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Technology Skills Development as a Panacea for Youth Migration in Nigeria

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Abstract

Nigeria is characterized by numerous socioeconomic challenges such as poverty, increased cost of living, youth restiveness, environmental concerns, insecurity and limited opportunities among others. These developments bring about a significant exodus of young population in search of better prospects outside the shores of Nigeria. Thus, this paper describes a comprehensive road map for leveraging digital electronic technology to empower the Nigerian youth to contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the nation, thereby mitigating the prevalent issue of youth migration. Consequently, the study focused on utilizing digital electronic technology as a catalyst for positive transformation among Nigerian youths by addressing crucial aspects such as education, entrepreneurship, remote employment, skills development, social connectivity, and the reduction of socioeconomic disparities. Bridging the digital divide among young people is believed to advance economic transformation in Nigeria. Therefore, the implementation of the strategies outlined in this study will create an enabling environment capable of not only retaining the youth within Nigeria but also empower them to flourish in their respective careers and contribute to the sustainable development of the nation. Thus, it was recommended among others that Government should create technology transfer centers across the country where young people can acquire digital technology skills for job creation and self-reliance.

Keywords: Digital skills development, youth migration, electronic technology, unemployment, Nigeria

Introduction

In the present global context, the fusion of electronic technology and the obstacles associated with youth migration has engendered an immediate requirement for inventive solutions. As digital progressions persistently redefine our ways of life and occupations, the utilization of the possibilities presented by electronic technology can play a pivotal role in mitigating the incidence of youth migration. The migration of individuals and communities in and out of a particular geographical area has been a long-standing occurrence worldwide. Migration can be defined as the process of relocating individuals from their country of origin to other nations primarily in pursuit of better opportunities. Moreover, migration can be observed as a continuum, with educational migration and skilled migration being closely interconnected and substantially influencing career development (Lucia, Yixi, Wei, Yining, Zheng, 2021). As a multifaceted and evolving phenomenon, migration is influenced by a variety of factors, including geopolitical disparities, the digital divide, and climate change (Abbas, 2019). Depending on the nature of the relocation, migration can be classified as internal or external. Internal migration transpires when the movement and settlement remain within the same country, while external or international migration involves leaving one's country for another. Additionally, migration can be temporary if the migrant returns to their original place of residence after achieving their desired goals. Conversely, migration can be permanent if the migrant chooses to remain in the migrated city or country. However, the current geopolitical, technological, and climatic conditions in Nigeria substantially contribute to an upsurge in migratory movements of individuals from diverse backgrounds. It is worth noting that some of these migratory movements are voluntary, while others

are involuntary. Forced migration occurs when individuals decide to leave their country due to insurmountable constraints. Interestingly, migration is not limited to adults and experienced professionals, as it also affects the youth. Youth migration, a global phenomenon, refers to a situation in which young individuals (typically between the ages of 18-35) leave their original geographical location to seek better conditions in another location, either within the same country or abroad (Nwoke, 2019). Thus, youth migration encompasses the relocation of young people from one place to another, usually in search of improved opportunities in terms of education, employment, well-being, and personal growth. As indicated by Smith and Sage (2014), education plays a crucial role in propelling youth migration, as young individuals cross local, regional, and national boundaries in pursuit of quality educational prospects. In actuality, many young people relocate to acquire 21st-century skills, including digital skills, which are highly sought after in the labor market. Although youth migration may offer enhanced opportunities, it also presents a complex phenomenon that poses various challenges to young migrants, particularly those who lack the financial means to meet their basic needs in their new location. Migration provides access to quality education, skills acquisition, personal development, and youth empowerment which are not within reach in the migrant's country of origin (Jyoti, 2021).

Youth migration in contemporary Nigeria, as analyzed by Nwoke (2019), encompasses various factors that drive it, accompanied by both advantages and disadvantages. The factors encompass the pursuit of sustainable livelihood, limited employment opportunities, insecurity, violent conflicts, inadequate education, food scarcity, poor governance, and the impact of climate change. It is worth mentioning that migration can either positively or negatively impact the sustainable development of a nation, such as Nigeria. Positive impacts arise when migrants travel to acquire skills and quality education and subsequently return to contribute to their country's development. However, the phenomenon can have detrimental effects when a nation loses its skilled workforce to other countries due to unfavorable government policies, inadequate compensation, high unemployment rates, stagnation, and underutilization, among other factors. A notable illustration of this situation in Nigeria is the continuous departure of medical doctors, nurses, university professors, and researchers to foreign countries in search of better opportunities due to unfavorable governmental policies and operational conditions. Youth migration, often driven by aspirations for a better future, can also be triggered by precarious circumstances, fraudulent intermediaries, and oppressive work conditions. Additionally, unemployment and a low standard of living contribute to an increase in youth restiveness, cultism, and other forms of criminal behavior (Owo, 2020). In urban communities, youth migration can have insignificant implications for the local economy, the development of social capital, and the workforce. Considering the economic effects of migration in Nigeria, it is imperative to explore effective strategies to mitigate this phenomenon among young individuals. One proven approach to combat youth migration in Nigeria is through the creation of numerous job opportunities facilitated by the development of digital skills.

Youth migration can be tackled using the instrumentality of skills development in digital (electronic) technology. Young people can acquire skills in relevant electronic technology areas such as electronic system maintenance and repairs, electronic circuit designs and fabrications, phone repairs, software development, auto-electronics, data communication and networking, electronic system control and automation, signal processing, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, web development, software development, coding, programming, data analysis, data science, among others. Trained personnel skilled in these areas are highly demanded in the industries, banks, higher educational institutions, information technology organizations, research institutes, and other relevant sectors.

In tackling this issue, Nigeria is set to create three million jobs for the teeming youth in the digital technology sector through her 3 million technical talent (3MTT) development programme of the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy. The programme aims at developing young talents through hands-on training in digital courses like digital marketing, AI, Machine learning, software development, among others. 3MTT is a critical part of the renewed hope agenda which aims at building Nigeria's technical talent backbone to power the digital economy thereby reposition Nigeria as a net talent exporter. The program is open to all Nigerians from 18 years who are interested in acquiring lifelong skills. Similarly, Wema Bank in conjunction with the Federal Government of Nigeria had set up a training Programme for the youths which centered on digital skills development and innovation tagged 'FGN ALAT Skillnovation'. This Programme is aimed at bridging the digital divide experienced by young Nigerians through quality online and hands-on training sessions in specific areas of digital technology as well as assuring successful trainees of grants for self-employment, connection with key operators in the digital sector for employment and business development. These digital skills development programs in electronic technology would help to ameliorate the effects of the unpleasant economy on Nigerians as well as discouraging youth migration.

Harnessing and building the electronic technology skills of young people is *sin qua non* to mitigating youth migration. Developing young talents in digital technology and empowering the youth for productivity is necessary if Nigeria is serious about moving her economy from consumption to production. The relationship between electronic technology and youth migration in the contemporary global landscape is an eye opener for uncommon innovative solutions as digital advancements continue to redefine the way we live, learn and work. Thus, creating opportunities that could deter migration and address socioeconomic disparities are usually the whole essence of digital technology and innovation. Electronic solutions therefore offer directions that improve access to public services and increase participation in their design and operation, thereby contributing to the reduction of social exclusion and the re-development of the deprived groups (Eli Hustad, Hansen, Skaiaa & Vassilakopoulou, 2019). Also, the use of information and communication technologies can enhance conflict prevention efforts and help information to flow horizontally between citizens, particularly in the developing world (Francesco, Mancini, Letouzé., Meier., Vinck., Musila., Muggah., Diniz., Larrauri., Matveeva & O'Reilly, 2013). Accordingly, electronic technologies can be effectively applied to solve the numerous issues associated with youth migration in Nigeria as outlined under the following sub-headings:

1. Bridging the Educational Gaps among Youth

One of the primary contributors to youth migration is the lack of quality education in certain regions. For instance, most wealthy Nigerians send their children and wards abroad for higher education claiming that the rot in the Nigerian education system is enormous. Electronic technology can bridge this gap by facilitating remote learning opportunities. Online courses, digital libraries, and interactive educational platforms like discussion boards and zoom networks provide access to quality education, empowering young individuals with the knowledge and skills crucial for personal and professional development (Xiao-Miao, Mingda & Chunhui, 2023). Online education removes the digital divide inhibiting access to quality education globally. The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), which is the first digital university in Nigeria is doing well to develop the digital expertise of learners and all educational stakeholders directly linked to it across the 36 states of the federation and the federal capital territory through the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system. Thus with remote learning adopted by NOUN, its quality educational contents are easily assessed from all parts of the world

through the worldwide web. This is one major way electronic technology is currently fighting the incessant migration of young people from Nigeria in search of quality education.

2. Fostering Digital Entrepreneurship among Youth

Digital entrepreneurship is considered in terms of its relationship with the digital economy, the degree of digitization of processes, scope, growth opportunities and access to markets. Anny (2022) asserts that digital entrepreneurship is characterized by the implementation of business without space-time limitations, the continuous introduction of new digital means facilitating communications with customers and counter parties, various business activities and the implementation of new business models. E-marketing, e-learning, electronic communication among others play vital roles in entrepreneurship development. Alteration in competition and consumer behavior, as well as the opportunities this entrepreneurship provides for creativity and innovation are highlighted as essential features of digital entrepreneurship. The importance of such features as the need to change the mindset of entrepreneurs and customers and special training of human resources to use digital technologies is capable of helping young people to overcome the challenges of migration. Consequently, empowering the youth for self-reliance in the digital space by exposing them to relevant electronic technology skills is a key strategy to overcoming youth migration. Electronic technology allows for the creation of online businesses, digital startups, and e-commerce ventures. By fostering a culture of innovation and providing resources for digital entrepreneurship, Government can create economic and technological opportunities that can deter young people from seeking refuge in a foreign land.

