Higher Education Institutions: Reforming And Regenerating The Critical Mindset Of Human Capital

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Abstract

The importance of higher education institutions in spreading knowledge cannot be denied. Since its establishment, it has demonstrated that the creation of human capital through a creative and transparent mindset is essential for ensuring human civilization continues to thrive. With the advent of globalization and the global market without borders, freedom of thinking is a matter that should be enhanced to ensure the built-in human capital is more open to receiving positive changes. By having knowledge, we are able to make human capital more effective and we will be able to empower a country by acting as a change agent. As a result of the United Nations General Meeting in September 2015, 17 sustainable development goals were established (Sustainable Development Millennium). To achieve sustainable development for all, this new Agenda emphasizes a holistic approach based on the principle of "not leaving anyone behind." The purpose of this study was to examine the extent of higher education institutions to assure the success of this agenda in producing holistic human capital by conceptual legal studies. To obtain data, the library searches and the web pages' related websites will be used. Generally, potential human capital will have a high level of confidence in expressing an opinion and ideas that are related to human civilization. Through transparency and freedom of thought, higher education institutions are the best platforms for educating human capital so that they can successfully play a role as a pioneer in the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

Keywords

higher educational institutions, Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, human capital, academic freedom, mindset, transformation

Introduction

According to the perception of many of the members of the community, globalization is a process of changing the ways in which human life is lived in order to improve the quality of life for all. This change entails not only a change in the way we live our lives but also a change in the way we think about what we do and how we perform it. This change should be taken into account in an appropriate manner in the context of globalization as a whole.

The course of our lives will continue to change as time goes on, and as we move forward, we will continue to experience these changes. As a matter of fact, it is a fact of life that we cannot escape. It is important to remember that adapting to these changes is something that can only be done in a positive way, and that means actively embracing them for the good that they bring. The important thing is that by doing so, we will be able to cultivate a competitive country that is not left behind by the rapid changes that are taking place in modern civilization as the nation strives to remain competitive despite the rapid changes in modern civilization.

Consequently, higher education institutions play a crucial role in ensuring that future human capital has the appropriate knowledge that will enable them to accomplish this goal by providing them with the appropriate education. This ambition may seem to be pure and sacred; however, it can only be realized if we are capable of removing ourselves from any unreasonable constraints that bind our minds to generate creative ideas and discoveries that can be used by the entire community if human thinking is freed from unfair limitations. To create a knowledge-based society that achieves the stated goals, higher education institutions must review and refocus their roles in order to meet the objectives set out in the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

This article is intended to examine the extent of higher education institutions to assure the success of Sustainable Development Agenda in producing holistic human capital by conceptual legal studies. To achieve this objective, data for the article is collected through library searches and the web pages' related websites. Data from the relevant sources are analyzed using method of critical analysis (Ramalinggam Rajamanickam et al., 2015; Ahmad Azam Mohd Shariff et al., 2019; Ramalinggam Rajamanickam et al., 2019). Through this method, the article can address the issue critically to give a clear understanding and explanation.

Higher Education Institutions: Breaking Down the Human Capital's Narrow Minded

A fundamental element of creating an educational institution, according to John Henry Newman, is to create an environment conducive to learning. According

to him, the most important thing that can be done is to create a space conducive to communication and ideas exchange, to establish a research and discovery centre, to facilitate clashes of ideas, and to develop a nurturing environment for the next generation so that they may thrive in a positive environment when they grow up (Newman, J.H., 1852, p. 3; Geoffrey Boulton & Colin Lucas. 2008). It is a common belief that higher education institutions should adhere to three principles, which have been outlined by the German eminent scholar Wilhelm von Humboldt, who is considered one of the most well-known writers on the history and philosophy of education. Principles of the academy include the union of research and teaching, freedom of instruction, and the pursuit of academic freedom, all of which are interconnected. (Humboldt, 1810). As a consequence of all of these perspectives, it becomes increasingly evident that higher education institutions are the ideal platforms for creating communities where knowledge is considered to be a fundamental part of human civilization and that this goal is going to be achieved in an integrated way based on a holistic view of knowledge in the future. It is extremely important for the development of human civilization to have a sense of what is important and what is necessary, and it is essential to recognize that this is a fundamental part of the human civilization development process.

