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The Relationship between Gender Gap in Employment and Hofstede's Culture Dimensions depending on Country Scores

Ülke Verilerine göre İşgücüne Katılımda Cinsiyet Ayrımı ve Hofstede'nin Kültür Boyutları arasındaki İlişki

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ABSTRACT

Why is there a significant gender gap in the global labor force participation? Is there a way to reduce vulnerable employment? May cultural values explain the gender gap in employment and male-dominant work structure? This research examined the associations between Hofstede's culture dimensions (including power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation) and gender gap in employment indicators (women's and men's labor force participation and vulnerable employment rates) after controlling the economy. Secondary data were obtained from Hofstede's culture dimensions and World Bank databases. When the countries with missing data are excluded, remaining data of 60 countries make up the data set of the study. Two-step hierarchical regression analyses were performed, in which economic development was entered in the first step and study variables were included in the model in the second step. The main results indicated that after controlling economic development, women's labor force participation rate was negatively related to country scores on uncertainty avoidance. In contrast, men's labor force participation rate was negatively associated with country scores on power distance, individualism, and uncertainty avoidance. Besides, both women's and men's vulnerable employment rates were negatively related to country scores on individualism. The fact that more women and men participate in the labor force in countries with low power distance and uncertainty avoidance can be interpreted as women's labor force participation creates new job opportunities that both women and men benefit from. The results may be useful for researchers who aim to see the current gender-based labor force participation patterns in different countries and understand the culture dynamics of economic gender gap.

Keywords: Gender gap in employment, labor force participation, vulnerable employment, Hofstede's culture dimensions

ÖZ

Küresel işgücüne katılım oranlarında neden belirgin bir cinsiyet farkı var? Kırılgan istihdamı azaltmanın bir yolu var mı? Kültür değerleri işgücüne katılımda cinsiyet ayrımını ve erkek egemen çalışma yapısını açıklayabilir mi? Bu araştırma, ekonomi kontrol edildikten sonra Hofstede'nin kültür boyutları (güç mesafesi, bireycilik, erillik, belirsizlikten kaçınma ve uzun dönem yönelimlilik) ile işgücüne katılımda cinsiyet ayrımı belirteçleri (kadınların ve erkeklerin işgücüne katılımı ve kırılgan istihdam oranları) arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Çalışmanın verileri Hofstede'nin kültür boyutlarından ve Dünya Bankası veritabanından elde edilmiştir. Eksik verisi olan ülkeler çalışma kapsamı dışına çıkarıldığında çalışmanın veri setini 60 ülkenin verisi oluşturmaktadır. Modele ilk aşamada ekonomik kalkınma verisi kontrol değişkeni olarak eklenirken, ikinci aşamada çalışmanın değişkenleri eklenerek veriler iki aşamalı hiyerarşik regresyon yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, ekonomik kalkınmayı kontrol ettikten sonra, kadınların işgücüne katılım oranının belirsizlikten kaçınma ülke puanlarıyla negatif yönde ilişkili olduğunu göstermiştir. Diğer taraftan, erkeklerin işgücüne katılım oranı ülkelerin güç mesafesi, bireycilik ve belirsizlikten kaçınma boyut puanlarıyla negatif ilişkili bulunmuştur. Ayrıca hem kadınların hem de erkeklerin kırılgan istihdam oranları, ülkelerin bireycilik konusundaki puanları ile olumsuz yönde ilişkili bulunmuştur. Güç mesafesinin ve belirsizlikten kaçınmanın düşük olduğu ülkelerde daha fazla kadın ve erkeğin işgücüne katıldığının bulunması, kadınların işgücüne katılımının hem kadınların hem de erkeklerin yararlandığı yeni iş fırsatları yarattığı şeklinde yorumlanabilir. Bulgular, farklı ülkelerdeki cinsiyet temelli işgücüne katılım modellerini ve ekonomik cinsiyet ayrımının kültür dinamiklerini anlamayı amaçlayan araştırmacılar için faydalı olabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İşgücüne katılımda cinsiyet ayrımı, işgücüne katılım, kırılgan istihdam, Hofstede'nin kültür boyutları

Gender gap is defined as the difference between women and men as reflected in social, political, intellectual, cultural, or economic attainments or attitudes (Harris, 2017), and has four sub-dimensions (World Economic Forum [WEF], n.d.). Among these sub-dimensions, this study focuses on the gender gap in employment, the difference between women and men in labor force participation rates of the Economic Participation and Opportunity sub-index. Over the past thirty years, the labor force participation rate has decreased by 4.87 percent worldwide, and only six out of 10 people of working age, defined as everyone aged 15 and above, have joined the labor force in 2019 (World Bank Data, 2020d). Although this decline affects both men and women, the difference in labor force participation by gender has declined to only 27 percent, with a two percent decline in the past thirty years (World Bank Data, 2020b, 2020c). While women's labor force participation rate was 47.14 percent in 2019, it was 74.20 percent for men (World Bank Data, 2020b, 2020c). This shows that 1.4 billion of the 3.5 billion people that make up the global labor force were women (World Bank Data, 2020e).

People of working age fall into one of the following groups based on their labor force status: Employed, unemployed, and those outside of the labor force. Only those who belong to the first two groups make up the labor force (Gammarano, 2019). Six percent of people in the third group in the world (neither employed nor unemployed), around 120 million in 2019 (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2020), constitute the potential labor force that includes people who are unemployed and available but not seeking jobs or unemployed and seeking jobs but currently unavailable to work (Gammarano, 2019). According to 2018 data, the ratio of unemployment to the potential labor force was lower for women worldwide, interpreted as women face additional barriers for job-search or being available for employment (Gammarano, 2019). Nevertheless, the difficulties women face when entering or after entering the labor force are not the same in every country. While in some countries women face fewer barriers to labor force participation, in some countries, they face more barriers that may be social, political, legal, and cultural. To understand why gender gap in employment is higher in some countries, it is necessary to understand the cultural structure that feeds these systems.

This study aims to understand the culture dynamics of gender gap in global employment by examining the relationship between Hofstede's culture dimensions

(power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation) and employment rates of women and men, by performing two-stage hierarchical regression analyses using secondary data. But above all, it provides an overview of the extent of the economic gender gap in global employment.

Employment

The standard form of employment in the labor market is particularly continuous and full-time paid jobs. Nevertheless, with increased flexibility in the market over time, non-standard forms of employment such as temporary work (including term/contract, seasonal, and casual/other), part-time work, and occasional work performed at home emerged. Although non-standard forms of employment have emerged over the years, the 'ideal worker' norm, frequently expressed in professional settings, has not had its share of this change. It is still used for full-time jobs and requires prioritization of work over family with long working hours, continuous availability, and complete devotion to work with the exclusion of obligations in private life (Gupta, 2017; Holt & Lewis, 2011; Lewis, 2001; Reid, 2015; Williams et al., 2013). The ideal worker norm is interpreted as a masculine concept wherein many societies around the world, having a job, being the 'breadwinner' of the family, is traditionally associated with men through gender socialization (Gupta, 2017; James, 2007). Living up to the ideal worker norm does not eliminate responsibilities in private life creating the need for someone to fulfill those responsibilities and to provide basic care in private life. Therefore, it is the same gender socialization that imposes taking care of children and the elders and domestic work such as cooking, cleaning, and washing to women and holds them accountable. This traditional role, called the 'family-devotion' schema in the literature, expects women to prioritize their devotion to family (Blair-Loy, 2003; Stone, 2007; Turco, 2010).

