

**A COURSEWARE DEVELOPMENT ON INSTANT JOB INTERVIEW
GUIDE FOR HR GRADUATES**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement	iv
Table of Content	v
List of Figures	viii
List of Tables	x
Abstract	xi
<i>Abstrak</i>	xii

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Problem Statement	4
1.2	Objective of the Study	
	1.2.1 General Objective	5
	1.2.2 Specific Objective	6
1.3	Theoretical Framework	6
1.4	Scope of Study	9
1.5	Significance of the Courseware Development	9
1.6	Justifications of the Study	10
1.7	Conclusion	11

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0	Introduction	12
2.1	Overview of a HRM function: Interview as a Tool for Staffing	13
2.2	Types of Selection Interview	14
2.3	Basic Interview Guidelines	15
	2.3.1 Interview Myths	15
	2.3.2 Knowing the Employer	16
	2.3.3 Interview Checklist	17
	2.3.4 Interview Questions	18
	2.3.5 Self-image	18
	2.3.6 Tips and Interview Advice	18
2.4	Computer Based Learning (CBL)	19
2.5	Review of Existing Courseware	20
	2.5.1 Cost Efficiency of Existing Courseware	22
	2.5.2 Usability test of Existing Courseware	22
	2.5.3 Poor Design Strategies in Existing Courseware	23
	2.5.4 Existing Courseware are Informing Rather Than Educating	24
	2.5.5 Learning Approach in Existing Courseware	24
2.6	Design Principles	

2.6.1	Macro-strategy: Learning Theories	
2.6.1.1	Cognitive Theory	27
2.6.1.2	Gagne's Nine Level of Learning	28
2.6.2	Micro-strategy: Design Principles	29
2.6.2.1	Colors, Shapes and Textures	29
2.6.2.2	Flowcharts and Storyboards	30
2.7	Discussion	31

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.0	Introduction	33
3.1	ADDIE Model as the Instructional System Design (ISD)	33
3.2	Development Schedule	36
3.3	Analysis	37
3.3.1	Reviewing Sources	38
3.3.2	Identifying Memorable Goals	38
3.3.3	Instructional and Learner's Need Analysis	38
3.4	Design	39
3.5	Development	39
3.6	Implementation and Evaluation	40
3.6.1	Population and Sample	40
3.6.2	Instrument	40
3.6.3	Data Analysis	41
3.7	Conclusion	41

CHAPTER 4 DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

4.0	Introduction	42
4.1	Courseware Design	42
4.1.1	Flowchart	43
4.1.2	Storyboards	44
4.1.3	Courseware Contents	47
4.1.3.1	Preparing Yourself	47
4.1.3.2	Aiming for HR Post	48
4.1.3.3	Looking the Part	49
4.1.3.4	Quizzes	50
4.2	Courseware Development	50
4.3	Prototype Courseware	52
4.4	Conclusion	56

CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.0	Introduction	57
5.1	Courseware Implementation and Evaluation	57

5.2	Data Analysis	
5.2.1	Analysis on Demographic Factor	58
5.2.2	Analysis on the Content of IMM Courseware	59
5.2.3	Analysis on the Interactivity of the IMM Courseware	60
5.2.4	Analysis on the Navigation of the IMM Courseware	61
5.2.5	Analysis on the Feedback of the IMM Courseware	62
5.2.6	Analysis on the Screen Design of the IMM Courseware	63
5.2.7	Analysis on Students' Preferences toward the use of an IMM Courseware Compared to Textbooks	64
5.3	Students Additional Comments	65
5.4	Conclusion	65

CHAPTER 6 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.0	Introduction	66
6.1	Limitations of the Study	66
6.2	Summary	68
6.3	Recommendation	68
6.4	Conclusion	69

References	70
Appendix 1	74
Appendix 2	82
Appendix 3	84
Appendix 4	85

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 The Changing 21 st Century Malaysian Workplace	3
Figure 2 Theoretical Framework	8
Figure 3 The Selection Process	14
Figure 4 The Color wheel	29
Figure 5 A General Outline of ADDIE Model	34
Figure 6 Flowchart of Prototype Courseware	43
Figure 7 Storyboard	44
Figure 8 Storyboard	45
Figure 9 Image Editing with Adobe Photoshop	49
Figure 10 Layout	50
Figure 11 Script	51
Figure 12 Welcome Scene	51

