



Human resource management practice in the ready-made garment sector in Bangladesh: An empirical study

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Abstract

The economy of Bangladesh is largely driven by export of Readymade Garments (RMG), as the country is increasingly led by export-oriented industrialization. As of FY 2019-20, the sector contribute 80% of the total export earning of the country and employed 4 million worker, 80 of them are non-skilled rural women. Human resource management practices in RMG sector therefore has been widely a research area for years for better output of the very important sector of Bangladesh. But unfortunately, there have been no sufficient numbers of studies conducted on this area in the context of Bangladesh although readymade garments sector is part of a rich industry in Bangladesh. Training is a major function of HRM. The aim of the study is to identify and clarify ins and outs of employee's perceptions about training facilities in the ready-made garments sector of Bangladesh. The study was conducted structural and semi structural questionnaires and face-to-face interview. A set of 5 major questions were given to 50 employs of both male and female employees of several age groups, job and education levels of 5 leading RMG industries of Bangladesh to collect the data. Effective training and motivation to the employees have been recommended in the study as a major function for HRM in the RMG sector in Bangladesh.

Keywords: HR practices, readymade garments, training, performance

Introduction

Readymade Garments (RMG) play a very significant role for the economy in Bangladesh together with remittances and domestic agricultural sector. The country is increasingly led by export-oriented industrialization. The readymade garment sector, which includes knitwear and ready-made garments along with specialized textile products, is the nation's largest export earnings and 2nd largest in the world to only China. In the FY 2005-06, the sector exported \$7900.80 million worth of readymade garments that was 75% of the total exporting of Bangladesh. Both the amount of export earnings and the contribution of RMG to GDP have been increased gradually to \$28149.84 million (82.23%) in the FY 2016-17 and \$30614.76 million (83.49%) in the FY 2017-18. The growth was slow in the FY 2008-09 and 2010-11 due to world financial recession in the period but gain the pace from the following FY. The sector is also one of the biggest sources for domestic employment of the impoverished nation. As of FY 2017-18, 4 million people were employed in the sector, 80% of them were non-skilled rural women. So, HRM in the sector is predominantly important. But HR practice is always a challenge for any big organization like RMG. The effectiveness of employee performance largely depends on human resource policy and practice (Storey 1989) [3]. According to HR policy there needs to effective and sufficient training facilities of employees as training increase skills and behaviors of employee. But the training

facility of RMG sector in Bangladesh is lagging behind the standard level. The perception of employees about training is not positive. Thus, the RMG sector should consider to extent the training to employees for maximum output.

Objectives of the Study

The principle objectives of the study are to identify and clarify the perception of employees about training facilities in the RMG sector in Bangladesh. On the basis of the objectives the main tasks of the study are the followings:

- Examine the significance of RMG in the economic spheres of Bangladesh;
- Identify the present level of productivity of the sectors;
- To analyze and clarify the training as a major function of HRM of RMG sector
- To identify the employees' perceptions about training facility;
- To detect different problem areas of the sector;
- To suggest some policy measures to solve the problems related to the sector.

Hypothesis

RMG is the single most important sector for the economic growth and employment generation and the prospect and potentiality of the sector is sky high due to effective government policy and measures, good infrastructure and cheap labor force. If implemented successfully, the industries will get skill labor forces which are accelerating the quality and output of the sector.

Methodology

This study has focused upon the various problems regarding with the garments company and the prospect of these industries. We have taken 5 garments company to gather data on the present situation of the garments industries as well as problem regarding and the future of the industries. The study was conducted through structural and semi structural questionnaires and face-to-face interview. A set of 5 questions were given to 50 employs of both male and female employees of several age groups, and job and education levels.

Data analysis and Representation

Using the computer software including MS Word, MS Excel etc., the report analysis and interpretation was carried out. The research conducted through Likert Scale and Weighted Average method and gradual representation was given on the report. Here-scaling, charts, table, tabulation etc. were used to formulating data.

