

An integrated personality profiling framework to identify and produce talent in a technical university

Mohd S.M. Saad, Ahmad R. Yunus, Mohd F. Kamarudin & Ismail Ibrahim

Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka
Melaka, Malaysia

ABSTRACT: Presented in this article is a proposed holistic and integrated Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM) *i*-PRO personality profiling framework. Dynamic changes in the environment and rapid advancement of technology pose substantial threats to organisations, including higher learning institutions (HLIs), if not carefully managed. One of the strategies to manage this threat is by possessing not only qualified but, more importantly, highly competent talent. Therefore, the ability to identify and develop talent is crucial to assist HLIs, in this case UTeM. It is envisaged that the framework could be developed using qualitative document analyses of major public documents of UTeM and Malaysia National Higher Education Blueprint 2015-2025. As well, various personality principles and instruments would underpin the framework. Subsequently, the proposed framework will be utilised as the basis of a fast-response computer-based personality profiling system that could assist UTeM to identify, develop, and intervene to develop, talent as required by the University.

INTRODUCTION

The shifting demand for skills due to the challenges of competing in a world of rapid technological change necessitates adaptation in the workplace to this demand. This adaptation requires personality and behaviour reorientations that go beyond step-by-step incremental change [1][2]. This situation poses unique challenges to higher learning institutions (HLIs) through their role in developing future talent.

While responding to the need to produce employable graduates, HLIs also must be aware of their own need for the right talent to help produce these graduates. This could be assisted, if HLIs could holistically profile in an integrated manner the personalities of their own staff, both academicians and non-academicians; the same profiling also could be used for their graduates [3].

Such profiling would provide organisations, such as HLIs with the information to improve staff training and development [4]. This would enhance work performances, lead to job promotion and improve the effectiveness of HLIs.

Personality profiling is a process which systematically records and analyses a subject's personality. This allows individuals to understand factors that could influence their personal and social behaviour. It is argued that personality characteristics play an important role in influencing academic and work performance. This can be observed especially in the education environment [5-9] and human resource management [10]. Failure to identify traits and characteristic talent in organisations could affect performance and, in the case of HLIs, could negatively affect their graduates' academic achievements and their staff work performance.

There are various personality profiling instruments that have proven to be scientifically and empirically robust, such as the Holland person-environment fit, Hogan personality and Myer-Briggs type indicators [11]. Though valid, as well as reliable in profiling an individual's personality, none is an holistic and integrated method.

It is a particular challenge for an HLI such as Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM) to use such instruments to identify and develop talent, while taking into account the vision, mission and the strategic planning driving the University forward [12]. Therefore, it is incumbent upon UTeM to determine the right approach to identify and develop University talent.

The work reported in this article is a discussion of the development of the UTeM's integrated profiling system known as the UTeM *i*-PRO framework. This synthesises various personality principles and instruments, as well as supporting the University's vision, mission and strategic plan. The framework is compatible with Malaysia's strategic education blueprint, which aims to produce world class talent.

METHODOLOGY

The development of the UTeM *i*-PRO personality profiling framework was undertaken using a qualitative approach. It was decided that a document analysis would be the starting point for the study. Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give *voice to* and meaning about an assessment topic [13]. Documents are analysed to incorporate coding related to themes; this is similar to how focus group or interview transcripts are analysed [13]. Although there were three types of primary document [14], the study focused on only one type, which is in the public record.

In this study, the public records referred to when developing the UTeM *i*-PRO personality framework were:

1. UTeM Portal, particularly focusing on the vision and mission statement of the University;
2. UTeM Strategic Plan 2012-2020;
3. Malaysia National Higher Education Blueprint 2015-2025.

These three public records were crucial in determining the quality and types of talent that UTeM needs as an HLI to meet its objectives and justify its existence [15]. While the first two documents explain the core values and activities as well as the talent the University expects to produce [13], the third document is an overarching blueprint towards which UTeM must operate as one of the 20 public universities in Malaysia [16]. For example, there are ten major shifts that need to be adhered to by UTeM to produce learned, value-driven talent.

Among the key major shifts outlined in the blueprint that related to talent explicitly are shifts 1, 2 and 3. These shifts represent substantial challenges to UTeM if no appropriate talent identification and profiling approach were in place. Information extracted from these documents was analysed to determine the types and quality of talent needed by UTeM.

