

GLOBALIZATION CONTROVERSY IN THE U.S. LABOR MARKET

By

Shadrack K.Koros, Phd, Economist/Educator, Member of the Association of American
University Professors & Southern Economic Association

Barbara Butts William, Phd, Dean, School of Business and Technology

Susan miller, Phd, Faculty Mentor and Chair

Charlotte Neuhauser, Phd, Committee Member

Tiffany Green, Phd, Committee Member

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ABSTRACT

The economic effects of globalization remain a subject of much controversy in all corners of the world. This study examined the Globalization Controversy in the U.S. workforce. A correlational design was used to establish the relationship between variables. The findings showed a positive and significant correlation between globalization and the GDP, indicating better quality of life for workers. Results indicated a positive relationship between unemployment rate and outsourcing though U.S. workers have benefitted tremendously from direct foreign investments. It is notable that as much as non-skilled jobs were lost due to outsourcing, they were compensated for by high-paying skilled jobs from foreign direct investments into the United States relative to lower wages by locally owned companies. The study provides information that brings more clarity on the existing passionate debates on globalization.

Keywords: *Globalization Controversy in the U.S. Labor Market*

Introduction

Globalization is one of the most misunderstood, misused, and controversial concepts that continues to drive a wedge between scholars, politicians, and the general public. Negrea (2012) underscored the divergent views surrounding globalization as the subject has raised tensions, passionate reactions, fear, disputes, and has often been viewed as a disease that the current generation suffers from. Although many consider globalization as a gateway for economic prosperity, critics argue that the removal of economic barriers has been to the advantage of a few Western nations at the expense of most of the developing world (Bishop, Reinke, & Adams, 2011). Conflicting views are supported by more or less legitimate and arguably profound arguments (Negrea, 2012).

Tešić (2012) noted that not only globalization is a highly disputed phenomenon but also that there is no widely approved definition of the concept. For the purposes of this study, the term *globalization* is referred to as the integration of world economies through the removal of trade barriers for the purpose of taking advantage of comparative advantages inherent in every country. Economic theory indicates that the more open and integrated world economies are, the more opportunities exist for economic growth and prosperity (Ahearn, 2012). As such, the meaning and the objective of globalization refer to integrated world economies through international trade for the economic well-being of nations (Mankiw, 2011). Soomro, Nasar-ul-eman, and Aziz (2012) added that globalization implies the goal of increasing economic activity by producing and trading goods and service with limited trade barriers.

Despite the differences of opinions on globalization, there is consensus that globalization impacts everyone in every country in more than one way (Chebe, 2009). The existing dichotomy relates to whether the economic impact of globalization on various nations has been positive or negative, and further, whether the benefits outweigh the inherent challenges. According to Ekmekcioglu (2012), the recent global economic crisis has sparked further debates and contentions regarding the benefits of global integration in relation to the economic and financial risks to which each country is exposed.

Globalization proponents contend that the impact on world economies has been favorable and

that developed as well as developing nations have witnessed economic growth and significant improvement in the well-being of the population. Ekmekcioglu (2012) reported that each country has obtained numerous benefits by participating in international trade, given that the World Trade Organization is geared toward implementing agreements that are fair and accommodate all participating nations.

According to The World Bank (2011), the benefits of economic integration include advancements in information technology that have brought about efficiency in global trade and, hence, and improved standard of living for many people in different countries. Access to foreign markets at relatively reduced costs and the elimination of trade barriers have reduced economic isolation while improving the livelihoods of the people engaged in international trade.

Over the past century, global economic integration has contributed significantly to improvement in the standard of living of millions of people across many nations, including the United States (Straw, 2012). Reduced cost of production as a result of lower labor costs and advancements in technology explain the increased productivity across all sectors of the economy on a global scale.

Despite the positive impact of globalization, critics attribute economic inequality, regional imbalances, poor living conditions, and increasing unemployment to economic liberalization through the free flow of trade (Bishop et al., 2011). The trend is disturbing, as the gap between the rich and the poor nations appears to be widening. Inequality is largely a result of modern-day imperialism due to an uneven playing field as developed nations control trade policies through international organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization to the disadvantage of poor nations (Ekmekcioglu, 2012).

