INEQUALITIES IN ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE MALDIVES

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ABSTRACT

The current low enrolment rate in higher education of Maldives originates from inefficiencies in organization and distribution of educational resources. The sources collected for the analysis of this study reflects the entire country situation in regard to higher education system and gives evidence that both monetary and non-monetary barriers result in a corresponding shift in balance of power that has worked to the advantage of system over the people. The study has been conducted to assess the factors that hinder access to higher education in the Maldives. Through survey and content analysis technique, the interrelationship between cultural, social and linguistic advantages was assessed in relation to financial advantages of respondents who had access to higher education. The study concluded that non-monetary factors had a strong correlation with access to higher education in relation to monetary factors. More importantly, occupational status of parents, attitude of respondents, income/expenditure of families and cultural capital were proved to be the most influential factors in determining access to higher education.
Key words: Monetary barriers, Non-monetary barriers, Access, Higher Education, Inequality, Cultural Capital, Social Capital, Linguistic Capital

1.   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Maldives is a country in South Asia, situated in a South South-west direction from India and is one of the most geographically disparate countries in the world. The unique geography of Maldives, the relative smallness of individual islands, and their vulnerability to environmental hazards are particularly important factors to consider for development of any sector, particularly education sector in Maldives.

The population of Maldives is distributed unevenly over 194 islands. Large pockets of population (above 10,000) are located only on very few islands. Due to massive internal migration, Male', the capital island, houses more than 1/3 of the total population of Maldives. While there are several reasons for this influx of population to Male', most notably it is thought that it is due employment, educational and health opportunities, or more precisely due to the rural-urban gap in development of Maldives. Given current birth and child mortality rates, educational age groups in islands would increase. This would place greater burdens on the public purse, necessitating redistribution of expenditure in other areas in absence of corresponding increase in wealth. The local population of 15 years of age and over is increasing and statistics show that it is likely to continue to do so. In addition, expanding migrant workforce is another equally significant factor that accounts for human resource consideration.

In the education sector, statistics of 2012 from the Department of National Planning shows the total number of students in the Maldives is 86,946, out of which schools in Male' have a student population of 25,064, while schools in outer islands have a total student population of 61,882. Until the beginning of 2012, there was no university education in Maldives. Until the early 1990s, the trend in higher education was for students who succeeded in secondary education to go on to local tertiary education only available in the capital, although the brightest and wealthiest would travel overseas to attend universities abroad. Students

who complete their secondary studies and who intend to pursue university education have to go abroad, either availing of foreign scholarship opportunities, or by relying on their own self-funding resources. Given the higher education structure of the Maldives, there has been a number of concerns highlighted in World Bank reports (2011| 2012) about higher education in the country, which pointed out that there are several challenges in producing school leavers and graduates with the skills needed to operate the economic sector. It is generally argued that the education system in Maldives is too result-oriented, whereby parents, teachers and students emphasize on grades over learning competencies, resulting in lack of required skills and practical learning abilities. The Maldivian education system faces severe challenges in producing school completers and graduates with the skills required for the small multi-island nation to operate in the modern global knowledge-driven economy.

Apart from the monetary aspects, which are somewhat discussed in the public, it is also important to understand what other factors hinder access to higher education. Students who can afford to go abroad for higher education do opt for outside opportunities. However, for majority of the students this is not the case. Often times, the social connections of the families, family background, cultural exposure and their language competency are some causes that affect students' opportunity to participate in higher education.

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The main objective of the research is to examine the monetary and non-monetary factors that contribute to inequality in access to higher education, and the interrelationship between cultural, social and linguistic advantages in relation to financial advantages for respondents who had access to higher education. The aim of the study is to explore inequality in higher education system of the Republic of Maldives within the overall context of a developing small island state. Since the aim of the study is to explore contemporary issues in the higher education system, focus of the study has been limited to the period, 2010-to date.

The methodology utilized for data collection to examine monetary and non-monetary barriers include a mixed methodology of survey and content analysis. In this regard, a non-random sample of 120 participants was surveyed to analyse social and cultural reproduction factors. The first part of the questionnaire was focused on demographic data of respondents which included gender, marital status and the island of residence of the respondent. The second part of the questionnaire was focused on understanding social capital of respondents' and their parents and in this regard included questions on the education and occupation levels of the respondent and their parents. The third part of the questionnaire was focused on understanding the linguistic capital of respondents and their parents, with the ability to converse in English being used as an indicator. The fourth part of the questionnaire was focused on inquiring about cultural capital of the parents and the respondents. Understanding respondent's attitude towards education in terms of extrinsic and intrinsic value, together with their belief that higher education was a means of achieving their aspired job was questioned in the fifth part of the questionnaire.

