Linking Sustainability and Spirituality:
The University with a Soul

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Abstract

Higher education institutions were intended to nurture the creative potential of individuals and assist in the development of civilization. After 1945, the number of modern universities expanded, but their original purpose changed. Universities have become more business-oriented institutions. The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) has changed almost every area of human activity at an unpredictable pace, challenging old paradigms and frameworks. Society scaled back education to meet market demands, and people lost their moral and intellectual dispositions. The general focus is on developing a workforce, inventive spirit, and high-tech machinery based on innovation and technology, resulting in weak ethical standards and a dangerous lack of trust in the community. Educators need to explore new and creative approaches to educational innovation to improve future learning. The need is for an education with a soul. Educators must cultivate the dual consciousness that humanizes technology through bold visions of moderation. They should help students develop a higher sense of purpose. Knowledge must be viewed from a new perspective. Knowledge must be wholesome or holistic, inclusive, sustainable and equitable in the sense that everyone has access to this special knowledge and can develop a sense of mercy, compassion and benevolence. In sum, the education system should be world-wide, inclusive, sustainable, and show mercy to all.

Keywords: Higher education, The fourth industrial revolution, Market demands, Education with a soul, WISER

Introduction

As recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the oldest institution of higher learning is the University of al-Qarawiyyin, founded in 859 B.C.E in the Medina of Fez. In 1963, it became a state university in Morocco. It was a university that tried to nurture the creative potential of individuals by fostering an environment that allows creativity to flourish, seeks dialogue and engagement with outside partners to allow for stimulus and fresh perspectives, and allocated sufficient resources for responsible research, and innovation to uplift human dignity and civilisation.

Higher education institutions were small then, attracting a small group of upper-class students. Since 1945, the number of modern universities that produced graduates expanded to compete in the more complex technologies. This changed the university and its original purpose. Universities gradually turned into more business-oriented institutions, resembling an assembly line for mass production. The situation is further aggravated with the coming of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) as a continuum from the previous Industrial Revolutions spanning more than two hundred years. Old paradigms and frameworks are being challenged by the unpredictable pace of change in almost every sphere of human activity. The fourth industrial revolution spawned Education 4.0 with the intention of producing graduates for a world dominated by cyber-physical systems. Education has become a factory for creating jobs and emphasising innovation, especially technical innovation, which is part of the overwhelming training of the mind to create new things and a better economy for innovation and a flourishing economy.

As Professor Avram Noam Chomsky pointed out, society reduced education to market demands (Bovitch et al., 2018). In educational institutions created in this way, people do not have an intrinsic, moral, and intellectual nature. The general focus is on the development of manpower, inventive minds, and high-tech machines based on innovation and technology. Education so imparted is one without a soul leading to weak ethical norms and dangerous trust deficits in communities. Educators must investigate new and creative approaches to educational innovation to upgrade future learning.

The need is for education with a soul, educating the whole person, including their emotional, social, and spiritual development. It emphasizes the cultivation of values such as compassion, empathy, gratitude, and integrity, alongside academic knowledge and skills, enabling students to lead fulfilling, meaningful, and purposeful lives. Education should develop students' moral, civic, and creative capacities and prepare them for a livelihood and, more importantly, life. Educators must cultivate "double consciousness" to humanise technology through a bold vision of moderation and middle ground. They must take the lead for Education 2030, focused on The World We Want to be aligned to UNESCO's Pillars of Learning for the 21st Century, namely: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, learning to be, and learning to become with a stronger sense of personal responsibility for the attainment of common goals (UNESCO, 2014:93). They must strive to bring back much-needed balance in Prosperity, Planet, People, Partnership, and Peace (5Ps) based on Education 2030. They should help students develop their "moral, civic, and creative capacities" (Fish, 2008, 11) as well as "capacities for integrity and courage, diligence and self-sacrifice, commitment and service to others, and a sense of higher purpose" (Razak and Moten, 2022: 25).

Thus, there is a need to look at knowledge from a new perspective and find a new framework which Dzulkifli calls WISER. The knowledge must be Wholesome or holistic, it must be Inclusive, Sustainable, and Equitable, in the sense that everybody should be able to access that particular knowledge, and cultivates a sense of mercy, compassion, and benevolence. This study is based upon library-based approach, encompassing a thorough examination of both primary and secondary sources. The methodology employed involves meticulous document analysis, employing descriptive and analytical approaches to documents like the Brundtland report, "The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," and the "Paris Agreement." Furthermore, it goes beyond mere content analysis by elucidating the epistemological and philosophical considerations.

