



Journal of **EBOR**

Economics, Business & Organization Research

Vol: 6 Issue: 1

July 2024



e-ISSN 2687-5942

E-ISSN 2687-5942

Economics Business and Organization Research

Yıl: 6 Sayı: 1
Year: 6 Number:1

2024

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Citation: Abbas, S. G., Abbas, S. R., & Munir, A. (2024). The impact of external debt, population growth and inflation on unemployment: Evidence from developing countries. *Journal of Economics, Business and Organization Research*, 6(1), 1-14.

THE IMPACT OF EXTERNAL DEBT, POPULATION GROWTH AND INFLATION ON UNEMPLOYMENT: EVIDENCE FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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Received / Başvuru: 21.11.2023

Accepted / Kabul: 15.12.2023

Published / Yayın: 31.07.2024

Abstract

This paper investigates the relationship between external debt, population growth, and inflation with unemployment in 26 developing countries. The study uses data from 2010 to 2021 and panel data models (fixed, random, and pooled) to analyze the relationship between the variables. Results show that external debt has a significant and positive impact on unemployment across all three models. Similarly, GDP growth has a reducing and significant impact on the unemployment rate, which shows high employment elasticity of growth in the case of these 26 developing countries. Another important finding of the study is that foreign direct investment, inflation, and population growth have a non-significant impact on unemployment. The paper suggests robust macroeconomic policies and effective debt management in these developing countries to address the issue of unemployment.

Keywords: *External Debt, Unemployment, Panel Data, Panel Unit Roots*

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DIŐ BORÇ, NÜFUS ARTIŐI VE ENFLASYONUN İŐSİZLİK ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ: GELİŐMEKTE OLAN ÜLKELERDEN KANITLAR

Öz

Bu çalıŐma, 26 geliŐmekte olan ÷lkede dıŐ borç, nüfus artıŐı ve enflasyon ile iŐsizlik arasındaki iliŐkiyi araŐtırmaktadır. ÇalıŐma, deĐiŐkenler arasındaki iliŐkiyi analiz etmek için 2010-2021 yılları arasındaki verileri ve panel veri modellerini (Sabit Etkiler Modeli, Rassal Etkiler Modeli ve Pooled OLS Modeli) kullanmaktadır. Sonuçlar, dıŐ borcun her üç modelde de iŐsizlik üzerinde anlamlı ve pozitif bir etkiye sahip olduĐunu göstermektedir. Benzer şekilde, GSYH büyümesinin iŐsizlik oranı üzerinde azaltıcı ve anlamlı bir etkisi vardır, bu da söz konusu 26 geliŐmekte olan ÷lke için büyümenin istihdam esnekliĐinin yüksek olduĐunu göstermektedir. ÇalıŐmanın bir diĐer önemli bulgusu ise doğrudan yabancı yatırım, enflasyon ve nüfus artıŐının iŐsizlik üzerinde anlamlı olmayan bir etkiye sahip olmasıdır. ÇalıŐma, iŐsizlik sorununu ele almak için bu geliŐmekte olan ÷lkelerde saĐlam makroekonomik politikalar ve etkin borç yönetimi önermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *DıŐ Borç, İŐsizlik, Panel Veri, Panel Birim Kökler*

1. INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is one of the major macroeconomic problems faced by especially developing. In the last decade with an increase in debt borrowing and population, an increase in unemployment figures can also be observed in these countries (ILO, 2023). The increasing unemployment has been a major issue for both policymakers and researchers in these developing countries, while a similar situation can also be observed in developed countries. This reflects the importance of unemployment as a major indicator of the labor market, and the overall state of the economy in general.

Over the past decades debt financing has been a popular source of income and investment in developing countries around the world. The imperative of borrowing is justified by the gaps in the economy. Developing and underdeveloped countries are characterized by budget deficits and current account deficits (Alnaa and Matey, 2023; Bittencourt, 2012). To fill these gaps these countries, turn towards internal and external financing through borrowing. These external and internal borrowings accumulate over the time, increasing the debt burden on the economy, which takes a large chunk of the national cake for debt servicing. This leaves a lower capital for domestic investment and development spending which in turn shrinks the creation of job opportunities in the labor market (Hasan and Zaheer, 2022).

Population growth and inflation are other significant factors that impact unemployment. A higher rate of the population represents an increase in the labor supply, this leads to a surplus in the labor market thus, an increase in the unemployment in the economy. It is imminent that high population growth erodes employment opportunities, increasing unemployment in the economy (Wajid and Kalim, 2013; Aurangzeb and Asif, 2013).

Our study will explore the impact of external debt and population growth on unemployment in 26 developing countries. The reason to choose these countries is that firstly, these countries are high debt levels (both external and internal). Secondly, in the past few decades although these countries have shown good economic growth but unemployment in these countries is increasing. Thirdly, all these countries have a considerable amount of high population which we believe is one of the factors in impacting the unemployment rate in these countries. Lastly, these countries are characterized as middle, lower-income, and developing countries, analyzing these countries can pave the way for better policy solutions in similar countries.

An important contribution of this study is the focus on developing countries. Most economic research focuses primarily on developed countries, and research focusing on the dynamics of external debt, population growth, inflation, and unemployment in developing countries may be limited. This study provides insight into the interplay of these factors in the context of the unique challenges facing developing countries. Moreover, using data from 2010 to 2021, the study presents a contemporary time frame and provides current insights into the relationships between external debt, population growth, inflation, and unemployment. These time frames are important for understanding how these variables interact in the recent economic context of developing countries. Lastly, the study's specific findings, such as the significant and positive impact of external debt on unemployment and the high elasticity of employment growth for the 26 developing countries studied, provide valuable insights into the literature. Finding the marginal effects of foreign direct investment, inflation, and population growth on unemployment also adds nuance to our understanding of these relationships.

Panel data models will be used to estimate the impact of population growth, inflation, and external debt on unemployment, and to establish a relationship between dependent and independent variables. A summary of dependent and independent variables is given in Table 1 below.

2. BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Cahyadin and Ratwianingsih (2020) studied the relationship between external debt, exchange rate, and unemployment in selected ASEAN countries (i.e., Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines). They found a causal relationship between external debt, exchange rate, and unemployment. Moreover, they concluded a co-movement link between external debt, exchange rate, and unemployment. Therefore, they emphasized on robust macroeconomic policies, such as pro-stability exchange rates, and efficient external debt risk management for these countries. Sajjad et al. (2018) in there on debt, and growth, and unemployment, found a negative relation between variables. They argued that if external debt is not utilized properly and managed effectively, it will become a huge burden on the economy. It is not only true for Pakistan but to other countries that are dependent on external financing.

Maqbool et al. (2013) found that external debt insignificantly impacts the unemployment rate in Pakistan. On the other hand, GDP, population, inflation, and FDI are significant determinants of unemployment in Pakistan. They concluded that an increase in GDP and FDI

has a decreasing impact on unemployment, while population growth and inflation have increasing effects on unemployment in the case of Pakistan.

Alnaa and Matey (2023) using a panel data model study, the relationship between unemployment and external debt in 25 sub-Saharan countries. They concluded a non-linear relationship between debt and unemployment. They argued that inefficient fiscal policies and embezzlement of borrowed funds by officials are the main causes of the increase in unemployment in these countries. Thus, for better management of unemployment, robust macroeconomic policies, sustainable growth, and investment are steppingstones for these economies (also see Dođru, 2013).

Shuaibu et al. (2021) used ARDL and ECM models to investigate the relationship. They concluded that a long-run relationship exists between public debt and unemployment in Nigeria. A positive and significant relationship exists between the variable, indicating an increase in the public debt increases the unemployment rate in the Nigerian economy. Interestingly, external debt causes more increase in the unemployment rate than public debt in the case of Nigeria. Furthermore, they did not find any significant relationship between inflation and unemployment in the case of the Nigerian economy.

Donaldson et al. (2019) in their study on household indebtedness and unemployment in the US, concluded that due to household debt overhang, households are required to work for a high-wage job. However, the limited supply of high-wage jobs in the markets leaves these households temporarily unemployed, increasing the overall unemployment in the economy. Thus, household indebtedness has a positive impact on unemployment affirming that an increase in household indebtedness increases unemployment in the US economy. Oshora et al. (2021) using time series data examined the correlation between economic growth, population growth, investment, and unemployment in the case of Ethiopia. The results revealed that an increase in unemployment is positively correlated but in the opposite direction to economic growth, investment, population growth, and working-age population. They concluded that COVID-19 coupled with political instability led to distress in the economy, disrupting security and investment, increasing unemployment, and decreasing economic growth in the case of Ethiopia. Moreover, they recommended that to address unemployment government must ensure political stability, sustainable economic growth, and infrastructural investment in the economy.

Folawewo and Adeboje (2017) studied the impact of economic growth and inflation on unemployment in West African countries. They found that economic growth has a reducing but insignificant impact on unemployment, indicating low employment elasticity of growth in the region. Moreover, they found that FDI and external debt has a weak negative impact on unemployment, indicating debt as a reducing factor in reducing unemployment, meanwhile, population growth has an increasing effect on unemployment. Meanwhile, they also found that labor productivity is positively related to unemployment, indicating a trade-off between labor productivity and employment. The study suggests that efficient macroeconomic policies with structural changes can play a major role in addressing the unemployment issues in West African Countries.

Barros (2022) investigated the relationship between inflation and unemployment in the US economy. He argued that the relationship between inflation and unemployment in the US is not a simple issue as it may appear in the Phillips curve interpretation. Political and institutional factors are pivotal when it comes to inflation and unemployment. Although, low rates of both are desired but in practice, there will always be some sort of trade-off between two variables in the short run, and policy regimes to keep the low may come at the cost of weakening the bargaining power of the working class and thus may lead to concentration income.

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The study will follow a panel data analysis of 26 developing countries with data ranging from 2010 to 2021. The data for the variables are obtained from WDI, and IMF respectively.

Using (Doğan, 2012) and (Folawewo and Adeboje, 2017) the estimation equation for this study is as follows:

$$y_{it} = \alpha \Gamma X_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad \dots\dots (1)$$

Where y represents unemployment, X represents the independent variables (determinants of unemployment), ε denotes the random errors of the model, i represents each country in the study, and t represents the year, i.e., $t = 2010, \dots, 2021$. The extended form of the model can be written as:

$$Unemp_{it} = \alpha_{1i} + \alpha_2 GDPgr_{it} + \alpha_3 FDI_{it} + \alpha_4 Inf_{it} + \alpha_5 PopGr_{it} + \alpha_{it} EDS_{it} + v_{it} \dots\dots (2)$$

Where $v_{it} = \varepsilon_i + \mu_{it}$. ε_i represents the individual or cross-section error components, whereas μ_{it} represents the combined error component of time series and cross-section.

Equation (2) shows the relation between the dependent variable and independent variables. Where, unemployment (Unemp) is our dependent variable, and independent variables include GDP growth (GDPgr), foreign direct investment (FDI), inflation (Inf), population growth (PopGr), and external debt/GDP (EDS).

