

Gender Relations in Super Shops at Dhaka: Experience of Women Sales Associates

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A thesis submitted to the department of Economics and Social Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of BSS Bachelors of Social Science in Anthropology

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that:

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Abstracts

This study aims to explore the evolving role of women in the retail sector of Bangladesh, specifically as sales associates or representatives, and the impact of gender dynamics on their position within the industry. While previous studies have examined gender perceptions of salespeople in various countries, limited research exists on this specific issue in Bangladesh. To address this research gap, a qualitative approach utilizing in-depth interviews will be employed. The participants will be women who have either previously worked or are currently working as sales associates in different super shops across the city.

The research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities encountered by these women in their professional journeys. By investigating their experiences, perspectives, and societal perceptions, the study aims to shed light on how gender relations influence the role of sales associates and, in turn, impact the overall retail business in Bangladesh.

Through in-depth interviews, this research will capture the nuanced aspects of these women's experiences, including the barriers they face, the strategies they employ to navigate their roles, and the societal expectations placed upon them. The findings will contribute to the existing literature on gender, work, and entrepreneurship, specifically within the context of Bangladesh's retail sector.

Furthermore, this study holds practical implications for promoting gender equality and inclusivity within the retail industry. The findings may also provide guidance for retail businesses to foster an inclusive workplace culture that supports the success of both male and female employees.

This research aims to fill the gap in the literature regarding gender dynamics in the retail sector of Bangladesh, particularly focusing on the experiences of women working as sales associates. The utilization of in-depth interviews will provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by these women, as well as the overall impact of gender relations on the retail business. Ultimately, this study strives to contribute to the understanding of gender, work, and entrepreneurship in Bangladesh while providing practical implications for promoting gender equality and inclusivity in the retail industry.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

The retail sector in Bangladesh is currently experiencing phenomenal growth. The company employs more than six million people, demonstrating that it has tremendous potential for young employees and women in particular (TBS Report, 2022). The sector that contributes the most to the economy of the country is retail. Gross value addition (GVA) exceeds 63 percent of the total (Tribune Desk, 2022). According to research conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), wholesale and retail trade services contributed Tk333, 900 crores to Bangladesh's gross domestic product in 2012. (Tribune Desk, 2022).

Currently, women in Bangladesh are permitted to work in the retail sector; however, they must have adequate training. As a result of receiving less training than men, it is more difficult for women to have a significant and evident impact in the field they have chosen. Additionally, society has taboos regarding employed women. The surrounding community opposes the notion that women should be required to work late schedules, which creates an obstacle for women in the workplace (TBS Report, 2022). Consequently, despite the fact that there are enormous opportunities for the female workforce to flourish in the retail industry, there are still cultural and infrastructural barriers that the industry must address and mitigate before women can be fully integrated into the industry and enjoy its full potential.

Spero (2022) depicts that woman working in retail are more likely to be on zero-hours contracts and earn less than the minimum wage. In addition, the study found that women in the retail industry were more likely to experience workplace harassment and violence than women in other industries (Brockbank & Airey, 2020).

In Bangladesh, both genders who worked in retail faced a number of obstacles, including extended working hours, but for female employees there are just few opportunities for career advancement because of their physical strengths (Ghosh, 2021). In addition, the study revealed that numerous women have been victims of sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence on the job. (Trading Economics, 2023).

Women comprise a significant portion of the retail workforce in India, with estimates indicating that approximately 40% of employees in this industry are female. Nevertheless, Brockbank and Airey (2020) found that women in retail were more likely to be employed in

low-paying, entry-level positions and were less likely to receive training or career advancement opportunities.

Overall, women's working in retail, including in supermarkets, encounter a variety of gender relations-related challenges. These obstacles include, limited career opportunities, and workplace harassment and violence for females. It is essential to address these issues so that women in retail can receive fair and equal treatment and completely contribute to the success of this industry (Shafiek, 2022). Women s are working hard to transform their gender role from traditional setup to meet the criteria to the retail business in China and Sri Lanka (Attanapola, 2004). Chang and Greffli (1994) evicts the women in US are working for consumers, fashion garments from the past to exceed their skills to prove they can do better in retail business. Women in Asian countries operates for specific retails items all over the world (Afshar and Agarwal, 2016). In the present study, researcher wanted to explore the gender role regarding retail industry and their work impact on the development of retail business.

1.2 An overview of the retail industry and women in Bangladesh

In order to address the identified challenges, grocery store companies have a responsibility to implement hiring and promotion policies that prioritise gender diversity and social justice. This entails enacting legislation to prevent discrimination and harassment based on gender, identifying a mechanism to close the wage disparity between men and women, and providing equal opportunities for advancement (UNW, 2021). By providing their female employees with benefits like healthcare and paid leave, businesses can ensure that women are able to support themselves and their families.

Retail companies have a duty to resolve the issues women face in the global retail industry. By improving working conditions and opportunities for women, retailers can promote greater gender equality and social and economic progress (UNW, 2021). Here are some of the most important responsibilities retail companies have in this regard:

Paying women fairly and equally for their work: Retailers should ensure that women are compensated fairly and equally for their labour. Women in the retail sector earn 28% less than males on average, according to a report by the International Labour Organisation, highlighting the gender pay gap in this industry. (International Labour Organisation, 2018) Retailers can address this issue by implementing pay equity policies and undertaking regular pay audits.

Ensuring safe and healthy working conditions: Retailers should prioritise the safety and health of their female employees by providing safe and healthy working conditions. This includes ensuring adequate illumination, ventilation, and space, as well as addressing any workplace hazards or risks.

Offering opportunities for career advancement: The retail industry should provide opportunities for women to advance their professions within the organisation. This includes providing training and development programmes, mentoring, and merit- and performance-based promotions. Retailers should provide flexible work options, such as part-time or remote work, to accommodate the requirements of female employees who may have caregiving responsibilities or other personal obligations.

Addressing harassment and discrimination: Regarding harassment and discrimination, retailers must implement zero-tolerance policies and ensure their workplaces are free of any form of bias or maltreatment. This includes providing employees with training on these issues and establishing clear procedures for reporting and responding to any incidents.

Supporting women-owned businesses: Retailers can support women in the retail industry by procuring products from and promoting the products and services of women-owned businesses. This can help to increase the visibility and market share of enterprises owned by women, thereby empowering them economically.

Due to their gender, women in the grocery store industry face significant obstacles, including a reduced income, limited promotion opportunities, discrimination, and harassment (UNW, 2021). These challenges are not unique to a single nation; rather, they affect people in every region of the globe (UNW, 2021). To ensure that women can completely participate in and benefit from this vital industry, grocery store operators must ensure that their hiring and promotion practises promote gender equity and diversity. Women will only then be able to completely participate in and profit from this industry.

1.3 Problem Statement

In the context of sales positions in superstores, where the majority of employees are female, a significant issue regarding gender relations and workplace dynamics arises. While the presence of a significant female workforce in these positions is viewed as positive and empowering, there is concern that the workplace may be characterised by gender stereotypes and biases, preventing women from climbing the corporate hierarchy (Blau and Kahn, 2017;

Whitmore, 2021). This situation begs the question, "How do the absence of gender relations and prevalent gender biases in the super shop sales environment affect women's ability to advance in their careers?"

To investigate this issue, it is essential to examine the dynamics of the primarily female-staffed superstore sales industry. Although the female-dominated character of the workforce may suggest a level playing field, the absence of effective gender relations and the existence of gender biases may limit women's advancement opportunities. Understanding how these factors interact in the workplace and examining the unique obstacles women face in their pursuit of career advancement will cast light on the obstacles that must be addressed. By unravelling these complexities, we can identify strategies to promote gender equality and create a more inclusive and supportive environment that enables women to achieve professional success.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the current state of gender relations in Bangladesh's retail sector?

Sub questions include;

- a) What difficulties do women confront when working in the retail industry?
- b) What impact does women's labour have on the retail industry?

1.5 Research objectives

1. Analysing the gender relations in the retail industry of Bangladesh.
2. Investigating the challenges of a specific gender and its prioritisation.
3. Identifying the overall impact to the retail sector due to the contribution of women.

1.6 Rationale for the Study

In many developing nations, such as Bangladesh, women encounter substantial obstacles to entering and succeeding in the workforce. Among these obstacles are societal expectations regarding gender roles, limited access to education and training, and discrimination and harassment in the workplace. In the retail industry, women confront additional obstacles, including long hours, and limited career advancement opportunities. However, given that the retail sector is one of the fastest-growing segments in Bangladesh, there is a significant opportunity to utilise the skills and abilities of women in this industry, particularly in supermarkets (Broadbridge, 2005). The study is beneficial for the women leading towards working in retail business with high expectations and opportunities for growth and development. Financial policies and NGOs of Bangladesh are formulating the role of

Bangladeshi women as entrepreneurs (Hossain et al., 2009), so the study will be beneficial for policy makers to establish rules for building friendly and bias free environment to establish retail industry.

According to Trading Economics data, more than 35 percent of Bangladesh's workforce consists of women, and the retail industry is expected to experience significant growth in the future years, with an annual growth rate of 6 to 8 percent (Spero, 2022). This presents a rare opportunity to employ women in retail and benefit from their skills and perspectives. However, more research is required to comprehend the unique obstacles women experience in the retail industry, particularly in the context of superstores.

Training is an important factor that can facilitate the integration of women into the supermarket workforce. It is possible to identify the specific skills and knowledge that women need to be successful in this industry, as well as the gaps that they can cover, through research. By providing specialised training and assistance, supermarkets can create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for women, which will benefit the Bangladeshi economy as a whole.

In addition, research can cast light on how much women contribute to the economy through the retail super shop market. By analysing sales figures, customer feedback, and employee satisfaction, researchers can gain a better understanding of the role women play in this industry and the potential benefits of incorporating more women into the workforce.

In addition, it is crucial to examine gender relations in superstores in Dhaka and other cities around the globe. As a result of their gender, women working in retail confront numerous obstacles, including discrimination, harassment, and violence. These issues can create an unwelcoming workplace and prevent women from reaching their maximum potential. By examining the factors that contribute to these obstacles, it is possible to develop policies and strategies to resolve them and create a workplace that is more equitable and supportive for women.

Additionally, research from other nations sheds light on the obstacles women confront in the retail industry. In the United States, for instance, women working in retail earn substantially less than their male counterparts, on average \$0.79 for every dollar earned by men in the same industry. In addition, according to a survey conducted by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, 77% of women in retail had encountered some form of gender-based violence or harassment at work (Spero, 2022). In the United Kingdom, women

employed in retail are more likely to be on zero-hours contracts, earn less than the minimum wage, and experience workplace harassment and violence than women employed in other sectors.

The incorporation of women into the superstore workforce can have substantial economic and social benefits for Bangladesh, but it is crucial to address the obstacles women encounter in this industry. Research can play a crucial role in identifying these obstacles, devising strategies to address them, and creating a workplace that is more inclusive and supportive for women. Bangladesh can accelerate its economic development and improve the living conditions of underprivileged women by leveraging the skills and talents of women in the retail industry.

1.7 Limitations of the study

This study is reliant on the first-hand interviews with the women who work in the retail industry and the secondary data collected from various peer reviewed papers and articles. Due to a lack of budget and labour power, the interviews are limited to a small number of retail stores. The interviewees may also be reluctant to disclose the full extent of the challenges they face fearing for the security of their jobs. Moreover, the research is conducted using the qualitative and observation method which might not paint the full extent of the picture of women working in the retail industry.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Overview of the Chapter

The grocery store industry is an integral part of the economy because it provides communities with their basic requirements. Despite this, there is still a gender disparity in a variety of aspects of this company's employment. Women, who make up the majority of the workforce in grocery stores, face a variety of issues. Because women are underrepresented in management positions, this is the case. These issues include lower pay, fewer opportunities for advancement, discrimination and harassment based on their gender, and fewer opportunities to advance their careers.

In this section of the thesis, recent studies pertinent to the topic will be discussed. Real-time scenarios, the conditions of women and the global economy, and the situation in Bangladesh will be portrayed within the limitations.

2.2 Global retail sector and the status of women

According to the National Retail Federation, 73% of the labour required in retail and grocery stores across the United States is performed by women. Despite this, women in the grocery store industry earn only 81 cents for every dollar earned by men (National Retail Foundation, 2023). This wage gap is much more pronounced for women of colour; for example, black women earn only 66 cents for every dollar earned by white men. Women in the grocery store industry typically hold part-time or low-paying positions, and they do not typically receive benefits such as paid time off or health insurance. In addition, the majority of available employment opportunities are not unionised.

In the global retail industry, working conditions for women are frequently deplorable and exploitative, with lengthy hours, low pay, and few opportunities for advancement. Despite their importance to the retail industry, women are frequently subjected to poor treatment and brutal working conditions. According to a report by Oxfam International (2019), a significant proportion of low-paid and precarious retail labourers are female. Women are frequently employed in low-skilled, low-paying positions such as sales assistants, cashiers, and shelf stackers, according to the report. These occupations offer few opportunities for career advancement or professional development, limiting women's economic mobility and perpetuating a cycle of poverty.

In addition, the retail industry is infamous for its terrible working conditions and long hours. Numerous women are required to work extended and irregular hours, including nights and weekends, which can negatively impact their health and wellbeing. Moreover, many women are compelled to work in hazardous and unpleasant conditions, such as poorly ventilated and overcrowded stores.

Lack of employment security is another problem for women in the retail sector (Spellman, 2019). Many women are employed on temporary or part-time contracts that provide little job security or protection from discriminatory treatment (Spellman, 2019). This means that women are frequently subject to arbitrary termination or underpayment, which can have severe financial and social repercussions.

When comparing data from various regions of the world, one can observe similarities and differences. In the retail industry of the United Kingdom, women comprise sixty percent of the workforce; however, the majority of jobs held by women in this sector are low-paying and part-time, whereas men are more likely to hold managerial positions with higher salaries (Ghosh, 2021). According to the findings of a survey conducted by the British Retail Consortium, women in the retail industry earn 16% less than their male counterparts, regardless of factors such as education level and years of experience (Brockbank & Airey, 2020). Despite the fact that more than forty percent of retail employees in India are women, they are frequently subjected to discrimination and harassment based on their gender, including sexual harassment. Because sexual harassment is prohibited in India, this is a problem.

2.3 Retail trade and southern Asia

Bangladesh's grocery store industry is vital to the country's economy, as it provides essential products and services to local communities. Nonetheless, this industry confronts numerous obstacles, such as competition, supply chain issues, and shifting consumer preferences. The grocery store industry in Bangladesh and the challenges it confronts will be examined in this article, with a focus on the role of women in this industry.

In Bangladesh, the grocery store industry is highly fragmented, with the majority of enterprises being small and family-owned. According to a report by the World Bank, there are more than 1.5 million retail businesses in Bangladesh, with a significant portion of these being grocery stores. The size of these stores range from tiny roadside kiosks to large supermarkets and department stores.

Competition is one of the greatest obstacles confronting the grocery store industry in Bangladesh. Modern retail formats, such as supermarkets and hypermarkets, have increased competition for traditional grocery stores (BILS, 2017). Consequently, many small retailers have struggled to remain competitive and have been compelled to close or merge.

The retail store industry in Bangladesh also faces supply chain challenges. Numerous small retailers rely on wholesalers and distributors to provide their inventory, which is susceptible to price and availability fluctuations (BILS, 2017). This can result in supply chain disruptions and a lack of product quality consistency.

The evolving preferences of Bangladeshi consumers present a challenge to the grocery store industry. Due to the expansion of e-commerce and online purchasing, an increasing number of consumers prefer to buy groceries online rather than at traditional brick-and-mortar stores. This has led to a change in consumer behaviour, necessitating that grocery stores modify their business models in order to remain competitive.

In light of these obstacles, women play an important role in the Bangladeshi grocery store industry. Numerous women manage and operate modest grocery stores, either as proprietors or as employees. However, women in this industry encounter a number of obstacles, such as limited access to capital, a lack of training and education, and societal and cultural barriers.

