

Supply Chain Practices at HearLife & Hearing Aid Center

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This report is submitted to the school of Business and Economics, United International University as a partial requirement for the degree fulfillment of Bachelor of Business Administration

Internship Report on Supply Chain Practices at HearLife & Hearing Aid Center

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Letter of Transmittal

August 3, 2025

Dr. Saad Hasan

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Subject: Submission for Internship Report

Dear Sir,

With due respect, I would like to say with pleasure that I am submitting my internship on "*Supply Chain Practices at Hear Life & Hearing Aid Center*" I am submitting this report in fulfillment of the requirements for the BBA degree. This internship has provided me with real-life experience in sourcing, logistics, and the distribution department at Hear Life & Hearing Aid Center.

I have tried my best to follow your instructions and guidelines to prepare this report. I have tried my best to make this internship report valuable and insightful.

I am grateful to you for all of your aid and cooperative effort as I worked on this report. I hope you will find this report valuable and insightful, and observe my effort. I welcome any queries regarding my report, and I would be glad to answer with my knowledge and experience.

Yours sincerely

Mohammad Ashek Islam

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BBA Program

School of Business & Economics

Certification of Similarity Index

This is to certify that this internship report is a result of work carried out under my supervision. I confirm that the report adheres to the necessary quality and academic standards prescribed by United International University (UIU). Additionally, I verify that the report's similarity index, as per the plagiarism detection report, is within the permissible limit set by the university, ensuring the work is free from plagiarism.

Supervisor's Name: Dr. Saad Hasan

Signature:

Date:

Declaration of Student

I hereby declare that this internship report, “*Supply Chain Practices at Hear Life & Hearing Aid Center*” is my work and has not been submitted previously, either in full or in part, to any other institution for any degree or any other purpose. The contents of the report are my efforts. I have mentioned others' work and contributions. The references are appropriately mentioned in the text.

Mohammad Ashek Islam

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BBA Program

School of Business & Economics

United International University



হিয়ারলাইফ এন্ড হিয়ারিং এইড সেন্টার HearLife & Hearing Aid Center

INTERNSHIP COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

To Whom It May Concern

This is to certify that **Mohammad Ashek Islam**, a student in the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) program at the United International University, **ID No. 111201136**, has successfully completed his internship in the Supply Chain Department at HearLife & Hearing Aid Center. During his internship, he received practical exposure and training.

Internship details are given below:

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Designation: Intern (Supply Chain)

Period: From May 1, 2025, to July 15, 2025

Throughout his internship, Ashek worked sincerely at HearLife & Hearing Aid Center and performed well. We wish him success and a bright future ahead.

Mohammad Al-Amin

CEO

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Acknowledgement

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I am thankful to the Hear Life Hearing Aid Center, particularly to Mohammad Al-Amin Hosain (CEO, Hear Life & Hearing Aid Center), for giving me the opportunity to visit his office. I would also like to thank Mr. Arafat (Sourcing and inventory manager) and Redwan Ahmed (officer) for their kind assistance and support in collecting data, analyzing information, and preparing this report.

Finally, I am grateful to my family and my honorable professors and faculty for their valuable support and advice. Their encouragement of me has been a great source of strength throughout my internship journey. This achievement would not have been possible without their support.

Executive Summary

The object of this report is to analyze the Hear Life and Hearing Aid Center's supply chain management activities and find out its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. I worked for ten weeks during this time, collecting data and discussing it with staff and the CEO of Hear Life to develop this report.

This report carries various information about supply chain activities, services, products, and accessories of Hear Life. This report includes information about the hearing aid industry in Bangladesh and the hearing aid market there. The data will help to understand the overall hearing sector positions in Bangladesh, the activities of hearing aid service providers, the services for patients, and the hearing aid devices to cover hearing loss.

The study's main focus is to learn more about the supply chain management's regular operations of the hearing aid organization, Hear Life & Hearing Aid Center. The study focuses on how the organization handles its sourcing, procurement, import, storage, inventory, and distribution. How they deliver their hearing aid devices to their nationwide dealers. My ten-week internship period is limited, as the scope of data collection and analysis without confidentiality issues also prevents sensitive data from being widely used.

While Hear Life has established itself as a reliable brand with its global warranty, unique extended warranty options, and free after-sales services, it faces operational challenges due to the absence of automated inventory systems, limited warehouse space, and dependency on third-party logistics. The report highlights how these challenges can impact dealer coordination and customer experience.

Hear Life needs to invest in digital marketing strategies to increase its visibility and clientele, develop a dealer monitoring system, and deploy automation tools to enhance its supply chain. By implementing these adjustments, Hear Life can maintain its high level of efficiency, build consumer confidence, and become a significant player in Bangladesh's growing market for hearing aids.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The healthcare industry plays a vital role in improving the quality of life of people, and among its many subsectors, the hearing aid sector is vital for those who are not eligible to hear proper sound naturally due to their hearing loss issue of the ear. Using a hearing aid device enhances the hearing capacity of a patient. In recent years, the demand for hearing aid devices has been increasing steadily in Bangladesh. Since hearing devices are medical devices, effective and efficient supply chain management has become vital and critical for organizations involved in sourcing, importing, logistics, and distributing hearing aid devices. My internship at Hearlife & Hearing Aid Center has provided me with the opportunity to gain real-life experience and understand the complex supply chain process within the hearing aid industry.

In Bangladesh, HearLife & Hearing Aid Center is the only authorized dealer of A&M Company, a global producer of hearing aids. The Center imports lightweight hearing devices via air freight and distributes them to about 27 dealers of the Center nationwide, and the Center sells the device directly to patients through retail. Moreover, the center has a testing department where an audiologist determines the problem of the hearing loss level of the ear through some hearing tests.

The purpose of this report is to explore how HearLife & Hearing Aid Center handles its supply chain from sourcing and importing hearing aids to inventory management and final distribution, and how its activities align with the supply chain management principles in a healthcare product context in the hearing aid industry.

