INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF GLOBAL HUMAN BEHAVIOUR REVIEW

Global Human Behaviour in Transition: Examining the Role of Culture, Technology, and Social Interaction in Shaping Individual and Collective Action

D. Nilsson[1*], L. Romanach[2], E. Frederiks[3], Chi-Hsiang Wang[3], J. Gardner[4]

[1]CSIRO Energy, Dutton Park, QLD 4102, Australia. Email Id: danie.nilsson@csiro.au
[2]CSIRO Environment, Dutton Park, QLD 4102, Australia.
[3]CSIRO Energy, Clayton, VIC 3168, Australia.
[4]CSIRO Energy, Clayton, VIC 3168, Australia.

Abstract

The study examines the influence of cultural values, social trust, and digital participation on individual and collective action in contemporary global societies. As human behaviour is increasingly shaped by globalization, technological connectivity, and evolving social structures, there is a growing need for integrated behavioural research that explains how cultural, relational, and digital factors jointly influence action across diverse contexts. To address this need, the study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional design based on secondary data analysis of the World Values Survey (WVS) Wave 7. The analysis focused on key constructs related to cultural values, trust, digitally mediated participation, and behavioural engagement using a large cross-national sample. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression techniques were applied to examine the relationships among the study variables. The findings revealed that cultural values, social trust, and digital participation all had significant positive effects on individual and collective action. Among these predictors, digital participation emerged as the strongest factor, indicating the growing importance of online engagement in shaping behavioural expression and civic involvement. Social trust also played a substantial role in supporting cooperation and participatory behaviour, while cultural values continued to provide the normative basis for action across societies. The study concludes that global human behaviour is best understood through a multidimensional framework that integrates cultural, social, and digital influences. These findings contribute to interdisciplinary behavioural scholarship and offer practical implications for policymakers, educators, and organizations seeking to foster meaningful participation in culturally diverse and digitally connected environments.

Keywords: global human behaviour, cultural values, social trust, digital participation, collective action

1. Introduction

Globalization, digital communication and the fast changing social structure are redefining human behaviour. The modern societies no longer dictate patterns of choice, participation and social response by the local traditions or face to face interaction. Rather, they are becoming more affected by the cultural values, interpersonal trust and digitally mediated types of interactions. This has rendered the study of human behaviour more interdisciplinary and it requires the input of sociology, psychology, communication and behavioural science that brings knowledge in the adaptation of individuals and groups to changing environments (Garcia et al., 2011). With the increase in communication systems and greater interconnection of societies, the human action has to be comprehended as both socially negotiated and culturally grounded.

The culture has been a dominant factor in influencing behavioural norms, beliefs and actions amongst societies. The cultural values are still applied in understanding the social expectations, interactions between people, and reaction to collective problems even in the most technologized setting. The recent research indicates that the communication technologies impact cultural processes not eliminating them but instead change how the meanings, practices, and skills are organized and shared (Kivinen and Piiroinen, 2023). In the same vein, technology change has proven to be one of the factors that affect wider social change through the change of the context and patterns of development (Greenfield, 2019). Even in the case of teaching, technological development is also related to more extensive changes in social and cultural systems, which supports the notion that behaviour has been conditioned by the joint effect of the culture and technology (Spatar-Kozachenko et al., 2024).

In addition to culture, social trust is also important in facilitating behavioural coordination and collective action. Trust lowers the degree of uncertainty, facilitates collaboration and enhances the willingness of people to engage in common objectives. Research has indicated that social capital and trust are critical in the formation and development of institutions that rely on joint and shared interaction (Six et al., 2015). The literature has also highlighted that collective action requires collective trust since people would be more willing to cooperate when they have confidence that other individuals will also cooperate (Kramer et al., 1996). Accordingly, trust is not just an attitude between people, but an extended social process between individual behaviour and social level performance.