Problem Statement

There are conflicting reports and arguments among scholars, politicians, businesses, and the U.S. population regarding the quality of life due to economic integration. Although proponents argue that globalization has improved the economic well-being of nations including U.S. workers, critics dispute such assertion by indicating unfavorable impact on the welfare of citizens (Bishop et al., 2011). Evaluating the relationship between globalization, standard of

living, gross national income (GNI), FDIs, and unemployment helps to ascertain whether the impact of economic integration on the U.S. labor force has been positive or negative. The analysis is based on utilization of Pearson coefficient of correlation by testing the relationship between variables.

Literature Review

David Ricardo's (1776) theory on land, rent, and capital laid the foundation and provided the rationale for economic activity that led to modern day economic globalization. The advent of welfare economics (Pigou, 1932) particularly in the 20th century paved way for macroeconomic activity which became prevalent in Europe and the United States, and essentially accelerated intercontinental trade in 1950s and 1960s.

The Great Depression in early 1930s set forth a path for global conversation in hope of finding was to turn around economic loss across nations. As a result, John Maynard Keynes's (1936) economic theory became the pillar for stimulating economic growth. Many countries embraced Keynesian economic theory in solving economic problems through government intervention in the market. Although classical and modern economic theory plays a large role in modern economics, Keynesian economic theory remains a critical fabric of modern economics as seen in global government's intervention during recent global economic crisis (Ahmed et al., 2011).

The United States transitioned to the center stage of international trade in the 19th century as the manufacturing industry grew from 30% in 1840 to 60% in 1913 (Mukherjee, 2008). The Great Depression and World War II short-circuited growth; nevertheless, the momentum for international trade picked up globally in the early 1970s into the 1980s courtesy to trade agreements like the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) of 1947 and the Bretton Woods in the 1970s (Bishop et al., 2011).

Additionally, the involvement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and The World Bank accelerated economic integration as countries worked together to harmonize trade through removal of trade barriers and embracing of bilateral, multilateral, regional, and international trade. Trade agreements and treaties have made globalization a major driving force in modern day business (Mankiw, 2011).

The rapid spread of globalization in modern times has been as a result of information technology revolution. Technology revolution in the 1980s significantly lowered the cost of air, land, and ship transportation (Bishop et al., 2011). The cost of moving goods and services from one country to the other has dropped tremendously because of technological advances. Modern forms of transportation have played a critical in the growth and development of globalization by reducing communication barriers an ideal scenario for economic integration. Mukherjee (2008) acknowledged that digital revolution has made it easy and cheap for businesses to communicate across national boundaries in a timely and convenient manner.

Although globalization has revolutionized the way business is conducted, challenges are nonetheless evident. Removal of trade barriers is regarded both a blessing and a challenge (Okogbule, 2008). Bishop et al. (2011) pointed that economic integration is illogical yet unavoidable in modern era. No one country can be isolated from the rest of the world community and such. Nations have to deal with challenges that come along with globalization by taking advantage of inherent benefits. Therefore, globalization is not a new concept; instead, it has transcended many centuries and is anticipated to continue revolutionizing the global landscape into the distant future.

Empirical Review

The United States is not immune to the economic consequences of globalization as evidenced by job outsourcing and the ripple effects on the state of employment. On the one hand, critics and fierce opponents of economic liberalization lament challenges associated with globalization, to which Anderson and Gascon (2007) agreed that although globalization has great benefits, the bad outweighs the good.

On the other hand, some scholars support economic liberalization as an opportunity to benefit from competitive advantages and economies of scale brought about by economic integration. Renforth and Chawla (2012) rallied in support of globalization as beneficial to many nations and that the U.S. GDP has grown significantly over the years as a result of international trade and foreign direct investments (FDIs). According to The World Bank (2011), despite global economic challenges, world economies have evidently experienced significant economic progress through bilateral and multilateral agreements resulting in decreased inequality and

poverty.

Although there are evident benefits and challenges that come along with economic globalization, consensus regarding the impact on world economies and particularly in reference to the standard of living of the U.S. workforce remains elusive. Bhagwati and Blinder (2009) acknowledged that concerns regarding the impact of economic liberalization are shared by U.S. students, politicians, businesses, and economists alike. Proponents and opponents of globalization differ on whether the benefits of economic integration supersede the inevitable negative consequences. The effects of globalization on nations remain a subject of much debate and controversy (Smick, 2012).

