Report On

Talent Acquisition Practices of Leather Industries of Bangladesh - A Case Study on STEP

By

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An internship report submitted to the [Human Resource Management] in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Business Administration

BBS Department
BRAC University
Summer, 2025

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/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

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Mohammad Rabiul Basher Rubel
Professor, BRAC Business School
BRAC University

Letter of Transmittal

Mohammad Rabiul Basher Rubel

Associate Professor

BRAC Business School,

BRAC University BRAC University

Kha 224, Bir Uttam Rafiqul Islam Ave, Dhaka 1212

Subject: Submission of the internship report on "Talent Acquisition Practices of Leather Industries of Bangladesh – A Case Study on STEP"

Dear Sir,
It is my extreme pleasure to submit the internship report entitled TALENT Acquisition Practices of Leather Industries of Bangladesh -A Case Study on STEP which I have tried to compile as a partial obligation of the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) program of BRAC University.

I have attempted to be as clear and honest as possible, providing both practical experience and theories. I think that this report will be useful to understand the practices of the leather industry in terms of talent acquisition.

I would like to thank you for your guidance and support on a continuous basis on this process.

Sincerely,

Farin Tasnim Trina

ID: 20104031

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

Date: October, 2025

Non-Disclosure Agreement

This agreement is made and entered into by and between IPDC Finance Limited and the undersigned student at Brac University

Farin Tasnim Trina

20104031

Acknowledgement

I would like to say my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has been on my side and helped me in the course of this report. To begin with, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Mohammad Rabiul Basher Rubel, who is my supervisor in BRAC University and who has provided me with invaluable guidance, constant encouragement, and feedback. His views assisted me in developing this report and accomplishing it meaningfully and clearly.

I also want to offer my heartfelt gratitude to the HR team of the STEP Footwear and Accessories Ltd. to grant me the chance of being an intern. The knowledge I have acquired during the course of my involvement in different talent acquisition processes and the industry practices will always be invaluable to my academic and career path.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends, who have helped and encouraged me to go through this journey. They have been an endless inspiration to encourage them.

Thank you so much to all your priceless pieces.

Executive Summary

The present report is on the talent acquisition practices within the leather industry in Bangladesh with the case study of STEP Footwear and Accessories Ltd. Leather, which is the second largest export business in the country after the RMG, is a very important industry in terms of economic development and job creation. During my internship at STEP, I realized how the company handles hiring, selection, orientation and workforce planning in a systematic manner. STEP uses a combination of the contemporary sourcing method, structured interview, and onboard approaches to recruit and keep the talent and a robust employer brand as a Made in Bangladesh company. In spite of its weaknesses like dependency on imported materials, and underdeveloped tools to perform advanced selection, STEP focuses on cultural fit, candidate experience, and employee involvement. My experience was an eye opener as it taught me some of the practical HR processes which not only guarantee organizational growth but also enhance the competitive stance of Bangladesh within the international footwear industry.

Keywords: Talent acquisition; Leather industry; STEP Footwear; Recruitment; Bangladesh; Human resource practices.

Contents

List of Acronyms

1. **BBA** - Bachelor of Business Administration
2. **BRAC** - Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
3. **HRM** - Human Resource Management
4. **STEP** - STEP Footwear and Accessories Ltd.
5. **RMG** - Ready-Made Garments
6. **CEO** - Chief Executive Officer
7. **HR** - Human Resources
8. **BD** - Bangladesh
9. **ATS** - Applicant Tracking System
10. **BIDA** - Bangladesh Investment Development Authority
11. **EPB** - Export Promotion Bureau
12. **SWOT** - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
13. **PPC** - Pay-Per-Click
14. **ROI** - Return on Investment
15. **CLV** - Customer Lifetime Value
16. **SEM** - Search Engine Marketing
17. **CPC** - Cost Per Click
18. **CTR** - Click-Through Rate
19. **KPI** - Key Performance Indicators
20. **CLV** - Customer Lifetime Value
21. **GDP** - Gross Domestic Product
22. **SEO** - Search Engine Optimization
23. **IoT** - Internet of Things

Chapter 1

Overview of Internship

1.1 Student Information

Name: Farin Tasnim Trina

ID: 20104031

Program: Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)

Major : Human Resource Management (HRM)

Minor: Marketing

1.2 Internship Information

1.2.1 Company Information

Company Name: Step Group of Industries Bangladesh

Department/ Division: HR Department

Tenure: 14th May, 2023 to 1th August

Address: Baly Complex (5th Floor), Plot-33, Sector-03, Uttara.

Logo:

1.2.2 Internship Company Supervisor’s Information:

Name: Rinkon Sarker

Position: HR & Admin, Assistant Manager

1.2.3 Job Scope – Job Description/Duties/Responsibilities:

My stay at Step group of industries Bangladesh allowed me to be part of and have an opportunity to work with the Human Resource Team. I served between 14th July and 17 th September. I was mainly assigned with administrative and recruitment functions in the human resources department. operations as an HR intern. During my employment period with Step group of industries Bangladesh I was assigned the following duties:

Administrative and Clerical Job

Data entry and record keeping: My job involved updating and maintaining employee databases and personnel files, with all the information being accurate and confidential.

Document management and filing: In this section, a number of HR-related documents should be organized and filed, including new hire, performance review, and termination documentation.

HR administration: I had to work in general office duties, write HR-related reports, and create internal communications as well as help with the payroll data gathering.

