

Using Functional Education/Education to Synergise Religion, Economy and Politics towards Achieving and Sustaining Excellence in Globalised Malay and Islamic World

Orenaiya, S. Adewale

Faculty of Major Languages Studies, Universiti Sains Islam (Usim),
MALAYSIA.

orenaiyaadewale@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Every country as a unique entity reveals, communicates and showcase to others without physical contact through religion, economy, politics and education. These four words are relative in nature except useful applicability to citizens, effect of which will increase immigration to such a country. Politics is a driving force that determines the direction (positive or negative) of religion and economy. When politics (act of governance) is not educationally oriented, it tends to produce narrowness in the acts and practices of religion and economy which are mostly use for personal enrichment and political leader's long-term stagnancy in individual empowerment and eventual collapse of such dynasty because it avoids contributions and construct criticisms. History and experiences had shown that strongly reliance on religion, economy and politics especially deeply rooted in religion is open irreparable mistakes, disintegration. Meanwhile a truth discovered through education has a rich implication for the present and future. Religion, economy and politics are mostly use as instruments to achieve perpetual hold –on to power, positions and influences which encourages monopolization of national resources. The theory upon which this paper rests upon is functionalist/ functionalism theory in which the society remains relatively stable. Education is a secondary agent of socialization which will instill values of competition, equality and individualism. Therefore, functional education/education should be use as transformer in a country for useful application of religion, economy and politics for long-term sustenance of excellence in a Globalised Malay and Islamic World.

Keywords: Transformation, functional education, religion and politics

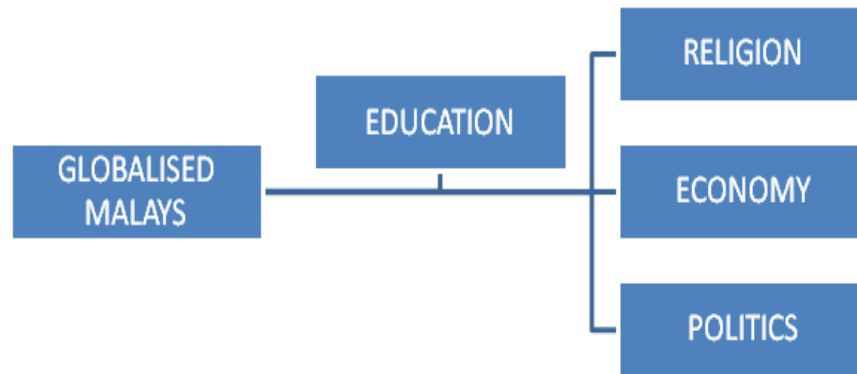
INTRODUCTION

Human beings basic satisfactions of life are food, shelter and clothing. When these basic needs are almost at the process of meeting, human beings are conscious of interacting with religion, economy, politics and education at every moment of daily transactions. The control and satisfaction level of humans differ from individual, homes, society from time to time. In fact, no average human is immune and indifferent from it.

Religion, economy, politics and education are important variables that predict the functionality and relevance of Globalised Malays and Islamic World (as dependent variable). The understanding of Globalised Malay and Islamic World cannot be realized if these three operational words were not studied together in unison. What makes a country unique and distinct are these intertwining variables/factors considered as multiple factors which is depicted in a common and simple language as culture.

Culture is defined as the total way of life of a people (as Malays) comprising arts, religion, economy/ trade, politics, education, technology and crafts. Theoretically and practically, the four multiple factors are directional related and intertwined but one of them (education) will

