

Gen Z's Employment Expectations

An Exploratory Study in Bangladesh



**Fahmida Khatun
Syed Yusuf Saadat
Afrin Mahbub
Maesha Rashedin Joita
Mohammad Abu Tayeb Taki**



সেন্টার ফর পলিসি ডায়ালগ (সিপিডি)
Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

**FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG**
FES Bangladesh

Gen Z's
Employment
Expectations
An Exploratory Study in Bangladesh

GEN Z's EMPLOYMENT EXPECTATIONS

An Exploratory Study in Bangladesh

Fahmida Khatun
Syed Yusuf Saadat
Afrin Mahbub
Maesha Rashedin Joita
Mohammad Abu Tayeb Taki



সেন্টার ফর পলিসি ডায়ালগ (সিপিডি)
Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)



Published in September 2024 by

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

House 40/C, Road 11 (new)

Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1209, Bangladesh

Telephone: (+88 02) 55001185, 58156983

Fax: (+88 02) 48110414

E-mail: info@cpd.org.bd

Website: www.cpd.org.bd

Copyright © Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the CPD or the FES Bangladesh Office.

Cover Design

Avra Bhattacharjee

Copyediting

HM Al Imran Khan

Page lay-out and typesetting

Md Shaiful Hassan

Citation: Khatun, F, Saadat, S. Y., Mahbub, A., Joita, M. R., & Taki, M. A. T. T. (2024). *Gen Z's Employment Expectations: An Exploratory Study in Bangladesh*. Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Bangladesh.

Abstract

This study delves into the challenges faced by unemployed youth in Bangladesh, revealing a significant disparity between the expectations of young graduates and the realities of the labour market. The findings, based on a survey of both unemployed and employed youth, highlight key areas of mismatch, such as salary, required skills, working hours, and working conditions. Unemployed youth prioritise prior experience, while employers value skills like writing and communication. A prevailing belief among both employed and unemployed youth is that foreign degrees hold more value than local ones. Many young people in Bangladesh were found to work more than expected hours for very low pay, and struggle to find internships that meet their needs. The paper recommends several actions to bridge this gap, including improved career counselling, collaboration between educational institutions and employers, and policy changes to promote work-life balance and encourage daycare facilities in workplaces. Addressing these misalignments can lead to a more efficient job market that empowers young people and strengthens businesses in Bangladesh.

Acknowledgements

This research has been conducted by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka. This study is part of CPD's 'Expectation Mismatch and Youth Employment in Bangladesh' programme implemented in collaboration with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Bangladesh.

The team would like to register its sincere thanks to the officials from several institutions and to the graduates and students from various universities who participated in the surveys which were conducted as part of this study.

Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Acronyms</i>	<i>xi</i>
1. Introduction	1
2. Literature Review	2
2.1 What are the expectations of youth worldwide?	
2.2 Social and economic factors shape expectations	
2.3 The emergence of a new generation, economy, and expectations	
2.4 What do Bangladeshi youths expect from their future workplace?	
3. Methodology	6
4. Findings	6
4.1 Survey findings from employed participants	
4.2 Survey findings from unemployed participants	
4.3 Expectations gap	
5. Conclusions and Recommendations	23
References	25

List of Table and Figures

Table 1:	Expectations Mismatch in Attributes that Employers Look For	21
Figure 1:	Satisfaction with Current Wage	8
Figure 2:	Level of Education of the Respondents and Their Parents	10
Figure 3:	Mother's Education and the Respondent's Education	10
Figure 4:	The Hierarchy Level of the Position that Respondents Tried to Apply for was Categorised by Expected Salary	11
Figure 5:	Number of Years Respondents Expect to Stay with an Organisation	12
Figure 6:	Expectations Mismatch in Employment Benefits Provided by an Organisation	15
Figure 7:	Expectations Mismatch in the Work Environment in an Organisation	16
Figure 8:	Expectations Mismatch in Hours of Labour	18
Figure 9:	Expectations Mismatch in Salary at Entry-level Positions	18
Figure 10:	Expectations Mismatch in Salary at a Mid-Tier or Executive Level	19
Figure 11:	Expectations Mismatch in Salary at Entry-level Positions for Female Youth	20
Figure 12:	Expectations Mismatch in Salary at Entry-level Positions for Male Youth	21
Figure 13:	Perceived Importance of Networking to Attain Employment	22
Figure 14:	Perceived Importance of a Foreign Degree to Attain Employment	23

Acronyms

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
Gen Z	Generation Z
ILO	International Labour Organization
LDC	Least Developed Country
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NU	National University
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal

1. INTRODUCTION

After 50 years of independence, Bangladesh is poised to begin its new development journey. At this juncture, there appears to be a rough road ahead for the country due to the health hazards of diseases such as COVID-19, the environmental risks of the climate change crisis, the threat of disruptive technology of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), and the challenges associated with graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) group. Hence, it is now, more than ever before, that Bangladesh urgently needs to fully utilise the large pools of young workers entering its labour market each year so that an efficient, productive, and skilled workforce may guide the country forward. However, the labour market of Bangladesh is presently dominated by informality and distorted by differential returns from public versus private employment. However, it is unclear whether the realities of the labour market fulfil the Bangladeshi youth's aspirations of decent work. Expectations mismatch can be important in explaining the incidence and duration of youth unemployment in Bangladesh.

This research aims to investigate whether the prevailing conditions in the labour market are meeting the expectations of the youth labour force regarding wages and job characteristics and to uncover any existing frictions affecting the labour market's capacity to achieve full employment.

The Labour Force Survey 2022 of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) reveals that while the national unemployment rate is 3.53 per cent, the youth unemployment rate is as high as 8 per cent (BBS, 2023). The share of unemployed youth in total unemployment is 83.2 per cent (BBS, 2023). Informal employment as a share of total employment was 84.9 per cent in 2022 (BBS, 2023). Thus, it appears that the ability of the labour market to generate employment opportunities, specifically decent employment opportunities, is still quite limited. When salaries of government officials were increased through the National Pay Scale Amendment 2015 (MoF, 2017), the private sector employers could not catch up immediately. This distorted the labour market since some public sector jobs now have more perks, privileges, and higher pay than some private sector jobs. Consequently, many young job seekers became determined, if not desperate, to find a public sector job. Meanwhile, there appears to be a growing trend of university graduates choosing to work in informal jobs that are entirely unregulated and often associated with long working hours, low pay, inadequate worker rights, and lack of employment benefits. Bangladesh is now the second largest supplier of online labour in the world, with a 16 per cent share of the global online workforce (Kässi & Lehdonvirta, 2018).

Given the above, it is important to understand if the labour market is meeting the expectations of young job seekers in terms of providing them with adequate income and other perks. Such research can reveal valuable insights regarding existing frictions in the labour market, which may be important evidence for designing appropriate policy interventions or public awareness campaigns. This may be conducive towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets 8.5 (achieve full employment) and 8.6 (reduce youth Not in Education, Employment, or Training) (UN, 2024).

Bangladesh is now showing signs of a youth bulge, which means that it is well-poised to reap the benefits of a demographic dividend if it can capitalise on the potential of its vast young labour force. Conventionally, the entry point for the discourse on youth unemployment has been education. Research has shown that each additional year of schooling increases the probability of entering Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) status by 1.16 per cent for male youth and 1.07 per cent for female youth (Khatun & Saadat, 2020). However, research findings have also indicated that the skills gap alone cannot explain the level of youth unemployment in the labour market of Bangladesh (Khatun F. et al., 2022). Studies have shown that the National Pay Scale Amendment 2015 has significantly influenced young people's career preferences and created a strong preference for government jobs among Bangladeshi youth (ILO, 2016) (Matin et al., 2018). The proposed study aims to fill the gap in the literature by exploring how a mismatch of expectations may affect youth employment in Bangladesh.

The proposed study is designed to tackle the following key research questions:

- i) What are the job expectations of young people from diverse demographic backgrounds regarding pay, benefits, status, working conditions, working hours, type of work, job security, career advancement, co-workers, and supervisors?
- ii) Is there a mismatch between the expected and market wage rates in Bangladesh's labour market?
- iii) Is there any gap between the expectations of young job seekers regarding the career prospects in their field of education and the actual employment scenario in Bangladesh's labour market?
- iv) Is there any mismatch between the expectations of young job seekers regarding the nature or characteristics of jobs and the actual nature or characteristics of jobs?

It is anticipated that the proposed study will lead to two research outcomes:

- i) Improved understanding of the frictions affecting Bangladesh's labour market efficiency.
- ii) Empirical evidence of the expectations mismatch in Bangladesh's labour market.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 examines past literature on this topic, Section 3 describes the methodology, Section 4 summarises the findings, and Section 5 presents the concluding remarks and recommendations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Over time, numerous studies have provided evidence of the existence of discrepancies between expected and actual wage and job characteristics amongst the youth all over the world. Studies from 1978 showed a disparity between the job expectations of youth and the availability of jobs in Sri Lanka (Ranasinghe, 1978). Similar results were observed regarding expectations concerning work environment, as gaps were found between the expected and actual experiences of fresh Malaysian graduates in studies conducted in 2011 (Jusoh et al., 2011) as well as in 2015 (Islam et al., 2015). A study in 2017 exploring the expectations of relevant stakeholders in the engineering field in Malaysia found a mismatch of expectations in terms of skills required

(Tan et al., 2017). A longitudinal survey of graduates in Mozambique from its six largest universities found significant gaps in expected and actual first wage (Jones et al., 2020). Such findings indicate the existence of an expectations mismatch between youth expectations and labour market realities over the years worldwide. To understand this gap, it is first required to comprehend the expectations of youth regarding their future jobs.

2.1 What are the expectations of youth worldwide?

According to a survey, Serbian young people aged between 16 and 30 years entering the labour market expect their personal lives to remain unaffected by a job and expect safe working conditions (Pavlović et al., 2016). A 2018 study by Shah and Monahan comparing student responses from Singapore and Spain found similarities and differences between students in terms of where they would like to work, how they value their work, the amount of money they want to make in their first job, and time spent on the job. It was found that students desired to stay in their first job for at least six years (Shah & Monahan, 2018). It was seen that Spanish students aimed to join their family businesses, whereas Singaporean respondents preferred government work. While both Spanish and Singaporean students responded positively to earning higher wages relative to having complete autonomy, Spanish students showed more significant concerns about being involved with meaningful work than money. Spanish students also attributed greater importance to working for 'green' companies than Singaporean students (Shah & Monahan, 2018). In another study, unemployed Malaysian youths were also found to include basic wage and work-life balance among the four most crucial work characteristics (Jamil & Zakaria, 2019).

Various studies have found noteworthy differences between men and women regarding expected wages. It has been observed that male students tend to expect higher starting incomes on average. (Briel et al., 2022). A large-scale study on students and recent graduates in Germany revealed gender differences in expected wages, where women's expectations for wages even before entering the labour market were much lower than men's (Kiessling et al., 2019). For instance, the study found an expectation gap of 10.45 per cent between men and women among its sample of economics majors (Kiessling et al., 2019). Despite expectation gaps between men and women in the form of overestimating their pay, studies have found that females tend to expect lower wages than men in the labour market (Betts, 1996). Data also revealed that this gap in wage expectations and the gender gap in actual wages among recent graduates are almost identical (Kiessling et al., 2019).

2.2 Social and economic factors shape expectations

Knowledge regarding the formation of aspirations and existing youth expectations is crucial to ensure that the labour market is well prepared to work towards realising full employment. Youth expectations regarding employment play an essential role in shaping their attitude and feelings, contributing to the expectations between management and workers regarding the other, known as the psychological contract (Schroth, 2019). New employees must have realistic expectations regarding their future jobs, which is key in reducing turnover, as prospective employees will be aware of both positive and negative aspects (Schroth, 2019).

A study showed that more accurate expectations were formed when post-training job opportunities were made available to Indian vocational trainees—leading to better placement results (Chakravorty et al., 2021). Expectations regarding wages will also lead a person to harbour a reservation wage, resulting in them rejecting job offers that call for a wage less than their reservation amount (Ehrenberg & Smith, 2018). Providing better information can lead to improved outcomes by mitigating unrealistic expectations. Therefore, it is important to recognise how these expectations are formed.

