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Editorial: The Rape of Afghanistan



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Yet again the long suffering people of Afghanistan are in the midst of moral, economic and structural collapse of society with a drought adding to the chaos and forecasting mass starvation. This has been caused by two factors –

1. The withdrawal of international groups, not just the US Military, but of many global agencies and charities who had been trying to keep the people alive and well. Many have now left or ceased operations due to Afghanistan becoming an unsafe environment to stay after the takeover by the Taliban and their immediate attacks on elements of society and total lack of training or ability to be a proper government. Currently their governmental policy and actions, have been to kill rivals and reli-

gious minorities, beat and kill innocent women and sell or “forcefully marry” young girls into a life of rape and abuse, too often aided and abetted by the girls’ and babies’ own fathers. What a betrayal – by the parent who was supposed to protect them. Young boys are also being raped and forced to be child soldiers.

Respect for women and children, is the FIRST sign of a civilised society and civilised men – and crimes committed against adults and children are opposed by religion including the religion the Taliban claim to represent.

(Quran 6:151–153):

You shall not kill your children on a plea of want; we provide sustenance for you and for them.

You shall not take life, which God has made sacred, except by way of justice and law(*). Thus does God command you, that you may learn wisdom.

(*) The phrase “except by way of justice and law” was added by men into the original scripture; it is not the word of God. Rather it is an insult to God and demonising of God’s name to justify killing and shows that ‘justice and law’ bodies can also go against the will of God in those societies that claim their right to abuse and kill.

2. Other than the Taliban's religious manifesto, which insults God in word and deed, we have seen nothing positive and no harbinger of a bright or even sustainable future for the Afghan people. Indeed those who may have stayed and helped rebuild the country have had to flee in fear for their lives and to try to give their children a decent future.

Be aware that most of this group of miscreants affecting the fate of Afghanistan are not real men, and not village idiots, they are the under belly of an evil and endless plague of humans; men who legitimise their local dictators and who have destroyed our planet and raped our children since humanity first crawled out of the mud. They have ensured we have stayed covered in mud and blood ever since.

The lack of any proper form of government, and particularly a government with the welfare of all Afghan people in mind has also opened the country up to hostile corrupt outside governments and influences, notably Russia and China who have announced to the world that they support this rule of a revengeful mob.

Both have a record of oppressing their own people and minorities and of supporting cruel and wicked dictatorships. China's dictatorship has its own history of genocide and we could ask Putin where his change of mind has come about since Russia's 9 year war against Afghanistan.

What are the needs?

According to the UN, Afghanistan saw a high number of civilian casualties in the first 6 months of 2021, an increase of 47% compared to the same period last year. Since the beginning of 2021, some 550,000 people fled their homes, bringing the number of displaced people to at least 4.2 million. Attacks against medical and educational facilities remain high..

The COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 spring drought, persisting political insecurities, and increased violence have further deteriorated the humanitarian situation. Coronavirus import restrictions and widespread unemployment have worsened food insecurity, with close to 14.1 million people (35% of the population) critically food insecure.

Due to the severe drought and withdrawal of international troops, 18.5 million people could require humanitarian assistance. Severe weather conditions – drought, heavy snowfall, flash floods and avalanches – regularly affect thousands of people and their homes.

Funding organisations

To have charities and international organisations stay in Afghanistan the Taliban who are ill equipped and not educated in administration or disaster relief are going to have to ensure a safe environment for local people and foreigners - otherwise their mission will quickly turn into one of genocide of their own people.

The European Union has pledged a one-billion-euro (\$1.15bn) aid package for Afghanistan, "to avert a major humanitarian and socioeconomic collapse" 12 Oct 2021

The EU supports health services, trying to ensure access to health care for people in areas where regular government services are disrupted. Health facilities continue to report record-high admission levels of conflict-related trauma cases. The EU also supports nutrition response, in view of the more than 3 million children under 5 suffering from malnutrition in Afghanistan.

The EU also funds education projects for children who were forced out of school due to gender, conflict or displacement. EU funding supports humanitarian flights, the provision of security information to non-governmental organisations and the coordination of humanitarian interventions.

In 2015 the Prime Minister of Australia, Julia Gillard, committed to increasing Australia's aid to Afghanistan by \$85 million a year to \$250 million by 2015 in an agreement signed with Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai during a side meeting at the NATO summit.

BUT did and will all of that money, indeed any of that money, get to where it is needed and will any aid now given go into the Taliban "war chest" and further strengthen its unholy mission?

May heaven help the good people of Afghanistan. Currently there does not seem to be much hope for them here on earth.

[[And as we go to press there is news that more Afghani girls are being sold into the global rape trade. The ONLY obligation on adults everywhere on this planet is to protect their children. But it seems when adults have to go without, children are expendable, especially the most vulnerable, and those who have always been preyed upon by the most evil in our society - girls.]]

Proposed Growth Model for SMEs Using the Delphi Method

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Abstract

Using the Delphi method to engage experts in the field, the intention in this paper is to offer a predictive growth model for small-firm growth. The purpose of this model is to allow small business owners, decision-makers and researchers to assess the growth of the business through a four-stage model over time. The research used a qualitative paradigm with a DELPHI approach, involving data analysis using interpretation and structural analysis of the data sent by the experts. In this study, a consensus of a Delphi group for a proposed small business predictive model was used. The resulting model may offer a better fit to small businesses now, and it may be used pragmatically with small business owners and managers in the future. The results indicated a consensus within the Delphi group, allowing for an understanding that a different conceptual framework may impact small business growth and future development.

Key words: Growth model, Small-medium enterprise, homogeneous

Introduction

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) possess unique qualities that make them unique from most of the other large counterparts (Abdulsaleh & Worthington, 2013). Consequently, for SMEs, there is a requirement to incorporate the related existing measurement and growth methods and to recognise a pragmatic procedure for the implementation, design, and measurement of measurement systems based on growth strategies (Zortea-Johnston et al. 2012). This research provides a brief overview of the current literature related to the dynamics of growth models for SMEs, which associates with distinctive characteristics, issues, and requirements of growing SMEs. Models of SME growth suffer from many critiques and are overlooked by SME managers and decision-makers (Edvardsson & Durst, 2013). Hence, there is a requirement for the critical evaluation of the current studies relevant to it. The research is based on highlighting a framework based on the concept of pragmatism, in which it will be represented that the growth of a small business is based on the series of 4 stages of growth. Hence, for development, every business has to pass all the stages successfully. Using the Delphi method to engage experts in the field, this paper intends to offer a predictive growth model for small-firm growth and measurement in a pragmatic manner that will be served as a huge intangible framework required for conducting the research. Moreover, business owners and managers will design policies based on the business growth phenomenon.

Literature Review

1. Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

Different jurisdictions, such as the European Union and the United States, have varying definitions of the size of businesses that fall into the category of SMEs. The European Union comprises businesses that have a workforce of fewer than 250 employees. SME businesses are divided into groups, including micro-businesses i.e. up to 9 workers, in addition to the entrepreneur, small businesses i.e. up to 10-49 workers, and medium-sized businesses i.e. up to 50-250 workers (Neagu, 2016). In the USA, the Small Business Administration or SBA, the standard size for small businesses is dependent on the explicit sector of the industry. According to the North American Industry Classification System or NAICS, classification has been done to reflect the differences between labour-intensive and capital-intensive businesses; however, federal agencies typically considering the corporations with around 35.5 million dollars in sales and around 1,500 workforces as a small business (Prieto-Sandoval et al. 2018). As the definition varies with the state, therefore, it has been described in Israel differently. The small business is one working with only 50 or fewer employees (Cagno & Trianni, 2013).

SMEs are considered the backbone of the modern economy, and most businesses are SMEs. It has been reported that around 99.7 per cent of the businesses running in the USA are SMEs (Karadag, 2015). Here in the USA, SMEs are contributing to offer around 1.86 million job opportunities every year (Neagu, 2016). By considering the private sector, it has been reported that around 50.9 per cent of the employees are working here. Not only this, but they also account for around 50.7% of the production based on local business in the country. In the OECD, over 95% of enterprises are SMEs, and they account for 60%-70% of employment in most countries (Okr glicka et al. 2015). Some researchers make the point that governments cannot rely on SME growth, and they have raised significant doubts over the effectiveness of government policy to increase the performance of SMEs (Edvardsson & Durst 2013).

In Israel 99.5% of businesses are SMEs, employing around 1.1 million workers, hence it can be identified that 55 per cent of the employees are constituted in the public sector (Tomši et al. 2015). SMEs are recognised as engines for creating jobs and economic growth. Data reported from one of the authentic sources known as the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics or CBS depicts that around 51 per cent of the businesses running in Israel are running based on self-employment hence, they are not involved in the activities to employ someone. On the other hand, it has been observed that around 70 per cent of these businesses hire workers limited to 4 and 92 per cent of these kinds of businesses hire workers up to only 20 (Neagu, 2016). From the data, it has also been evaluated that the SME businesses that are newly started (2012) in Israel, are successful in providing around 84,400 employment opportunities (CBS n.d.). This result has supported the concept that SME businesses are running in large numbers especially in Israel. Not only this, they have a strong contribution to the growth of the economy in Israel.

2. Differentiating Small and Medium Size Enterprises

Although the literature addresses SMEs as a united, well-defined, homogeneous group, for this paper, we have elected to address only small business enterprises (Marom et al., 2019). Some argue that small business owners lack the expertise and the resources to grow (Krajnáková, Navikaite & Navickas, 2015; Peake et al., 2019). Therefore, it can be estimated that they will remain small, and instruments related to the policy are designed in a way that will help the overall growth procedure of SMEs and it can also be estimated that it will have a minor, or no impact on this kind of businesses. Furthermore, the vast majority of small firms are more interested in maintaining their current levels of profit than in expansion (Ndubisi & Iftikhar, 2012). Another attribute is that most of the working capital comes from the owners themselves, which limits resources (Bamiatzi & Kirchmaier, 2014). Besides, and by their nature, small businesses capture only a small share of the market in which they are operating (Parnell et al. 2015). Most of the qualitative attributes of small businesses, such as management structure, are not embedded in the core of their classification by government and public institutions, as they are difficult to gauge and codify.

Owners usually make decisions in small businesses. However, due to the idiosyncratic conduct of some owners (Sundgren & Svanström, 2013), managerial duties and operations are often carried out by the same people, leaving little if any time for the process of management and decision making (Müller, 2019), or for gaining new information about the business. In addition to this, the managerial infrastructure of such kind of small businesses is usually based on simplicity, but informal with the social perspective, the link present between the associates are in most cases do not follow any sort of hierarchical structure, the organisation typically does not depend on distinct goals. Moreover, the valuable tools required for successful management are not utilised hence, the overall business is found to be managed without the element of perfection as compared to huge companies (Wynarczyk et al. 2013). Some argue that small businesses are different from medium-sized businesses in management, resources, and goals. It is not always clear that most small businesses want to grow into larger businesses, thereby increasing the workforce, administrative work, etc. (Voss & Voss, 2013). Further, given the unpopularity of using qualitative measures within the business at large (Welch and Piekkari 2017; Pett & Wolff, 2016), classifications of small businesses tend to rely on quantitative measures. Most such classifications use two measures of size: the number of employees and a financial indicator such as annual sales (Garay & Font, 2012). This may limit perspectives and knowledge for researchers, owners, and the government.

3. Marketing Capabilities and Accounting Capabilities of SMEs

According to Sekhar et al. (2015), the components that make the dynamic capabilities include marketing and accounting capability. In this context, Cho and Lee (2013) stated that there is a fundamental relationship between the competitive advantage and dynamic capability, one of which is regarded as marketing capability. Marketing capa-

advantage and dynamic capability, one of which is regarded as marketing capability. Marketing capabilities are considered identical for capabilities and competencies but they are not limited to capabilities (Pulka et al., 2018). Marketing capabilities are also identical to a process that is designed for the business marketplace. By this process, the collective knowledge, resources, skills of SMEs are integrated which enables the addition of the goods and services that are competitively valued and hence, meet the requirements of the business (Rekarti et al., 2018); for instance, in the restaurant business, the presentation of food (menu, look, temperature, freshness and taste). Michna (2018), predicted that the satisfaction of the customers meets the expectations; even though there might be some gaps of dissatisfaction; but the customers must express satisfaction. Thus, SMEs are required to develop this capability dynamically. It is extremely significant for the business to develop the capabilities by acknowledging the uncertainty within the environment of the organisation that is faced by them (Eikelenboom & de Jong, 2019).

According to Rekarti & Doktoralina (2017), in the role of professional reporting, the accounting capability plays a significant role. Nevertheless, the extensive use of external accountants' services is used by some of the SMEs for their business reports. Moreover, by acknowledging the speed of changes in technology, the owners of SMEs are required to consider the technological developments within their organisation by understanding the accounting information system (AIS) (Trabulsi, 2018). Implementing the technological development within the organisation for the accounting information system can enhance the gathering and handling of the accounting data beginning from the primary data to the final reporting of the transactions, for providing the valuable information to the decision-makers of the organisation. Owing to the quality information, the quality decisions will be made by the decision-makers which will further enhance the performance of the organisation (Sekhar et al., 2015). For adapting the environment of the business, the performance of the business is the organisation's ability which escorts the changes in the environment of the business that includes competitors, customers and other various power forces, by which the working environment of the business can be altered. The ability of the management for developing harmony between the internal organisation and the environment are the factors on which a good strategy is dependent; therefore, the ability to adapt is enormously significant (Rekarti et al., 2018).

Florici (2016) stated that the taste of the markets will change tremendously by the occurrence of the several new modern culinary offers along with the occurrence of competitors from comparable culinary traditions. Moreover, adaptability is not only important for keeping up with the changes but instead, anticipating them. Therefore, business persons are required to be more creative and innovative (Yacob et al., 2020). For generating the growth in performances of sales and profitability, the SMEs are required to be more innovative, courageous, and proactive for performing the strategic risks behaviour and the non-financial behaviour follows this approach. Due to this reason, in order to grab the accounting opportunities

and capabilities, the SMEs are required to develop their adaptability through marketing for developing an understanding of their inner business and capitalise on those opportunities (Murwatiningsih et al., 2019). The monetary circumstances of the region where the SMEs are operating will be improved due to the ability to adapt and maximise the performances of the business. The changes in the business enable the owners of SMEs to determine and prioritise the strategies in order to overcome the challenges that arise for becoming competent and remaining relevant within the SME sector (Rekarti & Doktoralinak, 2017).

4. Impact of Marketing Capabilities and Accounting Capabilities on Performances of Business

According to Takata (2016), the better market sensing, development of the customer relationship and the ability for strengthening the bonds among the channels within the market can be provided by the marketing capabilities. Thus, the activities of the business can be widened and more market can be attained by the organisation having marketing capabilities (Cacciolatti & Lee, 2016). The SME having marketing capabilities are enabled to perform efficiently as compared to its competitors with regards to growth, the satisfaction of the customers, profitability, and adaptability due to the strong market research, distribution capabilities, and marketing management. The increase in the business activities will certainly increase the transactions of the business that will further generate the source of income for SMEs (Liu et al., 2015). Moreover, Wilden and Gudergan (2015) determined that the performance of marketing is positively affected by the marketing capabilities of the organisation. Therefore, the performances of the organisation are significantly affected by the marketing capabilities of the organisation and the income is regarded as one of the measurements of the performances (Hernández-Linares et al., 2021).

