Unleashing Higher Education Leadership: Driving Internationalization in a Globalizing World

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The paper analyses the challenge of advances in human knowledge generation, dissemination, and management beyond national, cultural, and academic silos of universities in Islamic societies. The overarching ad vocative gestalt of the paper is that as there are Muslim majority populations in nations of OIC, there are also significant Muslim peoples living as minorities in non-Muslim nations. Whether as minority or majority, the paper argues that every Muslim must have the right to universal primary, mass secondary, and elitist higher education. The paper notes that there are societies which have formulated policies of the democratization of higher education and implemented such policies successfully. The problems of ideas and ideologies in the Muslim world in general and in Islamic universities are raised. Of all the institutions of Islamic nations/societies, Universities are the institutions which can forge global religious, social, academic, and intellectual capital, not just among contemporary scholars but also among future generations of leaders in all fields of human endeavors.

The vision of nurturing social and intellectual capital of bonding, bridging and linking among universities in Islamic societies in order to realize robust capacity building and the fullest development of potentialities of human beings is discussed. As the lead institutions of Muslim civilization, Islamic universities have to create consciousness, construct vision, and nurture the development of geoscopic minds and collective mission for effective contributions to humanity and global leadership. It argues for the systemic focus of leveraging on the historical, intellectual and future –oriented traditions of universities to contribute to build and achieve the vision of the ummatun wassatun. The paper assesses the contemporary strengths of Islamic universities in their internationalization initiatives to develop human capital and to achieve the highest level of excellence towards the Tajdid of scholarship benchmarks against the best universities in the western world. It examines the of channels relationships of the community of scholars and community of practice beyond Government to Government initiatives. Ways and means to further promote internationalization among institutions of higher education in the Islamic world through the sharing of best practices and collaborative exchanges in such critical areas as governance, and leadership, research, publications, translations of seminal works, consultancies, teaching and learning, students living and learning experiences are noted. The preconditions, components, and criteria for internationalization to ensure world class standards are met include first class infrastructure, systems, mechanisms, policies, and procedures which should be in continuous improvements for excellence.

The paper invites discourse regarding intangible assets, long term returns, and contributions to overarching academic concepts, metaphors of learning and teaching in the Digital era which inspire the practical and spiritual best for the worldly domain and the Hereafter. It explores the culture of fostering respect towards each other among scholars from different backgrounds and across all types of university institutions with differences of standards and histories. From the collective governing and educating experiences, the paper invites university leaders to develop acceptable, creative, enlightened, inspiring, and sustainable academic models of internationalization.

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