

# Impacts of globalization on primary school students' social and cultural behaviour: a Samoan case study

## Abstract

Globalization impacts primary school students in many ways including individual members, their behaviour, actions reactions and the ways they do things. These influences are driven by external forces such as parents, teachers as well as other students which are of course derivatives of different waves of globalization. Globalization can be seen as both positive and negative, and this could only be determined after people have experienced global changes in their life situations. This study invited seven participants including teachers, and students at an urban co-ed private primary school in Samoa. The goal was to explore the impacts of globalization on students' social and cultural behaviours in primary school. A qualitative research methodology was selected as the most appropriate design for this study. The analyses developed three themes which look at (i) effects of behavioural change, (ii) roles of parents and teachers in preserving the Samoan culture. There was also a consideration of (iii) globalization and cultural trend (GCT) within the classroom to enforce cultural preservation.

**Keywords:** globalization, behaviour, actions, reactions, primary school, students, parents, teachers

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## Introduction

Globalization is recognized in Samoa as a multifaceted process characterized by increased interconnectedness and interdependence with other countries (e.g., Australia, China, Fiji, Japan, NZ, UK, USA, etc.). Such process has been a defining force of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century around the world and it inspires the developments in education, economics, politics, health, infrastructure and private organisations within Samoa. Although globalization facilitates the exchange of goods, services, ideas, and cultural practices as well as improvement of technology and communication,<sup>1</sup> it has presented both opportunities and challenges, profoundly influencing the social and cultural dynamics of Samoans youths, particularly primary school students.

## Contextual information about Samoa

Samoa is an independent island nation in the Pacific with a population of approximately 200,000.<sup>2</sup> Samoa was governed by New Zealand until its people voted for independence in 1961. It is a Christian country with a stable democratic government and strong ties to its traditional culture—*fa'aSamoa* [Samoan way of life]. At its core, *fa'aSamoa* emphasizes respect for elders, a communal approach to living, and the prioritization of familial and community ties. In Samoan culture, the family is not limited to the nuclear family but extends to the *aiga* [family], which includes a broad network of relatives connected by blood, marriage, or adoption. The *aiga* forms the bedrock of Samoan society, creating a strong sense of belonging and responsibility to one's extended family. Respect or *fa'aaloalo*, is the cornerstone of *fa'asamoa*. This respect extends not only to elders and family members but also to cultural traditions and the natural environment. Elders are revered as the keepers of wisdom and custodians of cultural knowledge, and they are central to the decision-making process within families and villages. This hierarchical respect ensures that Samoan customs and practices are passed down through generations, preserving the integrity of the culture.

When the idea of Samoa becoming a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) was first introduced, it was naturally met with strong pessimism. This was largely due to fears that economies like

Samoa – that are least developed – cannot foot it on a level playing field with everyone else, let alone superpowers such as America, Australia, China, Europe, Japan, New Zealand and others. Samoa started to realise that globalization is the reality of today and there is no way we can ignore it. Basically, globalization has occurred because trade barriers (such as duties and quotas) have been drastically reduced, providing companies with the opportunities to expand into international markets. Thus, globalization in Samoa has become the hallmark of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as it articulated a new form of social organization—an increasingly borderless world where flows of capital and new technologies are propelling goods, information, people, and ideologies around the globe in volumes, and at speeds, never previously imagined.

## Arrival of globalization in Samoa

Samoa's official introduction to globalization began with the arrival of European Missionaries in 1830 and colonial powers (i.e., German Empire 1870s-1915 & Great Britain/New Zealand 1915-1961) which set the stage for ongoing cultural exchange as well as economic integration.<sup>3</sup> These early interactions laid the groundwork for complex relationships with globalization, where traditional Samoan customs and values continuously negotiate their place amidst global influences. For instance, foreign cultures (Western & Biblical cultures) made an incredible impact upon Samoan traditions and values in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. As a result, Samoans began to adopt foreign customs in areas such as language, where English has become a dominant force in education and business, often at the expense of indigenous languages.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Western-style clothing and cuisine have permeated daily life, leading to a blend of traditional and modern practices that characterize contemporary Samoan society. These cultural shifts are also observed in the changing landscape of language, dress, food, and social norms. The increasing use of English in schools, combined with exposure to global media, has influenced students' language preferences and proficiency. Traditional Samoan attire is slowly replaced by Western clothing styles, especially in urban areas, while global fast-food chains introduce new dietary habits that coexist with traditional foods.<sup>5</sup>