Takata (2016) stated that the organisations having accounting capability will tend to produce quality information due to which the quality business decisions will be made within the organisations. Therefore, the accounting capabilities play a significant role in determining the performances of SMEs. The main concern of the decision is how the financial resources are being used within the organisation to operate, or how they are being used for generating revenues with the minimum amount for the sustainability of the SME organisation along with the improvement in the performance of the results for sales growth of SMEs (Cacciolatti & Lee, 2016). The accounting information system supports the quality decision that can be used within an indefinite market in order to identify the viability of the economics and finance ROI (return on investment) by which the quality of the product can be affected (Liu et al., 2015). Wilden and Gudergan (2015) identified that the effectiveness of the business can be increased by an accounting information system; therefore, the corporate earnings will be increased from the total cost incurred by the investment capital, relationships, increased profitability, and the measurements of non-financial performances.

5. Business Adaptability, Accounting and Marketing Capability

According to Johnson & Schaltegger (2016), SMEs that are developed, positively have a long-term orientation, which means their prime focus is on the future sustainability of the organisation. Due to this, it is determined that all the businesses are required to change their course of action according to the development of the environment and the markets. The business can lead to a difficult situation to sustain and survive within the market if the changes are delayed within the organisation. Moreover, the delays in the changes will tend the organisation to display a constant process that enables the organisation to balance the active agents along with a dynamic environment (Michna, 2018). However, offers are regarded as the products of local traditions that require some adaption to the conditions of the market for obtaining good performances within the SMEs. Furthermore, Farida et al. (2017) argued that better marketing analysis can be specifically provided by the marketing capabilities that transform the relationship of the customers and the ability for strengthening the bonds among the channels with the market. However, value of the prevailing market is the basis on which this change is still based on, as according to the traditions that are offered by the SMEs. Hossain et al. (2020) stated that the changing situations within the market or the region must be adapted quickly. Naturally, by fulfilling the obligations of a careful citizen and by respecting their traditions (Hanifah et al., 2019).

It is extremely significant that adaptability is committed with the organisation as the objectives of the organisation can be shaped with capability by the commitment and it will also determine the final way to act in the long term along with respecting the right environment in shaping the goals and relationships within the organisations. Thus, the SME will be responding by the awareness of the change (Laine & Galkina, 2017). Moreover, the organisation will be encouraged to act in the market context due to the awareness of change. Many SMEs are not able to sustain in the market and its environment because they possess low marketing capabilities. In fact, confidence and encouragement to the organisations is provided by the high marketing capabilities, in order to implement changes, due to which adaptability is highly needed by the SMEs (Sulistyo, 2016). Hermawati, (2020) determined that the understanding of the internal capabilities of the organisation are the basis on which the awareness and an ability to implement changes are dependent. The quality of the accounting information system determines the understanding of the internal conditions. Therefore, the accounting capability is enormously significant for determining the availability of the right information completely and accurately. The organisations are allowed to use the internal strength for adaptive decision making by this information (Johnson & Schaltegger, 2016).

6. Challenges faced by SMEs

According to Avevor (2016), the increase in the competition, the ability to adapt to rapidly changing market demand, technological change, and capacity constraints that are related to innovation, knowledge, and creativity are the components by which a lot of challenges are faced by SMEs. In addition to this, Vendrell-Herrero et al. (2017), identified in his study that most

of the SMEs face the issues of competitive disadvantage due to their geographical isolation. Despite this fact, many economies rely on SMEs especially for generating employment opportunities. Notwithstanding its perceived weaknesses, SMEs are not cleared with the process of regional integration and globalisation, but instead of that the role of SMEs have evolved and changed, due to which they are internationally competitive and collectively regarded as the significant source of employment generation (Bilal & Al Mqbali, 2015).

Nkwabi & Mboya, (2019), determined that one of the significant challenges that are faced by SMEs is the lack of information infrastructure that is required to be addressed. The information is dealt with intrinsically by the financial industry; however, the problem between the suppliers and the demanders of funds, in general, is inappropriate information. Therefore, the infrastructure of information is essential to address this issue. Moreover, another main challenge that is faced by SMEs is the low level of research and development (R&D). The expenditure of any organisation in R&D is considered significant for driving innovation and economic growth within the organisation. The SMEs are accountable for the significant share of the total business R&D effort. This may be due to a large body of SMEs or to SMEs, which perform a huge amount of R&D. For instance, the specialised units of R&D are part of the larger group. Afolayan et al. (2015), stated that another main challenge that is faced by SMEs is the lack of use of advanced information technology. In recent years, information technology has been rapidly increased. The ownership of mobile phones, tablets, computers and smartphones have also increased in recent years. Hence, most of the consumers prefer internet sales and therefore, for individuals, the e-commerce market is expanding. Consequently, SMEs are identified to be unable to utilise such opportunities. Most of the SMEs do not have their own websites due to which, they face the issues of competitive advantage (Avevor, 2016).

7. SME Growth

During the past decade, the failure of SMEs to transform themselves into large firms regionally and globally has been of great concern (Schoonjans et al. 2013). Researchers have argued that constant growth with interest has been observed for around 50 years. The complete knowledge is not available associated with this type of occurrence, therefore, misunderstanding and conflicts are present related to it; they have called for more theoretical development on the subject of business growth (Eggers et al. 2013). In the context of SME growth, there is still limited research, and most such studies have proposed holistic models (Eggers et al. 2013). It can be critically evaluated that smart growth stage models are easily obtainable by SMEs for addressing their limitation related to the business skills and to evaluate SME's growth (Karada, 2016). However, for the review of relevant material in this article it has been recommended that this identified supposition might be doubtful, precisely as a result of the position of this kind of growth stage models (Simpson et al. 2006).

Researchers tend to agree that there are life cycles in the development of SMEs (Yukhanaev, et al. 2015) and that the life cycle phenomenon is significant for business owners and managers

(Xheneti & Bartlett, 2012). A brief look at SME-related research will show that models based on the life cycle of any organisation and SME development phases have often been used as variables to understand the changes and problems SMEs face. These models used 3 to 5 steps for highlighting the growth of SMEs on which any business will grow during the life cycle of the organisation. Ullah (2020) argued that the needs of the research are required to incorporate the most innovative method of the research for addressing the numerous queries which will remain untied. Consequently, intrusions from both of the mentioned sectors persist to be sub-optimal (Khan et al. 2012)

Marjanski et al. (2019) applied a lifecycle model with 4 stages of development: (a) start-up, (b) extension, (c) maturity, and (d) diversity. Their research describes the growth phase as a unique configuration of variables relating to the organisational context or structure. Contextual dimensions include the size and age of the organisation, the pace of growth, and the challenges it faces (Mutalemwa, 2015). Structural dimensions include structural form, formalisation, centralisation, vertical distinction, and several organisational levels.

To date, most measurement of businesses in the SME sector has relied only on manpower and financial indicators. Some have suggested that this may not be sufficient, especially in the small business realm. A company's ability to increase profitability, to survive or expand, is a more complicated issue these days due to the existence of the free market and fierce competition (Xheneti & Bartlett, 2012).

Thus, more than ever it may be argued that there are other measures for SMEs' growth (Rafiki, 2020). Some have proposed increased employment as a possible measure of growth (Marja ski et al. 2019), even though the owner of the SME may not refer to increased employment as a business goal and it may be perceived as more of a government goal (Stoian et al. 2018). SME growth has also been measured through the growth of sales and turnover (Khan et al. 2012). Thus, there is widespread agreement among researchers that it is difficult to determine one best measure for small business growth (Shinozaki, 2012). Moreover, using different measures may produce different results (Eniola & Ektebang, 2014). The model of Mutalemwa (2015) offers limited reference, since it covers businesses in the technology sector only, and it does not represent all businesses, let alone small business.

The above models do not offer explanations for various small business processes such as the need to manage external and internal knowledge of the business. Additionally, the Lewis and Xheneti & Bartlett (2012) model offers a direct relationship between business growth and manpower, which does not necessarily hold in the contemporary, technological era. In modern times, the use of ICT in business organisations is common in facilitating operations (Pisar & Bilkova, 2019). Furthermore, the Eniola & Ektebang (2014) model mainly refers to the organisational, hierarchical side, and it does not relate to the marketing aspect of the business, which is particularly crucial for SMEs (Shinozaki, 2012).

It has been extracted that the size, diversity, complexity, and individual management aspect of the standard SME growth model can be considered as the drawback, as this failed to advance the business practices for each sort of small business (Xheneti & Bartlett, 2012). Other than this, it has been observed that robust growth rate and lack of business skills are among the factors that do not work efficiently for advanced small businesses. The study of Khan et al. (2012) suggested that the small business realm is based on the growth model considering the manpower as the major functions; however, this is considered as the drawback along with the financial indicators. Apart from this, Schoonjans et al. (2013) shared that the business growth model has 4 stages of development that are directed to the unique configuration of the variables, hence these variables do not apply to all small businesses therefore are considered as a drawback.

The current models offer no pragmatic, easy-to-follow, method for assessing the outcomes at each stage of the model. However, the notion that upholding strategy will induce growth is agreed upon among researchers (Ullah, 2020), but it lacks pragmatism. The assessments the models offer may be perceived as descriptive only, which may make it difficult for a small business owner to follow a model to achieve movement towards the next stage of growth. Thus, we address the gap in knowledge about SME growth, as described by O'Farrell and Hitchens (Marjanski et al. 2019):

"Which firms achieve growth? Our thesis is that it will be those which can identify the key criteria upon which to compete in certain segments (for example, design, after-sales service, price, quality, delivery reliability, and so on) and can then build a competitive advantage based upon these criteria."

According to Marjanski et al. (2019), with the changes in competencies of business, there is a need to change the business model for innovation and practical transformation. Moreover, Mutalemwa (2015) mentioned the need to include the model practices that would be in the favour of external and internal knowledge of business so that this can emerge as the changes required by the management.

We address this gap in the knowledge by adding a flow of stages in key areas for SMEs such as marketing and business process that can be measured pragmatically.

Methodology and Research Design

This chapter describes the research method, the participants, the research setting, and the procedure.

We used a qualitative paradigm (Mohajan, 2018) with a DELPHI approach, involving data analysis using interpretation and structural analysis (Basias & Pollalis, 2018) of the data sent by the experts. We performed this analysis using the software application ATLAS.ti 8.

The Delphi method was developed by the Rand Corporation during the 1950s and the 1960s to gather information from different experts about future technology trends for

issues, or desirable directions in specific research fields (Ngozwana, 2018). The Delphi group aimed to achieve consensus between experts in their judgments on certain issues by using group communication while using a series of questionnaires interspersed with controlled opinion feedback (Glesne, 2016).

Different scholars have addressed the minimum target, with some arguing that just 51% consensus is required (Mohajan, 2018), while others require 51-75% consensus (Basias & Pollalis, 2018).

It is important to point out that the goal of the Delphi process and the comprehension of external support was to validate the model before further research.

We began by approaching 14 experts, of whom only 8 participated through the full process. We set criteria for the Delphi experts as follows (Glesne, 2016):

- Minimum of 10 years of working with SMEs in different capacities
- Minimum of 1 article published regarding SME.
- Hold a senior position.
- Have direct involvement in the organisational process, marketing operations, or human resources in their organisation of employment.
- Experts must be interested in and well informed on the topic.

The Delphi process was administered according to the following guidelines (Hsu and Sandford 2007):

- All the information was written and emailed to avoid misunderstandings.
- All communications were discrete, preventing a bias in the results and avoiding conflict within the Delphi group.
- An online two-round Delphi study was performed among eight experts. Representative interpretation and structural analysis (Basias & Pollalis, 2018) of the data sent by the experts in the first and second rounds were analysed using ATLAS.ti 8 software.
- Experts replied openly to statements provided with the theoretical text to 10 statements in the first round and 6 statements in the second round.
- A feedback report was provided in Rounds 1 and 2, including response percentages and answers to all questions in the previous round. Round 3 was considered unnecessary due to the majority agreement and the scope of the questions (Figure 1)

Data analysis

Data analysis is a process of arranging and structuring the information gathered to interpret it and to understand its meanings (Brady, 2015). In qualitative research, there are two approaches to data analysis: structural analysis and thematic analysis. The current study used both structural and thematic

content analysis methods, which related to participants' descriptions, feelings, and sensations while emphasising how what they said and how they said it aligned with a structural analysis of the contents, a combination of the analytical perspective and the analytical standards taken from the literature. Data analysis was performed while gathering data and again subsequently. The data analysis process was divided into four stages: the initial stage, the charting stage, the focused stage, and the theoretical stage (Kezar & Maxey, (2016).

Data analysis was performed with ATLAS.ti 8 a qualitative data analysis program designed to examine the information collected in the form of visual data, audio data and in text form. This also helps to analyse or interpret the data with the help of coding and other annotating activates as shown in sample analysis (see Appendix A).

The issue of the model inclusion for all businesses, part of small experts has difficulty to generalize and there is an application to qualify under the field, size, etc., for measurement.

This subject occurred at one research proposition 3, 6, and phases 2 study proposition 6.

Regarding the issue of measurement, it was proposed by one specialist to make the measurement steps simpler. The expert expressed concern that the measure will be complicated to part of the businesses, this concern expressed by the expert reinforces the concern of the expert to the inclusion suggested by the proposed model.

Proposed SME Growth Model

The growth model for SMEs has been described that is based on the results of the Delphi process. The purpose of this model is to allow small business owners, decision-makers, and researchers to assess the growth of the business through a four-stage model over time.

Table 2 (page 12) shows the proposed growth model and thinking and working assumptions for the model.

The model offers different thinking about small business growth based on several assumptions:

1. There is no critical need to increase staff numbers to experience an improvement in business results, as other models suggest.
2. Small businesses differ materially from medium businesses in their resources and objectives.
3. There is a basic 'layer', a common ground, that is equivalent to all businesses, which in its very existence will provide a solid basis for the growth of the business, such as the need for marketing operations, the need to develop unique knowledge supporting the operations of the business, the need for observation of the market, clients, law, etc.
4. Small businesses may or may not experience better business results due to intangible assets.

