

Social Globalization: The Roles of Human Freedom, Education and Culture

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The purpose of this study is to explore the relationships of social globalization, national culture, human freedom and education. The results suggest important direct and indirect roles of various cultural dimensions on human freedom, education and social globalization. Social Globalization was directly impacted by culture (Uncertainty Avoidance), and human freedom and indirectly impacted by the cultural dimensions of power distance, individuality and long-term orientation. Education had an indirect as well as a direct impact on social globalization. Importantly, a necessary condition analysis was conducted with results indicating 7 necessary conditional relationships. Implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: social globalization, national culture, human freedom, education, necessary condition analysis

INTRODUCTION

With the accelerated development and progression in technology industries over the past decades, many nations across the world have been positioned to achieve the attainment of new opportunities that were not previously accessible without the presence of advanced social globalization. Social interactions and communication among countries with access to online platforms, mobile phones, and high tourism rates have enabled ideas, people, and information to rapidly spread. With “social globalization, one finds greater cultural, interpersonal, and informational engagements between citizens and residents of different countries” (Parakal, 2019, p.14), which suggests that these relationships have significant effects among the countries performing these exchanges, resulting in the advancement of knowledge and understanding, along with other possible beneficial outcomes.

The level of exposure to social globalization a county has helps to define how connected to other parts of the world it is. Social globalization is an important area to explore for researchers and businesses because there are potential benefits from understanding how countries experience the flow of ideas and information streaming in and out of their borders. The findings of Parakal (2019), who examined which countries are potentially more accepting of foreign direct investment, explains that countries who “socially engage more with the international system of states, international organizations, and global community do attract more FDI [foreign direct investment]” (p.11), which may bring significant economic benefit to a country.

In addition, a country's institutional characteristics such as education potentially affects the level of social globalization by supporting and encouraging exposure to different elements of social globalization by increasing the capability of citizens to interpret new information through technological resources and migration. Another country characteristic which may impact the degree of social globalization is national culture, which has been shown to have impact on many behavior-based constructs (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). However, there is limited research available regarding the relationships that the dimensions of national culture have with social globalization. Human freedom is another country characteristic that has potential of impacting social globalization exposure throughout a country, depending on the presence of coercive constraint, in which personal freedom or economic freedom could be influenced by. Despite the potential importance of social globalization there is little research evidence regarding other potential antecedents as well.

Given these gaps in the research literature, the purpose of this study is to explore selected potential antecedents of social globalization, specifically national cultural dimensions, education, and human freedom.

BACKGROUND

Social Globalization

In this study, social globalization is defined as “the spread of ideas, information, images and people” (Gygli, Haelg, Potrafke, & Sturm, 2019, p. 546). Research has shown that connections formed through social aspects of globalization have created many positive outcomes for countries, such as the advancement of human development, migration, technology and even labor and equality rights (Potrafke, 2015). Social globalization has potentially important impacts for a nation's business activities because “As information became present at hand with the widespread use of the Internet, a postindustrial society has also been recognized as a feature of globalization, wherein skills and knowledge to manipulate data and networks become more valuable than producing goods or trading material resources” (Jackson, 2016, p. 5). This suggests that new knowledge can be gained through the spread of information on the internet, allowing people to become more capable of understanding data better and completing more complex tasks. Businesses can take advantage of this process and can potentially cultivate innovative skills that can improve competitive activities, ultimately increasing sales and profits.

At the 2006 Nobel Lecture, Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize winner explained that “Information and communication technology is quickly changing the world, creating distanceless [sic] borderless world of instantaneous communications” (Moretti, 2012, p. 5), with increasing access to mobile phones and communication over the internet, the spread of information and ideas are able to also move faster than ever possible before this technology. Past research recognizes that “The ongoing growth of foreign tourism also reduces the government's burdens as a result of embarking on globalization, by enabling it to reduce its reliance on import tariffs and indirect taxation while, at the same time, maintaining the level of income necessary to finance its expenditure” (Blake & Sinclair, 2003, p. 698), this suggests that economies and employment opportunities are developed in part through cross-cultural migration and understanding as well as through tourism and information transfer. Although there is limited research on the specific effects of social globalization, the potential impact from the use of the internet, mobile phone access, migration and tourism can easily be imagined.