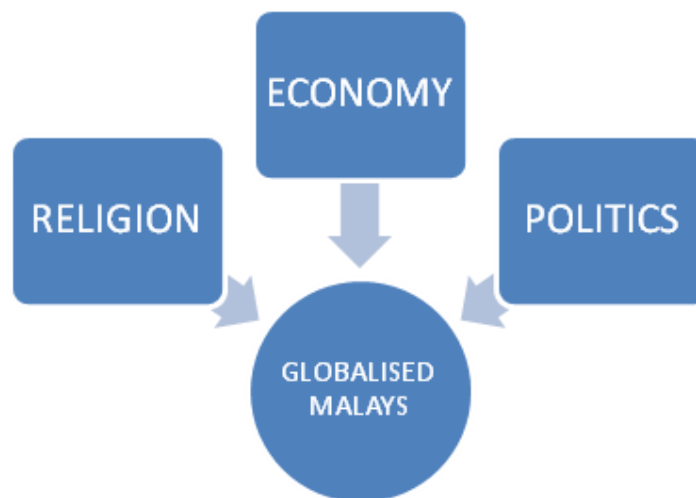
serve as moderator to balance religion, economy and politics impact with accompanying degree of relationship as positive and negative. When their relationship is positive, it implies all efforts and strategies falls in same line and direction resulting into peaceful co-existence, steady growth in economy, stability in conflicts and administration. Also, when the relationship is negative, efforts and strategies follow different/opposite directions which normally leads to conflict, depressed economy, corrupted politicking, and provision of parochial education.



The religion, economy and politics can be built up but easily deteriorate to certain level of diminishing returns thus the presenter had earlier categorized them as independent factors of life to serve as predictor and investigator of Globalised Malays and Islamic World as dependent variable(outcome).Whereas education as the best legacy will not be subjected to drastic diminishing rate,thus,education can play the role of synergies and moderator to reform,maintain,repair, conceptualize, promote, sustain the future Globalised Malays and Islamic regionalization/ World in the context of religion,economy and politics.

The theoretical framework of this paper will be Griffith’s System theory: religion, economy, politics and education are inputs while Malays and Islamic World are the outputs, and functionalist/functionalism theory but much emphasis will be devoted to functionalist and its application to education.

Therefore, the conceptual model of education/functional education to transform Malays among neighbors’ (Asia) and Islamic World will be diagrammatized or charted below to convey general meaning to all.



Education is widely accepted as the primary agent of transformation towards sustainable development, a prospect that increases people's capacities to transform views, aspirations, visions, religion, economy, technology and culture for the society into reality (UNESCO 2007). Functionality in education will automatically confer Globalisation to Malaysians or Malay World irrespective of the regions or affiliations found themselves all over the world. This is supported by the examination of Globalisation as an ideology which emphasizes the current trend toward international organizations and institutions covering politics, economy, culture and religion. Added to the functional education as propeller to emergence of issues was McGraw (1992) which states that Globalisation is a fundamental change of societal existence.

A functional education is a consensus perspective by examination of society in terms of how it is managed for the common goal. Functional education or Transformation in education is a structural consensus theory of society which is made up of interdependent and interrelated parts (education, politics, religion and economy) e.g. Education helps maintain the society by provision of skills for the economy.

The main theory upon which this paper is anchored is functionalist theory in sociology in the works of Emile Durkheim in which society (Malays) remains relatively stable. Functionalist/Functionalism theory interprets each part of society in terms of contribution to the stability of the whole society. Society is more than the sum of its parts and each part of society (education, politics, religion and economy) is functional for the stability of the whole society. The different parts are primarily the institutions of society to fill different needs. The various parts (religion, economy, politics and education) depend on each other. When one part of the system is not working or dysfunctional, it affects all other parts and creates social problems leading to social change.

A functionalist theory/ functional theory is also a macro theory which describes education as very important and beneficial, selecting talented individuals, allocates them to important roles in society, transmits ruling class ideology, culture, shared beliefs and values.

Presently, there are conflicts, misconceptions and critical disintegrations most Islamic Countries surrounding Malaysia because the narrowness of using religion, politics and economy in those places resulted into influx of their nationalities into Malaysia. Their unresolved problems may take longer period of time to address due to lack of concrete structure in functional education which should and must serve as lubricating and driving wheel for restoration, sustainability and prospectiveness in a Nation embedded or engulfed in such unavoidable experiences.

Functional education is examined as a body of action intended to induce learning and probing the nature of what one is learning (exploration) and thinking about one's learning process (reflection).

To be deeply rooted, narrowly minded in religion, economy and politics is synonymous to being blindfolded and one lampstand in a world of darkness will plunge the entirety of such institution to long-term and perpetual discomfort to majority and expanse benefits to the few individual controlling religion, economy and politics.

