



United International University

School of Business & Economics

REPORT ON

“PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES DURING PANDEMIC SITUATION IN RMG SECTOR OF BANGLADESH”

This report is submitted as a partial fulfillment of the degree of

Master in International Human Resource Management Program

Submitted To:

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Letter of Transmittal

October 24, 2021

To,

Jakowan,

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Subject: Submission of Project Report.

Dear Sir,

With due respect, this is to inform you that I successfully complete the report on the topic of **“Performance management challenges during pandemic situation in RMG sector of Bangladesh”** as a Project.

I would like to give you thank for giving us the opportunity to study under you. This report explores the level of knowledge that I have gained through writing this report. This report has been prepared based on the information that I have found form text book, Slides, web sites, and conducting Survey with different people.

I'd like to express my heartfelt appreciation to you for your helpful advice and suggestions in preparing this report. It would be my great pleasure if you found this report useful and informative in gaining a clear perspective on the issue. If you have any questions about this report or any other relevant matters, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

Name: **Md Saidur Rahman**

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Certification of Similarity Index

Title of the Report: “Performance management challenges during pandemic situation in RMG sector of Bangladesh”

Name of Student: Md Saidur Rahman

Supervisor: Mr.Jakowan

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I hereby certify that the project report is an original research work and it doesn't contain any plagiarized work. The student has not used any unethical methods such to prepare this report.

Signature.....

Mr. Jakowan

Assistant Professor,

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Acknowledgement

At the outset, I might want to pass on my true appreciation to the Almighty Allah for enabling me the strength and to do the job inside the arranged time. Then, at that point might I want to offer my true thanks to each and every individual who is contributed towards making this project fruitful.

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Executive Summary

Bangladesh witnessed first Covid-19 case on March 8, 2020; after a few months later of global outbreak of Covid-19. Till June 22, 2021 total infected people are 856304 with 13626 death cases. The virus not only hit the public health, rather it badly impacted all the major sectors of Bangladesh's economy – readymade garments, human exports and foreign revenue earning , banks, consumer service businesses and organizations. At the same time hit the high toll on medical treatment facilities with shortage of facilities. In general people went through a very uncommon income reduction in the crisis period when most of the organizations fought for survival and had to cut off a certain portion of salary from employee's monthly income. Except some best practiced organizations, reports of job losing and adverse low payment were very common news in the time. Good practiced companies later on adjusted employee's salary with the current payment structure. It has been the time when regular performance management process shifted towards some sorts of change in terms of assessing performance at a challenging situation. This paper attempts at finding out the different approaches taken by the Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd HR team to manage the performance management in a challenging situation caused by Covid-19. Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd as one of the big conglomerate company has been selected in hope of getting an overview on the performance management challenges in any crisis situation.

Chapter-One

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

After the rapid spread of corona virus, all organizations and businesses had to close their activities gradually, within a very shortest period. According to Worldmeters.info total numbers of Covid-19 cases are 178202610 on June 22, 2021 with death cases 3865738 and vaccinated 2413847050. Bangladesh found first three cases of Covid-19 patients, according to Wikipedia on 3rd March 2020. From 23rd march 2020, Bangladesh declared lockdown for safety purposes like other countries.

To run the wheels of the economy, Bangladesh, at initial stage decided to continue the official work through the digitalization process with the help of technologies that is now named 'new normal'. In this new normal process, vast majority of works have been performed through technology like Zoom/Google meet platform which was 'work from home' and with a minimal presence at work place unless physical presence was not required badly. Later on, to cope up with the economic crisis, most of the consumer goods and services organizations started the production process by maintaining hygiene process.

It was a great challenge for the organizations to handle the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak as well as employees. Now the challenge is employee's safety and their performance maintaining. To know about the performance management challenges at the time of 'new-normal'; Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd has been selected where we can identify the challenges Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd faced and how those have been recovered.

1.3 Objectives

Research objectives are a concrete statement describing what the research is trying to achieve. A well-worded objective will be SMART, i.e. Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, & Time-bound.

The objectives of this report also to provide a concrete statement about the findings from this limited time of study on this topic. The objectives are divided into two, based on their type. The general objective of preparing this report is to fulfill the requirement of finding on “Performance management challenges during pandemic situation in RMG sector of Bangladesh” actual practice or reality in the real life. The report focuses on two parts. They are:

1.3.1 General Objectives:

- To know the different theory about “Performance management challenges during pandemic situation in RMG sector of Bangladesh”.
- To measure the attitude of “Performance management challenges during pandemic situation in RMG sector of Bangladesh”.
- To present our observation and suggestion about “Performance management challenges during pandemic situation in RMG sector of Bangladesh”.