3. Creation of Remote Employment Opportunities

The advent of telecommuting and remote work has indeed revolutionized the job market, providing numerous opportunities for remote employment. Electronic technology has facilitated this shift, allowing individuals, especially young people, to work for international companies without the need to physically migrate. This development does not only addresses concerns about unemployment but also enables the transfer of skills and expertise across borders (Qian, Tek, Adriel, 2022). Remote work has become increasingly prevalent right from the COVID-19 pandemic era, with many companies adopting remote work practices. Studies have shown that remote work can have both positive and negative effects on employees including isolation and difficulties in building relationships with colleagues for young people entering the workforce (International Conference on Business Excellence, 2022). Overall, remote employment opportunities have opened up new possibilities for individuals to work globally, contributing to the growth of a more flexible and interconnected job market without necessarily seeking for ways to migrate to other geographical locations. Nigerian youths who are fully skilled in digital technology can apply for work abroad while in Nigeria and become employed if they meet the job requirements. From this development, it is clear that digital skills can create opportunities for young people to work remotely in all parts of the world to earn good salary.

4. Providing Opportunities for Digital Skills Development

To navigate the evolving job market, the youth must acquire digital skills. Acquisition of digital skills is very essential for all job seekers. Maitland (2018) opines that the digital divide remains a significant challenge, particularly in marginalized communities. Corroborating this assertion, Sylvester (2017), identifies eight success factors for addressing the digital divide in high deprivation-index communities in which one of them is digital skills development. Initiatives aimed at promoting coding, data analysis, digital marketing, and other relevant tech skills can equip the younger generation for the demands of the digital age. Similarly, Owo and Deebom (2020) posit that one of the branches of technical

education offered in technical vocational education and training (TVET) programmes of universities in Nigeria is electrical/electronic technology which aims at developing the digital competence of students through upskilling and reskilling electrical/electronics technological trade skills. Technical and vocational education was viewed as a platform for an individual to acquire relevant skills with the right attitudes necessary for entrance and progressing in an occupation (Thomas *et al.*, 2017). Thomas *et al.* (2017) further stressed that skills acquired in technical and vocational education trades provide employment and improve the standard of living of recipients with insurance against poverty and over-dependence. Youths participation in techno-vocational skills acquisition programmes will help to sustain national and rural community developments. Thus, governments, educational institutions, and the private organizations should collaborate to provide training programs and workshops that could enhance the employability of the youth. Programmes like the 3MTT of the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy and the FGNALAT Youth Skillnovation programmes of Wema Bank and the Federal Government of Nigeria are programmes designed to give better prospects to the Nigerian youths thereby fighting against youth migration in Nigeria.

5. Strengthening Social Connectivity

Digital electronic technology plays a crucial role in connecting people globally. By fostering social connectivity through social media and networking platforms, young individuals can establish valuable connections within their communities and beyond and collaborate to work productively in a team. According to Paulovich (2022), the use of electronic technology, particularly social media and networking platforms, has been found to significantly enhance social connectivity, especially among young individuals. Similarly, Schuster and Cotton (2023) also emphasized the influence of social media and networking platforms on building social connectivity among young people. Consequently, building strong social networks fosters a sense of belonging among peers and reduces the desire of young people to migrate in search of social opportunities abroad.

6. Addressing Socioeconomic Disparities

Electronic technology also known as digital technology can be a powerful tool for addressing socioeconomic disparities resulting to youth migration. Nora *et al.* (2011) assert that electronic technology can address socioeconomic disparities and empower marginalized communities. Digital literacy programs, affordable internet access, and community-based technology hubs are initiatives capable of empowering marginalized communities, thereby creating an inclusive environment where everyone has the opportunity to thrive (Resnick, 2007). Resnick further emphasized that these initiatives should be inclusive and designed to empower individuals to control their own development. The integration of digital solutions aims to bridge the existing gaps of socioeconomic disparity, provide a modifying pathway, fostering a sense of purpose and prosperity among youths within their local communities. When the youths are skilled in digital technology, these skills can be utilized as tools for economic stability as they can provide gainful employment to recipients thereby making them self-fulfilled.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Considering the danger posed by the escalating phenomenon of youth migration, digital electronic technology emerges as a powerful catalyst for positive transformation that can mitigate the incessant movement of young Nigerians to foreign lands. Thus, implementing the aforementioned plan, Governments at the federal and state and local levels, private organizations, and communities can work in synergy to harness the potentials of electronic technology in addressing migration. Conclusively, by empowering the Nigerian youth through quality education, entrepreneurship, good employment, and social connectivity, Nigeria can strive towards a future where individuals especially the youth are empowered to achieve their aspirations and goals without the need to engage in any forms of forced migration, violence and corruption which presently characterized the nation's economy.

Thus, the following recommendations are drawn from the study:

1. Government should create technology transfer centers across the country where young people can acquire digital technology skills for job creation and self-reliance.
2. Government through the federal ministry of youth development and sports should build strong social networks among young Nigerians through quality sporting activities to encourage youths to utilize the acquired education and skills for personal gains.
3. Government should discourage socioeconomic disparities among young people by putting in place digital literacy programs with affordable internet access, as well as establishing community-based technology hubs to empower marginalized communities and create an inclusive environment where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.
4. Government and the private sectors should strive to create more employment opportunities including remote job opportunities for the youth who are skilled in digital technology.
5. Government should invest massively in digital transformation of the young generation by promoting digital entrepreneurship and innovation as well as providing grants to emerging small and medium scale business owners.

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Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for Enhanced Career Guidance and Development in Bangladesh: Addressing Educational and Employment Gaps

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Abstract

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in career guidance and development offers a promising solution to the challenges faced by Bangladeshi youth in navigating their educational and professional futures. Bangladesh's education sector is currently grappling with a significant gap between the skills acquired by graduates and the demands of the labor market. This disparity is driven by several existing challenges: the overemphasis on traditional academic pathways forces many students to pursue honors and master's degrees due to a lack of viable alternatives post-intermediate education. This has led to an oversupply of graduates who are not equipped with practical, employment-ready skills, resulting in underemployment and a mismatch between job seekers and available opportunities. Additionally, there is a notable shortage of certified training courses that could provide the necessary skills for various industries, leaving students with few options but to seek other career paths immediately after their Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) exams. Furthermore, the absence of structured career guidance frameworks within educational institutions exacerbates these issues, as students lack access to informed advice and resources to make strategic career decisions. Compounding these problems is a shortage of skilled trainers capable of delivering relevant, up-to-date training, and an underutilization of technology in facilitating career development. This study aims to examine the potential of AI in addressing these career guidance and development challenges for Bangladeshi youths, utilizing secondary data sources and qualitative analysis. The findings reveal that AI-driven platforms can offer personalized career recommendations, continuous feedback, and self-assessment opportunities, facilitating partnerships between educational institutions and the private sector. Recommendations include investing in AI-driven career guidance platforms, developing certified training programs aligned with industry needs, establishing university skill hubs, and fostering collaborations between educational institutions and the private sector. The integration of AI in career guidance holds considerable promise for enhancing the employability of students and bridging the gap between education and employment, contributing to the development of a skilled and adaptable workforce in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Career Guidance; Skill Development; Educational Policy; Employability

Introduction

Career guidance plays a critical role in helping individuals make informed educational, training, and occupational choices, and manage their careers effectively (OECD, 2004). It encompasses a variety of activities, including providing information, facilitating self-assessment, and offering professional counseling. As labor market demands evolve, there is an increasing emphasis on reskilling and upskilling, making digital tools essential in modern career guidance (Toni & Vuorinen, 2020). These tools enhance accessibility, streamline information access, improve assessment methods, and support networking, all while reducing costs (Sampson et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of remote and digital career guidance services (Cedefop et al., 2020). Historically, technology in career guidance has been utilized in three primary ways: providing career information, offering automated tools such as assessments and simulations, and facilitating communication (Hooley et al., 2015). The effectiveness of these technologies depends on careful integration and planning by career professionals (Bakke et al., 2018), with adoption varying based on organizational and staff readiness (Kettunen & Sampson, 2019).

In Bangladesh, the career guidance landscape faces significant challenges. There is a mismatch between educational qualifications and job market needs, limited career opportunities, and inadequate guidance frameworks. Many students are driven towards honors and master's degrees due to a lack of viable alternatives after intermediate education, resulting in an oversupply of graduates without practical, employment-ready skills. This situation leads to widespread underemployment and a gap between job seekers and available positions. Moreover, there is a shortage of certified training courses and skilled trainers, exacerbating the issue. Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers a promising solution to these challenges by enhancing accessibility and providing personalized support. AI can improve job application processes with customized materials and leverage the National AI Policy 2024, which highlights AI's role in education and employment (National Artificial Intelligence Policy 2024 – DRAFT, 2024). However, AI lacks the human empathy crucial for effective counseling, potentially increasing feelings of isolation among users (Bansal, 2024).

This study explores the potential of AI in addressing career guidance challenges for Bangladeshi youth. It reviews global career guidance practices, assesses the integration of AI and digital tools, and investigates specific challenges in Bangladesh. The aim is to provide actionable insights and recommendations to improve career guidance in the Bangladeshi labor market, thereby bridging the gap between education and employment.

Career Guidance: An overview of Existing Practices Around the World

Career guidance is a crucial component of education systems globally, designed to assist individuals in making informed decisions about their educational and career paths. Different countries have tailored their career guidance approaches to align with their unique educational philosophies and labor market demands. Effective career guidance helps students recognize their strengths, explore career options, and plan their educational journeys accordingly. According to Howieson and Raffo (2013), aligning students' aspirations with labor market needs through career guidance reduces skill mismatches and enhances employability. Finland's career guidance system is exemplary, reflecting its holistic approach to education. Finnish students begin receiving career counseling in primary school, which becomes more intensive in secondary education. This guidance is integrated into the curriculum and provided by trained career counselors (OECD, 2004). The Finnish model underscores the significance of early and continuous career guidance to help students effectively navigate their educational and career paths.

Singapore's SkillsFuture initiative, launched in 2015, represents a progressive approach to career guidance and lifelong learning. SkillsFuture aims to prepare Singaporeans for future job markets through ongoing education and career guidance. The initiative features a national career guidance framework that includes services in schools, colleges, and workplaces, ensuring accessibility at various life stages (SkillsFuture, 2021). Germany's dual education system uniquely combines vocational training with academic education, allowing students to gain practical work experience while studying. Career guidance is an integral part of this system, with schools and vocational institutions collaborating with industry partners to provide relevant and timely advice (BIBB, 2017). This approach aligns educational outcomes with labor market needs and supports informed career choices.

