

The Impact of HRM Practices on Employee Performance: A Study on Readymade Garments Sector in Bangladesh

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Abstract:- This study explores the impact of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices on employee performance in the Readymade Garments (RMG) sector of Bangladesh, employing qualitative data collection methods to gain in-depth insights. As the RMG sector plays a pivotal role in Bangladesh's economy, understanding how HRM practices influence employee performance is essential for organizational growth and effectiveness. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with HR managers, team leaders, and employees from various RMG firms, as well as focus group discussions. The research focused on key HRM practices including recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation and benefits, and employee relations. These practices were examined to understand their perceived impact on employee performance, such as job satisfaction, productivity and motivation. The qualitative analysis reveals that effective recruitment and selection practices are crucial in aligning employee skills with job requirements, leading to higher performance levels. Comprehensive training programs are valued for enhancing skills and boosting confidence, which positively affects productivity. Transparent and fair performance appraisals are seen as motivating employees and fostering a sense of achievement. Competitive compensation and supportive employee relations contribute to job satisfaction and commitment, driving overall performance. The findings indicate that while HRM practices in the RMG sector are generally effective, there are areas for improvement. This research provides actionable insights for HR professionals and organizational leaders aiming to improve performance outcomes in the RMG sector.

Keywords:- HRM Practices, Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Performance Appraisal, etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

Among the important sectors in Bangladesh, the readymade garment sector is at the leading position as an export product for earning foreign exchange and creating employment for women. So practicing HRM in this sector is a big challenge. Employee performance depends in large part on human resource policies and practices (Storey, 1989). To proper management of RMG employees of Bangladesh it needs to train-up them (Ali, M.M. 2018).

It is widely recognized that organizational performance depends in part on employee behavior that can constitute a sustainable source of competitive advantage (Huselid, 1995; Huselid et al. 1997; MacDuffie, 1995). Human Resource Management (HRM) practices affect organizational performance through their effect on employee development and behavior. These practices determine the type of employees who are selected, skills and motivation of these employees, and the opportunities and incentives that these employees have to design new and better ways of doing their jobs.

This study is conducted to evaluate the relationship between HRM practices and employee performance in the readymade garments sector of Bangladesh. The most relevant and important HRM practices considered in the study are: Recruitment and selection, performance management, training and development, compensation and benefits, employee relations, and grievance handling.

This research will provide the relevant information about the active HRM practices in the readymade garments sector of Bangladesh and their impact on employee performance and the result of this paper will be helpful for HR professionals in the readymade garments sector to increase the performance of employees by developing and implementing the functions of HRM practices.

This study will also help to optimize the working capabilities of the employees and authorize tasks and responsibilities accordingly. By developing and implementing proper HRM functions and practices, organizations will be able to increase their productivity and to achieve their goals by making an efficient and effective workforce.

Several studies have attempted to identify several HRM factors to determining overall organizational performance but this paper attempts to clarify the employee's perceptions about recruitment and selection, performance management, training and development, compensation and benefits, employee relations, and grievance handling facilities in RGM sector of Bangladesh aspect. Human resource management is a discipline and practice in managing people in an organization, which has evolved and developed into different areas. These practices have gone through a process of trial and error, theory building, and testing of various concepts by practicing managers and academics (Farnham & Pimlott 1995; Storey 1989). HRM practices can help organizations improve its behavior in areas such as employee commitment, efficiency and flexibility, thereby improving employee performance (Koch and McGrath, 1996).

Hence the main objective of the paper is to determine the effect of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices on employee performance and other objectives are: To determine the scenario of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in readymade garments sector (RMG) of Bangladesh and to determine the relationship between Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and Employee's Performance. The research problem identifies three main questions: (1) How Human Resource Management (HRM) practices affect Employee performance? (2) What is the scenario of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in the readymade garments (RMG) sector of Bangladesh? (3) What is the relationship between Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and Employee performance?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Implementing effective HRM practices—such as training, performance appraisal, fair compensation, and employee engagement—in Bangladesh's RMG sector significantly boosts employee motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance. These practices ensure that workers are equipped with necessary skills, feel valued through fair rewards, and are actively engaged in their roles, leading to improved productivity and organizational success within the industry (Azad et al. 2020). HRM practices such as recruitment, selection, and training have a substantial influence on employee productivity and overall organizational performance within the RMG sector in Bangladesh. Effective management of these practices ensures that employees are well-suited to their roles, contributing positively to operational efficiency and company success (Rahman and Akhtar 2019).

