Report On

How sudden impact of Covid-19 has affected Grow n Excel's
recruitment process

By

Md. Abul Hasnat
ID: 17104087

An internship report submitted to the BRAC Business School in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Human Resource Management & Marketing

BRAC Business School
BRAC University
June, 2022

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

The internship report submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.

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.

The report does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature

Md. Abul Hasnat

17104087

Supervisor's Full Name & Signature:

Rahma Akhter

Lecturer, BRAC Business School

BRAC University

Letter of Transmittal

Rahma Akhter

Lecturer,

BBS

BRAC University

66 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

Subject: Submission of the Internship Report on "How sudden impact of Covid-19 has affected Grow n Excel's recruitment process"

Dear Madam,

Hope you are doing well. I, myself Md. Abul Hasnat (ID: 17104087), a student of BRAC Business School, would like to inform you that I am doing an internship on Grow n Excel which is a renowned and leading HR Consulting firm of Bangladesh. Therefore, I am writing this internship report "How sudden impact of Covid-19 has affected Grow n Excel's recruitment process" under your supervision. The data included in this report is primarily included from my own "on-the-job" training experiences.

While making this report, I have realized how much my theoretical knowledge has boosted my job experience because this recruitment firm basically works with the basic HR functions. With your appreciation and direction, the report writing on our internship program looks really easy to me. Therefore, I sincerely appreciate your guidance and direction over this course. Kindly let me know how I can put my best effort in this report and I am always willing to make necessary changes if needed.

Sincerely yours,

Md. Abul Hasnat

17104087

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

Date: April 26, 2022

Non-Disclosure Agreement

The internship opportunity of "Grow n Excel" was shared to me via OCSAR. By attending interview twice (2), I was appointed as an intern of "Grow n Excel" for the next three (3) months which started on 13th February, 2022 and was valid till 13th May, 2022. After this time period the internship contract will be terminated automatically. The terms and conditions of the internship program is given below:

Nature of Appointment: Internship contract for three (3) months which starts from 13th February, 2022 and valid till 13th May, 2022.

Allowance: You will be entitled to receive TK 7,000 (Taka seven thousand only) as internship allowance.

Joining date: Your internship contract will be effective from 13th February, 2022.

General undertaking: You will abide by the rules and regulations of the organization as revised from time to time by the management.

Confidentiality of business information: During the course of your internship, it is probable that you will generate or become aware of information, which is or may be confidential. You will be under obligation to keep confidential all information incidents documents etc. concerning the affairs, plans and projects of the organization and you shall not disseminate/divulge them to any unauthorized person either directly or indirectly.

Acknowledgement

Working with the core functions of HR has always been a dream to me because of my enthusiasm and curiosity in Human Resource Management. First of all, I would like to thank my parents and the Almighty for who today I am close to my graduation from such a renowned university of Bangladesh.

Secondly, I would like to provide thanks to our honorable lecturer of BRAC University, Ms. Rahma Akhter who has been providing us tremendous support and great directions to help us prepare a quality internship report.

Lastly, I am and will always be thankful to the CEO of Grow n Excel "Mr. Zulfiquar Hossain". Hence, he provided the opportunity to work as a part of Grow n Excel and always treated me with respect and honor. In addition, I also must express my gratitude towards not only my supervisor but also all the colleague who were always available to help and share knowledge with me.

Executive Summary

This report provides and in-depth discussion and understanding of how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected a HR recruitment firm which mainly operates with different payroll and recruitment services because in the Covid-19 situation, organizations stopped hiring and some organizations were having a hard time using payroll services. Grow n Excel which was renowned for its multiple HR services from Academy, Payroll, Recruitment, Interview, Tests, Compensation and Benefits survey, Consultation etc. limited its operation to Payroll and recruitment only. This report highly focuses on job market, recruiter's demand and preferences on pre covid and post covid situations. As Grow n Excel is not a public or private limited company, all the data used in this report is collected from its employees who have seen both pre covid and post covid situation.

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Chapter 1 Overview of Internship

1.1 Student Information

Name: Md. Abul Hasnat

ID: 17104087

Department: BRAC Business School

Major/ Specialization: Human Resource Management & Marketing

1.2 Internship Information

1.2.1 Contract Information

Contract Period: Three (3) Months, From 13th February to 13th May, 2022

Company Name: Grow n Excel

Department/Division: Head Hunting

Address: 1st Floor – A1, House No. CWS (B) 6, Road No. 33, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212.

1.2.2 Supervisor's Information

Name: Riasat Ur Rahman

Position: Associate Manager - Talent Acquisition\

1.2.3 Job Scope

Generally, an intern is appointed in an organization for three months so that he/she can get exposure to corporate working experience and develop new skills and professionalism within himself/herself. However, as an intern of Grow n Excel and due to its culture, I have learnt how core functions of HR can be related to workplace and how its practiced in the workplace regularly. I, an intern of Grow n Excel, have learnt how the talent acquisition and headhunting is done. Therefore, I will explain my duties and responsibilities as an intern of Grow n Excel.

1.2.4 Job Duties and Responsibilities

Company Background: Grow n Excel is a HR recruitment firm that works with various local and MNCs. Grow n Excel has its own sister concern "Apparel Talent" dedicated for executive search for RMG industry of Bangladesh. Both of the concerns are integrated in one team. However, before

the pandemic the Apparel Talent used to be assigned on different employees specialized for apparel industry.

Executive Search/ Headhunting: As a headhunter, my job was to find the right person for the given position within 48 hours of timeline. Within this time frame, I was assigned to find at least 3 (preferred 5) full match candidates comparing with the Job description. I have successfully worked as a headhunter for the following organization:

Marico Bangladesh- Senior Manager- Marketing

Infinia Composite Textile Mill - Senior Manager for Fabric Marketing

Agami Apparels, Senior Manager, IE

Himalaya Bangladesh- Brand Manager

Agami Apparels. Head of Quality, DGM

Dekko Legacy Group, Marketing and Merchandising, AGM/DGM,

Cityscape International- PS to MD

SQ Group- HR, Admin, Compliance

International Beverages Private Limited- Maintenance and Operational Engineer

Avery Dennison- Supply Chain Manager

Pacific Jeans- Fabric Merchandising

The headhunting work is followed in a strategical process given below:

At first, the HR of the concern company contacts our Associate Manager for their open position. In the discussion over phone, they share all the duties and responsibilities and the requirements for the candidate they are looking for. Sometimes they also share preferred organizations from where they want to recruit. Hence, we prepare the Job Description.

Following the previous step, the position is assigned to me. Initially I used to work on Officer/Executive level. In this process, my supervisor approached me with a briefing where he tells me about the background of the company, some preferred companies, some probable candidates who might be fit for the position and so on.

After I am assigned to this position, I am given 48 hours of time to find out top 5 candidates who will be right fit for the position and matches with the JD 100%. To find out the candidates, I use search engine functions for both bdjobs CV bank as well as LinkedIn.

After going through some profiles and CVs. I find out top 20-25 candidates and call them. After having a brief conversation, I note a personal rating in my notebook. It is based on his communication skill, competency and smartness.

In addition, I also go through our personal database to find out candidates who might be fit for this position.

Lastly, based on the rating and candidate's competency I short list only 5 candidates and I forward their personal updated CV to the organization for further interview process.

Mapping: Mapping in Grow n Excel is a daily activity and it is being done by all employees almost every day. Mapping is what makes us efficient and unique. It saves our time and helps us to be punctual. Mapping is done with the shortlisted top candidates for a position. For example, I have sourced 40 CVs for Berger BD Head of HR-Manager. However, after going through top to bottom, I see that only 20 CVs are 100% match with the JD. Therefore, I open the file "Head of HR-Manager" file in excel and input all the 20 candidates name, current organization, current position, years of experience, education etc. As a result, when we are working on similar position, we don't have to go through bdjobs CV bank and LinkedIn once again. However, we can just go through our mapping file and find the best candidate who might fit for the position.