3.   FRAMEWORK OF INEQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework presented to outline inequality in higher education. Based on the current literature, it is evident that there is no single framework that outlines the multidimensional approach in access to higher education. Hence, an integrated approach has been utilized by researching the concepts and ideas presented in other related studies presented in section 3.1.
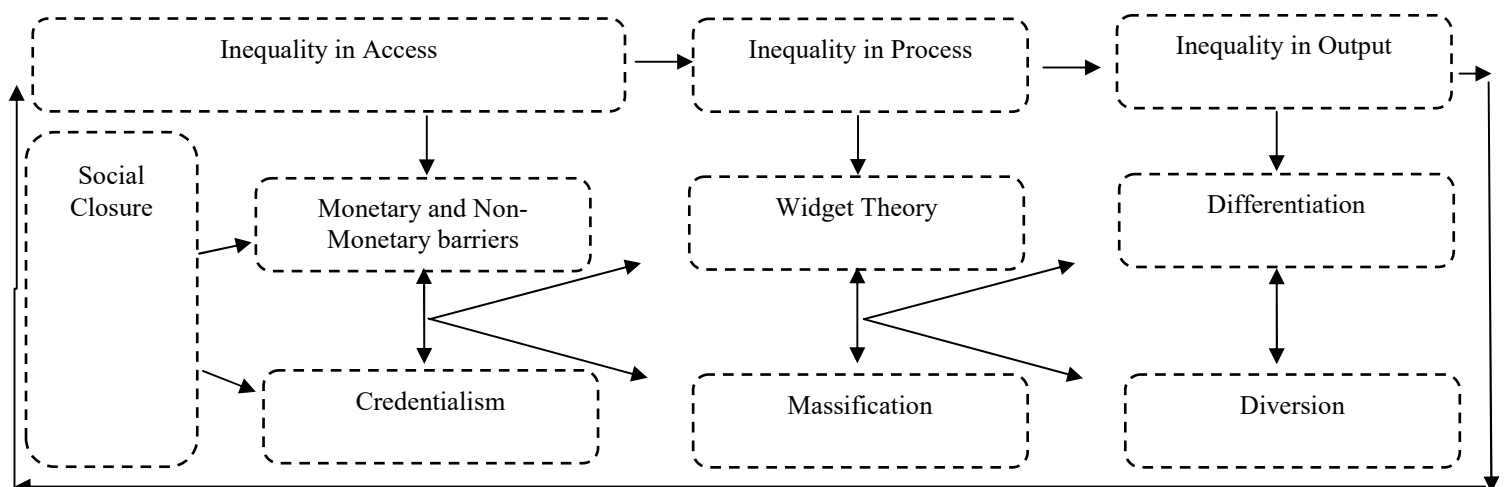
Figure 1
Modified from the concepts available from literature review

The model shows the three key stages in inequality in higher education: inequality in access, inequality in process and inequality in output. The diagram above shows a system of reproduction of inequality in which inequality in access leads to inequality in process, which in return leads to inequality in outcome and the cycle repeats.

Explaining the framework, it is clear and evident that it is not only one significant factor that is contributing to the inequality of higher education. However, several multiple factors from access to process and output of higher education combine together to create this situation. There are monetary and non-monetary factors contributing to inequality. Most of these factors are embedded into the structures and is consequently resulting in failure in participation in higher education.

3.1   INEQUALITY IN ACCESS

The inequality in access to higher education is the consequential result of social closure. The barriers to entry lead to monetary and nonmonetary barriers and credentialism. The two-way arrow between monetary and non-monetary barriers and credentialism is meant to state that over-emphasis on the value of certification could be because there is no equality in the opportunity to participate in education or vice versa.

3.1.1 Social Closure

'Social closure' is a term coined by Max Weber (1978) and later by Frank Parkin (1979) in analysis of class to describe the actions of social groups to maximize their own advantages by restricting access to certain social rewards: access to higher education to their members, and thereby closing access to those rewards to outsiders. International publications on access to higher education show that social closure is a process in which the status of groups, self-interests of organizations, usage of cultural capital and institutional power are defined in terms of boundaries, so that monopolization for one's own group is justified, thereby excluding others from using them. Max Weber (1949) defined that cultural ideals as an epoch bear the stamp of elite group domination where cultural interests and their use determines institutional power. However, the purpose of this study is to analyze only access factor of higher education, social closure is not investigated in the process of education.

Social closure in this study is defined as the process of drawing boundaries of constructed identities of communities to monopolize the resources of higher education to one's own group so as to exclude others from getting access to higher education. There are specific rules or preconditions that are being used to justify social closure in the higher education sector; mainly the basis as credentialism that will be discussed further in theoretical analysis.

3.1.2 Monetary barriers

Studies on tertiary education equity in developed countries categorize monetary barriers into three types: the cost-benefit barrier, the cash-constraint or liquidity barrier and the internalized liquidity constraint or the debt aversion barrier (Salmi 2009). The cost-benefit barrier is present when an individual decides that the cost of attending higher education outweighs the return of higher education. However, this decision is mostly undermined by the inaccurate information received. The cash constraint benefit, on the other hand, occurs when students decide that though the returns of higher education outweigh the costs, they are still unable to put together the resources required to obtain entry to university. The cash constraint benefit can best be explained when a student who pools all his/her monetary resources available, such as family savings, income, funds, financial aids and monetary assistance while adding to increase in liquidity, but, still unable to afford access to higher education. The third type of monetary barrier is debt aversion or internalized liquidity barrier. This barrier occurs when students do not want to use the funds available to access higher education even if they believe that the rate of return will be higher. This is usually associated with high interest rates of loans, or grace period or loans which have to be repaid.

However, the discourse of inequality in tertiary education of developing countries does not explicitly use these terms or separate the types. In general, studies in developing countries have found income, or more specifically family income as the major determinant of access to higher education. Apart from family income, some of the monetary barriers analyzed in this study are external monetary barriers such as the availability of funds, loans, grants, scholarships or any aid in helping the students to get access to higher education. The monetary barriers will be further analyzed together with non-monetary barriers in chapter four.

