The Magnitude of Cultural Factors That Affect School Enrolment and Retention in Afghanistan: An Analysis Through Hofstede's Cultural Model

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Abstract

This study aims to measure the magnitude of the cultural factors that affect enrolment and retention in both primary and secondary education levels in Afghanistan and advocate cultural transformation or modification in Afghanistan to enhance enrolment and retention in school. The study uses quantitative and particularly qualitative data regarding cultural constraints to school enrolment and retention in Afghanistan from secondary sources like Afghan government publications, private publications, publications from non-government organizations, journal articles, newspaper articles, newsletter articles, web documents, dissertations, published interviews, database articles, and books. It employs Hofstede's cultural dimensions model to analyze the cultural factors. However, the study found out that on the scale of Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions model, Afghan culture was characterized by high degree of power distance, masculinity, i.e., conventional gender role focus, high level of uncertainty avoidance, and long term orientation that were deterrents to education in Afghanistan. Finally, it recommends a culture with low level of power distance, femininity focus, low degree of uncertainty avoidance, and long term orientation to increase school enrolments and retention in Afghanistan.

Key words: Magnitude; Cultural factors; School enrolment; Retention; Afghanistan

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context of the Study

School education, including primary and secondary education is a key echelon of education because it makes way to literacy and higher education. International conventions like World Declaration on Education for All, Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), etc., give special focus on school education throughout the world. In the same vein, most of the nations have made primary and secondary education free and compulsory, putting a great emphasis on it. Furthermore, both national and international NGOs[1] work with their best efforts across the world to improve school education. Nonetheless, why do school enrolment and retention rates vary nationally with large differences? In a simplistic answer to this question, it can be said that school enrolment and retention rates differ from country to country due to economic, political, and cultural factors although there is a controversy as to whether cultural factors have more influence on school enrolment and retention than economic and political factors do. However, Afghanistan is one of the countries that have the lowest school enrolment and retention records in the world. Are economic, political, or cultural factors held more responsible for the country's low school enrolment and retention? It can be answered succinctly with the help of deductive reasoning based on some statistical data. For example, 68 percent of the population in Zimbabwe was reported to live below the poverty line in 2004; 55.8 percent of the population in Namibia was reported to live below the poverty line in 2005, and 50 percent of the population in Kenya was reported to live below the poverty line in 2000 (CIA World Factbook,

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[1] NGO stands for non-government organization.

2012). Zimbabwe[2], Namibia[3], and Kenya[4] also have a long-standing history of internal conflicts and wars. Even with these economic and political problems, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Kenya had 87.5 percent NER[5] at primary school and 37 percent NER at secondary school, 86.5 percent NER at primary school and 49 percent NER at secondary school, and 75.5 percent NER at primary school and 42.5 percent NER at secondary school, respectively for the period 2003-2008[6]. It indicates that cultural factors had more influence on the school enrolment rates of these three countries than economic and political factors did. Afghanistan was reported to have 36 percent of its population living below the poverty line in 2008 and over two decades' experience of internal conflicts and wars[7], and it had poor school enrolment and retention records. So, based on the deductive reasoning applied in the case of Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Kenya, cultural factors are said to have more impact on school enrolment than economic and political factors do. However, the influence of cultural factors on school enrolment and retention in Afghanistan is negative. This study is an attempt to assess the magnitude of these cultural factors negatively influencing school education in Afghanistan.

1.2 Purpose and Research Question of the Study

The purpose of this study is twofold. Firstly, it aims to assess the magnitude of the cultural factors that affect school enrolment and retention in Afghanistan. Secondly, it attempts to advocate cultural transformation or modification for higher enrolment and retention in schools in Afghanistan.

What is the magnitude of the cultural factors affecting school enrolment and retention education in Afghanistan?

NER and survival rate at primary and secondary school have been used as two output indicators of school enrolment and retention. As Afghanistan is still struggling with NER and survival rate at primary and secondary school, it is crucial to measure the magnitude of the cultural factors that pull down school enrolment and retention at primary and secondary schools.

