

Researchers develop test to assess job seekers' thinking skills

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Researchers from the Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi MARA, have devised a prototype assessing tool to gauge a candidate's critical thinking skills which appears to be a much sought after criteria among employers.

The current employment market requirements seem to indicate that major employers and stakeholders in the industry are explicitly interested in graduates who possess not only technical skills and knowledge, but also their [critical thinking](#) skills in practical applications within the working environments.

The current practice of assessing a candidate using a "thinking [test](#)" is carried out by major corporations in Malaysia such as Khazanah Malaysia, Sime Darby Malaysia and Permodalan Nasional Berhad (PNB). These corporations make it compulsory for all prospective scholarship candidates and employees to take a test that would assess the candidate's logical, critical and analytical thinking skills. This indicates that apart from technical qualifications, employers want scholars and employees who could analyze problems critically and think "outside the box" to present possible solutions. Nevertheless, the nature of the tests that are currently utilized are the traditional paper-and-pencil tests that need to be administered manually and graded manually which is a tedious process.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) all over the world are also moving towards assessing students' higher order thinking skills, which helps to

boost their graduates' employability. In view of this new development, a prototype named the "Electronic Malaysian Critical Thinking Test" or e-MCTT was developed. The e-MCTT utilizes suggested Generic Skills and Employability (GSAE) Assessment Model as a framework that policy makers and educators alike could use to assess scholars', students' and future employees' employability as indicated by their thinking skills.

During its development, a tangible assessment tool was formulated and constructed using specified dimensions and constructs to assess the candidate's responses. The candidates' critical thinking skills ability would be formulated automatically by the system, saving valuable time that the human resource department and the HEIs would have to allocate when using the conventional method of manual assessment and grading. Subsequently, the categorization and segregation of the candidates into more manageable cut-out groups could be done automatically as well. The e-MCTT is not only a test that comes in the form of software but it also simplifies the current practices of critical thinking assessment. The e-MCTT could become a nationally-recognized, commercialized and standardized user-friendly screening tool which major corporations and HEIs could effectively utilize.

The e-MCTT is a test that assesses the test takers' critical [thinking skills](#). The measurement of these skills is divided into 24 sets of problems with 6 seminal dimensions comprising both quantitative and qualitative problems. The focus of the test is to measure the test takers' ability to think, analyses and derive solutions from a given task. The test takers are also expected to show insight into the problem to identify and deal with key information logically. The assimilation and evaluation of viewpoints and arguments in a rapid rate are also expected.

Provided by Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)

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