As a matter of necessity, establishing a higher education institution that will facilitate the development of society is of paramount importance in order to foster its growth, as this will serve as a reminder that to ensure society's growth, individuals must be educated at an incredibly high level. Furthermore, innovative ideas must also be nurtured. It is therefore possible for society to move forward in the future. In order to ensure that society as a whole continues to grow and develop, keeping this in mind is an essential part of the process (E. D. Nakpodia, 2009). Higher education institutions should recognize the fact that there are a diversity of backgrounds in terms of their needs, skills, talents, status, efficiency, knowledge, behavioural style, interests, and perceptions, making it very important to cater to these differences in education (Nakpodia, 2003). As a result of the development of higher education institutions in the community, this community will be able to develop modern and holistic human capital. This will lead to a brighter and more productive future for the community as a whole. A wide range of knowledge backgrounds will contribute more to the sustainability of a knowledge base that is open, expansive, and able to accept a wide range of knowledge perspectives. The community needs to be exposed to a wide variety of open learning concepts in order to be able to conduct an effective and comprehensive selection process.

Among the efforts to deliver transparent and open knowledge, the higher education sector is one of the most important players in the process (Niall McCrae, 2011). It is widely acknowledged that higher education institutions are capable of developing not only human capital with exceptional academic achievements, but they are also capable of developing a wide variety of skills and competencies as well. In addition, these abilities play an important role in the development of human capital. Throughout the history of higher education, scholars have been able to

significantly contribute to the advancement of human civilization by utilizing the teaching and learning processes provided by higher education institutions. As a result of their contributions to human civilization, they have also been able to improve the quality of life of citizens and therefore make a positive impact on their lives. (Niall McCrae, 2011).

There has been some research indicating that the importance of teaching can be seen as much broader than just conveying facts and theories to students as a means of imparting knowledge. A broader purpose can be found in teaching than simply passing along information and theories to future generations, and that is why teaching has a lot more to offer (Niall McCrae, 2011). In higher education institutions, the ability to critically evaluate facts is one of the most significant parts of the teaching and learning process. Students are expected to be able to integrate the knowledge that they have acquired during their studies in a critical and logical way. There has traditionally been the notion that universities and colleges are "fortresses" of freedom of thought, but in the modern world, this has been challenged and faced significant difficulties, which make it even more difficult than ever before for universities and colleges to fulfill this role. Graduates of higher education institutions should be able to put what they have learned in the classroom into practice once they have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills. By doing so, they will be able to meet the needs of the community when they enter the workforce in the future.

The academic community should promote creative and critical thinking (along with their academic responsibilities, which include teaching and learning) in order for students to be inspired to go on and continue the legacy that has been left by their predecessors in the future. It is of the utmost importance that each member of the academic community demonstrates and nurtures these qualities in order to ensure that the acquisition process is placed in the strongest possible position during the acquisition process. The view of Humboldt of higher education institutions as "fortresses of freedom of thought" is accurate, and if that view is to be implemented in a manner that is integrated, then the "fortress" will be able to educate the community, develop competent human capital, and develop the skills necessary to foster creativity and critical thinking in the community. Higher education institutions will be able to become more effective and more powerful as a result of the concept of human capital that was raised by the Humboldtians. It is essential that these factors are taken into account to ensure that higher education institutions are not adversely affected by future challenges in their quest to achieve their objectives.

To be able to produce competitive human capital, higher education institutions should fulfill the following responsibilities in order to achieve their goals:

In order to ensure the quality of learning experiences that students receive from their higher education institutions; higher education institutions should implement a quality management system. It is the responsibility of the higher education institution administrators committee to ensure that the quality of the

learning experiences in higher education institutions is maintained for the sake of quality assurance and student learning (The University of Edinburgh, 2020).