1.3 Definitions

Culture: Culture is an inclusive concept; it usually subsumes elements like norms, values, beliefs, languages, statuses and roles, religion, and attitudes that a social group belongs to.

Literacy: Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts.

Poverty line: Poverty line is a measure of absolute poverty. According to the World Bank (2005), when a person earns at or below $1.25 a day, he or she is called poor.

NER for primary education level: NER for primary education level refers to the ratio of the number of children of official primary school age enrolled in school to the number of children of official primary school age in the population.

NER for secondary education level: NER for secondary level refers to the ratio of the number of children of official secondary school age enrolled in school to the number of children of official secondary school age in the population.

Survival Rate to the Last Grade of Primary School: Survival Rate to the Last Grade of Primary School is the percentage of children entering the first grade of primary school who eventually reach the last grade of primary school.

1.4 Brief Account of Afghanistan and Its Education System

Afghanistan is an independent country with a population of 31,108,077 (est. 2013), located in South Asia. It is a multicultural nation, mostly characterized by nomadic and tribal societies. It has more than 30 languages of which Dari and Pashto are its official languages. Over 99 percent of the Afghan population is Muslims and the rest is Christians, Buddhists, Parsis, Sikhs, and Hindus. Afghanistan is also recognized for its multiethnic makeup. The country's population is divided into ethno-linguistic groups, namely Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Aimak, Turkmen, Baloch, Pashayi, Nuristani, and Arab.

Afghan Education System

Primary Education: In Afghanistan, primary education ranging from grade 1 to grade 6 lasts for 6 years. Primary school age starts 7 and ends at 13. However, primary education in Afghanistan is free and compulsory.

Secondary Education: Secondary education lasts for 6 years. It is divided into two three-year cycles. The first cycle covers grades 7, 8, and 9, studied at middle school (Maktabeh Motevaseteh). The cycle covers grades 10, 11, and 12, studied at high school (Doreyeh Aali). At the end of the second cycle, students sit for the Baccaluria. In Afghanistan, technical secondary education is also provided at lower and upper secondary middle schools in Commerce, Applied Arts, Teacher Training, Agriculture, and Aeronautics. At the end of technical secondary education, students are awarded a Baccaluria level qualification. However, lower secondary education is

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[2] Zimbabwe's wars and conflicts include First Matabele War (1893–1894), Second Matabele War (896–1897), Rhodesian Bush War (1964-1979), and Mugabe's 33-year-old controversial rule.
[3] Namibia's wars and conflicts consist of Caprivi conflict (1994–1999), Herero and Namaqua Genocide (1904-1907), Namibian War of Independence (1966-1988), South-West Africa Campaign (1914-1915), and Maritz Rebellion (1914-1915).
[4] Kenya's wars and conflicts include East African Campaign (1914–1918), East African Campaign (1940-1941), Mau Mau Uprising (1952–1960), Shifta War (1963–1967), Garissa Massacre (1980), Wagalla massacre (1984), Turbi massacre (2005), and 2007–08 Kenyan crisis.
[5] NER stands for net enrolment rate
[6] UNICEF Report 2009
[7] Afghan wars and internal conflicts comprise Soviet War (1979-1989), Civil War (1989-1992), Civil War (1992-1996), and Civil War (1996-2001).

also free and compulsory in Afghanistan, whereas upper secondary education is free but not compulsory.

Post-Secondary Education: Post-secondary education covers grades 13 and 14. After completing post-secondary education, students obtain a post-Baccalaureate Diploma in majors like Islamic Studies, Teacher Training, Vocational Education, and Technical education. Moreover, post-secondary education is free of charge but not compulsory.

Tertiary Education: University education is divided into three stages, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, and Doctorate. 6 universities provide university education in Afghanistan. Bachelor's degrees require 4 years to be completed. The duration of Master's degrees is 2 years, whereas the duration of Doctorate is 3 years. University education in Afghanistan is free yet not compulsory.