Literature Review

In the world RMG of Bangladesh is well known and extremely reputed. Many researches have been conducted on various issues in the field, mainly on working conditions, industrial disputes, conflicts, compliances etc. HRM is one of the most significant factors in this field. There is a good scenario of the RMG sector in respect to HRM practice, working conditions, job satisfaction revealed in many past researches. Chowdhury and Protima Mazumber (1991) [7] studied on the topics and accepted survey and research methodology to analyze a wealth of data on the socio-economic backdrop, problems and the prospect of the female workers of the sector. They concluded that though the contribution of female workers is impressive in the sector, but they face discrimination and unfriendly working conditions. Female worker’s average salary is almost a half of their male counterpart and they face sexual and physical harassments at the working places. Quddus (2006) [2], present results from a field survey research based study of apparel entrepreneurs and evaluates the performance of entrepreneurs and their condition to the success of the industry. Khan (2006) [16], argued that to improve wages working hours, overtime, job security, the right to form trade union, social security as well as occupational health and safety, strengthening compliance issues and labor standards is important. An empirical study conducted by Azimet *et al.* (2006), exploring the impact of HR practice on job satisfaction in the RMG sector in Bangladesh found that HR practice has significant association with job satisfaction of employees as well as employee performance. Azimat *et al.* found the same result in the following study (2010) [6] conducted in same issue.

Another study conducted by Jakir (2010), said that demand of basic needs have a great force the workers to follow the way of violent behavior. In his study life of RMG workers of Bangladesh has been compared with life of prisoner. Rubel and Daisy (2013) [10] in their empirical study identified the relation between perceived supports and performance of workers. According to the study perceived organization supports are necessary for the sustainability o performance of workers in the RMG industries. Sarker and Rahman (2014) [11] in their study examined the financial and non-financial incentives as motivational factors in order to keep job satisfaction of RMS employees in Bangladesh. They suggested that financial and non-financial factors can

accelerate the job satisfaction of employees as well as industrial output. A study conducted by Sabbir (2015) [12] explored whether the RMG sector in Bangladesh follow the HRM rules and regulation in the working areas. It also examined whether HRM is emphasized by RMG sector in Bangladesh or not and found that both of the factors are not practiced properly in the sector. Therefore HRM practice of the RMG sector in Bangladesh have a great extend to study.

Conceptual framework

In an organization HRM is a discipline and practice in the management of people, has involved and developed into different areas. By practicing managers and academics these practices have gone through a process or trial and error (Farnham and Pimlott 1979) [13]. Training is a formal structural process thereby people achieve and accelerate working skills to achieve the organizational goals (Mathis & Jackson 2003) [9]. So training is a very significant function of HRM. Organization, should provide effective and efficient training to its employees to enhance their skills to accelerate the productivity and achieve the goals.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

This section has been designed with analyzing selected sample’s demographics characteristics including age, gender, academic qualification and marital status. The tables are in the below:

Table 1: Age groups of the respondents

Participants	Number	Percentage (%)
20-30	10	20
31-40	22	44
41-50	12	24
51-60	6	12
total	50	100

It is seen from the table 1 that overwhelming majority of the participants of the study are from the age group 31-40 (44%) whereas lowest number of the participant are from the age group 51-60 (6%). The number of the participant from the age groups 20-30 and 41-50 are 10% and 12% respectively.

Table 2: Gender Groups of the respondents

Participants	Number	Percentage
Male	22	44
Female	28	56
Total	50	100

It is seen in the table 2 that the number of the participants of male and female are almost same, though the number of female participant are slightly higher (28%) than their male counterpart (22%).

Table 3: Educational qualification of the Respondents

Participants	Number	Percentage
SSC	20	40
HSC	05	10
BBA	10	20
MBA	15	30
Total	50	100

Table 3 shows that majority of the participant (40%) are lower (SSC) education group followed by higher education group (MBA) which is 30% of the participants.

Table 4: Marital status of the respondents

Participants	Number	Percentage
married	38	76
Unmarried	12	24
Total	50	100

It is seen in the table 4 that overwhelmingly majority of the respondents married (78%) whereas the unmarried respondents area merely (24%).

Training as a major function for HR development

In the context of RMG sector of Bangladesh we try to evaluate the opinions level of the employees measuring their perception in the study. To identify the level of employees’ opinions the close ended questionnaires have been applied effectively here. With the assistant of likert scale method and statistical formula each question has been analyzed.