1.3.2 Project Objectives

- To fulfill the requirement of MIHRM program
- To gather comprehensive knowledge about Performance management.
- To provide recommendations on the basis of findings or problems.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

Objectives are important segment of a study which describes concisely what the research is trying to achieve. For the accomplishments of my study, following objectives provide direction,

- To know the performance management system of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd.
- To identify performance management challenges of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd in Covid-19.
- To know the alternative measures of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd in lieu of regular performance management procedures during Covid-19.
- To know the perceptions of employees regarding performance management system of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd.
- To suggest alternative performance management mechanisms which can be applied to future emergency situations like Covid-19

1.4 Methodology

The study has been conducted through visiting Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd office and by gathering information from a questionnaire interview asking to the top responsible authority at HR department. The targeted employees were-who had to attend work either by work-from home pattern or by the physical presence at the office, from initial phases of corona attacks.

The data were collected by the help of questionnaire survey and interview with responsible authority from HR department. For literature review, some papers covering covid-19 and employee performances have been used.

Based on the research objectives, following questions have been set to conduct the questionnaire survey,

- What performance management tools are used in Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd?
- What are the problems and challenges in managing performance of employees in Covid-19?
- What alternative performance management mechanisms were taken in Covid-19 situation?
- What were the employees perceptions regarding performance management system during Covid-19.

1.4.1 Primary sources

This report focuses on the primary sources of information. Here I have collected information in two ways:

- **Discussion:** I discussed with different people and follow the theories to prove the statement.
- **Survey:** I conducted a survey among the employees of the organization based on the question of performance management methods in epidemic situations and took their views.

1.4.2 Secondary sources

I also looked at the secondary source. This means that the information in this report has been collected from various journals, newspapers, articles and web sites.

1.4.3 Scope and Limitations

Scope

This paper attempts to illustrate employee's reaction to the 'new normal' challenges and to find out the impact on their performance. Besides, it seeks for knowing alternative methods Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd used to retain previous employee performance. So, the remedies can be used as possible alternatives to any disastrous or unwanted situation when any company faces.

1.4.4 Limitations

- Very few researches have been done on the issue in Bangladesh as it's a new scenario regarding employee performance management.
- The project couldn't cover many organizations, the selected organization has been considered as a sample being a large conglomerate in Bangladesh.
- More clarity could come to the discussion if there were no organizational secrecy while answering the questions from the HR departments as well as from employee's end.

Chapter-Two

2.1 Literature Review

Performance management is a cycle of managing performance and providing feedback on employee's assigned tasks and roles in an ongoing process. This can be thought as the strategic needs of an organization which is done by the continuous supervision of the authorized and assigned persons. In general, the HR department takes the responsibility to do the performance management of the organization. Performance management process not only focus on observing performance, it incorporates the clarification of expectations of performance, set objectives, identify goals, provide feedback, and review results. As stated by Herman Aguinis,

“Performance management is a continuous process of identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization.”

2.1.1. Performance of employees depends on many factors. It may be influenced or hampered by many factors in their personal and professional life. Hence, organizations of modern time should be vigilant and proactive to situations out of the blue. Such situations involve any external crises, which amplified uncertainty for the employees and causes abrupt threats for organizational performance and feasibility. After the outbreak of Covid-19, organizations, on all of a sudden, fell into unprecedented situations and problems. Thereby they had to confront with challenges generating across diversified operational sectors. *(Carnevale & Hatak, 2020)*

Corona pandemic created a conflict of income and safety of life. To cope with crisis due to worldwide lockdown situation, organizations had to discontinue their regular timetable and had to introduce new process of communicating and for conducting daily works. Managers had to take significant decisions in this crisis to save the organizations as well as employees' interests. *(Van der Meer et al., 2017; Van Zoonen & Van der Meer, 2015)*

Though the condition is much normal now than that of the beginning, the challenges for the organizations is- conducting everyday tasks as per the 'new normal' timetable in harmony with varieties of new rules for employees protections. For communicating, organizations depended on technologies. Was that helpful to resolve issues? It is observed that only white-collar employees and professionals are effective to take the advantages of technologies. *(Karin et. al., 2020)*

Employees working in manufacturing sites and premises with requirements of direct communications, faced communication and safety challenges mostly. Such areas involve banking and finance, hospitals, customer goods services, law enforcing and security agencies. Around the world, these employees are in the most hazardous situation. *(Wang C. et al., 2020)*

There is no doubt that employees' performances are depended on their mental state. When Covid-19 pandemic struck, employees got concern about the risk of virus infectivity, safety, social prohibition, job insecurity and economic loss. Elements discussed here, combindly hampered employees' performance at the workplace. Hence, organizations need to pay highest attention for securing employees health, social distancing, economic safety, and job safety to lessen anxiety and boost employees' overall performance. [\(Sasaki et.al, 2020\)](#)

Research conducted from a Bangladesh perspective revealed that bulk of employees believes putting masks in face is disturbing the communication while working at office hours. Employees pointed to these changes as creators of tremendous interruptions on their daily works. In particular, employees who are involved in industrial sites, marketing and sales, client services, call centers; faced difficulties in maintaining social distancing as well as performing well in work. They claimed that putting mask is creating interruption for communicating at time of giving instructions, conducting meetings, dealing with customers, and so on. [\(Wahab & others, 2020\)](#)

Therefore the organizations require adjusting employees' responses to changes. Or else they may feel stressed as well as their work performances will be hampered. Sasaki (2020) claimed that for maintaining employees' work performance, organization requires to retain their psychological wellbeing by rising courage and reducing stress about Covid-19. The research also instigates the fact that employee's psychological health can be potential determinant for good performance.

