

Human Governance Management in Islamic Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

The role of a university now is no longer to produce a good man but that of a factory producing human resource to fulfil the needs of the industry. The university has diminished from the status of a centre of learning, becoming more utilitarian. This paper discusses leadership style and its relation to the understanding of higher learning institution leaders on the role of universities. Corporate governance of such leaders has established universities as suppliers of mass generic product for the materialistic profit-orientated industrial market. The focus of universities has shifted from the enhancement of student quality to enrolment quantity bringing maximum profit gain with students as customers. The framework of administration is based on code and conduct as well as the limitations of guidelines (SOP, KPI etc.). This differs from governance that prioritises on the internal quality of insan at every level of organisation, from academics, administration staff to students (human centric). The orientation of a university should be to mould insan ta'dibi with spiritual strength and internal quality as well as good judgement. The framework of insan leadership administration is based on the potential of insan as unique individuals bearing internal human values and more pristine principles in managing organisations. The information in this paper is based on literature reviews and experience of the researcher as an educator and student. Universities should not place material returns (medals, status, money and ranking) as their main focus. This paper introduces the preliminary study of the need for further research in the area of education administration on the understanding and aim of universities among administrators of institution of higher learnings. Leaders in Islamic higher learning institutions should clearly understand the real meaning and role of a university that will enable them to apply human governance in the management of a higher learning institution. This paper also discusses the uncertainty of university leaders in implementing the corporate governance or human governance or insan leadership style in the management of an institution of higher learning.

Keywords: Insan leadership (human governance), Education Administration, Role of university, Student as customers, Adab, insan ta'dibi

INTRODUCTION

Today's Education

The world today is in chaos. This is apparent in the world economic system which assures the wellbeing of a selected few but prove to be malignant to the majority of the people. The failure of contemporary political systems to create trustworthy leaders who care for the people; the inability of universities to produce adabic insan who are developed and civilised in the true sense; and the futile enhancement in science and technology that lack the means to make the world a better place for insan are all evidence of chaos. Al-Attas is of the opinion that this chaotic condition is the consequence of the corruption of knowledge originating from the crisis of knowledge from the West. Secularism and liberalism from the

West are built upon a thinking and conception framework which is deluded in terms of knowledge, insan, religion, revelation, God and other key concepts which define a civilisation. This confusion in epistemology caused the West to fail in recognising the true nature of the realities of life and to fail also to place everything in its right place.

THE CHAOS IN TODAY'S EDUCATION AND ROLES OF UNIVERSITIES: BACK IN ORIGIN PERSPECTIVES

Post-modernism education has failed to implement the true nature of education (Sidek Fadhil, 2009). It is characterised by materialism. Educators teach learners to increase monetary values, without emphasising or teaching the values of adab, resulting in learners aspiring for material gains only. This in turn, leads to a decline of the quality of one's personal well-being. Characteristics of this decline include decreased happiness, lower life satisfaction, the lack of self-actualisation ((Aaron Ahuvia, 1995); (Mick, 2007), as well as mental and physical ailments (Sheldon Cohen, 2009); (Maarten Vansteenkiste, 2006). These bring about poorer relationships (Mieson, 2009), lack of communication, miserliness (Richins, 2004) and sympathy (Sheldon & Falnagan, 2001) which often end in greater conflicts, anti-social behaviour (Kasser & Ryan, 1993) and interpersonal manipulations (Khanna & Kasser, 2001).

Spiritual education is becoming more relevant, more so in the context of civilisation now (Adibah Abdul Karim, 2010). Secularism which created a civilisation without God has brought about the chaos of desacrelisation-dehumanisation in massive torrents. Its main ideology is to free mankind from religious and metaphysical values, slowly eradicating religion from the aspect of insan life. Materialistic civilisation which is hedonistic, permissive, greedy and extravagant has changed mankind to animals and robots. It is apparent that the world is faced with a civilisational crisis and it is in need of a saving religion that will return humanity to its wholesome nature in every aspect. Signs of spiritual decadence are widespread. Spiritual quests and questions asked of them have begun to emerge rampantly. But they would be futile when the searchers are beguiled and the answers sought beyond the sanctuary of religion.

