

Youth Entrepreneurship and Its Impact on Employment Creation: A Study on University Students of Bangladesh

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Abstract

Youth entrepreneurship has emerged as an important solution to dealing with unemployment and economic downturns in developing countries like Bangladesh. Although the current research literature tends to emphasize the general economic environment, a limited focus has been given to university students of Bangladesh who intend to establish their careers in entrepreneurship, and this research addresses that gap. This study's key objective is to assess university students' youth entrepreneurship and its contribution to employment creation in Bangladesh. The study followed a mixed method, containing both qualitative and quantitative approaches to collecting data through simple random and snowball sampling. This included a survey of 440 students and in-depth interviews (IDI) of 10 students from different universities in Bangladesh who run their entrepreneurial businesses. The study found a statistically significant association between access to funding and the number of people employed in the business as per the chi-square test result ($p < 0.05$). The study showed that access to funding in youth entrepreneurship plays an influential role in determining the level of employment creation. On the other hand, the study found a relationship between support from university programs ($p > 0.05$). It confirmed that the university programs might generally support university-going entrepreneurs,

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but they do not appear to influence employment levels significantly. The study addressed some of the significant challenges students faced in entrepreneurship, including financial risks, lack of funding, lack of mentorship, competition in the market, etc. Entrepreneur students from various universities can benefit from increased access to funding, mentorship, and skill development by networking with venture capitalists through various university programs. Promoting entrepreneurship will ultimately help minimize the unemployment problem in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Youth Entrepreneurship, Employment, University Students, Bangladesh.

Introduction

Bangladesh is a developing country with a swiftly advancing economy. In recent years the country has witnessed a new boom in entrepreneurial activity through small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which are also leading the way in economic progress (Meng et al., 2021). Basically, an entrepreneur is a person who performs agency and takes initiative, puts himself in a position of responsibility for achieving results, is ready to take action, and embraces innovation by anticipating any danger (Johnson, 2001). Creating value for society by starting a new business is also a significant prominence of an entrepreneur (Holt 1992). Entrepreneurship has been defined in various ways over the past 800 years. The word comes from the French word “entreprendre” which means "to do something". The word was already in use in the 12th century, and its noun form was developed by the 15th century. Related English words e.g., adventurer and undertaker (referring to "Merchant Adventurers") that used to describe business risk takers were introduced around the same time. Richard Cantillon's work (published in 1730) contains the earliest formal theoretical application of the notion of entrepreneurship (Long, 1983). As per (Hoselitz, 1951) the word ‘*entrepreneur*’ was not introduced by Jean-Baptiste Say in economic literature while many economists believed he was. Later research found that Richard Cantillon had already talked about the role of entrepreneurs around 1730. And even before that, François Quesnay had coined the term "*entrepreneur*." This indicates that J. B. Say. contributed to the idea's popularity even if it existed before.

According to (Chowdhury, 2017) Bangladesh has tremendous opportunities to flourish the entrepreneurial sector as a developing country.

There are three stages of opportunities available that are interconnected and come from government or private sectors. Stimulatory opportunities help individuals through entrepreneurial education, role play (providing practical experiences), access to natural resources to build confidence and skills for starting businesses. Supportive opportunities help entrepreneurs grow their businesses by providing training, logistic, financial and technological support. Whereas sustaining opportunity provides encouragement by providing other marketing assistance including motivational support, policy improvement, and promotional assistance.

Currently Bangladesh is offering a very healthy and supportive environment for the entrepreneurs that is driven by abundant natural resources like fertile land and valuable mineral deposits along with a motivated and industrious workforce. Programs like Bachelor Entrepreneurship Development (BED) at Daffodil International University, UIU entrepreneurship forum, NSU Business Club, AIUB Business Club provide theoretical and real world skills to the students that they need to succeed in the corporate world. Several government organizations including Bangladesh Development Bank (BDB), Bank of Small Industries and Commerce (BASIC), Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB), Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute (BSTI), Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BICSIR), Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), Industrial promotion and Development Company of Bangladesh (IPDCB) and government supported private organizations i.g., Commercial Banks, Private Insurance Company, Grameen Bank, Industrial Development leasing Company of Bangladesh Ltd. (IDLC), United Leasing Company (ULC), Saudi Bangladesh Industrial and Agricultural Investment Company Ltd. (SABINCO), The Bangladesh German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BGCCI), Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), Proshika, The Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) etc are there for any kind of assistance to the entrepreneurs (Chowdhury, 2017).