To develop the sound performance of employees, organizations must encounter with corona virus and retain safe physical condition and a good security system. For measuring health safety and increase employees' performance, an effective way can be—'employee training on safety'. This catastrophe undoubtedly created lots of threats for the organization which are tough to grip. If organizations want to keep up high-quality performance, they have to guarantee that employees' individual performances are in track as well. [\(Carnevaleet.al, 2020\)](#).

By reviewing above research studies, a clear perception can be drawn to the problems faced by employees during Covid-19 worldwide. It is a concern for both employers and employees as well, when maintaining individual as well as group performance is a challenge. To elevate the challenges, a crisis response or emergency support system is very obvious for all organizations. I felt a need to work on the issue that what can be the alternative measurements to face the Covid-19 challenges and how an escaping measure can be drawn by the organizations.

Chapter-Three

3. Organizational Background/Overview

3.1 RMG sector of Bangladesh

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) is the apex trade body that represents the export oriented woven knit and sweater garment manufacturers and exporters of the country. Readymade Garment (RMG) is the leading sector of Bangladesh in terms of employment, production and foreign exchange earnings. Readymade garment (RMG) alone earned about 83% of the yearly foreign exchange earning of the country. About 40 (Forty) Lac people are employed in the garment – manufacturing sector. The growth rate of RMG export was over 20% per over the last two decades.

3.2 Growth of the Employment

Out of 3.1 million manpower employed in BGMEA member factories, 2.38 million are women (85%), majorities of them are disadvantaged and economically poverty stricken women folk. The country's RMG sector, to a creditable level has relieved Bangladesh from over populous unemployment burden through providing the largest employment next to agriculture, transport and trade industry sector. This sector has uplifted the neglected section of the population, thus radically transforming the socio-economic condition of the country. Such empowerment and employment raised awareness regarding children education, health safety, population control disaster management only so far. It is an epoch making event in the history of Bangladesh.

3.3 Main Functions of BGMEA

BGMEA is being run by a 27-member elected Board of Directors. Four Vice Presidents having important portfolios, along with a secretariat of experienced officials, assists the Board in formulating and executing vital policies and programs of the organization. The President is the highest executive authority of the BGMEA.

The fundamental objective of BGMEA is to establish a healthy business environment for a close and mutually beneficial relationship between the manufacturers, exporters and importers in the process ensuring a steady growth in the foreign exchange earnings of the country. BGMEA issues UD to its exporters thereby monitors export as well. BGMEA plays a very strong role to lead the industry in concurrence with the government. The following are the regular activities of BGMEA for its members, apparel buyers and other partners.

To Protect and uphold the interest of the industry by aiding the formulation of government policies consistent with a congenial growth of the sector.

- Committed to protect the interests of its members and their employees by implementing legitimate rights and privileges for garments workers.
- To negotiate and consult with foreign and local agencies to promote the garments sector in every possible fields.
- To maintain liaisons with foreign buyers, business associations and chambers.
- To provide foreign buyers with all necessary information regarding all issues concerned with the RMG sector.
- BGMEA brings the opportunities for local manufacturers to interact with foreign buyers and form new rapport by arranging different apparel fairs at home and abroad.
- To keep the BGMEA factories child labor free through continued monitoring.
- Continue and expand collaboration with relevant Ministries of the Governments.
- Continue educational support to workers' children and make a provision for skill training for children removed from the BGMEA's member factories.
- Promotes computer oriented solutions for better management to its member units.
- Participates actively in all trade negotiations for the sector in order to get easier market access and GSP benefits.
- BGMEA has introduced Service Books for each and every workers employed in the factories.
- BGMEA is going to launch a workers welfare committee in the factories.
- BGMEA conducts training activities through 27 technical training centers and 3 other centers with a view to create skilled workers for the RMG sector. More than 15,000 trainees have been formed through this program. BGMEA has also trained and employed 10,000 people so far.
- BGMEA is in the process of taking over 34 vocational training centers to provide various skill sets to the unemployed.
- BGMEA regularly conducts fire drills and fire safety program at the member factories. Although 18 fire incidents took place in 2007 and 2008, there were no casualties.



3.5 About Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd

Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd was incorporated as an apparel manufacturer for the global market in January 2014. The organization commenced operation with a modest 150 workforce and 100 sewing machines. Currently operating with a workforce of 1200 and 650 sewing machines, and look forward to double the capacity by mid of 2021. Current capacity is 3.6 million pieces a year. The head office with marketing, merchandising team and management is located in the factory and the corporate office as well as an additional marketing office is located in Dhaka City.

Founded in 2014, Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. has expanded its business in the field of garment making. It employs more than 12,00 employees each year with huge revenue, representing one of the leading companies in Bangladesh.

Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. strives to meet changing global requirements and customer satisfaction. The customer-driven strategy allows for a better understanding of the client's needs and thus enables to deliver the product instantly and efficiently. Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. is also engaged in the welfare of the people to provide clear talent recognition, skills development training and ensure a worker-friendly environment.

3.5.1 Board of Directors

Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. has a board of Directors headed by a chairman. The Managing Director is the Chief Executive Officer appointed by Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. Managing Director of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. is responsible to the authority and the Board of Directors of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. for all types of performances. The board of Directors of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. consists of executive members and non-executive members. The executive members are the managing Director and the Director. The non-executive members are Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd., the non-executive representatives of the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Organogram of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd

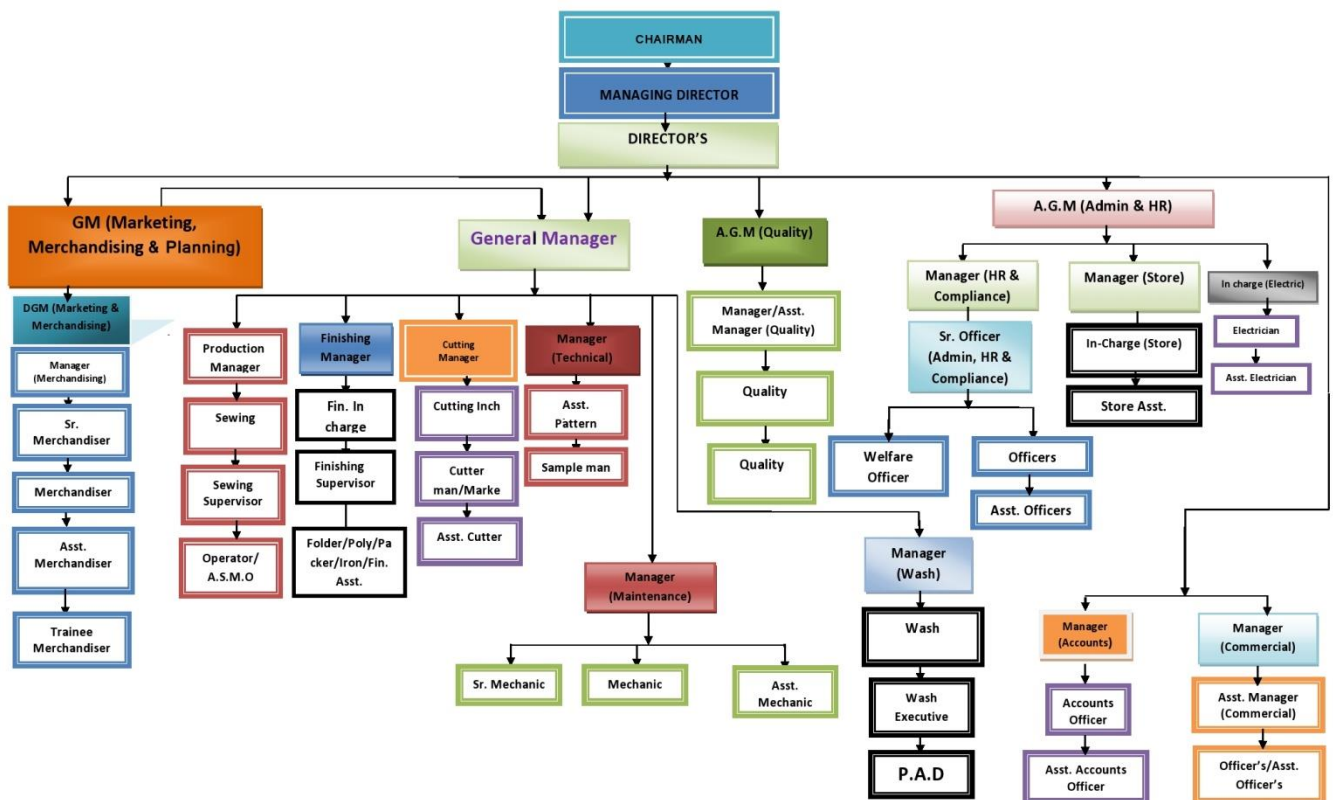


Figure-1: Board of Directors whole organogram of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd

Thus, Zas Apparels Board of Directors is comprised of outstanding leaders having diversified knowledge. Its mission is to spread out the businesses by establishing new industry scopes for creating more job opportunities for Bangladesh. Besides, Board is endorsing the lasting value and wellbeing of the shareholders.

3.5.2 Vision of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd.

Vision of an organization describes what it desires to accomplish in long-run, generally in a longer time incorporating five to ten years or more than that. What an organization will look like in the future is depicted by its vision. Usually vision sets a clear direction to the plans and required executions of corporate level strategies. Such as:

- To ensure that their products are always safe to consumers and the environment.
- To focus and work towards a sustainable socially responsible program.
- To empower and enable their employees with successful career enhancement programs.
- To discover new heights with a participative and inclusive policy along with their people.

3.5.3 Mission of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd.

Mission statement is the statement that communicates the organization's grounds for being. It also illustrates the aims for serving its key stakeholders- customers, employees, government or communities. Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd has the following mission-

“To strive continuously to exceed customers' expectations for achieving unlimited excellence by providing greater value to customers than the competitors.”

