

The Implications of Western Decision Making Practices and their Effect on the Future of Civilization?

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Abstract: *This paper is an attempt to examine decision making which has affected Western education, namely the United Kingdom, USA, and attributed to neoliberalism and its contribution to other nations' educational policy. In addition, the data will show that this nineteenth century's equivalent of economic liberalism laissez faire, is affecting both the academics and students' way of life inclusive of the future of civilization. "The great fact to remember is that the trend of civilization itself is forever upward:" (Roosevelt & Peabody, 1945). The data will also illustrate how society has become less civilized, notably changes of interaction between people. It will be shown how the late twentieth century reintroduction of neoliberalism is unhelpful in this century as it was misplaced in the late 1980s. For academics and educational practitioners alike, does duty mean to nurture the future populous who could evolve civilization to go forever upward or to see if the model of capitalism infringed or impeded teaching practice thus hindering experienced educators and respective teaching institutions globally, and importantly, the student body... the societal future. The aim is to answer the question; if this cycle was unhelpful due to the pejorative neoliberalism? This paper will measure the facts to establish if new international legislation be adopted, so business has no direct intervention in academic affairs and indeed its management, whereby the Government, Institutional Stakeholders and Parent Governors presently have a say over teaching policy or to decide if professors, lecturers, and teachers alike, have either Students or indeed Consumers in their classrooms and lecture auditoria, dominated by the enforcement of IT placed upon the students therefore diminishing their basic cognitive or mental skill sets, and pre-examination standards.*

Keywords - Neoliberalism, Capitalism, Generation Change, Ethics in Education, Policy, Future .

I. INTRODUCTION

Having observed schools, universities and the students, civilization is being effected by the lack of graduate ability via having discipline problems within the social skill sets and poor mental academic ability. In short, the student of today and of this generation, are far removed from the basic academic knowledge and its application, from their predecessors a generation ago.

These issues, are endangering the existence as a progressive intellectual and more evidently an evolving race of *Homo sapiens*. It is clear that a vast majority of both school and university graduates lack the ability to manage the basics; from arithmetic times-tables to life threatening on-the-spot leadership decisions. The removal of school discipline which differs from a generation ago, has been the main issue. "Court decisions and federal laws have turned principals into psycho babbling bureaucrats. How can kids respect them?" (Hymowitz, 2000). Since the late 1980s until the present day, neoliberalism's eco-political model has covertly labeled education, and its institutions as businesses, with the students being consumers under the cloak of Non Profit Organizations.

Evidence has continually displayed that parents and students alike, override decisions by practicing teaching faculty, owing to the students are now customers for the board of governors or its administrators. A commentator once uttered: "American education is being deliberately destroyed - But why?" (Potash M, 2012). There has not been any conclusive study to investigate why graduates

and other humans are becoming weaker? -even the genetic argument did not hold any validity. One study suggests that “Human Beings Are Getting Dumber”. (Kim, 2012) yet again, without sufficient empirical evidence. The main limitation to redress this issue is due to Government legislation and of course the fiscal elements involved neoliberalism. In this study, the aim was to achieve awareness to the administrators in both the UK and USA be that change ought to be the priority, or for a better phrase; to be a reversal of current administrative dominance practices in education: To return traditional education from today’s materialistic practice. Reversing the trend is necessary to correct the policies within secondary education.

II. METHOD

The premise of this investigation was uncover how much the student populous has changed compared to the nineteen-eighties school age generation.

This was in various capacities as university chairperson in two countries, supervising students of secondary levels and to freshman-sophomore students at three universities: Lebanon, Turkey, and secondary schools visited in the United Kingdom, Europe and further East.. Student Age Criteria Evaluated: 08 years – 26 years. Completed over a thirteen year timeframe inclusive of having worked in fourteen countries within education. Analysing data from both the United Kingdom and the USA. Questionnaires were used inclusive of online opinion.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results also show that the multi-national companies in London, disturbingly are not certain how to determine a new potential employee’s grades at university and to correlate them with their entry qualifications or criteria. The numbers do not add-up for these blue-chip institutions as the bar has continually been in free-fall for years, to accommodate high levels of registrations at UK universities, thus keep the profitability on fiscal track commensurate to any given corporation.