1.2 Background of the Report

This internship program is significant for the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree at United International University. It is required to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and real-life corporate practice. Following the policy of United International University, students are placed in service and manufacturing organizations based on their field of study. They are engaged in practical activities and gain real-life professional experience. Then, an internship report is created by analyzing, considering, and compiling the knowledge acquired during the internship period.

This report is created based on my internship at HearLife & Hearing Aid Center, an organization in the healthcare industry that is an authorized dealer of A&M for hearing aids in Bangladesh. The center actively imports, stores, and distributes hearing aid devices to both the nationwide dealer network and retail customers.

1.3 Object of the study

- To analyze the overall supply chain practices and structure of HearLife & Hearing Aid Center, including the procurement, importing, logistics, and distribution of hearing aid devices.
- Identify the challenges faced in logistics, inventory, distribution, and after-sales service.
- To explore the roles and responsibilities of the supply chain to ensure smooth coordination between the organization and its nationwide dealer network.
- To recommend possible improvements using technology in the supply chain for better control in inventory management and increased coordination with nationwide dealers.

1.4 Scope of the study

The report focuses on the supply chain practices of HearLife & Hearing Aid Center. I worked in the areas of inventory management, product storage, and ultimate distribution to dealers and retail customers throughout Bangladesh.

The practical experience during the internship period was focused on inventory management, which included order processing, storage procedures, and stock monitoring. In addition, it also covers distribution procedures such as packing, dispatch, coordination, and dealer communication to ensure the product's availability on time.

This report does not make a comparative analysis with other organizations. It provides a detailed view of the supply chain operation practice of HearLife and the Hearing Aid Center.

1.5 Methodology

During my internship at HearLife & Hearing Aid Center, I gathered both primary and secondary data for this report. The purpose of the methodology is to describe how the data was collected and applied in this report.

1.5.1 Primary Data

- I gathered data from my direct observation in various supply chain activities like inventory handling, storage, and delivery.
- I asked my colleagues and seniors who are responsible for supply chain activities to understand how their job is run.
- I was responsible for the day-to-day activities of supply chain operations, which helped me to learn and gather information.

1.5.2 Secondary Data

- I visited the official website of Hearlife & Hearing Aid Center to gather more information about the company.
- I also visited the main website of the A&M company to learn more about the product and its features.
- To know about the industry, I used articles and online resources that are related to the hearing aid sector in Bangladesh.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

Though this report is created based on my internship experience and observation at Hearlife & Hearing Aid Center, the depth and scope are limited due to some limitations.

- The duration of my internship was 10 weeks, which was a barrier to observing and evaluating every aspect of the supply chain process.
- This organization is relatively new. Its internal software system was not ready to work during my internship. As a result, its activity was not automated.
- I didn't get the opportunity to access some confidential documents like the Letter of Credit and the product purchase list.
- I was not able to observe the import customs process.

Despite some limitations, I have tried to prepare a comprehensive report based on available resources gathered during my internship.

Chapter 2

Internship Objectives

2.1 Purpose of the Internship

The purpose of the internship is to apply my theoretical knowledge of supply chain management, which I acquired at university, in the practical business world. The internship was the bridge between my academic knowledge and the organization's experience of the real business world. Through the internship, I was able to learn about the supply chain operations of the hearing aid sector and observe the different functions of supply chain management.

2.2 Learning Goals

The goals of my internship at Hearlife & Hearing Aid Center are

- i) To be practical within the supply chain management activities
- ii) To learn how to control, manage, and distribute the hearing aid products
- iii) To observe the challenges that are faced in managing inventory, distribution, and product availability.
- iv) To gain adaptability in the organizational culture and environment.

2.3 Relevance to Supply Chain Management Major

The internship was highly relevant to my major, supply chain management. It allows me to directly function in the supply chain activities of Hearlife & Hearing Aid Center. I applied my academic knowledge of supply chain management in inventory control, logistics, and distribution areas of a real-world environment. The experience helped me to understand how supply chain activities work in the hearing aid sector of the healthcare industry. Also, it helped me to learn how to effectively and efficiently coordinate and maintain organizations.

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Chapter 3

Organization Profile

3.1 Overview of HearLife

HearLife is a leading organization to provides advanced hearing solutions in Bangladesh. It is dedicated to improving the quality of life of people who are facing the difficulties of hearing loss of the ear. It is committed to helping people reconnect with the environment around them. HearLife thinks that every individual's hearing needs and problems are unique. So it works with its client closely to improve the hearing capacity, which will fit the patient's lifestyle and performance. The audiologists and hearing specialists of Hear Life are always committed to delivering the maximum level of care with their hearing aids and devices, which are comfortable and have cutting-edge features.

Hear Life also prioritizes teaching its customers how patients can protect their hearing from loss in the future and take care of their hearing aids. It helps them to protect further hearing loss than the present level and use the device better for a long time with proper maintenance. Hear Life always puts its customers' needs and wants first and makes a meaningful impact so that patients can hear clearly and enjoy a better life every day.

3.2 Mission, Vision, and Objectives

➤ Mission

Hear Life's mission is to provide high-quality hearing solutions to enhance the hearing capacity of patients who have hearing loss in one ear so that individuals can reconnect with the world around them. It is always committed to offering advanced technology, specialized care, and good customer service to ensure better hearing for a better quality of life.

➤ Vision

Hear Life wants to be a trusted leading organization in the hearing care sector. They aim to provide a better hearing experience to their customers for a better living and an enjoyable life.

➤ Objectives

- To offer personalized hearing solutions based on their hearing loss level.
- To provide high-quality services such as different types of hearing tests, hearing device fitting, and repair.

- To educate the patients about their hearing health so that they can properly care for their hearing device and ears.
- To gain strong customer loyalty and satisfaction for the long run
- To establish more branches across Bangladesh to expand their services. To get an original product, more warranty, and good after-sales support, make a strong relationship with the manufacturer.
- To buy and sell updated and latest technology devices to provide modern features such as wireless synchronization, noise management, automatic classifiers, advanced sound processing, and feedback prevention.