Recruitment and On-boarding

Job advertisements: I was requested to advertise job vacancies in terms of job boards, career pages and social media.

Resume screening: One of the most important tasks regularly performed is the screening of resumes and application forms with the view of getting competent employees to fill vacant jobs.

Interview coordination: This involves scheduling of interviews, contacting candidates and offering and rejection letters.

New hire orientation: I was doing shadow work and later helping in the preparation of on-boarding materials as well as coordination of new hire orientations so that the incoming employee can easily transition into the new job.

Event planning: I, as an intern used to participate in the organization of company events, such training and social gatherings.

Coupled with HR efforts: I participated in several HR projects that endeavored to enhance employee engagement, researching best practice.

My job was not only about work but also about relationships with people and improving the hiring process for everyone.

Relationships: I did not only collect them but created a personal talent pipeline of promising candidates. This has enabled me to call them personally and directly thus making the procedure of hiring quicker and more efficient.

Empowerment of the Team: I contributed to the establishment of an employee referral program to take advantage of the networks of the current team. This attracted quality candidates who fitted very well in our culture and minimized our recruitment expenses.

Automation of the Process: I have automated the process of application by simplifying our process and an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to automate the manual tasks. This implied that I could concentrate on the human aspect of hiring as opposed to being absorbed in administrative chores.

Focusing on Candidate Experience: I put it as a priority to treat each of the candidates in a respectful manner. I maintained contact with them and swiftly acted to make offers to the best talent. This assisted us in finding the best talent and retaining a positive image. Through my internship at STEP, I was involved in administrative duties, and all these duties were aimed towards serving my team and enhancing the efficiency of my department. I was involved directly in a number of projects as well as in a number of daily tasks, which provided me with the overall idea of how the company operates.

1.3 Internship Outcomes

1.3.1 Major responsibilities and contribution

Helping in Data Organization and Management: I was in charge of the day-to-day management of a high amount of company files. I was to sort and organize reports, correspondence, and client data in correct digital folders very carefully. This has made my team easily accessible in a fast and easy manner meaning that my team was able to prepare timely financial reports and audits.

Donating to Project-Based Work: I was actively involved in helping my group to follow important projects. This was through monitoring of our own systems in reference to deadlines and milestones so that everything was running according to time. I also assisted in preparing a weekly progress report to my line manager, which indicated the achievements of our team and also potential road blocks.

Administrative Support: In addition to my project activities, I was also instrumental in offering administrative support. My responsibility was to receive incoming calls and write minute meetings, hence no crucial information could be overlooked in absence of the team members at their workstations. This position served to keep the department workflow steady and efficient.

Teamwork: I joined forces with staff members in other departments such as finance and operations. I was responsible for organizing these teams to collect data and information required to make cross-departmental reports and presentations. The given experience not only enhanced my professional skills in communication but also equipped me with such a comprehensive view of how various sections of the company are interdependent.

1.3.2

My internship experience at STEP was not the one where I would turn up and do a list of things. It was three months of crash course education on how a real company operates and it taught me more than I would ever have learned in a textbook. I had an opportunity to become a true member of the team and work on some significant projects.

1.3.2 What I Did

I assisted in maintaining order. Each day, our files would be hundreds of files, reports, client data, etc. It was my duty to ensure that it was sorted and placed in the appropriate digital folders. Perhaps it sounds easy, but this was critical towards ensuring that anything that a member of the team needed could be found immediately, a fact that made our entire operation run smoothly.

I became a support system to my team. On top of my primary responsibilities, I ensured that I was present to support my fellow employees. I was the one who received some calls and made notes when they could not be at their desks. It was a mere trifle, and was of use in keeping up with no beat.

I learned to work with others. This was a massive experience on my part. I was able to cooperate with the representatives of other departments, such as finance and operations. This has taught me the way in which the various components of a company make sense and assisted me in developing my communication abilities.

1.3.3 What I learned

Real-world skills, the most significant lesson was to acquire practical experience. I had the opportunity to practice what I studied in school in actual life and address problems that were not in a case study.

Confidence, I was very confident having spent some time at STEP. I came to know how to deal with new challenges, as well as assume more responsibility, and this gave me confidence in my abilities.

This was the first time I had to learn how to maneuver within a corporate setting. I also got to know how to adjust to the office culture and manage myself professionally even in cases where there are minor challenges.

All in all, it was a worthy experience that made me grow as a professional and a person.

Chapter 2

Organization Part

2.1 Introduction

Leather Industry in Bangladesh- Current contributions

The leather and footwear business is among the most promising Bangladesh industries and the only industry to earn second place after the Ready-Made Garments (RMG) industry in terms of earnings and creation of employment. The industry plays a major role in the national GDP due to the increased demand of cheap leather products worldwide and the development of the domestic market of consumers. The industry also gets more than USD 1 billion in export revenues each year, with footwear being the most dominant growth during the last several years.

Economic Contribution: It is a major contributor of GDP in the form of exports, domestic sales and manufacturing activities. Reports indicate that the sector has been realizing revenue of more than USD 1 billion a year through exports and footwear has turned out to be the primary growth driver. In addition to exports,the domestic market is also growing because of the increasing middle-class interest in fashionable but inexpensive products.
Leather is a so-called thrust sector identified by the government due to its ability to diversify the exports and decrease reliance on garments. The industry is also expected to expand further and earn the economy additional foreign exchange due to due investments in compliance and technology.

