Globalization via ICT: Impact on the Youth and Making of a Nation State

Norila binti Md Salleh (PhD)
Faculty of Education and Human Development, Sultan Idris University of Education
35900 Tanjong Malim, Perak Malaysia
Tel: 6-015-48117440 E-mail: norila@fppm.upsi.edu.my

Ikhsan bin Othman (PhD)
Faculty of Education and Human Development, Sultan Idris University of Education
35900 Tanjong Malim, Perak Malaysia
Tel: 6-015-48117294 E-mail: ikhsan@fppm.upsi.edu.my

Abstract

Rapid development in technology has become a challenge in nation building among youths. Erode of individual self worth and patriotic spirit, increase in immoral activities and fragile family institution are among the phenomenon widely discussed. As access of information is openly and for free via internet youths are exposed to various forms of information that agitates them to respond beyond religious values, norms or social boundaries. Educators and teachers should prepare to face and overcome the challenges. Curriculum activities to inculcate positive attitudes, nurture strong characters and pleasant personality should be planned. Activities involving moral and spiritual appreciation and activities based on healthy lifestyles would help in the formation of self-worth among students.

 Keywords: Globalization, Information and communications technology (ICT), nation state

1. Introduction

Today's rapid developments in the field of technology have made the world change at a fantastic pace. This phenomenon demands a complete and thorough preparation by all quarters in meeting the challenges to come. They have to be ready and vigilant in orientating their future in line with this development. In the 21st century Malaysia is faced with challenges from within and outside the country due to globalization, liberalization and developments in Information and communications technology (ICT). This rapid development in the ICT field is capable of changing the mindset and values of people and this inadvertently creates issues and challenges. The abundance of information catering to all as a consequence of developments in globalization and ICT is indeed difficult to prohibit or control. However, as all parties find it extremely difficult to sidestep this powerful force, they should, on the other hand, build a new paradigm to acknowledge and track the developments that are evolving. Therefore, in the Malaysian context, the phenomenon above demands that the country develop its people in a more mature fashion with high self-worth and competitiveness.

2. Globalization and the Development of ICT

Globalization based on ICT applications has a huge impact on culture and human civilization. It is obvious that the efforts to build a nation state play an important role especially when the waves of globalization gains momentum and has the potential to destroy and erode the self-worth in every citizen of a country. It is acknowledged that developments in ICT has drastically changed the way of life and peoples customs since the advent of ICT, in fact these developments are gaining momentum and influencing peoples way of life and the environment. In reference to the rapid development and expansion in the ICT field, one aspect of it has given a negative impact and got an unfavorable view. The phenomenon that involves racial sentiments, religious issues, political and social problems are among matters that have cropped up of late and has strengthen its influence on materialism, hedonism and pornography that eventually will erode self-worth of the people, especially the youth. The phenomenon stated above, among others, is attributable to the unfettered freedom of ICT usage.

Undeniably, the developments in ICT can contribute either a negative or a positive effect depending on the views and understanding of each individual and the society itself. The abuse of internet facilities can cause one's mind to stray and impel him to be incensed in futile immoral activities. The web portal has got its good side where it offers a lot of information and resources about various topics. It also offers a wide range of services such as delivering of information via e-mail and sharing of information via forums.

However, from another aspect it has been known to have an imminent influence on one's self-worth. Blogs created and written by irresponsible bloggers could trigger off sentiments and confusion causing the thinking, spirits and actions of the people including youths and school children to be in a state of dilemma, to falter and

eventually bring about the erosion of the individuals self-worth. Citizens including youths and school children are easily influenced by materials and information on the internet although these materials and information may not have been corroborated for their authoritative authenticity.

Present developments on global matters can easily be accessed through web portals or social websites by almost anyone including youths and school children. They are easily influenced by these developments rendering them oblivious to their actual and immediate obligations and responsibilities such as school regulations, societal norms and basic laws of the country. Therefore, they are literally carried away or immersed in the supposedly righteous world of the World Wide Web although in actual fact the actions have transgressed or are insensitive to a country's point of view. For example, issues pertaining to legality, the constitution and the social contract which have been agreed upon all this while including ethnic and cultural rights and religious provisions are being questioned on websites and blogs. Hence, in the fervor of globalization, youths and the upcoming generation are slowly being cut off from cultural reality and the roots of their own historical being. The country is caught unaware as the people and the country's history is losing its significance. The globalization process is eventually controlling today's civilization. If this matter is left to its destiny, globalization would eventually erode and subdue the patriotic spirit and self-worth of the people including youths and school children.

