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Gender, Remittances and the Impact of COVID-19: A Preliminary Analysis

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ABSTRACT
Remittances are an important source of development finance, particularly in recent years, due also to increased migration flows at the global level. The recent COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a sudden drop in remittances, and an alarming aspect of the pandemic was that it particularly affected female migrants. Despite the importance of gender for remittance sending and usage, research about international migration and remittances insufficiently considers its role. Against this backdrop, this paper aims to partially fill this gap in the relevant literature by trying to address the following important questions: (1) In what ways is gender important in understanding the sending and the usage of remittances?; and (2) what is the relationship between gender, COVID-19, and pandemic-induced remittance reductions? In doing so, the paper provides an overview of the (limited) literature on the vast influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on female migrants. It also assesses whether gender has influenced the extent to which remittance inflows decreased as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic by conducting a preliminary empirical analysis based on some recent data (albeit limited) on the above nexus. The paper contributes to the relevant literature in multiple ways. First, the detailed discussion of the influence of gender on remittances and the impact of COVID-19 on female migrants has revealed important aspects of the overall relationship that can stimulate further research on these topics and also raises important policy questions for policymakers. Second, preliminary findings of a possible negative correlation between COVID-19-induced changes in remittances and female emigration rates provide some further insights into the above nexus. Finally, the paper raises important concerns about female migrants’ wellbeing during the pandemic and calls for further empirical research.

Keywords: Remittances; gender; COVID-19 pandemic; international migration

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the past decades, migratory flows intensified a lot. Between 1965 and 2000, the international migrant stock was more than double (Lean Lim et al., 2003). Remittance flows, which are strongly associated with migration, increased with it, with a lot of low- and middle-income countries being more dependent on them (Adams & Page, 2005; Ratha et al., 2020). Consequently, a lot of households rely on remittances for their survival (Sørensen, 2005). However, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a sudden drop in remittances (Ratha et al., 2021). An alarming aspect of the pandemic is that it particularly affected female migrants meaning that the amount of remittances sent by them is especially threatened (Azam et al., 2020; UN Women, 2020). This is problematic as both the sending and the usage of remittances are far from gender neutral (Sørensen, 2005). At the same time, females’ sending and usage of remittances are believed to have a more positive effect on poverty levels and human development indicators (Fleury, 2016; Guzmán et al., 2008; Orozco et al., 2006), thus the potentially larger drop in remittances coming from female migrants having major implications.

Despite the importance of gender for remittance sending and usage, research about international migration and remittances insufficiently takes into account its role (Hennebry et al., 2017; IOM, 2004). This paper aims to partially fill this gap in the relevant literature. The following important questions need attention: (1) In what ways is gender important in understanding the sending and the usage of remittances? (2) what is the relationship between gender, COVID-19 and pandemic-induced remittance reductions? In doing so, a critical discussion and overview of the (limited) literature provides insights on the vast influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on female migrants. It is also assessed whether gender has influenced the extent to which remittance inflows decreased as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic by conducting a preliminary empirical analysis based on some recent data (albeit limited) on the above nexus. This paper contributes to the relevant literature in multiple ways. First, the detailed discussion of the influence of gender on remittances and the impact of COVID-19 on female migrants has revealed other important aspects of the overall relationship that can stimulate further research on these topics and also raise important policy questions for policymakers. Second, preliminary findings of a possible negative correlation between COVID-19-induced changes in remittances and female emigration rates provide some further insights into the above nexus, although with some caveat because of the inevitable shortcomings of the available data for reasons beyond one’s control. Finally, the paper raises important concerns about female migrants’ well-being during the pandemic and calls for further empirical research in this crucial area once more reliable data become available.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: In section 2, an overview of the (limited) literature available on the relationship between gender and remittances is provided; in section 3, trends in female migration are discussed and how the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced remittance sending from female migrants. Section 4 reports the key findings emanating from the empirical analysis along with a discussion of data sources and methodology used. Section 5 concludes the paper and provides some tentative policy recommendations in this important research and policy area.

2. GENDER AS AN INFLUENCING FACTOR IN REMITTANCES

The term ‘gender’ refers to what it socially and culturally means to be male or female. Gender influences people’s visions of what males and females should behave like, and what is expected from them. Consequentially, it leads to stereotypes, norms and rules and thus influences people’s actual behaviour (Davids & van Driel, 2015; Fleury, 2016). It has been argued that gender should be considered when analyzing remittances, as it influences both the number of remittances sent and remittance usage (IOM, 2004; Sørensen, 2005).

2.1 Gender Differences in Remitting Behaviour

There is still a lot of uncertainty about the differences in total remittances sent by male and female migrants (Azam et al., 2020). However, a consensus seems to emerge about women’s tendency to remit a larger share of their income than men (Azam et al., 2020; Foley and Piper, 2020; IOM, 2004; Robert, 2015; Tittensor & Mansour, 2017). This is striking as female migrants, on average, earn less than male migrants (Engle, 2004; Fleury, 2016). The lower earnings of migrant women can be explained by two factors. First, female migrants are more often unemployed than their male counterparts and the
females without a migration background. This is because female migrants, having both the migrant and female identity, face a ‘double disadvantage’ in the labour market and this negatively affects their employment rates. In addition, working female migrants are more often employed in low-skilled, low-paid and precarious occupations than men (Azam et al., 2020; Donato et al., 2014; Foley & Piper, 2020; Hennebry et al., 2017; Hennebry et al., 2016; ILO, 2018; IOM, 2004; Lean Lim et al., 2003; OECD, 2020; Rubin et al., 2008; Tayah, 2016).

The tendency of female migrants to remit a larger percentage of their income than the male ones has multiple plausible causes. First, female migrants have stronger family bonds, and they have more altruistic motives to send remittances than male migrants (Chimhowu et al., 2005; Fleury, 2016; Le Goff & Salomone, 2016; Orozco et al., 2006). Second, gender norms may also have an influence. These norms can lead to higher expectations and pressures to remit for female migrants. In addition, inheritance may play a role here. The (in)ability to ‘earn’ an inheritance, which is linked with gender in some societies, can increase (or decrease) female and male migrants’ remittance sending (Fleury, 2016; IOM, 2004; Orozco et al., 2006). The finding that female migrants remit a large share of their income, even though they earn less than male migrants, can be seen as a positive outcome since female migrants’ households still receive a significant amount of remittances. However, it has been argued that this also raises concerns about female migrants’ well-being and mental health, as they significantly lower their expenditures to remit (Foley and Piper, 2020; Pérez Orozco et al., 2010; Robert, 2015).

Although female migrants remit a large share of their income despite their lower earnings, their labour market circumstances do influence their ability to remit, and thus their remitting behaviour (IOM, 2004; Robert, 2015). The amounts that female migrants send per transaction are overall smaller than those sent by their male counterparts (Fleury, 2016; Engle, 2004; Hennebry et al., 2017; IOM, 2004). Furthermore, female migrants send more often remittances home than the male migrants and they keep sending them for a longer time (Fleury, 2016; Engle, 2004; Hennebry et al., 2017; IOM, 2004). The finding that female migrants send smaller amounts of money also means that they lose more money on transfer fees than male migrants (Fleury, 2016; IOM, 2004).

A third important difference between male and female migrants is that female migrants less often use formal remittance-sending methods (Azam et al., 2020; Hennebry et al., 2017). Female migrants’ lower access to banks’ financial services and technological money transfer services is partly responsible for this difference. Lower educational levels of female migrants and banks’ reluctance to open the bank accounts for female migrants are important in this respect (Azam et al., 2020; Engle, 2004; IOM, 2004; Ramírez et al. 2005). Another difference between male and female migrants is that female migrants remit more during periods of crisis than men (Fleury, 2016; Hennebry et al., 2017; Orozco et al., 2006).

In addition, the recipients of male and female migrants’ remittances are different. The recipients of male migrants’ remittances are usually their wives. However, female migrants who have children living in their home country often send remittances to females that took over the childcare after their migration. The partner is often not the one receiving the remittances, as men rarely take over the care of the children after their wives migrate. Female migrants want to evade that the money is spent on things that do not benefit their household and, therefore, send the money to the caretakers of their children (IOM, 2004; Lopez-Ekra et al., 2011; Pérez Orozco et al., 2010; van Naerssen, 2015). Female migrants, thus, do not only send remittances to members of their nuclear families, but they also more often remit to their extended families than the male migrants (IOM, undated; Orozco et al., 2006; Robert, 2015).