On average, men entered the workforce much earlier than women who remained outnumbered in the labor force. While the ideal worker norm is the only requirement that working men have to meet, working women are also expected to fulfill the requirements of the family-devotion schema (Blair-Loy, 2003; Coltrane & Adams, 2008; Cornwall et al., 2008; Stone, 2007). Yet, many studies revealed the belief of being devoted to the family conflicts with the ideal worker norm, perceived as the reason of being perceived as less competent and successful, leads to a lower recruitment of women, less professional advancement and work-life imbalance for many women professionals (i.e., Benard & Correll, 2010; Correll et al., 2007, 2014; Cuddy et al., 2004; Ely et al., 2014; Fuegen et al., 2004; Padavic et al., 2020).

The difficulty women experience in complying with the ideal worker norm and the family-devotion schema causes them to work in less demanding jobs that do not require overtime work, unlimited commitment, and availability. Women, therefore, have been overrepresented in low-paying jobs such as informal sector jobs with lack of social protection, rights at work, and decent working conditions (ILO, 2016; ILO Workquality, 2019; Pan American Health Organization [PAHO], 2010), while underrepresented in political offices, corporate boards, and other high-level leadership positions (Catalyst, 2020; Milazzo & Goldstein, 2017; World Bank, 2012; WEF, 2018). Women who can participate in the labor force despite the family-devotion schema do not only have to work in less competitive positions, but they also earn less than men working in these positions. Regardless of whether they are at the bottom or the top of the labor force, there is a large pay gap between men and women (Blau & Kahn, 2017). Although the gender pay gap has decreased, women continue to earn significantly less than men in most G20 countries where the pay gap ranges between 10 percent (in France, Turkey, and Italy) and 30-35 percent (in the Republic of Korea and India) (ILO Workquality, 2019). The pace of gender pay gap closing has stalled in some G20 countries in recent years, despite the slow progress in most countries (ILO Workquality, 2019).

Part-Time Employment

All over the world, women spend more hours than men do when it comes to the time devoted to domestic work (Ortiz-Ospina et al., 2018). Among G20 countries, women spend between one and a half hour and four and a half hours more time on domestic work than men do (ILO Workquality, 2019). Across G20 countries, the time women spend for domestic work per day peaks at five hours 30 minutes (in Turkey), while the longest time men devote to housework is two hours 52 minutes (in Australia), 16 minutes less than women who devote the shortest time for domestic work (in the Republic of Korea) (ILO Workquality, 2019). In an environment where they spend significantly more time on domestic work, it can also be inferred that there is less time left for women to have paid work. The increased flexibility in the market in recent years has created many part-time work opportunities that offer more time to pursue something else, flexible time, and opportunities to work in a less stressful environment. Studies have shown that flexible working opportunities provide a better work-life balance by reducing the distress employees go through (Beham et al., 2012; Roeters & Craig, 2014; Oishi et al., 2015). Although part-time working opportunities are increasing, it seems

that more women prefer these job opportunities. Such that, 2019 statistics show women work in part-time jobs 3.3 times more than men (OECD Data, 2020).

Besides its appealing features mentioned above, part-time work also has a dark side called the 'flexibility stigma' nurtured by the ideal worker norm. The flexibility stigma causes negative career outcomes, such as lower earnings (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2004; Coltrane et al., 2013; Williams et al., 2013) and less favorable performance evaluations (Wharton et al., 2008) which may deter both working women and men from using existing work-family benefits (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). As the flexibility stigma penalizes those who remain in part-time jobs by negative career outcomes, it encourages women to find a way to fulfill the requirements of both the ideal worker norm and the family-devotion schema without using work-family benefits, while encouraging men to fulfill the requirements of the ideal worker norm, and if they do not, it encourages them not to participate in the labor force.

Vulnerable Employment

According to the World Bank, unpaid workers and family workers, as well as self-employed and wage earners, are also within the scope of vulnerable employment (World Bank Data, 2020j, 2020k). Work and workplace conditions separate formal and vulnerable jobs. Most of the vulnerable jobs originate from the unorganized sector that is not registered and has no fixed employment terms, such as plantation labor and fishermen (Adeleye et al., 2019; Saunders, 2006). Similar to self-employment and voluntary family work, unregistered and no fixed terms of employment are unprotected under prevailing labor laws about employment and social protection (Saunders, 2006). With unregulated working conditions and the lack of employment security, those engaged in vulnerable work are often invisible workers who lack a formal form of voice and representation (e.g., unionization) (Adeleye et al., 2019; Burgess & Connell, 2015). Having a job rather than being unemployed may seem like a better option, even if it is a vulnerable job. Yet, working irregular and for long hours do not contribute to those employed in vulnerable jobs in terms of skills and training, as well as in terms of sufficient income and career development to drag them or their families out of poverty (Adeleye et al., 2019; Burgess & Connell, 2015). Statistics of the ones working in vulnerable jobs show the severity of this situation. Almost a fifth of workers worldwide in 2019, more than 630 million workers, did not earn enough to free themselves and their families from extreme or moderate poverty (ILO, 2020).

While it is estimated that around 1.4 billion workers were employed in vulnerable employment in 2017 (ILO, 2018), this number is thought to have increased by 600 million by 2020 to nearly two billion, almost 61 percent of the global labor force (ILO, 2020). Among 107 countries, women in developing countries work in vulnerable jobs, while men in emerging countries (countries in transition) make up the majority (ILO, 2016). Three out of every four workers in developing countries work in a vulnerable job, while this number falls to almost one in two in emerging countries (ILO, 2018). Although their employment rates are close to each other in the world, women and men are concentrated separately within the subcategories of vulnerable employment (World Bank Data, 2020j, 2020k). It has been observed that the majority of women in vulnerable employment are family workers, and the area dominated by the majority of men is self-employment (Gokhool et al., 2018; ILO, 2018; Kring, 2017). Women are twice as likely to contribute to family workers, which accounts for one-third of the total informal employment in developing countries (ILO, 2018). Contributing family workers are not considered business partners, although they live in the same household with the business founder. The fact that these people are mostly women and the men are self-employed can be argued to be in line with traditional gender roles. The slight increase in self-employed women and the decrease family workers' rate over the past decade can also be interpreted as women starting to establish their own businesses (ILO, 2017, 2018). Although shifting from one form of vulnerable employment to another does not seem to make a difference in terms of vulnerable employment, women's transition from worker to employer can be interpreted as a positive change that empowers women in society and the workplace.

