

Identifying Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Among the Entrepreneurs of Bangladesh – A Case Study on Khulna City

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Abstract

ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Several studies confirmed that entrepreneurs are more likely to have ADHD than their non-entrepreneur counterpart. Consistently with this finding, the majority of entrepreneurs of Bangladesh also possess some degree of ADHD characteristics. Among the entrepreneurs who have ADHD, majority possess borderline ADHD. The level of ADHD is found to vary in terms of different demographic composition (such as gender education and age) of the entrepreneurs. Male entrepreneurs are more likely to be ADHD type than female entrepreneur. Less significant variation is found in ADHD existence among entrepreneurs of different education level. ADHD characteristics are found more among older entrepreneurs than younger entrepreneurs.

Key Words: ADHD; Entrepreneurs; Demography;

Introduction

The letters ADHD stand for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. The condition is characterized by impulsive and poorly managed behaviour, and problems in attention, short-term memory and classroom learning. ADHD people typically act before they think and under-perform for their intellect in the classroom. Barkley (1988) notes that ADHD people can concentrate intently on something that interests them or provides immediate feedback and reinforcement.

It is a highly hereditary endowment with some slight differences in those parts of the brain that are responsible for self-monitoring (Green, 1997). There is also a correlation with very low birth weights, parent smoking and other factors that may cause some brain damage during the foetal and infant stages. The condition is not caused by diet, parenting or environment (Muir, 2000). ADHD was first described by Dr. Heinrich Hoffman in 1845. Dr. Heinrich in his book "The Story of Fidgety Philip" gave an accurate description of a little boy who had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Yes it was not until 1902 that Sir George F. Still published a series of lectures to the Royal College of Physicians in England in which he described a group of impulsive children with significant behavioral problems, caused by a genetic dysfunction and not by poor child rearing—children who today would be easily recognized as having ADHD. Since then, several thousand scientific papers on the disorder have been published, providing information on its nature, course, causes, impairments, and treatments. ADHD often continues into adulthood.

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ADHD adults are nearly four times as likely to be entrepreneurs as their non-ADHD counterparts (Mannuzza et. al., 1993). It is also thought that many great people such as Winston Churchill, Leonardo De Vinci, Edison, Einstein, and Benjamin Franklin had the classic characteristics of ADHD. This suggests ADHD people have some exceptional qualities with exhausting side effects.

The ADHD literature makes frequent reference to the high percentage of entrepreneurs who appear to be ADHD. The entrepreneurship literature (eg Caird, 1993; Martin, 1996) describes the traits and behaviours of entrepreneurs in words that closely match the qualities of ADHD.

There is some evidence to show that ADHD is more common in new world countries like New Zealand, Australia, Brazil and the United States (Green, 1997; Hartmann 1999). This would be consistent with a gene pool of people who chose to take their chances in a foreign land. The entrepreneurship literature shows that immigrants in all countries are much more likely to be entrepreneurs, although this is likely to reflect more factors than just personality type.

Several studies had been conducted on this issue in different countries but there had been no research effort so far on this issue in Bangladesh. In this paper, an attempt has been made to determine the percentage of entrepreneurs of Bangladesh those are experiencing ADHD, to analyze the extent of variations of the entrepreneurs of different demographic groups (gender, age, education) and its possible outcome.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurs are more likely than most people to have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or ADHD. Unfortunately, many of these ADHD entrepreneurs have no idea how their ADHD is affecting their ability to do business. Entrepreneurs are not like other people in business, and the ADHD brain is not like other brains. Studies have shown that the ADHD brain even looks different when you examine it with an MRI or other magnetic imaging equipment. In fact, the more we learn about the brain, the more we understand that the ADHD brain isn't defective. It's simply different (Giwerc, 2004).