3.3 History of the organization

Hear Life was founded as a partnership business with four individuals in February 2024 with a simple but powerful vision: to improve the hearing capacity of people who were not eligible to hear natural sound by providing hearing solutions against hearing challenges for a better quality of life for people in Bangladesh. The founders of Hear Life recognized the need for a client-focused, technologically advanced, and expert approach to hearing treatment. With this goal in mind of the founders, Hear Life started its journey. From the beginning to present, the organization has been focusing on staying updated with modern and advanced technology to provide the best service to its customers.

3.4 Core Business Operation

The services provided and the products and accessories sold are to ensure better hearing for everyone for a better and more enjoyable life.

3.4.1 Services of Hear Life

- I. Hearing test
- II. Hearing Aid Repair
- III. Hearing Assessment
- IV. Hearing Aid Fitting
- V. Home Hearing health checkup
- VI. Industrial Hearing Screening
- VII. Hearing Loss Prevention

VIII. Hearing Related Consultations

IX. Newborn Hearing screening.

3.4.2 Products Hearing Aids List

1. XTM XP R10
2. XTM P R10
3. XTM RIC R10
4. XTM XP R8
5. XTM XP P12
6. XTM IF/Custom P12 CIC
7. XTM XP R6
8. XTM RIC P12
9. XTM P R8
10. XTM P R6
11. XTM RIC R8
12. XTM Custom P6
13. XTM CIC P6
14. XTM P P4
15. XTM RIC P8
16. XTM Custom P8
17. XTM P A4
18. XTM P P8
19. XTM XP P6
20. XTM CIC P4
21. XTM RIC R6
22. XTM XP P4
23. STF P T1
24. XTM IF A4 CIC
25. STF P T3
26. XTM P P6
27. XTM Custom P4
28. XTM XP A4
29. STF XP T3
30. XTM IF CIC P8
31. XTM XP P8

3.4.3 Hearing Aid Accessories

Hearing Aid Zinc Air Batteries

A&M # 675 Battery (Mercury Free) 6 Pcs

A&M #13 Battery (Mercury Free) 6 Pcs

A&M # 312 Battery (Mercury Free) 6 Pcs

A&M #10 Battery (Mercury Free) 6 Pcs

Open Fitting Accessories

Life Tube/A-Life Tube (Specify Size/Size)

Connexx Thin Tube Specify Size / Size

Open Life Tip: Specify Size

Close Life Tip: Specify Size

Double Life Tip: Specify Size

Semi-Open Life Tip

Receiver-In-Canal (RIC) Fitting Accessories

Click Mini Receiver 2.0 (S.M.P.). RIC

Click Mini Receiver 2.0 (HP with CIC shell). RIC

Click Dome (Open, Close, Double, Semi-Open) 6 Pcs.

Receiver Mold (P mini Receiver)

Mini Receiver Waxguard Set (08 Pcs)

Behind-The-Ear (BTE) Fitting Accessories

BTE Eartip Assembly (Eartip + Elbow + Tube)

BTE Eartip Joint Elbow (L-Bend)

BTE Eartip (Any Size)

Mold

Soft Mold

Hard Mold

Amiga Pocket Instrument Accessories

2-Pin Single Cord (Black)

2-Pin V Cord (Black Pseudo-Binaural Fitting)

2 Pin Receiver SM-885 (Black)

3-Pin Single Cord (Black)

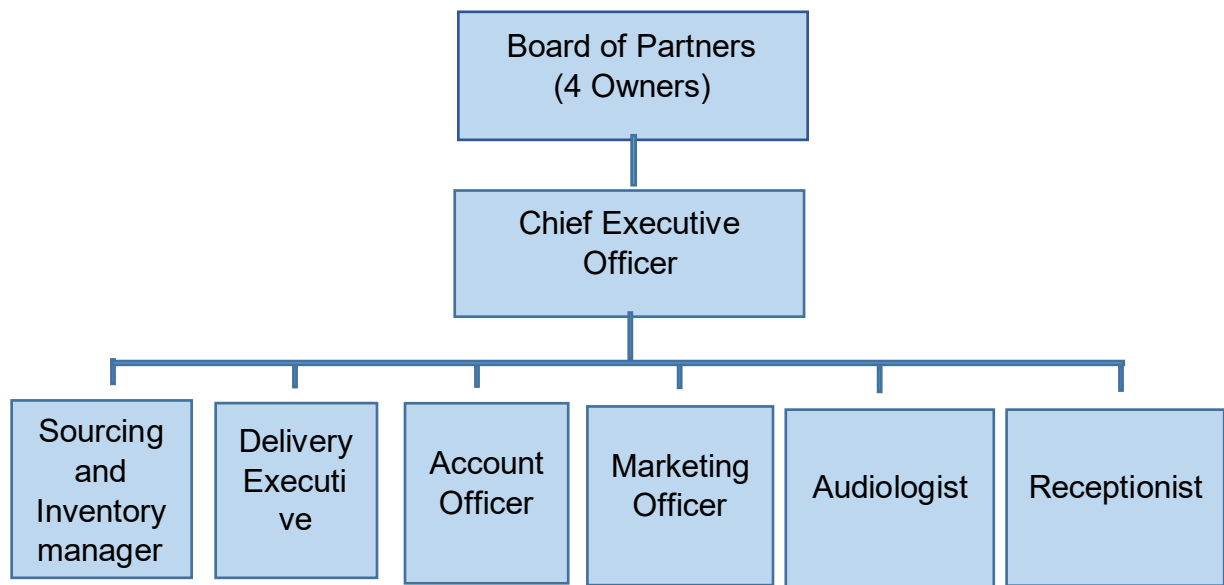
3 Pin V Cord (Black Pseudo-Binaural Fitting)

3 Pin Receiver ME-38 (Black)

Optional Accessories

Hearing Aid Charger

3.5 Organizational Structure



Chapter 4

Industry Analysis

4.1 Overview of the Hearing Aid Industry in Bangladesh

The hearing aid industry is becoming a vital sector of the healthcare system. According to a study by Tarafder et al., around 9.6% of people in Bangladesh suffer from different levels of hearing loss. These numbers are increasing day by day with age and noise exposure. All these 9.6% of people do not use hearing aids due to a lack of awareness, ability, and access.

