ICT Implementation Policy on Education in the Eyes of Erich Fromm: To Have or To Be?

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Abstract

This article examines the sociology, psychological thinker and analyzer of Erich Fromm’s work of to have or to be and its relevance to the ICT implementation policy in education. Many previous researches that have been conducted by many researchers in regard with ICT implementation policy whether in developed or underdeveloped countries, western to east, they put the blame on teachers’ capacity with any kinds of pitfalls, ranging from lack of confidence to lack of skill of ICT use. Whilst in larger scale of society capacity; central and local education authorities, and school as well to be blamed by researchers as lack of support from them, whether in form of facilities, motivation, professional development until lack of partnership and policy support. Therefore, this conceptual paper tries to see this phenomenon from other angle of Erich Fromm’s analysis of “To Have or To Be?”

Keywords: ICT implementation policy, society and change, capacity building, having and being.

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of information, communication and technology (ICT) toward e-readiness or now more popular with digitalization in every human living aspect in developed, developing or underdeveloped countries, western to east is believed by many experts; scientists and economist could help in changing and elevating one’s country prosperity and society welfare (Cypher and Dietz, 2004; Reinert, 2008).

The demand of digitalization, technology skill of employee in today modern industries, also has impact toward the policy of ICT implementation in education that also implicates to the change on education system for comprehensive capacity building and innovation; restructure and reculture (AdyPutera and Mahani, 2014). As the result, if we take a look at some schools in develop and developing countries overall, the policy development on ICT implementation has been applied and bring impact toward some part of capacity building; individual, organization, and society.

However, we can’t deny as well that in some part of another schools, this ICT implementation also still has many pitfalls and lack of support from stake holders and decision makers, central or local authority. For example, in Europe, in case of UK, the restructuring system conducted by, policy makers, stake holders and local education authorities on ICT still many things need to be resolved (Ofsted, 2010). Asia too, still not much better than Europe where many sectors still lack of support from education government leaders (UNESCO, 2007, 2014). Whilst in Africa, in case of South Africa, it is not much different with Asia as well. The capacity building of local education authority, private agent, schools, and teacher still becomes the problems (Assan and Thomas, 2012). In term of teacher level capacity, although there is positive improvement on their perspective and attitude on ICT use toward learning (Marwan and Sweeney, 2010), yet the gap of ICT integration in teaching and learning in classroom also still wide open and unequal among schools (Eadie, 2001; Ofsted, 2005; UNESCO,
The research question arise here is that, why such this gap, barriers, inconsistency, and unequal performance happens and is there any panacea to change this?

METHODS

Due to this paper in form of concept, several literature reviews and result findings from the previous studies are used by writer to support the statements and ideas he states in regard with ICT implementation policy on education and its correlation to Fromm’s perspective of socio and psychological analysis of “having” and “being” existence.

RESULTS

Shortly, based on the previous studies conducted by precious researchers, the investigation about ICT implementation in education conducted by Ofsted in London since 2001 until 2011 indicated that the practice and ICT implementation in field has many inconsistent performance and commitment from government stake holders, and wide gap of unequal support in the three level capacities; individual, school as an organization, and education authorities, private sectors as society capacity (Ofsted, 2001-2011). In Asia, such as developing countries are even worse where the data finding revealed that electrical become the main problem in supporting ICT implementation policy (UNESCO, 2014). Below is the quotation of the document data related to the electrical problem.

“In most developing countries, the key determining factor for electricity is location. Rural, remote and mountainous regions are frequently neglected in building up national infrastructure, resulting in a lack of power supply to support ICT in education” (UNESCO, 2014).

This inconsistence could be discerned from several aspects such weak in local policy support, weak in management programs; infrastructure, human resource development, technical, motivation, and lack of participation from external partnership due to profit and business reason (UNESCO, 2007; AdyPutera et al, 2014). For example the data related to business profit reason is stated as below.

Business Profits problem:

“In other words, if the infrastructure is built there, such big tower but the income obtained is not match with the profit, they of course won't do that. Is that right? So, they just provide the quota to the satellite not big enough” (AdyPutera et al, 2014).

Whilst in Africa, in case of South Africa, it is not much different with Asia as well. The capacity building of local education authority, private agent, schools, and teacher also still becomes serious problems (Assan and Thomas, 2012). Below is the data support the fact above.

