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A Construct Validation of the Malaysian University English Test and the English Placement Test: Two High-stakes English Language Proficiency Tests

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Abstract: *Malaysian students are normally required to show a certain level of English language proficiency before they are offered a place by a local institution of higher learning. One of the examinations conducted to ascertain their level of proficiency is the Malaysian University English Test (MUET). Apart from MUET some universities also conduct their own test for the same reason. This paper discusses a study on the comparability of MUET with the English Placement Test (EPT) conducted by the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). This study was conducted to see whether the two tests could be used interchangeably for admission and placement purposes. The two tests were administered on second year pre-university students of IIUM. Analyses show that though significant, the correlation coefficients of the two tests were not high enough for them to be used interchangeably.*

INTRODUCTION

Many leading universities require their intending students to show a certain level of proficiency particularly in the language of instruction before they are admitted into the institutions. TOEFL and IELTS scores are two of the common yardsticks where English language proficiency is concerned. Such tests, however, are not easily accessible to candidates in some countries, and they could also be costly by local standards. To overcome this problem, countries such as Malaysia offer their own version of the test. The Malaysian University English Test (MUET) is conducted by the Malaysian Examinations Council, and it is a requirement for all students intending to pursue their studies in Malaysian public universities. Apart from the MUET, some Malaysian universities – public and private – also administer their own English language