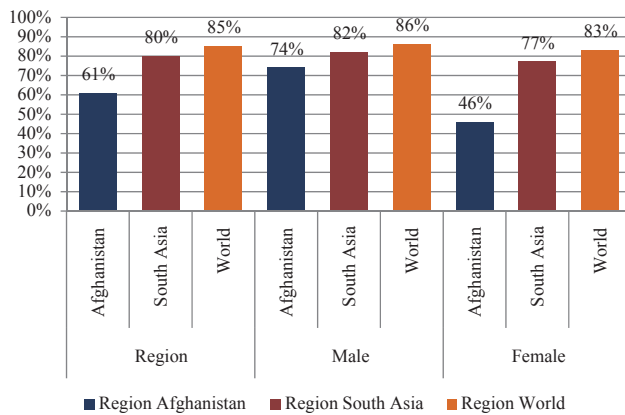## 1.5 (A) Comparative Statistics on NER at School
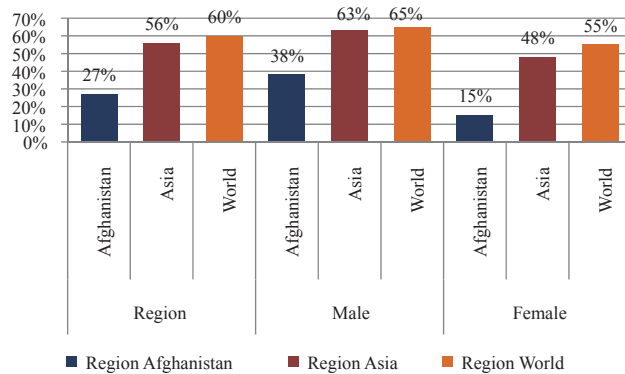

Figure 1
NER at Primary School[8]

Figure 2
NER at Secondary School[9]

Figure 1 demonstrates that NER at primary school in Afghanistan for the year 2007 was reported at 61 percent to 80 percent NER at primary school in South Asia and 85 percent at primary school in the world for the same year. The figure also shows that male NER at primary school in

Afghanistan was 74 male NER at primary school in South Asia to 82 percent male NER at primary school in South Asia and 86 percent male NER at primary school in the world for the same period, while female NER at primary school in Afghanistan was 46 percent to 77 percent female NER at primary school in South Asia and 83 percent female NER at primary school in the world for the same period.

Figure 2 shows that NER at secondary school in Afghanistan for the period 2007-2010 was **27** percent to 56 percent NER at secondary school in Asia and 60 percent NER at secondary school in the world for the same period. The figure also shows that male NER at secondary school in Afghanistan for the period 20007-2010 stood at 38 percent to 63 percent male NER at secondary school in Asia and 65 percent male NER at secondary school in the world for the same period, whereas female NER at secondary school in Afghanistan for the period 2007-2010 was reported at only 15 percent to 48 percent female NER in Asia and 55 percent female NER at secondary school in the world for the same period.

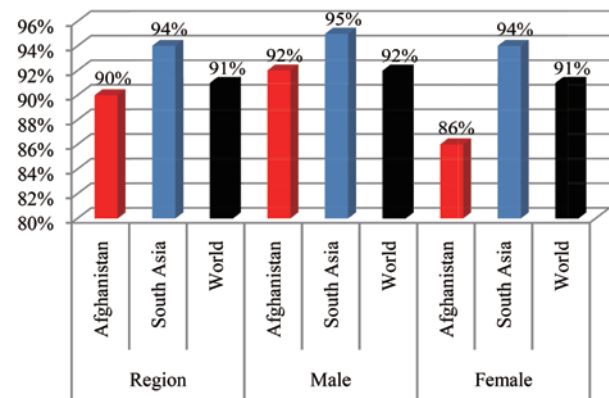## 1.5 (B) Comparative Survival Rates at School Education

Figure 3
Survival Rate to the Last Grade of Primary Education[10]

Figure 3 shows that survival rate to the last grade of primary education in Afghanistan for the period was reported at 90 percent to 94 percent survival rate to the last grade of primary education in South Asia and 91 percent survival rate to the last grade of primary education in the world for the same period. The figure also exhibits that male survival rate to the last grade of primary education in Afghanistan for the period 2005-2010 was 92 percent to 95 percent male survival rate to the last grade of primary education in South Asia and 92 percent male survival rate to the last grade of primary education in the world for the same period, whereas female survival rate to the last grade of primary education in Afghanistan for the period 2005-2010 was 86 percent to 94 percent female

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[8] Data from UNICEF Institute for Statistics (UIS)
[9] Data from UNICEF Institute for Statistics (UIS)

[10] Data from UNICEF Institute for Statistics (UIS)

survival rate in South Asia and 91 percent female survival rate in the world for the same period.

