

The Role Of Philosophy In Linking Skills Training And The World Of Work To The Marginalized People

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ABSTRACT : Due to the economic transformation in order to achieve Malaysia's vision to become a successful developed country in the whole Asia region by year 2020, the technical and vocational educator is obligated to deal with concern that quality is built into the 'finish product' or graduate. The keyword for the 'finish product' of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is employment for learners where it leads learners to the theoretical knowledge, practical skills to be acquired, and attitude towards work. The concern towards marginalized people, such as women, individuals with special needs, out-of-school youth, rural and remote populations, indigenous people and the homeless is also important to ensure the effort to move out the nation's endeavour from low or middle income trap into a high income economy is achieved. However, many approached to education for works are based on models, and have been shaped by practice rather than philosophic principles. In order to linking the skills training and the world of work, technical and vocational educators must be aware of the philosophies that fulfill both technical and vocational needs and "personal development" as well. It is also important especially to educators or organizations to develop well-defined philosophic principles that will guide, support or create practice in changing workplaces.

Keywords : *Technical and Vocational Education training (TVET), Philosophic Principles, Marginalized People, Technical and Vocational Educators, Skills Training and World of Work.*

ABSTRAK : Berhubung dengan transformasi ekonomi di dalam mencapai visi Malaysia untuk menjadi sebuah Negara yang membangun di seluruh rantau asia menjelang tahun 2020, pendidik teknik dan vokasional diwajibkan untuk menangani tentang keprihatinan terhadap kualiti pembangunan di dalam bentuk "produk akhir" atau di panggil siswazah. Kata kunci untuk "produk akhir" di di dalam pendidikan teknik vokasional dan kemahiran adalah pembangunan kerjaya untuk pelajar di mana ia memimpin pelajar untuk Berjaya dalam pekerjaan yang diceburi dengan ilmu teori, memperolehi kemahiran praktikal, dan membentuk sikap terhadap pekerjaan. Perhatian terhadap orang yang dianggap tidak penting seperti perempuan, golongan istimewa, belia yang tidak bersekolah, populasi perkampungan dan terpencil, orang asli, dan golongan yang tidak berumah juga penting bagi memastikan usaha untuk memastikan mereka mampu untuk keluar dari belunggu ekonomi yang berpendapatan rendah atau sederhana kepada ekonomi berpendapatan tinggi tercapai. Walaubagaimanapun, kebanyakan pendekatan pendidikan kepada pekerjaan hanya berdasarkan model dan dibentuk melalui amalan berbanding prinsip falsafah. Untuk menghubungkan latihan kemahiran dan dunia pekerjaan, pendidik teknik dan vokasional mestilah dibangunkan berlandaskan falsafah yang mantap dan mampu mengintegrasikan kepentingan keperluan teknik dan vokasional dan juga pembangunan sendiri. Ia juga penting terutamanya kepada pendidik atau organisasi uuntuk membentuk prinsip falsafah yang jelas yang boleh dijadikan sebagai panduan, sokongan atau mencipta amalan di dalam perubahan persekitaran pekerjaan.

Kata kunci : Pendidikan dan Latihan Teknik dan Vokasional (PTV), Falsafah Pendidikan, Golongan yang Dianggap Tidak Penting, Pendidik Teknik dan Vokasional, Latihan Kemahiran dan Dunia Pekerjaan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As Malaysia nowadays is in the process of economic transformation as a successful developed country in the whole Asia region by year 2020, there is more concern about the critical role that technical and vocational education and training (TVET) can play in national development. In the overview of TVET in Malaysia, TVET already exists in Malaysia since 1897. According to Zakaria, 1988, TVET is first appeared in the Malaysian education when the British initiated the training for Malay youths as mechanics and fitters to manage the railway lines in Malaya. After that, in 1906, the first public technical school was opened to train technicians for government sectors. This education has been evolved and gives an impact to the TVET scenario in 1965 when the comprehensive education and training was introduced. On the point of historical TVET development, Ahmad, 2003, observed that TVET in Malaysia had progressively develop into three different stream, namely higher education, technical and vocational education, and vocational skills training.

