Revealed Knowledge Integration in National Dual Training System (NDTS): Philosophy, Issues, and Challenges

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the implementation of National Dual Training System (NDTS) in Malaysian Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) System. The establishment of National Philosophy of Education (NPE) is solid evidence that Malaysia is committed to develop potentials of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced are said to be the ultimate goal of education in this country. In the context of Malaysian TVET System especially in the aspect of skills training system, the official implementation of NDTS started in 2005 has been seen as the most potential system to develop the excellent quality of human capital in this country. The main outcome of this program is to produce Holistic K-Workers who have the integration of Technical Competence, Human and Social Competence, and Learning and Methodological Competence. These Holistic K-Workers are then expected to contribute efficiently towards the transformation of Malaysia to become high income country by 2020. However, some issues and challenges surface in the context of individuals’ potential development which is the development of individual as workforces in economic model and the development of individual as human itself in Islamic model. Therefore, this article aims to examine the current approach used in NDTS and henceforward to evaluate the potential for Revealed Knowledge Integration to be applied into the current approach of NDTS. The study found that even though the concept of Revealed Knowledge Integration is well-known especially by the policy makers and the society of TVET in Malaysia, the aspect of implementation of this kind of spiritual approach is not well-practice enough to fulfil the requirement of holistic development of individuals’ potential as stated in NPE.

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1. Introduction

What is the concept of Education? What is the concept of Training? What is the concept of Technical and Vocational Training and Education (TVET)? And what is the concept of Holistic TVET? There are various principles and theories about “holistic” terminology had been proposed by current philosophers and even the ancient Greek philosophers. All of these principles and theories respectively rest on the assumptions that the soul is an essential component of the individual that is connected to the individual’s potentiality including intellectual, emotional, spiritual and the physical elements. The famous words of Socrates, know thyself is a depiction of his belief that the potential element of an individual is latent and concealed in nature and hence, needs to be brought to surface. This innate potentiality can be made active through the use of right and proper technique in education and also an environment that is conducive to its cultivation and nurturance (Ismail & Hassan, 2009; Mcgrath, 2007).

What about us? What is a Malaysian principle of individual’s potential development? The basic philosophy underlying the Malaysian system is based on Malaysia’s very own National Philosophy of Education (NPE) with the belief and devotion to God as its central tenet (Baba, 2011; Hamzah, 2010; PPK, 1988). The NPE formulated in the early year of 1988 and implemented in the following year aimed to nurture the holistic concept of education and training. The implementation of NPE also witnessing a radical break from the traditional curriculum which was too content centred and overly focused on examination. By looking at the ideals of the NPE, the Malaysian system had clearly identified that the concepts of integration and holism are first and foremost based on the concept of belief and devotion to God. We also must clearly understand that the “spirituality” in the Malaysian context first and foremost rests upon the belief of God the Almighty and the revelation as the greatest source of truth (Baba, 2006; Ismail & Hassan, 2009).

Hence, in addressing to this point, this paper will try to discuss and argue the current approach of Malaysian TVET System and how the concept of Holistic TVET can be implemented and at the same time fitted into the educational philosophy of this country. This paper at the same time will propose and discussed one of most potential Skill Development and Training (SDT) program that can be implemented together with the concept of Holistic TVET which is National Dual Training System (NDTS). This paper also will try to highlight the issues and challenges towards the implementation of this kind of spiritual approach in NDTS.

2. NDTS; Made In Malaysia

What is the history of NDTS? How Malaysian start? according to Ahmad (2010) and Leong, Narunan, & Sim (2010), it’s all started from bilateral talks between the Governments of Malaysia and Germany back in 1986. A study known as “Basic Study on the Design of a Dual Vocational Training Scheme in Malaysia” conducted by German consultants from 1997 to 1999 with the main purpose was to strengthen TVET System in Malaysia. This basic study then followed by the implementation of Dual System Project (DSP) which inspired Malaysian Government to implemented our own design of dual training system on May 19, 2004. A year later, the Malaysian government officially introduces NDTS from the cabinet decision under 8th Malaysian Plan (Ahmad, 2010; Othman, 2005).