Therefore, transformation of education through functional education is a power, light, energizer which can be meaningfully transmitted from one generation to another in a constructive path that will globalised such a country for sustainability and prospect ability. In a nutshell, functional education is a concept of acquisition and developing taught variable (long life skills) in order to produce new behaviours for life activities. Functional education is

a type of education which makes the holder to be useful to self, society and contribute to existing state of knowledge or life phenomena.

Characteristics Of Functional Education (Sterling, 2001)

1. Creative
2. Solutions-focus Learning.
3. Self-directed Teamwork.
4. Interactive Refinement
5. Reflection.

The implication of this transformation of education through functional education is that a new system of knowledge which is conventional knowledge (scientific education) in collaboration with religious education (Islamic education) meets up the jurisdiction opined by Cogburn, 2009 as conceptualization, holistic approach or in-depth application of other or all disciplines for comprehensive education irrespective of propounder or sources of Globalised system of education or westernized educational system and enhancing users or end-users ability to acquire and utilize knowledge.

Advantages of functional education/Transformation in Education.

1. Improve the ability to deal with continuous change: Certain discoveries in medicine, science, technology and education will be published in the language of inventors which will be translated in English Language which is the world accepted medium of instruction.
2. Build assets for the future: The German, America are now studying and researching in Arabic and Islamic education in addition to the westernized education, this is beneficial for religion's emancipation and economic liberalization and dictation of policy statement.
3. Becoming more responsive to people' needs re-organization, integration and development.
4. Competitiveness of organization, state and country: Competitiveness is an improvement which creates additional innovations and productivity in acts of governance/politics, religion and economy.
5. Reduces indoctrination and dogmatization to manageable level: Researches and sociological studies revealed that politics, religion and economy is highly stereotyped and indoctrinated without recourse to further critical examination of facts and issues. It only takes education as abridge or bridging gap between the extremes of politics, religion and economy whose nature and control is one-way traffic i.e. using politics, religion and economy as a tool(means) to achieve ends/personal upliftment not minding what becomes of the means now and at a future periods. It must be realized that future is bigger than today. Let's consider this question, of whose advantage is it to deny western knowledge in preference to Islamic education? The leader who deny massive introduction of western education into a country after leaving office would have amassed substantial wealth and resources to update self and relatives thereby creating massive gaps of either rich or poor. Whereas, functional education or western education combined or supported with Islamic education(and not religiosity) will result into equal and judicious re-distribution of power, influences, positions, authorities and control of an organization, group and state, country, human and material resources.

Components of Curriculum Contents for Functional Education toward Sustainability

Essential to functional education for sustainable development of Malaysia nation amongst neighbours and the world at large are the following skills to be the corner stone of education, adapted from Tibury and Wortman 2004;

1. **Envisioning:** Being able to imagine a better future implies that one wants to advance in the existing state of knowledge, facts and belief. A neglect of worldwide and majorly accepted westernized education cannot know the strengths, limits and shortcomings not to talk of improvement. The danger of not envisioning is that the westernized countries with western education are sponsoring and learning Islamic education which is a minor to them. If this minor is what certain country (ies) is majorly relying upon, it shows they are not envisioning but are static and may be consumed during radical changes.
2. **Critical Thinking and Reflection:** In reflection, we learn to question our current belief in religion, economy and politics and to recognize the assumption responsible for our knowledge, opinions while critical thinking skills enable practioner and products cultivate the mind and habit of comprehensive examination of economy, societal, cultural and political structures/ideologies in the context of sustainable development.
3. **Building Partnership:** An organization, state or country cannot have same ideological views and approaches/methodologies as there are individual differences which manifests during cross examination but converging together in a conference will promote dialogue and consensus after initial disagreement thus promotes individual with a mind to work together in spite of differences.
4. **Systematic Thinking:** A procedural step in finding answers to problem(s) is the acknowledging complexities in context, seek for links, synergies while finding while finding answer(s)/solutions in a scientific and measurable dimension which are achievable through functional education embedded in westernized system education.
5. **Empowering people:** Among the four variables or factors under discussion in this paper, functional education/education is the one that can be equally and substantially be given to half of the inhabitants of a country such as Malaysia in form of loan to parents, students, soft loans/capital to float a business and provision of basic amenities such as housing units, car loans, holiday jobs to Malaysians citizens and neighbor countries. The aforementioned will make the holders to be useful to self by providing income and jobs, creation of various opportunities during growth and development, creation of continuous and stable income to the government, catalyst to transformation in all aspects of development with accumulation of foreign exchange/currency and growth in religion adherents, expanse economic growth and world-wide accolation of political leader(s) in Malaysia and neighboring countries especially the Asia and World Muslim Community.

