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Editorial Comments

Many who have made education their life's work have legitimate questions about the direction in which many of the most eminent education establishments are being lead. The current obsession with outcomes, whilst understandable to some extent, is disturbing for a number of reasons. Across the globe universities are witnessing attempts to suppress both free speech and those who think differently or who may hold views that disquiet or challenge the mainstream orthodoxy. Financial pressures have also seen institutions readily accept funding from political entities that have either bought their silence or unquestioning devotion. Little wonder then that some have felt the need to raise questions about the way in which entities such as European Union have used funds to create a dependency culture in the HE sector across much of Europe. What has been doubly disturbing is that those who have been courageous, some might say foolhardy, enough to question such systems of patronage have often found themselves rounded upon and stigmatised. We all need to ask ourselves what learning is really about, and how we empower ourselves and others to not just be passive receivers of knowledge, but develop the capacity to become autodidacts. Maybe Saul Bellow (1915-2005) was nearer the mark when he wrote the following; "The book of the world, so richly studied by autodidacts, is being closed by the "learned" who are raising walls of opinion to shut the world out."

This edition of the International Journal of Higher Education Management (IJHEM) contains seven scholarly articles conforming to the principal objective of the journal, namely the dissemination of both applied and theoretical knowledge. The papers provide an insight into a range of issues, both with local and global significance, and afford us an opportunity to appreciate the way in which the HE sector is endeavouring to adapt in this era or rapid change. Demographic and economic pressures are providing many challenges, and yet many of those in leadership and management roles have little time for serious foresight planning, as they are invariably focused on day to day firefighting. In addition there are issues concerning accountability and ensuring that those in leadership roles are much more representative of society as a whole. The findings of a number of these papers are significant not only for academicians, but also for professionals, policy makers and those responsible for local, regional and national strategy.

The Editorial Board is grateful to the contributors for making IJHEM the platform by which they have chosen to put their research into the public arena, and trust that they will use their good offices to ensure that others do the same.

The first paper is entitled: Investigating change through Appreciative Inquiry: A Case Study by Collington & Fook. No organisation or institution can afford to ignore the need for some form of appraisal and yet it might surprise some to discover, thanks to this paper, that Appreciative Inquiry (AI) has been a recent arrival in parts of the HE sector in the United Kingdom. Post- the financial crisis of 2008/2009 budgetary constraints and the drive for savings that have become known as Austerity have proved a catalyst for change, some of this change being in regard to institutional rationalisation. Financially at least, the UK HE sector has been

rather under the cosh, and as such has had to make savings, as well as rationalise resources including staff. Some in leadership roles have been only too pleased to use supposed government funding constraints and even the recent uncertainty surrounding the impact of the Brexit vote to push through unpopular measures. The HE sector in the UK is no stranger to funding constraints, with entities such as the publicly funded Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) be responsible for the distribution of funding, often at below inflation rates that result in a de facto cut for universities. Various universities have had to take tough decisions for some time with well-respected institutions such as Reading University making controversial decisions such as when it decided to close its award-winning physics department in 2006 – note that this was prior to the aforementioned global financial crisis.

With a marked increase in both internal and external pressures the atmosphere in some universities has been soured to some extent. Thus the mechanism used to help forge greater unity and purpose is worthy of research. Appreciative Inquiry, whilst not without its critics, is viewed as more constructive. Collington & Fook observe that; "AI promotes collegial, reflective practice..." something that is essential when endeavouring to take an educational institution forward. Whilst mention is made of the future, it is perfectly reasonable to ask what is meant by the word 'future'. What timeframe is being considered? All too often the planning time frames tend to be far too short. I note with interest that whilst departments featured in this research met both separately and together, it would appear that only the Heads of Schools or programme leads were deemed worthy to have one to one meetings. For AI to be truly effective, it requires both vertical and horizontal scoping of opinion, and this is especially true when it comes engaging those whose voice may well be marginalised or occasionally overlooked.

Whilst the findings generally appear positive, it would have been useful to have some idea of how far the AI approach has permeated the institutional culture. It is heartening that participants found the process "interesting", the real value must surely lie in the ability of the institution to become more effective at internal communication. The silo mentality that bedevils countless organisations is difficult to combat, and thus anything that helps in this regard has to be something that adds value. Refining such processes is of paramount importance, as is the creation of safe environments where participants feel free to speak candidly without fear of recriminations. Anyone familiar with the HE sector will appreciate that universities and colleges are notorious political institutions, often lead by talented individuals who do not take kindly to criticism, even when offered in a constructive manner. If AI can help provide a conduit that improves the situation, then it is to be welcomed. It is certainly encouraging that such an initiative appears to have been met with such positivity in the institution featured in this research.

The extent to which universities mirror the societies that they form part of is a matter for discussion. Those that rise to leadership roles are almost certainly likely to be of a conformist nature, or at the very least have proved themselves adept at reading and navigating the prevailing power mechanisms. Whilst many of those in leadership roles are often viewed as bulwarks against change, it is important to appreciate the role that creativity and the creative and questioning self can play in a society's ability to renew itself. With this in mind academic and social freedoms are clearly important, as are the prevailing norms within any given society.