Export Contribution: Finished leather, leather goods and footwear are the primary export of Bangladesh to the EU, USA and East Asian markets. Footwear has been the best-growing of these- especially leather shoes and sports footwear. It has been reported that the exports of leather footwear have been in the double-digit figures in the past couple of years, and this figure has been contributing most of the export revenues in the industry.

Under the BIDA and the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), the government assists exporters by providing short term cash incentives, tax incentives, and promotion. This has promoted local and foreign investments within the industry, particularly the footwear industry.

Employment Contribution: The business creates millions of direct and indirect employment. The employees are working throughout the value chain, in tanneries, factories, production of accessories, logistics, design, and retail. Big groups such as Savar, Gazipur, and Narayanganj, offer mass employment in industry particularly to semi-skilled and unskilled people. Small enterprises also bring about indirect employment by supplying raw materials, shoe components and packaging.

Leather factories give people with many opportunities to earn a certain income, which is stable in many cases both in rural areas and urban ones. The industry also involves the employment of women especially in stitching, finishing and retailing activities.

2.1.1 Company Profile

STEP footwear and accessories company Ltd.

Industry

Footwear & Accessories

Headquarters

Baly Complex (5 th), Plot-33, Sector-03, Uttara West, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Factories

Bangalgaas, Joydebpur, Gazipur, Bangladesh 57/3.

Key People

Mr. Aminul Islam (CEO), Mr. Shamim Kabir (Managing Director).

Products

Men, Women, and Children Furniture (Casual, Dress, Sports, Sandals, Slippers); Accessories (Backpacks, Wallets, Socks, Luggage).

Website

https://www.stepfootwear.com/

The history of STEP footwear and accessories company Ltd.

STEP has been an effective supplier of premium and exclusive footwear and accessories. It has played a significant part of the company because it makes local products with the prestigious Made label in BD. Over time, STEP has diversified its operations to a large number of retail outlets therefore its products can be found in the highest number of customers. The management of this company has been strategically obsessed and operationally excellent so as to achieve sustainable growth and sustainable effects on the economy of the country.

2.2 Overview of the Company

STEP footwear and accessories is an enterprise that operates in the dynamic retail and manufacturing industry, the primary goal of which is to manufacture good quality, comfortable and trendy products. The brand is also known through its unique designs and masterly, which is tailored to the new fashion trends. Even though it is not possible to tell about the exact details of the operations. The business model of the company relies on the fact that it appears in the open providing a diverse range of products to a large audience of consumers.

2.2.1 Vision

To be a large and well-known shoe brand with a quality and promise of the same design creativity and top-quality customer satisfaction.

2.2.2 Mission

To manufacture high-frequency, comfortable, stylish shoes that will provide value to the lives of customers and to be a prototype of quality and craftsmanship in the market.

2.2.3 Principles

STEP consists of three significant concepts: Ultimate Comfort: It is ensured with the assistance of special material that all of the footwear would be comfortable to its user.

trendy Designs: it would be in touch with the current trends on fashion so as to offer the newest and trendy products. Happy Customers: Customer satisfaction through quality, value and comfort.

2.2.4 Core Values

It has anthropocentric values and core values such as: Tired Innovation pursuit: Planning and producing fresh and superior product designing and manufacturing techniques.

2.2.5 Leadership

The STEP management is strategic expansion oriented and personnel building. The company also has the leadership of its Managing Director and its CEO whose three-year road map is oriented towards the development of the business, market growth, trend based innovation. It is a more information-based form of leadership disposition to not only concentrate on short term returns but also on long term organizational competencies.

2.2.6 Product Offering

STEP boasts of a large choice of shoes and accessories which satisfy the demands of various consumers.

Footwear:

Men: Dress shoes, casual shoes, sneakers, sandals and slippers.

Women: Sandals, heels, flats and casual shoes.

Children: Children footwear, school shoes, casual keds, etc.

Accessories:

Backpacks

Socks

Leather wallets

Luggage

2.2.7 Signature Projects

There is no publicly available data of the specific signature projects. The business strategy could be found as the ones mentioned in the IPDC report of three that are referred to by STEP presupposes the constant commitment to the product diversification and market growth.

The company has a good image in terms of its Corporate Social responsibility. The combination of the social responsibility strategy practiced by STEP is combined with its business philosophy in which its focus is laid on business ethics and human resource growth. The leaders of the companies know that there must be a positive work-life and support work culture. It is also worth having products that have been Made in BD to the local economy because it binds the company to production of products.

and providing career opportunities.

2.2.8 Quality Policy

The level of quality of the company is reflected in the attempts to utilize quality crafts and materials.The trust of its and the reputation. This policy is founded on customers.

2.2.9 Achievements

No general list of particular awards and achievements of STEP is documented publicly as is the case of IPDC. However, the continual evolution of the The main indicators are the company and strategic market expansion of the success of the firms in the competitive footwear market.Leather and footwear talk (season 2) with Aminul Islam Shamim-

CEO,Steps footwear Ltd. The video is timely in the sense that the CEO of STEP Footwear is the one who owns the video discusses the plan of the business and its ideology.

2.3 Company Practices

2.3.1 STEP Footwear and Accessories departments

Though no elaborated organogram is available in the open, the departments are as follows.

the inclusion of which would be customary in the case of such a company as STEP Footwear & Accessories the departments focused on the entire design-sales value chain. According to the publicly proclaimed Strategy Planning emphasis of the business value chain Optimization, people development, Organization development and Operational Excellence, the next important departments at the moment can be defined as Design and Production: This department design of the product, source of production process working in the materials and management factory in Gazipur. They do not just focus on making something stylish, but on quality work.