Stream or Pathway	Institutions	Workforce Preparation
1. Higher education	Universities and other institutions of higher learning, both public and private	Professional and managerial personnel such as engineers, architects, and surveyors.
2. Technical and vocational education	Polytechnics, technical colleges and (more recently) community colleges	Supervisory personnel such as technical assistants and supervisors.
3. Vocational skills training	Skills training institutions, public and private	Skilled and semi-skilled workers.

Table 1: Paraphrased and tabulated from Ahmad (2003, p.6)

From the TVET development programme showed that the effort of developing TVET is to linking skills training and the world of work while enhance the capability of the workforce. However, nowadays, there has been an issue where the current graduates do not match the needs of industries. How this become an issue? Is the students does not filled the industries needs or the educators does not delivered well to the students? Nadler, 1985, mentioned that in linking skills training and the world of work, TVET encompasses all education, training, and development activities that:

- Prepare people for work or assist them in current employment
- Engage in the development and refinement of competencies, attitudes, and knowledge through formal and informal education.

Thus, in reaching marginalized people, the philosophic principles that underlie practice in TVET, human resource development (HRD) and adult education can be used as a guide, support, or create practice in changing workplace in order to move them out from the low or middle income into highly income as stated by the vision year 2020.

2.0 TVET FOR REACHING MARGINALIZED PEOPLE

Marginalized is vary according to the place, culture and circumstance, but they are generally understood to include women, youth who particularly out of-school, those who with special needs, indigenous peoples, rural and remote populations, and the homeless. UNESCO, 2000, sponsored in Education for All (EFA) Forum which reminds that marginalization is not simply one thing, not just one status in characterized a marginalized group, but lack of knowledge, political rights and capacity, recognition and power are also the factors of marginalization. Marginalized as defined by political philosopher, Iris, 1990, are people of the system of labour cannot or will not use. While UNESCO, 2000, conclude that marginalization occurs when people are systematically excluded from meaningful participation in economic, social, political, cultural and other forms of human activity in their communities and thus are denied the opportunity to fulfill themselves as human beings.

As the countries are in the process of transforming the economic, most of the governments and voluntary sector are struggle to address the crisis and embark on various initiatives to solving these marginalized problems. Nonetheless, the underlying problems are still remaining. However, the difficulty of solving these problems can be attributed to rapid changes associates with large trends such as globalization, new information technologies, restructured labour market, and new ideologies as well. As analyze by Betcherman and Lowe, 1997, there are three different diagnoses of marginalization which are:

Marginalization results from:	The problem is:	Diagnose
Being unemployed	Lack of jobs	Marginalization and change of work
Being poor	Lack of material resources	Marginalization and poverty
Being excluded	Lack of social ties	Marginalization and exclusion

Table 2: Diagnoses of Marginalization. Innovation from Betcherman and Lowe, 1997.

From the table above, each diagnosis are identifies the problem differently. The marginalization can be describe in three ways such marginalization and changing work, marginalization and poverty, and marginalization and exclusion. In the point of marginalization and the changing work, there are three different ways analyzing the marginalization and the change of work:

Description of Change	Diagnosis of marginalization/Work Interface	Prescriptions for Dealing with Marginalization
Technology – less demand for workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small elite of employed. • High unemployment for the rest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work sharing • Guaranteed income • Job creation in the third sector
Technology – new kinds of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for those prepared to seize them. • Unemployment for those who lack initiative or do not prepare for knowledge-based employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in human capital • Transition benefits (training, mobility grants, etc) • Guaranteed income

Almost business as usual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent unemployment in certain social categories. • Need for flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusted labour contracts • Including “regularization” of a typical work • Employment centred social policy • Self sufficiency social policy
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Table 3: Marginalization and changing of work tabulation. Innovation from Betcherman and Lowe, 1997.

Despite these generalizations, there are different ways of analyzing the links between poverty and marginalization as described by Betcherman and Lowe, 1997.

