


Cultural Indoctrination and Management Education Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

As organizations are increasingly confronted with the need to engage with stakeholders from a variety of different cultural backgrounds, the need to understand the ways in which cultural imperatives play into individual and collective performances becomes increasingly important. These cultural traditions exert immense influence on business issues ranging from consumer behavior to management. This article examines the need for management education to establish an introductory course on cultural indoctrination (CI) for business students in an era of global hypercompetition. CI is defined as the process of inculcating ideas, attitudes, and cognitive strategies during the transfer of cultural traditions from one generation to the next with the expectation that such traditions will not be questioned in the future. This article introduces the CI concept and subsequently suggests how it should be incorporated into a university curriculum focusing on factors that promote convergence in international management contexts.

KEYWORDS

Adult Education, Andragogy, Cultural Indoctrination, Geert Hofstede, Global Hypercompetition, Management Education Research Institute, Multicultural, Shifting Demographics, University Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to examine the need for management education to establish an introductory course on cultural indoctrination (CI) for business students, with the long-term goal of synthesizing CI into mainstream business programs, in an era of global hypercompetition. Disruptive technologies, a growing global skills gap, industry uncertainty, global inflation, and a quickly aging world population are just some of the key factors affecting long-term economic growth and prosperity today. These issues are forcing corporations and nations alike to implement new strategies to contend effectively with contemporary realities. Among other things, the previous statement means that business education and training institutions must reevaluate their offerings, especially as they pertain to cultural studies, since firms must contend with increasingly complex organizational situations across international borders requiring new “hard- and soft-skills” in the workplace (Varlander et al., 2016; Ingols & Shapiro, 2014).

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Cultural origins can permit the prediction of individual behavior in an organizational environment under various situations (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2010; Hofstede, 2001; Hall, 1976). Therefore, as organizations are confronted with the need to engage with stakeholders from a variety of different cultural backgrounds, the need to understand the ways in which cultural imperatives play into individual and collective productivity becomes increasingly paramount. This need ultimately provides the ability for organizations to sustain a competitive advantage and to remain profitable over time (Campbell, Coff, & Kryscynski, 2012; Porter, 2015).

Achieving these goals demands top management to appreciate and understand the four global forces affecting business today (McKinsey & Company, 2015): urbanization, accelerating technological change, an aging world, and greater global connections. Anderson and Wong (2013) state that obtaining competitive advantage in the digital economy of the 21st century requires focusing on intangible factors including firm strategy and positioning, radical innovation and first mover advantages, intangible resources and competencies, organizational ambidexterity, network effects and externalities, transaction cost efficiency, and relational optimality. It is also important to consider the effects of disruptive technologies on business operations and the global economy such as The Internet of Things, advanced robotics, 3D printing, next generation genomics, and renewable energy (McKinsey Global Institute, 2013).

“All of these factors will make destabilizing cycles of volatility more likely than ever in the past” (McKinsey Quarterly, 2010). Associated effects include global inflation, drastically altered business and product life cycles, and the need for corporations to increase liquidity buffers for unexpected changes in global markets (PryMarke LLC, 2015). The key point here is that such volatility will require far more flexibility and creativity in business and education than was common in the past. However, many educational institutions have not yet advanced creative (and critical) thinking capabilities sufficiently for business use after graduation (Şen, 2011; Kresin, 2012).

Furthermore, business programs in particular must further stress the importance of cultural studies in their curricula because contemporary globalization adds an extra layer of complexity to business which broadens the scope of firm’s operations worldwide in various locations requiring the use of multiple languages and engaging a wide variety of cultures subject to various employment laws (Briscoe, Schuler, & Claus, 2009). In fact, continued shifting demographics worldwide are creating an increasingly diverse customer base as well as a workforce composition both domestically and internationally (Christiansen & Sezerel, 2013).