## Technology and globalization in Samoa

The speed with which culture is diffused has changed because of technological advances. Sharing of ideas, information, goods, and services through globalization is possible because of advances in communication technology and the media. In fact, the role of technology in Samoa's education has been pivotal in spreading global influences. The availability and use of technological tools, such as computers and Internet, have revolutionized the educational experience for Samoan students, offering them access to a vast array of information and learning resources from around the world.<sup>1</sup> This technological integration has not only enhanced educational outcomes but also exposed students to diverse cultural content. According to Tuia and Iyer, et al.,<sup>6</sup> global educational standards and practices have been integrated into the Samoan curriculum, aiming to elevate educational quality and competitiveness on an international scale. However, this integration often challenges the preservation of indigenous knowledge and practices, necessitating a careful balance between global and local educational aspirations. It is obvious that globalization of education extends beyond curriculum changes, influencing the ways which students interact and communicate with peers from different cultural backgrounds. Through international exchanges and digital communication platforms, Samoan students engage in multicultural dialogues that expand their cultural awareness and adaptability. Similarly, global media and social media platforms have had a significant impact on students' social lives and self-perceptions. These platforms serve as conduits for global cultural trends, shaping students' identities and self-esteem, as they navigate the tensions between global influences and local cultural norms.<sup>4</sup> However, such media introduces new social dynamics and peer influences that can both enrich and complicate Samoan primary school students' behaviour as well as their social developments.

## Economic development and globalization in Samoa

The national vision of the Government of Samoa (GoS) is "for every Samoan to achieve a better quality of life".<sup>7</sup> Basically, research in Samoa shows that having modern technologies, newly constructed school buildings, a huge selection of food, clothing and new vehicles are indications of quality lifestyles.<sup>1</sup> In addition, globalization had led to changes in Samoan family incomes, and improved students' access to educational opportunities and technological resources. Aslam A et al.,<sup>8</sup> confirmed that technological progress is the key driver of improvements in incomes and standards of living. While some families have benefitted from new economic opportunities and increased income, others have struggled with the economic disparities that globalization can exacerbate.<sup>1</sup> These economic shifts have implications for Samoa primary school students' educational experiences and future aspirations. In response to the varied impacts of globalization, the Samoan government has implemented initiatives to manage its effects on education while preserving cultural heritage. These initiatives include policies that aim to integrate global educational practices with a strong emphasis on retaining Samoan cultural values, ensuring that students are equipped for global citizenship without losing their cultural identity.<sup>3</sup>

## Rationale of the study

This study explores the impacts of globalization on students' social and cultural behaviour in primary school. Understanding the effects of globalization on primary school students is crucial, as they are at a formative stage in their development and are particularly susceptible to external influences. By examining these dynamics, the research seeks to illuminate the complex interplay between global forces and

local cultural practices, providing insights into how globalization can be managed to support cultural preservation and enhance educational outcomes. Therefore, this study is guided by the following research questions:

- I. What are the impacts of globalization on the social behaviours and cultural practices of primary school students in Samoa?
- II. What are the changes to the behaviours, practice and values of primary school students in Samoa?

## Proposed outcomes

The research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of globalization's effects on the social and cultural behaviour of primary school students in Samoa. By focusing on this demographic, the study seeks to fill a gap in the literature, as previous research has predominantly focused on older participants. The outcome of the study will contribute to a deeper understanding of how globalization influences the younger generation, offering insights into developing culturally sensitive educational policies and practices that balance global integration with cultural preservation. In addition, the study will inform relevant strategies that promote cultural resilience and educational innovations in Samoa, ensuring that the nation's cultural heritage is preserved for future generations while embracing the opportunities presented by globalization.

## Literature review

The literature selected for this review are from local researchers who had conducted case studies on globalization and its impacts on Samoa. They are selected due to their relevance and reliability for this study. With their focus on globalization in Samoa, this review will formulate the foundation of this research. Relevant international literature is also reflected to support various aspects of the review.

## Historical context of education and cultural identity

The literature<sup>3,5,6,9</sup> highlight the historical context of Samoa's educational landscape, that shaped by missionary education, colonial and post-colonial influences.<sup>10</sup> Education in Samoa became influenced by western theories, language, methods, strategies and approaches of teaching and learning. The influence of missionaries, and the subsequent impact of colonial policies, education has become a central site for embracing new identity. In fact, the Samoans believed that the arrival of the missionaries was the kingdom that Nafanua [Samoan Goddess of War] prophesized to Malietoa Fitiseanu (king of Samoa) in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century to *tali i lagi lou malo* [wait for a government/kingdom from the heavens].<sup>11</sup> The acceptance of missionaries with their mission was considered a very smooth transition that encouraged Samoans to listen and adapt these new transformations. For example, the students started to speak English and behave like foreigners.<sup>1,5,10</sup> The missionaries main aim was to spread the good news and educate Samoans to speak, read and write fluently in the Samoan language.<sup>10</sup> An additional aim was to teach the locals to understand the basic English language in reading, writing, and speaking for communication.<sup>3</sup>