Marketing and Sales: It is the department that talks about the presence of this brand, the sales promotion and the avenues of sale. It is their job to push sales through the different retail outlets and the internet platform, in the objective of receiving the products of the company into the right hands.

Human Resources (HR): The HR department will be instrumental in attracting and retaining talent. It would tend to handle the recruitment, training, the leadership, which in turn, is performance management, and positive work culture, which, in turn, is performance management of the company has been emphasized publicly on.

Finance and Administration: This department works in charge of financial planning, accounting and budgeting. It also deals with the administrative side of the. company that makes running of the company a smooth affair.

Supply Chain and Logistics: Outsources are going to be imported hence. This department would be central to the supply chain management. Its responsibilities would include sourcing of raw materials, inventory management and handling the logistics of making sure that the finished goods do reach the retail outlets by the factory.

Figure: SWOT Analysis

2.4.2 SWOT Analysis

This model establishes the weaknesses and strengths of the company.

the internal and the external opportunities and threats.

Strengths

Good Brand Recognition: Made in BD brand name is also attractive to the local consumer and reminds the company that it is completely committed to Manufacturing at the national scale.

Big Box Store: Has a substantial number of physical stores in Dhaka. The company is very present in the market in other major cities accessibility by consumers.

Lay More Stress on Comfort and Design: Publicity and description of products puts emphasis on cozy and fashionable designs which is a significant selling point in the market.

Experienced Leadership: The leadership that is supported by the industry experience,

is the strategic management that is being offered to grow and expand into the market.

Weaknesses

The Company is very reliant on imported materials: the importation of raw materials, such as outsources, leaves the company at the mercy of currency risks and supply chain risks.

Absence of Public Transparency: The company is privately operated and therefore no public. This complicates the process of establishing the performance of the financial reports. company and therefore limit the potential of investment by the external stakeholders.

High Competition: It has established brands like Bata and Apex and it has not been the case as there are many other local and foreign competitors in the market to retain market share.

Opportunities

Economic contribution (overview)

The leather & footwear sector is one of Bangladesh's important export sectors after RMG, and it has shown strong growth recently — driven especially by footwear. Between July 2024 and May 2025 total leather exports (leather, leather goods and footwear) rose to about US$1.06 billion, an increase vs the previous year, with leather footwear being the largest driver of growth. World Footwear+1

Export performance (figures & trends)

Leather footwear exports saw double-digit growth in FY24 and into FY25; several trade reports show **~24% YoY growth in leather footwear** in FY24 and strong gains in non-leather footwear as well. This shows footwear (rather than finished leather or leather goods) is the fastest-growing segment at present. Bida+1

Export promotion measures and incentives (cash incentives for footwear and leather goods) announced recently have supported rising exports and investment interest in the value chain. LightCastle Partners

Employment generation: The leather and footwear sector supports substantial direct and indirect employment — from tannery and material processing to factory floor workers, product development, logistics and retail. National and trade publications emphases the industry's role in job creation in industrial clusters (e.g., Savar, Gazipur, Narayanganj) and in backward linkage enterprises (shoe-lasts, components). STEP and related enterprises contribute through factories and supply-chain jobs. Leatherfootwear Bangladesh+1

Policy & investment context: Government and private sector actors (export incentives, trade bodies, industry promotion) are actively supporting the sector's expansion into export markets — particularly the U.S. and EU. Lightcastle and BIDA summaries highlight new incentives and rising investor interest in footwear manufacturing.

Threats

Intense Competition: The Bangladeshi footwear industry is a competitive market, where the leading industry players are Bata, Apex and others, both local and international. This puts a continuous pressure on STEP to maintain market share.

Rising Raw Material Costs: Extensive dependence on foreign raw materials, particularly soles and leather parts, subjects STEP to fluctuation of currency, increase in global prices and disruptions in supply chains.

Shifting Consumer Tastes: A sudden change in fashion trends and the growing popularity of international brands can decrease the loyalty of local customers to the local footwear.

Pressure on the Environment and Compliance: International consumers are becoming tough on sustainability and ethical manufacture. The failure to comply with the environmental policies in the tanning, waste management, and labour standards may restrict the STEP exporting possibilities.

Economic Uncertainty: Demand of footwear products in Bangladesh can be adversely impacted by inflation, increasing production cost, and declining consumer purchasing power.

Global Trade Barriers: STEP expansion into foreign markets is susceptible to tariff policies, changing trade agreements, and geopolitical instabilities especially the EU markets and US market.

Recommendations

1. Take advantage of a Good Brand Recognition: STEP needs to expand its retail distribution network and e-commerce through its brand identity of Made in Bangladesh. It can also enhance its competitive advantage by means of marketing campaigns that would focus on comfort, design, and affordability.

2. Lessen Reliance on Foreign Raw Materials: In order to reduce the risks associated with currency fluctuations and supply chain interruptions, STEP ought to invest in domestic sourcing and local collaborations with local suppliers. This would also assist backward connection in the leather industry in Bangladesh.

3. Enhance Openness and Disclosure: Because STEP is privately managed with minimal information available to the public, the publication of annual sustainability or performance reports might bring investor confidence and enhance stakeholder trust.

