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## EDITORIAL

### Concerns of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Globalization has brought many benefits to the world population in general, but it has also raised a lot of concerns, especially in this new century. The more people work hard to make the most out of globalization, the more concerns come out as a result. These concerns are raised in education, religion, politics, the environment, economics, business, health, and many other aspects of society. While continuing to maximize the benefits of globalization, it is important to understand the related concerns and try to generate possible solutions to create a more balanced understanding of the world we are living in.

Looking critically at globalization, one can easily see several concerns that should generate scholarly discussion today. During the last two Graduate School Forums held on the campus of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) in 2011 and 2012, a number of presentations addressed some specific concerns about globalization, especially in the developing world. A number of the papers presented were selected for publication. The concern of this volume of *International Forum* is to start exploring some of the issues that globalization is presenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What are some of the most pressing issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in education, organizations, society, and church? What can be done about these issues?

The articles in this issue address a broad range of concerns related to globalization. Vyhmeister and Vyhmeister present their findings about the digital divide conducted in a rural educational setting in the Philippines. Their experience with education in both urban and rural areas, and in both developing and developed countries, provides them with a critical eye on issues relating to the digital divide. The concern in their study is that access to technology might be the most researched issue, but they found that another area of divide is the lack of equal access to knowledge. This study provides a fresh look at the issue of digital divide.

Kollabathula conducted a similar study, also in the Philippines. However, his study focused primarily on the effects of technology usage on the academic

performance and spirituality of teenagers. While he did not find any significant effects of technology usage on students' academics and spirituality, his study revealed that ownership of technology can have some impact. The study is an addition to an already-conflicting body of research of the effects of technology usage on academic performance.

Wa-Mbaleka's piece is a theoretical model that he developed to address the concern that many higher education educators continue to raise about online instruction. Many of them are required to teach online without any solid training in instructional design and delivery. To get novice online faculty started, Wa-Mbaleka's article provides practical strategies that can be applied in designing the modules of an online course in a Christian institution of higher education.

The next two studies were done in a school setting. Luntungan investigated the impact of different teaching methods on academic performance of college students in a business class. Even in an Asian setting, where lecture is generally preferred, his results matched the literature available on teaching methods, with cooperative learning yielding better results than lecture. Gochuico's study focused on the collaboration that can enhance partnership between a university and a local community, businesses, and organizations. The model that came out of the study shows how knowledge creation and knowledge sharing can enhance these partnerships.

The last three articles are qualitative studies that were conducted to try to understand some of the current concerns in society. Boucaud explored the self-perception of women of African and Asian descent. She found that globalization has negatively affected the self-image of these women to some degree. Joseph's study explored discriminatory practices against homosexuals in the Philippines. Her study gives a voice to this group of individuals whose voice is not always heard in scholarship because the issue is still considered taboo in many societies. The third study explored the lived experiences of interracial couples. Sossah interviewed interracial Christian couples to explore the challenges that they face and how they cope with the cultural differences.

It is the hope of the editorial team that the current issue of *International Forum* will generate more discussion on the concerns of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, raise awareness where it is needed, and promote new avenues for further research on the topics presented here. Readers are encouraged to contact the authors to expand and continue the discussion.

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