Also there remains a challenging endeavor due to economic and social disparities compared to developed nations despite having a vast human resource (173 million people in 2023). Financing problems, legal issues, improper marketing channels, improper publicity of government facilities, social aperture, higher interest rates, lack of mentorship, lack of education,

ignorance, sloppy or weak political portrayal, religious constraints, and lack of technological or managerial knowledge are some of the things that impede the growth of entrepreneurship (Ullah, 2020).

A solid number of papers on entrepreneurship have been conducted in Bangladesh however there is a scarcity of studies focusing on the RESEARCH GAP. Because unemployment has been shown to be a major obstacle to Bangladesh's economic progress, this research is a must. Especially for university students, as future leaders and workforce participants who have the potential to enlarge the country's economic growth through entrepreneurship. By assessing the youth entrepreneurs, this study will help to find alternatives to the unemployment issue. The findings would provide insights into the factors that influence them towards entrepreneurship, the challenges they face, and the opportunities that are available to pursue it. Understanding these aspects will help policymakers, universities as well as other stakeholders to create a sound environment for the upcoming and existing entrepreneurs in a way that would be beneficial for them. Thus this paper aims to evaluate the role of youth entrepreneurship among university students and its contribution to employment creation in Bangladesh. By identifying opportunities and challenges faced by the students, it provides insights into how entrepreneurship can be strengthened as a solution to some complex problems.

Literature Review

Youth entrepreneurship stands crucial for nation-building activities because it drives economic development together with employment opportunities and inventive solutions. Business startups help fight unemployment by giving entry points to young employees and developing their expertise. The potential for business involvement by youth remains limited because they face obstacles such as restricted financial access and political instability together with insufficient education about entrepreneurship. Government policies designed to encourage entrepreneurship demonstrate weak outcomes because bureaucratic errors and insufficient implementation practices prevent them from being effective. By providing financial support alongside training and reforming policies obstacles to youth entrepreneurship will strengthen and support sustainable economic growth (Fadeyi et al., 2015).

According to Ahaibwe and Kasirye (2015) youth entrepreneurship stands as a fundamental tool to create jobs especially among developing countries with their employment spaces already filled up. Research indicates that while financial access remains essential it is equally vital for sustainable business development to receive mentorship together with training and institutional backing (ILO, 2012). The Youth Venture Capital Fund of Uganda (UYVCF) drives business development yet faces barriers towards job generation because of funding limitations and management issues. The same research conducted in Kenya and South Africa shows that combined services for entrepreneurs lead to better outcomes (Fafchamps et al., 2011).

The study conducted by Vogel (2013) explores how entrepreneurial ecosystems help solve youth unemployment by showing the importance of organized support structures including governmental interventions together with financial assistance and skill development programs. This study reveals problematic coordination and operational effectiveness of current entrepreneurial activities because these activities mainly do not align with national economic plans. This research adds value to youth entrepreneurship and employment creation studies by establishing a systematic data-based framework to develop ecosystems which produces continuous job opportunities through entrepreneurial ventures.

Njoku (2024) describes how education programs for entrepreneurs help young individuals gain power and establish employment opportunities while reducing poverty. This study illustrates the business startup capabilities of young students in combination with their enhanced industry marketability and shows how entrepreneurial teaching elements of innovation and creativity support economic development at different levels within the system. Quality education proves more important than raising educational length for developing competent abilities. The research evaluates Nigeria's economic difficulties caused by high unemployment levels along with proposing educational strategies to include entrepreneurial education at all educational levels. Social problems coupled with economic sustainability gain first priority in entrepreneurial education because it provides solutions for unemployment and poverty and makes societies financially sustainable.

