

## CONFUCIANS IN THE 21ST CENTURY SKILLS: AN EDUCATIONAL STUDY OF THE READINESS OF THE STUDENTS IN TODAY'S PEDAGOGIC TRENDS

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### ABSTRACT

*With the education research pointing to utilization of digital platforms, such as social learning sites (Web 2.0), there are more needs to meet and enhance today's students' capabilities. Using the lens of the student perspective through the RASE pedagogical framework, this study covers the essence of the development of 21st century skills among the Asian students and how those capabilities are in-line with the P21 framework. The study was conducted at a private university in Selangor, Malaysia, with 249 students as respondent. This study used quantitative research approach to identify the Asian student learning capabilities through Edmodo, a social learning site. The significant results from the correlation and regression analysis open the researcher to map the Asian capabilities to the 21st century skills from the P21 framework. This study can be considered as a starting point towards P21 framework among the academicians in Asian countries.*

Key words: Confucius, P21 Framework, Social Learning Site, Edmodo, Asian students, Capabilities.

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### Introduction

In Malaysia, students in private universities can be divided in two major categories: Asians and non-Asians knowing that Indonesia, China and Korea are the main origins. The purpose of this study is not to generalize the findings but to investigate within the students' capabilities in order to further social, cultural or educational researches. Researches exist regarding the cultural or educational aspect of the learner but very few are related to the emerging paradigm of the 21st Century Learning framework. The Confucius way of learning, as part of most Asian countries, values behaviors, efforts, respects, sensibilities and rationalities in the learning process (Tweed and Lehman, 2002). Previous researches on the learning preferences were done in the field of hospitality, tourism and culinary arts. For instance, Balasubramanian, Jaykumar and Fukey (2014) showed the interest from Asian students to use web platform such as Edmodo in a learning context. Can Asian learners bloom in the 21st Century Learning paradigm? There are various learning styles and today's high competitiveness of the private education forces institutions to be ahead of pedagogic strategies to vary the teaching styles and learning experiences. Furthermore, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning framework supported by educationists and developed by Partnership for the 21st century learning (2016) shows that discipline specific knowledge is not sufficient and it is important that capabilities development contribute to the learning experience. By using the findings from Balasubramanian, Jaykumar and Fukey (2014), it could be interesting to further their work by (1) identifying the Asian student learning capabilities through social learning platform and (2) investigating the readiness of the Asians students to cope with the 21st Century skills developed in the P21 framework. The aim of this study is to investigate through the RASE Pedagogical model the readiness of student studying in an Asian environment, in this case Malaysia. The current study has been divided in various parts: after reviewing the existing literature, the authors will be defining their key conceptual frameworks and developing their hypotheses. The data analysis will be reflecting the findings collected through a precise methodology. The study will be ending with a discussion and a conclusion summarizing the whole research.

### Literature review

According to Hall and Ames (1987, p64) and Wong (2004) the conception and over usage of "rote learning", "spoon-feeding", teacher centered style and heavy memorization of the knowledge in Asians classroom is a misconception of the way it is. Confucius learning style has nothing to do with memorizing as an absorption of information but a more thorough, systematic and organized methodology integrating reflection, wisdom, critical thinking, synthesizing in an open minded, fair and autonomous way (Hall and Ames, 1987; Kim, 2003). The lecturer has a predominant place in the learning experience of the student and one the main role is to generate creativity and critical thinking. 'Love of learning' (hsueh), 'reflecting' (ssu), 'realizing' (chih), 'living up to one's word' (hsin), and 'signification' (yi) are the central development powers (Hall and Ames, 1987, ch.1) in the Confucian concept. Those powers will be important in the transformation of the student and will help the development of the mind. Core values, behaviors, awareness, open-mindedness, reflection and meta-cognition are key element in the Confucius learning style (Confucius, 1993a; Confucius, 1993b; Elliott and Tsai, 2008). Also, according to Corcoran (2014), western learning theories such as Behaviorism, Liberalism, Connectivism, and Humanism can be observed in the Confucian concept.

their students innovative opportunities to improve their self confidence, to monitor their own learning and to practice their learning skills in and outside the classroom.

### Limitations and Future Research

The study has shown some limitations. First, the study has been carried out only in one of the private university among several in Malaysia. Therefore, generalisation of results has to be exercised with caution. Secondly the students' learning is attached with the teachers, so the teacher's preference of using social learning platforms should be included too. Thirdly, this study is a cross-sectional study, so the causal relationships between the variables cannot be empirically validated as informed in the introduction. This research forms the starting point for future research in the area of social learning platform among Asian students in higher education at Malaysia. It also highlights the use of social learning platforms to enhance the students' learning skills and interest towards online activities in and outside the classroom. This study offers insight on the potential of the Asian student's capabilities towards the P21 framework. The results from the present work cover a small population in Malaysia. Therefore, we deem that the future studies involving a larger sample would improve the validity of the results. Moreover, cross-cultural studies are recommended to compare students' preference of using social learning platform with the other Asian countries.

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