A summary of variables data source and definition is given in table 1 below. Data is obtained from World Bank (WDI), and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Table 1. Data Source and Unit

Variables	Descriptions	Measurement	Sources
uenmp	Unemployment	Annual Percentage of Change (%)	WDI
GDPgr	Gross Domestic Product	Annual Percentage of Change (%)	WDI
EDS	External Debt to GDP Ratio	Annual Percentage Change (%)	IMF, WDI
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	Annual Percentage of Change (%)	WDI
PopGr	Population Growth	Annual Percentage of Change (%)	WDI
Inf	Inflation	Annual Percentage Change (%)	WDI

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Unit Root Test

To determine the stationarity of variables, panel unit roots are applied. All the variables of the study are stationary at the level. (Levina et al., 2002) panel unit root testing has been employed because it allows intercept and trend to vary freely across the cross-sections and gives efficient pooled t statistics. Table 2 shows the unit root statistics for each variable of the study.

Table 2. Panel Unit Root Tests

Variables	t-statistic	p-value	Order of the Integration
<i>Unemp</i>	-9.7501***	0.0000	<i>I(0)</i>
<i>Inf</i>	-7.3785***	0.0000	<i>I(0)</i>
<i>PopGr</i>	-7.5660 ***	0.0000	<i>I(0)</i>
<i>FDI</i>	-7.0700***	0.0000	<i>I(0)</i>
<i>EDS</i>	-4.9697***	0.0000	<i>I(0)</i>

<i>GDPgr</i>	-3.1363***	0.0009	<i>I(0)</i>
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Note: *** represents significance at the 1% level, ** at the 5% level, and * at the 10% level respectively.

As all the variables are stationary at the level i.e., $I(0)$ thus, there is no need to test for the co-integration in the data.

As our data ranges from 2010 to 2021 (12 years). This implies that there is no need for testing cross-sectional dependence, and serial correlation, which are problem in macro panels with long time series (20-30 years) (Torres-Reyna, 2007). As for heteroscedasticity in the case of random effects model we employed Breusch and Pagan Lagrangian Multiplier Test for random effects and, the results are shown in table 3.

H0: Panel Homoscedasticity

Table 3. Breusch and Pagan Lagrangian Multiplier Test

	Var	SD
Unemp	32.71164	5.719409
e	3.318805	1.821759
u	24.56848	4.956661

$Chibar2(01) = 1.19526$

$P\text{-value} = 0.2385$

As the P value for our test are greater than the 0.05 threshold level, thus we failed to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that panel data is homoscedastic.

4.2. Empirical Results

Hausman specification test (Hausman, 1978) is employed to determine whether a random or fixed effect model is preferable, results show that the random effects model is efficient and consistent for our data set. Although, we ran all three models (pooled, random effects, and fixed effects) our interpretation is based on the random effects model's estimates. Table 4 shows the results for the Hausman specification test and table 5 shows the estimation of the models.

Table 4. Hausman Specification Test

	Fixed Effects	Random Effects
<i>Inf</i>	0.001513	0.0013524
<i>PopGr</i>	-0.1701133	-0.3647821
<i>FDI</i>	-0.0042742	0.0364198
<i>EDS</i>	0.0333462	0.033537
<i>GDPgr</i>	-0.0627426	-0.0703557
<i>Chi-squared</i>	5.16	

<i>p-value</i>	0.3964	
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Table 5. Panel Regression Estimates

	Random Effects	Fixed Effects	Pooled
<i>Inf</i>	0.00135 (0.40)	0.00151 (0.45)	-0.00170 (-0.20)
<i>PopGr</i>	-0.365 (-0.94)	-0.170 (-0.42)	-1.058* (-2.38)
<i>FDI</i>	0.0364 (0.38)	-0.00427 (-0.04)	0.606*** (4.04)
<i>EDS</i>	0.0335*** (3.31)	0.0333** (3.19)	0.00806 (0.68)
<i>GDPgr</i>	-0.0704* (-2.28)	-0.0627* (-2.03)	-0.314*** (-4.20)
<i>_cons</i>	6.877*** (5.57)	6.777*** (8.86)	8.232*** (7.62)
<i>N</i>	312	312	312

t statistics in parentheses (* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$)

In line with previous studies, inflation has an insignificant and weak positive relationship with unemployment. The small coefficient of 0.00135, although shows the presence of an opposite relation to the Phillips curve hypothesis, between unemployment and inflation, however, it is weak and negligible, indicating no relationship between unemployment and inflation in the long run (Shuaibu et al., 2021; Folawewo and Adeboje, 2017; Abugamea, 2018). Similarly, population growth and foreign direct investment have insignificant but opposite impacts (decreasing/increasing unemployment), contrary to prior expectations (increasing/decreasing unemployment) (Folawewo and Adeboje, 2017; Alisa, 2015). This may be due to an increase in migration to other countries from these countries due to better employment opportunities abroad. This, in turn, decreases labor force participation in the local labor market, thus impacting the unemployment rate negatively (Kreishan, 2011; Shabbir et al., 2020). For FDI most of these developing countries receive little to no FDI due to huge funds mismanagement, and official barriers such as high taxes, low security, and high political instability. These factors in turn impact employment opportunities adversely and increase unemployment in the local market (Strat et al., 2015; Alam et al., 2020).

As expected and consistent with previous studies external debt has a positive and significant impact on unemployment. This indicates an increase in external borrowing increases

unemployment in the economy (Cahyadin and Ratwianingsih, 2020; Alnaa and Matey, 2023; Siddiqa, 2021). A plausible explanation for this can be that as the burden of external debt increases, a large chunk of the national cake is vested in debt servicing. As a result, the spending on public sector development programs shrinks in the economy leading to lower employment growth and fewer employment opportunities and thus, an increase in unemployment in the economy (Trimurti and Komalasari, 2014). This indicates a need for robust long-term debt management in these countries. Borrowing with a simultaneous investment in development projects can create employment opportunities, thus, increasing employment in the economy and decreasing unemployment. Our findings are consistent with findings of (Shuaibu et al., 2021; Alnaa and Matey, 2023)

The estimated impact of GDP growth on unemployment is highly significant. A negative coefficient of -0.074 indicates an inverse relationship between GDP growth and unemployment, confirming the presence of Okun's law. This indicates that the growth in these developing countries is not jobless growth, rather with GDP growth more and more employment opportunities are created in the labor market (Maqbool et al., 2013; Oshora et al., 2021). Thus, sustained, and long-term economic growth can further stimulate the labor market acting as a catalyst for creating jobs in the market.

5. CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study panel data model techniques are used to estimate the relationship between inflation, external debt, population growth, and unemployment in 26 developing countries from 2010-2021. Panel cointegration tests are employed to check the long-run relationship between variables. The results show the existence significant long-run relationship between variables. Empirical analysis showed that GDP growth and external debt are significant determinants of unemployment for the 26 developing countries under study, meanwhile, inflation, FDI, and population growth are insignificant determinants of unemployment.

The study found a significant and negative relationship between GDP growth and unemployment, in line with the theoretical postulate of Okun's law. It means that higher and sustained GDP growth can drive down the unemployment rate and boost employment opportunities in these countries. The study confirms the findings of past studies such as (Maqbool et al., 2013; Sahnoun and Abdennadher, 2019).

Another important finding of the study is that external debt and unemployment have a significantly positive relationship. This indicates a trade-off between external borrowing and employment in these 26 developing countries. A higher external corresponds to higher unemployment, and lower employment, due to the huge burden of external debt servicing. This in turn shrinks the fund availability for developmental projects, thus shrinking the employment creation in the job market (Alnaa and Matey, 2023; Moosa, 2008). This indicates an urgent need for better debt management in these countries.

As regards to policy recommendations of the study, it is recommended that sustainable and long-term economic growth that has the potential to generate employment in these countries should be pursued. It is advised that these countries should follow economic growth with real production, boosting the manufacturing sector, and specific sectors special to each country. Moreover, diversifying the economy will also be effective in creating jobs in the labor market. Consequently, the countries should embark on growth policies that ensure sustainable and inclusive growth. The effective management of debt is another major policy emergency that these countries need to ponder. For employment creation, external debt should be managed properly and should be channeled toward sustainable and productive investment. Having proper accountability, transparency, and fund-utilizing schemes can minimize the embezzlement of funds and can contribute to job creation in the economy.

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Declaration of Contribution Rate: The authors have contributed equally.

Declaration of Support and Appreciation: The research did not receive any support from any institution or organisation.

Declaration of Conflict: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

In this study, the rules stated in the “**Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive**” were followed.

This article has been screened with **similarity** detection software.

Article Type: *Conceptual*

Citation: Iqbal, A. (2024). Understanding intergenerational collaboration: exploring challenges and collaboration strategies in the multigenerational workforce. *Journal of Economics, Business and Organization Research*, 6(1), 15-43.

UNDERSTANDING INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION: EXPLORING CHALLENGES AND COLLABORATION STRATEGIES IN THE MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

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Received / Başvuru: 23.03.2024

Accepted / Kabul: 25.07.2024

Published / Yayın: 31.07.2024

Abstract

This conceptual paper aims to explore the challenges and opportunities of intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce. The paper provides a theoretical framework for understanding the dynamics of intergenerational collaboration, including the communication, management, and collaboration strategies that can facilitate effective collaboration among different generations. The method section outlines the research design, literature review process, and synthesis approach used in developing this conceptual paper. By drawing on a diverse range of academic sources, the paper aims to provide a robust theoretical framework for understanding and promoting intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce. Drawing on existing literature from various disciplines, the paper examines the factors that influence intergenerational collaboration, including differences in values, leadership styles, technological adoption, change and communication styles. The paper also highlights the potential benefits of intergenerational collaboration, such as increased creativity, innovation, and knowledge sharing. Finally, the paper proposes strategies for strengthening intergenerational collaboration in the workplace, including mentorship programs, professional development and communication styles. The findings of this paper will contribute to a better understanding of the importance of intergenerational collaboration in the workplace and inform the development of policies and programs that support collaboration among different generations. Overall, the paper aims to stimulate further research and discussion on the topic of intergenerational collaboration and its role in promoting organisational success and individual well-being.