For state education, Neoliberalism was incorporated in the late eighties, hence the radical unproven reforms which turned these state entities into fee paying institutions, offsetting the cost of a debt ridden government. Today in the City of London, HR departments in the financial district, (unsurprisingly) do not simply trust the products which leave Higher Education in other words; the graduates. Some companies employ entry examinations both in-house and online for new potential recruits, prior to being considered for further evaluation or interview. Other companies have even adopted the “Poshness Test” simply because these aforementioned candidates are so weak in: speaking with a good English articulation, spelling and grammar, mental arithmetic skills and general demeanor. Consequently “Students will no longer need a minimum of three Bs at A level and a 2:1 degree to work at Ernst & Young, known as EY, because the firm wants to create “a level playing field”. Instead, it will use online tests to assess applicants’ potential.” (Elison, 2015)

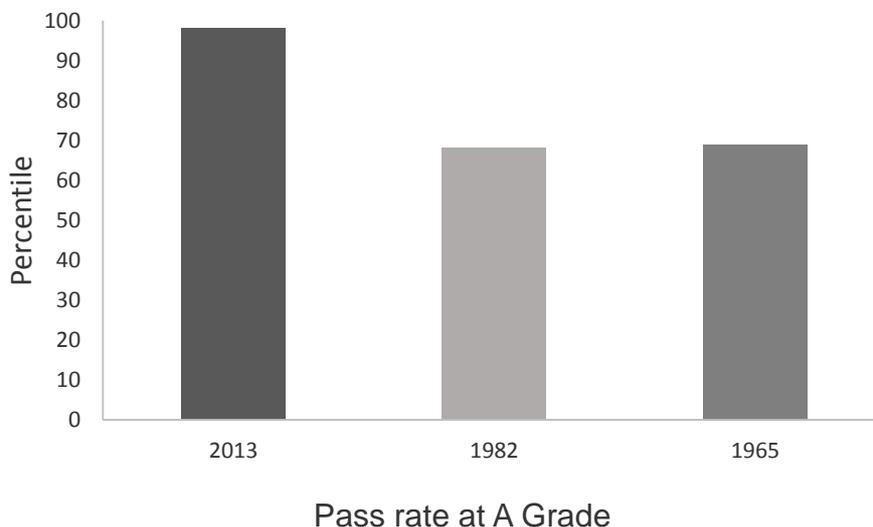
Clearly the research will show that both academe and the general public were aware of the failings within the late nineteen-ninety’s neo-political economic agenda. In fact, this also led to the lackluster liberal teaching training practices which had only exacerbated the situation for students, who were already under the stress factors of funding their respective higher education major courses.

The universities’ engineering departments in the UK are so underwhelmed with student registrations, owing to two noteworthy factors: a) Secondary education’s lack of producing good science and mathematics students. b) A student’s lack of interest in these technical subjects. This correlates with the advent of information technology dominating the classroom and its learning framework. Examinations themselves were made easier to show the students’ pass rates had increased nationally. However, beginning from the source of the various issues one must commence from the secondary school mechanism and the changes due to commercial activities that had and has made the students commodities or consumers. Since the early nineteen eighties certain liberal reforms coupled with a government’s vision for a US “Reaganesque and the UK’s “Thatcherite” form of privatization, free trade or capitalism in all sectors of industry, unfortunately education was not spared from this neo-business culture. In fact, the data has shown how neoliberalism had manipulated the secondary school university examinations (Advanced Levels: A-Levels) to an extent, that the data became ambiguous

or unexplainable. If we were to refer to the UK's university entrance examinations qualification of Advanced Levels (A-Levels) the increase in pass rates at A 'Grade has exploded from 1982 to 2013.

Refer to figure 1.