3.1.3   Non-monetary barriers

The non-monetary barriers in this study reflect all barriers other than economic aid and income of the family as the determinants of access to higher education. Majority of the studies conducted in the educational field consider race, ethnicity, gender and geographical location as the non-monetary barriers, neglecting the sociocultural dimensions. The non-monetary barriers analyzed in this study are the family background, the spatial and regional distribution of the educational resources and cultural and social capital.

3.1.4   Forms of Capital

Pierre Bourdieu (1977) explains how the knowledge and use of cultural artefacts, body and taste constitute transformations from different class levels, while maintaining the class struggles in which the power hierarchy of social and cultural products dominate. Bourdieu explains that the concept of Economic Capital can take form in factories, stockpiles, finance capital etc., while other forms of capital can be transformed into economic capital in due course. Bourdieu argues that,

The social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds. Social divisions become principles of divisions, organizing the image of social world. Objective limits become a sense of limits, a practical anticipation of objective limits acquired by experience of objective limits, a 'sense of one's place' which leads one to exclude oneself from the goods, persons, places and so forth from which one is excluded (p.471)

Bourdieu's research shows that possession of cultural capital is closely predicted by social origins. The education system offers a way to acquire culture and a certificate to prove it. However, Bourdieu's research shows that a certificate value undermines that cultural value acquired by constant exposure at home.

Although the cultural and economic capital consists of the major areas in Bourdieu's capital, Bourdieu explains about social and linguistic capital as well. The social capital encompasses the connections needed to make use of cultural capital and the educational certificate. The social capital also gives a pathway to go up in the ladder of social struggle. The linguistic capital on the other hand is defined as a subset of cultural capital and deals with the ease of command in a particular language.

Another interesting concept from Bourdieu is Habitus. Borrowed from Aquinas, Habitus refers to the internalized form of class condition and the resultant behaviour in unconscious mind on how to react to cultural stimuli. In this context, whether someone has qualification or money, these turn out to be secondary to habitus.

Bourdieu (1977) claims that since the educational system presupposes the possession of cultural capital, there is a great deal of inefficiency in pedagogic transmission. But despite the fact that lower class pupils are seriously disadvantaged in competition for educational credentials, the result of the competition is seen meritocratic rather than legitimate.

3.1.5   Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice theory explains how human behaviour functions or how people make decisions based on their beliefs about situations. The rational choice theories have been utilized by several scholars, Murphy (1990), Gambetta (1987) and Breen and Goldthrope (1997).

Murphy (1990) takes the issue that class differentials in educational attainment have nothing to do with inequality of opportunity. He argued that working class students simply demand lower levels of education and he sees the efforts made by students during their school career because of decisions made on the basis of preference.

Boudon (1974) further elaborates on the rational choice model, explaining the differences in class through his concept of primary and secondary effects. The primary effect refers to cultural inequalities while the secondary effect refers to the decisions made by students based on cost and benefit analysis. For Boudon, ambition varies according to classes, depending on which class the student starts. The lower class student's ambition needs to be higher to acquire professional jobs. Boudon also states that the social costs of taking a particular educational option might differ,

Thus not choosing a prestigious curriculum may represent a high social cost for a youngster from a middle class family if most of his friends have chosen it; but choosing the same course may represent a high cost for a lower class youngster if most of his friends have not (Boudon 1974, p.30)

Boudon's rational choice theory is seen as a more utilitarian theory rather than a choice achievement approach.

Now the rationality theory that was developed in chapter 2 is incompatible with the value theory. The latter assumes that people, at least some people, behave against their interest because of the values that they are committed to, whereas the former assumes that people behave according to their interests in the sense

*that they attempt to maximize the utility of their decisions. Of course, the rationality factor and the value factor cannot be added to each other, since they are contradictory (*Boudon1974,p.111*)*

Breen and Goldthrope (1997) also followed Bourdon's distinction of primary and secondary effects in utilizing rational choice theory. They make explicit Boudon's implicit assumptions that (1) peoples' priority is to avoid social demotion rather than to pursue social mobility, (2) failure in a high prestige option is believed to be more likely to lead to social demotion than not attempting to pursue an option.

Breen and Goldthrope focused on three factors of parents' and children's involvement in education; cost of remaining in school, likelihood of educational success and the value of educational outcome. Their model further identifies three class differentials that are service class that consists of professional, administrators and managers. The working class and the underclass consist of unemployed and 'those with only precarious place in the labour market and in only the lowest grade of employment, if not employed' (Breen and Goldthrope 1997, p.281). Breen and Goldthrope (1997) found out that there has been considerable expansion in education between all the class levels; however, it has not led to a decrease in class differences This leads to the question of to what extent students choices actually leads to differentials in educational attainment.

3.1.6 Credentialism

The expansion of access to education and the over emphasis on the qualification requirements for entry to employment have been an imminent subject among the stratification theorists. Many of those who represent developing countries are enrolled in secondary education, and this increase in expansion has led to a higher entry requirement into jobs as a means of maximizing the entrance criteria for employment. The credentialism or the over-emphasis on the value of certification has led to an unnecessary link between schooling and vocational training, because credentialism leads to diminished academic inclinations for students who understand and acknowledge only the instrumental value of education.