In the United States, career guidance programs are embedded in the education system, although implementation varies by state. The National Career Development Association (NCDA) offers resources and frameworks for career counseling in schools, which often include career assessments, job shadowing, and planning workshops (NCDA, 2020). The focus is on helping students understand their interests and potential career paths from an early age. Despite the diverse approaches to career guidance, global challenges persist, such as limited resources, insufficient training for counselors, and the need for better integration into the educational framework. Innovations like AI-driven career guidance platforms are emerging as potential solutions, offering personalized recommendations, continuous feedback, and self-assessment opportunities (Smith & Johnson, 2020).

In Australia, a survey by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) found that most schools are preparing students for future employment, with those employing dedicated career advisors feeling more confident in meeting student needs. The GENERATION longitudinal study highlighted that 95% of schools employed career advisors, with more than 70% including university visits in their guidance efforts. Schools with dedicated advisors felt more assured in their ability to meet student needs compared to those without (ACER, 2024). The Australian Government's Future Ready National Career Education Strategy emphasizes the importance of high-quality career education in building resilient individuals capable of adapting to an evolving job market. In summary, career guidance practices vary worldwide, but common elements include early intervention, integration with educational curricula, and collaboration with industry partners. Challenges remain, but innovative solutions are being developed to enhance the effectiveness of career guidance.

Existing Practice of Career Guidance in Bangladesh

Bangladesh's education sector faces a significant challenge in bridging the gap between the skills acquired by graduates and the demands of the labor market. This disparity is primarily driven by an overemphasis on traditional academic pathways, compelling many students to pursue honors and master's degrees due to the lack of viable alternatives after completing intermediate education. A recent study by the Ami Probashi app highlights a concerning trend: over three-fourths of 2,477 PhD holders registered on the platform have opted for blue-collar jobs abroad. This underscores a critical issue within Bangladesh's employment landscape—the stark mismatch between educational qualifications and available job opportunities (Siddiqui, 2024).

This trend extends beyond PhD holders; approximately 50,000 graduates and postgraduates have shown interest in low-skilled employment opportunities in traditional migrant destinations. Migration experts attribute this to the limited professional opportunities available domestically, driving highly educated individuals to seek low-skill positions overseas in search of better prospects. This has resulted in an oversupply of graduates lacking practical, employment-ready skills, leading to widespread underemployment and a significant mismatch between job seekers and available opportunities. Additionally, there is a notable shortage of certified training courses that could provide the necessary skills for various industries, leaving students with few options but to pursue other career paths immediately after their Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) exams.

The absence of structured career guidance frameworks within educational institutions exacerbates these issues. Students lack access to informed advice and resources to make strategic career decisions. Compounding these problems is a shortage of skilled trainers capable of delivering relevant, up-to-date training, and an underutilization of technology in facilitating career development. In summary, the existing practice of career guidance in Bangladesh is inadequate to meet the needs of students and the labor market. The overemphasis on traditional academic pathways, coupled with a lack of practical training and structured career guidance, results in a mismatch between the skills of graduates and the demands of employers. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach, including the development of alternative career pathways, the enhancement of training programs, and the implementation of robust career guidance frameworks within educational institutions.

AI and Career Guidance in Bangladesh

The integration of AI into career guidance in Bangladesh offers several key advantages. One of the most significant benefits is the unparalleled accessibility and availability, which helps overcome constraints such as geographical distance and limited resources. AI can provide personalized interventions and feedback tailored to each user's specific needs, increasing the efficacy of career guidance and establishing stronger connections between clients and counselors. Additionally, the anonymity provided by AI tools offers users a sense of privacy, allowing them to seek guidance without fear of judgment or stigma often associated with face-to-face sessions. However, AI algorithms lack the empathy and human intuition necessary for effective counseling, which could exacerbate users' feelings of isolation or inadequacy (Bansal, 2024). Despite these limitations, the National AI

Policy 2024 (Draft) suggests that AI solutions will be pivotal in enhancing education quality, skills development, and employment opportunities in Bangladesh. The draft policy emphasizes that AI systems will facilitate job matching and optimize employment opportunities through advanced algorithms and data analytics (National Artificial Intelligence Policy 2024 – DRAFT, 2024).

In terms of career guidance, AI tools can significantly improve the job application process by generating customized resumes, cover letters, and interview preparation materials tailored to specific job descriptions. This can save time and enhance the effectiveness of job applications, particularly for individuals with limited resources or writing skills (AI and Career Counseling, Advice, Information and Guidance and Generative AI – AI Pioneers, 2024). Additionally, AI can analyze trends in job postings, skills requirements, and salary ranges across various industries, providing real-time guidance on in-demand skills, emerging fields, and potential earning trajectories. This empowers individuals to make informed career decisions aligned with market realities and future-proof their skillsets. Human counselors and AI differ significantly in their abilities to understand and empathize with an individual's emotional complexities. While AI excels at analyzing data and providing logical answers, it lacks the emotional intelligence to fully comprehend the nuances of human emotions. To address this gap, investing in AI-driven career guidance platforms is crucial. Additionally, developing certified training programs aligned with industry needs, establishing university skill hubs, and fostering collaborations between educational institutions and the private sector can enhance the effectiveness of career guidance in Bangladesh.

Conclusion

This study explores the integration of AI into career guidance, with a specific focus on addressing the challenges faced by Bangladeshi youths. Career guidance is essential for helping individuals make informed educational and occupational choices, but traditional methods often fall short in rapidly evolving job markets. The rise of digital tools and AI has introduced new possibilities for enhancing career guidance, offering benefits such as improved accessibility, personalized support, and cost-effectiveness. These advancements are particularly relevant in the context of Bangladesh, where gaps between educational qualifications and labor market demands, coupled with inadequate career guidance frameworks, have created significant challenges.

Our review of global career guidance practices reveals that while there are successful models in countries like Finland, Singapore, Germany, and Australia, Bangladesh's system faces unique obstacles. The overemphasis on traditional academic pathways, combined with a lack of practical training and structured guidance, has led to a mismatch between graduate skills and job market needs. This issue is compounded by a shortage of skilled trainers and underutilization of technology. AI presents a promising solution to these challenges. Its capacity for delivering personalized interventions, improving job application processes, and providing real-time insights into market trends can significantly enhance career guidance in Bangladesh. The National AI Policy 2024 underscores the potential of AI to improve education quality and employment opportunities, aligning with our findings that AI tools could address many current limitations in career guidance.

However, while AI offers many advantages, it also has limitations, particularly in terms of empathy and emotional support. To bridge this gap, it is essential to combine AI-driven tools with human counseling to provide a more comprehensive support system. Additionally, investing in certified training programs, establishing skill hubs, and fostering partnerships between educational institutions and the private sector are crucial steps in improving career guidance frameworks. Moving forward, stakeholders should focus on:

- **Invest in AI-Driven Career Guidance Platforms:** Develop and implement AI-powered career counseling tools that offer personalized career pathways, skill assessments, and continuous feedback. These platforms should be integrated into educational institutions to enhance students' career decision-making processes and provide real-time guidance.

- **Create University Skill Hubs:** Set up skill development hubs within universities that offer courses, workshops, and practical training sessions. These hubs should be equipped with state-of-the-art resources and technologies to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical skills.
- **Foster Public-Private Sector Partnerships:** Promote collaborations between educational institutions and the private sector to ensure that career guidance, training programs, and curriculum developments are closely aligned with industry requirements. Such partnerships can facilitate internships, apprenticeships, and job placements.
- **Enhance Career Guidance Frameworks:** Implement structured career guidance frameworks within educational institutions. This includes training career advisors, incorporating AI tools, and creating comprehensive career services that offer students access to informed advice and resources.

By adopting these recommendations, Bangladesh can leverage AI to significantly improve career guidance and development for its youth. This approach not only addresses the current gaps in education and employment but also contributes to the creation of a skilled and adaptable workforce that meets the demands of a dynamic labor market. The strategic integration of AI in career development will play a crucial role in bridging the gap between education and employment, ultimately fostering economic growth and development in Bangladesh.

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Post Pandemic TVET Prospect: Digital Globalization, IR4.0 and Sustainable Development in Bangladesh

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Abstract:

The unheard coronavirus cruelly affected the global community. The pandemic gap carries an incalculable loss of education and unemployed millions worldwide. It spoiled human resource development's harmony, affecting global sustainable development goals (SDG). The current risks to holistic education with key constraints of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) are becoming a barrier to sound healthiness and professional career. TVET actors need to kick off risk mitigation and resilience approaches to accelerate Industry Revolution (IR) 4.0, currently, IR 5.0 started in harmony. The universal partnership and techno-driven prospect could tackle the emerging condition of TVET harmony. It is challenging to achieve the United Nations' SDGs by 2030. The key objective is to build the capacity of TVET institutes with the essential Information Communication Technology (ICT) acquaintance and skills to engage productively in working life. To achieve this, it might be focused on building the techno-based pedagogical skills to reach the teaching-learning gateways with ICT integration. The techno-based pedagogical approach needs to be improved for the emerging causes. In this study, the qualitative data gathered from secondary sources was examined using the CIS (composite index score) to determine percentile points. The study result shows the potential EduTech support led to achieving the SDGs with skill development initiatives. The TVET institutions will reform and effectively offer globally demanding TVET programs and connect with global TVET partners, inclusiveness towards employment, and economic empowerment for poverty reduction that implies TVET governance in Bangladesh.

