

current system as engaging within the second stage of development which is the most critical and challenging stage to pass through. In order to reach the ‘norming stage’ of the ed-tech, the whole system needs to undergo a process of repetition to arrive at a maturity phase of digital transformation.

Online Forum: Systems Thinking and Its Necessity in Managing the Pandemic Crisis (4 October 2021)

Ahmad Badri Abdullah

This online forum featured two prominent personnels in academia and the industry: Associate Professor Dr Ridhwan Fontaine, a business management expert and a lecturer at the Kulliyah of Economics and Management Sciences, Islamic International University Malaysia (IIUM), and Dr Mohd Izhan Mohd Yusuf, an Analytics Consultant at Telekom Malaysia (TM) Berhad and a specialist in statistical analysis. The forum aimed to shed some light on the necessity of resorting to systems thinking to tackle the pandemic situations especially by the authorities and how the approach may resonate with Islamic teachings and principles. More importantly, it was also a discussion of how a systemic mindset may harness our ability to build resilient socio-economic-health systems in the post-pandemic era.

In his session, Ridhwan Fontaine narrated the historical development of systems thinking as a scientific discipline whose main interest is in making sense of the complex phenomena in nature and societies. By using water as an example, Ridhwan explained that an emergence phenomenon is truly a novel situation or substance that does not represent its own components. Systems thinking, according to Fontaine, represents thinking in feedback loops, contrary to the conventional linear cause and effect reasoning, and making sense of how a system operates is a painstaking task. Responding to the issue of how businesses can survive in the pandemic context, Ridhwan suggested that they need to become specialised in their own niche in terms of their product offering. He also advises businesses to brace new ways of doing things as we would never return to a normal situation in the post-pandemic era.

Mohd Izhan Mohd Yusuf proposed that systems dynamic modelling, a tool in systems thinking, be employed before the authorities make policy decisions. Policymakers would be capable of predicting many models of outcomes and scenarios resulting from the policy execution. Systems dynamic modelling would enable policymakers to foresee different models of outcomes and

scenarios emanating from the implementation of a certain policy. By doing so, it would enable the authorities to minimise bad decision making. The challenge, however, is to collect as much relevant data as possible to be analysed in the systems dynamic software. According to him, no country is using systems thinking as a whole to manage the pandemic issue. However, several countries, like as Korea, Taiwan, and Sweden, have effectively mitigated the negative pandemic consequences by employing some features of systems thinking.

Webinar: Islam & Futures Studies (5 October 2021)

Ahliis Fathoni

Future studies are an interdisciplinary branch of science that seeks to map out the futures of humanity. The establishment of futures studies was motivated by the need to forecast and overcome global crises through a methodical and comprehensive analysis of social, economic, political, scientific, and environmental progress. To explore the Islamic perspectives of future studies, a webinar was organised by IAIS Malaysia on 5th October 2021, featuring two futuristic-thinking Malaysian scholars, Datuk Dr Daud Bakar, President of the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) and Distinguished Professor Tan Sri Dr. Mohd Kamal Hassan, Honorary Advisor of the Centre for Islamisation (CENTRIS), IIUM.

Future thinking and planning are based on an individual's belief system, as well as their conceptualisation and imagination of the future. Mohd Kamal Hassan stated that the Islamic worldview of future studies dictates how to envision futures in our present life and the hereafter. It strikes a balance between humans' roles and responsibilities as vicegerents of earth and their preparedness for life after death.

Future studies can help us predict our near-term futures, such as technology optimisation via quantum computers and 5G, renewable energy development, healthcare paradigm shift, global economic enhancement, engineering and architectural revolution, reversing climate change impacts, and closing the inequality gap. On the other hand, future planning and thinking based on an Islamic worldview should analyse how Muslim nations have diverged from the methodology and approaches provided by divine wisdom and revelation, in order to remedy their faults and failures.

The encouragement of future studies and forward-thinking can be found in the Qur'anic verse: "O you who have believed! Fear Allah, and let every soul look