- To provide to the world a portfolio of quality garments that foresees and satisfies customers' needs.
- Offering trend-setting woven garments to the global market.
- Being innovative, cost effective and globally innovative.
- Ensuring in time delivery with right quality.
- Providing opportunities of growth to all stakeholders and improve people's lives.

3.5.4 Business goals

Already, we know that an organization's vision and mission statements provide a broad and holistic sense of organization direction. Goals help organizations achieve these aspirations. Goals should have the feature of having narrow goals that provide clear and practical direction to employees when working on a daily basis. The goal of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. is,

“To be the best company in the industry and it is the policy to deliver total quality goods and services to all of customers. To accomplish this by adopting a set of quality policy throughout the organization.”

Setting business goals are important for several reasons, including that they:

- Provide a way to measure success
- Keep all employees on the same page as to what the goals of the company are
- Give employees a clear understanding of how decision-making reaches company's goals
- Ensure the company is headed in the right direction

3.5.5 Set short-term business goals of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd

The short-term goals of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. are usually those that the company can achieve within weeks or months. The steps to take when setting short-term business goals are:

- Identify the company's short-term business goals for a given period of time.
- Divide each goal into workable business goals.
- Make sure the company's goals are measurable
- Assign goal-oriented work to employees.

3.5.6 Long-term business goals of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd

In addition to the steps outlined for how to set short-term goals, these steps should include when creating long-term business goals:

- Has set the goals you want to achieve in the next 10 years.
- Prioritize your long-term business goals.
- Divide each long-term goal into short-term goals.

The following are examples of long-term business goals:

- Increase your company's total revenue by 10% over the next two years
- Reduce production costs by 5% in the next three years.
- Increase overall brand awareness.
- To increase the company's share in the market.
- Develop and launch three new products.

3.5.7 Product

Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. manufactures all of the Garment's Oven Items such as: Ladies Jeans, Gents Jeans, Twill, Jackets, and Kids All Oven Items.



Image Source: Company Website of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd

3.5.8 Exporting Countries of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd

USA, Australia, Italy, Nederland, Canada, Ghana, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, France, UK, Spain, Poland & Brazil.

3.5.9 HR Department

Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd believes in the collective efforts of entire workforce. Its HR division has concrete policy and procedure to practice best approaches that take into consideration the legal and ethical issues. Like other organizations, Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd human resource division has the purpose of familiarizing the organizational policy. With a vision to maintain the expected standards, HR division provides specific guidelines of operation. It also makes specific guidelines regarding the evaluations, rewards and long-term benefits of the employees. Besides, HR department illustrates a clear picture on projected standards by which employees get clear ideas of their present condition, development and value adding process in the organization.

