



The Missions of the Science Institution and Academic Community to Promotion and Discourse Building of the Progres Model

* Masoud Shafiee  ** Reza Mahdi 

* Professor, Amirkabir University of Technology (AUT), Tehran, Iran. mshafiee@aut.ac.ir

** Associate Professor, Institute for Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), Tehran, Iran.
mahdi002@gmail.com

Received: 24.05.2025

Accepted: 04.07.2025

Abstract

The acceleration of developments in civilizational fields have made progress a complex, voluntary and conscious process based on valid and normative future research. In this complex process, the assets of countries are not enough to move on their own and end up well. A recommended criterion for nations seeking progress is to utilize all their civilizational capital and resources with maximum efficiency. Therefore, one of the general recommendations for streamlining the progress model is to discourse it based on all material and spiritual assets in the path of civilization and progress. The science institution and universities is one of the most important pillars of discourse on the progress model in the scope of a long-standing civilization and a great nation. Based on the fate of existing national documents, without discourse-building on a national scale with the participation of all influential institutions and individuals, including universities and higher education institutions, moving within the framework of the existing model will be difficult, with little or even impossible achievement. In this article, with a positive recommendation approach, the important mission of universities and the academic community in the discourse-building of the Iranian Islamic model of progress has been explained and described. Based on the central idea of this research, the higher education system and universities, including all members of the academic community and the university institution, must define and operationalize one of their missions in accordance with the three functions of education, research, and socio-cultural transformation, and general and specialized discourse-building of the progress model. The responsible participation of universities and academics in the promotion and discourse-building of the progress model has at least three special advantages, including the continuity and sustainability of achievements, public participation, and the comprehensiveness of the model on a national and civilizational scale.

Keywords: Model of Progress, Discourse-Building, Knowledge Promotion, University Mission, Science-Society Relationship.

Corresponding Author: Reza Mahdi- Mahdi002@gmail.com



Introduction

The acceleration and scope of developments in various political, economic, social, scientific and environmental fields have made development a complex voluntary process based on valid and normative participatory thinking and futures research. In the complex and challenging megaprocess of progress, the resources of states and nations are not enough to move according to their wishes and reach their destination [1]. A recommended criterion for all nations in the throes of progress is to utilize all their civilizational capital and resources with maximum efficiency and effectiveness. From this perspective, one of the general recommendations for streamlining the model of progress and civilization is to discourse it based on all civilizational assets in material and spiritual dimensions. Based on the historical experience and fate of great civilizations, the institution of science and today's universities is one of the most important and valuable elements of discourse on the model of progress [2]. Without a national discourse involving all influential, relevant and responsible institutions and individuals, including universities, moving within the framework of the existing roadmap and model is considered difficult, with little or no achievement. Today's university is not a single, unified institution, but rather a collection of multiple, complex and flexible structures [3]. Hence, the concept of "multiversity" [4] is used as a way to describe the different and sometimes contradictory functions and roles of modern university systems [5]. A number of concepts related to the social role of universities and higher education institutions can be found in the theoretical foundations and literature of the university and higher education institution. Universities and higher education institutions have begun to operate in new and entrepreneurial ways with the aim of gradually reducing their dependence on government funding [6]. Entrepreneurial universities take risks by combining old identities with new structural features, such as strengthening decision-making structures and bridging core functions with the outside world [7]. This contrasts with the concept of the "civic university", in which social engagement is intrinsically linked to teaching and research and, as an institutional activity, gives the university community a sense of purpose [8]. Benneworth [9] and Watson et al. [10] refer to the "engaged university" as a university in which the academic community and administrators play a prominent role in addressing critical issues facing the surrounding communities, especially the target community, such as poverty and social exclusion, helping to combat environmental risks, within a framework of social justice and ethical responsibility. Today, universities and higher education institutions face increasing pressures for accountability and responsibility [11]. In the article, the important mission of the university institution in discursively creating the Iranian Islamic model of progress has been explained in a mixed method. Based on the central idea of this article, the academic community and the university institution should, in line with civilization and progress, place one of their main missions in the triple functions of education, research and cultural transfer and socialization, promotion, explanation and popularization and discourse creation of the progress model. The concerned and responsible participation of universities in the discourse creation of the progress model can have at least three important advantages, including the continuity and sustainability of the process of implementing the model and achieving achievements, public participation, and the comprehensiveness of the model on a national scale. In fact, the main question of this article is what mission the university institution has in promoting, popularizing and publicizing the Iranian Islamic model of progress, and how can this institution carry out such a heavy and historical mission and mission in a worthy manner?

