Internship Report On

The Barriers Faced by Employees in Job During COVID-19
Pandemic in Retail Industry

By

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An internship report submitted to the BRAC Business School in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration

BRAC Business School
BRAC University
July 2023

Declaration

It is hereby declared that -

1. The internship report submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.
2. The report does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The report does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Letter of Transmittal

Dr. Md Asadul Islam

Assistant Professor,

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

66 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

Subject: Submission of Internship Report

Dear Sir,

This is my honor to inform you that I am authoring a report on "*The Barriers Faced by Employees in Job During COVID-19 Pandemic in Retail Industry*", which is the final report of my internship at New Grameen Motors Limited as a member of their HRM team.

I have attempted my best to finish the report with the essential data and recommended proposition in a significant compact and comprehensive manner as possible.

I trust that the report will meet the desires of my peers and professors who have supported and helped me along every step of the journey in completing this report.

Sincerely,

_____

Mohammad Sadman Sadab Gazi

ID: 20264010

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

Date: July 25, 2023

Executive Summary

This report highlights my experience working as a member of HRM team in New Grameen Motors Limited. The first chapter summarizes all the necessary information I have learned about being a part of their HRM team. While working as an intern, I was tasked to fulfill some specific responsibilities that taught me about the real-life work culture first-hand.

This report provides an elaborate overview of the company and their different department such as management, marketing practices, CSR, and the products and services they provide in detail. In detail, this report expresses various competitive analysis such as Wining strategy test, Porter's five forces and SWOT analysis of the company. Furthermore, it delivers some useful recommendations based on these analyses.

In this report, the third chapter describes the barriers faced by employees while working during the pandemic in Bangladesh in retail industry. The main theme of this study was to find the barriers that employees faced during COVID-19 pandemic. This study is conducted based on the qualitative data collected through interviews of six Bangladeshi employees from retail industry. Through the interviews, three distinct categories of barriers were analyzed. The findings were that the employees faced personal barriers such as deteriorating mental and physical health, communication barriers, then work-life balance barriers which relates to social barriers and lastly organizational barriers such as late salaries, less incentives, no reactive strategy plans, unjustified lay offs. This study further discusses these barriers faced by these employees in Bangladesh in retail industry.

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List of Acronyms

NGML	New Grameen Motors Ltd.
HRM	Human Resource Management
HRIS	Human Resource information System
HR	Human Resource

Chapter 1

1.1 Overview of Internship

1.1.1 Student Information

Student's Name: Mohammad Sadman Sadab Gazi

Student's ID: 20264010

Program: MBA

Majors: HRM

1.1.1 Introduction

This internship report details my time spent working as a New Grameen Motors HR intern. In this chapter, I'll talk about my internship experience, including the duties I was given, the outcomes I got, and the difficulties I ran into. I oversaw doing operational HR duties during my employment, helping with hiring and selection, maintaining personnel files for employees, administering the HRIS and assuring data accuracy.

Developing a deeper understanding of the HR activities and processes inside a company was one of the primary lessons I took away from this internship. These included duties including maintaining staff records, helping with hiring and selection procedures, and becoming familiar with the performance appraisal system. Furthermore, I was able to build knowledge about the operation of HR activities such as employee engagement, exit management, and scheduling interviews.

Employees were engaged in a group of peers throughout their internship who all seemed anxious to learn from each other. I was able to learn a lot from my supervisor because he was always willing to impart his wisdom and experience. I additionally had the chance to converse with and gain knowledge from my HR department's other employees.

Regarding my contributions to the business, I was able to assist the enterprise by highlighting issues with the present HRIS platform used by the HR division. Additionally, I was able to modify features to meet the needs of New Grameen Motors Limited's HR division, which will eventually improve the efficiency of those operations.

In summary, this internship gave me invaluable hands-on experience in the human resources sector, and I am appreciative for the chance to have worked with the NGML team.

I think my contributions to the organization have been advantageous, and I'm eager to use the information and abilities I've acquired in upcoming HR positions.

1.1.2 Internship Information

1.1.3 Period, Company Name, Department/Division, Address

Period: 3 months

Company Name: New Grameen Motors Limited

Department: Human Resource

Address: House #8, Road #8A, Nikunjo-1, Dhaka-1229

1.1.4 Internship Company Supervisor's Information

Supervisor Name: Abdullah Al Masud

Position: Assistant Manager (Marketing)

1.1.5 Job Scope – Job Description/Duties/Responsibilities

In my job, my duties included but were not limited to the following.

- ✓ Recruiting assessment
- ✓ Reported & created data visualizations of employee performance & talent composition.
- ✓ Outlined training strategies based on analytics.
- ✓ Perform daily operational HR responsibilities.
- ✓ Assist in the recruitment and selection process.
- ✓ Maintain employee personal files.
- ✓ Management & update of HRIS
- ✓ Continuous monitoring of employee processes

1.1.6 Job responsibilities

I was recruited as an intern at NGML for the department of Human Resource Management. It absolutely was a great pleasure on behalf of me to work with such a company at the start of my career. I have conjointly enjoyed every task assigned by my supervisors. I understood however the practical work life truly operates and learn how to figure stressed with responsibilities by this program. My job responsibilities are listed below as a HR internee:

1.1.6.1 Hiring the right candidate:

As a Human resources in charge, one of my job responsibilities was to look for the right candidate for the company. Not every day, I was tasked to take interviews, though I had to go through a couple of CVs and select some based on different job requirements and of course their job experiences.

1.1.6.2 Update policies:

As an employee of HR, I was tasked to review and suggest any change in the policy, but they change the policy very often to cope up with the changing economy. Like changing privacy policy, changing shipping policy-return policy etc.

1.1.6.3 Maintain employee records:

During my internship, almost every day I observed how they maintain employee records. By maintaining their records, they can clearly identify the hard worker employees within the company and analyze employee performance and efficiency.