The Marxian scholars have argued that Capitalists who control the economic markets also control the educational institutions in society. Veblen (1918; 1957) argued that Capitalists own and control education, while Gramsci (1928; 1871) argued that school is a centre of production of cultural hegemony. These ideas have led recent scholars to put forward the view that Capitalists manipulate the content of schooling to create a docile labour market. Bowles and Gintis's Schooling in Capitalist America (1976) and Apple's Education and Power (1982) each explored the Capitalist infiltration of education.

The educational signalling theories argued that through degrees, students sought to signal their competence to employers, particularly when recruitment entailed uncertainties about adequate technical performance (Spence 1974). On the demand side of employment relations, economists tempered simplistic notions about employer's assessments of candidate's skills with theories of filtering and screening (Arrow 1973; Thurow 1975). In educational screening, degrees were alternatively used to cut down large pools of applicants, to filter applicants who have demonstrated their ability to learn a new task, even if the task was not the specific one required for the job.

3.2   INEQUALITY IN PROCESS

Because of monetary and non-monetary barriers and credentialism, this leads to widget theory situation and massification. Here, the two-way arrow between widget theory and massification is meant to present that low quality education and low quality qualifications could be the consequence of expansion in education or vice versa.

3.2.1 Widget theory and Differentiation

Flawn (1979) presented the Widget Theory of Higher Education; that a college or university is a manufacturing enterprise that produces products called academic degrees in the same way as a company such as Universal Widgets, Inc. produces widgets. Like widgets, academic degrees come in several models and price ranges. He further elaborates that under the Widget Theory of Higher Education, the cheaper a college produces degrees, the more efficient and cost-effective the institution is.

It is a basic premise under the theory that if two colleges or universities produce the same degree, the one that produces it cheaper, is the better institution. The Universal Widget Company is committed to the proposition that if it can produce a superior line of widgets without raising the price, it will control a larger segment of the market. Rather than trying to differentiate the product and explain the quality assurance mechanisms, they try to expand their share in the market, but the implementation of mechanisms is hidden (Flawn 1979, p. 1)

Flawn's argument also addresses the contradictions between the assumptions made in widget theory and dominant scholarly opinions amongst quantity and quality.

The controversial issue is that if we want to measure the cost-effectiveness of universities producing graduates, the method is to count the number of graduates produced in the year and divide that number into the total cost of production. The university that has the lowest unit cost per doctorate is clearly the most cost-effective and therefore the best managed. A university that produces more graduates per year per employee (has a higher student- faculty ratio) is a leaner, tighter organization than one producing fewer graduates per employee (has a lower student-faculty ratio). This is quite contrary to the academic dogma that holds that a lower student-faculty ratio leads to greater teaching effectiveness (Flawn 1979, p.2)

3.2.3   Massification

Massification refers to over-expansion of education in most countries throughout the world. Increasing enrolment rates and expansion of higher education and its consequential effect to cater to this need has been one of the most challenging pressure on national governments in the recent years. A change driven by the economy and growth in occupations for which secondary school education is insufficient drives mass higher education. However, the social theorists explain the phenomena as an attempt by societies to keep young adults 'gainfully engaged' i.e. with no jobs to go to, keeping them longer in education to keep them off the streets to avoid the social cost. There was more interest for highly educated individuals keeping in mind the end goal to fill the necessities of the economy. The desires of the students and also societal desires put the expert part of the higher education at the core interest. The aptitudes and expert learning that empower students to do well at the work picks up in significance. This obviously has a suggestion on the substance of the educational programs and the methods for instructing.

However, in most of the cases, due to credentialism, students, teachers, parents or other stakeholders in education attainment give more importance to the grades rather than the skills and competencies attained.

3.3   INEQUALITY IN OUTCOME

When the level of education and social capital defines entry into job market, those in society who cannot afford academic qualifications are being driven into vocational institutions; diversion takes place. The two-way arrow between diversion and differentiation is meant to state that diversion could be the consequence of differentiation or vice versa. The differentiation is the classification in which the public determines reputed and non-reputed institutions. When diversification and differentiation take place, those who can afford will enter into real academies, while others will be diverted into non-reputed institutions or vocational institutions that restrict their path to real academies. With this classification, those who graduate from reputed colleges will only survive and those who cannot afford these colleges will be stratified which leads to further inequality in education.

3.3.1   Diversion

The diversion thesis (Müller and Pollak 2008) asserts that working class children are distracted from the direct path to university by non-academic institutions, which eventually affects individuals' educational choices since they provide attractive education in non-academic institutions (Becker and Hecken 2009). The diversion thesis suggests that the working class student's educational choices are influenced by negative estimates of prospective success in education, which causes them to refrain from attending university education.

Some scholars have suggested that the diversion takes place because of educational expansion, especially when it occurs through hierarchical stratification which channels the lower class to lower status post-secondary opportunities in order to reserve the higher status opportunities for elites (Brint and Karabel 1989). Furthermore, the main mechanisms responsible for the fact that those working-class children are very likely to favour alternative forms of higher education are related to prior academic performance, the probability of success at school and the subjectivity of expected costs.

4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS (NON MONETARY FACTORS)

4.1 ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Table 1. Frequency Table on Access to Higher Education

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Had no access	24	20.0	20.0	20.0
Had access	96	80.0	80.0	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The first investigation carried out was based on categorizing the questionnaire respondents' to those who had access to higher education and those who did not have access to higher education. To analyse this, a frequency table is presented above (Table 1). The frequency distribution table indicates that from the total sample, 20% had no access to higher education, whereas 80% had access to higher education.