Social networking sites on the internet such as Twitter, YouTube, Friendster, MySpace and Facebook are examples identified as contributing to matters that involve social ills such as unfettered socializing, drug problems, human trafficking, cheating, fraud, corruption, persecution, defamation and matters beyond the standards of morally acceptable behavior. Individuals, including youths and school children, are exposed to various forms of information that agitates them to respond beyond religious values, norms or social boundaries. It is found that some blogs do display photos, action scenes, pornographic videos or recordings and also statements or writings by the younger generation. YouTube, Friendster and MySpace clearly portray the collapse in moral values, self-worth and patriotism which is presumed to be the basics for nation building. The majority of the younger generation has been dragged into the social and cultural globalization process and through various means these youths will continue to become the main targets of globalization.

Upon analyzing the phenomenon above, it can be concluded that ICT development in the globalization era actually can contribute to matters deemed negative and undesirable. Globalization makes distance, space and time seem to be in a virtual dimension which can be moved with ease. The human communication web makes distance almost negligible and incredibly fast by using ICT. Information in various forms flow through the internet and are received almost instantaneously. This feature of instantaneous access of information is abused by some parties to offer pornographic material openly and for free which eventually lends a negative effect to individuals and the family institution. For example, the increase in the number of adultery, rape and incest are among the consequences of watching pornographic material or surfing pornographic sites on the internet.

The family institution is becoming more fragile day by day due to the influence and role played by ICT. This is because individuals feel that they can go about doing this based on the pretext of being independent. Individuals also feel that all things are literally at their finger tips that can be applied in various situations without the assistance or service of fellow family members. That confidence which makes them rely on virtual friends is so strong that rationality in decision making is at a minimum. Without them realizing it some parties tend to take advantage of this situation to engage in immoral activities. Coupled with other factors such as the minimal or absence of religious education and parental or family love, the wanting to try something new and pressure or influence from peers has become the cause of these social ills that are almost impossible to arrest. Therefore, the edification of self-worth towards building a nation state is one effort that is bound to face huge challenges and obstacles.

When the individual and the family institution become fragile, society will no longer be sturdy. As a consequence, the negative effects would be felt at the societal level. The society would become shaky and culpable to various threats. The society would be vulnerable to disasters due to the expansion and freedom of usage of ICT as it becomes the nucleus in the era of technology development and globalization. Other than society, the religious and educational institutions will also feel the same impact whereby their institutional roles would be seen as insignificant and trivial. Therefore, now surfaces the issue of the difficulty in cultivating self-worth of the citizens towards building a nation state as envisioned.

The effect on the nation would become obvious when the efforts to develop self-worth and eventually to build a nation state faces innumerable obstacles arising from the state of the individual, family and society that has become unstable and in shambles. Self-worth cannot be inculcated and developed in such a situation. A nation state with citizens that do not possess self-worth is considered weak. Consequently the country would face numerous risks not only in terms of security, peace and prosperity but from a nation's progress point of view too.

In relation to that, it can be emphasized that globalization, especially through ICT, gives a contradictory impact on the efforts to create a chivalrous self-worth in the citizens towards building a nation state.

From one angle, globalization gives a contradictory impact on the efforts in building a nation state. The above issue is deemed serious and worrying because its negative effects on inculcating and buttressing self-worth of the citizens towards building a nation state is very obvious. In schools, educators are working very hard to develop and educate these youths towards inculcating and educating self-worth with characteristics such as patriotism, nationalism, unity, sense of national culture and arts and a global vision with a local flavor. However, the wave of reality arising from the acceleration of ICT does not advocate any of the efforts initiated by the educators.

According to Ismail Hussien, Wan Hashim Wan The and Ghazali Shafie (1997), globalization which dissimulates under the direct effects of ICT is apparently a westernization or imperialistic culture, language and education that is influential; and has a profound effect in debilitating and eventually marginalizing religion. It will make Malaysian society relatively materialistic and more orientated towards consumerism and commerce that reaps extensive profits without considering other's rights and mutual importance. Monopolistic riches are deemed as economic growth; cultural domination as liberalization; oppressing the weak is democracy; hedonism is individual freedom; moving the populace to the suburbs is urbanization; and colonization is the free market. Therefore, globalization in actual fact is nothing more than domination. This matter is an adverse phenomenon which is a consequence of globalization.

The thought on globalization is personified by people around the world so much so there does not exist any feeling of apprehension of the effects of the process which is being given life and triumphed up by world powers who just might not be very responsible or have their own agenda. The notion on globalization would eventually conclude that sovereignty of a nation state need not exist anymore as 'a world without borders' is the apex of human progress universally. Therefore, all parties would seem to be satisfied although in fact they are being manipulated by numerous global institutions that are exploiting all the expertise and manpower to overcome the resistance that does not believe globalization is a granted entity.

