

Education, Globalization, Cultural Diversity and a Revised Human Development Index for the Caribbean Region: Findings & Policy Implications

Ian S. McGowan

University of Technology, Jamaica

Abstract

Up to now, the Caribbean region was lacking of a statistical model to sufficiently measure its human capital. A three pronged regression model of the human development index was proposed considering the variables of globalization and cultural diversity. Two of the three hypotheses failed rendering the globalization index not significant but showing that the variable of cultural diversity was highly significant in explaining human development in the region.

Keywords: Cultural diversity, globalization, CARICOM

1. Introduction

Caribbean economies have been searching for an appropriate model to measure their human development and to promote sustainable development in the region, especially in the post-independence period. With increasing vulnerabilities, the region faces growing multidimensional poverty having experienced a persistent low growth and erosion of human development gains over the past decades (Clarke, 2016). Available data show that real gross domestic product (GDP) growth for the Caribbean region averaged 2.03 percent between 1971 and 2013, as compared to 3.57 percent for Least Developed Countries and 5.99 percent for developing countries in Asia. In pursuit of sustainable development, the region has long recognized some of the primary human development related constraints and challenges it faces, to included limited human resources compounded by high levels of migration of skilled individuals out of the region (Bárcena, 2018). The region also recognized the economic growth is insufficient on its own for lifting and keeping people out of poverty. Thus human development measures to target and address some of the key sources of vulnerability and deprivation and to strengthened adaptive capabilities as in the areas of education and skills training across the region, are of critical importance.

Human development is the process of expanding the range of choices (Kovacevic, 2019), so there is no doubt in the fact that the human capital across the Caribbean region, rather than physical, plays a major role in increasing the rate of economic growth in each of the member countries. In the economics, the human development index (HDI) is used as a basic quantitative assessment of human capital (Sagar, 1998). A comprehensive index, the HDI characterizes the level of human development in a country. The index is inherent in the measurement of a country's achievement in terms of health and longevity, education and actual income of its citizens (Yakunina, 2015; Manliv, 1992). Literacy and enrolment in formal education are the main indicators in the construction of the *education achievement index* (Narayana, 2006).

A region with a history of colonialism and current exposure to some of the central dilemmas of globalization such as socio-economic inequality and environmental precarity (Brissett,

2018), the Caribbean community began to engage in education for social transformation since the 1990s as one its crucial parts of the regional integration movement. From the inception of this movement, the narrative has always maintained the focus on people as central to the process of bringing the Caribbean together and it is vital – if this is to be attained - that an effective functional framework for education and human resource development be constructed (Jules, 2001). The diversity in the region comes in the form of its geography, its people, its governments, its economy and its culture (Vinat, 2003). Through this region, one can see the lasting impact colonization has had and how different the experience for each island had been. Several studies have linked the colonization experience of Caribbean countries to their present day institutions and individual economic performances (Acemoglu et al, 2001; Bruhn et al, 2012; Michalopoulos et al, 2013; Dippel et al, 2018). European colonists had a profound influence on the region's politics, economy and institutions (Dippel et al, 2018). Dippel et al (2018) further explained that this history persisted in to the former colonies through their constitutions, language, education system, ethnic composition, as well as the economic models they followed. Two major ethnic groups emerged in Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago (T&T) while five major ethnic groups formed in Suriname (Mc Letchie, 2013). In the case of T&T, for example, after slavery was abolished in 1838, Africans moved to and settled in urban centers while persons from India who were recruited as indentured workers to replace African slaves were settled in the proximity of the plantations with restrictions on their movement (Bisram, 2015). In studying the region, one can appreciate the mixture of African, European and Native cultures that create the tapestry of Caribbean life. Even though the region is currently globalizing itself through organizations such as CARICOM (Caribbean Community), each island still struggles to prosper and sustain their people. Several studies have been undertaken to establish the statistical relationship between a country's ethnic diversity and its levels of human development, economic development and economic performance (Basci, 2017; Churchill et al, 2020). Studies on the effect of globalization on spurring human development in developed and developing countries have also been undertaken (Sabi, 2007; Muhammed et al, 2010). The relationship between economic liberalization, cultural diversity, human development and quality of people's lives in the CARICOM region however, has not been examined rigorously though. The current HDI index doesn't provide for this examination.