The startup ecosystem of Bangladesh continues to grow because it receives government support from national and international investors with its population composed of technical experts and young people. Startup success in Bangladesh happens due to continuous growth in the middle class segment with elevated numbers of mobile users and Internet subscribers and expanding digital economic opportunities. Funds flowing into Bangladesh mostly support fintech services and logistics industries while also aiming at e-commerce businesses and education technology. Startup Bangladesh Limited operates high-tech parks which aid new startup ventures through new incubator and accelerator facilities. A significant transformation occurs within the ecosystem because more than 2,500 startups established substantial economic measures and employment opportunities. The startup ecosystem encounters two main barriers including regulatory impediments and lacking capital availability alongside the need to promote gender equality in investment. Bangladesh startup growth demands policy adjustments as well as accessible funding and corporate training for maintaining high momentum (Bangladesh Startup Ecosystem Assessment Report, 2022).

Although studies exist on various social business aspects such as social entrepreneurship traits and social company establishment barriers there is little research about how Social Business Funds (SBFs) impact youth economic conditions specifically. Ferdousi et al. (2022) argued that social business remains fundamental in handling financial difficulties that young entrepreneurs face. The research investigates the Nobin Equity Program (NEP) to fill this knowledge gap because this particular program targets young micro-entrepreneurs with educational support and financial resources. The study applies agency theory along with utility theory to investigate how SBFs enhance both earnings and spending of young entrepreneurs thus expanding knowledge about social entrepreneurship. The study demonstrates that SBFs create substantial impacts on the financial outcomes of entrepreneurs because financial help with training and supporting programs can boost their economic situation.

Amin (2019) investigates Dhaka City youth entrepreneurship by studying the reasons that drive online businesses and identifying obstacles experienced by young entrepreneurs. Through qualitative research the study demonstrates that young individuals start their own businesses because they

find no chance for employment and receive low-paying salaries. The online business sector contains three major obstacles which include social recognition challenges and business security issues and restricted growth options. The analysis investigates the influence of digital platforms especially Facebook towards facilitating entrepreneurial activities. Research shows that economic pressure drives most youth involvement in establishing businesses since they need to operate due to financial limitations rather than spotting new business prospects. The study encourages policies combined with financial backing and training for initiatives that will boost sustainable youth entrepreneurial activities across Bangladesh.

Quaaim & Hossain (2024) evaluate how public universities contribute to youth empowerment through entrepreneurship education in Bangladesh. Students face barriers in starting and maintaining businesses because academic institutions mainly offer theoretical skills without sufficient practical skill building. The paper outlines three main barriers which include old curriculum frameworks along with weak relationships between education institutions and businesses and insufficient governmental financial support. The research indicates that business success among youths improves through practical training and mentoring strategies combined with institutional backing. This research recommends that entrepreneurship education needs to adapt to current industry needs for building an environment that promotes sustainable business competitiveness. The necessary policies combined with stakeholder involvement aim to create connections between classroom education and practical entrepreneurial obstacles.

The level of entrepreneurial activity shows a direct negative relationship with unemployment because high entrepreneurial activities lead to new employment opportunities. The education received about entrepreneurship shapes students' career decisions by teaching them fundamental entrepreneurial competencies for business startup. Support programs from training institutions together with government interventions help young entrepreneurs but they experience limitations in funding acquisition and confront social barriers. Intensifying entrepreneurial attitudes across society results in social-economic advancement through efficient resource management while solving market deficiencies. Bangladesh needs both policy interventions and financial support and skill development

programs to maintain entrepreneurship as an effective career path for its young people (Rahaman & Podder, 2023).

Extensive research about youth entrepreneurship tends to focus its examination on financial obstacles combined with policy deficiencies and educational programs which promote self-employment. However, the investigation of employment generation from youth entrepreneurship lacks substantial research especially among university students in Bangladesh. Existing literatures demonstrate that entrepreneur success relies on financial support as well as skill training with mentor guidance yet fail to provide data-based evidence about student-business startup effects on job creation. The evolving startup market in Bangladesh faces barriers, including inadequate capital availability and regulatory restrictions that impede long-term growth. Therefore, a detailed examination of the relationship between university entrepreneurship programs and students' business initiatives, along with their employment creation needs, is warranted to investigate the economic environment of Bangladesh further.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, blending qualitative analysis with quantitative procedures to investigate youth entrepreneurship and employment creation among university students in Dhaka City, an educational hub in Bangladesh that hosts the largest number of public and private universities.