Education during the first colonial period saw Germans focused more on organizing people to work the lands by growing cocoa and coconuts in return for wealth. Basically, German language was introduced and reinforced in schools together with the Samoan language for everyday communication. Although the missionaries taught Samoans to read and speak,<sup>12</sup> formal education only came to existence when the New Zealand administration took over Samoa from the German empire. During this transformation of education system, Samoans were thoroughly introduced into the colonizer's

education system.<sup>12</sup> Formal education became well accepted by every Samoans and the importance of well-educated in such system became the norm. Samoan parents encouraged and motivated their children to do well as a means of getting a better future and bringing blessings to the whole family.<sup>3,13</sup> Understanding this context is vital for analysing how historical educational practices continue to affect contemporary cultural behaviours of students. The persistence of colonial and missionary legacies in education might contribute to a cultural dissonance experienced by primary students navigating both traditional Samoan and globalized identities. Suaalii et al.,<sup>1</sup> supports these influences by exploring the broader impacts of globalization on Samoan communities, which can be extrapolated to understand its effects on primary students. Globalization introduces diverse cultural practices and values that primary school students might internalize, affecting their social interactions and cultural identities.

### Cultural integration and educational transformation

Esera E<sup>4</sup> emphasize the impact of globalization on cultural integration within Samoa's education system. It is a process of blending and harmonizing different cultural perspectives, practices, and values within our education system. The authors believed that successful cultural integration involves creating an inclusive environment where students from diverse cultural backgrounds feel valued, respected, and able to contribute fully.<sup>4</sup> In fact, cultural integration is essential for promoting diversity and inclusion particularly in situations where indigenous cultures/practices are slowly disappearing.<sup>1</sup>

Tuia TT<sup>6</sup> discuss the negotiation of education policies that create hybrid spaces for Samoan values (*fa'aSamoa, fa'aaloalo*) that balance traditional Samoan cultural values with global influences. This is relevant in examining how our educational policies and practices impact the social behaviours of primary school students, as they are often at the forefront of these hybrid learning environments. The negotiation process might influence students' cultural adaptability and openness to global perspectives while trying to maintain cultural roots. Today, the Samoa Primary School Curriculum adopts a subject based (SB) approach as opposed to an integrated one where content and ideas are interwoven in all subjects. The ideology embedded within the SB approach is to promote the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of the individual subject.<sup>14,15</sup> Efficiency in the progress of this approach encouraged the integration of the two languages (English & Samoan) in a bilingualism policy. The policy proposed to "ensure development and maintenance of Samoan language whilst acquiring English with both languages developing high levels of proficiency".<sup>16</sup>

The implementation of the bilingualism policy and many other practices in the Samoa education showcase a hybrid system—a mixture of two or more cultures.<sup>5</sup> Although it may seem a new life that inherits both characteristics of foreigners and indigenous the Samoa cultural system retains its integrity, its organization and practices change to suit contemporary ideas and beliefs. With the changes from time to time brought about by cultural integration and educational transformations, the Samoan children, within different primary school communities adopt and replicate these influences as part of their learning, personal and social developments.<sup>1</sup>

### Cultural preservation versus global competencies

Known as *fa'aSamoa*, Samoa aims to preserve and protect its cultural traditions and practices. Respecting cultural values are a part of everyday life in Samoa, including in the school, home, church and in the villages.<sup>1</sup> Others<sup>3,5,6,9</sup> believe that the significance of Samoan

Indigenous knowledge (IK) should be maintained. This is because it represents a unique body of knowledge generated and possessed by Samoans (ancient) enabling them to benefit from their natural resources. Although IK is developed outside the formal education system, it does not necessarily operate within formal organisations and is mainly transferred by word of mouth, yet Samoans lived through it, and they had been practicing in various occasions.

Despite the urge for cultural preservation, the current emphasis of education in Samoa is better quality of life that requires a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values successfully applied to global issues or intercultural situations.<sup>17</sup> In this sense, not only education be universally accessible, but it must also be of high quality, relevant and sustainable, to equip citizens to improve their society and gain benefit from social and economic progress.<sup>15</sup>

Research<sup>1,3-6,9</sup> suggests that cultural preservation and global competencies should be integrated in a way that they become relevant, meaningful and be sustained. Such integration is critical in understanding how primary students are taught to navigate a world that values both the local cultural heritage and global knowledge. These two aspects contribute significantly to the students' behaviours which can potentially lead to a hybrid cultural identity that blends Samoans and global influences.