4.2. NON MONETARY FACTORS: SEX AND ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Table 2. Cross Tabulation on Sex and Access to Higher Education

Count				
		Access to Higher Education		*Total (%)*
		Had no access (%)	*Had access (%)*	
Sex	*Female*	12.5%	58.3%	70.8%
	Male	7.5%	21.7%	29.2%
Total		20%	80%	100%

This investigation was run to test the null hypothesis that access to higher education is not dependent on sex as a demographic indicator. It was computed from the cross tabulation that from 20% that had no access, 12.5% were female and 7.5% were male. It was also analysed that from 80% respondents' who had access, 58.3% were female and 21.7% were male.

4.3. NON MONETARY FACTORS: DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERS AND ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The table given below (Table 3) is a combination of demographic indicators analysed in relation with access to higher education. To determine correlation and significance level of impact of the factors; island, sex and marital status on access to higher education was analysed through ANOVA. Furthermore, in the ANOVA table, the groups for this analysis have been categorized as follows. For islands, Male' is categorized as one group, while outer islands is categorized as another. For sex, female is categorized as one group, while male is categorized as another. For marital status, group categorizations are based on never married, married and divorced.

Table 3. ANOVA on demographic patterns and access to higher education

		Sum of Squares	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
Island	*Between groups*	0.008	1	0.008	0.038	0.845
	Within groups	25.583	118	0.217		
	Total	25.592	119			
Sex	*Between groups*	0.208	1	0.208	10.000	0.319
	Within groups	24.583	118	0.208		
	Total	24.792	119			
Marital status	*Between groups*	0.002	1	0.002	0.008	0.928
	Within groups	29.990	18	0.254		
	Total	29.992	19			

This investigation has been done to test the mean difference of the demographic factors in relation to access to higher education. The null hypothesis tested for this investigation is that access to higher education is not dependent on demographical factors such as island of origin, sex and marital status. The mean of the islands is at 0.008, while the mean of sex is indicated at 0.208, and marital status at 0.002. The significance levels for all the demographic variables are above 0.05; hence, accepting the null hypothesis that the access to higher education is not dependent on demographic factors.

4.4. NON MONETARY FACTORS: SOCIAL CAPITAL AND ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Social capital in this study comprised of three major components, including father's level of education, mother's level of education and occupation of guardian. For fathers' and mothers' level of education, respondents were provided with six categorizations that include no education level, basic literacy level, primary education level, secondary education level, tertiary education level and work-based education. For occupation of guardian, four categorizations were computed within and between the groups that include self-employment, private sector employment, public sector employment and retired.

Table 4. ANOVA on social capital and access to higher education

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Fathers' education level	Between groups	1.519	1	1.519	1.287	0.259
	Within groups	139.281	18	1.180		
	Total	140.800	19			
Mother's education level	Between groups	3.333	1	3.333	4.041	0.047
	Within groups	97.333	18	0.825		
	Total	100.667	19			
Occupation of guardian	Between groups	13.002		13.002	7.509	0.007
	Within groups	204.323	118	1.732		
	Total	217.325	119			

Source: Survey Data

To test the significant difference between the means of the social capital variables, an ANOVA analysis has been computed in Table 4. The table demonstrates that fathers' education at 0.259 level of significance does not appear to have a significant influence on access to higher education. However, mothers' education level at 0.047 and occupation of the guardian at 0.007 allow us to conclude that they have a significant influence on access to higher education. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected that access to higher education is not dependent on mother's education level and occupation of guardian. However, the null hypothesis that access to higher education is not dependent on fathers' education is accepted.

To analyse the social capital factors, mothers' level of education, fathers' level of education and occupation of the guardian were analysed as variables. The Spearman Rank Correlation test was carried out, and it was observed that mothers' education was significantly influential on fathers' education at 0.00 significance levels. In addition, father's education level was also significantly influential on funding for education at 0.00 significance levels.

Mother's education as a component of social capital was found to have a significant influence on fathers' education, Income of the family, cultural capital of the parents as well as cultural capital of the respondents at 0.000, 0.000, 0.006 and 0.008 significance levels respectively. When analysing these significance levels, it is evident that as mentioned above, in the Maldives the entry to job market is closely associated with the value of certifications. Hence credentialism is linked to higher income levels of the family and thereby increasing affordability of exposing respondents to different environments, thereby increasing cultural capital that can be aptly seen from the significance levels. The association of mothers' education to fathers' education can be seen from table 4; that most of the parents were categorized at the literate level. However, this relationship can also be seen from the dimension that societal relationships are based mostly on social status, and thereby the people who are in the same social classes were more likely to be in the same social circle of network (explained in 3.1.4)

Another factor analysed from the social capital variables is the level of occupation of guardian. The Spearman Rank Correlation tests conclude that occupation of the guardian had a significant influence on access to higher education at 0.008 significance levels. Moreover, it was concluded that linguistic capital of the parents has significant influence on occupational status of the parents at 0.001 significance level.

Across the social capital, a Mann Whitney U test was run to test the differences associated with the social capital variables in relation with higher education. The results showed that the distribution of fathers' education level is not the same across categories of access to higher education at 0.382 significance levels and thereby accepting the null hypothesis. The factor, mothers' education level to access to higher education, was significantly influential at 0.055 levels, thereby confirming that the distribution of mothers' education level is not the same across categories of access to higher education. The most influential variable in social capital factor was occupational status of the parents. The null hypothesis that access to higher education is not dependent on occupational status was rejected at 0.008 significance levels. This evidently concludes that, from the variable in social capital category, the most highly influential discriminator was occupational sector of the parents, which determined the access to higher education of the respondents.