Methodology

In the article, to explain the mission of universities and academics in discursively developing the progress model, a non-systematic document review method, qualitative content analysis and theme analysis, experiences and knowledge from attending several national conferences on the Iranian Islamic Model of Progress, and lived experience in the space and hierarchy of university bureaucracy have been used [1]. The mission of universities to in discourse the progress model has been extracted and introduced from available sources and documents using qualitative content analysis and theme analysis.

Findings

In the Iranian-Islamic progress model document, at least 13 strategies, the role and position of universities and the missions of the science institution in the discourse of the model of progress have been designed: Scientific and realistic introduction of the values and achievements of the Islamic Revolution, expansion of revelation-oriented, rational and scientific education and training, training of capable, creative, responsible human resources with a spirit of collective participation with an emphasis on the culture of jihad and hard work, promotion of the job position, dignity and status of scientific and cultural strata, especially teachers and professors, research and theorizing to explain the lack of conflict between dualities such as reason and tradition, science and religion, progress and justice, Simultaneous attention to Iran and Islam, and the production of wealth and spirituality by the country's experts and scientific institutions, strengthening and expanding original, indigenous and useful scientific production in the fields of humanities by utilizing Islamic foundations and resources and human achievements, development of interdisciplinary sciences and original and useful multidisciplinary studies and research, intellectual effort and interaction. Long-term and sustainable development of the country's leading scientific elites and institutions in the international arena, increasing support and proportionate demand from the country's most prominent scientific institutions and personalities to produce science in order to meet the needs and solve the fundamental problems of society, valuing up-to-date and efficient informal information and skills, promoting skilled knowledge and diversification through skill-building methods, promoting basic knowledge and developing science, technology and innovation networks with mutual cooperation between scientific and research institutions, industries and the government in the process of producing goods and services, promoting indigenous professional skills to industrial technologies using new scientific achievements and historical experiences, and revitalizing specialized production markets in accordance with territorial capabilities. Based on the analysis of available sources and documents, with an emphasis on the three key functions of universities, including education, research, and socio-cultural services, the main themes and categories in the field of universities' mission in promoting, popularizing, and discourse-making the overall progress model and its concepts have been extracted and summarized: 1. Successful leadership and governance of universities, 2. Participation in civilization-building, 3. Promotion of democratic ideals, 4. Focus and reliance on solving important social issues and topics, 5. Civic commitment, 6. Increasing expectations from faculty members and the university community, 7. Synergy and co-creation of civilization and the university.

Conclusion

Considering the main functions of higher education and university, including the function of education, the function of research, and the socio-cultural function, and the strategies foreseen in the Islamic-Iranian model of progress regarding the role and position of universities and the