National Culture

Culture is defined by Hofstede as “the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others” (*Hofstede Insights* n.d.). Hofstede et al. (2010) have identified six cultural dimensions that differentiate a country's national culture. These dimensions include power distance, masculinity, individualism, long-term orientation, uncertainty avoidance, and indulgence. For this study, the cultural dimension constructs used are those developed by Hofstede whose work is among the top cited authors in the Social Science Citation Index (Bing,

2004). Specifically, the most recent data from Hofstede, which has 6 dimensions and updated dimension data (Hofstede et al., 2010; Hofstede Insights, 2019) were used in this study.

In a study conducted by Peng and Lin (2009), Hofstede's cultural values' relationship with education were examined. For example, they argue that workers in individualist cultures need higher levels of education, as unlike collectivist cultures that work more in group environments, workers in individualist societies do not have the advantage of group experience and knowledge. They also argue that people in high uncertainty avoidance societies also need higher education to address their desire to minimize uncertainty. Their research confirmed these relationships of individualism and uncertainty avoidance with education levels, and in addition, found an inverse relationship of masculinity to education, suggesting a less masculine culture would have higher levels of education.

Education

In this study, education is defined as the mean number of years attained by an individual (United Nations Development Program, 2009). Czaika and de Haas (2014) have proposed that "...increased literacy and education alongside improved access to 'global' information through (satellite) television, mobile phones, and internet seem to have increased people's aspirations and awareness of opportunities in previously unknown countries". This supports a possible connection between education and the advancement of social globalization within countries. Rizvi and Lingard (2010) have found that access to education can result in the learning of new skills, such as, internet and social media skills. Essentially, these types of skills in turn are becoming more desired because of the impact an individual can have from understanding how to utilize a digital platform to connect to new ideas, information, and people which can assist with increasing social globalization.

Further potential support for the education-social globalization relationship is suggested by Manstead (2014) who argued that "Higher levels of education are associated with a wide range of positive outcomes – including...higher social trust, greater political interest, lower political cynicism, and less hostile attitudes towards immigrants." (p.1). In addition, Spiel et al. (2018) suggest that education can lead to greater social inclusion, which also may increase the likelihood of such inclusion from elements of social globalization.

Hofstede et al. (Hofstede et al., 2010; Hofstede, 2001) has consistently emphasized the importance of organizational culture as an antecedent of individual and group behavior. It should also be noted that Hofstede (2010) recognizes the potential inter-relationship between education and culture through the role that education has in reinforcing culture, along with culture's role of shaping educational experiences (Hofstede and Minkov, 2010; van Hoorn, 2019). Although, there is limited available research directly relating these specific relationships with social globalization too. Moreover, Jackson (2016) suggested that "education has been reframed in the global era that something youth needs, not just to accept globalization but to interact with it in a critical and autonomous fashion" (p.13). In addition, Peng and Lin (2009) tested the impact of Hofstede's original four cultural dimensions and found a significant positive relationship between individualism and uncertainty avoidance with the level of education, as well as a significant inverse relationship between masculinity and education level. They also found education level to significantly impact a country's social and institutional capacity (environmental sustainability performance), and importantly concluded that culture has direct effects on education and both direct and indirect effects on social and institutional capacity (partially mediated model).

Human Freedom

It has been argued that human freedom and development, including social development, go together, with social and economic development reinforcing each other (Sen, 1999). Vasquez and Porcnik (2018) measure "human freedom" by combining personal freedom measures and economic freedom measures to define human freedom, as used in this study, as "a social concept that recognizes the dignity of individuals and is defined by the absence of coercive constraint" (p. 14).

Both sub-indexes of the Human Freedom Index are equally weighted in order to measure country data to identify a specific country's level of human freedom. The Human Freedom Index's findings

suggest that freedom plays an influential role in the well-being of citizens and offers opportunities, it “thus implies that individuals have the right to lead their lives as they wish as long as they respect the equal rights of others” (Vasquez & Porcnik, 2018, p. 14). When citizens of a country have the ability to embrace self-dignity in a social environment, with an absence of coercive constraint, then these citizens can learn how to harmoniously live among others, practice freely desired lifestyles, and accept differences.

Akerlof (1980) suggested that internationally recognized social norms, provide governments, politicians, and managers incentives to follow, and can be attributed to the important awareness of how impactful the level of human freedom can be on the prevalence of social globalization within a country. Thus, countries that have a higher recognition of personal and economic freedom, could also potentially engage in more elements of social globalization. Moreover, countries that encourage human freedom potentially may be seen to hold an increased level of acceptance in differences of lifestyles, gender, ethnicity, and religion, possibly leading to toleration and increased acceptance of, and interest in, social globalization (Dreher, Gassebner, & Siemers, 2012). This suggests a potentially influential connection between the level of human freedom within a country and social globalization.

