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Reasons and Realization of Exit Decisions of Women Bank Managers in Bangladesh: A Kaleidoscopic Career Model View

Mansura Akter[1]
Hasina Sheykh[2]

Abstract: The study aims to identify the reasons why women bank managers leave their jobs as well as their realization after the exit. Based on spillover theory while taking a Kaleido scopic view, the study tried to explore women bank managers' exit career decisions through a gender lens. Utilizing a qualitative method, first purposive sampling and then snowballing technique were used to identify women bank managers who have quitted from their jobs. They were then interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. Findings show that the participants went through both work interference with family (WIF)and family interference with work(FIW) spillover resulting in work-family conflict (WFC)thus requiring more 'balancing (B)' instruments, as the majority of the participants were in their mid-career. However, 'authenticity (A)' and 'challenges (C)' still lied there with lessen force to impact. Accordingly, two major recommendations came out of the study to retain the talents of women in the workforce: availability of childcare centers and flexible work arrangements. Further study is suggested on both the areas to check the viability and probable execution.

Keywords: Exit decision, Women, Banking, Kaleidoscope Career Model (KCM)

1.0 Introduction

Women make up half of the world's population. Still, their contribution to the economy is a new phenomenon in many countries, particularly in patriarchal ones, where men are expected to participate in paid work while women are expected to work in families. However, consistent growth of an economy is not possible by leaving the talent of half of the population unutilized. This remains the reality in countries where women are mostly outside of the paid labor force. Of course, their contribution in family level is very high. However that remains unmeasured, uncounted and even unnoticed. Recently, women have started participating in paid work side by side with men. However; their expected role in family is not reduced, leaving their workload in paid work on the top of their thorough participation in housework (Sheykh 2016[3]).

[2] Corresponding author, Associate Professor, Department of International Business, University of Dhaka. Email: mansura@du.ac.bd
[1] Professor, Department of Banking and Insurance, University of Dhaka
[3] An ILO survey (2013 cited in Sheykh 2016) reporting on women's lower work-family balance

This, along with other factors, has resulted in situations where some of the women have started quitting from the paid labor. A number of studies have been conducted on women working in various industries, who took such exit decision; this study focuses on the women managers in the banking industry.

Women's participation in the banking job is relatively a recent scenario. Particularly in Bangladesh, women entered in banking jobs in the early 1980's with the expansion of the industry allowing private commercial banks (Sheykh, 2016). After four decades, it is probably high time to look back to know how did they progress in their career. Literature identified two major findings: women have increased numbers in the junior level of management and their scarcity at the top level (Evetts, 2014; O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria, 2008; Sheykh, 2016). Researchers pointed to many factors causing few women on top: their late entry in the industry as compared to men as well as various discriminations to their career-growth finding glass-ceiling and/or women's 'complex' career-path compared to men's straight one.

This study, however, focuses on such cause viewing particularly women bank manager's exit decision through Kaleidoscopic Career Model (KCM) (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005). In the KCM model, the authors suggested three probable reasons why women exit from jobs; authenticity (A), balance (B), and/or challenge (C) where the reasons vary at different stages of women's life-cycle as comparable to various kaleidoscopic images. Pointing to the role of spillovers (from work to family and family to work) in women's career was found creating work-family conflict (WFC), where the study explores how A, B, and/or C contribute more on women bank managers' exit decision in Bangladesh. The study also identifies wheather the women's such decision reflects any realization of the women after exiting from the job. The study, consequently, helps identifying in what ways such female-talents can be retained in the banking sector, thus to achieve gender equality along with higher economic growth.

2.0 Research Objectives

The objective of the study, broadly, is to understand the exit decision of women bank manager's from their role in various banks of Bangladesh. Specifically, this study focuses on identifying the reasons behind exit decisions and the nature of their realization after exit, if any. The study contributes to the policy recommendations on how to retain the female-talents in the banking sector of the Bangladesh, thus, to ensure gender equality to promote better economic growth.

(WFB) showed an average Bangladeshi woman's contribution of 10.34 hours per day spent in household work in contrast to a man's 2.26 hours..

3.0 Literature Review

3.1 Women in Banking

In Bangladesh, women are increasingly entering in the banking industry. According to Bangladesh Bank (BB), the central bank of Bangladesh, there are 31,548 women working in the banking industry of Bangladesh(BB, 2022). The number grew from 4.74% in 1983 to 6.23% in 1993 (Choudhury, Saha and Moral, 1995) to 8.96% in 2012 to current 16.28% of total bank-employees in 2022 (BB, 2012, 2022). Although women's increased participation in paid work is generally observed, the major factors behind that big increase particularly in banking industry probably are due to banking jobs being viewed as prestigious, decent and, thus, preferable jobs for women with an assumption of less requirement for outdoor work (Sheykh, 2016). On the top of this, it helps attaining the 5th sustainable development goal (SDG) 'gender equality' while empoweringall women and girls. In 2021, Bangladesh becomes the 65th country among 156 in the world in terms of 'global gender gap' as published by World Economic Forum; increased participation of women in the workforce and enhanced economic benefits probably are the main reasons behind this achievement (BB, 2022).