On-line involvement introduces another dimension on this change. The web has broadened the space of civic and political participation, and has made a new mode of communication and networked action possible. Nevertheless, there is controversy on whether online engagement brings about really new types of collective engagement or merely transfers networked individualism into the digital realms (Mascheroni, 2012). It has been found out that online participation becomes more significant when integrated into local communication resources and community ties (Ognyanova et al., 2013). Meanwhile, cultural engagement itself is slowly turning digital with inequalities in access and difference in technological engagement influencing it (Mihelj et al., 2019). The cross-national difference in collective action also indicates that digital behaviour depends on broader cultural and social contexts, and not on technology (Jenkins, 2019).

Although these findings have been realized, previous studies are quite disjointed across the disciplines, with many studies investigating culture, trust, or digital involvement individually (Figure 1). Fewer studies exist on the combination of these factors to influence individual and collective action between countries. It is noteworthy that this gap needs to be addressed in order to come up with a more holistic perception of behavioural transition in global contexts. The research thus evaluates how cultural values, social trust, and digital participation affect human behaviour and makes contributions to the interdisciplinary scholarship and provides implications to policymakers, educators, and organisations in culturally diverse and digitally connected societies (Bedson et al., 2021).

Figure 1: Conceptual Determinants Influencing Global Human Behaviour

The figure presents a structured flow highlighting the transformation of human behaviour, emphasizing the roles of cultural values, social trust, and digital participation, ultimately identifying the need for integrated analysis to understand behavioural change in global contexts.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the influence of cultural values on individual and collective action in contemporary global societies
2. To assess the effect of social trust on behavioural engagement and collective participation across diverse social contexts
3. To analyze the role of digital participation in shaping human behaviour and its contribution to individual and collective action

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The present study used a quantitative cross-sectional research design that was founded on the secondary data analysis. This design was suitable since it facilitated the investigation of the relationship between cultural values, social trust, digital participation, and behavioural outcomes, based on existing data (in large scale international surveys). These factors and the influence of personal and collective action in various social settings were explained in a comparative perspective.

2.2 Data Source and Sample

Data used in the study were the World Values Survey (WVS), Wave 7 which is a popular cross-national dataset that contained information on beliefs, values, trust, and participation among various countries. The sample was made up of adult respondents in the dataset. Only the records containing the usable information on the chosen study variables were included in the analysis and the incomplete ones on the critical variables were excluded to enhance the consistency of the analysis.

2.3 Variables and Measurement

The research has incorporated cultural values, social trust, and digital participation as the key independent variables, and individual and collective action were considered as the outcome

dimensions. Control variables included demographic variables like age, gender, education and employment status. The variables were chosen based on the WVS items that are relevant and were categorized based on the conceptual framework of the research to ensure that the title, objectives, and empirical analysis are consistent.

2.4 Data Analysis Procedure

Data were first cleaned, coded and then ready to analysis. To summarize the nature of the respondents, and the distribution of the main variables the first statistics used was the descriptive statistics. This was then correlated to test the relationship between the constructs, and multiple regression to test the effect of cultural value, social trust and digital participation on behavioural outcomes. These methods have been chosen so as to give clear and statistically based results.

2.5 Validity, Reliability, and Ethics

The research adopted the methodological rigor by using a standardized global dataset using standardized survey procedures. Some of the factors that were put into consideration are reliability during selection and grouping of variables, and construct validity was achieved by matching the measures with the study framework. The study did not involve the direct participation of any participant since the data was based on publicly available secondary data. The data set was anonymized and the research was conducted in accordance with ethical standards of responsible use of secondary data.

3. Results

3.1 Sample Profile

Table 1 demonstrates that the uploaded WVS Wave 7 file had 97, 220 records. The final sample that was used to come up with the results part was 85,705 respondents after being screened on full responses on the chosen variables of analysis in 61 countries. In this way 11,515 cases were eliminated due to lack or inability to use a value on one or more study variables. According to the Wave 7 documentation of the World Values Survey, this data set is a cross-national survey used to measure values, trust, and the newer values such as online political participation and social trust, so it can be used in this study.