Organogram of HR Department

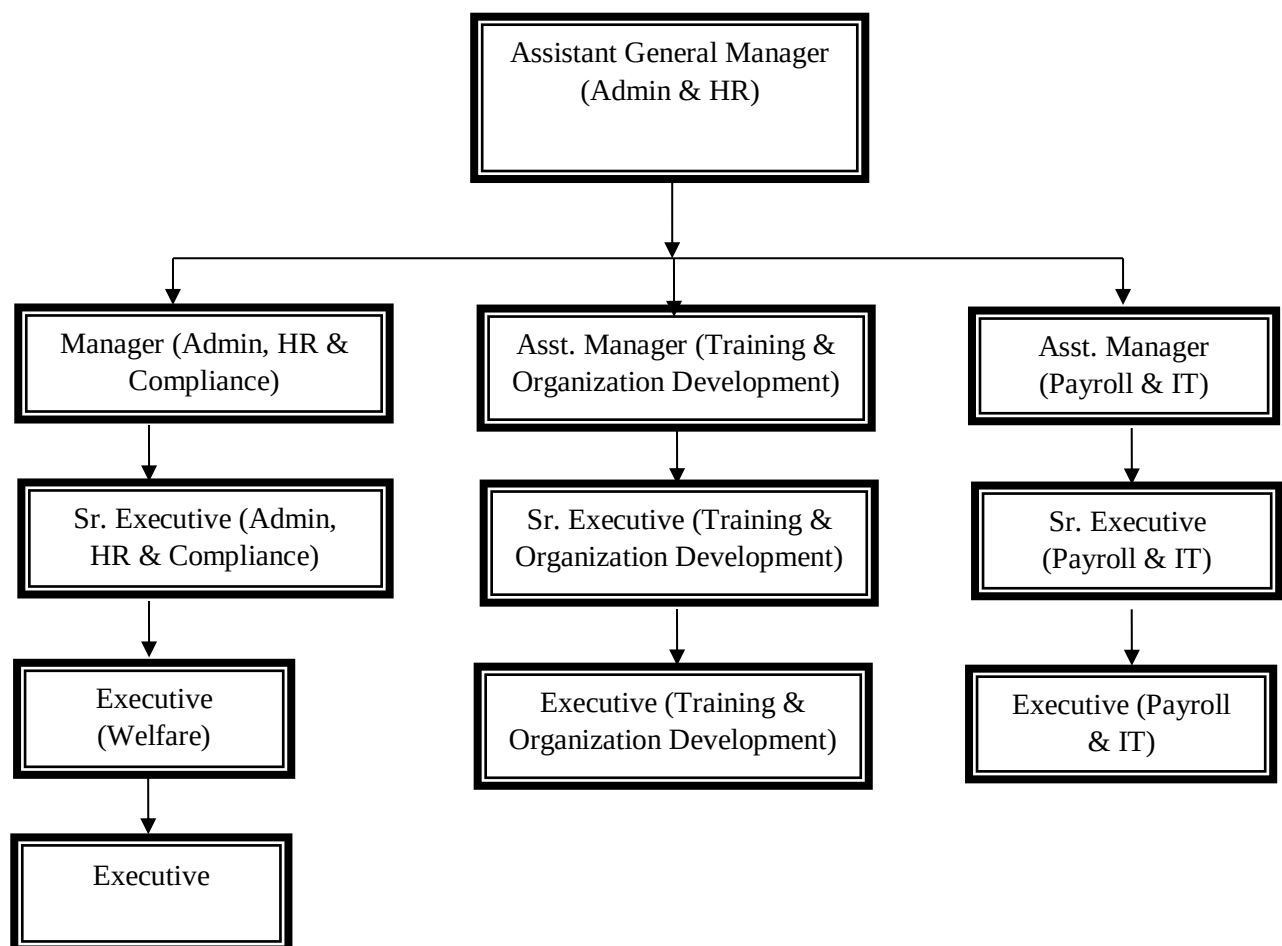


Figure-2: HR Department Organogram of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd

Chapter-Four

4.1 The performance management important of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd

In any organization, regardless of size, it is important to understand what employees are doing, how they are doing it and why they are doing it. Without the ability to understand individual strengths and weaknesses, provide constructive feedback, trigger interventions, and reward for positive behavior, it is much more difficult for managers to effectively lead their employees.

Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. combines their performance management with a stimulus management process. There are many similarities between the two systems, from role defining and setting goals to reviewing and rewarding employee behavior, and it works very well when run simultaneously. Using incentive management means that the most important 'reward' step in performance management has been done correctly.

4.2 The purpose and goals of performance management of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd

Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. Performance Management aims to provide both managers and employees with a clear and consistent system in which to work will, as a result, increase productivity.

- This system will show employees the path to success, allow them to measure performance with feedback, and provide opportunities for training and development.
- Performance management lets management understand what employees are doing and tracks the progress of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd objectives while providing consistent feedback.

4.3 Performance management benefits of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd.

Performance management has a lot of benefits for employees and managers as well as the company as a whole. If Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. can successfully create an environment of engagement where customers are equally engaged by employees in the front row, their results are even better.

Some benefits of Zas apparels for performance management as below:

- Identify where management can improve working conditions in order to increase productivity and work quality.
- Address behavioral issues before they impact departmental productivity.
- Encourage employees to contribute more by recognizing their talents and skills
- Support employees in skill and career development
- Improve strategic decision-making in situations that require layoffs, succession planning, or filling open roles internally.

4.4 Benefit for employee of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd

Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. performance appraisal is meant to provide a positive result for the staff. Employees benefit greatly from insights gained from an employee's performance appraisal and insights gained from discussions.

The benefits that Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. employees enjoy for performance appraisal are:

- Recognizes and acknowledges an employee's accomplishments and contributions.
- Recognize the opportunity for promotion or bonus.
- Identifies and supports the need for additional training or education to continue career development.
- Determines specific areas where skills can be improved.
- Inspires an employee and helps them feel involved and invested in their career development.
- Open discussion to an employee's long-term goals

Chapter-Five

5.0. Analysis and Findings

5.1. Performance Management System of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd

Performance of employees can be measured by different tools which differ from organization to organization. Some of the major performance management tools of modern time are -Key performance indicators (KPIs), Performance appraisals, Management by objectives (MBO), 360 degree feedback, Reward and recognition programs, Personal development plans (PDP) etc.

Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd follows combination of performance management tools-one is performance appraisals and reward and recognition program is another one. Performance appraisal is commonly said to be one of popular tools. Most of the cases it is done once or twice a year. In Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd, they do it once a year. Supervisors of respective departments are responsible for the primary appraisals of their departments. Then reports are passed to top the management's acknowledgement and approvals.

Reward and recognition programs are another tools used for performance management in Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd. This is a significant element of a comprehensive performance management system that creates a process for celebrating the performances of top performers. Rewards and recognition are not only in monetary returns, such as performance bonuses, rather simple praises and recognitions of a task well performed is much important for maintaining spirits and continued high performance of the employees. Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd, besides giving performance bonus, has the system of best employee rewards which encourages its workforce.

During Covid-19, these systems are kept adjourned for the time-being. It will be effective after the regular situation backs- as said by the management. Depending on the situation's emergency, employees accepted the decision, too.