CARICOM is a set of small island development states (SIDS), and there is a mixed evidence on the state of human development in the SIDS (Herbert, 2019). The OECD (2018) finds that human development indicators lag behind those of other developing countries. Example, when using the UN (United Nations) Human Development Index (HDI), two fifths of SIDS have a low or medium levels of development. However, Palanivel (2018) finds that human development in the SIDS is better than in other developing countries, but that long term progress by the SIDs is relatively low compared to other groups. Herbert, 2019) and Kunzel et al (2018) suggest this limitation in the understanding of the development levels such as human development in SIDS is caused by the lack of data. This can mean that databases are completed with "approximations based on assumptions, and alternative assumption could have produced a different approximations" (Herbert, 2019; Briguglio, 2016). The lack of data on SIDS means that they are often not included in data sets (Herbert, 2019; Briguglio, 2018b).

It is generally considered that human development is the most important aspect for the prosperity and sustained growth of any country (Ullaha et al,2017). So this is an appropriate

time to empirically analyze the possible impact of globalization policies on human development in the CARICOM region.

Reflecting the possible impact of *globalization* and effects of this *cultural diversity* across the Caribbean region on human development and in an attempt to include additional human development data more specific to a SID such CARICOM, this paper is therefore proposing a revised human development index GHDI (or dependent variable) to include the main areas (or independent variables) of *gross national income*, *the education index*, *the globalization index* and the respective country's *cultural diversity index*. We begin with a background of CARICOM, then an examination of research literature to define the four independent variables followed by a definition of the regression model of the GHDI.

2. CARICOM

The economies of the CARICOM are undergoing a process of economic reform in which market-based policies, including trade liberalization, are key components of a new development strategy. With an original goal of economic integration in 1975, powerful new forces since 1990s began to shape its relationship with the global economy (Nogueira, 1997). These forces include the rapid process of globalization, and the formation of new, powerful trading blocs in the Western Hemisphere. The original thirteen member countries of CARICOM have a combined population of 5.6 million people and a GDP of approximately US\$12.5 billion in 1992. Per capita income, except for Guyana, is comparable and/or superior to the average for Latin America; the Bahamas and Barbados have the first and second highest per capita income in the region. In the area of education, the region continues drive the modernization of secondary education across the member countries using a single secondary high set of syllabus and assessment system.

3. Variables Of The GHDI Model

3.1. The Index of Gross National Income per capita (*GNI*)

The World Bank uses *GNI* to classify countries according to levels of development. According to Ocampo (2012), Caribbean economies are characterized by differences in *GNI* and is a key measure of disparities among the economies. Caribbean policy makers recognize that growth in *GNI* is a key plank of development and acknowledge that sustained growth in *GNI* requires high growth rates over a long period of time (James, 2012). In Lyare (2006), the causal relationship between education and development in three Caribbean countries—Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago — using annual time series data from 1964 to 1998 was studied. The empirical results show that in both the short and long run, the evidence suggests that *GNI* is driving education in all three countries. In this sense, we build our quantitative regression model of the GHDI by regarding *GNI* as a contributory factor of measuring human development.

3.2. The Education Index (*ED*)

While the impacts of inequitable distribution of GDP in the Caribbean region are the most obvious focus of the discussion on the subject for the region's policy makers, the inequitable distribution of education can have an insidious impact by changing the balance of access to

opportunities for the citizens in the region (Sagar, 1998). The ED index indicates educational attainment measuring average school life expectancy of children of school age and the mean years of schooling of the adult population. In the Bailey (2009) study of education attainment data from eleven of the CARICOM member countries, it was shown that a disproportionately high percentage of both the males and female populations in five (5) of the countries, that is more than 50%, had only primary level education and were therefore not well equipped for engagement in the paid workforce. Education throughout the CARICOM has likewise been deeply affected by past and present socio-economic challenges in the region. Much of the colonial enterprise destroyed indigenous social systems and with them, the type of education and learning that supported them (Brissett, 2018). So the education index is included in our quantitative regression model of the GHDI.

3.3. Globalization Index (*GLOBAL*)

Globalization is a process that erodes national boundaries, integrates national economies, cultures, technologies and governance, and produces complex relations of mutual interdependence (Gygli, 2018). in (Huh et al, 2019), the globalization indices of 158 economies over the period 2006–2014 were studied to evaluate the possible effects of globalization. The results showed that although globalization promotes economic growth, it may worsen income inequality. High income countries benefit most in that the positive effect of globalization on economic growth is strongest among them than on other income groups, and they experience a less pronounced widening of income inequality. Kim (2014) however studied the effects of regionalism on economic development in the 217 economies (including CARICOM, the European and African Unions). The study found that (a) in general, regionalism pursued by countries via their respective regional organizations was found to have no significant independent effect on the economic development, and (b) regardless of regionalism, the international economic variables such as globalization and terms of trade, as well as domestic variables such as population growth, urbanization and ethnic composition were found to have significant impact on economic development. We therefore include the index of globalization in our quantitative regression model of the GHDI.