1.1.7   Internship Outcomes

1.1.7.1 Problems/Difficulties faced during internship period

There were several problems at the outset of my internship period. First, communication with my colleagues was also a challenge at first, as I struggled to establish a productive working relationship with them but later the issue was somewhat resolved. Second, As I was not a regular employee of the NGML, they didn't always respond accordingly and sometimes was vague about certain processes. Third, they seem to doubt my actions and suggestions quite often which made me uncomfortable from time to time. Fourth, some employees were not regular in their job which hindered my experience and prolonged my internship period. Furthermore, time management became an issue, as I struggled to complete my tasks efficiently and effectively. Through all the challenges and obstacles, I worked towards a mindset that helped me throughout the internship period which helped me understand the working environment and especially working in the HRM department.

1.1.7.2 Benefits to student

I gained a lot from my internship with NGML, which was a genuinely enriching experience. First and foremost, I received practical experience in duties like onboarding procedures, exit management, and the creation and implementation of business culture, which allowed me to develop a thorough understanding of HR services, particularly HR operations. I gained knowledge of the many procedures involved in these processes as well as successful execution techniques. In addition, I learned about many HR rules and practices from the Bangladesh Labor Law, including various leave policies (sick, yearly, casual, maternity, paternity), which is essential knowledge for anyone working in the HR profession.

Working with a varied and creative team was one of my internship's most beneficial experiences. I gained knowledge about the value of cooperation and clear communication

during activities to foster teamwork. I also had the chance to speak with HR experts from various departments and discover more about their responsibilities. I gained a comprehensive understanding of the area thanks to this exposure to a variety of HR functions.

I also developed a greater understanding of the fintech sector, including trading, trend analysis, in addition to HR. Given that financial technology is a continuously expanding and dynamic subject, this exposure to it was especially beneficial.

1.1.8   Recommendation based on Problems

My internship at New Grameen Motors Limited was challenging. As a new member of the governing body of the company, I had to understand their whole teamwork procedure, also meeting their expectations in learning management. Some stressful situations escalated into mental pressure when dealing with day-to-day work but not in a harmful way. It took time adjusting to the office environment but eventually I adapted to the office norms and etiquette and learned to respect the diversity of opinions and backgrounds. I developed a network and collaborated with other interns and employees to learn from them and build relationships as a couple of days passed. I had to work for a long period, and I had to multitask to finish all the departmental work. I started seeking guidance and mentorship from experienced staff and asked for feedback and suggestions on how to improve my performance and skills.

Chapter 2

2.1 Organization Part

2.1.1 Introduction

This chapter includes the overview of the company where I have done my internship in New Grameen Motors Limited. It also includes the management body and their unique practices. Furthermore, it also includes promotional activities, financial practices & accounting department practices. Also, the operations management and information system practices are briefly described here. Lastly, the comprehensive analysis of this company and conclusions & recommendations are added in this chapter.

2.2 Overview of New Grameen Motors Limited

New Grameen Motors started its journey in the year 1995. We manufacture motorcycles. In the past 10 years, the company has invested a large amount of capital to introduce a complete set of advanced production technology and equipment. Till now, the company's production capacity has reached 20,000 motorcycles per year. Our products cover 4 series of motorcycles ranging from 80cc to 165cc and about 12 models of motorcycle. The company's product range also includes the tricycle, electric tricycle etc. We sell motorcycles and tricycles all over the country. Since inception by earning a good reputation, New Grameen Motors has captured the domestic market as an avant-garde in this horizon. At present New Grameen Motors has a lot of dealers and a sales Centre run by trained sales personnel. New Grameen Motors is selling the high quality of Chinese origin motorcycles in the domestic market and expecting to export soon (Mazba, 2023).

In Bangladesh, New Grameen Motors Limited is the sole distributor for several Chinese-made motorcycles, scooters, professional three-wheelers, motor gear, and motor peripherals. The business brings in and sells an extensive selection of two- and three-wheeled vehicles from Chinese producers in Bangladesh. The organization right now has a few motorbike and scooter variants available for viewing under the H Power brand, such as Hyosung motorcycles made in Korea. In Bangladesh, the distribution organization New Grameen Motors Limited began operations in 1995. The business has long been associated with the shipment of several motorbike manufacturers. Additionally, New Grameen Motors Limited established infrastructure during the last ten years to construct motorbikes along largely and fully with industrial three-wheeled automobiles. The corporation has also created its own brand, which is called H Power. New Grameen Motors Limited is creating a unique range of goods to serve

the two-wheeler and motor accessory sectors beneath the trademark H Power. The manufacturer is now displaying an impressive selection of motorcycles and scooters under the H Power brand (Mazba, 2023).

A handful of Chinese motorcycle brands, including CFMOTO, ROBOT, ZAARA, and Korean Hyosung, are sold under the H Power brand, while the remaining vehicles are tarted up versions of select high-quality Chinese motorcycles.

The assortment of goods of New Grameen Motors Limited also includes a variety of three-wheeler and motor accessory items. The business also launched the H Power brand in these markets and created its own line of items with its own insignia. As a result, the corporation made significant financial investments in the creation of products, their production, and automotive assembly. The organization presently can manufacture 50,000 motorcycles annually.

As a result, New Grameen Motors Limited established itself in Bangladesh's motor business and gained a solid name there. Being a major distributor, the organization is currently connected to a significant number of devoted dealers and sales outlets, featuring corporation-owned dealerships around the nation. As a result, the organization's major showrooms are in Gazipur, while the head office is in Dhaka's Nikunjo neighborhood.

2.3   Management Practices

2.3.1   Leadership Styles

According to Bennis, (2008), understanding oneself, possessing well-presented aims, creating trust among coworkers, and executing proactive steps to reach one's own management potential are all aspects of leadership.

An examination of the literature by several social science experts revealed a range of leadership styles. These are given below-

1. **Autocratic Leadership Style:** The leaders are the epicenter of authority in autocratic leadership, also known as authoritarian rule, and see their decisions and judgment as ultimate decisions (Burke et al., 2006; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). This style is based on transactional theory, which emphasizes the interactions between leaders and their followers. In this situation, individuals perform because of systems of incentives or penalties for disobedience (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006).