Then there was a separation between revelation and reason, as well as between tradition and modernity. This separation has led to the choice of secular human beings to glorify science above the realities of nature, reason above revelation, material above spirit, this world above the Hereafter and modernity above tradition. Al-Attas aptly concludes that Western civilisation adheres only to reason to unravel worldly issues in what he terms as a form of the deification of human being. This is the state of the secular human being.

The consequence of this deviant worldview is secular and materialistic concept towards reality which manifests also in views regarding the development, progress and change in education.

The world has begun to feel the direct effects of chaos from the degradation of adabic values in education which originates from the West. Numerous scandals in the corporate and business world shook the world and made headlines (Corporatenarc, 2011). Embezzlement, corruption, bribery involving economic giants such as ENRON (2001), Volkswagen (2005), Goodin (2011), Dietmar (2005), Martha Stewart (2002), Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae (2003-2004), Healthsouth (2003), Merrill Lynch (2002), Tyco International (2002), Worldcom (2002), XEROX (2002), and Erome Kerviel (2008), raise questions to the value of the education that those involved in the scandals possess. How did they appreciate the Business Ethics subject taught in every business school? This is justified by (Giacalone, 2006) who says, "In our lesson plans, there is no selflessness, no objective for the nonfinancial, collective improvement of our world, and no generative aspiration to leave behind the better

world for those who follow. We are, at best, silent about transcendent aspirations and at worst active participants in the shallow goal of increasing material wealth without a sense of long-term social benefit.”

The education system existing in Malaysia is being tainted with the stain of modernism, be it at the level of philosophy and metaphysics, principles or even in practice, while nations like Ghana, Canada and China has begun to challenge the ego of eurocentrism. The West itself realises its mistake and is attempting to revert to education based on *fitrah* or back in origin concept. Just because of the lack of ease to measure academic relevance to society, academics prefer the simple way out to adopt a ‘one-size-fits-all quantitative criterion (Ohanian, 1999).

The true meaning of education with its aim to bear witness to the Oneness of Allah has long been deviated. The advent of the colonial era saw the adaptation of an education system from the West, structured on eurocentrism which is secular and upholds materialism. This produced graduates who entered the industry devoid of the insan nature and without a sense of being servants to their Khalik or their creature, when they failed to comprehend the meaning of life on this world which is just a mere bridge to the Next. We often learn exclusively for a career-life and not for living a human-life. Of these, then, would there emerge leaders, shapers of the education systems, and policy makers that would contribute to the endless cycle of mass generic product moulded by the West.

Education is the inculcation of adab into the spirit of insan while adab is the mirror of the wisdom of insan *Ta’dibi*. But how many of the local institutions of higher education emphasise on the cultivation of adab and the moulding of insan ta’dibi and place these as the aim of the institution? How many of such institutions realise the wrongness of *Eurocentrism* in their curriculum to the extent that adab is absent in the national vocabulary? Muslims should not rest unperturbed when the West itself is stirred to question their errors and is seeking paths back to religion, realising that secularism has marred the moral and development of the Western civilisation as mentioned by (Lagemann & Lewis, 2012).

Al-Ghazali in his *Ihya’ ‘Ulum al-Din*, said that the noble aim of education is its coherence with the objective of the creation of mankind, that is, to master knowledge about Allah. This life is a journey to prepare oneself for life in the Hereafter and not for the sake of power, influence or wealth.

Higher education at the tertiary level has become the engine to the growth of the economy for ages. The university, as a cultural institution closely linked to skills and values, needs to continuously evaluate the appropriateness of culture and practical implications on its programmes and orientation (Wan Mohd Noor Wan Daud, 2013). The growth of a university transcends time and plays a crucial role in not only aspects of teaching and learning but in other significant roles in developing the society and nation. However, the tremendous advancement in the globalisation, information technology and communication era and changes in the lifestyles of the society have caused the university to shift its focus to be abreast with the demands of time.

Universities should produce students who are wholesome, being imbued with wisdom and morals, and are able to lead and shape their lives. This, however, is rarely achieved now. The First World Conference on Islamic Education which commenced in Makkah al-Mukarramah (1977) which discussed the concept of true Islamic Education, decided that education institutions should not be alienated from education philosophy and Islamic universities should not adopt philosophies and policies which are not founded on the teachings of Islam (Syed Ali Ashraf, 1977).

THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: ASPECTS TO PONDER

Education Institutions: Corporate Governance Entity?

Corporate governance which dominates the administration systems of higher education institutions can be seen as a damaging and mechanical structure. It does not improve with the endless control, rules and policies. As stressed by (Aziuddin Ahmad, 2010; Dzulkifle Abdul Razak, 2013) universities need to step out of the conveyor belt mentality or producing graduates treated as products for fulfil market demands. Corporate governance is seen to justify anything, even unwholesome elements to achieve the target and aim. The implementation of what is considered the truth is no longer a concern and no qualms are felt in actions as long as 'it is not wrong.' This causes confusion to the purpose of a university which is to do the best and not just to refrain from doing something wrong.

The well-being of the society is superseded by the need to maximise profits among the administrators and the gain of shareholders becomes the main concern. In the last two decades, the business entity has introduced the terms 'corporate social responsibility' and 'business ethics' as part of corporate activity designed to fulfil their social contract. To meet the needs and demands of the society for good and ethical governance, corporate governance in the form of rules and regulations with the ability to control business entities has dominated the business landscape. While there is promise of good ethics, it is yet to be seen in reality. Rules set by the regulators on paper and legal documents are etched in stone above the essence (Arfah Salleh & Aziuddin Ahmad, 2009). Administrators place these written rules and law on a pinnacle. But the standards by which objectivity is employed on subjective, abstract and dynamic governance activities on education institutions to control the behaviour of employees is not feasible. In this advanced era of information technology, the dignity of human beings have been lowered to the level of computers, and machines are considered to have human ability, without considering the moral and practical implications of this great material growth (Christian, 2011).

Many higher education institutions in the Muslim world have begun to fortify their structure and activities. They are in need of academic leaders who understand the true role of institutions of higher education besides possessing ideology, history and foundation of an institution. The belief that there is no relationship between business entities and their surrounding or the existence of rivalry has become a doctrine in business administration. Most of these problems originate from the US or from the lies wrought by MAN (Arfah Salleh & Aziuddin Ahmad, 2008).

Incentives, according to (Christensen, 2012), are the main motivation for people to perform duties resulting the world to be functional. But the true motivation comes from fundamentals and not from monetary gains. Real motivation moves people because of what happens inside them that make them want to do something and not influenced by external factors. Hence many researchers and philosophers such as (Al-Attas, 2011; Arfah Salleh & Aziuddin Ahmad, 2008; Christian, 2011; G. Eaton, 2012; Wan Mohd Noor Wan Daud, 2005) agree that the internal factors of man are the main elements that form a direction and purpose of institutions of higher learning. (Lagemann & Lewis, 2012) clearly states that the role of universities should be restored through religious and moral education. They insist that administrators of learning institutions such as Harvard, as a renowned university celebrating its 375th anniversary, to play the crucial role of restoring moral education as the core of the institution. While the West is in search of re-establishing moral education, should Islamic education institutions not lead in showing the way to the true path of returning education and its institutions to the real purpose?

Communication in the Administration of Higher Education Institutions: Language of Machines or Insan?

Communication is the most important aspect in the administration of education. How the philosophy of an institution of higher education is communicated to administrators to be translated into working actions needs effective communication. However, the 'language' of communication, which is not merely speech, should reflect modesty and delicacy, as well as high insan value of thinking rather than simple acceptance of orders. This differentiates the language of machines and that of insan. The language of machines, as it is with computers, is mechanical in nature and it just follows orders as compared insan language which comprises also aspects of the qalb and adab seen as moral philosophy. Everything is mainstreamed by standards boxed up in the constraints of the limitations of human rationalisation. Various controlling standards such as the *International Standard Organization (ISO)*, *Key Performance Indicator (KPI)*, *Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)* and many more which were developed to control organisational governance initially, have been used to produce learners as products of education. The language of insan bearing the characteristics of love, sincerity, honesty, ihsan, responsibility, trust and transparency has been replaced by the language of machines which represents code and conduct, orders, target, SOP, KPI, ISO and other standards as the mould to educate learners.

