

Report On

How House of Ahmed is performing its HR- related operations during the COVID-19 outbreak?

By

Syeda Anisa Aziz
ID - 16204059

A case study report submitted to the BRAC Business School in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor's of Business Administration in HRM & CIM

BRAC Business School
BRAC University
August 2021

2021. BRAC University
All rights reserved.

Declaration

This Case Study has been prepared for academic and research purposes only within the premise of BRAC University to give valuable insights about how a unique ethnic wear brand operates its HR-related operations post COVID-19 outbreak. This case is direct based and an interview has been conducted directly with a very close tie of the particular organization who is Mr. Intekhab Zaman, the Chief Financing Officer (CFO) of House of Ahmed, as I believe it is the best possible way to extract the most useful information about the organization. This case study analysis has been made completely from scratch to work on the particular topic and most of the insights are extracted mainly from primary resources and less from secondary resources.

I declare that no part of the work has been prepared in support of another application for another degree or qualification or course of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

_____ **Syeda Anisa Aziz** _____

ID - 16204059

Supervisor's Full Name & Signature:

_____ **Jubairul islam Shaown** _____

Lecturer, BRAC Business School

BRAC University

Letter of Transmittal

Jubairul Islam Shaown
Lecturer,
BRAC Business School
BRAC University
66 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

Subject: Submission of case study report of how House of Ahmed is performing its HR-related operation during the COVID-19 outbreak

Dear Sir,

With respect I want to state that I have finished my final report on how House of Ahmed is performing its HR-related operation during the COVID-19 outbreak . I also want to state that this case study helps me to gain knowledge about how a big corporation performs its HR operations during the pandemic. With this in hand, I got the opportunity to talk with House of Ahmed's Chief Financing Officer (CFO), Mr. Intekhab Zaman and conduct his interview virtually.

In this report, I tried my level best to make it a useful outcome with my utmost effort. Although, preparing it was a bit challenging for me to gather all types of information as much as possible but due to my utmost dedication and your support it made easier for me to prepare this report for you. It was a great opportunity given to me that I could gain useful insights about a corporation and the internal environment of a company. So, now I would like to take this platform to thank you. In the end, I would like you to kindly to accept my report and to acknowledge my devotion and efforts. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

____Syeda Anisa Aziz_____

ID- 1620405

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

Date: August 16th , 2021

Non-Disclosure Agreement

- I. THE PARTIES. This Non-Disclosure Agreement, hereinafter known as the “Agreement”, created on ___18th May_____, 2021 is by and between ___Syeda Anisa Aziz_____, hereinafter known as “1st Party”, and ___Intekhab Zaman_____, hereinafter known as “2nd Party”, and collectively known as the “Parties”. WHEREAS, this Agreement is created for the purpose of preventing the unauthorized disclosure of the confidential and proprietary information.
- II. The Parties agree as follows: II. TYPE OF AGREEMENT. (check one)
- Unilateral. This Agreement shall be Unilateral, whereas, 1st Party shall have sole ownership of the Confidential Information with 2nd Party being prohibited from disclosing confidential and proprietary information that is to be released by the 1st Party.
 - Mutual. This Agreement shall be Mutual, whereas, the Parties shall be prohibited from disclosing confidential and proprietary information that is to be shared between one another.
- III. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the date written below.

1st Party’s Signature _____Syeda Anisa Aziz_____ Date___13/08/21___

2nd Party’s Signature ___Intekhab Zaman_____ Date___13/08/21___

Executive Summary

Coronavirus has taken a sharp surge in Bangladesh, leaving thousands of people infected and also having a negative impact in business operations. This case study is mainly based on how this COVID-19 outbreak is impacting on House of Ahmed's HR- related operations. I prepared this report by collecting data mainly from primary resources and it has been used for in-depth analysis of some key issues to make it a sound report. I have mainly emphasized on focusing on some key issues of what is happening in their business operations currently, explained further of why those key issues are working or not working, took an interview of the CFO of House of Ahmed to collect raw data and then prepared solutions to their HR- related problems and prepared discussion questions. I also provided necessary answers to my discussion questions and teaching guidelines. Lastly, I recommended practical solutions of how House of Ahmed can solve the key issues.