In efforts to elaborate on the potential connection between education and human freedom, an argument in past research has been proposed in which “Freedom and competence cannot move ahead separately, and neither can move far without education” (Punke, 1966, p. 455). There is indication that when education is available for citizens, this enables the capability to gain enhanced competence, which in turn increases the potential of a higher desire for human freedom. When individuals have the ability to expand their knowledge through educational programs or systems there are more possibilities for individuals to form personal opinions and perspectives based from learned information and therefore, “participate more extensively in the achievements of civilization” (Punke, 1966, p. 455). “Tremendous leaps in educational systems can also contribute to the better understanding of importance in education for children, which can later potentially have effects on social and economic development along with the advancement of human freedom” (Lilemba, 2017, p. 101).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the above limited research regarding social globalization, and the lack of available research exploring Hofstede’s et al. (2010) six cultural dimensions with education, and with social globalization, the following are the research questions being explored:

***RQ1:** To what degree do each of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions impact social globalization?*

***RQ2:** To what degree do cultural dimensions and human freedom impact social globalization?*

***RQ3:** To what degree do cultural dimensions together with human freedom and education impact social globalization?*

***RQ4:** To what degree does culture impact human freedom?*

***RQ5:** To what degree do culture and education impact human freedom?*

***RQ6:** To what degree does culture impact education?*

***RQ7:** Does human freedom mediate education or cultural dimensions and social globalization relationships?*

***RQ8:** Are any antecedent variables in the model necessary conditions for one or more model dependent variables.*

METHODOLOGY

The Hofstede's cultural value dimension data used for this study came from Hofstede Insights Country Comparison (Accessed February 2019) which is based on Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) with available updates. The social globalization dependent variable data were gathered from the KOF Globalization Index database (Accessed November 2019). The data collected for the average number of years of education attained came from the United Nations Human Development Reports (Accessed November 2019). The measure of human freedom came from The Human Freedom Index Report (Vasquez & Porcnik, 2018) and covers 162 countries. This index uses a 0-10-point scale with "10" representing more freedom.

In this research study, a sample of 54 countries that had data available for all the constructs used in these analyses. Correlations, descriptive statistics, and hierarchical regressions were conducted in SPSS to analyze the data sets to examine significance of the antecedents. Variance Inflationary Factor (VIF) analysis was used to assess multi-collinearity. In addition, to measure mediation a Bayesian test of indirect effect and Partial Posterior P-value was utilized (Falk & Biesanz, 2016), and also Necessary Condition Analyses (Dul, 2016) were completed to assess the degree to which an antecedent is a necessary condition for dependent variables as used in this model.

RESULTS

**TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

	Mean	Std. Dev.	N
Social Globalization (Social-G)	71.74	15.26	54
Human Freedom (HF)	7.31	1.00	54
Power Distance (PDI)	64.78	19.35	54
Individuality (IND)	42.67	21.75	54
Masculinity (MAS)	47.54	20.07	54
Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)	69.78	19.94	54
Long-Term Orientation (LTO)	43.69	22.55	54
Indulgence (IVR)	43.69	22.54	54
Education (EDU)	10.07	2.72	54

**TABLE 2
CORRELATIONS**

	Social-G	HF	PDI	IND	MAS	UAI	LTO	IVR	EDU
Social-G	1								
HF	.766	1							
PDI	-.436	-.593	1						
IND	.617	.641	-.685	1					
MAS	.057	.017	.100	.138	1				
UAI	.247	.044	.185	-.036	-.063	1			
LTO	.479	.459	-.029	.307	.028	.240	1		
IVR	-.065	.032	-.246	.139	.034	-.183	-.458	1	
EDU	.874	.687	-.372	.593	.020	.214	.591	-.087	1