World-Wide Education

The world is increasingly becoming global. The technical revolution has resulted in dynamic transnational and cross-cultural transactions among countries and peoples (Diaz, et.al., 1999). The cellular phone, the Internet, and satellite television instantaneously connect people on the planet. People live and work in a global marketplace of goods, services, and ideas. A new consciousness has emerged about the roles that individuals, institutions, nations, and nongovernmental organizations play in the new millennium. The global village has arrived (Barber 2000).

There is an urgent need for educational institutions to address and infuse global awareness into curriculum instruction. Students are increasingly confronted with many issues that require a global education focus. According to Kirkwood (2001), students face a new world order thereby creating a need to acquire a global education. He writes:

> Their daily contacts will include individuals from diverse ethnic, gender, linguistic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds. They will experience some of history's most serious health problems, inequities among less developed and more developed nations, environmental deterioration, overpopulation transnational migrations, ethnic nationalism, and the decline of the nation-state. (Kirkwood, 2001, p. 2)

As a result of global capitalism and globalisation, 21st-century students need to be interconnected and interdependent to address the global issues that have arisen, such as human rights abuses (Abdullahi, 2011). The need for global education is due to the state of the planet as a whole and an understanding of how its systems political, cultural, economic, ecological, and technological are linked and how these are manifested in relationships. For students to learn to live together in a globally interconnected world,

they must examine the world from varying perspectives and become aware of the complex interrelationships that characterise it (Starkey, 2012). According to Kirkwood (2001, p. 11), globally educated people "possess high tech skills, broad interdisciplinary knowledge about the contemporary world, and adaptability, flexibility, and world mindedness to participate effectively in the globalized world."

The term global education has been used interchangeably with such terms as world-centered education, and global perspectives in education because of similar if not identical meanings. Each construct stands for an education that brings the world into the classroom, where teachers teach from a moral, world-centric rather than an ethnic-specific or nation-state perspective. The implications of global education are that all professionals and bodies of knowledge must be prepared to deal with their involvement in worldwide systems. All have a need to know in what ways they are involved, how they are affected, and how they affect people in other countries.

The philosophical underpinnings of global education rest on the assumptions that human beings are created equal, their behavior is culturally determined, they possess basic human rights, and that global education has a moral purpose (Csikszentmihalyi 1993). These points have been well stated in the first two articles of the Cairo declaration of Human Rights in Islam (1990) as follows:

> Article 1: (a) All human beings form one family whose members are united by their subordination to Allah and descent from Adam. All men are equal in terms of basic human dignity and basic obligations and responsibilities, without any discrimination on the basis of race, colour, language, belief, sex, religion, political affiliation, social status or other considerations. True religion is the guarantee for enhancing such dignity along the path to human integrity.
>
> Article 2: (a) Life is a God-given gift and the right to life is guaranteed to every human being. It is the duty of individuals, societies, and states to safeguard this right against any violation, and it is prohibited to take away life except for a *shari'ah* prescribed reason.

Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi (1976) argued that fundamental rights are guaranteed for every human being by his status as a human. The Qur'ān (17:70) states that "God has conferred "dignity" on the children of Adam, whatever their innate and acquired differences may be" (Al-Qur'ān, 17:70). The Global Education Project, New South Wales (2014) lists important values and attitudes as a sense of identity and self-esteem; a sense of community; concern for the environment and commitment to sustainable practices; a positive attitude towards diversity and difference, and commitment to upholding rights and dignity of all people.

The global world requires educational institutions to adopt programs to reflect the international ties that bind people as they bind countries. They must produce graduates who know other cultural histories, languages, and institutions. They must help students to broaden their understanding of world events by offering the perspectives of other cultures; to produce graduates who understand the complexity of globalisation and develop skills in cross-cultural interaction and are competent to function professionally in an international environment and are equipped to make personal and public policy decisions as citizens of international society.

Higher educational institutions can meet this challenge in many ways. The institution may include its goals for international education in campus-wide strategic plans. They may incorporate comparative and International assessments into individual disciplines. They may alter the curricula to ensure explicit teaching of key values using values terminology and model key globally acknowledged values. They may encourage students to examine issues affecting more than one nation. These education efforts can extend to every discipline and professional school, weaving together academic institutions, private non-profit entities, businesses, local and national government, and public and private organisations. The graduates so prepared will be aware of and sensitive to the inequities which exist globally, to be future focussed and willing to act for change.