2. **Democratic Leadership Style:** The democratic leadership style derives its roots from the transformational theory (Burke et al., 2006; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). This leadership style focuses on transformation innovative leadership and improving individual and organizational outcomes. Participants are given the opportunity to develop their abilities as leaders, engage in leadership, and make decisions (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). This type of leadership is undoubtedly more effective than autocratic leadership (MacBeath, 2005).

3. **Participative Leadership Style:** Participative leadership ought to foster in followers an elevated degree of cognitive trust since it is likely to affect their opinions of their supervisor's expertise, skills, and competency in dealing with task-related challenges. Leaders, for example, ought to help those beneath them feel more secure in their capacity and competence to direct task performance by encouraging participation in decision-making (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Affective trust is a psychological connection that develops between two people in a relationship as they engage in a process of reciprocal social trade (Schaubroeck et al., 2011). Participatory leaders should elicit affective trust in their subordinates through the establishment of a restricted emotional link between the two parties by giving opportunities and support for them to assume responsibility and participate in decision-making (Newman et al., 2016).

4. **Laissez-faire Leadership Style:** The leader in a laissez-faire leadership style does not personally oversee the staff and does not rely on regular communication or feedback. It specifically grants members complete autonomy and self-rule in making decisions related to the completion of assignments. However, the leader is always accessible to provide direction if any of the team members need it (Eagly et al., 2003).

According to my observation, NGML uses a hybrid of autocratic and democratic leadership practices mostly because they want to move forward quickly while still maintaining the satisfaction of their workforce. The top executives are typically the ones in the organization who can comprehend the broad perspective. Because of this, while making important choices, they adhere to authoritarian leadership, holding the helm by Mazba Uddin Mamun.

On the contrary, they make decisions on holidays or rules democratically to maintain the staff. It significantly aids in achieving NGML's organizational objectives. NGML typically undertakes personnel planning at the start of each year. Production projection serves as the basis for this workforce planning. Production planning helps NGML estimate the number of employees needed to accomplish all the goals and objectives.

2.3.2   Recruitment and Selection Process

Separating the "right" person from the "wrong" person to fill a certain office post is a method of hiring and selecting. Developing assumptions about potential conduct and requirements for the organization is part of this process, which helps determine which candidates will be the best qualified for a given position (Newell et al., 2006). From a decent applicant's pool, or from internal candidates who have been working for the company without being permanent. Through several stages of analysis and data examination, a recruit is chosen from the pool but diversity is always considered. The HR staff posts employment adverts on job sites in accordance with the demands. They do, however, additionally conduct hiring according to staff recommendations. The marketing, sales, human resources, MIS, and other departments offer entry, mid, and senior level management personnel, field force, executives, and non-executive jobs. NGML has a rigorous hiring procedure to choose the top applicants. To be hired by this organization, an applicant must pass an exam and a two-step interview process. An applicant must successfully complete each stage of the application procedure. Every time a hire is made, NGML makes sure that every potential hire receives all the necessary details via email and phone calls. Furthermore, NGML makes sure to give excellence top importance while choosing the best applicants. Each applicant's prior career history is also carefully reviewed. Additionally, the applicant's psychological and physical condition are considered. Finally, NGML supports providing everyone with an equal chance. The entire hiring procedure is therefore available to everyone.

2.3.3   The Compensation System

Compensation is the payment made to an employee in exchange for performing services to the company. By giving workers financial and non-financial perks, it is an organized process that seeks to balance the relationship between employer and employee. Payments as incentives may also include commissions from sales, bonuses, profit sharing, and overtime pay (Reddy, 2020). According to my observation, soon after recruiting, NGML ensures the acknowledgement and implementation of the compensations that every employee receives. NGML ensures the yearly bonus along with Eid and Puja bonus. Also, employees get extra compensation for overtime. So, it seems that NGML's compensation system plays one of the vital roles in the business that they try to achieve in the long run. Considering all the benefits that they planned for the employee may be the reason employee feels so liberated in this working environment.

2.3.4 The Training and Development Initiatives

Training and development are the ongoing process of learning information, articulating ideas, shifting mindsets, and developing abilities via organized and scheduled instruction to increase staff efficacy and efficiency. One of the main focuses of NGML is training and development. Employees, according to NGML, are the main force behind the organization's progress. They are also the one element that other companies cannot duplicate. Because of this, NGML places a high value on and lots of effort put into training its staff.

Typically, there are two to three training sessions every month. Depending on the needs of the business and the employees, training is provided. A yearly and mid-year performance assessment is typical. The employee's most recent performance is assessed at the yearly review. Every employee receives promotions, and Performance Improvement Plans (PIP). If employees fail to perform accordingly, they will be given a 3-week Performance Improvement Plan.

Employees often receive projector-based training in accordance with their work environment. They are taught how to operate certain machinery and how to conduct office work with other employees. A projector helps trainees visualize their workplan and plan effectively. Trainees can learn how the company is operating through PowerPoint slides of the statistical data with charts. They learn to use support tools based on their departments in which they will contribute. And sometimes companies invite trainers from outside or different companies, which can help trainees understand the workplace of different companies and how they operate. This also enables management to include different policies and procedures from other companies.

2.3.5 Performance Appraisal System

An important instrument for assessing an employee's competence and effectiveness about his job is the Performance Appraisal (PA), a procedure through which performance is assessed according to predetermined criteria (Das et al., 2020). Performance reviews are employed in this workplace for several purposes. These factors include increasing worker productivity and fostering staff growth. An analysis of the purposes for which businesses utilize performance reviews provides ample evidence of this variety of uses for NGML's employee base. The most prevalent motivations firms utilize performance assessments are remuneration and performance feedback.

According to my observation, performance evaluation systems perform several different tasks for HRM department of NGML. The reliability and fairness of the appraisal is the primary

factor in the evaluation of a system because of how crucial these functions are for NGML's future. The HRM department choses the best and effective appraisal system to cope with the workflow and Bangladesh's work environment.

2.4   Marketing Practices

Marketing is an undertaking, set of institutions, and methods for creating, communicating, and exchanging value-added services for clients, prospects, collaborators, and the community at large (AMA, 2017). According to my observation, there are functional departments in New Grameen Motors Limited and with the help of these departments New Grameen Motors Limited runs its activity. These departments are briefly discussed in below (according to AGM-Marketing Mr. Abdul Rafiq and Assistant Manager-Marketing Mr. Abdullah Al Masud).