Employer Branding: Grow n Excel has its two-sister concern organization. Which are the Apparel Talent and Dynamic Resources. Apparel Talent works on executive search of RMG industry of Bangladesh. On the other hand, Dynamic Resources work on payroll services to many top-level companies like Robi, IDLC etc. In order to maintain the professionalism and keeping track, we do the employer branding in the CVs we send to our clients. Our clients are the organizations who signs the contract with us. Therefore, with the permission of the candidate, we embedded our logo

and submission date as proof that these CVs were submitted by us. Moreover, nowadays there are lots of HR recruitment firm a company makes contract with to be more resourceful when doing the recruitment process. Doing the employer branding, it also helps them keeping record of which CV was submitted by which recruitment firm.

Interview Schedule of the shortlisted candidates: After sending the top 5 CVs to our client, they sometimes call 5 of them for interview and sometimes 1 or 2 or 3. However, they cannot schedule this interview by themselves. Therefore, they give us some time frame and tells us to schedule interview within the given time. Next, we contact the candidates and ask for their preferred time. By communicating with both clients and candidates, we schedule an interview and forward that schedule in email to both client and candidate.

1.3 Internship Outcome

Doing my internship in Grow n Excel, I received the opportunity to work with the core function of HRM for which I find myself very lucky because I think doing my major in HRM and later on working on the core functions of HRM is not common. Instead of recruiting and HR intern, I was appointed to the Headhunting Intern for which I felt being honored. In this internship program, I learnt how theoretical knowledge is important for workplace. I also learnt professionalism and tried my best to develop myself with professionalism in workplace. I believe this internship has taught me many things about practical working environment and helped me develop my knowledge, skills and attitude.

1.3.1 My contribution in Grow n Excel

Instead of treating me an intern, they have always treated me like one of them. Moreover, I was always told that putting my best effort to this organization may result is permanent job. Therefore, I put all my effort when working for a position. During my Internship, I have contributed as follows:

Mapping: 300+ entries in excel

Branding: 50+ CVs.

Banner and posters: 15+ posters weekly or national/ international occasions.

Contact Management Database: 100+ entries.

CV Pool Submission:

Marico Bangladesh- 5 CVs

Agami Apparels- 3 CVs

Infinia Composite Textile Mill- 5 CVs

Himalaya Bangladesh- 5 CVs

Dekko-Legacy Group- 5 CVs

Cityscape International- 4CVs

SQ Group- 5 CVs

International Beverages Private Limited- 5 CVs

Avery Dennison- 3 CVs

Pacific Jeans- 4 CVs

Email Telemarketing monthly 2000+ emails

Website Content update and monitoring.

Among all the submitted CVs. I have successfully recruited 3 candidates. One candidate in Himalaya Bangladesh as Brand Manager, one candidate in Avery Dennison as Supply Chain Manager and lastly One candidate in SQ Group as HR, Admin a Compliance Manager. During recruitment process of these candidates, I had taken the responsibility of interview scheduling, duties and responsibilities explanation, gross and CTC salary negotiation. And finally, the candidates were recruited.

1.3.2 Grow n Excel's contribution to me

For the last three (3) months, at first, I will pay my gratitude towards the CEO of Grow n Excel for giving me the opportunity to work as a part of the leading HR Consultancy firm. They not only treated me equally but also put lots of effort on me to develop me so that after internship I can be a part of the headhunting team. The contribution of Grow n Excel in me is listed below:

Experience of working as a professional: Given no experience in my CV, it is tough for any organization to hire me as an intern. Because every organization tries to develop potential candidate and train within this internship period so that they can recruit that intern as their regular employee. However, there is no way to judge other than the interview session because mostly an intern candidate does not have any knowledge and experiences of professional workplace. Despite, they gave me that opportunity.

Working with the core HR policies: I believe HR agencies are the best for a graduate who just completed his/her major in Human Resource Management. Because HR agencies deal with the core HR functions in their day-to-day work life. Therefore, through this internship opportunity, I was able to connect the theoretical knowledge with the activities of Grow n Excel. For example, Recruitment and hiring, Training needs analysis, Salary negotiation, compensation management, Selection and hiring, interview, employee engagement, retention and so on.

Skill development: Working with large numbers of data always sounded tough to me. However, through working in grow ne excel, I had to deal with large number of data almost every other day for mapping purposes mentioned above. As a result, it improved my skills on database management software and I also got to learn a lot. Moreover, I was given the responsibility for content writing and content update on website. Therefore, it helped me improving my Microsoft office skills. Our CEO asked us for weekly report update and I had to make a PowerPoint presentation every week for keeping him posted. Working every week with PowerPoint and presenting every week, it definitely improved my presentation and Microsoft PowerPoint skills. Lastly, I also had to work with Canva which is graphics designing tools used for various posters and banners as well as illustration. I used this tool for every local and international events. During those events I created banners, posters for website and social media. Moreover, I also had to do the email telemarketing for our recruitment firm. Due to that I also had to make specialized posters. As a result, I developed my skills in graphics designing.

Knowledge on FMCG and Apparel industry: Grow n Excel works with FMCG multinational companies. And Apparel Talent (sister concern of Grow n Excel) works with executive search for apparel industry. I got the opportunity to work in both Grow n Excel as well as Apparel Talent. Hence, I got a lot of understanding about the cultures of FMCG multination companies. For example, Unilever, Marico, Arla I got to know in details about their working culture, benefits, advantages and disadvantages and so on. Moreover, the most important thing is I developed an understanding that what kind of educational background they prefer, which organization's ex-employees they want to hire, why candidates prefer multination FMCG than local and so on. Besides, working with Apparel Talent has been truly a great knowledgeable experience to me. Previously I though Garments means just making finished clothing and supplying those. However, this perspective totally changed. Because now I know how composite textile works, how textile mills work, how liaison office works, how buying house works, how corporate garments office works, how factory level manager works, how apparel garment works.

1.3.3 Difficulties

Conversely, I also faced some difficulties in these three (3) months of working in Grow n Excel. These are listed below:

Lack of resources in database: Grow n Excel started its operation as HR Consulting firm back in 2008. However, they did not keep record and didn't maintain any database. Therefore, there are very lack of data. As a result, there are people who does not want to get hired through HR consulting firm. However, due to lack of record in organization's sever, we approached them again and had to hear inappropriate behavior.

Lack of CV in organizational database mapping: As mentioned earlier, Grow n Excel did not save the collected CVs. They started mapping system only few years back. As a result, it still takes time and effort to collect new CVs.

Lack of Accountability: The CEO and Manager himself is not strict enough in the organization in terms of rules and regulations. There is a Fingerprint Scanner which is used to monitor employee's absenteeism. It was used on regular basis before the pandemic. However, after the pandemic when the office started working physically, the employees stopped using that device. As a result, there

are no records and strictness regarding attendance in the organization. Employees often take leave without letting know the previous day. In addition, some of them are very impunctuality in terms of office arrival time and as always, they blame the traffic jam. Grow n Excel maintains 5 days of working in a week and only 8 hours each day which starts from 10:00 am and ends at 6:00 pm. Therefore, it is very unfortunate to see them coming late at work and leaving early just because of the traffic jam.

Poor Working Environment: The place where employees work 8 hours 5 days of a week, should be maintained cleanliness. Nobody likes to work in an unorganized place. Often the office is cleaned moped only once a week in Friday. Therefore, it becomes quite uncomfortable to work on such environment.