Youth education can impact their employment expectations (Bandara, 2018), however, youth who are high achievers do not necessarily aim high, especially those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds (Mann et al., 2020). A report published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2020 found that amongst high performers in mathematics or science, according to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) exams of 2018, boys were far more likely than girls to indicate a desire to work in the fields of science or engineering (Mann et al., 2020). The opposite was observed for careers that are health related. Students from rural locations, although expected by education literature to showcase lower expectations and aspirations, have displayed the opposite. A New Zealand study found that the youth of the small town of Kawerau have higher and more positive aspirations than metropolitan youths. This is because these youth choose to pursue further education as opposed to job search due to local unemployment, leading to higher expectations linked to additional schooling (Morrison & Loeber, 2004).

Several factors, including personal desires, beliefs regarding available opportunities, role models, and peer structure, can further influence youth aspirations (Gardiner et al., 2021). Studies have shown that culture also shapes the aspirations of youth. Within a collectivist culture, family expectations were found to be the chief influence on youth, and similarity with parents' careers helped increase confidence, whereas, in individualistic settings, youth were more independent in career decision-making as personal interest played the primary factor (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018). Expectations after the COVID-19 pandemic have changed the views of the desired workplace environment for youth, as shown by research (Laskowska & Laskowski, 2021). Interviews with Polish full-time and part-time university students found that youth desire jobs with decent wages and good work-life balance to pursue their hobbies in the post-pandemic world (Laskowska & Laskowski, 2021). A similar hopeful attitude that conditions will improve remains among Bhutanese youth. However, their situation leaned more towards disillusionment regarding the labour market (Norbu, 2021). Most youth in Bhutan were not confident about securing full-time employment and were uncertain about their future employers. Findings from Bhutan also showed that there may exist a gap between the education received by students and the requirements of the job market (Norbu, 2021).

2.3 The emergence of a new generation, economy, and expectations

The cohort of youth, Generation Z (Gen Z), that will be entering the labour market are described as the most educated, ethnically and racially diverse generation (Parker & Igielnik, 2020). They share many characteristics with the Millennial Generation, including identical views on climate change, politics, gender and family (Parker et al., 2019). However, Gen Zs

also bring new behaviours that necessitate adaptation. For instance, their upbringing in more affluent circumstances has led to less labour market experience, potentially resulting in low commitment and high turnover due to unrealistic work expectations. This underscores the need for employers to align their strategies with the unique needs of this generation (Schroth, 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to grasp Gen Z's expectations to bridge the gap between their aspirations and the realities of the labour market.

Gen Zs expect close relationships with their workplace leaders and co-workers while working as part of productive teams. Besides expecting work-life balance, learning is vital to their career aspirations (Barhate & Dirani, 2022). A study concerning Vietnamese Gen Zs shows that more consideration goes towards the workplace's intangible characteristics, for instance, the office atmosphere (Ngoc et al., 2022). Youth nowadays look for a creative and fun place to work. They also expect the work culture to provide fair treatment without conforming to the 'norms', coupled with the outlook of changing jobs within three to five years (Grant et al., 2021). Romanian Gen Zs have shown a constant need for development, aspiration for secure employment and generous pay, and expectations to be mentored in the workplace (Iorgulescu, 2016). These expectations have led many youths to show interest in the gig economy, even being optimistic about considering it as their primary source of income (Mishra et al., 2018). In terms of both the use of the service and labour supply, youth were found to be at the forefront of gig work (Caro et al., 2021). Their interest in gig work seems to be driven by work-hour flexibility, more autonomy, and variety of work—however, the perceived lack of career progression and personal growth opportunities, as well as job insecurity, tends to diminish their interest (Mishra et al., 2018).

2.4 What do Bangladeshi youths expect from their future workplace?

A study from 1980 found that the expectations amongst Bangladeshi graduates exacerbate the existing structural imbalance in the graduate labour market (Islam R. , 1980). Students were found to have unrealistic expectations regarding wages and job characteristics, resulting in many students choosing specialisations that are not in particular demand within the labour market (Islam R. , 1980). Recent studies on employment outcomes of National University (NU) graduates of Bangladesh also showed general long periods of unemployment (BIDS, 2021). Another study on Bangladeshi university graduates revealed that among youths out of the job market, many received but rejected a job offer due to low pay (BIDS, 2018). The study also found that graduates chose their current job because they felt it was the 'best fit' with their educational background, followed by 'good pay', while working conditions, good location, and the institute's reputation were also cited (BIDS, 2018). It was also observed that private university graduates obtain more private-sector jobs, particularly in multinational companies. In contrast, public university graduates get more public-sector jobs than graduates from private universities (BIDS, 2018).

Public sector jobs have increased in desirability since the salary scale was revised in 2015 (Rahman & Al-Hasan, 2018). Now, in addition to higher pay, jobs in the public sector come with non-wage benefits comparable to those in the private sector. These non-monetary reasons caused public sector jobs to become more dominant (Islam & Hasan, 2020). Because low-paid

private jobs did not keep up in response to the pay scale revision for the public sector, entry-level job seekers were more attracted to public-sector jobs (Rahman & Al-Hasan, 2018). Although more people were going for public sector jobs, the productivity of public sector employees did not increase. An earlier study showed that the productivity of public sector employees in Bangladesh was lower compared to that of the private sector employees in 2008-09 (Tumpa & Ferdus, 2017).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out using primary data collected through two surveys: i) a survey of 250 youth employed in formal jobs in the private sector of Bangladesh and ii) a survey of 250 unemployed youth currently studying at university or graduated from university within the last 12 months. For both surveys, youth was defined as individuals between the ages of 18 to 35 years old.

In the survey of employed youth, university graduates working in formal private sector jobs in various fields were interviewed to understand the nature or characteristics of their careers and the prevailing wage rate in the market. Employed youth were also asked about the recruitment practices in their respective organisations to understand how many fresh university graduates were being recruited and from which disciplines. Employed youth were selected from companies such as, among other things, pharmaceutical companies, hotels and resorts, telecommunications companies, banks, real estate development companies, architectural and engineering firms, research organisations, development sector organisations, higher education institutes, hospitals, law firms, and accounting and auditing firms. Owing to the time and resource constraints, a flexible convenience sampling strategy was used to obtain responses from as many different sectors as possible.

In the survey of unemployed youth, university students and recent graduates were interviewed to understand their expectations regarding the nature or characteristics of jobs and their reservation wage. Additionally, unemployed youth were asked about their expectations regarding their employment prospects in their respective fields of study. The unemployed youth were selected from both public and private universities in Bangladesh.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Survey findings from employed participants

A total of 250 employed youths were surveyed as part of this study, of which about 72 per cent of the respondents were male and nearly 28 per cent were females. The number of people working for an enterprise, or an organisation was around 89 per cent. In comparison, 5.2 per cent identified as self-employed, and 5.6 per cent worked for their own organisation.

Most respondents (92 per cent) were employed in the private sector, and only 8 per cent responded that they were in the public sector. The survey respondents were found to be mainly employed as full-time employees, with about 77 per cent identifying as such. Others were employed part-time, contractually, or in a project-based manner. When asked about the ratio of female to male employees within their organisation, about 36 per cent of the employed youth asserted that, on average, there are significantly more male employees. Only 5.2 per cent of the employed youth stated that their organisations employ considerably more females than males.

About 50 per cent of the survey participants were entry-level employees, while around 37 per cent were from mid-tier or executive-level positions. Only about 12 per cent were identified as being in the managerial or top-level management position. Most individuals (63.6 per cent) stated that they had one to four dependent members in their family. On the opposite end of the spectrum, 26 per cent indicated that they had no dependent members in their family, while about 10 per cent stated they have more than four dependent members. Only about 36 per cent of the respondents were the primary earning members of their family.

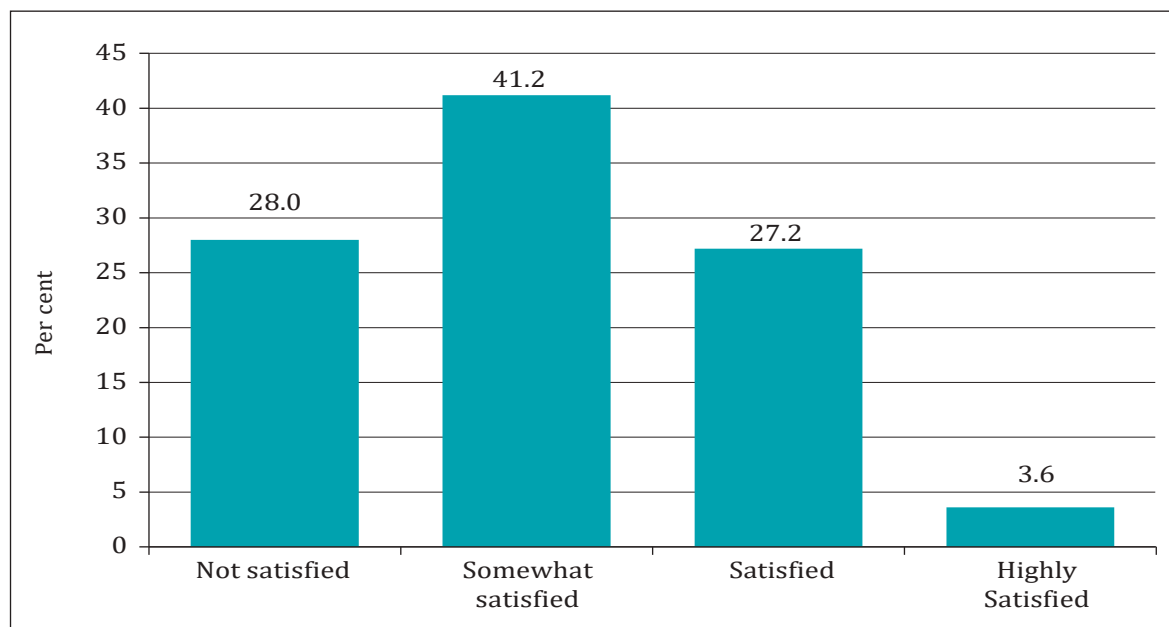
Around 29 per cent of the survey participants stated they had been with their organisations for less than six months, while 32 per cent had been working at their current organisation for six months to 1.5 years, followed by nearly 16 per cent who stated they had been working at their current workplace for 1.5 to 2.5 years. Additionally, around 7 per cent responded that they had been working for 2.5 to 3.5 years at their organisation, and about 6 per cent answered that they had been with their organisation for 3.5 to 4.5 years. Only 10 per cent stated that they had been with their organisation for more than 4.5 years.

However, nearly 38 per cent of the respondents stated that, on average, employees are usually retained for one to three years in their respective organisations, while 22 per cent said that employees are retained for three to five years. Roughly 20 per cent of the participants said that employees are usually retained for six months to one year, whereas some (about 17 per cent) stated that employees stay with their organisations for more than five years. Only about 3 per cent responded that an average employee remained in their organisation for less than six months. Most of this survey's respondents worked at an organisation with more than 300 employees, followed by organisations with 31 to 120 employees. Forty-three people responded their organisations employed 15 employees at most. The lowest number of people, 24, stated they worked for an organisation with 121 to 300 employees.

4.1.1 Work satisfaction

When asked how satisfied they were with the training opportunities offered by their company, most respondents stated that training helped them develop efficiency and new skills, while the second-most frequent response was that their organisation only provided as much training as needed to complete their tasks. This was followed by responses stating that their organisation offered no training. When asked about their relationship with their colleagues, the most frequent responses included helpful colleagues who address their questions or concerns, assisting when required, and understanding them well. Answers that indicated unhelpfulness and lack of good understanding with colleagues were chosen less frequently. As for their relationship

Figure 1: Satisfaction with Current Wage



Source: Author's illustration based on data from the survey conducted as part of this study.

with their supervisors, the survey participants most frequently stated that their supervisor was cooperative and open to suggestions.