Finally, female migrants more often instruct the recipients of remittances on how to use the money than male migrants (Fleury, 2016). Female migrants often want their remittances to be used for education and healthcare. Male migrants, on the other hand, often want the recipients to invest the money in real estate or productive activities (sometimes on their behalf). The above finding can be explained by the fact that male migrants more often intend to return home than the female migrants. Therefore, they might prefer the money to be used in ways that will also benefit them upon return (Chimhowu et al., 2005; Engle, 2004; Guzmán et al., 2008). The differing preferences of male and female remitters are relevant as they (to a varying extent) also influence the spending of their remittances (Pérez Orozco et al., 2010; Rahman & Fee, 2009). Orozco et al. (2006) have argued that the difference between male and female migrants’ preferences about remittance spending results in female remittances having a more positive influence on poverty alleviation than men’s preferences.
2.2 Gender Differences in Remittance Usage

Although women are often the recipients of remittances (Chimhowu et al., 2005; Engle, 2004; Fleury, 2016; IOM, 2004; van Naerssen, 2015), they do not always control the usage of this money. Pérez Orozco et al. (2010) have found that women are both the major recipients and the chief administrators of remittances. However, other authors (IOM, 2004; Lopez-Ekra et al., 2011) have argued that women’s control over the usage of money varies between regions. In addition, joint decision-making between males and females about the usage of the remittances is also possible (IOM, 2004; World Bank, 2021d).

Women’s control over the usage of remittances depends on multiple factors. Decision-making power over remittances is higher for women who receive remittances in their name (Lopez-Ekra et al., 2011). However, Ramirez et al. (2005) have argued that the household allocation of resources and bargaining strength also influence who decides on the usage of the money received. We can also link this to the importance of individual characteristics. For instance, educational level and age are relevant, with decision-making power over remittances being higher for older and more educated women. For women who receive remittances from their migrant husbands, the duration of the marriage also influences their decision-making power. Third, household characteristics can influence females’ ability to control remittances. Household structure (i.e., who the woman and her children live with - her parents, the parents of the husband or alone), is also relevant. In addition, the households’ socioeconomic status is influential (IOM, 2004; López-Ekra et al., 2011; Sørensen, 2005). Finally, gender norms can also influence female decision-making power over remittances. In more patriarchal societies, for example, females have less control over the usage of remittances (Fleury, 2016; Robert, 2015; Sørensen, 2005).

When women are in control of the spending of remittances, they are believed to spend the money on different items than male recipients. Men more often use the money for their personal needs, while women usually spend it on things that have value for the entire household. More specifically, female recipients are believed to use the money mostly for purchasing food and paying for education and healthcare. Males also use remittances for these purposes, although in smaller proportions. Instead, they more often invest the remittances in order use to buy assets or spend them on leisure (Chimhowu et al., 2005; Fleury, 2016; IOM, 2004; Pérez Orozco et al, 2010; Tittensor & Mansouri, 2017; van Naerssen, 2015). Consequently, when women migrants decide on the usage of remittances, this is more positive for children’s educational level and health than when men make the decision (Fleury, 2016; Guzmán et al., 2008). Therefore, intuitively, one could argue that female spending on remittances can have a more positive influence on human development outcomes, while male spending on remittances could be more valuable to economic development.

2.3 Further Insights

The previous sub-section provided overall insights into the relationship between gender and remittances. However, it is important to stress that the influence of gender on remittance sending and usage can vary a lot from region to region and from country to country. Various authors (Dodson et al., 2008; King et al., 2013; Engle, 2004) have argued that findings can differ a lot between countries and regions. Therefore, Dodson et al. (2008) have argued that it is important to conduct gender-sensitive research in different contexts.

In addition, it must be noted that there are also sceptics regarding the view that female migrants are better remitters. For example, Davids & van Driel (2015) and King et al. (2013) argue that the above insights are common views in the literature, but that the amount of empirical evidence is fairly limited. In a similar vein, Pérez Orozco et al. (2010) emphasize that certain dogmas and stereotypes about gender-differentiated behaviour are prevalent in gender-sensitive research. Therefore, they warn that studies sometimes affirm these dogmas whilst not correctly testing them. And since the relevant literature is rather limited it is thus necessary to be cautious about the above insights (Sørensen, 2005). In addition, concerns also arose about the consequences of dogmas about women being better remitters. Kunz (2015), for example, argues that this image can normalize gendered behaviour, forcing women to apply to certain expectations and intensifying gender inequality.
3. TRENDS IN FEMALE MIGRATION AND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

3.1 Trends in Female Migration and its Influence on Remittance Sending

Over the past six decades, women have been migrating more or less in the same magnitude as the men (Lean Lim et al., 2003; Migration Data Portal, 2021a). Table 1 presents the data of UN-DESA (2020b) with most recent calculations of the international migrant stock and the number and percentage of female international migrants.

Table 1: Female Participation in Migration, 1990-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total migrant stock</th>
<th>Female migrants in the total international migrant stock</th>
<th>Female migrant stock</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>152,986,157.00</td>
<td>75,422,690.00</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>161,289,976.00</td>
<td>79,708,475.00</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>173,230,585.00</td>
<td>85,510,752.00</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>191,446,828.00</td>
<td>93,783,747.00</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>220,983,187.00</td>
<td>107,042,306.00</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>247,958,644.00</td>
<td>119,720,586.00</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>280,598,105.00</td>
<td>134,942,261.00</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors, based on United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA, 2020b)

Table 1 illustrates that both the total migrant stock and the female migrant stock have increased significantly over the past three decades. However, female participation in international migration has decreased a bit over the years. In 2020, approximately 48% of international migrants were female (UN-DESA, 2020b).

Nevertheless, there are regional differences in the proportion of female international migrants. Le Goff (2016) argues that particularly developed countries (and particularly Europe) host a lot of female migrants. In contrast, female migrant stocks are lowest in Asian and African countries (Le Goff, 2016). His statements are confirmed by the Migration Data Portal (2021a), which provides an excellent overview for the year 2020. This is shown in Figure 1. The figure shows that a lot of international immigrants in Europe, Northern America and Oceania are females (Migration Data Portal, 2021a). In addition, there are sizeable differences within regions. For example, in the South Asia region, the average percentage of females among the international immigrant stock over the period 1990-2020 in Bhutan was approximately 18%, while this was 68% in Nepal (UN-DESA, 2020a).

![Figure 1: Regional differences in the number of male and female migrants for the year 2020](Source: Migration Data Portal, 2021a)
Although female migration has not increased in recent years, female migrants’ migration motives have changed considerably. Unlike in the past, when females most often migrated for family reunification, more and more women are migrating independently in recent years. More specifically, females are more often migrating for economic reasons, to study or as refugees. Still, more women are migrating for family reunification, but an evolution occurred where women’s independent migration increased. This could have implications for remittance trends, as female migrants can become financial supporters of the home-staying family. Consequently, this could be one of the reasons why international remittance flows have significantly increased in recent years (Bauloz et al., 2019; Ghosh, 2009; Le Goff, 2016; Sørensen, 2005).

3.2 COVID-19 as a Great Burden to Migrant Women

Ratha et al. (2021) showed that the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative influence on global remittance flows. They found that remittance flows towards low and middle income countries (LMICs) decreased by 1.6% in 2020 and that there were large regional differences (Ratha et al., 2021). As already mentioned, overall, little is known, however, about the total amounts of remittances sent by male and female migrants (Azam et al., 2020). Therefore, the exact extent to which female remittance sending has decreased as a consequence of the pandemic is still uncertain. However, there are important reasons to think that female migrant remittances could be vastly affected by the pandemic.

The first pathway in which remittances from migrant women could be negatively affected by the pandemic is through its influence on remittance-sending methods. Informal methods to send remittances became inoperative because of the pandemic. As migrants, women are less able to use formal methods, this can prevent them from sending remittances (Azam et al., 2020; UN Women, 2020).

Second, the pandemic unevenly affected female migrants. The specific occupations female migrants often take on, play a large role here. To begin with, the group of female migrants is one of the most exposed groups to COVID-19 as they are overrepresented in the health, social care and domestic sector. Insufficient protection against infection, a lack of hygienic facilities and close contacts with sick people increase the risks of female migrants getting infected in the workplace (Foley & Piper, 2020; Gottardo & Cyment, 2020; UN Women, 2020; IOM, 2021). Furthermore, female migrants often lack information on how to protect themselves against infection. Their living and working circumstances also do not allow them to take distance from others (ILO & UN Women, 2020). In addition, overrepresentation in essential sectors like healthcare and cleaning services places greater pressure on female migrants. This is because they often need to work longer whilst, at the same time, they face more responsibilities at home due to the closures of nurseries and schools. As a result, female migrants bear a double burden (Foley and Piper, 2020; Migration Data Portal, 2021b; UN Women, 2020).

Third, the risk of experiencing (sexual) violence is higher for female migrants. Again, females working in the health, domestic and social care sectors face a higher risk of becoming the victim of violence at the workplace. Overall, domestic violence against females increased during the pandemic, but female migrants as a group are especially vulnerable to this (ILO & UN Women, 2020). This is because they often lack information about the support they can appeal to and because they lack language skills (Foley and Piper, 2020; ILO & UN Women, 2020; UN Women, 2020). Abusers also take advantage of undocumented female migrants’ migration status to prevent them from seeking help (IOM, 2021). In addition, the number of organizations that can help migrant women in person decreased because of mandatory closures. This is an additional barrier, as migrant women have less access to technologies to report violence online (ILO & UN Women, 2020).