Diagnosis of Marginalization/Poverty Interface	Prescriptions for Dealing with Marginalization
<p>Poverty is a preventable condition; anyone may be poor for a time. Marginalization is a threat if poverty is not overcome</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting labour force participation, including education and training to encourage acquisition of human capital and self-sufficiency programs that foster and facilitate labour force participation • Provision of basic social supports, including those supplementing income from work or other sources
<p>Poverty is a debilitating condition, sapping health and trapping individuals in a “spiral of disadvantage”. It produces marginalization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carefully targeted programs to address specific needs for “remedial purposes”. • Health and social services, including those to break intergenerational cycles of poverty

Table 4: Marginalization and poverty tabulation. Innovation from Betcherman and Lowe, 1997.

Same as analysis from two diagnoses, several idea-typical ways of analyzing exclusion are:

Diagnosis of Marginalization/Exclusion Interface	Prescriptions for Dealing with Marginalization
<p>Exclusionary distribution of resources (economic, social, political)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of full citizenship, including a redistribution of power and income across individuals, groups and communities
<p>Lack of social integration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration depends on real access to the labour force
<p>Social pathologies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social cohesion depends upon promotion of activities leading to self-improvement

Table 5: Marginalization and exclusion tabulation. Innovation from Levitas, 1998.

By understanding the marginalization, it will help the technical and vocational educator on their teaching in order to set their goal and the right philosophy to be applied. Those focused on the workplace assign unions and other workplace institutions; the responsibility is to achieving power balance. For those who define the problem as one of poverty, there is some attention to change the individuals’ sense and self capacity. And those who are define the problem as one of the exclusion; they need to recognize the importance of redistributing

political power and citizenship in disadvantages communities through community development. In the simply word, the diagnose of marginalization and change of work is ignores the spatial dimension while the diagnoses of marginalization and poverty and exclusion as well are provide insight into how to understand the concentration of disadvantages in certain communities.

3.0 PHILOSOPHY AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Human resource development (HRD) is the branch of human resources that is concerned with the management and development of human resources in organizational environments. International Labour Organization (ILO), 1996, describe that the prime task of HRD is to ensure that the education and training system is "demand driven" and responsive to the changing needs of industry. ILO also mentioned that employers' organizations may want to encourage individual enterprises to work with schools and other education and training institutions in programmes which improve the relevance of vocational courses, introduces the world of work to students, increases the familiarity of teachers with the industries they are preparing their students for and promotes the teaching of the basic skills required by industry. In this regard the employers' organization may want to establish jointly with the Ministry of Education, a committee to improve linkages between industry and education and to promote collaborative programmes between enterprises and schools.

Stuckey and Berardinelli, 1990, identified six philosophies bases of HRD that can be applied to education for work:

- Behaviorist: Behavior modification
- Idealisme-Realism: Values ideas and ideals
- Realism-Analytic: Scientific method
- Pragmatic-Progressive-Cognitive: Real world or practical
- Existentialism-Humanistic: Personal growth
- Reconstructionism-Radical: Social reform

From the philosophies above, Stuckey and Bernardinelli, 1990, suggest that the Reconstructionist-Radical philosophy to be used by technical and vocational educator in linking the skills training and the world of work. They suggest that reconstructionist-radical philosophy of training and development will allow changes to be made that will be cutting edge and forward looking in perspective and will cause the educators and learners to act as change agents in the workplace and the society. Based on open system between educator and learners, does this suggested philosophy will reach the purpose of TVET in integrating the skills training and the world of work and personal development as well.

On the other hand, there are still a trends in many business and industry trainers, they are still relied on traditional method of training which is behaviorist orientation and like vocational education; HRD practice is too much emphasis on agrarian and industrial models to drive the practice. According to Stuckey and Bernardinelli, 1990, the educators in business and industry are still use the behaviorism because they are interested in keeping training formal and traditional. In the 1990s, workplace has been changed caused by political, economic, and social forces which have caused the educators to modify their practice and adopt new methods that utilize or are driven by philosophic foundations like pragmatism, existentialism and radicalism.

In reaching marginalized people, HRD play as main important role in solving the marginalized issue. Since the education of marginalized people are more towards lifelong

learning education, there are a lot of initiative made by the government and HRD in helps those group of people from being exclusion from the communities and adopt with the changing of work while at the same time helps them to move out from the poverty issue. For example in Malaysia, HRD has come up with the initiative by collaboration programmes with the industry in providing the skills training especially to out-of-school youth and homeless people. To encourage the industry to joint HRD are offer a lot of incentives and training to the industry as a support to the industry economic.