This research obtained its data from two primary sources. The quantitative, structured survey collected data on entrepreneurial business statuses from a wide range of university students. Interviews with students running their businesses for three years or more provided extensive qualitative information that mirrored their survey responses about the entrepreneurial environment of Bangladesh. The research constructed its analysis by using official reports combined with document analysis, reviewing existing literature, online articles, and newspaper reports as secondary data resources.

Data Collection method

The study incorporated primary and secondary data. Primary data were gathered through online surveys and in-depth interviews. The study utilized Google Forms to collect a total of 440 responses through structured questionnaires, targeting respondents who operated entrepreneurial firms for this research project. The survey was delivered through social media platforms, including Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp. The interviewees were selected from personal networks and peer networks through a combination of simple random sampling and snowball sampling. A total of ten in-depth interviews yielded the collected qualitative data. The study conducted six interviews via phone calls, and the additional four interviews were conducted face-to-face. The research obtained secondary data through a combination of document analysis and examinations of existing literature, online articles, and newspapers.

The respondents for the study were chosen following simple random and snowball sampling. According to the University Grant Commission (UGC), as of 2022, the Dhaka division comprises 17 public universities and 69 private universities. Therefore, the total number of students in the Dhaka division is around six lakhs. Considering the acceptable sampling error, $E = 0.05$,

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{N}{1+N \times (e)^2} \\ &= \frac{600000}{1+600000 \times (0.05)^2} \\ &= 399.73 \end{aligned}$$

(n = Sample size, N = Population size, E = Acceptable Sampling Error)

According to this formula, to justify the research, considering a total number of students of approximately 600,000 and an acceptable sampling error of 0.05, a minimum of 399 respondents is required. Therefore, 450 respondents have been allowed for the convenience of the study.

Data Analysis Techniques

The research employed a structured survey questionnaire that students from various universities in Dhaka completed through Google Forms. A Microsoft Excel and SPSS software analysis system was used to process the collected responses. Microsoft Excel received the initial task of data set, along with response cleaning, to ensure well-ordered data input. Basic descriptive statistical procedures have been employed, utilizing both frequency distributions and percentages, to summarize the collected information. Furthermore, a chi-square test was performed using SPSS to analyze the relationships between key variables. The chi-square test functioned to detect any statistically important connections among the fundamental variables under this research.

Ethical Consideration

The research adhered to strict ethical procedures to protect the rights and dignity of all participating subjects. The participants provided their informed consent before participating in the study, having understood the research purposes and methods. Every participant received assurance regarding their freedom to discontinue their study participation without experiencing a negative impact. The research protected participant privacy through strict policies regarding data anonymity and used the information only for research purposes.

Result

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Participants

This study was conducted with data from respondents (n=450) studying in both public and private universities of Bangladesh. Table 1 shows the socio-demographic profile of these respondents of whom, 16.2% are aged between 18 to 22 years, 53.8% are aged between 23 to 25 years, and 30% are of age 25 to 30 years. Among the respondents, 43.7% were male, and 56.3% were female. Majority of the youth entrepreneurs (73.3%) are students of Bachelor's, while 26.7% of respondents are Master's students. Regarding their area of study, 34.5% of the respondents were of Business Studies, 55.7% were of Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and 9.8% were of Faculty of Science and Technology.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Profile of the Participants

| Demographic Characteristics | | (%) |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Age | 18-22 | 16.2 |
| | 23-25 | 53.8 |
| | 25-30 | 30.0 |
| | Total | 100.0 |
| Gender | Male | 43.7 |
| | Female | 56.3 |
| Level of Education | Bachelor's | 73.3 |
| | Master's | 26.7 |
| Area of the Study | Business Studies | 34.5 |
| | Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences | 55.7 |
| | Faculty of Science and Technology | 9.8 |

Background Information of the Respondents about their Business

Table 2 represents the type and mode of entrepreneurial activities of the respondents. The study revealed that 76.4% of the respondents have a business that runs all year, while 23.6% of the respondents have a seasonal business. Regarding the mode of business, more than half (57.9%) of the respondents run their business through online method, 18.7% of the respondents follow offline method, while the rest (23.4%) of the respondents use a mixed method of both online and offline.