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	ii
Letter of Transmittal	iii
Non-Disclosure Agreement	iv
Executive Summary.....	v
Table of Contents	vi
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Summary.....	1
Chapter 2 Background.....	2
2.1 House of Ahmed Company Overview.....	2
2.2 House of Ahmed Revenue Statistics of year 2019,2020,2021.....	3
2.3 House of Ahmed's response to COVID-19 outbreak.....	4
2.4 Employment level of the House of Ahmed and their employee compensation plans.....	5
2.5: Changes in the company’s recruitment processes and strategies before and after the pandemic.....	5
2.6: Are customer needs and sales forces abilities of House of Ahmed aligned while recruiting?	6
Chapter 3 Evaluation of the Case.....	7
3.1. What are the issues House of Ahmed had to face during the pandemic?.....	7
3.2 Key issues to focus on and why they are/not working.....	8

Chapter 4 List of Questions Central to the Case and teaching notes.....	9
4.1 Discussion Questions.....	9
4.2 Teaching Objectives.....	9
4.3 Target audience.....	10
4.4 Suggested teaching strategies.....	10
Chapter 5 Suggested Answers, Solutions and Recommendations to Discussion Questions	
.....	12
References.....	19

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction:

Bangladesh first started having COVID-19 cases from 11th March 2020 with a number of 3 people and now the disease is widespread across the country with astounding number of 780,857 new cases. Present day, The Bangladeshi government imposed a 9-day lockdown from 5th April. On 9th April, the country took the highest toll of cases with 7,462 new cases and a record breaking casualties of 102 in a single day. Currently the country is facing the highest amount of surge and the lockdown is still going on until further notice. As COVID-19 has taken a sharp surge throughout the country, House of Ahmed's business is also negatively affected due to a sharp turn of the whole clothing industry. We will discuss about how House of Ahmed is performing its HR-related operations during the outbreak. House of Ahmed's revenue statistics varied throughout the years 2019, 2020, 2021 where in 2019 the annual revenue was 20,000,000 taka. In 2020, it was 30,000,000 taka and in 2021 the annual revenue was 15,000,000 taka. Due to their poor performance during lockdown they had to lay off half of their employees from 80 to 40 people from January 2020 till May 2020 and they did fundraising by generating Tk.10,00,000 to pay their laid off employees and then rehired them on December 2020.

1.2: Summary

House of Ahmed established itself as a famous ethnic wear brand within the past few years and became the talk of the town in just few weeks of operating it and was slowly reaching its peak of growth. But then COVID-19 happened and it ruptured the overall business structure of the company as a whole and had to bring some changes to cope up with the new normal. Overall it had a significant impact on the company's revenues, employment levels, compensation plans, recruitment processes, and their business structure policies. They also had to face some challenges while planning their business structure as they had to deal unionized blackmails from some of their employees and set new policies. All in all, they managed to overcome most of their employee related issues and made enough effort to make their employees feel valued as their only asset and as their own family. In the end of this case study, we have discussed further about the issues House of Ahmed with possible solutions and recommendations of what

can be done. We created some discussion questions for students and possible answers are given to solve them.

Chapter 2: Background

2.1: House of Ahmed: Company Overview

House of Ahmed is a premium ethnic clothing brand which uses local craftsman, handloom artisans and masters to create fashionable yet elegant ethnic-wear pieces for men, women and children. They have been in this business for 3 years since 2016. Before, they were in a partnership as a Private Limited Company and they had two branches: Ahmed & Elmas.

Mr. Ahmed Tuhin Reza is the founder of House of Ahmed, who worked at Multinational companies for several years and then started his own entrepreneurship by establishing this luxurious clothing brand. Mr.

Ahmed worked for many years at MNCs and collected all the concepts and implemented on his own company, which turned out to be successful in the end and in a span of few weeks became the main headline of every news. He wanted to preserve our country's ethnicity and make dresses in such unique ways that can't be replicated easily. The company follows strong patent rights and strict policies where if anyone tries to replicate their unique designs he/she will be jailed. If we talk about markets like Punjabi and Saree industries, people went abroad after 2010 to buy wedding dresses and outfits as they couldn't find their desired designed wedding dresses. So House of Ahmed was established in order to fill in that gap of premium shopping in Bangladesh so that people won't have to travel to buy their dresses and they have been successful in achieving this goal up-to date. Mr. Ahmed ensured to fulfill every possible desires of his customers in making their dream wedding dresses and party dresses beautifully by local handloom artisans.

Mrs. Tanzila Elma is the Co-founder of House of Ahmed and is an intelligent marketing strategist and knows very well how to meet every demand of each of her clients. She is empathic towards her local craftsman and artisans and determined to empower them and preserve the Bengali ethnic heritage. She works alongside her husband, the founder of House of Ahmed, with her innovative and intricate designs and always keep updated with the latest trends and bring it to her sense of fashion and implement them.