Figure 1

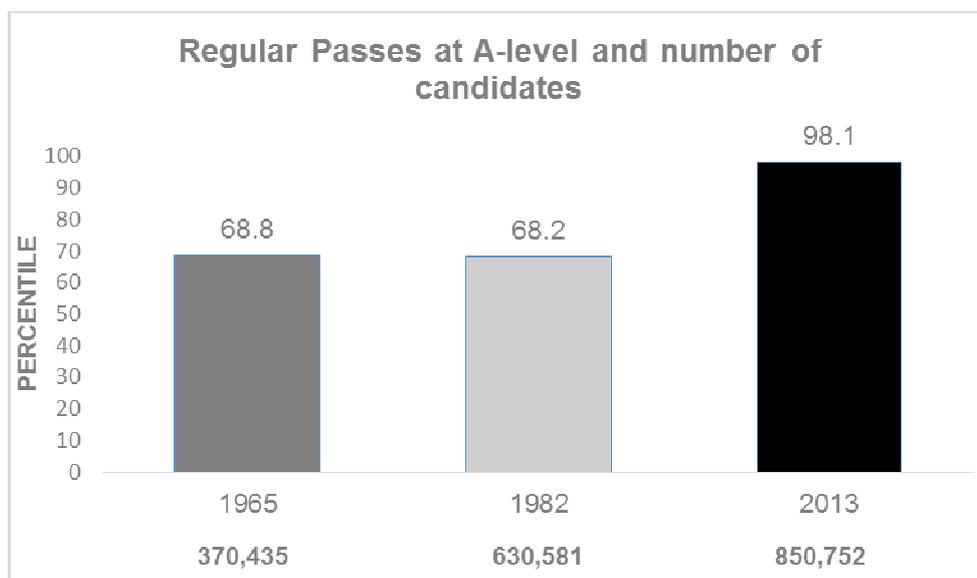


Note: The data compliments of the source: Joint Council for Qualifications UK, (JCQ)

The data clearly portrays a substantial increase in A Grades from the nineteen-eighties to 2013. However, the data also showed that there was a consistent rate of passing at A Grade in these examinations year on year from 1965 to 1982. There was nothing really ambiguous until completing the century until entering the twenty-first.

The data really becomes interesting after delving into the years and grades achieved by students of the generations. If the concentration on other variables were to be analyzed; such as how many students in the UK passed not with A Grades but with only standard passes, this ought to be in correlation to how many candidates took the examination from 1965 to 2013 as well. This shown in figure 2

Figure 2



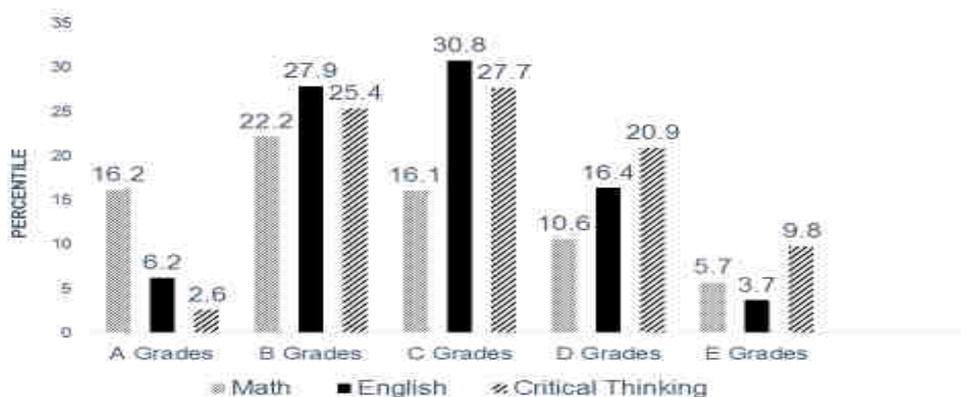
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Note: Below each of the years and respective students who sat this exam (JCQ)

The graphic shows from 1965 to 1982 that irrespective in student generational increase of 260,146 the pass rate (PR) was again consistent as were the A Grades from the sample previously over the same period analyzed. Yet again, there was an inconsistency inclusive of ambiguity that if the generational numbers of students had increased, it would not have guaranteed that the data should reflect the increase of passing students; as in this case. How could the PR have risen in the last 31 years and also achieved a 29.9 percentile gain in passing students, compared to a 68 percentile stability pattern in both 1965 and 1982. Moreover, with over 220,171 students' increase who had sat the examination, the performance levels had remained consistent and deemed unquestionable.

What was more revealing in the figures released by JCQ in 2013, were the actual results published with the disbursement pattern for three major subjects in the curriculum, namely: Critical Thinking, Mathematics and English Language. Refer to figure 3