To further strengthen the UTeM *i*-PRO personality framework, the literature related to personality profiling was systematically explored to investigate relevant principles and instruments. Big five personality was incorporated as the anchor theory, with the Holland person-environment fit, Hogan personality and Myer-Briggs type indicators. The aim was to develop a holistic and integrated personality profiling framework.

UTeM *i*-PRO PERSONALITY PROFILING FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 depicts the UTeM *i*-PRO personality profiling framework, which integrates the core values, strategic planning, major educational shifts and personality profiling as discussed earlier. The integration of these elements enables UTeM to identify and develop appropriate talent, so as to navigate the challenges as it moves forward.

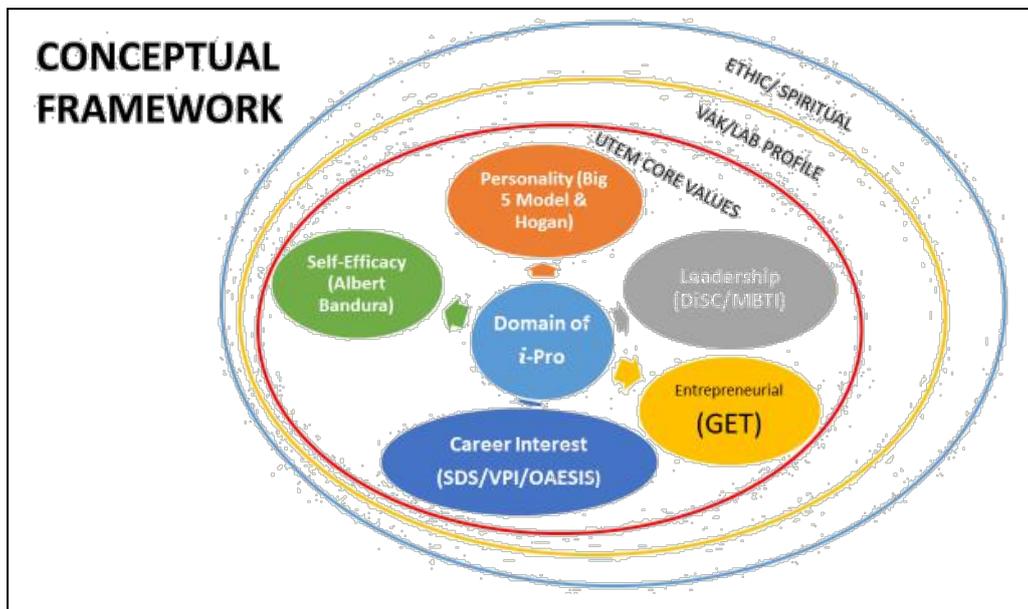


Figure 1: UTeM *i*-PRO personality framework.

The major domains of the profiling consist of three plus one domains. The first three main domains are:

1. core values;
2. personality;
3. competency.

The last domain covers the pillars for the newly developed four-track academic and faculty competencies in UTeM; namely:

1. teaching;
2. research;
3. professional services;
4. community services.

The three main domains can be broken into distinct domains, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: UTeM *i*-PRO domains.

Main domain	Core values	Personality	Competency
Sub-domains	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readiness for change 2. Resilience 3. Loyalty 4. Integrity 5. Professionalism 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-orientation 2. Career orientation 3. Emotional stability 4. Cognitive self 5. Self-representation 6. Leadership 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Entrepreneurial 2. Ethics and spiritual 3. Interpersonal 4. Common sense 5. National identity

The proposed UTeM *i*-PRO personality framework will undergo further refinement through a series of validations to ensure it becomes a workable framework when the study moves to the next stage. It is envisaged that there will be a computer-based integrated system known as *i*-PRO (integrated profiling system) providing a fast and responsive assessment of an individual personality profile, before recommending appropriate training, development and intervention programmes.

CONCLUSIONS

Fast-paced change and rapid technological advancements pose tremendous challenges to organisations, UTeM included, to respond proactively and positively in order not to be left behind by their competitors. One of the most important strategies to be implemented by UTeM is to profile its staff and subsequently to develop their talent according to individual personality and strengths. This has to be undertaken while being cognisant of the overarching aspirations of the University and the nation's interests. This is not possible in the absence of a holistic and integrated personality framework implemented using a fast-response tool.

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