2.4.1   Marketing Department

Digital marketing is the area of marketing that promotes companies and products using the World Wide Web along with other web-based digital devices, including personal computers, cell phones, and other types of digital communication and platforms (AMA, 2016). This is the main control source of New Grameen Motors Limited as this department directly runs most of the major activity. Under the marketing department a few teams work and those are operation & technical, customer support (CS), sales team, public relations, and marketing team. Moreover, all the programs are organized and most of the major activity takes place in this department according to AGM Mr. Abdul Rafiq and Assistant Manager-Marketing Mr. Abdullah Al Masud.

2.4.2   Digital Marketing Department

Another team that is comprised is the Digital Marketing team. This team under New Grameen Motors Ltd. but they also work for H power Motors Limited. They are responsible for promoting the contents on Facebook and Instagram page according to Manager-Digital Marketing of New Grameen Motors Ltd. Mr. Azad Islam. They also send review units to social influencers for them to give reviews on different products. Cricketer Shafiul Islam from Bangladesh national cricket team was once the brand ambassador of NGML. NGML also uses Google Ads and Commerce for their promotional activities. These ads are often used in online newspaper portals and e-commerce websites.

2.4.3   Details of the product lines or services

New Grameen motors have various product lines for their customer.

Motorcycle: NGML mainly focuses on motorcycle manufacturing.

They produce 80cc-165cc motorcycles for customer use. For the 80cc-125cc they focus on low pricing. And for the 150-165 they use superior features and high prices for the product.

Figure: 150CC Motorcycle under H-Power brand name

Figure: Super-R scooter under H-Power brand name

Tricycle: they also produce tricycle for the country which powered by battery. These tricycles are used in the village area. Because battery is prohibited in major roads in the city.

Figure: H-Power three-wheeler

2.4.4   Promotional Activity

One of the basic and regular operations of New Grameen Motors Limited includes making a creative branding. It can be static, sometimes dynamic. This is done by following a few steps. The first one is generating a concept for an upcoming event branding or a regular making branding that is due. This is done by arranging an ideation meeting with the team that is working for that specific branding. The meeting is arranged by the head of the team, since they are the ones who understand the most and knows if any branding is still left to update (according to AGM Mr. Abdul Rafiq and Assistant Manager-Marketing Mr. Abdul Al Masud).

2.4.5   Graphics Designer Department

After the ideation meeting a creative brief is given to the creative team/graphics designers. They are responsible for visualizing the whole concept and creating the final design of branding. According to Executive-Marketing Mr. Abu-Nur and Md. Monjur-ul-Karim, in this process the copywriter also contributes by writing the design of branding. Requirement of the sponsor and event requirement the caption sometimes written in Bangle, sometimes in English.

Figure: Graphics work done by the designer's team for promotion

2.5 Financial Performance and Accounting Practices

2.5.1 Financial Performance

Financial performance is the accomplishment of the company's fiscal performance during a specific time, including the collecting and distribution of funds, as determined by capital sufficiency, liquidity, solvency, efficiency, leverage, and revenue (Fatihudin et al., 2018). The financial department of NGML is managed by a skilled staff. The team handles all business-related transactions in accordance with the company's norms and regulations. Furthermore, the personnel generate essential financial reports based on the needs of the stakeholders. The expenditures, bills, debts, and financial accounts of the firm are all recorded and maintained up to date. Their financial reports provide information to investors and stakeholders on revenue generation, profit margins, and financial commitments.

2.5.2 Accounting Practices

A company's or any other business organization's expenditures delivered and obtained over a specific time duration, known as the accounting period, are identified, analyzed, sorted, recorded, and credited as part of the accounting cycle (Jason Gordon, 2022). NGML's

accounting department keeps detailed accounting records for each transaction. Employees follow an accounting cycle, which includes recognizing and evaluating transactions, recording transactions to ledgers, generating an unadjusted trial balance, modifying entries after a period, and finalizing an adjusted trial balance.

Experienced experts check the implementation of the principles and practices at each level to guarantee that the documentation is error-free. Furthermore, because these reports are made public, the Audit Committee of the Board is regularly reviewing the quarterly and yearly reports.

2.5.3 Philanthropic Activities/ Corporate Social Responsibility

According to my observation, New Grameen Motors limited is doing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. This company is not doing business for only profit, they are also doing some corporate social responsibility and donating clothes on religious occasions so that poor children who reside on the streets can enjoy their occasion's day. It also creates a good impression on society. They have an agenda where against every 100 products they assemble, they plant a tree for their recent dedication towards building an eco-friendly company. They have solar panels for their assembly factories which demonstrates their responsibility towards using sustainable energy. According to NGML communication co. Ltd. Assistant Manager Mr. Tajul Islam Rajib, New Grameen Motors also works for some social causes which are associated with different brands.

2.6 Operations Management and Information System Practices

Vehicles are assembled at their assembly factory situated at Gazipur. Parts are imported from China and assembled at the factory at a very low labor cost. I was not able to conduct any visit to the factory and have no information regarding operations management or traditional data management. Any other information regarding collection, organization, storage, and maintenance of data, including documents etc. was not available for me at the NGML headquarters.

2.7 Industry and Competitive Analysis

2.7.1 Porter's Five Forces Analysis

Michael E. Porter's Five Forces Analysis, which was first published in the Harvard Business Review in 1979, provides an arrangement for analyzing and gauging the appeal of a sector depending on the level of the sector's intense competition.

- **Rivalry among existing competitors:** NGML, from its established years, has been in intense competition with rival companies such as Jamuna, Runner, and Keeway. These companies produce similar products, as a result, NGML was on high alert to get the competitive advantage over them.

- **Bargaining power of suppliers:** NGML faces medium bargaining power of suppliers because of the varied Chinese company parts among its competitors. They maintain crucial and effective negotiation to buy parts from Chinese companies. However, its selection of motorcycle parts makes it hard for them to overcome bargaining power of the suppliers.