When asked if they were satisfied with their current wage, about 41 per cent of the respondents indicated they were somewhat satisfied, while 28 per cent said they were not, as shown in Figure 1. Only about 27 per cent responded that they were satisfied, and about 4 per cent said they were delighted. Still, 56 per cent stated they were somewhat happy with their jobs. However, around 51 per cent responded with affirmation when asked if they were doing the type of job they wanted, while about 49 per cent replied in the negative.

When asked if they were looking for other employment opportunities, 82 per cent responded with a yes. For the reason behind looking for a new job, the respondents' frequency was highest for a better salary followed by a better work-life balance. The next closest reason was better alignment with their skills and goals. This was followed by better job responsibilities and work environment, respectively.

When asked why employees were leaving the organisation, respondents most frequently cited wanting to switch job sectors, followed by a delay in promotion, no prospect of growth, and low wages with little to no increments offered. Other frequent answers included a lack of work-life balance, monotonous work, non-flexible or extended working hours, and work that did not match their qualifications.

4.1.2 Recruitment process

According to the survey respondents, their organisations' recruitment processes mainly included interviews, written examination, oral examination by the employer, and psychometric tests. About 52 per cent of the respondents stated that their organisations offered paid internships. In comparison, only 12 per cent responded that they do not pay any salary to interns, and nearly 36 per cent stated that they do not hire interns. The responses also found that organisations mainly retained interns based on performance, although 16 per cent said their organisation did not have any policy to retain the interns.

When asked if their organisation had any dedicated programme for fresh graduates, about 42 per cent affirmed, while around 58 per cent responded negatively. Regarding the frequency of hiring fresh graduates by their organisation, roughly 58 per cent stated their organisation always preferred fresh graduates for starting positions. However, about 42 per cent said their organisation rarely hired fresh graduates for any position as they preferred someone with at least some years of experience.

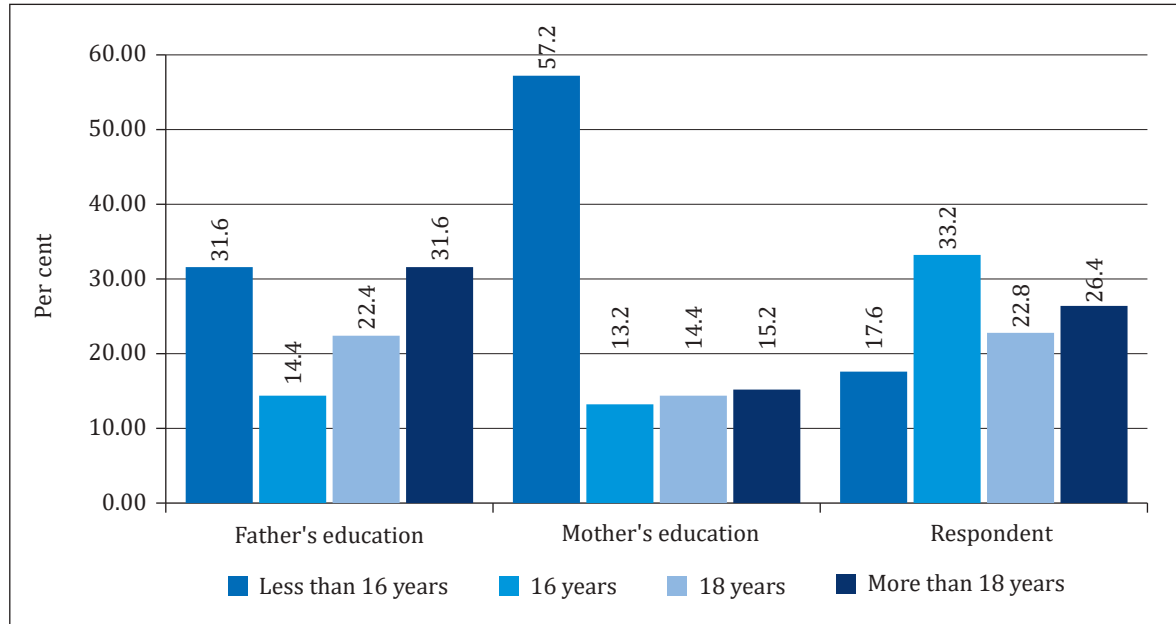
4.2 Survey findings from unemployed participants

Of the 250 respondents, 66 per cent males and 34 per cent females participated in the survey. About 64 per cent of the respondents stated they were not previously employed, while about 36 per cent stated they were. Likewise, around 30 per cent stated they had previously left a job, while about 70 per cent said they did not. Those who did leave frequently cited reasons such as monotonous work followed by delay in salary payment and work not matching their level of qualifications, among other reasons.

Around 33 per cent of the survey respondents stated they had 16 years of education, nearly 26 per cent had received more than 18 years, about 23 per cent had 18 years of education, and around 18 per cent had less than 16 years of education. Most survey participants (about 92.4 per cent) belonged to the National Curriculum, while 5.6 per cent stated that they studied under the British Curriculum (Edexcel/Cambridge). Correspondingly, most of the respondents' medium of education was Bangla, while others belonged to English medium (British Curriculum) and English version (of the National Curriculum).

As depicted in Figure 2, it can be observed that there is an equal proportion of fathers within the sample, with the highest and the lowest level of education. In the sample, the fathers' education level at 16 and 18 years is 14 and 22 per cent, respectively. So, it is safe to conclude that the respondents in the survey mostly have educated fathers. In contrast, the mother's education level is skewed to the right, showing that, on average, the respondents have a lower proportion of highly educated mothers. More than half of the mothers have less than 16 years of education. The respondents are mostly educated, with only 18 per cent without a degree or less than 16 years of education.

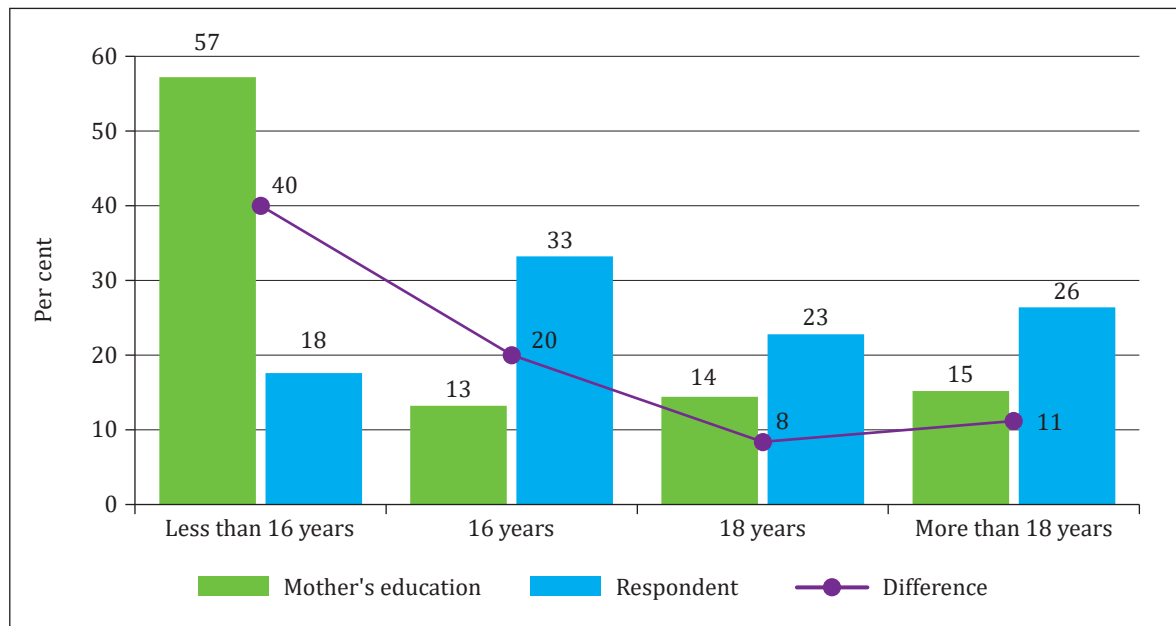
Figure 2: Level of Education of the Respondents and Their Parents



Source: Author's illustration based on data from the survey conducted as part of this study.

Figure 3 compares the trend between the level of education for the respondents and their mothers, depicting that 57 per cent of the mothers and 18 per cent of the respondents have less than 16 years of education. By further disaggregating the quartile data of 'Less than 16 years' of maternal education, 80 per cent of the respondents whose mothers had less than 16 years of

Figure 3: Mother's Education and the Respondent's Education



Source: Author's illustration based on data from the survey conducted as part of this study.

schooling had attained at least a diploma. Consequently, 14 per cent of the mothers and 23 per cent of the respondents have 18 years of education.

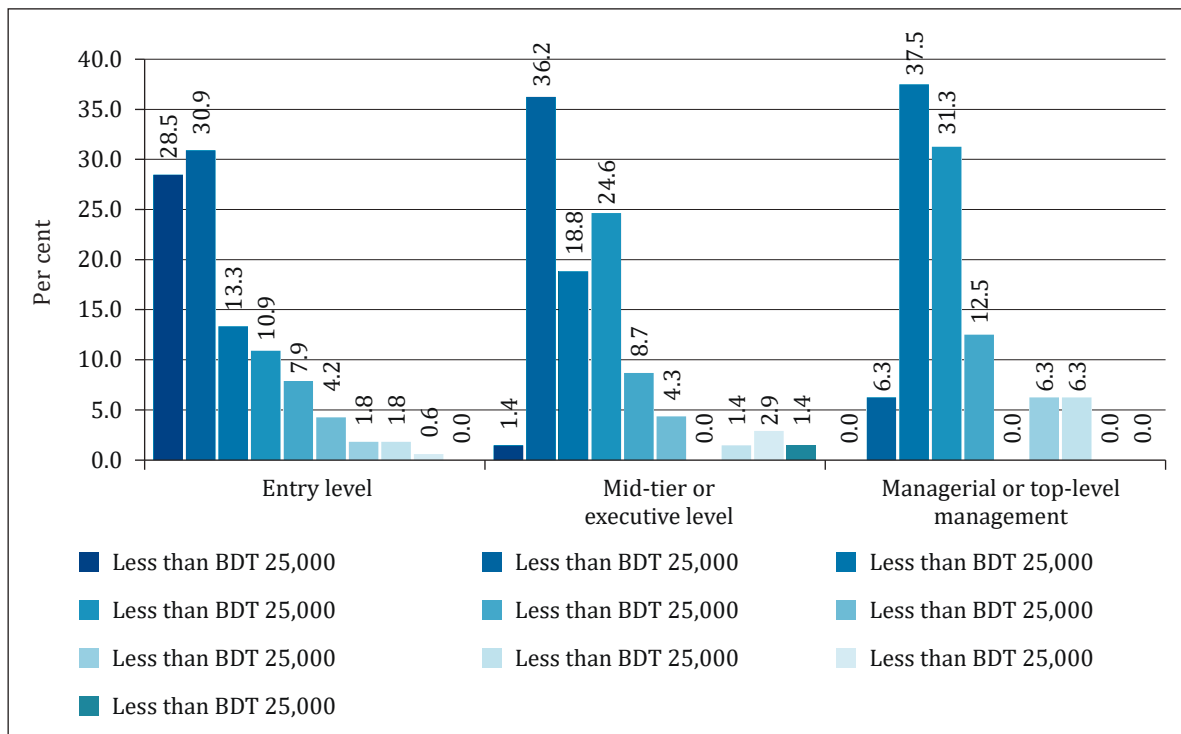
Of all the respondents, 143 (57 per cent) mothers have attained less than 16 years of education, while the majority (30 per cent) have more than 18 years of education. While acknowledging the limitations of the exploratory or non-experimental study, it can be loosely generalised that most mothers in the sample lacking a formal degree had children with a higher level of education, as seen by the respondents in this survey.

Adjoining the gaps, as illustrated in Figure 3, shows that there is an inverse relationship. It may be qualitatively argued that less educated mothers focus more on their children’s need for higher education via various means, such as improving the home environment’s suitability for schooling (Magnuson, 2007). However, showing a causal effect of maternal education on children’s educational attainment is beyond this non-experimental study’s scope.

