

Re-Engineering Values into the Youth Education System: A Needs Analysis Study in Brunei Darussalam

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Abstract

This study aimed to present a practical framework for designing values teaching program in youth education system. The choice of content, the nature of the students with respect to learning and their perception about the selected content for teaching values were studied. The study follows a Needs analysis design which drew upon document analysis and questionnaire. There were 104 respondents consisting of students from Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) coming from different background and nationalities. Although qualitative paradigm was adopted, quantitative strategy was also used in order to gather views from a large sample size. Document analysis and questionnaire survey were used for data collection. The finding reveals that majority of respondents have strong interest in the selected content and exhibit most of Generation Y characteristics with respect to learning. Although they are technology addicts, they unexpectedly show a different approach to values learning; they preferred personal contact with teachers rather than online-based mode. Inferring from results, the authors recommend the content and method of teaching values in Universiti Brunei Darussalam and the need for further research on the effect of cultural and religious background on the adoption of global culture by students.

Keywords: values, education, Islam, Brunei Darussalam, generation Y

1. Introduction

In recent times, there has been clamor for re-construction of values in education system, as a result of lost of core values in the youth behaviors (Fyffe et al., 2004). The recent school violence by teenagers in American schools which results to an estimated \$16 billion loss costs (Centers for Disease control and prevention, 2012), and the rampant youth violence in Africa (Ikeja & Iwilade, 2012) have raised alarm and pressed the need, more than before, to include values into the youth education system. For such move to be successful, a total re-construction or “re-engineering” would be a necessity; because of many facets involved, and such re-engineering process requires a preliminary study. William Ward analogy elucidate the importance of this kind of study, when he opines that: “*We must be silent before we can listen. We must listen before we can learn. We must learn before we can prepare. We must prepare before we can serve. We must serve before we can lead*” (Thinkexist, 2005 in Volek, 2007).

The present youth have unique characteristics which differentiate them from the previous generations; they are called generation Y. More importantly, their approach to learning has always challenged educators and they have risen to the challenge from their different perspectives (Coyle et al., 2010; Manuel, 2002; Martin, 2005; Nicoletti & Merriman, 2007; Reilly, 2012; Shih & Allen, 2007; Volek, 2007). For their values, some studies have researched into their approach with respect to specific subjects (Wessels & Steenkamp 2009), and the implications of their attitude on educational program design had also been studied (Jonas-Dwyer & Pospisil, 2004; Black & Nesterkin, 2013). There are other studies which focused on designing instruments for measuring their multidimensional values (Fyffe, 2006), and Heidi (2004) carried out a pilot study on how to integrate values into the curriculum of the university system. However, needs analysis studies of the generation Y with respect to values teaching seemed to be very few, and studies on the perspectives of students in Universiti Brunei

Darussalam are even fewer. This study therefore, aims to present an empirical study that will inform the type of content and approach for designing values teaching program in the Universiti Brunei Darussalam. This study was guided by the following research questions:

- a) To what extent do students of Universiti Brunei Darussalam exhibit the characteristics of generation Y?
- b) What is the content suitable for teaching values in University of Brunei Darussalam and what are the students' perceptions about it?

In this study, relevant literatures on generation Y and their characteristics were reviewed. In order to choose suitable content for values teaching, the values that are promoted by Universiti Brunei Darussalam were uncovered. In the field work part, the presence of generation Y's characteristics in the students was confirmed, what the learner already know, what they want to know and how they want to learn were also discovered. The paper then concludes with recommendations for programs design for teaching values in University of Brunei Darussalam.

2. Literature Review

Halstead et al. (2000) described values as "the principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behavior, the standards by which particular actions are judged to be good or desirable". Going by this definition, designing program to teach values requires a definite decision on the principles and standards which will form the content. The content must also be relevant both to the learners and their local situation, and such relevance could be achieved through needs analysis study. In such, a needs analysis, Mohammadi and Mousavi (2013) posited that such study usually revolve around three main questions: What the learners already know? What they need to know? What they want to know?

Furthermore, the learners' perspective should also be studied in order to arrive at a good conclusion. This is by answering the following questions: Who are the learners in terms of cultural background? What are their characteristics with respect to learning? In the following paragraphs we shall look into the characteristics of nowadays youth, called generation Y.