Table I gives a short, anonymised description of the Delphi group

Identification	Expertise	Academic Degree
Expert#1	Business consultant, over 15 years of experience in the business community in Israel	PhD
Expert#2	Academic lecturer, a business consultant with over 17 years of experience	PhD
Expert#3	CEO of the factory, serving the I.D.A and private contractors, employing over 25 people, more than 20 decades of experience	BA
Expert#4	CMO of the large software company, over 15 years of experience	BA
Expert#5	CEO, owner of the business employing over 100 people	N/A
Expert#6	CEO of insurance company, business consultant, over 20 years of experience	MA
Expert#7	CEO of software company, business consultant, over 15 years of experience	BSc
Expert#8	Owner of property company, business consultant and mentor, over 15 years of experience	BA

Figure 1: Delphi Process

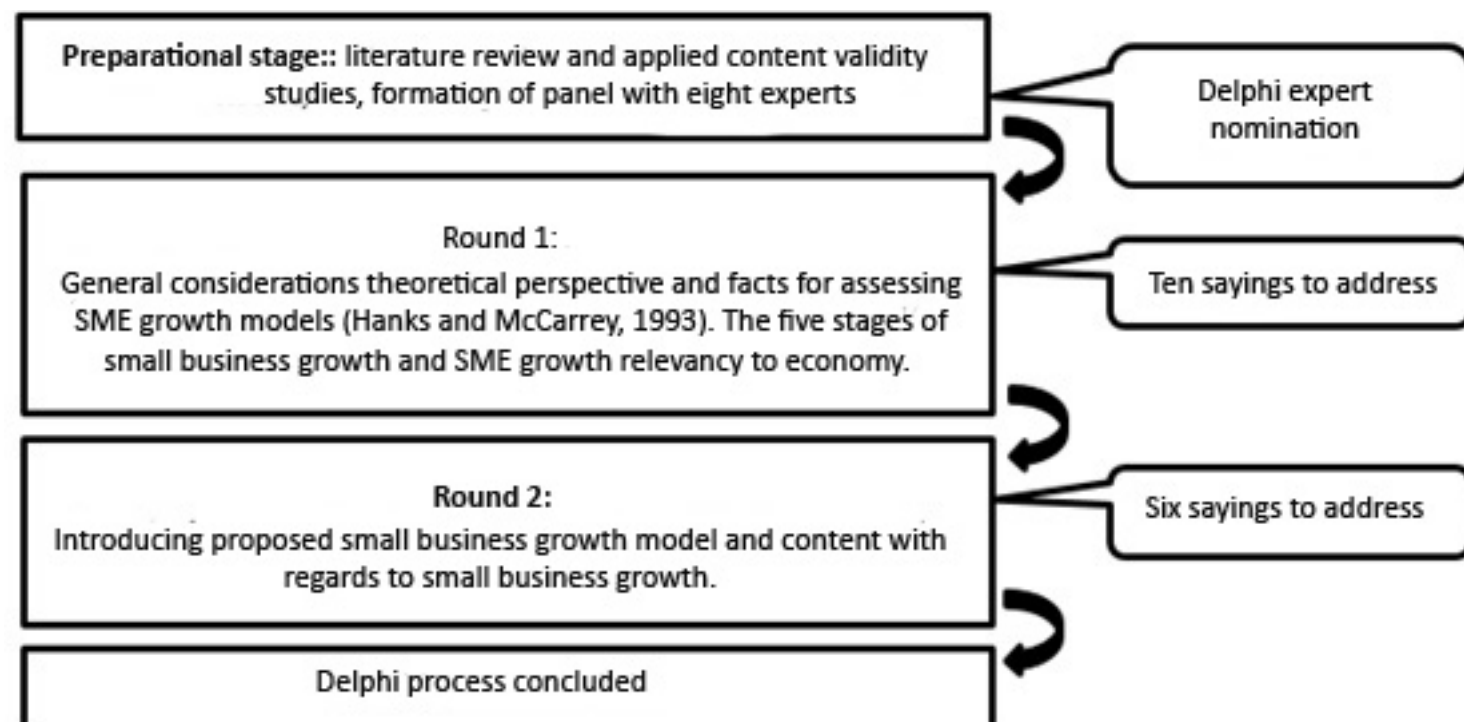
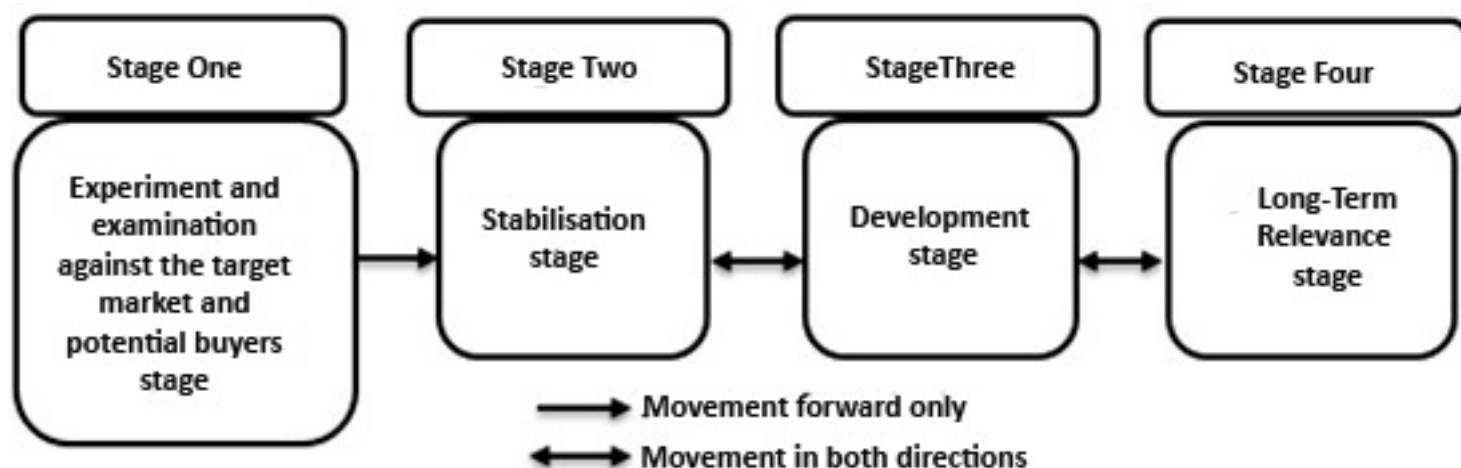


Table 2: Four Stages of SME Development

Stage	Criteria and Options	Description
Stage 1: Experiment and examination against the target market and potential buyers	Criteria: - Passing the break-even point Possible outcomes: - Go - No Go	<p>The business manages to pass the economic balance point, break-even point: the revenues cover the expenses.</p> <p>The assumption is that the business has a certain demand in the target market and therefore it can exist in its initial configuration and to sustain itself</p>
Stage 2: Stabilization	Criteria: - Development of specific organisational knowledge Possible outcomes: - Fail - Grow	<p>The organisation does not/does succeed in developing its unique knowledge, how things are done in the organisation, what methods it needs to maintain to support its business proposals, adapting technological systems, budgets, manpower and more.</p> <p>Knowledge is specific to the organisation, but it is assumed that parts of it overlap with the industry in which the organisation operates.</p>
Stage 3: Development	Criteria: - Identifying and deepening key services or products Possible outcomes: - Fail - No Change - Grow	<p>The organisation succeeds/does not succeed in developing and deepening its unique products or services that help it to reach its business goals and advance them.</p> <p>If it does not succeed, it will fail to increase its income and to improve its total share of the target market. If it does succeed, it will increase its total income, profitability, and share of the target market.</p> <p>This stage can lead to the significant physical growth of the organisation as a whole, in terms of manpower, physical location, and even the opening of branches.</p>
Stage 4: Long-Term Relevance	Criteria: - Relevancy Possible outcomes: - Death - Sustainment - Relevancy	<p>The organisation succeeds in becoming/fails to remain relevant to the target market over time if its performance improves over time.</p> <p>If it fails to remain relevant, it is likely to close. A second possibility is a sustainability that allows continued activity without real ability to develop. There is a fear of reducing market share and reducing profits over time.</p> <p>If the organisation succeeds in carrying out relevant actions at various levels, it will remain relevant and enable growth over time.</p>

Figure 2: The Four Stages of Development



The working assumption is that management and stakeholders are interested in continuing to invest energy and resources for the continued development and growth of SMEs. Additionally, pragmatic evaluation of the firms' growth phase will follow the following stages (Figure 2):

- **Stage 1:** An evaluation can be performed through company documents and accountancy as it passes the break-even point; thus, the profits cover all costs of the business, including salaries.
- **Stage 2:** An evaluation can be carried out through questionnaires for employees and management and through a systematic examination of the organization based on existing models.
- **Stage 3:** An evaluation can be performed through omnibus research and the financial reports of the organization.
- **Stage 4:** An evaluation can be carried out through questionnaires for employees and management, omnibus research, and the financial reports of the organization.

Summary and Conclusion

This study offers a new predictive model for small enterprises to serve as a practical, pragmatic tool to measure and delineate firm development toward growth based on the writer's practical experience and theoretical review.

Pragmatic models for small business development are very important and scarce: they must be very resource-effective and produce notable short-term and long-term benefits.

In this study, a consensus of a Delphi group for a proposed small business predictive model was used. The resulting model may offer a better fit to small businesses now, and it may be used pragmatically with small business owners and managers in the future.

The results indicated a consensus within the Delphi group, allowing for an understanding that a different conceptual framework may impact small business growth and future development. The need for business growth was discussed many

times in the literature: enterprise is under pressure to grow. To survive in spite of the competition, the enterprise must maintain its growth by improving its capability. Further, in recent decades, the business environment has been experiencing instability due to changes in economic, social, and technological issues; these may be better resolved using the proposed model with small businesses.

The definition of SME may impede business growth, and there was a consensus in this paper on the importance of a new perspective. This perspective approaches SME segmentation with an in-depth resolution offering to analyse the SME group in smaller segments with specific needs, rather than using a broader approach.

The proposed pragmatic model can be applied to any small enterprise. However, an adaptation of the different stages may be necessary to meet the internal and external context of each small enterprise. For instance, the manufacturing and service sectors may present different external difficulties and opportunities. Further, different managerial paradigms may allow for different interpretations and operations in different small firms. Small enterprise growth should be considered a continuous process that requires the collaboration of all stakeholders. The study of firm growth is a complex phenomenon, and it needs pragmatic models specifically designed for unique specifications of a segment in the business complexity that is not generic. Accordingly, our model gives a direction on how to predict small enterprise growth. Moreover, this research also provides a broader understanding of the significance of marketing and accounting capabilities for the growth, sustainability, and survival of SMEs. The marketing capabilities of the businesses enable the organization to develop good customer relationship, better market sensing, and the ability for strengthening the bonds among the channels within the market. Furthermore, a significant role is played by accounting capability, as the organization that possesses the effective accounting capability will be producing quality information that will highly affect the business decisions positively.

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Appendix A

Delphi stage 1:

<p>Statement No 1: So far, measuring business in the SME range relies only on manpower and financial results, and it is not certain that the size of the business today is solely based on manpower and financial results. Today, the business world appreciates and seeks to succeed in a unique knowledge of processes, sales offers and services, accessible to customers and more, it is necessary to express these issues in measuring the size of business</p> <p>It seems that here is full acceptance with all the experts about the necessity of different measuring methods than the proposed models, which were presented to them.</p> <p>The experts answers were divided into 2 main groups: First group- responded with full and brief agreement Second group- responded with full agreement but expressed further reference to the statement</p> <p>Respondents Agreement Distribution: Yes (#), No (#), Partial (#) Example Response: Expert #1- "Totally agree" Expert #4- "I think success is not measured only the amount of force a person and money" Expert #2- "agree very " Expert #6- "I was thinking more about Statement 1, and as I wrote, the measurement based on financial results and number 25 is limited. Today, in the midst of a technological revolution, in the long run many professions will become extinct and machines will increasingly replace humans</p> <p>Already, many organizations are undergoing a digitalization process and are reducing the dependency on human resources. Therefore, measurement on a human growth basis is less and less relevant and reflects an existing reality. However, today there is still no real alternative to objective and accurate measurement that cannot be interpreted personally.</p> <p>Therefore, it is the difficult setting non-numeric universal standards."</p>	<p>Statement No 5: The Harvard model offers a direct relationship between business growth and manpower. Perhaps today, because of technology it can be argued that the ratio does not have to be mainly honest in small businesses</p> <p>Respondents Agreement Distribution: Yes (#), No (#), Partial (#) Example Response: Expert #1 - "Totally agree"</p>
<p>Statement No 1, structural analysis: 100% agreement between experts</p>	<p>Statement No 5, structural analysis: 100% agreement between experts</p>

(continued)

Appendix A (continued)

<p>Statement No 3: The model of Hanks and McCarrey (1993), offers limited reference since it examines business in technology only (HI-TECH), so we do not represent business as a whole</p> <p>Respondents Agreement Distribution: Yes (#), No (#), Partial (#)</p> <p>Example Response: Expert #4 - "Totally agree, also refers solely to statistical numerical data"</p>	<p>Statement No 5: It will be difficult, perhaps impossible, to quantify processes accurately so that they can be an accurate map for growth and open business in general</p> <p>Respondents Agreement Distribution: Yes (#), No (#), Partial (#)</p> <p>Example Response: Expert #6 - "Don't think there is a model that will suit all businesses" "Disagree, there are distinct and common stages of development that can serve as milestones for strategy and tactics."</p>
<p>Statement No 3, structural analysis: 57.1% of the experts agree 42.8% of the experts disagree</p>	<p>Statement No 5, structural analysis: 57.1% of the experts agree 28.5% of the experts disagree with the statement 14.2% of the experts agree with the term but limit it</p>

Appendix B

Delphi stage 2:

<p>Statement No 1: Do you have any comments or questions about the results of the first round?</p> <p>Respondents Agreement Distribution: Yes (#), No (#), Partial (#)</p> <p>Example Response: Expert #5 - "Everything is clear to me"</p>	<p>Statement No 5: I agree that it will be possible to measure through the model the progress of businesses that will follow the model (phases)</p> <p>Respondents Agreement Distribution: Yes (#), No (#), Partial (#)</p> <p>Example Response: Expert #2- "Agree and this is also perhaps the most important thing that it is measurable for every stage " Expert #1 - "Yes"</p>
<p>Statement No 1, structural analysis: 100% agreement between experts</p>	<p>Statement No 5, structural analysis: 100% agreement between experts</p>
<p>Statement No 2: I understand and agree that the above model does not offer direct or indirect reference to a product type or service and thus allows a broader business reference, that is, the general model for business and not specific to one or the other area</p> <p>Respondents Agreement Distribution: Yes (#), No (#), Partial (#)</p> <p>Example Response: Expert #3 - "Totally agree"</p>	<p>Statement No 6: For me, the model is exhaustive and should provide measurement and evaluation for small businesses.</p> <p>Respondents Agreement Distribution: Yes (#), No (#), Partial (#)</p> <p>Example Response: "... in most businesses"</p> <p>Expert #7 – "Agreeing with reservations, a pilot of the model that has been tried on at least 4 businesses with the same classification in different areas of the country should be shown "</p>
<p>Statement No 2, structural analysis: 100% agreement between experts</p>	<p>Statement No 5, structural analysis: 100% agreement between experts, 2 reservations.</p>

Child labour - is it a curse or a reality: Role of Government of Bangladesh and ILO in the elimination of child labour from dangerous industries in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Should child labour be considered a social curse or a reality? This inevitable debate has long been taking place in both the public and academic spheres. If child labour has become a curse, then who should be held responsible for creating this curse in society. On the other hand, if socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political aspects of marginalised states worldwide have become a reality, then why such a reality cannot dwindle has long been a fundamental question for policy-makers and capitalists in the world. Whether the extreme form of child labour in Bangladesh is due to the failure of the state's policy and administrative system, or a curse, is another academic discourse. The ILO officially started working in Bangladesh in 1972, and in the same year, Bangladesh ratified several ILO conventions, including a few fundamental conventions. The Bangladesh Government endorsed the "C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)" on 12 March 2001. However, since 2001, Bangladesh's child labour has not decreased significantly due to a lack of constructive and substantial policy from the Government of Bangladesh and the ILO. The fundamental question, therefore, for both the ILO and Bangladesh Government is whether there is the necessity to formulate a more constructive national policy to see the eradication of child labour in Bangladesh rather than considering it as a social curse.