Table 1. Sample profile

Indicator	Value
Total records in uploaded dataset	97,220
Final analytical sample	85,705
Excluded cases	11,515
Countries include in analysis	61

3.2 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive findings in Table 2 indicate moderate variation across the key constructs (Figure 2).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of study variables

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Cultural values	85,705	0.435	0.184	0.000	1.000
Social trust	85,705	0.226	0.418	0.000	1.000
Digital participation	85,705	0.637	0.239	0.150	0.959
Individual and collective action	85,705	0.547	0.253	0.000	1.000

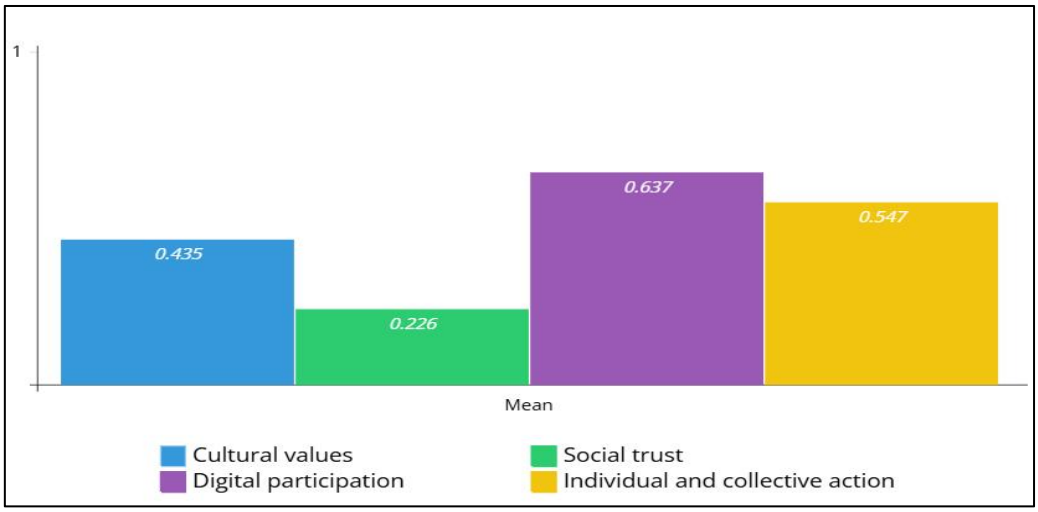

Figure 2: Cultural Values, Social Trust, Digital Participation, and Individual and Collective Action

The figure shows that digital participation recorded the highest mean score (0.637), followed by individual and collective action (0.547). Cultural values were moderate (0.435), while social trust had the lowest mean (0.226), indicating comparatively weaker trust levels.

3.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 3 below represents the correlation among all three independent variables and the outcome variable; it is possible to conclude that all independent variables were positively correlated with the dependent variable.

The predictors also have moderate interrelationships as exhibited by the matrix. Specifically, digital participation (r = 0.479) and social trust (r = 0.232) were positively determined to be related to cultural values, which means that these two dimensions are in fact not independent of each other (Figure 3).

Table 3. Correlation matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4
Cultural values	1.000	0.232	0.479	0.156
Social trust	0.232	1.000	0.230	0.156
Digital participation	0.479	0.230	1.000	0.199
Individual and collective action	0.156	0.156	0.199	1.000