4. Increase Competitive Positioning: In order to handle intense competition levels with Bata, Apex and foreign brands, STEP ought to work on product differentiation issues by innovating, using sustainable materials and fashionable designs.

5. Capitalize on Export Sights: Since the world is increasing its exports of footwear, STEP must not just limit itself to the domestic market, but it must also seek to tap into international consumers, particularly in the EU and US markets, which are ever-demanding of cheap leather footwear.

6. Invest in Automation and Technology: This can be achieved through adopting automated manufacturing and advanced supply chain systems to enhance efficiency, minimize costs and ensure uniform quality of product to fit the export market standards.

7. Solve Environmental and Compliance Problems: In order to address the buyer needs and threats posed by the tougher environmental regulations, STEP ought to intensify its waste management and environmentally-friendly production processes. Credibility in the global markets will also be achieved through the achievement of certifications (such as ISO, LEED, or compliance audits).

8. Development of the Employee as a Strategic Resource: STEP must leverage its strong leadership team by developing organized training, leadership development initiatives and talent retention procedures that would see it stay competitive in the long run.

SWOT Analysis Interpretation of STEP

As I could observe the strengths of STEP, I could easily understand why the brand has been able to grow so much. The identity of Made in Bangladesh makes people have confidence in the products and the extensive retail network ensures that customers can readily locate STEP outlets nearly anywhere in Dhaka and other cities.

Simultaneously I observed certain weaknesses. A large portion of the problem is that STEP relies too much on imported raw materials. This implies that when the dollar rate increases or gets stuck in the global chains, the costs increase and the production slows.

They do not publish much financial information as STEP is privately owned and this may make an investor apprehensive. And finally, the rivalry is ferocious there - such brands as Bata and Apex already make a massive presence.

There are opportunities, though, as well. E-commerce is on fire in Bangladesh and I believe that STEP can benefit a lot by driving further into online sales. They were also able to diversify, such as introducing sports shoes or higher quality accessories.

On the other side, there are threats that STEP always needs to maintain a look out on. The increasing cost of living and inflation may be considered as some of the factors that will cause individuals to spend less money on footwear.

In general, I believe that STEP is well-placed to expand, although it must be intelligent. The brand already enjoys both trust and visibility, yet to take it a step further it must decrease reliance on imports, combat counterfeits, and take advantage of online mediums and eco-friendly products.

A Five Forces Analysis of STEP Footwear by Porter

1. Competitive Rivalry – High

The Bangladeshi footwear sector is very competitive and has its own local and international competitors such as Bata, Apex, Lotto and Walkar. The price and design competition are also fierce, and STEP needs to be always innovative and uphold quality. The pressure on STEP to maintain and expand market share is high because of high brand recognition of rivalry and extensive retail networks. There is also further competition due to low product differentiation of basic segments of footwear.

Implication: STEP needs to work on brand positioning, quality craftsmanship, and design innovation in order to be differentiated.

2. Threat of New Entrants -Moderate to High

The barriers to entry are medium since the initial capital needed in the production of small-scale footwear is not very high. Nonetheless, it is very difficult to reach large-scale distribution, brand confidence and meeting international standards (environmental and labor laws). Footwear and leather incentives by the government in support of exports can bring in new players. Established players such as STEP have brand recognition and already have a retail network.

Implication: STEP needs to ensure that it has a competitive advantage by utilizing the Made in Bangladesh brand, its existing retail business and leadership experience.

3. Supplier Power- High

STEP relies largely on imported raw materials, particularly raw materials of outsoles and certain leathers. Costs are escalated because of currency variations, international price fluctuations and international supply chain disruptions. Lack of domestic production of large quantities of quality raw materials gives the suppliers high bargaining power.

Implication: STEP should establish local relationships with suppliers and invest in backward linkages industries to minimize supplier dependence or risk exposure.

4. Buyer Power -Moderate to High

The domestic market is also price sensitive as buyers focus on increasing inflation and other low-cost alternatives offered by the local and foreign brands. International customers are demanding that producers in the export market improve strict adherence to quality, sustainability, and ethical production standards, which may impose high costs on producers. Buyers are further empowered by the online shopping platforms as they are provided with more options.

Implication: STEP must explore green production, emphasize on quality and comfort, and improve on customer loyalty programms to minimize buyer switching.

5. Threat of Substitutes- Moderate

In the case of footwear, substitutes will be low-cost synthetic products, worn out shoes, and foreign fast-fashion brands.Younger consumers with a strong sense of fashion tend to switch to trendy imports, whereas low-end buyers can opt to use cheaper and less quality alternatives. Substitutes are, however, few in case of basic footwear requirements.

Implication: The strategy to be adopted by STEP should be based on affordability, comfort, and trendy design combined with physical emphasis on the Made in Bangladesh value proposition in order to mitigate the risk of substitutions.

Figure : Porters Analysis

Chapter 3

Project Part

Project name: Talent acquisition of STEP

3.1 Introduction

Human Resource Management plays a very crucial role as it makes sure that talent acquisition is one of the most significant functions that the organization attracts, selects and retains the best talent in the labor market. Compared to the conventional approach of recruitment, talent acquisition is a wider and more enduring strategic process of aligning workforce strategist, procurement, recruitment and orientation towards the long-term objectives of the organization. During the course of my internship at STEP, I was able to observe and be part of the organization practices in talent acquisition that gave me concrete ideas about how HR policies and procedures work are performed in practice. This chapter covers STEP recruitment, selection, orientation, and so forth processes that fall under the bigger umbrella of talent acquisition.