Inclusive Education

The term "inclusive education" has often been used synonymously with education for students with disabilities. Indeed, the primary motivation for inclusive education is to cater to the disabled. However,

the term includes students with many different attributes such as ethnicity, language, gender, and socio-economic status. Inclusive education means that all children are together in mainstream classrooms. It would provide real learning opportunities for groups that have traditionally been excluded. This includes children with disabilities as well as minority language speakers. Inclusive systems value the unique contributions that students from all backgrounds bring to the classroom, allowing diverse groups to grow side-by-side for the benefit of all. Recognition of inclusion as the key to achieving the right to education is enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This is the first legally binding instrument that contains a reference to the concept of quality inclusive education. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 also affirms "inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."

Inclusive education is central to achieving high-quality education for all learners. As per Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, inclusive education is to be understood as a fundamental human right of all learners. It is the primary means for persons with disabilities to lift themselves out of poverty, participate fully in their communities, and achieve inclusive societies. It is a principle that "values the well-being of all students, respects their inherent dignity and autonomy, acknowledges individual requirements and ability to effectively be included in and contribute to society." (United Nations, 2016, p. 3).

Inclusive education is a "whole systems" approach requiring the authorities to bring about necessary changes in institutional culture, policies, and practices. It is a "whole educational environment" necessitating the leadership of educational institutions to provide all facilities to achieve inclusive education and interact with the parents of learners, the local community, and the wider public. It is also a "whole person" approach that implies the provision of support, reasonable accommodation, and early intervention so that all learners are able to fulfil their potential. This approach aims at ending segregation within educational settings.

Inclusive education is also characterised by respect for and value of diversity; an inclusive learning-friendly environment; and well-trained teachers equipped to work through collaboration, interaction, and problem-solving. It requires accessible environments where everyone feels safe, supported, stimulated, and able to express themselves and where there is a strong emphasis on involving students in building a positive school community. Recognition should be afforded to the peer group in learning, building positive relationships, friendships, and acceptance. The final feature of inclusive education is the "recognition of partnerships" implying that "the involvement of parents or caregivers and the community is viewed as an asset that contributes resources and strengths" (United Nations, 2016, p. 4). Principals are the key actors responsible for operating and directing all administrative functions of schools effectively. They are responsible for maintaining the effective internal functioning of school systems, representing the school in the community, and implementing educational policies. They also act as role models who improve the ethical and professional growth of teachers and other professional staff (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2008). School principals are the key agent of change, as they are the central actors who contribute to the creation and promotion of a successful inclusion program (Cohen, 2015). For them to succeed, school leaders need adequate resources and facilities, specialised staff, adequate teacher training in inclusive thinking and techniques, and positive socio-cultural attitudes about schools and disability.

Several Qur'ān texts and prophetic traditions show that Islam has provided the term disadvantaged people as a generic term that includes disabled individuals under its umbrella. The term "disadvantaged people" refers to those with special needs (Bazna and Hattab, 2005). This term reflects a holistic notion of the Islamic philosophy in relation to disadvantaged individuals based on the main Islamic values of equality and justice (Bazna & Hatab, 2005). Society is held responsible for taking care of such individuals and is responsible for improving their conditions (Al-Qur'ān, 49:11). It is essential to take café of their basic needs such as food, safety, care, and shelter (Al-Qur'ān, 24:61).

Disadvantaged people have a right to be educated and their abilities should not be underestimated. Allah (SWT) rebuked His messenger (Al-Qur'ān, 80:1-3) when he turned away a blind man asking the Prophet

to teach him about Islam. Regardless of disability, individuals have a right to be treated equally, to be educated, and be included within society, and to have an effective, valuable role within it (Miles, 1995). According to the Qur'ānic text, there is no difference between people in terms of their physical appearance, their colour, race or nationality. They are all treated equally and differ only in terms of the amount of faith they may have. Verse 49: 13 reads: "Indeed the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous". Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said that "Allah does not look at your bodies nor at your faces but He looks into your hearts."

