

Assessment of managers' proclivity for social dialogue in Bangladeshi Textile Industries

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship of two important constructs (the belief and attitude constructs) with managers' proclivity for using Social Dialogue – a tool for managing people at work (patronised by ILO) for maintaining peace and harmony in Bangladeshi textile industries. Managers' personal belief and attitude within an organisation might affect the managerial responses towards social dialogue. The obtained data from the questionnaires are analysed through the 1st generation statistical packaged software (SPSS) and hypotheses are tested using Smart PLS software package well known as 2nd generation data analysis software. Analyses results strongly supported the relationship of the belief and attitude construct with managers' proclivity for using social dialogue. The research surveyed three hundred fifty-one managers at 49 textile industries. The findings of this study suggest that the belief and attitude construct have a significant positive relationship with managers' penchant for supporting social dialogue. The result of the paper provides managers with a credible argument to continually question their employee perceptions and objectively analyse whether their beliefs and attitudes impact their intention to use social dialogue. The selected sample should have been from strategic, tactical, and operational level of management that remains as a research limitation.

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1. Introduction

The social dialogue is characterised as all forms of collaboration and negotiation, as well as the sharing of information between government officials, employers and employees on issues of mutual interest relating to economic and social policy (Manzur & Remick, 2017). The social dialogue is not only a necessary mechanism for managing change and resolving the differences underway; it also helps to determine the longstanding issues that modern industries are facing every day (Hossain and Akter, 2016). Collective bargaining is defined in the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154), as "all negotiations which take place between an employer, a group of employers or one or more employers' organisations, on the one hand, and one or more workers' organisations (Maarten, Huib & Ongevalle, 2017). Bangladesh also lacks appropriate institutional frameworks to support the adoption of the new legislative structure (Enamul & Nilufar, 2018). Moreover, the level of trust between workers and employers is negligible, and the dialogue at the workplace is limited and deficient (Islam, 2020). Previous researchers have found that social dialogue has little impact on managing people at work (Islam & Kalimuthu, 2020). The program limited contribution and could not provide expected outcome causing disputes and disrupting peace and harmony in the industrial relationship of Bangladesh. Managers belief and attitude play a vital role in the social dialogue process (Ansar, 2019). Beliefs are founded on principles defined as that which is perceived to be good or right while attitude is a psychological inclination or mental predisposition that is reflected by assessing an individual or person with a certain degree of resemblance or displeasure, favour or disfavour. There is a need to understand if the managers of textile industries pose a required proclivity for using social dialogue as a tool for managing people at work. Based on the fact that managers' belief and attitude for using social dialogue is paramount important, this research aims to examine the relationship between managers' belief and attitude towards social dialogue.

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2. Literature Review

Freedom of association and the legitimate right to collective bargaining are the prerequisites for a fruitful social dialogue. Collective representation and social dialogue provide the systemic skills required to manage the future of job transitions (Underwood, 2008). The social dialogue is indeed one of the four objectives of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda. Above all, however, it should be understood as a "how-to" to make decent work. Effective social dialogue requires appropriate infrastructure and an institutional framework. Workers should be able to raise their voices, organise and negotiate (Aboyassin, 2008). To do so, managers must display the requisite penchant for social dialogue. Attitudes are a result of practice contributing to individual differences and resulting from general, secure personal arrangements. Employee involvement can help people to understand, monitor and use their emotions to handle their stress so that they can perform well under pressure, and their attitude is not influenced (Bilginoğlu & Yozgat, 2018). Furthermore, situational experiences, interactions with others, the process of influencing people and formal education have influenced behaviours throughout life (Phuong *et al.*, 2020). Still, personal influences, including personality characteristics, are likely to place a cap on the degree of social situational impact that can be observed. Researchers cannot analyse the belief and attitude in isolation from the constellation of variables that lead to their development (Brown, 2010), maintenance and reformation. It is though individually held, values and behaviours are shared, with few exceptions.