The only existing consensus is that economic liberalization affects the welfare of nations. Whether globalization benefits supersede its challenges continue to raise, passions, debates, and disagreements. Economic integration affects people from all walks of life and in different nations in diverse ways (Ukpere & Slabbert, 2009). Globalization is surrounded by disputes, passions, and a cause for much disagreements the world over; as a matter of fact, the phenomenon is referred to as the disease of the century in the modern era (Negrea, 2012).

Conflicting views surrounding globalization effects have existed for centuries and the controversy lingers on to date (Prentis, 2012). The need for more studies on a subject riddled with divergent and controversial views cannot be underestimated given recent global economic and financial crisis. Empirical studies are a precursor to understanding the impact of globalization on the welfare of workers which brings clarity leading to more consensus (World Public Opinion, n.d.).

Research Methodology

A quantitative, non experimental, correlational method was considered suitable for this research. A researcher with a positivist view is not influenced by personal prejudice or emotions (Creswell, 2008), rather, considers the world in an objective manner while examining relationships between variables in order to test hypotheses (Swanson & Holton, 2005). In order to evaluate the relationship between variables, secondary data, which refers to already collected, and archived data were used in the analysis. A quantitative analysis was considered the most suitable approach in this study as Creswell (2009) agreed that a

quantitative research is a viable and an objective means for testing relationships between variables. Additionally, a quantitative approach assumes independent physical and social realities from the observer (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

Hence, the researcher in this study analyzed and reported findings objectively and independent of human influence as no human participants were involved. In cases in which the degree of effect is the objective and the assessment of factors it correlates to the outcome, a quantitative evaluation is considered the best approach (Creswell, 2008).

This study used secondary data which was archived virtually on the sources' websites. Yin (2009) recommended and advocated ideal conditions for conducting a study which includes archival analysis as a viable means to analyze data in a study. Using archived data allowed cross-referencing of data across multiple data sources while utilizing standard statistical tools that reduced the chances of error as no human elements were involved except the researcher. While there are many research designs, a correlational design was considered the most suitable for this study. Given that the goal of this study was to evaluate the degree of relationship between globalization and standard of living for U.S. workers, a correlational study made it possible to establish the of relationship between variables using factual data without personal bias. Creswell (2009) supported a correlational study as it adequately evaluates the existence of relationships between independent and dependent variables.

Further, a correlational study was considered ideal because experiments could not be conducted to ascertain the nature of relationship between variables instead, Pearson coefficient of correlation and regression analysis were determined as suitable measures. Gall et al. (2007) acknowledged the suitability of correlation studies for nonexperimental study designs.

Pearson coefficient of correlation is regarded as a viable measure in examining the relationship among variables particularly in a linear relationship (Ratner, 2009). Thus, the researcher chose correlational design as a fitting approach in determining the relationship between globalization, gross domestic product (GDP), national unemployment rate, national income, and foreign direct investments (FDIs). Data were collected and analyzed from the period between 1992 and 2011. Limited data were available between 2012 and 2013 and as such it made it difficult to cross-reference for accuracy. U.S. governmental agencies were in the process of updating virtual data for the period between 2012 and 2013 (P. Aboroa, personal

communication, May 7, 2013). Data during the period between 1992 and 2011 was available in multiple data sources, which made it possible to cross-reference for accuracy.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Researchers conduct a variety of statistical analysis on numerical data in order to make inferences and generalizations on the study (Haunschild & Eikhof, 2009). This study sought to establish the relationship between economic integration and the standard of living of U.S. workers by examining the relationship between variables. Creswell (2002) and Farris (2012) agreed that correlational analysis provides a basis for establishing the extent and the nature of relationships between variables. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Omoregie (2012) advocated for descriptive statistical analysis for studies that do not intend to make causal inferences. Microsoft Excel and SPSS software were used to examine the relationship between variables without inferring causality, hence the use of a descriptive analysis. Norusis (2009) supported Excel and SPSS in testing relationships between variables.

Trend analysis was used because time series data were involved given the objective of observing data changes over the period between 1992 and 2011. There was limited data with variations in different sources due to updates between the years 2012 and 2013 (P. Aboroa, personal communication, May 7, 2013); hence, the 2 years were not included in the analysis. The ability to cross-reference data across multiple data sources allowed accuracy test thus the period between 1992 and 2011 was adopted. The Microsoft tool Web Query was used to retrieve archived data from the websites and Microsoft Excel and SPSS were used in the analysis of data.