Table 5 shows result of the Spearman Rank Correlation test. The variables analysed are (1) access to higher education (2) funding for education (3) fathers' education level (4) mothers' education level (5) monthly expenditure (6) income level of family (7) occupation of guardian (8) cultural capital by activity-parent (9) linguistic capital by English fluency- parent (10) cultural capital by activity- respondent (11) attitude towards education (12) means of achieving aspired job.

Table 5		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.151	.080	.176	.270**	.235**	.240**	.355**	.134	.372**	-.106	.287**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.100	.382	.055	.003	.010	.008	.000	.145	.000	.248	.001
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
2	Correlation Coefficient	.151	1.000	.322**	.167	.071	-.025	-.100	.034	.152	.033	-.147	-.078
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.100	.	.000	.069	.440	.787	.277	.710	.099	.722	.110	.399
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
3	Correlation Coefficient	.080	.322**	1.000	.506**	.078	.063	-.050	.171	.000	.050	.055	-.024
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.382	.000	.	.000	.397	.491	.587	.061	1.000	.585	.552	.791
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
4	Correlation Coefficient	.176	.167	.506**	1.000	.150	.327**	.016	.247**	.083	.242**	.073	.064
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.055	.069	.000	.	.101	.000	.862	.006	.367	.008	.431	.490
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
5	Correlation Coefficient	.270**	.071	.078	.150	1.000	.309**	-.043	.160	-.064	.178	-.029	.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.440	.397	.101	.	.001	.644	.080	.488	.051	.751	.991
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
6	Correlation Coefficient	.235**	-.025	.063	.327**	.309**	1.000	.094	.223*	.077	.353**	-.106	.083
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.787	.491	.000	.001	.	.308	.014	.405	.000	.250	.367
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
7	Correlation Coefficient	.240**	-.100	-.050	.016	-.043	.094	1.000	.171	.291**	.153	.012	.096
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.277	.587	.862	.644	.308	.	.061	.001	.094	.899	.299
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
8	Correlation Coefficient	.355**	.034	.171	.247**	.160	.223*	.171	1.000	.219*	.481**	-.039	.199*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.710	.061	.006	.080	.014	.061	.	.016	.000	.674	.029
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
9	Correlation Coefficient	.134	.152	.000	.083	-.064	.077	.291**	.219*	1.000	.220*	-.019	.162
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.145	.099	1.000	.367	.488	.405	.001	.016	.	.016	.838	.077
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
10	Correlation Coefficient	.372**	.033	.050	.242**	.178	.353**	.153	.481**	.220*	1.000	.048	.394**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.722	.585	.008	.051	.000	.094	.000	.016	.	.604	.000
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
11	Correlation Coefficient	-.106	-.147	.055	.073	-.029	-.106	.012	-.039	-.019	.048	1.000	.198*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.248	.110	.552	.431	.751	.250	.899	.674	.838	.604	.	.030
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
12	Correlation Coefficient	.287**	-.078	-.024	.064	.001	.083	.096	.199*	.162	.394**	.198*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.399	.791	.490	.991	.367	.299	.029	.077	.000	.030	.
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.5. NON MONETARY FACTORS: CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC CAPITAL AND ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Cultural and linguistic capital were also assessed to understand the impact on access to higher education. The first null hypothesis tested in this dimension was that access to higher education is not dependent on cultural capital of the parents. The grouping categorized in cultural capital was based on the frequency of activities associated with culture that parents and respondents practise. The categories 'often', 'sometimes', 'rarely' and 'never' were given as options to the respondents. Seven categories were given as groupings which included 'visiting historical places', 'reading novels', 'reading non-fiction', 'going to movies', 'listening to songs', 'playing musical instruments' or 'attending evening or day classes'.

To investigate the relationship between access to higher education and linguistic capital of the parents, the two categories of groups investigated were 'parents who speak and write in English', and 'parents who do not'.

Table 6. ANOVA on cultural and linguistic capital and access to higher education

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Cultural capital by activity-parent	*Between groups*	7.500	1	7.500	16.607	0.000
	Within groups	53.292	18	0.452		
	Total	60.792	19			
Linguistic capital by English language fluency- parent	*Between groups*	0.533	1	0.533	2.158	0.145
	Within groups	29.167	18	0.247		
	Total	29.700	19			
Cultural capital by activity-respondents'	*Between groups*	14.352	1	14.352	18.978	0.000
	Within groups	89.240	18	0.756		
	Total	103.592	19			

Source: Survey Data

To investigate the significance of cultural capital of the respondents, cultural capital of parents and linguistic capital on access to higher education were computed using a one-way ANOVA analysis. Table 6 indicates that cultural capital of parents and respondents both have significant influence at 0.000 levels. It rejects the null hypothesis that the higher the cultural capital, the lower the likelihood of access to higher education. However, it was analysed that the linguistic capital at 0.145 significance levels was not an influential factor in access to higher education.

The Spearman Rank Correlation test was conducted to understand the significance levels of linguistic capital in relation to other factors. It was established that linguistic capital had a significant influence on occupation of guardian at 0.001 significance levels. In addition, linguistic capital was found to be significantly influential on cultural capital of the respondents and cultural capital of the parents at 0.16 and 0.16 significance levels respectively.