Unemployment

Job loss and subsequent unemployment is a common threat to all workers. However, they are punished differently according to their gender. Since breadwinning is traditionally linked to men, they determine their self-worth through breadwinning (Chesley, 2011; Legerski & Cornwall, 2010; Townsend, 2002), and they experience a greater social pressure and heavy stigma to quickly return to paid work because they are expected to be in uninterrupted full-time employment for many years (Damaske, 2020). Perhaps for this reason, men spend more time looking for work than women (Kulik, 2000). Unlike men's experience, women's job loss does not pose a threat to their gender roles; instead, it appears to have a reinforcing effect that triggers women to regress to

domestic work (Legerski & Cornwall, 2010; Seguino, 2010). Since working women are also expected to fulfill the family-devotion schema, being fired triggers questions about whether they should return to work (Blair-Loy, 2003; Cha, 2010), and those who can return to work are only those who can find someone for childcare (Damaske, 2011). Women, laid off at much higher rates than men, generally experience more difficulty getting a new job and remain unemployed in longer durations, although the structural adjustments in the economy is in their favor (Appleton et al., 2002; Giles et al., 2006; Korinek, 2005). This perhaps explains why more women remain in the potential labor force category.

Yet, when it comes to job search, refusing a job offer is more common among women when there is a conflict with domestic work (Kulik, 2000), indicating that women consider more criteria, such as the search area, when seeking new jobs. They constrain their job search to immediate areas under their control, even though the likelihood of getting a job offer is limited due to fewer positions with lower wages (Eriksson & Lagerström, 2012). Moreover, studies documented that being a woman, being married, and/or being a mother seem to lead to being unfavored in recruitment. Being married makes women less suitable, competent, and committed to employment (Benard et al., 2008; Correll et al., 2007; Jordan & Zitek, 2012; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004), while it makes men more suitable, successful, and committed to employment (Jordan & Zitek, 2012). Their parental role makes men be perceived as more mature, stable, and suited up for higher positions (Coltrane, 2004). Women's commitment is expected to decrease following marriage; therefore, single women are preferred over married ones (Jordan & Zitek, 2012). Women with children, but not men with children, are rated as less competent and deemed less valuable for recruitment (Cuddy et al., 2004). Similarly, in a study with real employers, it was found that women with children are half as likely to receive a response to their job applications than women without, whereas men's parental role does not affect their likelihood of receiving a response for their job applications (Correll et al., 2007). This shows that women with children who are unemployed for some reason are much less likely to find a job again than men with children.

Economic Gender Gap and Countries' Economic Development

Since the labor supply is an important determinant of economic growth, women's labor force participation has some impact on economies. Based on Gross National Income (GNI) scores, countries are classified into four different economic states: Low

income, lower-middle income, upper-middle income, and high-income economies (World Bank Data Team, 2018). The McKinsey Global Institute (2018) suggested that encouraging women's labor force participation would benefit countries more by moving upward from low-income economies to high-income economies or maintaining their positions as high-income economies. Globally, only 36 percent of GDP (gross domestic product) came from women's contribution in 2015 (Statista, 2015). The female share of GDP falls within a range of 11 percent in India to 41 percent in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and China (Statista, 2015). Closing the worldwide gender gap could deliver $11.7 trillion in additional GDP in 2025, equal to an 11 percent increase in the collective annual GDP worldwide (McKinsey Global Institute, 2018). If they could advance women's equality, the African countries could benefit from a 10 percent increase (an extra $0.3 trillion), while the Asia Pacific countries could benefit from a 12 percent increase (an extra $4.5 trillion) in their collective annual GDP by 2025 (McKinsey Global Institute, 2018, 2019). This additional $4.5 trillion GDP was something equal to Germany and Austria's combined economic size each year (McKinsey Global Institute, 2018). Therefore, economically, reducing the gender gap and providing equal job opportunities for women and men has been crucial for countries to have a faster economic growth and better prosperity. However, of that expected an extra 12 percent collective annual GDP increase among Asia Pacific countries by 2025, 58 percent of the increase could come from raising the labor force participation of women, and the remaining could come from gender equality (McKinsey Global Institute, 2018). The expected increase in annual GDPs shows that reducing the gender gap is a necessity for economic growth and better welfare.

Culture

The decision to join the labor force is not just an individual matter. Cultural attitudes and beliefs that can shape societies, the roles assigned to women and men, and the value attributed to women and girls are among the factors that can affect women's participation in the labor force and their positions (Dicke et al., 2019). Thus, the decision is heavily influenced by the social, political, legal, and cultural systems in which that individual was raised. In many countries, women legally do not have the same rights as men. For instance, in some countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, women still need to get a male figure's (i.e., husband, father, or even son) consent to work (Coker, 2018; Musawah, 2018; World Bank Group, 2015). Similarly, in Syria one needs to have a

license called ‘gedik’ to practice trade, and the right to trade belongs only to the men of the family (Littrell & Bertsch, 2013). In the absence of a male figure at home, women could inherit the gedik and sell or rent it, but they cannot use it. However, countries are aware of the fact that the ongoing practices contribute to the maintenance of gender gap. Therefore, 40 countries have aimed to reduce the economic gender gap and increase economic efficiency with more than 60 reforms since 2017 (World Bank, 2020). In countries where laws provide greater equal opportunities to decrease the economic gender gap, more women participate in the labor force (World Bank, 2020). Yet, in only eight economies (Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Latvia, Luxembourg, and Sweden) that scored full points out of 190 economies, women and men are equal before the law (World Bank, 2020).

National and gender cultures have much deeper roots than other types of culture (i.e., organizational and professional culture) because individuals are exposed to social cultures from a very early age. In most countries, men’s primary role is to be the provider while domestic work, nurturing and childrearing, is seen as women’s primary responsibility (PAHO, 2010). Housework is still seen as women’s responsibility, even though men have started to contribute. Social norms and culture discourage women from joining the labor force by imposing gender roles and providing discouraging options for those who still want to work outside the home (Das & Kotikula, 2019; Gupta, 2017). Just because they could only find ‘inferior’ jobs and perform below their potential does not mean they are not capable. Although there is no way of knowing which causes the other, seeing more women in the informal sector reinforces the distorted notion that women are inferior to men and cannot be successful outside of their homes (PAHO, 2010). Even seven years after the PAHO study, IPSOS data from 17,551 adults in 2017 showed that one-fifth believe women are inferior to men and should not seek for opportunities to do anything outside home (Kaur-Ballagan & Skinner, 2017).

Parallel to how deeply gender socialization and social norms affect individuals’ thoughts and behaviors, World Values Survey (Wave 6) results revealed that 38.8 percent of respondents globally agree that men deserve priority if jobs are scarce (Inglehart et al., 2014). Almost half of the participants (46.6 percent) believe that children will be harmed if their mothers work in paid work (Inglehart et al., 2014). Also, 30.3 percent of those surveyed believed that a woman earning more than her husband would cause a problem because it is the duty of a man to ‘make a living’. Forty-three percent of

respondents believe men make better business executives than women do, and almost half (48.5 percent) of respondents believe men make better political leaders than women (Inglehart et al., 2014). While some claim that these consequences are just beliefs, these beliefs are embodied by women's underrepresentation in executive positions and parliaments. Because values and social norms are learned at an early age (Solbes-Canales et al., 2020), their long-lasting impact on an individual's decision can be passed on to successive generations, even if they are outdated. In a study of second-generation immigrants, Fernandez and Fogli (2009) showed that the labor force participation among second-generation immigrant women is strongly associated with women's labor force participation in their country of origin. Thus, although these second-generation immigrant women were raised in another country and culture, and had equal opportunities with men in employment, leadership, and decision-making at all levels, they could benefit from institutional and labor market opportunities only if women have had similar opportunities in their country of origin (Alesina et al., 2013; Fernandez & Fogli, 2009).