Summary of the Findings

A correlational study was used to examine the impact of economic globalization on the standard of living of U.S. workers. Pearson coefficient of correlation and regression analysis helped in establishing the nature and degree of relationship between variables. The strength of the relationship was based on a level of significance set between 0.05, which represented the level

of the observation occurring by chance. Values closer to +1.0 or -1.0 showed a high degree of correlation which therefore led to the rejection of the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis. Creswell (2008) acknowledged the strength of a correlation to be validated by values close to +1 or -1.

The findings are presented by responding to each hypothesis.

Hypotheses 1

- H1₀: There is no significant relationship between globalization and gross domestic product (GDP).
- H1_A: There is a significant relationship between globalization and GDP.

Figure 1 shows significant and positive relationship between globalization and of 0.000, there is a significant relationship between outsourcing rate and unemployment rate.

Table 1. Analysis of Variation of Outsourcing Rate and Unemployment

	Sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Regression	19.999	1	19.999	10.826	.004 ^a
Residual	33.251	18	1.847		
Total	53.250	19			

Note. Dependent variable: Unemployment rate.

^aPredictors: (Constant), outsourcing rate.

Table 1 shows that, when controlling for unemployment, outsourcing is found to be highly significant, $t(1) = 3.290$, $p < 0.004$. The effect is that, on average, every 1-unit increase in year increases outsourcing by 0.002 units. As outsourcing increases, unemployment rate increases.

Results show significant correlation between unemployment and outsourcing using regression and Pearson coefficient analysis. The relationship is significant, $r =$

0.613 and $p = 0.05$ Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favor of the alternative

hypothesis because the p -value for two-tailed is significance is $p < .05$. The coefficient of determination (r -square) of 0.376 says that this model explains 37.6% of the variation observed in outsourcing. The findings agree with the alternative hypothesis, hence the rejection of the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis

Pearson correlation analysis as shown in Figure 1 indicates the relationship between unemployment rate and gross domestic product rate. Relationship is considered significant, $r = 0.513$ and p -value < 0.05 .

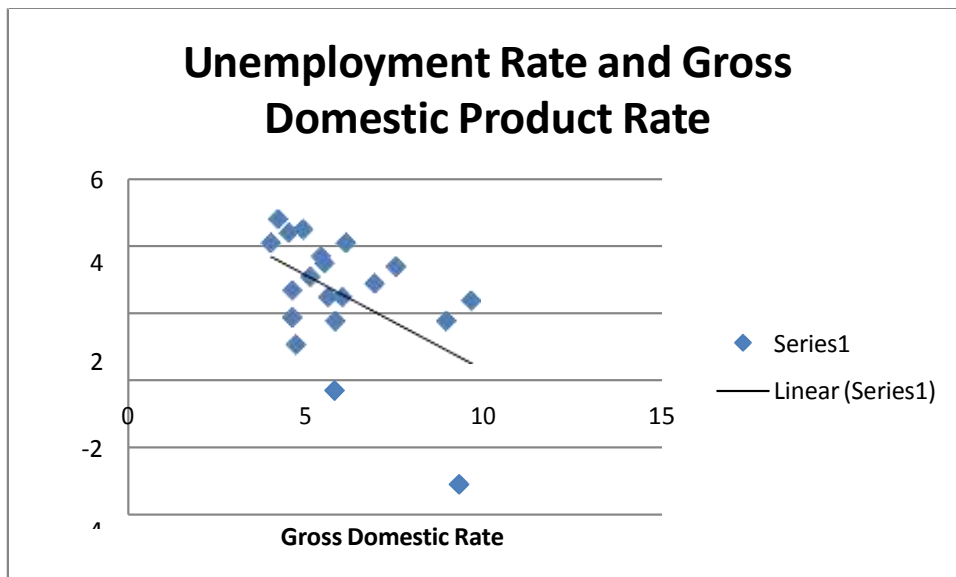


Figure 1. Correlation analysis between unemployment rate and gross domestic product rate,

$$r = -0.51$$

The relationship between unemployment rate and gross domestic rate were considered negative and moderately significant based on Pearson r -value of 0.513. A negative relationship indicates that while GDP rate increases, unemployment rate reduces and vice versa.