This paper is structured in the following manner. First CI theory is introduced to provide a general background for the remainder of the article. Next will be an overview of management education followed by specifics regarding a proposed CI introductory course. Future Research Directions and the Conclusion complete the article.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theories Related to CI

The cultural anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn (1949, 1951, 1962) argued that humans share biological traits and characteristics which form the basis for the development of culture and that people normally believe their own cultural beliefs are natural, but consider those of others as inferior or abnormal (Hills, 2002). Building on Kluckhohn’s theory were Florence Kluckhohn and Fred Strodtbeck (1961) who developed three basic assumptions: 1) There is a limited number of common human problems for which all people must at all times find some solution; 2) While there is variability in solutions of all the problems, it is neither limitless nor random but it is definitely variable within a range of possible solutions; 3) All alternatives of all solutions are present in societies at all times but are differentially preferred. These assumptions formed the foundation of their Values Orientation Theory (VOT) which is incorporated into the framework below because VOT is a culmination of the other factors involved in CI.

Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede departed from the anthropologists' interpretive methodology for comparing cultures by presenting the first large-scale quantitative study of national cultural dimensions via an extensive survey of 144,000 IBM employees in 50 countries and three multi-country regions. Using factor analysis on the data, Hofstede (1980) originally developed four dimensions of culture: 1) power distance; 2) individualism vs. collectivism; 3) masculinity vs. femininity; and 4) uncertainty avoidance. He later added a fifth dimension: long-term vs. short-term orientation. Different models have been created to describe and analyze differences in cultures and their effect on human behavior and relations (Hofstede, 1991; Schwartz, 1994), but Hofstede's work continues to be the foundation of cultural studies or dimensions as it remains the most highly cited in the extant literature (Hartmann, 2012).

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is defined as the ability to function effectively in situations involving cultural diversity (Earley & Mosakowski, 2005; Earley & Ang, 2003). CQ is still an emerging field (Gelfand, Imai, & Fehr, 2008) which includes four subdimensions: metacognitive, motivational, cognitive, and behavioral (Van Dyne et al., 2012). Although business executives will be interested to know that CQ has a definite impact on an organization's "financial bottom line" (Chen, Liu, & Portnoy, 2012), the importance of CQ training for executives and managers within the context of this work cannot be underestimated due to the effects of global hypercompetition. In addition, there is evidence showing that additional research is needed regarding intercultural global collaboration (Hinds, Liu, & Lyon, 2011, p. 136). Therefore, the author submits that not all management training should be targeted solely for the "bottom line".

Templer et al. (2006) state that contemporary globalism highly encourages mobility of labor across cultural and national boundaries, but operating in different cultures is a major obstacle for most people (Redmond, 2000). Therefore, motivational CQ is of particular note as individuals with high motivational CQ levels are more likely than others to engage in the intercultural interactions that all of us face increasingly both at home and abroad via work and pleasure (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Molinsky, 2007).

Empirical research exists indicating there are "high hidden costs" of hiring people with inappropriate backgrounds to engage them in assignments which require finesse in multicultural settings (Molinsky, 2013; Reichard, Dollwet, & Louw-Potgeiter, 2014; Dessler, 2012).

Decision-making is a multivariate and complex endeavor that can be greatly influenced by cultural behaviors and is a critical business activity in today's global hypercompetition due largely to technology (Ang et al., 2007; Gates & Hemingway, 1999; Drucker, 2002). How well this core function is conducted can significantly alter corporate success in the long-term (Hannah et al., 2013). Styhre et al. (2010) argue that uncertainty in industries is leading to more risk-taking in companies which, in turn, is affecting decision-making quality, cost, and speed. Game theory, which simply stated is a mathematical model of optimality considering benefits less costs in interaction between participants, can assist in decision-making to capture strategic situations of the involved parties and their mutual behaviors (Küçükmehtetoğlu et al., 2010). Dadkhah (2011) stresses that many mathematical theories in economics and industrial organization require modeling the behavior and interactions of many decision-makers. Şen (2013) believes organizations of all types must adopt globalization patterns for their decision-making success. However, these must be based on effective, rational, logical, and systematic treatment of all possible inputs via fuzzy logic modeling which involves the development of models used for decision-making under uncertainty.

If human decision-making is modeled as a search for global optimization simply by using rigorous mathematical rules, it will be incomplete in terms of offering a fair representation of reality. Therefore, it is necessary to consider qualitative as well as quantitative issues regarding corporate decision-making in an era of hypercompetition (Verplanken & Holland, 2002). Cultural factors based on CI are at the center of effective corporate decision-making as is incorporated into the CI conceptual framework below.