3.4. Cultural Diversity Index (*CULTURAL*)

Caribbean societies are inescapably heterogeneous. The Caribbean has long been an area where some people live next to others who are remarkably distinct (Premdas, 1995). To understand how peoples in the Caribbean cohere into cultural communities, how they are different and separate, how they act in solidarity and individually, one may look at the diverse bases on which they have tended to define themselves (Premdas, 2011). *But is there a statistical relationship between (ethnic) fractionalization and an economy's level of human development?* Bacsı (2017) using economic and demographic data of 155 economies established a pattern of correlation between economic development and ethnic or cultural fractionalization (considering only language and cultural traits). Patsiurko (2019) collected 1985-2000 cultural diversity and economic data for a set of OECD countries. The study found that ethnic fractionalization was more closely associated with economic performance than other types of fractionalization. These results quantitatively support the idea that multiculturalism being a benefactor for human development, hence we include the index of cultural diversity in our quantitative regression model of the GHDI.

4. DERIVING A QUANTITATIVE REGRESSION MODEL OF THE GHDI

$$Y = GNI + ED + CULTURAL + \varepsilon \quad (v1)$$

$$Y = GNI + ED + GLOBAL + \varepsilon \quad (v2)$$

$$Y = GNI + ED + CULTURAL + GLOBAL + \varepsilon \quad (v3)$$

Where Y is the GHDI

Three versions of the quantitative GHDI model are proposed. According to the first version (v1) of the model, human development is statistically explained by the gross national income per capita, the education index and the cultural index considering the error ε . The second version (v2) of the proposed model, human development is statistically explained by the gross national income per capita, the education index and the globalization index considering the error ε . The third version (v3) of the proposed model, human development is statistically explained by the gross national income per capita, the education index, the cultural index and the globalization index considering the error ε .

4. AIM OF THE STUDY AND HYPOTHESIS

In correspondence with the quantitative model of the GHDI, our research aims at validating the hypothesized quantitative GHDI model (one or more of the versions), which implies measuring the respective GHDI variables and verifying the following hypotheses:

In addition to gross national income and education index

- H₁. Cultural diversity influences the level of human development
- H₂. Globalization processes influence the level of human development
- H₃. Cultural diversity together with globalization processes influence the level of human development

The validations would confirm evidence of a relationship between globalization and/or cultural diversity and the levels of human development in the CARICOM region.

5. Construction of the GHDI Index

5.1. Index Composition

In this paper, we will focus on the following indices, which, from our point of view, reflect the level of human capital, namely Human Development Index (HDI) – the gross national income per capita index (GNI), the education index, the cultural diversity index and the globalization index. Table 1 reports on dimensions, indicators and data sources of these indexes.

Index	Dimension	Indicators	Data Source
Globalization	KOF Globalization Index	Average of the de facto and de jure Global Index	KOF Swiss Economic Institute
GNI	A decent standard of living	GNI per capita (PPP \$)	UN Development Program
Education	Knowledge	Expected years of schooling Mean years of schooling	UN Development Program UN Development Program
Cultural Diversity	Cultural fractionalization	Structural distances between spoken languages (or linguistic similarities)	Fearon (2003). Pages 218-219
HDI	Long and healthy life	Life expectancy at birth	UN Development Program
	Knowledge	Expected years of schooling Mean years of schooling	UN Development Program UN Development Program
	A decent standard of living	GNI per capita (PPP \$)	UN Development Program

Table 1: Indices, Dimensions, Indicators & Data Source

This study covers 14 economies from the CARICOM community. Appendix 1 provides a full list of the economies. It uses annual data from 2005 to 2017, which is the latest year for which all required data are available.