Key words: Globalisation and neoliberalism, child labour, ILO, UNICEF, UN, Bangladesh Labour Act, BGMEA, collective bargaining, RMG, ethical business, COVID-19

Research aims and objectives

This article aims to review and evaluate the global child labour situation and Bangladesh as a case study to see if the Government of Bangladesh and the ILO have been succeeded in eradicating the worst forms of child labour in Bangladesh or any factors hindering their success.

Study design and methodology

This article has primarily been written from a range of secondary sources such as scholarly journal articles, newspapers, media coverage, published reports from the World Bank, IFC, Better Work Bangladesh, ILO and UNICEF.

Findings and contributions to knowledge

The investigation of this article shows that the Government of Bangladesh lacks political commitment to implement the national Labour Act and the ILO conventions. Most importantly, the ILO's piecemeal intervention strategy at the state and organisational level have created academic discourse on whether the ILO can see any significant results in the eradication of child labour in Bangladesh sooner or later.

Conclusions and recommendations

The political commitment of the Government of Bangladesh is essential for the respect and implementation of the ILO Convention (C182), while the enforcement of the national Labour Act is also the biggest challenge for the Government of Bangladesh. Therefore, consideration should also be given to formulating effective policies and intervention strategies of the Government of Bangladesh to control and reduce the worst child labour from the most dangerous industries in Bangladesh. However, without the genuine contribution of significant stakeholders of the Government of Bangladesh such as the ILO, the World Bank, ADB, the IMF, IFC, and national and international NGOs, and donor countries like Australia, Canada, the USA, the UK and the EU, the elimination of any child labour project would not be successful.

Any form of child labour is a social stigma. The exploitation of children should have been stopped yesterday; today is too late. Children are the future of the world - they need proper education, health care, and a conducive environment to make their bodies and minds build a sustainable tomorrow.

Child labour - is it a social curse or a reality? This fundamental question needs to be addressed more deeply to understand why child labour is still prevalent in the world. Child labour is not a curse; instead, it is a reality in some regions or countries of the world. The failure of most disadvantaged states, including the failed policies of international organisations in child labour eradication programs, has exacerbated the situation in the world. Therefore, the issue of child labour still needs extra careful consideration at the policy level, both locally and internationally, in order to find a solution to eradicate child labour in the world. At the outset, two essential questions that we need to address carefully in this article are (a) why child labour occurs and (b) how child labour can be abolished? Before I aim to answer these two fundamental questions in this article, it is also significantly important to know the definitions of child labour. According to Dayiolu Tayfur:

Child labourers constitute a group of working children who are either too young to work or are engaged in hazardous activities – that is, work that is potentially harmful to their physical, social, psychological or educational development (2013, p.1).

International Labour Organisation (ILO) has defined the term “child labour” which refers to work that:

- *is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and/or*
- *interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work (ILO, n.d.).*

In Bangladesh, an extreme form of child labour is apparent in almost every informal sector, such as agriculture, construction, transportation and the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) industry (see Naeem, Shaikat & Ahmed, 2011; Ahmed & Ray, 2014; Bakkar, 2019; Henry, 2011; Beaubien, 2016; Lau & Chan, 2021; *The Diplomat*, 2021). Bangladesh ratified the ILO “C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)” on 12 March 2001 (ILO, C182). However, respecting and enforcing the ILO conventions and the national Labour Act have been a significant challenge for the Government of Bangladesh. As a result, child labourers are still employed in various informal sectors, and they often face death in hazardous factory fires (see Ahamed, 2013; *The Diplomat*, 2021). According to the 1996 Labour Force Survey conducted by the Government of Bangladesh, there are more than 6.3 million children between the ages of five and 14 who work for wages and who are not enrolled in school (see Douglas, Ferguson & Klett, 2004; Henry, 2011). Afrin (2021) published a report in *Dhaka Tribune*, a leading online newspaper revealing that: “Bangladesh fourth worst-hit country in the world in terms of [a] number of children affected by elevated blood lead level”. Now the question is how to wipe

out child labour in Bangladesh? Bangladesh Government has taken some strategies to eradicate child labourers, for example, by forming the Child Labor National Action plan in 2012, but its progress has not been satisfactory. Significantly, Bangladesh lacks an adequate data collection and storage system (centrally), which prevents researchers from finding out the genuine number of child labourers in Bangladesh. However, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) survey report shows that as of 2015, the country had some 3.45 million active child labourers. There would be at least more than 4 million child labourers in Bangladesh now, from earlier estimates of BBS (Rezvi, 2017). Due to COVID-19, the percentage of child labourers might increase significantly over the next few years (see Ullah, 2021; ILO & UNICEF, 2021). Therefore, this article aims to reflect on the critical discussions that should provide a clear understanding of the facts that have determined child labour in the world and Bangladesh. The recommendation in this article might be fruitful for the Bangladesh Government, ILO and other countries to reduce the dangerous form of child labour in the future.

Critical theoretical discourse for child labour

The contemporary scholarship reflects upon various issues that considerably produce child labour in the world. For example, Lau and Chan (2021) argue that poverty should have been considered one of the significant causes of child labour. However, other factors, such as family size, geography, education, socio-economic and socio-cultural and global political economics, also play a crucial role in child exploitation and child labour worldwide (Lau & Chan, 2021). For example, most child labourers are engaged in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Asian, African and Sub-Saharan African belts due to the high rate of poverty in those countries (UNICEF, 2021). Scholars, e.g., Ullah and Amanullah (2021), argue that LDCs are seriously behind in capital accumulation than most western, European and other developed countries. In addition, LDCs have inadequate education systems, low regulation in the workplace, and socio-economic structural barriers etc. Thus, the fact that these disadvantaged states can deal with their socio-economic and other cultural and political problems that have long persisted in their countries should be given another important consideration by scholars and policy-makers worldwide. For example, scholars (Ullah & Amanullah, 2021) further argue that approximately 880 million people in 46 countries have contributed two per cent to the global GDP and one per cent to worldwide trade. Therefore, there is a compelling call for significant changes in politico-economic policies to reduce poverty and other socio-economic barriers and eliminate child labour from these countries (see Ullah & Amanullah, 2021; Lau & Chan, 2021).

Scholars, e.g., Ullah and Amanullah (2021) argue that Bangladesh is about to be ousted from the list of the LDCs by 2026 as the review Committee for Development Policy of the UN set some obligations to fulfil on 12 March 2018 despite Bangladesh's ongoing progress on socio-economic aspects in the last decade.

Graph One: Bangladesh's GDP from 2010 to 2020



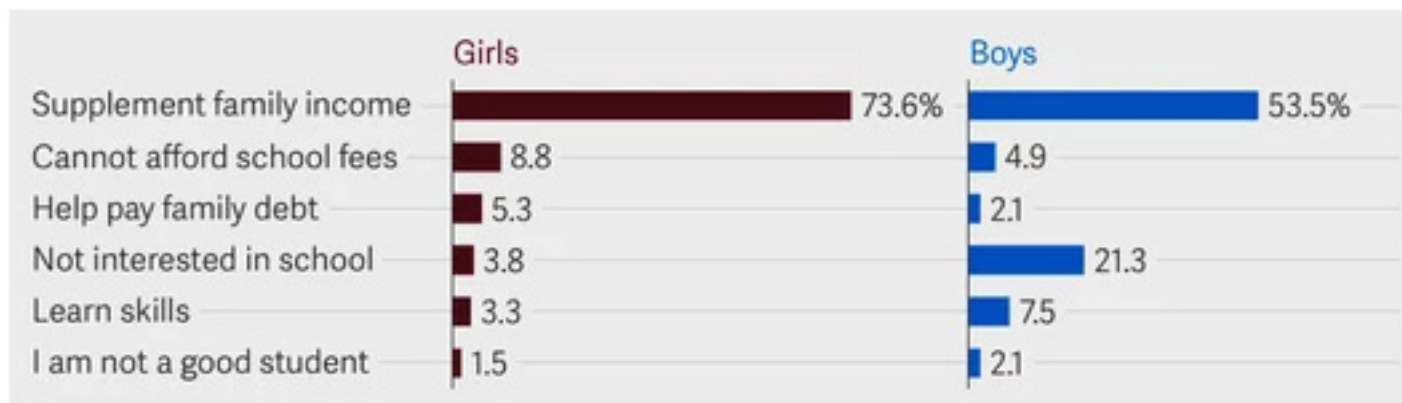
Source: Tradingeconomic.com

Bangladesh's economy is boosting because of the direct support of the informal sectors of the country. For example, Bangladesh's RMG industry's contribution to the national economy has been phenomenal over the last few decades (see Labowitz, 2016; Siddiqi, 2019; Rahman & Rahman, 2020; Ullah, 2021). The RMG industry's contribution to the national GDP would be approximately 13 per cent or more when it aims to make a profit of US\$50 billion within the next few years from its current US\$40 billion (see Haque & Gopalakrishnan, 2019; Ullah, 2021). However, scholars, e.g., Ashwin, Kabeer & Schuessler (2020), argue that global clothing brands are culprits and have connections with the Bangladeshi RMG traders who have the 'Porsches, Rolexes, and helicopters', while RMG workers are starving and fighting for their basic needs (see also Ullah, 2016; Ullah, 2021; IndustriALL Global Union, 2021).

Child labour in the RMG industry in Bangladesh dates back to the early days of the 1980s (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, n.d; Islam & Akther, 2015). Due to the socio-economic and other social obstacles, a Bangladeshi girl or a boy at an early age when they should be at school and home may instead work in dangerous RMG and other informal industries. Children work long hours at minimum wages and sometimes without regular payment in the RMG and most informal sectors in Bangladesh (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, n.d). Here we can find an example of Ms Kalpona Akter, a labour activist from Bangladesh, who was also child labour in Bangladesh's RMG sector for a while. In the early 1990s, Ms Akter started working in the RMG factory after her father's death when she was just 12 years old (see Human Rights Watch, 2016). However, Ms Akter, in several of her public speeches, acknowledged the reality and her awful experience as child labour and how child labourers

are brutally abused in the RMG industry in Bangladesh. Ms Akter's case reflects the actual child labour condition and how pitiful it was. Unfortunately, Bangladesh's current child labour conditions did not change much (see Lau & Chan, 2021). Ms Akter later fled the industry as a child labourer but began working as a union organiser to support RMG workers defending their fundamental rights in the RMG sector. Ms Akter is also the Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity founder and executive director and was awarded Human Rights Watch's Alison Des Forges Award for Extraordinary Activism in 2016 (see Human Rights Watch, 2016).

Capitalists are always closely associated with the state and power, and workers are consistently devalued and exploited (see Harvey, 2007; Brown, 2018; Munck, 2010; Ullah, 2021). Capitalists do not consider workers as a supporting force in industrial relations which creates complex situations and often creates antagonistic relationships between employers and workers. On the other hand, trade unionism in Bangladesh is discouraged for attracting FDIs, which also weakens workers' power to organise collectively against any forms of exploitation (see Siddiqi, 2015; Ashraf & Prentice, 2019; Bair, Anner & Blasi, 2020). In the entire process, children are more exploited as they cannot raise voices or form trade unions to protect their basic rights. The sectoral and federation trade union bodies in Bangladesh are politically coloured and considerably failed to protect workers' rights in Bangladesh (see Ashraf & Prentice, 2019). In this case, as a guardian, the state must be proactive to safeguard children and child labour from any exploitation, but the question is, how can it be done?

Table One: The reasons for child labour in Bangladesh

Source: ADRA (2019)

A study result recently published in ADRA (2019) shows why child labour occurs in Bangladesh. The survey (ADRA, 2019) has shown the results based on six categories, and the top variable was related to poverty when most child respondents stated that their income had been a supplement to their families. So, poverty is again a dilemma to many of Bangladesh's children, who have often been compromised of their present and future by working hard in dangerous workplaces throughout the country for supplementing their families (see ADRA, 2019). After 50 years of Bangladesh's independence, it is hard to believe that abundant children still live in the streets of the capital city of Dhaka, where multi-billion-dollar business deals and transactions take place every day (Gilbert, 2018). Globalisation perhaps was a blessing for western and Bangladeshi capitalists (RMG traders) who are mainly responsible for an extreme form of child exploitation on top of poverty and other socio-economic and socio-cultural barriers in Bangladesh (see Saxena, 2019; Crinis, 2019; Siddiqi, 2019; Lau & Chan, 2021; Ullah, 2021).

On the other hand, contemporary scholarship suggests that the issue that needs to be seriously considered is whether the demand for child labour in the global supply chain has been reduced or is still increasing (see Crinis, 2019; Lau & Chan, 2021). The exploitation of child labour by international clothing brands like Nike, Adidas, Walmart in developing countries (Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh) have been in the academic discourse for a long time (see Ahamed, 2013; Ullah, 2021). Multinationals come to low regulated countries to exploit workers and child labourers to pay low wages and often force them to work in unhealthy production hubs. If the global and local capitalists exploit children, then it is also essential to find a solution by capitalists who mainly use and exploit children mostly in impoverished countries. However, theoretically and practically, it would be a worthy dream to consider that child labour will be completely eradicated from this world soon, especially when the capitalist mode of production has been more potent in the world (see Harvey, 2007; Munck, 2010; Ullah, 2021). Hence, we can considerably say that poverty should not be considered only the issue for child labour in Bangladesh. Scholars should consider other important factors such as globalisation, which has lessened most developing countries' potentials and why these countries remain ineffective in formulating effective policies and strategies to eradicate child labour. Notably, scholars should also consider the capitalist mode of the production method, which perhaps would not end up child labour in this world. Thus, how capitalism can be better structured and how capitalists can spend more on their CSR budgets can also be a topic of discussion for the elimination of child labour in the world and Bangladesh. Nevertheless, another theoretical debate could be whether Bangladesh needs to develop a far-sighted plan to eradicate child labour with political commitment, which has been absent since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971.



Child labour in Bangladesh

Source: *The Daily Observer* (2015)

Literature

A brief history of child labour

When we mainly consider the modern form of child labour or slavery, we should not undermine the historical discourse on child labour, as it provides the background of child labour in the world. Historically, it is not well traced, but it can be assumed that from the very beginning of human history, child labour or child servant was common practice in society (see History. Com Editors, 2009). However, the industrial revolution made the situation for child labour worse. In the early centuries, business traders and factory owners began recruiting child labour in crowded and unsafe and unclean factories, where factory codes and the proper industrial Act were missing. Throughout the first half of the 1800s, the USA had recruited a considerably high number of child labourers in the handicraft and agricultural industry, when slavery was also a severe issue. Surprisingly, in 1900, almost 18 per cent or more of all American workers were under the age of 16 (see History. Com Editors, 2009). Harry McShane, a young American factory worker, was a prime example of a machine belt injury in a spring factory in May 1908. His arm was pulled close to his shoulder, and his right leg was broken. Unfortunately, he did not receive any compensation from the factory owner when he was only 16 years old, and the fate of many RMG workers in Bangladesh today is the same (Inspireeducation, n.d.). The fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory on 25 March, 1911 in Greenwich Village, Manhattan, New York City, was the deadliest industrial disaster in the history of America. Events such as the Harry McShane's accident and Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, saw the rise of the labour movement that brought occupational health and safety issues to the forefront of society (Kleeberg, 2003; Aldrich, 1997; Fishback & Kantor, 2007; Inspireeducation, n.d.). The timeline for child workers is:

- 1802: *Children's working day is 12 hours*
- 1819: *Minimum work age is 9 in the cotton industry*
- 1833: *Minimum work age is 9 in all large factories. Children aged between 9 and 12 may only work 8 hours a day, and have 2 hours of compulsory education.*
- 1842: *Children may no longer work underground in mines*
- 1847: *Children's working day is 10 hours*
- 1878: *Minimum work age is 10*
- 1901: *Minimum work age is 12 (ACTUWORKSITE, n.d.).*

The world is much more civilised now, but the question is whether the capitalists have changed their attitude towards child labour, perhaps not. Further elaboration and evidence from recent exploitation of child labour (see *The Diplomat*, 2021) create inevitable arguments as to whether the world is still ready to see a positive outcome in the child labour eradication program, especially in Bangladesh. Before we move into a discussion on global and Bangladesh's perspectives on child labour elimination, it is also imperative to know how the ILO evaluate its progress and success in the child labour elimination process in the last one hundred years (see ILO, n.d.).

