Preface

This book is a product of demand, the demand for knowledge. This book traversed a lengthy passage that commenced from conception, progressed through deliberations, reflections, research, and was produced in its current form. Such a progression has been the motivation of scholars to actualize the realities of the 21st Century. The life of a 21st Century individual is foregrounded by a heightened desire for individual wellness as punctuated by the Age of Information Technology and Globalization.

This handbook encompasses all subject matters of relevance in the education and empowerment of information-oriented 21st Century individuals. The intention of this handbook is to illustrate precisely what is needed for individuals to ably participate in the current milieu of globalization.

There is indeed a growing global market for healthcare professionals, accompanied by scarcity in both developed and developing countries. Such growth on the one hand scarcity on the other, signifies some of the many ramifications of the intercultural integration of education, healthcare, production and consumption, and the like, all of which are subsumed under the term globalization. Healthcare services, which, in developed countries, are typically conducted by national governments, are now seen as being in dying need of reform. Among the many social, political, and administrative reasons are mismanagement, ineffective leadership, disequilibrium between demand and supply, and diminishing supply of professionals. Yet, dissimilarities between local and foreign ailments are somehow becoming extinct.

The current globalization phenomenon, which threatens localities with the prospect of losing their abilities to impose limits on the activities of 21st century individuals, cannot be completely ignored. For centuries, the lack of transport facilities confined ordinary people to their various geographic homelands. Nonetheless, such inadequacies failed to entirely prevent migration and cross-cultural trade in the ancient world. Push and pull factors, such as poverty, employment or unemployment opportunities, liberalization, and standardizations and the like, have always facilitated cross-cultural and international migration. Notwithstanding, Information Technology and modern transportation systems continue to now intensify global interaction.

This book is not for you, should you prefer asceticism or self-denial while living in the current global operational environment of knowledge that is generated by interdisciplinary researcher. All chapters in this book represent independent research by twenty authors.

OBJECTIVE

These pages brim with issues of concern to both senior investigators as well as becoming scholar-practitioners in academia, corporate enterprise, government, and other institutions interested in solutions-oriented questions. Handbook of Research on Individualism and Identity in the Globalized Digital Age
is particularly appropriate for those who affirm the necessity of partaking in the current global climate of scholarship, characterized by the coactions of Educational, Information Technology, Sociocultural, and Wellness (healthcare) among the world’s peoples.

As you go through the pages of this book, I expect that you will appreciate the works for the many scholars and that you will be in agreement with the suggestion that adequate education enables individuals to critically process information. I draw on Benjamin S. Bloom in defining adequacy as, among other things, the ability to discern, explain, interpret, and extrapolate information through critical assessment.

THE 21ST CENTURY INDIVIDUAL

A 21st Century individual will need the ability to critically and independently contemplate, deliberate, innovate, conduct intercultural communication and collaborate, employ digital aptitude, be healthy, and be prepared to learn and lead. Call centers, which were the initial manifestations of a globalized workforce and workplace, were and still require intercultural awareness. The Internet exemplifies standardization, which facilitates globalization.

The syntax, context, and formats involved in online learning employ Internet protocols that are standardized to ensure global communication. Hence, Information Technology is integral to the 21st century global individual. Education engulfs a borderless worldwide workforce from India, the Philippines, and elsewhere to respond to outsourced customer inbound service calls across the globe to English-speaking customers.

The term globalization connotes wide-ranging differences and varieties of customs, laws, creeds, languages, and other values or institutions. Research presented in this book will show that inequalities in such areas as healthcare, education, access to technology, and other basic items, attest to the fact, although globalization tends to facilitate or promote the homogenization of hegemony, it is by no means universal.

Globalized Pitfalls

Different reasons account for shortages of healthcare professionals in both developed and developing countries. Such differences include healthcare educators and programs, working conditions and incentives, supply of medicine and equipment, patient to physician ratios, among others.

Contextual dissimilarities among cultures account for the sole source of confusion, often resulting in unsmingled ramifications, the least of which include trade disputes as promulgated by trade imbalances, disputes, individual exploitation, and some. Contrarily, distinctions between local and foreign ailments are quickly becoming extinct. The SARS outbreak of 2003, followed by the 2009 H1N1 influenza “A” pandemic, and the recent Ebala outbreak in West Africa are but a few examples of the globalization of local diseases.