The hearing aid industry is at a developing stage in Bangladesh. There are no manufacturers to produce hearing aids in Bangladesh. The industry in Bangladesh is fully dependent on imports for hearing aids. The main international brands in Bangladesh are A&M, Phonak, Oticon, Signia, Widex, and Starkey. Without these companies, there are a good number of international brands whose hearing aids are imported into Bangladesh.

According to Volza (2024), between October 2023 and September 2024, 354 shipments of hearing aids were imported into Bangladesh, where 91 foreign exporters exported the product to 71 Bangladeshi importers. The majority of the hearing aids are imported from the USA, Singapore, and Europe. The local service provider performs assessments, fittings, and aftercare.

46 shipments were imported in September 2024, which reflects a 64% increase compared to August 2024 and 18% from September 2023. There are more than 150 hearing centers in the districts and divisional cities such as Dhaka, Sylhet, and Chittagong. All the hearing aids are imported and distributed by the local company of Bangladesh.

4.2 Industry Trends and Growth

The population aged 60+ is 8% of the population in Bangladesh, and predicted that this percentage will increase to 12% by 2035. This will significantly create the need for hearing aids. (BanglaJOL,2021).

According to Export Genius (2024, the demand for digital hearing aids with Bluetooth connectivity, rechargeable batteries, and noise reeducation technology is becoming more popular in the cities. The initiatives, such as home-based hearing examinations and tele-audiology services increasing the demand in rural areas. The World Hearing Day campaigns supported by the World Health Organization (WHO) are increasing awareness of early detection and hearing health. According to industry analysts, the Bangladeshi hearing aids market is expanding between 6 and 8% annually, with rising demand and imports.

4.3 Key Competitors and Market Dynamics

Since there is no local manufacturer of hearing aids, Bangladesh is dependent on imported products of international brands. The dominant international brands are A&M, Widex, Phonak, Signia, and Oticon, which are imported and distributed in the nation through their authorized dealers and distributors. Hear Life & Hearing Aid Center has a competitive edge in terms of exclusive product offerings and warranties because it is the only authorized dealer for A&M Hearing Aids.

Since all the hearing aids are imported, the main source of competition is service rather than the brand based in the Bangladeshi market. The dealers and distributors can influence their customers by product cost, warranty terms, and after-sales service support. The market is dominated by companies that provide extended warranty periods, free maintenance throughout the warranty, and digital features such as Bluetooth connectivity and noise reduction. Price range also affects the market. Low-cost models are in high demand among middle-income buyers.

The demand for hearing aids is still growing among the elderly, as well as hearing problems caused by harmful noise in industries like garments, textiles, workshops, and factories. However, the low awareness and hearing screening programs are obstacles to the overall growth of the sector.

4.4 Regulatory Environment

Hearing aids are medical devices. The Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) and Bangladesh Testing Institution (BSTI) for medical devices have established rules and regulations that the hearing aid sector must follow in Bangladesh. Following the rules and regulations of medical devices, hearing aid device importers and distributors must collect import licenses and safety certifications from the authority and adhere to the customs clearance process.

According to the Customs Act 1969 and the import-export policies of Bangladesh, importers like Hear Life & Hearing Aid Center must keep up-to-date trade licenses, VAT registration, and necessary papers, such as Letter of Credit (LC) papers, for customs clearance.

To ensure product safety and quality, it must meet the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification.

Value-added tax (VAT) and import tariffs apply to the cost and taxation of imported hearing aids. Although the government has granted limited exemptions to promote access to medical supplies. There are no specific regulations from the responsible authority for pricing the hearing aids, so the importers can price based on the market competition and import cost.

Additionally, the government is working to execute the objectives of the National Health Policy, which includes increasing the awareness of hearing loss and enhancing accessibility to assistive technology such as hearing aids.

Despite these initiatives, the regulatory environment surrounding hearing aids is still less developed than that of other medical devices, and more simplified regulations are required to guarantee improved affordability and quality control.

4.5 Challenges in the Industry

Though the hearing aid industry is developing in Bangladesh, there are some challenges for both service providers and customers. The challenges have to be overcome.

i) Lack of Local Manufacturing: There are no hearing aid manufacturers in Bangladesh. So, all the devices are imported from another country, like the USA, Singapore, or China. That's why import cost, freight cost, and current fluctuations increase the product cost.

ii) Low Awareness: Due to low awareness, most people are not aware of or interested in taking the proper treatment for their hearing loss and using hearing aid devices.

iii) High costs and affordability issues: low- and middle-income people cannot afford some product models due to high prices. The products' price ranges start from BDT 25,000 to BDT 200,000.

iv) After-sales Service and Technical Expertise: In this sector, there is a shortage of qualified technicians, and almost all service centers and labs are in Dhaka. It is challenging for the outsider customers to maintain or repair their devices.

Chapter 5

Market Analysis

5.1 Customer Segments (Retail and Dealers)

In Bangladesh, the main consumers of hearing aids are the elderly for their age-related hearing loss, children for their congenital hearing problems, and young people who work in sound-polluted areas like garments, workshops, bus stands, transport, and textiles. Hearing aid centers, including Hear Life, sell their product retail to the customers and serve a network of dealers nationwide. The dealers distribute the product in the local markets.

5.2 Product Demand and Pricing

The demand for hearing aids is increasing from children to older people based on their hearing loss. Volza (2024) reports that 354 shipments of hearing aids were imported by Bangladesh between October 2023 and September 2024. This represents an 18% increase in demand in a year compared to the previous year. How much will be the price of a product that is dependent on product features, technology, brand, and import cost? The average price of hearing aids is between BDT 25,000 and BDT 200,000. Updated and premium digital devices are more expensive because of features like noise reduction, rechargeable batteries, and Bluetooth connectivity.

5.3 Competitive Landscape

In the Bangladesh hearing aid market is dominated by international brands Signia, Stakey, A&M, Widex, Phonak, and Oticon. All the product is imported. To sustain in the competitive market, companies like Hear Life provide individualized service, warranty extensions, after-sales service support, and free machine trials. The dealers' network plays a vital role, spread throughout the local areas.

