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**TOTAL FACTOR PRODUCTIVITY, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND  
ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY IN DEVELOPING ASIAN COUNTRIES**

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**Thesis Submitted to  
School of Economics, Finance and Banking,  
Universiti Utara Malaysia,  
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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## ABSTRACT

Technological progress or total factor productivity (TFP) is the main factor in sustaining economic growth in the long run. As technological follower, technology transfer is the main source of technology progress in developing Asian countries. Effectiveness of technology transfer requires adequate human capabilities to absorb and adapt foreign technological knowledge. This study attempts to study the relative contribution of TFP growth to economic growth and technological absorption of human capital in the technology transfer process by looking into gender aspect at different levels of education. Solow neoclassical growth accounting method is applied to investigate the contribution of TFP growth to economic growth. The logistic technology diffusion model is used to determine the impact of human capital gender on TFP growth through dual dimensions – innovation and technology transfer for a sample of 12 developing Asian countries over the period of 1970 -2009 by using panel data pooled Ordinary Least Square (OLS), fixed/ random effects model. The growth accounting estimation supports the assimilation views that TFP growth has significantly contributed to the output growth of developing Asian countries. The empirical results indicated that the aggregate of female and male educations is significant in the technology transfer process. In terms of gender disaggregate educational levels, female and male tertiary education showed higher absorptive capacity in facilitating technology transfer. The results also showed that autonomous technology transfer has significant impact on TFP growth. This study shows the absorptive capacity of female and higher education in the technology transfer in enhancing the growth of productivity. As such, several policies may be implemented to enhance the effectiveness of technology transfer process by augmenting tertiary education, reducing the gender education disparity, enhancing the rate of female participation in labour force. Sustaining the economic growth which is based on productivity is important at accelerating the economic development of Asian developing countries.

Keywords: total factor productivity, human capital, technology transfer, absorptive capacity

## ABSTRAK

Kemajuan teknologi atau produktiviti faktor keseluruhan (*TFP*) merupakan faktor utama dalam mengekalkan pertumbuhan ekonomi dalam jangka masa panjang. Sebagai pengikut teknologi, pemindahan teknologi ialah punca utama kemajuan teknologi di negara Asia yang sedang membangun. Keberkesanan pemindahan teknologi memerlukan tahap keupayaan sumber manusia tertentu untuk menyerap dan menggunakan pengetahuan teknologi asing. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji sumbangan relatif pertumbuhan *TFP* kepada pertumbuhan ekonomi dan kapasiti penyerapan teknologi modal insan dalam proses pemindahan teknologi dengan meninjau daripada aspek jantina di peringkat pendidikan yang berlainan. Kaedah perakaunan pertumbuhan Solow Neoklasikal digunakan untuk menyiasat sumbangan pertumbuhan *TFP* kepada pertumbuhan ekonomi. Model penyebaran teknologi logistik digunakan untuk menentukan kesan jantina insan terhadap pertumbuhan *TFP* melalui dual dimensi - inovasi dan pemindahan teknologi bagi sampel 12 negara Asia sedang membangun untuk tempoh 1970–2009 dengan menggunakan data panel *OLS* dikumpulkan, model kesan tetap/ rawak. Anggaran perakaunan pertumbuhan menyokong pandangan asimilasi bahawa pertumbuhan *TFP* telah memberikan sumbangan yang besar kepada pertumbuhan pengeluaran di negara-negara Asia sedang membangun. Daripada segi penyerapan teknologi, hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa agregat pendidikan wanita dan lelaki agregat adalah penting dalam proses pemindahan teknologi. Tahap pendidikan daripada segi jantina dipecahkan yang menunjukkan bahawa wanita dan lelaki berkelulusan pengajian tinggi mempunyai tahap kapasiti penyerapan teknologi yang lebih tinggi dalam memudahkan pemindahan teknologi. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa pemindahan teknologi autonomi mempunyai kesan yang besar ke atas pertumbuhan *TFP*. Berdasarkan hasil kajian ini, ia menunjukkan bahawa pendidikan wanita dan tahap pengajian tinggi adalah kapasiti penyerapan pemindahan teknologi yang penting dalam meningkatkan pertumbuhan produktiviti. Justeru itu, beberapa polisi boleh dilaksanakan untuk meningkatkan keberkesanan proses pemindahan teknologi melalui peningkatan pendidikan tertiar, mengurangkan perbezaan jurang pendidikan jantina, meningkatkan kadar penyertaan buruh wanita. Mengekalkan pertumbuhan ekonomi berasaskan produktiviti adalah juga penting dalam memacu pertumbuhan ekonomi negara Asia yang sedang membangun.

Kata Kunci: produktiviti faktor keseluruhan, modal insan, pemindahan teknologi, kapasiti penyerapan

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to convey great appreciation and gratitude for the following persons that have contributed to this study. Foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Nor Azam bin Abdul Razak for his supervision, patience and knowledge sharing. His guidance helped me a lot in the completion of this study.

I would like to thank my co-supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Hussin bin Abdullah for his support and encouragement. My sincere thank also go to Associate Professor Dr. Sallahuddin bin Hassan for his suggestions and comments on the proposal of this study and special thanks to Associate Professor Liew Mee Lin for her comments.

My appreciation goes to Kementrian Pendidikan Malaysia and Universiti Teknologi MARA for the sponsorship of my study, Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business, Universiti Utara Malaysia and school of Economics, Finance and Banking, University Utara Malaysia for their co-operations and assistance.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband, children and parents for their support, understanding and encouragement during my study years.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TFP	Total Factor Productivity
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
NIEs	Newly Industrialised Economies
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ADB	Asian Development Bank
APO	Asian Productivity Organisation
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
R&D	Research and Development
OLS	Ordinary Least Square
FEM	Fixed Effects Model
REM	Random Effects Model
LSDV	Least Square Dummy Variable
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
PWT	Penn World Table
UNCTAD	United Nation Conference on Trade and Development
IIASA	International Institute for Applied Systems
VID	Vienna Institute of Demography



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

One of the overriding objectives of a nation is to achieve sustained economic growth because it enables the nation to enjoy greater economic prosperity over time which, in turn, elevates the standard of living of its population. If this is the case, then what does it take to attain sustained economic growth? In the past, nations have competed with each other primarily through the political means (i.e. through the colonial power). In the modern world, however, nations choose to compete with each other mainly through the economic means (i.e. through growth-oriented policy). Smith (1776) once posed the question “what determines long-term economic growth rate and hence the prosperity of nations?” Since then, the search for the fundamental determinants of growth has become a continuing research theme.

Basically, a country's economy grows with the combination of factors of production such as capital, labour, land and natural resources. However, economic growth is not just determined by factor accumulation alone, but also by total factor productivity (TFP) which represents the relative efficiency of a country to produce goods and services. TFP is commonly referred to as a measure for technological progress. It incorporates the impact of technological change and other factors that rise further than the quantified contribution of factor accumulation (Solow, 1957).

TFP growth is crucial for sustaining an economy's long-run growth. A country could not sustain its growth by relying on factor accumulation alone because it is subject to diminishing marginal returns. The law of diminishing marginal returns

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