Keywords: *Intergenerational Collaboration, Multigenerational Workforce, Communication Strategies, Management Strategies, Organisational Success, Individual Well-Being*

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KUŞAKLARARASI İŞ BİRLİĞİNİ ANLAMAK: ÇOK KUŞAKLI İŞ GÜCÜNDE KARŞILAŞILAN ZORLUKLAR VE İŞ BİRLİĞİ STRATEJİLERİNİ KEŞFETMEK

Öz

Bu kavramsal çalışma, çok kuşaklı iş gücünde kuşaklar arası iş birliğinin zorluklarını ve fırsatlarını keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, farklı kuşaklar arasında etkili iş birliğini kolaylaştırabilecek iletişim, yönetim ve iş birliği stratejilerini içeren kuşaklar arası iş birliğinin dinamiklerini anlamak için teorik bir çerçeve sunmaktadır. Yöntem bölümünde, bu kavramsal çalışmanın geliştirilmesinde kullanılan araştırma tasarımı, literatür tarama süreci ve sentez yaklaşımı ana hatlarıyla açıklanmaktadır. Çeşitli akademik kaynaklardan yararlanarak, çalışma, çok kuşaklı iş gücünde kuşaklar arası iş birliğini anlamak ve teşvik etmek için sağlam bir teorik çerçeve sağlamayı hedeflemektedir. Farklı disiplinlerden mevcut literatüre dayanarak, çalışma, değer farklılıkları, liderlik tarzları, teknolojik benimseme, değişim ve iletişim tarzları gibi kuşaklar arası iş birliğini etkileyen faktörleri incelemektedir. Çalışma ayrıca kuşaklar arası iş birliğinin artan yaratıcılık, yenilikçilik ve bilgi paylaşımı gibi potansiyel faydalarını vurgulamaktadır. Son olarak, çalışma, iş yerinde kuşaklar arası iş birliğini güçlendirmek için mentorluk programları, profesyonel gelişim ve iletişim tarzlarını içeren stratejiler önermektedir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, iş yerinde kuşaklar arası iş birliğinin önemini daha iyi anlamaya katkıda bulunacak ve farklı kuşaklar arasında iş birliğini destekleyen politika ve programların geliştirilmesine rehberlik edecektir. Genel olarak, çalışma, kuşaklar arası iş birliği ve bu iş birliğinin örgütsel başarı ve bireysel refahı teşvik etmedeki rolü üzerine daha fazla araştırma ve tartışmayı teşvik etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Kuşaklararası İş Birliği, Çok Kuşaklı İş Gücü, İletişim Stratejileri, Yönetim Stratejileri, Örgütsel Başarı, Bireysel Refah*

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing diversity of the workforce has resulted in the emergence of the multigenerational workforce, where employees from different age groups, cultures, and backgrounds work together (Sobrino-De Toro, 2019). Diversity in the workplace increases as baby boomers delay retirement and join the other generations in the labour force (Bennett et al., 2012). Differences in age, intrinsic and extrinsic motivator preferences, and characteristics of generational workers can lead to challenges for business managers in retaining their multigenerational staff (Zemke et al., 2000). While the multigenerational workforce has numerous benefits, such as diversity of perspectives and experiences, it can also present challenges, particularly in terms of intergenerational collaboration (Chaprana, 2022).

Intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce can be understood through the lens of social identity theory proposed by Tajfel et al. (1979), which suggests that individuals define themselves in part by their membership in social groups, such as generations. Each generation has its unique set of experiences, values, and attitudes, which can influence how they interact and collaborate with individuals from other generations.

Collaborating effectively across different generations requires a deep understanding of the factors that influence communication, management, and collaboration strategies (Waldman, 2021). This understanding can help organisations develop effective policies and programs to promote intergenerational collaboration, thereby enhancing organisational success and individual well-being (Nurhas et al., 2023).

The study of intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce is significant for several reasons. Firstly, the increasing diversity of the workforce means that employees from different age groups, cultures, and backgrounds are working together more frequently than ever before. Effective collaboration across different generations is essential for organisations to achieve their goals and maintain a competitive advantage in a rapidly changing business environment (Cox and Blake, 1991; Saxena, 2014).

Secondly, intergenerational collaboration is essential for promoting individual well-being. Employees who feel valued and included in the workplace are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, have higher levels of engagement and productivity (Norouzi et al., 2022), and experience greater levels of job satisfaction and happiness (Krzeczkowska et al., 2021).

Thirdly, intergenerational collaboration can promote social cohesion and reduce ageism in the workplace. By working together and learning from each other, employees from different generations can develop a greater appreciation of each other's perspectives and experiences (Iweins et al., 2013), which can help break down stereotypes and promote mutual respect.

Finally, understanding the dynamics of intergenerational collaboration is crucial for organisations seeking to create inclusive work environments that value diversity and foster innovation and creativity (Cox and Blake, 1991).

This conceptual paper aims to provide a theoretical framework for understanding intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce. The paper will examine the challenges and opportunities of intergenerational collaboration, the communication, management, and collaboration strategies that can facilitate effective collaboration among different generations, and the potential benefits of intergenerational collaboration for organisational success and individual well-being.

The paper will also propose strategies for strengthening intergenerational collaboration in the workplace, including professional development, mentorship programs, and communication styles. The findings of this paper will contribute to a better understanding of the importance of intergenerational collaboration in the workplace and inform the development of policies and programs that support collaboration among different generations.

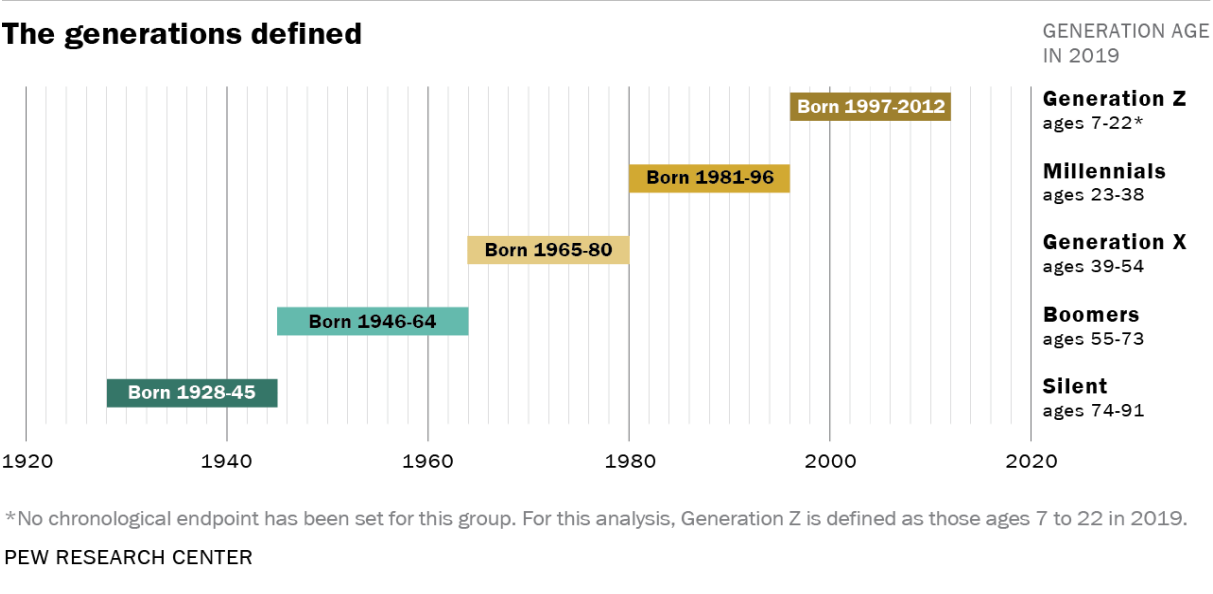
2. GENERATIONS OVERVIEW

A generation can be defined as an “identifiable group that shares birth years, age location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages” (Kupperschmidt, 2000). At present, the society lives amid a plurality of ideals, coming from different generations present in the community and job market de Brito (2013). It is incredibly important to identify the different generations (Baby Boomers, X, Y and Z) present in an organisation and learn how to develop intergenerational collaboration. “A generation is defined by what it thinks, feels, and experiences and not just by dates of birth” (Zemke et al., 2000). Each generation has unique characteristics that are directly linked to their behaviour, customs and values. To better understand each generation, it is important to know their individualities and their impact on the organisational environment.

The term "multigenerations" refers to the presence of individuals from different age groups and generations in the workplace (Srinivasan, 2012). This includes Baby Boomers (born

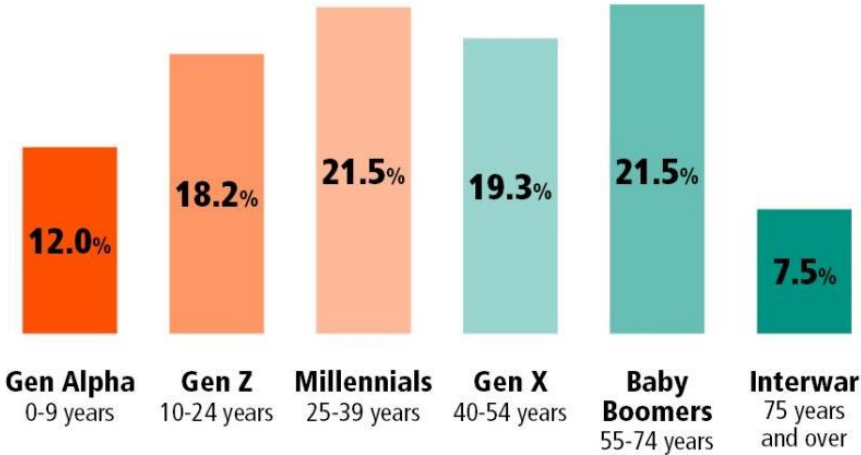
between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980), Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996), and Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012). The multigenerational workforce is becoming increasingly common in many organisations due to factors such as delayed retirement, longer life expectancy, and changing attitudes towards work and career.

Figure 1. The Generation Defined



Source: Dimock, 2019

Figure 2. Census Count by Generation (Australian)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021

The idea of classifying generations started with the baby boomers. After this, the changes started happening frequently for around 20 years, finishing in 1964 as noted by Greeley (1994).

The multigenerational workforce presents both opportunities and challenges for organisations (Waldman, 2021). By recognising and addressing generational differences and biases, fostering open communication and collaboration, and providing opportunities for learning and development, organisations can create inclusive and engaging work environments that value diversity and promote innovation and creativity. Here is a brief overview of multigeneration in the workplace.

2.1. Silent Generation

In 2020, this generation represents people who are 75 to 95 years old (Howe, 2014). The vast majority of people from the silent generation have retired and are therefore not the main focus of this research. The Silent Generation grew up facing social and economic problems, as they were the generation right before World War II, born between 1925 and 1945 (Howe, 2014).

The silent generation were told that the sacrifices made in battle were for their future. Due to all the difficulties faced when they were kids, the Silent Generation consider the possibility of work a privilege, with this mindset they achieve great results, being considered a hard-working generation (Kane, 2019).

2.2. Baby Boomers

According to SBCoaching (2019), the baby boomer generation got its name as it represents the “boom” in births that happened between 1946 and 1964. This phenomenon is explained by the return of World War II combatants, who as an act of compensation for the lives taken in battle, increased the birth rate. This generation is also called the ‘TV Generation’ (1950/1960) as they were born during the period in which the television was invented. The majority of this generation are parents and even grandparents, but they were young during the 60s and 70s. Therefore, they were shaped by significant political, economic and cultural changes that the world was going through at that time and television played an essential role in all this transformation, as it served as a means of propagating ideas and tendencies. The message mobilised the population to fight for their rights.

Baby boomers seek individual appreciation and recognition. Their motivation is directly linked to money, and they are willing to assume positions of responsibility as long as they are highly rewarded (Brower, 2022). This competitive, individual, and committed trait reveals the relentless pursuit of professional success.

2.3. Generation X

Generation X represents baby boomers' children. For SBCoaching portal (2019), this generation's focus ends up taking the lamentations of its predecessors much more into account. They see their parents dedicating their lifetime to a single company, often giving up better offers due to their loyalty to their company, but sometimes they are not recognised for this. Generation X are more open to new opportunities. Jordão (2016) still shows that the social profile of this generation presents the balance between personal and professional life, motivation in the face of new challenges, a more open view of the world, faith in meritocracy and a value of teamwork.