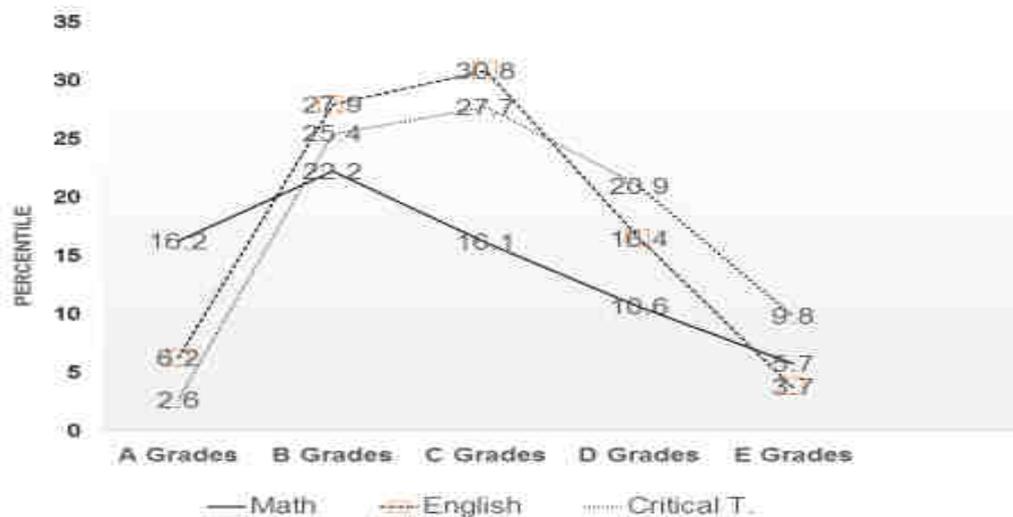
Figure 3. A-level results for Math, English and Critical Thinking in 2013



Note: Curve mainly achieving a B to D grade achievement

As there was a 98.1 percent overall PR in 2013 compared to the average 68.5 percentile for the past two generations in the UK. It is seen that this high rate of passes cloaked the overall picture of success in major academic courses and examinations at this pre-university level.

Figure 4 Arc of achievement model analysis



Note: A-E Grades with the three core subjects in 2013

The statistics clearly display that the United Kingdom is very much a below average D, C, B grade country, where it comes to students of university entry in major academic subjects.

This evidence also illustrates that the universities were not the cause of depreciating standards, however it was the contributing policies from the secondary system of schooling, manipulated by distorted national grades via both government and sadly commercial globalization modality. This is not only a product of Britain now, embryonically, it was exported to the UK from the USA and then onto developing nations.

Other research also suggests that the results at A-level and a higher AS-Level are not really positive in core relation: “The results show that predicting future 'value added' performance from past trends is unreliable. The implications of these findings for notions of 'continuous improvement' are discussed as well as their consequences for further research on institutional improvement.” Even the so-called poverty verses affluence angle cannot be used as a premise as it was previously. How intellect was continually achieved with certitude in the less affluent former East Germany during the cold war? Just an example. An illustration of the widening business controlled education issues depicted in this paper can be determined by such citations mentioned below, and could be used as a premise:

“What is education for? Is it to earn money only? Now it seems that the quality of education is deteriorating at a rapid rate. Education is oriented now not towards creating good human beings/citizens but mainly towards mere materialistic prosperity. As a result, we are confronted with a weakening of the social system across the world. Values are no longer considered for quality education- they have become redundant. Conflicts and violence are increasing on a continuous basis. Education has become an unethical business today. Question papers are sold before an examination. Mushroom growth of universities by using money power is rampant around the world. Beautiful buildings are constructed (as it is easy) to attract students without having dedicated faculties. Now the trend is to sell good names for education establishments to recruit students with high capitalization fees. Such organizers of education have only one motive, which is only to grab more money at the cost of quality education.” (Das, 2010, paraphrased for grammatical coherence)

IV. CONCLUSION

If we were to continue at the rate values mentioned in this paper we could see an uncertain future not only within the West, but also globally owing to the signs are there already. As plagiarism from the student body has manifested itself as the norm, we could only attribute this to the ill-discipline within

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education, and the psych-somatic nature of the students perceived notion that Higher Education is a right not a privilege, unlike within the 1950's to the late 1970's generations, they saw obtaining a place at university was a both a life-changing event and immense in privilege.

One solution is to sharpen the "Bell Curve" in Secondary (K-12) education inclusive of a complete return to a disciplined environment. All forms of student evaluation must be more controlled within a core subject's grading policy. Secondly, as the evidence portrayed within this text has identified that the current mandatory examinations to enter university, are deficient in degrees of difficulty and are not clear indicators of K-12 students' overall academic and social wellness abilities. The reliance on Information technology in tuition, has drifted so much out of control in a child's learning, it has nearly taken-over both educational policy and societal reasoning. The extent of this, is that a student's mental or self-reasoning skill sets in problem solving are being impaired. In my estimation, in one further generation's time in the year 2030 and beyond, the graduates of that epoch would solely be dependent on the IT gadgetry at their disposal to acquire basic data such as geographical (world's capital cities) and so-called mental arithmetic calculations, instead of using raw brain power in the knowledge based memory process, insofar of becoming a dumber race of *homo sapiens*.