The ILO as a labour organisation and its structure

The ILO, as a labour organisation, despite its limitations in enforcement and implementation of significant conventions in the member states, has played a role in critical historical junctures. The ILO has experienced the Great Depression, decolonisation, the creation of solidarity in Poland, the victory against apartheid in South Africa - and construct a moral and productive framework for a just globalisation today. Under the Treaty of Versailles after World War I, the ILO was founded in 1919 to reflect the belief that universal and long-lasting peace can only be achieved by ensuring social justice (see Helfer, 2006; Standing, 2008; Rodger et al., 2009; Henry, 2011). The ILO tripartite type of social dialogue approach is unique in the world. However, several scholars argue whether this tripartite intervention structure is effective enough to stop exploitation around the globe (see, e.g., Helfer, 2006; Standing, 2008; Rodgers et al., 2009). Beyond ILO's criticisms on its success at the state level on workers exploitation, its several conventions are the guideline for the state members to follow towards eliminating child labour or workers exploitation, and some are discussed below.

ILO's "declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work in 1998

The ILO's "*Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*" was adopted by governments, multinational companies and labour right NGOs in 1998. "In line with the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", ILO's "Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work it aimed for:

- (a) *freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;*
- (b) *the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour;*
- (c) *the effective abolition of child labour; and*
- (d) *the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation (ILO, 1998).*

ILO's convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour, 1999

The ILO recommends the member states ratify, respect and enforce Convention 182 to eradicate child labour by following the five crucial recommendations that mainly creates the worst form of child labour, and they are:

- *Slavery or similar practices, such as the sale or trade of children or the use of children in debt bondage or serfdom;*
- *Obligatory or forced work, including the compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflicts;*
- *The recruitment, use or offer of a child for involvement in prostitution, pornographic material or pornographic shows;*
- *The use, recruitment or offer of a child for illicit activities, notably in the production or trafficking of drugs, as defined in the specific international treaties;*
- *Work which, by its very nature or the conditions in which it is undertaken, is likely to jeopardise the health, safety or morality of children (Humanium, n.d.).*

The overview of child labour from global perspectives

To get an accurate picture and estimates of global child labour is a challenging task because many developing countries do not keep a record of their actual number of child labour. According to UNICEF and ILO, by 10 June 2021 - the number of children in child labour worldwide had reached 160 million - an increase of 8.4 million children in the last four years - with millions more at risk due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, UNICEF and ILO also warned we will see another 9 million children at work by 2022, due to the COVID-19 pandemic (UNICEF, 2021). Understandably, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation for child labour, but previous efforts have not been even conducive towards eliminating child labour worldwide (Henry, 2011; Ospina & Roser, 2016). In addition, without emergency mitigation step by step, the COVID-19 crisis is likely to push millions of more children into child labour.

Contemporary research shows some astonishing results that children aged 5 to 11 in child labour now account for more than half of the global child labour. Dangerous work for children aged 5 to 17 - defined as work that could harm their health, safety or morals - has increased from 65 million to 79 million in 2016 (UNICEF, 2021). Graph Two shows that the progress of child labour elimination was quite well followed until 2016, but after, the rate of child labour has started increasing again in the world. Nevertheless, Graph Three shows the world's child labour mainly occurs in rural areas rather than urban slums.



(Photo source: Humanium, n.d.)

Impact of COVID-19

Without mitigation measures, the number of children in child labour could rise from 160 million in 2020 to 168.9 million by the end of 2022

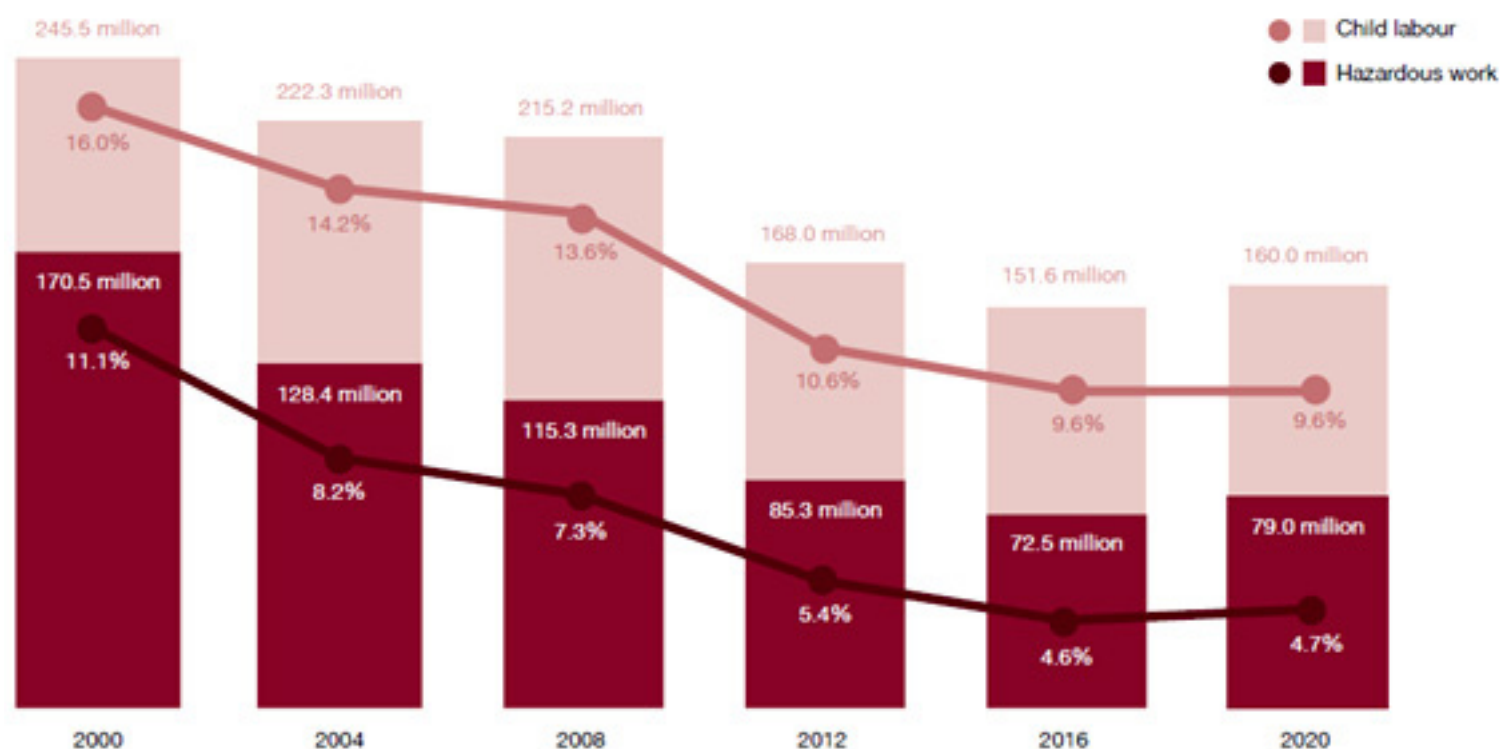
Number of children aged 5 to 17 years in child labour, projected to the end of 2022



© UNICEF/UNI274800/Soumaila

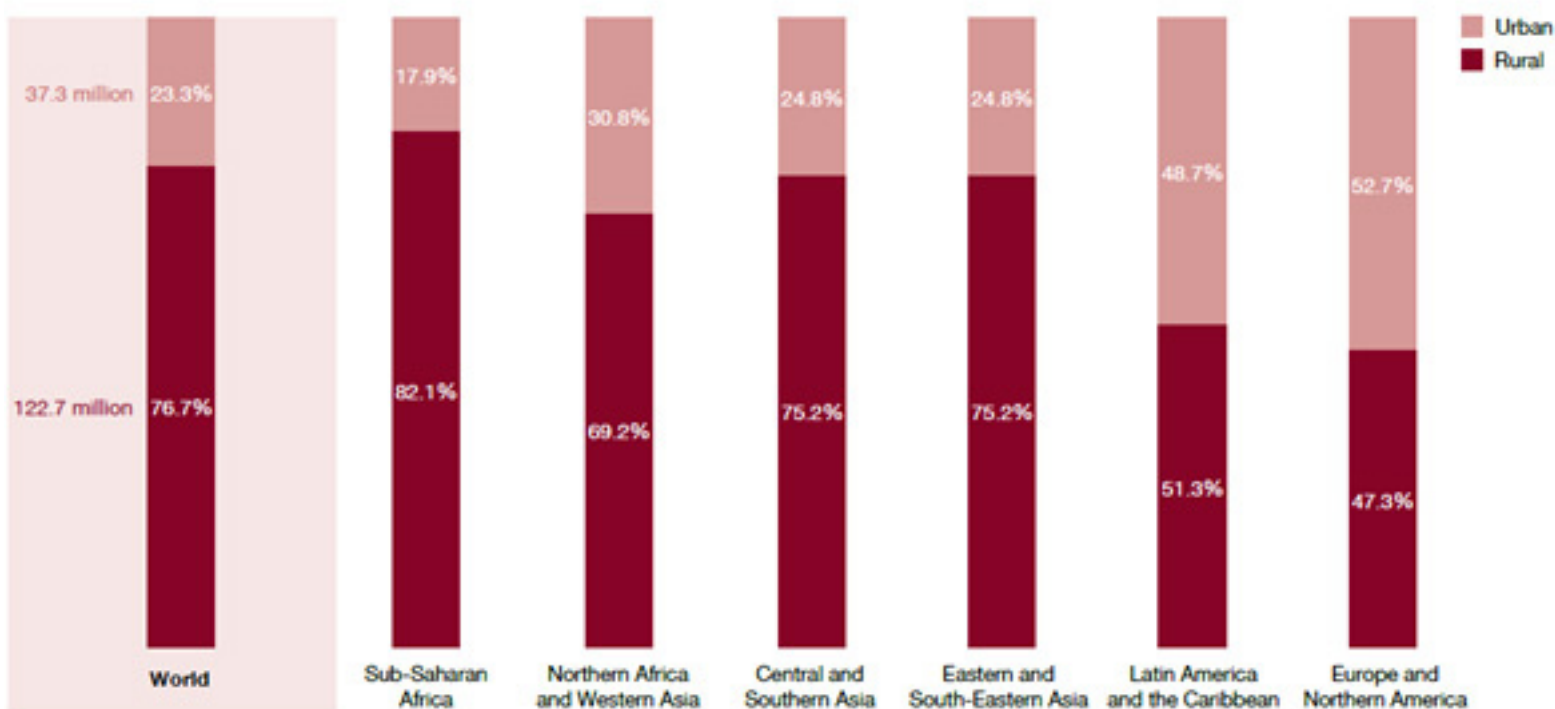
Source: ILO & UNICEF (2021).

Graph Two: The child labour elimination progress



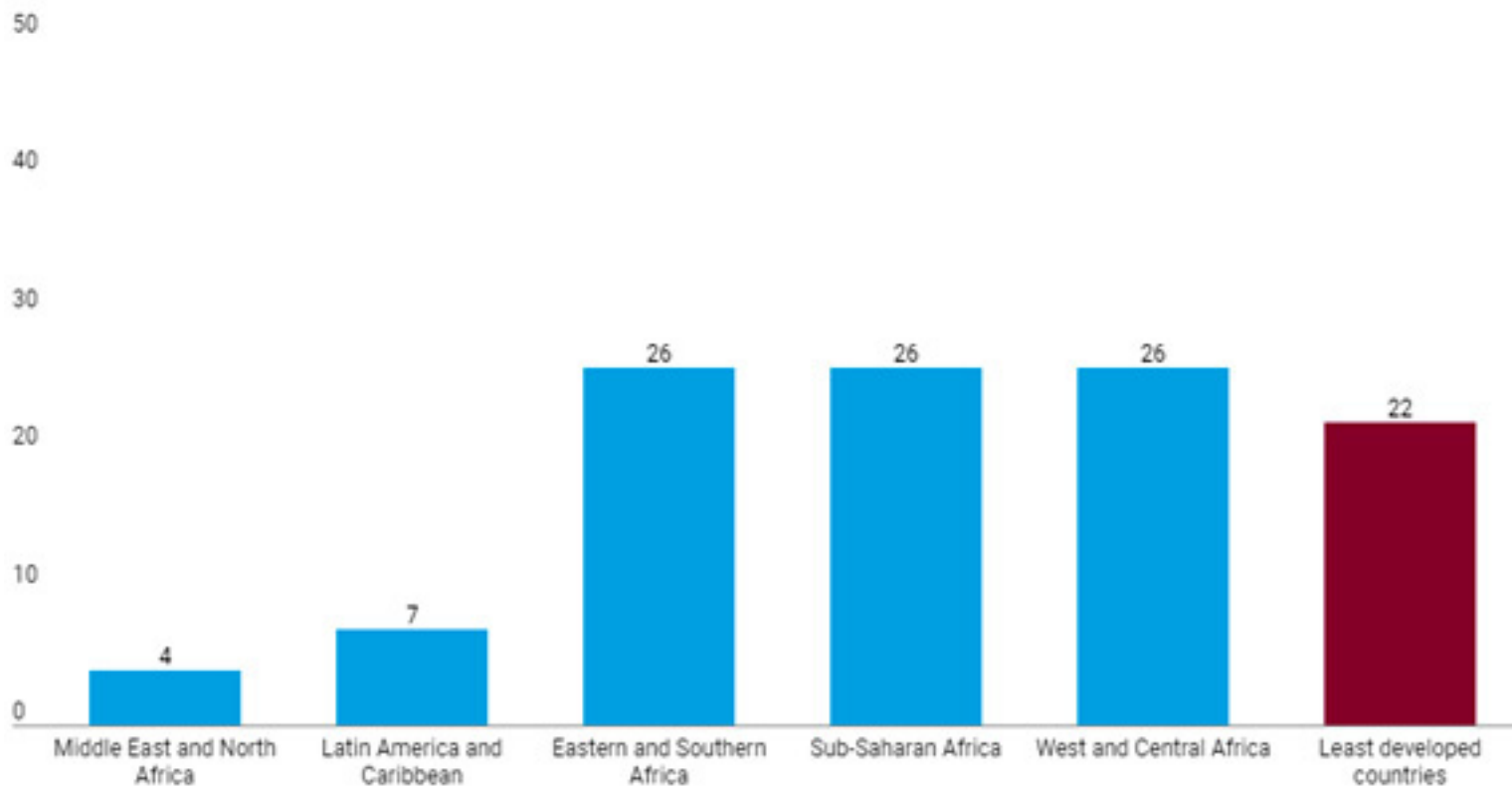
Source: ILO & UNICEF (2021).