What is the basic concept of NDTS? What is “Dual” Training? Dual means training in two learning situations which is actual workplace and training institute. A company usually collaborates with a training institute to conduct training under NDTS. The structure of NDTS implementation can be seen in Table 1. What is the specialty of this duality nature of NDTS? This duality approach is very crucial for the sustainability of the country in both of economic and social security factors. This dual approach also has differentiated between two learning places which is typical classroom set in training institutes and the real on the job set in companies or industries. In the simplest words, the student as apprentice has a lot of opportunity to learn and train from both of these places.
Training Period | Depends on Area and Certification Level
---|---
Training Ratio | 70:30 or 80:20 (Practical: Theory). Practical training is conducted at workplace whereas basic skills and theory are offered at the training centre.
Delivery Method | Day Release System; 1-2 days a week of theory and basic skills at training centre and 4-5 days a week of practical training at the company. Block Release System; 1-2 months of theory and basic skills at training centre and 4-5 months of practical training at the company.
Apprentice | School leavers or existing workers selected by the company to undergo NDTS.
Training Allowance | Semester 1; Rm350 a month  
Semester 2; Rm400 a month  
Semester 3; Rm450 a month  
Semester 4; Rm500 a month
Award of Skill Qualification | Malaysian Skills Certificate (MSC) level 1, 2, 3, Malaysian Skills Diploma (MSD), or Malaysian Skills Advanced Diploma (MSAD) by Department of Skills Development (DSD).

Table 1: NDTS Implementation (Ahmad, 2010)

What is the philosophy of NDTS? What is the main product of NDTS? NDTS is a practice-oriented apprenticeship training system design to develop highly quality skilled knowledge worker in order to meet present and future industrial needs of Malaysia. All of this as a preparation to steer and gear up the ambition of this country to become a developed nation by the year 2020 (KPM, 2011; KSM, 2008a; RMK10, 2010). The main product of NDTS is known as Holistic K-Workers who is expected to be prepared with the Technical Competences, Learning and Methodological Competences, and Social and Human Competences. Technical Competences are comprises of knowledge and skills in respecting technical field, while Learning and Methodological Competences are comprises of lifelong learning, problem solving activities, executing, and monitoring workplace assignments (Leong et al., 2010; Othman, 2005).

However, the most important aspect that differentiates NDTS Holistic K-Workers from another is there is a crucial need to develop the Social and Human Competences to the apprentice which is comprises of character development and social integration while in the world of work (Sail et al., 2007). In this case, NDTS can be assumed as a TVET System that not only stressed on the development of apprentice in technical aspects, but also stressed on the development of apprentice in human aspects. Hence, the development of apprentice in the aspects of Social and Human Competences in NDTS also need to be aligned with overall philosophy of individual’s potential development practices in Malaysia which is NPE that stressed the important of belief and devotion to God as its central tenet.

3. Philosophy Of Holistic TVET; Revealed Knowledge Integration

Holistic Education practices in Malaysia can be divided into five integration aspects which can be seen in the Table 2. However, these five aspects of integration not stand in isolation to one another. Integration among these five aspects should be implemented coherently if the concept of holistic education is to be clearly defined and manifested in the context of real practices. The integration of these five aspects is also pertinent in bringing about a clear understanding of the various sub-concepts subsumed under the holistic concept of education namely; God or Creator, universe, knowledge, values, skills and human existence and their inter-connectedness. With Islam as the official religion in Malaysia, the principles of the National Philosophy of Education is clearly God-centred and being holistic encompasses the meaningful integration of disciplines both “inter” and “intra” discipline, inculcation
and transmission of the 16 core values across the curriculum with the use of language as the main “vehicle” in translating the principles of the NPE into actual practice (Ismail & Hassan, 2009).

| Integration of Knowledge, Skills, Values and Language in Learning | Simultaneous process of promoting an overall development of an individual student through the mastery of knowledge, acquisition of skills, internalization of noble values and the proper usage of language in teaching and learning. |
| Integration of Learning Experiences in the School Subjects | Integration of the disciplines is not to be only understood from the perspective of integration of subject matter. Integration of subjects must be made against a more wholesome interpretation of knowledge as uphold by the NPE. |
| Integration of Theory and Practice in the Subject Taught | Transfer of knowledge and skills through the subjects taught is not devoid of the infusion of core noble values. Thus, having these values as the platform for character building, the teaching of various subjects should aim at developing different student potentiality and interest. |
| Integration of Learning Experience Inside and Outside of Classroom | Various aspects of meaningful learning process is definitely infused with the concept of God or the Creator which is the ultimate cause of the ecological balance and harmony, a metaphysical position to be found in almost every religion in the country. |
| Integration of Teaching and Learning Strategies | The development of the intellect should not be separated from the other aspects of the individual development which also comprise the affective and physical dimensions. |