Interestingly, the trend is higher among the younger generation of women as the Central Bank showed that there is a larger share of women employees in the below-30 years' age group relative to older age groups (BB, 2022). The scholars, however, viewed the issue of more women mostly in the junior management of the banks through a 'gender' lens. Although banking was earlier identified as a 'feminized' industry, scholars found it partially true as women are found more in initial positions than in senior levels of management forming a 'pyramidal' shape of banks' management structure; women comprise 60% of the employees but at most a tiny proportion of the managers (Evetts, 2014). The local scenario shows a similar pattern too, as in Diagram-1:

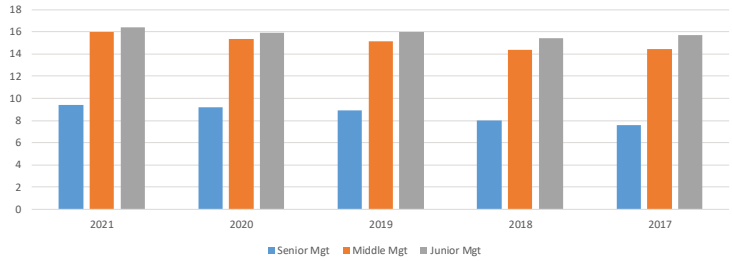

Diagram 1: Women's participation in various management levels in banks

Source: Gender Equality Reports, Bangladesh Bank, 2017-2021

The Diagram-1 shows the percentage of women's employment in various banks in Bangladesh at three different levels of management; senior, middle and junior management. It clearly portrayed women's lower presence in the senior level of

management over the years. Some of the reasons included their late initiation in paid labor as well as many of them leaving the workforce at some point of the career mostly for family responsibilities; second is the focus of this study as reflected in the literature, too.

3.2 Women's decision to exit from career: A work-family perspective

Women's identification as 'employees with family responsibilities' impacts negatively on their participation and, consequently, their career progression in banks in Bangladesh (Alam, Sattar and Chaudhury, 2011). Many scholars identified the banking industry as 'family un-friendly' where long working hours with intensified workloads is a 'norm' and any flexibility in work is 'informally arranged' at the discretion of the line managers and that usually leads to negative career consequence (Wilson, 2014). Women working in banks and living in a 'patriarchal' society as in Bangladesh remain the primary carer of their children and any elderly in the family facing high social expectations. Their participation in workforce, being a relatively new phenomenon in Bangladesh, thus gives rise to work-family tension. Lim and Rasdi (2019) pointed that working mothers are often overloaded with both family and paid work, that they very often do more than men; leaving them in a constantly stressful environment.

Previous researchers have acknowledged the socially constructed nature of motherhood and career, as well as the fluidity and complexity of ways of performing mothering practices alongside professional work (Herman, Lewis & Humbert, 2013). It is about not only gender differences, but also the gendered nature of the attitude that expects men to prioritize work over family, and women to prioritize family over work (Lyness and Judiesch, 2014). Many of the women are found forced to choose between having a family and having a successful career (O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria, 2008). Identifying the deep-rooted discriminatory socio-cultural values, the other researchers recognize that women do not experience the same status as men, nor can they compete with them in paid work being established that it is not their first priority (Rehman and Roomi. 2012).

Researchers, therefore, identified both the work-side (push) and family-side (pull) factors that drive women out of their jobs. By making a content analysis Williams et al. (2006 cited in Lim and Rasdi, 2019) found that 86% of women refer to inflexible jobs with long working hours as well as lack of support for working mothers and gender biasness in the workplace as the key reasons for their decision to leave the job. On the other side, Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) refers to some key pull-factors like need to care for children and/or aging parents, personal demands, and sometimes trailing spouse issues for the exit decision. Considering the alarming 'talent drain' among women who choose not to aim to

a senior position at work, the scholars thus refer it to the "opt-out revolution", a term sensationalized by Lisa Belkin (2003 cited in Lim and Rasdi, 2019).

4.0 Theoretical perspective and Conceptual framework

This study was reasonably conducted from a feminist perspective. Although women around the world had established themselves in the work sphere in addition to their roles in the family sphere, extension of men's role-playing in the family sphere was found still very insignificant (Bartley et al., 2005; Sullivan, 2000). Since the last several decades, researchers established the spillover arguments within the gender differences in family and work lives, thus, possible conflict due to WIF and FIW (Hintsa et al. 2015). Research suggested that women were more likely to exit work when they faced a conflict between work and family (Xue et al., 2018). Besides, men and women attached themselves differently to work force. For example, when men exited a job they exited it permanently, however, women moved in and out of the workforce and consequently shifted their household responsibility (Lacey et al., 2015). Hence, exit from work might have different meaning and impact for men and women.

According to Hartsock (2004), feminist stance revealed the differences between men and women's life spheres. Here, this study employed such perspective to uncover the reasons and realization of women bank managers' exit decision from work. Social standpoint theory provided an important lens to understand insights about women's multiple role-playing and its impact on WFC (Chasserio et al., 2014). Few theories (e.g. compensation, segmentation, spillover) were developed focusing on relationship between work and family life. Segmentation theory stated that factors in family life sphere and work sphere were independent from one another, while compensation theory claimed that success or failure of one sphere might be compensated by failure or success in another sphere of life. These two theories claimed that there is no overlap or connection between work life and the family life, thus one sphere of life influenced the other sphere positively. In contrast, spillover theory claimed that experiences in one sphere of life might influence the other sphere both positively and negatively (Radóó, Nagy and Király, 2016). Spillover theories could be applied for covering various interactions and experiences women bankers faced between work and family life (Tammelin 2009 cited in Radóó, Nagy and Király, 2016).

Another theory related to this studywas*Kaleidoscope Career Model (KCM).* In KCM, (also called ABC model) Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) looked at the career development pattern of an individual employee depending on the different stages of his/her life cycle. As the model said, a person considered available alternatives in work/non-work demands, constraints, and opportunities in each phase in life that best fits his/her respective values and interests. It looked into the

career development pattern through three lenses: authenticity (A), balance(B), and challenge (C). First, authenticitywas an individual's need to make choices reflecting one's true self, while aligning his/her values and behaviors. Second, balance, was the need to reach a middle point between work and non-work aspects of life including own-development, immediate and extended family requirements as well as social aspects. Finally, challenge was the need for a motivation in work that remained highly responsible for having good control and autonomy that results in career advancement. More specifically, (A) authenticity meant making decisions that suit the self above others, (B) balance meant making decisions so that the various aspects of one's life, including work and non-work, form a coherent whole, and (C) challenge, getting opportunities so that one could pursue autonomy, responsibility, and control while learning and growing (August, 2010).