4.0 PHILOSOPHY & ADULT EDUCATION

In develop country, adult education is essential to sustain the economic growth and national development. Mazanah, 2001, defined adult education as learning opportunities that are undertaken by adults outside the formal schooling system. In Malaysia, adult education is the education of people who are over 18. They are beyond the age limit that allows them into the public school system. It also refers to people who have education knowledge or schooling at or below the sixth grade. Generally, these are also adults who read at a very low level. As cited by Wong, 1997, from UNESCO, adult education is defined as:

“The entire body of organized processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges, and universities as well as in apprenticeship, persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behavior in the twofold perspectives of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development.(UNESCO)”

In adult education, the availability of educational opportunities and the delivery of education to adults are important issue. The technical and vocational educators who train the adults must be more than transmitter of knowledge. Because of the life experiences that the adults have such job, marriage, having children, serving in the military, etc, adult learners have more accumulated experience and knowledge than do young children. Therefore, the curriculum needs to be adapted. However, adults enrolled in an adult education program may have more fears and concerns about their education. They worry whether or not they will be able to understand and remember what is taught in class. They worry whether or not they will have the necessary reading, writing, and math skills. They worry that others will make fun of them. But, there is one great advantage for the educators in an adult education program. The adult learners are more motivated to learn. They are more mature and understand the value of an education. They see what life is like without a good one. They have a strong desire to improve their situation and to better themselves. Thus, the educators in adult education, must strongly applied the right philosophy in their teaching in order to deliver well to this kind of adult learners.

Elias and Merriam, 1980, identified six philosophies of adult education;

- Behaviorist: Behavior modification
- Liberal: organized knowledge for intellectual development
- Analytic: Logical and scientific positivism
- Progressive: Social reform
- Humanistic: Personal growth
- Radical: Radical social change

Elias and Merriam, 1980, suggest that adult education is heavily influenced by progressive, humanistic and radical philosophies. Each of these philosophies is based on certain assumptions about human nature, the purpose of education, and the roles of the instructor and learner. Detail explanation about the philosophies proposed by Elias and Merriam, 1980 are as below:

Philosophy	Description	Application to Extension practice
Progressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stresses an experiential, problem-solving approach to learning. Emphasizes experience of learner in determining problem areas and solutions to be considered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human resource specialist in interior design and household equipment designs an instructional approach directed toward household maintenance via a problem solving process. Participants identify, by experience, problems in home care and then determine appropriate procedure based on alternatives suggested by the specialists.
Humanist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the assumption that human nature is essentially positive and that each person possesses virtually unlimited potential. Places emphasis on personal growth and self direction in the learning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family development specialist designs instruction relevant to economic stress with emphasis on self-concept and self-esteem (the worth of the individual). Small group workshops, seminars, and forums used to enhance "participatory" approach resulting in a positive feeling by individuals. Specialist serves as facilitator of the learning process.
Radical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stresses the role of education as a means of bringing about major social change. Education is used to combat social, political, and economic oppression within society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public affairs specialist designs instruction relevant to public issues such as water policy. Forums, self-instructional packages, and other techniques are used to increase awareness of specific issues and, in turn, provide opportunity for possible community change.

Table 6: Adult education philosophy applied to extension practice tabulation. Innovation from Elias and Merriam (1980).

This adult education philosophy has much helps the technical and vocational educators in teaching adult and adult learning theories. Many HRD and technical vocational trainer are finding the progressive and humanistic philosophies in designing and use in their practice for certain learning situations, like training in business and industry and the institutional classroom as well in linking skills training and the world of work.