Table 2: Holistic Education in Malaysia (Ismail & Hassan, 2009)

To produce a balanced human capital from the Islamic perspective, an integrated concept must be put in place which is a type of education and training that guides and trains the mind, body and soul of a person based on Islamic values and its revelations which is Al-Qur’an and Al-Sunnah (Lubis, Mustapha, & Lampoh, 2009). Islamic education and training also must emphasis the following concepts; To produce a pious human being who are devoted to God; To carry out lifelong learning; To develop total potential of a person’s soul, mind and body in an integrated way; and To develop a person’s capability to carry out his or her duties as a servant of God and as a “Caliph” of God (Langgulung, 1990). An Integrated Islamic Education emphasizes the unison of knowledge and not merely an installation or imitation of one’s knowledge through conventional teaching and learning practices. In the simplest words, Islamic education rejects duality between God and the World of Work (Hashim, 2004).

Therefore, Malaysia as on its way towards attaining the developed nation status by the year 2020 with its aspiration to success in developing human capital also need to reconsider this spiritual aspect. Beside the development of skills to equip individuals with the competencies required for a modern industry, the development of individuals with the quality of human being required by God or Creator also needs to be specified and implemented (Baba, 2006; Daud, 2005; Hamzah, 2010; Salleh, 2010). The overall national education and training systems also need to be continuously realigned with this aspect in order to enhance in terms of its quality, efficiency and effectiveness, yet respecting the guidelines and rules of God.

4. The Issues and Challenges

4.1. Uncivilized Perception of TVET

Since its introduction, TVET in Malaysia has always been considered by the public especially parents, as the second choice path for the less academically qualified in general education system. This negative perception has
been driven by the low academic requirements set for the admission into most of TVET programmes in this country. There are also myths like there will be limited prospects for TVET’s product and there is no chance for them to further their educational and professional development. This unfair stigma of TVET in Malaysia has also been created by the impression that the primary objective of TVET is only to cater for school drop-outs, rather than as an important strategy to train skilled workers for the reality of World of Work and for their sustainable live in the community. In addition, TVET’s qualifications and careers are still poorly perceived and recognised in the landscape of workplace in Malaysia. There is a lot of employers are actually not really recognise all of the variety certification due to the highly fragmented landscape, with variety ministries and agencies issuing variety of certifications (Leong, 2011; Zain, 1990).

4.2. Multiplicity of TVET Providers and Standards

The interesting fact about TVET provision in Malaysia it is undertaken by a lot of different ministries, agencies and organisations, both public and private, with a multiplicity of certification, standards and curricula (Leong, 2011; Yunos, Ahmad, Kaprawi, & Razally, 2005a, 2005b; Zain, 1990). This is from one aspect showing that how our country is serious and eager in the aspect of skilled workers development. However, this variety of TVET providers often operate as “lone ranger” and do not taking into account programme offerings in the broader context, resulting in overlapping courses and institutions as well as creating confusion for students, employers, and even the community itself. This kind of too much traffic situation surely has implications towards the standardization of training and qualification, budget effectiveness, quality assurance, recognition of prior learning, and the further education of TVET graduates. The current governance structure also still lacks effective coordination, sharing of resources, and articulation within the overall system. The crucial part is, there is also no single oversight body to provide overview of TVET landscape here in Malaysia (Leong, 2011; Yunos et al., 2005a; Zain, 1990).

4.3. Efficiency and Quality of TVET’s Delivery

Despite the variety of TVET providers and standards in this country, there is still an issue of efficiency and quality of TVET’s delivery itself. There are many reports, writing, and findings about demand and supply mismatch which will contribute to unfilled employment vacancies in the industries. To outcome this kind of problem, there is obviously a need to improve links between training schools and the industry in order to minimize this mismatch (Othman, 2009; Zain, 1990). Training institutions also seem not to track the employment destination of their graduates. Consequently, the institutions have not taken advantage feedback from past trainees on the quality of the training they have received to improve their curricula and training packages. In short, the implementation of outcome evaluation and tracer studies that can improve the market responsiveness of training programmes is still lacking (Leong, 2011). Some TVET systems work well, it just a matter of doing it right (ADB, 2009).