Figure 13 Introduction Scene	52
Figure 14 Main Menu Scene	52
Figure 15 Interview Myths Scene	53
Figure 16 Know your Enemy Scene	53
Figure 17 Quiz Scene	54
Figure 18 Right Answer Chosen	54
Figure 19 Analysis on the Content of IMM Courseware	58
Figure 20 Analysis on the Interactivity of the IMM Courseware	59
Figure 21 Analysis on the Navigation of the IMM Courseware	60
Figure 22 Analysis on the Feedback of the IMM Courseware	61
Figure 23 Analysis on the Screen Design of the IMM Courseware	62
Figure 24 Analysis on Students' Preferences toward the use of an IMM Courseware Compared to Textbooks	63

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Ratings of Generic Competencies Sought by Employers and Comparison between Perceptions of HR Managers and Hiring Managers	16
Table 2 Ratings of Employer's Hiring Criteria for Fresh Graduates and Comparison between Perceptions of HR Managers and Hiring Managers	17
Table 3 Computer Based Learning versus Web-Based Training	20
Table 4 Courseware Comparison Matrix	
Table 5 Comparing Pedagogy and Andragogy	24
Table 6 Gagne's nine Level of Learning	27
Table 7 Basic Flowchart Symbols	30
Table 8 Project Development Schedule	35
Table 9 Likert-type Scale	40
Table 10 STAR Formula	48

ABSTRACT

A COURSEWARE DEVELOPMENT ON INSTANT JOB INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HR GRADUATES

Nur Khairunnisa Binti Rakawi

In the 21st century workplace, employment offering “jobs for life” are increasingly becoming scarce. Fresh graduates will face a gradually more competitive and uncertain job market. What has become ever more clear over the last decade is that the focus of efforts on becoming employable for life instead of worrying about being employed for life in a large stable company. It is also crystal clear that having a degree is not enough to gain and retain a “graduate” job. This research contributes to enhance final year students’ proficiency in preparing themselves for the job market by producing an interactive multimedia courseware. A survey research method was used to gather questionnaires from 3rd year HRD students of FCSHD, UNIMAS. The outcome confirms that courseware is effective. This result confirms that interactive multimedia courseware is a right medium for learning. In addition, the implications of this study to career theory and practice, limitations and directions for future research are discussed.

ABSTRAK

PEMBANGUNAN KOSWER GARIS PANDUAN SEGERA TEMUDUGA UNTUK GRADUAN HR

Nur Khairunnisa Binti Rakawi

Di alam pekerjaan abad ke-21 kini, penawaran “pekerjaan seumur hidup” telah pun berkurangan. Graduan secara beransur akan berhadapan dengan pasaran pekerjaan yang penuh dengan persaingan sengit dan keraguan. Situasi yang kelihatan semakin jelas bukannya kebimbangan terhadap bekerja seumur hidup di organisasi yang stabil tetapi sebaliknya fokus kepada ikhtiar menjadi “pekerja untuk hidup”. Lantaran itu, segulung ijazah sudah tidak lagi mencukupi untuk memperoleh dan selanjutnya berpegang kepada “kerja bertaraf graduan”. Kajian ini dilaksanakan untuk memperkukuhkan pengetahuan pelajar tahun akhir dalam persediaan menghadapi temuduga dengan menghasilkan multimedia koswer yang interaktif. Kaedah tinjauan telah digunakan bagi mengumpul borang soal selidik daripada pelajar tahun 3 HRD, FSKPM, UNIMAS. Keputusan analisis menunjukkan koswer adalah efektif. Dapatan kajian ini mengesahkan bahawa koswer merupakan media yang baik untuk pembelajaran. Turut dibincangkan dalam penulisan ini adalah implikasi kajian terhadap teori dan amalan kerjaya, limitasi – limitasi serta cadangan kajian lanjut untuk masa akan datang.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Citizens of Malaysia nowadays have realized the importance of education. Living with the well known proverb knowledge is power; parents are willing to spend a large sum of money to ensure their children can achieve a higher education level assuming that in the future there will be a return on their investment. No doubt, the numbers of graduates increases from year to year. However, according to Ranjit Singh Malhi & A. Wahab Bakar (2008), *in the twenty first century workplace, a degree promises no guarantee of a job.*

In the epoch of globalization and innovation, swift changing technologies are revolutionizing organizational practices. Keeping to the lead of the

competition is vital. Accordingly, organizations need to make the most of the employment of their greatest asset of all time i.e. human capital. Within this perspective, organizations seek to employ the best and gung-ho employees whose performance and achievements are aligned with organizational objectives and needs which indirectly contributed to the growth of the industry cum economy. Demand and supply in the job market is getting stiff especially with the presence of foreign workers employed as professionals. Seeing that, fresh graduates are required to set a higher level of qualifications to impress — not just academically, but behavioral and attitudinal as well.