House of Ahmed stood up to break all stereotypes, norms and barriers to empower their local-craftsman and artisans and stepped ahead of helping their workers a sustained livelihood and make ends meet to preserve their talent and effort and never let them leave the company. Their premium clothing showroom is located at Banani road-12 and has been operating since 2018.

Ever since COVID-19 took place in Bangladesh, it did had a major impact on the House of Ahmed's overall business operations and they have been trying their best to cope up with the new normal way of living and had to bring some necessary changes and policies to survive during this tough time. They had to cut down a lot of their employees temporarily and rehired them. They did fundraising campaigns to pay their salaries and Zakats to the most affected ones, changed their concurrent policies and solved trade union issues among the employees and took necessary compensation plans to stop it. Another issue that House of Ahmed often faces every month is that few sums of their money is being stolen by some of their underground employees and they are unable to keep track of it that who did it and from where it is being stolen. Moreover, they didn't had to face much challenges in terms of training and developing their employees amid the technological challenges of the country as a whole, as House of Ahmed has always been selling their products online and their salesmen are very well groomed and trained to sell their ethnic wear clothing.

2.2: House of Ahmed Revenue Statistics of year 2019, 2020, 2021

2019- House of Ahmed's biggest business sales happen during Eid festivals. In 2019, they earned around Tk. 11,000,000 during the Eid-UI-Fitr and in Eid-ul-Azha they earned revenue of Tk. 3,000,000. During the wedding season they earned within Tk. 25,00,000 to Tk. 30,00,000. The remaining of the year they earned about Tk. 30,00,000. However, they don't have much remaining in their revenue after they pay for their operating cost each month for Tk. 15,00,000.

2020- Before the COVID-19 outbreak, House of Ahmed already had strong online references. During the month of August they had a huge purchasing order. They generated revenue of Tk. 30,000,000 during Eid-ul-Fitr and the last 15 days of Ramadan they earned about Tk. 80,00,000. COVID-19 did hit them and lot of orders were cancelled. But they came back strong during the wedding season and generated revenue of Tk. 50,00,000.

2021- In 2021, House of Ahmed relied mostly on their previous year's residual inventory as in 2020 they didn't had much of sales order. But they came up with 20 new designs, 4000 punjabis, and 600 pcs kameez. After the lockdown they didn't had much sales as expected by generating each day of Tk. 10-12,00,000 and in last 15 days of Ramadan they earned revenue of Tk. 15,000,000.

2.3: House of Ahmed's response to COVID-19 Outbreak

As COVID-19 struck in Bangladesh during May 2020 and then lockdown started it had a great impact on the overall business of the country. House of Ahmed on the other hand didn't faced much difficulty in shifting its business fully online mode as they have been selling their ethnic clothes from the very beginning before COVID-19. They have been taking orders online as always and things didn't changed much in their business operations after the pandemic. But they did had to bring some changes in their HR-related operations. They had to cut down their employees from total of 80 employees to 40 employees as they couldn't pay their salaries in due time but they didn't fired them. House of Ahmed kept on giving their salaries between the month of 21st January 2020 till 21st May 2020 of Tk. 12,00,000 each month and rehired them back in December 2020. In order to pay the salaries of their employees, House of Ahmed started a fundraising campaign to pay Tk. 10,00,000 to their employees for 3 months and also paid Zakat in this way.

Another significant changes they had to bring in their business after the COVID-19 outbreak is that they had to shift their operations fully online. Before they also took orders online but their customers mostly visited their premium studio to purchase their desired dresses. After the lockdown they shifted completely online and took orders and delivered dresses directly to their clients' homes. They also had to keep eye on their transportation cost as it increased significantly due to large volume of online orders.

Moreover, due to COVID-19 outbreak they didn't forget about their responsibilities towards the general people and their employees , where they provided 200 families with groceries and necessities and financial help.

House of Ahmed still didn't fully shut down their premium studio and main office after the lockdown but they have been maintaining strict sanitation rules when entering the office. Everyone must enter the premise with fully covered masks and go through temperature checks,

maintain 6-feet distance with everyone while working inside the office. They enter inside the premise only when they have shipments to deliver to their clients and handle the orders when transporting them.

All in all, House of Ahmed doesn't have their designated alternative crisis management policies after the pandemic apart from the above-mentioned points.

2.4: Employment level of the House of Ahmed and their employee compensation plans:

Their compensation plans of the blue-collar employees is divided into three tiers:

1. Basic craftsman's compensation is tied to their performance level and are paid Tk. 12000-15000. Specialist artisans are given basic compensation of around Tk. 15000- 17000 per month.
3. Master craftsmen consists of five to 10 employees in total and are paid roughly Tk. 20000 along with team incentive for their hard work of Tk. 2000-5000.

