SECURITIZING THE ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF FAITH-BASED NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (FBNGOs): THE CASE OF TAHFIZ SCHOOLS IN KLANG VALLEY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a vital tool for social development. The growing number of Private Tahfiz Education Providers (TEP) shows that there is a demand for such services need to be served by relief organizations. This study aims to explore the issues and challenges face by Private Tahfiz Schools owned by Faith-Based Non-Governmental Organizations (FBNGOs) and concurrently to offer capacity-building investment as one of the tools to upgrade the Tahfiz Schools' system. Following the issues and challenges, the investment in capacity building in the system had long been suggested by Light (2014) to ensure the sustainability of this type of Tahfiz School. Besides, it is also to ensure the quality education objectives are achieved because improper system practiced by FBNGOs can create a crisis that jeopardise the image of Tahfiz Schools.

2. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY FBNGOs IN MALAYSIA

Faith-Based Non-Governmental Organizations (FBNGOs) are set up with specific orientations (Fauzik & Soni, 2016) including poverty eradication through education delivery. The result of this kind of effort is widely evaluated (Chege et al., 2015) all over the world. In Malaysia's education governance setting, FBNGOs can provide Tahfiz education to the public and this set-up is categorized under Private TEP. Alongside this category are Private TEP established by an individual, business venture, and community's effort. The first issue for Private TEP is the governance adopted by Malaysia's Education System. In Malaysia's practice, the setting of religious-related matters including Tahfiz Schools is under the control of the State Authority, and the highest authority that Private TEP reporting to is State Sultan. It is different from the mainstream Tahfiz education providers, these Tahfiz schools are reporting to the Federal Government (Ministry of Education) and answerable to YDP Agong. No doubt, this practice allows the empowerment of the Private TEP on how it should be managed, however, this practice has also opened a loophole in the education system especially when the stakeholders expected Private TEP should provide a quality education that will complement mainstream education in Malaysia. This governance has created inconsistency in the administration and management of Private TEP because each state is adopting different practices. For example, the distribution of resources is greatly dependent on the different policies and decisions made for each state.

Like any other Private TEP, FBNGOs are also given the full authority to operationalise the Tahfiz Schools, an issue derived from this practice is there is no standard curriculum and academic syllabus because it is varied from one Tahfiz school to another. No clear guidelines are provided to Private TEP as most syllabuses are developed by its course based on the emergence of the inception of the Tahfiz School. As for consequence, Tahfiz schools are too free to implement any curriculum and academic syllabus for teaching while the learning process is based on the experience or background of the teachers or the founder. Besides the varies of the school curriculum, the teachers are not well trained, and the recruitment process is easy, as they do not require skilled teachers to perform the duty. Most of the teachers have no guidelines, strategies, techniques, and motivations in teaching, therefore, an organized teaching method is still unable to implement properly because the techniques delivered by the teachers still do not contribute much to teaching professionalism and effectiveness outcomes for Tahfiz school (Ridza, 2017; Ahmad & Norazmi, 2019).

The future in education is dependent on how the regulations are applied to the system, adhere to professional norms of accountability, and are result-driven (Hutton, 2015). On that note, there is an urgency for Private TEP need to change to more efficient and standard governance so that it would result in a more systematic and accountable education system in Malaysia (Hamidah et al., 2017). In this case, an investment in capacity building is strongly suggested to change how the Tahfiz schools should be operationalized. This also would apply to Tahfiz Schools that are run by FBNGOs. As mentioned earlier, the Private TEP governance somehow creates an inconducive school environment due to insufficient funds, under standard infrastructure, and an underrated curriculum rooted in weak management and administration. The absence of strong capacity building in the organization will threaten the whole system of the organization. Capacity building is defined as activities that strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills, and behaviour of individuals to improve institutional structure and processes. So that, the organization can effectively and efficiently meet its goals in a sustainable way (Brix, 2018); and this is align with Junjan (2020) define that capacity building as a broad palette of techniques and methods that help individuals, organizations, and communities develop the best solution in sustainably achieving their objectives.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Capacity building is a method that able to strengthens an organization's ability to fulfill its mission by promoting sound management, strong governance, and persistent rededication to achieve results (Centre to Improve Project Performance, 2015). Scholars recommended strong capacity building as a strategy that should be applied in every organization to reduce these issues and challenges. Capacity Building may consist of the Best Practice of Management in Finance (Millar & Doherty, 2016; Felix & Kusmanto, 2013), Human Resource (Gossett & Pynes, 2003), Strategic Planning (Analoui & Samour, 2012), Leadership (Maiocco, 2017), Stakeholder Network (Millar & Doherty, 2016) and Project Management (Felix & Pao, 2013) that contribute directly to the success or failure of an organization. The benefit of capacity building is the continuous improvisation, and the development of capabilities will recognize the requirements for further improvement as well the new findings of the latest competencies (Jensen & Krogstrup, 2017). Each of these capabilities is interrelated and strongly depends on each other. A weak practice of one element can tarnish the next element and slowly it can create more gaps in governance, administration, and management.