2.1 The Belief Construct

Beliefs are founded on principles defined as that which is perceived to be good or right. The interpretation of what is right or wrong begs the teleological question: that is, what is to be seen as the endpoint of pursuit. There are two types of beliefs — personal beliefs and commonly held beliefs. When individuals are created, stored uniquely in their minds, and not shared with others, a belief is called personal. The micro-perspective focuses on the study of beliefs is a mental process, systems and products of the individual (Miah, Wakabayashi & Takeuchi, 2003). This orientation is focused on the premise that mental or cognitive processes are important to the comprehension of human reactions, whether they are categorised as acts or actions, and whether they are of a social or non-social nature. Previous researchers' interest in social dialogue is primarily confined to general understanding and promotion of the social dialogue concept (Cargile, 2017; Maarten, Huib and Ongevalle, 2017). However, some study such as Hossain and Akter (2016); Wei and Nishimoto (2016); Waardering (2018); Islam, Juhi and Raju (2020) empirically tested the contribution of social dialogue to mitigate workers related disputes. These researchers have opined that managers' knowledge, training, willingness, and government intervention are few among many reasons for which social dialogue. Personal beliefs are uncommon, since people prefer to communicate their personal beliefs through interpersonal or mediated means of communication and, as is often the case, when picked up by others, the former personal belief becomes a mutual, widely held or social belief. A few people, a small group, a government, a society, a culture or most of humanity may have common beliefs (Rego *et al.*, 2016). The emphasis of psychology is on values shared by groups, communities, or cultures. Since personal belief and commonly held belief both postulates ones' mental condition (individually or as a group) to perceive something right or wrong, therefore, the research propose:

H₁: The belief construct has significant relations with managers' propensity to adapt or decline social dialogue process.

2.2 The Attitude Construct

Attitudes may give way to the desire to behave in a certain manner and finally to actions. Some people have reasonably positive attitudes towards all things, while most persons, objects, and ideas hate others. Changes in mindset give people a purpose in their working lives. They could change behaviours so that workers start thinking differently and are more likely to contribute to the development efforts of the organisation (Harrell, 2005). The loyalty of employees to the company is a psychological condition that defines the employees' perceptions and attitudes. Their conduct towards the business is characterised by how they view it: whether they belong to the company or are outside it. From a managerial point of view, if the managers develop trustworthiness to the company in their employees, it is a tremendous success (Islam, 2020). It requires internalising the goals and ideals of the company, the desire to work for the good of the whole organisation and to overcome individual needs (even in situations where the employee is not profitable). Therefore, it is perceived that managers' intention or willingness (positive desire) often determines if they wish to use social dialogue as a tool to manage people at work (Albarracin, Chan & Jiang, 2018). Managers' attitude towards social dialogue needs to be empirically tested and validated that might assist business leaders to understand the psychosomatic reason behind managers' predisposition for social dialogue (Manzur & Remick, 2017).

Researchers opine that attitude can be learnt, meaning that certain attitude can be learnt from the society that reflects ones' propensity for some social phenomenon (AlKahtani *et al.*, 2020). The attitudes construct has three distinct types of contexts-cognitive, affective, and behavioural. In a cognitive learning mechanism, theorists who prefer a cognitive basis for attitude formation believe that attitudes are established about the belief of an object (Chan *et al.*, 2016). Generally, individuals agree with those they like and disagree with those they hate meaning that they show up their attitude (positive or negative) towards some object, subject or phenomenon. Considering these arguments, the research proposed:

H₂: The attitude construct has a significant relationship with managers' propensity for using social dialogue as a tool to manage people at the workplace.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (see Fig. 1) is developed to test the relationship of a defined set of variables (the belief construct and the attitude construct) with managers' penchant for using social dialogue. The belief construct has two dimensions, i.e. personal belief, and common belief. Personal belief is considered personal when created by individuals, exclusively stored in their minds, and not communicated with other individuals (Cargile, 2017). The personal orientation is focused on the premise that mental or cognitive processes, whether those reactions are classified as behaviour, for example, and whether those responses are social or non-social, are important to the understanding of human responses. A few people, a small group, a community, a society, a culture, or the majority of humanity hold common beliefs. In the interpretation of social structure and social expression, shared beliefs play a determining role. At the same time, beliefs are also affected by the existing social structure. This is evidenced by evidence that in a later period, beliefs common in one era are often rejected.