During the COVID-19 and lockdown House of Ahmed had to cut down their employees from 80 employees to 40 employees for 6 months and rehired them back in December 2020. But their wages and salary amounts didn't changed after the pandemic.

Moreover, all the employees are given festive bonuses of 100% twice a year during Eid holidays. In order to make their employees as their main asset and make them feel valued, the company arranges an annual picnic every year as most of their employees come from poor background, they need some recreations and time off from work so they take them to nearby resorts around the suburbs of Dhaka. They also provide their employees with Zakat funds and also pay for their education and most importantly provide them with enough paid time leaves.

2.5: Changes in the company's recruitment processes and strategies before and after the pandemic

Normally House of Ahmed don't have a separate Human Resource recruiter as the company mostly involves blue-collar workers and specialized training and recruitment is not needed as

they are mostly skilled in their work and showcase their unique artworks on each dresses. They just follow the instructions of the Designer head how they want the dress to look like. Their operational manager usually supervises the daily tasks of the employees and monitors their project completion of each dresses. Before COVID-19 happened, they hired their local craftsmen from Mirpur Benaroshi, Islampur and Narayanganj by headhunting and travelling to look for the best talents. Moreover, when they hired all their local artisans at the very beginning of their business, the employees need to go through a probation period for a week before they secure this full-time job. Post COVID-19, they had to cut down a lot of their employees and kept the resourceful ones but again rehired them when situation felt a bit better. They didn't had to go through the probation period all over again like in the beginning. Most importantly, House of Ahmed's employees don't leave the organization as they are treated and valued like they are their own. For white-collar workers, they are mostly hired through head-hunting and most of them are university/college students and are mostly hired from different job postings, specially Facebook as it is a common platform to gather more employees. They also need to go through the same probation period for a week and then their compensations are increased gradually every six months.

2.6: Are customer needs and sales forces abilities of House of Ahmed aligned while recruiting?

Mr. Intekhab Zaman, brother of Mrs. Tanzila Elma and the Chief Financing Officer (CFO) of House of Ahmed emphasized that obviously the customer needs and sales forces abilities are well aligned with their recruitment because their salesmen needs to be well-dressed and courteous enough to grab the attention of their clients. He makes sure that they need to be very well-trained and well-groomed whenever any client enters their premium studio. They are very smart salesmen and are groomed in such a way, not like the usual ones who talks and persuades a lot and the clients feel irritated, so that the moment they see their clients they can understand their body language and psychology. The moment a client eyes on a particular dress they will explain about the intricate details of the product and that helps them to understand the client's tastes and preferences. At some point, it puts an impressive impression on their clients and they get amazed whenever the salesmen showcases them more dresses based on their particular preferences and that they understand well about their psychology which a lot of other companies fail to do that. Mr. Intekhab also explained that their company likes to recruit

humble and dedicated employees and they prefer to hire people based on their competency level other than their degree qualifications.

Chapter 3: Evaluation of the Case

3.1: What are the issues House of Ahmed had to face during the pandemic?

As a new business, House of Ahmed don't have much retained earnings and they have cash crunches due to high operation cost. They have to pay huge sum of money every month for their payroll system of employees of Tk. 12,00,000 and as their studio is extravagantly decorated they have to pay monthly rent for the studio of Tk. 800,000.

Moreover, sales was also an issue for high end Punjabis during the lockdown restrictions as clients couldn't give trials before purchasing them and so they focused more on the high end kameez and lehengas.

In 2019, there have been an issue among the workers where one of the craftsman left the company on purpose and tried to establish his own tailoring business while replicating all the unique designs of House of Ahmed. When Mr. Ahmed learned about such news he took immediate action against the local craftsman by sending him to jail for 2 years with a penalty fine of Tk. 1 crore for the damage. Mr. Ahmed took such drastic step in order to each the workers a good lesson so that if anyone tries to replicate their designs they will face serious consequences. What really happened after the incident was that, when that local craftsman joined working at House of Ahmed he also brought some of his fellow mates to the workplace to work alongside him. When the owner put him to jail, his mates formed a union and demanded to release him otherwise they will quit their job. So this is one of the challenges House of Ahmed needs to face when operating their HR operations as they can't deal with their employees individually.

Another big problems they have to face on a monthly basis is that some of their revenue money gets stolen by their employees. Around Tk. 15,000-30,000 gets stolen every month by employees when they try to sell their ethnic clothes and they can't keep track of it because the company itself is so big that they can't focus on each and every employee individually. Also

the employees have close connections with their fellow colleagues and try to hide each other's flaws and wrong doings.