5.4 Dealer Network and Coverage

Bangladeshi hearing aid centers distribute their product through retail to direct patients and a dealer network nationwide. For instance, Hear Life has 27 dealers around the country to cover the divisional district cities.

Dealers receive the hearing aid device from the importer, and they provide services like determining the hearing loss level of the patient and matching the machine that will cover the needs of the patient. Without that, they offer basic fitting and consultancy.

This dealer network is essential to cover the small towns and reach the remote customers.

5.5 Consumer Behavior in Hearing Device Purchases

Bangladeshi consumers are becoming aware via online and offline platforms about their hearing health. Purchasing decisions for hearing aids depend on pricing, warranty coverage, after-sales services, and brand reputation.

Price sensitivity: Because of financial limitations, usually, middle-class families select mid-range hearing aids.

Brand concern: Usually, very well-known global brands such as Signia, A&M, and Starkey get top priority from the customer side. Most of the customers are highly loyal to this product for its long sustainability and easy use.

After-sales service, including warranty, low maintenance cost, and easy maintenance options, highly influences the purchasing decisions of the customers who live in rural areas where a service center is not available.

Chapter 6

Supply Chain Practices at HearLife & Hearing Aid Center

6.1 Sourcing and import process

6.1.1 Role of A&M Company

In Bangladesh, Hear Life & Hearing Aid Center is an authorized dealer of the A&M company, Singapore. A&M is renowned for manufacturing high-quality hearing aids. A&M directly supplies the hearing aids from its store to Hear Life. Every year, A&M makes a new agreement with its updated terms and conditions with its approved dealer. In the agreement, A&M mentions the sales target of a dealer and which accessories will be included with the hearing aids. And also mention the specific warranty duration for a specific model.

6.1.2 Product Selection and Ordering

The sourcing and inventory manager of Hear Life communicates with A&M to place orders based on the demand of customers and dealers. Secondly, the A&M responsible person sends a product order via mail. Thirdly, Hear Life fills up the product order form with the product model and unit and sends it to the A&M. The orders are approved by the CEO.

6.1.3 Import procedure and Documentation

After sending the fill-up order form by Hera Life, A&M sends a feedback mail with an attached performer invoice (PI) which includes the unit base price and total cost, and other information with details. Then Hear Life agrees with the PI via mail. After that, A&M sends a confirmed performer invoice (PI). Hear Life downloads the confirmed PI and submits to the bank for an application of a letter of credit (LC).

6.1.4 Model of Transport (Air Freight)

Hearing aids are tiny, light, and sensitive electronic medical devices. The air freight method is faster than other methods and reduces damage during transit. This method also helps to show the high responsibility. So, after opening an LC, A&M sends the products via air freight with their responsibility.

6.1.5 Customs Clearance and Local Delivery

When products arrive in customs, the necessary office and bank documents are submitted to customs. And the product is released from customs. After that, the

responsible person of Hear Life brings the product to Hear Life. To be complete, the overall process from order to receiving products takes a maximum of one month. In addition, the entire LC mechanism is not visible to the applicant and beneficiary.

6.2. Inventory Management

6.2.1 Product Types and Storage

After arrival, the products are at Hear Life. All the boxes are opened for matching with the performer invoice (PI) and testing some devices to ensure that the machine is performing properly. Every machine has a unique serial number. Using a unique serial number and product model of the devices, an entry is made in an Excel file and a hard notebook of the Hear Life organization. After that, the products are stored in order.

6.2.2 Inventory control practice

The Hear Life does not yet have an automated inventory management system. So the sourcing and inventory manager controls the inventory manually. When a product is sold, he removes the product serial number from the Excel file and strikes it through in the hard book and the entry in the retail hearing aid book if the product is sold in retail. Or entry in the dealer hearing aid book if the product sells to the dealer. During entry, the selling date and name of the purchaser are mentioned.

6.2.3 Inventory Monitoring Tools

Basic Excel is used every day to check stock and inventory levels for every specific model and monitor sales trends. When an import comes at that time, Hear Life checks and counts the previously stored product and enters the new product in the store. At the end of the month, and before making a purchase order to A&M Hear Life, also check out the total store.

6.2.4 ABC Analysis of Inventory

Item No	Item	Unit price	Annual usage (Units)	Usage value BDT	% of Total BDT Usage	Category
1	XTM XP R10	560000	18	10080000	25.31%	Category A
2	XTM P R10	560000	10	5600000	14.06%	Category B
3	XTM RIC R10	560000	9	5040000	12.65%	Category B
4	XTM XP R8	156000	28	4368000	10.97%	Category B
5	XTM XP P12	145000	14	2030000	5.10%	Category C
6	XTM IF/Custom P12 CIC	148000	12	1776000	4.46%	Category C
7	XTM XP R6	146000	5	730000	1.83%	Category C
8	XTM RIC P12	145000	10	1450000	3.64%	Category C
9	XTM P R8	156000	8	1248000	3.13%	Category C
10	XTM P R6	146000	7	1022000	2.57%	Category C
11	XTM RIC R8	160000	5	800000	2.01%	Category C
12	XTM Custom P6	44000	13	572000	1.44%	Category C
13	XTM CIC P6	44000	12	528000	1.33%	Category C
14	XTM P P4	36000	13	468000	1.17%	Category C
15	XTM RIC P8	52000	8	416000	1.04%	Category C
16	XTM Custom P8	52000	8	416000	1.04%	Category C
17	XTM P A4	26000	14	364000	0.91%	Category C
18	XTM P P8	45000	8	360000	0.90%	Category C
19	XTM XP P6	44000	8	352000	0.88%	Category C
20	XTM CIC P4	40000	8	320000	0.80%	Category C
21	XTM RIC R6	150000	2	300000	0.75%	Category C
22	XTM XP P4	38000	7	266000	0.67%	Category C
23	STF P T1	16000	13	208000	0.52%	Category C
24	XTM IF A4 CIC	28000	7	196000	0.49%	Category C
25	STF P T3	17000	10	170000	0.43%	Category C
26	XTM P P6	42000	4	168000	0.42%	Category C
27	XTM Custom P4	40000	4	160000	0.40%	Category C
28	XTM XP A4	28000	4	112000	0.28%	Category C
29	STF XP T3	18500	6	111000	0.28%	Category C
30	XTM IF CIC P8	52000	2	104000	0.26%	Category C
31	XTM XP P8	48000	2	96000	0.24%	Category C
Total			279	39831000	100%	

Inside the Excel: Products are categorized based on the cost incurred to purchase the category.