According to a report by the International Finance Corporation, only 2% of female entrepreneurs in Bangladesh have access to formal financing, which presents significant barriers for women-owned enterprises. This hinders the expansion and development of women-owned grocery store businesses and can contribute to a lack of investment in equipment, inventory, and marketing. Women in the Bangladeshi grocery store industry also lack access to training and education. Many women in this industry have limited formal education, which hinders their capacity to effectively manage and expand their enterprises. In rural areas where traditional gender roles are more prevalent, women may also encounter societal and cultural obstacles to their participation in training programmes.

Despite these obstacles, there are efforts undertaken to support women in the Bangladeshi grocery store industry. The International Finance Corporation has launched numerous initiatives to increase women-owned enterprises' access to financing and training in the country. In addition, the government of Bangladesh has implemented a number of policies and programmes to support small enterprises and promote entrepreneurship, including among women.

Bangladesh's grocery store industry is a vital part of the country's economy, supplying essential products and services to local communities. Nonetheless, this industry confronts numerous obstacles, such as competition, supply chain issues, and shifting consumer preferences. Women play an important role in this industry, but they encounter a number of obstacles, such as limited access to financing, a lack of training and education, and societal and cultural barriers. Bangladesh can promote economic development and gender equality by addressing these obstacles and supporting women-owned businesses in the grocery store sector.

Bangladesh has some of the lowest average wages in the world (Brockbank & Airey, 2020). However, women who work in retail encounter a number of obstacles, including low pay and limited career advancement opportunities. In addition, the patriarchal culture of Bangladesh routinely promotes gender-based discrimination and harassment, which limits women's options and contributes to the low proportion of women in positions of authority.

For many years, the working conditions of women in Bangladesh have been a source of concern (Heyzer, 2017). Despite recent advances, women continue to encounter obstacles in gaining access to decent employment and fair pay. In this paper, the contemporary situation of women in Bangladesh and the factors contributing to their working conditions (WB, 2023) will be examined. According to a 2018 report by the International Labour Organisation, over 23 million women are employed in various sectors of the Bangladeshi economy, constituting a significant portion of the labour force. However, a large number of women are employed in informal or low-skilled occupations with poor working conditions and minimal pay. Over 90 percent of garment industry employees are women, despite the industry's reputation for low pay and poor working conditions.

Discrimination is one of the leading contributors to inadequate working conditions for women in Bangladesh (Pettit and Hook, 2019). Women frequently encounter discrimination in hiring, promotion, and compensation, as well as harassment and workplace violence. Women in Bangladesh's garment industry are subject to sexual harassment, physical violence, and forced overtime, according to a report by the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS).

The absence of legal protections also contributes to poor working conditions for women in Bangladesh. Although the country has labour laws that secure the rights of workers, they are rarely enforced. This makes women susceptible to exploitation by employers who can

disregard labour laws without fear of repercussions. In addition, women frequently lack knowledge of their legal rights and the resources to pursue legal redress when they have been wronged.

In addition to discrimination and a lack of legal protections, women in Bangladesh must contend with destitution and restricted access to education and training. Many women are employed in low-skilled positions with few advancement opportunities, which perpetuates the cycle of poverty (Fitzgerald, 2013). In addition, women frequently lack access to education and training programmes that could assist them in acquiring new skills and enhancing their employment prospects.

Recent years have witnessed some positive developments despite these obstacles. The Bangladeshi government has taken measures to improve working conditions and safeguard worker rights. For instance, the country's labour laws were revised in 2013 to strengthen worker protections, and the government has set up a hotline for workers to report labour violations. In advocating for the rights of women employees in Bangladesh, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and labour unions have also played a crucial role. These organisations have contributed to the promotion of labour rights awareness and provide training and legal aid to women workers.

Bangladesh continues to be a source of concern. As a result, the cycle of destitution is perpetuated. However, there have been some positive developments in recent years, and it is essential to continue working to improve working conditions and opportunities for Bangladeshi women. By addressing the causes of poor working conditions, we can establish a more just and equitable society for all.

The difficulties women encounter when working in grocery stores have repercussions far beyond the industry in which they are employed. It is not uncommon for women to need multiple occupations to make ends meet, making it difficult for them to continue their education and advance in their careers (Fitzgerald, 2013). The dearth of benefits and low earnings is a contributing factor to this issue. In addition, the lack of diversity in senior positions hinders the industry's ability to adjust to the diverse needs and perspectives of its clientele, which is a significant competitive disadvantage.

2.4 Women and their working condition

Globally, women are disproportionately represented in low-skilled fields. In these occupations, working conditions are typically deplorable, pay is low, and advancement opportunities are severely limited. In this section of the literature review, the working conditions of women in low-skilled positions around the globe and the factors that influence their employment will be discussed.

According to research published by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (Chant and Pedwell, 2008), more than sixty percent of the global informal economy is comprised of women. The informal economy is distinguished by its low wages, lack of legal protections, and deplorable working conditions. Due to a lack of access to education and training opportunities, as well as discrimination on the formal labour market, women throughout the world are frequently compelled to engage in occupations that fall under the category of informal work.

Discrimination is one of the most significant challenges women confront when working in low-skilled occupations. In addition to harassment and violence, it is common for women to experience discrimination in employment, advancement, and compensation, as well as in the workplace. According to a study conducted by Chant (2007), the majority of domestic workers in the world are women, and their employers routinely exploit them through long working hours, low pay, and a lack of leisure days (Chant, 2003). These are merely a few examples of how domestic labourers are mistreated.

The lack of legislative protections for women in low-skilled occupations is another factor that contributes to these women's deplorable working conditions. Despite the fact that many nations have labour laws that are intended to protect the rights of workers, these regulations are frequently disregarded in the informal sector, where a large number of women are employed (Heyzer, 2017). As a result, women are more likely to be exploited by their employers, who can therefore disregard any applicable labour laws without concern of repercussions. In addition, women are frequently unaware of their legal rights and lack the financial means to pursue legal recourse when they have been injured. This is problematic because women are disproportionately likely to be victims of violence.

Despite these obstacles, recent years have witnessed a few encouraging breakthroughs. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has authorised a convention aimed at enhancing the working conditions and rights of domestic workers worldwide. In addition, there is a greater

awareness of the significance of closing the wage disparity between men and women in the workforce and expanding women's access to equal employment opportunities (Chant and Pedwell, 2008).

Globally, women working in low-skilled occupations face significant obstacles in gaining access to decent employment and equitable compensation. These obstacles exist in numerous forms (Heyzer, 2017). Several factors, including poverty, discrimination, a lack of legal protections, and restricted access to education and training, all contribute to the deplorable working conditions that women in these professions must endure. Even though there have been some encouraging improvements in the working conditions and opportunities available to women in low-skilled positions in the past few years, it is necessary to maintain efforts in order to continue making global progress in this area. If the factors that lead to unfavourable working conditions can be identified and eliminated, it may be possible to contribute to the formation of a more just and equitable society for all (Heyzer, 2017).

2.5 Theoretical framework

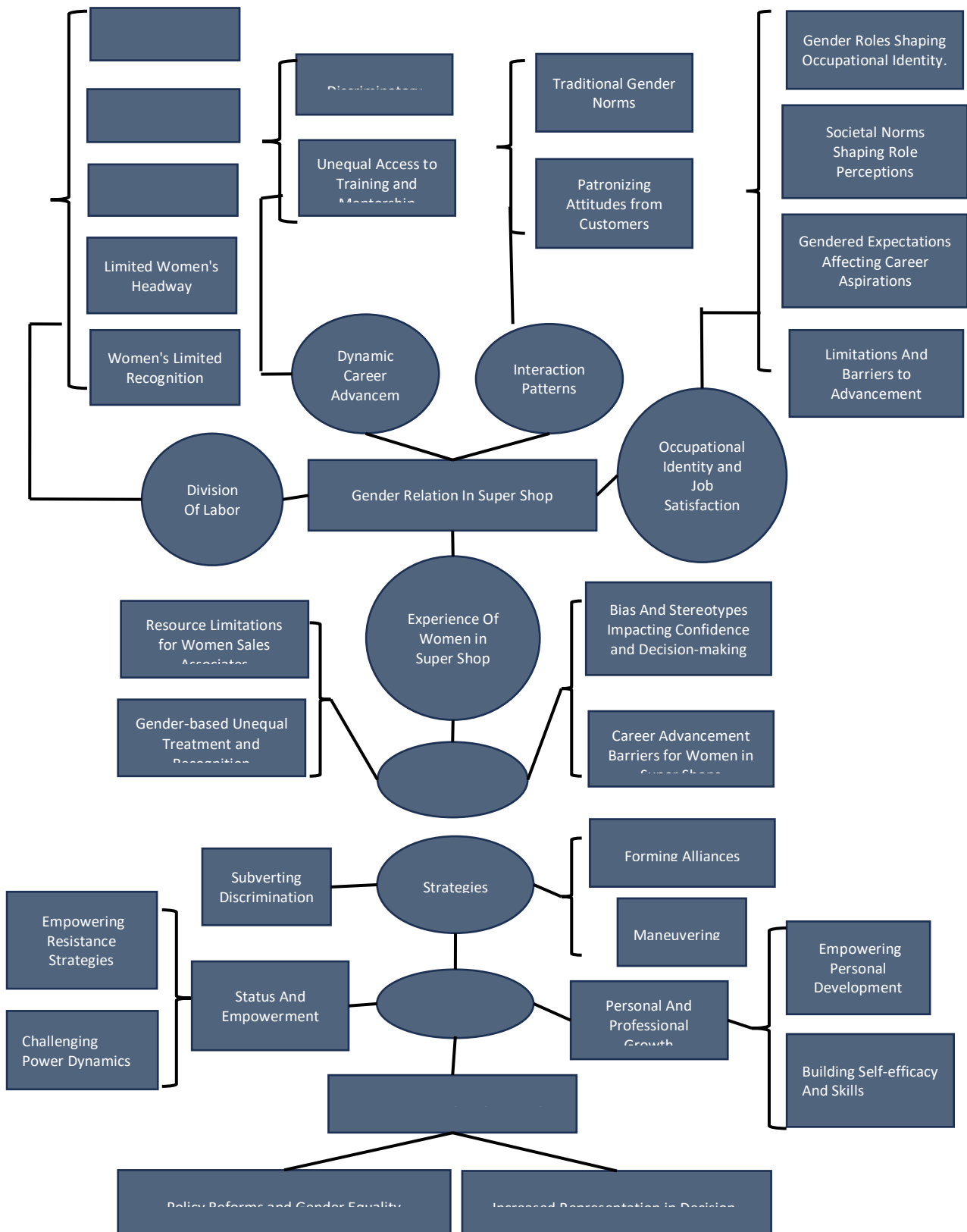


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework for Understanding Gender Relations Experiences of Women Sales Associates in Super Shops (Chant, 2013)

2.6 Explanation of Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this study is Sylvia Chant's urban women gender theory, which has made significant contributions to the understanding of gender inequality in urban areas and has developed theoretical frameworks to analyze the experiences of urban women in different contexts. This framework provides a lens to explore the gender relations and dynamics within the context of Super Shops in Dhaka, specifically focusing on the experiences of women sales associates. By applying Gender Role Theory, we can gain insights into the roles, expectations, and power dynamics that shape the experiences and challenges faced by women working in Super Shops.

Sylvia Chant's urban women gender theory is a feminist and intersectional framework (Lemanski et al., 2015) that explores the ways in which gender intersects with other social categories, such as class and race, within urban contexts. Within the context of Super Shops in Dhaka, this theory provides valuable insights into the gender relations and dynamics experienced by women sales associates. The theory emphasizes that gender roles and expectations contribute to the creation of gender inequalities and influence social interactions and power dynamics. In Super Shops, traditional gender norms often shape the experiences of men and women, with men being assigned roles as breadwinners and women as caregivers. These gendered expectations can result in disparities in wages, job opportunities, career advancement, and decision-making authority. Furthermore, power differentials emerge, with men typically occupying positions of authority while women face marginalization and limited influence. Gender role conflict also arises when individuals experience tension in meeting societal expectations assigned to their gender. Understanding the implications of Gender Role Theory in the Super Shops setting enables a deeper comprehension of the challenges faced by women sales associates and informs strategies and interventions to promote gender equality and address gender-based discrimination.

Sylvia Chant's urban women gender theory in Super Shops involve unique dynamics and challenges, particularly for women sales associates. Within this retail environment, gender roles and expectations shape their roles, responsibilities, and interactions. Traditional gender norms often limit advancement opportunities for women, perpetuating unequal power dynamics and wage disparities. Women may be confined to customer service or cashier roles while men occupy higher-paying positions. Gendered expectations further influence interactions, as women must navigate societal norms related to appearance and behavior while meeting professional expectations. However, there are opportunities for women as the

industry recognizes the importance of diversity and inclusivity. Super Shops can implement policies to address gender disparities and empower women in leadership positions. By challenging stereotypes and embracing their skills, women sales associates can contribute to the organization's success. Recognizing and addressing these dynamics is crucial for creating an equitable and supportive work environment within Super Shops in Dhaka.

The division of labor (Chant and McIlwaine, 2011) within Super Shops perpetuates gender stereotypes, with women primarily occupying customer service or cashiering roles while men hold positions of authority as store managers or supervisors. This reinforces power imbalances, limiting women's advancement opportunities and visibility within the organization. Power dynamics play a significant role in career advancement, with women facing barriers and biases that restrict their access to decision-making positions and opportunities for growth. Discriminatory practices, biased evaluations, and limited mentorship further hinder women's progress. This unequal distribution of power reinforces a hierarchical structure favoring men, impacting gender relations and overall organizational effectiveness. To address these issues, Super Shops must challenge traditional gender roles, promote equal representation in leadership, and implement inclusive policies that provide equal opportunities and support for all sales associates. By dismantling power imbalances and fostering a more equitable work environment, Super Shops can create a workplace where women can thrive and contribute to the organization's success.

Within Super Shops, understanding the interaction patterns among women sales associates, their colleagues, supervisors, and customers is crucial. It is essential to examine the presence of gender-based discrimination, biases, and stereotypes in these interactions and their impact on women's experiences. Women in Super Shops may face unequal treatment, limited growth opportunities, and biases based on societal stereotypes. Gender dynamics influence interactions with colleagues, leading to exclusion or conformity to traditional gender norms. Additionally, customer interactions can subject women sales associates to patronizing attitudes or objectification. These interaction patterns are closely tied to the occupational identity and job satisfaction of women sales associates. Gender roles and expectations significantly influence how women perceive their roles, career aspirations, and growth opportunities within the organization. Societal norms may assign them to specific roles or departments, affecting their occupational identity and self-perception. Career aspirations can be shaped by gendered expectations and limitations, impacting motivation and long-term goals. Opportunities for growth and advancement may also be hindered by gender biases and

barriers. Addressing these issues requires promoting inclusive and respectful interactions, challenging gender stereotypes, and providing equal opportunities for career development and advancement within Super Shops.

Women sales associates in Super Shops encounter various everyday challenges that hinder their professional growth and job satisfaction. These challenges include limited access to resources, such as training, information, and opportunities for skill development, which can impede their ability to perform effectively. Additionally, the gender roles and expectations prevalent in society contribute to unequal treatment and recognition of women's contributions within the workplace. Biases and stereotypes may undermine their confidence, restrict their decision-making authority, and create barriers to career advancement. These gendered challenges shape the resistance strategies employed by women sales associates. In response to the obstacles they face, women may develop covert resistance strategies, such as subtle defiance, negotiating behind the scenes, or finding alternative ways to assert their interests and exercise agency. By understanding the specific challenges faced by women sales associates in Super Shops and how gender roles influence their experiences, organizations can take proactive measures to address these issues. This may involve promoting equal access to resources, implementing gender-sensitive policies and practices, providing mentorship and support networks, and fostering a workplace culture that values diversity and gender equity.

Women sales associates in Super Shops employ covert resistance strategies to challenge gendered dynamics and power imbalances in the workplace. These strategies, shaped by societal expectations and existing power structures, involve subtle defiance, forming alliances, and strategic maneuvering. However, it is important to recognize that the effectiveness of these strategies varies depending on the context and power dynamics. While covert resistance allows women to navigate challenges, it may limit broader systemic change. Super Shops can empower women by addressing gender roles, fostering an inclusive culture, providing training, and promoting gender equality. By creating an environment that encourages open challenge of gender inequalities, Super Shops can support women in asserting their rights and promoting change (Chant, 2013).