On the other hand, 34 percent of the students enrolled in secondary school completed secondary education; among the students, 49 percent were male students and 19 percent were female students (FHI360, 2013).

2. STUDY DESIGN

2.1 Literature Review

A good number of studies were carried out in Afghanistan with a view to finding out cultural barriers to school enrolment and retention in Afghanistan. Research by Uppsala University (2013) showed that cultural factors like early and forced marriage, attitudes of family and community towards girls' education, lack of female teachers, and physical access to schools were barriers to girls' education in Afghanistan. Zoy (2009) found out that cultural factors such as physical distance of school, insecurity, parents' disinterest for girls' education, lack of female teachers, parents' focus on work for survival, inappropriate treatment by teachers, and early marriage of girls were the reasons why children dropped out of school. However, none of the previous studies were aimed at measuring the magnitude of the cultural factors that are deterrents to Afghan school enrolment and retention Hence, I have decided to work on it, believing that the results of the study will help to augment school enrolment and retention in Afghanistan.

2.2 Data Source

I have used secondary data, both qualitative and quantitative in alignment with the purpose of the study. The sources used in this study include government publications, private publications, publications from non-government organizations, journal articles, newspaper articles, newsletter articles, web documents, dissertations, published interviews, database article, and books. Although the data available in different sources are meant to serve different purposes, I have incorporated them to serve the purpose of the study.

2.3 Framework of Analysis

In this study, I have employed Hofstede's cultural dimensions to understand and explain the cultural norms that affect school enrolment and retention in Afghanistan. Hofstede's model contains six cultural dimensions: power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, Long term orientation versus short term orientation, and indulgence versus constraint. Of the six dimensions, I have used four dimensions, namely power distance, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long term orientation versus short term orientation to measure the magnitude of the cultural factors. Hofstede's model has been discussed below with a brief background.

Geert Hofstede is a Dutch social psychologist and anthropologist, who conducted a survey study among 117,000 IBM employees across 50 subsidiaries of IBM, a US multinational corporation between 1967 and 1973 to find out national values differences. This analysis identified four dimensions in national cultures, namely power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, and uncertainty avoidance. Later on, six subsequent studies were conducted among different groups including commercial airline pilots, students, civil service managers, up-market consumers, and elites across 28 countries between 1990 and 2002 to verify the early results obtained from the IBM study. In 1991, Michael Harris Bond and his colleagues carried a study among students in 23 countries by applying a survey instrument used with Chinese employees and managers. From the results of this study, Hofstede developed a new fifth dimension to his model: long term orientation versus short term orientation. In 2010, Michael Minkov used the World Values Survey across 93 countries, and the results from the study led Hofstede to identify a sixth dimension to his model: indulgence versus restraint. Then he developed a scoring system on a scale from 1 to 120.

1.2.1 Power Distance

Power distance is the first dimension of culture. Power distance is "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. Institutions are the basic elements of society, such as family, the school, and the community; organizations are the places where people work" (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p.46). This dimension measures the extent of power of the people living in a particular culture based on their wealth and hierarchical positions in the society. In a high power distance culture, people with higher hierarchical positions and more wealth treat people with lower hierarchical positions and less wealth as unequal, and a result the latter cannot easily approach the former in terms of anything. On the other hand, in a low power distance culture there is little or no influence of wealth and social hierarchical positions in building and maintaining relationships. However, power distance is very high for Asian, African, and Latin American countries areas as well as the Middle East. In contrast, power distance is low in Anglo and Germanic countries.