2.4. Generation Y

According to Jordão (2016) Generation Y is known as the Millennial generation, or, Internet generation. This generation developed at a time of huge technological advances and economic prosperity in a highly urbanised environment. This was also immediately after the establishment of the domain of virtuality as a system of social and media interaction, and in part at the level of labour relations. If Generation X was conceived in the transition to the new technological world, Generation Y was the first genuinely born in this environment, even if incipient (Jordão, 2016). The author shows that Generation Y was the first to be born and raised in an advanced technological environment with greater social interaction, via virtual means.

According to Guaita (2016) conducted a survey and she noted that 50% of the labour market consisted of individuals from Generation Y, also known as Millennials. According to the same survey, in 2020, professionals in the age group of up to 34 years were predicted to occupy 75% of the vacancies.

2.5. Generation Z

Generation Z emerged from the middle of the 90s, born in a time of globalisation. Braga and Sene (2017) present that Generation Z is quite different from the generations that preceded it. Although many have not yet entered the labour market, there are quite striking characteristics of virtual natives that should bring about changes in the working world. Although they appear to be more demanding than millennials, they are also much more proactive, which should be considered by the market (Törőcsik et al., 2014). For that reason, they seek to create their own solutions when they find nothing that satisfies them. The entrepreneurial profile is one of the traits that defines the youngest group in the generational pyramid.

3. METHOD

3.1. Research Design

This conceptual paper utilises a literature review and synthesis approach to provide a theoretical framework for understanding intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce. The research design involves a comprehensive review of existing literature on the topic, drawing from academic articles, books, and relevant studies. The purpose is to examine the challenges and opportunities of intergenerational collaboration, communication, management, and collaboration strategies, as well as the potential benefits for organisational success and individual well-being.

3.2. Process

Identification of Relevant Literature: The initial step involves identifying and collecting relevant literature on the multigenerational workforce, social identity theory, and intergenerational collaboration. Academic databases, journals, and reputable sources are systematically searched to ensure a comprehensive review.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: The selected literature is assessed based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Only studies and articles that directly contribute to the understanding of intergenerational collaboration, its challenges, and benefits are included. Additionally, it was taken care that only latest scholarly articles should be included to address the contemporary challenges faced by multigeneration.

Synthesis of Findings: The collected literature is synthesised to extract key themes, concepts, and empirical evidence related to intergenerational collaboration. The synthesis process involves categorising information, identifying patterns, and summarising major findings.

The method section outlines the research design, literature review process, and synthesis approach used in developing this conceptual paper. By drawing on a diverse range of academic sources, the paper aims to provide a robust theoretical framework for understanding and promoting intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce.

4. INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION- BENEFITS

Intergenerational collaboration refers to the interaction and collaboration between individuals from different age groups. This collaboration has numerous benefits for individuals,

organisations, and society as a whole.

4.1. Enhanced Productivity

Intergenerational collaboration leads to increased productivity as it brings together individuals with diverse skills, knowledge, and perspectives. A study by Brčić and Mihelič (2015) found that while motivation and willingness significantly influence knowledge sharing, communication and collaboration exhibit insignificant relationships. Furthermore, respondents, both younger and older, report that the amount of knowledge received in mentoring processes is less than what is desired. Similarly, Kiviranta (2010) emphasises that if managers know how to manage people from different generations, they are able to increase productivity, wellbeing, and retention of their employees. To achieve all those objectives, the managers should keep their employees motivated, ensure their personal growth in job and make sure the work community is supportive and functional enough.

Building respect and communication among employees of various ages can help employers leverage the talents of each, while building productivity. The transfer of work experience and knowledge is crucial to transmission of industry expertise. Mentoring programs have historically been used for transferring knowledge by pairing experienced senior employees with juniors, similar to the cultural described in Mannheim's theory. Yet mentoring, like cultural transmission, is not limited to a unidirectional transfer and can be used to enhance intergenerational relatability and communication. Reverse mentoring is a process of pairing junior employees for the sharing of expertise and skills with their senior colleagues (Sanner-Stiehr and Vandermause, 2017).

Overall, intergenerational collaborations can be a powerful way to enhance productivity and create a more inclusive and supportive work environment. By valuing and leveraging the contributions of people of all ages, organisations can create a more dynamic and innovative workplace that benefits everyone.

4.2. Improved Decision-Making

Intergenerational collaboration provides opportunities to bridge discussions between people with insights into past, present, and future generations; diverse and complementary points of views; knowledge of various life course stages; and diverse values and priorities (Kennedy and Gislason, 2022). Furthermore, collaboration between different age groups helps to bring varied perspectives to decision-making processes. In line with Gerhardt et al. (2022)

recognised that age-diverse teams are valuable because they bring together people with complementary abilities, skills, information, and networks. If managed effectively, they can offer better decision-making, more-productive collaboration, and improved overall performance.

Research by Zurba et. al (2020) found that intergenerational collaboration positively influenced decision-making outcomes due to the diversity of perspectives and experiences. They suggested that a comprehensive programme of work to encourage institutions and organisations to engage younger generations (as well as older people) in decision-making” and “monitor the participation of younger people”. Overall, the study provides evidence to support the idea that intergenerational collaboration can lead to improved decision-making in the workplace. By bringing together employees with different experiences, perspectives, and skills, organisations can make better decisions that consider a wider range of factors and potential outcomes.

4.3. Increased Creativity and Innovation

Intergenerational collaboration fosters creativity and innovation by promoting the exchange of ideas, experiences, and knowledge. When people from different age groups come together to work on a project, they bring unique perspectives and experiences to the table. The diversity of ideas and ways of thinking can lead to more creative solutions and innovative approaches. According to a study by Nurhas et al. (2023), intergenerational collaboration led to increased creativity in problem-solving processes. *Fostering Innovation Through a Diverse Workforce* (Forbes, n.d.) note that:

“Today, diversity and inclusion efforts are de rigueur for almost all companies. Executives understand that their companies can’t be successful on a global platform if they don’t have a diverse and inclusive workforce. A diverse and inclusive workforce is necessary to drive innovation, foster creativity, and guide business strategies. Multiple voices lead to new ideas, new services, and new products, and encourage out-of-the box thinking”.

Older individuals often have a wealth of experience and knowledge, while younger individuals may have a fresh perspective and be more open to new ideas and technologies. By combining these different strengths, intergenerational teams can create more well-rounded and effective solutions.

Additionally, working with people from different generations can help break down stereotypes and promote understanding and empathy (Rentz, 2015). This can lead to better communication and collaboration, which in turn can help teams work more effectively and efficiently. Overall, intergenerational collaboration has the potential to bring significant benefits to organisations and communities, including increased creativity, innovation, and understanding.

4.4. Enhanced Learning and Development

Collaboration between individuals from different age groups can facilitate learning and development. This is because each age group brings unique perspectives, experiences, and knowledge to the table, and when they collaborate, they can learn from each other and gain new insights. For example, older individuals may have more life experience and knowledge, while younger individuals may have a better understanding of the latest technology and trends. When they work together, they can share their knowledge and learn from each other.

Table 1. Integrational Collaboration Benefits

Integrational Collaboration- Benefits
Enhanced Productivity
Improved decision-making
Increased creativity and innovation
Enhanced learning and development
Improved social cohesion

Source: Author's Construct

A study by Maslo (2019) found that intergenerational collaboration led to improved learning outcomes and helped individuals to develop new skills. She noted that the intergenerational collaboration in research affects the synergy of ideas which in a cyclical sequence transforms the theoretical constructs in more and more universal applicable practical knowledge.

Collaboration between different age groups can also promote social and emotional learning (Nurhas et al., 2023), such as empathy, understanding, and communication skills (Lyu et al., 2020). This is especially important in today's global and diverse society, where people from different backgrounds and age groups interact with each other on a regular basis.

4.5. Improved Social Cohesion

Intergenerational collaboration can help to promote social cohesion and reduce intergenerational stereotypes and conflicts. By working together, individuals from different age groups can gain a better understanding of each other's perspectives and experiences, which can lead to greater empathy and respect. Intergenerational collaboration can also help to break down negative stereotypes that exist between different age groups.

For example, younger individuals may view older individuals as out-of-touch or resistant to change, while older individuals may view younger individuals as entitled or lacking in experience. By collaborating and working together, these stereotypes can be challenged and dispelled (Wu et al., 2023).

A study by Nurhas et al. (2023) found that intergenerational collaboration improved attitudes towards other age groups and promoted social inclusion. They concluded that the core of intergenerational integration lies in effective communication between intergenerational groups, equal collaboration, strong empathy that results in social inclusion and strong integration. Overall, intergenerational collaboration can help to promote social cohesion and reduce intergenerational stereotypes and conflicts by fostering empathy, respect, learning, and a sense of community.

In summary, intergenerational collaboration has numerous benefits for individuals and society as a whole, including enhanced productivity, improved decision-making, increased creativity, enhanced learning and development, and improved social cohesion.

5. INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION-CHALLENGES

Today's workforce is the first in history to span five generations, so it is no surprise that organisations are facing challenges when it comes to intergenerational collaboration. Workplace communications are evolving rapidly, and each generation defines successful collaboration differently (Alton, 2017). However, intergenerational collaboration at the workplace can pose a variety of challenges due to differences in work styles, values, communication preferences, and technology use among different age groups.

The multigenerational workforce is a relatively new phenomenon in today's workforce, which has led to numerous challenges for managers and leaders. Researchers have examined the generational differences in work values, outcomes, and person-organisation values fit

(Cennamo and Gardner, 2008). Here are some key intergenerational collaboration challenges at the workplace:

5.1. Communication Styles

Different generations may have different communication styles, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts (Iqbal and Trevisan, 2022). According to Smola and Sutton (2002), once several generations of employees are in the workforce together managers should be “[...] encouraged to deal with generational differences. Failure to do so may cause misunderstandings, miscommunications, and mixed signals.” Younger generations tend to prefer instant messaging and social media for communication, while older generations may prefer face-to-face conversations or phone calls (Johnson and Johnson, 2010).

Furthermore, younger and older workers may have different communication preferences and styles, leading to misunderstandings and conflict (Swan, 2012). For instance, younger workers may prefer digital communication methods, such as email or instant messaging, while older workers may prefer face-to-face communication (Robbins and Judge, 2020).

A baby boomer manager may prefer giving feedback in person, while a Gen Z employee may prefer receiving feedback via text or email. This can lead to miscommunications and misunderstandings, especially if the manager's feedback is critical (Smola and Sutton, 2002).

5.2. Work Values

Different generations may have different work values and priorities. For example, younger generations may prioritise work-life balance, while older generations may prioritise job security and loyalty to the organisation. Each generation may have its own work style, leading to differences in expectations and work ethics (Stanley, 2010). For example, older workers may prioritise job security and loyalty, while younger workers may prioritise work-life balance and flexibility (Davidescu et al., 2020).

Furthermore, each generation may have its own values and beliefs, which can lead to differences in how they approach work and life. For example, younger workers may prioritise social justice and diversity, while older workers may prioritise traditional values such as hard work and discipline (Robbins and Judge, 2020).

A study conducted by Cennamo and Gardner (2008) found that the youngest groups placed more importance on status and freedom work values than the oldest group. Baby

Boomers reported better person-organisation values fit with extrinsic values and status values than Generation X and Generation Y.