The importance of knowledge, information, and ideas for institutions is becoming increasingly evident in recent years, as they are among the most important players in the global system of higher education, as a whole, and are among the most important participants in the higher education community as a whole (The President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2020).

Higher education institutions can be regarded as a nurturing ground for the development of critical thinking skills as well as skilled human resource development. It is important to bear in mind that these are two of the key factors contributing to a country's competitive advantage. Higher education institutions have the responsibility of making sure that the community has access to the latest educational and technological tools that will assist it in resolving any problems that they might encounter. Additionally, it serves to meet the economic, social, and cultural needs of the local community and is an important centre for a variety of economic, social, and cultural activities (University World News, 2009).

Based on the study conducted by Sullivan and Rossin (2008), it can be concluded that higher education prepares students for challenges in life and work, as well as provides them with advanced knowledge, skills in skilled training, and a commitment to a cause that is supported by their local community (Sullivan & Rossin, 2008; Sullivan, 2011).

In order to be prepared to manage the demands of the economic future in terms of human resources, graduates will be able to develop the skills, knowledge, and ethical responsibilities necessary to accomplish this task. In addition to this, they will also be able to determine the direction of a new global economy that will continue to drive the economy for many years to come as well (Spellings Commission, 2006).

It is important for higher education institutions to provide support to their local communities. This will enable them to facilitate the development of globalisation within their communities in light of rapid changes. In addition, they should promote and facilitate citizen participation. This is how they can ensure that globalisation can take place in their local communities. There is a great deal of value for us in this conduit between the local community and globalization as a whole (Spellings Commission, 2006).

As a form of neutral source for talents, ideas, and creativity, higher education institutions serve as a means of promoting individual growth and development, as well as the advancement of society, as well as a means of providing solutions to community problems (Global University Network for Innovation, 2020).

It is a fact that higher education institutions which are integrated into the National Development Centers play an invaluable role in nation-building, research, and training that are of significant benefit to the entire country as part of their responsibilities (Altbach, 2008).

It is the responsibility of educational institutions in Malaysia to ensure that the next generation of students in Malaysia is well-balanced, mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually, according to the direction set forth in the Malaysian Education Development Plan 2013-2025 as well as the Malaysian Education Development Plan 2015-2025 (Higher Education) (Ramalinggam Rajamanickam et. al, 2022).

Higher education institutions are responsible for the following considerations according to the University of Sunshine Coast, Australia, in order to maintain a high standard of education (University of the Sunshine Coast, 2019):

Assuring that the highest standards of quality in education are met while providing a high-quality education to students;

Assisting in the provision of research funding and supporting the development of research and learning facilities as a result of the provision of research funding;

Supporting the advancement and expansion of knowledge, as well as supporting government, industry, commerce, and society in this endeavour;

For the purpose of being able to be able to meet the needs of the entire community, it is important that the courses of study or instruction offered in the community be of the highest quality in order to facilitate knowledge dissemination and provide opportunities for intellectual development within the community as a whole; and

By applying research findings in a commercial context, the researcher is able to gain a greater understanding, a broader range of knowledge, and a wide variety of practical applications as a result of the research, which is a very valuable concept.

In a study published by the Ministry of Education (Singapore), it was stated that higher education institutions are crucial to the future development of a resilient workforce, for social mobility, and for creating a positive external environment that promotes social stability and well-being. This is based on the belief that higher education institutions are critical to society's well-being and stability (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 2020). It is very important to remember that if higher education institutions are not able to provide the necessary support for the development of a competitive society within this globalized era, society will become trapped in its narrow world, which will be a tragic outcome for mankind. Unless higher education institutions work together to promote a sense of civilization within society, society will eventually develop into a society that lacks a clear vision of what civilization is.