### Summary

The literature review identifies specific factors of globalization that influence the social and cultural behaviours of primary school students in Samoa through educational systems, policy frameworks, and community influences. These ideas highlight the complexity of the impacts of globalization, and the need for educational strategies that support cultural identity while fostering global awareness.

### Research methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the impacts of globalization on students' social and cultural behaviours in primary schools in Samoa. The qualitative approach is appropriate for exploring complex social phenomena because it allows for in-depth investigation of participants' experiences and perceptions.<sup>18</sup> By focusing on the lived experiences of primary school students and teachers, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the impacts of globalization within the educational context.

### Method of data collection

With limited amount of time given for this study, the method of data collection used was semi-structured interviews. This method involves data collection through direct verbal interaction between the researchers and the research participants. It allows the researchers to gain insights into participants' perspectives on the phenomenon under study. Semi-structured interview is particularly useful, to ascertain the participants' thoughts, perceptions, feelings and retrospective accounts of events,<sup>19</sup> since these could not be directly observed.<sup>20,21</sup> Due to the nature of this tool, it allows new questions to be introduced and offers opportunities to probe deeper into the "situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the participants and to new ideas on the topic".<sup>20</sup> Seidman<sup>22</sup> suggests that interviews allow for a deeper understanding of the meaning individuals make of their experiences, making them ideal for this type of exploratory research.<sup>23</sup> All interviews were audio recorded to provide the researchers with more time to concentrate on what individual participant is trying to say rather than trying to write it all down.

### Research participants

From an urban co-ed private primary school, a total of seven participants volunteered to participate in this study that includes one school principal, two teachers, and four students (Table 1). The selection of this number of research participant was sufficient to collect the principal's and teachers' ideas and observations as well as the students' views upon the impacts of globalization on social and cultural behaviours in primary schools.

The different demographic information of PPT, POT and PYT (Table 1) ensured that the data collected provided wide range of perceptions, feelings and retrospective accounts of the impacts of globalization on primary school students' social and cultural behaviours in Samoa. In addition, the four student participants were selected from four primary levels to obtain diverse age-related perspectives on the same phenomenon.

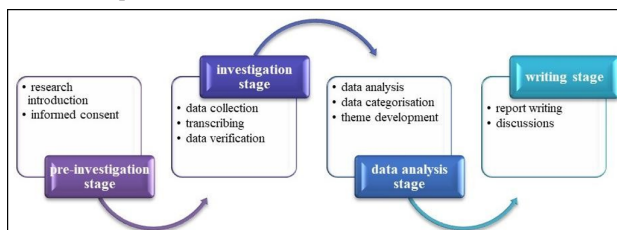
The seven research participants were identified in the study using codes (Table 1) to ensure confidentiality and anonymity and adhere to ethical standards outline in education research.<sup>24-26</sup>

**Table 1** Demographic information for research participants

Participants	Description	Age (yrs)	Teaching experience (yrs)	Identifiers
1	School Principal	68	30	PPT
2	Old teacher	52	25	POT
3	Young teacher	31	3	PYT
4	Yr 5 student	9	-	PY5
5	Yr 6 student	10	-	PY6
6	Yr 7 student	11	-	PY7
7	Yr 8 student	12	-	PY8

### Procedures of data collection

Pre-investigation stage (Figure 1) included formal procedures for obtaining informed consent which consisted of an information sheet that explained the research investigation, the participants and researchers' roles as well as the participants' rights. Informed consent served to protect the identities and privacy of the participants. Thus, the participants were made aware that their names and the school would not be used in any discussion or written documents about the research.<sup>19</sup> The research participants were also informed about making voluntary choices about participation, and freedom of responding to the interview questions.



**Figure 1** Research procedures.

The investigation stage (Figure 1) included interviews, data transcription and verifications. Each research participant was interviewed individually at different times to protect privacy from other participants as well as other students and teachers. The researchers made it clear that the participants' names would not be used for any other purposes, dissemination of the results of the

study, nor would information be shared that revealed their identity in any way. Additionally, prior to the start of each interview session, the participants were reminded about the recording and their right to stop it at any time. Each interview was transcribed to maintain the authenticity of the data.<sup>27</sup> The research participants were invited to verify the information contained in the interview transcripts, and to provide further exploration where necessary. This task did not take long as all of them approved their transcripts as true evidence of their responses to the interviews. The data analyses stage involved systematic exploration of the data through categorising, identifying and comparing to generate relevant themes in relation to the focus of the study.<sup>27</sup> This is followed by the fourth stage where the researcher puts together a written report of the research investigation.