Table 5: The used likert’s scale and assigned weight for the study are given below

Scale	Weight
Agree	4
Strongly agree	5
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1
Neutral	3

Formula used for weighted average:

$$X = \frac{\sum WX}{\sum W}$$

Where,

X = weighted average,

W = relative weight (%) and x= value.

Question 1: My organization arranges training program regularly

Table 6: Percentage about training Arrangement

Scale	Weight	Respondents	Product	WA
Agree	30.0	15	09	0.72
Strongly agree	00.0	00	00	
Disagree	40.0	20	16	
Strongly disagree	10.0	05	05	
Neutral	20.0	10	06	
Total	100	50	36	

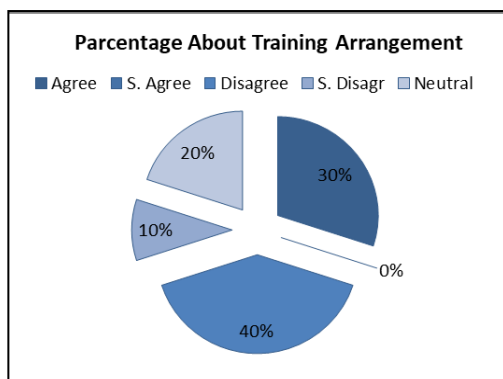


Fig 1: Percentage about training Arrangement

It is seen from the above table 6 and Figure 1that majority of the participants/employees (40%) are disagree with the

arrangement of training program. The weighted average here is, 0.72, means that the employees are close to strongly disagree with the arrangement of training program.

Question 2: The training is provided for long duration.

Table 7: Perceptions about training duration

Scale	Weight	Respondents	Product	WA
Agree	20.0	10	06	0.45
Strongly agree	00.0	00	00	
Disagree	30.0	15	09	
Strongly disagree	40.0	20	04	
Neutral	10.0	05	1.5	
Total	100	50	28.5	

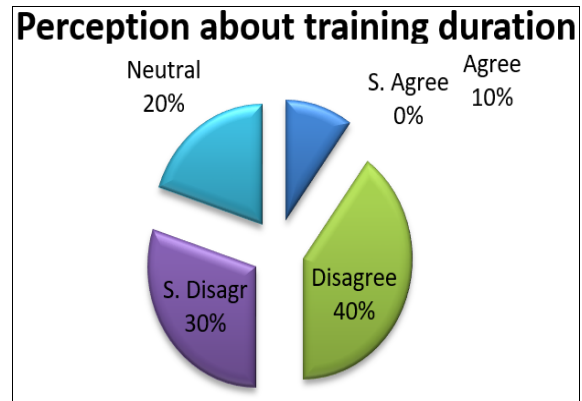


Fig 2: Perceptions about training duration

It can be observed from the table 7 and figure 2 that the majority of the employees are disagreeing about longer duration of training program. The weighted average here is 0.45, which means that the employees are close to disagree on this issue.

Question 3: I have given trainings related to my job responsibilities and also which helps in my overall development.

Table 8: Perceptions about training participation

Scale	Weight	Respondents	Product	WA
Agree	10.0	05	16	.57
Strongly agree	00.0	00	4.5	
Disagree	40.0	15	06	
Strongly disagree	30.0	20	02	
Neutral	20.0	10	00	
Total	100	50	28.5	

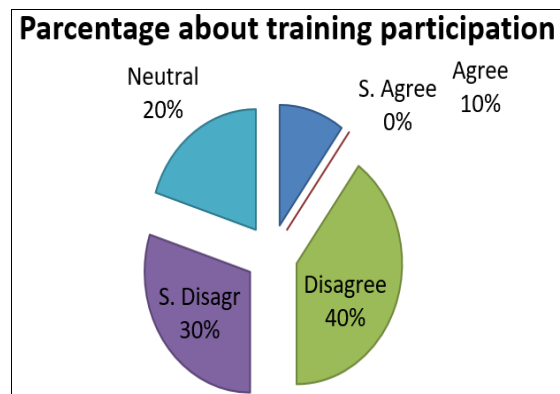


Fig 3: Perceptions about training participation

It has been noticed in the table 8 and figure 3 that most of the employees are disagree with the statement. The average weight is 0.57 here which means the employees are almost disagree with this issue.

