

## **The Capabilities Approach as a Future Alternative to Neoliberal Higher Education in the MENA Region**

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**Abstract :** This paper aims at offering a futures study for higher education in the Middle East. Paying special attention to the negative impacts of neoliberalism, the paper will demonstrate how higher education is now commodified, corporatized and how arts and humanities are eschewed in favor of science and technology. This conceptual paper argues against the neoliberal agenda and aims at providing an alternative exemplified in the Capabilities Approach with special reference to Martha Nussbaum's theory. The paper is divided into four main parts: the current state of higher education under neoliberal values, a prediction of the conditions of higher education in the near future, the future of higher education using the theoretical framework of the Capabilities Approach, and finally, some areas of concern regarding the approach. The implications of the study demonstrate that Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach will ensure that the values of education are preserved while avoiding the pitfalls of neoliberalism.

**Keywords :** capabilities approach, education future, higher education, MENA

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