Mainiero and Sullivan (2005, 2022) pointed that all the three parameters remained active throughout the life guiding the decisions made. However, in one particular phase of life, one lens may get priority to shape the decision; the rest two still lied there with lessen force to impact. This was how different career decisions came out resembling to the changing pattern created in a Kaleidoscope. Later, the scholars applied the model on women's changing career decisions in different stages of their lives as shown in Diagram-2:

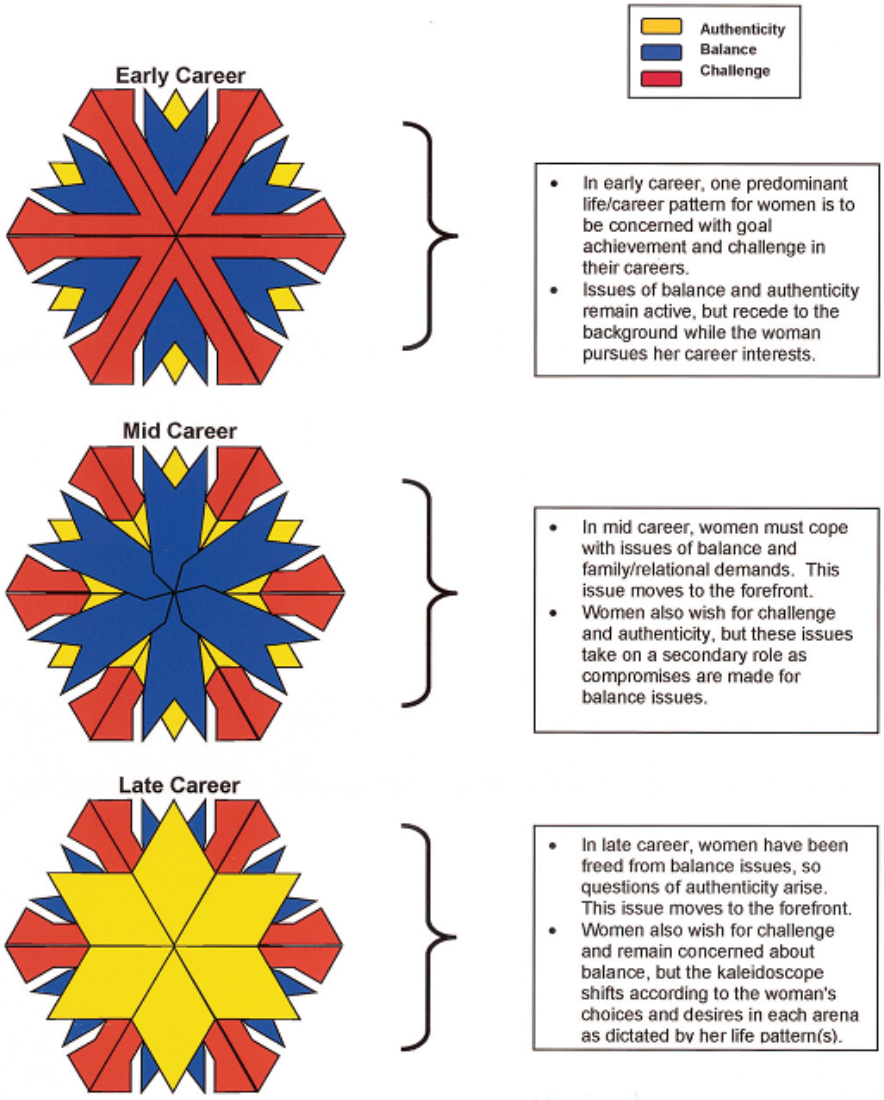

Diagram 2: The ABC Model of Kaleidoscope Careers for Women

Source: Mainiero and Sullivan (2005)

Different theories might be applicable in a research setting depending on the nature of research questions and concepts (Dén-Nagy, 2013). Based on the assumptions of different theories related to this study, a conceptual framework was developed, as shown in Diagram 3, for analyzing the reasons and realization of exit decision of women bank managers in Bangladesh.

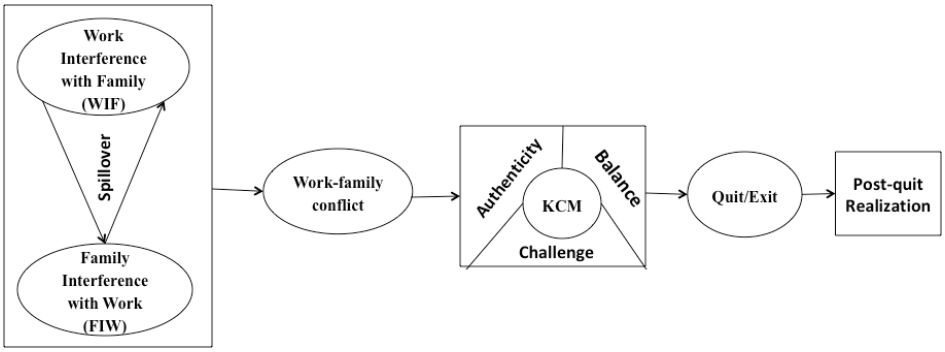

Diagram 3: Conceptual framework
Source: Developed by the Authors

5.0 Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative method to effectively uncover the voice of women (Olesen, 1994), specifically women bank managers.Simultaneously, it borrowed the essence of feminist standpoint theory and spillover theory to unveil any gender-specific reasons and realizations behind their exit decisions. Accordingly, a qualitative study was deemed appropriate as it interrogated how women contextualized their experiences of WF and FIW within sociocultural or other macro-environmental aspects (Roomi et al., 2018).