It was observed that 66 per cent of the respondents applied for entry-level positions, while roughly 28 per cent applied to mid-level positions, and around 6 per cent applied for top-level positions. This is consistent with the demography of our sample size, which mainly surveyed recent graduates or final-year university students.

Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of the expected salary based on the hierarchy level of positions in the jobs that respondents had applied to in the past month. The figure shows

Figure 4: The Hierarchy Level of the Position that Respondents Tried to Apply for was Categorized by Expected Salary



Source: Author’s illustration based on data from the survey conducted as part of this study.

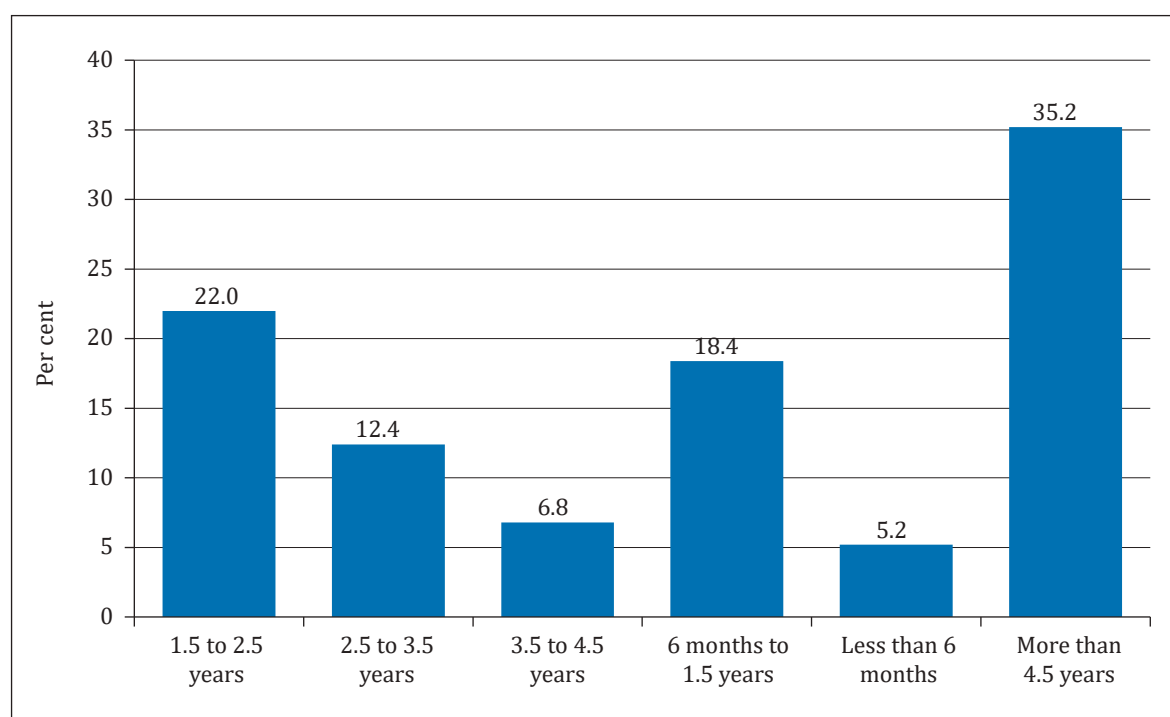
respondents who applied for an entry-level position mainly (31 per cent) expected to receive a salary from BDT 25,000 to BDT 35,000. It is also seen that around 60 per cent of the respondents who applied for entry-level positions had expectations of a wage of no more than BDT 35,000. Thus, the distribution of expected salary for entry-level positions looks skewed to the right.

Among the respondents who applied for a mid-tier or executive-level position last month, the majority (36 per cent) had salary expectations within the range of BDT 25,000 to BDT 35,000, and almost no one expected a salary of less than BDT 25,000. However, around 44 per cent of the respondents who applied for the mid-tier position expected their salary to be in BDT 36,000 to BDT 50,000 range. Hence, 75 per cent of the respondents who applied for mid-tier or executive-level positions in the last month expected no more than BDT 50,000 for this designated position.

No one expected a salary of less than BDT 25,000 for managerial or top-level management positions. A total of 69 per cent of the respondents who applied for managerial or top-level management positions in the last month expected a salary in the range of BDT 36,000 to BDT 50,000.

Figure 5 presents the number of years that respondents expected to stay with an organisation. It shows that about 35 per cent of the respondents stated that they would stay more than 4.5 years, while 22 per cent said 1.5 to 2.5 years. Only about 5 per cent of the respondents stated that they would stay less than six months with an organisation.

Figure 5: Number of Years Respondents Expect to Stay with an Organisation



Source: Author's illustration based on data from the survey conducted as part of this study.

The survey found that 44 per cent of the respondents were looking for an internship in the past month. It was further found from their responses that the reason was that many wanted to gain experience, as they believed that prior experience was required to get a job. Other reasons ranged from enjoying learning and getting practical know-how, increasing efficiency, and earning money. Some respondents stated that an internship was required to obtain their educational degree or that it added to their resume. An internship benefited future job and career prospects, allowed them to build personal networks, and helped them learn more about the job. Some survey participants were current students yet to graduate and preferred internships over jobs for time flexibility, commute, etc. Additionally, students about to graduate were looking for internships before getting into a more full-time position. Some respondents were looking for internships because they could not find a job, while one felt they were not suited to a full-time job, and another wanted to establish their own company.

Those not looking for an internship cited reasons including wanting a full-time job, having already completed an internship, or being previously employed and having prior experience. Some stated internships had no use and did not like them, or they wanted to pursue jobs in sectors that did not require internship experience. Some said that there were few internship opportunities in their industry. Other participants were not actively looking because they were busy with their current degrees or academics, cited less pay, and lacked information. Some did not find a suitable place to apply, did not find any good offer yet, had tried earlier but not in the last month, wanted to be employed on a contractual basis, or could not because of family pressure or disability. Some respondents also stated that most organisations do not provide internship opportunities for students without bachelor's degrees.

When asked about the type of employment they were looking for, 68 per cent of the respondents wanted full-time employment. This is because they wanted to start a career, preferred formal jobs, job security and wages, and other facilities or benefits such as a pension, and perceived full-time jobs as having better prospects. Some respondents felt that a full-time job would give them time to focus on developing skills and achieving goals. Some stated that working in a specific job sector required working full-time. Others noted that it was to support their family or themselves, be part of an organisation, have a stable environment, or learn and gain skills.

Around 26 per cent of the respondents were looking for part-time employment. Their reasons were that they were pursuing their studies and did not have the required experience or the time. Other reasons included working for money, wanting to attain skills and experience the work life, or preferring part-time or freelancing work for flexible work hours and spending time with family. One participant responded that being a female university student would make working in an office challenging. Others wanted to work part-time to make time to prepare for exams for higher studies or apply to specific jobs.

About 6 per cent wanted to be hired on a contractual basis. Their reasons ranged from enjoying a decent wage and a job position, preferring personal growth, gaining experience from different jobs, building a network, increasing skills, or going abroad. Some students wanted part-time contractual work, while other participants perceived it as a secure workplace. Some respondents stated contract-based work would provide more opportunities to explore different

organisations, sectors, and work environments. Some participants also said their specific field required work on a contractual basis.

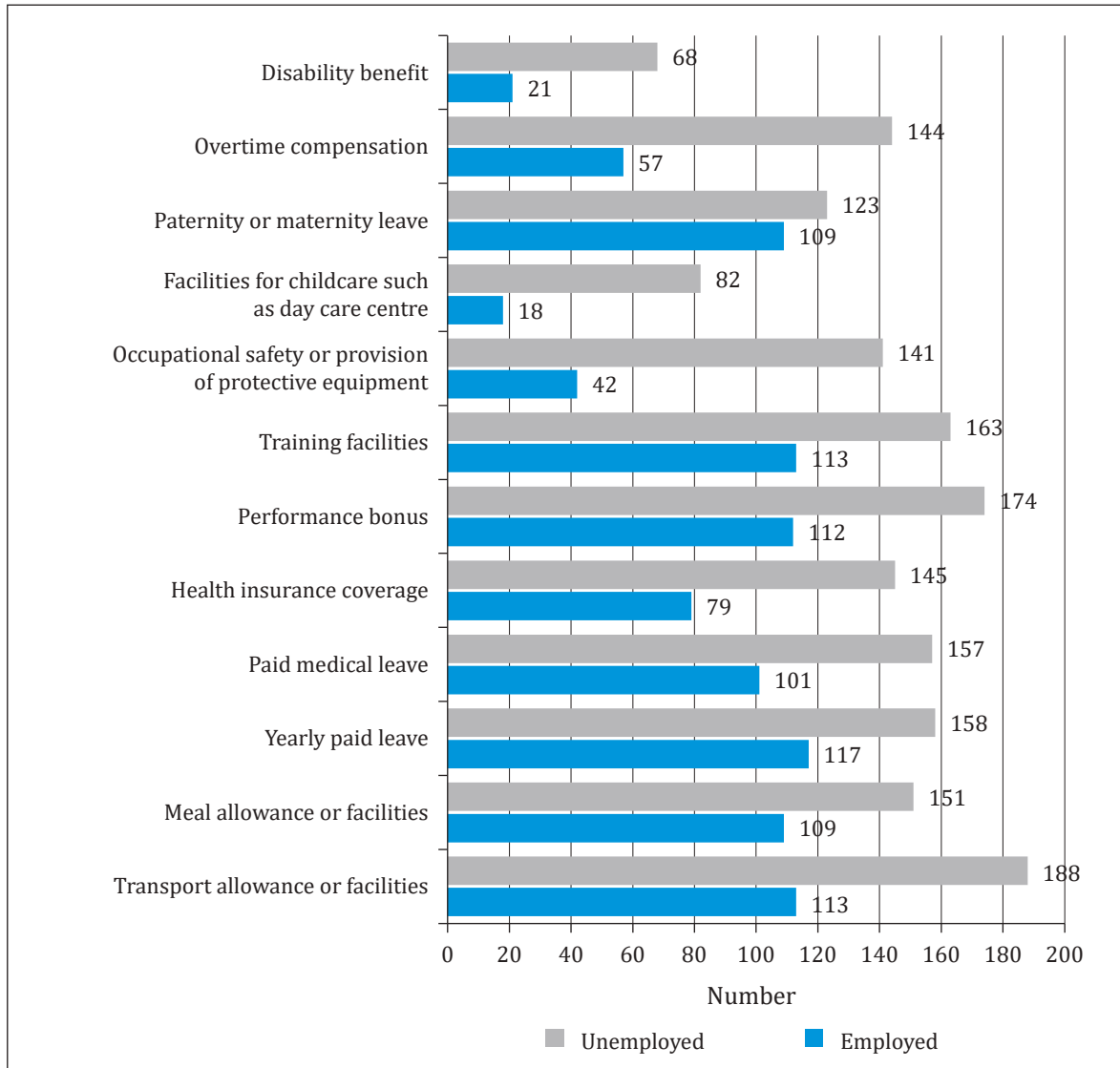
4.3 Expectations gap

There is a considerable gap between the expectations regarding employment benefits provided by an organisation and the actual benefits provided. Most unemployed youth expect occupational safety or the provision of protective equipment and to receive transport allowances or facilities as employment benefits. However, occupational safety and transport allowance or facilities are not as prioritised as employment benefits as the unemployed youths expect them to be (Figure 6). In contrast to the 141 unemployed youth who expect occupational safety or provision of protective equipment, only 42 employed youth confirmed their organisation provided such benefits. On the other hand, 113 employed youth reported that their employers give transportation benefits, and 188 unemployed youth indicated that they anticipate organisations will provide these incentives as part of their employment benefits. Performance bonuses are the second most expected benefit by young individuals, despite businesses and corporations not giving them great attention. While 174 jobseekers expect to be given incentives and be accredited for their performance, only 112 employed youth substantiated that expectation. Furthermore, 145 respondents who are actively seeking employment expect that employers may offer health insurance. However, only 75 currently employed respondents asserted their companies provide health insurance as an employment benefit. It is also vital to note that childcare facilities like daycare centres are atypical among organisations. While 82 job seekers anticipate businesses to provide a daycare centre, only 18 employed youth reported their employers had a daycare centre for working mothers. This disparity in expectations and actual benefits underscores the need for better alignment of employment benefits with the expectations of young jobseekers.