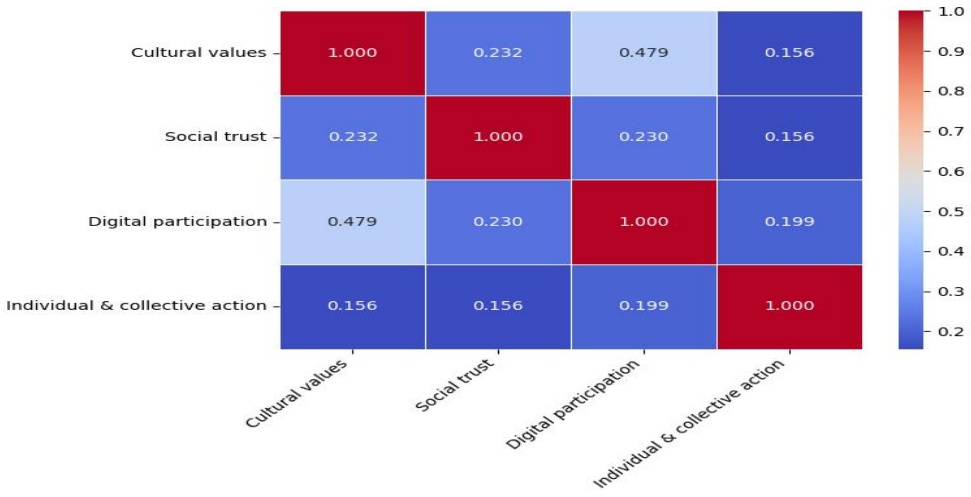

Figure 3: Correlation Heatmap of Cultural Values, Social Trust, Digital Participation, and Behavioural Action

The heatmap illustrates positive correlations among all variables, with the strongest relationship between cultural values and digital participation (0.479). Digital participation shows the highest association with behavioural action (0.199), while social trust demonstrates relatively weaker but consistent relationships.

3.4 Regression Results

The results of the multiple regression in Table 4 indicate that the regression model was statistically significant and it had 5.5 percent of the variance in the individual and collective action (R 2 = 0.055) as presented in Figure 4.

Table 4. Multiple regression predicting individual and collective action

Predictor	B	SE	Beta	t	p
Constant	0.398	0.003	—	152.040	< .001
Cultural values	0.084	0.005	0.061	15.988	< .001
Social trust	0.066	0.002	0.109	31.535	< .001
Digital participation	0.154	0.004	0.145	38.002	< .001

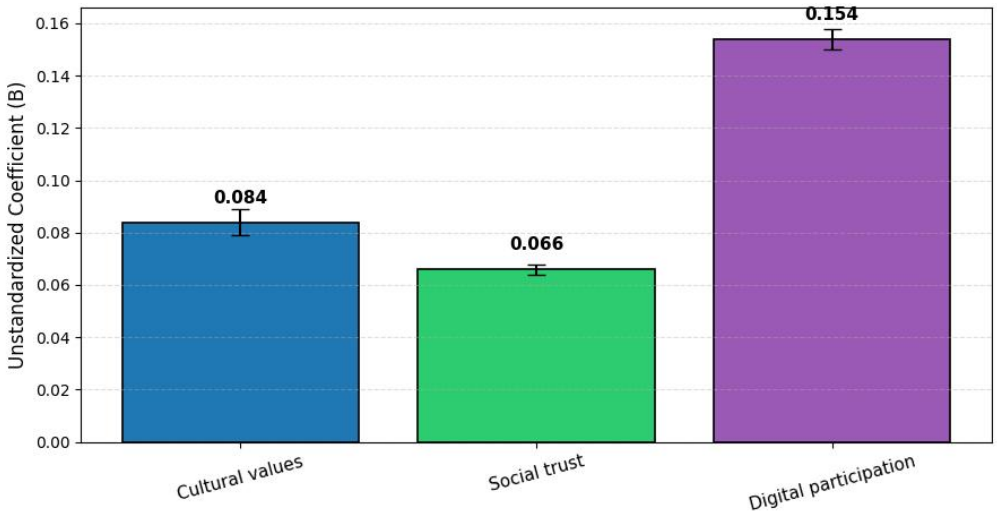

Figure 4: Regression Coefficients of Cultural Values, Social Trust, and Digital Participation on Behavioural Action

The figure illustrates that digital participation has the strongest positive effect (B = 0.154), followed by cultural values (B = 0.084) and social trust (B = 0.066), indicating that digital engagement is the most influential predictor of behavioural action.

3.5 Cross-National Variation in Behavioural Action

There was a significant difference in individual and collective action mean score in countries as indicated in Table 5. Such findings indicate that behavioural involvement varies significantly when in a national context and this underpins the global comparative orientation of the study.