Data were collected first based on purposive sampling (Roomi et al., 2018) and then using a snowballing technique (Malhotra, 2018) from 10 women bankers who have quitted their jobs. The major criterion for selecting the sample was that all the participants were women bank managers in Bangladesh who have quitted from their jobs. As the study was to investigate the reasons and realizations behind the exit decisions of those women, semi-structured interviews were utilized to collect data, whichwas consideredan appropriate method of data collectionreflecting the life (Jayaratne, 1983). All interviews were voice-recorded. Interviews were conducted in the native language of the participants and the researchers (i.e. Bengali language) for capturing all the possible aspects of the views. The recorded interviews were transcribed later. Once the transcription of all the interviews was over,researchers made the literal and meaningful translation of all interviews into English language. Necessary adjustments (e.g. grammatical omissions) were made in the translated copies for better understanding of the spoken language (Pilnick and Zayts, 2016). Moreover, some necessary words were inserted in square bracketsduring translation of the interviews for needed clarification (Bryman, 2016).

Data were analyzed usingcontent analysis following Elo and Kyngäs' (2008) guidelines. Initially, for preparing the data, researchers immersed in the data to obtain the sense of whole insights. Later on, they selected the unit of analysis for deciding on the analysis of manifest content or latent content. At the second stage, for organizing the data, they coded data for creating categories, and then grouped codes under higher order themes for formulating a general description of the research topic using categories and subcategories. Finally, they used *Kaleidoscope Career Model's ABC framework* to report the reasons of women bank managers' exit decision and their realization after quitting their jobs.

6.0 Findings and Discussion

This section is divided into three sub-sections. First, demographic information about the participants as portrayed in a tabular form while linking the respective information to their exit decision. In the second sub-section, focus is put on the reasons behind the exit decisions of the participants and finally their realization after exiting from the job are identified from three point of views in the third sub-section.

6.1 Demographic details of the participants

To identify the participants, a variety of banks in Bangladesh – e.g. State-owned Commercial Banks (SOCB), Private Commercial Banks (PCB), Islami Shariah based PCB, and Foreign Commercial Bank (FCB)-were selected by considering thatwomen bankers' reasons for exit decision may vary depending on the nature of banks. Each category of banks was contacted to collect the contact information of their ex-employees. Besides, researchers' personal sources were also used to collect the potential participants' contact information. At the first-stage, participants were contracted to get their consent to participate in the interview. Based on their agreement, at the second-stage, 10 participants were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. Table 1 portrays the demographic details of the participants of this study.

Analysis of the demographic information of the participantsrevealed many important insights related to the women bankers' exit decision. The demographic data showed that only 20% of the interviewees had less than 5 years of experience at the time of taking the exit decision. Surprisingly, majority of the participants (60%) had more than 15 years of career length while they decided to quit from their jobs. Another interesting finding was that, most of the participant (70%) quit their jobs when their child wereover 7 years old. However, literature suggested that day-to-day household concerns along with childcareresponsibilities produced significant costs for mothers of all socio-economic backgrounds (Usdansky and Wolf, 2015). The finding of this study consistentlyconveyed that women

bankers not quitting their job at the early age of their child when childcare duties were of high demand. Rather, they quitted their jobs when their children needed less physical care but more mental care. For example, one of the participants elaborated:

"I had left my children to their grandfather and grandmother. They took care of them including taking them to school. At one point, my children became teenagers and required to maintain proper study and mental health-care. For that reason, I had to give my time to them more, and I quit [from] my job." (P-4)

Table 1: Demographics of the participants (at the time of exit)

Source: The Interview Data

Participants (P)	Family				Personal			Organizational		
	Nature& Members	Children (# & Age)	Husband's Job	Maid Servant*	Age (Range years)	Education	Service-length, Exit-year	Nature of Bank	Commuting (Home to Office)	Designation
P-1	Nuclear	1, 14Y	Govt. Job	Nil	45-50Y	Master Degree	20Y, 2021	Private Bank	Khilgaon to Bangla Motor, 10.7 km	Senior Principal Officer
P-2	Nuclear	No child	Banker	PTPS	45-50Y	Master Degree	10Y, 2011	Islamic Bank	Mirpur to Gulshan, 7.5 km	Assistant Vice President
P-3	Joint	1, 7Y	Banker	Nil**	45-50Y	Master Degree	15Y, 2016	Private Bank	Gulshan to Kawran Bazar, 6.3 km	Assistant General Manager
P-4	Joint	2, 6Y & 8Y	Private company	FTPS	45-50Y	Master Degree	17Y, 2019	State-owned Bank	Mirpur to Motijheel, 15.1 km	Assistant General Manager
P-5	Joint	No child	Barrister	FTPS	30-35Y	Master Degree	2.5Y, 2011	Foreign Bank	Shantinagar to Motijheel, 1.5 km	Management Trainee Officer
P-6	Nuclear	1, 4.5Y	Project-based job	FTPS	35-40Y	Master Degree	8.5Y, 2021	Private Bank	Mirpur to Gulshan, 7.5 km	Senior Principal Officer
P-7	Joint	2, 12Y & 18Y	Private company	FTPS	45-50Y	Master Degree	20Y, 2021	Private Bank	Mirpur to Kakrail, 13.3 km	Senior Principal Officer
P-8	Joint	1, 16Y	Govt. Job		50-55Y	Master Degree	18Y, 2021	Private Bank	Badda to Dilkusha, 7.3 km	Senior Executive Officer
P-9	Nuclear	1, 6Y	Private company	Nil	30-35Y	Master Degree	3.5Y, 2022	Private Bank	Banasri to Khilgaon, 4.7 km	Junior Officer
P-10	Joint	2, 13Y & 5Y	Banker	PTPS	50-55Y	Master Degree	20Y, 2014	Private Bank	Mirpur to Shantinagar, 14.3 km	Manager