Social norms play an important role in women's labor force participation, having equal opportunities with men for employment, leadership, and decision-making at all levels (Dicke et al., 2019). It was essential for countries to understand the role of culture in the economic gender gap when developing national-level policies and public awareness. The elimination of the gender gap will only be achieved as people's beliefs, values and behaviors change, which takes years to achieve. Perhaps, for this reason, it is estimated that another 202 years will be required to close the gender gap in the workplace (WEF, 2018). Some years, this difference has progressed slowly, and in some years even reversed, making it difficult to close (WEF, 2018). Yet, culture is a construct with different sub-dimensions. Understanding which sub-dimensions are related to the gender gap is also essential for countries to shape their policies.

Hofstede's National Culture Dimensions

Although many anthropologists and sociologists defined culture in many different ways, this paper examined culture using Hofstede's National Culture dimensions. After the analyses of data collected from 116,000 IBM workers between 1967 and 1973, Hofstede categorized the culture into four dimensions: *Power Distance*, *Individualism*, *Masculinity*, and *Uncertainty Avoidance*. Later, *the Long-term Orientation* was added as the fifth dimension (Hofstede & Bond, 1988), followed by *Indulgence*, the sixth culture dimension (Hofstede et al., 2010). Indulgence shows the extent to which individuals try

to control their desires and impulses depending on their upbringing, and was not included to this study because of the data unavailability. The hypotheses mentioned below are established on the two conditions that job opportunities in the formal market are limited, and according to the zero-sum rule, increasing employment opportunities of one gender decreases the possibility of the other. Although some culture dimensions also inherently support a reduction of the gender gap, women's labor force participation has also been supported by countries' labor market strategies and regulations. Similarly, countries enact laws and regulations to reduce vulnerable employment. As a result of these laws and regulations, employees are considered within the scope of labor force participation, not vulnerable employment. Thus, women's and men's vulnerable employment are expected to move in the same direction simultaneously, regardless of gender.

Power Distance

It is referred to what extend less powerful members of the society accept and expect power to be distributed unequally to maintain social order (Carl et al., 2004; Hofstede, 2001). Human inequality is perceived as the core component of the social order in countries with high power distance scores. Obedience is taught at home and in school, and less powerful members of the societies are expected to do what they are told. Gender roles are more pronounced in countries high on power distance (Best & Williams, 1994). In cultures with high power distance, there are wide status differences between subordinates and their superiors (Friedman, 2007). Moreover, members of advantageous groups tend to favor those similar in status to maintain the status differences between advantageous and disadvantageous groups (Garcia et al., 2009). Inequality is unacceptable in countries where the power distance is low, such that children in these countries are treated as equals at home, and less powerful members have a say. As far as the gender gap is concerned, women are more likely to have equal employment opportunities with men in low power distance countries. Unlike in high power distance countries, men in low power distance countries do not perceive women's employment as a threat to authority, male authority, because in these countries women and men are treated equally. Favoring the status difference between advantaged and disadvantaged groups in countries where the power distance is high can be interpreted as more women and men participate in vulnerable employment in these countries. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H1: (*H1a*) Women's labor force participation will be lower in high power distance cultures, while (*H1b*) men's labor force participation, and (*H1c*) women's and (*H1d*) men's vulnerable employment will be higher.

Individualism

This dimension indicates the extent of individuals' integration into their own groups that can be loose in individualistic cultures and tight in collectivist cultures (Hofstede, 2011). Individualistic cultures attach importance to horizontal relationships while valuing independence and self-sufficiency (Hofstede, 2011). And the justification of the status quo is weaker in individualistic cultures where people are not limited by group constraints (Garcia et al., 2009). However, the hierarchy is more important in collectivistic cultures in which sacrificing personal interests, showing conformity, and preserving harmony are valued (Hofstede, 2001). Together with the power distance, the hierarchical nature of collectivistic cultures could foster gender inequality by supporting the disproportionate distribution of power (Triandis, 1995). Some empirical studies showed women are subordinated to men in collectivist societies (Hofstede, 2001; Triandis, 1995). Similarly, in a study of how national culture influences preferences for employment-related decisions, Garcia and colleagues (2009) found that countries with higher collectivism are more likely to prefer males over females. Women's labor force participation can be expected to be high in individualistic cultures where independence and self-sufficiency are promoted. Higher representation of women in the formal sector and lower gender inequality are expected in individualistic cultures. Women's access to the work pool gives men the flexibility to prioritize their personal interests as they do not have to be the only breadwinner. In individualistic cultures, men and women are expected to prefer jobs protected under labor laws. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H2: (*H2a*) Women's labor force participation will be higher in individualistic cultures, while (*H2b*) men's labor force participation, and (*H2c*) women's and (*H2d*) men's vulnerable employment will be lower.

Masculinity

The masculinity dimension focus on the dominant gender role patterns of masculine (e.g., independence, dominance) or feminine values and behaviors (e.g., interdependence, empathy, openness) (Cheung & Chan, 2007; Hofstede, 2001; Jeknić, 2014). The clear

differentiation of gender roles, distinct occupational differences, independent performance, achievement, and ambition are the characteristics of masculine societies, while feminine cultures promote equal sex roles, less occupational differences, cooperation, quality of life, and trust (Cheung & Chan, 2007; Garcia et al., 2009; Hofstede, 2001; Wagner & Hollenbeck, 2005). Unlike in masculine cultures, both men and women could be the breadwinners as gender roles overlapped in feminine ones (Arrindell et al., 2003; Hofstede, 2001, 2011). As explained in Hofstede's study (2001), there is a small gender culture gap in feminine societies, and socialization is directed towards non-traditional gender roles. Thus, women's labor force participation is expected to be high in feminine societies. The proportion of women in professional and technical jobs and at the management level is greater in feminine societies. Similarly, more women hold seats in parliament in feminine societies (Cheung & Chan, 2007). Men's labor force participation is expected to be higher in masculine societies. The distinct occupational differences in masculine cultures may cause women and men who cannot find a place for themselves in limited labor market positions to seek a job in vulnerable employment. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H3: (*H3a*) Women's labor force participation will be lower in masculine societies, whereas (*H3b*) men's labor force participation, and (*H3c*) women's and (*H3d*) men's vulnerable employment will be higher.

Uncertainty Avoidance

This dimension focused on society's latitude toward ambiguity and uncertainty (Hofstede, 2011). Societies high in uncertainty avoidance showed less risk-taking behaviors, more respect for authority, resistance toward change, and great value on stability and certainty (Hofstede, 2011; Littrell & Bertsch, 2013). Cultures high in uncertainty avoidance enforce strict rules, laws, policies, and regulations to reduce or minimize uncertainty. These societies have better labor standards, stricter employment protection, and more generous notice and severance provisions (Black, 1999). Yet, developmental growth opportunities that might require learning new skills or relocation are perceived as risk-taking behaviors which employees may avoid (Friedman, 2007), while managers are also unwilling to invest in training programs (Kirkpatrick, 2006; Tyler, 2002). Cultures with low uncertainty avoidance are more comfortable with risk, more willing to move forward without knowing all the contingencies that lie ahead, and have a flexible nature that allows tolerance toward different attitudes and behaviors

(Friedman, 2007; Hofstede, 2011). Cultures low in uncertainty avoidance are expected to give women more opportunities to participate in the labor force, which in turn decreases men's employment opportunity. In countries with high uncertainty avoidance, unemployment is not a risk people can bear. Thus, instead of seeking a job that matches their skills, they are expected to accept any job even if it means vulnerable employment. For this reason, an increase in uncertainty avoidance is expected to trigger a rise in women's and men's vulnerable employment. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H4: (*H4a*) Women's labor force participation will be lower in countries with high uncertainty avoidance, while *(H4b*) men's labor force participation, and (*H4c*) women's and (*H4d*) men's vulnerable employment will be higher.