Keywords: TVET governance, EduTech, SDG, IR 4.0, economic empowerment, inclusiveness, pedagogical approach

Background:

Starting with a wise quote 'While education is the key to any development process, TVET is the master Key that can transform the world of work and the economy, alleviate poverty, save the environment and improve the quality of life' ... (Luisoni, 2005:250)

TVET in Bangladesh aims to develop skilled workforce for local and global job placement. TVET curriculum objectives are generally set to offer domain specific competencies relevant to profession (Rauner, 2007). The emerging need for the sector reform and competently trained recourse hands who can work in the global trends of automation and IR 4.0 and presently affix IR 5.0 for economic development. The education policy of Bangladesh highlighted ICT based education in Bangladesh (National Education Policy, 2010). Technical education curricula objectives are generally set to provide domain specific skills relevant to a profession (Rauner, 2007). Digitalization is essential keeping in mind the affordability and inclusion of the trainable youth population (Tumo Potiinen, 2020).

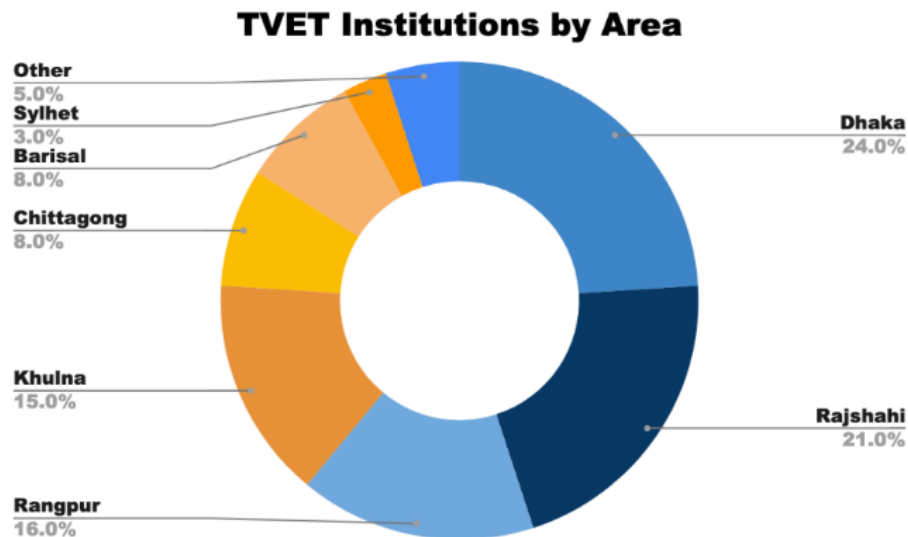


Fig 1: TVET Institutions by Area in Bangladesh

Source: BANBEIS (Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics; <http://www.banbeis.gov.bd/>)

Global and local waves spread in nanoseconds with the cyber system engineering mechanism. Skill advancement has often been determined by a competitive competition to interest foreign direct investment, particularly regarding high-value sections of global supply chains (Ashton, Chris & Morton, Lynne, 2005). Meanwhile, technology will never replace great teachers but technology in the hands of great teachers is transformational world.

Cascading the use of AI in the TVET governance and its application is a burning requirement. The gradual plan for young majority could change the economic world by providing demandable TVET schooling for employability (Ahmed, 2010). As educationalists, we have to constantly see how we can equipage technology on enhance teaching and learning. Jeffrey Thomson (2018, p. 8) observed that "These changes [artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotic process automation, etc.] are redefining and expanding the role of auditors and making our cultivation of skills such as data analytics, data visualization, storytelling and strategic management more important than ever before". It will also reduce our dependence on workers, specifically migratory workers while improving the competitiveness and earning potential of our employees (Busian & Schroder, 2015). The combination of AI and TVET governance might moor and solve almost gaps. Nowadays without AI, does not moor smart TVET programme management.

Problem Statement:

TVET in Bangladesh often faces challenges in ensuring quality education. Bangladesh Education Sector Review 2000 (World Bank, 2000) elaborated that the main problem with skills training (teaching pedagogy and cyberogogy) in the formal and non-formal sectors of TVET is the lack of linkages to employers and the job markets. Inadequate professional and dysfunctional or lack of industrial attachment are identified as barriers of technical education in Bangladesh in different studies (Haolader & Paul, 2013).

Accordingly, the traditional curriculum mismatched between the graduate-achieved competencies and the competencies in use at the work (Haolader et al., 2015). However, a few studies had that focused on the SMART TVET to develop teaching-learning pedagogy to the global trends. The educational sector is faced with changing

philosophy, integrating innovative pedagogy, instructional tools, techniques and curriculum on the way to attractive teaching and learning which translates to competencies for present skills demand (Serdyukov, 2017). Within this conditions, Sauphayana, (2021) defined novelty as a planned dynamism through interactive actions.

To help in building a sustainable TVET system is crucial to create a model of pedagogical competence for teachers in the field of sustainable expansion (Phong & Martin, 2016). The 21st century, the internet has affixed to our marrow and every breath. It requires modern and smart educators, who are capable of imparting thoughtful teaching to the learners, who are proficient in the language and usage of devices and cyber systems.

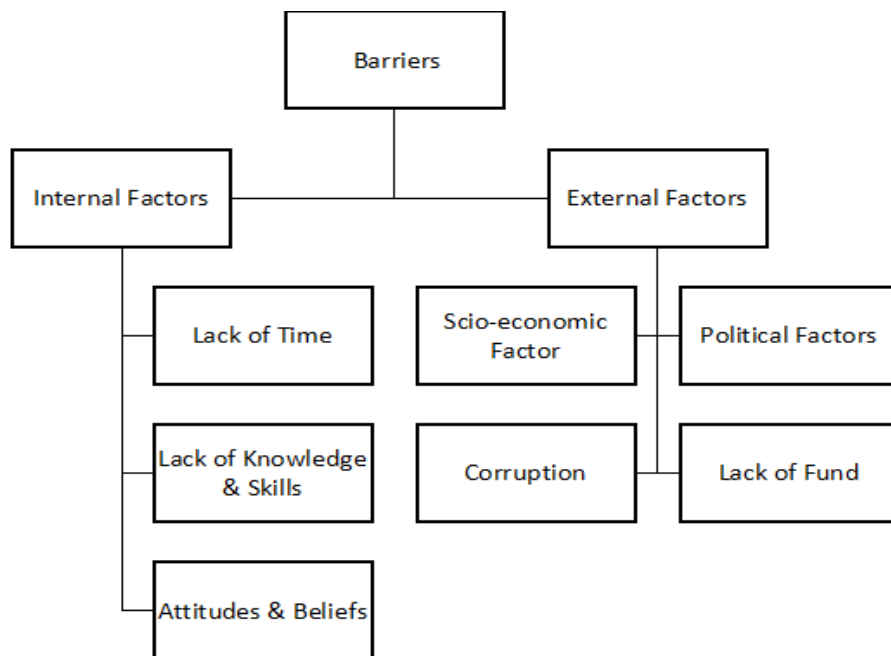


Fig 2: Barriers of TVET in Bangladesh

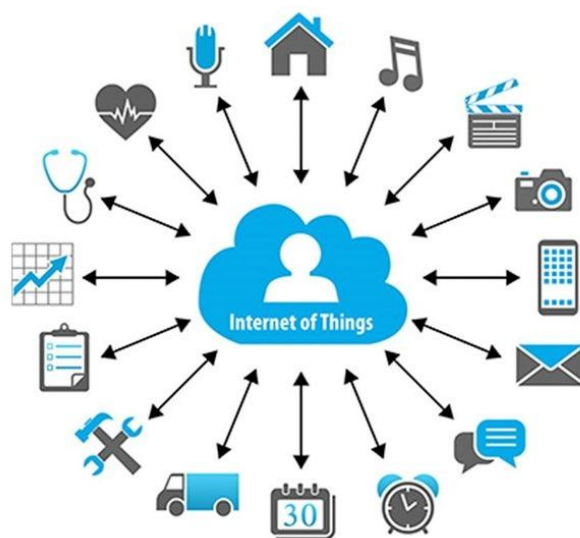


Fig 3: Internet of Things and IR 5.0 with smart devices; Source <https://steemit.com/iot>

The SDGs is the arched prospect of TVET improvement:

The UN adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015; as global goals with a visionary action plan. The SDGs are the outline to achieve a better world and more sustainable future for the planet. Addressing the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. The goals are interconnected and to leave no one behind, we must achieve them all by 2030. Initial government responses seem to have quicker been in general education than TVET in different countries¹.



Fig 4: The SDG goal 4: quality education and direction of goal; Source: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>;

Institutional TVET scale up and governance:

In truly, without sound format for digitizing TVET in Bangladesh left far behind of global opportunity. Now brings the consideration of AI and technology-based textbooks for teaching-learning. With the rapid development of technology, the industry is also undergoing massive changes day by day. The key of IR 4.0 brought in digitization which inbuilt inclusive technology.

The time loss may cover of the COVID-19 situation to govern the planning with integrated ICT applications in post COVID recovery (The Daily Star, 2020). TVET institutes were completely closed for over 2 years caused by the incident of COVID-19 and the lockdown in Bangladesh. An extended contract of disengagement from TVET institutes disrupted learning of learners (Majumdar, 2020).

Research Questions:

This study tries to find out the mitigating solutions of the TVET process in post-pandemic Corona period for the transition:

- i. How technology may help TVET advancement in Bangladesh?
- ii. How to scale up teaching pedagogy in the TVET programme?
- iii. How blended learning and AI will help in institutional management?

Objectives of the Research:

¹ Work-based learning has been most affected by the pandemic and its impact is severe in countries where it is compulsory part of the curricula, The European Commission, *Survey on addressing COVID – 19 emergencies for TVET providers and policy makers*, 2020.

Currently, TVET is entirely related to technology. Technology acting a vigorous and significant role in human development and any association. Nonetheless, the digital innovation transformation increases global deliverables to user-friendly ICT applications. connection. The structure of systemic process and design have forecasted everything and might predict. The research objective is integrated between TVET and IR 4.0. The study based on the following points.