❖ *HRM Practices*

Many experts believe that managing human resources is more difficult than managing technology or capital (Barney, 1991; Lado and Wilson, 1994). HRM practices means to the organizational activities conducted to manage the pool of human resources and ensure that resources are used to meet the organization's goals (Schuler & Jackson, 1987; Schuler & MacMillan, 1984; Wright & Snell, 1991). HRM practices should be designed and implemented in such a way that human capital can play an important role in achieving the organization's goals (Delery and Doty, 1996). Proper use of human resource management positively affects commitment between employers and employees (Purcell, 2003). HRM practices such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal etc. encourage employees to do work better in order to increase the performance of the organization (Snell and Dean, 1992; Pfeffer, 1998). The practices selected for this study are based on its importance in relation to the industry selected for the analysis. The practices used in this study are listed and defined as follows:

➤ *Recruitment and Selection*

Recruitment as a human resource management function is one of the activities that most critically affect the performance of an organization. Although it is understood that poor recruitment decisions affect organizational performance and limit the achievement of goals, so it is better to put more effort into recruitment and selection practices (Saviour, Kofi, Yao, & Kafui, 2016). Organizations cannot afford the negative cost of recruiting and selecting candidates who are not capable. So the overall aim of recruitment and selection in organization is to select and recruit quality personnel in required number and at minimum cost for the organization (Ofori & Aryeetey, 2011). Available evidence indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between recruitment and selection and the performance of an organization (Gamage, 2014). With specific reference to recruitment and selection criteria and organizational performance, Montana and Charnov (2000) maintained that recruitment and selection include sourcing candidates by advertising or other methods, screening potential candidates using tests and interviews, selecting candidates based on the results of the tests or interviews, and on-boarding to ensure that the candidates are able to fulfill their new roles effectively. According to Okoh (2005), not just that organizational selection practices determine who is hired, the use of the proper selection criteria will increase the probability that the right person will be chosen. When the best people are selected for the job, productivity increases (Osemeke, 2012).

➤ *Training and Development*

Training and development contribute positively towards organizational growth (Hassan, 2016). Training programs play a significant role in achieving organizational goals (Dobson and Tosh, 1998). Training refers to the effort to develop additional skills needed currently or in the future to increase an employee's level of performance (Jackson and Schuler, 2000). Training is used as one of the tools to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of employees to

increase organizational performance (Cook and Hunsaker, 2001). By insuring proper employee training and development, the organization can ensure employee contribution to greater revenue by increasing the productivity of the organization (Heathfield, 2012). Training and development are basically practices and techniques related to acquiring knowledge (Joyce, 2019). In addition to improving profits, training develops positive employee attitudes towards profit orientation because training improves employee's ability to perform in organizational productivity and when productivity increases, profits are higher (Shuma, 2010). Training and development mainly develops leadership skills, loyalty, and other aspects including good attitudes that are used by successful employees and managers to reduce the interference of outside consultants in the organization (K. Aswathappa 2001).

➤ *Compensation and Benefits*

Competitive compensation not only attracts the best talent in the organization but also helps in retaining it whereas the compensation should be in line with the industry standards as a good compensation package encourages employees to increase their efficiency and productivity (Naidu & Satyanarayana 2018). Compensation paid by an employer to an employee for providing services such as spent time, work as labor or use of skills. Compensation and benefits provided to employees is one of the factors that affect performance because the higher the compensation and benefits the more the organization will benefit from employee performance (Prihantoko & Ferijani, 2021). Compensation is given to motivate and retain the employee because it can be seen that the more compensation and benefits are given to the employee the more he is happy at work and does not leave the job but works towards achieving the objectives of the organization by creating a successful work environment (Feraro-Banta & Al Shaikh, 2017).