2.1 Who Are Generation Y?

Foot and Stoffman (1998) define generation Y as those who were born between the years 1980 and 1995 (p. 30). However, there is no consensus on their precise age bracket. For example, some researchers indicate that it started in 1977, some suggest 1980 (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002), others opine 1982 (Wessels & Steenkamp, 2009), and while Foot and Stoffman (1998) closed the generation Y age group with year 1995, Lancaster and Stillman (2002) extended it to 1999, and Nicoletti and Merriman (2007) moved it further to 2003. Although this age-based demarcation may be advantageous, for giving us a clear demographic boundary, but, in our opinion what is more important are the peculiar characteristics that generation Y members possess. These characteristics may be shared by other age group members and, as such, include them into generation Y category, or exclude some age group members who do not possess the characteristics. Although there may be differences in the generation Y age demarcations, authors and researchers do not differ, to the best of our knowledge, about their characteristics. It is therefore necessary to refer to this generation by characteristics rather than by age bracket. The following paragraphs unfold the characteristics of this group in line with the implications of each characteristic in teaching-learning process.

2.2 Characteristics of Generation Y

Below are some characteristics of generation Y.

2.2.1 Addiction to Technology

The most important feature of generation Y members is that they are technology savvy (Reilly, 2012). They are so addicted to communication technologies that "technology is assumed to be a natural part of their environment" (Oblinger, 2003, p. 38), and they are the most interactive generation (Eisner, 2004, p. 6). In a survey of 277 first-year British university students, the study reveals that not only are learners experienced with tools such as wikis, blogs, and chat rooms, but more importantly, they believe that these tools can benefit their learning in school (Sandars & Morrison, 2007). As we shall see later, this exposure to technology has effect on all other generation Y characteristics.

2.2.2 Peer Dependence

Another characteristic that distinguish generation Y from the previous generation is that they are feedback dependent, especially from their peers. The use of social media such as facebook, twitter, whatsapp, blog and so forth, has created a strong bond between them and their peers from around the world. According to Reilly (2012),

frequent instant messages and hours spent in chat rooms have made today's students sensitive to peers' opinions.

2.2.3 Love for Autonomy

Respect and open communication: Due to this group wide exposure and connection with various people of different cultural background, they have grown up to value comfort and informality over rules and deadlines (Reilly, 2012). Internet has provided them with such a freedom to say, to see, to hear and to do as they like, and their addiction to it has restructured their mindset. They would want to share their views without any impediment, and turn formal situation to an informal.

2.2.4 Preference for Flexible Teaching-Learning Process

The learning habit of this generation has been affected and influenced by their mindset. Jonas-Dwyer and Pospisil (2005) and Volek (2007) identified the following major characteristics that this generation possess in relation to learning. They include the followings; (1) They love to learn in a collaborative learning environment, exhibit a preference for teamwork, incorporating cooperative learning and constructivist principles; (2) They prefer a challenging environment that has as its purpose a "life plan" that is goal orientated and directed toward their future plans; (3) They love to learn in a flexible, personalized and customized program. ("Let me do it my way"); (4) They prefer an environment that makes learning interesting. Fun and humor are important additions to instructional components without compromising learning and classroom management; (4) They love to learn in a structured learning process; (5) They do well in an environment that uses technology to enable them to be more productive and connected with outside world; (6) They love to learn in an environment in which individuals are respected and all members of the group are supported.

3. Methodology

Othman (2013) in his study reveals that students of UBD are addicted to communication technologies, where majority of them confirmed that they use smart phones for more than ten hours a day, and check their phones at least every 15 minutes even though it does not ring (p. 17). Rosli and Wang (2013) study confirms that most of the students of UBD do not use facebook for academic purposes. Furthermore, statistics also buttressed this addiction, as stated by Social Bakers (2013) that the Facebook penetration in Brunei Darussalam is 54% with a total number of monthly facebook users of 213 180. Inferring from this figure, Rosli and Wang (2013) suggest that most of the population in Brunei are familiar with Facebook.

The changing of cultural values which threatens the future of Brunei identity and the family bond have been a topic of concern to policy makers in Brunei, and technological tools have been seen to be partially responsible (Azhari, 2013; Abdul-Aziz, 2013). Azhari (2013) confirms that there is a change in the values system among the youth in Brunei Darussalam and that the watching of television has affected their language, way of dressing and education (pp. 318-328). Abdul-Aziz (2013) recommends an urgent and more futuristic alternative way of inculcating values and identity into the youth.

Consequently, there is need for a study that would aim at re-construction of values teaching modules which would agree with the youths' mindset and give them a say in programme design in terms of content selection and the desired approach. This is the thrust of this paper.