As cited in Ranjit Singh Malhi & A. Wahab Bakar (2008) the Malaysian workplace is currently undergoing dramatic transformation due to major changes in the environment; increasing globalization, fast-changing technology, and the emergence of a knowledge-based economy. To compete successfully in an increasingly globalized and highly competitive business world, Malaysian companies need to create high-performance workplaces that can respond rapidly to the continually changing environment.

In this era, scarcity of “employment for life” increases. According to Cappelli (1999) the old employment system of secure, lifetime jobs with predictable advancement and stable pay is indeed dead. DeFillippi & Arthur (1994) termed the flexible and multidirectional career system which replaced the traditional form of linear career system as the “boundary-less” career.

Ranjit Singh Malhi & A. Wahab Bakar (2008) pointed out that to survive in the twenty-first century workplace, fresh graduates ought to learn to live with chaos and adapt quickly to new realities. One has to commit themselves to lifelong learning as it is crucial to ensure employability in a dynamic and fast changing job market. At this point, knowledge is often out of date in 3-4 years. One has to keep up with changes in the workplace and work sector.

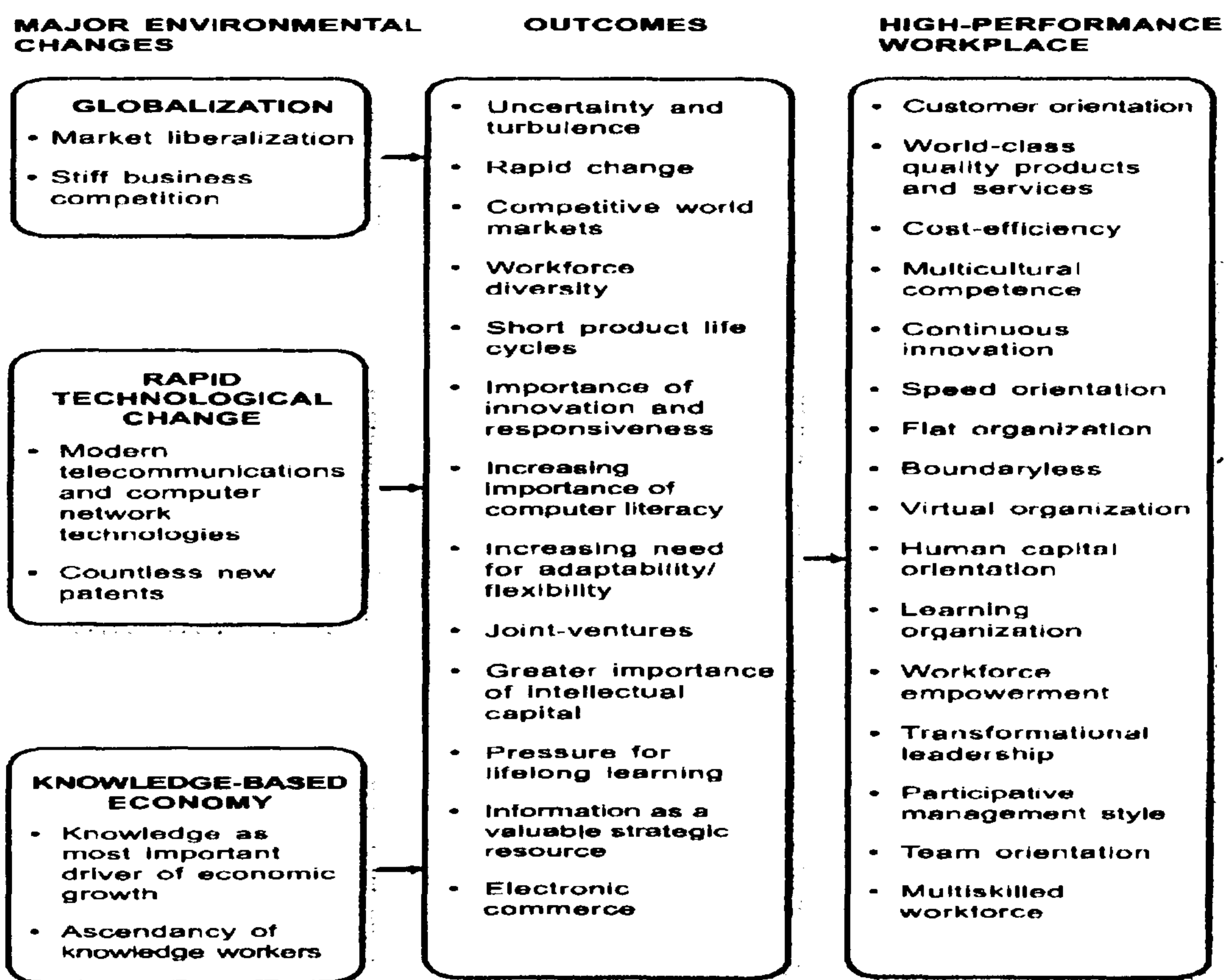


Figure 1: The Changing 21st Century Malaysian Workplace. Adapted from Ranjit Singh Malhi & A. Wahab Bakar (2008). *Your dream job. Malaysia: TQM Consultants.*

Hall & Moss (1998) prescribed a new career paradigm — *the protean career*. “Protean” originates from the term “Proteus”, an ancient Greek sea god who has the ability to change form constantly. Protean career encourages individuals to become self-reliant and to assume ownership of their careers. It also suggests diverse career paths and stressed the importance of multitasking, lifelong learning, resilience and self career management.

1.1 Problem Statement

In the 21st century workplace, employment offering “jobs for life” are increasingly becoming scarce. Fresh graduates will face a gradually more competitive and uncertain job market. What has become ever more clear over the last decade is that the focus of efforts on becoming employable for life instead of worrying about being employed for life in a large stable company. It is also crystal clear that having a degree is not enough to gain and retain a “graduate” job (Ranjit Singh Malhi & A. Wahab Bakar, 2008).