Bold $p < .05$; For Abbreviations see Table 1

TABLE 3
REGRESSION MODELS

	Model 1a Std. Beta	Model 1b Std. Beta	Model 1c Std. Beta	Model 2a Std. Beta	Model 2b Std. Beta	Model 3 Std. Beta
PDI	-.205	-	-	-.427²	-.439³	-.111
IND	.386¹	.234¹	.070	.206	-	.368²
MAS	.030	-	-	.019	-	-.027
LTO	.303¹	.100	-	.415³	.210*	.477³
UAI	.229¹	.206¹	.107*	.050	-	.146
IVR	.011	-	-	.097	-	.081
H Freedom	-	.561³	.304³	Dep.	Dep.	-
EDU	-	-	.601³	-	.399³	Dep.
Social-Globe	Dep.	Dep.	Dep.	-	-	-
R²	.531	.674	.828	.582	.631	.565
Adj.R²	.471	.647	.814	.528	.609	.509
Δ R²	-	.143	.154	-	.049	-
F value	8.853³	25.278³	58.966³	10.890³	28.490³	10.164³

*p<.10; ¹p<.05; ²p<.01; ³p<.001; For Abbreviations see Table 1

Tables 1 & 2 address the basic descriptive statistics and correlations for the variables in this study. As seen in Table 3, *Model 1a* addressing **RQ1** indicated IDV, LTO and UAI were significant (positive) predictors of the variance in Social Globalization (R².53). **RQ2** was addressed by *Model 1b* suggesting that human freedom together with individuality and uncertainty avoidance were significant (positive) predictors of the variance in social globalization (R².674). **RQ3** was addressed by *Model 1c* found the combination of uncertainty avoidance, human freedom and education to be significant (positive) predictors of the variance in social globalization (R².828). **RQ4** as indicated in *Model 2a* suggested lower power distance and higher long-term orientation explained the variance in human freedom (R².582) at a significant level. **RQ5** was addressed by *Model 2b* which found lower power distance, along with higher long-term orientation and education to explain the variance in human freedom (R².631) at a significant level. **RQ6** addressing *Model 3* indicated individuality and long-term orientation were significant (positive) predictors of the variance in education (R².565).

In addition, the variance inflationary factor (VIF) was used with each of the regression models to measure the degree of multicollinearity between variables which might result in difficulty in accurately interpreting the regression results. VIF scores ranged in all six models between 1.1 and 2.1 which are well below the suggested conservative score of 5. Therefore, VIF scores in this study suggest interpretation problems due to multicollinearity should not be a problem (Hair, et al. 2006).

For **RQ7**, in order to evaluate possible indirect effects, Hierarchical Bayesian Analysis was used. Biesanz et al. (2010) suggests that the Bayesian approach to confidence interval estimation is similar to the Monte Carlo method but draws from the posterior distribution of each regression coefficient instead of assuming that the sampling distributions are normal. They have found this approach may be better suited for small samples (less than 100) and was found to be one of the best performing methods for forming an accurate confidence interval.

The indirect effect p-value with the mediation is measured using the partial posterior method. Calculators for both the Hierarchical Bayesian and partial posterior probability were developed by Falk & Biesanz (2016) who conclude they may be used for making inferences about indirect effects with multiple regression models using the t-distribution computational method and that the hierarchical Bayesian

method provided coverage rates for the indirect effect that outperformed both the distribution of the product method and the BCa bootstrap.

The Table 4 results indicate that only Long-Term Orientation (LTO) impacts Social Globalization through the Education (EDU) mediation variable at a significant level. As can be seen, a zero is not included in the confidence interval (CI) which suggests that the null hypothesis is rejected with the CI having a confidence level of $\alpha < .05$. Thus, the indirect effect is significant – based upon evidence consistent with mediation as suggested in the research model (Falk & Biesanz, 2016).

TABLE 4
HIERARCHIAL BAYESIAN TEST OF INDIRECT EFFECT AND PARTIAL POSTERIOR P-VALUE ANALYSIS (SIGNIFICANT ONLY INDICATED)

Settings & Results	LTO>EDU*>SG	IND>EDU*>SG	PDI>HF*>SG	EDU>HF*SG
Computational Accuracy Setting	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent
Confidence Interval Setting (%)	.95	.95	.95	.95
Confidence Interval	.0873, .3218	.0257, .3013	-.2181, -.0424	0.212, -1.507
Partial posterior p-value	.000	.015	.001	.001