Table 2: Background Information of the Respondents about their Business

What type of business are you running?

| | | |
|--|------------|------|
| | Year Round | 76.4 |
| | Seasonal | 23.6 |

In which mode do you run your business?

| | | |
|--|---------|------|
| | Online | 57.9 |
| | Offline | 18.7 |
| | Mixed | 23.4 |

Factors Affecting Employment in the Business

Chi-square statistics have been used to examine the association between affecting factors such as access to funding, support from university programs and family, etc. and the number of people employed in the business. From the chi-square test results shown in Table 3, the study finds that access to funding have a significant relationship with employment creation in youth entrepreneurship ($p=.014$). This indicates that adequate financial resources are a critical factor for the expansion of youth entrepreneurs and employment generation.

Table 3: Factors Affecting Employment in the Business

| Significance (P - value) | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Affecting Factors | Number of Employment |
| Access to Funding | .014* |
| Support from University Programs | .180 |
| Family Support | .414 |
| Government Initiatives | .263 |
| Networking Opportunities | .366 |

* $p<0.05$

One of our respondents from “X” University who runs a Travel-tech startup, shared the story of growing his business stating,

We initially started our business as a group of four friends and right now we have 12 employees. So far, we have received investments from four different entities. We received investments two times by winning startup competitions at national level, we received a fund through collaborating with an investment company and the other one we received by utilizing the network of a previous investor.

According to his statement, investment plays a critical function in achieving entrepreneurial organization growth together with sustainability. Startups need secured financial support to increase their operation scale and workforce capacity and achieve higher business competency. The respondent demonstrated three essential methods through which young Bangladesh entrepreneurs can find investments by maneuvering competitive funding routes, strategic alliance development and utilizing investor groups. Entrepreneurial access to capital for youth depends on more than direct investments since they can reach funding through well-established credibility within the startup network and strong relationships.

On the other hand, the study found no significant relationship between the number of employees and other affecting factors. Calculated p-value from chi-square tests of other affecting factors, including support from university programs ($p=.180$), family support ($p=.414$), government initiatives ($p=.263$), and networking opportunities ($p=.366$), are all indicative of a p-value ($p>0.005$) greater than the expected value for having an influential relationship. Therefore, these factors may support the growth of entrepreneurial business, but they do not pose any direct significance in creating employment opportunities.

Perception of Entrepreneurs about their Contribution in Employment Creation

Table 4 shows the perception of the youth entrepreneurs about the contribution of their entrepreneurial activities in direct employment creation. 9.1 % of the respondents feel that their business have no contribution in employment creation as they have not employed anyone under their business.

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22.9% of the respondents think they have very little contribution and 31.3% of the respondents think they have moderate contribution. These respondents generally have employed 1 to 5 employees under their business. 31.1% of the respondents believe that they have made high contributions in employment creation, while a smaller group (5.3%) believes their entrepreneurial activities have made very high contributions. This perception of higher contribution is generally seen among the youth entrepreneurs who have managed to employ more than 5 employees.

Table 4: Perception of Entrepreneurs about their Contribution in Employment Creation

| Response | Description | Count | Percentage |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1 | No Contribution | 41 | 9.1% |
| 2 | Very Little Contribution | 103 | 22.9% |
| 3 | Moderate Contribution | 141 | 31.3% |
| 4 | High Contribution | 140 | 31.1% |
| 5 | Very High Contribution | 24 | 5.3% |
| Total | | 450 | 100% |

The study found another valuable insight about recruiting employees as one of our respondents uttered,

Seven university students now work for the enterprise under my recruitment. The recruitment process aimed for candidates who shown creative strengths rather than extensive resume length and collaboration willingness. As my social enterprise organization I prioritized selecting team members who brought both creativity and personal responsibility along with collective advancement commitment.

Here, the growing movement of social entrepreneurship has been followed that combines financial success with social impact to allow young staff members' productive contribution to both economic growth and social progress.

Challenges in Business

Of the 450 respondents, 190 of the youth entrepreneurs (42.2%) found the lack of funding to be the major challenging factor in their entrepreneurial activities. 33.8% of the respondents believe of lack of mentorship as their leading challenge, while 23.6% of the respondents face the most difficulties in balancing their academics and business. Only 1 respondent (0.2%) thinks of market completion as an influential challenge.