Globalization fuels the need to reexamine of all that have heretofore remained locally moored in terms of education, personhood, wellness, age, and employment. Being foregrounded, globalization has besieged cultural institutions and such socio-cultural elements such as religion, spirituality through medical tourism.

Among the many ramifications of globalization is the growing global market for healthcare professionals, accompanied by scarcity in both developed and developing countries. The main cause of such
shortages is migration of nurses, physicians, pharmacists, technologists, and other practitioners from poor to wealthy countries, while others migrate between economically affluent countries. Emigration has a negative impact on the ability of governments in less developed and developing countries to deliver vital services due to brain drain.

Developed countries are likewise affected by demographic changes as their aging populations contribute to increases in demand for services while supply of professionals dwindle.

OVERVIEW OF THE CONTENTS

The book is primarily concerned with the subject of education. It is comprised of five sections, covering five subjects: Information Technology, Education, Individualism, Wellness or Healthcare, and Globalization. It must be noted that the issues covered in most of the twenty chapters entwine with the subject matter of others chapters; the fulcrum being education. For example, discussion of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in chapter 2 will explore IT, Globalization, and Education, whereas such subjects constitute separate topics by different authors. This is symptomatic of the interdisciplinary nature of the subject matter of this book.

Information Technology

Chapters 1-6 deal with Information Technology in the context of education.

The term education is a loaded word with the complexities of culture, politics, and economics embedded. It has different meaning depending on the country or society to which it is applied. Defining aspects of education include differences based on gender, health, and recreation. For countries with over 90% literacy and numeracy, education connotes lifelong learning since almost adults have achieved basic education. This is different for less developed countries where lifelong learning includes adults that are yet to acquire basic education. The educational challenge for 21st century remains a standard that is wanting.

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) now threaten the sustenance of traditional brick-and-mortar classrooms. Although such Internet-enabled educational enterprise offers free education to the global masses, ethical questions are raised respecting assessment, identity, anonymity, confidentiality, and cultural impact, all of which are absent in the pedagogy of MOOCs.

The contestants of MOOCs typically transcend a single epistemic learning culture. For example, validation of knowledge in the Western culture, is accompanied by the analysis and synthesis of given facts that a learner has acquired, whereas, Eastern-oriented Confucius cultures espouse the facts unaltered by critical analysis and synthesis. In such diverse learning environment, any benefits contained in the MOOC pedagogical practice could arguably be obnubilated by dissimilarities in the epistemologies of the targeted constituents.

Education

Chapters 7-11 deal with Education.

All chapters in this book deal with the subject of education as an aspect of the specific topics being explored. The age-old requirements for learning remain in place as long as humans remain with memory and other cognitive faculties. The two significant changes to the definition and meaning of education
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include Information Technology and globalization. Nonetheless, learners still need to remember what they have learned; they must also be motivated and engaged in critical thinking. For these reasons the subject of education permeates all of the chapters in this book.

Challenges for specialized educational programs are foregrounded by the emergence and transcendence of multiple cultural epistemologies as facilitated by several elements, including globalization, the Internet, and a new lingua franca. The reader’s attention is drawn to the need to overcome and harmonize global research methodologies.

The educational challenge for the 21st century individual is the means by which educational programs, pedagogic, and materials are designed, developed and delivered to meet and transcend multiple cultural epistemologies in a globalized market place.

Individualism

Chapters 12-14 deal with Individualism

Although a definitional debate over such concepts as personhood, birth, death, wellness and other remain unabated, intercultural communication has come into prominence in the worldwide deportment of globalization.

In birth, most civilizations, with some dissent, believe that humans come into being at conception. For some religions, any tempering with stem cells that lead to their destruction is tantamount to a pre-natal sin of homicide. Based on the Gregorian calendar of 28-31 days, the rest of the world seems to concur that pregnancies last for an average duration of forty weeks full-term gestation, which is approximately nine months. Infants born less than 37 weeks gestation are pre-term; those born over 42 weeks gestation are post-term. Conversely, using the traditional lunar calendar months of precise 28 days, Japanese women are conceived for ten months rather than the nine months as referenced by the rest of the world. Beyond these distinctions lie the tasks awaiting those individuals that are born.