Graph Three: Comparison statistics between urban and rural child workers in the world



Source: ILO & UNICEF (2021).

Graph Four: The regional child labour aged between 5 to 17

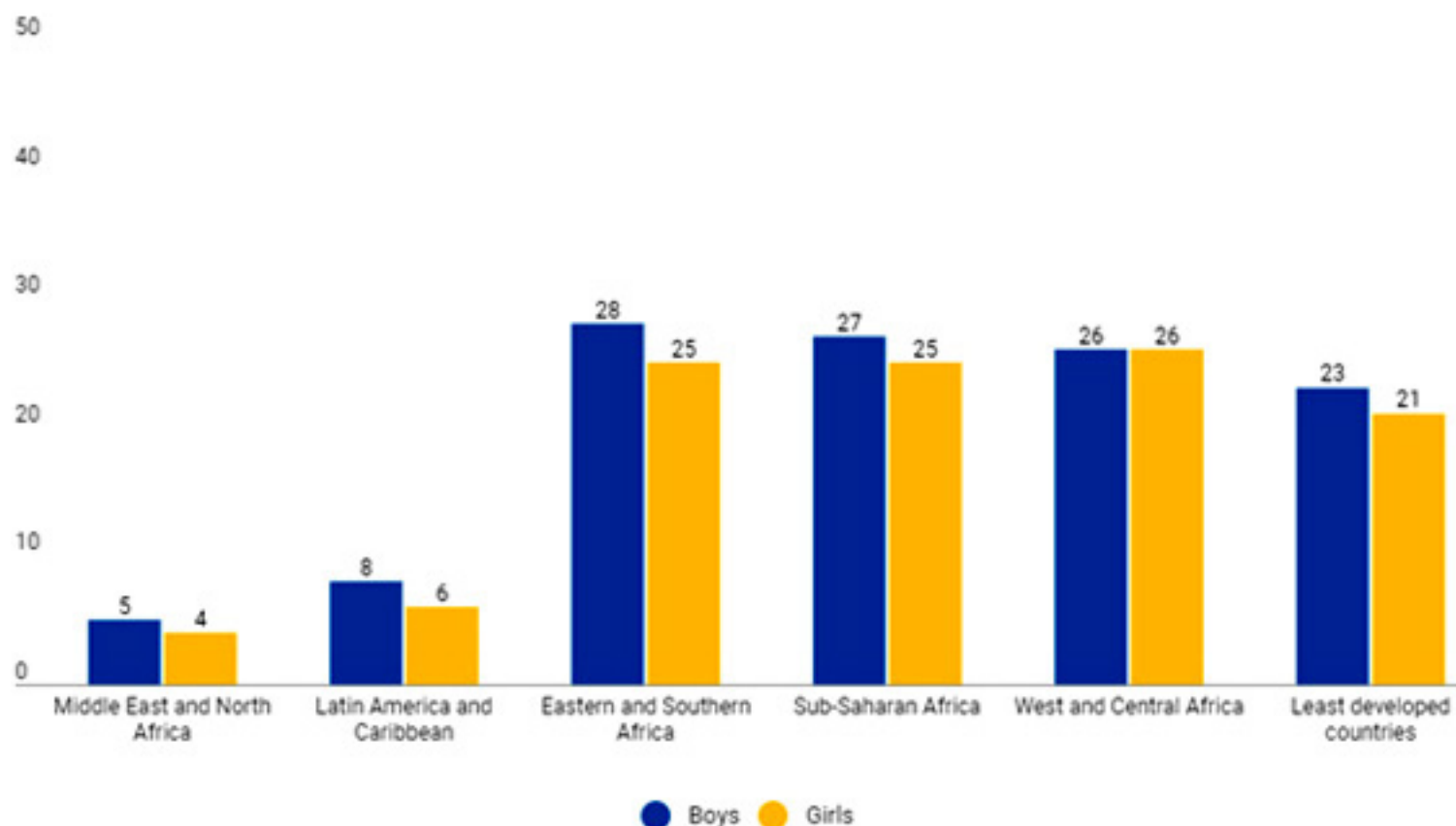


Source: UNICEF (2021) based on Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and other national surveys, 2012-2019.⁽¹⁾

Graph Four shows the percentage of child labour based on the regions. Eastern and Southern Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, West and Central Africa, and LDCs (such as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Cambodia) produce the larger scale of child labour (see, e.g., Naeem, Shaukat & Ahmed, 2011; Bakkar, 2019; UNICEF, 2021). The gender disparities research shows that both boys and girls are almost equally involved in child labour in these regions, despite

a slightly higher percentage of boys than girls in some regions (see UNICEF, 2021). Nevertheless, the study indicates that girls are primarily involved in most household services as unpaid child labour. Graph Five shows the percentage of boys and girls engaged in child labour aged between 5 to 17 in these regions.

(1) Notes: Regional estimates represent data from countries covering at least 50 per cent of the regional population of children aged 5 to 17. Data coverage was insufficient to calculate a global estimate and regional estimates for East Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, North America, South Asia and Western Europe.

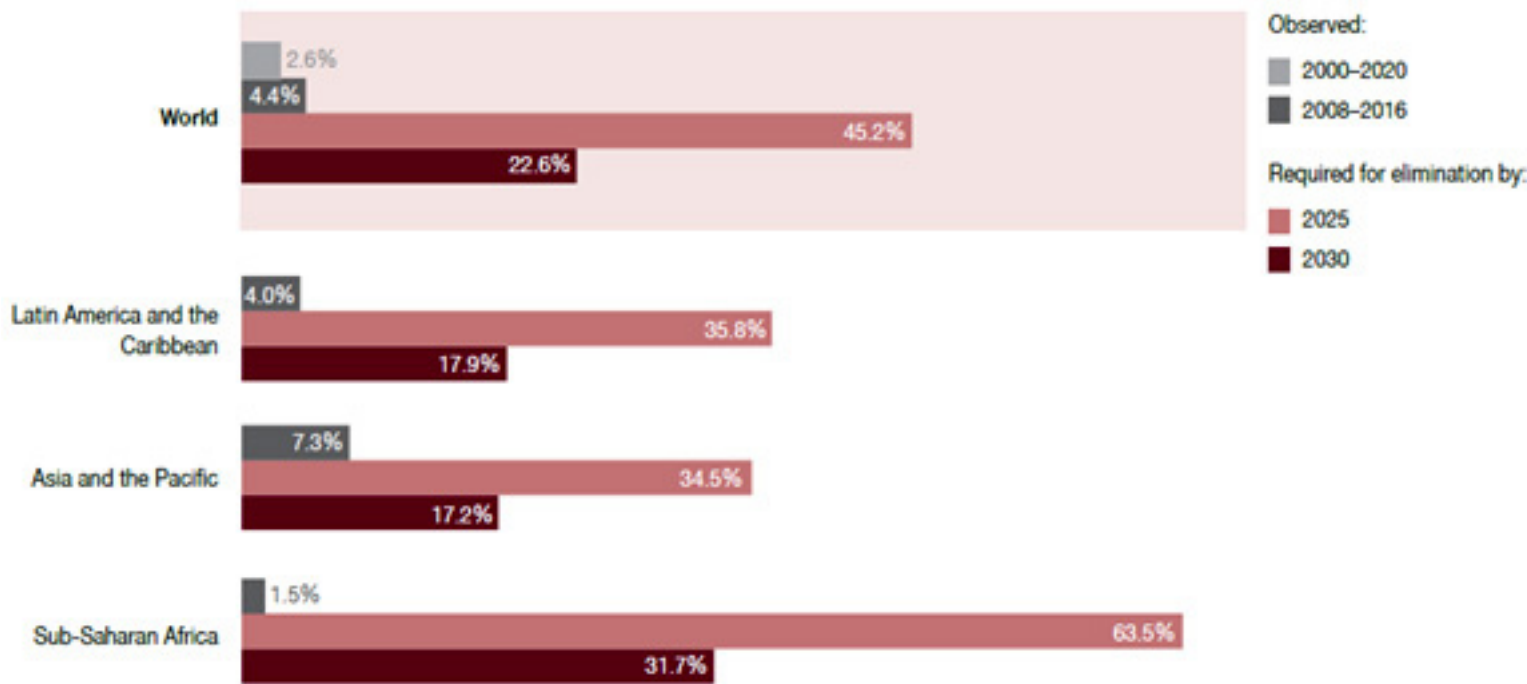
Graph Five: The regional child labour aged between 5 to 17 (boys & girls)

Source: UNICEF, 2021, based on Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and other national surveys, 2012-2019.

Data from the National Household Survey are calculated based on the extrapolation of 2020 every four years from 2000, consistent with the child labour estimates produced. The new Numan uses a survey of more than 100 households to cover two-thirds of the world's children aged 5 to 17. What is said in the report is worrying. Global advances against child labour have stalled for the first time since we began producing two global estimates

decades ago (see ILO & UNICEF, 2021). Graph Six shows the actual picture of the current status of the child labour elimination project of SDG8 that has to be ended by 2030. Still, there is significant concern whether SDG 8 will be achieved by then due to COVID-19 and other socio-economic variers in the world (see ILO & UNICEF, 2021).

Graph Six The target to meet SDGs to eliminate child labour by 2030



Source: ILO & UNICEF (2021).

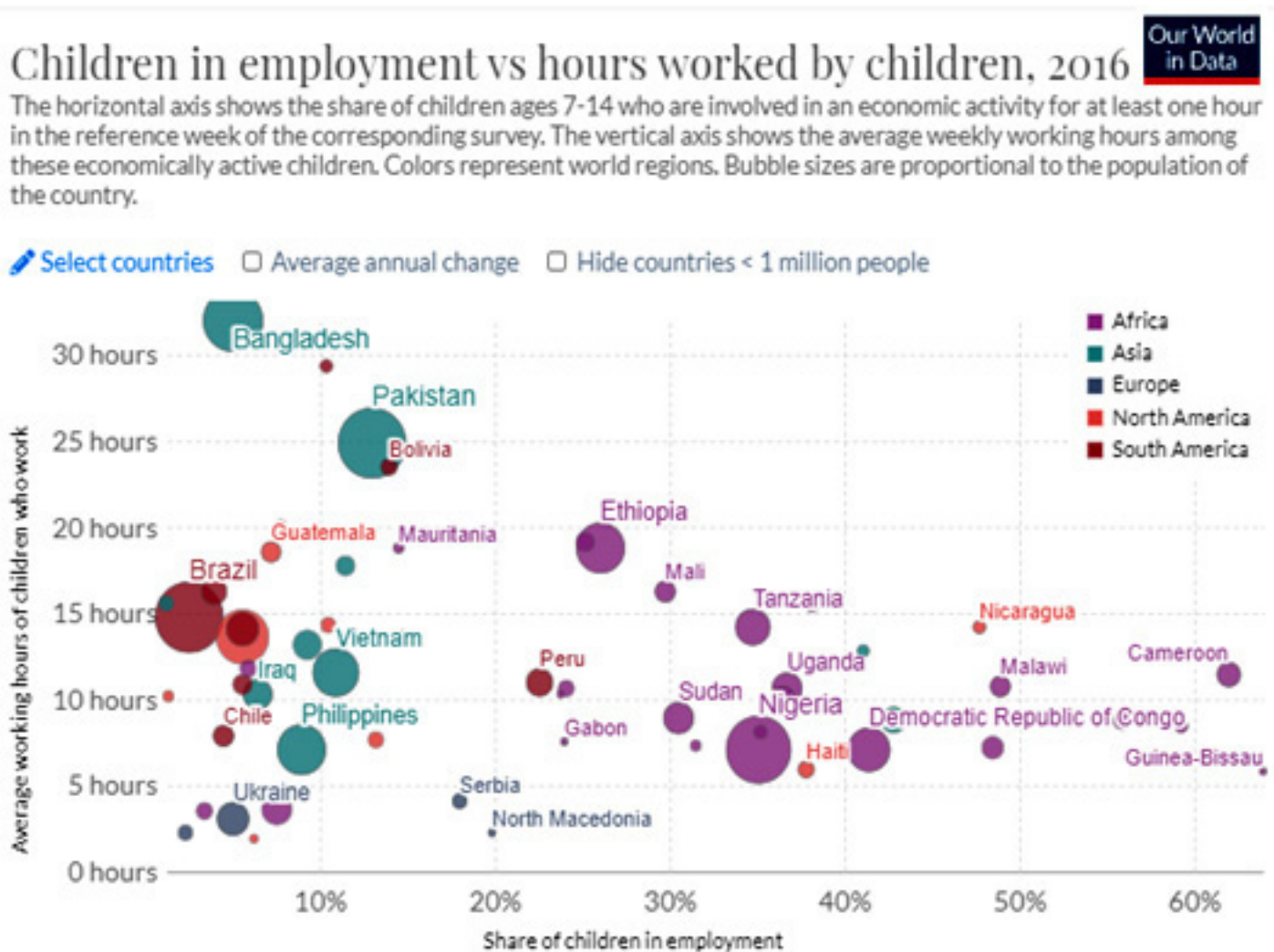
The overview of child labour from Bangladesh's perspectives

A few crucial facts about child labour in Bangladesh

- Currently, 4.3 percent of children (between the ages of 5 and 14) in Bangladesh engage in exploitative work to support their families. Statistics determine that not all Bangladeshi children attend school. Lack of education is frequently a barrier to higher-paying jobs.
- Eighty-three percent of child laborers work in rural areas. Since resources and jobs are more readily available in the city, children may seek employment in urban areas for low wages.
- Children are especially vulnerable to exploitation and therefore receive minimal compensation for their work.
- There are regulations on child labor in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics informs the existing legislature which defines child laborers as those working between the ages of 5 and 14. In 2006, the Bangladeshi government outlawed work by children under the age of 14. Despite this, the number of child laborers has continued to rise in the past decade, given that most children work at small local businesses, factories or homes. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that approximately 5 million children are full-time workers.
- Bangladesh also has the fourth-highest rate of child marriage in the world. While families rely on their children to work, many encourage their young daughters to marry due to being unable to support them. Reducing poverty is a promising start for addressing gender discrimination (Powell, 2019).

When the government of any state fails to provide basic needs for children, they go to work. In Bangladesh, many families have only one person to earn money, and children get jobs to help their families when a member of the family dies or suffers for a long time (see Ahamed, 2013; Lau & Chan, 2013). In addition, another significant obstacle to eliminating child labour in Bangladesh is the natural disasters that occur almost every year. Tsunamis, cyclones and floods are the main ones. When daily life collapses due to natural disasters like cyclones, it becomes difficult for many families to survive in the remote coastal areas of Bangladesh. So, families move to major cities of Bangladesh, mainly to the capital city Dhaka, where some jobs are available. However, due to the non-enforcement of the National Labour Act and the ILO convention, the industry in which children get jobs is not healthy and often suffers from catastrophic factory casualties. Recent research (RMG Bangladesh, 2021) exhibit children aged between seven to 17 work 12 to 14 hours, six days a week, in most unhealthy and dangerous industries such as leather. Children employed at the leather factories usually do all kinds of work, including animal slaughter, skinning, dyeing, waste disposal and manufacturing of leather products and by-products such as glue and meat (see RMG Bangladesh, 2021). Almost every informal economic sector in Bangladesh lack proper OHS regulation (see Ullah, 2021). Although children are often employed in unhealthy informal and non-regulated economic production houses, Bangladesh's domestic (household) work is also dangerous. Most underage children do not receive adequate wages, food and health care in household work in Bangladesh. Most importantly, underage children engaged in domestic work in Bangladesh are mentally and physically abused (see Chart Two of this article). They primarily work long hours day and night, revealing the worst forms of child labour considered modern slavery (see Ahmed, 2013; Beaubien, 2016; ILO & UNICEF, 2021; Hiba, Jentsch, & Zink, 2021).