Table 5: Challenges in Business

| Response | Count | Percentage |
|---|--------------|-------------------|
| Lack of Funding | 190 | 42.2% |
| Lack of Mentorship | 152 | 33.8% |
| Market Competition | 1 | 0.2% |
| Balancing Academics and Business | 106 | 23.6% |
| Total | 450 | 100% |

Level of Challenges in Entrepreneurial Activities

Table 6 illustrates the level of challenges perceived by the youth entrepreneurs. The respondents rated the challenges they face in their entrepreneurial activities from 1 to 5 (1=Not Significant, 2=Slightly Significant, 3=Moderately Significance, 4=Highly Significant, 5=Very Highly Significant). From the percentage in each rating, 34.44% of the respondents find difficulty accessing startup capital a highly significant challenge, while 5.33% of the respondents find it not significant at all. 39.78% of the respondents believe the challenge of balancing academic workload with entrepreneurship to be highly significant, while 1.33% of the respondents believe it to be not significant. 35.11% of the respondents note lack of business guidance as a moderately significant challenge, while 1.33% of the respondents find it of no significance. Regarding inadequate government support, 25.78% of the respondents perceive it as moderately significant challenge, while 11.78% of the respondents believe it to be not significant. Lastly, 36.44% of the respondents assume social or cultural stigma around

entrepreneurship as a moderately significant challenge, while 4.67% of the respondents do not find it to be of any significance.

Table 6: Level of Challenges in Entrepreneurial Activities

| Challenges | Rating 1 (%) | Rating 2 (%) | Rating 3 (%) | Rating 4 (%) | Rating 5 (%) |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Difficulty accessing startup capital | 5.33 | 14.89 | 23.56 | 34.44 | 21.78 |
| Balancing academic workload with entrepreneurship | 1.33 | 11.33 | 36.44 | 39.78 | 11.11 |
| Lack of business guidance | 1.33 | 20 | 35.11 | 30 | 13.56 |
| Inadequate government support | 11.78 | 17.56 | 25.78 | 20.67 | 24.22 |
| Social or cultural stigma around entrepreneurship | 4.67 | 16.67 | 36.44 | 30.67 | 11.56 |

The qualitative analysis of the study further suggests the significance of financial resources, especially startup capital, in driving employment expansion and fostering entrepreneurial growth. The findings underscore that the absence of adequate funding in entrepreneurial activities lead to numerous shortcomings such as resource constraints, inadequate remuneration for staffs and shortage of skill building training opportunities for employees. As a ripple effect, financial constraints not only have adverse impact on entrepreneurs, but also stifles job creation and economic growth.

The analysis also identifies several other barriers that demotivates entrepreneurs in expanding their activities. Such barriers include lack of institutional and family support, social stigma, etc. Limited access to mentorship, business networks, and government-backed initiatives pose as significant challenges in pursuing entrepreneurship. Social stigma surrounding entrepreneurship also plays a demotivating role as society

perceive it as not enough prestigious and unstable career choice with a higher probability of failure.

Discussion

Experimental research findings confirm that youth entrepreneurship drives job creation as earlier studies showed financial backing and organizational support function as primary catalysts (Fadeyi et al., 2015; Vogel, 2013). Statistical assessment showed that university students achieve substantial employment growth from acquiring funding as an essential business expansion factor ($p < 0.05$). Studies from Amin (2019) and Ahaibwe and Kasirye (2015) agree that financial restrictions obstruct entrepreneurial expansion alongside employment formation within developing economies. Business growth together with employment expansion occurred because students succeeded in obtaining investments according to survey participant testimonies. The study established that university entrepreneurship support programs do not create a statistically noteworthy connection with job creation ($p > 0.05$). Quaium & Hossain (2024) established that Bangladesh's public universities deliver theoretical instruction instead of practical entrepreneurship learning. A lack of mentorship which persists as an ongoing problem according to survey respondents (33.8%) manifests as evidence toward the inability of educational institutions to deliver practical hands-on guidance required to advance business development and create employment opportunities.

