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GUEST EDITORS: ISLAMIC EDUCATION AS THE CORE FOR THE FORMATION OF *BARAKAH* CAMPUS

Editor Tamu: Pendidikan Islam Nadi Pembentukan Kampus Barakah

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This special edition compiles a collection of papers presented at International Conference on Islamic Higher Education (SeIPTI) 2018 organised by Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) on 25 to 26 November 2018. SeIPTI is a conference that groups scholars to discuss issues pertaining to Islamic higher education. The fifth conference this year brings about the theme of “Barakah Campus”. Under this theme, various issues have been discussed including the concept of barakah in universities and wider topics that are not confined to merely discussions on Islamic higher education but also broader debates on developments related to Islam in various fields in different kinds of organisations. Hence, this special edition highlights the theme, “Developments in Potential Fields in Achieving Barakah”.

The first article by Siti Fatimahwati Pehin Musa and Khairul Hidayatullah Basir (2019: 1-22) examines youth unemployment and the rentier economy in Brunei, taking Norway as the exemplar. In this comparative study, focus groups of young people were conducted and the major finding found and to be learnt is the fact that Norway focuses its education system not merely on academic achievement but also on vocational training and entrepreneurial skills, hence increasing the value of her graduates and may reduce the risk of unemployability.

The discussion is resumed by Lang Sanyang and Khadijah Othman (2019: 23-35) on work force diversity and its impact of organizational performance. Although previous studies have shown mixed results on this topic, there are positive relation between diversity factors and performance. The paper argues positive significant relation between the workforce diversity and performance based on majority previous findings’ suggestions. This further suggests the importance of managing diverse workforce in determining workplace performance.

If we have seen that certain alternative system might be very useful to support education and improve its effectiveness, we can argue similar trend may be seen in other fields too. For instance, Ahamad Faosiy Ogunbado (2019: 36-48) writes about Infrastructural Development in Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (IOC) Member Countries: Sukuk Mode Financing as an Alternative and introduce Sukuk as an alternative option to conventional mode of financing infrastructure for economic and social growth of OIC countries.

Kauthar Abd Kadir, Mahyuddin Hashim, Nurul Asiah Fasehah Muhamad, Norakyairee Mohd. Raus, Noornajihan binti Ja’afar and Nur Badriah Omar (2019: 49-59) focuses further on a study specifically among visually impaired people in learning Quran through Braille. The paper discusses Iqra’ Braille 1 studied by researchers from Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia in terms of its contents, guidelines, activities and performances. The study found these four aspects under study are suitable to act as the foundation in teaching Quran for visually impaired people with suggestions to improve the system. Such alternative supports specific needs of specific group.

There is a question of what is the meaning of *barakah* and how it is applied in universities? This lead Aulia Naufal, Syed Mohammad Chaedar Syed Abdurrahman Al-Yahya and Robiatul Adawiyah Mohd@Amat (2019: 60-77) to find an answer from their research on Gontor University and Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia. The authors describe the fact that rapid development of Gontor, initially a small educational effort now has grown with 25,000 students spread to 21 campuses across Indonesia and such model may be an exemplar to USIM who is planning for her expansion in the near future.

Interesting discussions are continued by Siti Rahmah Ahmad Razuan, Norakyairee Mohd Raus, Mahyuddin Hashim, Mohd Nur Adzam Rasdi, Adnan Mohamed Yusoff, Noornajihan Ja’afar and Nurul Asiah Fasehah Muhamad (2019: 78-98) which emphasize on Quranic education for disabled based on experience of Ibnu Ummi Maktum Research Unit (UMMI). The study aims to share the experience of UMMI in identifying issues related to Quranic education for people with disabilities (PWD) and the role of UMMI in the effort to assist PWD in Quranic education. The findings suggest that there is an urgent need for Public University (UA) to play the role to increase the accessibility for the PWD in order for them to appreciate the virtues of the Quran and significant concepts of religion in life.

Mohd Radhi Ibrahim (2019: 99-115) brings a discussion on Islamic science and aims to examine the meaning of Islamic science in the context of epistemology and the framework of Islamic science. This is discussed within the implementation of the

concept of the integration of *naqli* and *aqli* knowledge at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia.

Authors Amnah Zanariah Abd Razak, Sahlan Surat, Saemah Abd Rahman and Rosadah Abd Majid (2019: 115-130) focuses the study on extraordinary excitement among genius and talented students and the fact that this aspect has been neglected in empirical studies although studies have shown that it affects these students' social life. In this quantitative study, the results of investigating 40 school students demonstrate that these students are capable to succeed if they can overcome their uniqueness.

Rosninawati Hussin, Suria Hani A. Rahman, Sofia Hayati Yusoff, Rosidayu Sabran dan Fauziah Hassan (2019: 131-144) examined the use of communication technology such as iPad in classrooms and its effectiveness among high school students. Semi-structured interviews with teachers involved in this teaching and learning method, and the study exposes matters related to their perception on the advantages and disadvantages of iPad for students, and their routine in the usage of such technology. This study is part of a preliminary investigation which is on-going and aims to explore positive impact of technology use among students in seeking blessed knowledge.

In summary, this collection of articles presents various aspects related to knowledge and learning process, job satisfaction in organization, as well as building a *barakah* nation. They are not only relevant but also will contribute different insights to the general readers and researchers. The discussion and findings shared in this volume is hoped to shed light on the overall development of Islamic higher education, with the aim to open more aspects for discussions and to encourage more research in the future.

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