3.2 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- What is the Staffing and Hiring and Selections practices at STEP?

- How do we source and screen applicants?

- What is the orientation and on-boarding of new employees?

- What are the weaknesses and strengths in the talent acquisition practice of STEP?

3.3 Research Objectives

Key Purpose: To investigate the talent acquisition practices of STEP.

Specific Objectives:

- To investigate the process of hiring and selection at STEP.

- To examine practices of orientation and on-boarding.

- To learn about sourcing, workforce planning and screening strategies.

- To find problems and suggest how to make it better.

3.4 Significance of the Study

The research bears a substantial importance because acquisition of talent is not only an HR task but also a strategic organizational success formula. When dealing with a competitive and skill-sensitive industry such as the manufacturing of footwear, then attracting, recruiting, and retaining qualified employees will have a direct impact on the productivity, service delivery, and the overall growth of an organization.

In the case of STEP Footwear and Accessories Ltd., talent acquisition is effective because it will see that the company has a workforce that is able to meet its production needs, brand recognition and its future growth objectives. The paper assists in determining the role played by the recruitment and on-boarding processes of STEP in developing a stable, skilled, and motivated workforce that fits within the cultures and business goals of the company.

Moreover, the study brings indicators on how structured recruitment, open assessment, and constant enhancement in recruitment procedures could result in increased employee engagement, lower turnover, and better organization performance. The results of the present study can advise the management of STEP to improve their HR programs to enhance the workforce capacity and gain competitive edge in the changing footwear sector of Bangladesh.

3.5 Literature Review

3.5.1 Introduction

Talent acquisition has become one of the most fundamental roles of Human Resource Management (HRM) in the contemporary business environment. As competition and the rate of industrialization are on the rise, organizations have been forced to acquire the finest talents in order to achieve operational perfection and sustainability in their performance. Phillips and Gully (2015) note that talent acquisition is not just any other recruitment process, it includes identifying, attracting, and keeping talents that are capable of aligning with the long-term goals of an organization.

In the expanding industrial environment in Bangladesh particularly in the labor-intensive industries like leather and footwear production, talent acquisition practices must be efficient. Organizations such as the STEP Footwear and Accessories Ltd. are guided by systematic, transparent and ethical recruitment processes so that they can be able to select competent individuals who can help the company achieve the targets of production and quality of their products.

The next part will cover the definition of the concept of talent acquisition, procedures and techniques used by STEP, the relevance of the process, and principles, according to which the company will build a recruitment framework.

3.5.2 Idea of Talent Acquisition

Talent acquisition is a procurement strategy and a permanent process that involves the development of a workforce that is relevant to both skills requirements as well as the cultural values of an organization. It is a process of predicting talent requirements in future, where it can be sourced and how to build networks with potential recruits (Bersin, 2019).

The talent acquisition is a long-term workforce planning, employer branding, and candidate experience, unlike the short-term recruitment that concentrates on the vacancies that are available in the present moment. This will be a sustainable source of talent and increased retention rates of employees.

Not only does good talent acquisition assist organizations to get able workers, but also builds on the image of the employer in the market place. A robust talent pipeline is a competitive advantage in an industry such as the footwear manufacturing where skilled workmanship and discipline in operations are paramount.

3.5.3 STEP Approach to Talent Acquisition

The Human resource department of STEP Footwear and Accessories Ltd. has established a well-structured talent acquisition process which involves strategic planning and practice. The strategy of the company is designed in the following steps:

Workforce Planning: The initial step of the process is to determine the needs of the staff oriented to the production schedules, expansion objectives and seasonal requirements with the help of STEP. The HR works closely with the heads of departments in anticipating manpower they need and schedule it.

Sourcing: Sourcing is done by several methods with the application commonly used being online job portals, internal referral, and walk-in interviews. Internal mobility is also promoted in the company whereby current employees are encouraged to take up the position when there is a vacancy.

Screening and Selection: Applications are filtered according to the job relevance, technical knowledge and behavioral fit. The HR department will then proceed to carry out interviews and evaluations to identify the best candidates.

Orientation and On-boarding: New recruits will undergo an orientation program that is done after the selection process and this is done to help them understand the culture of the firm, its safety measures and expectations of performance.

This system of organization guarantees efficiency, fairness and consistency in hiring decisions. It is also appropriate because STEP considers that the right individuals are the keys to long-term business success.

The significance of talent acquisition is based on the fact that it assists in enhancing the organization's performance and boosting its productivity.

3.5.4. The significance of talent acquisition is:

Developing an effective work force: Means that the company will hire people who are skilled and with the appropriate mindset to deliver the production targets.

Minimizing turnover: Recruiting staff that fits the organizational culture will reduce the rates of turnover and mitigate trainee expenses.

Improving employer brand: An open and equitable recruitment process will also improve the brand of STEP as a preferred employer.

Enabling long-term growth: Strategic planning will enable STEP to match the long-term business expansion with the future manpower requirements.

According to Chugh and Bhatnagar (2006), sustained advantage is produced when talent acquisition processes are done efficiently, as it guarantees the right talent in the right positions at the right time.

3.5. 5 Leading Principles of Talent Acquisition of STEP

STEP footwear and accessories Ltd. follows a code of guiding principles that define its talent acquisition model. These principles encourage objectivity, diversity and professionalism in any recruitment exercise.