Another problem female migrants are experiencing is a higher risk of dismissal. The first important factor here is that a lot of migrant women are working in sectors that are most severely hit by the pandemic (ILO & UN Women, 2020). In addition, a higher risk of dismissal is especially true for women working in the domestic sector, where fear of infection caused employers to lay off their domestic workers. Female migrants working in the informal economy also face larger risks of losing their job as they lack protection by labour laws and labour agreements (ILO & UN Women, 2020). This means employers can easily dismiss them. Female migrants working in the sex sector also lost their job and thus their means of earning an income. The high dismissals are problematic as the chances of finding a new job are low. The fact that the sectors where a lot of vacancies opened were also sectors where specific knowledge and experience are needed, enlarged this problem. Dismissals are not only
problematic for the incomes of migrant women, but they can also result in additional problems, like losing one’s work permit or becoming homeless (Foley & Piper, 2020; UN Women, 2020; Gottardo & Cyment, 2020).

Finally, and as already mentioned, female migrants often lack access to social security and healthcare. Especially for undocumented migrant women and those working in the informal economy, this poses a serious problem. This is problematic for migrant women’s health during this pandemic. Both the fact that women migrants lack access to healthcare when they have symptoms and the decreased access of female migrants to reproductive healthcare are important in this respect (Foley & Piper, 2020; Gottardo & Cyment, 2020; IOM, 2021).

The many problems migrant women are facing affect their exposure to a higher risk of poverty and food deprivation (Gottardo & Cyment, 2020). Some women, as a last resort, take on occupations where the risk of violence, exploitation and infection are high (IOM, 2021). In addition, lots of them were forced to return home (Gottardo & Cyment, 2020). Intuitively, one could argue that these problems can have significant effects on remittance flows from this particular group.

4. METHODOLOGY

This very preliminary, due to data limitations, data analysis in this section, seeks to contribute to the rather inadequate literature on the relationship between COVID-19-induced remittance reductions and gender. In particular, it examines whether countries with a higher rate of female emigrants have experienced more/less reductions in remittances after the start of the pandemic. A correlation analysis is performed for which three datasets are used.

Firstly, new data on the international migrant stock from the UN-DESA (2020b) was used. This dataset contains estimates on the international migrant stock by country of destination and country of origin, and it also consists of data on the age and gender of international migrants. Data is available for 232 countries or areas for the reference period 1990-2020 (for every five years1). Most of the data from this dataset were gathered from population censuses. In addition, information from population registers and nationally representative surveys was used. In this dataset, a country’s number of international migrants was counted based on people’s place of birth or (when this information was not available2) their country of citizenship. The data was adjusted to properly count for refugee populations in countries where the data insufficiently captured this group. In addition, the United Nations took into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the international migrant stock in 2020. As international travel was highly affected by the pandemic, the 2020 estimates were made under the assumption3 that the number of international migrants remained unchanged between the 1st of March and the 1st of July of 2020 (UN-DESA, 2020c). For empirical analysis, focus was laid on the United Nations estimates of the percentages of female emigrants migrating from specific countries of origin. This data was used directly in the empirical analysis.

In addition, the World Bank’s (2021c) Annual Remittance Data was used. This dataset consisted of the information on both remittance inflows and outflows of 214 countries or areas around the world. Data was available for the reference period 1980-2020. Estimates were based on the balance of payment data obtained from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank’s country desks, central banks and countries’ statistical institutions (World Bank, 2021c). For the data analysis, the data concerning migrant remittance inflows in 2019 and 2020 was used. This data was available for 185 countries. This data was used to construct a variable named ‘Rem_%_change’, which showed the percentage changes in countries’ total remittance inflows from 2019 to 2020.

A third dataset used for this paper was the World Bank’s (2021a) COVID-19 Household Monitoring Dashboard. High-Frequency Phone Surveys about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on

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2 However, in most countries, data on the foreign-born population was available (UN-DESA (2020c).
3 However, intuitively one can argue that this assumption might be incorrect. Therefore, we recognize that this dataset might insufficiently reflect reality. The United Nations themselves argue that very little empirical data is currently available on the influence of COVID-19 on the international migrant stock and that their future data will be updated to new information (UN-DESA, 2020c).
people’s socioeconomic situation were performed to construct this dataset. Data was collected through multiple waves in around 70 developing countries. A questionnaire template was provided by the World Bank, but countries could change the questionnaire so that it would fit with the country’s context. Information about approximately 15 socio-economic topics was gathered (for example people’s labour, education, safety nets and food security) (World Bank, 2021a; World Bank, 2021b). For the empirical analysis, the World Bank’s data was used on ‘the percentage of remittance-receiving households that saw its remittances decrease since the start of the pandemic’ (World Bank, 2021a). Short-term remittance reductions were looked at as a consequence of the pandemic, as the user data was gathered between April and August 2020. An important remark to make here is that the data for this variable is quite limited. At the time the empirical analysis was performed, only 28 countries had gathered this type of data. In addition, the samples taken in countries were quite small (see Table 3 – the average size of the sample was 366 households). Another disadvantage of this variable is the different timing of data collection between countries. An overview of the three variables employed in our analysis is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Overview of Variables Used in Empirical Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable name</th>
<th>Dataset</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female emigrants</td>
<td>The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020b)</td>
<td>Percentage of female emigrants of a country, compared to the total international emigrant stock of that country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rem_%_change</td>
<td>Annual Remittance Data</td>
<td>Percentage change in remittance inflows from 2019 to 2020.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inco_redremitt</td>
<td>COVID-19 Household Monitoring Dashboard</td>
<td>Percentage of remittance-receiving households in which remittances decreased since the beginning of the pandemic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank, 2021a; World Bank, 2021c; UN-DESA, 2020b

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First scatterplots of changes in remittance flows and female emigration are reported. Figure 2 shows the scatterplot of female migration rates and remittance reductions, using the remittance data from the COVID-19 Household Monitoring Dashboard (World Bank, 2021a). The figure shows that as the percentage of female emigrants is higher, the percentage of households that experienced decreasing remittances is lower, and vice versa. It, thus, shows a negative correlation between COVID-19-induced remittance reductions and female emigration. However, the number of observations for figure 2 is quite small as the COVID-19 Dashboard only contained remittance reduction data for 28 countries.

Figure 3 shows the scatterplot of remittance reductions and female emigration, using the World Bank’s annual remittance data (World Bank, 2021c). Here, the trend line is a little descending but almost horizontal, which seems to suggest that there appears to be an extremely small negative correlation between remittance reductions after COVID-19 and female emigration. In addition, Pearson’s correlation coefficients should be considered. As this measure is sensitive to outliers in the data (Neels, 2017), the outliers were checked and those observations were excluded from the analysis. When using the survey results about remittance reductions, a Pearson's correlation coefficient of -0.5477 is recorded. This indicates that a strong negative linear correlation between remittance reductions and female emigration exists (Neels, 2017). However, when using the World Bank's estimates on remittance reductions, the

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4 As a consequence, countries’ questionnaires differed from each other. The World Bank however harmonized the data obtained from the countries.

5 Data was also available on remittance decreases ‘in the past 12 months’ (before the interview) and ‘since the last interview’. We chose to use the data on remittance decreases ‘since the start of the pandemic’ for multiple reasons. First, most data were available for this variable. In addition, the shock that resulted from the pandemic is not captured sufficiently by the data from ‘the past 12 months’. The number of data collections (and timing) for the variable on remittance decreases ‘since the last interview’ differed a lot among countries, which made the variable not appropriate to conduct between-country-comparisons.

6 Only three countries’ data was collected in April. One country collected its data in August. Most of the data was thus collected between May and July.
Pearson’s correlation coefficient is -0.066, suggesting a very weak negative linear correlation (Neels, 2017). Although both datasets show a negative correlation between female emigration and remittance reductions during the pandemic, the strength of the relationship differs. This difference in results could be explained by two factors. First, and as already mentioned, the COVID-19 Household Monitoring Dashboard contains only a small number of data points. Therefore, the observed correlation coefficient could inadequately reflect reality. A second plausible explanation could be given by looking at the interpretation of variables Rem_%_change and Inco_redremitt. The variable Rem_%_change shows percentage changes in remittance inflows and, thus, reflects the intensity of remittance reductions. However, the variable Inco_redremitt tells something about the number of households that declared their remittances decreased. The variable does not show, however, the intensity of remittance reductions. This difference in interpretation of the two variables could explain why different results are recorded.

Figure 2: Scatterplot of remittance reductions and female migration using data from household surveys [Source: Authors, based on data from the World Bank (2021a) and UN-DESA (2020b)]

It is necessary, however, to make some remarks about these correlation coefficients. First, interpreting the correlation coefficient of -0.066 should be done with caution, as the Shapiro Wilk test\(^7\) and Shapiro Francia test\(^8\) for normality show that the data is not normally distributed. The correlation coefficient of -0.5477 also has to be interpreted prudently, as there are only 28 observations in this dataset. For these reasons, the above correlations should be interpreted with some degree of caution since they do not provide strong evidence for the existence of a negative correlation between COVID-19-induced changes in remittances and female emigration rates.

