Identifying People’s Responsibilities for the Global Knowledge Societies: A Framework and a Survey

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ABSTRACT

The drive toward building global knowledge societies for peace and sustainable development is becoming of increasing importance. This paper attempts to identify human or people’s responsibilities that need to be emphasized in order to achieve the goals of these societies. It introduces a framework for these responsibilities built upon a past knowledge society framework. Ethics is considered to be at the heart of the framework, which consists of three main types of responsibility: knowledge; social and intercultural. Eight main issues are considered to be associated with each main type. These issues have been debated among highly educated audience in Saudi Arabia for assessment and views. Each issue is considered from the viewpoints of: importance; current practice; and potential future improvement. The work hopes to explore people’s responsibilities needed for the global knowledge societies, in order to enable their future promotion and enjoy their benefits.

Keywords: Global Knowledge Society, Human Responsibility, Intercultural Responsibility, Knowledge Responsibility, People’s Responsibility, Saudi Arabia, Social Responsibility

1. INTRODUCTION

This section addresses the drive toward building global knowledge societies and emphasizes their increasing importance. It reviews the development of a past four dimensional framework that attempts to capture the activities, scope, continuous improvement, and the global harmony of these societies. Based on this, the section introduces the work presented in this paper as a fifth dimension of the framework that explores personal responsibility, which would enhance sustainable development, support peace, and promote happiness.

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1.1. The Drive toward Knowledge Societies

At the turn of the century, in the year 2000, world leaders gathered in the United Nations (UN) and issued the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) that set development directions toward better world (ITU, 2003). In the year 2003, they met again in Geneva in what is known as the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which emphasized knowledge activation as a mean for development, through the widespread use of information and communication technologies (ICT) (WSIS, 2005). In 2005, the UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) started replacing the term information society with that of knowledge society emphasizing the need to create knowledge and to utilize it for supporting development (UNESCO, 2005). In 2010, UNESCO introduced a paradigm of the knowledge society, shown in Figure 1. This paradigm identifies knowledge activities as consisting of knowledge creation, knowledge preservation, knowledge diffusion and knowledge utilization. It considers the needed environment for the knowledge society to involve pluralism and inclusion, and to support human needs and human rights (UNESCO, 2010).

In 2013, UNESCO stressed the need for the knowledge societies to promote human development, not only technological innovation. It considered that the core aspiration for peaceful and sustainable knowledge societies must acknowledge the interest of all stakeholders (UNESCO, 2013). If every country plans and drives its ways toward building its own knowledge society according to these principles, global knowledge societies seeking peace and development can be reached for the benefits of all.

1.2. A Knowledge Society Framework

In parallel with the international efforts given above, knowledge societies have attracted the attention of researchers. A framework that represents a knowledge society has been developed; and this framework has considered providing answers to three main questions (Bakry, 2009):

- How can knowledge lead to development?
- What are the issues that control this role?

Figure 1. UNESCO knowledge society paradigm

K Society

K Creation  K Preservation  K Dissemination  K Utilization

Pluralism & Inclusion

Human Needs & Rights
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