Clearly, the Islamic perspective declares the right of disabled individuals and establishes the responsibility and duty of society toward such disadvantaged members. However, several cultural practices exemplify that there is a contradiction between Islamic perspectives and local culture. The negative attitudes towards disadvantaged people are experienced by family members as well as by other members of society.

Inclusive systems, however, require changes in the school, the community, and the nation as a whole. At the school, teachers need to be trained, buildings need to be renovated, and students need to be given accessible learning materials. In the community, there is a need to combat stigma and discrimination, and educate individuals about the benefits of inclusive education. At the national level, governments must take effective measures to ensure children are being reached with effective services.

Education for Sustainable Development

The rise of market-based capitalism legitimising and idealising competition and greed has damaged the human psyche, society, and the environment. It is characterised by inhuman competition leading to a huge gap between the haves and the have-nots. This "dance of ideology and unequal riches" (McCarty et al. 2016), has caused various social problems threatening human survival, as well as that of the planet through various human-induced ecological crises. These crises led to the emergence of a powerful alternative paradigm advocating a shifting of the focus of economics from the accumulation of wealth to the idea that "humans are both the means and the end of economic development". However, repeated experience has shown that the rich continue to get richer and the poor, poorer (Piketty, 2014).

The global concern around the effect of human actions on the environment led people to pay serious attention to the idea of "sustainability." The Brundtland Commission Report (Brundtland and Khalid, 1987) made the idea acceptable world-wide. The report defined sustainable development as, "the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p 43).

Sustainable development is broadly based on the idea that the developmental efforts should not compromise the abilities of the future generations to meet their own needs; should not damage the Earth and the natural resources and should promote an equitable redistribution of wealth in the society and the elimination of extreme poverty. These pillars also feature prominently in the new global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 2016 (Helliwell, Layard, and Sachs, 2015). Some scholars suggest a potential contradiction in the SDGs between socioeconomic development and environmental sustainability goals (ICSU and ISSC 2015). There is a potential inconsistence in the SDGs, particularly between the socio-economic development and the environmental sustainability goals. Critiques also question the measurability and monitoring of the broadly framed SDGs (Ranjula, 2018: 341-342). It is also been observed that:

> SDGs are an overly ambitious and insufficiently integrate global agenda that could potentially undermine the sustainable development end goa. … If taken at face value, the SDGs could jeopardize 'Earth's life-support system' and the welfare of future generations (Lim, et.al., 2018, 22).

The Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) developed the Islamic Declaration of Sustainable Development model which the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) presented to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. It proposed a five-pronged approach calling for justice; active participation; a just world trade system; an enhancement of the international community's development practices/policies; and the education of youth on

environmental, religious, and moral responsibilities. It called for cooperation to achieve sustainable development (Laylla, 2017: 116). Unlike secular development ideals, Islamic development is spiritual in essence and does not concern itself only with material accumulation or consumption (Sardar, Z., 1996). Instead of maximising consumption and accumulating wealth, the Islamic worldview recommends lowering one's desires and consumption in the present, sacrificing short-run and illusory benefits for the long-run benefits. Human beings, in Islam, are charged with *`Imāra tul Ard* (construction of the earth) and *Istikhlāf* (stewardship or vicegerency) (Al-Jayyousi, O.R., 2016).

Education is an essential tool for achieving sustainability. An educated citizenry is vital to implementing informed and sustainable development. The education system has to be appropriately reoriented to include teaching and learning knowledge, skills, perspectives, and values that will guide and motivate people to pursue sustainable livelihoods, and to live in a sustainable manner. The education authorities must reorient curriculums, select the knowledge that will support sustainability goals, focus largely on the major social, economic, and environmental issues that threaten the sustainability of the planet, and let students gain practical skills that will enable them to continue learning after graduation, to have a sustainable livelihood, and to live sustainable lives. These curricula must also assist students to understand values which are essential for understanding one's own worldview and other people's viewpoints.

To succeed in this endeavour, the leaders must take steps to develop awareness within the educational community and the public that reorienting education to achieve sustainability is essential. They must take into consideration the local environmental, economic, and societal conditions. They must provide a basic understanding of sustainable development; help in understanding the range of social, economic, and environmental issues facing the world today; and help the students and the public explore different ideas and perspectives about the future.