Poor compensation and benefits compared to other firms: Grow n Excel is an established brand with huge brand value in this executive search HR consulting industry. However, the benefits and salary they offer is not sufficient compared to the workforces' efforts. Organizations in the same industry offer better salary and benefits compared to Grow n Excel. Moreover, in the first 6 months of any employment, employees don't get any benefits, not even the festive bonuses which I think is a very poor decision taken by the management. As a result, I have seen very higher turnover rate in Grow n Excel. During my internship period of this 3 months, I have seen one HR associate leaving her job and an Associate Manager switching to another organization due to little or no increment in their salary. It affected Grow n Excels overall productivity and efficiency.

1.3.4 Recommendations

In the corporate world, I believe there are no such organizations which can be called perfect. All organizations have its own strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, in my opinion, every issue I have raised above can be resolved quickly without any hassle.

Upgrading work environment: Grow n Excel is a small organization consisting only 15 employees. Therefore, it is not a tough job to offer an organized and productive work environment for these small number of people. Desks can be more organized, better laptops can be given for less time for processing, cleanliness should be the top priority and before arriving at office all employees expect a clean room and desk.

Clear communication method: As mentioned earlier, I received my direction for headhunting from my supervisors. He gave me direction in oral format and I had to note down each and every important point when he briefed. However, this type of direction is not clear and effective. Written direction is the best direction, I think. At least in that case, I will not forget and do not have to keep looking at my notes over and over again. A clear format where lists of directions are given is the most effective way.

Implication on rules and regulations: There are enough rules and regulations present in the organization's code of conduct. It is a matter of sorrow that nobody abides by these rules and regulations. They come whenever they want and also leave early. Moreover, they take leave without advanced notice. As a result, as an intern I faced severe consequences because my supervisor was absent several times in a month. The rules and regulations are present but not implemented. Hence, these rules and regulations should be strictly followed.

Focusing on employees' needs: As mentioned earlier, Grow n Excel does not provide a productive working environment. Again, the compensation and benefits are poor. Employees don't feel motivated. Often, they feel bored and frustrated because other organization are often celebrating different events at office, going for tours. Hence, they also expect the same from Grow n Excel. However, due to lack in all these, employees feel that they are not given priority in the organization. Therefore, the CEO should focus on hearing out these employees' needs and expectation from this organization so that in return the CEO also gets higher productivity and keep the employees motivated because at the of the day, employees are the key of running this organization.

Chapter 2 Overview of the Organization and its Operation

2.1 Overview of Grow n Excel

Executive search is a specialized form for recruitment which is usually adopted for organization's top level management employees. In this globalized environment, in order to lead in the competitive market, every organization wants to hire the best candidate for their organization. However, without executive search it is not always possible. Employees are the lifeblood of any organization. When employee turnover rate suddenly rises, organizations need HR consulting services to reduce the rate. In addition, losing an employee in a managerial level of a special rare designation whom they have nurtured and trained for that particular position, may lead to a disaster in the overall organization if they fail to find the right candidate (Why Executive Search Is Important for your Business - Edward Drummond & Co., 2020). Finding top talent for an organization can be difficult. Therefore, some organization feel free to spend as much needed but wants to find the right candidate for their position. So, they sign contract with executive search firms who are specialized in recruitment services and well known for finding perfect match in top level candidates ("How Executive Search Firms Work", 2014).

Executive Search firms are relationship driven. Executive search firms work closely with their client organization and when they are instructed to work on a position. An executive search firm works beyond the JD. They work closely with their client so that they get an in-depth idea which can help them find the "right fit" employee. By using that understanding, then the HR firm/ executive search firm finds out the right and most effective strategy to deliver the most suitable candidate for that position. The whole work process is research based. Again, the firms are paid upon the successful recruitment ("Guide to Executive Search", 2022).

2.2 Overview of Grow n Excel

Grow n Excel is an Executive Search firm that is partnered with various Local, Global and Multination Companies operating in Bangladesh. In near future it aims to further expand its business outside the country's boundary and make it global gradually. Likewise, other executive search firms, Grow n Excel also works in the same way. For better understanding, the whole working process of Grow n Excel is mentioned below:

1. Briefing: The process starts here. Clients call Grow n Excel and share the position for which they want recruitment.

2. Understanding the Job Description: In this step, the employee must go through the JD thoroughly and needs to understand the duties, responsibilities and job specification.

3. Competency/ Context Matching: We must identify some contexts which we will need to match when sourcing CVs. For example: Skill, Age, University etc.

4. Start the Searching Process: Searching process includes multiple steps

Ideal Profile: We have to look for the ideal profile. In other words, we must identify and search those employees' CV who has worked in that particular position. Commonly known, we must find the Demo CV.

CV Bank: We look at our database and also seek our colleagues to know if that particular position has been worked before. If yes, we go through their collected CVs.

Mental mapping: Going through the JD is not enough. we must gather knowledge about the organization's culture. So that I can do the mental mapping and identify which organizations should I look for to do the recruitment for this organization.

Searching from LinkedIn/ BDjobs

Help from Ambassador/ Colleague: By working here for a long time, we have built up connections. We can seek their employee's contact details or suggestions.

Generate Calls and Match their Competencies: After getting the contact details, we start generating calls and try to observe the competencies they have and see if those competencies match with the specifications.

Mapping: We must do mapping so that we can keep record of the candidates we have approached.

5. Discuss with the CEO Sir or team in the meeting about the CV pool we have prepared.

6. Potentiality Assessment: When we talk with the candidates, we try to understand if he/she has potential for this position and whether he/she interested to attend the interview.

7. Shortlist: After talking with so many candidates over phone, we create a CV pool consisting of 5 candidates. Among them, at least 3 of the candidates should have full match with the JD and the other 2 can have partial match.

9. Submission of the CV Pool.

After the CV pool submission, Grow n Excel takes follow up steps from both clients and candidates so that if the candidates are recruited Grow n Excel can forward the bill to payroll service of Grow n Excel. Mr. Pankaj Kanti Sarker the manager of Grow n Excel is responsible for all the payrolls of Grow n Excel. He ensures that clients have paid 1.5% of the newly recruited employee's gross salary in the Grow n Excel's account.

The HR Consulting firm "Grow n Excel" is lead and established by its own CEO and Lead Consultant Mr. M. Zulfiquar Hussain. He is known for one of the best HR professionals of Bangladesh. Before establishing Grow n Excel, he was the country HR director of Nestle Bangladesh. Furthermore, he was also assigned as the HR director of Citycell Bangladesh. Working in the HR director position for more than a decade has given him lots of experiences and understandings of local and global HR practices. He has experience of conducting lots of training programs, workshops as well as seminars throughout his career. Later on, to spread his knowledge and understanding of HR practices, he joined as faculty of North South University as well as BRAC University and been there for 4 years before finally establishing the one of first HR consulting firm "Grow n Excel". Succeeding on operations of Grow n Excel, he established another brand focused only on RMG industry's Executive Search which he named "Apparel Talent" and is quite renowned brand among RMG companies. Prior to that, he also established "Dynamic Resources" which is focused on payroll services for large conglomerates and is dominating in the payroll service industry.

2.2.1 Mission and Vision of Grow n Excel

Grow n Excel's mission is to help people as well organizations with a wide range of HR and Management Consultation services. We at Grow n Excel believe that we are quite expert and we carry an in-depth knowledge as well as understanding about the best-in-class HR services. It enables us to deliver any customized HR services to our clients. Professionalism, Passion as well as Client focus are the core values of Grow n Excel. We aspire to be the most premier HR firm of Bangladesh with its core values.