Holding that thought for a moment, we would do well to ensure that we equip ourselves with an understanding of the degree to which any given community permits and encourages individual freedom and nurtures a spirit of individualism. In this respect the work of Geert Hofstede is pertinent to the next paper, and is worth perusing in regards to Turkey (<https://geert-hofstede.com/turkey.html>)

Mediating Role of Emotional Self-Efficacy between Emotional Intelligence and Creativity: Empirical Study on University Undergraduates by Gurbuz et al provides clear evidence that lecturers have a pivotal role to play as life coaches. Herein lies the challenge faced by educational institutions in Turkey and elsewhere, and that is that time and limits on personnel restrict the ability of lecturers to play a larger role, assuming of course that they are even interested in becoming mentors. Curricula have become increasingly prescriptive in some parts of the world, whilst in Turkey itself the higher education sector has become increasingly politicised, to such an extent in recent months that grave misgivings have been expressed internationally about the stifling of expression and dissent. It is important that readers appreciate that the authors of this paper wrote it prior to the recent failed coup in Turkey, an event which is already having widespread ramifications on the Higher Education Sector and society as a whole. This paper reminds us of the desirability of providing an academic environment that is conducive to creativity. We would all do well to cherish those dimensions that foster Creativity and Self Efficacy.

The third paper of this issue is entitled: An analysis of applied professional teaching practices in relation to research and policy - Parkinson & Chew. It is only really when there is an opportunity to survey the number of changes that have taken place across the UK HE sector over the last three decades that we begin to appreciate the enormity of what has and continues to take place. Where once to all intents and purposes in most institutions an undergraduate degree was free at the point of delivery, since 1997 fees have changed the dynamic to such a degree that they appear to colour decisions made by consumers and providers alike. The so-called marketization of the HE sector has created the "demands for a perceived value for money" that a range of academics have observed, and Parkinson and Chew are right to articulate the fact that many professionals have grave misgivings about what is taking place. "Measurable outcomes" have become the order of the day, and some are questioning how much further this commoditisation will go. Formal and informal league tables have resulted in students and indeed many of those in leadership and management roles demanding more bangs for their buck. The learning process has become a particular area of focus with some academics feeling as if they are in an X-Factor-style talent contest, one that requires them to play to the gallery and shamelessly self-promote at every available opportunity.

This paper highlights the impact of new technology and the role of Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) and Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs). The quest for measurable outcomes has thrown the spotlight firmly on to the questionable issue of relevance, little wonder then that many academics feel decidedly nonplussed. Maybe this goes some way to explaining why so many staff are taking early retirement or leaving the profession altogether. Whilst it is important to appreciate that change is a constant, and that some change ultimately is beneficial for all concerned, the simple fact is that the speed of change has been bewildering. This

measured paper draws heavily on professional experience and provides a cogent explanation of much of what is taking place. The fact that it ends by urging a degree of reflection is a testament to the mature and thoughtful approach that appears to under-pinned the manner in which this paper has been approached.

It takes a person of tremendous courage and self-confidence to challenge the prevailing orthodoxy, and yet that is precisely what is done in the next paper: Sorry Harvard, but I don't like the case method - Tarun Pasricha. I have no doubt that some may see this as a polemic, one written by someone who has the temerity to question the teaching method of an august institution. In point of fact what Parischa is doing, is what all effective academics should do, and that is examine whether something is fit for purpose. The author is not questioning the validity of using case studies, he is making the case for a more balanced approach, one that seeks to restore a degree of equilibrium. It is neither good for Harvard University nor the Higher Education sector as a whole that some people and institutions ape the Harvard model without question. Other institutions are so in awe of the name that they mentally genuflect, this too is decidedly unhealthy. Whilst no one questions the fact that Harvard University is an academic powerhouse, it is not infallible, and we would do well to appreciate that what works well in an exceptionally wealthy US institution does not automatically work well elsewhere.

The issue of case studies does indeed raise a range of questions. How many of these case studies come from the developing world? How well represented are case studies from female owned or ethnic minority communities? What effort is made to ensure that students are made aware of the importance of discernment? There is a growing appreciation that the 'West knows best' approach (or more accurately the 'US knows best') is well past its sell-by date, a point that was further underscored by the fact that so few western policy makers and academics predicted the financial crisis of 2008. Case studies have their uses, but are invariably drawn from an extremely limited pool, one that in some respects is highly unimaginative and rarely representative of society, or for that matter the world as a whole. Parischa draws on his professional experience to make a convincing case for paring back the percentage of the curriculum that is given over to the examination and exploration of case studies. If we read what he has to say in as objective and open-minded a manner as possible we may well find ourselves acknowledging that he has a point. In which case far from this paper being mere effrontery, it is precisely what we need those in leadership and management to do on a regular basis.