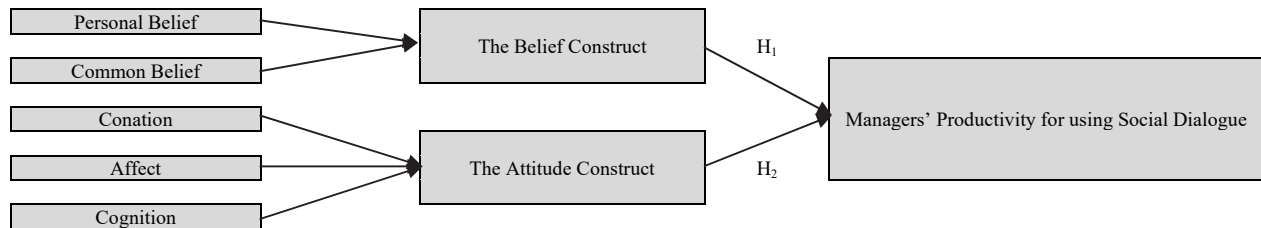


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework in pictorial view

An attitude is a psychological trend or mental predilection demonstrated by assessing an object or entity with a certain degree of like or dislike, favour or dislike. The attitude has three dimensions, i.e. conation, affect and cognition (Underwood, 2008). Attitudes can have an emotion-defensive role in protecting one from unappealing or adverse feelings towards oneself or one's associates or any concept (Islam & Kalimuthu, 2020). Conation denotes the psychosocial or action-oriented intentions of a person concerning or in the presence of an object; that is, the willingness or willingness to achieve an end. Affect refers to the feelings of a person towards a given object and its evaluation. Confucianism and the sharing of authority with workers meets the humanistic desires of employees, thus enabling employees to generate positive cognitions, attitudes and behaviours. These three dimensions of attitude can measure managers attitude towards social dialogue. The model (see figure 1) describes the relationship between the exogenous constructs (the belief and attitude construct) with the endogenous construct (managers' propensity for using social dialogue).

3. Method

This is descriptive research following the quantitative research method. The researchers have narrowed down the scope and tested only two hypotheses due to ongoing COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak in Bangladesh. The research was conducted on textile industries emphasising the feeder industries of ready-made garments industries (RMG). The RMG industries alone contribute 14.07% in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is 81% foreign exchange earnings in Bangladesh (Islam, Juhi & Raju, 2020). Self-administrated questionnaires were distributed for the survey. The instrument had two sections. The first section contained information needs to be collected for demographic variables (nominal data) and the second section contained items on 5 points forced-choice scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The scale of forced-choice was used to prevent any neutral reaction, especially in questions that sounded negative (Zahoor *et al.*, 2021). Data were collected at one point of time from middle-level managers of 14 spinning, 25 textile and ten dyeing industries. The belief construct measurement was done adapting research instrument used by (Underwood, 2008), which has eight items. The belief construct was operationalised in three perspectives, descriptive beliefs, inferential beliefs and informational beliefs (Underwood, 2008). Descriptive beliefs rely on one's observable thoughts. People rarely doubt the authenticity of their senses and tend to believe what they observe by themselves. Inferential beliefs are those beliefs presented to an individual with statistical evidence. And informational beliefs are from interpersonal or mediated communication. The result of descriptive, inferential and informational assumptions may combine ones' beliefs. The attitude construct was measured adapting research instrument used by (Hair *et al.*, 2019), which has nine items. This construct was operationalised in cognitive consistency, which focuses that people typically agree with what they like and strongly disagree with what they do not like. Self-reports are the most direct method of evaluation of attitude unless the persons under investigation are unable or reluctant to provide the necessary details. In self-reports, questions like 'how do you feel about the notion of social dialogue' are frequently posed. Dependent variable managers' proclivity was measured by adapting the research instrument used by (Islam, Juhi & Raju, 2020). The scale has seven items measuring managers propensity for participative decision-making. The same scale is adapted to measure the managers' proclivity for using social dialogue. Five demographic variables were used to collect data about respondents' age, gender, managerial experience, educational qualification, and service length.