2.3.2 Individualism Versus Collectivism

The individualism versus collectivism dimension is the second dimension of Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, which refers to "the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups" (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p.456). In the society with an individualistic culture, personal gain is the supreme thing to its members. They do not tend to sacrifice their own interest for the sake of other members' interest. People from an individualistic culture usually maintain nuclear

families. In a word, they are self-centered in terms of achievements. On the contrary, communal gain is the ultimate concentration of people from a collectivistic culture. They sacrifice their own interest for the well-being of other members. They do not behave in the way other members are hurt and deprived. "There is a stress on adaptation to the skills and virtues necessary to be an acceptable group member" (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p.98). Moreover, people from a collectivistic culture have extended families. North American and European countries have individualistic cultures, whereas Asian, African, and Latin American countries have collectivistic cultures.

2.3.3 Masculinity Versus Femininity

The masculinity versus femininity dimension is the third cultural dimension identified by Geert Hofstede. People from a masculine culture put emphasis on material pursuit and are ambitious plus unyielding. In contrast, people from a feminine culture are easy-going, affectionate, and maintain social relationships. "Men are supposed to be assertive, tough and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life" (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p.120). People from a masculine culture play conventional gender roles, while gender roles are not predominant in the society with a feminine culture. Masculinity is prevalent in Japan, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, and the United Kingdom. On the other hand, Nordic countries have feminine cultures.

2.3.4 Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance is the fourth cultural dimension, which refers to "the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations" (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p.167). People from a high uncertainty avoidance culture get afraid of uncertain, confusing, and volatile situations; they feel uneasy and nervous in such situations. So, they feel a need for laws, regulations, and stable environments to reduce risks. In contrast, people from a low uncertainty avoidance culture do not shudder in any unexpected occurrences. They always get ready to accept any changes that may be in the way of their achievements. This is why, they do not demand any structured environment to minimize uncertainty. East and South European as well as Latin American countries have high uncertainty avoidance cultures. Contrarily, Anglo and Nordic countries as well as China have low uncertainty avoidance cultures.

2.2.5

Long Term Orientation versus Short Term Orientation People from a culture with long term orientation focus delayed yet stable achievements. They value persistence, perseverance, and thrift that eventually lead them to success in the future. On the other hand, people from a culture with short term orientation put emphasis on immediate gratification. They value tradition, current social hierarchy, and fulfillment of social obligations.

Present and/or past is a matter of their concentration; they have little or no concentration on the future. China, Hongkong, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea are the examples of strong long term orientation cultures, whereas Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, Norway are those of short term orientation cultures.

2.3.5 Indulgence Versus Constraint

The indulgence versus constraint dimension is Hofstede's sixth cultural dimension, suggesting the extent to which members in a society control their natural desires and impulses. People from indulgent cultures enjoy freedom in terms of consumption, merriment, sex, ideology, etc. On the contrary, people from constrained cultures have restrictions in gratification of such desires. They are guided by the existing norms, values, beliefs, and traditions.

3. FINDINGS

3.1

Historically, people from elite classes had access to education in Afghanistan. Akbar (2013) asserts that "Public education became the economic battlefield between the middle-upper class of religious leaders and the newly emerging class of governmental workers, teachers and administrators" (para. 7). Even in the current Afghanistan, the upper and wealthier classes have more access to education although primary and secondary education is free and compulsory for all. According to the 2007/08 NRVA[11], NER of children aged 6-9 from the poorest quintile in Afghanistan is 36 percent, whereas NER of children aged 6-9 from the richest quintile is 46 percent (The World Bank, 2010). Similarly, survival rate to the last grade of primary school from the poorest quintile was 82 percent to 95 percent survival rate to the last grade of primary school for the period 2005-2010 in Afghanistan (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2012). On the other hand, Afghan teachers pose authoritarian attitudes towards their students and so students do not feel at home while approaching them. Such authoritarian attitudes are predominantly exposed through student-beating that enhances school drop-outs, particularly at primary and secondary levels.