An upcoming interview makes everyone especially fresh graduates uneasy about being scrutinized, judged and most probably rejected. Generally, interviewees felt two different feelings at a time — exited and anxious. As such, students must be exposed to interviewing process skills. Synonymous with the era of information technology and conducive self-learning, it is therefore relevant for interpersonal skills module is presented in an interactive form seeing that individual responds to self-learning. This will embrace self-empowerment to students to manage their self-learning.

The twenty first century job market needs well-rounded graduates who possess generic competencies besides discipline-specific knowledge (Ranjit Singh Malhi & A. Wahab Bakar, 2008). University Kuala Lumpur’s Malaysian Institute of Information Technology (MIIT) Dean Associate Professor Dr Roslan Ismail said, “This helps prepare students for their future roles in the industry. So university courses must be shaped in such way that allows students to prepare themselves for the job market” (as cited in *Job Preparation: A Good Grounding*, 2008).

Interviewing is a stylized form of conversation, and as such requires preparation. But realistically, candidates are rarely given enough time to do so (Clegg, 2001). As first-time job seekers; graduate need to be very well prepared o

maximize their chances of success in getting employed. Resumes may do equivalent of “leaping tall buildings in a single bound”, to be chosen. It is not necessarily the best candidate gets the job offer — it is more likely the best interviewee (Deluca & Deluca, 2001).

Things tend to be complicated for first-time job seekers namely fresh-graduates. There is a lot of misinformation out there, not forgetting odd perceptions as well. Deluca & Deluca (2001) stated that *some magazine articles state that current graduates are unprepared...poorly educated...lacking in practical skills.*

Hence, producing an educational module is necessary to develop students’ ability in facing interview, a step before entering the working life. Due to scarcity of “jobs for life”, fresh graduates should be wary that they are responsible for proactively managing their careers as the new career paradigm is remaining employable and not so much on getting employed (Ranjit Singh Malhi & A. Wahab Bakar, 2008). Suchlike, a computer-aided instruction module which contains a self-pacing feature that permits students to control the pace of instruction and makes them self-sufficient learners is an appropriate solution.