3.1 Population, Sampling and Unit of Analysis

The population of this research include all the middle-level managers of spinning, weaving and dyeing industries of located Dhaka and Khulna division of Bangladesh. Table 1 briefly presents the population of the study. Industries were chosen following simple random sampling, and managers were selected using purposive sampling. Samples were chosen from the population through simple random purposive sampling technique (referring to Table 2). Managers were selected purposively based on following reasons: a) Managers should be a member of company's collective bargaining team or social dialogue team, b) Manager should have attended at least four meetings with the labour committee, c) Managers should have institutional training on social dialogue organised by Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BMTA). The unit of analysis is the individual manager working at the middle level in the textile industries in Bangladesh. A total of 585 research instrument were distributed among the middle-level managers of 49 textile industries, and 362 were returned. The response rate is 61.88, which is satisfactory. However, 351 fully completed instruments were used for evaluation.

Table 1

Industry facts

Type of industry	No of Enterprise	No. of unit	Production	Employment In thousands
Spinning	56	385	20.5 Million Metric tons	400,000
Weaving	113	721	21.5 Million meters	80,000
Knitting	45	2800	41 Million meters	60,000
Dyeing Finishing	29	310	17.2 Million meters	33,000
Garments	5063	unknown	44.4 Million dozen	3600,000
Sericulture	16	72	609,400 kg	600,000
Jute	182	unknown	905,000 tons	350,000

Source: Islam, Juh and Raju (2020)

Table 2

Sampling framework

Serial	Description	Textile Industries (N-351)				
		Number of Manager in each level	Number of Industries (Spinning, weaving and knitting only)	Total Population	Sample size (determined by (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970)	The final sample size for Questionnaire distribution considering 60% response rate
1	Operational Level Manager	19	198	3762	351	585
2	Total			16038	351	585
3	Total instrument distributed					585

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Data Evaluation

The research instruments were tested for reliability and validity. The Cronbach Alpha was .908, which is greater than the expected threshold (.7) indicating good reliability and validity of the research instruments (Taber, 2016). Data were assessed for multivariate outliers using Mahalanobis Distance Tests (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The highest reading of Mahalanobis Distance was 43.408, and the lowest is 11.667. The highest Mahalanobis distance (D^2) is much lower than the critical value 56.084, indicating that there are no severe outliers. However, the data violated the assumptions of normal distribution. The skewness and kurtosis are beyond the expected level (out of range of suggested skewness value of +3.29 to -3.29 (Tabachnick *et al.*, 2013). 2nd generation statistical analysis system partial least squares based structural equation modelling is a better option for analysing the complex model. The key attraction of PLS-SEM is that without forcing distributional assumptions on the results, the method allows researchers to evaluate complex models with several constructs, indicator variables, and structural paths (Hair *et al.*, 2018).

4.2 Demographic Profile

Fig. 2 provides a demographic profile of the respondent's in terms of frequency and percentages. As it can be seen in Table 3, male respondents are 338 and female were only 13. This figure is not abnormal as previous research confirms that there is a sharp difference in female appointment in a managerial role in Bangladeshi textile industries. Bangladesh is a high power distance country; the female has a limited scope to serve in a managerial role (Islam, 2020). Around 55% of respondents age ranges from 30 to 50 years. Most managers have 6 to 15 years of managerial experience; opinion of these managers are crucial for assessing their proclivity for social dialogue since they mostly participate in the meeting as management representative.