Grow n Excel understands the enormous potential of Bangladesh. Therefore, we believe that in Grow n Excel together we play an important role for unleashing potential among job seekers so that organizations can meet tomorrow's challenge.

Grow n Excel have strong database with pool of resources of diversified background which helps not only us but also our clients. We work with youth and who are highly motivated and devoted in this profession. Here youths join to Grow with Excellence. Grow n Excel is the best platform for youth to maintain and develop strong professional network across different industries

2.2.2 Organization's Chain of Command/ Organogram

Grow n Excel is consisting of 13 employees. The organogram of the organization is stated below in graphical format.

Even though interns are assigned below HR Trainees, they are mostly directed by HR Associates and Senior HR Associates so that they can be the future HR trainees of Grow n Excel.

2.3 Management Practices

Manager of the Grow n Excel as well as Associate Manager of Grow n Excel use different tools and techniques as well as different innovation regularly to keep employees motivated and maintain most efficiency of the work practices. Therefore, they continuously search for better techniques that enables the headhunters to search and bring out the best results. In addition, they always try

to make employees think out of the box which is why Grow n Excel is now one of top HR consulting firm of Bangladesh.

2.3.1 Leadership of Grow n Excel

The CEO and Lead Consultant of Grow n Excel is Mr. M. Zulfiquar Hussain is the leader of Grow n Excel. To stay on track, he calls a meeting every working day at 11:00 am and takes around 30 minutes. Every morning he asks each and every individual by himself and also distributes new positions that they need do executive search. In addition, to keep employees motivated, he also shares stories from his or his friend's life which I found really motivating. He also shares news of evolving Bangladesh which lets us think that we are not only contributing to Grow n Excel but also helping different industries to lead in their market by having right fit candidates. Lastly, he calls a meeting at 5:30 pm and takes around 30-45 minutes to get an update of the work progress of the whole day. However, the meeting often takes around an hour and that time all the employees are exhausted for working the whole day. Therefore, it is sometimes demotivating too.

2.3.2 Recruitment and Selection Process

The Leader and the CEO likes to work with the young energetic people. Therefore, they try to keep the talent and nurture him from the very beginning of internship. It means all the employees in this organization are either from internship or from trainee period. Most of the employees are from BRAC University, Independent University Bangladesh, United International University. The promotion is given based on the performance of an employee. After reaching a certain quota, the employee is promoted.

2.3.3 Compensation and Benefits

Grow n Excel compensates its employees with above average compensation exist in the market. However, the popularity, profitability and work load does not make the compensation up to the mark. The basic salary is very poor comparing with other firms. However, the commission based on each successful recruitment is pretty high. Therefore, sometimes it is unlucky to have

unsuccessful recruitment and as well as motivating to reach higher commission. Furthermore, they get yearly bonuses and weekly food allowances.

2.3.4 Training and Development Process

As mentioned earlier, Grow n Excel employs mostly from internship and trainee position. So that they can nurture a fresher from the very beginning. All the employees I have worked with in Grow n Excel and here from their internship. Grow n Excel trained them with headhunting skills if they see that the candidate has potential. The CEO believes that more knowledge is exchanged and freshers also get a boost in their career by working in an organization that works with core HR function. Moreover, in Grow n Excel employees have to communicate with lots of candidates and sometimes the position is for Director. As a result, they are building up their communication and leadership skills with people from different levels.

2.3.5 Performance Appraisal

In Grow n Excel, promotion is given based on the performance. No matter how late an employee joined, their promotion and seniority depend on their performance. Employee who fills the quota early, gets a promotion instantly.

2.4 Marketing Approach/ Strategy

A company introduces itself and attract its target segment customers through different marketing approaches or strategies. Likewise, Grow n Excel uses digital marketing tools and strategies for its marketing and awareness.

2.4.1 Marketing Strategy

Grow n Excel is a works with recruitment and hiring. Meanwhile, LinkedIn is the biggest platform of recruiters and candidates. LinkedIn is a place where people from any profession and background can open an account and update their job profile and also can connect with recruiters. Grow n

Excels connects recruiters and candidates. Therefore, both of the segments are present in LinkedIn. Hence, Grow n Excel uses LinkedIn platform for their marketing approach. To keep the LinkedIn profile active, Grow n Excel shares posts and articles from different premium HR related article website every day of the week.

Grow n Excel also uses telemarketing approach by sending newsletters in email through Grow n Excel's own knowledge desk portal. Grow n Excel maintains a contact management sheet database where they have stores more than eight-thousands email addresses. Every month they send the knowledge desk email to all these candidates as well as clients.

2.4.2 Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning

Market Segmentation:

Geographic Segmentation:

Bangladesh's Local Public and Private Limited Companies

Global Companies

Sri Lanka based Multinational Companies

India Based Multinational Companies

America based Multinational Companies

Sweden based Multinational Companies

Profession Segmentation:

White-Collar job holder. For example: Nestle, Unilever, Marico, Arla, Reckitt, Himalaya Drug Company, Berger, Novartis, Beximco, PRAN-RFL etc.

Targeting: After choosing the target companies, they try to get connection with their white-collar job holders and maintain good professional relationship. Then gradually they try to contact with their HR Director/ HR Head. Afterwards, Grow n Excel offers their recruitment services to the target organization and signs contract if the agreement happens. In prior with, Grow n Excel also

tries to make connection with their white-collar job holders so that they can also be shared job opportunities in near future.

Positioning: Grow n Excel employs young fresh graduates as internship and later on tries to develop the potential inters and offer them trainee position. In this way through the young fresh graduates, Grow n Excel is promoting itself to the young fresh graduates of that particular batch. Moreover, Grow n Excel promotes their clients name like Unilever, Beximco, Marico etc so that new organizations are attracted to make contract with Grow n Excel. Grow n Excel tries to promote itself in the client's mind in such a way that whenever they think about a recruitment, they think about Grow n Excel.

2.5 Financial Performance and Accounting Practices

Grow n Excel's financial operations are maintained by Mr. Pankoj Kanti Sarker who is the manager of Grow n Excel. All the financial transaction are recorded my him in the company's ledger accounting software. He records every day-to-day transaction even the food allowances of the office through the accounting practices so that everything is on track.

2.5.1 Budget

Grow n Excels records its day-to-day transaction in its own payroll software where all kinds of transactions are given input. A dedicated employee is employed so that nothing is skipped while recording its costs and earnings. There is a spend budget maintained in the software. All memorandums, legal papers, food allowances, rent everything falls under the budget. So that the company does not suffer due to budget constraint before the month ends.

2.5.2 Banking Transaction

Grow n Excel disburses all of its salaries from its bank account. Therefore, the debit and credit sides are recorded in the bank account and available to get the bank statement whenever needed.

In addition, the contractual transactions that are made from the clients also enter the Grow n Excel's bank account. Hence, all the debit and credit transactions are recorded on bank account.

2.5.3 Financial Report

At the end of every month, the manager of Grow n Excel prepares a monthly report where each little transactions are shown and prepared by Grow n Excel's own payroll software. The financial report is then presented to the CEO and approved by the CEO. The manager explains and tries to reconcile any miscalculations occurred during preparation of the Financial Report. After that VAT and Government Tax is paid on the basis of profit from Grow n Excel's bank account.

2.6 Operation Management and Information System Practices

2.6.1 Ownership

Grow n Excel is a solo proprietorship entrepreneurial organization founded by the CEO and lead manager M. Zulfiquar Hossain. Therefore, it is not a public or private limited company. The organization is funded, regulated and policies are dependent on him. However, it has been heard that the Manager of Grow n Excel also have some shares in this business. As they are not bound in a written contract, in the eyes of law, it is still a sole proprietorship organization.