Long-term Orientation

The term orientation categorizes societies based on the prioritization of their past over their future or vice versa (Hofstede, 2011). Short-term oriented cultures are focused on the present or the past, honoring tradition and consuming resources to meet current needs by showing hesitant behavior towards change and preserving their ongoing traditions and norms (Friedman, 2007). Long-term oriented cultures gave higher importance to the future by focusing on the pragmatic approaches where resources are saved to meet future contingencies (Hofstede, 1984, 2011). Women's participation in the labor force may be perceived as incompatible with traditional gender roles. Since long-term oriented cultures focus on economic development and create conditions to lift workers out of poverty, fewer women and men are expected to take part in vulnerable employment. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H5: (*H5a*) Women's labor force participation will be higher in long-term oriented cultures, while (*H5b*) men's labor force participation, and (*H5c*) women's and (*H5d*) men's vulnerable employment will be lower.

Aim of the Current Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the culture dynamics of the gender gap in employment. Therefore, this study investigated the relationship between Hofstede's culture dimensions dimensions (power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation) and women's and men's labor force participation rate of the population older than the age of 15 at the country level, and women's and men's vulnerable employment rates after controlling the economy.

Table 1

Hypothesized Relationship among Study Variables

Variables	Women's Labor Force Participation	Men's Labor Force Participation	Women's Vulnerable Employment	Men's Vulnerable Employment
Power distance	-	+	+	+
Individualism	+	-	-	-
Masculinity	-	+	+	+
Uncertainty avoidance	-	+	+	+
Long-term orientation	+	-	-	-

Note. + = positive significant association; - = negative significant association

Method

Data Set and Measure

The gender gap in employment indicators selected for this study were women's and men's labor force participation and their vulnerable employment ratios. By definition, labor force participation includes people who are currently employed and people who are unemployed but seeking work, as well as first-time job-seekers (World Bank Data, 2020b, 2020c). Therefore, the labor force participation indicator shows the percentage of women/men in the labor force among women/men over the age of 15. However, not everyone who works is included in the labor force participation ratios. Unpaid workers, family workers, and students are often omitted. Yet, another ratio, vulnerable employment, includes unpaid workers and family workers as well as own-account workers and wage salaried workers as the indicators (World Bank Data, 2020j, 2020k). In this study, the vulnerable employment represents the percentage of women/men in vulnerable jobs out of the total women/men employed over the age of 15. Since the World Bank updates country classifications (low-income, lower-middle income, upper-middle income, and high-income economies) each year, GNI levels were classified according to the revised cut-off levels (World Bank Data Team, 2018). The 2019 data sets of countries' economic progress (Gross National Income [GNI]), women's labor force participation, men's labor force participation, women's vulnerable employment, and men's vulnerable employment rates are taken from World Bank databases (World Bank Data, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020j, 2020k). Hofstede's five culture dimensions (including power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation) were used to measure cultural variables at the country level. The data set of countries' culture dimensions, re-adjusted between 0 and 100, was obtained from Hofstede's website (Geert Hofstede, 2015).

Procedure

Publicly available data, secondary data, were used in this study. Countries without data on culture dimensions from one hundred and eighty-nine countries were excluded from the data set. Countries with missing data on women's and/or men's employment rates have been neglected. Two countries (the Iran Islamic Republic and Venezuela RB) without economic datum were removed from the analysis. Therefore, the data set of this study covers 60 countries (see Table 2).

Data Analysis

Bivariate correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between study variables and Hofstede's five culture dimensions. In the hierarchical regression analyses, economy was entered in the first step and Hofstede's five culture dimensions were entered in the second step. All statistical analyses were conducted by using the SPSS 25.0 software program.

Table 2

Country Scores depending on Culture Dimensions, and the Proportions of Women's and Men's Employment

Country Name	Income Categories	WLFP	MLFP	WVuln	MVuln	PDI	IDV	MAS	UA	LTO
Argentina	Upper-Middle Income	50.72	72.73	20.10	23.06	49	46	56	86	20
Australia	High Income	60.30	70.86	8.13	12.81	38	90	61	51	21
Austria	High Income	55.06	66.57	6.85	7.85	11	55	79	70	60
Bangladesh	Lower-Middle Income	36.26	81.37	66.99	50.26	80	20	55	60	47
Belgium	High Income	48.61	58.70	8.42	11.72	65	75	54	94	82
Brazil	Upper-Middle Income	54.21	74.10	23.72	31.01	69	38	49	76	44
Bulgaria	Upper-Middle Income	49.24	61.98	6.33	9.06	70	30	40	85	69
Canada	High Income	60.84	69.42	9.40	11.86	39	80	52	48	36
Chile	High Income	51.80	73.97	22.90	22.54	63	23	28	86	31
China	Upper-Middle Income	60.45	75.27	48.85	42.65	80	20	66	30	87
Colombia	Upper-Middle Income	57.35	80.90	46.25	47.64	67	13	64	80	13
Croatia	High Income	45.45	57.49	6.51	7.91	73	33	40	80	58
Czech Republic	High Income	52.94	68.55	10.65	16.11	57	58	57	74	70
Denmark	High Income	58.25	66.29	3.58	6.07	18	74	16	23	35
El Salvador	Upper-Middle Income	45.32	75.74	42.95	27.80	66	19	40	94	20
Estonia	High Income	57.10	71.01	4.77	7.43	40	60	30	60	82
Finland	High Income	55.54	62.77	7.38	11.64	33	63	26	59	38
France	High Income	50.75	59.91	6.19	8.58	68	71	43	86	63
Germany	High Income	55.28	66.57	4.95	6.20	35	67	66	65	83
Greece	High Income	44.17	59.78	23.56	27.37	60	35	57	100	45
Hong Kong SAR, China	High Income	53.98	67.51	4.01	7.40	68	25	57	29	61
Hungary	High Income	48.47	65.50	5.35	6.59	46	80	88	82	58
India	Lower-Middle Income	20.52	76.08	76.09	73.81	77	48	56	40	51