Managing and owning a small business can be very stimulating for the ADHD adult. Many ADHD entrepreneurs thrive on the fact that they can work on growing their business without all of the structure of being employed by someone else. While the structure of a 9 to 5 job might not be ideal for an ADHD adult, an ADHD entrepreneur should establish some structure and boundaries in order to be successful with their business opportunities and their personal lives (MacKenzie, 2008).

While there are as many types of entrepreneurs as there are businesses, most entrepreneurs share some common traits. They tend to be visionaries. People who go into business for themselves tend to be risk takers.

"After almost a decade of coaching entrepreneurs, it has also been my observation that a majority of all entrepreneurs have ADHD..." (Giwerc, 2004)"

Having ADHD is like having a high-powered sports car with an out of sync transmission. The motor – your mind – runs just fine. It's speeding along with all kinds of new ideas and revving up for more. Unfortunately, the car – your brain – doesn't always move like it should. Sometimes the gears slip and you lose ground despite the fact that your motor is running about as fast as it can. At other times, everything clicks and you can do amazing things. That's what happens when things get out of sync. This kind of inconsistent performance is one of the hallmarks of ADHD. It means

that you're inconsistent. It does not mean you are stupid. Many, perhaps even most, people with ADHD have IQ's that are well above average (Giwerc, 2004).

One popular ADHD writer and self-avowed computer geek describes it as having "the mind of a Pentium with the memory of a 286". Having AD/HD means that there is a big gap between your ability and your actual performance, between what you could do and what you actually end up accomplishing. If you are going to reach your full potential, then you have to learn to close that gap (Giwerc, 2004).

There are several advantages of ADHD in high tech career such as the ability to hyper focus, rapid fire mind, multitasking at will, high energy level, highly creative, quick learner, stimulus seeking brain, constantly scanning your environment, great in a crisis, risk taker etc. Many entrepreneurs have ADD i.e. Paul Orfalea who founded Kinkos, JetBlue Founder and CEO David Neeleman who attributes his creativity to ADD. Both are Billionaires (Taylor, 2008; Williamson, 2006).

ADHD should instead be called Latent Entrepreneur Personality Type (LEPT). The name LEPT (ADHD) also conveys the idea that this is a normal personality type at one end of a spectrum rather than a brain disorder. The LEPT (ADHD) label will make it easier to celebrate the exceptional qualities of LEPTs, bring joy to those who are currently negatively labeled, and find constructive ways of helping them to express their best qualities (Gilbertson, 2003).

Some authors have provided alternative names of ADHD that focus on the positive qualities while acknowledging the challenges. One alternative is 'Da Vincis'. Discussions on ADHD usually highlight the problems but there are just as many bounties. The same characteristic can be viewed as strength or a challenge like two sides of the same coin. (Gilbertson and Fitzmaurice, 2003)

Problem Statement

The study was undertaken to identify ADHD in the entrepreneurs of Bangladesh. As Bangladesh is a developing country, the need for successful entrepreneurs knows no bound. But the fact is that the country is going through hardship though there are numbers of entrepreneurs and most of them are small and medium business owner but their success is in doubt. There are also many successful entrepreneurs but our study was undertaken to find out whether ADHD is acting as positively or negatively with the entrepreneurs especially with the small and medium entrepreneurs.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to identify existence of ADHD in the entrepreneurs of Bangladesh. Besides, following were the specific objectives of the study:

- i. To find out the percentage of entrepreneurs of Bangladesh those are experiencing ADHD.
- ii. To find the level of ADHD characteristics present among the entrepreneurs of Bangladesh.
- iii. To analyze the extent of variations in level of ADHD among the entrepreneurs of different demographic groups (gender, age, education).

Scope of the Study

The study was undertaken in Khulna city which is located in the South-western region of Bangladesh. It is the third-largest city in the country with 1.4 millions inhabitants (Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh 2006). There are about 14500 registered entrepreneurs in the city and the study was confined in the Khulna City Corporation area. The study was carried out from July 2008 to August 2008.