Due to the very rude behavior of teachers, every year thousands of children leave schools. Like the normal teaching material, teachers hold sticks to control students and behave with them like commandos in the war. However, punishment at schools became part of the government's educational system. Students get punished for small reasons. In the class, if the students miss the homework or are unable to answer the teacher's questions, the students will be either punished by stick or asked to stand in front of the class till the teaching session is over

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[11] NRVA stands for National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment.

to humiliate them in front of their classmates which will be the main cause of abhorrence and hatred. ("Children are Escaping", 2011. para. 1 & 2)

"As of the year 2013, some countries that still practice the convent school corporal punishment are Afghanistan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan" ("Convent School Corporal", n.d.). Zoy (2009) showed that "Inappropriate treatment by teachers such as bad language, scolding, and battering has negative effects on student psyche and creates psychic complexes in children, causing some of these children to leave school before completing their education" (p.36).

Power Distance Dimension

The data above showed that the people from the upper or wealthy class in Afghanistan had more access to education, whereas the people from the lower or poor class had little access to education. The data also found out that Afghan teachers punished their students physically for poor performance and absenteeism. Consequently, a great number of students dropped out of school every year. However, this authoritative behavior of the teachers towards students made a gap in the relation between teachers and students. These two features of the society indicate that there was high power distance in Afghan culture.

3.1.2

In feminist terms, Afghan society is markedly gendered in that it makes stark distinctions between the roles of women and men, and is patriarchal and paternalistic. It is permeated with masculine values such as honor, justice, and hospitality, while the roles of women limit their "agency," or ability to act. (Murray, 2012, para. 3) In Afghanistan, families and community members think that girls' roles are to give birth to children, raise them, and look after the households. They can learn the roles from their mothers. Akbar (2011) states that …historically, women's education had not been a part of society, and there were no economic gain from women's attainment of education, since their contribution to the community was limited to working in the fields, embroidering, tailoring, and house chores. (para. 11) Afghan parents give emphasis on their sons' education over their daughters' education. "Poor families are more likely to send their sons, than their daughters, to school" (Uppsala University, 2013, p.13).

There is often a powerful economic and social rationale for investing in the education of sons rather than daughters, as daughters are perceived to less valuable once educated, and less likely to abide by the will of the father, brother or husband. ("Why aren't girls", n.d. para. 2) Girls' early and forced marriage is a great barrier to literacy in Afghanistan because after marriage their husbands and in-laws hardly allow them to go to school. The 2003 MICS[12] report (as cited in United Nations Girls'

Education Initiative [UNGEI], n.d.) showed that child marriages accounted for 43 percent of all marriages in Afghanistan.

In the case of girls, marriage may also be seen as a way to alleviate economic pressures in that it creates household income in the form of a bride price. But often when girls get married, they do not continue their education. (Oxfam International, 2011, p.14) Zoy (2009) showed that "Of all girls who have dropped out of school, 10.1 percent have stated marriage as the reason for their dropout" (p.35).

Masculinity versus Femininity Dimension

The data above showed that Afghan families ignored girls' right to education, considering that girls' education was not a part of society and able to make money as the girls played their stereotyping roles like embroidering, tailoring, and household chores. The data also revealed that Afghan families, particularly poor families prioritized boys' education over girls' education because education made the boys skilled to earn a better living. This discriminatory distribution of education for boys and girls suggests that Afghan culture had high masculinity or gender role focus.

3.1.3

Afghan parents are prejudiced about their daughters' movement in public. They think if they send their daughters to school, they are likely to be exposed to men's eyes, which is not warmly accepted in the society.

Due to the strict rules of the society, many girls have not attended the 3,500 new schools that have been built across the country since 2001; besides being frightened to send their children, many families do not allow their daughters to go anywhere where they may be seen by men (Baker). (Doerter, 2010. para. 3) The family members of a girl enrolled in school feel insecure in the sense that their neighbors and community members may criticize them for sending her to school. An AREU[13] study (as cited in Oxfam International, 2011) summarized that If a daughter is enrolled in school, the fear of being shamed by extended family members in other households, neighbors and others is widespread. 'People talk,' and often this is too humiliating for members of a household – both male and female – to bear. (p.17) Afghan parents also do not want that their daughters study in mixed gender schools and are taught by male teachers because they think that their daughters may be sexually harassed by male students and teachers. "Education of females poses additional challenges since cultural norms decree that female students should be taught by female teachers. Currently, there is a lack of female teachers to meet that gender-based demand" (Education in Afghanistan, 2013. para. 3). "In Afghanistan, many parents fear that male students or teachers will sexually harass their daughters" (Uppsala University, p.29).