The consequences of different resistance strategies employed by women sales associates in Super Shops can have a significant impact on their status, empowerment, and personal and professional growth. By challenging gender norms and asserting their rights, women can increase their sense of agency and confront discriminatory practices, improving their working

conditions. These resistance strategies also have the potential to drive organizational and societal change by advocating for policy reforms and transforming gender norms within Super Shops and the wider society. Additionally, resistance strategies contribute to the personal and professional growth of women sales associates, fostering self-efficacy, confidence, and increased career advancement opportunities. Recognizing and harnessing the transformative power of resistance empowers women to cultivate their potential, create an inclusive workplace, and foster gender equality for themselves and future generations.

In conclusion, this study highlights the gender dynamics and challenges faced by women sales associates in Super Shops. It emphasizes the complex and multifaceted nature of gender inequalities and recognizes that gender intersects with other social identities, power structures, and spatial contexts. Future research should focus on the long-term consequences of resistance strategies and interventions promoting gender equality. By challenging societal norms, Super Shops can create an inclusive and empowering work environment that values the contributions of women sales associates and fosters gender equality.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The methodology employed in this research follows a qualitative approach, aiming to delve into a deeper understanding of concepts, viewpoints, and experiences. Through the collection

and examination of non-numerical data, such as interviews and observations, the research seeks to gain comprehensive insights into the subject matter.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the set of beliefs, assumptions, and values that guide the researcher's approach and perspective towards the research process. It serves as a foundation for the design, methods, and interpretation of the study (Marquise, 2015). There are various research philosophies, including positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. Positivism emphasizes objectivity and the use of scientific methods to uncover general laws and causal relationships. Interpretivism, on the other hand, focuses on subjective meanings, social constructions, and understanding human behaviour within specific contexts. Pragmatism combines elements of both, aiming to address practical problems while considering multiple perspectives.

For this thesis, the chosen research philosophy is interpretivism. This philosophy aligns with the aim of gaining a deeper comprehension of concepts, viewpoints, and experiences related to the research topic. By embracing interpretivism, the researcher acknowledges the subjective nature of human experiences and aims to understand the social constructions and meanings attributed to the phenomena under investigation (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). Through qualitative methods such as interviews and observations, interpretivism allows for the exploration of diverse perspectives and the generation of rich and contextualized data. This philosophy also provides flexibility to adapt the research approach as new insights emerge during the study.

The choice of interpretivism as the research philosophy for this thesis stems from several reasons. Firstly, the research topic requires an in-depth understanding of the experiences and viewpoints of sales representatives in the grocery and retail industry. Interpretivism aligns with the goal of uncovering the subjective meanings and social constructions associated with their roles and job safety concerns. Secondly, the chosen research philosophy allows for the utilization of qualitative methods, such as interviews, which are well-suited to capture the nuanced experiences and perspectives of the participants. Lastly, interpretivism provides the researcher with the flexibility to adapt the research approach based on emerging insights, enabling a more comprehensive and contextualized understanding of the topic.

3.3 Research Approach

The research approach chosen for this thesis is a qualitative approach. This approach focuses on gathering and analysing non-numerical data to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic. The primary data collection methods include semi-structured personal interviews and observations. Through these qualitative methods, the researcher aims to explore the experiences, viewpoints, and perceptions of the sales representatives in the grocery and retail industry regarding job safety concerns.

The semi-structured personal interviews conducted through phone conversations and in-person interactions provide an opportunity to delve into the participants' experiences and gather detailed insights. Participants share their thoughts, emotions, and perspectives related to job safety. Additionally, qualitative observations offer a means to directly observe and document the behaviours, interactions, and workplace dynamics of the sales representatives.

The research approach's focus on qualitative methods aligns with the aim of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. By analysing the qualitative data collected from interviews and observations, the researcher can identify patterns, themes, and narratives that contribute to a deeper comprehension of the sales representatives' experiences and viewpoints on job safety.

Through this qualitative research approach, the thesis aims to provide rich and contextualized insights into the concerns, challenges, and perspectives of sales representatives in the grocery and retail industry regarding job safety. By adopting a qualitative approach, the research can capture the nuanced aspects of the participants' experiences and contribute to a deeper understanding of the topic at hand.

3.4 Research Method

Research methods refer to the specific techniques and procedures employed to collect, analyse, and interpret data in a research study. They provide a systematic and structured framework for conducting research and obtaining reliable and valid results. Various research methods exist, each with its own strengths and limitations, and the choice of method depends on the research question, objectives, and the nature of the data.

For this thesis, the chosen research method is qualitative research. Qualitative research involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data, such as interviews, observations, and textual analysis. It aims to explore and understand the complexities and nuances of

human experiences, behaviours, and perceptions within specific contexts. The qualitative research method is well-suited for studying subjective phenomena, gaining in-depth insights, and generating rich and detailed descriptions.

By opting for qualitative research, the thesis seeks to explore the experiences and perspectives of sales representatives in the grocery and retail industry regarding job safety concerns. The use of semi-structured personal interviews and observations allows for the exploration of participants' thoughts, emotions, and behaviours related to job safety. These qualitative methods facilitate the capture of detailed and contextualized data, enabling the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

The qualitative research method offers flexibility and adaptability, allowing the researcher to adjust the interview questions and observation techniques as new insights emerge. Through careful analysis of the qualitative data, the thesis aims to identify patterns, themes, and narratives that contribute to a deeper comprehension of the research topic. Overall, the chosen qualitative research method aligns with the aim of exploring and understanding the experiences and viewpoints of sales representatives in the grocery and retail industry regarding job safety concerns.

3.5 Sampling and Sample Size

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a subset of individuals or entities from a larger population to participate in a research study. A well-designed sample is crucial for obtaining valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the broader population. In this thesis, the sampling approach employed is the snowball technique. The snowball technique involves initially selecting a small number of participants who meet the criteria for inclusion in the study. These participants are then asked to refer other potential participants who fit the study's requirements. This method is particularly useful when the target population is difficult to access or when the research topic involves sensitive or niche areas.

Using the snowball technique, I initially conducted an interview with the senior head who works at Unimart and had prior experience at Shwapno. He also assisted in identifying and referring additional participants for the study. The total number of interviews conducted was 19. All the interviews were aged from 18-25 years of age because in this age individual is working on his/her career growth and development, unmarried and a total of 3 years maximum experience in the field. Most interviewees were female, however there was a significant number of male interviewees. This approach enabled the researcher to access a

network of sales representatives from reputed grocery and retail chain-shops, enhancing the diversity and depth of perspectives in the sample.

For qualitative studies, minimum numbers of participant required to get the deeper understanding related to the study variables, author depicts those 15 to 16 participants are enough for data collection (Warren, 2002). Boddy (2016) suggests that 30 in-depth interview or 12 focus group discussions would be beneficial for the qualitative data. There are a lot of suggestions for different sample size from demanding experts, other than that quality matters a lot. Interviews were conducted to find the answers of specific questions, which Instils to the shaded evidence (Showkat and Parveen, 2017).

The final sample for this thesis consists of 15 sales representatives from organizations such as Unimart, Shwapno, Aagora, Meena Bazar, and Grocery Mart, these are selected because number of women retailers were working there. The sample size of 15 was determined based on the principle of data saturation, which suggests that information-rich qualitative data can be obtained from a smaller sample when data redundancy is achieved and new insights are no longer emerging.

While the sample size of 15 may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of sales representatives in the grocery and retail industry, the focus of qualitative research is on obtaining in-depth and nuanced insights rather than statistical generalization (Marquise, 2015). The snowball technique facilitated the recruitment of participants and contributed to the diversity and richness of perspectives in the sample, enabling a comprehensive exploration of job safety concerns among sales representatives in the selected organizations. For the safety of the interviewee's jobs and future career, all of them wished to remain anonymous and for the purpose of the research, pseudonyms have been used in their place. However, the organizations they worked in is accurate.

3.6 Data collection and analysis

Data collection and analysis are critical components of the research process, allowing researchers to gather and make sense of the information needed to address the research objectives. In this thesis, data collection involved two primary methods: semi-structured personal interviews conducted through phone conversations and in-person interviews. The interviews were conducted with 15 sales representatives from reputable grocery and retail chain-shops. The snowball technique was utilized to identify potential interviewees, leveraging the referral network of participants.

Semi-structured personal interviews provided a flexible and comprehensive approach to gather in-depth insights into the experiences, viewpoints, and perceptions of the sales representatives regarding job safety concerns. The interviews were designed to elicit rich and detailed responses, allowing participants to share their thoughts, emotions, and experiences related to the research topic. By conducting interviews through phone conversations and in-person interactions, the researcher ensured convenience and flexibility for the participants, particularly considering the cautiousness of women about job safety.

To analyse the data collected, thematic analysis was employed. Thematic analysis is a method used to identify patterns, themes, and meanings within qualitative data. It involves a systematic approach to organizing and interpreting the data in a way that uncovers underlying concepts and constructs (Chant and, Kerwin, 2015). The qualitative observation data, interview transcripts, and field notes were subjected to a thorough process of coding and categorization to identify recurring themes and patterns. The researcher employed an inductive approach, allowing themes to emerge from the data itself rather than being preconceived.

Phas Description

e

- 1 **Data Familiarization:** Transcribe and thoroughly read through the collected data, including interview transcripts and observation notes.
- 2 **Code Generation:** Identify and assign initial codes to relevant segments of the data, capturing key concepts, ideas, and patterns.
- 3 **Theme Identification:** Group similar codes together to form potential themes that encapsulate the central ideas and recurring patterns within the data.
- 4 **Theme Review:** Carefully review and examine the relationship between the codes and themes, ensuring consistency and coherence in the analysis process.
- 5 **Theme Definition:** Refine and define the identified themes, providing clear titles or names that accurately represent the essence of each theme.
- 6 **Write-up and Analysis:** Compose the thesis, emphasizing the main research issues, and incorporate the identified themes into the narrative. Describe and analyse the themes in detail, supporting them with relevant excerpts from the data.

Table 1: Thematic analysis scheme

The thematic analysis involved several iterative steps. Initially, the researcher familiarized themselves with the data by reading and rereading the interview transcripts and observation notes. Next, initial codes were generated to capture important concepts and ideas within the data. These codes were then organized into potential themes, with similar codes grouped together. The themes were refined and defined, ensuring they accurately represented the data. Finally, the themes were further reviewed and validated against the entire dataset, ensuring consistency and coherence.

Thematic analysis allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the experiences, viewpoints, and perceptions of the sales representatives regarding job safety concerns. It provided a rigorous and systematic approach to identify patterns and meanings within the qualitative data. By employing thematic analysis, the researcher aimed to uncover and present the key themes that emerged from the data, offering a deep understanding of the research topic and shedding light on the complexities and nuances of job safety concerns among sales representatives in the grocery and retail industry.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

Findings of the study, explores that woman in retail industry are struggling to work in such hectic diverse environment.

According to Attanapola, (2004) women's employment satisfaction in retail provides valuable insight into the experiences of women working in this dynamic and diverse industry. It was also suggested by Atulkar and Kesari, (2018) that challenges such as work-life balance, gender pay gaps, and the need for more support and mentorship are areas that require development, despite the fact that many women find fulfilment in their roles. By addressing these issues, fostering a positive work culture, and offering opportunities for growth and development, the retail industry can create an environment in which women can flourish, experience greater job satisfaction, and contribute to the industry's continued success.

However, it was also concluded by Blau and Kahn, (2017) that interviews were the underrepresentation of women in positions of authority within the retail sector. In spite of the fact that women make up the vast majority of the labour force, there is a shocking lack of females in positions of higher administrative responsibility. There is still a great amount of difficulty involved in breaking through the glass ceiling, and it requires concerted efforts to promote gender diversity and inclusion at all levels of the industry. The retail industry stands to gain from a more diversified set of viewpoints and can be propelled forward by fostering the advancement of women's growth and development (Boddy, 2016).

It was also indicated the issue of maintaining a healthy work-life balance is another obstacle that women in the retail industry must overcome (Chant, and McIlwaine, 2011). Through the interviews it has been revealed that a significant number of women find it challenging to successfully juggle the demands of their professional lives with those of their personal lives and the duties they have as carers (Chant, and McIlwaine, 2011). For women who are also primary carers or who have other family duties, the demanding nature of retail work, with its erratic schedules, long hours, and weekend shifts, can often provide issues. The provision of flexible working arrangements, such as alternatives for part-time work, job-sharing, and policies that are family-friendly, can assist alleviate some of these obstacles and support women in attaining a better work-life balance.

It was also depicted (Broadbridge, 2005) the interactions and bonds between male and female co-workers are also impacted by the segregation of roles. Men and women frequently have separate social and professional networks within the organization since there are few opportunities for collaboration or shared responsibility. This can result in less interaction, less mutual understanding, and less empathy between the sexes, which feeds stereotypes and reinforces gender differences (Broadbridge, 2005).

Despite of theses it was also suggested by Chant, Sylvia and Pedwell (2008) that the culture of the workplace, which is predominantly male in many retail businesses, contributes to an imbalance of power and maintains gender inequality. When men have positions of authority and influence, they frequently marginalise women by ignoring their points of view and keeping them out of the decision-making process. Because the prevalent culture may place a higher value on male bonding and camaraderie than it does for women, it can be difficult for women to build networks and support systems (Chant and Sylvia, 2007).

Although, it was also predicted that when it comes to interpersonal interactions, trust is one of the most important components. Trust makes it more likely that investment will be repaid and that rewards will be distributed in accordance with their terms. It can be difficult for women to create and maintain trust in the retail industry due to gender biases, power inequalities, and discriminatory practises. This might make it difficult for women to shop there. This can result in the dissolution of relationships, a reduction in the amount of cooperation, and a loss in job satisfaction (Ferdaush and Rahman, 2007).

According to Cheng and Gereffi (1994) in the dynamic retail industry, where customers are enticed by bustling stores and vibrant displays, there is a workforce of devoted women who play a crucial role in shaping the purchasing experience. This research explored the employment satisfaction of women in the retail industry, shedding light on their experiences, obstacles, and aspirations. Through a thorough analysis of the interview responses, a deeper understanding arises, illuminating both the joys and difficulties that women face in this diverse and ever-changing industry.

4.1. Coping Strategies and Empowerment

4.1.1 Occupational identity and job satisfaction

It was depicted that (Houston and Houston, 2005) the significant proportion of women in the retail industry have reported high job engagement. They derive satisfaction from interacting with consumers, assisting them in locating the ideal products, and creating unforgettable

experiences. A source of pride and joy for many women in this profession is the ability to connect with customers and observe their satisfaction. In addition, the opportunity to work in a fast-paced environment that provides constant challenges and variety contributes to their job satisfaction (Heyzer, 2017).

However, the interview also reveals a number of obstacles women encounter in the retail industry. A significant concern is the work-life balance, as many women reported having difficulty achieving a balance between their personal and professional obligations. The demanding schedules, which include irregular working hours, evening shifts, and weekend work, have a negative impact on their personal and familial obligations. It was depicted by Kabeer and Mahmud (2004) the delicate act of balancing these contradictory demands requires considerable resilience and adaptability.

Karim (2014) suggested the interviews also revealed the gender pay disparity as a concern. Despite progress made in gender equality across various industries, women in the retail sector continue to experience disparities in pay and opportunities for career advancement. The study (Hussain, 2010) revealed that women frequently feel undervalued and believe their contributions are not recognised or compensated adequately. It is essential to address this disparity and ensure equal pay for equal work in order to cultivate a more inclusive and empowering workplace.

The interviews highlight the importance of workplace support and mentoring for women in retail. Many respondents expressed a desire for more opportunities to advance their professions, develop their skills, and receive training (Pettit and Hook, 2019). To increase employment satisfaction among women in the retail industry, it is crucial to foster an environment that fosters growth and provides opportunities for personal and professional advancement.