Similarly, a study conducted by Gursoy et al. (2008), they explored generational differences in work values and generational gaps in the hospitality workforce. They found that the Baby Boomers respect authority and hierarchy, while the Generation Xers (Gen Xers) rebel against authority. Their findings also suggested while Baby Boomers live to work, Gen Xers work to live. The Baby Boomers are willing to wait their turn for promotions and rewards and are very loyal. On the other hand, Gen Xers expect immediate recognition through title, praise, promotion, and pay.

Understanding the work values of these young individuals helps organisations appreciate how to structure jobs, working conditions, compensation packages, and human resource policies to attract GenMe (Millennials and Yers). What a Boomer or Xer valued or expected from work when he or she was young may be very different from what a member of GenMe values coming into the workplace (Twenge et al., 2010).

5.3. Technology Adoption

Different generations may have different levels of comfort and proficiency with technology. Many researchers agreed that Millennials grew up extremely comfortable with technology as a part of their daily lives, which was contrary to the two earliest generations (Cekada, 2012). For example, younger generations may be more comfortable with new technology and digital tools, while older generations may prefer traditional methods. A Gen Z employee who is tech-savvy may have difficulty working with a baby boomer colleague who struggles with using technology (Lyons and Kuron, 2013). The Gen Z employee may expect quick responses to emails and messages, while the baby boomer may prefer face-to-face communication. This can lead to misunderstandings and delays in completing tasks (Underwood, 2007).

Çoklar and Tatli (2021) explored the concept of "digital nativity," which refers to an individual's familiarity and proficiency with digital technology. The participants were 270 people, 90 from each of the X, Y and Z generations and it was found that the level of digital nativity increases as we move from the X generation to the Z generation. In terms of gender, while males in the X and Y generations have a higher level of digital nativity than females, there was no difference in the Z generation. The researchers examined the effects of age and

technological experience on digital nativity levels and their impact on work outcomes, including job satisfaction, work engagement, and turnover intentions.

5.4. Leadership Styles

Different generations may have different leadership styles and expectations (Cox et al., 2013). For example, younger generations may prefer a more collaborative and flexible leadership style, while older generations may prefer a more hierarchical and authoritative approach.

Based on author's personal experience, one example of intergenerational collaboration challenges is when a younger employee is leading a team with older members. The younger employee may prefer a more collaborative leadership style and be more open to new ideas and technology, while the older members may prefer a more hierarchical approach and be more resistant to change. This can lead to conflicts and challenges in working together effectively.

Gursoy et al. (2008) note that the managers belong to boomer cohort have low opinions of the Gen X and Gen Y employees. They perceive them to be inconsistent, unreliable, and calculating in their work, and they therefore did not deserve prompt recognition and reward. As subordinates, the Boomers also do not think highly of their Gen X managers; they perceive them as inexperienced and incapable of leading and managing them and others. Boomers are most unhappy whenever their younger bosses overlook their hard work and snap at them for reminiscing about their time.

A study by Easton and Steyn (2022) found that millennials prefer empowering and transformational leadership styles as they regard these styles as effective. However, important to note is that Generation X has very similar preferences. This finding will assist with improved development of millennial leaders in the workplace. Furthermore, transactional leadership and directive leadership are not, in general, associated with leader effectiveness, and should be avoided.

5.5. Attitudes Towards Change

Different generations may have different attitudes towards change, which can affect their willingness to embrace new ideas and processes (Ludviga and Sennikova, 2016). Ludviga and Sennikovas (2016) conducted a study to explore how three major generations of employees – Baby Boomers, Xers and Millennials, react to change and how their commitment to change

affect satisfaction and engagement. In their study, resistance to change was found to be characteristic to 43.5% of Baby Boomers, 18.7% of Yers and only 8.2% of Millennials. Support of change was characteristic to 68.4% of generation X representatives, 54.2% of generation Y representatives and only 43.5% of Baby Boomers. Which means younger generations may be more open to change and innovation, while older generations may be more resistant to change. Older workers may be resistant to change, especially technological changes, due to their lack of familiarity and comfort with new technologies (Verma and Garg, 2023).

A study by Schoch (2012) found that Generations X and Y are more comfortable with technology and technical changes than the older generations. Baby Boomers and Traditionalists did not grow up with technology in their day to day lives, and while they are capable of learning, they can be lacking some of the basic skill sets and confidence to do so.

Managers today have the unique challenge of not only managing these varied generations, but in getting them to respect each other. This challenge can become even more difficult if said manager is from a younger generation than the employees, which can be the case when working with technology changes. Thus, it is imperative for the change manager to be able to relate to individuals from each generation. Managers must know how to communicate, how to motivate, and how to provide feedback to each generation, as well as how to recruit and retain these employees (Njoroge and Yazdanifard, 2014).

6. STRATEGIES TO FACILITATE INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION

The review of literature showed that across the world and across disciplines, fun filled workplace, an organisational culture that promotes work life balance, upward mobility, flexible work environment, career advancement, supportive supervisors and engagement through social media are the various strategies that would help organisations could foster intergenerational collaboration. Based on the review, the following common themes have been identified:

Table 2. Strategies to Facilitate Intergenerational Collaboration

Author(s) Strategies	DeJuliis and Saylor (2021)	Jagajeevan, et al. (2021)	Montoya (2019)	Jones (2017)	Kapadia (2015)	Burke et al. (2015)	North and Fiske (2015)	Bennett et al. (2012)
Coaching and Mentoring	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
Practice-Ready Skills	✓							
Facilitate a Growth Mindset	✓							
Workplace culture		✓		✓		✓		
Skill development		✓			✓	✓		
Role clarity		✓						
Communication platform		✓	✓	✓			✓	
Cross-collaboration								
Professional development	✓		✓	✓		✓		
Foster a diversity-friendly				✓				
Encourage a healthy work-life balance				✓				
Eliminate negative generational stereotyping.				✓				
Challenging work assignment					✓			
Flexible scheduling						✓		
Use of technology								✓
Collaborative workspaces			✓	✓				✓
Non-hierarchical work styles								✓

Source: Author's construct

To overcome these challenges, it is important to promote open communication, respect different perspectives, and find common ground to work towards shared goals. The literature suggests that effective communication, mentoring, professional development, work culture and use of technology strategies are essential for successful intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce. Understanding the generational differences in work values and managing diversity can also contribute to a more productive and harmonious workplace. Furthermore, the importance of supervisor support and leadership style should not be overlooked when managing a multigenerational workforce.

6.1. Coaching, Mentoring and Professional Development

Mentoring is a key strategy in intergenerational collaboration that involves pairing a more experienced individual, known as the mentor, with a less experienced individual, known as the mentee, for the purpose of sharing knowledge, skills, and experience. The mentor serves as a guide, coach, and role model for the mentee, offering support and advice as the mentee

navigates their personal and professional development.

In the human resource and talent management fields, many organisations over recent years have adopted a coaching and mentoring model to enhance the growth and performance of their employees, while also cultivating more effective employee-supervisor relationships (DeJuliis and Saylor, 2021).

Professional development is a crucial component of any successful organisation. It allows employees to develop new skills and knowledge, improve their performance, and stay up to date with the latest industry trends. Intergenerational collaboration, on the other hand, refers to the practice of working together across different age groups to achieve common goals (DeJuliis and Saylor, 2021).

One way to encourage intergenerational collaboration is to offer training programs that cater to the different learning styles and preferences of each generation. For example, older employees may prefer more traditional classroom-style training, while younger employees may prefer more interactive and technology-driven learning experiences (Montoya, 2019).

Case Study: Mentoring at IBM

IBM is a global technology company that has been actively engaging in intergenerational collaboration through mentoring programs. One such program is the "Reverse Mentoring" program that pairs senior executives with younger employees for the purpose of sharing knowledge and skills (Stock, 2018; Montoya, 2019).

In this program, younger employees, often referred to as "Millennial Mentors," are paired with senior executives, who are referred to as "Boomer Mentees." The program aims to provide the senior executives with insights into emerging technologies, trends, and ways of working, while also giving the younger employees an opportunity to learn from the experience and expertise of the senior executives.

One example of this program's success is the partnership between an executive in his 50s and a young employee in his 20s. The executive was struggling to understand social media and how it could be used for business purposes. The young employee, who was an expert in social media, was able to teach the executive how to use various social media platforms, create engaging content, and leverage social media for business growth (Stock, 2018).

Through this mentoring relationship, the executive was able to gain valuable knowledge and skills, which helped him to improve his leadership and decision-making abilities. At the same time, the young employee gained exposure to the executive's experience and insights, which helped him to develop a deeper understanding of business strategy and leadership (Montoya, 2019).

Overall, coaching, mentoring and professional development are important strategies for intergenerational collaboration as they can help to build stronger relationships between individuals from different generations, promote knowledge-sharing, and support personal and professional growth.

6.2. Interpersonal Communication Styles and Platforms

Interpersonal communication involves the exchange of information, ideas, and feelings between people. In an intergenerational collaboration, effective interpersonal communication enables individuals of different ages and backgrounds to understand each other's perspectives, needs, and values. This understanding is critical in building trust, respect, and rapport, which are essential for successful collaboration.

Another important aspect of interpersonal communication in intergenerational collaboration is the use of appropriate language and communication styles. This includes recognising and respecting generational differences in communication preferences and adapting communication styles accordingly. For example, older team members may prefer face-to-face communication, while younger members may prefer digital communication (Jagajeevan et al., 2021).

Case Study: The Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC)

One example of intergenerational collaboration in Australia that relies on communication is the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC). The AYCC is a youth-led organisation that aims to tackle climate change by empowering young people to take action in their communities. The organisation relies heavily on communication to facilitate collaboration between young people and older generations (AYCC, n.d.).

Through a variety of communication channels, including social media, email, and face-to-face meetings, the AYCC connects young people with older generations who have experience in fields such as business, politics, and academia. By fostering these

intergenerational connections, the AYCC aims to create a diverse and powerful coalition that can effectively advocate for climate action (Hilder and Collin, 2022).

Overall, this case study demonstrates the importance of communication as a key strategy for intergenerational collaboration in Australia. By promoting understanding, respect, and empathy across different age groups, these initiatives are helping to build a stronger, more cohesive society for all Australians.

6.3. Workplace Culture and Collaborative Workspaces

Workplace culture can play a critical role in fostering intergenerational collaboration. In today's workplaces, we have employees from multiple generations working together, including Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z. Each generation brings unique experiences, skills, and perspectives to the table, and creating a culture that embraces these differences can help to foster collaboration and increase productivity. A study by Montoya (2019) found that the collaboration of older and younger generations would allow them to begin to ask questions and look for commonalities in knowledge transfer inquiries via the means of brainstorming and social interactions.

In addition, workplace culture can also promote intergenerational collaboration by creating opportunities for employees to socialise and connect outside of work-related activities. This can include team-building exercises, social events, and community service projects. By bringing employees together in a non-work setting, it can help to break down barriers and foster stronger relationships across generations (Garg and Mahipalan, 2023).

Case Study: The Australian Departmental Store Chain

The Australian department store chain, XYZ, has been actively working to promote intergenerational collaboration in its workplace culture. XYZ recognised that its workforce was becoming increasingly diverse, with employees from multiple generations, and wanted to create a culture that embraced these differences and fostered collaboration.