- **Bargaining power of customers:** Since there are approximately ten brands (such as Jamuna, Runner, Lifan and Keeway etc.) for similar products, it is easier for customers to switch between brands. As a result, customers have strong bargaining power. Though NGML produces medium quality products, it must adhere to a focused low-cost strategy to pull customers.

- **Threat of new entrants:** NGML faces a moderate threat in this aspect as it already has a loyal customer base. Moreover, it continues to develop its products to limit the factor of imitation.

- **Threat of substitutes:** There is a medium threat of substitute products. However, NGML can make their products better to compete with substitutes. They need to come up with new innovations or good quality motorcycle parts to reignite the need of the customer base.

2.7.2 SWOT analysis of NGML

SWOT Analysis (short for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) is a business strategy tool to assess how an organization compares to its competition. The strategy is historically credited to Albert Humphrey in the 1960s (Teoli et al., 2022). Table 1 depicts the SWOT analysis of New Grameen Motors Limited.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis

STRENGTH	WEAKNESS
1. High quality Chinese motorcycles 2. Featureful motorcycle choice 3. Affordable pricing 4. Wide range of motorcycle based on cc	1. Not an influential company. 2. Small customer base. 3. Servicing and spare parts are expensive. 4. Not representing any powerful brand 5. Low resell value
OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
1. Huge demand for lower CC bikes. 2. Emerging app-based ride sharing service. 3. Relaxing CC limitation opened a new customer base. 4. Reduction of import cost can minimize repair cost.	1. Other Chinese bike manufacturers have introduced cheaper and more advanced motorcycles. 2. Constantly facing challenges from Runner, Keeway, Lifan, Jamuna etc. 3. Collapsing import business of Bangladesh

Based on the SWOT Analysis, NGML produced high quality Chinese motorcycles though their demand is decreasing day by day. They produced featureful motorcycles including features like hydraulic brake system, liquid cooling technologies, LED lights and eco-friendly tires etc. They had 3 showrooms in Dhaka with strong dealer all around Dhaka city. They produce 100cc to 160cc motorcycles which promises all classes of riders. The major weakness is that they are not that big a company and they have somewhat of a customer base. Chinese motorcycles require expensive parts to repair because they import most of them. Based on these strengths and weaknesses, they have high demand for lower CC bikes which can support the demanding sectors like ride sharing. And if they can minimize their reliability on imported parts and make them totally in Bangladesh, they might meet the consumers expectations. Companies like Lifan, Jamuna, and Keeway must not be overlooked and come up with new ideas to compete with them. And the current import expenses are the most crucial threat for this company.

2.7.3 Winning Strategy Test

Every company needs some venture of strategy to win against market competitors and provide real values to the customers. Winning strategy has three unique tests and if the company fails even one of them will mean they couldn't produce a winning strategy.

1. **The Strategic Fit Test:** This test often measures how well a company is matching its assets and expertise to the possibilities currently present in its surroundings. Because pairing is done through a plan of action, the company must thus possess the real resources and capabilities to implement and support the plan. In the case of NGML, as this company is a motorcycle company they review their products on tech channels in Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. They also promote their branding in different trade fairs; thus, they align their goals with the promotional activities. So, they do not fail the strategic fit test.

2. **The Sustainable Competitive Advantage Test:** This test particularly talks about the uniqueness and innovative capabilities of a company which eventually competes with its rivals and earns good revenue. The strategy to create or produce such uniqueness and gain a competitive advantage over strong brands. But for NGML, the creative body is missing since the emergence of this company. Innovations were never a strong suite of NGML; thus, they failed the sustainable competitive advantage test.

3. **The Performance Test:** Every company sets some goals or targets that they incline to achieve in the yearlong operations. But not always a company achieves this feat of goals at the end of the year. Once the year-round achievements are not achieved or somewhat performed, the performance is not up to the mark which was the initial goal of this company. NGML tries to fix some goals and achievements every year, but the performance gap and innovative decline has resulted in the failure of the year-round performance results which they set to achieve. Thus, they fail the performance test too.

Since NGML failed two tests, both the sustainable competitive test and performance test, their strategy is not a winning strategy.

2.8 Summary and Conclusions

As per the discussion from this chapter, NGML has a combination of autocratic and democratic leadership where all the major decisions are obtained quickly but when the topic is associated with the welfare of the employees, NGML tends to democratically choose the best option. Which impacts the overall company procedures in a way that it still maintains the overall

satisfaction of the workforce. This way of leadership style helps acquire the overall goals and objectives of the company in its most effective & efficient way.

Furthermore, NGML has been found that they use digital marketing for their promotional endeavors. They promote their variating CC motorcycles and their features on Facebook and Instagram page. They also promote ads on social media and digital mews portals through Google ads. They also send review units to youtuber to create positive impressions.

Moreover, this company doesn't just operate for financial gain; it also practices corporate social responsibility by giving fabrics to needy street kids on special occasions so they may celebrate. Additionally, it makes a positive impact on society. They have a strategy whereby they plant a tree for every 100 goods they manufacture as part of their recent commitment to becoming an eco-friendly business. They are responsible for utilizing sustainable energy because they have solar panels for their manufacturing facilities. To sum up, NGML has established a well featured motorcycle lineup.

2.9   Recommendations/Implications

According to Porter's Five Forces Analysis, NGML emphasizes better products than their competitors. Also, they buy their products through intense negotiations from foreign manufacturers to overcome the influence of competitors and new entrants alike. As they face intermediate threat from substitute products, they constantly try to improve their products to uphold a good impression to their customer base. Moreover, a new strategy can minimize the threat of changing customer preferences. The SWOT analysis of NGML shows some opportunities and challenges. If they quickly work on their weaknesses, and develop a strategy to tackle the challenges, they might overcome them and create more opportunities to move forward. And if their ambition is to expand their business to worldwide level, they need to utilize their opportunities from SWOT analysis. Finally, it will be able to compete with the growing market for motorcycles by expanding in a variety of geographic regions, giving it a competitive advantage over other local businesses like Jamuna, Lifan, Runner, Keeway, and others. Additionally, the rising popularity of ride-sharing apps among the younger population may present an opportunity for internet businesses.