Question 4: Training improves performance.

Table 9: Perceptions about training importance

Scale	Weight	Respondents	Product	WA
Agree	10.0	05	2	3.27
Strongly agree	50.0	40	160	
Disagree	00.0	00	00	
Strongly disagree	00.0	00	00	
Neutral	10.0	05	1.5	
Total	100	50	163.5	

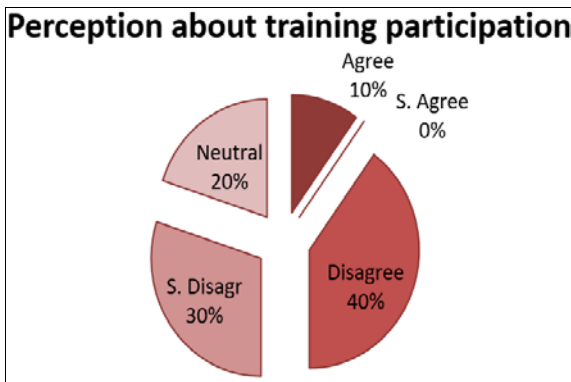


Fig 4: Perceptions about training importance

It has been noticed from the table 9 and figure 4 that most of the employees of the sector are agree about the statement that training improve performance. Here the weight average is 4.20 which means the respondents are basically agree with the issue.

Question 5: The training programs are satisfactory of my organization.

Table 10: Perceptions about training availability in the organization

Scale	Weight	Respondents	Product	WA
Agree	10.0	05	04	0.61
Strongly agree	00.0	00	00	
Disagree	40.0	20	16	
Strongly disagree	30.0	15	4.5	
Neutral	20.0	10	06	
Total	100	50	30.5	

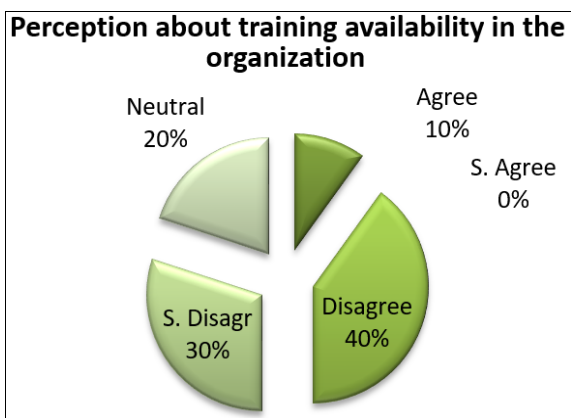


Fig 5: Perceptions about training availability in the organization

It can be observed from table 10 and figure 5 that majority of the employees are disagreeing about the statement. The weighted average here is 0.61, which means that the employees are close to disagree with the statement.

Recommendation

Some effective measures have been taken in order to solve the problems which have been detected in the study for the survey factors. In developing employee performance these can assist and can make a better environment for working in the organization. There is no alternative way except following the given recommendations to be an upper position holder in the world Garment sector. By maintaining proper management and policy strategies RMG sector of Bangladesh will take the apex position in future we hope.

1. All your training efforts and designs would fail without the approval of the management. Make sure the personnel at the top position are aware of your training of employees and needs within the organization.
2. Training programs have to designed and conducted in such a meaningful way so that it works for developing employees and must be effective for the employees.
3. There should have a recognized training institution with extensive training facilities of each RMG organization.
4. Properly maintaining the database of employee training.
5. In the expense and extensive plan of RMG organization there should have training budget.
6. Through effective training programs, feedback and recognition, building employee’s competence and self-confidence.
7. Effective working environment makes a positive sense among the employees concept about the organization.

Conclusion

The paper attempted to specify the perception of employees about the training facilities of the RMG sector of Bangladesh though several studies have attempted to identify several Human Resource Management factors to the overall organizational performance. Based on the above discussion it has been concluded that majority of the respondents are female and their perception about the training facilities in the RMG sector of Bangladesh in negative, though training and development of employees is enormously significant for the success of the particular sector. Thus, in order to promote the performance of the employees and sustainable development of the RMG sector of Bangladesh the responsible body should have proper policy and framework for effective and efficient training facilities of the workers of the sector for long term and sustainable wellbeing.

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