Table 1 shows significant correlation unemployment rate and gross domestic rate, $r = -0.513$, $p = 0.021$ level.

Results show significant correlation between unemployment and GDP using regression and Pearson coefficient analysis. The relationship is significant, $r = 0.513$ and $p = 0.021$.

Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis because the p -value for two-tailed is significance is $p < 0.05$. The coefficient of determination (r -square) of 0.376 says that this model explains 26.3% of the variation observed in GDP. The findings agree with the alternative hypothesis, hence the rejection of the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis.

Hypotheses 3

- H3₀: There is no significant relationship between FDIs and gross national income (GNI).
- H3_A: There is a significant relationship between FDIs and GNI.

The relationship between GNI and direct foreign investments are presented on Figure 2 using Pearson correlation coefficient.

Results indicate a positive and significant relationship between GNI and FDIs as shown by Pearson coefficient, r of 0.976, which were higher than the r -value of 0.456.

Results indicate a positive and significant relationship between unemployment rate and outsourcing as shown by Pearson coefficient r of 0.976, which were higher than the r -value of 0.456. The value above the critical r -value confirmed a significant degree of correlation between the level of GNI and FDIs given that the r -value was significant at levels. Table 2 shows that the relationship is significant, $r = 0.870$ and $p = < 0.05$.

Pearson Correlation Analysis of Foreign Direct Investments and Gross National Income

Variable characteristics

FDI

GNI

FDI	Pearson correlation	1	.870**
	Sig. (two-tailed)		.000
	Sum of squares and cross-products	5230684312652.950	22370654846.505
	Covariance	275299174350.155	1177402886.658
	N	20	20
GNI	Pearson correlation	.870**	1
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of squares and cross-products	22370654846.505	126433708.370
	Covariance	1177402886.658	6654405.704
	N	20	20

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Table 3. Shows that the relationship is significant, $r = 0.870$. The coefficient of determination (r -square) of 0.757 says that this model explains 75.7% of the variation observed in FDI.

Table 20. Summary of Regression Correlation Analysis of Foreign Direct Investments and Gross National Income

r	r square	Adjusted r square	Std error of the estimate
.870 ^a	.757	.743	1307.21539

Note: ^aPredictors: (Constant), FDI.

The output in Table 4 suggests that FDI is significantly related to GNI, $F(1) = 55.989$, $p < 0.05$. There is also the suggestion that, with a p -value of 0.000, there is a significant relationship between FDI and GNI.

Table 4. Analysis of Variation of Foreign Direct Investments and Gross National Income

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	95675091.125	1	95675091.125	55.989	.000 ^a
Residual	30758617.244	18	1708812.069		
Total	126433708.369	19			

Note: Dependent variable: GNI.

^aPredictors: (Constant), FDI.

Conclusions

The rationale for this study concerning the economic impact of globalization on the standard of living of U.S. workers was to provide more understanding about the contentious concept of globalization. This was made possible through an empirical analysis with the objective of achieving more clarity on the impact of globalization given the existing tension, controversy, debate, and conflicting views on the effects of global integration on the U.S. economy.

The findings indicated a significantly positive correlation between globalization and the standard of living of U.S. workers. Greater involvement on the part of the United States in global trade has improved the welfare of its workers. Similarly, the results showed that although unemployment was linked to outsourcing, the loss of U.S. jobs to other countries was countered by the inflow of FDI. Foreign companies in the United States offer more skilled jobs at a higher wage rate relative to local companies. The result has been a better quality of life for workers through medical benefits, retirement packages, bonuses, and higher income. FDI was directly linked to increased revenue to businesses, employees, and the government.

The study showed a positive correlation between FDI and GNI. As the United States has engaged in foreign trade and foreign investments, GNI grew at a significant rate. The gains from global integration superseded any losses through outsourcing. Therefore, given that the benefits of globalization outweigh the negative effects, the quality of life of U.S. workers improved as a result of U.S. participation on the global community.