* FTPSFull-time paid servant, PTPS Part-time paid servant
** Sister helped

6.2 Reasons for exit decision

Mapping the reasons behind women bank managers' exit decision was the first research objective of this study. In an effort to find out such reasons,data were analyzed using the *Kaleidoscope Career Model* (KCM also named as ABC framework). More specifically, it was tried to find out whether women bank managers' quit their job because:

- it was not suitable for them (i.e. A, for Authenticity), or
- they failed to manage the various aspects of their lives, including work and non-work (i.e. B, for Balance), or
- they were deprived from engaging in activities so that they could pursue autonomy, responsibility, and control for learning and growing further (i.e. C, for Challenge).

Interview data expressed the following findings.

6.2.1 Authenticity: Suitability of the job

Authenticity indicates "the desire to make some decisions solely due to one's own needs rather than the needs of others" (August, 2010). In this study, it was tried to find out whether women bank managers made their career choices based on their own choices or not. They were askedwhether they think banking job was suitable for them or whether they quitted their job because it was not suitable for them (i.e. Authenticity). Majority of the participants (70%) of this study mentioned that they thought career in banking sector were suitable for women. Participants expressed as-

> *"The nature of the job was suitable for me. I had no issue with that."*(P-1)

> *"Yes, it was suitable for me. I think if I was given any options now, I would join a bank again, because I love banking work."* (P-3)

> *"Bank job was suitable for me. I guess the bank job is very secured job for women. I was in a Multinational Bank. Their environment was very good."*(P-5)

Existing literature also supported this finding. A study conducted in Bangladesh found that women prefer banking career because this career option had growth opportunity, better work environment, supervisor recognition and better job recognition in the society (Islam, Saha and Ahmed, 2000).

However, some specific features of banking job including long working hours and a few other factors became keys in retaining the talents in banks. Majority of the participants (80%) expressed that banking career was difficult for them for these reasons. Mainly, they mentioned that long work hours and distance between residence and office location requiring even longer time in traffic made

this job unsuitable for them. They expressed in the following way-

"The timing was the big factor." (P-3)
"I used to feel ill after returning home. This was one of the reasons." (P-4)

Although bank work-hours were specified, that remained in black and white only, the participants mentioned. In reality, the working hours for a bank-manager remained very open at the end; they used to start on time in the morning but they had no idea regarding the closing time. This included the name of the industry identified in the group ofhaving 'long-hour'culture. In many other researches, this was identified as a major drawback in banking career (e.g. Alam, Sattar and Chaudhury, 2011; Rehman and Roomi, 2012). This study found a similar situation that ultimately impacted on women's exit decision.

Another finding was that, sometimes, family members thought banking job not suitable for a married woman. One of the participants expressed as:

"My in-laws indirectly used to tell me to join any jobs other than bank job. Staying out of home the whole day was problematic. Some family issues also were there. I had tried to switch to other departments [requiring less work hours]."(P-5)

This finding also resembled the existing literature that showed how a woman's career choice became influenced by environmental and/or other significant family factors (Orbih and Imhonopi, 2019).

In sum, it could be said that women's desire for authenticity was related to many issues. Their preferences of choosing and staying in banking career at some level, revolved around the idea of focusing on one's own needs as well as in relation to family and society's requirementswere other key of those.

6.2.2 Balance: Adjustment between work and family

Difficulty faced in balancing work and family was found as another critical reason for women bank managers' exit decision. Existing literature also supported this finding. Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) used the term 'holy grail' to define 'balance' as many women continuously searched for readjustment to circumstances, with little likelihood of actuallyattaining it. This was true particularly for women in work force. Women in work always desired to achieve balance among various piecesof their lives—work and non-work—into one coherent picture (August, 2010). Hence, during interviews taken for this study, women bank managers' discussions were liberally sprinkled with discussions of home life and families. Several existing research established and proved the spillover arguments within the gender differences in family and work life, creating possible conflict due to WIF andFIW (Hintsa et al., 2015). Moreover, there was assumption that women

may be more likely to exit work when they faced a conflict between work and family (Xue et al., 2018). The participants were asked what instigated them to take the exit decision. More specifically, whether they quitted because of their family obligations, or their own guilty feelings, or society's pressure. This study found mixed results regarding WIF and FIW.

6.2.2.1 Work interference with family (WIF)

This study found association of WIF, which created WFC, leading towomen bank managers' exit decisions. For all participants, WIF was strongly relatedto work-related factors such as long working hours, job stress,schedule inflexibility, and far location of workstation from home.

Long working hours

The findings of the study matched with the literature that banking industry was identified as a workplace with long hours' culture.