Finding a negative correlation between remittance reductions during the pandemic and female emigration is quite an interesting finding, though. The discussion of the literature review provides some insights into how the pandemic unevenly affects migrant women (Foley & Piper, 2020; Gottardo & Cyment, 2020; UN Women, 2020; IOM, 2021) and how it mainly threatens female migrant remittances (Azam et al., 2020; UN Women, 2020). However, the emerging negative correlation between remittance reductions and female emigration does not align with these insights from the above literature. Having said that, the above finding corresponds with Fleury (2016), Hennebry et al. (2017)

\(^7\) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shapiro%E2%80%93Wilk_test
\(^8\) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shapiro%E2%80%93Francia_test
and Orozco et al. (2006), who argue that female migrants remit more during periods of crisis than the men. It is also possible that female migrants’ tendency to remit a larger percentage of their income (Azam et al., 2020; Foley & Piper, 2020; IOM, 2004; Robert, 2015; Tittensor & Mansouri, 2017) played a role in this finding. These explanations are problematic, however, as they would suggest that female migrants’ well-being may be at stake as a consequence of their persisting tendency to send remittances home during the pandemic. This is a general concern that was already raised by various authors before the COVID-19 outbreak (see Foley & Piper, 2020; Pérez Orozco et al., 2010; Robert, 2015).

Figure 3: Scatterplot of remittance reductions and female migration using the World Bank's estimates
[Source: Authors, based on data from the World Bank (2021c) and UN-DESA (2020b)]

Table 3: COVID-19 Household Monitoring Dashboard9 (Source: World Bank, 2021a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Subset sample</th>
<th>Total sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>4338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>1814</td>
<td>9448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>2665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>1141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>1075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>1227</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 Number of households from which data about remittance reductions was gathered (compared to the total sample of the survey in the country)
6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This paper’s aim was twofold. First, it was tried to clarify why gender is an important factor to take into account when trying to understand the sending and usage of remittances. Second, the relationship between gender, COVID-19 and pandemic-induced remittance reductions was assessed. A literature review and a preliminary data analysis (based on rather limited data) were performed for this purpose.

The detailed discussion of the relevant literature seems to suggest that remitting behaviour of male and female migrants differs from each other. Female migrants are believed to remit a larger share of their income whilst at the same time sending smaller amounts more frequently than the men. In addition, they remit more during the periods of crisis. They also send remittances for a more prolonged amount of time, more often use informal methods to remit and the recipients of their remittances are usually other females. Furthermore, their preferences about the spending of their remittances more often result in poverty alleviation. Second, the usage of remittances is also influenced by gender. Regarding the usage of remittances, the literature review showed that female control over remittances depends on multiple factors. Age, household structure, socioeconomic status, educational level, duration of marriage and gender norms determine whether or not females get control over remittances. However, when women decide on the usage of the money, the remittances are more often spent on food, education and healthcare, thus, affecting human development outcomes.

The literature review also suggests that the pandemic had a larger effect on remittance-sending methods that are more commonly used by female migrants. In addition, their occupations and status expose them to a higher risk to be severely affected by the pandemic than male migrants. More precisely, various problems female migrants are facing during the pandemic put them at a higher risk of poverty and food deprivation, which force some of them to take on occupations with a high risk of violence, exploitation and infection. Therefore, female migrant remittances may be more vulnerable to the pandemic as compared to those from male migrants. In the preliminary (due to data limitations beyond control) data analysis based on correlation statistics, it is tried to see whether countries with a higher rate of female emigrants have experienced more or fewer reductions in remittances after the start of the pandemic. Surprisingly, a negative correlation between COVID-19-induced changes in remittances and female emigration rates was found. This contrasts with the above insights about the higher vulnerability of female migrants to the pandemic. However, this finding seems to be in line from the standpoint of the literature that seems to suggest that female migrants remit more during periods of crisis than the men and that they tend to remit a larger percentage of their income than the male migrants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
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<td>807</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
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<td>715</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>1968</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>1748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>3249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>1729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>1766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>1747</td>
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This paper has tried to contribute to the relevant literature in multiple ways. First, the comprehensive review of the literature on the influence of gender on remittances and the impact of COVID-19 on female migrants has revealed important aspects of the overall relationship that can stimulate further research on these topics and also raise crucial policy questions for policymakers. Second, the finding of a possible negative correlation between COVID-19-induced changes in remittances and female emigration rates is rather relevant. In view of the insights gained from the discussion of the relevant literature, this finding raises some concerns about female migrants’ well-being during the pandemic.

Having said this, this paper has some important limitations. An important limitation of this research lies within the data sources for reasons clearly beyond one’s control. The data on female emigration rates from the UN-DESA (2020b), for instance, has certain limitations. First, international migrants in this dataset are equated with the foreign-born population of a country or, when this information was not available\(^{10}\), citizens with foreign citizenship. However, using citizenship as a basis to count migrants can lead to inaccurate results\(^{11}\). The second disadvantage of this dataset is that some countries do not provide information (or accurate information) on the country of origin of their migrant stock (UN-DESA, 2020c). Therefore, the UN-DESA (2020c) recognizes that “estimates of the origin of international migrants by sex are likely to underestimate the size of transnational populations, especially for smaller countries or areas of origin” (p.7). The data from the COVID-19 Household Monitoring Dashboard also has some disadvantages as mobile phone surveys were used to acquire this data. These kinds of surveys, however, are characterized by a high non-response bias, the acquirement of superficial information, a high attrition rate and selection bias (World Bank, n.d.-a; World Bank, n.d.-b). In addition, and as already mentioned, the available data in this dataset was quite limited and the timing of data collection differed between countries. These shortcomings could also influence the results. A further limitation is related to the Annual Remittance Data (World Bank, 2021c) that was used to compare the results since the World Bank estimates on remittance flows have some important shortcomings. For example, the incomes of short-term migrant workers are automatically counted in these estimates, whether or not they remit. In addition, residency status is used as a basis for the calculation and not all countries report reliable data on their remittance inflows. Finally, the estimates insufficiently include remittances sent by informal methods (IMF, 2009; Migration Data Portal, 2021c; Ratha et al., 2017).

In view of the above, it becomes entirely clear that the most important recommendation emerging from the discussion is that more research on the gender-remittances nexus is required. This is an area that has not received the attention it deserves in the relevant literature. This complex relationship becomes even more important in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as mentioned repeatedly in the paper, there is still insufficient data regarding the influence of gender on remittances – an area that requires urgent attention so that more meaningful and informative data analysis can be conducted. In addition, data sources that allow researchers to assess the role of gender in COVID-19-induced remittance reductions are also scarce. Furthermore, data registration systems should be adjusted in such a way that the gender of the remittance sender is also documented in the collected data. This modification would be a very valuable one because this would resolve a very important shortcoming in the current data available, therefore, enabling more informative research to be conducted (at the country level too) on this important research and policy area. Another recommendation emanating from the discussion is associated with the finding that the female migrants’ labour market circumstances have important effects on their ability to remit. In this context, it is important for host countries to make an effort to increase employment rates of female migrants in the formal economy as well as to improve the quality of the occupations they take on (e.g., by addressing the problem of non-recognition of diplomas and the problem of discrimination among others). This way, female migrants’ access to formal employment can be enhanced, which, in turn, can increase their ability to remit. The discussion seems to suggest that during the pandemic these problems female

\(^{10}\) This information was however available in most countries.

\(^{11}\) People who were born in a different country but who acquired naturalization are, for instance, not counted as migrants. In addition, in some countries jus sanguinis is used as a basis for citizenship, which means that some people who were born in the country and who have never lived abroad could erroneously be counted as migrants (UN-DESA, 2020c).
migrants are generally facing were further reinforced, thus, making them even more vulnerable to poverty and food deprivation. And this calls for the urgent need for more protective measures to be taken in order to secure female migrants' wellbeing during and after a pandemic.

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REFERENCES


Catherine Van den Bosch, George Mavrotas | Gender, Remittances and the Impact of COVID-19: A Preliminary Analysis


AUTHORS’ DECLARATIONS AND ESSENTIAL ETHICAL COMPLIANCES

Authors’ Contributions (in accordance with ICMJE criteria for authorship)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Author 1</th>
<th>Author 2</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collected the data</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributed to data analysis &amp; interpretation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrote the article/paper</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Editing of the article/paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
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<td>Project Administration</td>
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Research involving human bodies (Helsinki Declaration)
Has this research used human subjects for experimentation? No

Research involving animals (ARRIVE Checklist)
Has this research involved animal subjects for experimentation? No

Research involving Plants
During the research, did the authors follow the principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora? Not Applicable

Research on Indigenous Peoples and/or Traditional Knowledge
Has this research involved Indigenous Peoples as participants or respondents? No

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Psychological Peculiarities of the Ukrainian People in Context of Globalization and Transformations

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes multiple interpretations of the concept of "mentality" and its structure. The peculiarities of the psychology of the Ukrainian people are studied/analyzed, and the main features of it are highlighted. The factors influencing the identity of modern Ukrainians are the living environment, geopolitical influences, relations with other peoples, history and historical conditions of the nation's development, church, and the religion. The manifestations of the psychology of the Ukrainian people hinder the effective socio-economic development of the country when interfacing the globalization. This article analyzes the consequences of the destructive influence of the repressive Soviet regime on the national culture and social consciousness of the Ukrainian people. Attention is focused on the need to cultivate behavioural characteristics of the people aiming at the implementation of an effective complex solutions, which tend to contribute to increasing the competitiveness and success of the State. A conclusion is made about the negative impact on the national psyche of the long-term absence of their own State in global domains.

