

## INNOVATION FOR EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY

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For the purpose of this paper presentation, employability is addressed from the aspects of the potential at risk employees ( $n=1,274$ ). It is noted that some data collection for innovation for employment is still on-going. This is because the project, titled **Innovation for Employment and Employability** is a two-year project; therefore, the research team has agreed that analyses of data will be completed in September, with recommendations for innovative employment for publishing the findings in an academic book. Notwithstanding this constraint, this article surveys related data to establish a profile of potential at risk employees. Amongst the related data are work preferences of potential at risk employees including their poor aims in working, their unrealistic work values and general outlook towards work. Implications of the findings are also discussed.

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### NOTE:

1. Research team members: This Abstract is written for a preliminary presentation in the PERSIDANGAN MEMPERKASA BUDAYA PENYELIDIKAN, FAKULTI PENDIDIKAN, which will be held on 22-23 December 2008.

### 2. Book chapters

According to Professor Dr. Sufean Hussin as a Senior member of this research team and also agreed by all team members, it is logical firstly to complete the analyses of the data which will be in September, and then secondly, the research team as per listed will decide on the book title/Research Report, the style/contents for the write-up of the chapters, name the publisher of the book and other logistics of publication.

Tentatively, for the purpose of the PERSIDANGAN MEMPERKASA BUDAYA PENYELIDIKAN, FAKULTI PENDIDIKAN, which will be held on 22-23 December 2008, the following write-up is done to meet the request of the Dean of the Education Faculty (*Surat Dekan bertarikh 23 Jun 2008, bertajuk PERSIDANGAN MEMPERKASA BUDAYA PENYELIDIKAN, FAKULTI PENDIDIKAN*). This means changes and adjustments are anticipated in the process of publishing research findings.



A high performance culture is a hallmark of global competitiveness. Under this view, mobilizing a country's resources including employability of youths speaks volumes in benefits for the people and national development. This explains why developed countries such as Australia (Smith, 2008) and the United Kingdom (Walmsley, 2008) and developing countries such as China (Amiras, 2008) and Malaysia conduct employability studies. It is also for the same reasons that this study, which is also a policy study under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia is aimed at improving the employability of Malaysian youths.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In Malaysia, public policies endorse human resource development practices that are "inculcating excellence and a high performance culture" (Malaysia, 2006, p. 29), and also "reducing employment disparity" (Malaysia, 2006, p. 35). In this context, this research was formulated to enable youths to live a productive life and to contribute to national development.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To survey aspects of the potential at risk employees including their work preferences, their aims in working, their work values and general outlook towards work.
2. To improve at risk employees' employability based on the evidence obtained from their responses to employment.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions are:

1. What are the aspects of the potential at risk employees including their work preferences their aims in working, their work values and general outlook towards work?
2. What measures can improve at risk employees' employability based on the evidence obtained from their responses to employment?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The Ninth Malaysia Plan conceptualizes human resource development (Malaysia, 2006) as the framework for building competitiveness of the Malaysian economy with "wellness" of Malaysians (Malaysia, 2006, p. 413). In this context, this research is being conducted to improve human resource development practices by employability.

### **Methodology**

The survey method is used for data collection, since comprehensive data such as work, aims in working, work values and people's general outlook towards work are collected without disturbance to the respondents. The sample is randomly selected with stratification for the mediocre performers, so as to answer the research questions. A pilot study was conducted prior to this study and logistics were worked out as to data collection. Feedback from the pilot test, NGOs and employers were used to improve the final draft of the questionnaire. The zoning of the schools was that used by the Department of Curriculum Development, Ministry of Education, Malaysia (in their Basic Economics Study) which was developed with the author who is also their consultant-head researcher. The random sample has 579 (45.4%) male and 695 (54.6%) female students who were in Form Four.



## Findings

In this preliminary presentation, the main findings indicate that about half (50%) of the sample were potential at risk employees. These respondents also ask for high salaries despite their poor academic results in school. About 45% of the respondents were not sure of job requirements. Notwithstanding this, about 90% indicate that they had ambitions even though these were rather difficult to achieve. On the whole, more than four-fifths wanted to continue schooling after their SPM but were not sure what to study.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The preliminary findings are similar to other related studies (Chew, Lee, Chew, & Quek, 1995; Lee, Quek, & Chew, 2001; Quek, 2000, 2001, 2005). It is logical to conclude that potential at risk employees in Malaysia present a group of youths who require guidance and help in career intervention. More evidence-based research is required to empower such youths to enter the labor market competitively.

## References

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