Social capital has earned an increasingly important place in economic development over the past 20 years (Cartwright & Singh, 2014). Sobel (2002) states social capital is an attribute of an individual in a social context which can be transformed into conventional economic gains. Social capital varies from country to country, and can also act as a conduit for non-economic benefits (Woolcock, 1998). Nonetheless, an individual's overall socioeconomic status can still depend greatly on her or his social capital, so it is included in the CI framework as it relates to socioeconomic status.

Religion can influence economic growth and economic growth can influence religiosity (Barro & Mitchell, 2004; Barro & McCleary, 2003; McCleary, 2007). However, Chandan (2014) notes that since Hofstede's (1980) national culture dimensions and economic growth rates vary among nations, religion alone is not sufficient to explain (for example) higher economic growth of emerging markets. Therefore, due to these conflicting yet established viewpoints religion is included in the CI framework as a critical mediating factor.

Bandura's (1977) social learning theory states that learning is a cognitive process which occurs in a social context via observation or direct instruction. Possibly the most influential theory of learning and development, Bandura's added a social element to the field in which he argued that people can learn new information and behaviors by observing other people. This aspect is included in the proposed framework due to the increased interaction between people as the world becomes more interconnected—especially via technology (McKinsey & Company, 2015; Gates & Hemingway, 1999).

Language structure differs significantly with regards to time, gender, hierarchies, and individual or collective emphases (Berman, Mudambi, & Shoham, 2017). Whorf (1956) was a pioneer in the study of linguistics and the role of languages in forming societies and their behaviors. Since his time some significant studies have been published on the role of language in various areas of human behavior (e.g., Chen, 2013; Brannen, Piekkari, & Tietze, 2014; Santacreu-Vasut, Shenkar, & Shoham, 2014; Tenzer & Pudelko, 2017). One example regarding language structure can be found in the Japanese katakana writing system which was originally developed in the ninth century and eventually used for official government documents and religious texts (Seely, 2000). The katakana syllables permitted the easy assimilation of foreign concepts and loanwords into the Japanese language, especially from Dutch, English, and German, which was largely credited with allowing Japan to develop its military and scientific capabilities for World War II following the Meiji Restoration of 1868.

Language acquisition has abundant extant literature (e.g., Blume & Lust, 2017; Loewen & Sato, 2017; Christiansen, Chatter, & Culicover, 2016). According to the concept of linguistic relativity, or more commonly known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, the manner in which people think is strongly affected by their native language(s). This concept has both strong and weak aspects; the former is associated with language determining thought while the latter is associated with language limiting thought. However, this hypothesis has been challenged repeatedly over the years and remains a highly controversial subject in the field of linguistics. Gumperz and Levinson (1996) reinvestigated linguistic relativity in light of new evidence within the fields of anthropology and cognitive science while Wolff and Holmes (2011) concluded there is growing support for the view that language has a profound effect on thought. Other related works on this subject include Leavitt (2015) and Everett (2016).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Papalia & Feldman, 2012) explains how everything within an individual and her or his physical environment impacts and influences a person's growth and development. This is in line with Erikson's (1993, 1994) extensive work on childhood, identity, and the life cycle. A developmental psychologist who served as a professor at Harvard and Yale Universities even though he lacked even an undergraduate degree, Erikson established the eight stages of life-stage virtues ranging from infancy to old age. These stages include: basic trust vs. basic mistrust, autonomy vs. shame, purpose, competence, fidelity, intimacy vs. isolation, generativity vs. stagnation, and finally ego integrity vs. despair. The first five stages are critical aspects of CI and are included in the child development section of the framework.

Institutionalization, initiation, and indoctrination are often confused with education and training (McDonough, 2011), although some theorists believe all education emits from a particular

ideological perspective with the intent that a person will adopt that ideology. Hocutt (2005) states that current disputes in academia raise the philosophical question regarding how education differs from indoctrination, and it is the author’s viewpoint there is a definable difference between the two.