### Findings and discussions

Due to the huge amount of relevant information from the interviews, the researchers formulated summaries of responses as given in Appendices 1 and 2 to show a comparative analysis of the data from each research participant. After transcribing and verifying the responses, the researchers conducted thematic analyses to generate relevant themes to assist in answering the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The three themes include:

- I. Behavioural shift
- II. Teachers & parents are part of globalization
- III. Strategies to balance globalization and cultural preservation

#### Theme 1: Behavioural shift

In this study, this theme is referred to as a temporary or permanent effect that is considered a shift or a change to an individual's behaviour. This shift or change is generally characterized by changes to an individual's ways of performing a task, thinking, emotions, or reactions to their surroundings.<sup>1</sup> These changes can be either good or bad, depending on which behaviour is being affected. A study of Samoan communities by Suaalii<sup>1</sup> suggested that the behaviour, actions and reactions of an individual are influenced by all the events, processes, cultures, media mass that they are exposed to. The summaries in appendices 1 and 2 confirmed that the students' showed different behaviour. For example:

*"... attitude towards their parents, teachers, and elders ... disrespectful, ... students talkback or retaliate to the teacher ..."* PPT.

*"... many changes, ... dependency on technology instead of ... critical thinking. Increase 'unnecessary wants' instead of recognizing basic needs ... devices do the thinking ... students who are disrespectful ... think they are untouchable when they display unacceptable behaviour"* POT.

*"... show behaviour that makes me winch ... show so much disrespect in the classrooms causing distractions and sometimes end up in detention or their privileges are removed"* PYT.

*"... my friends ... bully me and are mean ... I made new friends ... play with me and share with me ... other kids are cheeky ... pass around notes of their crushes--who they like, they get into trouble ... sometimes they get sent to the principal's office"* PY5.

*"... changed the way I treat my friends ... when bully others ... now I ... tell them not toas it's not nice and they can get into trouble ... other friend ... spread rumours about me"*

... kids started making fun of me ... other friends ... tease other kids but I tell them not to as it's not nice" PY6.

"... some want to compete to see who has the most friends in Roblox ... I don't like ... they say mean things and talk bad about me ... some friends ... are so disrespectful and mean to others as they think they are rich ... their parents ... buy them stuff that they show off" PY7.

"... we share certain things we see online ... some of my friends say bad words ... when the teacher looks away ... my friends brought her device to school and got us into trouble

... for doing a TikTok video ... my friend has a boyfriend ... and everyone knows" PY8.

The data from the teacher participants showed that they were able to see the changes in the students' behaviour, both in (teachers & classmates) and out (parents) of the classroom. These behavioural changes inspired destructive reactions that interfered with their classroom learning. As a result, the students experienced difficulties to stay focused on their learning, unable to use critical thinking skills as well as inability to become active learners. With their own interpretations of their peers (friends/classmates) behaviours and actions, the students tend to react and exhibit certain social behaviour to reflect disapproval and disagreement. Behaving in such manner, is a strategy that they use to contend. For instance, PPT stated that students' behaviours shifted from respect to being disrespectful to their teachers where they "... retaliate and talk back ..." because they do not want to do what they were told to do in class.

Parents were also mentioned as they seem to play a part in this behavioural shift/change. When a child is given two different representations of the same instruction/idea, s/he tends to favour the one that is on his/her side. For instance, it is obvious that this school prohibited students from bringing mobile devices to school. However, the parents purchased the device which gave the child an intention that s/he can take it to school. Although the child is aware of the school rule, the change in behaviour was motivated by having a mobile device. Suaalii<sup>1</sup> described that these shifts/changes in behaviour, actions and reactions are results of external stimuli, surrounding events or own experiences. Literature suggests that the interactions between physiological processes (how the human body works) and their effect on individual behaviour is referred to as psychophysiology (body interactions causing different physical symptoms).<sup>15,28-31</sup>

## Theme 2: Teachers and parents are part of globalization

While globalization refers to the process of interaction and integration among people within a community, the findings from this study suggest that teachers, parents and students are part of it (Figure 2).