The study reveals the employment generating power of social entrepreneurship by examining how young entrepreneurs conduct their recruitment activities. The research outcomes match what Njoku (2024) establishes through his work about how entrepreneurship education develops employment opportunities and social progress. The businesses applying new recruitment approaches built around teamwork and creativity instead of conventional qualifications support economical growth along with social progress. Rahaman & Podder (2023) confirmed financial limitations (42.2%) and academic-business conflict (23.6%) as obstacles student entrepreneurs encounter although both issues demand institutional policy interventions to support youth business operations according to them. Bangladesh startup sector faces regulation together with capital barriers which necessitate policy

transformation and easy investment conditions and mentorship frameworks for youth entrepreneurship (UNESCAP, 2022). The ability of entrepreneurship to tackle unemployment in Bangladesh depends on strategic funding support and policy changes alongside structured mentorship programs to achieve maximum employment generation.

Conclusion

Youth entrepreneurship plays a transformative role in addressing or dealing with things like unemployment and driving economic growth. This paper highlights that young entrepreneurs conduct their entrepreneurial activities throughout the year, where online platforms act as their main mode of operation. Although these entrepreneurs offer opportunities like self-employment, small-scale job creation, etc. but still limited access to funding and others remain a significant constraint while expanding their ventures and hiring staff. Along with the financial barrier, institutional ineffectiveness, policy inefficiencies, lack of expertise act as a major constraint while innovative business models, technological advancement and supportive government policies can be a solution by creating a sound or favorable environment for entrepreneurship. Although this paper provides valuable insights, some limitations must be acknowledged. The depth of data collection and analysis was somewhat reduced due to time constraints, which has become a barrier to more comprehensive research of this topic. Also, financial constraints, limited availability and interest of respondents, and some external factors (such as economic changes also) may affect the long-term applicability of research findings. The upcoming researchers can address these limitations by incorporating a larger number of participants, longer research duration, and diversified funding sources. Overall, although youth entrepreneurship in Bangladesh shows promise in terms of self-reliance and small-scale employment generation, structural and financial constraints must be addressed in order to realize its full potential and create sustainable employment. Based on the findings discussed earlier, the following area has some policy implications that can help policymakers enhance entrepreneurial opportunities in Bangladesh. 1) The findings have great implications for employment creation and youth entrepreneurship as per the 8th five-year plan (2020–2025). Promoting young entrepreneurship through training and start-up funding accessibility is an integral part of the plan. Special efforts are

required to deal with unemployment and NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth. The plan sets a target to reduce the NEET population from 29.8% to 15%. 2) The findings also have great implications on the role of higher education in skill development for university entrepreneurs as per the existing SDG goal-4 ‘Quality Education’. 3) The study found the importance of digital entrepreneurship, online startups, and digital financial inclusion that directly support the aim of “The National Digital Bangladesh Policy (2021).” To strengthen youth entrepreneurship and its impact on employment creation, the following recommendations are proposed: providing low-interest startup loans by government and private institutions for university-level entrepreneurs, launching easy repayable microloan schemes, and establishing a national youth entrepreneurship fund or offering tax incentives and subsidies. Business incubators and one-stop service centers should be developed to provide training, mentoring, technical assistance, and financing support for fresh and small entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial training boot camps, both online and offline, should be launched with a focus on business strategies and digital marketing, while compulsory internship programs can be introduced to give students practical experience in startups. Collaboration between industry and academia should be encouraged for knowledge exchange and mentoring, and the business registration process for students should be simplified by reducing legal and administrative complications. Public-private partnerships (PPP) should be strengthened to improve investment and innovation in youth-led entrepreneurship, and gender-responsive policies should be implemented to provide additional support for women entrepreneurs. A national mentoring network should be created to connect experienced entrepreneurs with student startups, and university-run business clubs should be encouraged to facilitate peer-to-peer learning and industry engagement. Access to global networking events and startup accelerators should be strengthened, and a university initiative advisory board with business leaders and policymakers should be established. Digital initiatives should be encouraged by providing free access to e-commerce platforms for student businesses, and high-speed internet infrastructure should be invested in on university campuses to facilitate online business growth. Affordable digital tools and software for marketing and business management should be provided to student entrepreneurs, and support should be given for the development of AI-powered business solutions to foster innovation in youth-led startups. Finally, training programs

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in cybersecurity and digital finance should be initiated to ensure secure online business operations.

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