“Four of the six schools surveyed did not have an internet connection and also lacked appropriate communication, and economic and social empowerment of the communities was considered necessary to support ICT integrated teaching and learning in schools” (Assan and Thomas, 2012).

“what I feel is that educators are not that eager to become computer literate” (Assan and Thomas, 2012).

“this new curriculum and associated changes may work well in the urban areas where the schools have sufficient funds to appoint additional educators and have funds to provide adequate resources from school fund”. And “we don’t have funds to meet all
curriculum needs. Our funds are too small as compared to our needs. Our learners come from poor families, from destitute families, their parents are unemployed; we don’t have a functional library, all because of shortage of fund” (Assan and Thomas, 2012).

DISCUSSION
ICT Implementation: Philosophical Perspective of Having and Being

The fact above made us to think that why such that condition happens. Erich Fromm, as the socio and psychological analysis in one of his master pieces To Have or To Be vividly explains that all man life activities derive from two mode of human existence of having and being.

According to Fromm, the philosophical concept of having relates to the instinct of “possession” for property or thingness. Based on Fromm analyzes, having or thingness has strong relationship with consuming culture that causes “sick social structure” in western modern life that so much adore for “fame and money”. Having also prone toward greedy passion of world resources exploitation and as the root of evil that brings a lot of conflict in social structure. Fromm also mentioned that people whose principles just for profits, property, and possession will produce having oriented society, characterological having precisely. The further consequence of this having oriented finally make society used to have what Fromm named it as “material advantage” culture like rewards, and incentives to motivate or as media to leverage society work performance. The worse form of this material advantage culture conducted by this society is bribe of what Spinoza (1927) called as “insane” society.

Fromm’s philosophical concept of having and being is still pretty much relevant and applicable as well with the phenomena illustrated above. The relation to this policy of ICT implementation on education that long inconsistent performance, and long unequal and wide gap of capacity building support such policy, management, and participation indicates that leaders who have competence on this matter such stake holders and decision makers have lost their zeal of being existence of To Be, milting and drifting into deep ocean of To Have.

What is seen here from this policy of ICT implementation in education just to show to the public that the policy has been made and action been executed, but the fact, “nothing real important happens” just the repetition of restructuring (Fromm, 1977). Grounded to the Fromm philosophical concept of human existence mode, this phenomena of ICT implementation in education is the reflection of the portrait of having. Business and profits become the first priority and people are get use to the culture of incentive and reward or gifts as what they call as motivation, but not more than the form of selfishness of human characters and the product of having (Fromm, 1977).

Is There A Way Out to the Real Change?

“Physical survival of the human race depends on a radical change of the human heart.”
(Fromm, 1977)

“Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.”
(Rumi)

According to Fromm, the root of the change to drive toward the real transformation in education, we need radical change, that is, radical and fundamental change of human characters; belief, value, attitude, and mindset, and moving from having to being or from “to have” to “to be”. The changing of education system for constructive social structure need “being” not “having”, so that good quality of productivity of human activity will be achieved along with their fully selves actualization.
Fromm also noted that the fundamental of being is “active” or being active not passive. The people or any profession holders in the existence of being mode are active in producing good quality of their best performance of capacity such talent or gift endowed by God. The manifestation of this being active, these individuals are open minded to learn something new to upgrade their skill and professionalism. In this existence mode of being, like innovator, they interest in creativity and new idea that makes them leaders among their friends in their organization (Hallinger and Richardson, 1988).

Being active in one activity of human being existence is not just ordinary routine activity but the activity established has value of quality inside it, Fromm noted. This quality activity Fromm name it as non-alienated activity. This kind of non-alienated activity is live and integrated in man body and soul. The impact of this quality of non-alienated activity causes good and positive productivity in work which then further Fromm label it as “productive activity”. This type of productive quality activity can only be obtained by them who work based on their own capacity, intuition, own interest, inner power and talent which make them free, independent, and happy (Spinoza, 1927). Above of all, Fromm explained that this action of productive quality of being make them fully present in their live.

Fromm also further states that being is a about the process of life and the process of becoming. As process, nothing real in this life, since everything should keep moving, growing, and changing. By becoming and through the process of changing, growing, developing and moving, the human being will be active, “creative vision”, and “imaginative” (Fromm, 1971). Finally the perfect word to close this writing is what Lao Tzu said “the way to do is to be” (Cited in Fromm, 1977).

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