Keywords: Psychological characteristics; National character; National consciousness; Geopolitical influence; Ukrainian society; National idea


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1. INTRODUCTION

Each nation and every human have its own individuality and integrity. The main features of such individuality are embedded in the peculiarities of the psychological composition and thinking patterns. The history of the people is an interplay of the changing social environment and the stable composition of the spiritual world. The search for national development directions requires a deeper understanding of the fundamental reasons behind the successes of some nations and the failures of others. The ability to overcome negative external obstacles, to implement effective economic models, and to create new forms of social organization is based on positive mental characteristics nationwide and on the conscious minimization of the influence of negative environment.

The analysis of the Ukrainian mentality and its transformation in a specific historical period allows to understand the reasons behind the emergence of certain social phenomena, behavioral patterns, common stereotypes, etc. Thus, necessary tenets include a better understanding of society and its characteristics, potential, and needs. It will allow responding more effectively to social challenges, thereby, producing effective mechanisms to solve complex situations, and choosing strategic directions of the development.

2. DISCUSSIONS

Piren (1996) believes that "national character is a set of specific and relatively stable psychological traits of one or another nation, evolved under the influence of historical, economic, socio-cultural and natural conditions of its development. It manifests in the behavior of people, their habits, rites, customs, and traditions in everyday life, and, especially vividly in the national culture. The national character underlies the most important things encompassing creativity, actions, and behavior of people giving them a unique color".

In modern political discourse, the mentality is usually understood as a concept manifested through the synthesis of logical-conceptual and sensory-emotional components. It is portrayed as an integrated indicator in which the consciousness, mind, worldview, nature of thoughts and thinking of the nation, its psychology and spiritual interests are organically combined. Strazhnyi (2022) interprets mentality as a system of relevant psychological algorithms that shape a person's view of the surrounding reality and, accordingly, determine his/her behavior. Regardless of nationality, people living in the same territory for a long time develop certain psychological algorithms. The national mentality is formed not even over decades, but over millennia. According to Kirichuk (1994), mentality is "a certain integral characteristic of people living in a specific culture, which makes it possible to describe the peculiarity of people's vision of the surrounding world and to explain the specifics of their response to it. This is a complex hierarchical system that determines the orientation of a person, individual social groups, notions in society, their goals and motives of life".

Likewise, Yuri (2007) points out that mentality in its structure "includes primarily something collective, with certain elements of a national character that act spontaneously, similar to a certain emotional and psychological code. This collective subconsciousness is a set of worldview and psychological instructions that have turned into principles and habits and, without a doubt, are manifested in traits, ingrained ways, forms and norms of life, that is, in a number of the most deeply rooted traditions, stereotype of behavior. Speaking about the mentality of a particular nation, people or citizens, we touch on a complex mechanism closely related to the centuries-old culture of the people, the established ways of responses to changes in the outside world, which determine the behavior of the nation or its citizens.

The mentality is a spiritual phenomenon that characterizes national culture and social consciousness. It reflects a set of established norms, principles, life orientations, and reproduction of the cumulative experience of previous generations (Tereshchenko, 2013). Mentality can be interpreted as an established way of specific world perception, inherent in ethnic groups, and nations, which determines their reaction to certain social processes and unites them into social and historical groups (Yushkevich, 2012).

Ukrainian economist, Mykhailo Baranovsky, drew attention to the fact that the economic organization of society depends on the psychological state of people, labor traditions, religious beliefs, national consciousness, and the spiritual composition of the individuals, that is, on the mental
phenomenon (Bondarenko, 2009). The mentality of the Ukrainian people has developed under the influence of complex historical circumstances. In the process of living in groups, individual signs of mentality are transferred to the general content, and this, in turn, presents the Ukrainian mentality expressing at the national level.

In general, it is possible to single out such features of the mentality of Ukrainians as concentration on the facts and problems of the inner, personal-individual world, psychological flexibility, sentimentalism, sensitivity, empathy, love for nature, etc. The famous modern Ukrainian philosopher, Popovych (2014), believed that condescension and respect for others are special Ukrainian national traits. According to Kolodny & Filipovych (1996), the Ukrainian people are characterized by such traits such as introversion, a sense of forgiveness, tolerance, a desire for spiritual solitude, asceticism in life, and unpretentiousness. The Ukrainian is also characterized by the dominance of the sentimental over the intellectual and strong-willed. Other scholars, Berezina & Pomaz (2022), believe that Ukrainians are adaptable, flexible, hospitable, and sociable. They have pragmatism, inherent intuition, hardworking temperament, mastery, versatility, broad outlook, and creativity. These are necessary prerequisites for innovative activities.

Demyanyuk (2016) believes that the sense of dignity and freedom is "embedded" in the national character of Ukrainians. They are able to rise quickly, actively react to injustice, and activities organized and selflessly. However, later Ukrainians often allow themselves to be disoriented, and buy into "simple solutions". Prokhasko (2022) is also convinced that one of the main components of the Ukrainian mentality is the desire for unconditional freedom. Yes, this freedom can be limited, and someone can encroach on it. There are times when it is taken away from Ukrainians, or they try to take it away. There are times when it is to be protected, or submitted for a while. But Ukrainians always strive to win back their freedom.

Among the main factors affecting the identity of modern Ukrainians, the following should be highlighted:

1. The environment of the life: Landscape, weather, soil features, territory area, flora and fauna, water bodies, etc., create a unique environment along with cognitive processes, a culture of communication, and associations. Nature has always occupied a significant place in the life of Ukrainians, and is reflected in the numerous images of nature in the folklore.

2. Geopolitical influences: The geopolitical position of Ukraine is advantageous, but difficult. It is located approximately equidistant from the non-European centers (Washington and Beijing) of world politics and economics. Ukraine is relatively close to the capitals of the largest European States - Berlin, London, Paris, Rome, as well as Brussels and Strasbourg, the so-called “capitals of Europe”, and quite close to the capitals of neighboring States. Ukraine has wide access to the seas, and a considerable length of borders – 6,993.63 km, including land borders of 5,638.63 km. Ukraine has the longest border with Russia (2,295.04 km), Moldova (1,222), and Belarus (1,084.2 km). According to its geopolitical position, Ukraine is, as it were, on the "border of two worlds" - Europe and Asia, which certainly have affected the psychology of the people. As a result, a peculiar dualism of the mentality of the Ukrainian ethnic groups was formed consisting of the presence of traits of both Western European people (individualism) and Eastern cultures (sensuality, emotionality). The famous writer Mykola Gogol was quoted in an article on the history of Ukraine, having described the national character of the Ukrainian people, writes: "in it, two opposite parts of the world and two different elements collided amazingly: European caution and Asian carelessness, naivety and cunning, a strong active principle and excessive laziness, a train to development and improvement and, meanwhile, trying to appear as someone who despises perfection" (Voropai, 1991).

3. Relations with other nations: The diverse ethnic composition of Ukraine's population, and constant interaction with other peoples, have led to an atmosphere of tolerance and the absence of national arrogance. Ukrainians themselves had no reason to seek and conquer foreign lands. This produced a gentle disposition and an almost complete lack of expansion. However, in defending their land, they showed bravery, sometimes even cruelty. Ukrainians have such valuable qualities as tolerance, and respect for other peoples and their cultures.

4. History and historical conditions of development of the people: Ukrainian life should be seen from a historical perspective. The difficult historical trials that the Ukrainian nation has
undergone, especially over the last one hundred years, could not help but affect its mental makeup. The system of unprecedented repressions and famines, collectivization, wars, urbanization, and aggressive imposition of atheism by the Soviet authorities had the greatest influence.

5. Church and religion: Today, religiosity in Ukraine is manifested not so much at the worldview level in explaining the picture of the world, but at the level of satisfying the spiritual and moral needs of a person, in observing family and domestic traditions, religious communication, moving away from life’s conflicts and everyday needs, explaining the meaning and value of life. There are more than 70 different denominations operating in the country, and each of them relies on a certain believers, an extensive network of monasteries, spiritual educational institutions for staffing the church’s activities, and religious education of believers. The missionary and preaching activity of the clergy has become widespread; it has free access to mass media. In Ukraine, various foreign religious missions also carry out preaching activities.

As Zemlyuk (2018) notes, among the defining psychological features of Ukrainians, which determine the structure of their life and behavior, the following should be highlighted:
- a developed personal principle, manifested in a high sense of self-worth, independence and individualism;
- moderation of higher mental functions in the perception of reality, which is manifested in a person's concentration on the facts and problems of the internal, personal world;
- emotionality – emotional-sensual factors that dominate over rational factors;
- love of God (religiousness);
- the cult of the "house" (house, estate residence, apartment).