➤ *Employee Relations*

Employee relations refers to relationships that create morale, confidence, commitment, trust and an appropriate work environment that enables continuous efforts to achieve organizational goals (Bajaj et al., 2013). Employee performance has a significant relationship with employee relations (Kuzu and Ozihan, 2014 and Al-khozondar, 2015). Good employee relations can create a favorable environment by increasing the motivation of employees which also contributes to the improvement of worker's efficiency (Brhane & Zewdie, 2018). A study found that employee relations directly affect employee performance and in keeping with the practices of highly satisfied organizations, current organizations can change their productivity (Sequeira and Dhriti, 2015). If there is no good relationship

between the employer and the employee, as the organization cannot perform well, it becomes difficult to achieve its goals and for that, the managers should maintain it by creating good relationships with the employees (Samwel, 2018). Good employee relations are essential for the organizations as it motivates employees to perform well and produce results (Burns, 2012).

➤ *Grievance Handling*

Any real or imagined feeling of dissatisfaction or injustice which the employee brings to the attention of the organization and management regarding the nature of work, experience, management policies or practices etc. is called grievance (Juneja, 2018). If an employee is resentful towards an organization or his supervisor then that employee cannot perform the work efficiently and effectively because in such a situation he feels depressed and morale is broken and adversely affected which results in reduced performance of the employee even though the work is enjoyable and well paid (Ubeku, 1975). A well-organized and effective employee grievance management system creates positive performance for employees in the organization but if the grievance management process is defective it is destructive as it heats up the work environment, reduces productivity, undermines performance and creates disunity within the entire organization (Akanji, 2005). Good conflict management helps in effective decision making by removing weaknesses in the organization and establishing positive change and effectiveness in the organization (Longe, 2015). Management's responsibility is to solve all grievances properly in order to improve organizational performance as well as employee performance, thereby improving communication, coordination and overall productivity of the organization (Obasan, 2011).

➤ *Performance Management*

Strong organizational performance can be achieved only when all employees actively participate in it and employee engagement is most positively impacted by empowerment-contributing recognition and participative decision-making (Almulaiki, 2023). Performance management places more emphasis on measuring and adapting employee performance than on individual practices (Hartog, Boselie & Paauwe, 2004). So it is a coordinated process in which manager's work with their employees to set expectations, measure and review results and reward performance to improve employee performance with the ultimate goal of positively impacting organizational success (e.g. Mondy, Noe & Premeaux, 2002). Performance management focuses on increasing the effectiveness of organizations by improving the performance of those who work within them and developing the capabilities of teams and individual contributors (Baron and Armstrong, 1998).