A-Category: Most of the BDT of the total BDT has been used to purchase this category item.

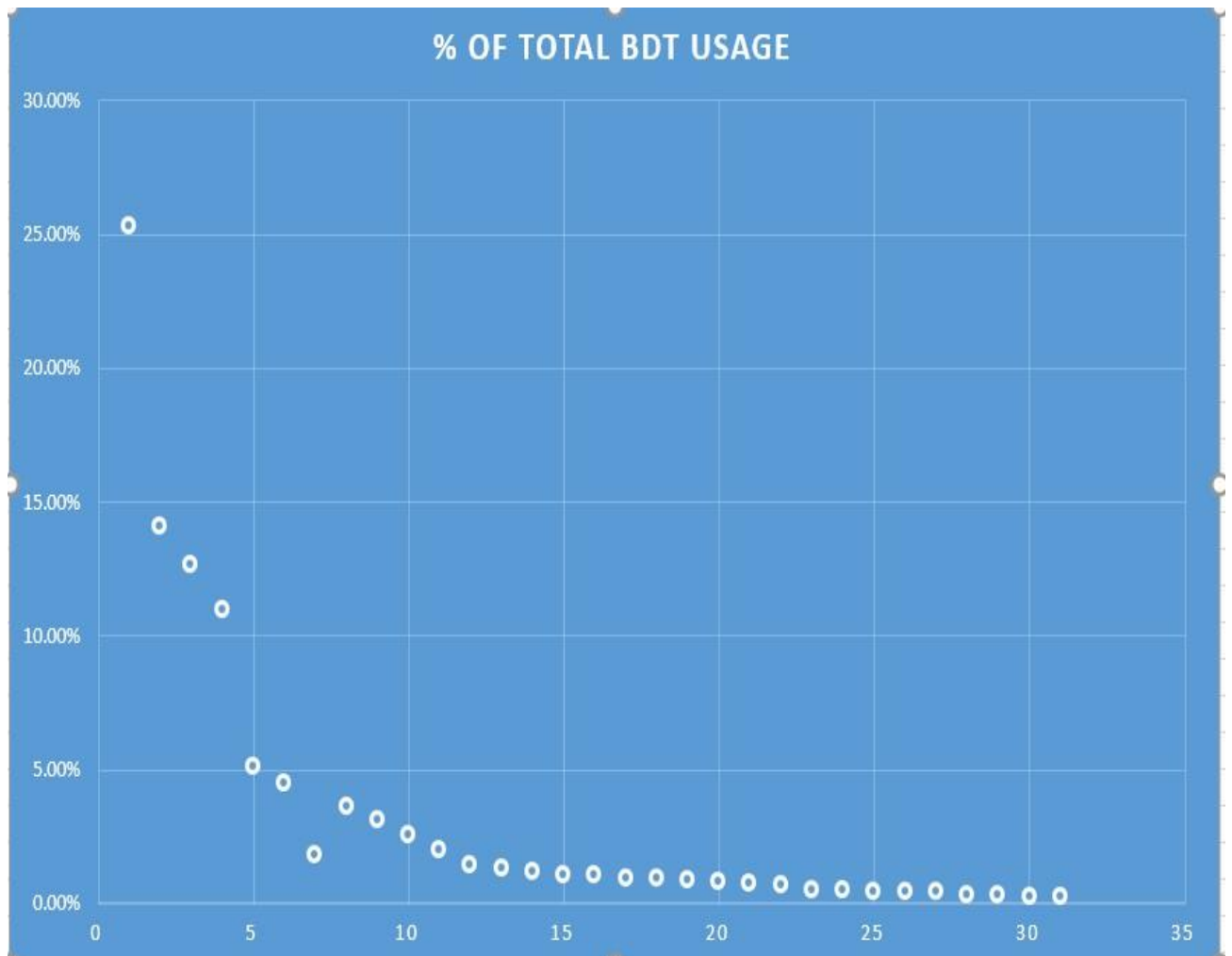
B – Category: Neither most nor little BDT has been used to purchase this category item.

C-Category: A comparatively minimum BDT has been used to purchase this category item.