According to Artemenko (2005), for Ukrainians, respect for work as a source of material well-being, understanding of the value of human life, respect for property rights, and mercantile perception of wealth are fundamental. It should be noted that certain manifestations of mentality do not always have a positive effect on the development of the country. In particular, a number of researchers interpret the features of Ukrainian society to a large extent as an obstacle to the effective socioeconomic development of the country in the conditions of globalization. Some of those features are illustrated as follows:
- conservatism of individual and public social consciousness;
- paternalism of a significant part of the population of Ukraine, a tendency to dependence, inability to be independent in decision-making, passiveness regarding the course of economic reforms;
- social and political conformism, unwillingness to defend one's own interests (Karpenko & Ilyina, 2017);
- anarchic individualism manifested in various forms of centrifugal desire for personal freedom;
- an inferiority complex, which is associated with the recognition of the inadequacy of one's national characteristics in comparison with other peoples and nations (Novikova, 2015).
- lack of a clear national idea;
- lack of own national mental model of success (Ilyina, 2013).

To a large extent, the national mentality was negatively affected by the long-term absence of its own State (Pidkova and Shast, 2001). The mentality of large part of the citizens, mostly of older age, bears the imprint of the Soviet mentality. The main features are resistance to change, passiveness, lack of initiative, the desire to see an authoritarian leader as the head of the State, inflated expectations from oneself, an inferiority complex, and infantilism. Organized by the Soviet regime in the 20th century, the process of collectivization, the elimination of the institution of private property throughout the country, and repression led to the formation of a deformed and distorted society. The destruction of the institutions of spirituality and moral traditions of the people led to the terrible degradation of the Ukrainian nation (Ivanyshyn et al., 2018).

In the second half of the 20th century, intensive processes of urbanization and growth of the specific industry were observed in Ukraine. At the same time, the influence of the traditional Ukrainian villages with a patriarchal spirit, which were supported by positive folk traditions, morals, and ethics, which were a reliable foundation, first of all, for the younger generations, decreased. The urban
population differed from the rural population in terms of lifestyle and behavior, age, and demographic structure. One of the negative mental characteristics manifested in Ukraine today is that a significant part of the society has practically come to terms with the fact that the internal politics of the State is formed from the outside. Even if Ukrainians shape the agenda, they are not always able to defend it.

A famous Ukrainian economist, philanthropist, and public figure, Havrylyshyn (2009) saw the main reasons for the inefficiency of Ukrainian society as the incompetence and corruption of the government and bureaucracy. There are a number of competent, decent, and patriotic people in the legislative and executive bodies. However, there is no critical mass of such people. Therefore, they are unable to carry out a real transformation of society. The majority of Ukrainians recognize the authority of a statesman not on the basis of real abilities and moral qualities but guided by emotions, and temporary admiration. That is why, phenomena such as cheap populism, vanity, slander, etc. flourish in Ukrainian politics.

Due to the historical circumstances in Ukraine, total resistance to changes has formed in many spheres; there is a lack of acceptance of the necessary reforms (Karpenko & Ilyina, 2017). Demyanenko (2022) emphasizes such a feature of the Ukrainians, like patience. This helps make informed decisions; however, this feature is harmful in the conditions of corruption and incompetence of power structures. World practice shows that one of the most effective methods of preventing corruption in the State is the strengthening of measures of financial and other control of persons authorized to perform State and other equivalent functions. Experts had high hopes that in the future such control would change the logic of people who enter politics only for their own enrichment. In Ukraine, an electronic declaration mechanism has been introduced since 2016 to implement such control. However, so far this has not brought any real results, although the discrepancy between the income and expenditure levels of the vast majority of parliamentarians and top level officials has become obvious.

In addition, the problem of forming an all-Ukrainian national identity remains relevant. Issues of State's language policy and inter-ethnic relations are acute. Such phenomena as denationalization and Russification of broad sections of Ukrainian society create significant difficulties on the way to national and political consolidation (Novikova, 2015). Unfortunately, the process of forming a national idea, which should become the basis of spiritual and political life, has not yet been completed in Ukraine. The stereotype about the obsolescence of the "national State" as the main form of statehood is quite actively spread in the mass media. Such conclusions are devastating for the national security of the country in general (Vlasyuk & Mokii, 2013).

The lack of citizens’ solidarity, low level of trust in State institutions, underdeveloped horizontal ties, weak sense of common values, practical absence of an effective trade union movement, etc. do not contribute to the development of Ukrainian civil society. In addition, increased attention at the State level requires ensuring the spiritual and cultural needs of the Ukrainian nation and maintaining values as an important regulator of social relations. Ukraine can become either a prosperous State or find itself in a dead end, in the deep periphery of European civilization. Today we have a chance to make the right choice and rise to a completely different level of development (Popovych, 2014). Havrylyshyn (2009) noted that the building an effective society in modern conditions is impossible without the implementation of political freedom, and an economic well-being for the entire population, ensuring social justice and symbiosis with the biosphere. Unfortunately, the ecological culture of entrepreneurs and the majority of the population in Ukraine remains quite low. This leads to the deterioration of the natural environment and slows down the dynamics of introducing technologies saving energy and resources in production process. Therefore, essential for building an effective Ukrainian society is a harmonious combination of economic, social and ecological components of development, the popularization of "green" entrepreneurship, which will contribute to increasing the ecological, material and spiritual well-being of Ukrainian citizens (Pecheniuk, 2013).

According to Bendukidze (2016), Ukraine "must take decisive steps to transform the economy, which is burdened by huge government expenditures and corruption". He suggested reforming the tax system, reducing the State apparatus, and starting an uncompromising fight against corruption. A number of psychologists believe that, in order to implement the idea of building a successful State in Ukraine, it is necessary to develop and implement an effective model of success. People should feel the effectiveness of the reforms through the improvement of their quality of life (Ilyina, 2013). A psychologist, Khrushch (2021) In her article, “Globalization, Greed and Glocal Ecology: A Psychological Perspective”, has described the process and nature of corruption in illicit forest curring
in the Carpathian mountains of Ukraine (p.8). Further, Khrushch and Karpiuk (2021) strongly argued that the changes happening in life depend on a person’s level of development, orientation (towards the good or evil, improvement or destruction, augmentation or wastage), morality, spirituality and environmental consciousness (see also Khrushch, 2013, p.5). They quoted Hutsul ethnic groups having keen sense of dignity and industriousness, believing that a healthy or able-bodied person must attribute to morality and spirituality. In modern conditions, the Ukrainian people have an internal need to identify themselves as a nation of the European model.

In the coming years, the Ukrainian people will face the urgent task of cultivating mental characteristics aimed at implementing a set of effective solutions that will contribute to increasing the competitiveness and success of the State. The experience of the past decades shows that investors invest in countries where citizens have mental characteristics aimed at discipline, a responsible attitude to time and resources, and rejection of corruption. All these are elements of the investment climate, and, accordingly, the driver of economic growth. The entrepreneurial consciousness will give an impetus to creative adaptation, and assimilation of the best of what humanity has discovered for itself in the long history of the search for fundamental foundations, and not simply too passive adaptation and blind imitation of other peoples.

3. CONCLUSION

It should be understood that the standard of living of citizens, the level of economic development, the place of the country on the geopolitical map of the world, and its competitiveness directly depend on the mentality of the citizens. It is difficult for us to achieve changes in these directions due not only to political turbulence, total corruption, and external aggression, but also to deeper things. Understanding mental features allows understanding to a great extent the reasons for building the appropriate system of socio-economic relations in modern Ukraine. In the future, it will help overcome an oversimplified vision of social processes, and to understand the fundamental foundations of national rules of economic relations that exist in the minds of members of Ukrainian society.

REFERENCES


AUTHORS’ DECLARATIONS AND ESSENTIAL ETHICAL COMPLIANCES

Authors’ Contributions (in accordance with ICMJE criteria for authorship)

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Vietnam’s Policies on Child Abuse Prevention and Abatement: Facts and Solutions

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ABSTRACT

Children are the future of a country, and they should be at the center of the national development strategy and policies. However, these are also objects of vulnerability and abuse. Therefore, child protection and child-abuse prevention are the responsibilities of each country. In this article, the authors have mentioned and analyzed the following main issues: (i) The facts and the problem of child abuse in Vietnam; (ii) Causes of child abuse in Vietnam; (iii) Recommendations to improve laws and policies and the effectiveness of implementation of child abuse prevention and abatement in Vietnam.

Keywords: Policy; Prevention; Children abuse; Facts; Solutions; Vietnam
1. INTRODUCTION

This article presents an analysis of official statistics of 2020-2021 on children’s victimization in Vietnam and reviews the data of several selective researches in the area. It defines the conception of child abuse and offences, and presents certain kinds, types and classification of child abuse. An analysis of accumulative and cyclical inversion of victim (child and offender from the perspective of victimology) is introduced. The authors present the inversion of victim - child and offender as a dynamic phenomenon, as a result of interaction between the processes of criminalization and victimization.