5.0 PHILOSOPHY IN TVET

Nowadays, most of the approaches used in linking skills training and the world of work are still based on models that were developed during the industrial revolution and have been shaped by practice rather than philosophic principles. When the approach is only based on models without involving the philosophic principles, the teaching are become just to prepare the students towards the employment but not towards personal development and the human

capital development. While to fulfill the needs of labour market in providing the learners to the world of works, the technical and vocational educators must be aware of the philosophies that may suite in their practice in promoting the TVET. They must select and adapt with appropriate philosophy that will guide their practice in order to achieve the objectives of TVET. As defined by Stein, 1980, philosophy is a system of principles for guiding practical affairs.

Philosophy is derived from two Greek words which are Philos (love) and Sophos (wisdom). Literally, it means as a love of wisdom. Klemke, 1986, have defined philosophy as the eternal search for truth, a search which inevitably fails and yet is never defeated; which continually eludes people, but which always guides people. He also mentioned that this free, intellectual life of the mind is the noblest inheritance of the Western World and it is also the hope of the future. Miller, 1985, has identified three primary philosophies TVET:

- Essentialism: The educator or trainer is the focal point of the learning process; mastery of subject matter is important, development of skills through drills, repetition, conditioning, and development of desirable habits, and a desire to influence the behavior of the learner.
- Existentialism: The leaner is the focal point of the process. Truth is relative, and personal growth and development are key to the process.
- Pragmatism: The educator and learner are both important to the learner process. Reality or real-world situations are stressed, context and experience are important, and the educator is progressive and open to new ideas.

He also suggest that pragmatism is the most effective philosophy for TVET since it is allow new ideas to be considered for practice and a balance the philosophies between essentialism and existentialism. He stated that vocational educators have been successful in terms of practice and keeping current and relevant, by using principles of pragmatism as a frame-of-reference and basis for workplace education. In linking the skills training and the world of work, pragmatism has been responsible for the development of innovative programme like involved technology that allows TVET to meet the needs of the workplace of the future. According to him also, the educator may use the philosophic base either by pragmatism alone, or mixed with the element of essentialism or existentialism to reflect on their practice and create or adopt vision in their practice. However, does this pragmatism is really a suitable philosophy to apply in TVET, since in real, pragmatism philosophy is look like only to promoting the importance and needs of TVET, but not to personal development.

6.0 THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN LINKING SKILLS AND THE WORLD OF WORK

In linking skills training and the world of work, the educator needs to develop well-defined philosophic principles that will guide, support, or create practice in changing workplace. McKenzie, 1985, stated that the philosophical orientations are rooted in professional practice and derive more from concrete experiences in organizational settings than from logical analysis or the evaluation of abstract philosophical arguments. While Miller, 1994, describe that philosophy ought to provide the framework for establishing practice.

In reaching marginalized people, the educator must understand their action and behavior in adopting the suitable philosophies. Their utilization of philosophic views may derive the educators perspectives from which view their roles in education and develop modes of thinking about practice. The educator also needs to consider some criteria of developing philosophy. As Gilley and Egglund (1989) mentioned that practitioners in each field, HRD and adult education, continue to view their profession as separate disciplines built on different

bodies of knowledge, approaches and methodologies which this as prevented an open exchange of ideas and information regarding adult learning theory, program and curriculum design, classroom methodologies, and other approaches to enhancing adult learning and change. With this challenges, the educators must hold a correct philosophy and able to conduct in their practice while tend to be more innovative in deliver the education to learners. Therefore, to encourage those marginalized people to involve in economic, the educators must built or find the philosophies that may able to promote both technical vocational needs and personal development as well. The right identification of philosophic foundation for linking skills training and the world of work may encourage the educator to prepare a workforce that will meet the needs of labour market.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Philosophy in linking skills training and the world of work can be a tool for improving practice even though the gap between philosophy and practice often seems impossible to close. In reaching marginalized people, there are three important issues that need to be considering while choosing the philosophy in teaching which are the changing of work, poverty and being exclusion. Since most of the marginalization is more towards lifelong learning education, Human Resource Development (HRD) and adult education are play as a main role in education in linking the skills and the world of work and personal development as well. For instance, by having a right philosophy, it can be used to explain results and process, while the experience of practice gives new insights into theory. Philosophy also can serve as a guide for practice in giving direction to philosophy and research. Experiences in instructional planning, and evaluation of learning provide a basis for determining the effectiveness of a theory in a practical manner.

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