To achieve this, XYZ implemented a number of initiatives, including:

Flexible work arrangements: XYZ introduced flexible work arrangements that allowed employees to work from home or adjust their work schedules to better accommodate their personal lives. This helped to create a more inclusive workplace culture that recognised the diverse needs of its employees.

Professional development opportunities: XYZ invested in professional development opportunities that were relevant to all generations, including training programs and workshops that focused on digital skills and customer service.

These initiatives helped to create a workplace culture that valued diversity, promoted open communication, and provided opportunities for learning and collaboration across generations. As a result, XYZ was able to foster a more productive and engaged workforce, which ultimately led to improved business outcomes.

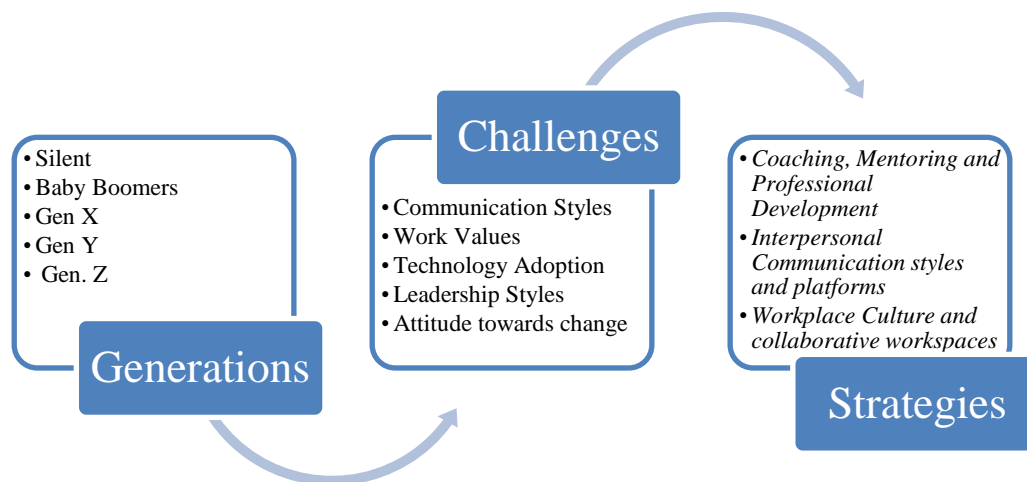
In summary, XYZ's case study demonstrates that workplace culture plays a critical role in promoting intergenerational collaboration. By creating a culture that values diversity, encourages open communication, and provides opportunities for learning and collaboration, organisations can foster a more productive and engaged workforce that is better equipped to tackle the challenges of today's rapidly changing business landscape.

7. CONCLUSION

This conceptual paper provides a summary of existing studies identifying methods, tools, and strategies used to facilitate intergenerational collaboration in the workplace. Intergenerational collaboration in the workplace is an important topic that has gained a lot of attention in recent years. As the workforce becomes increasingly diverse, with people from different age groups working together. Intergenerational collaboration in the workplace can bring numerous benefits to both organisations and employees.

This collaboration can lead to increased creativity, innovation, and productivity in the workplace. With the rise of multigenerational workforces, it is becoming increasingly important for individuals of different ages to work together effectively. The strategies, as outlined above, were identified by various researchers, and perceived to be useful or effective in the workplaces. However, the evidence is too premature to draw definitive conclusions regarding its impact and efficacy in the workplace. Here is the summary of the study:

Figure 3. Multigeneration, Challenges and Managing Strategies



This study suggests that intergenerational collaboration is a valuable emerging area of research. To foster intergenerational collaboration, organisations can implement professional development programs, workplace culture, communication styles and mentoring programs that bring employees of different ages together. By creating a culture of respect and inclusivity, organisations can help their employees work together more effectively, regardless of their age or background. Through intergenerational collaboration, younger workers can learn from the experience and wisdom of their older colleagues, while older workers can benefit from the fresh perspectives and new ideas of younger workers.

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Declaration of Contribution Rate: The author has completed the article on his own.

Declaration of Support and Appreciation: The research did not receive any support from any institution or organisation.

Declaration of Conflict: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

In this study, the rules stated in the “**Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive**” were followed.

This article has been screened with **similarity** detection software.

Article Type: *Conceptual*

Citation: Rahman, M., & Santayana, K. (2024). Ready-made garments sourcing from Bangladesh to the UK: Buyers and suppliers relations. *Journal of Economics, Business and Organization Research*, 6(1), 44-64.

READY-MADE GARMENTS SOURCING FROM BANGLADESH TO THE UK: BUYERS AND SUPPLIERS RELATIONS

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Received / Başvuru: 28.11.2023

Accepted / Kabul: 04.03.2024

Published / Yayın: 31.07.2024

Abstract

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the ready-made garment (RMG) industry, focusing on the supply chain dynamics between Bangladesh and the United Kingdom. It elucidates the critical relationship between suppliers and consumers within this sector, emphasizing the importance of a robust interconnection between these parties. The research highlights the significance of effective communication networks, which play a pivotal role in enhancing the supplier-buyer relationship. Furthermore, the impact of digitalization on the RMG industry is thoroughly explored, shedding light on how technological advancements are reshaping supply chain operations. The article also delves into the challenges faced within this business domain, proposing strategic solutions to overcome these obstacles. The operational intricacies of the RMG supply chain, spanning from Bangladesh to the UK, are examined in detail. This includes an analysis of market citations, sourcing processes, and the operational factors that influence supply chain operations. The study identifies key challenges associated with sourcing RMG from Bangladesh to the UK and offers insights into viable strategies for addressing these issues.

Keywords: *Supply Chain Management, Logistics, Sourcing, Suppliers and Buyers, Garment industry, Communication Network, Supply Chain Resilience*

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BANGLADEŞ'TEN BİRLEŞİK KRALLIK'A HAZIR GİYİM TEDARİĞİ: ALICILAR VE TEDARİKÇİLER ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİLER

Öz

Bu çalışma, Bangladeş ve Birleşik Krallık arasındaki hazır giyim (RMG) endüstrisinin tedarik zinciri dinamiklerine odaklanan kapsamlı bir analiz sunmaktadır. Bu sektördeki tedarikçiler ve tüketiciler arasındaki kritik ilişkiyi açıklamakta ve bu taraflar arasındaki sağlam bağlantının önemini vurgulamaktadır. Araştırma, tedarikçi-alıcı ilişkisini geliştirmede kilit rol oynayan etkili iletişim ağlarının önemini öne çıkarmaktadır. Ayrıca, RMG endüstrisindeki dijitalleşmenin etkisi kapsamlı bir şekilde incelenmekte ve teknolojik ilerlemelerin tedarik zinciri operasyonlarını nasıl yeniden şekillendirdiği üzerine ışık tutulmaktadır. Makale, bu iş alanında karşılaşılan zorluklara da değinmekte ve bu engelleri aşmak için stratejik çözümler önermektedir. Bangladeş'ten Birleşik Krallık'a uzanan RMG tedarik zincirinin operasyonel detayları ayrıntılı bir şekilde incelenmektedir. Bu, pazar alıntıları, tedarik süreçleri ve tedarik zinciri operasyonlarını etkileyen operasyonel faktörlerin analizini içermektedir. Çalışma, Bangladeş'ten Birleşik Krallık'a RMG tedarikinde karşılaşılan temel zorlukları belirlemekte ve bu sorunların çözümüne yönelik uygulanabilir stratejilere dair bilgiler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Tedarik Zinciri Yönetimi, Lojistik, Tedarik, Tedarikçiler ve Alıcılar, Giyim Endüstrisi, İletişim Ağı, Tedarik Zinciri Dayanıklılığı*

1. INTRODUCTION

The ready-made garment (RMG) sector has been a transformative force within the textile industry, particularly in Bangladesh, where it has significantly contributed to the country's economic expansion. The UK's import market for ready-made garments, valued at £58.5 billion, has provided an avenue for Bangladesh's garment and textile industry to broaden its presence in the UK market (Statista.com, 2022). Such trade has not only facilitated commercial growth but also fostered robust relationships between suppliers and buyers across both nations. With exports comprising approximately 83% of revenue within the Bangladeshi garment sector (BBC, 2020), the industry's burgeoning growth has cemented Bangladesh's position as a global leader in RMG production. The registration of over 1,100 UK VAT entities for importing Bangladeshi goods underscores the deepening commercial ties and mutual growth prospects for both countries' garment industries.

However, the global pandemic introduced unprecedented challenges, disrupting the import-export continuum and influencing supplier-buyer dynamics detrimentally. Approximately 5,271 garment factories in Bangladesh encountered severe setbacks, stifling their international market presence (BBC, 2023). Supply chain disruptions, compounded by the complexities introduced by Brexit, have inhibited the RMG trade between the UK and Bangladesh, with long-term ramifications for Bangladesh's economic trajectory.

Furthermore, the interplay between supply chain disruptions and inflation has exacerbated economic pressures within Bangladesh, with inflation rates soaring to 7.70%, consequently inflating garment and cloth prices (Org.bd, 2023). Such economic volatility, alongside climate change concerns and logistic delays, poses significant risks for the RMG sector's stability in both the UK and Bangladesh.

This article aims to dissect the intricate dynamics of the RMG business bridging Bangladesh and the UK, delving into the symbiotic supplier-buyer relationship within this context. It scrutinizes the obstacles that impede the expansion of Bangladesh's garment industry within the UK market, highlighting the broader economic implications and strategic considerations required to navigate these challenges effectively.

2. BUYER AND SUPPLIERS RELATIONS IN READY-MADE GARMENT SOURCING

The relation between a buyer and supplier can be defined as the exchange of product that is important to maintain the flow of exchange in both local as well as in international market. Maintaining the proficiency in the communication skill between suppliers and buyers is very important to enhance productivity in the workplace. As opined by Zhu et al. (2020), the relationship between the buyers and suppliers can be long term as well as short term. The terms of the business varies from one to another based on the agreements. Similarly, trust is very important between the relationship of a supplier and buyer to maintain the consistency of the clothing exchanges among the countries. As stated by Awan et al. (2021), a strong communication network between the supplier and buyer is important that can help in establishing a trust to enhance productivity of the workflow. However, the lack of communication between the suppliers and buyers in recent years has increased the difficulties for maintaining proficiency in the business of the garment. Thus, improving the communication between supplier and buyer can be beneficial for establishing a strong communication.

Globalisation of a business can be achieved through a well-established relation between the supplier and buyer that can help in analysing the market scopes. Moreover, the proficiency in the relation has a positive impact on the supply chain management (SCM) in the garment resourcing industry. As highlighted by Pancaningrum (2019), a well-organised SCM is very important for enhancing the organisational performance by maintaining proficiency of the product exchange in the garment industry. However, the lack of proper equipment in the companies can be a disadvantage for maintaining an efficient SCM that can degrade the proficiency in the business operations. As opined by Pasi et al. (2020), equipment such as GPS tracking and barcode scanners is important that can help in managing the efficiency of SCM for enhancing organisational performance. On the other hand, digitalisation of the working process has increased the effectiveness of the business operations in the garment industry. SCM has also a positive impact on the supplier's relationship with buyers for effective business operations.