Improvement Approaches to Existing Educational Practices towards Globalisation Of Malays and Islamic World

1. Improvement in the quality of basic education.
2. Liberalization of religions.
3. Re-orientation of current educational practices and programme.
4. Provision of general information for effective decisions.

5. Continuous provision of conferences, workshops, seminars and training for acquisition of basic ideas and needed changes.
6. Development of Language education.
7. Writing and publishing of books, inventions, research results in English Language and Westernized Journals.

CONCLUSIONS

Functional education is a holistic educational experience that is focus on identification of situational problem, gather information to make decisions in a world of challenges and realities of life, enhancing users or end users to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes to showcase new concepts as a vehicle of globalizing such country or state for meaningful co – existence and sustainability and developments.

Practically, religion, economy and politics will interpolate with emerging issues and realities of life, but the extent of positive and negative responses, applicability and implications will largely be determined by the level of education acquisition and content of education imbibed. As a common truth of life says that you cannot give what you do not have or possess especially during making of critical decisions is required for sustainability.

Religion, economy and politics in some Muslim dominated countries on its own is only justifiable for today to have food on the tablebut functional education or westernized education accompanied with Islamic education will provide long term and longevity and increased emigration, improve economy as is being enjoyed by Malaysians among its equal and same entrants.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Giving opportunities to foreign/international students and business technocrats.
2. Learn and study western education as well as adapting to indigenous cultural and technology.
3. Provision of functional education which is equivalent, and qualitative for enrichment and comprehensiveness.
4. Cultivate World Standard in delivering education to people.
5. Accepted values should be entrenched in religion, economy and politics which education can transmit from person, organizations, countries, and region and to the world at large.
6. In spite of differences in Malaysia populace in respect to ethnics, religion and political affiliations, let us emphasize on oneness as this will suppress and overcome external forces.

Challenges to Functional Education for Sustainability in Globalised Malays and Islamic World

The fact that many countries around the world have embraced the need for functional education to achieve sustainability, varying degrees of progress had been recorded. Therefore, the following critical impediments will surface during designing, implementation and evaluation, but all efforts should be directed at reducing these challenges. For the purpose of academic reviewing and discourse, below are some among various sources of challenges to functional education/education towards globalizing the Malays in the Asia region and Islamic World:

1. Inadequacy or lack of awareness (female literacy, quality of life) in reformation/transformation for non-functioning of existing educational practices.
2. Structuring the curriculum since a true education or functional education is not indoctrination or inculcation.
3. Linking or linkage to existing issues such as educational reform and economic viability.
4. Facing the complexity of sustainability development concept.
5. Developing education/functional education with community participation.
6. Sharing the responsibility among sector of the Government or other Ministries associated or touched by reformation in Ministry of Education such as Ministry of Environment, Commerce, Trade, Health, Development, National Planning & Statistics and Immigration.
7. Building Human Capacity through training and re-training of officials, organs and staff of Ministry of Education, provision of scholarships within and outside Malaysia (e.g. UNESCO Asia-Pacific Center of Education, Information for Development in Thailand, Australia) for leverage and maximize knowledge base and strengths already acquired.
8. Allocation of financial and material resources or funding for new educational programs.
9. Developing policy from the political administration in power/ Government's policy.
10. Culture or Popular Culture e.g. conflicts between rates of usage of renewable resources and rates of regeneration, between local and foreign culture imputed by wider and thorough application of western education which is functional in entirety.

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