2.6.2 Analysis of Four Functions of Management

Based on my experiences while working as an intern, I have formulated an analysis of management's four functions practiced in Grow n Excel.

Planning: In order stay ahead in the competition, Grow n Excel tries to make a deadline within 72 hours from starting the work. As a result, the success rate is also higher than other HR recruitment firms. Deadline is always subjective to change depending on the current financial flows of the organization, the competitors' operations and the clients demands. The CEO establishes and reviews the company objective and tries to motivate employees by being the most successful in delivering best in class HR practices.

Organizing: In order to maintain the employees' accountability, the organization is divided into different departments and all the department maintains its own organogram. For example: Ms. Rifa is head of Apparel Talent and everyone working on Apparel Talent reports to Ms. Rifa, Mr. Riasat is the head of Grow n Excel and everyone reports to him and so on. Lastly all the departmental heads report to the CEO.

Leading: Like an ideal leader, Mr. Zulfiquar always listens to his subordinates. Weekly he calls in all the employees including intern in the board room. And one by one he talks, meets and greets everyone and takes feedback from everyone about business development, strategy formulation, suggestions and complains.

Controlling: Through the CEO, head of every department, a performance standard is established every month. At the end of the month, the actual performance is measured against standard. Lastly

if the employees meet the standard which is very common, they get bonus in every three months and dinner with the CEO. However, if employees fail to meet the standard in 6 consecutive months, it results in probation period.

2.7 Industry and Competitive Analysis

Grow n Excel works in a very competitive market. There are numerous numbers of HR recruitment firm in Bangladesh currently. In order understand the position of Grow n Excel in this competitive industry, I think it is important to do an analysis of Porter's five forces and SWOT analysis. Hence, the analyses are mentioned below:

2.7.1 Porter's Five Forces Analysis

Through the analysis of porter's five forces, we can get a proper idea how the five competitive forces shape the industry as well as determines weakness and strength of Grow n Excel in this competitive industry. These five forces are also beneficial for Grow n Excel because it not only gives an understanding of the competition level within the industry but also enhances the organization's long-term profitability. Moreover, companies that want to grow faster in a competitive industry, it is required for them to know about the market attractiveness, competition intensity and profitability in the industry.

Rivalry among competitors: There are numerous HR recruitment firms in this industry. However not all of them offer the same services as Grow n Excel nor everyone holds the brand value as Grow n Excel. In this industry Talent Centric HR Consultancy firm and Grow n Excel is the closest competitors. They both believe quality and follow the price skimming strategy. Grow n Excel's core job is working with recruitment services. However, Grow n Excel's operation is not limited to recruitment. Grow n Excel have numbers of other services like payroll services, smart check (reference checking), compensation survey, policy making, Apparel Talent, dynamic resources, Grow n Excel academy and so on. Although there are numbers of organizations in this industry, the competition is in neutral stage.

Potential of new entrants: There are no hard and fast rules from the government for entering in this industry. It is not mandatory to enlist the new entrant as public of private limited company. There are no legislations and regulations complicacy for entering this industry. However, the brand value is very important in this industry. Because no organization would like to hire employees from an agency and give them 1.5x of employees one month's gross salary to an organization which they have never heard of. Moreover, every organization in this industry maintains a database and establishing a database for a new HR recruitment firm looks very unfeasible. Therefore, there is high chances of new entrants.

Power of Substitutes: In this industry Grow n Excel is one of the firms who charges premium and ensures premium services. Grow n Excel delivers the best quality in class HR services. However, there are firms who charges less. In addition, many organizations have its own established Headhunting team for their organization. In that case, Grow n Excel cannot target those market segments no matter what because those organizations prefers hiring from their headhunting team. Hence, there is a moderate power of substitutes.

Power of Suppliers: Grow n Excel searches candidates from LinkedIn and Bdjobs. In addition, for experienced and confidential positions, Grow n Excel uses its own database. Bdjobs offers subscription-based access to CV bank and LinkedIn is an open platform which does not charge anything at all. Therefore, there are little or no power of suppliers.

Power of Buyers: Buyers are the main element of this business. Grow n Excel generates cash mainly from its buyers. There are numerous buyers and sellers. However, as there are very high number of suppliers ready to make a contract with HR consultation firm, high risk exists for sellers like Grow n Excel. Therefore, by establishing a premium brand value, this threat can be minimized but cannot be eliminated fully. Hence, there is a high power of buyers in this industry but can be minimized through pushing its brand value through offering best in class HR practices.

Therefore, after analyzing the industry, suppliers, substitutes and buyers, it is visible that Grow n Excel is in moderate pressure in this competitive HR service industry.

2.7.2 Swot Analysis

No organization is perfect. Organizations analyzes market in order to stay proactive, evaluate its position in the competitive industry and develop new strategies to stay ahead in the competition. Hence, here I am presenting a SWOT analysis for Grow n Excel.

Strengths: Grow n Excel's top strength is its employees. Employees are the key success of Grow n Excel from emerging to this current brand value. Grow n Excel have a strong hold in Mid to Top level recruitment which starts from Senior Manager to Director level. Grow n Excel holds the most brand value this industry. The CEO holds a huge network which enables the organization getting new contract and make successful recruitment.

Common Strength: Employees

Imitable Strength: Experience

Distinctive Strength: Brand Value

Weaknesses: Grow n Excel has never seen such downfall which occurred during the pandemic due to Covid-19. Many organizations ended the contract with Grow n Excel. Many recruited employees left job and as per the contract policy which states that during first six months of recruitment if employees leave the job, Grow n Excel must recruit another employees in the same position without any charge. Moreover, during pandemic, office was shut and employees had to work apart from each other while at work they could work as a team.

Opportunities: The world is growing at a faster rate. Every year there are numerous companies successfully expanding its business overseas. Moreover, every organization wants to hire the right employee who will be fit in the position. However, most of the organization's HR team does not hold headhunting team specialized for this. On the other hand, HR agencies hold a strong database and network for finding out the right candidate. Therefore, there is a great opportunity to grow in this industry.

Threats: In this HR service industry, everything depends on the global and local economic conditions. If the country goes through financial crisis or pandemic, no organization will want to hire new employee and increase cost. Therefore, it works as a great threat if economy starts falling or pandemic starts.

2.8 Summary and Conclusions

Grow n Excel is an old organization who started its journey in 2008 and was on the few HR consulting firm. Grow n Excel did not limit its work in recruitment. It also offered other HR services like payroll, reference check, consultation, compensation survey etc. At present Grow n Excel's main strength is its employees and its brand value which is driving the organization with lots of new positions of many multinational organizations.

Grow n Excel is run and funded by its CEO and is a solo ownership business. The CEO of Grow n Excel is also the lead consultant. He maintains liaison with many local and foreign company's HR department. He approaches them personally and makes a professional relationship by offering HR services of Grow n Excel.

In this competitive industry, Grow n Excel does its market analysis every 3-4 months which has created such a brand image and pushed this organization at top in this competitive industry.

2.9 Recommendations

Grow n Excel has contract with more than 50 organizations. However, there are only 15 employees which is not acceptable at all. Employees are loaded with lots of pressure. They do not get any leisure time at all. So, my first suggestion is to recruit at least 5 more employees and increase headcount so that employees can have work-life balance.

Grow n Excel did not upgrade its website since 2008. Therefore, it is a much-needed thing to focus on. Otherwise, when new organizations will search for HR agencies online, they will not have a positive image after looking at the website layout of Grow n Excel 2008's website.

Lastly, Grow n Excel must maintain a well resourceful organized database. There are lots of resources available at Grow n Excel but it is not organized in the database. Hence, for faster and efficiency, Grow n Excel must upgrade and organize its database.