Indonesia	Upper-Middle Income	53.08	81.89	56.78	42.13	78	14	46	48	62
Ireland	High Income	55.97	68.36	5.64	14.84	28	70	68	35	24
Israel	High Income	59.69	68.55	7.56	8.91	13	54	47	81	38
Italy	High Income	40.76	59.00	13.39	19.40	50	76	70	75	61
Japan	High Income	52.74	71.28	7.89	8.64	54	46	95	92	88
Korea, Rep.	High Income	52.89	73.10	18.83	19.20	60	18	39	85	100
Latvia	High Income	55.72	68.38	6.96	7.33	44	70	9	63	69
Lithuania	High Income	56.54	67.74	7.61	10.70	42	60	19	65	82
Luxembourg	High Income	54.91	63.67	5.52	5.70	40	60	50	70	64
Malaysia	Upper-Middle Income	50.75	77.10	24.32	20.23	100	26	50	36	41
Malta	High Income	46.05	67.06	5.82	12.55	56	59	47	96	47
Mexico	Upper-Middle Income	44.19	78.45	29.30	25.51	81	30	69	82	24
Morocco	Lower-Middle Income	21.47	70.14	60.03	43.64	70	46	53	68	14
Netherlands	High Income	58.26	69.08	10.91	14.15	38	80	14	53	67
New Zealand	High Income	64.77	75.33	10.44	13.58	22	79	58	49	33
Norway	High Income	60.37	67.19	3.46	6.19	31	69	8	50	35
Pakistan	Lower-Middle Income	21.92	81.74	71.29	51.51	55	14	50	70	50
Peru	Upper-Middle Income	70.28	85.14	57.31	44.62	64	16	42	87	25
Philippines	Lower-Middle Income	46.10	73.26	37.31	29.79	94	32	64	44	27
Poland	High Income	48.63	65.46	13.12	18.43	68	60	64	93	38
Portugal	High Income	54.19	64.08	9.40	14.18	63	27	31	99	28
Romania	High Income	45.31	64.74	22.62	24.56	90	30	42	90	52
Russian Federation	Upper-Middle Income	54.82	70.25	4.79	5.88	93	39	36	95	81
Serbia	Upper-Middle Income	47.41	62.81	20.98	26.90	86	25	43	92	52
Singapore	High Income	61.97	78.30	6.57	11.88	74	20	48	8	72
Slovak Republic	High Income	52.18	67.44	8.15	14.79	100	52	100	51	77
Slovenia	High Income	53.40	63.43	9.50	12.64	71	27	19	88	49
Spain	High Income	51.85	63.43	8.38	13.12	57	51	42	86	48
Sweden	High Income	61.38	67.77	4.09	7.88	31	71	5	29	53
Switzerland	High Income	62.90	73.75	9.40	8.54	34	68	70	58	74
Thailand	Upper-Middle Income	59.20	76.08	49.81	47.35	64	20	34	64	32
Trinidad and Tobago	High Income	50.06	70.24	13.02	21.92	47	16	58	55	13
Turkey	Upper-Middle Income	34.01	72.59	32.09	24.68	66	37	45	85	46
United Kingdom	High Income	57.65	68.11	9.64	15.97	35	89	66	35	51
United States	High Income	56.13	68.19	3.36	4.24	40	91	62	46	26
Uruguay	High Income	55.58	73.32	21.73	26.41	61	36	38	98	26
Vietnam	Lower-Middle Income	72.71	82.36	60.57	48.11	70	20	40	30	57

Note. WLFP = women's labor force participation rate (% of female population ages 15+); MLFP = men's labor force participation rate (% of male population ages 15+); WVuln = women's vulnerable employment (% of the total employed female population ages 15+); MVuln = men's vulnerable employment (% of the total employed male population ages 15+); PDI = power distance (%); IND = individualism (%); MAS = masculinity (%); UA = uncertainty avoidance (%); LTO = long-term orientation (%). Low Income = <= $995 GNI per capita; Lower-Middle Income = from $996 to $3,895 GNI per capita; Upper-Middle Income = from $3,896 to $12,055 GNI per capita; High Income = ≥ $12,056 GNI per capita (World Bank Data Team, 2018). The scores of countries based on culture dimensions were obtained from Hofstede's country comparison data set (https://geerthofstede.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/6-dimensions-for-website-2015-12-08-0-100.xls). The proportions of female's and male's employment ratios were received from World Bank database (http://data.worldbank.org/indicator).

Results

Correlations between Study Variables

Women's labor force participation rate had a negative correlation with power distance and uncertainty avoidance, and a positive correlation with income, while men's labor force participation rate had a negative correlation with individualism and uncertainty avoidance, and income. Women's vulnerable employment rates indicated a positive association with power distance, and negative association with individualism and income. Men's vulnerable employment rates showed a positive association with power distance, and negative association with individualism, long-term orientation, and income. Descriptive statistics and correlations of study variables were presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Study Variables

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Women's labor force participation	51.97	9.97	-	.07	**-.43****	**-.41****	**-.35****	.19	-.18	**-.27***	.10
2. Men's labor force participation	70.03	6.46		-	**.69****	**.64****	.21	**-.48****	.07	**-.29***	-.22
3. Women's vulnerable employment	20.19	19.98			-	**.97****	**.44****	**-.59****	.06	-.05	-.25
4. Men's vulnerable employment	20.39	15.13				-	**.45****	**-.57****	.09	-.04	**-.28***
5. Power distance	57.37	21.30					-	**-.64****	.14	.18	.08
6. Individualism	47.02	23.36						-	.06	-.18	.09
7. Masculinity	48.68	19.89							-	.02	.05
8. Uncertainty avoidance	66.82	23.03								-	-.03
9. Long-term orientation	49.99	21.68									-
10. Income categories	3.57	.67	**.46****	**-.60****	**-.86****	**-.80****	**-.52****	**.53****	-.06	.08	.22

Note. $N = 60$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{*}p < .05$

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to investigate the relationship between Hofstede's culture dimensions and women's and men's (formal and vulnerable) employment rates. As it was shown in Table 4, after controlling the economy (income categories as low, lower-middle, upper-middle, and high income), Hofstede's culture dimensions explained 35.8% of the total variance in women's labor force participation ($\Delta R^2 = .15^{**}$, F (6, 53) = 4.93, $p < .01$) and 55% of the total variance in men's labor

force participation (ΔR^2 = .19**, F (6, 53) = 10.78, p < .01). F change scores indicated that Hofstede's culture dimensions significantly improved explained variances of women's and men's labor force participation, and the additional explained variances in the second steps differed significantly from the explained variances in the first steps. Only uncertainty avoidance showed a significant and negative association with women's labor force participation rate (β = -.14, p < .01), which supported *H4a*. Power distance, individualism, and uncertainty avoidance were negatively correlated with men's labor force participation rate (β = -.09, p < .05 for power distance, β = -.13, p < .01 for individualism, β = -.08, p < .05 for uncertainty avoidance), which supported *H2b*. Hofstede's culture dimensions explained 77.8% of the total variance in women's vulnerable employment (ΔR^2 = .04, F (6, 53) = 30.97, p < .01) and 69.4% of the total variance in men's vulnerable employment (ΔR^2 = .05, F (6, 53) = 20.05, p < .01) after controlling the economy (Table 4). F change scores indicated that Hofstede's culture dimensions did not significantly improve explained variances of women's and men's vulnerable employment, and the additional explained variances in the second steps did not differ significantly from the explained variances in the first steps. Only individualism was significantly associated with women's vulnerable employment rate (β = -.22, p < .01) and men's vulnerable employment rate (β = -.16, p < .05), which supported *H2c* and *H2d*.