It only could be perceived that we could only see a depreciation of our civilization due to the lack of social interaction and mental discipline in various guises inclusive of our interpretation for general knowledge. Finally, what are the dangers of a devolution in our civilization? If we were to focus and have emphasis on key decision makers of the future: Politicians, Judges, Physicians, Military Officers, School Teachers and the Ministries of Education, we could imagine how much thought would be attributed to a change in ethics, and morality, then our inability to question critical reasoning would be at stake. The increase in crime demographically, and greed within the stock market which led to the recent crash, are just some of the variables that are present within society. Merely paying for an education within a "profit gain apparatus", type institution, should neither be a guarantee for graduation nor a pass of a subject. Currently, there are poor decision makers including school teacher graduates out there. Change ought to be implemented as soon as possible and must be initiated from primary school level through to K-12 grading. As for the developing nations, they take credence from the Western states, they have in fact mimicked developed countries to modernise their respective educational apparatus. This being inclusive of bad teaching practices and advice or consultancy prescribed to the ministries of education notably in overseas developing countries. This has been surprising considering these are failed Western ideologies that would hinder rather than aid educational development.

In addition, university professors ought to undertake teacher methodology courses as mandatory prior to the teaching of their undergraduates. If the suggestions mentioned were not to be implemented by the year 2020, then our children and their generation's future, would be very bleak and no way to redeem the situation. However, if changes were to be countenanced by the respective authorities in Western States, society would not feel the effect for at least a generation, this is due to the new students of an improved education system, would need time to graduate both primary and secondary grades for us to see the results. Moreover, when these said graduates become parents in their own right, the full extent in society and potential leaders, would be more evident as well as uncertain.

We as a civilization, would need thirty years more to witness the outcome if governments were to manifest a decision now. Business influence on any educational institution must be capped to non-majority control by new government legislation, this includes school owners if being private. This would consequently retain education and its core quality as priority, -not profitability as the sole entity. Thus education professionals preside over all academic decisions without unnecessary hindrance and contradiction. Teachers would not be too fearful of losing their position as they are today, due to the teacher funding spreadsheet. As for teacher retention in the public school system "Too many will quit permanently because they are fed up. Their ambition and self-respect will take them into business or other professions...they leave behind an increasing proportion of tired time-servers." Barbara B.T.; O'Brien, L (2002). A supermarket is a business and the product are the goods sold, so how can a school be a business? Are the students the same as products or are the parents

consumers? There is an urgency to conduct this form of school reformation. Graduates are seen as a pool of the future, however they are not being taken seriously by employers, bad CV's being drafted with numerous errors in their native language. The philosophy for overall education should be simple: *it is not that institutions should be selling education to the students and parents alike, but to sell what the students can do with that knowledge for themselves in the end...* This paper was neither designed to castigate, censure nor admonish business within educational institutions, but the mere dominance of its decision making practices being a disconnect from a school's academic governance, ought to be investigated and revised, where both parties could possibly work together. Minus education and its students, there would be no business in the first place. Even the authors of certain publications

use speculation and notate the issues in education, but do not comment on the root or simply do not wish to admit the cause and effect scenari fearing the Austrian school "de la théorie économique du laissez-faire à la politique.. IT gadgetry should only be a tool for students, thus bring their respective mental agility more into play, and state funded education inclusive of Higher Education per se, must return to aid the less wealthy, to re-address the balance in societal need –especially in the UK. Why the aforementioned? It is simple, students must have determination –especially in the West. Countries within the Indian sub-continent and South Eastern Asia possess highly motivated students emanating from a majority less affluent social system. In the West, if we were to pay tuition for our children, we would always expect them to be a success irrespective if they were to be spoilt and less motivated. This blame for a student's failure would be apportioned to the educators not to the administrators that outnumber academic staff in the first instance. For an "Old School" modus of classroom discipline to be returned, is not beyond the imagination. A return to a non-liberal form of student peer-control, ought to be also adopted by legislation, to return a pupil's respect to the teacher whence the previous generations came. Governments need to be more responsible for educational funding and who would be allocated to lead private sectored schools and institutions. Shirking responsibilities like education and medicine then outsourcing them to the private sector, has been proven to be an unaffordable policy for the masses and devolution for student development in the face of a spreadsheet's profitability.

Finally, being reminded that thoughtless decisions of our historical past, and their unfortunate applications, had manifested into conflict subsequently destroying nations... Surely it is what we could do as a civilization that would, and indeed define us as an intelligent species.

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