On the contrary, reduced communication skill among the suppliers and buyers due to digitalisation of the working procedures has increased challenges for maintaining proficiency in the SCM. As stated by Mateus and Martins (2021), social restriction has decreased the

communication skills that have reduced the proficiency of the supply chain network. Moreover, inefficiency of a communication network affects the relation between suppliers and buyers to maintain proficiency in the exchange of the products. On the other hand, enhancing the efficiency in the communication network by conducting regular meetings to discuss business can be beneficial for improving the effectiveness of SCM. Therefore, maintaining the relationship between the suppliers and buyers is important to conduct effective business operations in the garment industry.

Inclusion of digital technologies is very important that can help in maintaining the track record of the product exchanges. As highlighted by Ashima et al. (2022), inclusion of IoT and 3D printing can be beneficial for mass production of the garment production. Moreover, availability of the ready-made garment can be beneficial for fulfilling the increasing demands of the customers. The availability of automated technologies can be beneficial for producing unique clothing to attract potential customers to purchase the product. As opined by Tarigan et al. (2021), economic stability with the business is beneficial for maintaining a proficient relationship between suppliers and buyers. However, inefficiency of the employees to handle the digital technologies can be disadvantageous for achieving a strong interrelationship between the suppliers and buyers. As stated by Bazli et al. (2023), inefficiency of the existing workforce to operate 3D printing machines can increase insecurity regarding work. On the other hand, providing training and development activities among the existing employees can be beneficial for providing education regarding IT education that can be beneficial for achieving success in the strategic approach. Hence, improvement of the SCM by enhancing the efficiency of the employees can be beneficial for a strong supplier-buyer relationship.

Improvisation in the supplier-buyer relationship also helps in gaining more customers that can be helpful in increasing profitability. As opined by Gereffi et al. (2021), presence of a strong interrelationship between supplier and buyer increases the global presence of a company that can help in obtaining foreign investments. Moreover, a strong supplier-buyer relationship also helps in gaining the trust of the international customers that can be beneficial for increasing the business operations. A strong communication between the suppliers and buyers can encourage the global consumers to purchase the products that can be beneficial for increasing the sales of the garments. However, expansion of a business in the global market can be difficult for the managers to maintain the budget. As stated by Ketokivi and Mahoney (2020), inefficiency to maintain the expenses can increase conflict between the supplier and buyer that can decrease

the proficiency in the supply chain system. On the other hand, finding the suppliers providing the garment products at relatively lower price in the global market can be beneficial for managing the expenditure. Thus, maintenance of the working process to manage the expenditure by searching the suppliers providing raw materials at lower prices helps in maintaining proficiency in the interrelationship between suppliers and buyers.

Geo-political changes also increase challenges for the suppliers to maintain strong communication with the buyers. Moreover, the changes in the geo-political area have decreased the efficiency of interrelationship between suppliers and buyers. As highlighted by Dong and Kouvelis (2020), frequent changes of the trade policies also affects the expenses to operate the business as custom services can increase the prices of the products. On the other hand, restriction of the trade area can be beneficial for enhancing the profitability of the local suppliers. As stated by Subramaniam et al. (2020), improvement of the interrelationship between suppliers and buyers can be beneficial for enhancing economic conditions in a country. Therefore, increasing the business operations within local regions is advantageous for improving the supplier-buyer relation in the garment industry to enhance organisational performance.

3. METHODS

Research methodology is a specific and scientific procedure that is used in research while collecting data and information from authentic sources. As per the view of Rahman and Chowdhury (2020), research philosophy is mainly applied to determine a specific concept and knowledge based on the selected article topic. In this regard, interpretivism research philosophy has been used in this article to develop a deep understanding of readymade garments sourcing between Bangladesh and the UK. Qualitative research strategy used to implement a flexible understanding of the relationship between suppliers and consumers in the garment business. In this regard, this research strategy helps to cover a wider area of research topic. In addition, thematic data analysis is also used in this article to implement themes and patterns to address this article's topic. It is justified that this data analysis allows the development of deep insight into these article problems using theoretical implementations. Secondary sources especially articles, journals and books have been used to collect more relatable and informative data to construct a critical analysis of readymade garment sourcing from Bangladesh to the UK.

The article used a secondary data collection method to gather information and data from

a wider area to cover all aspects of this research. As per the view of Saha et al. (2020), secondary data is mainly used in article to collect data and information from multiple sources. In this case, Google Scholar has been used to collect a more accurate and relevant dataset to develop a deep insight into the garment sourcing business from Bangladesh to the UK. The selected data and information have been used for research purposes not to address any organisation or individuals. This article also maintains the guidelines of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR 2018) for fair use of data and reducing copyright claims issues (Gdpr-info.eu, 2018). It helps to increase the authenticity of this article and reduce the threat of academic misconduct issues.

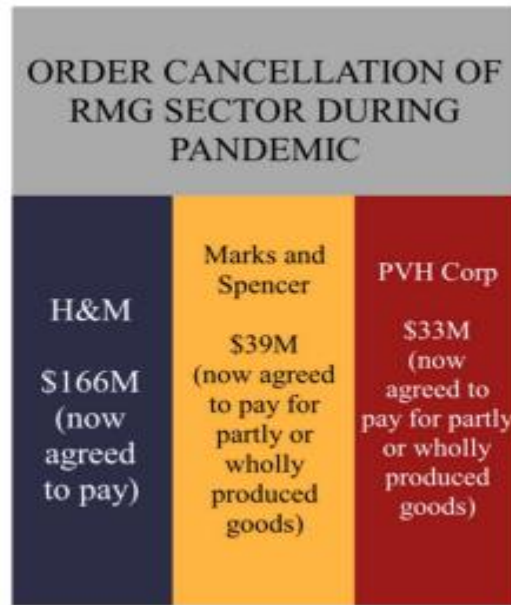
Thematic data analysis is beneficial for this study to address its article aims using themes and patterns. As per the view of Islam et al. (2020), thematic data analysis is mainly used in article to implement the theoretical interface and cover a wider area of the article topic. In this case, this article covers the role of suppliers and consumers in ready-made garment sourcing from Bangladesh to the UK.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Ready-Made Garments Sourcing Process

Garment merchandisers use the sourcing process as one of the essential ways of supplying raw materials, commodities and additional accessories from both domestic to international and foreign markets to their home country. As per the ideas of Sun (2020), the sourcing process can also be defined as an approach to determine the feasibility of supply chain (SC) operations. Assessing, selecting and managing suppliers to obtain predicted business goods and services throughout the process is important to maintain the flow of operations. This transferability of the SC operations is associated with the functional attributes of the sourcing process where ability to collect the right resources for garments under the ready-made industry of Bangladesh and the UK. As per the opinions of Putra et al. (2021), supply chain management (SCM) is the coordinated system of chains that supply goods and raw materials to end customers. Therefore, ready-made garments tend to be a day-to-day operation which has the most likelihood of utilising sourcing models to make improvements to the whole process.

Figure 1. Order Cancellation in the UK RMG Sector



Source: Hossain, 2021

Product sourcing has also been a comprehensive part of SCM that maintains the flow of goods supply even under non-functional chain operations between countries. As per the ideas of Moosavi et al. (2022), operating SC under macro-environmental transitions makes the operational flow of the chain due to unexpected trouble and statutory limitations. In that case, the COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the recent macro-environmental transitions that seem to impact the whole functional attributes of SCM. Almost 35 Bangladeshi suppliers working in Debenhams as a UK-based company have tripled after the company went bankrupt and shut down (Hossain, 2021). This uncertainty in supply and operational function made the sourcing process between both the UK and Bangladesh uncertain.

Besides this, ready-made garments (RMG) labour or workforce-related complexities have been another significant aspect impacting the sourcing procedures in the UK and Bangladesh. As per the ideas of Ahmed and Arun (2023), a critical issue associated with RMG workers and their value chain assessment process is the continuum of exploitation. The value trap and exploitation of workers in the RMG sector has been a comprehensive point in terms of analysing functional limitations in the SCM operations in the sector. Bangladesh's RMG industry has highly labour-intensive situations for which the chances of exploitative practices in the sector is common as well. However, regulatory and legal compliance have significant roles in terms

of defining adequacy in workforce operational activities in both countries. As per the ideas of Sumaiyah (2023), Bangladeshi Legal and Service Trust (BLAST), as a non-governmental organisation, follow regulatory aspects to poor and marginalised districts in the country. The RMG operations between the UK and Bangladesh have multiple advisory bodies and legal frameworks in which the end goal is to determine the ethical grounds in the sourcing process of the sector.

4.2. Supplier and Buyer Relations to the Sourcing Process

Sourcing raw materials under the SCM operations involves multiple aspects associated with functionality, traceability and feasibility of the chain, but the relationship between supplier and buyer is also important. As per the ideas of Obrenovic et al. (2020), maintaining the flow of supply operations without any coordination of the market situations might be a difficult task to execute. In that case, the behavioural aspect of buyers becomes important to market information that a supplier needs to evaluate before executing any change in the SCM process. Sustainability as part of industry trends to gain customer focus in the current era also has become an executable approach to acquiring customer interest. However, sustainability without adaptation and circular economy (CE) mode in the RMG industry, might be a difficult task to maintain the brand value by becoming net zero (Akhter, 2023). The prospect of the CE model intensifies the functions of waste management and production relaxation to reduce environmental concerns as part of business sustainability in RMG. Therefore, the environmental assessment as part of the sustainable trends in the RMG industry also has an important role in justifying the customer focus on the sourcing process to balance the relationship between suppliers and buyers.

On the other hand, the relationship between buyers and suppliers in the Bangladesh RMG industry also impacts the SCM resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. As per the opinions of Ali et al. (2021), apart from the issues related to operational technicalities, the pandemic has created operational vulnerabilities in the Bangladeshi supply chain of garments. The operational performance of a supply chain model depends on the transportation and logistics practices where covid restriction directly creates a disruption. This operational breakdown due to COVID-19 not only affects the flow of supply but also the relationship between suppliers in foreign regions with their end customers. However, performance improvement of an operational system of business depends on the technology and assessment of market situations

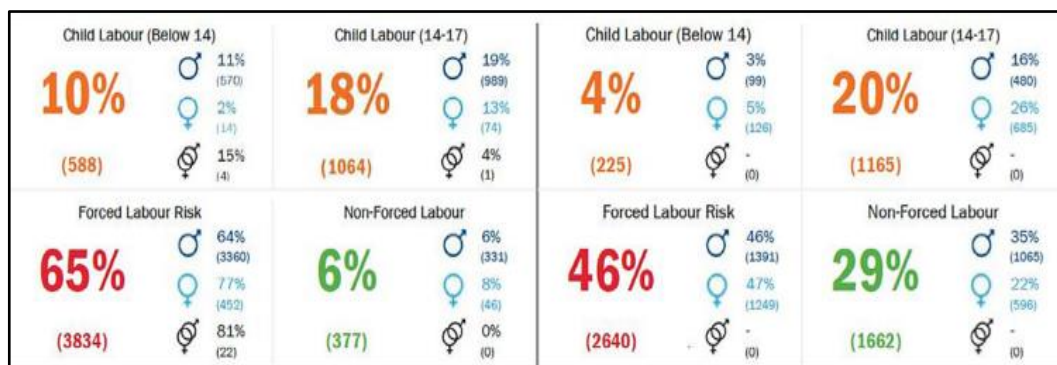
(Koronen et al. 2020). Therefore, the context of changing sourcing and SCM operations in the RMG industry of both countries tends to have a direct impact on the relationship between stakeholders of the sector as well.