Table 4

Hierarchical Regression Results

Variables	% of Participation in Labor Force		% of Vulnerable Employment	
	Women	***Men***	***Women***	***Men***
	β	***β***	***β***	***β***
Step 1: Control Variable				
Income Categories	.46**	-.60**	-.86**	-.80**
F(1,58)	15.60**	32.73**	165.81**	105.49**
ΔR2	.21**	.36**	.74**	.65**
Step 2: Study Variables				
Power distance	-.17	-.28*	-.12	-.05
Individualism	-.25	-.48**	-.26**	-.25*
Masculinity	-.10	.12	.05	.08
Uncertainty avoidance	-.32**	-.30**	-.02	-.03
Long-term orientation	.02	-.07	-.05	-.11
F(6,53)	4.93**	10.78**	30.97**	20.05**
ΔF(5,53)	2.42*	4.45**	1.78	1.70
ΔR2	.15*	.19**	.04	.05

Note. N = 60; **p < .01; *p < .05

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between Hofstede's culture dimensions and gender gap in employment indicators (women's and men's formal and vulnerable employment rates in 2019) using 60 different country-scores after controlling the economy. The findings of the study partially supported the proposed hypotheses (see Table 5). Numerous studies have provided evidence of a u-shaped relationship between women's labor force participation and countries' economic development (e.g., Goldin, 1995; Luci, 2009; Olivetti, 2013). Since this study mostly includes data from upper-middle-income and high-income countries, the results only took a snapshot of the upward trend of the well-known hypothesis of the u-shaped relationship. Accelerating economic development and providing more resources to invest in short and long-term goals for education, health, and employment could affect countries to have higher levels of labor force participation of women and lower levels of vulnerable employment men and women, and labor force participation of men. The negative correlation between economic development and vulnerable employments indicated that the demand for vulnerable job opportunities in economically developed societies would decrease. In line with the Ostry and colleagues' (2018) study, the absence of a relationship between women's and men's participation in the workforce showed that women' labor force participation does not cause the limited job opportunities to be distributed between women and men, but rather creates new job opportunities. Therefore, women's participation in the labor force does not decrease men's participation in the formal labor force. Likewise, women's participation in the labor force reduces the vulnerable employment of men. The negative correlation between women's labor force participation and women's vulnerable employment can be explained in two ways. The reason why women tend to work in vulnerable jobs could be their inability to find jobs in the formal sector. Yet, this relationship can be interpreted as an increase in women's labor force participation creates more job opportunities not only for men but also for women who were normally unable to find jobs in the formal sector. Moreover, the high correlation between female and male vulnerable employment suggests that vulnerable employment is an inclusive concept regardless of gender.

Table 5

Proposed Hypotheses and Study Results

Variables	Women's Labor Force Participation			Men's Labor Force Participation			Women's Vulnerable Employment			Men's Vulnerable Employment		
	Proposed Associations	Study Results		Proposed Associations	Study Results		Proposed Associations	Study Results		Proposed Associations	Study Results	
		Correlation	Regression		Correlation	Regression		Correlation	Regression		Correlation	Regression
Power distance	-	-	n.s.	+	n.s.	-	+	+	n.s.	+	+	n.s.
Individualism	+	n.s.	n.s.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Masculinity	-	n.s.	n.s.	+	n.s.	n.s.	+	n.s.	n.s.	+	n.s.	n.s.
Uncertainty avoidance	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	n.s.	n.s.	+	n.s.	n.s.
Long-term orientation	+	n.s.	n.s.	-	n.s.	n.s.	-	n.s.	n.s.	-	-	n.s.

Note. + = positive significant association; - = negative significant association; n.s. = non-significant association

Power Distance

As gender inequality is based on the perception of men as superiors where women are inferior, power distance is expected to be strongly related to gender gap in employment. However, *H1* was not supported. Power distance could only explain men's labor force participation. Contrary to the expectations, men's labor force participation decreased in countries with high power distance, while women's labor force participation and vulnerable employment rates seemed unaffected, regardless of whether they were in a country with a high or low power distance. If being perceived as inferior in high power distance cultures is an issue for women, the burden of being the only breadwinner of the family is on men. This burden can lead men to seek a job regardless of its nature: formal or vulnerable. However, the results showed that when the superior position of men is strengthened in a society, that is, when they become the only breadwinner of the family, their labor force participation decreases. The correlation results also showed that more men have participated in vulnerable employment under high power distance. In a society where job opportunities are only offered to men, and women are expected to fulfill their traditional duties, the decrease in men's labor force participation and an increase in men's vulnerable employment may not make sense. However, this result can be interpreted as that in societies where the distribution of power between men and women is more equal, more job opportunities are created. Therefore, more men can participate in the labor force.

The power distance dimension is closely related to economic development (Hofstede, 2006, 2007), and non-significant results of women's labor force participation and vulnerable employment may be related to the method of analysis where Hofstede's culture dimensions entered into the system after the economy was controlled. The correlation results showed a moderate positive relationship between power distance and vulnerable employment rates, and a negative relationship between power distance and women's labor force participation (see Table 5). But, when the impact of economic development was removed from the picture, power distance lost its predictive power. Although there was no relationship between power distance and women's labor force participation, the negative correlation could be a sign that the assumptions on which the hypotheses are based, that job opportunities in the market are stable and distributed amongst the labor force, are not correct. Moreover, not providing enough opportunity for women to work could be the reason why any change in power distance does not affect women's employment. So, regardless of whether the job is formal or vulnerable,

women do not enter the labor force. This may be the case in cultures where women need the approval of male members in their families to work (Coker, 2018), as well as in societies where there are invisible barriers toward women's employment.

Individualism

In line with Garcia and colleagues (2009), the findings in this study also showed that the higher the level of collectivism, the higher the labor force participation of men (*H2b*). Given the strong negative correlation between individualism and power distance, this also indicates the patriarchal nature of collectivist cultures. These results can be interpreted as, in individualist cultures, men are not seen as the family's sole breadwinner. Although it has been hypothesized that there is a positive relationship between individualism and women's participation in the workforce, no findings supporting this relationship were found in this study (*H2a*). Individualism was also negatively correlated with vulnerable employment ratios, supporting *H2c* and *H2d*. The close relationship between individualism and economic development (Hofstede, 2006, 2007) can be interpreted as cultures will become more individualistic with increasing economic development and wealth (Hofstede, 1980), which in turn reduce the participation in the vulnerable jobs. Economic development may trigger both men and women to stay away from vulnerable employment, as more job opportunities and higher welfare make vulnerable jobs less favorable.

Masculinity

Knowing about the self, social values, norms, and expectations begin with enculturation (Brewer & Chen, 2007). There have been different practices, different perceptions of what a woman can and cannot do between one from Saudi Arabia (or in any Masculine culture) and another from the Netherlands (or in any Feminine culture). While there are no such restrictions for those born in the Netherlands, a woman born in Saudi Arabia learns that she needs a male guardian's consent to travel, to enroll in courses, or even to open a savings account (Coker, 2018). This study results indicated that the masculinity dimension was not associated with (formal and vulnerable) labor force participation. There could be two reasons for this. Although masculinity has a negative relationship with women's career advancement (such as holding managerial positions in professional and technical jobs, being elected political positions, and holding seats in the parliament; Cheung & Chan, 2007), it may not really have an impact on the previous step, individuals' (formal and vulnerable) labor force participation. It is

also possible that, different factors can affect (formal and vulnerable) labor force participation in masculine and feminine societies. Therefore, in feminine societies, the absence of a factor that affects participation in the labor force in masculine societies does not mean that other factor(s) will not affect these processes.