Capacity Building is divided into three main stages, namely, individual, organizational, and environment or system (Blagescu & Young., 2006; Ubels, et al., 2010). These stages involve a long-term and complex changing process (Swiss Agency of Development & Corporation, 2016).   In response to this circumstance, capacity-building intervention functioned as an enabler to increase the organization's capacities. Before the capacity-building intervention took place, the needs assessment is compulsory to ensure the right decision will be taken. The needs assessment is an analysis of identification of gaps that respond to organization's core values, needs, culture, context, and the ongoing development of the organization (Kimit, 2008) and these gaps are expected to shift continuously as the degree of capacity building increases (Jensen & Krogstrup, 2020). Since the challenges exist at all levels of capacity-building stages, hence, the intervention is suggested as a mechanism to increase the organization's efficiency. For individual context, an investment in individual capacity building is important that that can promote new work behaviors to adopt the new work values (Pultar & Rabitsch, 2011) that will change organization's culture and later will contribute to achieving higher work performance (Ibrahim et al., 2017).   The intervention includes providing the right skills, on-the-job training, workshop, program, seminar (Karin et al., 2020), and advance professional certification (PEPFAR., 2011; Merino & Carmenado, 2012) that can improve one's ability. Capacity building not only individual development but also organizational development (UNESCO, 2010).

Organization capacity building grows from individualistic objectives to collective objectives with the purpose to improve the management, administrative, systems, governance, and resource mobilization (Jallow et al., 2008; PEPFAR, 2011). The gap of organizational capacity-building effort is identified when an organization is only focused on individual capacity building that involved a short period and only covers a small component in an organization, thus, the outcome is limited.   Individual capacity building should complement the organizational capacity building, both individual and organizational must work together to a common purpose by refrain the tendency to work in isolation (Kaitlyn K.,2014).   The integration of work cultures, policies, processes, and systems are the platform and enabler for the organization to improve performance to achieve the successful result (O'Refferty et al., 2014) because individual capacity heavily depends on the organization's setting, the resources accessibility, and experiences that gained are largely shaped by the organizational and environmental factors (Ranadewa et al., 2020).

The system level is the highest level for capacity building. At this stage, the system defines how the whole structure of the capacity building is shaped and as an enabler environment that facilitates the existence and the execution of operations of individuals and organizations. As the broadest level, this level is more challenging to grasp, thus, the interaction between individuals and organizations is vital to determine the direction of functions and organizational performance. Another gap at this level is how an organization overcomes the constraints that hinder the efficiency of operation and effectiveness of the functioning individuals and organizations due to external forces. (Musonda, 2016). Campobasso and Davis (2001) suggested it is vital to analyze the definition of the organisational capacity building before implementing any initial process so that organizations have a clear idea of what to improvise.

4. CONCLUSION

This subject is open or improvement, the refinement of this study, later, will provide the understanding of the importance of investment in capacity building that contributes towards the country's quality education and explore the foundation of current capacity-building efforts. It is also to discuss and promote capacity-building investment as a critical mechanism in the administration, management, and governance of Private TEP, especially in the scope FBNGOs. This research is expected to give another insight into Private TEP's current capacity building practice and the thorough findings applied later will recommend reducing the gap of issues and challenges faced by Tahfiz Schools.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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