➤ *Research Framework*

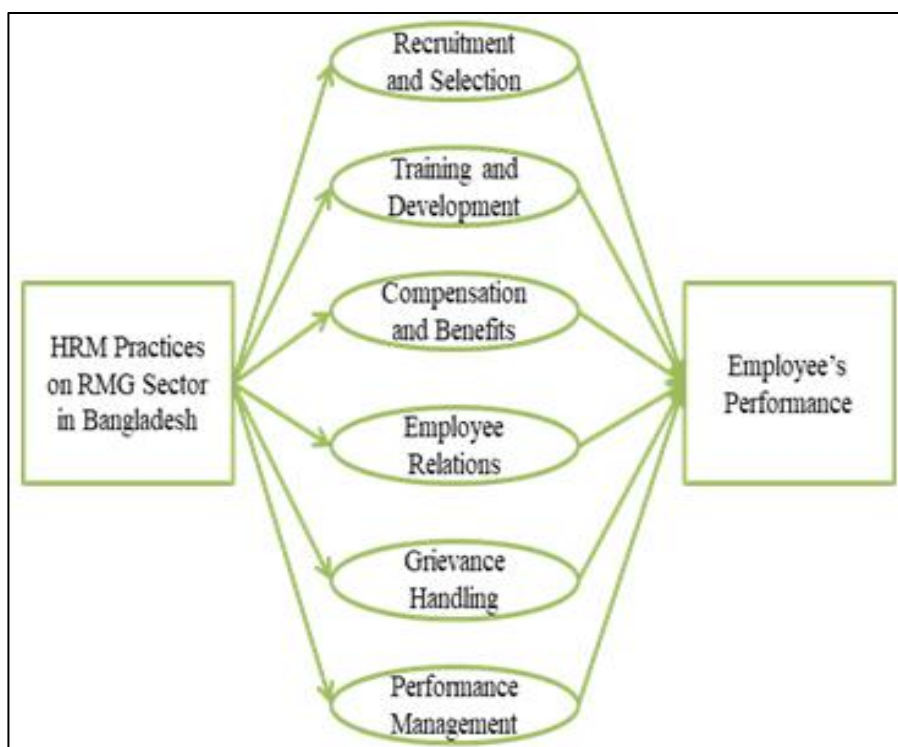


Fig 1 Research Framework

III. RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the case study method is employed to investigate the impact of HRM practices on employee performance within the Readymade Garments (RMG) sector in Bangladesh. The research selects several RMG firms known for their effective HRM practices based on criteria such as performance indicators and industry reputation.

Data collection involves comprehensive document analysis of HR policies, training materials, and performance appraisal records. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with key personnel including HR managers, executives, and employees to gather insights into their perceptions and experiences with HRM practices. Additionally, observational methods are utilized to observe the implementation of HRM practices in real-world settings.

Thematic analysis is employed to identify patterns and themes across the case study firms, aiming to uncover the contextual factors influencing employee performance outcomes such as productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. This approach ensures a detailed exploration of how HRM practices are perceived, implemented, and their impact on employee performance in the Bangladesh RMG sector.

Qualitative data was gathered through site visits to Mongla EPZ and its Sweater Company. Information was collected via semi-structured interviews with the CEO, department supervisors, and employees. This approach enabled firsthand insights into HRM practices and their

perceived impact on employee performance within the context of the readymade garments sector in Bangladesh.

➤ *About Sweater Company of Mongla EPZ*

The Sweater Company of Mongla EPZ in Bangladesh, operating within the Readymade Garments (RMG) sector, is a prominent player in the country's export-oriented textile industry. Located in the Mongla Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in Bagerhat district, this company specializes in the production and export of sweaters, catering to markets worldwide. The Sweater Company of Mongla EPZ was founded to capitalize on Bangladesh's growing reputation as a leading exporter of RMG products. Mongla EPZ, strategically situated near the port city of Khulna, provides logistical advantages for industrial operations, facilitating efficient export-oriented production.

The company specializes in the manufacturing of various types of sweaters, including pullovers, cardigans, vests, and other knitted apparel. It utilizes state-of-the-art machinery and employs skilled labor to ensure high-quality production standards. The manufacturing process typically involves knitting, dyeing, finishing, and packaging, adhering to international quality and safety standards. Being located within an EPZ affords the Sweater Company of Mongla several benefits, including duty-free access to raw materials and machinery, streamlined export procedures, and exemptions from certain taxes and tariffs. These advantages enable the company to maintain competitive pricing in the global market while meeting the stringent demands of international buyers.

The company exports its products to a diverse range of markets, with major destinations including Europe, North America, and Asia. Its ability to produce a wide variety of sweater styles ensures it can cater to different market preferences and seasonal demands effectively.

Employment generation is a significant outcome of EPZ-based industries like the Sweater Company of Mongla EPZ. The company provides job opportunities for a large number of workers, both skilled and unskilled, from the local community and surrounding areas. This contributes to poverty alleviation and socio-economic development in the region, empowering individuals with stable employment and income. In line with industry norms and corporate ethics, the Sweater Company of Mongla EPZ engages in various CSR initiatives. These initiatives may include environmental sustainability efforts, community development projects, and programs aimed at enhancing the well-being of its employees and their families. By investing in CSR activities, the company aims to create a positive impact on society and foster sustainable development in the region.