Many commercial advertisements are created to depict a form of art, without taking any care about ethical principles (Dojčinović & Ljajić, 2020). Some advertising involves a set of activities abusing the children. Based on the analyzed commercial advertisements, Dojčinović & Ljajić (2020) concluded that children are used in advertisements as a mean of achieving economic goals, and that the children are manipulated in the advertisements.

Research by Koesdyantho (2021) shows that child abuse is a serious phenomenon requiring a treatment to recover the victims. This research describes how giving treatments to recover children as victims from abuse and violence helped the students’ (participants’) knowledge. Six forms of treatments were applied to recover the victims, consisting of Combined Parent-Child Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CPC-CBT), Parent Training and Multi-Systemic Therapy, Project Support (Children's Protective Services), Web-based Parenting Skills, Home Visiting Program, and School Based Mental Health Intervention for Children.

2. DEFINING THE CHILD ABUSE

There are many definitions of what constitutes child abuse. The term ‘abuse’ is sometimes known as ‘maltreatment’ in the literature. Child maltreatment includes both acts of commission and acts of omission causing actual or threatened harm to a child. A definition of child abuse is: "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power" (WHO, 2020).

2.1 Types of Child’s Abuse

There is a variety of child’s abuses: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and witnessing parental intimate partner violence (IPV). Details of few types of abuses are as follows:

2.1.1 Physical abuse

Among professionals and the general public, there is disagreement as to what behaviours constitute physical abuse of a child. Physical abuse often does not occur in isolation but as part of a constellation of behaviors including authoritarian control, anxiety-provoking behavior, and a lack of parental warmth. The WHO (2020) defines physical abuse as:

“Intentional use of physical force against the child that results in – or has a high likelihood of resulting in – harm for the child's health, survival, development, or dignity. This includes hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning, and suffocating.”

Much physical violence against children in the home is inflicted with the object of punishing. Overlapping definitions of physical abuse and physical punishment of children highlight a subtle or non-existent distinction between abuse and punishment, but most physical abuse is physical punishment “in intent, form, and effect”.

Corporal punishment involves hitting (‘smacking’, ‘slapping’, 'spanking') the children, with the hand or with an implement – whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking or throwing children, or scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, or forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding, or forced ingestion (for example, washing children's mouths out with soap or forcing them to swallow hot spices).

Most nations with child abuse laws deem the deliberate infliction of serious injuries, or actions that place the child at obvious risk of serious injury or death, to be illegal. Bruises, scratches, burns,
broken bones, lacerations — as well as repeated " mishaps", and rough treatment that could cause physical injuries — can be physical abuse. Multiple injuries or fractures at different stages of healing can raise suspicion of abuse.

The psychologist Alice Miller noted in her book on child abuse that humiliations, spankings, beatings, slaps on the face, etc. are all forms of abuse, because they injure the integrity and dignity of a child, even if their consequences are not visible right away (Kaler, 2015). Physical abuse as a child can lead to physical and mental difficulties in the future, including re-victimization, personality disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), dissociative disorders, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, eating disorders, substance use disorders, and aggression. Physical abuse in childhood has also been linked to homelessness in adulthood (Kaler, 2015).

2.1.2 Sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is told to be a form of child abuse characterizing with an abuse of a child by an adult or older adolescent for sexual stimulation. The participation of a child in a sexual abuse of a child aims toward the physical gratification or the financial profit of the person committing the act. According to US Department of Health and Human Services, “Forms of CSA include asking or pressuring a child to engage in sexual activities (regardless of the outcome), indecent exposure of the genitals to a child, displaying pornography to a child, actual sexual contact with a child, physical contact with the child's genitals, viewing of the child's genitalia without physical contact, or using a child to produce child pornography” (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019). Selling the sexual services of children may be viewed and treated as child abuse rather than simple incarceration.

2.1.3 Psychological abuse

The child psychological abuse is defined by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in 2013 as "nonaccidental verbal or symbolic acts by a child's parent or caregiver that result, or have reasonable potential to result, in significant psychological harm to the child". Another organization, APSAC, defined psychological abuse as: “spurning, terrorizing, isolating, exploiting, corrupting, denying emotional responsiveness, or neglect”, or "a repeated pattern of caregiver behavior or extreme incident(s) that convey to children that they are worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or only of value in meeting another's needs" (Knight, 2002).

Again in 2014, the APA stated that: "Childhood psychological abuse [is] as harmful as sexual or physical abuse. Nearly 3 million US children experience some form of [psychological] maltreatment annually. Psychological maltreatment is the most challenging and prevalent form of child abuse and neglect. Given the prevalence of childhood, psychological abuse and the severity of harm to young victims, it should be at the forefront of mental health and social service training.” Victims of emotional abuse may react by distancing themselves from the abuser, internalizing the abusive words, or fighting back by insulting the abuser (Rokas, 2005). Emotional abuse can result in abnormal or disrupted attachment development, a tendency for victims to blame themselves (self-blame) for the abuse, learned helplessness, and overly passive behavior (Rokas, 2005).

2.2 Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was adopted by UN General Assembly with its Resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989. The UNCRC sets out children’s rights and how governments should work together to make them available to all children (United Nations, 1989). Under the terms of the convention, governments are required to meet children’s basic needs and help them reach their full potential, including basic fundamental rights1. The UNCRC is also the only international human rights treaty giving protection to the children under Article 45a.

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1 These include the right to:
- Life, survival and development
- Protection from violence, abuse or neglect
- An education that enables children to fulfill their potential.
- Be raised by, or have a relationship with, their parents.
- Express their opinions and be listened to.
3. THE CHILD ABUSE IN VIETNAM

According to Vietnam’s Government (2019), total number of abused children was 8,406 from which 7,646 were females and 760 were males. Number of children abused in specific forms was as follows: 513 children experiencing violence, 10 children experiencing labour exploitation, 6,476 sexually abused children, 195 children being trafficked, 7 children being abandoned, and 322 children suffered from other forms of harm, such as appropriation, property robbery, property appropriation, illegal possession of drugs, illegal arrest. In the continuum, number of subjects who committed acts of child abuse was 5,214 subjects from whom 494 subjects were people related by blood and relatives, 43 teachers, officials, and employees at educational institutions; 981 taking care of and treating diseases, 2,898 acquaintances of children, and 12 foreigners.

Kaler (2015) highlights types of abuses, such as rape, intercourse, lewdness against people under 16 years old. Other forms of abuse include child trafficking, killing newborn babies, robbing property, appropriating children, using children to commit crimes. There are many methods and tricks of abuse. In most cases of child abuse, subject takes advantage of the relationship, acquaintance and ignorance, limited awareness, material dependence, or inability to self-protection. Subjects take advantage of secluded places, use a force, threaten to use force, or threaten to kill. There are cases where victim and abused child lack the attention and education of the family, lead a loose lifestyle, and are not educated about sex. So, they are curious to discover and develop feelings for each other leading to consent for sex.

The majority of abused children often suffer child's psycho-physiology. Serious consequences include the victim’s pregnancy and female child give birth while her physical and mental health has not fully developed yet. Abused children can get infections, AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), etc. Children who are abused often feel guilt, fear, evil, stupidity, and at risk of becoming a criminal adult. In particular, if the abused children do not receive psychological treatment, they can become obsessed adults. When they grow up, they may abuse other children. Child abuse occurs nationwide, but mainly in rural, remote and isolated areas where there are outdated customs (Supreme People's Court, 2019a, 2019b).

3.1 Causes of Child Abuse in Vietnam

Vietnam Government's assessment discloses that the objective cause of child abuse in Vietnam for a long time was that institutions meant to create a safe and healthy living environment for children have not developed attention leading to the emergence of potential risk factors causing violence and child abuse on increase. Malicious and inappropriate information, publications, and products, especially in the network for a long time, are not prevented or controlled promptly and are not handled thoroughly (Vietnam’s National Assembly, 2020).

Supreme People's Court (2019a, 2019b) of Vietnam emphasized that cause of child abuse in Vietnam in recent years is the development of social networking sites. Pornography has created worse conditions for children, and they are not fully aware of the potential dangers of relationships. The gap between the rich and the poor leads to disparities in living conditions in the society, cracks in the family, and the erosion of traditional values leading to abandoned children wandering to earn a living, breaking the law, and facing violence, etc. These are the roots causes of crimes against children. The coordination for management and education of families, schools, and child protection organizations is not synchronous; the State management of culture and information is still not robust. Educating children on how to protect themselves is still overlooked, not focused, leading to children’s lack of knowledge, lack of understanding about psycho-physiological characteristics, and lack of skills preventing abuse.

The authorities are unable to control the depraved websites resulting into a large proportion of teenagers being sexually aroused, even addicted to sex. To satisfy their needs, children are ready to commit crimes. Children are the most targeted for their innocence, ignorance, and lack of defense. In rural and mountainous areas, the population is not dense composed of mainly seasonal and manual laborers. The interest of families and schools confine to children's activities at home and in school. The children have to go to school far from home, cross through remote areas. These are favorable places for subjects to commit acts of child abuse, especially child rape. The provisions of the Penal Code\(^2\) for the

group of crimes of child abuse, including sexual abuse, currently have some shortcomings. There are no specific and timely instructions to serve as basis for determining the crime. The deterrence, education, and general prevention affect the punishment process ascertained for this type of crime (Supreme People's Court, 2019a, 2019b).