Figure 2 demonstrates the three factors contributing to the changes revealed in this study include parents, teachers as well as the students. This is because each of the three is exposed to different dimensions of globalization as well as in different levels. For instance, the different levels of technology could be radio/newspaper, Television and Internet. Some parents are exposed to technologies but at different levels. Therefore, their knowledge, skills and interpretations of ideas vary significantly. The same applies to the other two components, teachers and students (Figure 2). With the huge number of experiences, knowledge, skills, cultures, principles, values, beliefs, theories and practice that each component brings into the classroom/school context there will always be a mixture of changes. Some of these changes may be comfortable/well accepted, some may bring discomfort, stress, and disbelief to others.

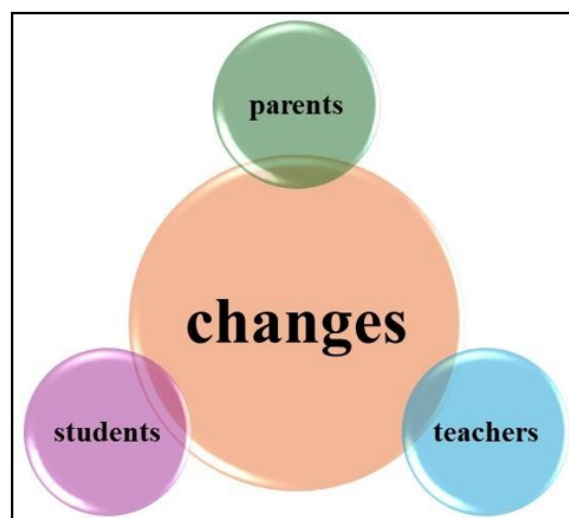


Figure 2 Cause of changes.

Theme 2 confirms that behavioural shifts/changes revealed in this study are caused by different waves of globalization and are brought into the classroom context by parents and teachers (students also). The students in this study are within the age group of 9-12 years, which shows that their exposure to globalization only started in 2012/13 ( $\leq 12$  years of age). Although 12 years may be a short period of time, however, the student participants are exposed to the most updated elements of globalization. Nguyen<sup>32</sup> talked about the changes of personality of the individuals are often related to the different generations, X—born between 1965-1980; Y—born between 1981-1997; Z—born between 1997-2010<sup>1</sup> and Alpha generation—born between 2010-2025.<sup>33</sup>

The ages of the teacher participants vary from 31-68 (Table 1) which represents a huge amount of exposure to the different developmental stages that happened from 1956 (colonial times) to 1993 (31 years of Samoa's Independence). Despite the huge exposures, knowledge and experiences of the different developmental stages since 1956, the teacher participants are not the same as what Z and generations are exposed to and practised today. For example, the constant use of anime, Roblox, Netflix, TikTok, Facebook and Instagram by the student participants. Because of such discrepancies, the interpretations of various actions and behaviours may bring distinct opinions. This is partly caused by the parents who are also exposed to other elements (of globalization), and they expect that all could be applied to any situation, including classroom context. For example, PPT stated that:

"... harsh reactions from parents and family members when ... discipline a child due of inappropriate attitude or behaviour inside the classroom ... parents are judgemental and quick to point a finger at the teacher ... teachers could hardly do their job without a parent dictating what the DOS and DON'TS ... always blame

teachers ..."

In some cases where the teachers try to discipline the children's bad behaviours, the parents intervene, despite the fact that they themselves could not discipline their own children. PYT responded in a very soft voice and with sad facial expressions:

"... when students are disciplined by hand raise or extra work after school the parents do not agree with it ... they report to the principal and students repeat disrespect through their actions and words knowing that their parents always

*intervene ... bullying-students discriminate weaker/slow learners by name calling ... but parents argue their child's right and their views against the consequences of their child's actions".*

Today, some of the parents tend to exercise their rights to select subjects for their children in school. For instance:

*"... some parents request to exclude their kids from Samoan exams ..."* PY8.

Although they are exercising their parental rights towards selection of subjects, the children observe, react or behave differently towards the teachers. No matter how committed the teacher is in terms of providing quality education and equity procedures within the classroom, the psychophysiological processed of this particular child has been influenced by his/her parents. The students start to react strangely to the teachers and towards others. The study revealed that "... *bullying, discrimination ... name calling*" (PYT) begin to surface. As a result, the students learning become distracted and the teacher becomes upset and wanting to discontinue the lesson. The student participants in this study are considered young, easily affected and they need guidance and support from the parents and teachers. However, the study revealed that the different elements of globalization held by the parents and teachers contribute to the behavioural changes / shifts that are evident in the classroom context. Suaalii<sup>1</sup> confirmed that these challenges are infectious and can spread from one, individual to another; classroom to another; family to another; community to another; and so forth. The wave of change that has swept over Samoa is evident in the changing perspectives and mentality of our people. The contribution of parents changing beliefs on how classrooms are to be run reflects the strength of globalization and its power to transform the mentality of parents as well as teachers. These views influence the behaviour of students causing inability to balance global influence and cultural preservation. At the same time, the teaching and learning of primary school subjects continue to face problems.