In 2021, the government of Bangladesh passed the Day Care Centre Act, which stated that organisations should have a daycare centre (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2021). According to the Bangladesh Labour Law 2006, organisations with more than 40 female employees must have a separate room for childcare (Department of Labour, 2006). Organisations need childcare facilities to provide equal opportunities for young women trying to balance their lives between their profession and motherhood. The misalignment of expectations around overtime compensation is another significant discrepancy that requires discussion. Among 250 young jobseekers, 144 anticipate getting paid for overtime. However, 57 of the 250 working youth acknowledged that their employers provide overtime pay. Employees in Bangladesh are frequently overworked without being compensated. This is not only demoralising, but it may also result in decreased productivity, creativity, and willingness to work for organisations. Except for paternity or maternity leave, in most instances, organisations do not meet the expectations of the youth regarding employee benefits. There is a sizeable difference between the expectations of unemployed youth and the job benefits employers offer.

Young jobseekers expect their future work environment to have an amicable atmosphere with coordinated activities and teamwork. They expect firms to have an organised work structure, open workspace, cooperative supervisors, and flexible working hours. Many unemployed

Figure 6: Expectations Mismatch in Employment Benefits Provided by an Organisation

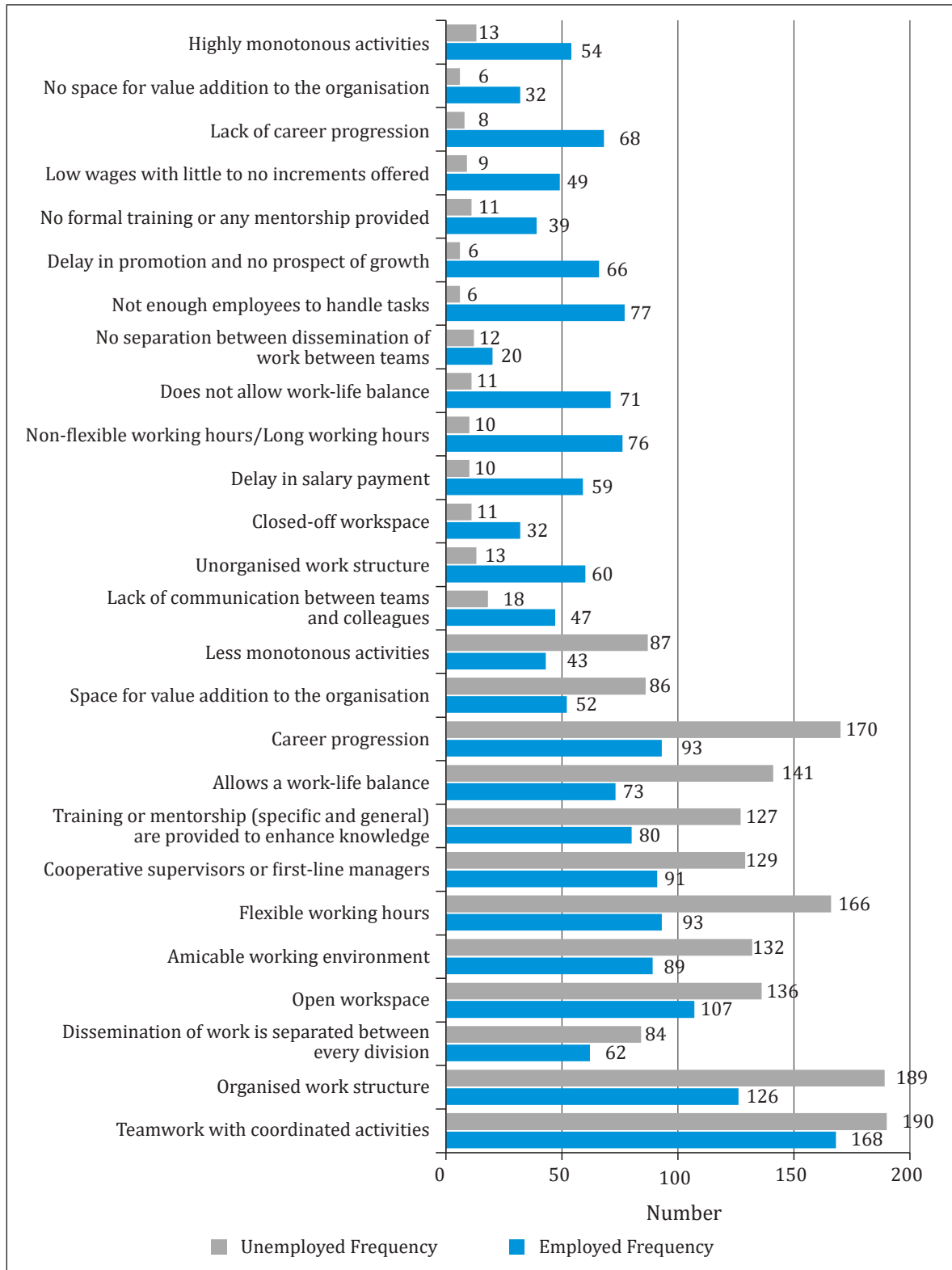


Source: Author’s illustration based on data from the survey conducted as part of this study.

youths also expect the separation of tasks and responsibilities between individual departments, a space for value addition, and opportunities for further growth and development in their chosen profession. However, some have also mentioned they foresee some drawbacks, such as a lack of communication between teams and colleagues, delays in wage payment and promotion, a shortage of personnel to manage responsibilities, and difficulty maintaining a work-life balance. However, among young job seekers, expectations for a workplace’s benefits outweigh expectations of disadvantages by a wide margin.

Although there is a total mismatch in organisational expectations of the working environment (Figure 7), according to the survey, the employed youth have corroborated that the good

Figure 7: Expectations Mismatch in the Work Environment in an Organisation



Source: Author's illustration based on data from the survey conducted as part of this study.

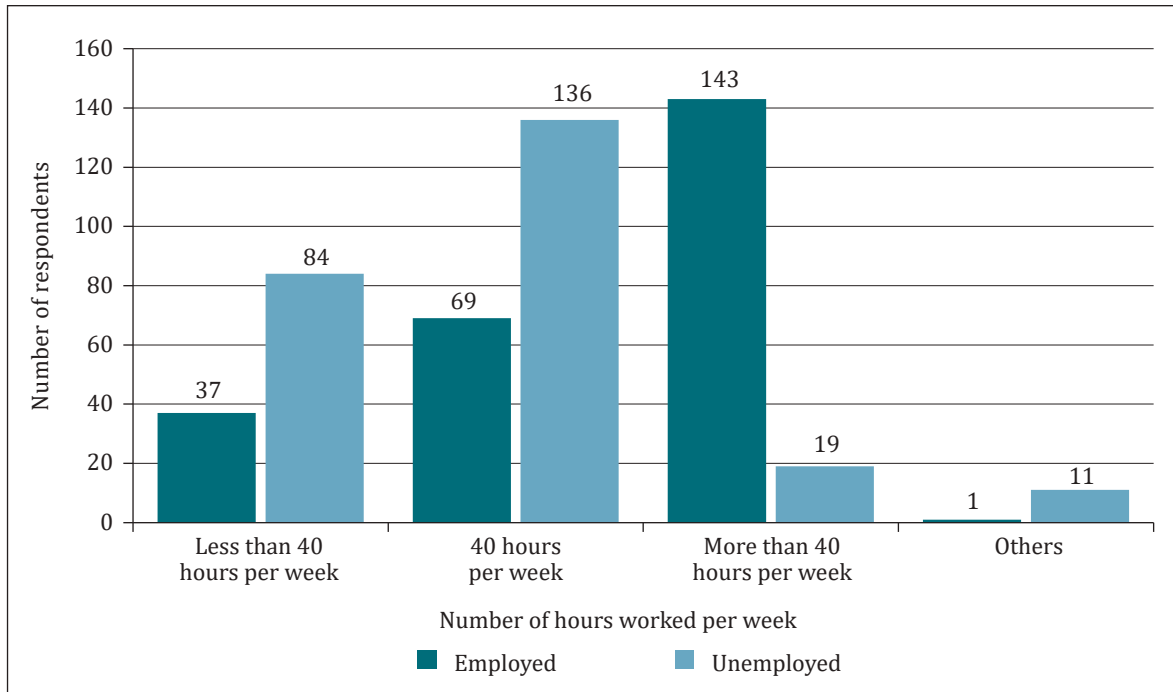
elements of workplaces are lower than expected. At the same time, there are significantly more negative aspects than expected. There are two key nodes where the positive perceptions of the workplace at organisations are substantially greater than reality. This includes hours of labour and prospects for professional advancement. A total of 166 of the 250 young people actively looking for jobs anticipate having flexible working hours, while only 99 of the 250 youths presently employed confirmed this presumption. Still, only 93 employed youths stated that their organisations provided them with the opportunities to do so.

Youths who are unemployed have very little anticipation of working in a setting with unfavourable conditions. Nearly all 250 unemployed respondents believed that organisations had an adequate workforce to manage and equally disseminate job responsibilities within every department. On the contrary, in reality, organisations in Bangladesh often lack sufficient workforce to manage responsibilities effectively. This generates a substantial difference in expectations regarding the number of tasks and activities employees are expected to oversee in the workplace. This also makes it exceedingly challenging for young people to maintain a work-life balance, as further evidenced by the employed young people who participated in the survey. It appears that young people who have recently graduated from their respective universities believe employers provide employees the freedom to balance work and family obligations while advancing their careers. However, in reality employees do not even have flexible work schedules and are overwhelmed with tasks and responsibilities, which limits their opportunities for professional advancement and work-life balance. Furthermore, due to time constraints, employees cannot attend training programmes or take courses to help them develop their skills, gradually eroding their aptitude. Eventually, employees may experience job dissatisfaction, causing them to leave the company and increase the pool of unemployed youth.

The youth in Bangladesh are frequently overworked and underpaid. Although most young people anticipate working 40 hours per week, results from the survey indicate that most young people work more than 40 hours a week (Figure 8). The International Labour Organization (ILO) established the Forty Hour Week Convention in 1935, which, enforced in 1957, states that working hours in all types of employment should be limited to 40 hours per week (ILO, 1935). Bangladesh has not yet ratified the convention, which has made it easier for enterprises to exploit their workforce. According to the survey, some employed individuals have claimed to work more than 50 hours in a week. Allowing the labour force to reset and conserve energy is essential, as excessive fatigue and exhaustion may decrease efficiency. Therefore, Bangladesh should ratify the convention to protect its workforce from fatigue and productivity loss.

