Navigating Disruptions in a Globalized Era

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IO – The world we live in today is rife with disruptions which change the trends of businesses, industries, jobs, etc. Things are no longer linear. The changes happen so fast, so profound, seismically altering life as we know it. While disruptions bring about innovative solutions and efficiency, they also give rise to new challenges and threats. The ramification is very broad, from finance, transportation, health, science and technology, education, culture, etc. This era requires to change or die. Here are some of the major disruptions that are happening around us and will surely affect us in the foreseeable future.

Industry 4.0

This disruption is triggered by the advent of Internet of Things (IOT), artificial intelligence, blockchain, robotics, and drones. These have made the world more connected through digitalization in almost every aspect of our life. In the context of economy and business, the emergence of the digital (gig) economy and platformbased business have changed the competitive landscape, consumer behavior, skill requirements, and new types of jobs. The world of academia has been forced to change its teaching-learning methods and curriculum. Industrial Revolution 4.0 calls for adaptation, paradigm shift, collaboration, new skillsets and flexibility.

MOOC & AI

The emergence of innovative gig economy companies such as Uber, Amazon, e-Buy, Alibaba, or Gojek have inspired similar applications in the field of education, for example Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and AI (Artificial Intelligence). MOOS is an online learning innovation that is designed to be engaging, open, accessible, shareable and scalable. This marks the beginning of the democratization of knowledge which creates opportunities for us to make a good use of information technology. Meanwhile, AI is an artificial intelligence machine designed to do specific jobs to help us in our daily lives. In education, AI will help individualized learning as it is able to search for the desired information while presenting it quickly, accurately, and interactively. MOOS and AI will disrupt traditional schooling. Teaching and learning activities will change completely. Today, classrooms are evolving with digital learning patterns that provide more creative, participatory, diverse, and comprehensive learning experiences.

The role of lecturers in the digital era has completely changed. They now must learn how to contextualize information and guide students through online learning. They must be able to shift from rote learning to discovery learning where students are trained to independently seek and evaluate information from diverse sources. Machines (search engines) are much smarter, knowledgeable and effective than us because they never tire. Therefore, lecturers today should be mentors, facilitators, motivators, inspirators. Someone who can nurture and develop students' imagination, creativity, character, and teamwork. Also someone who can teach ethics, wisdom, social empathy, cultural values, etc because these cannot be taught by machines.

Climate Change

Climate change is another disruption that gives rise to many existential threats to mankind and planet Earth. Global temperature is rising, glaciers and polar ice caps are melting causing sea level to rise, extreme weather events have become more frequent. From the grassroots level to national and global policies, climate change issues have taken precedence. Countries are scrambling to come up with adaptation and mitigation strategies. Climate change has affected us all on a personal level. Rising awareness about its impacts has given rise to green lifestyle, green economy, blue economy, and a circular economy based on the principle of sustainability.

Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted our life profoundly. It has plunged the world into collective uncertainty. Even after two years, the world is still reeling from more variants of the coronavirus, the latest being Omicron. The pandemic has caused public health emergency, battered the global economy and destroyed livelihood. Because of the pandemic, people are now starting to realize the importance of a healthy lifestyle, environmental health, food security, moral economy and mutual cooperation to tackle the crisis.

Turning Disruption into Opportunity

In this era of disruption, it is difficult to find best practices because everyone and all institutions are at the same time confused, some are even still learning, clueless. If our orientation is solely to seek best practices we will tend to wait for others' lead, hence becoming mere followers. But with orientation to the future, we can start charting our own course and become a model of excellence. We have no other choice; we have to change. We have to turn disruption into great opportunity, become a winner, and a leader that rides the winds of change.

The Role of Academia

In the era of disruption and constant change, what are the roles of campuses and universities? In principle, campuses must become part of the change, and their position is highly dependent on their ability to understand and respond to change brought about by disruption. Therefore, they need to have transformation agendas.

1. Moral Force/Inspiration

University must be the source of moral strength and inspiration for the nation. Hence, the Campus Merdeka (Independent Campus) must become an independent institution so that it functions as a moral force that can inspire change towards a better, advanced and civilized society.

2. Innovator/Reformist

University must not forget its role as an institution that always promotes change/renewal in the academic community and, more broadly, the nation by carrying out transformation process. University as educational institution made up of students, intellectuals, researchers or lecturers should become a melting pot of highly educated people and agent of change to solve various issues facing the world.

3. Leader/Pioneer

With many major disruptions taking place, university has a pioneering role to create breakthroughs in the form of agendas and actions for technological innovation, economy, the environment, health, education, and social innovation to advance the nation and humanity as a whole.

4. Forward Looker

Universities need to anticipate and adapt to rapid and constant change by keeping up with the latest development in science and technology. "Campuses have an absolute need to be able to anticipate quickly of the changing environment and be fully prepared."

5. Partner/Collaborator

Collaboration and partnerships are central to the advancement of educational institutions in today's world. Universities need to work with other stakeholders such as the government, companies, non-governmental organizations, alumni associations and professional bodies to fulfill its role as a force of progress and development.

Universities and the world of academic at large must ride the wave of change in an era of global disruption. To do this, they must constantly transform themselves toward becoming a World Class University.

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