Despite its successes, the Sweater Company of Mongla EPZ faces challenges typical of the RMG sector, such as fluctuating global demand, compliance with international labor standards, and environmental sustainability concerns. However, through continuous improvement in technology, operational efficiency, and strategic market positioning, the company is well-positioned to overcome these challenges and sustain its growth trajectory.

The Sweater Company of Mongla EPZ exemplifies Bangladesh's prowess in the RMG sector, showcasing the country's capacity to compete on a global scale in textile manufacturing and exports. Through its commitment to quality, efficiency, and responsible business practices, the company not only contributes significantly to Bangladesh's export earnings but also supports local employment and community development.

In summary, the Sweater Company of Mongla EPZ underscores the transformative impact of EPZs in driving economic growth and fostering industrial development. With its focus on innovation, sustainability, and social responsibility, the company continues to play a pivotal role in Bangladesh's journey towards becoming a leading exporter in the global RMG market.

IV. RESULTS

The critical role of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in shaping employee performance and organizational outcomes. By investing in training and development, HRM equips employees with the skills and knowledge essential for effective job performance, thereby enhancing overall productivity and efficiency. Clear performance management systems that include goal setting, regular feedback, and fair appraisals foster a culture of accountability and continuous improvement among employees, ensuring alignment with organizational objectives.

Moreover, competitive compensation and benefits packages not only attract top talent but also motivate employees to exert greater effort and dedication. Employee engagement initiatives, such as promoting a positive work environment and effective communication, enhance job satisfaction and commitment, directly influencing performance outcomes. Policies that support work-life balance contribute to employee well-being, reducing burnout and enhancing productivity. Human Resource Management (HRM) practices significantly impact employee performance in the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector in Bangladesh. Here are some issues related to HRM practices that influence employee performance in this sector:

- *Low Wages and Compensation:* Represents 25% of the issues affecting employee performance. This includes issues related to inadequate pay and compensation.
- *Poor Working Conditions:* Accounts for 20% of the issues, focusing on unsafe and substandard working environments.
- *Limited Training and Development Opportunities:* Makes up 15% of the issues, highlighting the lack of investment in skills development and career advancement for employees.
- *Inadequate Employee Benefits:* Represents 10% of the issues, reflecting the insufficient benefits such as healthcare and leave entitlements.
- *Poor Communication and Employee Relations:* Also comprises 15% of the issues, emphasizing the impact of communication breakdowns and strained relations on performance.
- *Lack of Compliance with Labor Laws:* Represents another 15% of the issues, addressing non-compliance with labor regulations, including working hours and child labor issues.