Table 5. Countries with the highest and lowest mean action scores

Rank group	Country	N	Mean action score
Highest	NLD	1,698	0.804
Highest	DEU	1,443	0.797
Highest	NZL	896	0.785

Highest	MMR	1,200	0.777
Highest	SGP	1,719	0.730
Lowest	GTM	1,187	0.383
Lowest	KGZ	1,134	0.377
Lowest	COL	1,520	0.339
Lowest	MDV	1,018	0.319
Lowest	NGA	1,222	0.317

4. Discussion

The current research paper has explored how cultural values, social trust, and the digital participation impact individual and collective action in a global behavioural context. The results indicate that behavioural engagement was positively correlated with all three factors with digital participation being the most predictive, then social trust, and cultural values. These findings support the main postulation of the research: modern human behaviour is becoming more and more influenced by the play of cultural, relational and digitally mediated factors, as opposed to being defined through one specific explanatory dimension.

The boosting impact of cultures on behavioural involvement is a validation that human behaviour is still entrenched in socially received norms, beliefs and systems of values. The behaviour is still guided by culturally based interpretations of obligation, participation, and social belonging under the conditions of the global connectivity and technological acceleration. This observation concurs with previous views in cultural psychology which hold that behaviour cannot be discussed without references to the cultural contexts where meaning is created and action is defined (Hippler and De Vos, 1973). It also helps sustain the opinion that behavioural processes ought to be considered interdisciplinary as human behaviour is shaped by a combination of psychological, social, and cultural factors but not by singular individual characteristics (Garcia et al., 2011; Naich, 2022). In this regard, the current results indicate that behavioural change in the global societies may not be seen as a degradation of cultural power, but a restructuring of the cultural power of functioning in the technologically mediated context.

The factor of social trust was also quite important, thus showing that trust is a cornerstone to behavioural coordination and group interaction. Respondents who had more trust were found to exhibit stronger participation-oriented behaviour which proves the point that trust enables cooperation by minimising uncertainty and enhancing anticipations of reciprocity. This outcome follows the scholarly evidence that demonstrates trust and social capital play a crucial role in the establishment and maintenance of institutions of collective action (Six et al., 2015). It also repeats the previous theoretical arguments that collective trust is an essential pre-condition of collective action since people are more ready to devote their time to collective objectives when they see other people as trustworthy and collaborative (Kramer et al., 1996). The conclusion thus points out that even in the digital transformation and in the global social transformation, trust is still playing the stabilization role in human behaviour by connecting individual drive with the wider social engagement.

Digital participation was the most influential variable in the model, meaning that the engagement of technology is a significant platform where individual and collective action is manifested. Such result indicates the increasing centrality of digital settings to the contemporary behavioural life, with online communication, interaction through social media, and digitally facilitated engagement becoming the key contributors to civic, political, and social action. The finding is aligned with the studies indicating that communication technologies are structured centres of human organisation which reconfigure the way behaviours, meanings, and practices are produced and distributed (Kivinen and Piiroinen, 2023). It also helps to argue that social and developmental change is becoming more associable with the dissemination of communication technologies and changes in the arrangement of interactional contexts (Greenfield, 2019). Technological change in education and institutions has also demonstrated the ability to shape the culture of the larger society, which further supports the notion that digital participation is not a technical variable but a behavioural force that exists within a larger social change (Spatar-Kozachenko et al., 2024; Resta et al., 2011).

The good contribution of the digital participation cannot be taken as independent of culture and

trust. Past research has been skeptical that online playing can produce truly new types of civic action, or is merely taking networked individualism and playing it in new media environments (Mascheroni, 2012). The current results indicate a more comprehensive explanation. The digital engagement seems to be the most important one in the light of being considered as an element of a more extensive behavioural ecosystem, conditioned by trust, cultural inclination, and social circumstances. This point of view is confirmed by the facts according to which the participation online is highly determined by the fineness of the communication structure in the community and the availability of social resources (Ognyanova et al., 2013). On the same note, digital cultural participation studies have highlighted the uneven nature of digital access and involvement, and how the digital realm is characterized by wider tendencies in cultural diversification and social stratification (Mihelj et al., 2019). Newer literature also suggests that digitally mediated social behaviour may be moderated by trust and peer influence, which implies that digital interaction is social and not technical in nature (Lu et al., 2025).