We now move from case studies to the necessity of a society to foster entrepreneurial activity as a means of providing employment, hope and greater social cohesion. Entrepreneurial Intentions amongst Tunisian Students: An Empirical Investigation Applying the Big-Five Personality Traits Theory - Ettis & Kefi seeks to address something of the current knowledge deficit with regards to part of the region that experienced the so-called Arab Spring. This paper makes clear that one of the root causes of dissatisfaction was the sense of social injustice caused by unemployment and the absence of job opportunities for those without money and influential connections. Those familiar with the GEM Tunisia Report 2012

(www.gemconsortium.org/report/49522) will appreciate that there has been a conscious effort on the part of Tunisia to endeavour to stimulate greater entrepreneurial activity. The HE sector has always had a duty to help prepare students for the world of work, whether by it

adding to the students' skill set or helping individuals grow in confidence and thus be better able to articulate themselves. That said, many of those in leadership and management roles in Higher Education have only ever known the world of education, and precious few have ever set up their own business, let alone made a success of it.

Ettis & Kefi's route into an exploration of student attitudes to entrepreneurial activity is through the use of the Big-Five Personality Traits Model (Eysenck 1960). Such an approach is eminently sensible, although it is inevitable that this has its limitations as the arrival of the Internet and social media has already brought about a seismic shift in the way in which individuals interact. For all the dominance of local culture and social mores, attitudes and expectations are changing, a point that is often lost on those that walk the corridors of responsibility in many universities. Family and societal norms and expectations still exert considerable influence, as do the role models that are held up by academia, the media and society at large. Whilst the youth of Tunisia will have various role models from popular culture, music, sport and fashion, it would be useful to know which entrepreneurs both male and female are in the public domain and receive comparable media exposure and adulation. Does Tunisia have a television programme such as 'Dragon's Den'? If so, how is this regarded? Interestingly, in common with other surveys carried out across the Maghreb and much of the Arab World those surveyed contain a higher percentage of female students. Whilst this is encouraging in some respects, prevailing patriarchal attitudes mean that the iconography and lexicon deployed invariably assumes that it will be the males that found their own businesses. Personality traits are of course significant, but equally so are the attitudes of those responsible for pedagogy and andragogy. This research makes it abundantly clear that educators need to do more.

A number of Arab countries are eager to ensure greater opportunity for their citizens, and in an ever changing world policy makers and educators are endeavouring to grapple with issues that will shape the future in regards to development and stability. The penultimate paper of this issue is entitled: Social media as a tool in learning and social behaviour in Saudi Arabia - Yusuf et al. New technology has opened up a world of opportunities, whilst also providing a means by which citizens can benchmark their own experience against what is taking place elsewhere. Internationally the HE sector is beginning to see new learning and teaching opportunities, and in some respects is feeling its way towards a new style of engagement with current and potential students. Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs) whilst a complete anathema to some academics, have taken on a momentum of their own, something that is more than apparent when visiting a site such as www.futurelearn.com

One of the greatest dangers about the response to the social media revolution is to base decisions on assumptions rather than on as comprehensive data set as is humanly possible. Whilst this research does not claim to be representative of Saudi Arabia as a whole, it does at least provide a useful snapshot of where things are at present, at least amongst an urban elite who attend a prestigious university. The generational gulf is significant, especially when we consider those who occupy the most senior posts in universities and colleges. Those responsible for drafting Saudi Vision 2030 (<http://vision2030.gov.sa/en>) are unlikely to be fully commensurate with the current state of social media engagement, or indeed aware of the

multiplicity of platforms available and the degree to which these are in favour amongst Saudi students and young adults.

The final paper of this issue shines a light upon an issue that every educational institution, indeed every organisation should take cognisance of, namely the degree of diversity amongst senior staff. A portrait of faculty diversity at selected elite universities by Saturnin Ndandala elucidates something of the progress being made amongst a cluster of elite North American universities. Whilst there is evidence of plenty of progress with regards to official policies, when it comes to key personnel the picture is decidedly patchy. Visible minority academics (VMA) remain thin on the ground when it comes to senior posts, and appear to be passed over when it comes to key promotions. A particularly telling point raised in this paper is in regards to whether this issue is deemed a priority or not, sadly, in some faculties and departments it would appear not. Whether "implicit bias" exists remains a point for further research, but the fact that many VMAs feel socially isolated should be a matter of considerable concern.

Ndandala makes an important point in highlighting the role that data collection, transparency and robust monitoring has to play. Sadly, many universities in North America and elsewhere are reluctant to collect data concerning ethnic origin, for fear that some might misinterpret the motivation behind such profiling. Looking around many universities and colleges it is still the case that whilst ethnic minorities are often hired in large numbers, they are invariably found in ancillary and support roles, not those deemed high status. This important research is a timely reminder just how much more work remains to be done to ensure that HE institutions not only are representative of society at large, but actually ensure equal opportunities for promotion regardless of gender and ethnicity. A key dimension here must surely be the lexicon and iconography of leadership.

Whilst it is important to note that there are signs of progress, it is clear a considerable amount of work remains to be done. Reports such as: Healing a divided Britain: the need for a comprehensive race equality strategy (<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>) are a reminder of just how much work societies have to do to achieve meaningful equality, rather than merely engaging in tokenism and ethnic minority window dressing. The HE sector has an important role to play, and needs to redouble its efforts in this regard.



Mark T. Jones
Managing Editor
International Journal of Higher Education Management (IJHEM)