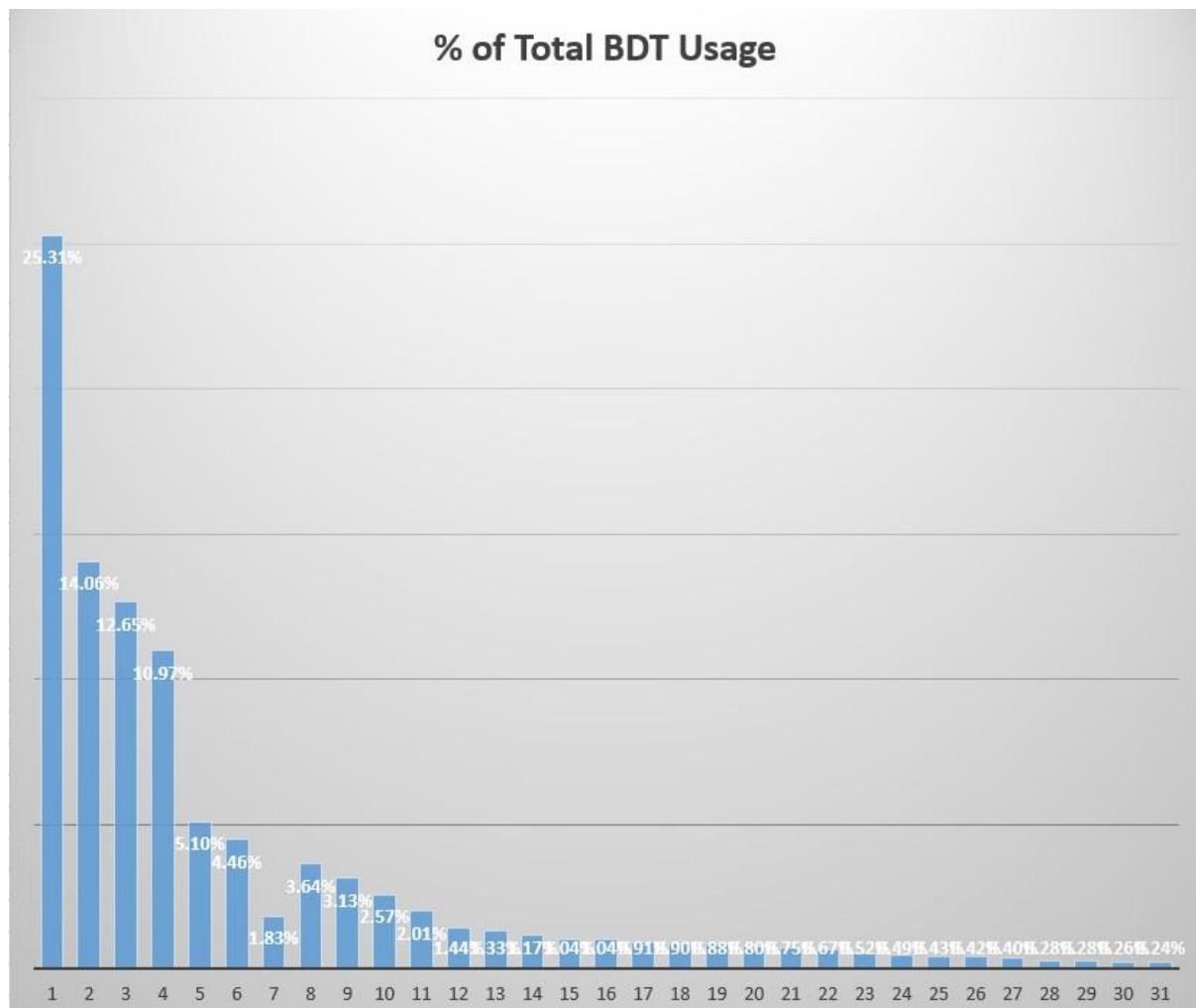
Usage value BDT: Formula (unit price * annual usage units)

% Of Total BDT Usage: Formula (usage value BDT / sum of usage value BDT)

ABC category: (A > 25%, B > 10%, C ≤ 10%).



Scatter Chart % of Total BDT Usage



Histogram Chart % of Total BDT Usage

Category	SKU	Count	% of inventory sku	% inventory investment
A	1	1	3%	25%
B	2,3,4	3	10%	38%
C	5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31	27	87%	37%
Total		31		

ABC Category Chart

6.2.5 Inventory Management Challenges

There is no automatic software system at Hear Life. So, it is difficult to track the inventory and stock in real time. Manual records are very time-consuming; as a result, the productivity of work decreases. And sometimes minor errors happen due to manual updates.

6.3 Logistics and Distribution

6.3.1 Distribution Channels (Retail vs Dealers)

Hear Life follows two distribution channels: those are retail sales and dealer sales.

i) Retail sales: The company sells its product directly to the patient from the head office in Dhaka.

ii) Dealer Network: The company has 27 dealers around the country. Whose are significant to cover and ensure product availability in a wide range of areas

6.3.2 Delivery Methods and Transportation Modes

For Retail: if products are sold in retail. In this process, customers come to the office, and the product is directly handed over to the customers, and a receipt is provided as a document for after-sales service.

For Dealer: To make an order, the dealers contact the sourcing and inventory manager or the CEO via phone calls, WhatsApp, and emails, then the CEO confirms the order after checking the inventory availability. Then the products, an invoice, and a money receipt are picked in a bag. Then the bag was delivered through the local courier service. Delivery cost is borne by Hear Life, and if any product is damaged in transportation, Hear Life will be responsible for this.

6.3.3 Scheduling and Tracking systems

Hear Life has no automated tracking system. For the delivery schedules, they use a basic Excel sheet and their manual office book. When they deliver the product to the courier service. Courier services provide a tracking number. After that, Hear Life sends the tracking number to their dealer.

6.3.4 Logistics Challenges and Observations

The import process is very time-consuming, and the entire process is very delayed, which affects the overall supply chain. If a demand is created for one or two models, Hear Life cannot open an LC for this small amount of product because the per-unit cost will be very high. As a result, they cannot fulfill the real-time demand for these products.

Chapter 7

Internship Experience

7.1 Tasks and Responsibilities

As an intern, I worked for 10 weeks in the supply chain at Hear Life & Hearing Aid Center. During my internship, I primarily focused on the inventory and distribution areas.

My key responsibilities:

- i) Assist in keeping the inventory record.
- ii) Assist during stock verification.
- iii) Assist in packaging for dealers.
- iv) Gather and arrange data for my internship report.

Additionally, during my internship, I created a product catalog featuring all the products of Hear Life, including detailed product information.

7.2 Tools and Processes Used

Hear Life is a new organization, so their automated system is not yet ready. During my internship, I used

- Microsoft Excel: To monitor inventories and prepare a stock report
- Manual Stock Records: To update arriving and exiting stock.
- Hearing Aid Book Retailer: To make a record of outgoing products at the end of the month.
- Hearing Aid Dealer Book: To make a record of outgoing products at the end of the month.

7.3 Daily Workflow and Collaboration

Using an Excel file, I began my daily routine by reviewing inventory and stock updates. I worked closely with the sourcing and inventory manager and the delivery executive. I collaborate to make a dispatch list for dealers in inventory and the delivery team. I discussed with the audiologist, marketing team, and CEO to understand the customer's requirements, which helped me to understand the insight of supply and demand planning.

7.4 Skills and Knowledge Gained

- This internship experience helped me improve my soft and hard skills.

- Practical supply chain knowledge: I gained real business world knowledge about sourcing and procurement, and experience in inventory control, logistics, and distribution.
- Communication: Learned how to coordinate with team members in the business organization.
- Data management: improved my data recording skills using Excel and manual books.