According to Yaman (Age, 22) Khalil from Aagora;

“[Women] Do not have much scope for career advancement because only people with bachelor degree and many years of experience get promotion based on their work performance.”

It was also suggested (Brockbank and Airey, 2020) the importance of a positive and inclusive workplace culture. Women value an environment at work in which they are respected, valued, and heard. A supportive environment that celebrates diversity, encourages teamwork,

and nurtures open communication increases job satisfaction and fosters a sense of belonging. It's evident that Agora and Unimart prioritise fostering an inclusive culture are more likely to attract and retain talented women, thereby bolstering their workforce and business success as a whole.

"Supportive Networks and Alliances" emphasises how crucial it is for women working in retail to develop supportive networks and alliances. Women frequently turn to unofficial networks and groups of female co-workers for support, advice, and the sharing of personal experiences. These networks foster a sense of community and equip women to confront problems at work together (Chant and Sylvia, 2017).

"Skill Enhancement and Professional Development" places special emphasis on the value of skill development and ongoing professional growth for women working in the retail sector. Women actively look for opportunities to learn new skills, information, and credentials despite several challenges (Ferdaush and Rahman, 2011). This gives individuals the ability to improve their skills, increase their career opportunities, and boost their self-assurance in a demanding workplace.

"Career Flexibility and Work-Life Balance" emphasises the importance of flexible work schedules and work-life balance in empowering women. For women in particular, juggling personal and professional obligations can be difficult. (Hussain, 2010). Women are better able to combine their professional and personal lives, take care of their family responsibilities, and advance in their careers when they have access to flexible work options like part-time schedules or remote work.

"Advocacy and Activism" focuses on the activism and advocacy that women engage in to effect systemic change. Women actively take part in activities, campaigns, and collective actions that advance gender equality, confront prejudice, and foster an inclusive and empowered workplace. Women's action helps to transform society as a whole and paves the path for future generations (Kabeer and Mahmud, 2004).

4.1.2 Opportunities for women growth in retail industry

The participation of women in the retail industry has significant repercussions for society, which go well beyond the bounds of individual stores and aisles of merchandise (Spellman, 2019). The results of the interviews have been analysed, and the findings shed light on these consequences. The results show both the progress that has been done and the challenges that still lie ahead.

It was also proposed (Marquise, 2015) the retail industry has evolved over the years to become an important source of employment for women, giving them the opportunity to become economically self-sufficient and free from financial reliance as a result of their work. According to the findings of the interview, a sizeable proportion of working women in the industry see their occupations as a means to sustain themselves and their families, which contributes to their overall sense of well-being and quality of life (Showkat and Parveen, 2017). These women are helping to reshape society norms through their active participation in the workforce, which challenges the traditional gender roles that have been assigned to them.

In addition, it was suggested (Marshall et al., 2013) that the retail sector provides women with an opportunity to hone their skills and demonstrate them to others. According to the interviews, a significant majority of women are content with the duties they have at work, which suggests that a large number of women do find fulfilment in their roles. Women tend to flourish in environments that require strong interpersonal and communication abilities, such as those found in retail contexts (Lemanski, 2015). Women are able to successfully negotiate interactions with customers, create connections, and contribute to the success of their organisations when they hone the abilities listed above.

Shahin (Age, 23) from Aagora had the following to say;

“Yes, they provided basic training on product knowledge, customer relationship, how to handle crisis or rude customers and how to use safety equipment.”

Despite the progress that has been accomplished it was depicted (Kabeer and Mahmud 2004) the on-going difficulties and disparities that women confront in the retail industry. One of the most important discoveries is the existence of a gender pay gap, which describes the situation in which women, on average, earn less than men do in equivalent positions. This wage gap not only makes it more difficult for women to advance financially; it also contributes to the larger problem of gender inequality that exists in our society. It is imperative that efforts be made to address and fix this disparity in order to ensure that everyone receive equal pay for equal work.

It was also depicted by Lemanski et al., (2015) the pervasiveness of gender-based harassment and discrimination in the retail sector. A significant number of women alleged that they had been subjected to unfair treatment, discriminatory promotions, and even sexual harassment.

These kinds of events not only lower workers' levels of happiness with their jobs but also have a protracted and deleterious impact on the overall health and sense of worth that women have (Marshall, 2013). For the sake of the sector's continued development and prosperity, it is essential that working environments be made as secure and welcoming as possible, with a focus on promoting gender equality and finding solutions to the problems that have been identified. The considerable income and job opportunity gaps between men and women in the retail sector are addressed "Unequal Opportunities". Even while performing equivalent employment tasks and responsibilities as men, women frequently earn less money than men do (Fitzgerald, 2013). Additionally, they run against obstacles when trying to improve their careers and get promotions, which exacerbate the gender gap in the sector. "Stereotyping and Bias" calls attention to the prejudices and stereotypes that women experience in the workplace. Because of their gender, women may encounter prejudicial stereotypes about their skills, competency, and dedication to their jobs (Broadbridge, 2005). These prejudices may restrict their chances for advancement, impair their ability to make decisions, and uphold an unfair work environment.

It was concluded by Kabeer and Mahmud (2004) the societal ramifications of women working in retail are complex and involve a variety of different aspects. On the one hand, the industry gives women the opportunity to advance their careers and provides a stage for them to exhibit their talents. It questions the conventional expectations of how men and women should behave towards one another and leads to the general empowerment of women. On the other side, ongoing problems such as disparities in salary between men and women, discrimination, and a lack of women in positions of authority serve as a reminder that there is still work to be done (Hussain, 2010). The retail sector will be able to realise the full potential of its female workforce if it takes head-on action to solve the issues it faces and cultivates an atmosphere that is both inclusive and equitable. This will pave the way for a more equitable and prosperous future.

4.1.3 Challenges of women in retail industry

According to Marshall (2013) women who work in retail encounter a wide variety of obstacles, many of which have an effect on their ability to advance in their careers, their level of happiness on the job, and their general well-being. The results of the study (Marquise, 2015), when analysed, shed light on these difficulties and provide insights into the lives of women who are employed in this industry.

The interviews (Shafiek, 2022) found that the gender wage gap in the retail industry still exists, which is one of the main concerns that it brought to light. In spite of the fact that they make up a sizeable share of the labour force, women continue to earn less than their male counterparts in professions that are otherwise equivalent. This salary disparity not only makes it more difficult for women to advance financially; it also helps to maintain inequality and fosters discrimination on the basis of gender (Hussain, 2010). Eliminating wage disparities between men and women is an essential step towards attaining gender equality and making certain that women are paid properly for the work they do.

In addition to the disparity in compensation, the survey (Thomas et al., 2021) demonstrates the widespread existence of gender-based bias and discrimination in the retail sector. Many women reported being subjected to unfair treatment, receiving promotions based on their gender, and having limited opportunity to progress their careers. Women have additional challenges as a result of these discriminatory practises, which impede their capacity to advance in their careers and prevent them from achieving leadership roles.

To add to this, below is a quote from Shimu (Age, 24) who is a sales representative from Shwapno;

“Sometimes [we] face problem that male workers do not face. For example – the way male customers or male security guard, cleaner stare at the female workers inappropriately, it makes the female workers uncomfortable.”

It is necessary to address these biases and cultivate a working atmosphere that is more inclusive and equitable if one wants to guarantee that women in the retail business have equal opportunities to achieve their professional goals.

A sizeable number of women have reported experiencing unwelcome advances, rude statements, and even physical assault at the hands of other people. Not only can these events produce hostile working environments, but they also have serious emotional and psychological effects on the people who are victimised by them.

A first-hand account of this comes from the interview with Sabiha who works at Meena Bazar as a sales representative. She says;

“Sometimes the guard keeps staring at me which me uncomfortable, sometimes when I’m working alone the shop manager comes and tries to

flirt with me which I try to ignore. There is no one to complain about such issues and I did not feel comfortable in complaining.”

In order to create workplaces that are safe and welcoming for women in the retail industry, crucial actions include the implementation of stringent policies against harassment, the provision of training programmes, the promotion of a culture of respect, and the establishment of zero tolerance for the behaviour in question.

It was suggested by Showkat and Parveen (2017) the underrepresentation of women in positions of authority is another significant obstacle to overcome. In spite of the fact that women make up the vast majority of the labour force, there is a shocking lack of females in positions of higher administrative responsibility. The inability of the sector to handle the particular requirements and points of view of its female workers is hampered by the absence of varied representation in positions of leadership. This difficulty can be overcome (Schuler, Islam, and Rottach, 2010), and a more inclusive and representative retail industry can be created by encouraging and supporting the career progression of women through mentorship programmes, leadership development efforts, and targeted recruitment tactics. These programmes can assist establish a more diverse workforce.

In conclusion, women who work in the retail industry encounter a variety of challenges that have an effect on their ability to advance in their careers, their level of job satisfaction, and their overall well-being (Marquise, 2015). The gender pay gap, gender-based discrimination, concerns with work-life balance, sexual harassment, and underrepresentation in leadership roles are all examples of these challenges. In order to effectively address these difficulties, a multi-pronged strategy that includes participation from industry stakeholders, policymakers, and organisations is required. The retail industry may create a more equitable and empowering environment for all of its employees by implementing policies and practises that promote gender equality, give support for work-life balance, foster safe and inclusive workplaces, and encourage women's career advancement. Additionally, this industry can provide support for work-life balance (Spero, 2022).

4.2. Gender Inequality in the Workplace

4.2.1 Gender-based Unequal Treatment and Recognition

Although a study (Houston and Houston, 2005) suggested that gender relations in the retail industry, shows that there is a certain pattern of gender-based segregation among employees in the Bangladeshi retail sector. According to this hypothesis, businesses frequently separate

workers depending on their gender, creating different opportunities, positions, and obligations for men and women (Houston and Houston, 2005). The effects of this organizational segregation on gender relations are revealed by a study of the retail sector in Bangladesh.

During an interview with Shahin, a sales representative from shwapno, he said;

“Female employees do not need to do much work. Male employees need to carry the products from the truck to the store and organize the upper shelves. Moreover, female employees do not usually need to work extra hours but male employees need to stay additional hours when needed.”

Men and women are given various jobs and roles in the retail industry in Bangladesh, which is primarily defined by a clear division of labour (Pettit and Hook, 2019). Traditionally, men are more likely to hold positions requiring technical expertise or physical prowess, such as managing logistics, operating machinery, or carrying bulky goods. However, women are frequently restricted to jobs in sales and customer service, such as cashiers, sales assistants, or representatives of clothing stores. The idea that some tasks are more suited for men or women than others is perpetuated by this division of labour, which reinforces gender stereotypes already present in society (Hossain et al., 2009).

It was proved (Kabeer and Mahmud, 2004) that gender relations are impacted by the organizational segregation in Bangladesh's retail sector. The first effect is that it strengthens gender hierarchies in the workplace. Women are typically restricted to lower-ranking positions with few chances for growth, while men typically hold higher-ranking roles like store managers, supervisors, or procurement officers (Karim, 2014). Men have more clout when it comes to making decisions and having control over resources, which perpetuates gender inequality.

Furthermore, Rashid (2011) suggested the varied tasks that are given to men and women in the retail sector might result in disparities in access to resources and levels of job satisfaction. In general, males in higher-ranking positions have easier access to training, more opportunities for career advancement, and higher salaries, which leads to more job satisfaction and better career prospects. According to Shafiek (2022) women in lower-ranking roles, however, frequently experience limited prospects for advancement, lower pay, and fewer benefits, which lowers job satisfaction and increases the likelihood of financial vulnerability.

The organizational segregation theory also emphasizes the likelihood of gender-based prejudice and discrimination in the retail sector (Showkat and Parveen, 2017). Men who hold positions of authority and influence may exert control on the work experiences of women, resulting in unfair treatment, prejudiced judgments, and the maintenance of stereotypes. Due to these discriminatory behaviours, women may find it difficult to have their opinions heard, be acknowledged for their achievements, or access possibilities for promotion (Chant, 2013).

Promoting gender equality within Bangladesh's retail sector is crucial to addressing the problems with gender relations caused by organizational segregation (Attanapola, 2004). This can be accomplished in a number of ways, such as by putting equal opportunity policies into place, developing mentorship and leadership programs for women, encouraging inclusive hiring practices, and offering training on gender sensitivity and diversity. Organizations should also try to eliminate gender stereotypes and foster a more inclusive workplace that promotes equality of participation, communication, and collaboration among staff members of all genders (Atulkar and Kesari, 2018).

"Gendered Norms and Stereotypes," summarises societal norms and stereotypes that are now in place regarding gender roles. Women frequently feel pressure to adhere to established gender stereotypes, which can restrict their professional options and chances for advancement (Kabeer and Mahmud, 2004). They are frequently thought to be more suited for jobs like salespeople or cashiers, whereas men are more likely to hold positions of power and leadership.

"Occupational Segregation," highlights the obvious gender-based labour segregation in the retail sector. Men predominate in managerial jobs, whereas women are frequently concentrated in lower-paying and less powerful professions as suggested by (Shafiek, 2022) women's access to decision-making processes is restricted by this segregation, which therefore limits their ability to influence organisational policies and practises.

The organizational segregation hypothesis (Blau and Kahn, 2017) clarifies gender relations in Bangladesh's retail sector. Men and women are given different duties, responsibilities, and opportunities as a result of the division of labour based on gender, which reinforces gender hierarchies and feeds stereotypes. The impact of this division on resource access, gender interactions, and job satisfaction is significant. By encouraging equal opportunities, dispelling prejudices, and building a culture of inclusivity and diversity within the retail business, it is

critical to question and overcome organizational segregation in order to promote gender equality and create a more inclusive workplace (Attanapola, 2004).

4.3. Work-Life Balance and Family Responsibilities

4.3.1 Societal Norms Shaping Role Perceptions in the Retail Industry

When it comes to the retail industry in Bangladesh (Hussain, 2010) suggested, gender relations play a key part in determining the experiences that women have and the opportunities that are available to progress their careers. The prevalent values and customs that are upheld within organisations have a significant impact on the ways in which women manage their working lives (BILS, 2017).

The traditional gender norms and social expectations in Bangladeshi retail firms are upheld and reinforced by the corporate culture of many of these companies. Women are frequently forced to conform to cultural standards that serve to propagate prejudices and stereotypes based on their gender (Fitzgerald, 2013). This can present itself in a variety of ways, including restricted career advancement due to cultural expectations and being allocated activities that are consistent with traditional notions of femininity. For instance, women are frequently relegated to customer service and sales positions, while men occupy the majority of administrative positions, which results in an imbalance in the amount of authority and decision-making ability (Ferdaush and Rahman, 2011).

The dominant culture of an organisation can have an effect on hiring and promotion practises within the retail business, which can further exacerbate gender disparities in pay and opportunities (Blau and Kahn, 2017). The appraisal and selection processes may be negatively impacted by unconscious biases, which may result in an inadequate number of women occupying positions of authority. It's possible for performance appraisals to be biased, which devalues women's achievements and impedes their ability to grow in their careers. These biases are a contributing factor to the presence of a "glass ceiling," which impedes the professional development of women and restricts the opportunities available to them for promotion in the retail industry (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020).

According to Abrar (Age, 23) from Aagora;

“Store in-charge and managers are sceptical towards female employees. They do not want to give important tasks or heavy works to female employees”

Organisations need to go through a culture shift in order to address these concerns and provide assistance to women who are attempting to improve their careers in the retail business. It is of the utmost importance to foster a culture of gender equality and inclusion in the workplace (Chant et al., 2015). This can be accomplished through activities such as carrying out awareness campaigns, putting in place diversity and inclusion training programmes, and putting gender-sensitive policies into effect.

The advancement of women into leadership roles should be actively encouraged and fostered by organisations, which should also provide women with possibilities for mentorship and career advancement (Broadbridge., 2005). Establishing a culture at work that values transparency, collaboration, and mutual respect is necessary if one is interested in dismantling harmful gender stereotypes and promoting healthy gender relations.