Sustainable Development Agenda 2030

According to the UN's 2015 action plan, which aims at promoting peace and prosperity for all people and for the planet in the present as well as in the future, all UN member countries have adopted a document that serves as a framework for achieving peace and prosperity for both people and the planet, in the present as

well as in the future. For all countries (developed and developing) to be able to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), they need to establish bilateral and multilateral partnerships as soon as possible. There is a need for all countries to work together with an empowered strategy in order to eradicate poverty and other deficiencies in their societies. The strategy must focus on improving health and education, reducing inequalities, and stimulating economic growth, while at the same time addressing climate change and protecting our oceans and forests at the same time as well (United Nations, 2020).

There must be access and opportunities for all people to receive high-quality, equitable education throughout their lives in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4, as well as opportunities for them to learn throughout their lives. It is important to address the following items in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (United Nations, 2020):

The right to quality education, free, and equitable by 2030, will be guaranteed to all people, regardless of their demographic background, and will contribute to the achievement of relevant and effective learning outcomes in all classes across the country.

Ensure by 2030 that all girls and boys are able to access the development, education, and quality of preschool education in order to prepare them for the rigours of primary school.

By 2030, the initiative aims to significantly increase the number of women and men who are able to access technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including higher education, equally and on an equal footing.

Increasing the number of young people and adults with the right skills, including technical and vocational skills, is crucial in order for employment, decent employment, and entrepreneurship to become a reality by 2030, in order to keep up with the pace of global technological advancements.

The 2030 initiative is intended to eliminate gender disparities in education, but it is also necessary to make sure that those who are in most need, such as individuals with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children living in extremely vulnerable circumstances, have access to all levels of education and vocational training, regardless of the situation they are in.

There is a projection that by 2030 the majority of youth, as well as most adults, male and female, will be literate and numerate.

By 2030, it is the aim that every student will be able to contribute positively to sustainable development by acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to do so. In order to accomplish this goal, it is necessary to provide education in sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, reconciliation and nonviolence, global citizenship, and an appreciation of cultural diversity and its contribution to sustainable development.

It is intended that, on a global scale, efforts will be initiated to develop and improve sensitive educational facilities that can serve a wide range of children from a wide range of ages and cultural backgrounds while providing them with an

environment that is safe, nonviolent, inclusive, and effective in order for them to be able to learn.

It is anticipated that by 2030, there will be a massive increase in scholarships available to developing countries, primarily those from the most underdeveloped countries, the smallest island nations, as well as African countries, for the purpose of enabling them to enroll in higher education programs, including vocational, information technology, communication, technical, engineering, and scientific programs, both in the developed and developing countries.

A number of international collaborations that involve teacher education in developing countries, including those with small islands and the most developed ones, are expected to result in an increase in qualified teachers by 2030 as a result of international collaborations that involve teacher education in developing countries. This goal will be achieved through the implementation of a variety of measures, including intensifying teacher training initiatives in both developing countries and developed countries in order to accomplish this goal.

It is without a doubt that education, as outlined in Sustainable Development Goal No. 4, is a very important aspect that could have a material impact on the development and improvement of human life in the future in terms of human progress and development. As part of Sustainable Development Goal No. 4. It is essential to establish a comprehensive, open, and transparent system of education at the national level in order to achieve the goal's objectives. So long as sanctions and pressures are applied that are unjustifiable, it will be impossible for the objectives outlined in this document to be achieved. The protection of human rights, the achievement of reconciliation, the observance of non-violence, and respect for cultural diversity must be brought to the table in order for the community to be able to achieve the goal of open thinking with absolute certainty.

The Importance of Critical Thinking in Shaping Human Capital

A crucial part of critical thinking is the ability to pose doubts and analyze ideas and assumptions in a way that challenges one's preconceptions in a manner that challenges one's own preconceptions. According to Paul (1992), critical thinking is not only beneficial to higher education institutions but also provides a basis for a balanced life in general. (Paul, R.C., 1992). As Lipman (1991) explains, in order for a rational and democratic society to be able to survive and flourish, the ability to think critically is a necessary character trait that can be possessed by individuals within such societies in order for them to be successful in their goals (Lipman, M., 1991). Although individuals do not have the power to choose whether or not to be free, education systems provide the opportunity for individuals to achieve freedom through the open sharing of ideas and views for the benefit of the entire community, regardless of whether or not they decide to become free (Billington, 1997).