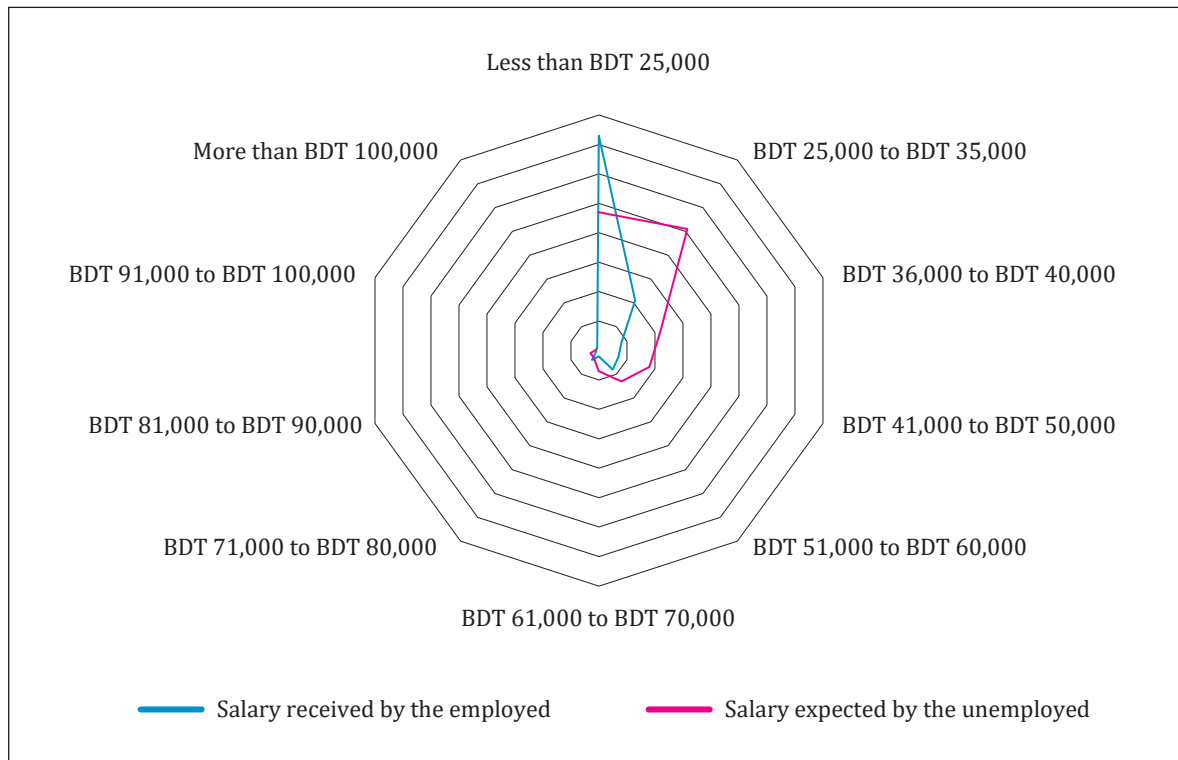
The expected salary range for a position the respondents applied for in the last month was recorded as the expected salary of that respondent based on the survey conducted on recent graduates or unemployed youth. The actual salary range of respondents from their current position was recorded as the actual wage employed youth received in their respective titles. There was a very distinct mismatch between the salary expectations of the unemployed youth and the salary received by the employed youth. University graduates seeking work are expected to earn a starting salary between BDT 25,000 and BDT 35,000, as shown in Figure 9. Most applicants for positions at the executive level or mid-tier anticipated receiving the same pay range. At the same time, others are expected to earn between BDT 41,000 and BDT 50,000, as

Figure 8: Expectations Mismatch in Hours of Labour



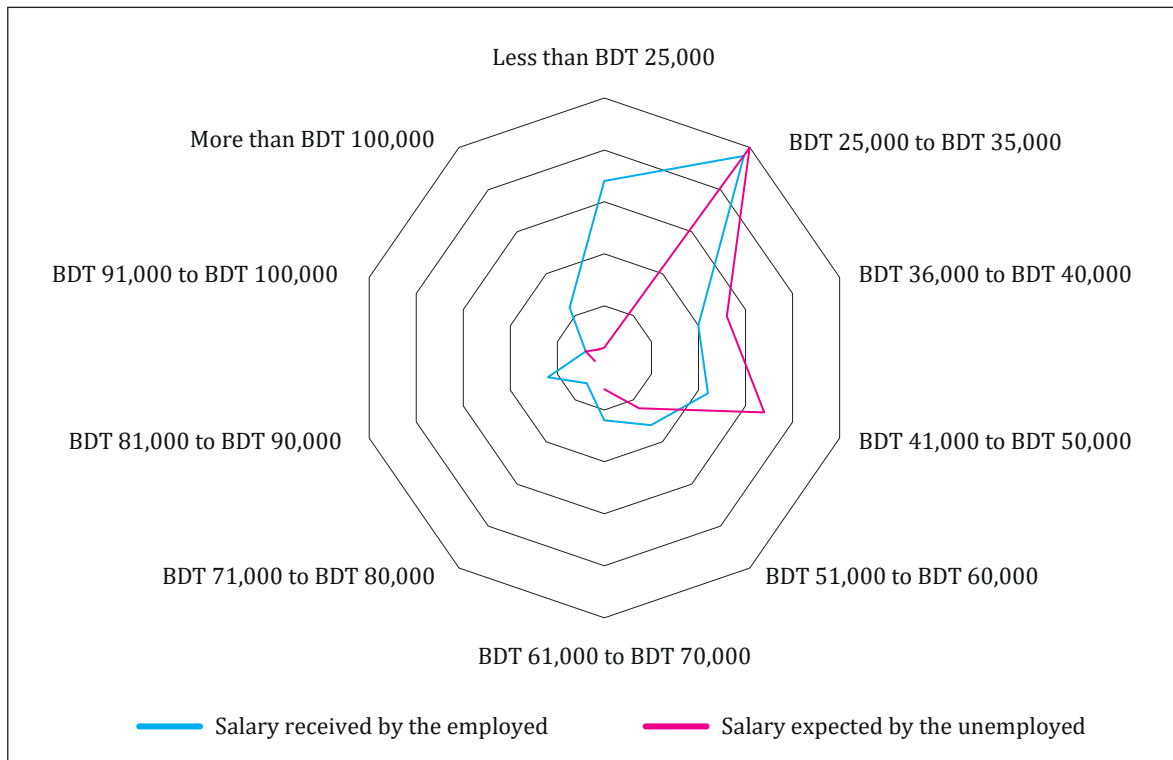
Source: Author's illustration based on data from the survey conducted as part of this study.

Figure 9: Expectations Mismatch in Salary at Entry-level Positions



Source: Author's illustration based on data from the survey conducted as part of this study.

Figure 10: Expectations Mismatch in Salary at a Mid-Tier or Executive Level

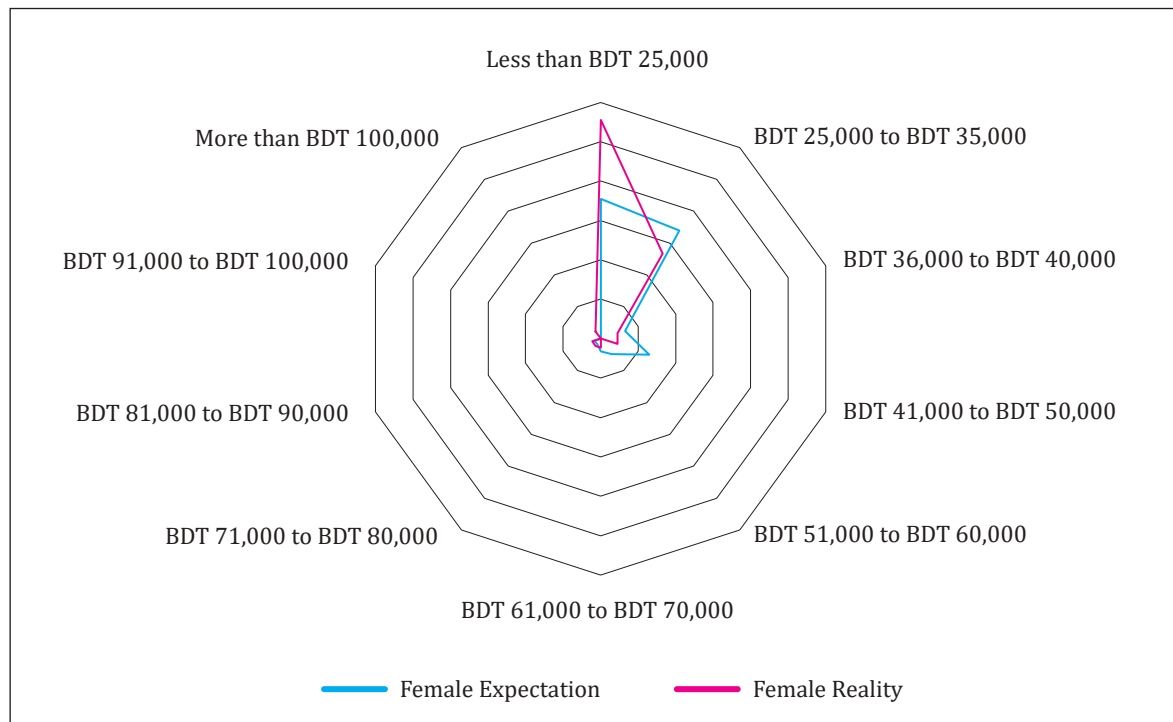


Source: Author’s illustration based on data from the survey conducted as part of this study.

seen in Figure 10. Surprisingly, most employed youth working in the lowest-tiered positions in their respective organisations are paid less than BDT 25,000, while executives and mid-tier managers are paid between BDT 25,000 and BDT 35,000. It is alarming that young people with an accredited university degree receive less than BDT 25,000 as their first salary in their first employment. The private sector’s pay structure must be altered since it is currently too low, particularly for entry-level positions. The wages earned by an individual need to reflect the marginal productivity of labour, especially when individuals are overburdened with responsibilities and have little to no overtime compensation. Even though most firms meet the expectations for the salary structure for executives and mid-tier managers, it is still relatively low relative to the cost of living in Bangladesh. It is also important to highlight that a few respondents currently employed as executives also receive a wage less than BDT 25,000. Considering the inflation and rising cost of living that Bangladesh is currently experiencing, the salary structure for the employed youth needs to be revised urgently.

When comparing the expected and actual salary brackets for an entry-level position disaggregated by gender, it can be observed that the expectation in salary outweighs the reality in the labour market for both females and males (Figure 11 and Figure 12). The wages of employed female and male respondents were juxtaposed with those of female and male unemployed youth or fresh graduates in entry-level employment. This shows that for the lower income brackets, the reality or actual wage outweighs the expectations, as considerably fewer individuals expect a salary of less than BDT 25,000 than those who receive it. Both female and

Figure 11: Expectations Mismatch in Salary at Entry-level Positions for Female Youth

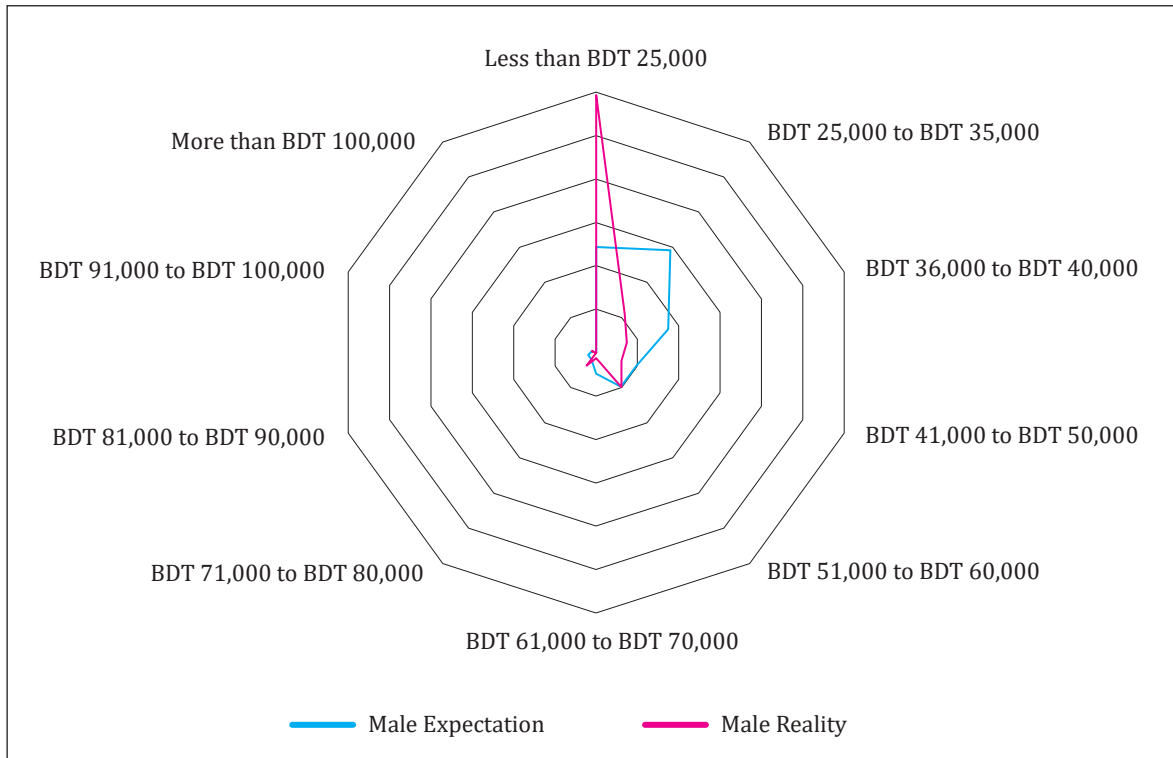


Source: Author's illustration based on data from the survey conducted as part of this study.

male youth expect a higher wage while applying for entry-level positions than they receive in the labour market. This indicates a substantial discrepancy between expected and actual wages, irrespective of gender.