In addition, organisations can counteract gender inequalities by developing open and impartial hiring and promotion practises, which put an emphasis on merit and competence rather than gender (Chant, Sylvia and Pedwell, 2008). Regular monitoring and action taken to address gender disparities in representation and compensation can help guarantee that all employees are treated in an equitable manner and have equal opportunity for advancement in their careers.

It was concluded by Chant and Sylvia (2017) the gender dynamics that exist in the retail industry in Bangladesh have a substantial impact on the career growth opportunities available to women. Traditional gender conventions, biases in hiring and promotion, and a work environment that is dominated by men are frequently reinforced by the dominant culture of corporations today. In order for organisations to successfully overcome these obstacles, they must actively develop an inclusive culture, challenge gender traditions and biases, and give equal chances for the professional advancement of women. It is possible for women to thrive in the retail industry and make important contributions if there is a culture of empowerment and inclusion fostered in the workplace (Atulkar and Kesari, 2018).

4.4. Gender Inequality and Discrimination

4.4.1 Discrimination for equal opportunity

The gender dynamics that exist within the retail sector of the Bangladeshi economy have substantial repercussions on the experiences and opportunities available to women. Gaining an understanding of the dynamics at play and the challenges women encounter when interacting with their bosses and co-workers can provide invaluable insights (Ghosh, 2021).

Women who work in the retail business take part in a dynamic exchange of resources that takes place within their workplaces. They invest their skills, time, and effort with the expectation of receiving rewards and benefits in return. These rewards and benefits can include things like fair salary, job security, possibilities for growth, and a work atmosphere that is encouraging (Pettit and Hook, 2019). On the other hand, women frequently face obstacles on the path to establishing fair resource exchange.

The "Gender Diversity" also emphasises the value of encouraging inclusivity and diversity in the workplace. The importance of achieving gender parity, equal representation, and providing opportunity for women to succeed at all levels of the retail sector is emphasised. By embracing gender diversity (Hussain, 2010), workplaces may become more creative and inclusive, promoting healthy organisational cultures that are advantageous to both individuals and enterprises.

One recurrent difficulty is proper compensation. Despite the significant contributions they make, women in the retail industry frequently encounter pay discrepancies that are based on gender (Kabeer and Mahmud, 2004). This discrepancy is caused by a number of factors, including discrimination based on gender, occupational segregation, and an undervaluing of the work done by women. A perception of injustice in the transaction might result from such imbalance, which can then lead to dissatisfaction and a decreased level of commitment to the organisation (Rajadhyaksha, 2012).

In the retail industry, women face challenges not just in maintaining their employment but also in advancing their careers (Rashid, 2011). It is possible for circumstances such as shaky employment contracts, limited access to formal benefits, and a lack of promotion prospects to work against the assumption of long-term benefits and stability in exchange relationships. Because of these difficulties, the perceived fairness of the transaction is diminished, which in turn leads to dissatisfaction and a decreased commitment to the organisation (Shafiek, 2022).

According to Shimu (Age, 24) from Shwapno;

“Females were preferred in marketing and sales department. Females have opportunity to grow their career in their sector but it takes them 6-7 years to reach to a higher position through their hard work, determination and commendable performance. Moreover, the number of female sales representatives is higher than males.”

The interview with Abrar (Age, 23) from Meena Bazar adds to this. He says;

“Salary is increased based on performance. Promotion is given based on work experience and higher qualification”

Relational investments are also something that play a vital part. In order to improve their job performance and career opportunities, women put effort into cultivating relationships with their bosses, co-workers, and customers (Spellman, 2019). These investments include working together with co-workers and establishing rapport with customers, delivering individualised customer care, and working together (Tribune Desk, 2022). On the other hand, job satisfaction and dedication may decrease for women if they believe that their efforts are not reciprocated or undervalued in the workplace. To keep women's drive and dedication at a high level, it is necessary to recognise and compensate them for the investments they make.

The phrase "Dual Role Expectations" refers to the pressures society places on women to play many roles at once, such as mother, wife, and employee. Women frequently experience enormous pressure to achieve professional success while also managing their homes and providing for their children (Showkat and Parveen, 2017). As they attempt to satisfy the obligations of both the profession and the family, these expectations can cause emotions of stress, guilt, and overload. Another crucial component is "Workload and Time Constraints". According to Chant and Sylvia (2017) women in the retail sector usually work long hours and under pressure, which leaves little time and energy for their personal lives. Long working hours, erratic schedules, and rigid shifts can make it difficult for them to prioritise their own well-being, take care of childcare duties, or participate in family activities.

According to Thomas et al., (2021) retail organisations should seek to develop work environments that are supportive of all employees and egalitarian in order to overcome these difficulties. This includes developing practises for employee compensation that are transparent and fair, ensuring that all employees have equal access to opportunities for promotion, and adopting policies that promote work-life balance and employee well-being. Women's social interactions, job satisfaction, and level of dedication can all benefit from the cultivation of a culture that prioritises trust, respect, and acknowledgment (Marshall et al., 2019).

4.5 Growth of Women Workers in Retail Sector

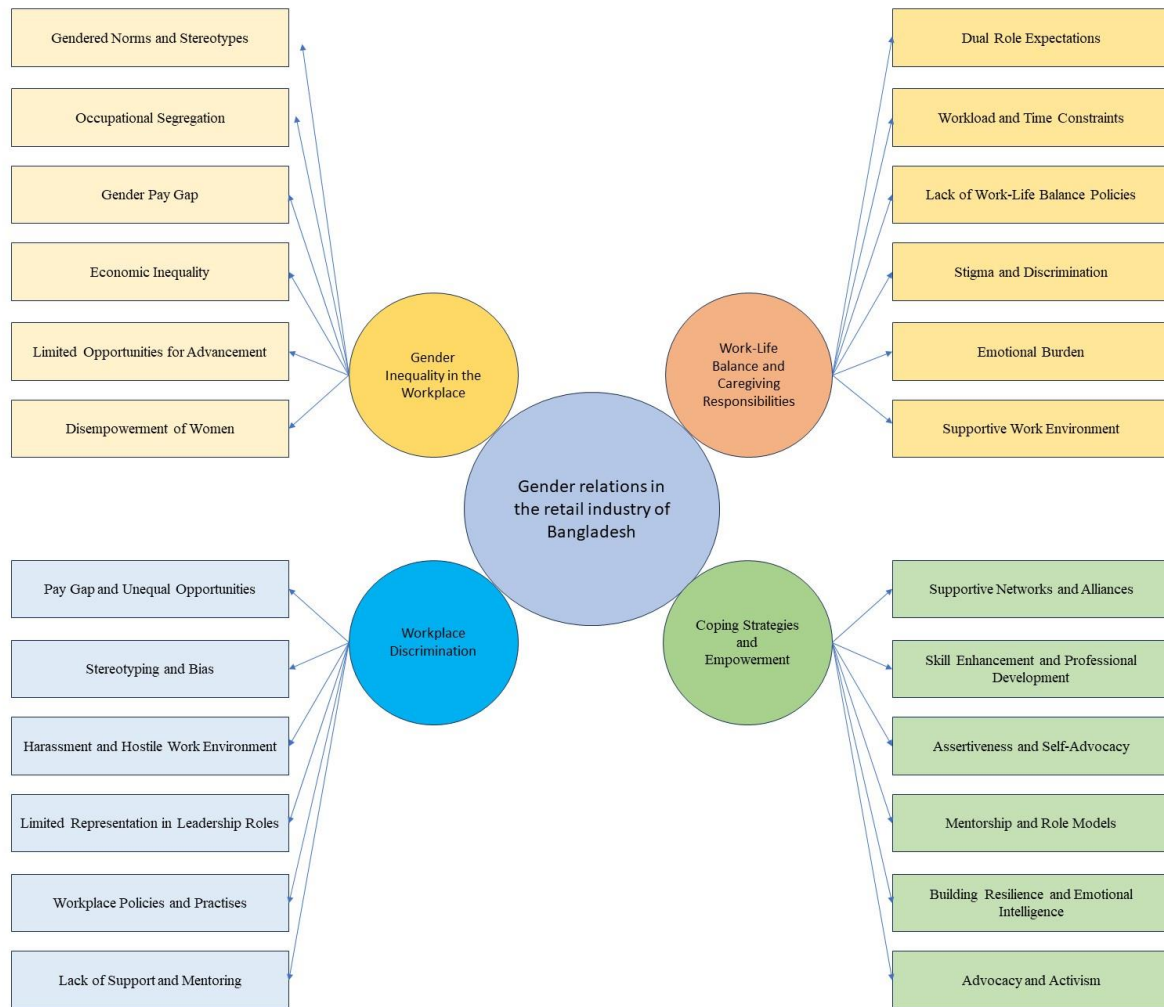


Figure 2: Growth of Women Workers in Retail Sector.

Source: The structure is generated from the fieldwork findings.

The visual depiction of the important topics and accompanying codes that were produced from the data analysis. It was created in order to facilitate the examination of gender relations in the retail business of Bangladesh (Pettit and Hook, 2019). It presents a succinct outline of the primary themes and their interconnection, bringing insights into the complex challenges that are faced by women in the field.

The route map is comprised on the following four primary themes: The first topic discussed in Theme 1 is Coping Strategies and Empowerment. The second topic, discrimination against women in the workplace is covered in Theme 2. The third topic, Work-Life Balance and Family Responsibilities, is covered in Theme 3. The fourth topic, Gender Inequality and Discrimination, is covered in Theme 4. Each main theme has a number of corresponding sub-themes, which are denoted by a set of codes that discuss the particular facets that are contained inside that main theme (Broadbridge, 2005). The road map draws attention to the structural problems that are prevalent in the retail industry, such as gendered norms and stereotypes, occupational segregation, pay discrepancies, limited possibilities for promotion, and workplace discrimination. In addition to this, it places an emphasis on the personal issues that women experience, such as the difficulty of juggling the duties of work and family, the pressures placed on them by society, and the emotional toll that gender-based barriers exact (Pettit and Hook, 2019).

In addition, the road map recognises the significance of supportive networks, the upgrading of skills, self-advocacy, mentorship, and resilience as coping mechanisms that women adopt when negotiating the problems that they face (Chant et al., 2015). In addition to this, it highlights the significance of working environments that are inclusive, the promotion of work-life balance, and the advocacy for gender equality.

Overall, the thematic road map offers a thorough overview of the gender dynamics in the retail business of Bangladesh by providing a visual depiction of the primary topics, sub-themes, and the relationships between them (Rashid, 2011). This information can be found by consulting the map. It is a useful instrument for comprehending the complexities of the problems at hand and locating prospective areas in need of improvement and intervention.

Chapter 5: Analysis

The following chapter included the analysis and findings of the study.

According to various data found throughout the theme analysis, gender inequality is a widespread problem in Bangladesh's retail sector. The numerous facets of gendered norms, stereotypes, and inequalities that women in this industry encounter are clarified by these codes (Attanapola, 2004).

5.1 Gender pay gap

The significant compensation gap between men and women in the retail industry is reflected in the "Gender Pay Gap". Women frequently receive lower pay than men do for doing equivalent work, which contributes to economic inequality and financial insecurity (Pettit and Hook, 2019). This pay disparity not only has an impact on how much money women have, but it also feeds a cycle of powerlessness and limited prospects for growth. "Economic Inequality" represents the wider economic inequities that women in the retail sector experience. Women are more likely than men to be poor, to have limited access to resources, and to encounter difficulties achieving financial independence (Chant et al., 2015).

5.2 Limited opportunities for advancement

The power dynamics in the workplace are made worse by this economic disparity, which also reinforces gender-based inequities and restricts the agency of women. The "Limited Opportunities for Advancement" code draws attention to the obstacles that prevent women from advancing their careers in the retail sector. Women's limited upward mobility is a result of a variety of factors, including discriminatory promotion practises, few mentorship and training opportunities, and a lack of supportive regulations (Fitzgerald, 2013). As a result, many competent and talented women are not given the opportunity to advance to leadership roles, which maintains the gender gap in the sector. The "Disempowerment of Women" acknowledges the institutionalised underrepresentation of women in the retail industry. Women frequently experience marginalisation, voicelessness, and reduced decision-making authority (Rashid, 2011). Their thoughts and viewpoints are not given enough weight, which fosters an environment of exclusion and limits their ability to influence organisational procedures.

5.3 Gender inequality and discrimination

The systemic gender inequality exists in Bangladesh's retail sector. The analysis highlights the importance of gender diversity as well as the impact of gendered stereotypes and norms,

occupational segregation, salary discrepancies, economic inequality, few prospects for promotion, and disempowerment. In Bangladesh, gender inequality is the main issues of each business, women don't have equal right amongst the upgradation or promotions (Asaduzzaman, Kabir and Radović-Marković, 2015; Ferdaush and Rahman, 2011). In order to address these issues, organisations, policymakers, and society as a whole must work together to develop a more equal and inclusive workplace where women may flourish and contribute to the fullest extent possible.

5.4 work life balance and difficulties

The second issue that emerged from the thematic analysis focuses on work-life balance and the difficulties women in Bangladesh's retail industry have in balancing their professional obligations with their responsibilities to their families (Ferdaush and Rahman, 2011). Numerous codes show the difficulties and cultural expectations that women must deal with on a daily basis while capturing the essence of this issue.

"Lack of Work-Life Balance Policies" denotes a lack of policies within an organisation that might help to promote work-life balance, or policies that are insufficient to do so (Rajadhyaksha, 2012). Many retail businesses in Bangladesh don't have complete policies that cover flexible work schedules, parental leave, childcare assistance, and other programmes designed to help employees achieve a healthy balance between work and family life. The difficulties women have in successfully managing their many roles are exacerbated by the lack of legislation that are supportive of them. The "Stigma and Discrimination" emphasises the societal discrimination and stigma women encounter when attempting to manage work and family (Blau and Kahn, 2017). When women express their need for flexibility or time off to take care of family obligations, some may worry about unfavourable reactions or judgement. This stigma can exacerbate women's attempts to strike a healthy work-life balance by making the workplace unpleasant and preventing them from openly expressing their problems.

Due to the "Emotional Burden" women frequently experience severe emotional stress as a result of juggling job and family obligations. As they manage the expectations and responsibilities of their many positions (Hossain et al., 2009), they could feel guilty, anxious, or emotionally worn out. Burnout and other negative effects might result from struggling to live up to social expectations and personal goals. The "Supportive Work Environment" designation draws attention to organisational strengths that can support work-life balance.

Some retail businesses offer reassuring workplaces that put an emphasis on workers' well-being, offer flexibility, and promote a climate of understanding and empathy. These businesses respect work-life balance and support their staff members by taking proactive steps to help them manage their personal and professional obligations (Kabeer and Mahmud, 2004).

5.5 Dual responsibilities of women employees

The difficulties women have when trying to strike a balance between work and family obligations and caring for their families while working in Bangladesh's retail sector. The analysis emphasises the demands made of women, the workload and time restraints they must deal with, the lack of helpful policies, the stigma and prejudice they experience, the emotional toll they bear, and the significance of a supportive work environment. In Bangladesh, women entrepreneurs faced a lot of difficulties (Mathew and Panchanatham, 2011). A culture of empathy and understanding must be fostered, policies that specifically meet the needs of women must be implemented, and cultural norms that unfairly burden women must be challenged in order to create a more equitable and supportive work-life environment (Houston and Houston, 2005). Organisations can establish an inclusive and nurturing workplace where women can flourish both professionally and personally by identifying and resolving these obstacles.

5.6 Discrimination and Hostile work environment

The third theme centres on the pervasive problem of gender inequality and discrimination faced by women in Bangladesh's retail sector. The data analysis produced a number of classifications that illustrate the many types of discrimination and inequality that women experience at work (Kabeer and Mahmud, 2004).

"Harassment and Hostile Work Environment" includes sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and other forms of discriminatory behaviour are among the many sorts of harassment that women frequently encounter. These hostile work conditions impede women's professional advancement and general wellbeing by causing emotional pain, undermining job happiness, and contributing to a culture of fear and inequity (Atulkar and Kesari, 2018). The underrepresentation of women in leadership roles within the retail sector is highlighted "Limited Representation in Leadership Roles". Women make up the majority of the workforce, yet they are notably underrepresented in positions of senior management.