Chart One: Childrens' working hours in the various destinations in the world and Bangladesh



Source: Ospina & Roser, 2016, cited in Our World in Data).

The London-based Overseas Development Institute surveyed about 3,000 families in the slums of Dhaka city. They found in the survey that children work full-time as young as 6 for 100 to 110 hours a week. On average, working children earn less than \$2 per day. So the London based survey report shows more working hours than the "Our World Data" in child labour in Bangladesh, and both surveys were conducted in 2016. In addition, the London based survey also found 13 per cent of young respondents aged below 13 works in the textile and clothing sector (Beaubien, 2016).

Bangladesh's commitment to ILO and UN conventions and labour standards

ILO, since 1972, has been working with the Government of Bangladesh following a social dialogue or tripartite approach to establish social justice and build a healthy work environment in Bangladesh, but results have not been satisfactory. The ILO has been significantly unable to persuade the Bangladesh Government to respect and enforce the ILO conventions that were already ratified, while the National Labour Act 2006 (amended in 2013) is not also well-enforced (see Human Rights Watch, 2013; Afrin, 2014; Rahman & Rahman, 2020).

From 1919 to date, 190 Conventions, 206 Recommendations, and six Protocols have been adopted by the ILO (see ILO, n.d.). Conventions like child labour elimination, forced labour, collective bargaining and freedom of association, minimum wage, gender discrimination, social security, working time, occupational health and safety are the few among so many other conventions that the ILO adopted, and its member states from time to time ratify those conventions and aim to respect and enforce their jurisdictions. However, due to changes like work and patterns globally, the ILO has modified some conventions and replaced older ones (see, e.g., Baccini & Koenig-Archibugi, 2014). The ILO aims to promote its Conventions and Recommendations by stating that:

An international legal framework on social standards ensures a level playing field in the global economy. It helps governments and employers to avoid the temptation of lowering labour standards in the belief that this could give them a greater comparative advantage in international trade... Because international labour standards are minimum standards adopted by governments and the social partners, it is in everyone's interest to see these rules applied across the board, so that those who do not put them into practice do not undermine the efforts of those who do (Baccini & Koenig-Archibugi, 2014, p. 447).

The above excerpt suggests that ILO's member states should adopt the Conventions and Recommendations that the ILO adopted since 1919 towards ensuring the international labour standards, which is crucial for workers and their families. The above quote also appeals to the member state to ratify the ILO Conventions and Recommendations so that other states can become motivated to ratify ILO's conventions and Recommendations (see Alli, 2008; Baccini & Koenig-Archibugi, 2014). However, despite this appeal from the ILO, not all states have yet ratified all ILO conventions. Scholars argue that it lacks the political will of the state governments or socio-economic or global political economy policy that might significantly hinder ratification of the ILO conventions (see also Rodgers et al., 2009; Ullah, 2020). Bangladesh, however, has ratified 35 ILO conventions altogether, which includes seven fundamental conventions. The fundamental convention that the Bangladesh Government has not still approved is "C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)". Out of 35 Conventions ratified in different categories by Bangladesh since 1972, 30 are in force, one convention has been denounced, four instruments abrogated, and none have been ratified in the past 12 months.

Bangladesh Government is the signatory of the United Nations Human Rights Convention 1948, and in line with Article 23, Bangladesh is also the signatory of the 2011 UN Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights, which require:

(a) *States' existing obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and fundamental freedoms;*

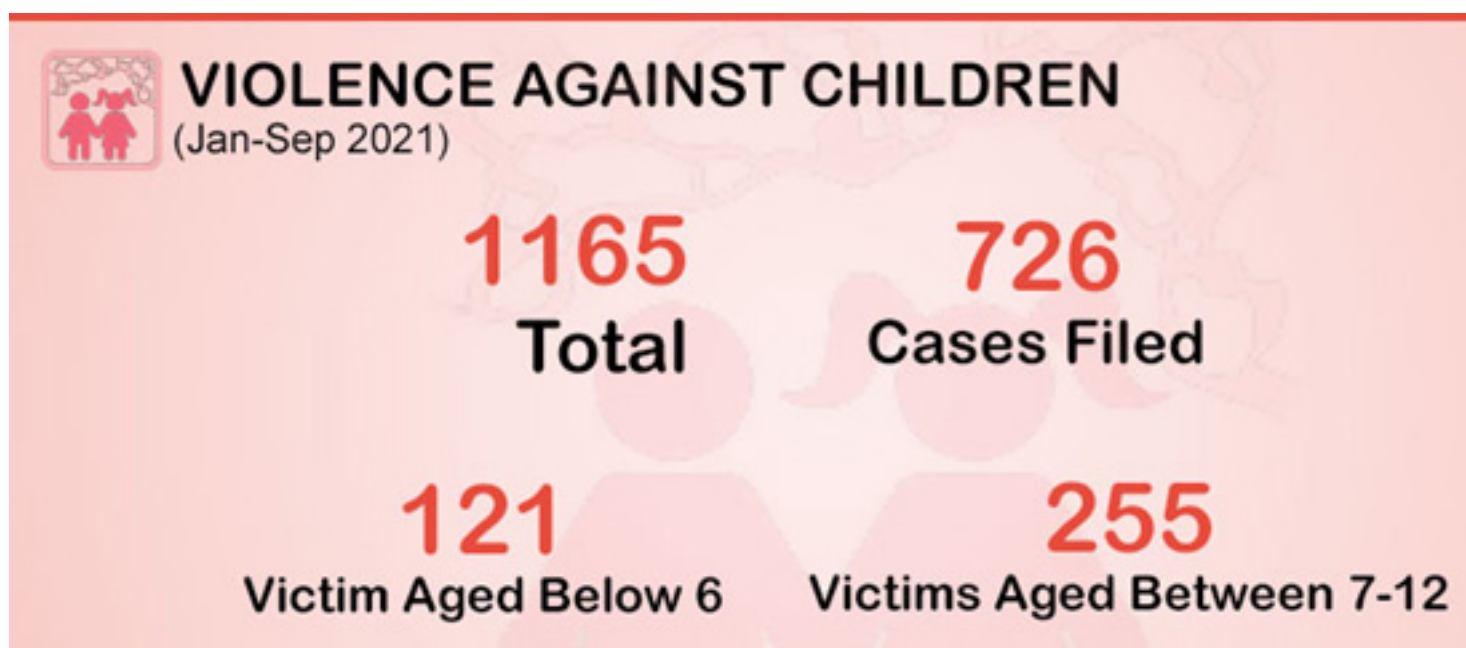
(b) *The role of business enterprises as specialised organs of society performing specialised functions, required to comply with all applicable laws and to respect human rights;*

(c) *The need for rights and obligations to be matched to appropriate and effective remedies when breached* (UN Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights, 2011, p. 1).

Most importantly, Bangladesh lacks respect and proper enforcement for the ILO and UN conventions that have already been ratified. For example, *The Diplomat* published a report stating that on 8 July 2021 afternoon, a fire broke out on the ground floor of the renowned Hashem Food & Beverages factory at Rupganj, an industrial district on the outskirts of Bangladesh's capital city. The reason for the fire was the illegal storage of chemicals and plastics. Hashem Food & Beverages factory fires killed at least 50 workers in which a number of under-aged and relatively young children were employed. According to *The Diplomat*, the age of some of these children were: (12), Takiya (14), Munna (14), Nazmul (15), Mahmud (15), Kompa (16), Himu (16), Ripon (17), and Taslima (17), in addition to many more (Anjum, 2021 cited in *The Diplomat*). So, what ILO, BGMEA, Bangladesh Government claim about child labour elimination in Bangladesh is inaccurate (see Ahamed, 2013; Lau & Chan, 2021; Hiba, Jentsch & Zink, 2021).

According to Ain o Shalish Kendro (ASK), a Bangladeshi legal aid organisation, noticed that between 2008 and 2011, 2709 cases were published in the national newspapers in Bangladesh on violence against domestic workers, including 729 children (cited in Rezvi, 2017). Chart Two reflects the statistics of violence on children between January and September 2021 in Bangladesh, which is more vigorous than the previous statistics, and this is alarming.

Chart Two: Violence against children between January and September 2021 in Bangladesh



Source: Ain o Shalish Kendro 2021

It is a fundamental question whether ratification of any ILO conventions is enough to stop any forms of exploitation, injuries and death of a worker in Bangladesh? Bangladesh Government has shown demotivation to respect the National Labour Act and the ILO conventions, and ILO is continuously being witnessed with all these things from time to time. However, scholars, e.g., Deva (2012), argues that the state must show political or social commitments to respect the UN conventions that were created to save humans from adverse calamities in the world.

Critical discussions with recommendations

Child labour has been a crime, and it has been prevalent in Bangladesh and elsewhere in the world for many decennaries. This is a severe social problem for Bangladesh and other countries because they do not follow the correct policies or intentionally violate the ILO conventions and national labour or child acts that impede the control of child labour. Scholars, e.g., Ospina and Roser (2016), argue that child labour is particularly problematic because it obstructs children's development significantly when interfering with schooling. But the question is, if the state and other social organisations fail to provide the essential benefits to children, what do they have to do for survival. In some states, as discussed earlier, mainly in impoverished countries, parents simply have no other options available but to allow their children to work to manage their lives and livelihoods (see ADRA, Islam & Akther, 2015; Ahmed & Ray 2014).

The global political-economic policy aimed to bring a new dogma on international trade since the 1980s by introducing neoliberalism through corporate globalisation. Scholars argue that it was a political agenda that vastly served capitalists rather than marginalised people worldwide (see Harvey, 2007; Munck, 2010; Ullah 2021, Hiba, Jentsch, & Zink, 2021). International organisations such as the World Bank and the IMF have played a significant role to make globalisation more potent and operative, but WTO and its free trade agreement between the member states was the turning point for the rapid expansion of globalisation in the world (Ullah, 2021) (see Harvey, 2007; Rahman, 2013; Ullah, 2021; Aked, 2021).

Globalisation has lessened ILO's effectiveness in its social programs, mainly in controlling workers' exploitation worldwide. However, scholars argue that the ILO, as a labour organisation, lacks enforcement power which is the major obstacle for this organisation to obtain any significant and constructive results on many issues such as workers exploitation etc. (see Standing, 2008; Rodgers et al., 2009). Nevertheless, ILO has created many international conventions and recommendations that are essential for the member state to follow and respect while enforcement is the final step. For example, Juan Somavia, the former ILO director General in 1919 introduced "*Decent Work*", which is defined as the "convergence of four interdependent strategic objectives encompassing rights at work, employment, social protection, and social dialog" (ILO, 1999, cited in Hiba, Jentsch & Zink, 2021, p. 148). ILO's "*Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalisation*" was introduced in 2008, though it was too late. Again, in 2011, ILO announced "*Making Globalisation Socially Sustainable*". But the question that has been very fundamental now to ask ILO is whether globalisation has socially been sustainable or not. Global supply chains still hunt cheap corporate labour in low regulated countries and make robust profits

from workers' exploitation (see Harvey, 2007; Ullah, 2021) (see Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019; Rahman, 2019; Ullah, 2021). Thus, the fundamental question is whether the ILO is still strong enough to fight globalisation and capitalism. The ILO, as a UN body, can raise this issue vigorously in the UN session and should give states a highly decisive guideline to approve ILO conventions and respect and enforce nation's labour and child labour acts to control and eliminate child labour and exploitation. With the help of Western and EU countries, WTO can impose trade and quota sanctions on WTO member countries.

In 2020, Bangladesh made moderate progress in its efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. The government has extended the implementation period of the National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour from 2021 to 2025. The Ministry of Labour and Employment has also drafted an update on the list of dangerous jobs. In addition, the government has formed and funded seven anti-trafficking organisations in individual tribunals to handle human trafficking cases. Unfortunately, all these steps were not stopping the exploitation of children and child labour in Bangladesh. For example, eradicating underage prostitution, another common form of child labour, should also be a government priority in Bangladesh.

Bureau of International Labor Affairs (2020) published a report stating that forced child labour is still found in different informal economic sectors in Bangladesh. The National Child, Labour Survey report 2015 revealed that about 1.2 million children (see ILO, n.d.) are still trapped in their worst form in different informal sectors in Bangladesh. Bangladesh enacted the Labour Act in 2006, including a chapter on child labour with special clauses to stop child labour, but it has not been well enforced in Bangladesh (see Ahamed, 2013). The new Act prohibits the employment of children under the age of 14 and dangerous forms of child labour for persons under 18. However, children 12 years of age or older may engage in 'light work' that does not pose risks to their mental and physical development and interfere with their education. However, such provisions were written only in the Act and were rarely implemented in Bangladesh (see Afrin, 2014).

Scholars such as Ahamed (2013) and Lau and Chan (2021) still argue that Bangladesh is still a country where the worst forms of child labour are still apparent. Hence, the Bangladesh Government must take necessary and significant steps to stop child labour and ensure affordable children's attendance at school. In addition, the Bangladesh Government must establish a social security scheme to provide financial aid to families that need support to manage their livelihoods without sending their children to jobs.

Directions for future research

This article should be considered a guideline for conducting empirical research to investigate further the cause of extreme child labour in some sectors, e.g., scrap metal, leather, dry-fish, RMG, transportation and construction industries in Bangladesh. It is necessary to understand Bangladesh Government's and ILO's views when other crucial stakeholders are also to be conducted to know more specifically why child labour in Bangladesh is still considerably high and how it can be reduced.

Conclusions

The world community, mainly international organisations such as the ILO, WTO, IMF, the World Bank, ADB, IFC and national and international NGOs, should adopt a unified strategy to eradicate child labour in Bangladesh and other countries. Child labour needs to be strictly prohibited following trade sanctions on those states that place child labour seriously in hazardous industries. Nevertheless, state governments should be held accountable for safeguarding and securing a bright future for the new generation for their country and the world. Child labour is a stigma for the state and the capitalists, who are primarily responsible for producing the worst forms of child labour as modern slaves in the world. Child labour was man-made, so the problem should be solved by humans as well. Children are the nation's future leaders; their minds and bodies should substantially be built to face any adverse calamities in the world. Hence, parents, society, and mainly state governments' responsibility is very high on this matter. Above all, to protect children's rights, Bangladesh must implement the National Labour Act, the ILO and the UN conventions and adopt more effective strategies to work with other essential stakeholders to eradicate child labour in Bangladesh.

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Business in the Post Pandemic World

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Abstract

The experiences faced by businesses and workers during the current Covid pandemic have and will alter many of the business practices we have employed till now. These involve where we work, how we work and do business, and participation in the workforce.