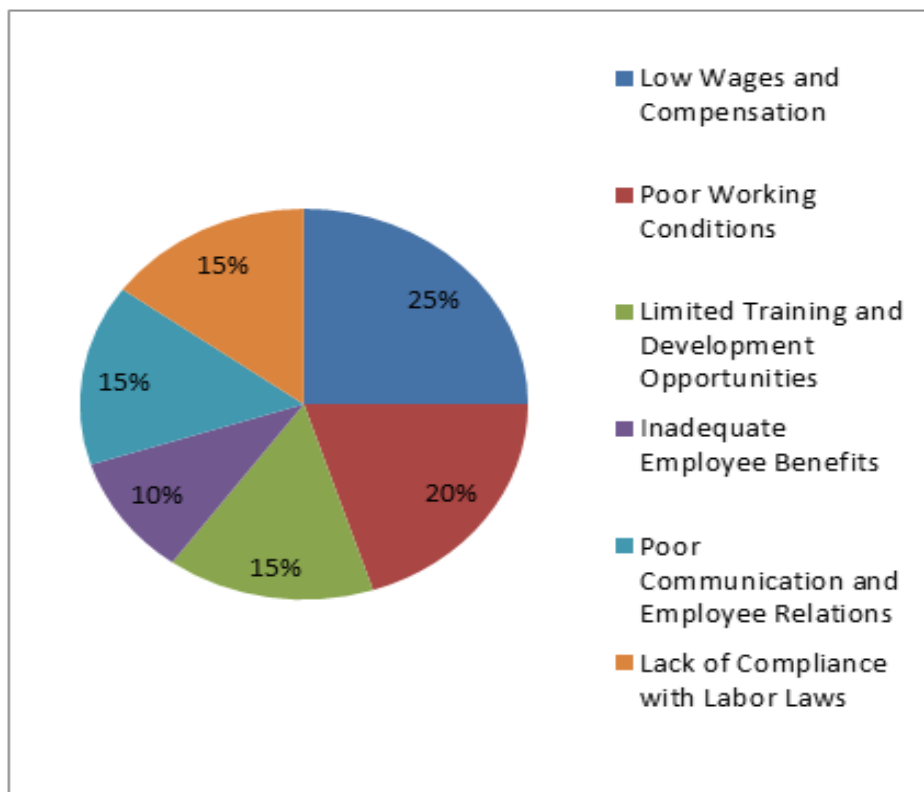


Chart-1: Issues that Influence Employee Performance

Addressing these HRM issues is crucial for improving employee performance and well-being in the RMG sector in Bangladesh. Implementing fair wages, improving working conditions, investing in training, enhancing benefits, fostering better communication, and ensuring compliance with labor laws can lead to a more engaged and productive workforce.

Ultimately, by nurturing career development opportunities and aligning human capital with strategic goals, effective HRM practices not only optimize individual performance but also drive organizational success, creating a dynamic and thriving workplace culture conducive to sustained growth and achievement. Effective HRM practices significantly enhance organizational performance, positioning the company as a market leader.

By effectively managing and developing human capital, HRM practices ensure that employees possess the necessary capabilities and are motivated to contribute to the organization's success. This alignment not only enhances the organization's competitive advantage but also enables it to outperform competitors by consistently delivering higher-quality products or services and adapting more effectively to market changes and challenges. In essence, strategic HRM leverages human resources as a key driver of sustained competitive success in the marketplace.

The scenario of HRM practices in the RMG sector of Bangladesh reveals several key trends and challenges. HRM practices in this sector typically focus on labor-intensive operations with a large workforce, where practices such as

recruitment, training, and compliance with labor laws are crucial.

Common challenges include issues related to worker safety, fair wages, and working conditions, often exacerbated by pressure to meet global demand and competitive pricing. However, progressive RMG firms are increasingly adopting strategic HRM practices to improve employee satisfaction, retention, and productivity. These practices include implementing training programs to enhance skills, ensuring compliance with international labor standards, and fostering a supportive work environment.

The study aims to explore how these varied HRM practices impact employee performance within the RMG sector, shedding light on their effectiveness in enhancing productivity, morale, and overall organizational outcomes amidst the unique socio-economic context of Bangladesh's garment industry.

The relationship between Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and employee performance is pivotal and multifaceted. Effective HRM practices, such as training and development, performance management, compensation and benefits, employee engagement, work-life balance initiatives, and career development opportunities, directly influence employee capabilities, motivation, and commitment.

When HRM practices align with organizational goals and support a positive work environment, they enhance job satisfaction and employee morale. This, in turn, leads to

improved productivity, higher quality of work, reduced absenteeism, and lower turnover rates. Clear performance goals and fair appraisal systems provide employees with clarity and motivation to achieve targets, fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

Thus, the relationship between HRM practices and employee performance is symbiotic: effective HRM practices enhance employee capabilities and motivation, contributing to achieve organizational objectives and maintaining a competitive edge in the market.

In the RMG sector in Bangladesh, the relationship between Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and employee performance is crucial for achieving competitiveness and sustainability. HRM practices such as training and development are vital in enhancing the skills of the predominantly female workforce. Performance management systems that set clear goals and provide regular feedback help align employee efforts with organizational objectives, crucial in an industry focused on meeting strict deadlines and quality standards.