*Mediator Variable; For Abbreviations see Table 1

To address **RQ8**, which allows further insights into the nature and importance of the research model variables, a Necessary Condition Analysis (NCA) is also used here. Dul (2016) suggests NCA as a method describing necessary conditions within a dataset that “may provide new insights that are normally not discovered with traditional approaches” (p. 15) such as multiple regression and suggests NCA as well as multiple regressions are complementary analytical tools and may precede traditional methods such as regression analyses. This also suggests support for the use of NCA in exploratory research provided there is sufficient theoretical support. He sees multiple regression as spotting determinants that may explain variances in the outcomes, while NCA may spot critical or necessary determinants that can prevent an outcome from occurring. In other words, an independent variable may be seen as a necessary condition to occur, but not substantive enough to explain significant amounts of variance in the outcome; while other independent variables may explain significant (substantive) amounts of outcome variance, while not being necessary for the outcome to occur. An NCA software program and bivariate calculator was developed by Erasmus University, Rotterdam, and used in this study (Erasmus Research Institute of Management, 2018).

A key output for NCA is the “effect size” (Dul, 2016). The effect size indicates to what extent the condition (independent variable) is necessary for the outcome to occur, or to what extent the condition constrains the outcome. For the purposes of this analysis each model antecedent was examined with each dependent variable and evaluated based on this effect size.

Using NCA, an effect size of between 0 and 0.1 is considered “small effect”; between 0.1 and 0.3 is considered “medium effect”; between 0.3 and 0.5 is considered “large effect”. In multiple studies, including those by van der Falk et al. (2016) and Goertz et al. (2013) “medium effect” sizes of between 0.1 and 0.3 “were found to be theoretically and practically meaningful” (Dul, 2016, p. 30). Therefore, in this study effect sizes of “medium” and “large” effects were considered as suggesting a significant necessary condition relationship. Necessary condition analysis was conducted with 21 potential variable relationships with the results shown in Table 5.

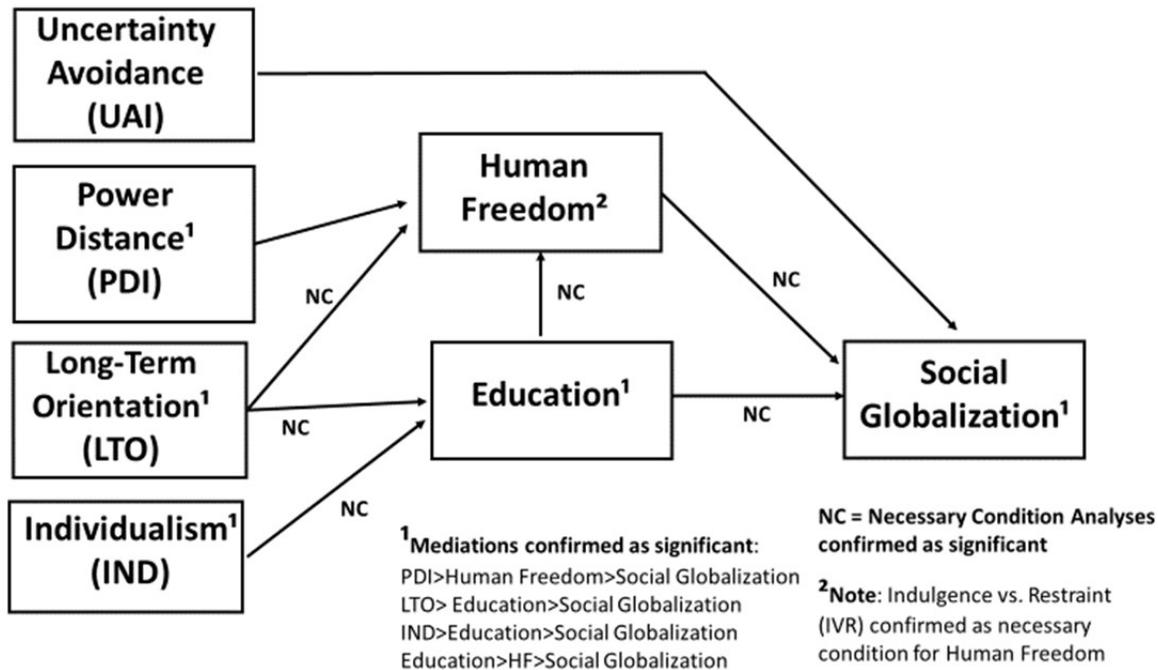
TABLE 5
NECESSARY CONDITION ANALYSIS SIZE EFFECTS