5.2 Performance Management Challenges of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd in Covid-19

Ensuring sound health safety was a challenge as revealed in the survey. As the Covid-19 situation suddenly outburst with in a very short period, organizations fell into trouble of measuring the problems associated with health risks and taking the possible measures. However, despite the new situation Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd has taken necessary health related precautions thought to be effective by the global and national health briefing. Necessary steps were included for the production plants as wearing mask all the time, washing hands at entry points, body temperature monitoring, keeping social distance during work. For corporate office, home office was introduced except for accounts department personnel who had to come to office on a roster basis. For Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd challenges were-

- ❖ Ensuring proper sanitization and wearing mask were challenging as employees were new to the situation and some employees were unaware of the risks at very beginning of the pandemic. So, monitoring this processes were making the working procedures slow compared to the previous condition.
- ❖ Social distancing during working hour was a problem especially for the production units due to the nature of the work where movements of materials are needed frequently.
- ❖ Fear and anxiety of getting sick were creating barriers to the regular working efforts of the employees. Besides they had to face transport problem during the strict lockdown period when public transports were sometimes too few or unavailable and distancing were making seat crisis in the transport. So, maintaining office time were a problem for the employees. These physical and mental situations were creating problem to the performance at the very beginning.
- ❖ For accounts department's personnel, it was tough to maintain the schedule while banking hours were varying during lockdown period. Transactions were been delayed sometimes.
- ❖ Production and Marketing department were also facing trouble in meeting deadlines of the production and shipment. Delay in getting raw materials was lengthening the targeted production schedule. So, overall performances were seemed to be interrupted.
- ❖ For HR department problems were multidimensional as they were in struggle of maintaining overall employee performance by guiding, counseling, monitoring and at the same time maintaining their own performance. Meeting schedules at targeted time were a major challenge. Some strategic challenges were also incorporated such as how to maintain employees in track during the crisis period.
- ❖ Dealing with any emergency problem during work, were not easy like before. Though online meetings could be helpful, but issues of network problem as well as communication gap were very common. It has been seen that physical presence were more needed in solving an emergency task.

5.3. Alternative Performance Management Measures by Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd in Covid-19 Indoor Workshop for Awareness Building

It was a great challenge for Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd to stick on regular performance management tool. Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd “supervisor’s assessment” as a tool to performance management. So, during pandemic an added responsibility from supervisors’ side was to ensure their employee’s sanitization and hygiene caused by Covid-19. Indoor workshops were organized at the initial time to ensure employee’s safety as well as ensuring their performance.

Online Platform for Keeping Employees in Track

Employees who were involved in production section could be directly monitored by own supervisor. But non-physical supervisory tool were adopted for the employees' working from home during lockdown. Online connection such as zoom and over phone contacts were made for keeping contacts and problem solving.

Adjourn Performance Rewards System for Crisis Time

As we know, performance rewards are considered vital element for performance appraisal and management. But it could not be possible during Covid-19 as meeting deadlines and performance in-track were not actually being possible. So, management didn't go for any rewards for the time being.

5.4. Employees Perceptions on Performance Management of Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd during Covid-19 Maintaining Hygiene

Employees were positive about maintaining hygiene. But sometimes during work pressure and tight schedule proper maintenance was being interrupted. In case of production facilities workers were provided hand gloves to put on, but it was causing trouble at very beginning to adapt with the system. Adopting a new system is a matter of time. When the systems were had to implement so fast, it were a bit challenging to adopt promptly.

Online Platform & Network Interruption

Employees working from home faced frequent trouble with online communication due to slow and interrupted internet connection. Especially at the very beginning, whole country faced a serious internet speed problem. It made working tough as interruptions in work were very common. Beside, work from home nature was a bit challenging with the acceptance of the new nature of work. For this family member had to first be used to with the new working pattern of the working person. Sometimes interruptions in work were very common while working from home due to the home atmosphere.

Physical & Mental Health Issues

It created a mental barrier for performing well. Long working hours in front of pc/laptops were also creating some specific health issues like severe back-pain, eye pain and extreme headache and sometimes having high pressure and panic disorder.

5.5. Alternative Performance Management Mechanisms for Future Emergency Situations like Covid-19 (in light of issues faced by Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd)

Employees' Online Efficiency Training

As online platform has been adopted now in more wide range, its continuation is necessary for future too. Some works can always be performed online if there are specific patterns of work segregation. Management meetings can be always be performed by online by flexible hours even when it is in office. Online literacy

training has to take to such level that any work can be performed by online in times of necessity. For each department and for each employee it is a mandatory to be efficient enough in online platform.

Work from Home & Flexible Hours

Some work has to be identified by the management those can be always performing from home. This can reduce pressure on physical presence at workplace during crisis moments nationwide as well as worldwide. For example, strikes or herbals in times of government changing or during elections or any socio-economic crisis period, when physical presence is risky due to constraints in roads, work from home nature can be a best solution. So, the new pattern of work from home is a new addition to our country; is a best introduction to any crisis moment to the uninterrupted work and performance.