A mismatch exists between the skills expected to be significant and the attributes relevant to organisations, as shown in Table 1. Most young people without jobs identify prior work experience as the most critical decisive quality for securing employment. However, there is a significant misunderstanding regarding that notion. Employers confirm that organisations need candidates to have at least an undergraduate degree in the appropriate discipline and a sufficient level of computer proficiency before emphasising prior job experience. Employers also value language and writing abilities, while young people out of work have not identified writing abilities as one of their priority concerns. Additionally, most unemployed youth believe they must have an adequate cumulative grade point average (CGPA) to get a job, whereas employers do not consider CGPA a priority when evaluating applicants. Moreover, few employed youths have suggested that it is essential to have a sufficient standard of presentation skills, confidence, and tenacity to obtain employment. This indicates that there is asymmetric information regarding the traits and attributes that are most demanded by employers and the skills that the current labour force has. This leads to further youth unemployment as enterprises do not find suitable candidates with the required skills to carry out their responsibilities.

Figure 12: Expectations Mismatch in Salary at Entry-level Positions for Male Youth



Source: Author's illustration based on data from the survey conducted as part of this study.

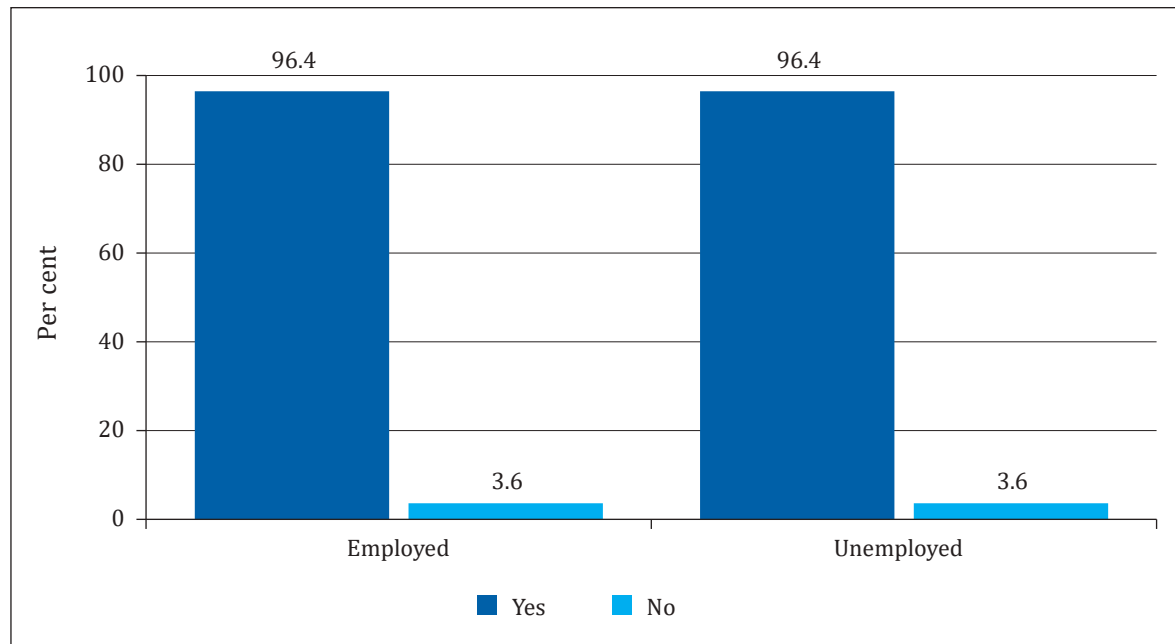
Table 1: Expectations Mismatch in Attributes that Employers Look For

Top 5 attributes that employers look for	Top 5 attributes unemployed youths expect employers are looking for
Having an undergraduate degree at least in the required field	Past work experience
Computer skills	Having an undergraduate degree at least in the required field
Past work experience	Computer skills
Language proficiency	Having an undergraduate degree with a minimum CGPA
Writing skills	Language proficiency

Source: Author's compilation based on data from the survey conducted as part of this study.

Networking is deemed highly important by both the employed and the unemployed youth to obtain employment. Around 96 per cent of the respondents, both employed and unemployed, verified the necessity of having a solid network for employment opportunities, as seen in Figure 13. This implies that, in addition to academic qualifications and relevant abilities, it is critical to have the proper connections as it is regarded as a valuable social capital for both firms and applicants during the recruitment process. The conventional notion is that individuals with more outstanding social capital tend to be hired for superior positions. Hence, it is often assumed that human capital may play a minor role relative to social capital in terms

Figure 13: Perceived Importance of Networking to Attain Employment



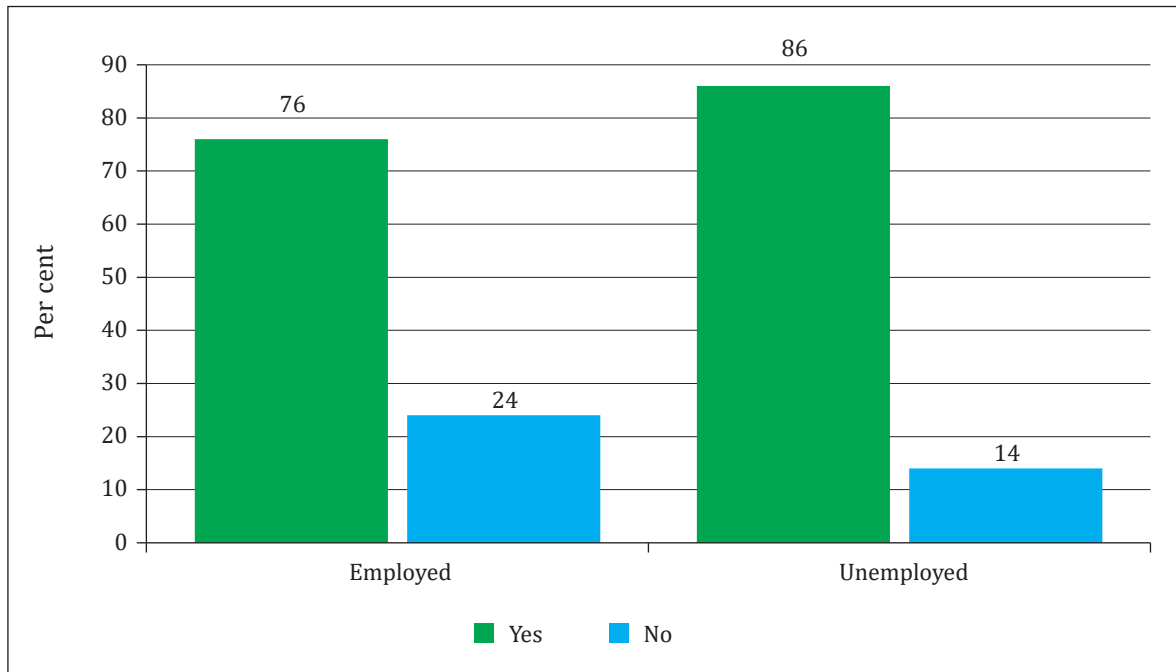
Source: Author's illustration based on data from the survey conducted as part of this study.

of employment. While it may sometimes be true, the statement may not always be true. Critical external contacts have a significant impact on a company's financial performance. Therefore, individuals with more outstanding social capital may be appropriate to execute these tasks and are suitable for superior positions. However, it is also argued that individuals with more excellent skills and qualifications will likely have better employment opportunities and a diverse network (Erickson, 2017).

The unemployed and employed youth concurred that attaining a degree from a university abroad is highly valued in Bangladesh. While 86 per cent of 250 unemployed youths agreed with that statement, 76 per cent of the 250 employed youths also corroborated the expectations, as illustrated in Figure 14. This indicates that higher education received from abroad is deemed more valuable than that from local universities in Bangladesh. There is little faith in the quality of education the local universities provide from the perspectives of both the employer and the employee, as perhaps it is assumed that candidates with an academic degree certified by an international university have more significant qualifications in terms of skills and knowledge compared to applicants graduating from the local universities.

Additionally, concerning the university status, it was observed that 93 per cent of the unemployed youth were from private universities and believed that an outside degree was more valuable for the labour market in Bangladesh. In contrast, 84 per cent of the respondents from the public universities also held the same belief.

Figure 14: Perceived Importance of a Foreign Degree to Attain Employment



Source: Author’s illustration based on data from the survey conducted as part of this study.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Bangladesh has great potential to increase its productivity substantially if it can gainfully employ its vast young population. The country may experience a demographic dividend if it can utilise the surplus youth in the labour market. Yet, a significant portion of the young workforce in Bangladesh remains unemployed. Mismatches in expectations between the ambitions of young individuals and the reality of the labour market may play a key role in facilitating such high unemployment among the youth.

According to the survey findings of the employed and unemployed youth, there remains a divergence between the expectations and the realities regarding employment benefits, organisational environment, salary scale, attributes required, and hours of labour. Employees in private enterprises in Bangladesh were found to be typically underpaid and overworked. The compensation structure in private businesses falls short of the hopes held by ambitious individuals actively looking for work. Furthermore, the wage scale is too low, particularly for entry-level employment, and thus insufficient to sustain the lives of young professionals just starting their careers. Most employed youth have also stated that they work more than 40 hours each week, which fresh university graduates did not anticipate.

There was also a discrepancy between the qualities employers search for in applications and the qualities that candidates believe employers value. For example, employers prioritise writing abilities as a factor when evaluating candidates, which job seekers believe is unimportant. Most university graduates believe that prior work experience is significant to be employed. Some

individuals pursue internship opportunities to attain work experience; however, they end up disappointed as organisations require candidates to have at least an undergraduate degree, do not have a paid internship programme, or do not offer any internship programme. Furthermore, firms and young individuals value an academic degree from an international university more than a local one. Hiring managers assume that candidates with academic degrees awarded by foreign institutions are better qualified than candidates with degrees from universities in Bangladesh.

It is also worth noting that many unemployed youths expect firms to have daycare centres. However, most private organisations do not have childcare facilities to help support working mothers. Organisations need to provide equitable opportunities to both female and male employees, as in Bangladesh, many credible and qualified women choose to remain stay-at-home mothers or do not take on more significant work responsibilities due to their childcare obligations.

In this context, the following recommendations are suggested to help narrow the gap between the youth's expectations and the reality of the labour market.

- The salary scale in private organisations should be increased to compensate individuals in a way that meets the expectations of youth and allows them to live a decent life.
- Organisations should provide well-paid internship programmes to students who have not graduated but are in their final year of university. This will allow them to obtain not only the required level of work experience but also to learn new skills that are needed to progress in their career.
- Internship programmes in organisations should be well-paid to ensure interns are adequately compensated and not exploited.
- Bangladesh must ratify the Forty Hour Week Convention 1935 established by the ILO and limit labour to 40 hours a week. This will enable the workforce to find a work-life balance and participate in skill development programmes to develop their professional expertise further.
- Initiatives should be taken to improve the quality of higher education in Bangladeshi public and private universities. This will eliminate the perception that candidates with degrees from local universities are underqualified and allow them to be on par with those holding degrees from overseas academic institutions.
- An industry-academia linkage needs to be established through which universities may establish a dialogue between students, academics, and representatives of various organisations in the private sector. This will enable the young aspiring youth to connect with corporations and be informed of the attributes firms demand to develop their skills accordingly. This will also allow them to build a strong network with key individuals in various industries.
- Academic institutions should adapt their curriculum to employers' needs to better equip young job seekers for the labour market.
- Lastly, private organisations should have child care facilities so that women do not have to compromise between work and family, and more women are encouraged to participate in the labour market.