Equitable Education

Education enables individuals and societies to utilise their human capabilities for social and economic development (Machin & Vignoles, 2018). Education is a fundamental right and is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and many other international human rights instruments. The right to education is also one of the key principles underpinning the United Nations Education 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4). SDG4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all. Education as a fundamental right is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and many other international human rights instruments. Interestingly, Article 9 of the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam (OIC, 1990) reads as follows:

> (a) The quest for knowledge is an obligation and the provision of education is a duty for society and the State. The State shall ensure the availability of ways and means to acquire education and shall guarantee educational diversity in the interest of society so as to enable man to be acquainted with the religion of Islam and the facts of the Universe for the benefit of mankind.
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> (b) Every human being has the right to receive both religious and worldly education from the various institutions of, education and guidance, including the family, the school, the university, the media, etc., and in such an integrated and balanced manner as to develop his personality, strengthen his faith in God and promote his respect for and defense of both rights and obligations.

Though many Muslim and non-Muslim countries are committed to all 17 goals under the United Nations SDG 2030 and in particular SDG4, it has not adopted inclusive universal education. This has vanquished the dreams of thousands of women and children of reaping the benefits of early education.

Education is considered equitable, when educational practices, policies, curricula, and resources are representative of all students, such that each student has access to, can participate in, and make progress in high-quality learning experiences, regardless of race, socio-economic status, gender, religion, national origin and linguistic diversity (Skelton & Kigamwa, 2013). Enhancing equity in education leads to improved economic, social, and individual outcomes, as boosting the skills of every student; and increasing chances for employment and productivity (OECD, 2012).

Equity in education encompasses two closely related dimensions: equity as fairness and equity as inclusion (Field, Kuczera, and Pont, 2007). Equity as fairness implies that personal or socio-economic circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin, or family background do not stand in the way of educational success. Equity as inclusion means ensuring that all students achieve at least a basic minimum level of education. Equitable education systems are fair and inclusive, supporting their students to reach their learning potential without creating barriers or lowering expectations, either formal or informal. An equitable education system can offset the impact of broader social and economic inequalities. In the context of learning, it enables individuals, regardless of their background, to reap the full benefits of education and training (Faubert, 2012; Field, Kuczera and Pont, 2007).

The scope of equity in education is very wide and may extend to ensuring equitable educational practices, including classroom instructional practices, educational resources, teachers' attention, curricula, assessments, interactions, attitudes, language and institutional cultures Many countries have committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030), the culture and structures of higher education institutions remain slow to change (UNESCO 2008: 13).

Raḥmatan lil 'ālamīn

Raḥmatan lil 'ālamīn or mercy to all is found in the Qur'ānic (21:107) verse referring to the attributes of Mercy, Compassion, and Benevolence. These attributes are to be nurtured in the educational system which is not happening. As argued by Neil Postman (1995: p. 30), "the narrative of Economic Utility is impotent to create satisfactory reasons for schooling." He points out that the purpose of schooling is to prepare children for competent entry into the economic life of a community. This narrative is "impotent" as it diminishes the idea of what a good learner is. Students are seen as merely economic creatures whose sense of worth and purpose is to be found in their capacity to secure lucrative jobs. An education system based on this narrative lets its graduates lose a sense of personal identity, a sense of community life, and a basis for moral conduct. "When we fail to honor the deepest questions of our lives, education remains mired in technical triviality, cultural banality, and worse: It continues to be dragged down by a great sadness... a cry for meaning" (Palmer, 1998, p.3).

The expression *raḥmatan lil 'ālamīn* brings the meaning of blessing to the whole world, be it humans, animals, land and seas, and the environment, and promoting peace and harmony and a coherent relationship not only between humans but also between humans and their natural habitat. There is some similarity with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Essentially, at the heart of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals is the goal to eradicate poverty, improve health and education, reduce inequality, boost economic growth, and address the issues of climate change while protecting the earth. Noticeably, these SDGs are consistent with the shari'ah objectives (*maqāsid al-sharī'ah*) of protecting faith, life, lineage, intellect, and property. The SDGs, however, are not legally binding. The Islamic ethics or moral code embedded in *raḥmatan lil 'ālamīn* can serve to morally reinforce the SGDs.

Many are unaware that the Qur'ān contains many verses admonishing people to protect the environment and not spread corruption (*fasād*) on earth (Al-Qur'ān, 2:11). The Qur'ān reminds believers that the destruction on earth and in the seas is a result of what human hands have wrought (Al-Qur'ān, 30:41). Similarly, the SDGs' goal of reducing inequality was spelled out in the Qur'ān 59:7, which forbids the circulation of wealth only among the wealthy.