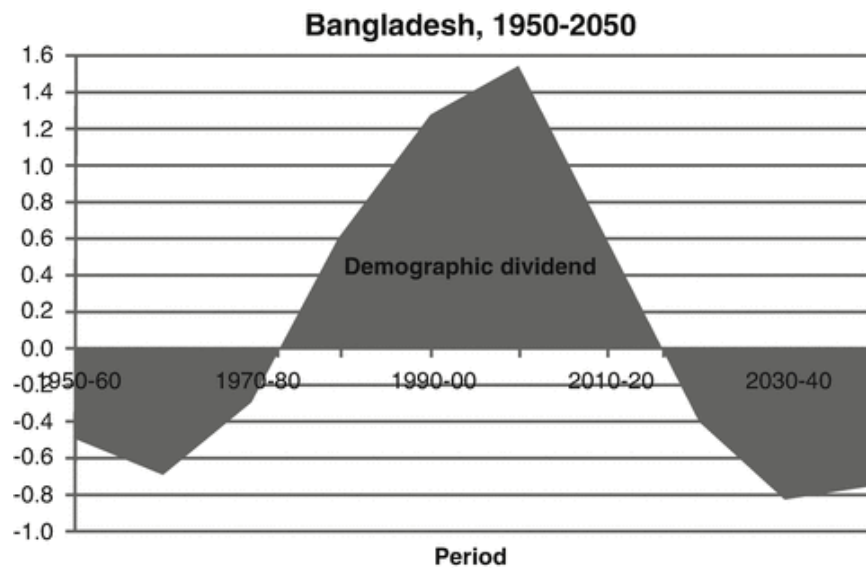


Figure 5: e-transitional demographic growth of TVET in Bangladesh; Source: The Directorate of Technical Education, Bangladesh, 2015

- Review the opportunities available through TVET to overcome COVID-19 destruction
- Current scenario of the nature of the TVET provisions at the ground level
- Rethinking post COVID-19 TVET planning and its blended education process
- Emphasis on TVET governance and transforming techno-based management
- Mapping and pointing the TVET institute development and blended e-learning

Methodology:

To accomplish its goals, this study used conventional methods. Selecting TVET institutes as units for collection and analysis of data by stratifying with the geographic/regional variance. Purposive sampling is allowed more or less representative of institutional types. The criteria that guided the selection process have been:

- Varying numbers of institutions selected from a region according to the total number of institutions in the respective region.
- The same principle as above has been applied in the selection process for the classification of TVET institutions by management authority, and type of TVET programs as per certification.

Data Collection:

Data collected by using a structured questionnaire administered with the support of Principals of Technical Training Centers (TTC) and also Principals of Technical Schools & Colleges (TSC). A total of 605 questionnaires were distributed but 540 institutional responded.

Table 1: Composite Index Score (CIS) indicating the overall strength of TVET institutions by region

Region	Common skill levels offered	Common program offered	Common technologies/ offered	Common enrollment capacity	Common enrollment in 2013	% Capacity filled in 2013	Average teacher/ institution	Teacher technology /trade	Pedagogical training of % teacher	Skills training of	% equipment available to skills	% Using available equipment to train skills	Total score (CIS)
Khulna	3	2	4	4	3	4	2	1	5	6	3	2	39
Barisal	3	2	1	5	6	2	5	4	4	5	3	4	44
Rajsahi	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	5	4	5	3	4	34
Dhaka	4	5	4	2	3	4	3	3	1	2	3	4	40
Chattogram	5	5	6	4	2	4	3	3	4	3	5	4	48
Sylhet	4	4	6	5	6	5	3	5	4	3	5	4	52

Sampling:

Purposive sampling used to include institutions from all categories. The afore-mentioned features had to be taken in the study in reflecting the variability. Noted that, a minimal number of sampling units from various categories taken for a valid analysis of the data based on the revealed principles. However, it was thought crucial that the selection method ensured proper representativeness of the sub-samples by taking the following characteristics:

- A greater proportion of sample units were chosen from regions with a greater concentration of educational institutions;
- Sample categories determined by the TVET certification level set by the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB); and
- A sample covering the different program kinds offered by each institution was taken.

Sample Size: Taking into account the list provided by BTEB, 606 TVET institutions total were chosen based on the aforementioned criteria. Sample units from various categories in Table 2 are used.

Table 2: Sampling Design

Level of Certification (programme)	Diploma/Trade														HSC*	SSC* VOC					General
													VOC								
Programme	Engineering			Agronomy			Textile			Health	Fisheries			Govt.	Govt.			Private	Private		
Administrative authority # of institute	Private 288	Govt. 48	Total 336	Private 142	Govt. 14	Total 156	Private 77	Govt. 4	Total 81	Private 160	Private 30	Govt. 3	Total 33	Total 65	BMET 63	TSC 38	TVI 41	Total 142	Total 1924	Total 966	
Sampling	50	25	75	29	10	39	28	2	30	30	24	2	26	27	24	26	24	75	207	98	
Number of samples = 606 TVET Institutions																					
Region-wise institution (sampling)																					
Khulna	6	6	12	2	4	6		5	3	4		5	7	5	4	3	2	9	30	20	
Barisal	3	2	5	1	4	5		1	1	1		2	2	3	2	3	1	6	16	8	
Rajshahi	7	14	21	4	11	15		6	6	7		13	6	8	6	9	23	86	27		
Dhaka	5	17	22	3	6	9	1	13	14	14		4	4	7	5	6	8	19	51	30	
Chattagram	6	5	11	2	1	3		3	3	2	2		3	2	5	4	6	13	20	11	
Sylhet	2	3	5	1	2	3		0	1	0			0	3	2	2		5	4	4	

* SSC= Secondary School Certificate; ** Higher Secondary Certificate

The following 4 tables, numbered 3.1 through 3.4, present the distribution of 540 institutions according to several factors to reflect strata among the institutions:

Table 3.1: Institutions by region

<i>Region</i>	<i>TVET Institutions</i>
Khulna	85
Barisal	43
Rajshahi	180
Dhaka	154
Chattagram	59
Sylhet	19
All	540

Table 3.2: Institutions by Administrative authority

<i>Authority</i>	<i>TVET Institutions</i>
Government	120
NGO	18
Private	402
All	540

Table 3.3: Certification Level (Institution)

<i>Level of TVET</i>	<i>TVET Institutions</i>
Diploma	180
HSC vocational	30
SSC vocational	272
General	118
All	540

Table 3.4: Institutions by programme (course)

<i>Programme</i>	<i>TVET Institutions</i>
Engineering	84
Textile	28
Agronomy	43
HSC vocational	29
SSC vocational	273
Fisheries	23
Health	30
Basic	120
All	540

Source: Survey of TVET Providers Bangladesh. www.nsdcbd.gov.bd

Overall, it has already been established that the proportion of female teachers working in the TVET sector is relatively low. Now that we are simply examining the data for these girls' types of employment under various management authorities. Discover that in some differences for those who are in regular employment (Table 4).

Table 4: Percentages of female instructor by type of job and administrative position

Administrative Authority	Nature of employment			# Total
	<i>Regular</i>	<i>Temporary</i>	<i>Part-time</i>	
Government	80.1	9.6	10.3	100.0 (369)
NGO	89.1	1.0	9.9	100.0 (20)
Private	85.7	5.6	8.7	100.00 (63)
# Total	85.5	7.6	6.9	100.0 (1354)

Instructors with and without pedagogy training: Instructors with and without pedagogy training: It is highly anticipated that the quality of skill training will be connected with instructors' competency, which is greatly increased by training, especially the training of educators in pedagogy. Only 15.8 (i.e., 16%) of the participants in the current study had any training in pedagogy.

Instrument for gathering data: Data gathering included a pre-test-confirmed structured questionnaire. Three sections made the questionnaire. the teachers/instructors of the same; the third part (20 pages), which included questions related to various jobs specified under various subject(s) for skills training/learning in technology. The first part (1 page) of questions is linked to a few basic aspects of the institute providing skill services.

Field data collection: Principals of TTCs (Technical Training Centers) and TSCs (Technical Schools and Colleges) were required to fill out questionnaires for data gathering in discussions with pertinent teachers (samples) for the survey. The heads of TVET institutions and TSCs at the district level were required to conduct face-to-face interviews with the heads of the training institutes they had chosen from their respective districts to collect data. Table 5: CIS indicating the strength of TVET institutions.

Table 5: By the BTEB certification level

Level of Certification (programme) i	% Institutions offering ii	Common technologies/trades offer iii	total technologies offering (%) iv	Average enrolment capacity v	Average enrolment in 2013 vi	% Capacity filled in 2013 vii	% machine available to train skills viii	Available machine to skills train (%) ix	Total score (CIS)
Diploma	3	3	2	4	4	2	1	1	20
SSC	3	4	3	2	2	3	1	1	20
HSC	2	3	1	2	3	3	2	2	18
General	2	1	2	2	3	2	3	5	20

Processing and analysis of data: The investigation generated a sizable data set. Every single survey was reviewed and edited. To perform computer processing and produce the necessary univariate and bivariate tables and charts under close monitoring, competent data management was chosen. To create the research, thorough data on 235,243 positions in 540 institutions across 1,899 technologies and vocations were studied. It should be mentioned that extensive testing was done to remove data discrepancies and response problems during the computer processing of the data.

Key Findings:

- i. The disparity between institutional capability and actual enrolment while maintaining the program type under different management. The number of institutions, there is a noticeable difference between the divisions, with Rajshahi and the lowermost in Sylhet region.
- ii. Approximately one-fifth of the institutions' combined enrollment capacity is still unfilled.
- iii. The fraction of female teachers paints a somber picture of female engagement in TVET.
- iv. About one-third of institutions lack the equipment required for teaching the skills unique to a given job in the training curriculum, gaps in teaching pedagogies and 5% of institutions don't even use the available equipment.