This factor can be understood evidently seen from the fact that the educational system of the Maldives is based on the English language. The higher the level of fluency in the English Language is, the higher the income level of the family is. However, this dimension can be analysed in the perspective that linguistic factors are seen more as subsidiary factors which do not have a direct influence on access to higher education. However, they exert indirect influence through cultural capital and income of the families, thereby increasing the influence on higher education. This retains the hypothesis that the distribution of linguistic capital of the parents is the same across all categories of access to higher education.

The Spearman Rank Correlation test concluded that the cultural capital of the parents and cultural capital of the respondents were highly influential factors in access to higher education. It was established that the cultural capital of the parents had a significant influence on cultural capital of the respondents at 0.000 levels of significance.

The above mentioned significant influences and the analyses accept the null hypothesis that the distribution of parental cultural capital factors is not the same across all categories of higher education. Furthermore, it is also established that the distribution of respondents' cultural capital was not equal across all levels of access to higher education.

These factors were analysed to understand the influence of cultural capital on higher education. It was discovered that the higher the cultural capital of the parents is, the higher the cultural capital of the respondents is too. Hence, we acknowledge that cultural capital is more likely to pass from generation to generation. It is also concluded that the higher the cultural capital is, the higher the access to higher education is. This factor could be indirectly associated with the monetary factors discussed above. It was further

established that respondents who have higher cultural capital regard education as a means of achieving their aspired jobs, which was investigated for attitude towards education in achieving their aspired job in the future. As the need for credentials in society increases, the extrinsic value of education increases too and thereby the respondents' access to higher education changes accordingly, devaluing the actual value of education.

4.6. NON MONETARY FACTORS: RESPONDENTS ATTITUDE AND ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

In this investigation, respondents' attitude towards education was analysed through statements, to which the respondents had to express their opinion, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'somewhat agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. Furthermore, to investigate the respondents' attitude towards higher education, respondents were asked what they perceived themselves to be doing in the future, and what they thought was the best way to achieve their aspired jobs. Categorical groupings for this data were experience, education or both.

Table 7. ANOVA on respondents' attitude and access to higher education

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attitude towards education	Between groups	0.469	1	0.469	1.021	0.314
	Within groups	54.198	18	0.459		
	Total	54.667	19			
Means of achieving aspired job	Between groups	10.502	1	10.502	9.543	0.003
	Within groups	129.865	18	1.101		
	Total	140.367	119			

Source: Survey Data

This investigation was carried out to investigate whether respondents' attitude had any significant influence on access to higher education. The null hypothesis was that the respondents who understood the intrinsic value of education were equally not likely to get access to higher education as those who understood higher education in terms of extrinsic value. The intrinsic value in this dimension is defined as whether respondents understood higher education in terms of knowledge gaining, inquiry or for the love of learning, and which were not associated with any ultimate results. Extrinsic value of education in this dimension is defined as whether the respondents understood higher education in terms of the benefit that they would get as the ultimate results, such as better pay and better jobs. The null hypothesis is accepted at the significance level of 0.314. The second null hypothesis: there exists a positive correlation between respondents' attitude towards higher education as a means of achieving their aspired jobs and the access to higher education, was accepted at 0.003 levels of significance.

It was further analysed from the Spearman Rank Correlation test whether the attitude towards education had any significant influence on any variables investigated. It was concluded that the distribution of attitudinal factors: whether respondents' belief in the intrinsic or extrinsic value of education did not have a significant influence on higher education. Thereby the null hypothesis was accepted at 0.248 levels of significance.

Another dimension that was analysed was to understand respondents' attitude towards education in terms of associating higher education with their aspired job. The null hypothesis is that distribution of means of achieving aspired job by education is not the same across all categories of access to higher education. This accepts the null hypothesis at 0.001 levels of significance.

5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS (MONETARY FACTORS)

5.1 MONETARY FACTORS: FUNDING FOR EDUCATION, MONTHLY EXPENDITURE, INCOME LEVEL OF FAMILY AND ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Table 8. ANOVA on monetary factors and access to higher education

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Funding for education	Between groups	0.208	1	0.208	2.744	1.00
	Within groups	8.958	18	0.076		
	Total	9.167	19			
Monthly expenditure	Between groups	9.919	1	9.919	5.509	0.21
	Within groups	212.448	18	1.800		

	Total	222.367	19			
Income level of family	*Between groups*	4.219	1	4.219	6.336	0.13
	Within groups	78.573	18	0.666		
	Total	82.792	19			

Source: Survey Data

To investigate the null hypothesis that access to higher education is not dependent on monetary factors such as funding for education, monthly expenditure and level of income, a one way ANOVA analysis has been computed. Funding for education, monthly expenditure and income level of families were computed to understand the monetary factors. For funding of education, four categorical groups have been considered; government sponsorship, private sponsorship, own self and family support. For analysis of monthly expenditure, expenditure has been defined to include rental accommodation, transport, utilities, food and entertainment costs but excluding tuition cost. Under this component, grouping categories have been given in monetary terms; (MVR 500-1000/ MVR 1000-3000/ MVR 5000 and above). To analyse income level of families, four levels of income ranging from MVR 5000 to MVR 20,000 and above were given as groupings.