Needs analysis design with a mixed strategy of data collection was used. This is to achieve suitability of the program designed (Mohammadi & Mousavi, 2013). For the qualitative part, document analysis and open ended items in the questionnaire were used, and the data so gathered were analyzed by interpretive analysis. This is to uncover "How" and phenomenon which could only be better captured by qualitative techniques of data collection (Bell, 2010; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Merriam, 1998; Mohammadi & Mousavi, 2013, p. 1017). The documents are majorly studies on education policy and programs in Brunei. In order to reach out to many respondents and for easy analysis, close-ended items were also included in the survey questionnaire, and were analyzed by simple percentage. The responses were of varying options. The questionnaire was firstly piloted on 20 respondents and necessary amendments were made to the items. It was then electronically posted on the students' body facebook, to further check the students' usage of internet and social media. The consents of all the participants were obtained.

There were 104 respondents among UBD students. These respondents include students of different nationalities, Brunei, Indonesia, other Asia countries, Europe and Africa. The participants include males, females, Muslims and non-Muslims. The sampling was done randomly.

4. Findings

4.1 Students of UBD and Generation Y Characteristics

The respondents consist of 83% Bruneians, 3% are Malay but not Bruneians, 9% are international students from Asia and 5% are from Africa/Europe. According to their religion and gender, 90% are Muslims (36% males & 54% females); and 10% are Non-Muslims (2% males & 8% females) (See Table 1).

Table 1. Nationalities, religion and gender of respondents

	Percentages
Nationality	
Bruneian	83
Malay but NOT Bruneian	3
International students from Asia	9
Africa/Europe	5
Religion	
Muslims	90
Non Muslims	10
Gender	
Female Muslims	54
Male Muslims	36
Female NON Muslims	8
Male NON Muslims	2

In order to uncover the students exhibition of generation Y characteristics, ten items were devoted for generation Y characteristics in the questionnaire. They include questions that ask about their use of technological tools such as smart phones, laptop and iPad, their perception about learning process and their general view about student-teacher relationships. These responses are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Perception of respondents on their learning process and student-teacher relationship

No	Item	Responses	Percentage (%)
1	When I wake up in the morning, I usually check my phone before anything	Always	63
		Sometimes	33
		Not at all	4
2	My smart phone and laptop are important to me because I use them for my favorite which is	Browsing web and blogging	33
		Charting with friends and playing games	16
		Browsing only	16
		Doing assignment	35
3	Whenever I want to learn or need information about something I usually	learn it from textbooks	20
		learn it from Google /internet	80
		I usually ask my lecturer	0

		I usually ask my parents	0
4	I like a classroom environment that is interactive rather than listening to the lecture alone.	Always	25
		Sometimes	53
		I do not mind	17
		That is the only class where I can do best.	5
5	I can learn alone and without my friends	Strongly agree	22
		Agree	55
		Strongly Disagree	4
		Disagree	20
6	I prefer to learn and discover things myself rather being told by the teacher only	Strongly Agree	14
		Agree	49
		Strongly Disagree	10
		Disagree	27
7	I do not like extensive and comprehensive information in classroom teaching, but prefer simple and direct information.	Strongly Agree	31
		Agree	55
		Strongly Disagree	4
		Disagree	10
8	I like a classroom setting that is very serious and do not give room for funs and jokes.	Strongly Agree	4
		Agree	11
		Disagree	48
		Strongly Disagree	37
9	I like the classroom environment that allows me to express my view without any stigmatization	Strongly Agree	43
		Agree	51
		Disagree	4
		Strongly disagree	2
10	I prefer to understand the “why” of something I am learning rather than learning it without reason.	Strongly Agree	52
		Agree	45
		Disagree	3
		Strongly Disagree	0
11	I have registered/ I wish to register for Arabic language as one of my modules because	I want to understand the content of Qur'an and Prayers	74
		I wish to speak Arabic language as a foreign language.	19
		I like Arabic language	7
		My parents compelled me to learn it and I am not convinced	1
12	When I read Qur'an, I usually read it from	My iPad or Smart Phone	14
		Mushaf (Qur'an	70

		booklet)	
		My memory	3
		I do not read it at all	13
13	I have been discouraged to learn about the values contained in Qur'an in Arabic language	Because of the attitude of the teacher/the method of learning	8
		Because Arabic language is very difficult	14
		Because there is translation	19
		I am not discouraged	59
14	When learning the content of Qur'an I think to understand the content in Arabic is better than the translation.	Strongly agree	37
		Agree	42
		Disagree	15
		Strongly disagree	5

The table above shows the students' perception towards the teaching-learning process by using technological materials and the interaction between teachers and students. Overall, it can be seen that there are many items with high scores. Specifically, 63% of the students like to look at their handphones before doing anything in the morning. For item 2, 35% of the students use their laptops and handphones to complete their assignments, meanwhile 33% like to use both of these tools when surfing the internet and blogs.