Recommendations:

- a. **Disrupt Industry Engagement:** However, an ideal digital Bangladesh will soon be realized if information technology is made more advanced and accessible. a. Disrupt industry engagement. Given the time, it is tough to achieve a different one. Modern techniques have been developed to repair the harm which may help to prepare TVET novice to skill entrepreneur.
- b. **Strategies & Innovations:** In the digital age, there is constantly a cycle of fresh ideas, inventiveness, and execution. If necessary, modifications and improvements can be done whenever. A traditional community like ours can only be educated through an EduTech-based educational system. Local TVET growth and fair economic advancement in the nation may be facilitated by the Union Digital Center (UDC), which is home to a national digital site and e-services (Abdullah, 2021). The once-in-a-century pandemic can open up a once-in-a-century opportunity for a young, resilient and vibrant country like Bangladesh (Parkash, 2020).
- c. **Blended Learning Approach:** A TVET ecosystem includes machine learning, artificial intelligence, artificial neural networks, data mining, virtual reality, and augmented reality. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend how social actors are situated differently with the chances for skill development and application that skill ecosystems offer (Trent, 2022). There will be several tests and developments involving AI technologies in the upcoming days.
- d. **ICT Programmes for TVET:** Due to the careful consideration of developing practical skills, horizontal course development, simulation, and compliance, TVET has additional hurdles while switching to online learning. To construct an inaccessible ICT-based TVET platform for a worldwide aspect, sufficient high-tech infrastructure and software and app-based capabilities are required.

Conclusion:

The study revealed that the TVET professionals stated that they need hybrid classrooms, teaching Pedagogy and Cereology incorporation. EduTech, COBOT (collaborative robots) and ICT improvement is must for the IR 4.0 spectrum even IR 5.0 is knocking in technology thoughts. It helps to mitigate upcoming challenges of demanding job placement. Asia, Africa, and Latin American government have sought to improve productivity, employment, and wages through upskilling and patronizing formally recognized skill qualifications (Powell and McGrath, 2019). Comprehensively, it is important that cascade the thoughts of post-corona blended learning plans setting, minimization of downtime and mapping academic prioritize in Bangladesh.

Making technical education meaningful for the overall development of the country, further expansion of technical education and initiatives to ensure quality technical education is necessary (Nitai, 2019). Hybrid mode of learning and in persons of learning even though student engagement has to unveil the gaps towards a new normal teaching-learning ecosystem. The TVET institutions will reform effectively and offer globally demanding TVET programs with global TVET partnership linkage that implies TVET governance in Bangladesh.

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Conflict of Interest:

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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The Growing Importance of Women Entrepreneurship in Dhaka City

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is the key to the creation of new enterprises that energize and revitalize the economy. This paper focuses on the growing importance of women's entrepreneurship in Dhaka city. Observations from two City Corporation's (Dhaka North City Corporation and Dhaka South City Corporation) survey are used. This paper aims to focus on the online small to medium business holders of women entrepreneurs by using a purposeful sampling method where in-depth interviews were carried out one-month time period. It utilizes a qualitative methodology by conducting interviews with forty-four women entrepreneurs. Results show that women are mostly interested in running small to medium businesses rather than wage workers due to unemployment, a gender-biased society, Glass Ceiling, Flexible Timing, and Work-Life Balance. Women entrepreneurs are creating their place by using their managing and marketing skills. The study aims to analyze the motivations and factors influencing the growing importance of women's entrepreneurship in Dhaka city. Moreover, two groups of women entrepreneurs are compared: those who started a business out of opportunity and those who started of necessity. Finally, this study has provided some recommendations based on qualitative studies. The findings of this paper will benefit policymakers, academic researchers, professionals, and all women entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurs, Women Entrepreneurship, Unemployment, Opportunity Entrepreneurs, Necessity Entrepreneurs, Dhaka, Bangladesh

1. Introduction

Bangladesh is an overpopulated country with limited resources and higher social stratification. Economic, political, and social recognition are determined based on gender, class, and location (Amin, 2017; Amin, 2018a). Today's business market is excessively competitive to sustain as the development of digital media has changed the traditional market situation (Amin, 2019, Amin, 2022). The contribution of women to the economy is very vital for the growth of the economic development of Bangladesh. Without the meaningful and active participation of women, half of the total population, in regular economic activities, a sustainable economy is impossible to achieve. (Chowdhury, 2007; Amin, 2020; Amin, 2021a; Amin, 2021b; Amin, 2023). Schumpeter's definition is acceptably precise. An entrepreneur is a person who carries out new business firms with innovative ideas. A manager/wage worker who operates an existing business, perhaps even with continuous adjustment in small steps, does not cause discontinuity and thus, by definition, is not an entrepreneur (Schumpeter, 1947). Entrepreneurship is widely considered an essential ingredient in the modern global economic improvement recipe (Kirschhoff and Phillips, 1989; Keeble et al., 1990; Audretsch and Fritsch, 1992; Amin, 2017). Firms can engage more customers within a shorter period, and customers also have multiple options to make purchase decisions from diverse regions. Therefore, the involvement of women in various entrepreneurial activities has empowered them in social, economic, and cultural fields. Studies on women's entrepreneurship show that many different factors have an impact on a woman's decision to become a woman entrepreneur (Amin, 2021a, Amin, 2021b). Women entrepreneurship is a rapidly growing phenomenon in many developing countries including Bangladesh.

It is observed that customers have plenty of opportunities to engage themselves in the digital platform (Amin, 2019). Business firms additionally have different alternatives, including growing correspondence through different digital media to create wider scopes to connect with clients in the global village (Khan, A., & Islam, M. A., 2017; Amin, 2019). Sarasvathy (2008) states that expert entrepreneurs behave more like explorers, rather than rulers. Historically, it is proven that with each economic downturn in both developed and developing countries, entrepreneurial drive and persistence bring us blessings (Kuratko, 2006; Amin, 2017). There is a research gap between identifying the growing importance of women entrepreneurs in Dhaka city. This study is going to fill these gaps in a proper methodological way.

2. Objectives of the Study

It observed that women entrepreneurship is a rapidly growing phenomenon in many developing countries including Bangladesh (Amin, 2018a; Amin, 2018b; Amin, 2023). The study aims to investigate the growing importance of women's entrepreneurship in ensuring its growth and development in Dhaka city of Bangladesh. To achieve this objective the following specific objectives are outlined:

- a) To analyze and discuss the motivation of women entrepreneurs in Dhaka city
- b) To explore the growing importance of women entrepreneurship in Dhaka city

3. Methodology of the Study

In light of the objectives of the study, the paper has been designed to illustrate the available support services as well as their impact and effectiveness on women's entrepreneurship in Dhaka city. To this end, an extensive literature survey has been conducted. It utilizes a qualitative methodology by conducting interviews with forty-four women entrepreneurs of online business holders located in both Dhaka city corporations (Dhaka North City Corporation and Dhaka South City Corporation). The choice of sample size is based on the work of Amin (2023), Schoof (2006) and Uddin et al., (2015). This paper aims to focus on women entrepreneurs by using a purposeful sampling method where in-depth interviews were carried out over a one to one-month time period (from 16th May 2023 to 16th June 2023). Dhaka city has been selected for only one reason. Women entrepreneurs in Dhaka city are more active and the number of online business holders is greater than any in other divisions of Bangladesh (Amin, 2018a; Amin, 2018b; Amin 2019; Amin 2020, Amin, 2023). According to Smith et al. (2013), Suddaby et al. (2015), Ramadani et al. (2015), Amin (2018b), and Amin (2023) qualitative research is better for in-depth research perceptions into understanding the complex psycho-social issues in the case of women entrepreneurship in Dhaka city. Other data and information from secondary sources were collected from various relevant journals, studies conducted by various donor and development agencies, international publications, and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) reports.

With this small sample size, it would be inappropriate to draw representative conclusions for the women entrepreneurs in Dhaka city of Bangladesh. Further, the collected perceptions, opinions, and experiences were described in light of barriers, hindrances, and incentives to participate in entrepreneurial activities by women entrepreneurs in this city. It will help future academic researchers to gain more knowledge about women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh.

4. The Findings of the Study

4.1. Motivations of Women Entrepreneurship in Dhaka city

Table 1: Motivations of Women Entrepreneurship in Dhaka city

Motivational Factors	Supported	Not Supported
Feel herself as a woman entrepreneur, not a profit maker businesswoman	90%	10%
Proper practical business knowledge; like marketing and management skills	80%	20%
Working in full-time/part-time/flexible timing	70%	30%
Start-up capital is low/entry barriers are low	90%	10%
Hope for sustainable business growth which is mainly influenced by many successful women entrepreneurs in Dhaka city	100%	0%
Most of the women entrepreneurs are family-oriented	70%	30%

Source: Empirical analysis and findings from own survey (from 16th May 2023 to 16th June 2023)

Discussion (based on table-1)

One of the important motivational factors that come into the picture is the start-up capital. When entry barriers are low, it becomes easier to start a business, even for low-skilled women entrepreneurs. Any academic course of study has great value when it has a particular application in real life. Only theoretical knowledge bears little importance unless it applies to practical life. Women entrepreneurs are now having better practical business knowledge than before due to digital media (Amin, 2020, Amin, 2023). Akhtar (2011) and Amin (2023) specified that the most important role played by digital media is that, it has changed the strategy of communication among customers and digital marketers. This study also supported the view of Akhtar (2011) and Amin (2023). In the end, it can be concluded that for women entrepreneur's success, there needs to be a balance between profit maximization and value creation.

4.2. The Factors Influencing the Women's Entrepreneurship in Dhaka City

Unemployment

Unemployment is one of the major problems in almost all the countries of the world (Amin, 2017). It has been the most consistent problem faced by all industrially advanced as well as poor countries (Amin, 2017). Unemployment is defined as the condition of having no job or being out of work or the proportion of people who can work and actively search for jobs but are unable to find them (Amin, 2019). In this study, it is observed that lack of opportunities for women as wage workers due to the job crisis in Dhaka city. Unemployment and lack of job opportunities are one of the important reasons for the growing importance of women's

entrepreneurship in Dhaka city of Bangladesh. Women respondents reported that the lack of job opportunities and low salary offers are the main two reasons to start their own business as a ‘professional career’. Many of them are applying for many government and private jobs to know their capability as ‘salaried employees’ (reported by eight respondents).

Opportunity/Necessity

Entrepreneurship is a wide concept and in this section, a distinction is made between necessity and opportunity entrepreneurs. To know the differences between necessity and opportunity definitions are given on the two types of entrepreneurship (Amin, 2019). Necessity entrepreneurship can be defined as someone who starts their own business as a response to unemployment or a lack of job possibilities as a wage worker (Cowling and Bygrave, 2002). An opportunity entrepreneur is someone who starts their own company because they see an opportunity (Verheul et al., 2005). Hessels et al. (2008) state that the amount of opportunity entrepreneurs is higher than the amount of necessity entrepreneurs. This study also supported all these views of publication.