Merit-Based Selection: It means that all the applicants are assessed according to their qualifications, experience, and performance in interviews.

Equal Opportunity: The company considers hiring without discrimination that acknowledges diversity and gender inclusion.

Transparency and Ethics: open communication is also practiced with the candidates throughout the process, which makes it trustful and accountable.

These principles help ensure that the trends in recruitment have made STEP create a sustainable and professional talent acquisition system that can meet the short-term requirements of the company and enable the long-term development of the organization.

3.5.6. Steps of Talent Acquisition

There are generally several steps in the talent acquisition process:

Planning of Workforce - Predicting future workforce and matching it with business strategy.

Sourcing – Finding candidates through job boards, referrals as well as the use of social media.

Screening and Assessment- CV screening, aptitude test, psychometric test, short listing.

Selection - Interviewing and testing of the candidates on both technical and cultural basis.

Offer Management- Making official job offers and negotiating agreements.

Onboarding -Assistance to new employees to smooth into the company culture and operation (Bauer, 2010). By working in concert these measures will ensure that the organization does not only recruit but also employs qualified and engaged employees.

3.5.7 Talent Acquisition techniques

Organizations use various strategies to acquire their talents based on resources and industry forces. Common methods include: promotions, transfers, and referral of internal recruitment increase the morale of the employees (DeVaro, 2020). External recruitment, achieved by online means, career fairs, and head-hunting, which increases the pool of candidates. The company can explain to clients the values and work culture that makes the company an appealing place to work through employer branding (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Online solutions like Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) and AI-driven screening to become more efficient (Nikolaou, 2021).

In STEP, sourcing was primarily done using online job portals such as Bdjobs and social media and structured interviews and referral programs were used to supplement the process.

3.5.4 Significance of Talent Acquisition

Good talent acquisition is essential in organizational growth and competitiveness. Effective process guarantees enhancing employee retention, the alignment of culture, and encouraging performance results (Cascio and Boudreau, 2016). Talent acquisition can help companies to hire qualified workers at the appropriate time of the year in the business such as the footwear and retail industries where customer service and seasonal demand is paramount. In the case of STEP, effective acquisition activities directly affect the sales performance at peak seasons such as Eid, and the brand image in the long-term.

3.5.5 Talent Acquisition Guiding Principles of STEP

Based on what I have observed, during my internship, STEP has several guiding principles in its approach to talent acquisition:

Fairness and Transparency Structured interviews and scoring systems help to reduce bias.

Emphasis on Cultural Fit - Attitudes, flexibility and teamwork among the candidates are given priority together with the technical skills.

Employer Branding -The focus of the Employer Bangladesh identity on being Made in Bangladesh draws in candidates in line with its mission.

Candidate Experience- A relationship of trust and respect is developed through maintaining contact with the applicants.

3.6 Methodology

The study is an exploratory one, and seeks to learn about the talent acquisition patterns of STEP Group of Industries. The paper is aimed at defining the way STEP attracts, selects, and hires employees, and the principles according to which the HR team at this company guides the processes. The information was gathered during my internship experience in STEP, during which I closely worked with the Human Resources and the Administration Department of the Talent Acquisition section. The majority of the data were collected using observations, unstructured interviews and study of HR documents.

Research Design

In order to fulfill the aims of this research, qualitative research was employed. This strategy was taken in order to have a clear picture of the real recruitment process based on real experiences and not numerical data.

The gathered information was obtained during the everyday HR tasks, i.e., helping to screen CVs, schedule interviews, and monitor on-boarding programs. Besides, non-official meetings were conducted with HR executives and supervisors to understand their recruitment approaches and difficulties.

Sample Population

The sample population was made up of employees of the HR and Admin Department of STEP and some departmental supervisors who participated in recruitment and selection. As I was directly engaged with the HR staff during the internship, I got access to the processes and people involved in the hiring and on-boarding process. Primarily, the respondents were the HR executives, recruitment officers, and the newly hired employees of STEP. Their experiences assisted me in comprehending the way the company deals with the talent acquisition process in its entirety.

Sampling Technique

The research was conducted through a purposive sampling method; thus the sample of the research was selected on the basis of their engagement in HR activities. As the study was conducted on the topic of the talent acquisition process, only individuals who directly engaged with the processes of recruitment and on-boarding were included. The sampling technique was good since it enabled the gathering of relevant and detailed information on the people that are most familiar with how the process works.

Data Collection

The data of this study were collected by:

Observation: In my internship, I was exposed to all the processes involved in the hiring process, including posting job circulars to ensure the employees are onboarded.

Informal Interviews: I also short-interviewed HR executives, recruitment coordinators, and new employees in regards to their job and experiences.

Document Review: I went through job ads, CV screening questionnaires, and onboarding documents of the HR department.

The findings were collected based on the real organizational practices; thus they were real and practical.

3.7 Findings and Analysis

The study on **"Talent Acquisition Practices at STEP Group of Industries"** reveals several key insights into how the company manages its recruitment, selection, and on-boarding processes. The findings are based on my internship observations, informal interviews with HR executives, and company document review.

The research applies the **Talent Acquisition Framework**, which includes workforce planning, sourcing, screening, selection, and on-boarding, to understand how theory is reflected in STEP's real-life HR operations.