Furthermore, social sustainability as another form of ethical grounds in business in the current era has a direct impact on the organisational suppliers and their target customers. As opined by Alghababsheh et al. (2023), poor working conditions of workers, limited community growth and social injustices are some common social issues where CSR implications are needed. Compliance and collaboration as part of SCM operations can also be adopted as additional practices to invest in communal development to justify social inclusion in business development progress. However, limited financial growth and inadequate surveillance of regional growth by governmental support can be attained (Sparrow et al. 2020). Therefore, the scope of balancing the communal and commercial growth seems to be core functional areas where SCM operations and the inclusion of sustainable practices can be increased to improve supplier-buyer relation.

4.3. Challenges in Ready-Made Garments Sourcing

In respect to the relation between suppliers and buyers within the supply chain of ready-made garments from Bangladesh to the UK, challenges are relied on associated operations. While sourcing garment products from Bangladesh, the brands and manufacturers have been obliged in considering the elements like cost, flow of sourcing, compliance and quality. According to the statements of Paul et al. (2021) the sourcing of ready-made garments includes a potential challenge of cost management due to the involvement of multiple suppliers, vendors, transportations, logistics and distributions. These are the key factors which are responsible for increasing the supply chain constraints in terms of cost effectiveness and elevating the overall service quality during the supply.

Figure 2. Intensity of Labour and Workforce Problem in Bangladesh’s RMG



Source: Chanani et al., 2022

According to figure 2, it has been observed that in Bangladesh’s RMG sector, major issues related with sourcing are centralised in labour and workforce problems. Chanani et al. (2022) have claimed that in Bangladesh’s RMG practices towards other international countries, allegations of child labour, forced labour, and inadequate labour foundation are major challenges. The challenges have also been based on labour issues, along with improper technological alignments and transportation issues.

Due to the long distance between Bangladesh and the UK, costs regarding transportation, logistics and procurement can be increased which can impose negative impact budgeting. However, as argued by Paul et al. (2021) forces included within the international supply chain environment such as global Covid-19 pandemic, rising inflation and increased economic tensions have disrupted Bangladesh’s “ready-made garment sector”. Consequently, both the manufacturing and supply practices have been affected due to labour shortage, financial limitations along with geo-political tension amidst countries. For instance, the global pandemic has triggered payment delays, renegotiation of export-import terms, and order cancellations which caused 17% reduction within the value of Bangladesh’s exports of ready-made garments (Mckinsey.com, 2023a). This example has set a clear idea of external challenges linked with the sourcing practices of “ready-made” garments from Bangladesh to countries like England. Based on the statements of Saha et al. (2021) shift in customers’ buying patterns among the western countries along with an international competitive environment influenced supply chain, there have also been severe challenges in sourcing ready-made garments. Thus, the risks associated with RMG exports have relied on the positioning of the countries within the supply chain environment with the largest bases of manufacturing like China, Bangladesh and other Asian countries.

Current trends across the buying side of RMG products for RMG products are in the ongoing phases of transition while cost positions play an important role. On the other hand, Mia and Akter (2019) have contradicted external challenges by examining a range of internal challenges creating discrepancies in RMG supplies from Bangladesh. In fact, the key challenges are relied on certain vital areas such as unskilled workers, inadequate infrastructure, issues related with safety, crisis in energy, lack of political support and the adverse impacts of “Accord & Alliance” (Mia and Akter, 2019). These challenges have been directed towards less scopes of achieving SDG goals and fewer efforts in sustainable development have caused challenges in sourcing RMG products from Bangladesh to the UK. As opined by Khan et al (2020) in respect to the relation between buyers and suppliers, a severe incident of “Rana-Plaza Tragedy” causing death to 1137 garment workers, has raised severe failures regarding workers’ safety, working conditions and supply of RMG. Incidents like these have adversely affected the relation between suppliers and buyers especially between Bangladesh and the UK. These are the major challenges linked with the sourcing of ready-made garments from Bangladesh to the UK.

4.4. Strategies of Product Sourcing Process Associated with Ready-Made Garments

In responding to the challenges linked with sourcing of ready-made garments from Bangladesh to the UK, strategies need to be aligned with sustainable sourcing and significant market development. As opined by Boudreau et al. (2023) garment manufacturers of Bangladesh and garment brands of the UK need to establish a strong communication network between suppliers as well as buyers to maintain a smooth flow of supply chain. Moreover, both the garment brands, as well as suppliers need to be concerned in developing a better relationship among suppliers which can help in maintaining a better supply chain. On the other hand, Jensen and Whitfield (2022) have argued that garment manufacturers of Bangladesh can also improve their infrastructure of exporting and better stakeholder engagement in order to perform better in dealing with external pressures. Mainly, the suppliers of Bangladesh and garments brands of the UK need to improve their resilience capacity, which can help in dealing with the pressures created by the supply chain environment.

RMG suppliers of Bangladesh and garments of the UK can also elevate their collaborative activities in implementing data-driven approaches to streamline supply chain practices. According to the views of Modgil et al. (2022) suppliers and brands need to accumulate as well

as interpret core data to forecast strategic solutions and predict possible conditions by using advanced technologies like AI, blockchain and digitalisation. This particular process can also help to maintain a better relationship between buyers and suppliers which can also help to resolve the challenges in a collaborative way. However, as argued by Tseng et al. (2022a) strategic level of market research with data-driven practices along with spends analysis has been effective in dealing with applying further supply chain practices in an accurate manner. Regarding the supply chain management of “ready-made garments” from Bangladesh to the UK, the volatility of raw materials, insecurity across buyers and regulations in margins need to be prioritised. For instance, there are multiple criteria such as “price”, “quality”, “capacity”, “speed” and “risks”, which need to be maintained while dealing with macro trends that rely on the RMG supply chain between Bangladesh and the UK (Mckinsey.com, 2023b). Focusing on these factors, sourcing of RMG products can accumulate adequate values in terms of international supply chain.

Apart from these key practices, suppliers and buyers need to conduct any kind of supply chain related activities according to the changes in international policies. Jani and Jatmika (2023) have claimed that the suppliers of Bangladesh and buyers in the UK need to emphasise all policy making changes like GSP and improvement in workers’ condition to facilitate streamlined supply. For instance, suppliers of Bangladesh can utilise “Generalised System of Preference” or GSP which can allow exports of garments to the EU without any tariffs, and improve workers’ condition to establish better supplier-buyer relation in product sourcing (Unctad.org, 2023). Consequently, using these key strategic approaches, buyers of the UK can source ready-made garments in a better way.

5. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Buyers and supplier relation management practices are essential to ensure strategic management of the product services that are provided to the customers. According to the view of Rasheed (2022), resource-based view theory can be effective for optimising supply chain practices by improving supplier monitoring practices. The application of this theoretical model can be effective for improving the relationship shared between buyers and suppliers in cross country trade practices. Resource-based view theory is effective for managing the inventory and improving the supply practices so that valuable aspects can be made for addressing organisational success. On the other hand, Tseng et al. (2022b) state that stakeholder theory is

more effective for evaluating the interrelationship shared between investors, customers, suppliers and community members that are associated in a business. Stakeholder theory enables a firm to focus on creating value and integrate with practices that can accelerate the growth of the organisation.

However, to ensure an effective relationship between suppliers and buyers, the cost management practices are essential in supply chain management. As per the view of de Goeij et al. (2021), transaction cost theory improves the cost investment made behind the resource purchase practices and optimises cost coordination. The transaction cost theory has been found to be effective for improving decision making practices and accelerating the cost management practices so that desired growth within the business can be achieved. In order to improve buyer and supplier relationship, the application of transaction cost theory can be applied by making effective investments and improving cost based decision making. On the other hand, Mardani et al. (2020) state that the rate of supplier's engagement in the SCM practices can be improved by the application of resource dependency theory. An organisation can focus on conducting transactions with other organisations or suppliers for accelerating business development. The resource dependency theory can be effective for the organisations to focus on improving the buyers and suppliers relationship in context to improve readymade garment sourcing strategy.

Furthermore, the application strategic approaches can help to evaluate the possible factors that can affect the supply chain business between countries. As stated by Beal Partyka (2022) the application of agency theory is effective in terms of resolving business issues and adopting a set of practices that can address individual interests. The cross border supply chain practices require a strong understanding of intentionality, rationality and power to ensure effective movement between the organisations. The rate of engagement between the suppliers and corporate governance also needs to be analysed so that future development practices can be ensured. Moreover, theoretical frameworks can be effective for addressing effective developmental practices to establish strong bonds between the buyers and suppliers. On the other hand, Saragih et al. (2020) state that it is important to evaluate the internal operation practices for improving supplier performance. The application of the theoretical model can result in providing insights to the set of approaches that can improve supplier and buyer relationship. Thus the theoretical frameworks are effective for addressing corporate approach, understand resource management and monitor supply chain so that interrelation between supplier and buyers can be improved.

6. CONCLUSION

The ready-made garment (RMG) sector has witnessed rapid expansion within the global textile industry, significantly enhancing trade relations between countries. Despite this growth, the RMG sector has faced several challenges, particularly during the pandemic and due to changes in regulatory practices across nations. These challenges have not only affected the inflation rates in various countries but have also strained the relationships between suppliers and buyers. A critical analysis of these relationships reveals that sourcing practices in the RMG sector have undergone significant transformations, including adjustments in handling raw materials, commodities, and accessories essential for product development. Such shifts have opened avenues for business expansion through optimized resource management.

Furthermore, the ability to transfer supplies within the chain is linked to functional attributes, emphasizing the importance of coordination in the supply of goods and raw materials. This coordination is crucial for ensuring that end customers receive strategic and efficient services. However, the pandemic's impact led to a dramatic reduction in business accessibility for RMG factories, with orders worth millions of dollars being canceled due to logistical challenges. This situation has adversely affected productivity, income generation within the textile industry, and supplier viability, leading to reduced productivity, bankruptcy, and business closures.

Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of effective communication and relationship management between suppliers and buyers. The application of theoretical frameworks such as the resource-based view, resource dependency theory, agency theory, and transaction cost economics can significantly enhance business performance within the RMG sector. Specifically, the Bangladesh textile industry can leverage these theories to strategically monitor and foster growth among suppliers.

However, this study is limited by the absence of primary data, which could provide deeper insights into the factors affecting business management and supplier-buyer relationships in regions like the UK and Bangladesh. Primary data obtained through interviews could offer a closer examination of current market developments and their impacts on these relationships. Identifying strategies based on these factors could enhance productivity and strengthen the supplier-buyer bond. Despite these limitations, theoretical models have proven effective in shaping business operations and fortifying the relationships between suppliers and buyers.

It is recommended that strategic frameworks be developed by applying these theoretical models to critically evaluate market changes and improve the supplier-buyer relationship. Adopting a strategic approach to business expansion and growth in the RMG sector is essential for achieving desired outcomes and enhancing the industry's overall resilience and sustainability.

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Declaration of Contribution Rate: The authors have contributed equally.

Declaration of Support and Appreciation: The research did not receive any support from any institution or organisation.

Declaration of Conflict: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

In this study, the rules stated in the “**Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive**” were followed.

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