5.2. Regression

A regression analysis on the data was performed to indicate how much the revised human development index (GHDI) was explained. The following hypotheses were tested:

$H_1: Y = GNI + ED + CULTURAL + \epsilon$ [Covering only 3 of the CARICOM economies]

$H_2: Y = GNI + ED + GLOBAL + \epsilon$

$H_3: Y = GNI + ED + CULTURAL + GLOBAL + \epsilon$ [Covering only 3 of the CARICOM economies]

Where Y is the GHDI

The evaluation of the three hypotheses follows the stepwise regression procedure as only a modest-sized set of independent variables is used (Semal et al, 2008) starting with H_1 and ending with H_3 that has the most independent variables.

6. Results

	<i>n</i>	Variable	Coefficient	Intersect	p-Value	r ²	Stand Error	Based on the p-Value
H ₁	39			0.37925		0.9930	0.0051	Accepted
		<i>GNI</i>	3.47x10 ⁻⁶		9.33x10 ⁻¹⁸			<i>Highly Sig</i>
		<i>ED</i>	0.46424		1.17x10 ⁻¹²			<i>Highly Sig</i>
		<i>CULTURAL</i>	-0.05666		9.74x10 ⁻⁷			<i>Highly Sig</i>
H ₂	18			0.20959		0.9349	0.0206	Rejected
	2							
		<i>GNI</i>	2.77x10 ⁻⁶		9.5x10 ⁻²⁶			<i>Highly Sig</i>
		<i>ED</i>	0.75194		2.59x10 ⁻⁶⁰			<i>Highly Sig</i>
		<i>GLOBAL</i>	-0.00028		0.43180			Not Sig
H ₃	39			0.37452		0.9930	0.0052	Rejected
		<i>GNI</i>	3.46x10 ⁻⁶		4.56x10 ⁻¹⁷			<i>Highly Sig</i>
		<i>ED</i>	0.45776		2.69x10 ⁻¹⁰			<i>Highly Sig</i>
		<i>GLOBAL</i>	0.00014		0.81916			Not Sig
		<i>CULTURAL</i>	-0.05459		0.00022			Sig
		<i>AL</i>						

Table 2 – Regression Results

As shown in Table 2, there is strong statistical evidence to support all three (3) hypotheses [H₁ r²=0.99, H₂ r² = 0.93 and H₃ r²=0.99]. For all three hypotheses also, the indices of GNI (gross national income per capita) and education are very highly significant with H₂ at 9.50 x 10⁻²⁶ and 2.59x10⁻⁶⁰ the strongest respectively. This suggest human development in the CARICOM region is explained by the two indices. As shown for H₂ and H₃, the index of globalization has little or no significance statistically.

The index of cultural diversity has shown very strong significance statistically of 9.74x10⁻⁷ and 0.00022 for H₁ and H₃ respectively. This suggest the index is a significant contributor to human development in the region.

Given that the globalization index in H₂ and in H₃ fail to be a contributory factor, we reject both hypotheses. H₁ is accepted hence the revised human development index proposed is:

$$GHDI = 0.37925 + 3.47 \times 10^{-6} GNI + 0.46424 ED - 0.05666 CULTURAL$$

This function best predicts the revised HDI based on the linear combination of gross national income per capita (GNI), the education index (ED) and the cultural diversity index (CULTURAL). Result indicates, first, that the intercept is 0.379 representing the geometric mean of normalized indices for each of the three dimensions (ED, GNI and CULTURAL) when all the dimensions have a value of zero. Holding ED and CULTURAL constant, GHDI increases by 3.47×10^{-6} for each additional GNI. Holding GNI and CULTURAL constant, GHDI increases by 0.4742 for each additional ED and holding GNI and ED constant, GHDI decreases by 0.567 for each additional CULTURAL. The p-values for all three coefficients are very significant statistically ($p < 0.001$).

7. Discussion & Implications

The purpose of this study was to validate a proposed three pronged quantitative model of a revised human development index for the economies of CARICOM. The study aimed to investigate in addition to the indices and explanatory variables of *education* and *gross national income per capita*, if the variables *globalization* and *cultural diversity* can be used to help explain the region's human development individually and/or in combination, and if so, by how much are their individual contributions.

The results of the regression analysis failed to show strong overall statistical evidence to support all three hypotheses (H_1 , H_2 and H_3). H_2 and H_3 while demonstrating to be very strong models, were however rejected. The analysis also showed that the globalization variable was not significant enough individually nor in combination with the cultural diversity variable to contribute to the model. The analysis however showed an overall support for H_1 with the variable of *cultural diversity* the strongest in the model. The *cultural diversity* variable was even very strong in the rejected H_3 hypotheses. The findings therefore suggest *globalization* variable has absolutely had no statistical relationship with human development in the CARICOM economies during the period 2005 - 2017 while *cultural diversity* was a significant contributory factor during the same period in the building of human capital in the region along with the variables *education* and *gross national income per capita*.