For item 3, google search or internet do facilitate the students especially when they want to look for information or want to know more about something. From the data, google search or internet show the highest score (80%) compared to making references using text books (20%). Surprisingly enough, the students never consult their lecturers or even with their parents.

Item 4 indicate that the students prefer interactive learning environment (53%) compared to merely listening to lectures. Nevertheless, item 5 shows that the students like to learn individually and do not prefer learning in a group. 63% of the students like to explore on their own especially when finding information on matters which were told by their lecturers (Item 6). They don't like comprehensive information in classroom teaching, instead they like simple and direct information given. In addition, the students resent class environment which is serious with no jokes (37% strongly disagree and 48% disagree).

Looking at item 9 and 10, the data show that majority of the students like to have classroom environment where they can express their views without stigmatization and the students are more inquisitive and don't prefer to learn something without any reasons being explained. Majority of the students (74%) learn Arabic because they want to internalize and thoroughly understand the content of Al-Quran and know the meaning of prayers in solat. Pertaining to tools used to read Al-Quran, 70% of the students used mushaf compared to the modern technologies avail such iPads or Smartphones (14%).

Item 13 indicates that 59% of the students are very enthusiastic to learn the values stated in the Al-Quran eventhough it is written in Arabic or without translation. This support the data in the last item where the students agree that by wanting to know more about the content of Al-Quran makes them want to learn more about Arabic Language (42% Agree; 37% Strongly Agree).

On the whole, these items show that students with generation Y have unique characteristics. Learning individually, using internet without the help from others and like interactive way of learning compared to the conventional approach, are the preferences of these students. They like the challenges in learning and understanding Al-Quran through Arabic language, without making use of the translations.

5. Discussion

It could be inferred from the responses that majority of the participants are Smartphone addicts and technology dependent for learning. This result is in line with Othman (2013) study and confirms their possession of generation Y characteristics (Reilly, 2012; Volek, 2007). For an interactive way of learning, responses on item 4

show that majority do not show strong interest. This contradicts, albeit partially, generation Y characteristics as stated by Jonas-Dwyer and Pospisil (2005). Additionally, majority of them do not show strong interest about collaborative learning. This also contradicts the features of generation Y as stated by Nicoletti and Merriman (2007).

It could also be observed that majority of the participants prefer to handle learning themselves, structured learning, a classroom setting which allows them to express their view, understand “why” of whatever they are learning and dislike a class without fun. These explain generation Y love for autonomy, open communication, respect, and immediacy (Reilly, 2012; Nicoletti & Merriman, 2007). Nevertheless, there are students who still have difficulty in expressing their feelings for fear of displeasing others (Salwa, Gamal & Aliff, 2014). On the whole, it could be summed up that the students of University of Brunei Darussalam exhibit the characteristics of generation Y to a large extent. Not only for the students, infact, teachers too must have the knowledge and skills beyond their teaching field and this will add the values to themselves and ultimately help the process of teaching and learning to be smooth (Mohd-Aliff, Gamal, & Salwa, 2014).

Like any well planned university, UBD promotes the culture of its host country, Brunei Darussalam. The Brunei state is founded on three concepts: Malay Islamic Monarchy (otherwise called Melayu Islam Beraja, MIB) (Muhammad, 2009). This MIB is the main source of value teaching in UBD and taught as a core module, to all undergraduate students regardless of their nationalities. However, educationists such as Pehin Abdul Aziz, the former minister of education and a member of council for royal succession, has recently lamented that the Malay component of MIB has no future; due to high rate of inter-marriage between Bruneians and other nationalities which makes some of the present generation not to identify themselves as exclusively Malay (Abdul-Aziz, 2013). Additionally, Brunei strongly opposes secularism (Abdul-Aziz, 2013) and it is only Islam that is recognized as the religion of the state (Ministry of Education, 2004 in Muhammad, 2009). Learning Islamic values contained in Qur'an will therefore be a suitable option, and the universality and unity of identity that Islam has across all races would ease tension of culture domination among different nationalities, which also fulfill the aims of international education (UNESCO, 2012).

