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The Role of Higher Education in the 21 Century

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generations of learners who possess the skills necessary to discover, use, participate in and add to it, and this can only be achieved through educational institutions, especially institutions of higher education. The 21st century is characterized by many developments in all aspects of human life, in terms of knowledge, technology, education, as well as life skills.

We live today in an era of knowledge and economic and technological competition among countries, and this in turn leads to the organizations' need for employees with skills that enable them to work and live together, and to rely on modern technologies in communicating with others. This requires the skills of the twenty-first century, as all of humanity in this century faces many challenges, whether in society, such as climate changes, the emergence of some new diseases and epidemics, or in the economy, where we are also witnessing changes such as innovations, inventions, and new products, as well as challenges on the personal levels. The most important of which is the possibility of obtaining a job that simulates an individual's ambition and contributes to achieving happiness and stability together.

Keywords: 21st Century Skills, Higher Education, Competencies of the 21st century.

This century, which depends on knowledge and its economy, requires the preparation of generations of learners who possess the skills necessary to discover, use, participate in and add to it, and this can only be achieved through educational institutions, especially institutions of higher education (Agarwal, 2009).

Therefore, higher education, and in light of all these requirements, faces great challenges, identified by UNESCO in 2019 (Agnoli et al., 2018, p.169), in “assimilating science and technology, raising professional skills and competencies, and developing society into a community of knowledge in order to be able to compete in the global labor market,” especially since education continuous life is the required formula that is irreplaceable for everyone.

To keep pace with this rapidly changing and highly complex environment, there are a number of skills that allow the owner to deal with all the transformations previously mentioned, bearing in mind that these skills are not only the result of this century, but rather an extension of the basic skills that individuals have possessed in the past (Alba et al., 2009), due to the fact that skills are not to be overlooked. In the twenty-first century,

old skills were added, and what enabled the individual to live more efficiently at a time when many demands became of renewed skills and competencies, and these skills are:

- Creativity

It is one of the most important success factors and the basic criterion for building the competitive advantage of organizations, as well as that human capital and technology are among the basic and important elements for the success of any organization (Barak, 2017), especially since in the near future we will be forced to work with robots, which requires new ways of thinking; that is why human creativity is the key for that.

- Emotional Intelligence

A person's ability to perceive, control, and express their emotions, as well as an awareness of others' emotions, describes their emotional intelligence (El-Chaarani 2013; El-Chaarani, 2016). Knowing that machines cannot easily replace the human ability to communicate with another human being, so the labor market in the near future will need employees who have a high IQ (Basu et al., 2006).

- Analytical - critical thinking

Anyone who has the skills of critical thinking can propose innovative solutions and ideas, through which he/she can arrive at a solution to complex problems using logic and evaluating arguments. The first step in critical thinking is to analyze the information flow from various resources. After observation, a person with strong analytical thinking will rely on logical thinking rather than emotion, collect the positives / negatives of the situation and be open to the best possible solution (Cleary and Quinn, 2016). Therefore, people with strong analytical thinking will be needed to navigate the human / machine labor division.

- Active Learning with a Growth Mindset

Any future employee needs to learn and grow actively. Therefore, an individual who has a growth mindset can develop his capabilities and intelligence, and his efforts to build skills will lead to higher achievement (Dunne, 2015). Thus, they will face challenges, learn from mistakes and actively seek new knowledge.

- Judgment and decision making

Human decision-making will become more complex in the workplace in the future, as

machines and data can process information and provide insights that are impossible for humans to collect. What makes managers and leaders in dire need to make appropriate, logical decisions with the highest level of responsibility (Helyer and Lee, 2014).

- Interpersonal communication skills

The ability to exchange information between people will be a vital skill during the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This means that people must sharpen their ability to communicate with each other so that they can communicate the correct idea, when presenting or receiving various types of information such as conveying ideas and feelings to other parties, or expressing what is happening around them (Lingel and Golub, 2015).