4.3 Partial Least Squared -Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) Analysis

In SEM-based partial least square analysis, all the variables are usually connected in one figure that shows the direction of the relationship between exogenous and endogenous latent constructs. PLS-SEM model provides three types of important

measurements. These are path coefficient, item loadings and coefficient of determination (R^2) (Sarstedt, Ringle & Hair, 2014). This model presented in the study is a reflective model where the indicators are pointing towards the latent constructs. Before going for hypotheses testing, PLS-SEM model demands to ensure that certain assumptions must be fulfilled. These assumptions are checked through the validity and reliability test and assessment of the model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Rigdon, 2016; Hair *et al.*, 2018).

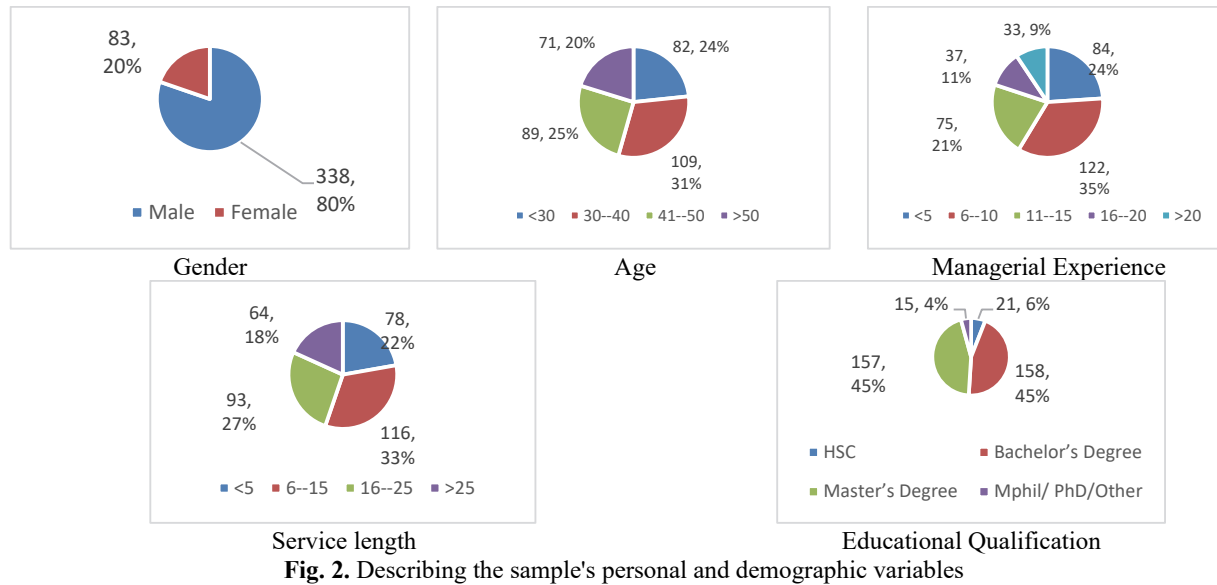


Fig. 2. Describing the sample's personal and demographic variables

Outer loading of the items concerning the latent construct should be above of 0.708, and the Cronbach A (α) should be above 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2014, p.111). As seen in Fig. 3, the outer loadings are above .708, but few items were deleted that were below the expected threshold. In the case of construct reliability and validity, as seen in Table 3, the Cronbach's Alpha is above .7, composite reliability is below 1, and average variance extraction (AVE) is above .5 (Hair *et al.*, 2018). All these results indicated good reliability and validity of the instrument used in the study. For the multicollinearity issue of the variables used in the study, VIF (variance inflation factors) of the outer model is shown in Table 4. All the VIF values are below 5, indicating that multicollinearity is not a serious issue in the study (Joseph F. Hair *et al.*, 2014).