Chapter 3 Project Part

3.1 Introduction

The core competency of Grow n Excel is recruitment and hiring. Grow n Excel is mainly profound and has gained its reputation as well as developed its brand image through perfect recruitment and hiring. Grow n Excel has been in a continuous growth since its establishment until the pandemic of 2020 of Covid-19. However, when the pandemic started, like other companies, Grow n Excel also went through its downtime. Employees were affected, the CEO was affected, staffs were affected. Till this date, things are not like it was before pandemic started.

As Grow n Excel mostly works with the Multi-National Companies, its operation nearly stopped. There was a demand shift in the labor market, organizations tried to reduce cost and stopped recruiting unless it was too important. When it was about the recruitment of local company, lots of candidates were not convinced because they wanted job security ("How COVID-19 has fundamentally changed recruitment", 2021). Moreover, local and both multinational companies stopped expanding their businesses in new areas. In addition, organizations those who were totally dependent on recruitment firms, started recruiting using their own HR department by posting job advertisements online just to fill a position without judging much about the competency level of candidates so that they don't have to make extra payment to HR recruitment firms (CRIVELLARO et al., 2021).

The Covid-19 pandemic period brought a lot of changes in the recruitment process of Grow n Excel. Instead of going towards layoffs, Grow n Excel kept trying to bring in more contracts and survive through the pandemic by doing work from home and by formulating new strategies.

3.1.1 Background/ Literature Review

Recruitment is one of the crucial parts of any organization. Employees drive an organization from its growth stage to peak. Covid-19 has changed the corporate world a lot. Organizations has stopped using the phrase "it's just better to do it face-to-face" because since the pandemic started everyone has been doing home office and they now understand that most professional jobs can easily be done remotely (Thomas, 2022). However, Grow n Excel works in a hybrid model for

candidate sourcing in a position and it required a teamwork to do so. There are some positions where personal contact connections are easier for candidate sourcing. Since the pandemic started, this process was no longer feasible because everyone had to work from home. So, the total recruitment process of Grow n Excel was conducted online. Every organization faced a cultural shift when the pandemic started and everyone wanted to hire employees who are comfortable as well as productive in hybrid work model (Hutchinson, 2021).

Likewise, Grow n Excel also had to take a crucial decision during pandemic. People who belong to generation X were less prioritized during the pandemic because they were not comfortable at working remotely whereas young generation y and z people grew up working with gadgets and new techs and therefore every organization focused on hiring these young people even though they had less experience (McMenamin, 2021). Likewise, Grow n Excel outsourced all the employees who were not fit at working remotely and restarted its remote work by doing home office with young energetic employees. Doing their job remotely without little or no experience of working at home, was bit tough and they faced many challenges while working remotely. This report shows study on the consequences they faced while working remotely and how it affected the total recruitment process.

3.1.2 Objectives

Being an undergraduate student with no experiences of corporate world, my primary focus and intention was to compare both the theoretical knowledge and corporate experience and see how they are connected with each other. Luckily, I got to experience the core functions of Human Resource Management at Grow n Excel.

Broad Objective: The broad objective of this report is to understand the effect of covid-19 pandemic in Grow n Excel's recruitment operation process.

Specific Objective: I have pointed out 3 (three) specific objectives which I think is appropriate for achieving my broad objective.

Identification of Grow n Excel's new approach process in recruitment operation.

Identifying the changes in Job Description shared by clients to Grow n Excel.

Differences in recruitment before the pandemic, during the pandemic and in current world.

3.1.3 Significance

This report shows the study on how the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the recruitment and working process of Grow n Excel. I believe in this current world; it is very important to understand how recruitment process has changed within few months when the lockdown was imposed due to pandemic. It is not only important for new HR graduates to understand the current recruitment system but also necessary for those people who works with recruitment and hiring process. The new normal world of includes hybrid working model and to recruit employees who is comfortable in hybrid working model, requires lots of different approaches to find out the right fit candidate. Hence, I believe to understand the current situation of recruitment, this topic is significant.

3.2 Methodology

In order to prepare this report, I used exploratory research technique. Covid-19 is a very recent pandemic situation. In addition, there are no article or research that has been done on Grow n Excel regarding their operations during the pandemic situation. Hence, there are no available of previous datasets to follow. Therefore, every information I have gathered during my internship period at Grow n Excel regarding how they operated in pandemic and lockdown was for the first time.

Primary Data: Grow n Excel is not a public/ private listed organization. Therefore, they keep their organizational data confidential. So, I collected all the information used on this study is basically from Grow n Excel's employees including my supervisor, Associate Manager, HR associates and other employees and trainees.

Secondary Data: Grow n Excel's website itself, Scholarly Articles, International Journals, reports were used as secondary data.

Sample Size: Grow n Excel has 15 employees at the office. As mentioned earlier, all the primary and organizational data and information was collected from the employees. Hence, the sample size is 15.

3.3 Findings and Analysis

Grow n Excel has changed its operating strategies and implemented new policies and strategies for coping up with the new post covid-19 world. While doing this study I identified several factors where I can see changes happened due to pandemic. There are discussed with appropriate explanation.

3.3.1 Employment in Grow n Excel Headhunting Team

Grow n Excel reshaped their employee size and outsourced those who were not fit for the latest strategy. Baby Boomers and Generation Xers are usually bit aged and more comfortable in working at traditional way through their network and mostly uncomfortable working at home with computer. Besides, covid-19 was emerging and affecting a larger portion of the population, lockdown was being imposed in many areas. As a result, there were no other choice than working at home. However, the CEO understood that organization cannot afford to hire those employees who cannot work at home with computer and internet. Moreover, he also knew it will be unethical if he starts layoff. Hence, he outsourced all the employees who were not fit to work remotely and started its recruitment and hiring process with only 13 employees instead of 25.