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[12] MICS stands for Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.

[13] AREU stands for Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit.

Schools fail to protect the basic rights and dignity of girls. Violence includes rape, sexual harassment, physical and psychological intimidation, teasing and threats. It may occur on the way to school or within the school itself, and is perpetuated by teachers, parents, persons of perceived authority and fellow students. Schools who also fail to provide adequate physical facilities, such as toilets and running water, cause inconvenience to boys, but spell an end to education for girls before education has even begun. ("Why aren't girls", n.d. para. 5)

Uncertainty Avoidance Dimension

The above mentioned data found out that the parents in Afghanistan did not send their daughters to school in the fear that they might be seen by men, and it might bear disgrace to their families. The data also showed that Afghan parents were not willing to get their daughters taught at mixed gender schools and by male teachers, apprehending that they might be sexually abused by their male students and teachers. So, Afghan parents' tendency to avoid these two types of fear or uncertainty sending girls to school indicates that Afghanistan belonged to a culture with high uncertainty avoidance.

3.1.4

Parents, particularly poor parents in Afghanistan assume that returns from education are future oriented. They think if they invest in children's education today, they will have to wait for its reward for a long time. So, they engage their children in work to serve immediate needs other than hope to gain bigger and stable returns from education in the future. *"Poorer parents are also more likely to withhold their children (girls or boys, depending on the country context) from education so that they can work and contribute to household income or help with domestic tasks"* ("Gender Equality and", n.d. p.3). "Children's involvement in work is common in Afghanistan and is often another reason for not attending school" (Save the Children Afghanistan, 2012. para. 4). Up to 30 percent of primary school-age children are engaged in work and often the sole source of income for their families. Child labor is extremely prevalent in Afghanistan; more than 25 percent of Afghan children work to feed their families. ("Child Labor", 2013). In Afghanistan, 30 percent of the children aged 5 to14 years were reported to be child laborers for the period 1999-2008, of whom 28 percent are male children and 33 percent are female children (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2009).

Long Term Orientation versus Short Term Orientation Dimension

The data above revealed that poor Afghan families engaged their children, regardless of boys and girls in work. They employed their children in work other than sent them to school for financial support. Afghan parents' priority to work over education suggests that Afghanistan had a culture with short term orientation.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study showed that Afghan culture had high power distance, masculinity focus, high uncertainty avoidance tendency, and short term orientation that discouraged the people to enroll children in schools in Afghanistan. However, Afghanistan can still hope to augment its school enrolment and retention through cultural transformation or modification. Firstly, Afghan people should opt for and raise a low power distance culture where individuals from all social hierarchies are equal and entitled to equal rights. As such, the people of all classes will have equal access to education. There will be a friendly relationship between teachers and students, thus increasing school enrolments and reducing school drop-outs. Secondly, they should seek to establish a gender unbiased society in which the families and communities will regard education as equally important for both boys and girls. At the same time, girls' early and forced marriage will be stopped or reduced, which will help school retention. Thirdly, Afghan parents should develop a strong mindset whereby they shake off doubt and hesitation taking risks for bigger achievements. Ignoring community members' criticism, when they will start sending their daughters to school, it will be a counterblow to social prejudice that sending girls to school or getting girls educated at mixed gender schools and by male teachers is not acceptable. This is how, more girls' enrolment and retention in school will be ensured. Fourthly, they should nurture a long term orientation focused culture where they will pursue a big stable interest that is likely to be attained in the future at the risk of sacrificing a little yet immediate interest. Then they will prioritize education over work for their children, which will eventually enhance school enrolment and retention in Afghanistan.

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