Chapter 3

Exploring the Barriers Faced by Employees in Job During COVID-19 Pandemic in Bangladesh: A Study on Retail Market

3.1   Introduction

This chapter includes the background and literature review of the barriers faced by employees in their jobs during COVID-19. It also explains the objectives of this paper. In this chapter, the research methodology is described briefly. Based on the findings and investigation of the study, an in-depth summary is also highlighted in this chapter. Lastly, this chapter is completed by identifying significance based on the barriers faced by employees in the job sector during COVID-19.

3.2   Background of the study

Given that all professional face barriers which are extremely widespread, it is possible that employees encounter one or more of them at some point. According to Kotler (2011), providing products or services to final customers for domestic or non-commercial usage is referred to as retailing. The impact of the pandemic on retail establishments included logistical problems, labor shortages, falling client demand, a lack of financial investments, a lack of cash on hand, and other issues. Retail firms were fully operational and employed staff members to run their operations. The study at hand primarily focuses on analyzing and comprehending the difficulties encountered by retail industry employees because of COVID-19 and lockdown (Sahu, 2021). The international organizations (the International Labour Organization, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and World Bank) observed the impact of COVID-19 on employment and work during the epidemic throughout different vantage points. While addressing the difficulties of the novel circumstances brought on by the pandemic, it was deemed necessary to concentrate on the complexity of employment for companies and people's everyday workplace interactions (Kalliola & Heiskanen, 2022). Security of job and status as an employee was threatened and employment from home (teleworking) was concerning for an employee during COVID-19. The standard of job satisfaction, such as regional and job-related workplace interactions, workplace customs, managerial, and leadership and guidance styles, trust and control, gender-specific work habits and conventional expert workplace behaviors suddenly was not practiced in formal rather informally approached during COVID-19. These topics coincide with common issues experienced by employees during crisis (Kalliola & Heiskanen, 2022).

3.3   Literature Review

Barriers Faced by Employees in Job During COVID-19 Pandemic in Retail Industry

Employees in the retail industry often faced various problems and barriers during emergencies such as COVID-19 pandemic. Countries obtained knowledge regarding a variety of preventive strategies as the COVID-19 pandemic persisted for a second year in a row which changed the working interactions and how employees were getting used to the customs (Kalliola & Heiskanen, 2022). In today's fiercely competitive market, retailers are having a harder time surviving and thriving. This phenomenon is summed up by (Singh et al., 2006), who dictated that "rapid growth of alternative retail formats, in the form of mass discounters, wholesale clubs, and supercenters, has transformed not only the competitive structure of the industry, but also the way in which consumers shop." Study on impact of COVID-19 in retail industry showed that, there was not much decline in unemployment due to the fact of high daily cost but when the pandemic started to loosen up, employees faced difficulties because of the existing working environment (Ren & Zeju, 2021).

- **Work-life balance:** Study conducted during crisis showed that self-confidence and motivation was at the lowest and the companies also failed to recognize this problem (Addair, 2019). Moreover, in another study, only 15% of workers in the EU had some experience with telework prior to the pandemic, it's possible that employees weren't adequately prepared for the difficulties of home-based telework. Additionally, the closing of daycare and educational facilities posed new difficulties for women in balancing work and family obligations (Kerman et al., 2022). Boundary violations happen whenever expected actions or attitudes disregard, cross, or otherwise violate the line separating work and personal life. Receiving a private phone call while in the office crosses the professional border, whereas receiving a job-related call while at home crosses the home boundary. Previous study has demonstrated that such boundary violations cause dissatisfaction with investment in the work or home domains (Hunter et al., 2019).

- **Low production:** Another study regarding financial aspect of COVID-19 affected employees shows that, employees also must deal with added uncertainty regarding financial and health aspects (Ererdi et al., 2021).

- **Mental Health:** Despite govt. preparations and trainings, individuals reported that they had a variety of psychological difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic, including

anxiety, despair, sleeplessness, and dread of unexpected death in different workplaces (Razu et al., 2021). Furthermore, an overall study showed that, the ability to interact with the supervisor plays a critical role in providing assistance during disruptive occurrences like the COVID-19 pandemic, even though communication in and of itself is not always synonymous with support. An important issue that employees are encountering is a lack of comprehension about how to function and what will be demanded of them in this novel scenario (Jo et al., 2023). This is because changes in the environment by nature imply an alteration of traditional work practices (Mihalache & Mihalache, 2022).

+ **Incentives:** Every single person involved was aware that despite putting in more time, there was no additional incentive for them. The government made several promises on incentives, including covering the cost of medical care in the event of exposure and offering an isolation area to guarantee safe inhibition. But none of them were ever put into practice. Participants were also adamant that these plans would not be put into action soon (Razu et al., 2021).

3.4   Objectives

Based on the literature review, all the studies conducted by researchers on workplace barriers faced during crisis were very much in sync with Bangladeshi retail industry. Therefore, this paper follows these objectives:

1) Identifying the personal barriers faced during COVID-19 by retail industry employees.

2) Investigating the barriers faced by employees in retail organizations during COVID-19.

3) Determining the social barriers faced by employees during COVID-19.

3.5   Significance

The investigation into the topic of post-pandemic diversity inclusiveness in the Bangladeshi workforce would greatly benefit from the findings of this research. I have examined the workplace difficulties with managing diversity during the COVID-19 epidemic in this research. I have spoken with the management teams of several notable organizations around the nation during this process. As a result, this research is significant in that it illustrates the crucial problems and solutions encountered by the diverse staff of the local and global enterprises spread across the entire country. In order to achieve optimal efficiency, supervisors ought to foster and sustain an appropriate work atmosphere. Additionally, this study will help academics

and researchers do additional research on many viewpoints to find long-lasting answers to Bangladesh's diversity management difficulties.