7.5 Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned

Limited access to confidential data: I couldn't see the Letter of Credit (LC) papers and the Performance Invoice (PI). These are the limitations to understanding the procurement practice in the real business world.

Manual Process: Manual inventory management is time-consuming, and it is difficult to manage compared to automation.

Import Process Complexity: I couldn't work through customs and import-related processes, so customs and import processes are difficult to understand for me.

Lessons Learned: I learned about the significance of inventory management, stock verification, effective communication, and the necessity of automation for supply chain operations for saving time, increasing productivity, and smooth work.

Chapter 8

Findings and observations

8.1 Strengths in Current SCM Practices

- Direct sourcing: Though Hear Life is an authorized dealer of A&M, they source the hearing aid device directly from A&M so they can ensure the product's authenticity and quality.
- Dealer Network: Hear Life has 25 dealers across the country. The dealers ensure the product availability in divisional, district, and small cities.
- Air Freight Import: To import hearing aids from Singapore, they use the air freight transportation mode, which ensures the first delivery and reduces the risk of device damage.
- Special Warranty service: if a machine product price is 100,000 BDT, and has a 24-month warranty. Customers enhance the product warranty with 10000 BDT per year. If the customer pays 110000 BDT. The customer will get a 3-year warranty.
- Global Warranty: Hear Life provides a 1-year international warranty. The patient will get the warranty opportunity from any authorized dealer of A&M in the world.
- After-sales service: During the warranty period, if repair is required, Hear Life will repair the machine free of cost, and if the machine is damaged, the patient will get a new machine free of cost. Without that, if a patient wants to exchange the device in the warranty period, they will get 50% BDT of the old machine.

8.2 Weaknesses and Operational Gaps

- Absence of an automated system: Hear Life has no automation system for its daily operations. Manual operations reduce productivity and also create possible errors.
- Lack of Monitoring System: Management could not see the dealers' inventory level and sales trends, and growth.
- Lack of a digital marketing system: Their digital marketing activity is not enough to provide the information widely.

8.3 Impact of SCM on Customer Satisfaction

The supply chain of Hear Life maintains high-quality service for their retail customers and dealers, and they ensure timely delivery so these customers are satisfied. However, due to occasional delays, customers are sometimes dissatisfied.

8.4 Opportunities for improvement

Automation system: The automation system will increase productivity and decrease the possible errors.

Monitoring system: a dealer portal or monitoring app implication will help to observe the dealers' inventory level and their sales trends and growth.

Strong Digital Marketing: Strong digital marketing will help to provide information widely and attract more customers.

8.5 SOWT Analysis of Hear Life Center

8.5.1 Strengths

Authorized dealer: Hear Life is the authorized dealer of the A&M company, so they can ensure product authenticity and quality.

Dealer network: The Hear Life dealer network helps to distribute their product from the divisional to the district-level market, also to remote people.

Air Freight import: They use the air transportation mode, which takes the minimum time for product delivery compared to any other transportation mode.

Unique warranty policy: Hear life has a unique warranty to extend the product warranty time by 10% extra payment of the main value.

Global Warranty Support: Hear Life on their A&M product gives a 1-year global warranty.

Exchange opportunity: Hear Life offers a product exchange opportunity during the warranty period. In this case, the patient will get 50% BDT of the old product values.

8.5.2 Weakness

- Hear Life has no automated system for its regular operations
- The organization has no monitoring system to monitor the dealer's stock and sales trends.
- Its digital marketing strategy is not strong.

8.5.3 Opportunities

Automation: The automation system will increase the productivity of their regular operations.

Dealer portal: monitoring and inventory tracking of dealers will be easy.

Digital marketing: Digital marketing will help to raise awareness among people about their hearing health, which helps to get a good number of customers.

8.5.4 Threats

- Competitor: Some competitors are dominating the Bangladeshi market, such as Signia, Phonak, and Starkey.
- Currency fluctuations: rising dollar value, increased import cost.
- Dependence on import: Hear Life is dependent entirely on one company's (A&M) imported product.

Chapter 9

Recommendations and Conclusion

9.1 Recommendations

9.1.1 Enhancing Inventory Systems

To smooth operations, Hear Life can execute an automated inventory system where the following will be available: i) automated purchase orders, ii) stock tracking of the head office, and iii) a head office inventory input and output report that will be generated automatically in real time.

9.1.2 Improving Dealer Distribution Efficiency

A dealer portal or app can be implemented to monitor the inventory level of dealers, to get the purchase order from the dealer, and to share updated information about product availability. This system will help to get real-time information about product demand, which will help to make an effective purchase order to A&M.

9.1.3 Use of Digital Tools and Software

The company can implement software like an ERP system for the integration of sourcing, inventory, logistics, distribution, accounting, and selling activities. If Hear Life makes this type of software, they can observe the real-time update report about their product, including dealers, and the required payment amount for the employer. They can see the most in-demand product.

9.1.4 Long-Term Strategic Supply Chain Suggestions

- Online sales platform: Hear Life can develop an e-commerce channel for its products.
- Digital marketing: Through digital marketing, they can make people aware of hearing health and hearing loss and inform them about their products and services.
- Multiple Supplier Relationship: The company should take the dealership of multiple international brands.

9.2 Conclusion

In my 10-week internship, I have been able to learn practical supply chain functions at Hear Life & Hearing Aid Centre. During my internship period, I got the opportunity to work in product storage, inventory management, logistics, and distribution. I also gather information on how global sourcing and import activities are managed in a collaboration process.

The internship was the bridge between my theatrical knowledge, which I acquired from university as a student of supply chain, and practical supply chain activities in the business organization. I observe the supply chain life cycle of hearing aids from sourcing to the end-user. I realized how significant an automation system is for daily operations in a business organization to increase productivity and avoid possible errors.

Though Hear Life faces some difficulties due to the absence of an automation system, the organization's strengths, which are a dealer network, air freight import, a unique warranty policy, global warranty support, and exchange opportunity, will help to lead and dominate the markets. I believe the knowledge, insights, and experience I acquired during my internship will help me build a supply chain career in the future.

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