3.3.2 Changes in client's contract

In the first lockdown during Covid-19 pandemic, all organizations shut down for a while. Schools, colleges and other educational institutes were also sine die. Gradually, people realized that we cannot sit at home and run the organization. Therefore, people started doing remote work sitting at home. Organizations started giving training online so that people can work from home. However, due to global economic downfall, organizations tried to cut their cost by using layoff process. Again, local organizations abolished the contract with Grow n Excel and used their own house HR for recruitment and hiring so that they can save some cost.
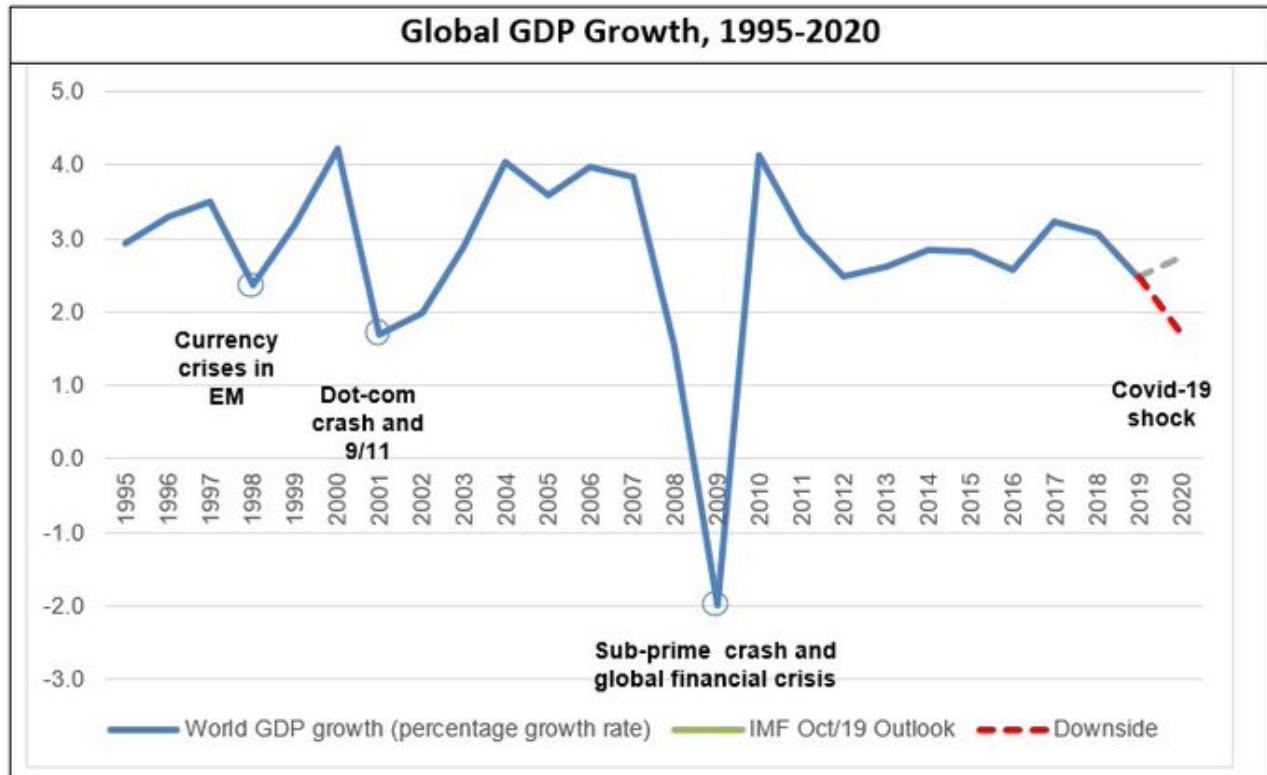
Figure 2: Global Economic Shock during Covid-19 pandemic.

Fortunately, Multinational Companies were still in touch with Grow n Excel and when they send the JD, they called employees of Grow n Excel personally and told them that they want to hire someone who is young and efficient working at home and expert in tech related matters because they want contractual hiring for 6 months.

Therefore, Clients made a lot of change in their contract so that they can judge employees with their work from home skills and also trained and developed during this contractual period so that the employee can also adjust at office work physically.

3.3.3 Analysis in client's demand

There were around 70 clients in contract with Grow n Excel. Among them around 40 of them were from RMG industry.
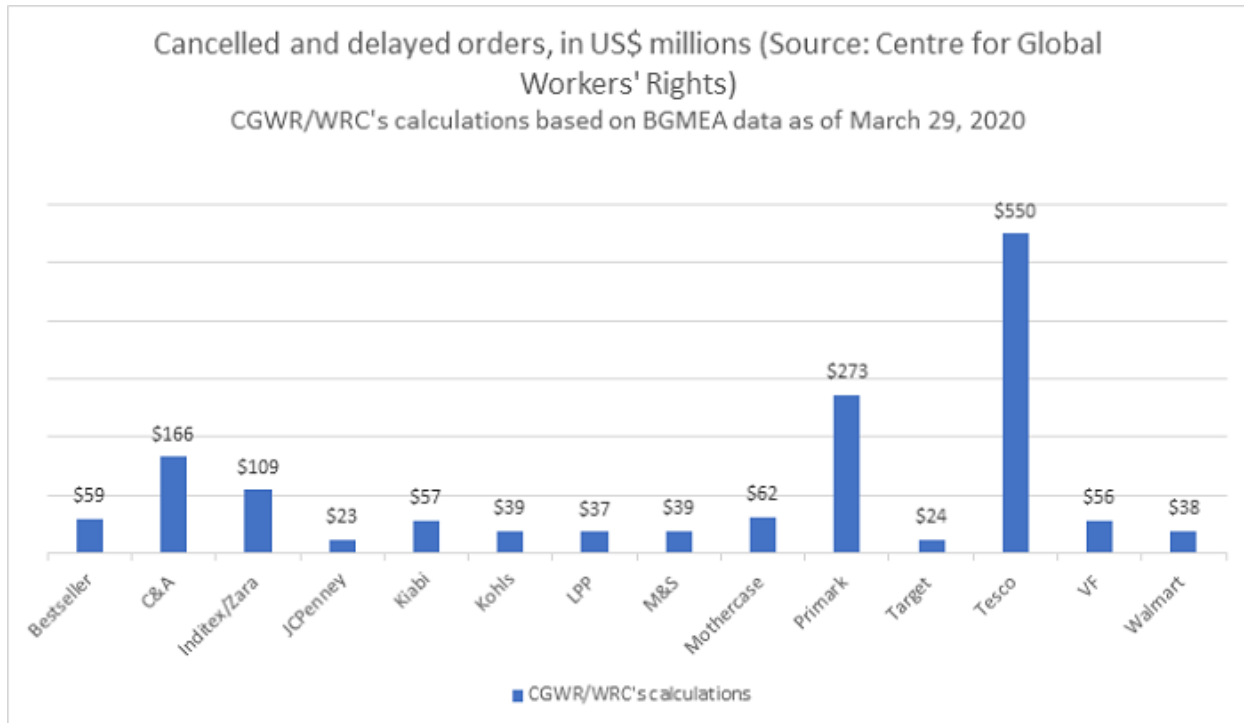

Figure 3: Cancelled and delayed orders of RMG in USA.

The figure above shows that during the covid-19 pandemic of 2020, USA cancelled and delayed lots of orders they made to RMG industry in Bangladesh US, UK and Europe are the top buyers of RMG in Bangladesh. As soon as they started cancelling and delaying orders, garments manufacturers faced a huge loss in cash and started suffering due to lower liquidity.

Figure 4: Export of Bangladesh RMG during Covid-19 pandemic.

From the graph above (Figure 3), we can see that how organizations faced loss during first wave of Covid-19. Local RMG companies were having a hard time paying their employees. Therefore, as they faced the losses and did want to reduce cost. As a result, around 20 RMG companies abolished contract with Grow n Excel, some of them bargained to pay 0.5x of the employees' salary and so on. Therefore, Grow n Excel also suffered during this situation of RMG industry.

3.3.4 Analysis in the job market and job specification

According to a report of world bank, around 68 percent of the people lost their jobs in Dhaka and Chattogram together (Bryon & Habib, 2020). Besides, 75% people were from Dhaka and 59% of them were from Chattogram of this 68% job loss people (Bryon & Habib, 2020). In that situation, people were having hard time maintaining their livelihood.

