This dissertation has focused on a firm level industrial up-gradation through value chain (IUVC) in the Global Apparel Value Chain (GAVC). The apparel manufacturers of the developing courtiers (DCs) and least developed countries (LDCs) are locked in the low value adding activities of the GAVC. Due to having disadvantage in negotiation and bounded rationality the firms are locked in low value adding steps and cannot integrate to other relevant higher value adding businesses like designing, marketing, procurement and logistics etc. The buyers are hopping from country to country in choosing their supplier whenever they find better option. Moreover, Multi Fiber Agreement (MFA) has been phased out in 2005, and there is no scope for economic diplomacy. Because of these, the firms’ risk in sustaining in the acute competition in the GAVC is very high. Therefore, an LDC like Bangladesh has to achieve competitive advantages (CA) through IUVC and that IUVC is not so easy to pursue. To pursue IUVC resource-based view (RBV) can be one of the most feasible options for Bangladesh. Bangladesh has been competing in this field for about three decades. Consequently it can be deemed that if a firm deploys leagile manufacturing systems (LAMS) with quite a good amount of experience in this business, they can utilize their existing resources and capability for decoding the knowledge of the relevant business and thereby, industrial up-gradation through value chain can be pursued. But pursuing IUVC is not the final destination. By IUVC, firms have to yield CA out of it. Choosing the scope of the CA for a firm in a supply chain also not like Porter’s trading off concept between cost and quality. A supply chain is created with a vision that it would select the most suitable firms for the different steps in the value addition from the different countries. Therefore, to gain CA
through IUVC, the firms should pursue all sorts of CA simultaneously. This is possible only if the firm can achieve dynamic capability to gain VRIO, explained in RBV. This study has both theoretically and empirically showed that firms can pursue for cost, quality, flexibility, reliability and quick response simultaneously. This dissertation also showed that through achieving CA the firms can improve all the growth based firm performances like capital growth, profit growth and sales growth.

The dissertation has eight chapters as a whole. Chapter 1 introduces the background of the study, dynamics of GAVC and on the basis of that how resources and capabilities can govern the GAVC for pursuing IUVC and CA and this chapter also states objectives, scope, significance and organization of the dissertation. Chapter 2 provides overview of the apparel industry of Bangladesh. It describes the growth trajectory of Bangladesh apparel industry and the factors contributed for it, types of firms and their variation in terms of value adding activities, challenges of the firms in the post MFA period, the need for restructuring, changes in modern machinery, product diversification status and market diversification status. Chapter 3 is the literature review which provides the definition of all factors for the study, the theories for linking the factors and the logic of the relationship among the factors. Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 are main empirical analyses. Chapter 4 describes the distribution of the 180 sample firms according to the resources and capabilities like HRM practices, Information technology (IT) and LAMS. Chapter 5 shows the impact of social compliance factors (SCF) on HRM practices for LAMS by surveying 75 sample firms. Chapter 6 shows the impact of HRM practices and IT as the antecedent on IUVC by utilizing same samples of Chapter 4. Chapter 7 shows the impact of IUVC as vertical integration (VI) on CA and subsequently on firm performance (FP) by utilizing same samples of Chapter 4 and 6.

In Chapter 4 the data collected from the 180 sample firms, on the basis of five point Likert scale are analyzed. It was found that in Bangladesh the up-gradation pattern is not linear unlike Gereffi’s idea of linear up-gradation pattern. Firms can be divided in six groups in the pattern of up-gradation like CMT, CMT with design, full path OEM, ODM with partial OEM and full path ODM. This chapter has shown that about half of the firms are standing in OEM stage in Bangladesh. It is shown that by implementing HRM practices with more importance the firm may undertake designing activities without fully implementing the activities of OEM.
In Chapter 5 the dissertation showed the relation between SCF and HRM practices for LAMS. This chapter accumulated the scattered relations among the indicators of human factors and the indicators of HRM practices for LAMS. Here it was found that many human factors of leagile and SCF match to each other. Consequently, this study has revealed the relation between SCF and HRM practices for LAMS by juxtaposing SCF on human factors for leagile. On the basis of economic goal rather than humanitarian goal of SCF, the relationships are discussed. The study found that ergonomics and worker related compliance factors are two most important SCF for the apparel firm in Bangladesh for implementing HRM practices for LAMS. Then, it come health and safety and then non-discriminatory attitude and social dialogue.

Chapter 6 aims at finding out whether firm’s resources and capabilities like manufacturing system can contribute to IUVC in the apparel sector of Bangladesh. Gereffi (1999) advocated for IUVC as a good strategy to overcome the problem of being locked in low value adding activity like CMT for the apparel manufacturers of DCs. But Gereffi did not discuss how to strive for IUVC for the apparel firms. This chapter paved the way for IUVC for apparel firms on the basis of RBV. It shows that resource development through development of asset specificity and knowledge can reduce transaction cost and these are the antecedents of VI. A survey was done on 180 apparel firms in Bangladesh and by using structural equation modeling (SEM), it found that HRM practices and IT positively influences on LAMS and LAMS positively influence on IUVC. The constructs of LAMS show that the variables responsible for producing fashionable products like customization, product line and differentiation are influencing on designing activity of IUVC, and procurement is influenced by product line and differentiation, and marketing is influenced by product line, differentiation, volume flexibility and minimum inventory.

Chapter 7 tried to advocate that IUVC as VI can be supportive for gaining several sorts of competitive advantages for the firm simultaneously. The major theories on strategic management like Porter’s generic competitive strategy, RBV and capability based view (CBV) advocates that IUVC integration gains CA for the firms. But other studies done on GAVC have neither discussed what should be the relevant CA for apparel manufacturing firms on the basis of above mentioned theories nor empirically showed whether IUVC as VI
can gain CA and improve FP. Therefore, this study has picked up the variables for CA examining the above mentioned important theories and linked VI and CA and subsequently with FP. This study has done on the same sample firms as for chapter 6, and by using SEM it found that IUVC which is renamed here as VI has positive influence on CA and CA has significant positive influences on FP. By analyzing the result, this study recommends the apparel manufacturers in Bangladesh that the firms must not stick to the strategy of reduction of labor cost rather they should also try to pursue for other CA like time, quality, reliability and flexibility. But this study suggests such, if the firms are running on LAMS and are pursuing IUVC. This chapter has shown that cost reduction is significantly influenced by design, and quality, quick response and product flexibility are significantly influenced by procurement. Marketing influences only on product flexibility. In this way, the firm performances would be improved.

Conclusion chapter asserted that RBV theory can be good logic for IUVC in GAVC. Earlier it was mainly used for describing how firm achieve sustainable CA. The chapter concluded by showing the deviation of the findings from the major theory like Gereffi (1999). This study deviated from the idea of up-gradation path of Gereffi (1999) that described only linear way. It is also showed here that currently, combination of lean and agile manufacturing system is possible in Bangladesh although agile is suggested to be implement after vast experience on lean by the scholars on LAMS.

備考 論文の要旨はA4判用紙を使用し, 4,000字以内とする。ただし, 英文の場合は1,500語以内とする。Remark: The summary of the dissertation should be written on A4-size pages and should not exceed 4,000 Japanese characters. When written in English, it should not exceed 1,500 words.