A subsequent examination of the cultural diversity index (CDI) data was conducted to understand its characteristics of the cultural fractionalization labels assigned to the economies. The three CARICOM economies (Appendix 1) studied with H_1 and H_3 are:

Trinidad & Tobago (CDI or cultural fractionalization of 0.38)

Guyana (CDI of 0.46)

Jamaica (CDI of 0.027)

In calculating the cultural fractionalizations, Fearon (2003) took into account the cultural distances between ethnic groups inside each economy mostly considering linguistic differences. Other distances considerations were religion and customs.

Cultural backgrounds of learners are significant because ethnic, racial, linguistic, social, religious or economic differences can cause cultural disconnection leading corruption of motivation to learning. On the other hand, education inevitably brings shifts, however, learners' cultural identity plays a significant role in transmission of such values (Altugan, 2015). Therefore, the H_1 results have implications for educators and policy makers engaged in or

concerned with human development in the CARICOM region. Educators should be developing a deeper intercultural understanding to ensure effective learning outcomes especially as internal migration into capital cities intensifies.

8. Conclusion

The research reported here tries to do a better job of measuring human development in the CARICOM region than is available in the literature considering the key factors of globalization and cultural diversity.

The human development index is an aggregate index of human development level in an economy, measuring the economy's achievement in terms of health, education and actual income of its citizens (Yakunina, 2015). The revised human development index excluded the health component but introduced the variables of globalization and cultural diversity for studying. It can be concluded that the accepted proposed regression model of the components of the revised human development index for economies in the region is valid and reliable. The variable of globalization showed little or no statistical relationship to human development in the region so was not used in the final model, however the variable of cultural diversity was demonstrated to be a significant contributor to the human development. Our research suggests recommendations for educators and policy makers responsible for human development in the region, its findings contribute to current literature on human development considering cultural diversity.

This study has some limitations. First, the sample size (of only three CARICOM economies) was unavoidably small for the assessment of the cultural diversity. The cultural diversity labels were not available in Fearon (2003) for the other eleven economies. Future research should seek to extend the data considering the ethnic groups, languages, religion and customs in the remaining CARICOM economies. Second, the human development index has a general limitation. What is measured as HDI in one of the developing countries in CARICOM can be different from what is measured in any one of the other developing countries in region. So it may not be practical to generalize the results.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 – CARICOM Members

	Member	Population	Official Language	Spoken Languages	Cultural Diversity Index (Fearon, 2003)
1.	Antigua and Barbuda	66,970	English	English, Antiguan Creole English, Spanish (immigrants)	
2.	Bahamas	303,611	English	English, Bahamian Creole, Haitian Creole (immigrants), Spanish (immigrants), Chinese (immigrants)	
3.	Barbados	275,330	English	English, Bajan Creole	
4.	Belize		English	Creole patois, and many Belizeans are multilingual. Yucatec, Mopán and Kekchí	
5.	Dominica	70,786	English	English, Antillean Creole French, French, Haitian Creole (immigrants)	
6.	Grenada	89,227	English	English, Grenadian Creole English, Antillean Creole French	
7.	Guyana	747,884	English	English, Guyanese Creole, Guyanese Hindustani (Hindi-Urdu), Spanish	0.46
8.	Haiti	6,964,549	French, Creole	French, Haitian Creole	
9.	Jamaica	2,665,636	English	English, Jamaican Patois, Spanish, Caribbean Hindustani, Irish, Chinese	0.027
10.	St. Kitts & Nevis	38,756	English	English, Saint Kitts and Nevis Creole English, Spanish (immigrants)	
11.	St. Lucia	158,178	English	English, Saint Lucian Creole French, French	
12.	St. Vincent & the Grenadines	115,942	English	English, Vincentian Creole English, Antillean Creole French	
13.	Suriname	541,638	Dutch	Dutch, Sranan Tongo, Sarnami Hindustani (Hindi-Urdu), Javanese, Ndyuka, Saramaccan	
14.	Trinidad & Tobago	1,169,682	English	English, Trinidadian Creole, Tobagonian Creole, Trinidadian Hindustani (Hindi-Urdu), Spanish	0.38