Key words: pandemic, Central Business Districts, business, workforce participation

Introduction

Coronavirus 2019 disease (COVID-19) is a contagious disease caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The first known case was identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. It has since spread worldwide, leading to an ongoing pandemic and at the time of publication has caused almost 5 million deaths and economic damage, and business collapse globally.

Direct economic and business damage includes lack of, or interrupted supply chains for manufacturers, workers unable to work in crowded conditions, due to fear of mass contagion, temporary or permanent closure of businesses due to fear of contagion especially those that deal directly with the public, or forced governmental lockdowns and over-stretched hospitals and health systems.

It has also created chronic health conditions and disability, orphans, abandoned elderly, and the rise of crime and opportunism.

The development of vaccines and their mass administration to populations – those willing to take them – in those countries that can afford or access them has seen some easing of restrictions in the vaccinated world though current medical opinion suggests ongoing immunity now requires a third booster or ongoing annual vaccine (1).

Central Business Districts (CBD) and centralised working environments

Central Business Districts or City Centres have been particularly affected as they usually consist of high rise corporate towers of offices with retail premises at street level. The huge influx of workers to the CBDs in normal times also supports a myriad of smaller businesses that cater to the needs of office workers, office supplies and food outlets being prime examples, as well as the lunchtime shopping of office workers.

The CBDs or City Centres are also usually the cultural, sporting and historical architecture hubs of cities and have noteworthy parks and gardens and therefore attract tourists, either local or international. This population is generally medium to high density but transient.

If companies cease using central city office spaces in favour of home workers and decentralised working areas closer to where people live, this will result in some emptying of the CBDs, and many businesses have already decentralised, and allowed employees to work from home on a permanent basis. This will see the need to convert some of the existing high rise building to other purposes with the obvious being city apartments. This will also help maintain cities and the businesses that are supported by the transport of daily workforces. City buildings can be readily converted to habitation precincts with for example, the use of rooftop and vertical gardens, and the retail sector could extend to include more domestic facilities like supermarkets. Theatres, Art Galleries and Museums also attract out of city and inner city users and tourists, and will likely remain viable, although the entertainment industry globally has seen huge loss of income and a change in the way it operates.

Hospitals (especially teaching hospitals attached to universities) and universities are also a feature of inner cities and the public transport systems currently in place can keep these temporary residents commuting into and out of the City centres.

The “Committee for Sydney” — a ‘think tank’ that represents organisations including universities, hospitality, construction and entertainment has reflected on pandemic lockdowns and talked to bosses of 130 organisations that employ 640,000 workers (1).

It found that 51 per cent of bosses expect their workers will commute to the office for just three days a week, and 36 per cent expect their staff will cluster their office days from Tuesday to Thursday. They anticipated workers having a three-day cluster of days in the office.

The research conducted by the Committee showed governments should review public transport pricing — as pandemic activity showed a huge drop in the amount of movement around Sydney from pre-pandemic levels (1),

“Experience in other cities around the world has shown the key to building public support for public transport pricing reforms is to make it clear the public is gaining something,” they said in the report (1).

“London used the proceeds from the congestion charge to significantly increase public transport service. San Francisco used the proceeds from demand-driven parking pricing to give fewer parking tickets and to fund increases to services.

“Very often, pricing reforms have eventually proven popular, after initial public opposition.”

Using Australia as an example approximately 40% of office workers worked from home during the pandemic but only about 35% of currently available jobs are able to be done from home. Additionally the pandemic showed workers to be more productive working from home. Of course the pandemic scenario when people have tried to hold onto their employment and weekly wages and the consequent privilege of working from home to keep them safe from Covid, may change when the pandemic is over and employment becomes more secure.

Data, compiled by research firm Roy Morgan (Australia) and based on the movement of mobile devices in Sydney’s CBD, found that in the week beginning 24 May, 2021 Monday movement was down 66% compared with pre-pandemic levels of January and February 2020, down 63% on Tuesday and Wednesday, and 62% on Thursday.

The reduction was also just 62% on Friday, but a spokesperson for Roy Morgan said the figures did not differentiate between people moving through the city for work and for recreation, including those travelling to entertainment venues, restaurants and bars in the evenings, noting that was traditionally more common on Fridays after work.

The chief executive of the Committee for Sydney, believes that the NSW state government must now consider an expected change in commuting behaviour as it plans for Sydney’s future.

Local Civic Councils and state and federal government and similar governmental planning bodies worldwide will need to review the way cities work in light of the pandemic to keep jobs and businesses viable but more importantly to protect the health of working people. This will require reassessment of office environments and public transport.

Extending opening hours and making working hours more flexible over a wider period of time (flexitime) can also assist in keeping workplaces safe but will likely incur some greater costs.

Businesses should support their staff choosing to work from home when they want to and where it is viable, and such a model can have a “genuine upside for workers and businesses” because a better work life balance can make workers more productive.

Any level of working from home will need safeguards to protect workers from risks including overwork, long hours, stress, isolation and a sense of “never being able to disconnect from work.” Conversely in some employees it may lead to abuse of the privilege, and absenteeism from the desk so managed weekly minimum work requirements, based on what needs to be achieved each week can help focus both employers and workers and maintain a viable workload.

“For those who will continue to work from home, it’s essential that those arrangements meet the same health and safety standards that would be expected in the workplace, including Covid protections.”

As an example of moving to work at home an Australian organisation, NIB (Health Fund) is paying employees \$1,200 a year to effectively rent a space in their homes as they ask workers to only come into the office one day a week. It is being enacted now by NIB and has shown productivity improvement.

Working from home of course is only now a viable option due to available technology (ICT) making the physical location of the home office irrelevant in terms of communicability.

There are also reasons for workers to come together not just for social and mental health issues: but to give them a clear sense of purpose, mentoring, coaching, feedback, training etc and a substitute for the feedback an employee may get in the traditional office situation may be overcome by a daily chat between bosses and staff. It would provide continuity of association and appreciation of employee’s efforts and reassurance to employers. Group meetings online can also provide the same benefits.

Participation in the workforce

The Pandemic has shown a massive switch to online retail/online shopping which has provided its own increase in work opportunities for ICT workers and for distribution workers (parcel delivery).

The pandemic has also changed the way people do business and has opened up the workforce to some groups of people who had restrictions on where they could work. The obvious example is people with disabilities who have limited mobility and who often already had their own home based communication hub with the world. This puts them on an even playing field with other workers.

In some countries there are cultural restrictions on women in the workforce and in most countries pregnant women and those with young family commitments are often unable to work outside the home, but with home offices and flexitime they will be able to work a full or part time job. Currently many talented women fall out of the work force due to pregnancy and the demands of a young family. Flexible home work allows employers to hold onto such valuable workers

Of course many jobs can only be performed in a specific workspace, such as hospitals, schools/universities etc. While online learning has now become ‘de rigueur’ for Secondary and University students during the pandemic, younger children particularly need interaction with peers (time to play) and also healthy activities to get them healthy and school playtime and school sports provide this. During the worst of the pandemic however most schools have adapted all levels of students to covering basic coursework online

So while the pandemic has caused great human suffering, it may have opened up business and employees to a better world of work that is more suitable to our current living environment,

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How long lasting pain feels

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How long-lasting pain feels

Chronic pain can be a real challenge with notorious implications to the sufferer

It is not a nice feeling though living with a constant nuisance pain

Fully aware of it all day long and while trying to sleep at night

Calling on all your senses to be up and crying out in despair

Self crippled and consumed by it

Intrepidity pain

It is basically a total pain in the neck, base of head and shoulder girdle, all tensed up and in constant pain and agony

Some days the pain is so much that it's difficult to move around and all I want to do, chop that part off, to lie down and do nothing

Stiffing and knotting all over, is all I can feel

Feeling as handicapped in my own body

Living around avoiding the pain

Cannot keep focus in any other thing

Pain can be distressing and disturbing, when it is continuous and affecting the daily life chores

It can be sharp, excruciating, shooting, stabbing and disabling in many instances

It is a total discomfort sentiment to a living human being

It is purely subjective phenomenal to the sufferer with various magnitudes

No one can explain and feel it but the sufferer

My journey has not been smooth for the last 2 decades

Chronic pain is a difficult task to deal with and alleviate

The pain itself brings uncertainty

Cannot predict its worst moment which makes future uncertain too

Because no one can feel and understand only the sufferer

No one can feel your pain until they experience it

It is hard to explain in many instances

They instruct and not converse

Struggling to cope and live
 Confined in my own pain
 Cannot work around it
 Cannot keep my neck bent at all
 Can't bear it up as well
 Being passed from one doctor to another, to try make sense of what is really going on
 No one seems to know
 Just sending back and forth between different specialties
 Everyone wants to inject blindly and see how it goes
 Living with daily pain is challenging and full of uncertainty
 Pain needs to be understood and explored thoroughly
 To reach to its deepest root
 I cannot surrender to pain
 I cannot keep sleeping and thinking of it all day long
 I try to accept and deal with the chronic pain
 I keep moving, instead of howling and try to carry on despite feeling it continuously
 It is complicated as its all neurons implicated on one way or another
 All entangled and intertwined tightly
 Patients cannot be just sent away with sedative and addictive pills of non-sense medications to make them further sick
 A proper engagement with showing respect and empathy could help in one way or another psychologically
 To validate the pain experience and yet it is still on
 No one wants to live with constant pain
 No one really wants
 You cannot tell patients to live with the pain
 Cope with the pain
 Many patients keep the blame to the self
 Chronic pain is depressing feeling
 It can take different shapes and colours
 It can be very dark, a very dark zone
 It can create isolation, despair and avoidance
 It can upset the mood and make the feeling a complete misery
 Medicine continues to be a vacation rather than a series of tasks
 The constant pain can put me off from life
 Despite all this, I try to keep motivated and inspired
 And yet I still try to keep on moving with my all wakes of life and its takes

COP-OUT* 26 - two ways for the good people on planet earth to save humanity

*(*Cop-Out is urban slang for a failure to deliver a proper and moral outcome)*

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1. Sue them - where there is loss of life or damage to property due to climate change, sue the politicians and governments responsible for their gross negligence and actions leading to loss of life and damage .

2. Boycott all that country's products. Boycott ALL products from those countries that failed to act - and if you cannot appropriate those products elsewhere - make them yourself and the world will come to your doorstep.

We know many humans can be an evil, tawdry planet- and life-destroying bunch - but NOT all of them (us) - and this is the last time the good and decent people of planet earth will need to fight

- as it IS the last time for all of us.

The majority of the so-called leaders of the planet have just shown the Taliban to be the least of the world's problems,

Corrupt and/or incompetent and disgraceful leaders, including our current appalling Australian government, who openly support the polluting industries that donate huge amounts of money to keep their puppets in power, have decided to discard humans in favour of themselves. It seems that it is mostly those who don't have planet-polluting interests that have bothered to try and save humanity- with of course some notable exceptions like the United Nations, and similar enlightened global organisations and David Attenborough and Charles, Prince of Wales.

So we are left with two options that can assist humanity in its fight to survive and protect our only home in the universe.

This test finds out the effect of particular independent variable impact on the dependent variable; the study finds that the Hypothesis of Social (H1), Technological (H2), and Brand Communicator (H4) are supported by the intention of the basis of beta coefficient. Here, social information sharing, followed by the effect of brand communication and technological advancement are respectively most important to influence on the adoption of social networking sites for the underlying young people of Bangladesh. However, another hypothesis that is the effect of Educational factor on the overall adoption of SNSs is not supported as the p-value for the case is not significant. In other words, young people are yet to find use of social networking sites for educational purposes efficiently.

Conclusion and Limitation

For the social and intellectual improvement of online surfers of any age including the young people, the development of social networking gives a noteworthy achievement. The study delivers an imperative milieu for the key part players and partners to reveal the hidden components behind this appropriation of social networking sites. It demonstrates that Bangladeshi users are additionally not hesitant to utilize long range informal communication destinations where technological headway quickens the utilization of SNSs. Implying that, they use social networking sites since it turns out to be so natural to access because of the most recent technological advances, for example, Smartphone and different devices. Dealing with the social associations with a various gathering of individuals including loved ones is another primary explanation for the selection of SNSs. A significant portion of the young people are utilizing Social communication destinations to broaden the learning opportunities and trade education values.

Among the numerous variables, the study has uncovered the most significant factors that cause the appropriation of Social communication destinations especially among the young Bangladeshi Users while the relative significance of the elements likewise appears in the examination. In any case, reception of long-range social networking sites is not restricted to these variables while numerous different studies demonstrate the diverse elements.

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Facts tell, stories sell

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Clinical, medical and aesthetic dermatology

Aesthetic dermatology nowadays is taking the lead and the trend is on high demand and competition. There are many reasons in fact for wanting it, however the main points can be briefed in the following points: wanting to look good, attending a special occasion and wanting to look their best, for marital changes, career wise, boosting up after a tremendous weight loss.

To establish a name in the aesthetic world, it is mandatory to focus on your existing patients and build a rapport and loyalty which will bring more patients (word of mouth referral) when the previous patients were happy, content and satisfied with your work and their expectations were met. It is important to make your patients feel special and valued and to keep a personal connection with them.

Patients usually share their experience with their friends, and thus it is vital to make it a positive one. It is necessary to promise less pain with faster results and lesser down time and on top of that cheaper and affordable if possible when applying prices. Educate your patients through the many options by discussing with them their wishes, anticipations, what is their thinking and liking and their main reasons for aesthetics and why they chose you specifically. Never disclose any of your patients to anyone even if you wish to promote your business, without their consent and hide their identity.

Every patient has their own reasoning for a change; it could be boosting self esteem, rising confidence, relaxation, feeling hot and sexy, attractive and appealing to opposite sex, professional career, pampering, a treat for one's self, looking great, contentment, pleasure, looking younger, wanted, feeling wonderful and the list goes on....etc.

The overall experience, is transformation, if results are met carefully and effectively.

The whole idea is about buying, is what we want and not what we need.

In aesthetics what matters the most is the outcome and results, thus patients would not really care about technology and features. They just want outstanding results that can put their mood at a high level and boost their spirit.

Make yourself stand out from the crowd differently and do not be the same as everyone else. It is important to find what makes you different, and what you can offer that no-one else does, and what do you do better than anyone else.

Talk the same language as your patients, and be congruent, authentic and be your true self. Use before and after photos and request a written testimonial and write an educational article that touches main patient's points and concerns and that can be commented on and shared.

Ask your patients their main problems that they want to change the most and how that will affect their emotions and vulnerability.

Patients constantly need assurance, safety, reliability, accountability, responsibility, special caring, compassion, confidence, credibility, and major trust in you. Take into account the patient's emotions and needs. Look after your patients and make them feel significant and important. Answer their worries and meet effectively their overall satisfaction.

Many patients come and say, I didn't know you did that and thus maximize up sells by the services you do and provide.

Summer is always the best time to make a change, hope, renewal, relaxation, and feeling good, satisfied - thus make it a positive experience with appealing positive changes.

Your patients are a real reflection of you and your patients are a perceived value. Thus do things with great care and consistency, every time.

To sum up, aesthetic work is great and needs a great care in application and meeting patient's expectations and demands. Knowledge is useless without action, and thus getting into the aesthetic business is rewarding if taken wisely, fully and carefully.