Table 2: The nature of entrepreneur’s analysis

Necessity entrepreneurs	Opportunity entrepreneurs
20 (Out of 44)	24 (Out of 44)
45%	55%

Source: Empirical analysis and findings from own survey (from 16th May 2023 to 16th June 2023)

Gender-Biased Society

Women involved in various small and medium enterprises take on the challenge of working in a male-dominated society, competitive and complex economic and business environment. When a male opens a business the thoughts that all too often come to mind are profits, workshops, hiring employees, business plans, and long-term goals (Amin, 2018b). The author of this paper found that the opportunity is as great as the challenges are real for women entrepreneurs of Dhaka city. It found that respondents complained about the huge humiliation faced by buying raw materials for their business. Many respondents said that eve teasing problem faced by her when she was on a public bus with her industrial raw materials for business.

Glass Ceiling

“A glass ceiling” represents a blockade that prohibits women from advancing toward the top of a hierarchical corporation (Amin, 2021a, Alam & Chaudhury, 2008). Due to the glass ceiling problem in the corporate world, some women are forced to work as individually as “women entrepreneurs” as reported by many respondents in this study. According to the study, it is observed that no matter how invisible the glass ceiling is in Dhaka’s corporate life, it is an obstacle that is difficult to overcome.

Flexible Timing and Work-Life Balance

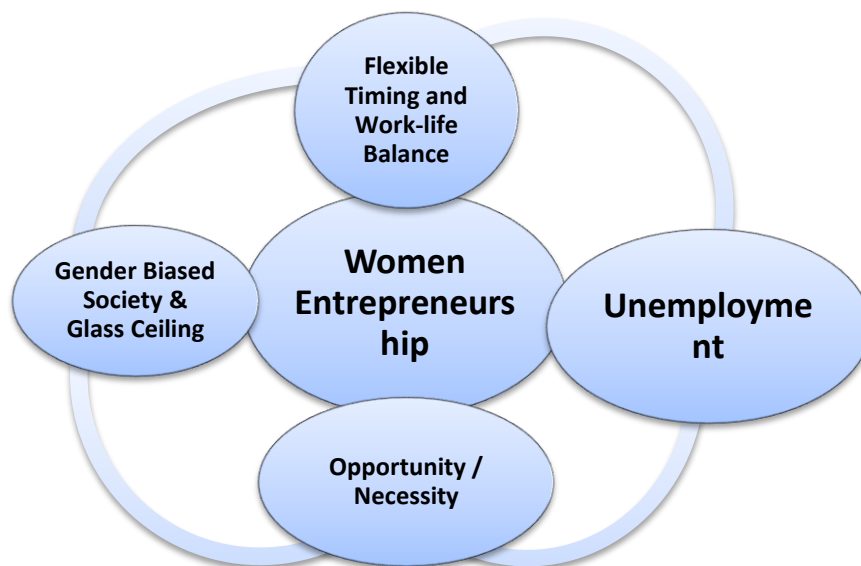
According to Nawaz (2009), Alam and Chaudhury (2008), and Amin (2018a,2018b) women are always family oriented; not business-oriented. According to this study, this study also supported this concept. Women possess fewer hours to work, due to household activities (Amin 2021a, Amin, 2023). This lack of work hours is not because women do not want to work, but because they have more diversity in their daily work activities (Amin, 2023). Approximately 20 percent of female entrepreneurs work from home, which allows them to take care of their child and to combine home and work (Parker 2009). This study also supported all these views. Flexible timing and work-life balance are one of the major reasons for the growing importance of women entrepreneurship in Dhaka city.

Discussion (based on figure-1& table-2)

In the 21st century, women entrepreneurs of Dhaka city are still facing traditional challenges which is remarkably frustrating news for the modern digital world. However, women-owned firms are the fastest-growing segment of businesses and many succeed, women must overcome barriers that their male entrepreneurs do not need to face.

To get a good insight into the two types of entrepreneurship, Block and Wagner (2010) examine opportunity and necessity entrepreneurs based on their earnings and found that opportunity entrepreneurs earn around 16 percent more than necessity entrepreneurs and that they also pursue more profitable decisions. It is observed that there are differences visible between both types of entrepreneurship, which makes it important to know more about both types of entrepreneurship. However, the effect of knowing an entrepreneur on opportunity and necessity entrepreneurs separately remains unclear. The future research direction is to find out the difference between opportunity women entrepreneurs and necessity women entrepreneurs in a proper methodological way in Dhaka city of Bangladesh.

Figure 1: **The Factors Influencing the Women's Entrepreneurship in Dhaka City**



Source: Empirical analysis and findings from own survey (from 16th May 2023 to 16th June 2023)

5. Conclusion

Researchers, teachers, and policy-makers need a commonly accepted definition that distinguishes a woman entrepreneur from a non-entrepreneur. The term, woman entrepreneur, is used in academia. Women's entrepreneurship is an inevitable part of the country's economic, social and cultural development process. The main objective of this study is to identify the growing importance of women's entrepreneurship in Dhaka city of Bangladesh. According to ILO publications (2004,2005,2007) and Amin (2017) reducing women's unemployment and increasing women entrepreneurs could contribute to the addition of GDP, societies may gain direct economic benefits, and violence and crime as well as vulnerability and exclusion might be reduced. This study has also supported this concept. Women's entrepreneurship is the key to the creation of new enterprises that energize and revitalize the economy of any nation of this world. It catalyzes the process of industrialization and economic growth. Hopefully, women entrepreneurs can play an energetic role in combating poverty in Bangladesh. It is proven that women entrepreneurs are the key players in the development of Bangladesh (Amin, 2018b; Amin, 2023). Considering their contributions to their family as well as the nation, they should get proper recognition and support as well for maintaining their business survivability.

6. Recommendations for Policy Implications

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for policy implications, especially for women entrepreneurs in Dhaka city.

For Women entrepreneurs:-

- Women entrepreneurs should take some time to study the nature of challenges women face in business and possibly proffer solutions to them before starting their business in Dhaka city.
- Attending training programs, seminars, workshops and conferences by women entrepreneurs is very necessary for Dhaka's women entrepreneurs.
- There is also a need for women who are successful in business to assist other women entrepreneurs who are just coming into business through a mentorship program.

These three steps will help to reduce the challenges these women are likely to face in business in Dhaka city of Bangladesh.

For the government of Bangladesh:-

- The government of Bangladesh should take the necessary steps to create more training programs, seminars, workshops, and conferences for women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh.

7. Acknowledgment

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Cross-Cultural Challenges Experienced By Foreign Employees in Bangladesh

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Abstract

In today's globalized economy, companies are increasingly expanding their operations beyond national borders. This has brought about the advancement of multicultural work environments where workers from various nations interact. However, managing a global business with employees from multiple nations presents more challenges than managing a local one. In Bangladesh, this phenomenon is increasingly evident as local businesses and multinational companies navigate the complexities of cross-cultural interactions. Cross-cultural challenges are usually the problems or misunderstandings that arise when people from different cultures interact. These challenges might affect expectations, communication, and behavior in both personal and professional spheres. Foreign workers arriving in Bangladesh for employment encounter numerous challenges and obstacles, navigating the complexities of adapting to a new cultural and professional environment. These difficulties emerge from differences in language, social norms, and professional expectations. Moreover, cultural misunderstandings can make foreign workers feel isolated and frustrated, complicating the adjustment process. This study will examine the scope and nature of these challenges, focusing on how they affect the productivity, job satisfaction, and overall workplace integration of foreign workers in Bangladesh. By understanding and addressing cross-cultural challenges, this paper aims to enhance our understanding of cross-cultural dynamics and provide significant guidance for managing a diverse workforce more effectively. This understanding can help businesses improve the efficiency and well-being of their foreign employees. Additionally, this study contributes to the pool of knowledge about cross-cultural management, offering valuable insights for HR professionals and business leaders who seek to enhance the retention and integration of foreign talent in a multicultural workforce.

Introduction

Businesses everywhere must contend with economic globalization, which results in a workforce that is becoming increasingly diverse (Greblikaite & Daugeliene, 2010). Having an understanding of cross-cultural obstacles in this diverse workforce is essential for businesses and makes it easier to communicate effectively with a wide range of partners, customers, and teams in today's globalized world. It helps build relationships that are based on respect and avoids misunderstandings that can lead to arguments or missed opportunities. In addition, this knowledge enables businesses to thrive in novel global markets, utilize diverse perspectives for creative purposes, and guarantee compliance with various legal and regulatory frameworks.

In addition, Bangladesh stands to gain a great deal from this, as the country grows into a global manufacturing hub, particularly in the apparel and textiles sectors, and expands its market share in numerous other sectors. The fusion of various cultures within an organization has the potential to boost creativity and innovation. Foreign workers who come to Bangladesh to work face a lot of challenges as they try to adjust to a new cultural and professional environment (TechWilmar, 2024). These difficulties result from language-related, social, and expert standard incongruities (Ahammad, 2019). Cultural differences can greatly influence the work satisfaction, productivity, and overall well-being of expatriates placed in Bangladesh.

However, cross-cultural management can help an organization become more globally fluent by providing it with the opportunity to learn new social skills. The ethnic and national landscapes are always changing. As a result, overcoming cross-cultural challenges posed by different cultures will allow companies to be able to operate more effectively and compete more effectively on a global scale.

Objectives of the study

The main purpose of this study is to establish and compare the cross-cultural issues that affect foreign employees in Bangladesh. Specifically, it aims to:

- Analyze the cultural, social, and professional barriers that foreign employees face in the workplace.
- Identify how these challenges affect the lives of foreign employees in their personal and working capacities.
- Identify how these challenges affect the organization and the level of productivity.
- Identify effective strategies and best practices for overcoming these challenges.