After the prison incident, House of Ahmed came up with a different policy to stop these kinds of problems and they came up with a dividend concurrent policy. They increased their compensation plans of their tailor masters and encouraged them to sit for meetings with the management to make them understand about all kinds of costs and where they come from. After taking this step the unionized blackmail of the employees finally stopped.

3.2: Key issues to focus on and why they are/not working

As we discussed earlier that House of Ahmed has been having bit of hurdles in constructing its business structure such as their sales was a bit of issue as their clients couldn't try their outfit due to the pandemic.

The reason why their strategy isn't working in this case is because they need to come up with an alternative strategy that fits their customer needs. What they can do instead is they can start a similar type of policy like the Amazon Prime Wardrobe. They can deliver the clients' dresses to their address and give them to give time for trial for free for a week. If they like it they can keep it and if they don't they can return it. They need to make sure they deliver the dresses to their clients carefully packaged in a sophisticated way with premium quality boxes and ribbons along with their salesmen. That way they can acquire their customer's impression and loyalty towards their brand.

Another problem House of Ahmed was facing was that they've been having problems with their workers' trade union blackmails when an employee tried to replicate their designs and wanted to start his own business. At some point it does have impacts on their traits and personalities. Even though they finally managed to stop the union blackmails after sending that employee to jail, it is important to train their employees, motivate them about their morals and start a workshop to familiarize them about the good and bad traits of an employee. Even after jailing an employee for replicating their designs it doesn't guarantee that trade union blackmails will stop. They need to focus more on why union blackmails are bad for the organization. Whatever happened in their organization may be a temporary solution but they need to focus more for the long run.

House of Ahmed also needs to focus on how they can stop stealing of their cash every month by employees. As a big corporation it often gets challenging for them to give employees individual attention. They have to come up with strict policies to stop these types of problems and work a lot more on this issue as they still couldn't figure out the problem. They need to come up with proper training and disciplinary plans so that they can put an end to this issue for good. They have to prepare and follow proper HR way of dealing and managing the disruptive behavior of their employee which is further discussed on the teaching note section.

Chapter-4: List of Questions Central to the Case & Teaching Notes

4.1: Discussion Questions

1. What is the right way for House of Ahmed to manage difficult employees and their disruptive behavior? Is Training Needs Analysis required to fix the issue?
2. What causes an employee to be dishonest in the workplace even when they get good compensation ?
3. Describe the pros and cons for House of Ahmed when they tried to solve trade union blackmails when it arose at first.
4. Describe the strategies of House of Ahmed in the new normal after the COVID-19 outbreak.

4.2: Teaching Objectives

The main objective of this case is to:

- Types of strategies that should be made to run a clothing business in the new normal
- How an employee's negative traits can have impact on employee engagement
- Which HR-related theories are most relevant with this particular case event
- Reasons why some employees are still dishonest/ disloyal even when they are given great compensations

4.3: Target audience

The main targeted audience for this case study analysis are undergraduate and graduate students who are mostly specialized in Human Resource Management (HRM) and familiar with some known concepts such as Training and development, Strategic human resource management, etc. The case tries to illustrate some core concepts of HR and related events of House of Ahmed's operations where undergraduate students can mostly relate such as:

- Employee compensation plan- how employees should be given their compensations during a pandemic and figure out ways to pay them even when the company cannot fully pay them from their earnings.
- Strategic management- develop and implement managerial strategies to structure the business model of the company before and after the outbreak.
- Strategic human resource- training and motivating employees, policies how to run employees during the pandemic.
- Training and development- come up with proper training techniques if needed for employees with negative traits

4.4: Suggested teaching strategies

The students should be emphasized with clear understandings of relevant theories and concepts that directly related with this case study. They should make sure they understand all the concepts comprehensively. They can do further research about the concepts if they want to know more in-depth knowledge. The instructor should familiarize the theories at first to make them understand such as:

- Are Training Needs Analysis (TNA) needed for those employees who lack to achieve organizational goal for their negative behavior.
- Managing and responding to poor employee performance
- Training and development of employees to adapt them in new normal
- Strategy implementation to cope up with the COVID-19 outbreak

To be more specific students can use these theories to directly relate to this case study theories and help them to solve the discussions questions:

- *Trade Union*- A trade union in any organization seeks to organize and present the employee's interest in the workplace and seeks to regulate employment relationship through direct process of collective bargaining with management (Salamon, 2000, p.94)
- *Training Needs Analysis (TNA)*- TNA is the process in which the company identifies training and development needs of its employees so that they can do their job effectively. It involves a complete analysis of training needs required at various levels of the organization. (English Edition, 2021).
- *Emotional Labor*- These are the emotions employees must appropriately display to do their jobs effectively. (Grandey, 2000).
- *Employee Counselling*- An employee counselling session is a meeting between the supervisor and the employee which happens for some reasons such as if they lack organizational performance and they need some improvement, having lack of concentration to work, helping them to overcome some of their negative traits. Usually this counselling session happens in a private mode as it is based on the individual's personal problems and is kept confidential. This session is kept with constructive feedback with the aim that after this session, both the parties will find it beneficial as a way of a proper solution. (Stony Brook University, 2021).
- *Importance of Strategic HRM*- Every organization needs to consider their employees as their strategic resources and human capital as their main assets as they offer a competitive advantage for them. An organization that manages its human resources strategically is more likely to survive and profit. So human assets must be managed and should be aligned to the organizational strategy.

A possible way of solving this case is that the students can be divided into pairs or group of 3 and then try to do more research on the case discussion questions. It is best for them to do their own research first and then solve it like a case study and later on discuss the issues with the instructor by giving class presentations. They can prepare PowerPoint slides to further help them elaborate in front of the whole class. The instructor needs to ensure that the students learn a lot from solving the case discussion questions instead of achieving good marks on it because that will be more helpful for them later on.

Chapter-5: Suggested Answers, Solutions and Recommendations to Discussion Questions

1. What are the right ways for House of Ahmed to manage difficult employees and their disruptive behavior? Is Training Needs Analysis needed to fix this issue?

In general, Training Needs Analysis is a systematic method for determining what caused employee performance to be less than expected or required. It is done to find out the reasons for poor performance so that is why training is required. The main reasons why organizations conduct this analysis is because it plays crucial part in pinpointing the causes of poor performance and poor performances can happen due to insufficient KSAs. Other times, the causes can be environmental or personality related and for that training will not be adequate enough to solve their problem, in this case, non-training methods will be required.

When employees are highly motivated and efficient in completing their work the company can achieve high performance growth, but when employees portray inappropriate and disturbing behavior it can have great impact on the company's overall performance negatively. In case of House of Ahmed, one of its employee tried to replicate their designs and was jailed for violating their patent rights. Moreover, the company also faced another problem among their employees where some parts of their company's profits are being stolen by the employees and the company cannot keep track of it of who steals them every month. These types of issues poses great problems for House of Ahmed and they need to find ways to resolve these types of problems. They can use certain techniques to deal and manage these types of difficult employees that are deemed to be successful.

At first House of Ahmed needs to start a basic planning for training employees with organizational level of manners and etiquettes. They can start a workshop and provide visuals to raise awareness of how their disruptive behavior can have great impact on the company's overall performance. They can explain them in their own easiest language. In this case, it is a great start to deal their disruptive. Where such training is required, training needs analysis is also required. In this way, teaching them workplace civility will give them clear idea of how they should behave in the workplace. According to SHRM, many known companies now have compulsory civility training for all types of employees. So training them first with business etiquettes is a great start.

The second way to solve the issue is a bit more stricter policy, which is a progressive discipline. If an employee is subject to progressive discipline the employer generally imposes a less severe form of discipline before proceeding to a more severe discipline option. The steps on progressive discipline were from Falcone (1997). Another example of progressive discipline was offered by Salvo (2004):

Step 1: Verbal counseling

Step 2: First written warning

Step 3: Second written warning, accompanied by suspension

Step 4: Third written warning (or final

warning) Step 5: Termination

Sometimes progressive discipline does not guarantee that it will be a 100% success as it depends on the severity of the employee's nature of conduct. It is alright to skip the steps and just terminate the employee straight up. That is what House of Ahmed did in their circumstances as the issue was that much severe.

But in order to make all these things work they also need to take some necessary steps before they implement such policies. What they can do to eliminate this problem is that they can start keeping tracks of records of those employees who handle cash transactions with their customers whenever they're trying to sell or transport goods to their address. The financing officer can be entrusted in this case. They can also install security code on their cash register and monitor screens so whenever they lend cash exchange only few employees will know about the code. No other employees will be able to open the cash register box. In USA, a lot of small groceries and fast food restaurants have installed these security codes on their cash register and by doing this, a lot of burglary and shop theft have stopped since then. Additionally, they can also install CCTV cameras in every corners of their studio including employee/staff rooms and break rooms even if an employee working at cash register tries to exchange money with their fellow colleagues in the break room.