1.2 Objective of the study

1.2.1 General Objective

To enhance final year students’ proficiency in preparing themselves for the job market by producing an interactive multimedia courseware on “*Instant Job Interview Guide*”.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To prepare graduates in the limited time by emphasizing the important points in interviewing.
- ii. To guide graduates on how to learn about the employer.
- iii. To give tips to graduates in responding to recruiters' favorite questions.
- iv. To provide graduates with interview advice from experts.
- v. To evaluate the effectiveness of the educational interactive multimedia courseware.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The main reference for the framework is *Your Dream Job: How to Get it and Excel* (2008) by Ranjit Singh Malhi, Chief Executive Officer and Principal Consultant of TQM Consultants; and A. Wahab Bakar, Nestle (M) Sdn Bhd Human Resource Director. The book is based on a study conducted between December 2006 and February 2007 involving 244 human resource managers and 102 hiring managers from nearly 100 multinational and local companies. This book gives a clear picture of what is expected of Malaysian employees in the 21st century.

Every interviewer is an individual with individual preferences and biases. Interviewers try their best to be impartial. Different people put a diverse emphasis on different things. Some will be influenced by a confident delivery, some by striking out first impressions, and others prefer someone who takes time to think things through (Williams, 2005).

Among the interesting points of this study is that the single most important criterion in hiring fresh graduates is soft skills — intra-personal and interpersonal skills and traits that are required to thrive in the workplace which are valued more highly than academic background. Ranjit Singh Malhi & A. Wahab Bakar (2008)

have assessed the importance of various hiring criteria of fresh graduates among human resources and hiring managers, the top 15 soft skills sought by Malaysian employers and the top 15 mistakes committed by Malaysian graduate interviewees.

According to Ranjit Singh Malhi & A. Wahab Bakar (2008) there are two types of interview questions; traditional and behavior based. Though most employees today still ask traditional interviewing questions, in which the questions is of general matters, many companies has now trained their interviewers to ask behavior based questions as it is considered to be a more objective and reliable way of assessing potential candidates.

It may seem that there is an awful lot of work needed before the interview, but being appropriately prepared is essential. A short list of information that can be checked off before undertaking an interview covers all information that will be dear in any interview (Clegg, 2001).

How interviewers perceive you can often determine whether a job is won or lost in today's job highly competitive job market. There is a research which shows that an employer often decides whether or not to hire a person in first few minutes of an interview. According to a study by University of Waterloo, interviewers typically make decision between 2.65 to 8.2 minutes after meeting the interviewee (Ranjit Singh Malhi & A. Wahab Bakar, 2008). As the saying goes, first impressions are often lasting impressions.

The tips and personal advice from senior HR professionals of well established companies provide added value. Undoubtedly, good grades are critical to securing job interviews. However, what primarily determines whether a graduate is hired is his ability to sell himself and stand out from the crowd during the interview. Malaysian employers also give greater emphasis on a graduates major than his cumulative grade point average (CGPA) or reputation of graduating

university in making hiring decisions (Ranjit Singh Malhi & A. Wahab Bakar, 2008). Grades are less important to many companies. Employers often prefer a well-rounded person who has proven the ability to juggle several different things at once to one who has narrowly focused on school alone (McDonnell, 1995).

As a summary of the referred text mentioned above, a theoretical framework (see Figure 2) was developed. This framework is build up on the analysis of literature that which will be extensively discussed in chapter 2. This framework is also the basis of courseware contents to facilitate courseware design phase.