Ways to cope with income shocks among poor and vulnerable households (in %)

	RURAL	URBAN
Reduced food consumption	63	69
Help from friends	50	69
Government's help	33	38
Used savings	55	42
Looked for more work	20	9
Obtained credit	22	30

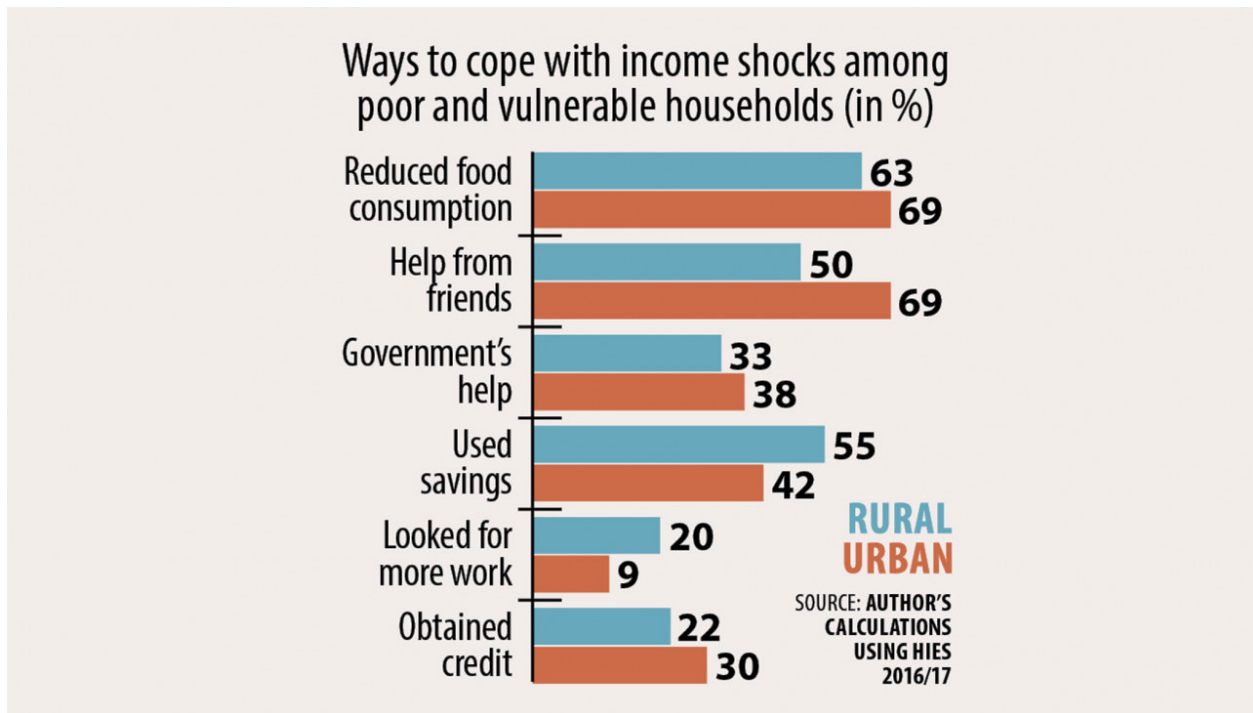SOURCE: AUTHOR'S CALCULATIONS USING HIES 2016/17

Figure 5: Covid-19 effect on unemployed class people.

People were facing scarce of liquidity which was being considered as a threat. Therefore, they started looking for job and reduce their daily life costs. Grow n Excel received lots of phone calls from people seeking new job opportunities, some even wanted to bribe Grow n Excel's employees. However, job market was not open. Organizations reduced their recruitment. As a result, there were lots of job seeker available and ready to get a job at lower salary than their previous organizations. However, clients did not want to recruit just to save cost.

3.3.5 Analysis in Grow n Excel's recruitment pressure

Before 2020, Grow n Excel used to work with people aged from 28 and upto 40. However, as the pandemic started and people started working remotely, the team work was not possible like it was before. People had to work independently with laptop and internet connection. However, some of the aged people were not fit for that. In addition, it was completely new for the employees and it took time for them to adapt to this new situation.
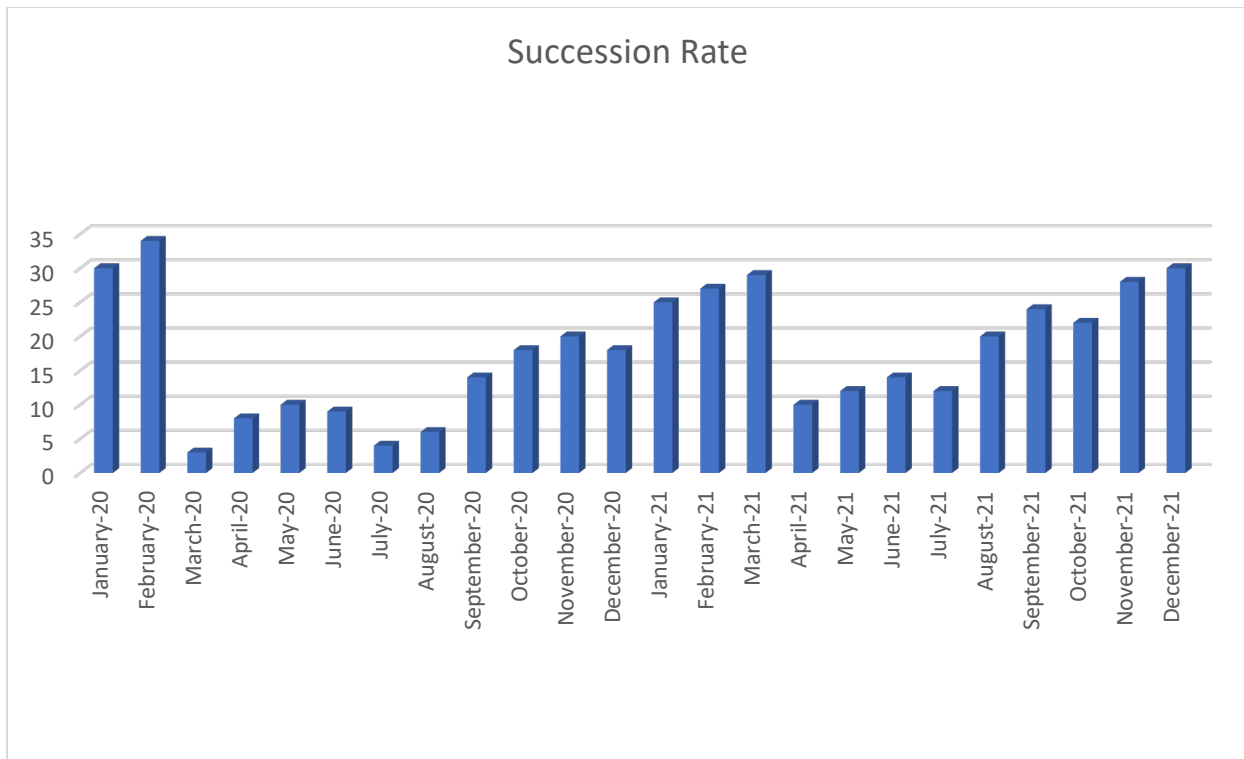
Figure 5: Grow n Excel's successful recruitment rate.

As a result, we can see that, Grow n Excel also suffered adjusting to the new remote job situation.

3.4 Conclusion

Although Covid-19 effect has not been resolved, organizations like Grow n Excel and other HR service provider firms are adjusting its daily job routines with the new normal situation. Organizations are now more proactive for future threats. Every organization thinks twice before they think of a recruitment and tries to be proactive so that no matter whatever the pandemic is for, people can easily work from home and companies get their regular productivity. Hence, job seekers are also preparing themselves these days by taking training on using technology at work with full potential. Grow n Excel still is not at their previous financial state. After Covid-19, Grow n Excel have only 20 Apparel Talent clients, Grow n Excel Academy has stopped its operation, Dynamic Resource had to outsource many of their employees. However, the CEO and Lead Consultant of Grow n Excel Mr. M Zulfiquar Hossain aims to start all the sister concerns and increase the organizations head count just as it was before Covid-19.

3.5 Recommendation

Grow n Excel is now currently operating with only 15 employees. However, there are lots of positions for recruitments and Grow n Excel is not able to submit all the CV pools within the given time. Other HR firms are having a better succession rate because they have more headcounts than Grow n Excel. Besides, organizations are now doing bulk hiring and new startups are emerging in our country as Covid-19 situation is over in corporate world and everyone is doing either physical or hybrid work. Therefore, in order to use and nurture the full potential of Grow n Excel brand image, immediately Grow n Excel should recruit at least 5 more employees to maximize profit and recover from the Covid-19 losses.

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