CI Conceptual Framework

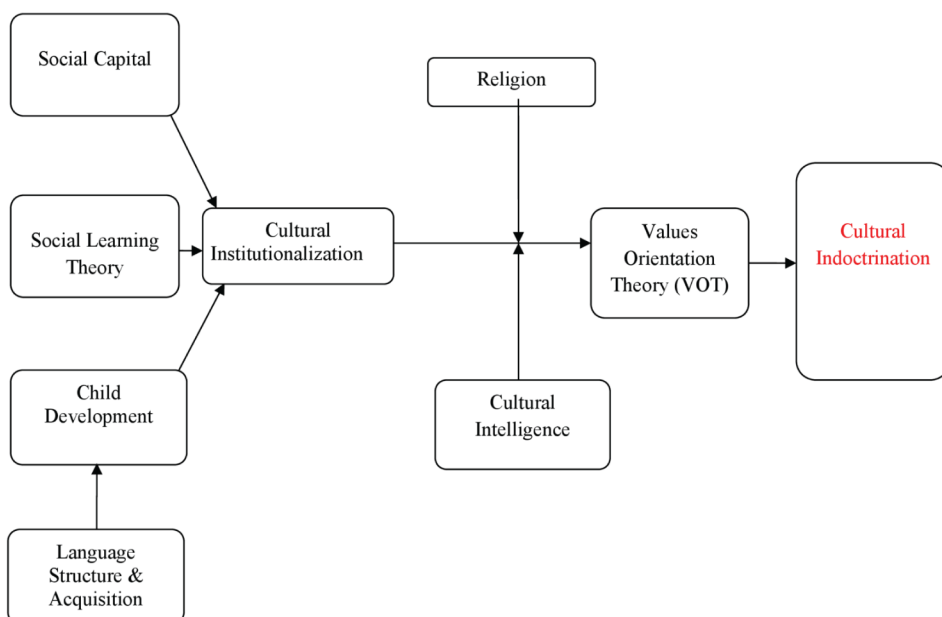
Below is the conceptual framework for CI based on synthesis of the literature review. It is referenced in the proposed introductory course (Figure 1).

OVERVIEW OF MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

The Management Education Research Institute was established in 2005 by the Graduate Management Admission Council which administers the examinations for admission to graduate business schools that award the MBA degree. The Institute is now part of the Council’s “Management Education for Tomorrow Fund” created in 2008 with a US\$10 million commitment to invest in strategic philanthropic initiatives that benefit management education globally. Through its Fellowship and Grants Programs, the Institute funds data-driven research related to graduate management education around the world that develops knowledge and innovation and identifies best practices and areas for improvement related to admissions, curriculum, career, and outcomes (GMAC, 2016).

In 2013, the Council published a book titled, *Disrupt or Be Disrupted: A Blueprint for Change in Management Education*, which analyzes the challenges business schools will confront in the face of dramatic marketplace transformation, technological advances, and contemporary globalization that have necessarily led to entirely new ways of learning, interacting, and information sharing. One of the major tenets of the book concerns the need for a more holistic graduate management education focusing on a key question: “How can [business] schools ensure that their curriculum program (content, structure, and activities) aligns with the needs and demands of managers and organizations?” (Rynes & Bartunek, 2013, p. 180). This very question resonates with the purpose for this work.

Figure 1. A theoretical framework for cultural indoctrination (CI)



Business and education must collaborate more closely to narrow the growing global skills gap to improve business performance in an era of hypercompetition (Christiansen, 2015). Additionally, in an era of the “Knowledge Worker” and the “Global Labor Pool” as defined by Drucker (2002), management education must further incorporate cultural competence training into their programs such as those found in Columbia Business School’s Diversity Management program in New York, USA or INSEAD’s Cultural Sensitivity training within its MBA program in Fontainebleu, France. On a related note here, a cursory look at the MBA programs for leading universities such as Cambridge, Harvard, and Oxford exhibit little if any cultural studies-related courses in their respective curricula.

The typical undergraduate or graduate business program has normally included core business subjects such as accounting & finance, economics, information management, marketing, operations, and statistics all designed to impart a broad base of general knowledge within which students pursue additional knowledge to become exceptional managerial and business leaders. Increasingly, the standard curriculum is even including more specialized courses such as strategic talent management or supply chain management to meet the growing global talent challenge and skills gap (Sparrow, Scullion, & Tarique, 2014; Baker & Baker, 2012; Heidrick & Struggles International, 2012; ASTD, 2009). However, few if any of these offerings seriously investigate or cover the very strong impact of cultural indoctrination on management and business operations (Earley & Peterson, 2004). Therein lies the contribution this paper makes to management education.