Methodology

The research was descriptive in nature and based on a single cross sectional survey. Data were collected with the help of in home personal interviews through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire had two parts -- the first part contained questions designed to obtain demographic information of the respondents and 35 questions were listed in the second part to evaluate whether the respondent is experiencing ADHD or not and its extent. A five point Likert scale, where 5 indicate highest favorableness and 1 the lowest, was used to measure the level of agreement of respondents regarding the questions.

Target population of the study was the small and medium entrepreneurs in Khulna city. In this case we used only registered entrepreneurs in Khulna city which were 14500 (Source: Khulna City Corporation, 2008). In selecting sample size we used Sample Size Determination Table (Israel, 1992) to avoid complexity. Confidence level for the study was 95% and allowable error was considered as 5%. And hence the sample size for the study was 390 (Appendix -1).

Respondents' profiles according to different demographic features are shown in the following table:

Table-01: Sample Characteristics

Demographic Features	Classes	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	329	84.4
	Female	61	15.6
Education	Primary	0	0
	Secondary	31	8
	Higher Secondary	82	21
	Graduate and Above	277	71
Age	Below 25 years	5	1.3
	From 26years – 35 years	168	43.1
	From 36 years – 45 years	156	40
	From 46 years – 55 years	53	13.6
	Above 55 years	8	2

The extent/level of ADHD (ADHD score) was determined using Jasper/Goldberg Adult ADD Screening Examination – Version 5.0 and labeled as No ADHD, Borderline ADHD, Mild ADHD, Moderate ADHD and Extreme ADHD based on the derived score as is shown in table-2. Simple percentage, average and SD were calculated to derive the level of ADHD of the respondents.

Table 02: Score Interpretation	
101 and up	Extreme ADD/ADHD
91 -100	Moderate ADD
81 - 90	Mild ADD
71 - 80	Borderline ADD
35- 70	No ADD/ADHD Likely

Analysis and Discussion

In this section, results of the data analysis is shown and interpreted. Collected data were analyzed and interpreted in line with the research objectives. Hence, the discussion in this section is made in two different parts. An overall discussion is in the first part. And the second part includes comparative analysis of different demographic groups.

Overall Analysis

This study on entrepreneurs has found that 65.64% of the entrepreneurs have ADHD scores above 70 which means that most of the entrepreneurs possess some degree of ADHD but majority (33.08%) of them possess borderline ADHD. Only 6.41% of them possess extreme ADHD whereas 16.67% and 9.74% of the entrepreneurs possess Mild and Moderate ADHD respectively (see Table – 3). The findings are consistent with the findings of some prior research (Literature review). The average score of the ADHD type of people is 83.74

Table-03: Total Score

Classes	No. People	Percentage	Average Score	SD	ADHD	Borderline ADHD	Mild ADHD	Moderate ADHD
ADHD	256	65.64	83.74	12.03	25(6.41%)	129(33.08%)	65(16.67%)	38(9.74%)
No ADHD	134	34.36	63.89	3.30				
Total	390	100	76.92	13.70				

ADHD analysis in terms of selected Demographic variables:

Further analysis on the existence of ADHD among entrepreneurs showed that levels of ADHD vary according to different demographic variable (see Table – 4).

Table-04: ADHD analysis in terms of demographic variable

Demographic Features	Classes	Average Score	SD	No ADHD (%)	Borderline ADHD (%)	Mild ADHD (%)	Moderate ADHD (%)	Adult ADHD (%)	Total ADHD (%)
Gender	Male	76.73	13.3	33	34.7	18	8.2	6.1	67
	Female	77.97	15.8	39.3	24.6	9.8	18.1	8.2	60.7
Education	Primary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Secondary	77.45	12.4	32.2	32.3	16.1	12.9	6.5	67.8
	Higher Secondary	75.17	11.1	35.4	36.6	19.5	7.3	1.2	64.6
	Graduate and Above	77.38	14.5	34.4	32.1	15.9	10.1	7.5	65.6
Age	Below 25 years	58.8	4	100	0	0	0	0	0
	From 26 – 35 years	77.85	14.8	34	35.1	12.5	9.5	8.9	66
	From 36 – 45 years	76	12.5	33.9	34	19.2	9	3.9	66.1
	From 46 – 55 years	77.85	13.4	32.1	26.4	22.6	11.3	7.6	67.9
	Above 55 years	60.75	3	12.5	37.5	25	25	0	87.5