> *"In banking job, the workload is so immense that you cannot complete those within 8 hours. You will need extra 1-2 hours, or even more, to complete your service*." (P-1)

> *"The long working hour was a big factor behind it. It was a big mental pressure for long days. It regularly takes around 9 pm to return home,which was quite a mental pressure for me as lots of house-responsibilities were waiting there. Then I thought 20 years have passed, I can not take it any more; need to quit. That's all."*(P-6)

Interestingly, a few participants linked the 'ability of employees being available in the workplace for long hours' to positive career-progress through good rapport building, thus better performance-appraisal leading to promotion. And 'presenteeism' matters too (P-2, P-8). They mentioned that, having high responsibility at home, women failed to take such opportunities. Rather, they wholeheartedly want to finish the workload as early as possible and reach home at their earliest to takeover the other responsibilities there. Consequently, they claimed that they did not get proper recognition of their effort in workplace rather being misjudged and/or stereotyped:

> *"We, women, always do our job timely and try to go back home early. What my male colleagues do is they relax, have numerous breaks, gossiping with bosses etc. We can't do that. If we would gossip with the boss, it would take 9 pm – 10 pm to complete all of my tasks. But by creating such a good relationship with the boss, they can have a promotion, that I cannot. Because, I don't have enough time for that. I get a low rating and they get higher ratings. My contributions did not matter. These aspects are truly shocking."* (P-6)

Job Stress

Research on job stress due to workload and its impact on job performance found correlation between job stress and job performance (Vijayan, 2017). Besides, job stress affects employees' turnover intension (Arshadi and Damiri, 2013). Job stress increases burnout, which in turn increases stress (Leung, Chan and Dongyu, 2010). The long working hours was due to the very high workload in banks, all the participants consented. Some of the participants, particularly who worked in private banks and foreign banks, expressed their high workload there.

> *"They give us the workload of 4 to 6 persons to be done by one person. This must take long hours to complete.* (P-8)

> *"Sometimes we need to work on holidays. Weekend working is quite common too.* (P-10)

> *"I used to work for about 12-13 hours each day. By the time I return at night, somedays my child become slept; don't see me."* (P-9)

Participants' expression revealed that job stress was one of the reasons for quitting their job, too. They mentioned:

> *"I wake up every morning to go to my job. If I do not have mental satisfaction, it is not possible to continue. As an employee, of course, I have to manage my office, and that's a challenging job. But I need to manage my home as well. If I focus on one side and give priority to that, the other one will perish. Until I am satisfied with an aspect, I can give my best there. The timing of the job was not satisfying for me. Huge mental pressure from it caused me to quit my job."*(P-6)

Another participant (P-1) explained some particular problems that she faced in balancing her work and family responsibilities. For example, she highlighted that long working hours in the banking job was not only caused her own problem; rather, the issue of her child's mental health was her main concern. She was found feeling guilty and blamingherself for her child's mental condition. She explained that the immense work pressure in the job was one of the reasons why she couldn't give proper time to her child:

> *"Everyday he waited for me. Once I return, he was walking with me when I was running between kitchen and other works; telling me whatever happened with him during the whole day. I used to feel bad. He needs more company of me."* (P-1)

Further, she added:

> *"A feeling of insecurity also worked in me while leaving my child home*

alone for a long a time. I had temporary home maid, but still I was not comfortable."(P-1)

Her (P-1)comments on the critical role of mother in care-giving to the child expressed that in our society, women themselves internalized the role of up-brining their child, which reiterated whatwas known from the literature (Echabe, 2010). For example, other participant (P-7) added to this concern as:

"Not everyone has support in their home to take care of their children. And a mother needs to support her child. When both father and mother get into jobs and a little support is provided at the early life-stage of the child, a big gap remains in childcare. What happens! The child becomes device addicted and faces speech-delay problems. Many other problems arise in the child that I have faced because I couldn't provide proper time."(P-7)

Another participant explained that howhigh work-load thus extended office hours created conflicts and misunderstandings among her family members. She stated as:

"If I frequently excuse my family in the name of my job, that would be unacceptable." (P-3)

Schedule Inflexibility

High workload requiring long office hours in banks accelerated the WFC due to non-flexibility of work; in terms of either time or place. All the managerial jobs in banks are full time jobs. Some women bankers argued that they rather would prefer to finish their work on time to minimize the WFCs. Majority of the participants consented that if they could get the flexible work hour facility, it would probably be possible for them to continue the job*:*

"During the pandemic of two years, office hour was shrunk and there was an opportunity to work from home. I have managed those two years well." (P-1)

"If the timing was flexible for me, I wouldn't have quitted my job. (P-3)

Location of the workstation

Location of the workstation, in terms of distance between residence and office,was found as another critical factor responsible for the women's career-exit decision. This factor was also found responsible for physical illness of the women bank managers, which in turn influence them for taking early retirement decision. All of the participants mentioned that long working hour, and work stress could be adjusted if they could get the opportunity to work in the branchesnear their residential area:

"My office was at Motijheel. My home was at Mirpur-10. It took four and half-hours everyday in transport from Mirpur to Motijheel. I could not take that journey. At one point, I started having a problem of back pain. I became very sick after returning home. This was one of the reasons."(P-5)

However, some contrasting findings also found in this study. For some participants (e.g. P-6, P-8) explained as:

"No, I did not face this type of issue in my office. I did my job properly during working hours. I did not feel extra pressure from my work, just as regular."(P-6)

Interestingly, this group of women further added that their family was very supportive:

"In my home, I had support. There were many ups and downs in the family. Still, I had to do my job. Even my daughters encouraged me to do my job."(P-6)

5.2.2.2 Family interference with work (FIW)

In contrast to the findings in the area of WIF as narrated in the last sub-section, the study also found association of FIW, which in turn created WFC leading to women bank managers' exit decisions. For all participants,FIW was strongly related to factors in two broad groups: factors related to the children at home including the number of children and theage of the youngest child, along with factors related to the housework responsibility at home (i.e. hours spend on housework) and thus availability of paid maid servant (Byron, 2005) and/or existence of family support.