According to the Vietnam Government (2019) assessment, the subjective cause of child abuse in Vietnam is the importance and urgency of child’s work. It has not been approved by the government or specialized agency. Socio-political organizations in many localities are fully aware, and interested in directing, investing, and performing properly their responsibilities. However, compliance to the law on child protection by some officials is not strict. The acts of violence and sexual abuse of children are overlooked, ignored, and handled carelessly. The local authorities and educational institutions do not usually inform or report the cases to the competent authorities. Cases of violence and sexual abuse of children are covered up. Families, parents, caregivers and children themselves are not fully aware of their responsibility to protect children and are slow to be supplemented with knowledge and skills on child protection, care and education. Lack of solutions to prevent moral degradation and lack of role models for a part of adults, parents, and family members leads to an increase in child abuse behaviors and crimes, especially child sexual abuse (Vietnam Government, 2019).

The assessment of the Supreme People's Court (2019b) reiterates that the worse situation of child abuse in Vietnam is due to the lack of upbringing, training, playing, and enjoyment by law violators, racing to claim bad habits, being dragged by friends into illegal acts. On the other hand, due to the lack of understanding of the law, authorities do not know how to deal with conflict situations. Lack of management, education, care, future orientation and acts of kindness collectively lead to behavior deviating from ethical standards and social relations. Many parents do not have or have little time to directly manage and take care of their children. They leave children at home alone, thus creating conditions for known subjects to use material benefits to entice them to commit acts of harmful aggression. Children are soon allowed to use valuable assets of their parents while they themselves are not able to protect their own property, creating conditions for criminals to commit acts of appropriation. The early development of children's mind, physiology as well as the desire to learn have been exploited and seduced by criminals to commit abusive acts (Supreme People's Court, 2019b). The legal awareness, sex education, and prevention of child sexual abuse have not been frequent and effective. The investigation, prosecution and trial of child abuse crimes are sometimes not timely, so it is still limited in creating consensus in public opinion to educate, condemn and prevent violations and crimes. Moreover, legal education and extension have not gone deep into each locality or each population cluster, so the effectiveness in raising legal awareness among the people is not enough. The contingent of staff working in child protection and care, especially at the grassroots level, is still lacking and unstable. The inspection and supervision of child protection work by some State agencies and authorities at all levels are not regular. The management of the accommodation services does not ensure the strict inspection of identification documents, creating favorable conditions for the subjects to commit acts of child abuse. The management of information, especially online information, is not good allowing a lot negative information directly affecting children's participation (Supreme People's Court (2019b).

Again the Supreme People's Court (2019a) states that the subjective cause of child abuse in Vietnam is the family or the social community whose management, care, nurturing and education of children are poor. Some reasons can be listed as follows. For families, in which the role of parents and caregivers is concerned, there is a lack of awareness of risks, a lack of prevention skills, and legal resolution skills, and care and recovery skills for physically and psychologically abused children. For the children themselves, the limited awareness of the child about forms of abuse, limited curiosity to discover about gender, the lack of skills to prevent and denounce the abuser are the major factors. For the society, communication on child abuse, sex education, and children's self-defense skills have not received attention or they are not taught to children even when they are in kindergarten or primary school. Kindergarten, primary schools as well as parents have not focused on educating of their children how to protect themselves. Schools today mainly focus on teaching literacy; so children do not have the skills to protect themselves against the risk of abuse (Supreme People's Court, 2019a).
4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOLUTIONS

Over the past decades, the legal system on child abuse prevention and control has been promulgated relatively fully, synchronously and timely, institutionalizing the guidelines and policies by closely following practical requirements, creating important legal basis for child protection in general, and child abuse prevention and control in particular. In addition, the legal system on prevention and control of child abuse still has many limitations. Many provisions of the law on children and other relevant laws have not been guided in a timely and sufficient manner, causing difficulties in implementation. The sanctions prescribed in some decrees on sanctioning administrative violations related to child abuse prevention and control are still weak and have not yet ensured deterrence. Violence against children occurring in the family is rarely detected and handled. The protection of children in the online environment is an urgent requirement, but the provisions of the law are not adequate and timely. There are no effective measures to prevent and minimize child labor in violation of the law. To improve the effectiveness of child abuse prevention and control in Vietnam in the next period, the following solutions, suggestions and recommendations are offered for the improvement of the following legal policies:

(i) The government continues to improve the legal policy on child abuse prevention and control: Consider and review the issues related to children, especially child protection, children's participation, principles to ensure the implementation of human rights and children's rights, which are stipulated in the Constitution and the Law on Children. The contents related to child protection in the legal system of criminal, civil, civil proceedings, handling of administrative violations, labour, judicial expertise, marriage and family, etc. should be amended and supplemented. Develop a national action plan to prevent and combat child abuse and submit it to the Prime Minister for approval. Investigate the possibility of developing juvenile justice legislation to form a child-friendly justice system in the best interests of children and juveniles, in line with international standards. Build and strengthen the child protection system to meet the requirements of child protection, strengthen the child protection capacity, promote effective inter-sectoral coordination, develop the child protection service system, ensure the best implementation of children's rights, especially the rights group to be protected from violence, sexual abuse, trafficking, labor exploitation, etc. Promulgate and organize the implementation of the National Action Plan for Children for the period 2021-2030. Program to prevent and reduce illegal child labor for the period 2021-2025 and orientation to 2030.

(ii) The Supreme People's Court will continue to coordinate with relevant ministries and branches in formulating documents detailing the Penal Code, the Law on Children and other relevant laws, thereby, creating a complete legal basis to handle acts of child abuse. Especially, it is necessary to speed up the promulgation and organize the implementation of the Resolution of the Judicial Council of the Supreme People's Court guiding the application of Articles 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146 and 147 of the Criminal Code to be implemented soon in practice, meeting the needs of solving cases in practice. Develop a plan to implement the program of coordination in the protection of women and children. Emphasize the content of coordination in providing information, handling reports and denunciations about crimes in cases related to girls. Continue to coordinate with projects and organizations to issue: (a) Handbook of Procurators dealing with child sexual abuse cases; (b) Question and answer document on awareness and application of the law in the exercise of the right to prosecution, supervision of prosecution, investigation, prosecution and trial of cases and cases of abuse of women and children. Review, amend, supplement and complete the system of legal documents and guiding documents related to the field of violence and child abuse prevention. Stipulate specific functions and tasks in protecting and supporting children who are abused, and exploited in relevant legal documents in order to create a necessary legal framework for the deploy and perform tasks of ministries, central branches and local authorities in the prevention and control of child abuse. Promulgate and organize the implementation of documents guiding and explaining conflicting concepts in order to ensure a unified understanding and synchronous application in practice, as mentioned in the section on difficulties in above (instructions on
lewd behavior, other sexual acts, pornography, etc). To assume the prime responsibility for, and coordinate with concerned ministries and branches in, formulating, promulgating and organizing the implementation of the Joint Circular on coordination between procedure-conducting agencies in the process of receiving denunciations and information about crimes, petitions to prosecute, investigate, and adjudicate cases of child sexual abuse.

(iii) The Supreme People's Court continues to perfect the legal system on prevention and combat of child abuse. Research, amend and improve regulations on sanctions for child sexual abuse because the current sentence of the Penal Code for these crimes is not strict. The consequences of these crimes are very serious for the victims, especially psychologically, spiritually and affect their later lives. Therefore, child abuse acts must be punished severely and to be able to deter and prevent this type of crime. At the same time, amend and supplement regulations in the direction of increasing monetary compensation for mental and health losses of abused children following the actual conditions of today's society and to compensate for the loss of mental health partially offset the serious consequences that children will have to bear in the long run. Specifying responsibilities of each agency or organization assigned responsibility for child protection, strictly handling agencies, organizations, educational institutions, agencies and organizations that fail to denounce or denounce acts child abuse, failure or delay in performance.

5. CONCLUSION

The abuse of children is exists in many different forms in Vietnam. Crime of child abuse is very complicated and it needs the cooperation of all people in society to prevent and fight it. Vietnam's Government has enacted many legal policies to abate this crime. Vietnam needs to strengthen methodology and cooperate with international networks to control better the situation of child abuse. Treatments are essential in the form of collaboration between parents (caregivers), schools, and children (as victims) to recover child abuse and violence through a variety of measures to realize the purposes and children abuse. Victims also need appropriate treatment based on their condition and such treatments as a choice and solution to recover the victims.

REFERENCES


Vietnam’s National Assembly (2020). Resolution No. 121/2020/QH14 dated June 19, 2020 on continuing to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of policies and laws on prevention and control of child abuse.

AUTHORS’ DECLARATIONS AND ESSENTIAL ETHICAL COMPLIANCES

Authors’ Contributions (in accordance with ICMJE criteria for authorship)

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<th>Contribution</th>
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