Uncertainty Avoidance

High uncertainty avoidance can strengthen dependence on existing traditional social hierarchy and respect for authority (Hofstede, 2011); because these countries show less risk-taking behaviors and less tolerance to change and deviants. These cultures use rules, laws, policies, and regulations; and put more policies into action to control unpredictability at a predictable level. Thus, as expected (*H4a*), there was a negative relationship between the uncertainty avoidance dimension and women's labor force participation. However, the significant negative relationship between men's labor force participation and uncertainty avoidance, contrary to what was hypothesized, showed that men also participate less in the labor force in cultures where uncertainty avoidance is high. There could be two reasons for this. The first may be that sustaining more traditional approaches with less technological developments creates fewer employment opportunities in these cultures. The second may be that the assumptions on which the hypotheses are based, that limited employment opportunities in the market are dispersed between women's and men's labor force participation, are not correct. Consistent with the second explanation, the Ostry and colleagues' (2018) study showed that men also benefited from an increase in women's labor force participation. Because women's participation in the labor force brings new skills to the workplace that complement men's skills in the production process, raise productivity, boost wages for everyone, this in turn increases the number of workers competing for jobs (Ostry et al., 2018). New skills in the workplace, resulting from women's labor force participation, could also trigger the opening of new job opportunities, both women's and men's participation in the labor force will benefit positively. Moreover, the absence of a link between uncertainty avoidance and vulnerable employment suggests that the decline in men's labor force participation rates in high uncertainty avoidance cultures does not have a spillover effect on men's vulnerable employment.

Long-term Orientation

Contrary to *H5,* the study results showed that regardless of what societies prioritized (either the past or the future), formal and vulnerable employment remained unaffected.

Compared to short-term oriented cultures, long-term oriented cultures have higher adaptive capabilities making them strong candidates for faster economic growth and better prosperity (Hofstede & Bond, 1988; Park & Lemaire, 2011). The correlation results showed that the only significant association that long-term orientation had was negative correlation with men's vulnerable employment. Men may not be able to cope with unemployment for long, as short-term oriented cultures have a narrow focus and traditional perspectives on meeting current needs. They are expected to fulfill the role of the sole breadwinner by getting a job, regardless of whether it is formal or vulnerable. Yet, when the high inverse correlation between vulnerable employment and economy is considered, it can be argued that the reason why the relationship between long-term orientation and men's vulnerable employment was not significant in the hierarchical regression is that the economy is controlled in the first stage.

The current study has some limitations that should be taken into consideration. One of these limitations is the number of countries included in this study. Hofstede's culture-based country comparison data set and World Bank databases were used to generate this overall data set. Out of one hundred eighty-nine countries with partial data, only 60 countries with full data were included in the analysis. However, given that there are 194 countries in the world (World Atlas, 2020), the findings of this study come from only a third of the countries.

Moreover, when these countries' nature was examined, 40 of them belonged to the high-income countries, and 14 countries were in the upper-middle-income country category. Although the economy was entered in the analyses as a control variable, it explained a 21% to 74% variance of the model in the first step. The absence of low-income countries and enough lower-middle-income countries in the data set may raise generalizability questions. Studies on gender gap can also be examined with different cultural classifications, such as the Schwartz's model (Schwartz, 2006), to increase the representation of low-income and low-middle-income economies in future studies.

Besides economic development, marital status is also related to female and male employment. Labor force participation by marital status in 2019 is available for only 32 countries (ILO, 2020), and only half of them (17 countries) were found to match the countries used in this data set. However, since it is not possible to make a meaningful comparison with 17 countries, labor force participation by marital status was not

included in this study. As more countries provide publicly available data on this issue, it will be possible to carry out these analyzes.

Also, an increase in years of education should be considered in studies that focus on reducing the gender gap at work. As primary education is compulsory in most countries, it is necessary to look at non-compulsory secondary and tertiary education to understand the years that girls and boys spend in education. Globally, the gross enrollment rate of women in tertiary schools (including universities, trade schools, and colleges) has increased by five times in 50 years to 41 percent, while for men this increase was 3.2 times, to 36 percent (World Bank Data, 2020h, 2020i). Although women outpaced men in the tertiary education level, the proportion of boys and girls is equal at the secondary education level; three out of every four children are enrolled in secondary education, regardless of their gender (World Bank Data, 2020f, 2020g).

Increasing the years women spend in education (higher secondary and tertiary education) will increase their chances of being promoted to management and senior positions in the long term, it will also delay their participation in the labor force, leaving fewer women available for work at younger age groups (Kannan & Raveendran, 2012). It should be noted, however, that when highly-educated women enter the labor force, an immediate effect of education on the economic gender gap may not be seen, as women with limited education will still be in the labor force pool. For this reason, observing the effects of higher education on women labor force participation is possible over longer periods or in studies that divide labor force participation into age groups.

Which variable is the cause of another can only be understood by causal studies. For this reason, the correlational nature of this study does not allow any causal interpretation between study variables. As a suggestion, researchers can use the vast number of massive open-source databases waiting to be used on the internet more to conduct cross-cultural studies and to reach more generalizable findings in future studies.

In conclusion, this study demonstrated the relationship between the culture dimensions and the gender gap in employment indicators (formal and vulnerable labor force participation ratios) in 60 countries using country-based databases. The main results indicated that, after controlling for economic development, women's labor force participation rate was negatively related to country scores on uncertainty avoidance, whereas men's labor force participation rate was negatively related to country scores on

power distance, individualism, and uncertainty avoidance. In addition, both women's and men's vulnerable employment rates were only negatively related to country scores on individualism. The gender gap has been prevalent all around the globe. This study provides a deeper understanding of why the gender gap in employment exists and what culture dimensions it feeds on. Countries' economic development can be achieved or sustained by the participation of women and men in the labor force. The fact that women's and men's labor force participation rates are higher in countries with low power distance and uncertainty avoidance can be interpreted as women's participation in the workforce actually creates new job opportunities and not only women but also men benefit from it. Moreover, as mentioned in the assumptions and demonstrated in the study's correlation and regression results, women's and men's vulnerable employment move in the same direction. In countries where individualism and long-term orientation are low and power distance is high, there is an increase in women's and men's vulnerable employment rates. At the same time, individualism and power distance are closely related to the countries' economic development, indicating that increasing countries' economic development can be effective in reducing vulnerable employment. This can also be interpreted as there are more laws and regulations to reduce unprotected employment in economically developed countries. Countries need to develop some policies and strategies to reduce informal employment and encourage formal labor force participation, but their adoption depends on the beliefs, norms, and traditions of that country. Therefore, policies developed as incompatible with culture are doomed to fail. This study can be considered as a guiding resource showing the culture dimensions that policymakers should consider when designing their strategies to eliminate the economic gender gap. The findings may be useful for researchers and practitioners who aim to see the current gender-based labor force participation patterns in different countries and understand the culture dynamics of the gender gap at work.

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