4.4. Two Thought of Policy Makers

There is two way of thoughts that influence the policy formulation of education and training in Malaysia. The first reasoning states that the purposes of education and training is purely to fulfil the economic interest, while the second reasoning states that the purposes of education and training is for human and knowledge development (Hamzah, 2010; Salleh, 2010). The effect to this kind of polemic or conflict between these two ways of thoughts later can be seen with the introduction of several education and training implementation and evaluation system within this country. In addition, this various system seem to rapidly changes from time to time with various of goals and ambitions from various of TVET providers in this country (KPM, 2011, 2012, 2013; KSM, 2008b; RMK-10, 2010). There is also a reasoning that the goal of education and training is to prepare the technocrats, bureaucrats, scientist, economist, and highly skilled professionals that always fulfil the demand of industries and World of Work. From their point of view, this kind of group is the group that capable to contribute effectively towards the development of economy, industry, and trade of this country. The slightly different reasoning states that the goal of
education and training is not necessarily require the application of specific proficiency in a certain field of work and to prepare the “industry” workers. It is usually look as an experience process that related to the individual’s way of life and psychological drive to develop their self potential (Baba, 2011; Ismail & Hassan, 2009; McGrath, 2007; Mustapha & Rahmat, 2013).

4.5. The Fitrah of Human Creation and Knowledge Development

Based on nature (fitrah), every creature called human assumes a dual role, first as a servant to the God or Creator and the second as a caliph who is responsible for performing the role of self, others and the environment with a fair and wise (Hamzah, 2010). Both of these roles of human nature should be considered as the main basis for the human capital development to ensure educational goals that have been set can be achieved and at the same time always is on the right track. In order to realize the fitrah of human creation, the development process of knowledge also must be returned to nature in the integrat ive way. In nature, Islamic religion offers two sources of human knowledge which is Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet. Knowledge of Personal Management (Fardhu Ain) and Knowledge of System Management (Fardhu Kifayah) which can be obtained from this revealed knowledge should be expressed in an integrated and comprehensive development process. This is to make sure that the quality of human capital produced is not only high in skill and knowledge, but also has a quality as a human itself (Ayden, 2009; Baba, 2006; Hamzah, Isa, & Janor, 2010).

5. Conclusion

Rejuvenation in the cultures of academic context does not mean to rejuvenate or redesign the whole system but more to show the way of courage to change and adopt the methods and approaches as well as a new ecosystem environment. In this context, NDTS seem to have a good quality in design to develop the potential of human capital as a Holistic K-Workers. However, there is some space in its implementation process that can be further improved by using the Holistic TVET Approach which is the integration of Islamic Revealed Knowledge in Intellectual and Practical Knowledge. In short, this kind of approach is trying to blowing the divine ruh (soul) as embodied in the NPE into the existing potential training system which is NDTS.

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<th>REVEALED KNOWLEDGE</th>
<th>ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE</th>
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<td>Akhlak</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
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<td>(Minds-On)</td>
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Figure 1: Holistic TVET Approach (Baba, 2006; Hamzah, 2010; Lubis et al., 2009)

By not setting aside the economic interest, the creation of quality human capital requires them to explore and further understand the deep spiritual potential inherent in themselves. This is supported by (Ayden, 2009) which stated that human spiritual potential need to be developed on the basis of belief in God or Creator in order to form praiseworthy attributes such as cooperation, not hypocritical, not according to their own desires and thus be able to act as a fair leader in environmental administration. The development of mind, heart, and body is a prerequisite to the development of quality human capital (Fig. 1). When all of this potential is developed in an integrative ways, it will produce a holistic talent that have a potential to contribute to the all of community wisely. There are two main
basic need of human life, the first one is the basic personal and akhlak (moral) development; while the second is the development of basic skills whether scientific knowledge, technical and vocational schools (Baba, 2006; Hamzah, 2010; Lubis et al., 2009). Thus, both of these bases should be developed with balanced to produce quality human capital that meets the intent of the NPE as a whole.

References