In this paper, the author has used the Talent Acquisition Theory to gain an insight into how the STEP Group of Industries conducts its general recruitment and selection process. According to the theory, successful talent acquisition comprises five main processes, which are workforce planning, sourcing, screening, selection and on-boarding. I was able to follow every step of this process during my internship with STEP, and it allowed me to see the ways in which the practical HR activities of the company go in line with the theoretical model.

3.7.1 Workforce Planning

According to the Talent Acquisition Theory, the workforce planning entails the determination of present and future manpower requirements in accordance with the business goals. It aids in proper assurance that the right number of people is available at the right place and at the right time.

At STEP, I realized that workforce planning at the HR department is mostly done according to the production schedules, seasonal demands, and sales forecasts. As an illustration, prior to the Eid or other promotional seasons, the HR organizes more hiring spurs related to the production and sales units.

Findings: The observation is that, STEP planning of its workforce is short term and need driven, however, it is useful in supporting operational requirements. Limited use of long-term forecasting and analysis of data are used in predicting future staffing requirements, however.

3.7.2 Sourcing

The theory points out that sourcing entails attracting the right employees using different internal and external methods like job portals, referrals, and campus recruitment.

The HR department of STEP primarily uses Bdjobs, Facebook and LinkedIn to advertise on job circles and recruit candidates. Internal referrals are also encouraged particularly when it comes to experienced jobs. Walk-in interviews are made to take place in the case of factory-based jobs.

Findings: I discovered that the sourcing procedure at STEP is successful in accessing a great number of applicants via online channels. Nevertheless, the company can get better by establishing a better employer brand and cooperating with universities to recruit young professionals.

3.7.3 Screening and Shortlisting

Screening assists the HR professionals to select candidates based on education, skills and experience in order to get the best candidates who fit within the job requirements. At STEP, the HR executives screen the CVs manually. They look at education, experience at work, and communication ability and then shortlist job seekers. Phone calls are also made to follow up on the details of the candidates.

Findings: The results indicate that the screening process of STEP is correct but manual and therefore is time-consuming. It is fair and it is personal to every application, but making it digital or an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) may enhance efficiency.

3.7.4 Interview and Selection

The Talent Acquisition Theory states that during the interview, one can evaluate the technical, cultural and motivation skills of the candidate. Bias is minimized by structured and fair assessments.

As an intern, I was present at a number of interviews where the HR executives and departmental heads attended. Knowledge, attitude, and communication skills were the criteria used in the evaluation of the candidates. There were also practical tests conducted on some of the technical positions.

Findings: The theoretical model is adequately followed in the process of selection at STEP. It is participation, equitable and competence based, such that the successful candidates are competent and fit in the culture of the organization. Nevertheless, HR does not work off a formal evaluation sheet and this may make the decisions more consistent.

3.7.5 Onboard and Orientation

The last phase of the theory is on assimilating the new workers into the company through orientation and socialization so that the workers feel welcomed and informed.

At STEP , When a candidate is offered the position, an orientation program is conducted by the HR. New employees are brought through the policies of the company, departments and culture of the workplace. They are also informed about attendance and safety regulations and procedures.

Findings: On-boarding in STEP is effective and enables the employees to adjust and feel at home. It facilitates interaction and appreciation of the company culture. Nonetheless, job-specific training may be used in the on-boarding process, to enable the employees to work more efficiently in their jobs.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Through my experience as an intern, I realized that the talent acquisition practices at STEP are both organized and flexible to the evolving business requirements. The processes of hiring and selection are clear, sourcing techniques are varied and on-boarding activities are meant to develop employee engagement. In general, the project emphasizes that talent acquisition is not just about filling the vacuum but it is also about developing a driven and competent workforce to power the long-term success of STEP.

To sum up, STEP has built a good base of talent acquisition yet more workforce planning, taking advantage of HR technology, and organized orientation programs would improve overall performance. By enhancing these practices, STEP will not only enhance the growth of the organization but also help the leather industry to be more competitive on a global scale in Bangladesh.

Enhance Workforce Planning: STEP needs to embrace data-intensive workforce planning solutions that would help it to predict the seasonal demand and employee demands. This will minimize the pressure of hiring at the last moment and have the right talent at the right time.

Empower Employer Branding: The emphasis on the Made in Bangladesh identity of STEP, ethical sourcing, and culture that is employee-friendly, publicized via digital channels and career fairs, will help to attract more talented employees and save money on hiring.

Implement Structure Evaluation Systems: Although, STEP uses interviews and reference checks as its current practices, the introduction of psychometric tests, casework, and skill-testing would enhance the quality and cultural appropriateness of the candidates.

Increase Training and Development: By providing on-boarding training and providing ongoing training programs on skills, it will assist in retaining employees, provide more engagement, and train future leaders in the organization.

Take advantage of Technology in Recruiting: The implementation of Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) and AI-based CV screening will help make the recruitment process more transparent, efficient, and less resource-consuming.

Enhance Orientation & On-boarding: Along with the orientation, the process of becoming acquainted with the paperwork, the practice of orientation should be extended to mentorship programs, frequent check-ins, and activities related to the cultural integration of new employees to make their induction process more comfortable and enhance retention rates.

Multiply Channels of Talent Sourcing: To reach a larger number of youths and talented young professionals, STEP ought to extend its recruitment channel into universities, vocational institutions, and online job fairs.

Target Employee Engagement & Retention: The implementation of structured feedback programs, recognition and career advancement opportunities will minimize employee turnover and enhance employee loyalty.

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