scientific community in implementing the measures and realizing the progress model, it is proposed that the science institution and universities play a role in the discourse of the progress model in four ways. 1. Education and knowledge transfer, including the inclusion of the content and concepts of the progress model in curricula, especially in general subjects and courses in the humanities and social sciences. Based on this proposal, it is expected that all general curricula and educational courses will be transformed and fundamentally reviewed in line with the foundations, horizons, goals, and measures of the progress model, both openly and covertly. In this review and transformation, the updating and efficiency of the content of the courses should be the concern of designers and planners. 2. Research and creation and dissemination of knowledge, including research on the content and concepts of the progress model in both cognitive and normative aspects. The scientific institution, universities, and the academic community can (and should) continuously explore and analyze the content and concepts of the progress model in two aspects, including the cognitive and normative aspects. Creating capacity and a platform for research and knowledge creation in the field of categories and concepts of the progress model will lead to the permanent generalization and promotion and institutionalization of the content and concepts of the model among the elite and the entire society. 3. Promoting and popularizing the content and concepts of the progress model through conferences, meetings, discussions, theory-building, promotion, and criticism chairs. Every year, thousands of conferences, meetings, discussions, addressing the theory, scientific-promotion, and criticism chairs are held in universities and educational and research institutions with the presence of a large number of experts. These scientific events can become a place and platform for promoting, publicizing, and Discourse-making the content, categories, and concepts of the progress model. How can all these principles, horizons, goals, and measures defined in the progress model be implemented and realized without promotion and generalization through the unique capacities of universities and the scientific community? 4. Training responsible citizens and building culture based on the goals and concepts of the progress model and designing and carrying out cultural and social activities based on the content of the progress model. Based on the mission and mission of the science institution and universities, designing, planning, and implementing cultural and social measures and activities, including various extracurricular programs, camps, scientific visits, activities, and employment in student cultural institutions such as centers, student scientific associations, and Islamic organizations, are among the key functions of these institutions and institutions. Universities and the academic community are expected to focus and concentrate part of their abundant capacity and talent in the cultural and social field on training responsible citizens and building culture based on the goals, concepts, and measures of the progress model. Finally, it is suggested that the active discourse of the progress model and its stages and activities before and after it be demanded from the science institution, universities and the academic community as a serious national duty, responsibility and duty. In addition, universities and the academic community should be involved in the discourse, implementation and execution of the progress model, including educating the young generation in line with, accompanying and familiar with the goals and concepts of the progress model. In other words, in the successful implementation of the progress model, the rights and obligations should be defined and pursued simultaneously and in a balanced manner for the university institution and the academic community: The right to participate; the duty of discourse and preparing the conditions for the effective realization of the progress model.



References

1. Mahdi, Reza (2022). Developing a National Division of Labor Mechanism to Begin the Process of Implementing the Progress Model, *Quarterly Journal of Entrepreneurship Studies and Sustainable Agricultural Development*, No. 18, pp. 52-39. [in Persian]
2. Sarton, George (1949). *Introduction to the History of Science*, translated by Gholamhossein Sadri Afshar, Volume 1, Tehran, Scientific and Cultural Publications. [in Persian]
3. Pinheiro, R., & Young, M. (2017). The University as an Adaptive Resilient Organization: A Complex Systems Perspective. In J. Huisman & M. Tight (Eds.), *Theory and Method in Higher Education Research* (pp. 119–136). Bingley: Emerald.
4. Kerr, C. (2001). *The Uses of the University*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
5. Castells, M. (2001). Universities as Dynamic Systems of Contradictory Functions. In J. Muller, N. Cloete, & S. Badat (Eds.), *Challenges of Globalisation. South African Debates with Manuel Castells* (pp. 206–233). Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
6. Etzkowitz, H. (2001). The Second Academic Revolution and the Rise of Entrepreneurial Science. *Technology and Society Magazine*, 20(2), pp.18–29.
7. Clark, B. R. (1998). *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities: Organizational Pathways of Transformation*. New York: Pergamon.
8. Goddard, J., Hazelkorn, E., & Vallance, P. (2016). *The Civic University: The Policy and Leadership Challenges*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
9. Benneworth, P. (2013). *University Engagement with Socially Excluded Communities*. Dordrecht: Springer.
10. Watson, D., Hollister, R., Stroud, S. E., & Babcock, E. (2011). *The Engaged University: International Perspectives on Civic Engagement* (first Ed.). London: Routledge.
11. Sorensen, Mads P., Geschwind, L., Kekale, J. and Pinheiro, R. (2019). *Responsible University: Exploring the Nordic Context and Beyond*, Palgrave Macmillan.

ersity of Azarbaijan Press.