Employee engagement initiatives, including promoting a safe and supportive work environment, are also pivotal for maintaining high morale and reducing turnover rates. Challenges like compliance with labor laws and ensuring worker welfare highlight the need for effective HRM strategies that balance productivity with ethical standards.

In the Readymade Garments (RMG) sector of Bangladesh, employers and employees face several significant challenges. Employers often contend with issues such as compliance with labor laws and international standards, ensuring workplace safety, and maintaining competitive pricing amidst global market pressures. Meeting stringent deadlines and quality requirements while managing large-scale operations on tight margins poses continual challenges.

For employees, common issues include low wages, long working hours, inadequate workplace safety measures, and limited career advancement opportunities. The predominantly female workforce also faces socio-cultural barriers and gender discrimination. Moreover, job insecurity due to contractual employment terms and lack of union representation further exacerbates their concerns.

These challenges highlight the complex interplay between economic pressures, regulatory compliance, and social issues within the RMG sector. Addressing these issues requires collaborative efforts from industry stakeholders, government bodies, and international organizations to improve working conditions, ensure fair compensation, enhance job security, and promote sustainable practices that prioritize both employee well-being and organizational productivity.

Overall, in the RMG sector in Bangladesh, strategic HRM practices directly impact employee performance by fostering skills development, motivation, and job

satisfaction, ultimately influencing organizational success and competitive positioning in the global market.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The study of HRM practices in the RMG sector in Bangladesh, rigorous analysis, and empirical evidence demonstrate that practices like training, performance management, fair compensation, employee engagement, and career development are instrumental. They collectively enhance employee performance, underscoring their critical importance in optimizing workforce productivity and organizational success within this vital industry.

Specifically, robust training programs equip workers with the necessary skills, contributing to higher productivity and quality standards. Clear performance management systems align employee efforts with organizational goals, fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. Fair compensation and benefits packages attract and retain talent, reducing turnover and maintaining stability in the workforce. Moreover, initiatives promoting employee engagement and a supportive work environment enhance job satisfaction and morale, further boosting performance metrics.

These findings underscore the importance of strategic HRM practices tailored to the unique context of the RMG sector in Bangladesh. By investing in human capital, organizations can achieve sustainable competitive advantages, improve overall operational efficiency, and ensure long-term success in a highly competitive global market.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the research paper the following recommendations can be made to enhance productivity and economic outcomes in the RMG sector in Bangladesh:

- *Enhance Training Programs:* Invest in comprehensive training initiatives to improve skills and knowledge among workers, thereby enhancing their productivity.
- *Implement Effective Performance Management Systems:* Establish clear performance goals, regular feedback mechanisms, and fair appraisal systems to motivate employees and align their efforts with organizational objectives.
- *Review and Adjust Compensation Structures:* Ensure fair and competitive compensation packages to attract and retain skilled workers, thereby reducing turnover and improving productivity.
- *Promote Employee Engagement:* Foster a positive work environment with open communication channels, opportunities for involvement in decision-making, and initiatives that enhance job satisfaction.
- *Strengthen Safety and Compliance Measures:* Prioritize workplace safety and adhere to international labor standards to protect workers' rights and improve overall morale.

- **Support Work-Life Balance Initiatives:** Implement policies such as flexible working hours and wellness programs to improve employee well-being and productivity.
- **Encourage Career Development Opportunities:** Provide pathways for advancement through career development programs and skill enhancement workshops.
- **Foster Collaboration with Stakeholders:** Work closely with government agencies, industry associations, and NGOs to address sector-specific challenges and promote sustainable practices.
- **Monitor and Evaluate HRM Practices:** Continuously assess the effectiveness of HRM initiatives through feedback mechanisms and performance metrics to make informed adjustments.
- **Invest in Technology and Innovation:** Embrace technological advancements to streamline operations, enhance efficiency, and remain competitive in the global market.

These recommendations aim to leverage HRM practices effectively to not only improve employee performance but also contribute to sustainable economic growth and competitiveness within the RMG sector in Bangladesh.

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