3.6   Methodology

The term "research" refers to the methodical process that includes stating the problem, developing a hypothesis, gathering the facts or data, analyzing the facts, and coming to certain conclusions that can either take the form of solutions to the relevant problem or generalizations for a theoretical formulation (Kothari, 2004). Based on the method of data collecting, there are typically three categories of research: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed. Inquiry that is iterated upon in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of social processes is referred to as qualitative research (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Qualitative phenomena, or occurrences involving or pertaining to quality or kind, are the focus of qualitative research. For instance, we frequently refer to "Motivation Research," a crucial subset of qualitative research, when we are interested in examining the causes of human behavior (i.e., why individuals think or act in specific ways) (Kothari, 2004). In-depth interviews are used in this kind of study to uncover the underlying motivations and goals. Word association tests, sentence completion tests, story completion tests, and similar other projective approaches are other methods used in this type of study. Qualitative research also includes attitude or opinion research, which aims to understand how people feel or what they believe about a specific topic or organization (Kothari, 2004). Qualitative research focuses on a variety of methodologies and takes an interpretive, naturalistic strategy to its subject. This implies that qualitative researchers investigate occurrences in their natural environments while seeking to explain occurrences in terms that reflect the interpretations that individuals assign to them. A wide range of scientific resources, including case studies, personal experiences, introspective life stories, interviews, and historical, interactive, visual, and observational texts that describe common and troubling events and their significance in people's lives are investigated in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). A study technique that incorporates both philosophical presumptions and inquiry procedures is designed using the mixed research approach. This type of study combines qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to provide a more complete knowledge of a research topic than any approach could provide on its own (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

However, as the goal of this study is to explore the barriers faced by employees in the retail industry during COVID-19, a qualitative research technique was chosen. Additionally, it will examine how COVID-19 affects handling barriers in a dynamic context.

3.6.1 Interview

Data collecting techniques come in a wide variety. Due to time and resource limitations, the semi structured interview approach was used for this investigation. A semi-structured interview is carried out using a set of pre-planned questions. However, the remaining inquiries are primarily conversational and not pre-structured in advance to provide ad hoc subject investigation (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). The aforementioned technique was used in this experimental investigation to determine the barriers experienced by employees during COVID-19 in retail businesses.

3.6.2 Sampling Method

In this research, convenience sampling is used in light of the participants' requirement for flexibility given their hectic schedules. The convenience sampling method is a type of nonprobability sampling strategy that gathers information from people who are conveniently accessible (Amanfi, 2019). In this type of sampling, no inclusive criteria were used prior to participant selection. A total of 6 management professionals from retail industries such as BRAC-Aarong, Chaldal, Shwapno, BDSHOP, Agora Limited and ACI Logistics Limited were interviewed for the purpose of this study.

3.6.3 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analyses concentrate on finding and expressing explicit as well as implicit concepts within the data, that is, themes. Thematic analyses go beyond counting explicit terms or expressions. Typically, codes are subsequently generated to reflect the themes found and appended to the raw data as summary markers for subsequent analysis. Comparisons of code frequencies, detection of code co-occurrence, and graphical representations of interactions among codes within the data set might or might not be included in such analyses. (Guest et al., 2012). In the next section, the primary data is presented by dividing them in three major components such as the personal barriers, organizational barriers and social barriers faced by the employees in retail industries in Bangladesh during COVID-19.

3.7 Findings and Analysis

Presentation and analysis of the acquired data collected from the interviews are provided in this part of the paper. The data provided introduces the various types of barriers that an employee faced every day during COVID-19 in retail industries in Bangladesh.

3.7.1 Personal Barriers Faced during COVID-19

In context of Bangladesh retail industries, COVID-19 affected this sector as hard as any other sectors towards employees. From analyzing the interviews, personal health issues were prominent among participants. Participant 3 expressed about the mental health aspect,

"As an ACI representative, I felt severe mental stress while working because my work involved live contact with medical personnel. As my father is an asthma patient, I was always anxious about his wellbeing."

Participant 1 sympathized with participant 3. But he had personal experience with deteriorating physical health as he was sensitive to dust allergy. He shared his concerning thoughts,

"I often had to transfer goods for customers to their doorsteps during covid as previously the company only conducted offline, which led to my concern of exposing to covid from customers."

Nevertheless, personal barriers vary from person to person. As, Participant 2 faced lack of interactions because they had to work from home and communicating with personnel was not as smooth as before COVID-19. In this case, participant 2 faced a communication barrier and went on to say,

"Most of the time I had to take assistance from my senior colleagues regarding critical tasks as I was just a fresher. However, during the epidemic, I had to work from home and was struggling."

On another aspect, technological equipment prices were climbing unconditionally because of the reduction in import of goods during COVID-19, which hindered some employees who wanted to work from home. For instance, Participant 6 was unable to work from home as pandemic hit, who has this to say,

"When the office needed employees to work from home, I wanted to buy some computer components such as laptop, webcams etc. but I couldn't because of the price. As a result, I had to quit my old job."

COVID-19 had an incredible effect on the personal barriers such as employee health issues, lack of interactions and unaffordability of components needed to work from home.

3.7.2 Social Barriers Faced during COVID-19

Female employees could not get benefit from being able to balance their careers with their families because of the nature of the remote working culture during the pandemic. And those who needed to work outside the home faced pressure from society to spend time with their family. According to Participant 4,

"I am working in this company for 5 years, during pandemic I had to work from home for extended hours and didn't have much time to take care of my children and do my household chores."

Similar expression coincided with participant 5 as she also faced problems where she could not make time for social cultural programs because of long work hours. Participant 5 shared,

"I was engaged with office work and had to do household chores myself because of exposure to COVID. As a result, I was unable to attend most of the cultural programs and was under societal pressure because of that."

Social norms and customs were maintained during COVID-19 in societies like ours and as a result people felt obliged to participate and some felt left out for maintaining social distancing.

3.7.3 Organizational Barriers Faced during COVID-19

COVID-19 pandemic caused local organizations to lose a significant amount of profit. Which led to companies to sanction salaries later than usual and lower the number of incentives overall. In this context, Participant 3 had this to say,

"As pandemic hit Bangladesh, I was forced to stay at home because of lockdown. Then my company wanted us to work from home for long hours. Eventually, my salary was added later in the month, and I received less bonus during those time."