The suitability of the use of machine language to administrators in education institutions, who have a tremendous responsibility in shaping the character development of the future generation, needs to be re-evaluated. The language of machines is appropriate in some operational organisations such as in product manufacturing factories but surely not in institution of education, more so in higher education. Administrators in the practice of using machine language to supervise employees have unknowingly belittled their humanity to the level of living robots. The education institution changes in nature to become a factory to produce mass generic product to fulfil the needs of the job market. A plethora of rules will prevent employees from generating inspiration. Rules do not inspire, values do. The application of the use of insan language is not bound merely to the senses but also to non-physical aspects. Man needs to revert to the more meaningful internal guidance rather than be influenced by external stimuli (Al-Attas, 2011; Christensen, 2012; C. G. Eaton, 2000).

The Deviation of the True Purpose of Universities

(Ahmad, 1984) says that the occidentosis of thought through the separation between the west and the east as it happened in education has caused damage from within. This is supported by Syed Ali Tawfiq (2012) who terms this approach as being the most challenging for higher education. Higher education administration should not limit aims such as; the achievement of the best university status (by the yardstick of the west, not in line to the needs of the nation) or being a research university that puts aside the actual purpose of universities to develop well-balanced, pious insan as its priority.

The establishment of universities which initially had the purpose of developing good individuals began to change roles to become:

1. *Career Training Centers* (Paton, 2012)– where the role of universities was to provide skills needed for the market industry to learners enabling them to secure jobs after graduation.
2. *Churning robot in flesh* – Learners are taught using programmed moulds that ends in learners being unable to hone individual unique potentials.

3. *Mass Generic Product* (Campbell, 2012)– Standardisation following a blueprint of ‘one-size-fits-all’ aiming to create learners as products to be marketed.
4. *Delivery of Curriculum* – Educators play the role of postmen who deliver the content of textbooks or complete the syllabus.
5. *Profit Oriented – A Business* – Universities become utilitarian. Learners are the customers or consumers who have the perception that certificates can be bought at a price. Education becomes a commodity and an item for trade (Williams, 2013).

Jalal Ali Ahmad in his book *Oksidentosis* (Ahmad, 1984) stresses that the west do not produce their educating force through the formation of adab or character, although these are the core to create knowledgeable insan skilled in various fields through character development as found in Islamic knowledge tradition. The question is why do the eastern nations not rise up and see the treasures they own? Can the current education system educate the society? If not, why? Where did we go wrong? This is what he terms as "*Occidentosis*". This can be observed as a parasite attacking wheat. The hollow husk of the wheat grain looks good on the outside (Ahmad, 1984). That is the analogy that can be made for education that is shaped in the mould of the west.

MANAGING ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATIONS: ROLE OF MUSLIM LEADERS

Muslim Leaders in Islamic Higher Education Institution: The Inward Journey

“What does it mean to be an Islamic Institution of Higher Education in its true sense?” and “What reflects the occupant of such an institution as insan ta’dibi?” are two questions that invite leaders of Islamic education institutions to think on the nature of the universities that they manage. Does the name ‘Islamic University’ bear its meaning in the true sense or is it just an advertising slogan and the content is still from the west given an Islamic facade. As what Aristotle famous saying, “*Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.*”

There have been many leaders that have come and gone in the field of education but to seek out those who have left behind the legacy of moulding the character of insan with adab values where it matters, is not an easy task. The effort and mission of human transformation need to begin with the development of the value of iman and taqwa. (Siddiq Fadil 2012) states that if the leader appointed lacks the qualities of human transformer and culture builder, the move to change from the bottom needs to be executed. Philosophers of yore such as Plato, Socrates and Aristotle referred to the duty of leading a social institution as an artform in their writings. As art, effective leaders or administrators should possess certain skills in decision making, communicating and so on (Ramaiah, 1999).

Muslims are urged to return to the roots of Islamic values. Thus was the reminder of Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab r.’a., “*We were the worst of men, then Allah dignified us with Islam; if we were to seek honour from something other than Islam, then Allah will forsake us*”. It is not to be denied that academic excellence, especially in higher education is crucial. But to set only that as the highest measure in excellence is a folly. Such an obsession is a deviation from the true nature of education, which is the perfect formation of insan. Ignoring the dimension of character building is clear from the reaction of several parties that belittle knowledge that builds perfects and embellish insan (Siddiq Fadil 2012).