### **Theme 3: Strategies to balance globalization and cultural preservation**

Samoa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century recognises the acceleration of globalization due to technological advancements, economic liberalization, and interconnectedness across many countries.<sup>3</sup> This shows that we are experiencing an unprecedented exchange of ideas, goods, and services. This intricate network of connections has offered immense opportunities for socio- economic growth and intercultural understanding. However, this sweeping wave of globalization has also sparked conversations about cultural preservation, as concerns about cultural homogenization and the erosion of our Samoan cultures come to the fore.<sup>3</sup>

The literature states that globalization can serve as a platform for the propagation and appreciation of our local cultures.<sup>5,6,9</sup> It offers cultural artifacts, traditions, and information to an international audience, promoting cultural diversity and pluralism.<sup>34</sup> However, globalization, particularly Westernization, poses a threat to our Samoan culture.<sup>5,9,10</sup> As Western values, languages, and lifestyle choices dominate global media, the Samoan culture, may feel pressured to adapt or risk being overshadowed.<sup>3</sup> This is often the case where learning is influenced by various elements that are brought into the classroom/school by teachers and parents (Figure 2). These elements include experiences, knowledge, skills, expectations, policies, curriculum, teaching/learning materials as well as teaching and learning strategies. However, the teacher's role in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century classroom is a lot different from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century one. Basically,

teachers of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are facilitators of student learning and creators of productive classroom environments, in which students can develop the skills they might need at present or in future. They shape the culture of their classrooms, improve student learning, and influence practice and production. Part of these include ensuring a balance between the strong influences of globalization and cultural preservation as revealed in this study.

Theme 3 developed from a category of views that reflected an inconsistency between globalization and cultural preservations in Samoan primary classrooms. For instance, the research participants confirmed a constant influx of different dimensions of globalization, where the primary school students are left with no options but to adopt, adapt and changes to their behaviours, actions, reactions, preferences, expectations are evident. POT described that it is a:

*"... win-lose situation in the sense that we must move on with the changes of time ... we lose in the sense that we allow these changes to influence our decision ... these decisions determine the future ..."*

PPT and PYT also talked about their observations of the changes that the students bring into the classroom (refer to [Appendix 1](#)). Basically, the students:

- I. Bring mobile devices to school despite school rule—ban mobile devices,
- II. Do TikTok in the classrooms,
- III. Disrespect teachers and elders,
- IV. Talk, act and behave by imitating what they see on Television, Internet, movies etc.,
- V. Don't value Samoan culture at all; not speaking the language,
- VI. Prefer conversing using English language,
- VII. Failure rate in Samoan subject is more than 50% etc.

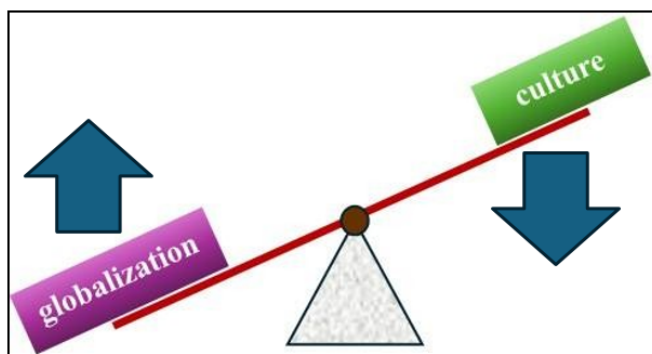
Similarly, reflections from the student participants about the same phenomenon revealed that our observations of generation (as in this study) are derivatives of globalization of the day. For instance, they (PY5, PY6, PY7 & PY8—[Appendix 2](#)) use technological features such as

- I. Anime, Roblox, Netflix, Tik Tok, Facebook, Instagram,
- II. Online movies, PS5,
- III. YouTubes,
- IV. Internet, searching for fashion styles, clothing, dances, food and cultures.

It is obvious from the analyses that the student participants favoured the various aspects of globalization more than their own culture, language and practice. As a result, an imbalance trend (Figure 3) which is a threatening experience to the Samoans<sup>1,5,6,9</sup> and it was also concern raised by the teacher participants.