Analysis in terms of gender had shown that ADHD characteristics were found more in male entrepreneurs (67%) than their female (60.7%) counterpart. But interestingly, extreme ADHD characteristics were found more among female entrepreneur (8.2%) than their male counterpart (6.1%). Or in other way we can say female had higher ADHD scores than male entrepreneurs.

The variations were less significant in terms of education. Among the different education groups, 67.7%, 64.6% and 65.6% from secondary, higher secondary and degree and above group respectively possessed ADHD characteristics. Extreme ADHD scores were found most among entrepreneurs with degree and above education (7.5%). Borderline and Mild ADHD scores were found more among higher secondary education group where as Moderate ADHD scores were found most among secondary education group.

Analysis in terms of age had shown few interesting results. Younger generation entrepreneurs (age group below 25 years) had no ADHD characteristics where as majority (87%) of the age group above 55 years were found to possess ADHD. The mid aged groups were also found to have ADHD in significant portion. Entrepreneurs of age group above 55 years had no extreme ADHD scores. Extreme ADHD scores were found more among entrepreneurs of age group 26 to 35 years (8.9%) and age group 46 to 55 years (7.6%). Regardless of the demographic variation, most of the entrepreneurs had Borderline ADHD characteristics.

Conclusion

The study showed that majority of the entrepreneurs in Bangladesh possessed some degree of ADHD characteristics which was consistent with the findings of research conducted in other countries. But most of the entrepreneurs had only borderline ADHD and a few of them had mild to extreme ADHD characteristics. The levels of existence of ADHD were found to vary in terms of demographic composition of the entrepreneurs. Male entrepreneurs are more likely to be ADHD type than female entrepreneur. Less significant variation is found in ADHD existence among entrepreneurs of different education level. ADHD characteristics are found more among older entrepreneurs than younger entrepreneurs. The method used to measure ADHD can be a simplistic way of describing ADHD type of people but should not be used as a diagnostic tool for mental disorder treatment.

This study had focused only on finding whether the entrepreneurs of Bangladesh possess ADHD characteristics or not and whether there were any difference in the level of ADHD in terms of different demographic variable. Further study can be done to identify the effect of ADHD on the entrepreneurs' performance of their respective business.

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Appendices

Figure-01: Sample size determination table

Table 1. Sample size for $\pm 3\%$, $\pm 5\%$, $\pm 7\%$ and $\pm 10\%$ Precision Levels Where Confidence Level is 95% and $P=.5$.

Size of Population	Sample Size (n) for Precision (e) of:			
	$\pm 3\%$	$\pm 5\%$	$\pm 7\%$	$\pm 10\%$
500	a	222	145	83
600	a	240	152	86
700	a	255	158	88
800	a	267	163	89
900	a	277	166	90
1,000	a	286	169	91
2,000	714	333	185	95
3,000	811	353	191	97
4,000	870	364	194	98
5,000	909	370	196	98
6,000	938	375	197	98
7,000	959	378	198	99
8,000	976	381	199	99
9,000	989	383	200	99
10,000	1,000	385	200	99
15,000	1,034	390	201	99
20,000	1,053	392	204	100
25,000	1,064	394	204	100
50,000	1,087	397	204	100
100,000	1,099	398	204	100
>100,000	1,111	400	204	100

a = Assumption of normal population is poor (Yamane, 1967). The entire population should be sampled.