References

- Akosah-Twumasi, P., Emeto, T. I., Lindsay, D., Tsey, K., & Malau-Aduli, B. S. (2018). *A Systematic Review of Factors That Influence Youths Career Choices—the Role of Culture*. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2018.00058>
- Bandara, A. (2018). Youth labor market expectations and job matching in sub-Saharan Africa: evidence from school-to-work transition surveys. *Applied Economics*. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00036846.2018.1512742>
- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). (2023). *Labour force survey 2022*. Retrieved May 6, 2024, from Bangladesh National Portal. https://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/b343a8b4_956b_45ca_872f_4cf9b2f1a6e0/2023-10-25-07-38-4304abd7a3f3d8799fbc59ff91007b1.pdf
- Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS). (2018). *Tracer Study of Graduates of Universities in Bangladesh*. Ministry of Education, Bangladesh. Retrieved August 31, 2022, from <https://bids.org.bd/page/researches/?rid=158>
- Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS). (2021). *Colleges, Tracer Study on Graduates of Tertiary-Level*. Retrieved August 22, 2022, from https://bids.org.bd/uploads/research/completed_research/Final%20Report_CEDP%20Tracer%20Study_BIDS_Exec_Summary_with_TOC.pdf
- Barhate, B., & Dirani, K. M. (2022). Career aspirations of generation Z: A systematic literature review. *European Journal of Training and Development*. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/EJTD-07-2020-0124/full/html>
- Betts, J. R. (1996). What do students know about wages? Evidence from a survey of undergraduates. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 31, 27-56. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/146042>
- Briel, S., Osikominu, A., Pfeifer, G., Reutter, M., & Satlukal, S. (2022). Gender differences in wage expectations: The role of biased beliefs. *Empirical Economics*, 62, 187-212. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s00181-021-02044-0>
- Caro, L. P., O'Higgins, N., & Berg, J. (2021). Young people and the gig economy. In *Is the future ready for youth?* Retrieved August 28, 2022, from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_790117.pdf
- Chakravorty, B., Arulampalam, W., Imbert, C., & Rathelot, R. (2021). *Can information about jobs improve the effectiveness of vocational training? Experimental evidence from India*. Institute of Labour Economics (IZA). Retrieved August 4, 2022, from <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/236458/1/dp14427.pdf>
- Department of Labour. (2006, October 11). *Bangladesh labour law 2006*. Retrieved November 28, 2022, from Department of Labour. <http://www.dol.gov.bd/site/page/2cc4a3b9-43ef-4af7-92dd-39bccc9b3df1/%E0%A6%AC%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%82%E0%A6%B2%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%A6%E0%A7%87%E0%A6%B6-%E0%A6%B6%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%B0%E0%A6%AE-%E0%A6%86%E0%A6%87%E0%A6%A8-%E0%A7%A8%E0%A7%A6%E0%A7%A6%E0%A7%AC>

Ehrenberg, R. G., & Smith, R. S. (2018). *Modern labour economics: Theory and public policy*. Routledge. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.routledge.com/Modern-Labor-Economics-Theory-and-Public-Policy/Ehrenberg-Ehrenberg-Smith-Smith-Hallock-Hallock/p/book/9780367346973>

Erickson, B. H. (2017). Good networks and good jobs: The value of social capital to employers and employees. In *Social Capital* (pp. 127-158). Retrieved November 28, 2022, from <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315129457-6/good-networks-good-jobs-value-social-capital-employers-employees-bonnie-erickson>

Gardiner, D., Goedhuys, M., & Amador, M. G. (2021). Youth aspirations and the future of work. In *Is the future ready for youth?* International Labour Office (ILO). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from https://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Publications/WCMS_776024/lang-en/index.htm

Grant, K., Egdell, V., & Vincent, D. (2021). *Young people's expectations of work and the readiness of the workplace for young people: Two sides of the same coin?* Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland. Retrieved August 8, 2022, from https://researchportal.northumbria.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/51511115/RIG_Report_FINAL_Grant_et_al_4May21.pdf

International Labour Organization (ILO). (1935). *C047 - Forty-Hour Week Convention, 1935 (No. 47)*. Retrieved October 2023, 8, from: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C047

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2016). *School-to-work transitions surveys (SWTS) Country Brief December 2016*. Retrieved February 3, 2022, from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_537748.pdf

Iorgulescu, M.-C. (2016). Generation Z and its perception of work. *CrossCultural Management Journal*, 47-54. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from https://www.seaopenresearch.eu/Journals/articles/CMJ2016_I1_6.pdf

Islam, R. (1980). Graduate unemployment in Bangladesh : A preliminary analysis. *The Bangladesh Development Studies*, 8, 47-74. Retrieved August 23, 2022, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40794301>

Islam, S., & Hasan, M. E. (2020). Is the public sector wage premium real? Findings from Bangladesh. *The Bangladesh Development Studies*, 43, 35-62. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3884596>

Islam, T., Ahmed, I., Khalifah, Z., Sadiq, M., & Faheem, M. A. (2015). Graduates' expectation gap: The role of employers and Higher Learning Institutes. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 7, 372-384. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1108/JARHE-05-2014-0056>

Jamil, R., & Zakaria, Z. (2019). Analyzing work and salary expectations of unemployed youths. *Malaysian Journal of Youth Studies*, 20. Retrieved August 8, 2022, from <https://www.iyres.gov.my/images/MJYS/2019/MJYS%20Vol%2020%20June%202019-84-103.pdf>

Jones, S., Santos, R., & Xirinda, G. (2020). *Misinformed, mismatched, or misled? Explaining the gap between expected and realised graduate earnings in Mozambique*. The United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35188/UNU-WIDER/2020/804-7>

Jusoh, M., Simun, M., & Chong, S. C. (2011). Expectation gaps, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment of fresh graduates: Roles of graduates, higher learning institutions and employers. *Education and Training*, 53, 515–530. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1108/00400911111159476>

Kässi, O., & Lehdonvirta, V. (2018). Online labour index: Measuring the online gig economy for policy and research. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 137, 241-248. Retrieved January 25, 2022, from Oxford Internet Institute . <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2018.07.056>

Khatun, F., & Saadat, S. Y. (2020). *Youth employment in Bangladesh: Creating opportunities—reaping dividends*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-1750-1>

Khatun, F., Saadat, S., Ashraf, K., & Taki, M. (2022). *Skills gap and youth employment in Bangladesh: An exploratory analysis*. Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). Retrieved October 8, 2023, from <https://cpd.org.bd/resources/2022/05/Skills-Gap-and-Youth-Employment-in-Bangladesh-An-Exploratory-Analysis.pdf>

Kiessling, L., Pinger, P., Seegers, P., & Bergerhoff, J. (2019). *Gender differences in wage expectations: Sorting, children, and negotiation styles*. Center for Economic Studies and ifo Institute (CESifo). Retrieved August 4, 2022, from https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/207218/1/cesifo1_wp7827.pdf

Laskowska, A., & Laskowski, J. (2021). Expectations of young people towards their future work and career after the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic outbreak in Poland. *European Research Studies Journal*, XXIV, 17-34. Retrieved August 8, 2022, from <https://www.ersj.eu/journal/2188>

Magnuson, K. (2007). Maternal education and children’s academic achievement during middle childhood. *Developmental Psychology*, 43(6), 1497–1512. <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.43.6.1497>

Mann, A., Denis, V., Schleicher, A., Ekhtiari, H., Forsyth, T., Liu, E., & Chambers, N. (2020). *Dream jobs? - Teenagers’ career aspirations and the future of work*. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Retrieved August 8, 2022, from <https://www.oecd.org/education/career-readiness/Dream%20Jobs%20Teenagers’%20Career%20Aspirations%20and%20the%20Future%20of%20Work.pdf>

Matin, I., Bhattacharjee, A., Ahmed, M., Das, N., Jahan, N., Morshed, K., Rahman , M., Islam, M., & Hamid, N. (2018). *Youth of Bangladesh: Agents of change? Youth survey 2018*. BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) and BRAC. Retrieved February 3, 2022, from https://bigd.bracu.ac.bd/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/YOUTH-SURVEY-2018_full.pdf

Ministry of Finance (MoF). (2017). *National pay scale 2015 amendment*. Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh. Retrieved January 20, 2022, from https://mof.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mof.portal.gov.bd/page/ebb460ed_b1f5_4fa1_bd1b_e08f87400002/amandment_pay%20scale_2015.pdf

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA). (2021). *Acts*. Retrieved November 28, 2022, from <https://mowca.gov.bd/site/view/law/Law>

Mishra, V., Chapman, T., Sinha, R., Kedia, S., & Gutta, S. (2018). *Young India and work: A survey of youth aspirations*. The Observer Research Foundation. Retrieved August 29, 2022, from https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/YA_Digital_-II.pdf

Morrison, P. S., & Loeber, E. (2004). Youth transition: The influence of the local labour market on expectations. *Labour, Employment and Work in New Zealand*. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.26686/lew.v0i0.1266>

Ngoc, T. N., Dung, M. V., Rowley, C., & Bach, M. P. (2022). Generation Z job seekers' expectations and their job pursuit intention: Evidence from transition and emerging economy. *International Journal of Engineering Business Management*. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/18479790221112548>

Norbu, K. (2021). Employment – youth perception and expectations. *The Druk Journal*. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from http://drukjournal.bt/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Employment_Youth-Perceptions-and-Expectations_Kuenga-Norbu.pdf

Parker, K., & Igielnik, R. (2020). *On the cusp of adulthood and facing an uncertain future: What we know about Gen Z so far*. Retrieved August 29, 2022, from Pew Research Centre. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/05/14/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and-facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far-2/>

Parker, K., Graf, N., & Igielnik, R. (2019). *Generation Z looks a lot like millennials on key social and political issues*. Retrieved August 29, 2022, from Pew Research Centre. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/>

Pavlović, D., Zubović, J., & Zdravković, A. (2016). Youth expectations in job search in Serbia. *Industrija*, 44. <https://doi.org/10.5937/industrija44-12784>

Rahman, M., & Al-Hasan, M. (2018). *Why is the relative preference for government jobs on the rise in Bangladesh? Evidence from labour force surveys*. Munich Personal RePEc Archive. Retrieved August 23, 2022, from https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/90133/1/MPRA_paper_90133.pdf

Ranasinghe, S. (1978). Unemployment and job expectations among our youth (Sri Lanka). *Manpower and Unemployment Research*, 11, 19-29. Retrieved August 17, 2022, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43574727>

Schroth, H. (2019). Are you ready for Gen Z in the workplace? *California Management Review*. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0008125619841006>

Shah, A., & Monahan, M. (2018). Salary expectations and salary realities: An analysis of university students in Spain and Singapore. *Journal of Organisational Psychology*, 18. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33423/jop.v18i1.1320>

Tan, A. Y., Chew, E., & Kalavally, V. (2017). The expectations gap for engineering field in Malaysia in the 21st century. *On the Horizon*, 25, 131-138. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1108/OTH-12-2015-0071>

Tumpa, S. R., & Ferdus, Z. (2017). Productivity puzzling: A study on recent behaviour of UK and Bangladesh. *European Journal of Business and Management*. Retrieved August 25, 2022, from <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/EJBM/article/view/38237>

United Nations (UN). (2024). *Global indicator framework for the sustainable development goals and targets of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development*. Retrieved May 12, 2024, from <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global-Indicator-Framework-after-2024-refinement-English.pdf>

This study delves into the challenges faced by unemployed youth in Bangladesh, revealing a significant disparity between the expectations of young graduates and the realities of the labour market. The findings, based on a survey of both unemployed and employed youth, highlight key areas of mismatch, such as salary, required skills, working hours, and working conditions. Unemployed youth prioritise prior experience, while employers value skills like writing and communication.



Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

House 40/C, Road 11 (new)

Dhanmondi, Dhaka - 1209, Bangladesh

Telephone: (+88 02) 55001185, 55001990, 58156983

Fax: (+88 02) 48110414 E-mail: info@cpd.org.bd

Website: www.cpd.org.bd