	Small $0 < d < 0.1$	Medium $0.1 \leq d < 0.3$	Large $0.3 \leq d < 0.5$
UAI>HF	0.01		
UAI>EDU	0.06		
UAI>SG	0.02		
PDI>HF	0.00		
PDI>EDU	0.02		
PDI>SG	0.01		
LTO>HF		0.12*	
LTO>EDU		0.12*	
LTO>SG	0.07		
IND>HF	0.07		
IND>EDU		0.11*	
IND>SG	0.09		
MAS>HF	0.05		
MAS>EDU	0.06		
MAS>SG	0.03		
IVR>HF		0.12*	
IVR>EDU	0.08		
IVR>SG	0.08		
EDU>HF			0.34*
EDU>SG			0.42*
HF>SG		0.21*	

Note: *significant; For Abbreviations see Table 1

Given the significant “medium” and “large” size effect scores in Table 5, Long-term Orientation, Indulgence vs. Restraint, and Education are all found to be necessary conditions for Human Freedom. It should be noted that while Indulgence vs. Restraint is a necessary condition for Human Freedom, it does not explain a significant percentage of its variance and thus, is not reflected in the path representations seen in Figure 1 but reported as a footnote (2). Long-term Orientation and Individuality are found to be necessary conditions for Education. Finally, Education and Human Freedom are found to be necessary conditions for Social Globalization.

FIGURE 1
SOCIAL GLOBALIZATION MODEL SIGNIFICANT RESULTS



DISCUSSION

The objective of this study is to explore selected potential antecedents of social globalization, specifically national cultural dimensions, education, and human freedom. This study suggests a number of important direct and indirect effects, as well as necessary conditions, for the potential growth of social globalization. Also of importance, are the findings suggesting the significant roles which national cultural plays with regards to human freedom and education as well as social globalization.

These results using the most recently available cultural dimensions and updated data of Hofstede (2019) suggests that four cultural dimensions (UAI, PDI, LTO, IND) each have either direct or indirect impacts on social globalization with a fifth dimension (Indulgence vs. Restraint) being a necessary condition of human freedom, which in turn is a necessary condition for social globalization. Thus, this study reinforces the emphasis Hofstede (2001) places on the culture-behavior connection, with the behavior in this case relating to the spread of ideas, information, images and people (social globalization), and the limited available literature suggesting various possible casual relationships of culture with education, human freedom and social globalization. Of furthermore importance are the findings suggesting the importance of culture (PDI, LTO, IVR) and education in explaining the variance in human freedom, which tend to be supported by previous related observations by previous researchers (Lilemba, 2017; Punke, 1966; Akerlof, 1980).

In addition, this research has potentially important implications for researchers in that the use of necessary condition analysis provided clear and interesting insights into these data by highlighting 7 necessary conditions including one (Indulgence > Human Freedom) in which there was not a significant percent of the variance explained by the relationship. As suggested by Dul (2016), van der Valk et al. (2016) and Goertz et al. (2013), necessary condition analysis (NCA) can significantly compliment and strengthen traditional regression analyses approaches by allowing us to differentiate those significant variance-explaining variables that are necessary for the dependent variable to exists versus those that have a significantly ability to explain the dependent variable but are not necessary

conditions. NCA can be seen to potentially identify not only variance explaining antecedents, that are necessary conditions, but also those variables that do not suggest significant variances still may be necessary for the dependent variable condition to exist.

From a policy perspective, social globalization has been associated with business opportunity and strategy, national and regional economic benefits, as well as international relations and understanding (Potrafke, 2015; Jackson, 2016; Moretti, 2012; Blake, 2003). Based on this study, these important benefits rest largely on a nation's and community's level of education, which in-turn is positively and significantly influenced from a long-term (not short-term) orientation. Those individuals responsible for education and economic policy should take note of the importance of social globalization and these results.

Perhaps the most significant limitation of this study is the availability of data for only 54 countries. The median GDP/cap/ppp (CIA World Factbook, accessed November, 2019) is approximately USD\$15,000, while the mean for this sample of 54 countries is USD\$24,426 suggesting there is a significant gap with the use of this smaller, and richer, sample. Among the benefits of a larger sample size would be the expansion of statistical analysis options. In addition, this study represents only a start in the quest to identify antecedents of social globalization and future research needs to expand this model and sample size. Social globalization research presents opportunities for research into not only the antecedents of this potentially important construct, but also into the outcomes, both short-term and long-term.

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