Women's ability to influence decision-making, advocate for their interests, and confront systemic injustices is hampered by this lack of representation (Ferdaush and Rahman, 2011).

5.6 Core strategies and empowerment

"Workplace Policies and Practises" emphasises how organisational policies and practises affect gender disparity. Some retail businesses might not have gender-sensitive policies like maternity leave, flexible work schedules, or assistance with work-life balance ((Attanapola, 2004). The absence of such policies increases gender inequities and limits women's capacity to successfully balance their personal and professional life. In order to combat gender disparity, "Lack of Support and Mentoring" emphasises the significance of mentorship and support networks. Women frequently struggle with a lack of mentorship options and social networks that could help them progress professionally (Rajadhyaksha, 2012). The barriers that women encounter in the retail sector can be reduced by creating a welcoming and inclusive workplace that promotes mentorship and sponsorship programmes.

The analysis draws attention to the ongoing problem of gender inequality and discrimination faced by women in Bangladesh's retail sector. The analysis draws attention to the pay gap, uneven opportunities, prejudice, harassment, stereotyping, lack of diversity in leadership positions, and the effects of workplace rules and practises. It is a debate about as policies mentioned that it should be right for women to enjoy same opportunities and rights (Karim, 2014; Rashid, 2011; Kabir and Mahmood, 2004). Organisations must establish fair and equitable practises, encourage diversity and inclusion, offer training on bias and sensitivity, enforce stringent harassment policies, and create chances for women's leadership development in order to solve these difficulties. The retail sector can maximise the potential of its female workers and contribute to a more equal and empowering workplace for all by tearing down gender-based obstacles and establishing an inclusive work environment.

The fourth theme focuses on the coping mechanisms and empowerment techniques used by Bangladeshi women in the retail sector to overcome the obstacles they encounter. The data analysis produced a number of codes that provided insight into how women deal with barriers connected to their gender and take control of their careers (Broadbridge, 2005).

Another significant code in this theme is "Assertiveness and Self-Advocacy". In order to express their rights, voice their concerns, and demand equitable treatment, women use assertiveness and self-advocacy techniques (Shafiek (2022). Women can confront unfair

practises, bargain for better opportunities, and set boundaries in the workplace by developing their assertiveness abilities.

"Mentorship and Role Models" draws attention to the value of mentoring and the importance of role models in women's professional lives. For women to overcome challenges, set career objectives, and negotiate the complexities of the retail industry, they need access to mentors and role models who can offer them advice, inspiration, and motivation (Chant and Sylvia (2017). Women need mentors and role models to help them feel empowered, gain insightful knowledge, and advance their careers.

5.7 Professional development of women in retail sector

It was proved (Kabeer and Mahmud, 2004) the importance of fostering emotional intelligence and resilience as coping methods is emphasised by the code "Building Resilience and Emotional Intelligence". Women frequently deal with challenging circumstances, prejudice, and discrimination at work. They may overcome obstacles, deal with hardship, and preserve their wellbeing through developing resilience. Women who possess emotional intelligence are better able to resolve disputes amicably, create lasting bonds with others, and handle difficult situations.

The coping mechanisms and empowerment techniques used by women in Bangladesh's retail sector were the unique ones. The analysis highlights the significance of lobbying, skill development, assertiveness, mentoring, resilience, and supportive networks. Women's in Bangladesh are working in different unions and are the active retailer and skilful individual with strategic plans (Karim, 2014; Hussain, 2010). Women may empower themselves, overcome challenges, and contribute to a more equal and inclusive workplace by using these tactics. By offering mentoring programmes, classes on resilience and assertiveness, promoting work-life balance, and creating an environment that values women's leadership and active engagement, organisations can further enhance women's empowerment. The retail sector can maximise the potential of women and contribute to a more gender-balanced and successful workforce by empowering them.

Chapter 6: Recommendations

In light of the discussions and findings of this research, a few recommendations are made in the section that follows. By adhering to this recommendation, any Bangladeshi retail company will be able to become more responsible, sustainable, and create a welcoming workplace for women. Despite the fact that some organisations have taken steps to improve the situation, as the majority of the sales force in the industry is female, they must adhere to certain general guidelines. That is,

1. Companies might follow the policies guidelines to overcome change resistance by demonstrating strong leadership, communicating effectively, and providing educational opportunities through practical approaches towards both genders.
2. Human resource might provide some training, allocate finances, to implement gender equality measures, evaluation of workplace practises and policies to appreciate skilful women retailers.
3. Leading companies might engage with the women entrepreneurs for partnerships with local retailers to promote organisational growth; this could be beneficial for the economic growth of a country.

By adhering to these recommendations, not only will the working conditions of women improve, but so will the efficiency of organisations in the industry and the nation's economy as a whole.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

The researcher found all the answers of the research questions, it is described that the findings have been achieved according to research objectives and research questions and sub questions. According to the findings of the study, some conclusions were drawn.

As findings show that the women workers in retail sectors faced a lot of difficulties and challenges during working hours and management of activities in Bangladesh's retail markets. Gender discrimination is the major challenge in this sector to cope up with. It is concluded that gender discrimination is there alongside, female employees face incorporative and hostile environment which may leads to the inefficiency of work so its needs to be discarded. Supportive, creative inclusive environment should be provided to all the employees whether it's male or female. Female workers also face physical restrictions in Bangladesh. Career advancement opportunities are also not same for both genders; it shows that there is huge diversity at the workplace. Study also determines that female employees are not allowed to take part in any activities and campaigns; it affects their skills and professional development.

It can be concluded that there are numerous challenges faced by the women employees in retails markets; these inclusive inappropriate environment, stereotypes behaviour of other employees, have to perform dual roles at home and at work, emotional burden like anxiety/ stress/ burnout, unsupportive staff, restrictions for professional development and so many others' problems. Workspace people believe that in retail sector women are not capable of employment due to the physical factors, responsibilities, management grind and activism. They believe that decision making, performing activities, management of task and others, these can be only done by the male employees. Due to this discrimination, it results in the inequality at the workplace. It should be a priority to the authorities and committees to minimize this gender gap and provide equal opportunities for skills development and professional enrichment to both genders.

Women are working continuously in the retail markets in Bangladesh for years. They are contributing as much as the male employees; they deserve as much respect as the males do. In Bangladesh, women workers are there at least in every business industry as salespersons, leaders, managers, product executor's responsibilities and so on. It is concluded that retail sector is achieving high scale market deals because of the working teams including both genders. Women's also have their specific part in contributing to enhance skills sets, practice

of policies implementation of women rights, activities involvement in the task and activities and beautifully managed campaigns. It would be better if both genders avail trainings of proper equipment for the development and progression of retail industry in Bangladesh.

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Appendix A

Gantt Chart

Activity	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
Literature Review										
Data Collection										
Data Analysis										
Findings Generation										
Recommendations										

Table: Duration of different activities for the study.

Appendix B

Characteristics of Participants

Interview Number	Age	Gender	Marital status	Name	Super shop name	Position	Year of experience
1	24	Female	Unmarried	Aysha Islam	Unimart	Sales Representative	2 years
2	25	Female	Unmarried	Aysha Sheikh	Unimart	Sales Rep.	2.5 years
3	25	Female	Unmarried	Sriti Haque	Unimart	Sales Rep.	1 year
4	22	Male	Unmarried	Yaman Khalil	Unimart	Store assistant	3 months
5	22	Female	Unmarried	Rabeya Akter	Grocery mart	Sales Rep.	3 months
6	20	Female	Unmarried	Akhi	Grocery mart	Sales Rep.	3 months
7	20	Female	Unmarried	Hashi	Grocery mart	Sales Rep.	3 months
8	23	Male	Unmarried	Sadat	Grocery mart	Sales Rep.	3 months
9	20	Female	Unmarried	Saiba Chowdhury	Meena Bazar	Bakery Sales Rep.	4 months
10	20	Male	Unmarried	Seam Mahbub	Meena Bazar	Bakery Second-in charge	5 months
11	23	Male	Unmarried	Abrar	Meena Bazar	Store assistant	8 months
12	22	Male	Unmarried	Yaman Khalil	Agora	Sales Rep.	7 months
13	23	Female	Unmarried	Rima Akter	Agora	Sales Rep.	5 months
14	24	Female	Unmarried	Shimu	Swapno	Sales Rep.	2 years
15	23	Male	Unmarried	Shahin	Swapno	Sales Rep.	6 months

Appendix C

Thematic Codes and Description

Theme	Description	Codes
Theme 1: Gender Segregation	Focuses on the organizational segregation of genders within the retail industry of Bangladesh and its impact on women employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited access to managerial roles - Concentration of women in lower-level positions - Gendered division of labour - Lack of upward mobility opportunities
Theme 2: Workplace Discrimination	Explores the experiences of women facing various forms of discrimination and biases in the retail industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unequal pay and compensation - Gender-based discrimination - Stereotyping and bias - Lack of recognition and advancement opportunities
Theme 3: Work-Life Balance	Examines the challenges women encounter in balancing their personal and professional lives within the retail industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demands of caregiving and family responsibilities - Inflexible work schedules - Workload and time management challenges
Theme 4: Coping Strategies and Empowerment	Focuses on the coping strategies employed by women to navigate challenges and empower themselves within the retail industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supportive networks and alliances - Skill enhancement and professional development - Assertiveness and self-advocacy - Mentorship and role models - Building resilience and emotional intelligence - Career flexibility and work-life balance - Advocacy and activism

Transcription of Interviews

Interview 1

Gender: Female

Name: Shimu

Age: 24

Super shop name: Swapno

Job Description: Sales representative

Location: Green Road Branch, Dhaka

Interview Questionnaire:

1. **For how long you are working in this shop?**
= Working here for two years.
2. **Did you start your career in your current position?**
= Started as sales representative
3. **Is this your starting job?**
= Yes, first job.
4. **Have you worked previously anywhere else? If yes, what is the difference between your previous job and current job?**
= No previous job.
5. **What are your average working hours per day?**
= 6days per week, 8hours per day (for Ramadan its 7hours on average), full duty 1 day per week which is 12 hours
6. **Why did you choose to work in a super shop instead of other places?**
= flexible work time for a student and good salary
7. **Do you receive any employee benefits? For example – employee discount etc.?**
= no extra benefits
8. **How do you feel about the work environment and culture at the super shop?**
= good, positive. Co-workers are helpful, co-operative. But the male cleaners are rude sometimes and she feels uncomfortable around them.
9. **Are you satisfied with the pay and benefits provided by the super shop?**
= satisfied
10. **Do you feel that your workload is manageable?**
= yes, manageable
11. **Do you feel that your contributions to the super shop are valued and recognized?**
= yes, they value
12. **Have you received any training or development opportunities from the super shop? If yes, what type of training? Can you please elaborate?**
= yes, they provided training on time value, customer relationship, leadership by professional trainers
13. **Do you have any concerns? If yes, please give an example?**
= yes, no seating arrangements, needs to stand for long hours, male cleaners behave rudely sometimes

- 14. Have you ever felt any sort of discrimination because of your gender at your workplace? If yes, can you please tell us in detail.**
 = never faced discrimination from the management. But sometimes face problem that male workers do not face. For example – the way male customers or male security guard, cleaner stare at the female workers inappropriately, it makes the female workers uncomfortable.
- 15. Have you ever had to work overtime, and if so, were you compensated for it?**
 = did not have to work overtime. Because they have different shifts
- 16. Have you been provided with proper safety equipment and training to ensure a safe working environment? Do you feel this is a safe working space?**
 = there are fire extinguishers but not everyone was trained
- 17. How do you feel about the opportunities for career growth and advancement at your current workplace?**
 = Females were preferred in marketing and sales department. Females have opportunity to grow their career in their sector but it takes them 6-7 years to reach to a higher position through their hard work, determination and commendable performance.
 Moreover, the number of female sales representatives is higher than males.
- 18. Would you recommend your current employer to other male/female workers?**
 = Would not recommend, because it is not easy for girls to stand all day.
- 19. Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the management to improve the work experience for male/female workers?**
 = Need better washroom, need to train the cleaners and security guards how to behave.

Additional info:

Swapno has equal number of male and female employees. Both of the floor managers and store supervisors are male.

Interview 2

Gender: Male
 Name: Shahin
 Age: 23
 Super shop name: Swapno

Job Description: Sales representative

Location: Green Road Branch, Dhaka

Interview Questionnaire:

- 1. For how long you are working in this shop?**
 = working for 6 months
- 2. Did you start your career in your current position?**
 = Yes, stated in their current position

- 3. Is this your starting job?**
= second job
- 4. Have you worked previously anywhere else? If yes, what is the difference between your previous job and current job?**
= yes, previously worked at another shop
- 5. What are your average working hours per day?**
= 6days per week, 8hours per day, full duty 1 day per week which is 12 hours, monthly 4 days off
- 6. Why did you choose to work in a super shop instead of other places?**
= To gain experience in sales, it gives good salary and easy to manage time as a student.
- 7. Do you receive any employee benefits? For example – employee discount etc.?**
= No extra benefits are given.
- 8. How do you feel about the work environment and culture at the super shop?**
= Friendly environment. Colleagues are very helpful and co-operative.
- 9. Are you satisfied with the pay and benefits provided by the super shop?**
= yes, satisfied with pay and salary.
- 10. Do you feel that your workload is manageable?**
= yes, workload is manageable. Never felt pressure.
- 11. Do you feel that your contributions to the super shop are valued and recognized?**
= yes feel valued for his contributions.
- 12. Have you received any training or development opportunities from the super shop? If yes, what type of training? Can you please elaborate?**
= yes, they provided basic training on product knowledge, customer relationship, how to handle crisis or rude customers and how to use safety equipment.
- 13. Do you have any concerns? If yes, please give an example?**
= Did not have any serious concern.
- 14. Have you ever felt any sort of discrimination because of your gender at your workplace? If yes, can you please tell us in detail.**
= Feels that female employees do not need to do much work. Male employees need to carry the products from the truck to the store and organize the upper shelves. Moreover, female employees do not usually need to work extra hours but male employees need to stay additional hours when needed.

15. Have you ever had to work overtime, and if so, were you compensated for it?

= Do not need to work overtime as employees work in shifts

16. Have you been provided with proper safety equipment and training to ensure a safe working environment? Do you feel this is a safe working space?

= Most of the male employees are trained to use the fire extinguisher in case of emergency.

17. How do you feel about the opportunities for career growth and advancement at your current workplace?

= Feels that there is very little chance of Promotion and salary increase. But if one works hard for few years and have higher qualification, they will get Promotion based on their experience and performance.

18. Would you recommend your current employer to other male/female workers?

= yes, recommended to those who can work hard.

19. Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the management to improve the work experience for male/female workers?

= No feedback was given.

Interview 3

Gender: Female

Name: Saiba Chowdhury

Age: 20

Super shop name: Meena Bazar

Job Description: Sales representative at Bakery

Location: Dhanmondi 27 branch, Dhaka

Interview Questionnaire:

1. For how long you are working in this shop?

= Working for four months.

2. Did you start your career in your current position?

= yes, in this position.

3. Is this your starting job?

= First job. No previous experience.

4. Have you worked previously anywhere else? If yes, what is the difference between your previous job and current job?

= This is the first job, no previous working experience

5. What are your average working hours per day?

= 6days per week, 8hours per day (for Ramadan its 7hours on average), full duty 1 day per week which is 12 hours

6. Why did you choose to work in a super shop instead of other places?

= To gain experience in sales and the salary is good, working time is flexible

7. Do you receive any employee benefits? For example – employee discount etc.?

= No extra benefits are given.

8. How do you feel about the work environment and culture at the super shop?

= Good, positive, all the male colleagues are helpful and co-operative

9. Are you satisfied with the pay and benefits provided by the super shop?

= Satisfied with salary.

10. Do you feel that your workload is manageable?

= Yes, manageable. Does not feel pressure.

11. Do you feel that your contributions to the super shop are valued and recognized?

= Yes, they value their employees contribution.

12. Have you received any training or development opportunities from the super shop?

If yes, what type of training? Can you please elaborate?

= Yes, they provided 3 days training on product price and code number, decoration, customer relationship.