Payment by Work-hours & Part-time Works

Covid-19 has shown major issues with payment. Organizations were in verge of survival while they also had to pay their employees. So, if working hours based payment can introduce and more part-time work opportunities are created, organizations and employees both will be benefited in terms of payment.

Chapter-Six

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1. Major Findings of the Study

Major findings of the study accompany the objectives of the study. There are challenges and remedies to the challenges which make a clear scenario of an organization in Covid-19 period. Hence, we can sum up the findings into two categories – challenges and remedies.

Challenges

- ❖ **Challenges in Maintaining Employees Performance:** Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd faced a major challenge in maintaining employee's performance in accordance with the previous performance. The overall performance target of individual and group were hampered.
- ❖ **Challenges in Ensuring Sanitization:** Due to the new situation, proper maintenance of sanitization and mask use were a new phenomenon. Awareness creating among employees and ensuring sanitation became a major challenge.
- ❖ **Maintaining Social Distance:** Social distancing during work was creating trouble as some pattern of work need frequent contacts.
- ❖ **Fear and Anxiety:** There were fear and anxiety of being infected of the virus. Using public transport was adding a feather to the fear because of the crowd. These physical and mental situations were creating problem to the performance at the very beginning.
- ❖ **Unique Trouble for HR Department:** For HR department, problems were multidimensional as they were in struggle of maintaining overall employee performance by guiding, counseling, monitoring as well as maintaining own performance.
- ❖ **Communication Gap:** Sometimes, dependency on online platform created communication gap. Proper message deliveries were hampered and it created a huge trouble in work.

Remedies

- ❖ **Awareness Building Workshops:** Awareness building workshops were arranged at time to time based on the priority issues. By this way, employee's performances were kept in track.
- ❖ **Strengthening Communication:** Both online and offline communication were trying to be made frequent by respective supervisor's of each department. Supervisors kept in touch over phone calls and e-mailing on a regular interval, like as dividing the day into morning, noon and afternoon phase of monitoring. By this way, some of the communication gaps could mitigate on major decision making issues.

- ❖ **Adjourn Regular Issues:** HR department itself was in challenge of maintaining overall office performance. In special condition, some of the regular HR activities like performance records and rewards giving were kept postpone for a time.

6.2 Recommendations

In the discussions, findings and remedies sessions, major challenges and required remedies were identified. Based on those identified issues, it has been diagnosed that there should be an alternative performance management mechanism for any crisis situation. Organizations could avoid performance licks and can abstain from becoming puzzled at a quick response; need to adopt a 'plan B' to all 'plan A' strategies and in need a 'plan C' in case of failures by 'plan B'.

The study is not enough individually to make a broad recommendations or suggesting all the plans that can be an alternative to any crisis time. However, during the study some recommendations seemed to be drawn based on the challenges Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd faced while confronting against Covid-19. Here are some suggested recommendations,

- **Making Employees Efficient by Training on Online Efficiency** - as there is no alternatives to adopt the technology. Hence, Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd as well as all organizations can make their employees 'tech-savvy' at all required departments.
- **Work From Home & Flexible Hours**- a flexible 'work from home' and 'flexible hours' can be offered and can be practiced on a regular basis, so that organizations can be stick to their strategies without any interruptions.
- **Payment by Work-hours & Part-time Works**- which will benefit both organization and employees.
- **Paperless work pattern**- which can reduce many challenges like time consumption, data protection, storing problem and can ensure access to information in a twinkling of eye, from any place.

6.3. Conclusion

Human being is going through a critical time never thought before. World Covid-19 situation is worse than that of our country. But we have to be prepared too for the extremity of Covid-19. Ours is a developing economy with middle income status, so every situation that creates a financial crisis is very alarming for us. Bangladesh government gave incentives to the industrial sectors at very beginning. But in long-run, industries cannot depend on government solely. Organizations have to be prepared for any sorts of crisis and have to develop 'plan B' or 'plan C' for running production without interruption. The suggested recommendations in chapter Six as well as remedies taken by Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd can be adopted by all organizations. There is room for adding new dimensions in it.

Appendix-1

Survey Questionnaire

My Name is Md Saidur Rahman and I am a Masters Student at United International University and you are kindly requested to assist in this study which aims to **“Performance management challenges during pandemic situation in RMG sector of Bangladesh”**. This research from is part of the requirement for my Master Qualification. The final outcome of this study will be shared with your organization. Please take a couple of minutes to fill out this questionnaire. The sincerity of your answers is very critical in depicting the real conditions. Any information provided from you is purely for academic purpose and all responses will be treated with greatest confidentiality. Your response will be very crucial the success and accomplishment of this study.

NB: This survey can be filled by all the levels of manager and employees in Private service Sector Organization (e.g., RMG Sector)

This study has been framed through these research questions which are provided below:

- What performance management system is used in Zas Apparels (Pvt.) Ltd?
- What are the problems and challenges in managing performance of employees in Covid-19?
- What alternative performance management mechanisms were taken in Covid-19 situation?
- What were the employees perceptions regarding performance management system during Covid-19?

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