6.2.2.2.1 Children at home

Working long hours in a full time banking job leaving young children at home alone was one of the key finding of the study where the women felt guilty about the children's safety and they couldn't concentrate in their work. One participant's expression was as:

"I have served my bank for total 14 years, including after marriage for 10 years. In between, I had a baby. For the baby, I had to quit my job. It is because I did not have any support to simultaneously manage three things – the office, my home and my baby. Even though I have a big family, I did not have the option to leave my baby to someone to continue my work. My sister was baby-siting for quite a while, but how long?" (P-3)

Some of them suggested about the childcare centers that, they expressed, would help them in managing work and family.

> *"In our society, we used to live in joint family system. But now, we started being in nuclear families. In abroad, different companies provide day-care system where a woman employee can keep her baby in that place inside of the company. This is a big support for the employee, which has not become possible at a wide level in our country yet*." (P-7)

The gender-issue came out in the study too. Participants explained that such situation is not same for their counterparts, the male bank managers.

> "*If anything happens, the woman has to run home, while the man does not have to."* (P-8)

> "*If I need to stay 30 minutes more in my job, I had to go through thousands of questions: what happened today, why happened, why am I late today etc*." (P-3)

Consequently, their family matters interferedtheir work life. For example, participants acknowledged that sometimes they felt guilty for not being able to give full potential to the children.One participant even expressed:

> *"I had a guilty feeling, as I am a Muslim – Is my work halal? Because I cannot provide muchconcentration from my side."* (P-3)

6.2.2.2.2 Housework responsibility

Number of hours spend on house chores is another factor that interfered the women bank managers' FIW and thus resulted in WFC. In a patriarchal society, women are expected to do all the house chores whether she is a working-women or not (Alexandre and Kharabsheh, 2019; Sheykh, 2016). This created extra pressure on women as well as demanded more time to spend on family, eventually resulting in FIW. One of the participants stated that:

> *"Whether I have an external job or not,homemaking itself is a women's job. And I have to deal with it."* (P-3)

The issue became more acute in the face of insufficient support from family and/ ornon-availability of paid maidservant. Although many of the participants had full-time paid maid servants at home, they needed to be supervised much, thus demanding even more time of the women in housework. A few of them didn't have any such fulltime support also:

> *"I needed to manage with the part-time maid servant as my house remained empty; we both worked for banks. On my way to office, I used to drop my son to my sister's home and she took care of him. Athough she was not in paid work, but she had big family, even grandchildren. I couldn't like bothering her for long until I quit from my job."* (P-3)

Another participant also explained in the same way:

> *"When my joint family became broken, my child started to feel lonely. From the childhood, a paid servant was there for about eleven and a half years. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, she got married. After she left, my child started to feel lonely inside, which I could not realize before."* (P-1)

These comments spotlight on the critical role of family and the maidservant in managing women's domestic responsibilities and lack of support in such area as the important factors that instigated the exit decisions of women bank managers. However, opposite evidence was found in the study, too. Only one participant mentioned that her family was so supportive that she did not face any such conflict. She further acknowledged that her husband and in-laws were not like a typical person of our society:

> *"No, I did not have any issues. Actually, it was the opposite. My family washelpful to me. My parents-in-law supported me. They were over 70 years old, but still, they gave me support."* (P-4)

Overall, the study identifiedissues arising in both the arena of WIF and FIW as the reasons of arising WFC that eventually resulted in their exit decisions. Interestingly, the women took all the responsibilities on their own shoulder:

> *"The decision to quit my job was totally on me."* (P-4)

> *"It was my decision to quit. My family never pressurized me."* (P-6)

> *"After marriage, I had family pressure to quit my job. But it was reduced with time. Later the pressure was not that much, but my family members thought that it would be good to quit. But when I quitted, it was solely my decision. I prioritized my family need."* (P-1)

6.2.3 Challenge:Discrimination in providing opportunity to learn and grow

As Mainiero and Sullivan mentioned in their study (2005), challenge is "a person's desire to learn and grow in their jobs andfind stimulating, interesting work". Getting such challengesgenerally influence workers positivelyby increasing job satisfaction and organizationalcommitment (Podsakof, LePine, and LePine, 2007). Participants of this study were asked whether their exit decision was connected to any discrimination in getting such challenges. Result confirmed that the women bank manages in the current study had a clearneed to maintain challenges in their work. However, in several cases, they faced discrimination in getting such opportunities for learning and growing. One of the participants explained as:

"Yes, of course. I would call it discrimination. Few politics were also there. I participated in interviews to switch my department,that ended well. But in the final selection, another person was selected. Somehow I became a victim of internal politics." (P-5)

Another participant added to this notion as management treated men and women bankers differently in providing them opportunity for further growth. She explained:

"From my observation, our bank watched a woman as a woman, not as a person. Obviously, I joined the job as a person, and then I am a woman. I always try to give my best everywhere regardless of my job and my family. Dissatisfaction is a thing that grew slowly for a long time. I don't have to say it loudly. I was dissatisfied with my job and I quitted." (P-6)

Table 2: Map of reasons of behind women bank managers' exit decisions

	ABC dimensions			
	A (Authenticity)	B (Balance)		C (Challenge)
Participants	Non-suitability of banking career	Work Interference with Family (WIF)	Family Interference with Work (FIW)	Discrimination at work
P-1		✓	✓	✓
P-2	✓	✓	✓	
P-3		✓	✓	
P-4	✓			
P-5		✓	✓	✓
P-6		✓	✓	✓
P-7				✓
P-8	✓	✓	✓	✓
P-9		✓	✓	✓
P-10		✓	✓	

There are other reasons that increased women bank managers' dissatisfaction and influenced to quit from their job. For example, a participant mentioned:

"There are more reasons. Internal management was one factor. Promotion was another factor. Everything combined and made up my decision." (P-9)

Moreover, there were other women who still continuing the job in banks called it a 'bravery' of the women who could exit, participants mentioned.