The comparative contribution of this study is further enhanced by the cross-national difference that was noticed in behavioural action. The variance of the action scores among the countries shows that universal assumptions cannot be used to explain global human behaviour. Rather, locally implemented value/trust/digital opportunities are what determine behavioural engagement. This finding aligns with that of which collective action during the digital age has a vastly different presence in different countries because of institutional, cultural, and informational context differences (Jenkins, 2019). It also favors more general claims of comparative and interdisciplinary inquiry: learning, engagement, and the construction of meaning occur within contexts in transitions between social and global environments (Norden et al., 2012; Menken and Keestra, 2016).

The paper adds to the increasing demand of the integrated behavioural frameworks able to elucidate the complexity of social action in modern societies. The earlier literature has been suggesting more and more that behavioural research and behavioural policy need interdisciplinary models that consider context, evidence, and the interaction of various determinants (Feitsma & Whitehead, 2022). Similar models within the context of the applied behaviour research have also been used to highlight the significance of incorporating structural, social, and motivational aspects to describe behaviour modification (Dreibelbis et al., 2013; McDonald, 2014). The integration of theory is particularly significant in digital space due to the adaptive decision-making processes that happen on social, technological, and contextual levels and influence behaviour (Zhang et al., 2021). The current paper provides such arguments by demonstrating that cultural values, trust and the involvement in digital participation provide a more significant explanation of behavioural transition, compared to any single-factor explanation. This proves the wider perspective that interdisciplinary research is essential in solving complex human issues as well as in explaining behaviour in fast changing settings (Waldman, 2013).

The implications of the findings are on the policies, teachers and institutions. The policies targeted at enhancing behavioural engagement cannot be based solely on technological growth as it cannot be the sole predictor of actual participation. Rather, interventions are also to be designed to encourage trust, social cohesion, culturally competent modes of interaction. Services in the educational field should be augmented with consideration of the social meaning, participation, and equity in the attempt to transfer systems to the digital era (Resta et al., 2011). Similarly, the organisations that want to enhance collective engagement must acknowledge that digital tools are not the only way to influence behavioural outcomes; relational trust and shared values can also help in this matter.

Discussion shows that global human behaviour can best be characterized as a multidimensional and transitional phenomenon, which is defined by interaction between cultural values, trust-based social relations as well as digitally mediated participation. The evidence thus confirms the main point of the article that individual and collective action in modern societies appears as a result of interplay of social, cultural and technological processes changes and not through individual behavioural impacts.

5.Conclusion

The research shows that cultural values, social trust, and online engagement are becoming the combined forces that are shaping the global human behaviour, as opposed to the specific behavioural factor. It was found that cultural values still influence norms, attitudes, and the pattern of action, and social trust is the key to cooperation, civic engagement, and participation in various social environments. Meanwhile, the role of online involvement became a rather significant one, which suggests that nowadays, tech-mediated interaction has become the leading factor that forms individual and group action in modern communities. These findings support the assertion of the multidimensionality of behavioural transition in the global age as the overlap of persisting cultural schemas, existing trust in relationships, and a fast developing digital landscape. The work has significant implication to multi-disciplinary studies by incorporating sociological, psychological and communication-based orientation in a comparative behavioural analysis based on secondary data on international surveys. It too has some practical implication to policy makers, educators and organizations who would have to comprehend and enhance behavioural engagement in digitally connected and culturally diverse situations. Even though the study involves cross-sectional secondary data, which makes it impossible to come up with causal analysis, the results are highly empirically backed in establishing a more integrated understanding of human behaviour and there remains the necessity to conduct longitudinal and context-specific studies in the societies.