Moreover, in order to keep track of the employee's behavioral pattern of whether they improved their moral behavior or not, it is essential for managers or supervisors to document their job discipline. Felton (2009) offers 10 best practices in documenting employee discipline:

1. Have an employee discipline form.
2. Conduct a full and unbiased investigation.

3. Gather all information.
4. Be objective.
5. Be clear and specific.
6. Complete the form while the facts are new.
7. Get the employee's acknowledgement.
8. Allow the employee to explain the conduct.
9. Be fair.
10. To the extent that it's possible, use the discipline process as a positive experience.

In this way, if House of Ahmed tries to follow these aforementioned solutions and policies they will be successful in resolving their problems as most of the largest corporations followed this pattern and succeeded in solving their own problems.

2. What causes an employee to be dishonest in the workplace even when they get good compensation ?

When employees are dishonest in their workplace it actually has bad impact on their morals and also causes negative influence in the workplace. Dishonesty causes corruption in the workplace and it happens in different forms such as theft, unethical conduct, lying to managers and colleagues, etc. Sometimes even when employees get good compensation they are still dishonest. A common form of dishonesty in the workplace is stealing where some employees tend to do that when they are unhappy with their current job status and feel they are paid less than they deserve. Some of them do that just to have extra money in their pockets at the end of the day. Managers of House of Ahmed in this case need to scrutinize enough about the possible causes of why their employees steal money from them every month and combat it with tight regulations.

Dishonesty also happens in the workplace when a company has a very weak enforcement towards dishonesty. They have to take strong measures to stand up against this crime and make employees understand about the possible consequences if they are being dishonest. For this reason, employees tend to take advantage of this situation and hence makes it easier for them to commit such crimes. As for House of Ahmed, they mentioned that it becomes difficult for them to give individual employee attention and its difficult for them to keep track of their workplace theft. It is high time for them to come up with the perfect solution to solve this issue.

Moreover, when a company has weak accountability systems it opens the opportunity for more employee theft. House of Ahmed needs to open up the checks and balancing systems on all of their accounting entries, monitor their cash balance every now and then. They have to be able to cause fear in the employees the next time they try to steal money from their vault. Imposing CCTV cameras in every corner of their studio will also help them to monitor their employees' live activities and tightening their security check-in systems.

Beside these, if employees feel that they are being paid less than expected they might have the urge to steal money just to have extra income in hand. For this reason, the company needs to focus on their payroll system and check from time to time otherwise such situations may lead to employee turnover and increased absenteeism in the workplace. So a lot of time companies such as House of Ahmed might assume from their perspective that they are paying enough to their employees in terms of their compensation but to the employees it might be different and for that both the parties need to be transparent and open enough to discuss about any sort of issue they might be having. Not necessarily it means that House of Ahmed are paying them any less. They just need to be more careful next time and cross check all of their payroll system in order to avoid such issues ahead. It is also important for them to keep an eye closely on the interactions between the supervisors and the employees, also the customers and the employees.

According to Timothy A Dimoff, a Certified Protection Professional and legal expert in corporate security procedures and training believes that if such measures are taken with clear monitoring and regulations it is possible to overcome this type of hurdle in the workplace and a lot big companies follows these type of measures to prevent such offences in the workplace and are proven to be very effective and successful.

3. Describe the pros and cons for House of Ahmed when they tried to solve trade union blackmails when it arose at first.

When Hose of Ahmed faced union blackmails from their employees for terminating one of their staff for violating their patent it did created some hurdles for them as well as solved some of their problems too. Pros:

- It gave them a clear perspective that running a business in Bangladesh is not so easy and that the bigger a company is there will be greater risks and they can learn a lot

from it and stay more careful next time. Solving this union blackmails did helped them to tighten up their policies and stay firm to their decisions.

- In order to teach the employees a good lesson when they were blackmailing them for accusing their particular co-worker, they sent him to jail to let them know of the consequences of what will happen if they accuse them without being rational, as it is a tendency in workers to take sides of their peers irrationally in Bangladesh.
- After solving this union blackmail issue, they didn't faced anymore similar problems up-to date and they got rid of such a big burden.
- One major thing that House of Ahmed were able to prevent was stopping them before they went on strikes. They always paid them in a competitive rate than others as they are mostly monopoly in this type of market structure so they didn't had to go through such phases like other garment companies normally would have faced.

Cons:

- Usually when such kinds of issues arises the company usually feels pressurized when they fall into such situations. During this time, it is important to stay calm and act and make decisions rationally. This way the problem can be overcome.
- House of Ahmed had to invest more time and energy to increase the compensation rate of their handloom artisans and craftsmen by 20% which in itself adds up like an extra costs for the company.
- When House of Ahmed had to face union blackmails, this actually led them vulnerable to the employees as they tend to have more power over them during the procedure.