Finally, based on the analyzed data and discussion, a summary of the reasons behind women bank managers' exit decisions was made as below:

6.3 Post-exit Realization

Being the second research objective of this study, it continued to evaluate the realizations of the women bank managers after leaving their jobs. The findings of the study evidenced that the participants encountered mixed realization after exiting from the job; positive, neutral, and negative, as briefly narrated here.

6.3.1 Positive Realization

Most of the participantskept themselves in the first group expressing their relief after taking the exit decision. Majority in this group of women identified 'balance' as the reason behind their exit decision. They were juggling between paid work and family responsibilities, went through high WFC, wanted to create a balance between the two, and thus felt relieved after exit.

> *"When I look back, I never regret. I am far better now, can give more time to my child"* (P-9)

> *"After leaving the bank, now I became more close to my son. I am enjoying all his stories everyday"* (P-1)

A few others who identified 'authenticity' as the reason behind their exit decision also felt better as they found their role in bank-job was inappropriate; either for the sake of themselves such as health reason (P-4) or for the job itself that didn't match with their values (P-2, P-10).

> *"I am happy that I could decide to exit. My health was worsening due to the long travel from home to work and retuning everyday. After returning, I used to feel sick." (P-4)*

> *"I thought a lot before taking the exit decision. Even I took leave without pay for quite a moderate amount of time to know if I can really exit. Finally, I became convinced that I can not take that much workload any more. Nor even I can say positive about those loan proposals that I definitely know will become non-performing soon."*(P-2)

> *"When I visit my colleagues in my last workplace, many appreciate me that I could take the right decision in right time. They say they are continuing the job because they can not afford loosing the income at the end of each month, but they wish if they could also exit as the work environment is ever deteriorating."* (P-10)

6.3.2 Negative Realization

Some other women, however, regretted to exit. This group belonged to women bank managers who identified either of balance or challenge factors as the reasons behind their exit from bank jobs.

> *"I was helping my child in his homework, and when I was writing a few words for him I felt sad remembering when is the last time that I used a pen to write that was an every-moment job when I was working in my bank"* (P-1)

> *"Whenever I need to spend money in these days, I think twice as I am paying from my husband's solo income. It was never before when I used to work. I bought dresses, ordered food; I miss that financial strength, and my identity too."* (P-9)

> *"Sometimes I feel like actually I rushed to take the exit decision. I could go rather slow to decide. It is so hard to get a job in banks."* (P-5)

6.3.3 Neutral Realization

Some women bank managers fell in this group, too. When they were asked to look back to the period after their exit decision, they mentioned they have no such realization; neither positive nor negative.

7. 0 Conclusion and Research Contribution

The study mainly aims to explore the reasons behind the exit decisions taken by the women from their managerial positions in various banks in Bangladesh. Their post-exit realization was the next focus of the study. Using a conceptual framework as shown in Diagram-3, the study was based on spillover theory and had taken a Kaleidoscopic view through a gender lens to understand women bank managers'career exit decision.

As Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) correctly stated that all the three parameters (i.e. aunthenticity (A), balance (B), challenge (C))were identified as remaining active throughout the participants' life guiding their exit decisions made. However, in one particular phase of life, one lens got priority to shape the decision; the rest two still lied there with lessen force to impact. For example, it was found that among the three, the participants invariably pointed to the 'balancing (B)' reasons that worked most behind their exit decision, which matches with their life-cycle stage as majority of the participants were in their mid-career aging 40-50 years while taking the exit decision. Only a few participants faced 'authenticity (A)' and/or 'challenge (C)' as the critical reasonsfor their exit decision.

Even within the second view of the Kaleidoscope, it was found that the women bank managers faced both WIF and FIW resulting in their WFC. While seeking to balance, they decided to exit.While investigating their realization after leaving the banks, they expressed mixed feelings; some were relieved, some regretted, while the others had neither been relieved nor regretted.

The study therefore contributed both to the literature and policy recommendation. The study contributes to literature by providingevidence on WFC from women bank managers. The study also extends thoughts about post-exit realization of women bank managers. The study contributes to policy recommendationby providing evidence that women bank managers wants to continue their career if they get proper childcare facilities. To increaseparticipation of women in the banking sector of Bangladesh, appropriate strategy must be taken soon to retain the talents of women who make up literally half of the population. Some concrete suggestions came from the study that the participants requested the availability of childcare centers in banks as well as flexibility in workplace to enable them to continue managerial level jobs in banks while accommodating their responsibilities in family.

Childcare centers have already received a bit focus of the govrnment, employers and the society as a few centers are set up by some of the banks. Such centers could be established in core commercial areas such as Motijheel, Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Mirpur, etc., where a number of banks are having their branches. The employees of different banks can share the childcare center.

Next, the flexible work arrangements will be very effective for the employees with family responsibilities. A number of banks around the world have implemented it long back (e.g. in Australia, USA, UK and so on) and continuing with no difficulty at all. The participants of the study, who had long experience at managerial level in banking jobs, have recommended the types of jobs where flexibility might be arranged. They suggested that back-office jobs might be redesigned while task-based jobs might be initiated to offer part-time jobs as well as flexi-hour jobs. This will be particularly helpful not only for women employees with family responsibilities but also for men who want to keep balance with other parts of life, such as, self-development and/or voluntary social service works. During the Covid pandemic, the country had to go through a situation when some sort of flexibility was allowed. We can replicate the model in normal time too.

7.1 Limitations and Future Research Directions

The study was limited to understanding the reasons why women bank managers decided to exit from their jobs as well as their realization after the exit. The research identified two major findings to be achieved to retain women employees in the banks: availability of childcare centers and flexible work arrangements. Further

studies need to be conducted to check the viability of both the recommendations in the banking industry in Bangladesh. The research mayalso be extended to all levels of employees including men.

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