The inward journey as a leader would surely touch aspects such as discipline, integrity; focus and hard work in ensuring those under his leadership are able to move along parallel lines

with his aims. He should be ready to know himself, those whom he leads, the direction and answer the following questions:

1. Who am I?
2. Whom do I lead?
3. What leadership style should I employ?
4. Where does my leading force come from?
5. How do I become a more effective leader?

Leaders have a responsibility and there are times, they would have to make difficult and unpopular decisions. They might have to act and take steps which might not be favoured by subordinates.

Returning Meaning to Insan Leadership (Human Governance) Style (Ihsan) in Education

Human governance is something beyond what is achieved by the senses, experience, mind or feeling. It returns the core of one's being through the vertical dimension and dependence upon Allah. A leader selected will value integrity or trustworthiness or what is known in Islam as Ihsan with specific behaviour and adab. Insan governance moves from within or from the spirit to physical actions. Hence, when discussing insan as the basic subject, reference has to be made to components of inner characteristics, awareness and spirit. Insan governance stresses on aspects of spiritual development of leaders leading an institution of education.

Leadership is about being human because as a leader, one leads insan and not robots or machines. Insan is formed with adab and controlled with ihsan (Chitic & Murata, 1994). Ihsan means doing something with the feeling of trust, responsibility and the sensation of being watched. The meaning of ihsan is given in a hadith where Rasulullah says, "Ihsan is performing one's ibadah as if one sees Allah (watching him), even if one does not see Him, remember that He sees you (Hadith related by Bukhari dan Muslim). Human governance is rooted in religion to guide worldview, way of thinking, decision making and actions of a leader.

Malik Bennabi once said that colonisation has internally damaged the native society in terms of problems regarding the spirit, mind and culture which have opened paths to a new kind of dominance, that of the mind. The most critical problem facing the Muslim world now is the problem of knowledge which results in social, economic and political upheavals. This is admitted by scholars such as (Ahmad, 1984; Al-Attas, 2011; Fauziah Md Taib & Hafiz Zakariya, 2012; Syed Ali Ashraf, 1977).

His Majesty Duli Yang Maha Mulia, Pemangku Raja Perak Darul Ridzuan, Raja Nazrin Shah in Kongres Majlis Agama Islam Negeri Seluruh Malaysia held on the 26th of September 2011, said that Islamic institution such as the State Islamic Religious Council should play a role in shaping the development of Muslims through various fields. It requires a paradigm shift, work ethos and change in administration. The purpose and direction of future education should be emphasised by administrators of universities in their attempt to achieve transcendence in education. This is to ensure that knowledge given is in line with fitrah and leads to the truth. The education institution should be different from business institutions or corporate bodies which have profit aims solely. Insan governance, run by insan for insan should be meaningful so education could return to its original purpose, that is to produce

insan ta'dibi, responsible to himself and to his God, does justice to himself and his fellow men, while attempting to achieve perfection (Wan Mohd Noor Wan Daud, 2005).

Role of Philosophy in Education Governance

Trans-formation (beyond the formation) in the governance of education involves not only change from the outside but further, it starts with *tasawwur* or correct worldview (Chitic & Murata, 1994). Since change in the education institution involves insan, it should start internally, understanding the purpose of education itself. To start with correct understanding, it begins with philosophy. This then will lead to implementation of action through the formation of principles, procedure and process.

If the philosophy is flawed, it affects the principle, procedure and process of the administration. It should be back in origin or fitrah concept in running the Islamic institution of education. *Trans-formation* is not an outer garment, but it should start from within, with the philosophy, to process, which then will be appreciated by members of the whole organisation. Philosophy acts as a compass that will show administrators the correct direction of where an institution should be taken.

CONCLUSION

The orientation of universities is to produce insan ta'dibi, who are spiritually strong with good judgement. Administrative framework with insan governance is based on the internal insan potential imbued with effective principles to better manage an institution. Universities should not place material aims as the main focus while ignoring the original function of universities to mould a balanced insan. Leaders in Islamic institutions of higher education should recognise what is being managed and who is being managed. They should also fully comprehend the true meaning and role of universities so as to be able to implement insan governance to return the institution to its correct purpose. Fundamental research in the education administration field should be carried out extensively to solve the various questions above in the attempt to solve the problems of knowledge and challenges of education in these post-modern times.

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