Education system based on *raḥmatan lil 'ālamīn* would help young people find questions leading to a discovery of the meaning of their lives. *Raḥmatan lil 'ālamīn* could be understood as a set of principles that promote universal values of love and compassion among mankind as well as all God's creatures. It encompasses positive universal values which are meant to benefit not only Muslims but the whole of mankind and creatures. People are to live in peace, diversity, and harmony in this universe. The principle of *raḥmatan lil 'ālamīn* stresses the need to eradicate hate and discrimination among people. It points out that religion, knowledge, and wisdom are essential bases that equip humans with effective ways to relate to, deal with, and serve others. It necessitates understanding the people or knowing the local reality, recognising the local wisdom, or work of local scholars in designing a policy or a programme.

Raḥmatan lil 'ālamīn, blessings for the entire world – mankind, animals, land and seas, and the environment, has several attributes. It teaches tolerance. Living in a world where belief systems, culture, and language are heterogeneous warrants a readiness among all to understand each other. Tolerance is to be furthered by eschewing coercion and refraining from the use of violence. Instead, the educational system should spread love, observe fairness, practice a non-discriminatory approach, and thus maintain peaceful coexistence among people of diverse backgrounds. Institutions should strive toward quality-driven work outcomes and efforts.

The internalization of the principle of *raḥmatan lil 'ālamīn* could be achieved by providing holistic, value-based education, and by availing effective communication about the importance of mercy, compassion, and benevolence. In the last few years, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) has emerged as competencies to help individuals recognize and regulate emotions, identify positive purpose, demonstrate empathy for others, and promote human flourishing. It is argued that explicit training in SEL builds competencies that might empower and enable individuals to regulate emotional responses. One such framework, labelled EMC217, seeks to provide explicit training in four competencies: empathy (E), mindfulness (M), compassion (C), and critical inquiry (C) to build emotional resilience and promote prosocial behaviour. These competencies can be developed through a formal education system wherein the focus must shift "from purely building intellectual intelligence to one where there is a balance of both intellectual and emotional intelligence" (Asah & Nandini, 2019, 56). They are of the opinion that the SEL is necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Conclusion

In today's world, there is an increasing demand for technological skills, complex cognitive skills, and high-level social and emotional skills such as initiative, leadership, and entrepreneurship. There is no equivalent emphasis on students' moral, civic, and creative abilities. There is no emphasis on developing skills of integrity and courage, diligence and self-sacrifice, responsibility and service to others, and a sense of higher purpose. The general direction of education in today's world is fully westernized, aiming at economic and industrial development while neglecting human purposes. As such, it is a dehumanizing exercise that needs to be replaced with a healthier, more inclusive, more sustainable, just, and resilient framework.

What is required then is "education with a soul". Educational institutions should aim to make full use of students' moral, civic and creative abilities without neglecting their role in promoting the socio-economic development of society. This requires, firstly, an education system that is worldwide promoting learning about the cultures, geographies, histories, and current affairs of all regions of the world. It should emphasise the connectedness and diversity of peoples and stories. It should broaden perspectives, establish diverse connections and promote innovations and ideas across borders. Secondly, education should be inclusive, primarily through accepting, understanding, and accommodating differences among students. Everyone should feel welcome, appropriately challenged, and supported in their efforts. Thirdly, the education system should be sustainable, which, in the words of the 1987 Brundtland Report, meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations. It calls for a concerted effort to build an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient future for people and the planet. Fourthly, the education system should be equitable, it should close the attainment gap by providing additional structures to overcome barriers faced by individual students. Practices, policies, and procedures be in place to support academic fairness and inclusion. Finally, the education system should show mercy to all (*raḥmatan lil 'ālamīn*). It should promote a system that is characterised by safety, peace, and mutual respect so that people could carry out activities in various fields in a synergistic and sustainable partnership. It should promote a system of education captured in the acronym WISER (Worldwide, Inclusive, Sustainable, Equitable, and thus be *raḥmatan lil 'ālamīn*), that will lead to a more just and humane world as a higher purpose of life. The system of education must harness and harmonise the opposite forces of matter and mind, body and soul, head and heart, and technology and ethical values.

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The authors of the study declared the following points within the framework of the "COPE-Code of Conduct and Best Practices Guidelines for Journal Editors":