In order to expose the students' willingness to learning Qur'an, and how they want to learn it apart from their general learning characteristics as generation Y members, four items were included in the questionnaire. It was discovered that majority of them have internal motive for understanding the message of Qur'an in its original Arabic form and they are never discouraged to learn Arabic language. In order to capture a rich data on how the students want to learn the content of Qur'an, items with open ended responses were structured for this purpose. The respondents express their views about learning Qur'an and how they want to learn it. The majority of them showed their interest in learning and understanding the content of Qur'an. They also believed that the best way to learn Qur'an is by using Arabic language and not the translation, showing keen interest in learning Arabic language for religious purposes, calling it as the language of paradise (*Bahasa shurga*).

As for teaching Qur'an and Arabic language in a technology-based method, the participants have divergent views. Although it would be expected from such set of learners who are generation Y members to choose technology-based mode as the best method to learn Qur'an and its content, the majority of the respondents were of opposite view. They prefer personal interactions with teachers rather than mere online mode of learning. According to Masitah, Salwa, Rohani, Hayati, and Mundia (2013), these are the critical areas of psychological interventions which should be looked into. But some are of the opinions that online-mode will make learning easier and accessible worldwide by both Muslims and non-Muslims. There are others who are neutral and indifferent about the method, as long as they would get autonomy to understand Qur'an without any intermediate or translation, signaling “let me do it my way” characteristics of generation Y.

All these comments put together express the students' willingness to learn Arabic to understand the Qur'an and to learn Qur'an in Arabic form so as to comprehend the message contained in it in an original form. It also shows that, even though the majority of the students belong to generation Y by age bracket and characteristics, they prefer to learn Qur'anic Arabic in a more practical and interactive way rather than mere technology based.

6. Conclusion

This study has been able to investigate three major variables concerning a program design for the purpose of teaching values, namely: the nature of the students with respect to learning as generation Y members, the suitable content and method. Although the majority of the students belong to generation Y age bracket (1980-1995), they show some differences from the general characteristics of generation Y with respect to learning and the use of technology. This informs the need for further investigation on the effect of religion and culture on the global culture.

It was also discovered that all of them possess phone which shows the wide spread of such technological tool. This result is in line with Othman (2013) whereby in his study reveals that students are addicted to communication technologies and show their keen interest in adding fun and humor to instructional components (Nicoletti & Merriman, 2007).

The use of Qur'an as common base to teach values to the diverse cultures represented by students of different nationalities is hereby suggested. This would answer "What to teach" question in a more acceptable way by the government of Brunei whose official religion is Islam, and by the majority of the students who are also Muslims. It may be said that teaching values from Qur'an is in line with the aims of international education as presented by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) who state that "Education should encompass values such as peace, non-discrimination, equality, justice, non-violence, tolerance and respect for human dignity" (UNESCO, 2012). All these are contained in Qur'an.

Since it has been discovered that it is only Islamic source that could be acceptable as the standards of values which are all contained in Qur'an, the Holy book of Islam, the students prefer learning Arabic language as an hobby rather than a module to be calculated with G.P.A, some prefer learning Arabic language for both Qur'an understanding and for speaking it as a foreign language, and the majority of them view learning and understanding the message of Qur'an as being very important to them. This is their needs and interests which give a clear picture of how these students want to learn if Qur'an is to be set as the source of values teaching.

The study also revealed the students' willingness to learn Arabic for Qur'an understanding and to learn Qur'an in Arabic form so as to comprehend the message contained in it in an original form. It also shows that, even though the majority of the students belong to generation Y by age bracket and characteristics, they prefer to learn Qur'anic Arabic in a more practical and interactive way rather than mere technology based.

7. Suggestions

Based on the findings narrated above, there are some recommendations for program design for the purpose of values teaching. Qur'an should be used and employed as part of resources to teach values to the students. This is because the majority of them are already familiar with it and the results show their keen interest in knowing its message.

Also, it may be difficult to choose a single most appropriate approach to teach the generation Y, deciding on an approach to choose out of the six approaches to value teaching. Thus, an eclectic approach that draws on all of these approaches is hereby suggested. This will be reflected in the followings:

- a) Effective and methodological use of technology in teaching Qur'anic text and meaning.
- b) Learners should be equipped with basic instruments of primary and direct understanding of the meaning of Qur'an (i.e. Arabic language).
- c) The teaching of Arabic language in University of Brunei Darussalam should be directed towards understanding the content of Qur'an and development of the 4 language skills.
- d) Learners should be challenged to think positively and allowed to express their views in line with their understanding of the content of Qur'an, and then guided accordingly.
- e) Cooperative learning method should be encouraged rather than lecture method alone.
- f) Learners should be allowed to extract values by themselves from every verse they read.
- g) Explanation of verses of Qur'an should be tied with its practical applications with the objective of inculcating values.

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