It is important at this juncture to distinguish between CI and cultural imperialism because there appears to be the understanding that the two concepts are similar. Christiansen (2016) states the former as the process of inculcating ideas, attitudes, and cognitive strategies during the transfer of cultural traditions from one generation to the next with the expectation that such traditions will be continued and not questioned in the future. The latter is defined by Bullock and Stallygrass (1977, as cited in Christopher, 1996) as “the use of political and economic power to exalt and spread the values and habits of a foreign culture at the expense of a native culture” (p. 85). It is self-evident that the two are separate in that CI can be viewed as “internal” and cultural imperialism is “external” in nature. Our concern in this work regards how CI affects management and why an introductory course should be included in management education.

There is some evidence that cultural indoctrination has been recognized in the past – albeit on a fairly superficial level – with regards to management in practice. Chung, Lee, and Jung (1997, p. 171) briefly mention CI within the context of employee training and performance-based selection. More recently, the US retail giant Wal-Mart uses the term cultural indoctrination within the context of *organizational* indoctrination (Bergdhal, 2004, p. 66). However, to the best of the author’s knowledge there exists no significant empirical or theoretical study on CI within the context of management education or practice.

PROPOSED CI INTRODUCTORY COURSE

There are a number of titles for an introductory course on CI for contemporary management education, but the major consideration is to eventually synthesize the concept into the business curriculum as stated in the Introduction. The primary purpose is to better show students how human action is so inherently involved in business management and operations, which is why there is fairly heavy coverage of sociology and psychology not normally included in management education.

Elements of the CI theoretical framework should be incorporated into the introductory course and beyond. Therefore, following is a general chapter-by-chapter outline for the initial CI textbook that could be used for both undergraduate and graduate university levels. The following areas were chosen because they cover critical areas of human endeavor which ultimately can affect business and management performance over time (Nahavandi, 2016):

- An Introduction to National Culture
 - Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions
 - Trompenaars' Model of National Culture Differences
 - Edward T. Hall's Cultural and Social Cohesion
 - Harry Triandis and Cross-Cultural Psychology
 - The Globe Project (2004)
- Childhood Development
 - Erik Erikson and Identity
 - Jean Piaget and Cognitive Development
 - BF Skinner and Behavior
 - Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's Self-Determination Theory
- Educational Influences
 - Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory
 - Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences
 - David Kolb's Experiential Learning
- Choice or Decision Theory
 - Normative and Descriptive
 - Uncertainty
 - Heuristics Origins of Belief
 - Albert Hastorf and Hadley Cantril's Selective Perception
 - Leon Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance
- Cultural Intelligence in the 21st Century
 - Four Dimensions of Cultural Intelligence (CQ)
 - P. Christopher Earley, Elaine Mosakowski, and Soon Ang
 - David Livermore's CQ in Business Practice
- Values Theory
 - Florence Kluckhohn and Fred Strodtbeck's Values-Orientation Theory
 - Ronald F. Inglehart's World Values Survey
- Impact of Social Capital
 - Pierre Bourdieu
 - Robert Putnam
- Language Structure and Acquisition
 - Linguistic Relativity
 - Language Structure
 - Psycholinguistics
- Effects of Institutionalization on Human Action
 - Kraft's Public Policy
 - Institutional Isomorphism
 - Structuration
 - Longitudinal Surveys
 - Institutionalization Theory
 - Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell
- Sociology vs. Psychology
 - Major Differences
 - Connection with Cultural Indoctrination
- Cultural Indoctrination and Business
 - Management
 - Marketing
 - Human Resources
 - International Business

- Accounting & Finance
- Negotiations
- Operations

This course could be introduced in the final year of a traditional undergraduate business program or at the end of the first year in a traditional 2-year MBA or related program. The typical business program shown in Figure 1 easily demonstrates there is a need to focus even further on the human aspect of business operations beyond human resource management size since contemporary globalization has broadened the scope of a firm's operations both domestically and internationally to include customers and suppliers from different cultures and languages (Richert-Kazmierska & Lechman, 2014; Godart et al., 2015).