Even though House of Ahmed had to go through such challenging phase, they were successful in preventing their company from worse situation before further damages would have been made to ruin their reputation. It suggests that they were very rational and had full control of the situation.

4. Describe the strategies of House of Ahmed in the new normal after the COVID-19 outbreak.

It is important for House of Ahmed to give a great comeback to recover their HR- operations from the COVID-19. They need to focus more how to recover from this unwanted circumstances and align their human capital along with their HR strategies. They have to take their employees into consideration that they are an important source to run their company so they have to keep things in mind and make their strategic decisions accordingly. It is essential for them to make policies in such a way so that they can prepare themselves for further calamities like COVID-19 ahead.

House of Ahmed needs to focus on tightening their security so that employees should not dare to commit crimes like theft in the foreseeable future. They can appoint a security managing expert and emphasize their trusted accounts manager to check their cash balances every month and create systems for all types accounting entries including petty cash receipts and inventory. That way it will stop the dishonesty in the workplace and the employees will not get a chance to commit such crimes. Many American companies such Apteon and Veritive Corporation follow these rules and that way they didn't faced any employee theft so far up-to date and has been proven as a very reliable way to stop dishonesty in the working.

Moreover, House of Ahmed also has a firm focus to keep selling their products online and shift their shop mostly to online mode and for now keep focusing on to improve in their digital marketing strategies as it is the best and high time to do so due to high demand of it. Digital marketing is taking a sharp spike in Bangladesh and House of Ahmed should grasp the opportunity in working on it by aligning this strategy with marketing team.

In addition, House of Ahmed is also planning to learn from their past experience to keep their employees closely tied with the organization and avoid problems such as union blackmails in the near future. They decided to increase the compensation of all their employees so that won't have the need to steal money from their vault every month. But they also need to focus and keep an eye on all their employees interactions with their supervisors and customers. That way it will helpful for the employees to understand that they feel valued and closely connected and understood by them.

Learning from the past experience House of Ahmed will now be more careful in terms of hiring people in their organization. They will be no longer be allowing random people coming from rural areas along with the primary hired employee, as it did created problems like union

blackmails. The new employees will also go through background checks and will be tested on their skills and experience from beginner to expert level. That way they won't be able to lie that they know all the work. They can assign for their skill test by providing them prototype materials and see how good they can handcraft them using their skills and if it matches with the company's requirement they will be hired immediately. Their main aim should focus on keeping the best employees in the workplace and not teach the new employees how to handcrafting from scratch as it will consume more time and energy for House of Ahmed as time is very valuable for them and it should not get wasted.

Finally to confront any future conflicts and calamities, House of Ahmed needs to act and make necessary decisions according to their instincts and learn from their past experience with their employees. They should also make decisions in a calm and well-planned manner, That way they can be well- prepared for any kind of unprecedented situations.

References

- Paul, R. Bangladesh detects first cases of Indian coronavirus variant. *Reuters*.
<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/bangladesh-detects-first-cases-indian-coronavirus-variant2021-05-08/>
- Worldometer. (2021). COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic.
<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>
- Lott, J. (2015). *Why Unions Are Harmful to Workers*. <https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/why-unions-areharmful-to-workers>
- English Edition. (2021). *Definition of 'Training Needs Analysis*
<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/definition/training-needs-analysis>
- Grandey, A. (2000). Emotional regulation in the workplace: A new way to conceptualize emotional labor. *Journal of Occupational Health and Psychology*. 5, 95-110.
- SHRM. (2021) *Managing difficult employees and Disruptive Behaviors*.
<https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/toolsandsamples/toolkits/pages/managingdifficultemployees.aspx>
- Meinert, D. (2021) *How Do You Deal With Difficult Employees*. <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hrmagazine/0217/pages/how-do-you-deal-with-difficult-people.aspx>
- Salvo, T. (2004). Practical tips for successful progressive discipline. SHRM White Paper.
www.shrm.org/Research/Articles/Articles/Pages/CMS_009030.aspx
- Falcone, P. (1997). The fundamentals of progressive discipline. *HR Focus*, 42, 90-94.
- Felton, T. (2009). Best practices in documenting employee discipline. *Workforce Management*, January 2009.
- Root III, G. (2020) *What Are the Causes of Dishonesty In The Workplace?*
<https://smallbusiness.chron.com/causes-dishonesty-workplace-13568.html>
- Dimoff, T. (2019) *5 Ways to End Workplace Dishonesty*. <https://www.cose.org/en/Mind-YourBusiness/HR/5-Ways-to-End-Workplace-Dishonesty>