While the end of life results to death, a precise definition or meaning of death is also subject to debate according to dissimilar cultures and customs. Does a person cease to be a human being when the heart stops pumping blood or when the brain stops functioning? Consequences for organs donation and transplantation are invoked in the brain vs. cardiac death debate. The unity of humanity requires a global conception of wellness. The current confusion, disagreement and adoption of anecdotal and/or socio-cultural interpretations associated with personhood promote distinctiveness.

Unlike Eastern philosophy, which posits the unity or inseparability of the body and mind, Western philosophy espouses a Cartesian dualism of mind and body as constituents of an individual. Eastern oriented Buddhism and Confucianism espouse holistic interconnectedness, interdependence, and harmonious symmetry between yin–female, passive, negative, and yang–positive, active, male.

The technology that effectuates lifelong learning will have to accommodate people living longer, particularly those in Europe, Asia and the United States where most centenarians are deemed to reside. Innovative wellness or healthcare management will be needed in all societies, clearly those with growing numbers of centenarians, such as Japan. Although longevity is said to be indicative of good health, improvements in the cognitive capacity of the elderly will become imperative given the reality of age-related defects as typified by processing constraints–restrictions of declarative, procedural, and strategic knowledge.
Ageing and Wellness

Wellness is undergoing renewed conceptualizations as life expectancy and old age are redefined. Wellness issues relating to centenarian are expected to occupy center stage in the 21st century. Because the elderly is specifically susceptible to aches, pain, and other incurable illness such as cancer, centenarians of the 21st century will require specific healthcare or wellness products and services. Given that illness inhabits learning, information about wellness is thus an aspect of an educated individual in the 21st century.

Globalization

Chapters 15-18 deal with Globalization.

Topics on globalization in this book relate to education, healthcare, and information technology. As such, readers should look elsewhere for issues dealing with the environment and it degradation, trade, and other business matters.

With succulent enticements of economic growth and development, often with clear evidence of cultural and environmental degradation and other ills, all countries, including the developed, developing, and the less developed, have shown their failure to ably respond to questions regarding education, health, and other aspects that contribute the life in a globalized and worldwide interconnected world.

Globalization, which began in the nineteenth century, is a phenomenon with nebulous definitions, often imbued with the proclivity of luring reluctant national governments into contracts that invoke interdependencies with ramifications that remain clearly misconceived by some nations or peoples. Nonetheless, the significance of the ubiquitous soi-disant globalization phenomenon and its effects on the lives of all individuals living in the 21st Century cannot be overestimated.

Globalization is a lose-win phenomenon for poorer economies and individuals. Changes instituted by this globalization within North America and Europe were socioeconomic and psychosocial. There were corporate downsizing or rightsizing—metaphors for redundancies or layoffs. Globalization facilitated mergers; bankruptcies, outsourcing, temporary employment; pension defaults; extensive transfer or relocation of capital and technology to foreign countries; medical tourism, and other aftereffects.

Wellness and Healthcare

Chapters 19-22 deal with Wellness and Healthcare.

These pages contain research that investigates problems with healthcare, specifically those relating to access, cost, quality, and availability. The 21st Century challenge is the global harmonization of wellness and healthcare services. Unlike tangible products that are transferred across geographic regions, wellness involves such issues as parents’ confidentiality, dissimilarities in the meaning of wellness, education, and biomedical ethics, among others.

While individual existence is acknowledged, agreement of a standard definition and meaning of wellness remains elusive. Thus, a global approach to healthcare is desired given the current scheme of things. To ensure universal treatment and the wellness of individuals, empirical data should be preferred to the anecdotal accounts that has so far exist based on an individual country and epistemologies.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), commonly known as Mad Cow Disease, is a disease that causes a degeneration of the brain. The disease originally affected cows in the United Kingdom (UK) in 1986. However, the effect and potential dangers of the infectious and progressive neurological disease
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on humans quickly became a matter of global concern. Similar global concerns came about in 2015, regarding the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak of 2003 in China Canada, South Korea. Other local diseases that sparked global fears and concerns were the H1N1 influenza pandemic in 2009 and the recent Ebola outbreak of 2014 in West Africa.

An increasing trend toward the internationalization of healthcare is manifested by medical tourism. There is a need to entertain the harmonization of the multiplicity of educational programs, pedagogic practices, and material diversities that currently pervade sociocultural institutions here and there, if meaningful intercultural communication and cooperation are to be attained. Curriculum design, development and delivery need to converge. The 21st Century individual needs to transcend multiple cultural epistemologies in order to achieve global proficiency.

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