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

One of the most critical studies that could be conducted within the context of this paper is empirical research into the current effectiveness of business programs regarding their cultural studies courses to prepare graduates for their duties in the real world. The results could be compared with the proposed CI course outline above to develop improvements in the current programs as well as to eventually incorporate CI throughout the business curriculum at the university level.

Another research project could involve the development of an algorithm or other suitable mathematical model, possibly based on fuzzy logic, to explain how the CI framework can be used in practice or in academia. This would provide the framework with an even wider range of applications than in the business world.

Finally, additional research into the motivational aspect of CQ could be conducted since this area of CQ appears to have the highest impact on the organization's financial "bottom line". It should be remembered extensive empirical research indicates there are high "hidden costs" of hiring people with inappropriate backgrounds to engage them in assignments which require finesse in multicultural settings.

CONCLUSION

The discourse above shows there are tectonic market shifts transforming the global business landscape. Such radical changes mean organizational management can no longer rely on traditional and tangible sources of value creation such as land, labor and capital, and raw material to drive competitiveness; instead, these entities must now embrace "intangibility" (Andersen & Wong, 2013). CI is one of those intangibles, and the framework above represents one link between global hypercompetition and management education. Engaging both scholars and practitioners in the further development of the CI framework via effective collaboration is suggested as it is no secret the research-practice gap is widely recognized and lamented (Bansal et al., 2012).

In this article, we have explored the emergent concept of CI and provided a theoretical framework. In addition, we have provided an overview of management education today followed by a general outline for an introductory CI course in current business programs at the university level. Finally, we have forwarded some future research directions for scholars and practitioners alike to consider. The primary goal in introducing this work at this time to the academic world is to demonstrate the need to have an even deeper understanding of the constituents who comprise the business world as we know it today be they executives, manager, employees, customers, or suppliers.

Competitiveness in contemporary globalization often depends on an adequate – if not superior – understanding of cultural value differences (Vance et al., 1992; Christiansen, 2012; Vassilopoulou et al., 2013). Additionally, scholars of strategic management confirm that firm- level differences in

capabilities are key to understanding differences in performance (Chatterji & Patro, 2014). Therefore, business (and other) organizations need to ensure their members have a solid understanding of the cultural influences around them. This is particularly true of managers and executives due to their roles in the organization. Hirsch's (1983, 1985, 1987) cultural literacy project called attention to the huge knowledge gap among U.S. students three decades ago. While it is arguable this gap has been significantly narrowed since the 1980s as is reflected in the development of university management programs around the world, even more research is required for these programs to allow graduates to function effectively in a multicultural global environment that only grows larger with time (Bird et al., 2010; Chao & Moon, 2005; Javidan & House, 2001; Thomas & Ravlin, 1995).

Implementing an introductory CI course, preferably into an established business degree program, might best be accomplished via a pilot or fast track process since these are not usually required to be placed on a Master Academic Plan for future authorization, depending on the country or institution which has its own set of rules regarding such matters (e.g., see California State University, 2016). After the introductory course obtains adequate momentum and interest in a particular academic organization, the course can be (more) formally put into effect within an official business degree program. More advanced CI-related courses can also be developed and added when appropriate or desired. The author believes incorporating the CI concept into human resources, management, marketing, and organizational behavior courses would be the best first core subjects following the introductory CI offering. This is due to the fact that these areas have the most bearing on human behavior compared to other subjects.

Developing student thinking skills and practical leadership skills are major goals of business education (Smith, 2014; Foster & Carboni, 2009). Furthermore, business and organizations even in many culturally similar developed economies are demanding employability skill development (Riebe & Jackson, 2014). As the world continues to become increasingly interdependent, the need for culturally-aware as well as skilled employees and owners alike also expands. Therefore, it is imperative that business and management education include core skills development as well as CI- and cultural-related courses into their respective programs worldwide that create truly transformed students capable of working well in 21st century realities (Burch et al., 2015; Christiansen, 2018).

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