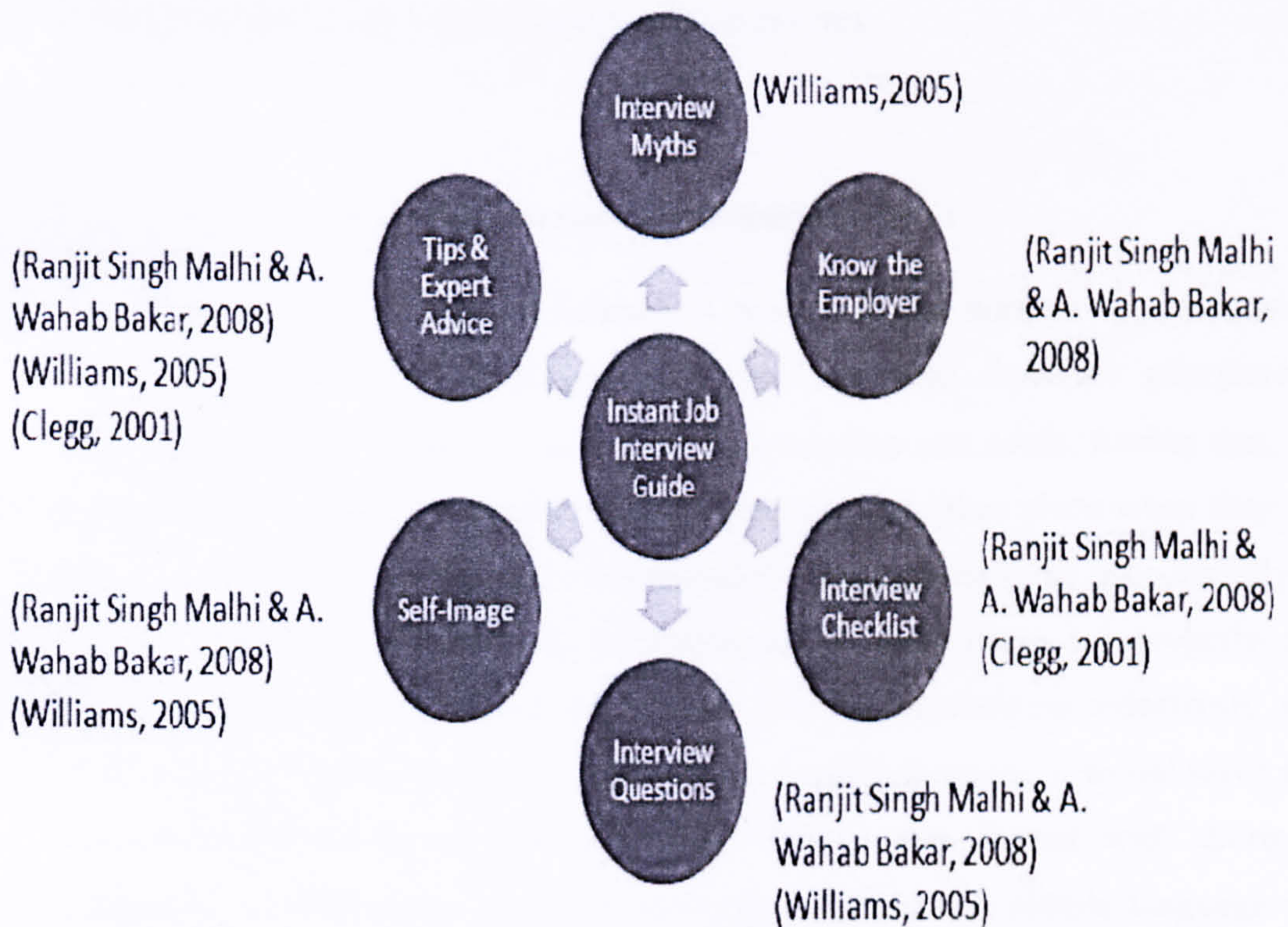


Figure 2: Theoretical Framework

1.4 Scope of Study

In general, the scope of study focus mainly on soon to be graduates which is the final year students of Human Resource Development (HRD) of Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development (FCSHD) who are taking degree courses in University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) to prepare them for a job interview which is a formal meeting with a view to ascertaining suitability for the job before entering a contract agreement. It is a process in human resource recruitment and selection. As university graduates, one needs to show significant reactions and expressions in order to impress future employers. Specifically, this study highlights the important information for instant interview guide as interviewees are rarely given enough time to prepare.

1.5 Significance of the Courseware Development

The design of the courseware is based on the context of educational. Attractive color, interface design, font type and font sizes are interactively implemented in the design to meet user's expectation and needs. Seeing that, the target users are among students, learning process only takes place when they are highly motivated to do so. The courseware is designed to be as user-friendly as possible. Instead of just merely confusing icons, the buttons are properly and clearly named. This will enable user to run the courseware effectively and efficiently. Though the primary target users are undergraduates, it would serve as a good reference point for any job seeker. The clear format with thorough explanation of key terms and ideas through diagrams and simple language use would be a comfortable read for even those not strong in English. In addition to that, this courseware is provided with directory so that user can skip to other preferable sections. What makes this courseware different from other career guidance sources is that it is based on recent research on the local scenario.