References

1. Bedson, J., Skrip, L. A., Pedi, D., Abramowitz, S., Carter, S., Jalloh, M. F., ... & Althouse, B. M. (2021). A review and agenda for integrated disease models including social and behavioural factors. Nature human behaviour, 5(7), 834-846.
2. Dreibelbis, R., Winch, P. J., Leontsini, E., Hulland, K. R., Ram, P. K., Unicomb, L., & Luby, S. P. (2013). The integrated behavioural model for water, sanitation, and hygiene: a systematic review of behavioural models and a framework for designing and evaluating behaviour change interventions in infrastructure-restricted settings. BMC public health, 13(1), 1015.
3. Feitsma, J., & Whitehead, M. (2022). Bounded interdisciplinarity: critical interdisciplinary perspectives on context and evidence in behavioural public policies. Behavioural Public Policy, 6(3), 358-384.
4. Garcia, J. R., Geher, G., Crosier, B., Saad, G., Gambacorta, D., Johnsen, L., & Pranckitas, E. (2011). The interdisciplinarity of evolutionary approaches to human behavior: a key to survival in the ivory archipelago. Futures, 43(8), 749-761.
5. Greenfield, P. M. (2019). Communication technologies and social transformation: Their impact on human development. Children in changing worlds: Sociocultural and temporal perspectives, 235-273.
6. Hippler, A. E., & De Vos, G. A. (1973). Cultural psychology: Comparative studies of human behavior.
7. Jenkins, M. D. (2019). Explaining cross-country variation in collective action in the digital era. Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 16(1), 1-19.
8. Kivinen, O., & Piiroinen, T. (2023). Epoch-making changes in the cultural evolution of communication: Communication technologies seen as organized hubs of skillful human activities. Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 53(2), 221-237.
9. Kramer, R. M., Brewer, M. B., & Hanna, B. A. (1996). Collective trust and collective action. Trust in organizations: Frontiers of theory and research, 357-389.
10. Lu, X., Balakrishnan, K., Chan, T. J., & Na, M. (2025). The role of real-time engagement in shaping social media check-in behavior: moderating effects of trust and peer influence. Brain and Behavior, 15(9), e70887.
11. Mascheroni, G. (2012). Online participation: New forms of civic and political engagement or just new opportunities for networked individualism. In Social Media and

Democracy (pp. 207-223). Routledge.

12. McDonald, F. V. (2014). Developing an integrated conceptual framework of pro-environmental behavior in the workplace through synthesis of the current literature. Administrative sciences, 4(3), 276-303.
13. Mihelj, S., Leguina, A., & Downey, J. (2019). Culture is digital: Cultural participation, diversity and the digital divide. New media & society, 21(7), 1465-1485.
14. Naich, M. B. (2022). Sociology and social psychology: A comparative study. Pakistan Social Sciences Review, 6(1), 188-196.
15. Nordén, B., Avery, H., & Anderberg, E. (2012). Learning in global settings: Developing transitions for meaning-making. Research in comparative and international education, 7(4), 514-529.
16. Ognyanova, K., Chen, N. T. N., Ball-Rokeach, S. J., An, Z., Son, M., Parks, M., & Gerson, D. (2013). Online participation in a community context: Civic engagement and connections to local communication resources. International Journal of Communication, 7, 24-24.
17. Resta, P., Searson, M., Patru, M., Knezek, G., & Voogt, J. (2011). Building a Global Community of Policy-makers, Researchers, and Teachers to Move Education Systems into the Digital Age. Summary report (pp. 2-22). EduSummIT.
18. Six, B., Van Zimmeren, E., Popa, F., & Frison, C. (2015). Trust and social capital in the design and evolution of institutions for collective action. International Journal of the Commons, 9(1).
19. Spatar-Kozachenko, T. I., Krylova, T. V., Loginova, N. Y., & Gruzdeva, M. V. (2024). The Link Between the Technological Evolution of the Education System and Transformations in Societal Culture. Сервис plus, 18(2), 146-154.
20. Waldman, D. A. (2013). Interdisciplinary research is the key. Frontiers in Human Neuroscience, 7, 562.
21. Zhang, C., Lakens, D., & IJsselsteijn, W. A. (2021). Theory integration for lifestyle behavior change in the digital age: an adaptive decision-making framework. Journal of Medical Internet Research, 23(4), e17127.