J.S. Mill holds that if the truth is not acknowledged by the individual before the opinion is rejected, then the individual will be in a position to reject the opinion,

and if this occurs, then it is a violation of their fundamental constitutional rights, as well as a violation of their right to express their opinion (Mill, J.S., 1978). Unless this is perceived as a normal occurrence, people will slowly be sluggish in their development if it is not accepted as a natural process. For Mill, freedom of expression is fundamental to developing a logical argument since it allows one to express their ideas freely. According to him, freedom of speech is one of the most important components of dignity and respect. There is a belief that the abridgement of the freedom of speech is stifling the intellectual development of mankind and sacrament the moral courage of thousands of people. Nevertheless, it is important to note that freedom of speech should not be used to denigrate any individual in a marginalized society without reasonable cause (Mill, J.S., 1978).

Education is undoubtedly one of the most significant factors when it comes to the development of democratic societies across the globe in today's society. Educating a population is one of the most vital steps necessary if a democratic culture is to be established and maintained in a country. This is due to the fact that the importance of education cannot be compromised in any way. Educating the public is the key to making the legal system work effectively and efficiently, and there can be no doubt about it (Hasbollah & Ramalinggam Rajamanickam, 2022).

Academic freedom, in general, is considered to be one of the most critical components of critical thinking, particularly when it comes to the purpose of academic research and the possibility of open debate within the learning environment of academic institutions. It is important to note that neither of these requirements is determined by policies, but rather, they are dependent on the attitudes and behaviours of all students and faculty members in higher education institutions, as well as their conduct in the educational process as a whole. Both the right and the responsibility must be considered in order to fulfill these two requirements (Niall McCrae, 2011).

Furthermore, Lee (2006) insists that academics should not only protect the freedom of thought, but they should also provide students with the opportunity to engage in discussions on controversial subjects and encourage them to take risks to accomplish their goals by giving them the opportunity to engage in debates on controversial topics (Lee, D., 2006). Taking a critical approach to thinking, as Barnett (1990) describes it, is a collaborative process that brings academics and students together in order to analyze theoretical assumptions as well as, most importantly, to be able to think freely without being limited by unreasonable cultural restrictions on their ability to do so. A critical approach to thinking can therefore be summarized as a continuous process of collaboration between academics and students, which ultimately results in the development of a critical way of thinking. As a result of the combined experiences of both academics and students, there is a way of thinking that has emerged as a result of their shared experiences that is different from both perspectives (Barnett, R., 1990).

A dynamic and complex business environment is expected to continue to develop in the future, so the role of human capital for business players of all levels

available in the current market will become increasingly important in order to be able to maintain a high level of skills so that they can keep up with the rapid changes in the market (Ramley, 2014b). It is therefore important that higher education institutions take a step back and reevaluate the way they create their instructional curriculum, instructional practices, and assessment policies in order to ensure that all students are equipped with the skills and attributes necessary to become an effective citizen and to be able to contribute meaningfully to the global economy (Fein, 2014; Kirst & Stevens, 2015).

Based on the analysis by Hart Research Associates (2015), 91% of employers believe that critical thinking skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills, as well as problem-solving skills, as well as problem-solving skills, are more important for employers to hire a candidate as a candidate when it comes to the interview process than a candidate's resume. As a result of a study taken place recently, it has been concluded that higher education institutions are meant to provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to function well in a democratic and globalized world, as well as to function as responsible citizens in a society that is constantly evolving (Roksa & Arum, 2015).