Despite the imbalance trend (Figure 3) established in Samoan primary schools, the study revealed that the teacher participants implemented alternative strategies to reverse the trend into a more balanced one. Basically, the teacher participants proposed to add (increase) weight to the cultural aspect to counteract the overwhelming effects of the various elements of globalization in Samoa primary schools. The addition of weight includes the adoption of strategies, activities, resources and constructive learning environments that are

conducive to improve the teaching and learning of Samoan culture. With constant practice and ongoing activities, the possibility of gaining further knowledge and skills of the Samoan culture also continues. For example, PPT talks about:



**Figure 3** Globalization and cultural trend (GCT).

*“... sharing/discussing issues in class & learn ... i.e., use of cell phones; why & why not ... the influences of alcohol, drugs, avoiding religious practices, not honouring own parents and elders ... encourage students to role-play and look at potential*

*outcomes ... talk about the above realities at home, in the community and society”*

Similarly, PY7 proposed for teachers to discuss the reality of global influences. For instance,

*“... [provide] examples of incidents that have resulted from global influences, i.e., high crime rates ... people want technology items, [but] they can't afford ... so they*

*steal, kill, use drugs ... eventually end up in jail ... understanding all these ... can change their minds and be a lot smarter about global influences ...”*

POT, PYT and PY5 emphasized the role of the teacher through modelling and motivating that uses a variety of relevant strategies to create positive changes. The significance of doing activities (PY6) to promote Samoan language, values and traditions was also emphasized. Additionally, changing the learning environment from a formal education setting (teacher has full authority) to incorporate culturally responsive pedagogies that may encourage students to interact. PYT suggested that it important to:

- I. Revise our education policies, school curriculum and objectives,
- II. Produce textbooks, reading books, etc in Samoan language to help teach our students,
- III. Use Samoan language as the mode of communication in the classrooms as there is enough English practice in the homes,
- IV. Be consistent with the use of Samoan language, values & traditions in students' activities,
- V. Model values and traditions for students to see and imitate them,
- VI. Be consistent with the use of Samoan cultural values in class before it fades.

Despite the multiple suggestions of strategies and their implementations in primary school classrooms, there is still an ongoing challenge faced by teachers and students. Theme 3 provides

an important lesson for all Samoans who are experiencing this GCT (Figure 3). As revealed in this study, it is important to initiate educational policies that are both accommodating of the many facets of globalization, but at the same time prioritize the preservation of our cultural values and traditions in our schools.<sup>4,6</sup> Similarly, Suaalii<sup>1</sup> showed the same concern and recommended that Samoan educational leaders need to create awareness programmes to educate the people on the effects of globalization.

In summary, the findings of this study have proven the various effects of globalization on the students' social and cultural behaviours in primary schools. The research participants confirmed that the behavioural shift/changes, attitudes and GCT are derivatives of the factors of globalization, parents, teachers and students. The perceptions, beliefs and experiences of the parents and teachers who had been in the midst of globalizations for many years contribute to this GCT that we are facing today. The analysis of the data and the development of the three themes confirm that globalization (including parents, teachers and students) impacts behaviours (actions, reactions, preferences, expectations) of primary school students in Samoa.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, globalization (including parents, teachers and students) impact on the students' social and cultural behaviours (including actions, reactions, preferences, expectations) of primary school students in Samoa. It highlights the fact that despite the unique and strong culture of Samoa, it does not stand against the effects of globalization. As globalization, continues to grow and develop more exciting, convincing features, our Samoan culture lacks the ability to create new initiatives. In this sense, primary school students in Samoa tend to attract themselves to these new changes and behave differently. Parents' choices, preferences, practices and views of what is acceptable to them interfere with classroom operations. Similarly, teachers' knowledge, skills, experiences as well as educational materials that are available at the time play a part in the processes within the classrooms. As a result, challenges continue to surface despite efforts to preserve cultural values and norms through primary school education.

## Recommendations

It is important for teachers to accept the fact that many factors/elements of globalization are reflected in their classrooms because the students are exposed to, and they gain access to most of them. Rather than trying to remove the child from such environment, teachers need to look at how it can be used to promote learning. For instance, allow the use of mobile devices for teaching/learning activities where students can take videos of certain cultural events in their village. Teachers also need to be aware of the different generations in a classroom context (Generations X, Y, Z and  $\alpha$ ). Different generations have different experiences, exposure and the ways they see or do things. Some of these may be distracting but the role of teachers in ensuring that the students are provided with thorough explanations and analyses can make a huge difference. Changing policies and documentations may only accommodate a certain period or a certain generation. Policy makers often make alterations based on research carried out in the past 3-5 years. This means the new policy is based on the data collected from participants who were exposed to different waves of globalization. This, however, will be used by a new generation who are currently going through new waves of globalization.

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## Conflicts of interest

The author declares there is no conflict of interest.

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