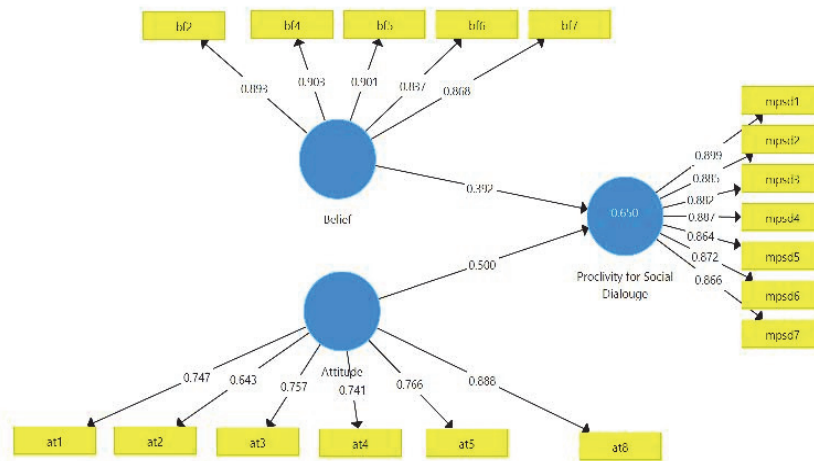


Fig. 3. PLS algorithm report of Smart PLS

Table 3
Construct's reliability and validity

Latent Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	(AVE)
Attitude	0.852	0.891	0.578
Belief	0.927	0.945	0.776
Proclivity for Social Dialogue	0.951	0.960	0.773

Table 4

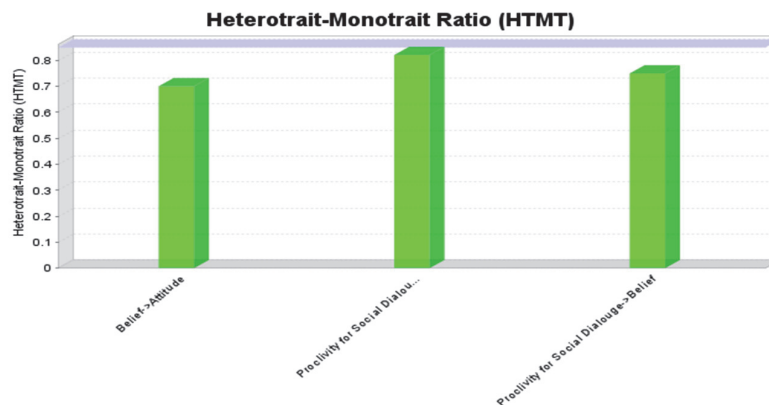
VIF of Inner Model

Construct	Items	VIF	Construct	Items	VIF	Construct	Items	VIF
Attitude	at1	1.667	Managers' Proclivity for Social Dialogue	mpsd1	4.031	Belief	bf2	3.39
	at2	1.403		mpsd2	3.515		bf4	3.403
	at3	1.685		mpsd3	3.5		bf5	3.635
	at4	1.69		mpsd4	3.464		bf6	2.32
	at5	1.872		mpsd5	3.052		bf7	2.674
	at8	2.811		mpsd6	3.215			
				mpsd7	3.055			

Discriminant validity of the constructs is measured using Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion. As seen in Fig 4, The HTMT values are below 1, indicating that the constructs discriminant validity was achieved (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2013). The results also show the R^2 value ($r^2 = 0.650$), meaning that the belief and attitude construct altogether have 65% variance on managers' proclivity for using social dialogue.

4.4 Hypotheses Test

The hypotheses were tested with bootstrapping procedure (5000 samples) using SmartPLS software. Hypothesis H_1 proposed that the belief construct has a significant relationship with managers' proclivity for using social dialogue. As it can be seen in Table 6, the path coefficient is .500 ($<.1$), t value is 9.159 (>1.96) while and $p > 0.05$ (0.000). The result indicates that this hypothesis is **supported**. Hence this research rejects the null hypothesis in favour of an alternative hypothesis. The result revealed that the belief construct has a significant positive relation with managers' proclivity for using social dialogue for managing people at work. Hypothesis H_2 proposed that the attitude construct has a significant relationship with managers' proclivity for using social dialogue. As it can be seen in Table 6, the path coefficient is .392 ($<.1$), t value is 7.282 (>1.96) while and $p > 0.05$ (0.000). The result indicates that this hypothesis is **supported**. Hence this research rejects the null hypothesis in favour of an alternative hypothesis. The result revealed that the attitude construct has a significant positive relationship with managers' proclivity for using social dialogue for managing people at work.