- Driving skills

Preparing leaders who possess specific skills, caring for them and caring for them is the decisive factor in the present and future of people. Moreover, successful leadership is able to make the right decisions by absorbing the present and anticipating the future (Nabi et al., 2018). In addition to his mastery of teamwork, whatever the skills and abilities of the multitudes of people, they need someone to define goals, mobilize energies, assign tasks, know abilities, refine skills, and

evaluate performance, which is the active and influential factor in people's lives.

- Diversity and cultural intelligence

As our world and our workplaces have become more diverse and open, it is crucial that individuals have the skills to understand respect and work with others despite differences in race, culture, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs, etc (Behar-Horenstein and Niu, 2011).

The ability to understand and adapt to others who may have different ways of perceiving the world will not only improve how people interact within the company, but also potentially make the company's products and services more inclusive and successful.

- Technology skills

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is fueling technological innovations such as artificial intelligence, big data, virtual reality ... etc.

At a basic level, employees in most roles will be required to access data and determine how to act on it. This would need some technical skills and competencies.

Accordingly, everyone needs to be able to understand the potential impact of new technologies on their industry, business, and job (Blikstein, 2013).

- Embrace change

Given the speed of change in the future workplace, people should be flexible and able to embrace and cope with changes around them (Cottrell, 2017).

Not only will our brains need to be resilient, but we will also need to be adaptive because we are required to deal with changing workplaces, expectations, and skill sets.

One of the key skills during the Fourth Industrial Revolution will be the ability to see change not as a burden but as an opportunity for growth and innovation.

- Thinking outside the box

It means that we think in a different way, unconventional, or from a new perspective, and we try to find new ways of thinking creatively, without hindrances or restrictions. Also, thinking outside the box is meant to invoke creative thinking in each of us to solve a problem that he/she may face and work to provide an appropriate solution to it (Fletcher and Sarkar, 2013).

Education does not stop at a specific time, but rather extends throughout a person's life, thus enabling him/her to always acquire everything new. And since the university is one of the institutions of education and

upbringing in society, and the highest degree of the pyramid in the education system, and with the developments and changes that the "university" has witnessed as a concept and organization, the latter acquired with the passage of time a set of features.

This is because it is a place of mental excellence, education of thought, and objective knowledge, in addition to being a place for the production of knowledge for its own sake and transmitting it to those who can assimilate and benefit from it.

The country's economy is also linked to higher education because it is one of the most important basic means that pump into the labor market a number of workers that are supposed to have been prepared in the way required to keep pace with the skills of the twenty-first century, and because higher education is an institution in which experiences, knowledge and skills converge, it bears the responsibility of preparing generations to serve the community in all the branches of science, professions, and skills, and the dissemination and development of specialized knowledge, as its institutions vary to include the university, the college, and the university institute.

Accordingly, these new data require expertise and skills that are not available to universities of teaching and indoctrination, which have no place today in a society in which knowledge is multiplied at a breakneck speed, and the fore is for universities that depend in their curricula on empowering students with the technologies of the twenty-first century.

In order for universities and higher education institutions to play this active role, they must communicate effectively with society to know its needs and weaknesses in order to be able to contribute to the acceleration of its development, and to define the roles that it should play, and the priorities required of it, and to define strategies and plans for the development of human capital to invest it in developing the creative capabilities of higher education students, by pushing knowledge, experiences and behavior towards continuous development and learning.

Human capital is defined as "all the knowledge, talents, skills, abilities, experiences, training, and wisdom possessed individually and collectively by individuals. These resources are the total capacity of the people, which represents a form of wealth that can be directed to achieve the goals of the

nation or state or part of those goals. " (Cleary and Quinn, 2016, p.117)

So we can say that higher education institutions contribute to the formation of the students' personality, building their cognitive and behavioral skills, enabling them to be autonomous to be able to make independent personal decisions with wisdom and logic, and here we do not mean absolute individual independence, but rather, we mean strengthening self-confidence and not relying on others in order to extract dependent values from the conscience to encourage students to take individual and creative initiatives that are the basic criterion in university work.

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