It is the belief of the researcher that the findings of this study will help bring more understanding and clarity to the American people on the effects of globalization while providing a framework for policymakers to reevaluate policies on attracting more FDI and revisiting the existing wage disparity. Additionally, it is hoped that this study will ignite a thirst among scholars for further studies on the subject of globalization in light of the existing controversy about its impact on the U.S. economy and the rest of the world. The recent global crisis that was experienced between 2007 and 2010 and the aftermath of its effects that are felt to date, is a testimony to the urgency of further studies on the globalization phenomenon.

Recommendations

Recommendations made herein are useful to policymakers, researchers, and the general public. There is a need for more information through research in order to avoid misconceptions, unrealistic assumptions, and misguided and flawed viewpoints that lead to poor decision making. Negrea (2012) reported that limited information and often inaccurate lead to misleading conclusions. The American public has been divided and has had passionate disagreements about the effects of globalization on the U.S. economy. The issue of globalization raises tensions and passionate debates among the U.S. electorate, scholars, and politicians alike (Smick, 2012).

In agreement, Burtic (2012) observed that Americans are asking for more information on the effects of globalization as a result of the recent worldwide economic crisis that occurred between 2007 and 2010. While this study covered the impact on aggregate workers, other aspects such as the effect on businesses, education, healthcare, the national debt, and many more areas need to be evaluated through empirical studies. Contrary to the perception of many, this study showed that FDI offset job losses that result from outsourcing to other countries. To be precise, foreign companies investing in the United States pay better wages than do the local companies, thereby improving the livelihoods of workers.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce (2011), businesses' anticipated profits from cheap labor in the developing nations have been directed toward covering relocation costs and the consequent increase in wages. A comparative analysis between the costs of doing business abroad relative to the local market is necessary, and is overdue to avoid costly miscalculations and forecasting.

The archival data used was originally collected for other purposes by government agencies and international organizations. Future studies may consider collecting and analyzing primary data, and thus close any data gaps while providing opportunities for new data. Conducting a survey that could be used in future studies would provide more representative data, given the

debate and contention among Americans regarding the impact of globalization. The fears, conflicts, and apprehension on the part of Americans regarding the economic impact of global integration require that such divergent views be evaluated (Smith, 2012), which is possible through conducting a survey.

While the current study was a quantitative analysis, a mixed method or a qualitative approach addresses any deficiencies that may exist from the application of one approach over another. A quantitative research study focuses on describing and explaining phenomena using large samples through deductive reasoning, while a qualitative research study uses inductive reasoning through the interpretation of phenomena as the primary objective (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Perceptions by Americans on the effects of globalization have a human element that could be captured and evaluated by employing a qualitative approach; hence, there is a need to employ a multidimensional approach in examining the overall impact of economic integration.

Time and financial resources were a limiting factor in this study; however, future studies that explore other research approaches are considered ideal for providing a wider perspective, and thus enhancing opportunities for a better understanding of globalization. This study examined the impact of globalization on the standard of living of U.S. workers. In order to bring about a meaningful and comprehensive resolution to the issues surrounding globalization, it is necessary to consider its effects on other sectors of the economy, which includes but is not limited to the impact on businesses, poverty, education, income inequality, economic growth, the healthcare industry, information technology, among others. Ki Hee (2010) agreed that the effects of global integration are one of the most compelling and debated issues among American scholars, politicians, and households alike. It is not feasible to examine all these variables in one study. Therefore, more studies are necessary that shed light on the controversies surrounding the globalization phenomenon. Although this study examined and established the existence of a relationship between globalization and the standard of living of U.S. workers, as indicated in the findings, correlation does not infer causation. It is therefore the recommendation of the researcher that further analysis be conducted that builds upon the

foundation that has been laid so that the cause and effect of this relationship can be ascertained. Whether globalization causes an increase in wealth that impacts the standard of living remains a contentious issue within the U.S. society.

Further education on globalization is also considered necessary as a way of reducing the controversy related to globalization. Research is a critical component in achieving this objective, and as such, more studies on this controversial subject are important. This study focused on U.S. workers; hence, generalizations on other sectors of the economy would be misleading. Therefore, multifaceted studies across the U.S. economy are recommended in order to make inferences on a much wider scale. Although various studies may provide multiple and different effects, the findings would provide empirical evidence that would lead to meaningful conclusions, and hence possibly reduce the controversy surrounding globalization. Although debates and disagreements related to globalization may not end, the availability of more information on the subject will certainly help to close the existing knowledge gap (Burtic, 2012; Newport, 2012).

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