**Fig. 4.** Discriminant validity (HTMT) result**Table 5**

Bootstrapping result of Smart PLS showing the direct path relationship

Path Relationship	Path Coefficient	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Attitude → Proclivity for Social Dialogue	0.500	0.501	0.055	9.159	0.000
Belief → Proclivity for Social Dialogue	0.392	0.392	0.054	7.282	0.000

4.5 Discussion

The collected survey data met all the prerequisite for evaluation and provided enough reliability and validity for further analysis. The respondents are representatives of managers at different textile industries who often participate in social dialogue programs. Their comments and views are important to understand if their beliefs and attitude have any relation to using social dialogue. Previous researchers have opined that social dialogue and collective bargaining agencies have a little contribution to managing people at the workplace with a view to increase in productivity. The findings of this research support the previous study that entrepreneurs (mostly managers) negative attitude to seat for dialogue with workers often bring disaster in textile industries (Manzur & Remick, 2017). The hypotheses tested in this study are supported, and strong correlations were found among the independent variables and the dependent variable.

5. Conclusion, Implications and Guideline for Future Research

The study was undertaken to explore the relationship of two underlying constructs (the belief and attitude) with managers' proclivity for using social dialogue. While managers' beliefs and psychographic characteristics are considered by many researchers while measuring job satisfaction, intention to leave, empowerment and industrial democracy in Bangladeshi manufacturing industries, no researcher has considered these two variables to measure managers' willingness to engage in social dialogue. Previous researchers have found out the psychosomatic reasons as to why CBA and social dialogue has little impact in the industrial relationship in Bangladesh, for example, Selvarajah, Meyer and Bose, (2018) study revealed that morality, religion, interpersonal relationships, and communication apprehension have an impact on leaders willingness to adopt or decline decision made by CBA meetings. Zaman (2018) have opined that managers' stubborn attitude has an impact on their propensity for social dialogue. But no study has considered the relationship of managers' belief and attitude with their proclivity for using social dialogue. Thus, the current study can be regarded as highly relevant and is a fresh addition to management literature in Bangladesh. There is a definite need for organisations to focus on constructs (the belief and attitude constructs) that can contribute towards managers' involvement in social dialogue. This is the main contribution of the present article. The findings of the study have numerous theoretical and practical implications. The main implications are that managers' belief and attitude do have a positive relationship with their propensity for using social dialogue. Belief, a construct that can be developed, (with information and appraisal on social dialogue) can help make workplaces meaningful and pleasurable. This construct, combined with attitude construct (as an attitude can always be learnt), can facilitate in enhancing the engagement level of managers in social dialogue meetings. This study also presents multiple practical implications and new directions for organisations to improve managers' willingness to engage in social dialogue. The model could be used to test the managers' willingness for social dialogue and train the managers who would go a long way in bringing in an ideal organisational climate and positive attitude among members for social dialogue. Such results could be a roadmap that could enable decision-makers to take their businesses more competitive, profitable, and culturally acceptable.

Due to COVID-19 coronavirus effect, access to many factories was limited. The study uses a random purposive sampling technique that might produce a biased result, remains as an important limitation of this research. There could be some other variable that has a relation with managers' willingness to use social dialogue, such as power-sharing attitude (Parnell and Crandall, 2001), communication apprehension (Russ, 2013), locus of control and motivation (Katsaros, Tsirikas & Nicolaidis, 2014). Future research can endeavour to explore such variables to study the managers' propensity for using social dialogue for managing people at work.

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