Literature review

Cross-cultural management is produced by businesses that conduct international trade. Multinational corporations face an increasing number of management challenges as a result of cross-cultural issues. The rise of the information economy and the acceleration of economic globalization have both increased the complexity and significance of cross-cultural management (Werner & Joynt, 2004). The performance of international workers is significantly influenced by the workforce in the host nation and the numerous support networks the company has established to facilitate a smoother transition, such as collaboration, emotional support, and informational assistance. How expatriates deal with cultural differences with local workers also affects how well they adapt (Toh & DeNisi, 2007).

Moreover, culture shock is a significant factor in the cross-cultural difficulties that international workers face when adjusting to a new work environment in a foreign country. Additionally, Kalvoro Oberg proposed the concept of cultural shock in 1960. There are numerous unmistakable degrees of culture shock that individuals experience when they migrate, work, or concentrate abroad. As a result of "culture shock," many expatriate managers in multinational corporations have had to leave their jobs abroad and return home. This not only costs the company a lot of money and time, but it also prevents these foreign workers from showing off their skills (Guo, 2022). In relation to overseas assignments and expatriate management, extensive research has been conducted on the difficulties that foreign workers face in adjusting to a new cultural environment. Hofstede's important work on cultural dimensions from 1980 emphasizes the significance of comprehending cultural variations in values, norms, and expectations. Foreign workers' ability to adapt to a new work environment can be significantly impacted by these differences. According to other studies, a major reason why multinational businesses fail is that they fail to adapt to the culture of the nation in which they operate (Doerr, 2004; Kavar, 2012). In particular, assuming cultural conflicts happen at work, employees could confront unpleasant circumstances that reduce their inspiration or feeling of satisfaction in their positions (Doerr, 2004).

Cross-cultural challenges have the potential to weaken employees' commitment to the business in addition to turnover and poor behavior (Ferraro, 2001). According to a number of studies, the abundance of obstacles is the primary obstacle for foreign workers in Bangladesh. Foreign workers can effectively navigate cultural differences and develop strategies for constructive cooperation with their local coworkers by participating in cross-cultural mentoring and training programs. The study reveals that an employee's ability to adapt to a new cultural environment, particularly for foreign workers, may be affected by personal factors like personality traits, previous international experience, and family dynamics. Consequently, employers may offer training, spousal support, assistance with family transitions, opportunities for interaction with local workers and other expats, and other forms of assistance to foreign employees. Cross-cultural conflict can boost creativity, productivity, and relationships when handled effectively (Zikargae, 2013). Therefore, Cross-cultural challenges allow workers to gain a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and how to interact with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds to solve them (An, 2022).

Methodology of the study

The research work was mainly focused on the cross-cultural experiences of foreign employees in various organizations in Bangladesh. We have taken interviews to collect data from foreign employees. We have interviewed 50 foreign employees from various sectors. We have also used information from books, articles and reports.

Sources of Data: Primary data was collected with the help of semi-structured interviews regarding the difficulties and work conditions of foreign employees. Secondary data was collected from different reports, articles, and other sources.

Data Analysis: We analyzed the collected data using Microsoft Excel. This helped us to record the experiences and challenges faced by foreign employees.

Sampling: In this study, we used purposive sampling to select employees who had been working in Bangladesh for more than one year. This made sure that they would have adequate experience to share with. This approach was intended to give a clear picture of the cross-cultural experience of foreign employees in Bangladesh.

Analysis of Cultural, Social, and Professional Barriers Faced by Foreign Employees in the Workplaces of Bangladesh

- **Cultural Barriers:** This is due to the fact that many employees from other countries find it difficult to relate to the cultural practices of the Bangladeshi people. The cultural differences in communication, social, and business interactions may cause some conflicts. For example, different perceptions of power distance, punctuality, and business attire may cause difficulties in communication with the local subordinates and managers. This unfamiliarity with cultural practices may greatly affect the foreign employees' ability to fit into the existing teams and their ability to perform their duties.
- **Social Barriers:** Social integration is a major issue that affects the foreign employees in Bangladesh. They may also experience challenges in social relations with local co-workers because of the different cultural standards. This can result in experiences of loneliness and challenges in forming a positive reference group in the workplace. Language differences, prejudice, and ignorance of cultural norms and practices can also lead to social isolation which in turn has an impact on job satisfaction and social integration. Sometimes foreign employees are unable to stay with their families, which also creates interaction problems, loneliness, and anxiety.
- **Professional Barriers:** Variations in management strategies, decision-making, and performance assessment may pose challenges to their functioning within organizations. Furthermore, if the skills and experience that the foreign employees possess are not in line with the expectations of the organization, then they are likely to face difficulties in their career mobility and progression.

Impact of Cultural Adaptation on Career Advancement of Foreign Employees in Bangladesh

The ability of foreign workers to adapt to Bangladeshi culture may have a significant impact on their career advancement. There are a number of advantages to adjusting to other cultures, including the ability to accelerate professional advancement and make the transition into the workplace easier. Therefore, if international workers are mindful of local etiquette, they will not struggle to engage with industry professionals and colleagues. Close relationships can result in cooperation, mentoring programs, and recommendations as to promotions. Furthermore, foreign workers can enhance their integration into the workplace community by participating in cultural and social activities. For instance, in an interview, a foreign engineer who works in Dhaka described how learning Bengali and adapting to the local culture led to his promotion. Through improved

communication and cultural awareness, he earned the respect of his superiors and coworkers, which resulted in his promotion to a management position in less than two years.

Thus, it is imperative to conform to the Bangladeshi work culture when it comes to climbing the corporate ladder. Punctuality, obedience to authority, and those who are in positions of authority are highly valued. A Chinese employee commented, “Titles and treating senior people with respect were a big improvement when I had to deal with my employers.”

Cultural adaptation also enhances leadership qualities. Foreign employees can become extremely beneficial to the company if they are able to show cultural understanding and flexibility, thus providing a link between different groups. Nevertheless, for the career advancement of foreign workers in Bangladesh, international workers need to advance in their careers and must learn to adapt to Bangladeshi culture. Expatriates who learn about local customs, improve their language skills, and respect workplace hierarchies can increase their chances of success. However, due to cultural adaptation, they also overcome obstacles like a lack of skills, legal restrictions, and other concerns, all of which may affect their employment prospects in Bangladesh. To address these issues, it is necessary to establish a welcoming and encouraging workplace that fosters mutual respect and understanding between local organizations and international workers.

Impact of cultural context on foreign employees

Understanding the way international workers are affected by their cultural context is essential for businesses that want to foster a diverse and productive work environment. The encounters of foreign workers in Bangladesh are vigorously affected by their social foundation, which affects their overall work environment mix, efficiency, and job satisfaction. A communication style that is characterized by indirectness, politeness, and a preference for achieving consensus has emerged from Bangladeshi culture, which places a strong emphasis on collectivism. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining harmony and avoiding conflict in communication interactions, particularly when discussing sensitive topics or sharing negative feedback (Rabbani et al., 2024). Language barriers, given that Bengali is the primary language, frequently result in misunderstandings and communication issues that harm workplace relationships. The hierarchical power structure of Bangladesh has an impact on the distribution of authority and social order, frequently leading to discrimination and a desire for higher positions (Choi et al., 2019). The power elements inside an association are affected by a progressive system, which might prompt questions and pose challenges for the board and administration. Bangladesh likewise has a high-power distance culture, which prompts particular hierarchical designs and a conspicuous line of order. An individual's job title and hierarchical position have a significant impact on the dynamics of relationships and the nature of professional relationships (*Bangladesh Comprehensive Country Overview*, n.d.).

Besides, Bangladesh's social norms, which put areas of strength on hospitality, hierarchical respect, and communication methods, can sometimes cause disturbance and misalignment in workplaces when cultural expectations diverge. In Bangladesh, for instance, instead of addressing senior coworkers by their first names, people use titles or kinship words to show respect. If foreign professionals who are used to more casual or direct ways of being addressed have different cultural expectations, this can occasionally cause irritation and misalignment in professional situations. In addition, the culture of Bangladesh places a high value on family, which may lead employees to request flexible scheduling or to frequent absence from work.

Particularly if their home culture places a high value on strict schedule conformity, foreign employees may find it difficult to strike a balance between these cultural expectations and their own work ethics. Foreign workers may feel pressured to meet local standards while still meeting their own professional obligations as a result of this discrepancy, which may have a negative impact on their job satisfaction and productivity.

Impact of Cross-Cultural Challenges on Organizational Performance and Dynamics

Cross-cultural challenges significantly impact organizational performance and dynamics in various ways. When foreign employees are unable to assimilate into the new culture, this results in communication breakdowns and conflicts within the team. These problems can affect cooperation and decrease the total efficiency of the system. Moreover, cultural differences can lead to a lack of trust and an unpleasant atmosphere in the workplace, and thus, reduce the employees' satisfaction. This leads to high turnover rates among the foreign employees which in turn can prove to be expensive for the organizations in terms of not only the costs of recruitment but also loss of expertise. Also, the failure to manage the integration of the foreign employees means that the company does not get a diversity of ideas and this hinders creativity. If these challenges are not met by organizations, they will be left behind in the global market competition.

Recommendation

Provide extensive cultural training for international employees and domestic employees to enhance their awareness and interaction.

- Develop a strong framework of social support for foreign employees such as coaching, counseling, and peer support to assist them in coping with cultural and work-related stress.
- Promote cultural diversity at the workplace through the formulation of policies that embrace cultural diversity.
- Cross-culturally managed organizational practices and policies should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Encourage foreign employees to point out their concerns in the organization and find ways to change to meet the new conditions.
- Promote the use of cultural differences in decision-making to facilitate creativity, innovation, and problem-solving in the organization.
- Have to create a respectful working environment for all employees.

Conclusion

The research shows that there are so many cross-cultural issues in Bangladesh that impact the employee's satisfaction and performance in their workplace. There are many factors that can be the cause of these difficulties such as social barriers and cultural differentiation. It is crucial to communicate with other people but sometimes language becomes an obstacle that results in conflicts and loneliness. Moreover, it is difficult to get used to the local organizational hierarchy and cultural norms for foreign employee. Thus, many directions can help organizations to provide people with better integration. As a result, it helps companies to improve the productivity of the foreign employees and have more effect in the global economy.

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