Table 8 gives the analysis of one-way ANOVA on the monetary factors examined, and it indicates that monthly expenditure and Income level of the family have a significant influence on access to higher education at 0.021 and 0.013 respectively. The funding for education at 1.00 level of significance was not concluded to be a significant factor in access to higher education. Hence, the null hypothesis that access to higher education is not dependent on monetary factors of monthly expenditure and income level of family is rejected, while null hypothesis that access to higher education is not dependent on monetary factor of funding for education is accepted.

To assess the monetary factors which might have a bearing on access to higher education, three variables were analysed: funding for higher education, monthly expenditure and income level of the family.

A Spearman Rank Correlation test was run to test the difference between means and to find the significant influence that these variables had on other factors of access to higher education. It was revealed that fathers' education level was significantly influential on funding for education at 0.000 significance levels. The monthly expenditure and the income level of the family were more correlated at 0.001 significance levels and both the factors had a significant influence on access to higher education at 0.003 and 0.10 significance levels.

As mentioned above, the structure of the educational and occupational sector of the Maldives is based on intergenerational transmission. Therefore, the higher the education of parents is, the higher the occupational status and higher their income level are. This, in consequence, leads to higher expenditure in the family.

A Man Whitney U test was further tested to find the difference of means between the variables. It was established that the distribution of funding for education was not seen to be significantly influential on access to higher education at 0.100 significance levels. It also accepts the null hypothesis that the distribution of monthly expenditure is not the same across the levels of access to higher education at 0.003. The income level of the family was also closely related with the monthly expenditure and thereby was proved to have a significant influence on access to higher education at 0.10 levels.

6. DISCUSSION

From the investigations, it was observed that mothers' education, income level of family, occupation of the guardian, cultural capital of respondents and parents and monthly expenditure are direct factors which affect access to higher education. Furthermore, it was also observed that funding for education from other sources, respondents' attitude towards education, English language fluency of parents and fathers' education level did not affect access to higher education. Furthermore, it is evident that access to funding for education is significantly correlated with fathers' education level at 0.000 levels. Moreover, the study also shows that fathers' education has a correlation with mothers' education at 0.000 significance levels, indicating strongly that mostly marriages in Maldives run among same social circles or networks. While fathers' education does not have a direct correlation with access to higher education, mothers' education has a significant correlation with access to higher education at 0.000 levels. Similarly, mothers' education levels also have a significant correlation with income level of family, cultural capital of the parents and cultural capital of respondents at 0.000, 0.006 and 0.008 significance levels respectively. Hence, the higher the education level of the parents, the more likely that parents and students get the opportunity to engage in cultural activities which provide them with more knowledge. Furthermore, the study also reveals that income level of family is significantly correlated at 0.001 levels with monthly expenditure of the family. Therefore, the income of the family is positively correlated to the monthly expenditure of the family. The study also indicates that when the income level and expenditure of the family are higher, the respondents tend to be more exposed to cultural capital as

they can afford to be engaged in these activities. As a result, they gain the advantage of having more access to higher education than other respondents.

The study states occupation of the guardian as a factor determining access to higher education. It was seen that occupation of the guardian is significantly correlated at 0.008 levels with access to higher education. Generally, when parents tend to be in high paid, white-collar jobs, more exposure was presented to them to enjoy the advantages of cultural capital, hence transferring these to respondents. Furthermore, it was observed that the higher the cultural capital of the parents, the higher the transmission of capital to respondents is and consequently, the higher the access to higher education too. It was evident that cultural capital also had a significant correlation with English language fluency of the parents and students' attitude towards education at 0.016 and 0.000 significance levels respectively. The study also shows that students' attitude towards education had a significant correlation at 0.030 levels with students' opinion about means of achieving their aspired job. When the students believed in the extrinsic value of education and education as a means of achieving their aspired job, the causal relationship in access to higher education was higher.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusions arrived at following the examinations of the evidence are summarized below:

- A high percentage of respondents interviewed were from outer islands which gives evidence that due to lack of higher education opportunities in the outer islands, those who seek access to higher education are forced to migrate to Male'. Out of 120 respondents, 24 were from the capital city, while 96 belongs to outer islands.

- It was seen that the access to higher education was not significantly correlated to the distribution of funding in the educational system. Due to lack of a proper financing mechanism for higher studies in the Maldives, students rely on their family or own income as a means of paying for tuition costs. This factor is further seen with the high significance level of income of family on access to higher education.

- Among the social capital factors as barriers to access higher education, occupational status of the parents was seen as the most influential factor. This shows that the stratification within the society is mostly based on occupational factors; more precisely white collar or high medial occupations rather than income of the associated occupation.

- Once people reach high medial jobs, the question of the level of income or education was inconsequential because once they reached high medial jobs they believed in the social status and capital that it provided for upward social mobility in the society.

- It was found out from the study that non-monetary factors were more influential in determining access to higher education. The cultural capital of the parents and the students were very influential in determining access to higher education, which concludes that the access to higher education was more likely to be an intergenerational factor.

- It can be concluded from the research that once the students were able to migrate to Male', there is no direct difference in access to higher education of students from Male' and other islands: from 83 respondents from outer islands, 66 had access to higher education while 17 did not have access to higher education. Similarly, out of 37 respondents from the capital, 30 had access to higher education while 7 did not have access. However, the expenditure of the students from the islands was observed to be high, which may be an indirect cost to access higher education.

- From the study, it can also be concluded that when the students understood education as a means of achieving the aspired job, it was correlated with access to higher education. These lead students to choose institutions even with low quality qualifications as a means of getting through the credential system.

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