13. Do you have any concerns? If yes, please give an example?

= Sometimes the guard keeps staring at her which makes her uncomfortable, sometimes when she is working alone the shop manager comes and tries to flirt with her which she tries to ignore. There is no one to complain about such issues or she did not feel comfortable in complaining. Other than that she is happy about her job, no other concerns.

14. Have you ever felt any sort of discrimination because of your gender at your workplace? If yes, can you please tell us in detail?

= No, did not feel any discrimination while working

15. Have you ever had to work overtime, and if so, were you compensated for it?

= Did not have to work overtime.

16. Have you been provided with proper safety equipment and training to ensure a safe working environment? Do you feel this is a safe working space?

= Safety equipment like fire extinguisher is available and trained.

17. How do you feel about the opportunities for career growth and advancement at your current workplace?

= Helpful for career growth, promotion depends on work performance, confident about career growth and advancement as there is many female employees working in a better/ higher position who reached their with their hard work

18. Would you recommend your current employer to other male/female workers?

= Will highly recommend to others, especially to people who are students.

19. Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the management to improve the work experience for male/female workers?

= Store manager needs to be more professional and should not flirt with female employees, feels the authority needs to emphasis on providing more safety for women workers.

Additional info:

Interviewee feels there is a problem in chain of command, their supervisors do not pay attention to their complains or does not inform the higher up authorities

Interview 4

Gender: Male

Name: Seam Mahbub

Age: 20

Super shop name: Meena Bazar

Job Description: Meena Bazar bakery second in-charge

Location: Dhanmondi 27 branch, Dhaka

Interview Questionnaire:

1. For how long you are working in this shop?

= Working for 5 months.

2. Did you start your career in your current position?

= Yes, stated in their current position.

3. Is this your starting job?

= First formal job.

4. Have you worked previously anywhere else? If yes, what is the difference between your previous job and current job?

= previously he used to provide tuition to other junior students.

5. What are your average working hours per day?

= 6days per week, 8hours per day, full duty 1 day per week which is 12 hours, monthly 4 days off

6. Why did you choose to work in a super shop instead of other places?

= To gain experience in sales, it gives good salary and easy to manage time as a student.

- 7. Do you receive any employee benefits? For example – employee discount etc.?**
= No extra benefits are provided.
- 8. How do you feel about the work environment and culture at the super shop?**
= Friendly environment. Colleagues are very helpful and co-operative.
- 9. Are you satisfied with the pay and benefits provided by the super shop?**
= Yes, satisfied.
- 10. Do you feel that your workload is manageable?**
= Yes, workload is manageable. Never felt pressure.
- 11. Do you feel that your contributions to the super shop are valued and recognized?**
= Yes, feels valued and recognised.
- 12. Have you received any training or development opportunities from the super shop?
If yes, what type of training? Can you please elaborate?**
= Yes, they provided basic training on time value/ time management, product knowledge, customer relationship, leadership etc. by professional trainers
- 13. Do you have any concerns? If yes, please give an example?**
= No serious concern.
- 14. Have you ever felt any sort of discrimination because of your gender at your workplace? If yes, can you please tell us in detail.**
= Female employees can leave work on time but male employees need to stay longer if need for work
- 15. Have you ever had to work overtime, and if so, were you compensated for it?**
= Do not need to work overtime
- 16. Have you been provided with proper safety equipment and training to ensure a safe working environment? Do you feel this is a safe working space?**
= Most of the male employees are trained to use the fire extinguisher in case of emergency.
- 17. How do you feel about the opportunities for career growth and advancement at your current workplace?**
= Salary is increased based on performance. Promotion is given based on work experience and higher qualification
- 18. Would you recommend your current employer to other male/female workers?**
= Will not recommend because it is difficult in sales, might be harder for girls

19. Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the management to improve the work experience for male/female workers?

= No feedback.

Interview 5

Gender: Male

Name: Abrar

Age: 23

Super shop name: Meena Bazar

Job Description: Store Assistant

Location: Dhanmondi 27 number

Interview Questionnaire:

1. For how long you are working in this shop?

= Working for 8 months

2. Did you start your career in your current position?

= Yes, stated in their current position

3. Is this your starting job?

= No, second job.

4. Have you worked previously anywhere else? If yes, what is the difference between your previous job and current job?

= Yes, previously worked in marketing at Bashundhara group for experience

5. What are your average working hours per day?

= 6days per week, 8hours per day, full duty 1 day per week which is 12 hours, monthly 4 days off

6. Why did you choose to work in a super shop instead of other places?

= To gain first-hand experience in sales, it gives good salary and easy to manage time as a student.

7. Do you receive any employee benefits? For example – employee discount etc.?

= No extra benefits are given.

8. How do you feel about the work environment and culture at the super shop?

= Friendly environment. Colleagues are very helpful and co-operative.

9. Are you satisfied with the pay and benefits provided by the super shop?

= Not satisfied with the salary, he thinks their salary should be increased based on working hours and performance

10. Do you feel that your workload is manageable?

= Yes, workload is manageable. Never felt pressure.

11. Do you feel that your contributions to the super shop are valued and recognized?

= Yes, valued and acknowledged.

12. Have you received any training or development opportunities from the super shop? If yes, what type of training? Can you please elaborate?

= Yes, they provided basic training on product knowledge, customer relationship, how to handle crisis or rude customers and how to use safety equipment.

13. Do you have any concerns? If yes, please give an example?

= Felt that store manager and in-charge are biased toward female employees and prefer male employees to do important tasks.

14. Have you ever felt any sort of discrimination because of your gender at your workplace? If yes, can you please tell us in detail.

= Feels that store in-charge and managers are sceptical towards female employees. They do not want to give important tasks or heavy works to female employees

15. Have you ever had to work overtime, and if so, were you compensated for it?

= Do not need to work overtime as employees work in shifts

16. Have you been provided with proper safety equipment and training to ensure a safe working environment? Do you feel this is a safe working space?

= Most of the male employees are trained to use the fire extinguisher in case of emergency.

17. How do you feel about the opportunities for career growth and advancement at your current workplace?

= Salary is increased based on performance. Promotion is given based on work experience and higher qualification

18. Would you recommend your current employer to other male/female workers?

= Yes, recommended to those who can work hard.

19. Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the management to improve the work experience for male/female workers?

= Authority should give proper training to all the employees so that nobody is biased towards others because of their gender.

Interview 6

Gender: Male

Name: Yaman Khalil

Age: 22

Super shop name: Agora supershop

Job Description: Sales representative

Location: Dhanmondi 27 branch, Dhaka

Interview Questionnaire:

- 1. For how long you are working in this shop?**
= Worked in Agora for 7 months (march 2022 to sept 2022)
- 2. Did you start your career in your current position?**
= Stated as sales representative, also worked in back store
- 3. Is this your starting job?**
= Second job
- 4. Have you worked previously anywhere else? If yes, what is the difference between your previous job and current job?**
= Previously used to work in a clothing store
- 5. What are your average working hours per day?**
= 6days per week, 8hours per day, full duty 1 day per week which is 12 hours, monthly 4 days off
- 6. Why did you choose to work in a super shop instead of other places?**
= To gain experience in sales and enrich his cv, the salary is good, time is flexible
- 7. Do you receive any employee benefits? For example – employee discount etc.?**
= No extra benefits
- 8. How do you feel about the work environment and culture at the super shop?**
= Average, colleagues are helpful, friendly but the supervisors are not that friendly
- 9. Are you satisfied with the pay and benefits provided by the super shop?**
= Satisfied with salary.
- 10. Do you feel that your workload is manageable?**
= Yes, manageable workload.

11. Do you feel that your contributions to the super shop are valued and recognized?

= Not always, he thinks sometimes their contributions are recognized when they are paid bonus for working overtime

12. Have you received any training or development opportunities from the super shop? If yes, what type of training? Can you please elaborate?

= Yes, they provided basic training on product price and code number, customer relationship, how to handle crisis or rude customers

13. Do you have any concerns? If yes, please give an example?

= No, separate washroom for females, both male and female need to share washroom. Agora management or authority tells the employees to use less cloth/better quality bags (which has their logo) to pack the purchased items of the customers, they instructed their employees to use net bags more, sometimes the bags get ripped off, customers get angry and behaves rudely with the employees

14. Have you ever felt any sort of discrimination because of your gender at your workplace? If yes, can you please tell us in detail.

= No, did not feel any discrimination while working

15. Have you ever had to work overtime, and if so, were you compensated for it?

= Yes, had to work longer than their working hours during busy days, whenever they had to work on govt. holidays or during Eid holidays they were compensated or paid bonus

16. Have you been provided with proper safety equipment and training to ensure a safe working environment? Do you feel this is a safe working space?

= Safety equipment like fire extinguisher is available and employes are trained.

17. How do you feel about the opportunities for career growth and advancement at your current workplace?

= Does not have much scope for career advancement because only people with bachelor degree and many years of experience get promotion based on their work performance

18. Would you recommend your current employer to other male/female workers?

= Will recommend to other males but will not recommend to females.

19. Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the management to improve the work experience for male/female workers?

= Higher authority needs to emphasize more on their shopping bags, so that customers do not get angry or upset. They should provide separate washroom for male/female employees and value their employees hard work more

Additional info:

Feels there is a problem in chain of command, their supervisors do not pay attention to their complains or does not inform the higher up authorities regarding the shopping bag issues, there is only 1 washroom for all the employees, male/female employees should have separate washrooms. Agora is unprofessional in terms of providing their customers with quality packaging and maintaining their brand image.

Interview 7

Gender: Female

Name: Rima Akter

Age: 23

Super shop name: Agora supershop

Job Description: Sales representative

Location: Dhanmondi 27 branch, Dhaka

Interview Questionnaire:

1. For how long you are working in this shop?

= Worked in Agora for 5 months

2. Did you start your career in your current position?

= Stated as sales representative,

3. Is this your starting job?

= Second job

4. Have you worked previously anywhere else? If yes, what is the difference between your previous job and current job?

= Previously used to work in a clothing store

5. What are your average working hours per day?

= 6days per week, 8hours per day, full duty 1 day per week which is 12 hours, monthly 4 days off

6. Why did you choose to work in a super shop instead of other places?

= The salary is good, time is flexible

- 7. Do you receive any employee benefits? For example – employee discount etc.?**
= No extra benefits
- 8. How do you feel about the work environment and culture at the super shop?**
= Average, colleagues are helpful, friendly but the supervisors are not that friendly
- 9. Are you satisfied with the pay and benefits provided by the super shop?**
= Satisfied
- 10. Do you feel that your workload is manageable?**
= Yes, manageable
- 11. Do you feel that your contributions to the super shop are valued and recognized?**
= Not feel valued
- 12. Have you received any training or development opportunities from the super shop?
If yes, what type of training? Can you please elaborate?**
= Yes, they provided basic training on product price and code number, customer relationship, how to handle crisis or rude customers
- 13. Do you have any concerns? If yes, please give an example?**
= No, separate washroom for females, both male and female need to share washroom.
Agora management or authority tells the employees to use less cloth/better quality bags (which has their logo) to pack the purchased items of the customers, they instructed their employees to use net bags more, sometimes the bags get ripped off, customers get angry and behaves rudely with the employees
- 14. Have you ever felt any sort of discrimination because of your gender at your workplace? If yes, can you please tell us in detail.**
= No, did not feel any discrimination while working
- 15. Have you ever had to work overtime, and if so, were you compensated for it?**
= Yes, had to work longer than their working hours during busy days, whenever they had to work on govt. holidays or during Eid holidays they were compensated or paid bonus
- 16. Have you been provided with proper safety equipment and training to ensure a safe working environment? Do you feel this is a safe working space?**
= Safety equipment like fire extinguisher is available and trained
- 17. How do you feel about the opportunities for career growth and advancement at your current workplace?**
= Very little chance for career advancement without a bachelor degree, promotion depends on work performance, experience and educational qualification. In recent years,

only one female employee from their branch got promotion to a higher position after working dedicated for 5 years

18. Would you recommend your current employer to other male/female workers?

= Will recommend to other males but will not recommend to females as it is a bit hard for female employees

19. Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the management to improve the work experience for male/female workers?

= Higher authority needs to emphasis more on their shopping bags, so that customers do not get angry or upset. They should provide separate washroom for male/female employees

Additional info:

The interviewee feels there is a problem in chain of command, their supervisors do not pay attention to their complains or does not inform the higher up authorities regarding the shopping bag issues, there is only 1 washroom for all the employees, male/female employees should have separate washrooms.

Agora is unprofessional in terms of providing their customers with quality packaging and maintaining their brand image.

Interview 8

Name: Aysha Islam

Age: 24

Job Description: Beauty Consultant.

Super Shop Name: Unimart

Location: Dhanmondi 9/A, dhaka

Interview Questionnaire:

1. For how long you are working in this shop?

= Working for 2 years

2. Did you start your career in your current position?

= Yes, started in their current position.

3. Is this your starting job?

= Yes, first job.

4. Have you worked previously anywhere else? If yes, what is the difference between your previous job and current job?

= No previous work experience.

5. What are your average working hours per day?

= 6 days per week, 8 hours per day, full duty 1 day per week which is 12 hours, monthly 4 days off

6. Why did you choose to work in a super shop instead of other places?

A. the salary is good, time is flexible, as student it is easy to manage.

7. Do you receive any employee benefits? For example – employee discount etc.?

= No extra benefits. Iftar is provided for all employees of Unimart. 30 minutes break for lunch. Besides 70tk is added to their salary for iftar

8. How do you feel about the work environment and culture at the super shop?

= Friendly and safe environment for girls, all the colleagues are helpful, co-operative.

9. Are you satisfied with the pay and benefits provided by the super shop?

= Satisfied with pay.

10. Do you feel that your workload is manageable?

= yes, target fill up manageable.

11. Do you feel that your contributions to the super shop are valued and recognized?

= Yes, valued by the authority.

12. Have you received any training or development opportunities from the super shop? If yes, what type of training? Can you please elaborate?

= Yes, they provided basic training on product knowledge, customer relationship, how to handle crisis or rude customers

13. Do you have any concerns? If yes, please give an example?

= No concerns

14. Have you ever felt any sort of discrimination because of your gender at your workplace? If yes, can you please tell us in detail.

= No, did not feel any discrimination while working because of their gender

15. Have you ever had to work overtime, and if so, were you compensated for it?

= Yes, had to work longer than regular working hours during Ramadan. They will be given bonus for working extra hours.

16. Have you been provided with proper safety equipment and training to ensure a safe working environment? Do you feel this is a safe working space?

= Yes, feels safe, there is safety equipment in unimart but not all girls are trained

17. How do you feel about the opportunities for career growth and advancement at your current workplace?

= No career growth, very little chance of increasing salary or promotion. Very few female employees got promotion based on their work experience and performance, most of their superiors are male.

18. Would you recommend your current employer to other male/female workers?

= Yes, she will recommend it to other females.

19. Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the management to improve the work experience for male/female workers?

= no seating arrangement for employees when they get tired. The authority needs to arrange seats, so that employees can rest when there is no customer or rush.

Interview 9

Name: Aysha Sheikh

Age: 25

Job Description: Sales representative

Super Shop Name: Unimart

Location: Dhanmondi 9/A, dhaka

Interview Questionnaire:

1. For how long you are working in this shop?

= Working for 2.5 years

2. Did you start your career in your current position?

= Yes, started as a sales representative

3. Is this your starting job?

= No, third job.

4. Have you worked previously anywhere else? If yes, what is the difference between your previous job and current job?

= Worked in 2 other stores previously but left them because one did not have good salary, the 2nd job was in mini good where female employees had to wear t-shirt-pant.