As defined by Max Weber (2009), a theoretical ideal refers to any mental construct we create so that we can have a better understanding and compare reality with our mental model, so as to help us make sense of what is going on in the world around us (Hart Research Associates, 2015). It is important to recognize that "ideal" higher education institutions may be able to reduce the uncertainty that students may have regarding the expectations of their lecturers, as inequality is a major factor contributing to social disparities as well as aggravating them. Aside from gaining more knowledge, students will also have the opportunity to discover some of the ideal characteristics they want to attain when attending higher education institutions, which will enable them to develop the ideal characteristics they desire. In addition to reducing the inconsistency between value and expectation, lecturers and students may strengthen the relationship between lecturers and students, which is becoming increasingly important when it comes to determining a student's academic performance and progress (Chetty, Friedman, and Rockoff 2014; Rockoff 2004).

Edmund C. Short, a professor of education at Pennsylvania State University, defines the purpose of higher education institutions as the development of knowledge and preparing individuals for the implementation of that knowledge in the real world. There are four broad functions associated with this mission, namely (Edmund C. Short, 1992):

To ensure that every student is provided with the opportunity to receive a general education. In order to succeed in the modern world, it is necessary that every student, in order to be able to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, receives a general education in order to be able to function in society. Education in general is based on the premise that each individual can be assisted in interpreting the world around him or her and putting that understanding to use in a variety of

ways in the course of their daily lives and within their communities around the world in a variety of ways.

A higher education institution serves a wide variety of purposes, including providing education and training to a wide range of individuals who have a wide range of specialized skills, which is one of the reasons for which they are established in the first place. One of the main objectives of this programme is to provide students with the opportunity to work as professionals as well as in other technical fields within a specific field of practice within the programme.

In order to ensure that their students receive a high-quality education, higher education institutions must ensure that students are taught in a research-based environment, as this is one of the primary responsibilities of higher education institutions.

It should be the goal of the higher education sector to be able to provide a wide range of expertise across a wide variety of academic disciplines, as well as across a variety of fields of study, in terms of highly skilled researchers in all areas of expertise. Higher education institutions play a big role in facilitating the achievement of these objectives through the education and training of academics. As a condition of being appointed to such a position, academics must fully comprehend the importance of ensuring all related activities are planned and executed in an orderly and proper manner in order to become successful in their efforts.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the introduction of higher education into the community is one of the most crucial steps for going beyond the darkness of ignorance and establishing a better situation for the ever-changing population in the near future. Recognition of higher education institutions as what they are is essential if we are ever going to accomplish this goal. As long as civilizations are built for the purpose of promoting universal human kindness, they will be unable to reach their full potential if they are deprived of it.

As part of recognizing the academic expertise of higher education institutions and the research conducted by scholars who are experts in their particular fields, it is important to reward the various "players" in the various fields of their expertise based on their academic expertise in a manner appropriate for the field in which they work. By restricting the development of such knowledge from time to time, we will only reduce its sustainability and thereby set back the progress of mankind.

A further aspect of determining the potential for the knowledge culture in society to achieve the highest level of excellence is the concept of determining how higher education institutions can play an important role in promoting social justice, value, and interest in society by providing higher education institutions with a specific mandate. It is possible that society may be dragged back into the "Dark Ages" of the past as a result of a lack of transparency and openness in society,

which will have detrimental effects on the advancement of humankind in the future. There is no way a passive human mind will be able to make a significant contribution to the common good if it is not forced to think critically and creatively about the problem at hand.

There is an underlying principle that if one wishes to be able to exercise his or her right to freedom of thought and expression, then one must be free to seek, receive, and express opinions about any kind of information from any standpoint in order to have that right. Freedom of speech must not be limited in any unreasonable way. In order to accomplish this objective, an independent platform must be provided as a means of providing information to the general public without violating any legitimate legal provisions.

Moreover, it is important to note that freedom of thought is also one of the most important foundations for the development of democracy since it provides the "main actors" in education with the ability to continue providing information and ideas, as well as concentrating on new discoveries, in a variety of formats to benefit the general public.

Acknowledgment

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