Furthermore, this courseware saves time and cost compared to seminars. Research has also shown that trainees using computer-aided instruction (CAI) takes less time to learn the same amount of materials as conventional methods (Werner & DeSimone, 2006). It explains the basic knowledge on employment interview, replacing an instructor-led course with a single standalone program in the form of a CD-ROM. Apart from its appealing visual and audio content features which is a very important element in retaining users' attention, this courseware is also packed with vital facts and information on each topics and subtopics covered. Quizzes are also provided to test the user's comprehension and maintain their interest.

The use of multimedia environments creates open, flexible and distance training as part of a process of lifelong learning. It has a number of advantages such as interactivity, adaptation, simulation, demonstration and integration (Collin, 1999). One solution to set up courses using interactive media for learning is so that individuals can learn at their own pace and place. Choosing technology as a media for training is not simply chosen for its own sake rather because it is more efficient for the task (Hunt, Burvall & Ivegard, 2004).

1.6 Justifications of the Study

One study revealed that both experienced and less experienced trainees prepared to learn to use software by experimenting or through trial and error (Harp, Satzinger & Taylor, 1997). The more traditional methods, including lectures and seminars, ranked near the bottom of the list of trainee preferences. Researchers are exploring a number of learning issues involved in computer training skills (Werner & DeSimone, 2006).

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In example:

- i. Self-efficacy is an individual's belief that he or she can successfully perform a given behavior (Werner & DeSimone, 2006). Research has shown that behavior modeling approach to software training resulted in higher self-efficacy scores and higher scores on an objective measures of computer mastery than a tutorial approach (as cited in Fagan, Neil & Woolridge, 2003).
- ii. Martocchio & Webster (1992) state that cognitive playfulness includes the spontaneity, imagination and exploratory approach that a person brings to task performance and learning. They also found that users in cognitive playfulness were more likely to exhibit higher learning, positive mood and satisfaction with feedback. However, they also found out that positive feedback was more beneficial for users who were lower in cognitive playfulness.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter seeks to express the meanings of this project in relation to Human Resource practice. Interview is after all, a part of recruitment and selection process, an element of Human Resource Management. Apart from that, this chapter search for relevancy of guiding and equipping students with employment interview skills which might assist them upon graduation based on employability terms to facilitate the new career management paradigm. This project stresses on making the most of CBL as the best practice to ensure effective transfer of training.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on reviewing learning theories and approaches which looks into learning concept, related research and related approach for the project. It familiarizes us with the major trends in previous research and opinions on the topic thus understand the relevance to the project. Most of the researches and literatures are from the Western countries as sources for local literatures related to leaning theories, project approaches and module content are limited. Learning theories and artificial intelligence are discussed in this chapter as well as its

relation to behavioral change towards learning process. In this chapter, literal analysis on strength and weaknesses of existing courseware is also done.

2.1 Overview on a HRM Function: Interview as a Tool for Staffing

Human resource management (HRM) is the utilization of a firm's human resources to achieve organizational objectives (Mondy & Noe, 2005). Strategic management involves a set of managerial decisions and actions that are intended to provide a competitively superior fit with the external environment and enhance the long-run performance of the organization. It involves several distinct processes, including strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and control. Progress has been made in moving towards a more "strategically integrated HRD". Some areas that need to be addressed include human resource system — how employees are selected (Werner & DeSimone, 2006). Staffing is the process through which an organization ensures that it always has the proper number of employees with the appropriate skills in the right job at the right time to achieve organizational objectives (Mondy & Noe, 2005). Recruitment and selection is part of staffing.

Recruitment is the process of finding and attracting capable applicants in sufficient numbers and encouraging them to apply for employment with the organization. The process begins when qualified individuals are sought and ends when their applications are submitted. Recruitment results in a pool of applicants from which the organization's new employees are selected. Selection is the process of choosing from those applicants who are best suited for the positions available. The selection process begins after the recruitment process creates a pool of suitable applicants (Tan, 2001).

The selection interview is a formal conversation which allows for a two-way exchange of information where interviewers can learn about the employer.