3. Overcoming Challenges

The phenomenon regarding the effects of globalization impeding on the efforts to form a nation state is something that is bound to happen. Challenges after challenges emanating from the physical, mental and spiritual aspects, which are consequences of the globalization wave, liberalization and ICT development, has put all parties in a state of alert and preparedness in determining their direction or orientation of their future. This matter can be looked from either a positive or a negative point of view. Emphatically, technology developments in the ICT field has the ability to shape our way of thinking and the society's value systems be it locally, nationally or internationally. This progress in the new era is described by Toffler (1980) as *The Third Wave*, which focuses on technology change.

This phenomenon could eventually become more serious when used in cyber space which is thought of as free from any prohibitions or limitations. Until today there is no charter or law that controls the use of cyber space. Western culture could effortlessly influence the minds of Malaysia's younger generation and cause a clash in cultures; the Eastern culture is based on norms and religion while the Western culture is associated with modern culture. Activities that are considered 'cool' in Western culture are seen as activities that could blemish the morals and deemed unacceptable by Eastern cultural standards. Hence, to consolidate the self-worth of the people, priority should be given in confronting the menace in cyber space.

To blame someone or to exclude one's self from taking part in the ICT technology development process would not benefit anyone. Conversely, this course of action could leave people lagging behind as the world moves forward. What's more important is the wisdom, strength and the apprehension of one's self. Actually, the developments in ICT technology should be looked upon with caution so as to balance the negative elements that it brings along in the era of globalization. Therefore, those who do not possess the strength to avoid the subjugation of their minds would eventually fall victim to this globalization challenge. This issue is global in nature and difficult to handle by one's self.

In order to increase efforts to consolidate the self-worth of the people towards building a nation state, all parties should have the initiative and join forces to take part. Beginning with the individual, who should have the resolve and determination in that direction, this action will follow suit with the support and cooperation from family members, schools, society and the nation. The various parties cannot just stand by and blame each other but instead have to compromise and collaborate to achieve their goals. If the fruits of labor are to be enjoyed by everyone then it is only proper that the efforts too are a collaboration of all parties concerned in order to seek harmony.

In the field of education, evaluation and revision of the curriculum is an important agenda to identify to what extend the curriculum is able to form self-worth among the students to enable them to face the encroaching challenges of globalization. The curriculum should contain added value that is relevant and able to prepare students with knowledge, skills, values and self-worth so as to enable them to confront global challenges. Curriculum activities and the hidden roles of the curriculum such as the practice of school culture should be given due attention in order to inculcate positive attitudes, nurture strong characters and pleasant personality's. Furthermore, activities involving moral and spiritual appreciation and also activities based on healthy lifestyles would help in the formation of self-worth among students.

For the educators and teachers, they should be committed and ready to bear these duties and responsibilities to achieve what is desired although critical challenges would be forthcoming. Teachers should be mentally and emotionally prepared to face these changes and challenges. The duties, roles and responsibilities of teachers cannot be stagnant over time but occasionally needs changes and a new orientation in teaching youths and students in accordance with the challenges of the global post modernization age. It cannot be denied that facilities and innovative methods involving ICT has to be taken full advantage off by teachers, hence teachers also need to guide these students on how to manage this technology wisely based on high self-worth and responsibility. For example, information that is received has to be processed first, i.e. evaluated, judged impartially and ascertained for its relevance. ICT technology users who are wise should be sensitive and evaluate the information for its truth and authenticity based on the original source of the information. Emphasis on truth and a way of life based on divine principles should be explained to students so as to produce a generation of students with self integrity.

While facing the challenges of global competition, a country very much needs human capital as its strongest ally to spruce it to a status of an industrialized nation. When planning activities and programs emphasis should be given to integrated activities and programs that train students to think critically when faced with changes or issues. The practice of docile acceptance of whatever put forth has to change. On the contrary, high level thinking has to be inculcated to secure the self-worth of the younger generation. In facing the challenges of globalization, the practice of compartmentalized thinking has to be replaced with a complete, balanced and integrated method of thinking based on in-depth knowledge on the issue and its features, details, background plus its effects and consequences. On a firm note, in view of the spectacular wave of globalization, efforts to consolidate self-worth of the people towards building a nation state ought to be by leaps and bounds in order to compete with that wave.

3. Conclusion

Developments in ICT technology have influenced human lives. These strong challenges need a firm self-worth among the people who dwell in these developments. The issues have to be managed critically by all quarters working in sync in an effort to build a future generation that is progressive, competitive, dynamic, innovative and creative and at the same time have high values and morals, be ethical, courteous, disciplined, having a vision and a patriotic spirit. It cannot be denied that innovation brings about effects that can become issues and challenges that need to be handled wisely and cautiously using critical and creative thinking. The mind shift and thought's of the younger generation that build self-worth is important in building a society that's harmonious and united. The future of a country depends on this younger generation and if they have a distinguished and impressive self-worth then the future and the progress of the nation is assured. On the contrary, if the younger generation of today does not hold on to true values and self-worth then the destruction of a nation are in order.

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