5. What are your average working hours per day?

= 6days per week, 8hours per day, full duty 1 day per week which is 12 hours, monthly 4 days off

6. Why did you choose to work in a super shop instead of other places?

= Did not have much educational qualification to join any other place

7. **Do you receive any employee benefits? For example – employee discount etc.?**
= No extra benefits. Ifter is provided for all employees of unimart. 30 minutes break for lunch. Besides 70tk is added to their salary for ifter
8. **How do you feel about the work environment and culture at the super shop?**
= All the colleagues are helpful, co-operative. Never faced any problem.
9. **Are you satisfied with the pay and benefits provided by the super shop?**
= Not satisfied with the salary.
10. **Do you feel that your workload is manageable?**
= Yes, target fill up manageable
11. **Do you feel that your contributions to the super shop are valued and recognized?**
= Yes, valued by management.
12. **Have you received any training or development opportunities from the super shop? If yes, what type of training? Can you please elaborate?**
= Yes, they provided basic training on product knowledge, customer relationship, how to handle crisis or rude customers
13. **Do you have any concerns? If yes, please give an example?**
= She feels her salary is not much compared to the time & efforts given by her.
14. **Have you ever felt any sort of discrimination because of your gender at your workplace? If yes, can you please tell us in detail.**
= No, did not feel any discrimination while working because of her gender.
15. **Have you ever had to work overtime, and if so, were you compensated for it?**
= Yes, had to work longer than their working hours during Ramadan and before eid. They were promised to be compensated with bonus.
16. **Have you been provided with proper safety equipment and training to ensure a safe working environment? Do you feel this is a safe working space?**
= All of them said they felt safe, there was safety equipment in unimart but many girls are not trained
17. **How do you feel about the opportunities for career growth and advancement at your current workplace?**
= No career growth, very little chance of increasing salary or promotion. Very few female employees got promotion based on their work experience and performance, most of their superiors are male.
18. **Would you recommend your current employer to other male/female workers?**
= Yes, recommended

19. Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the management to improve the work experience for male/female workers?

= No seating arrangement for employees when they get tired. Other than that no issues.

Interview 10

Name: Sriti Haque

Age: 25

Job Description: Sales representative

Super Shop Name: Unimart

Location: Dhanmondi 9/A, dhaka

Interview Questionnaire:

- 1. For how long you are working in this shop?**
= working for 1 year
- 2. Did you start your career in your current position?**
= Yes, stated in their current position
- 3. Is this your starting job?**
= First job,
- 4. Have you worked previously anywhere else? If yes, what is the difference between your previous job and current job?**
= no previous work experience
- 5. What are your average working hours per day?**
= 6days per week, 8hours per day, full duty 1 day per week which is 12 hours, monthly 4 days off
- 6. Why did you choose to work in a super shop instead of other places?**
= Good salary, safety, flexible time. Can balance both study and work.
- 7. Do you receive any employee benefits? For example – employee discount etc.?**
= no extra benefits.

- 8. How do you feel about the work environment and culture at the super shop?**
= Friendly, positive and safe environment for everyone. All the colleagues are helpful, co-operative.
- 9. Are you satisfied with the pay and benefits provided by the super shop?**
= Yes, satisfied with salary.
- 10. Do you feel that your workload is manageable?**
= yes, target fill up manageable
- 11. Do you feel that your contributions to the super shop are valued and recognized?**
= Yes, feels valued.
- 12. Have you received any training or development opportunities from the super shop? If yes, what type of training? Can you please elaborate?**
= Yes, they provided basic training on product knowledge, customer relationship, how to handle crisis or rude customers
- 13. Do you have any concerns? If yes, please give an example?**
= No serious concern was found.
- 14. Have you ever felt any sort of discrimination because of your gender at your workplace? If yes, can you please tell us in detail.**
= No, did not feel any discrimination while working because of gender.
- 15. Have you ever had to work overtime, and if so, were you compensated for it?**
= Yes, had to work longer than their working hours during Ramadan and before Eid. They were promised to be compensated with bonus.
- 16. Have you been provided with proper safety equipment and training to ensure a safe working environment? Do you feel this is a safe working space?**
= She felt safe, there was safety equipment in Unimart but didn't receive training on how to use them.
- 17. How do you feel about the opportunities for career growth and advancement at your current workplace?**
= Feels that there is very little chance of Promotion and salary increase.
- 18. Would you recommend your current employer to other male/female workers?**
= yes, recommended
- 19. Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the management to improve the work experience for male/female workers?**
= if the authority could arrange some seats for the employees and allow them to seat when there is no customer or rush, it would be helpful for them.

Interview 11

Name: Yaman Khalil

Age: 23

Job Description: Store assistant

Super Shop Name: Unimart

Location: Dhanmondi 9/A, dhaka

Interview Questionnaire:

1. For how long you are working in this shop?

= Working for 3 months.

2. Did you start your career in your current position?

= Yes, stated in their current position.

3. Is this your starting job?

= Second job.

4. Have you worked previously anywhere else? If yes, what is the difference between your previous job and current job?

= Yes, previously worked at Agora. Unimart has better environment than Agora.

5. What are your average working hours per day?

= 6days per week, 8hours per day, full duty 1 day per week which is 12 hours, monthly 4 days off

6. Why did you choose to work in a super shop instead of other places?

= To gain experience in sales, it gives good salary and easy to manage time as a student.

7. Do you receive any employee benefits? For example – employee discount etc.?

= No extra benefits are given.

8. How do you feel about the work environment and culture at the super shop?

= Friendly environment. Colleagues are very helpful and co-operative.

9. Are you satisfied with the pay and benefits provided by the super shop?

= Yes, satisfied with the salary.

10. Do you feel that your workload is manageable?

= Yes, workload is manageable. Never felt pressure.

11. Do you feel that your contributions to the super shop are valued and recognized?

= Yes, valued by authority.

12. Have you received any training or development opportunities from the super shop? If yes, what type of training? Can you please elaborate?

= Yes, they provided basic training on product knowledge, customer relationship, how to handle crisis or rude customers

13. Do you have any concerns? If yes, please give an example?

= No serious concern could be thought of.

14. Have you ever felt any sort of discrimination because of your gender at your workplace? If yes, can you please tell us in detail.

= Feels that female employees do not need to do heavy works. Male employees need to do all the heavy work. Moreover, female employees do not usually need to work extra hours but male employees need to work extra hours when needed.

15. Have you ever had to work overtime, and if so, were you compensated for it?

= Yes, had to work longer than their working hours during Ramadan and before Eid. Employees were promised to be compensated with bonus.

16. Have you been provided with proper safety equipment and training to ensure a safe working environment? Do you feel this is a safe working space?

= Most of the male employees are trained to use the fire extinguisher in case of emergency.

17. How do you feel about the opportunities for career growth and advancement at your current workplace?

= Feels that there is very little chance of Promotion and salary increase. But if one works hard for few years, they will get Promotion.

18. Would you recommend your current employer to other male/female workers?

= Yes, recommended to those who can work hard.

19. Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the management to improve the work experience for male/female workers?

= No feedback was given.

Interview 12

Name: Rabeya Akter

Age: 22

Job Description: Sales representative of Jewellery section

Super Shop Name: Grocery mart

Location : Dhanmondi 6, Dhaka

Interview Questionnaire:

1. For how long you are working in this shop?

= Working for 3 months.

2. **Did you start your career in your current position?**
= Yes, started in their current position.
3. **Is this your starting job?**
= Yes, first job.
4. **Have you worked previously anywhere else? If yes, what is the difference between your previous job and current job?**
= No previous work experience.
5. **What are your average working hours per day?**
= 6days per week, 8hours per day, full duty 1 day per week which is 12 hours, monthly 4 days off
6. **Why did you choose to work in a super shop instead of other places?**
= The salary is good, time is flexible, as student it is easy to manage time for study and work.
7. **Do you receive any employee benefits? For example – employee discount etc.?**
= Ifteri was provided during Ramadan. Nothing else.
8. **How do you feel about the work environment and culture at the super shop?**
= All the colleagues are helpful, co-operative. The superiors are helpful. The owner is humble, kind and understanding
9. **Are you satisfied with the pay and benefits provided by the super shop?**
= Yes, satisfied with everything.
10. **Do you feel that your workload is manageable?**
= Yes, target fill up manageable.
11. **Do you feel that your contributions to the super shop are valued and recognized?**
= yes, valued by the authority.
12. **Have you received any training or development opportunities from the super shop? If yes, what type of training? Can you please elaborate?**
= Most of the employees of grocery mart came from BRAC Center retail management training
13. **Do you have any concerns? If yes, please give an example?**
= Did not have any concern.
14. **Have you ever felt any sort of discrimination because of your gender at your workplace? If yes, can you please tell us in detail.**
= No, did not feel any discrimination while working because of their gender

15. Have you ever had to work overtime, and if so, were you compensated for it?

= If they work overtime, they are given bonus.

16. Have you been provided with proper safety equipment and training to ensure a safe working environment? Do you feel this is a safe working space?

= Yes, there is safety equipment in grocery store and she feels safe

17. How do you feel about the opportunities for career growth and advancement at your current workplace?

= Do not have much idea about career growth, but salary is increased based on work performance and experience

18. Would you recommend your current employer to other male/female workers?

= yes, will recommend others to work in Grocery Mart.

19. Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the management to improve the work experience for male/female workers?

= According to her, everything is perfect. Hence, did not provide any suggestion.

Interview 13

Name: Akhi

Age: 20

Job Description: Sales representative in the home décor section, works part-time

Super Shop Name: Grocery Mart

Location : Dhanmondi 6, Dhaka

Interview Questionnaire:

1. For how long you are working in this shop?

= Working for 3 months

2. Did you start your career in your current position?

= Yes, started as a sales representative

3. Is this your starting job?

= Yes, first job.

4. Have you worked previously anywhere else? If yes, what is the difference between your previous job and current job?

= No previous experience.

5. What are your average working hours per day?

= Part time working hours are 6 hours per day for 6 days per week.

6. **Why did you choose to work in a super shop instead of other places?**
= As she is still a student, easy to balance time between work and study
7. **Do you receive any employee benefits? For example – employee discount etc.?**
= Ifteri was provided during Ramadan. Nothing else.
8. **How do you feel about the work environment and culture at the super shop?**
= All the colleagues are helpful, co-operative. Never faced any problem.
9. **Are you satisfied with the pay and benefits provided by the super shop?**
= Yes, highly satisfied.
10. **Do you feel that your workload is manageable?**
= Yes, target fill up manageable
11. **Do you feel that your contributions to the super shop are valued and recognized?**
= Yes, valued by owner and management.
12. **Have you received any training or development opportunities from the super shop? If yes, what type of training? Can you please elaborate?**
= Yes, received training on product knowledge, customer relationship, how to handle crisis or rude customers from Brac's retail management training program
13. **Do you have any concerns? If yes, please give an example?**
= No serious concerns
14. **Have you ever felt any sort of discrimination because of your gender at your workplace? If yes, can you please tell us in detail.**
= No, did not feel any discrimination while working because of her gender.
15. **Have you ever had to work overtime, and if so, were you compensated for it?**
= Yes, they are paid for working extra hours
16. **Have you been provided with proper safety equipment and training to ensure a safe working environment? Do you feel this is a safe working space?**
= There is safety equipment and safe environment in Grocery Mart
17. **How do you feel about the opportunities for career growth and advancement at your current workplace?**
= Does not have much idea about career prospect in this sector
18. **Would you recommend your current employer to other male/female workers?**
= Yes, recommended
19. **Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the management to improve the work experience for male/female workers?**
= Everything is good. No suggestion.

Interview 14

Name: Hashi

Age: 20

Job Description: Sales representative in snacks section

Super Shop Name: Grocery Mart

Location: Dhanmondi 6, Dhaka

Interview Questionnaire:

- 1. For how long you are working in this shop?**
= Working for 3 months
- 2. Did you start your career in your current position?**
= Yes, stated in their current position
- 3. Is this your starting job?**
= First job,
- 4. Have you worked previously anywhere else? If yes, what is the difference between your previous job and current job?**
= No previous work experience
- 20. What are your average working hours per day?**
= 6days per week, 8hours per day, full duty 1 day per week which is 12 hours, monthly 4 days off
- 5. Why did you choose to work in a super shop instead of other places?**
= Good salary, safety and working hours are flexible
- 6. Do you receive any employee benefits? For example – employee discount etc.?**
= Ifteri was provided during Ramadan. Nothing else..
- 7. How do you feel about the work environment and culture at the super shop?**
= Friendly, positive and safe environment for everyone. All the colleagues are helpful, co-operative.
- 8. Are you satisfied with the pay and benefits provided by the super shop?**
= Yes, satisfied with the pay and benefits.
- 9. Do you feel that your workload is manageable?**
= Yes, target fill up manageable, not much workload.
- 10. Do you feel that your contributions to the super shop are valued and recognized?**
= Yes, contributions are valued by management.

11. Have you received any training or development opportunities from the super shop? If yes, what type of training? Can you please elaborate?

= Yes, they provided basic training on product knowledge, customer relationship, how to handle crisis or rude customers from Brac.

12. Do you have any concerns? If yes, please give an example?

= No serious concern was present.

13. Have you ever felt any sort of discrimination because of your gender at your workplace? If yes, can you please tell us in detail.

= No, did not feel any discrimination while working because of gender.

14. Have you ever had to work overtime, and if so, were you compensated for it?

= Yes, had to work longer than their working hours during Ramadan and before Eid. They were promised to be compensated with bonus.

15. Have you been provided with proper safety equipment and training to ensure a safe working environment? Do you feel this is a safe working space?

= She felt safe, there was safety equipment in Grocery Mart but didn't receive training on how to use them.

16. How do you feel about the opportunities for career growth and advancement at your current workplace?

= Feels that there is very little chance of Promotion.

17. Would you recommend your current employer to other male/female workers?

= Yes, recommended

18. Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the management to improve the work experience for male/female workers?

= No Suggestion or feedback was given.

Interview 15

Name: Sadat

Age: 23

Job Description: Sales representative in Fruits and Vegetable section

Super Shop Name: Grocery Mart

Location: Dhanmondi 6, Dhaka

Interview Questionnaire:

- 1. For how long you are working in this shop?**
= Working for 3 months
- 2. Did you start your career in your current position?**
= Yes, stated in their current position
- 3. Is this your starting job?**
= No, second job.
- 4. Have you worked previously anywhere else? If yes, what is the difference between your previous job and current job?**
= Previously worked in a clothing store. The working hours were longer.
- 5. What are your average working hours per day?**
= 6days per week, 8hours per day, full duty 1 day per week which is 12 hours, monthly 4 days off
- 6. Why did you choose to work in a super shop instead of other places?**
= To gain experience in sales, it gives good salary and easy to manage time as a student.
- 7. Do you receive any employee benefits? For example – employee discount etc.?**
= Ifter was provided during Ramadan. They get break or off days whenever needed.
- 8. How do you feel about the work environment and culture at the super shop?**
= Friendly environment. Colleagues are very helpful and co-operative.
- 9. Are you satisfied with the pay and benefits provided by the super shop?**
= Yes, satisfied with everything.
- 10. Do you feel that your workload is manageable?**
= Yes, workload is manageable. Never felt pressure.
- 11. Do you feel that your contributions to the super shop are valued and recognized?**
= Yes, valued by seniors and owner.
- 12. Have you received any training or development opportunities from the super shop? If yes, what type of training? Can you please elaborate?**
= Yes, they provided basic training on product knowledge, customer relationship, how to handle crisis or rude customers from Brac training center
- 13. Do you have any concerns? If yes, please give an example?**
= Did not have any serious concern.

14. Have you ever felt any sort of discrimination because of your gender at your workplace? If yes, can you please tell us in detail.

= Feels that female employees do not need to do heavy works. Male employees need to do all the heavy work. Moreover, female employees do not usually need to work extra hours but male employees need to work extra hours when needed.

15. Have you ever had to work overtime, and if so, were you compensated for it?

= Yes, had to work longer than their working hours during Ramadan and before Eid. Employees were promised to be compensated with bonus.

16. Have you been provided with proper safety equipment and training to ensure a safe working environment? Do you feel this is a safe working space?

= Most of the male employees are trained to use the fire extinguisher in case of emergency.

17. How do you feel about the opportunities for career growth and advancement at your current workplace?

= Feels that there is very little chance of Promotion and salary increase. But if one works hard for few years, they will get Promotion.

18. Would you recommend your current employer to other male/female workers?

= Yes, recommended to those who can work hard.

19. Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the management to improve the work experience for male/female workers?

= Did not give any feedback.