Another participant expressed similar thoughts which align with the barriers participant 3 faced. According to Participant 5,

"Since, I didn't receive salaries for 2 months, therefore I had to borrow money from my peers which was a hassle for me."

Another phenomenon was prominent during the pandemic, collapsing of small companies. A proactive strategy was not implemented rapidly, which led to the downward spiral of profit. According to the Participant 1,

"During COVID-19, my company didn't give much priority to online orders. Therefore, other competitive companies saw this as an opportunity and made a huge profit, but we lost our loyal customers."

This situation happened because they didn't have any reactive strategy.

And from interviews, some organizations laid off a hefty portion of their actual workforce at the beginning of the lockdown because of low workload but had to pay the full salary to them. Thus, people were insecure about their jobs. Participant 2 expressed this,

"I was laid off from a job where I was employed for 6 years during lockdown. And I have seen employees being laid off who were more experienced and loyal to the company."

Employees regardless of their dedication to work had to face barriers from retail organizations such as late salaries, less incentives, late promotions or laid off and collapsing workplace.

3.8   Discussions and Significance

Information collected through interviews indicates that all the participants faced some barriers as an employee one way or another. Findings suggested that employees of retail organizations often found themselves facing one or more barriers during the period of COVID-19 outbreak. Personal barriers such as personal heath barriers were the most reported complications they faced during lockdown. According to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey, 40.9% of the 5,470 participants reported having a negative mental or behavioral health condition, such as increased substance use, anxiety, or depression (Czeisler et al., 2022). According to a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, 53% of respondents said that worrying over COVID-19 was negatively affecting their mental health (Hamel et al., 2020). Participant 1 and 3 pointed out similar physical and mental health issues. Moreover, one study focused on the mental health issues of employees, where employees who only worked from home had a higher depression score than other workers. Women, young workers, and those whose quality of life was negatively impacted by the coronavirus had higher rates of depression than the general population (Rodoplu et al., 2022).

Technological difficulties were another barrier faced by employees in retail organizations during COVID-19 lockdown forcing them to work from home. Almost half of the participants

had similar complications regarding work from home and some were unable to buy components needed to support their job. According to a survey conducted by a team at San Francisco, California-based app design firm Fluxon surveyed 1,005 employees working during the height of the pandemic who had shifted from in-office to remote work in 2020 found that, the majority (50.6%) of those who work from home reported having IT problems. Over one-third (34.4%) and nearly two-thirds (39.6%) of respondents reported having problems with virtual meetings. One in three employees said they were less disciplined and effective since working from home, and that they were experiencing boredom (31%) and a lack of social connection (32.5%) (Brown, 2020). Furthermore, according to the participants, technological difficulties acted as barriers which hindered their ability to complete their work efficiently. Similar study shows, due to the pandemic, several businesses now allow their staff to work from home thanks to innovative technologies. But not every employee has access to the required technology, which can cause inefficiency and annoyance. According to a study by the Economist Intelligence Unit, corporate culture issues with complexity, expenses, and exposure, staff abilities, a lack of leadership consciousness, a lack of remote working possibilities, and inadequate IT infrastructure are some of the difficulties businesses have embracing the latest technology (Richter & Sinha, 2020).

In case of social barriers faced by the employees, work-life imbalance was significantly expressed in findings. In this context, social pressure due to responsibilities towards family members was expressed by participants 4 and 5. Similar results were found in a study published in April, 2020 by Boston Consulting Group on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on working parents in the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, and France, parents almost doubled the amount of time they devoted to parenting and housekeeping duties during the pandemic. In addition, women accounted for a larger proportion of the increased time spent on parenting and chores at home, accounting for an additional 31 percentage points. Parents say this has greatly decreased their capacity to function at work, especially those with smaller children (Krentz et al., 2020). Moreover, another study by Jelena Lonska showed that, When analyzing the findings of a survey conducted among Latvian employees about work-life balance and the challenges associated with maintaining it during the initial phase of the COVID-19 emergency crisis in the spring of 2020, a recurring pattern can be seen: both male and female respondents, particularly those between the ages of 25 and 44 and those with kids under the age of 18, reported that their families hindered their capacity to execute job responsibilities from home (Lonska et al., 2021).

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Temporary and permanent layoffs were one of the important barriers faced by employees of retail organizations. Participant 2 expressed the mass layoffs during the first phase of pandemic to cut costs by the retail organizations. According to data collected in a study, temporary layoffs were largely responsible for the increase in the unemployment rate to a historically high rate of 14.7% in April 2020, with temporary layoffs accounting for 11.5% of all unemployment (Hall & Kudlyak, 2020).

Some findings showed that retail organizations were late in providing salaries and because of low profit margins, they paid less incentives to the employees. According to Participant 3 and 5, they had to borrow money to meet their needs. And Participant 1 shared that some organizations lost their customer base by not following proactive strategy. Overall, these findings clearly showed similarities to other studies conducted globally.

As previously mentioned, this research is significant for stakeholders and retail organizations because they needed to know the barriers faced by employees during the crisis in retail industries in Bangladesh. Similarly, government needed to know these barriers pose difficulties for the employees during crisis so that they can implement solutions accordingly. Likewise, academicians and researchers also needed to know about these barriers and further study these barriers to implement new sustainable solutions to implement in new organizations. Finally, employees needed to know what they can do during the crisis period to avoid such barriers and find solutions or be better prepared during crisis such as COVID-19.

3.9 Summary and Conclusion

This research included the major barriers faced by employees during COVID-19 in retail organizations in Bangladesh so that organizations, govt., academicians, and researchers can implement sustainable solutions for these barriers. This study also explained the objectives by findings from interviewing participants from retail organizations. The barriers included personal barriers such as health issues, lack of interaction and technical difficulties. Furthermore, this study pointed out the social barriers such as work-life balance, lack of social acceptance which female employees faced. Moreover, organizational barriers were also found through analysis that permanent and temporary layoffs were significant in the initial phase of pandemic. And another barrier that indicated delayed salary and less incentives provided by the organizations. To conclude, the findings showed the significance of the barriers faced by employees during COVID-19 needs further study.

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