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Recruitment and Selection Process During Pandemic (Covid-19).

Case Company: Ahmed Bag Industry Private Trader

**KAMK • University
of Applied Sciences**

Abstract

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The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected most businesses. Human resource management is based on successfully maintaining the needs of human resources. Organizations must maintain their human resource management well to achieve their organizational goals. The pandemic forced the company to shift its work to remote working. This also leads to changes in the recruitment and selection process. The pandemic has created a lot of difficulties for employers to get new talent and hire them into their organization.

In this master's thesis, the main focus was on the various categories of recruitment and selection processes, and changes in the way of working in the organization. In this, the Qualitative method was used to find the solutions to the research questions. There were three research questions, the impact of COVID-19 on organization performance, work from home impact on the organization and the recommendation for the commissioner company to adopt a new recruiting policy. The content was structured through the use of Gioia's methodology in which four themes were derived Role improvisation, stress, isolation, and self-personalized creativity. These four themes predict the clear details of organizational work culture and employees' behavior during the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic had adversely impacted the industry. They are reviving back but they are shortages of skilled workers in the market. There is a need to change n human resource management practices in the organization in order to gain the high profit and to achieve organizational goals. Human Resources are assets for the organization and there is a need to properly nurture the employees and enhance their skills. This will help them to increase their output and efficiency.

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1. Introduction

Human resource management is based on successfully maintaining the needs of human resources. Organizations must maintain their human resource management well to achieve their organizational goals. The disaster and crises that occur generally during this time have shattered the working of the organization completely. The pandemic forced the company to shift its work to remote working. This also leads to changes in the recruitment and selection process. The pandemic has created a lot of difficulties for employers to get new talent and hire them into their organization. The restrictions put in due to the ongoing pandemic have resulted in job losses, nationwide lockdown, an economic slump, and shutdown of businesses (Kamran et al., 2015).

An important part of human resource management is the recruitment and selection process. According to Edwin B Flippo, "The process of searching for employees and motivating them to apply for the jobs in the organization is called as Recruitment" (Prin Kamala Balasubramanian, 2014). Selection is the step after the recruitment phase. Selection refers to the process of selecting the person who is eligible for the post available in the organization. Thus, these two processes are the crucial phase in the organization. During the pandemic, these two phases are also affected the most in the company because of low economic activity, and GDP slowdown (Ghimire,2021).

This master's thesis aims to identify the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on organizations' recruitment and selection process. In the research work, the recruitment and selection process that must be followed during the pandemic phase such as Zoom or Skype interviews, telephonic interviews, online tests, etc will be discussed. In this, the main work is to understand the effect of a pandemic on the other aspects, such as the quality of hiring employees, the time taken to fill the vacant posts, and the cost spent on the hiring and selection process.

The result of this study will be beneficial for HR professionals and managers to improve the practices for recruitment and selection during and after the pandemic. We will also suggest some recommendations that should be followed by the company during these phases.

1.1 Research Aim

The main aim of the Master's thesis is to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the recruitment and selection process of Ahmed Bag Industry Private Traders in Bangladesh. The employers and employees faced a lot of challenges during the pandemic related to recruitment and selection process. The viewpoints of employers and employees were discussed in the further research. During the pandemic Work from Home is a new trending concept, but to understand the benefits and drawbacks of this concept are necessary. So, this thesis focuses on the impact of working from home on the employee.

1.2 Research Problem

During COVID-19, there was no new onboarding of employees in the industry because of the shutdown of industries temporarily and even the existing employees leave their jobs and went back to their hometowns. Once, the restrictions were lifted new challenges were occur before the industry related to the recruitment of new employees. The pandemic has also changed the recruitment pattern. So, this problem is addressed in this thesis.

During COVID-19, the concept of Working from home was implemented by many companies. But still, this concept has its benefit and drawbacks and also it hugely impacts employee behavior which needs to be addressed.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the impacts of COVID-19 on the recruitment and selection process and organizational performance of the company Ahmed Bag industry private trader?

2. What are the impacts of working from home during COVID-19 on employees' behavior?

3. What are the recommendations for the Ahmed Bag industry private trader, if they change their recruitment and selection process to online platforms?

1.4 Significance of Study

An organization is only as good as its employees when it comes to matching the roles to the people who have the most long-term potential for the firm and achieving growth goals. So, the thesis aims to analyze the recruitment and selection process during and after the Ahmed Bag Industry Private Traders pandemic. This will be beneficial for the organization to understand the various challenges during the recruitment and selection phases. In the last, recommendations will be provided for the changes in the recruitment process of the company.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The first chapter of the thesis is related to the Introduction part and research aim research problems, and research questions. The second chapter discussed the theoretical background that is required for the thesis. The third chapter is related to the commissioning company, i.e., the Ahmed bag industry private trader. The next chapter is related to research methodology where the methods used for the research will be discussed. Then, chapter fourth discussed the data collection and analysis part. Chapter Six and chapter seven are related to theoretical research work on the topic of the recruitment and selection process. In the next chapter, the research outcome will be discussed. Then the results and the last conclusion and discussion will include.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Human Resource Management:

"Human resource management (HRM) is a field of management that deals with planning, organizing, directing, controlling the functions of recruiting, developing, efficiently maintaining and utilizing proper manpower". French Wendell defines Human resources as, "the planning, recruiting, directing, controlling, employing and motivating the human resource to achieve the organizational goals." Leon C. Megginson defines human resources as the national point of view, "Human resources are knowledge, skills, talents, creativity and unique attitude that can be attained in the nation's population." Human resource management has gained its origin from the earlier concept of Personnel Management, which considers the management of different people in an organization. Murad (2000) explains, "Human resource management is a method that can be used to monitor the activities of staff and also provide them an efficient working environment with the support and coordination of higher authorities." Human resource management is the concept of the 5M's that includes Men, Money, Machinery, Materials, and Methods. So, we can say that HRM is a vast concept and this is needed to manage these 5M's in the organization. The main functions of human resource management (*Functions of Human Resource Management - HRM*, 2015).

1.) Human resource planning, Recruitment, and Selection

2.) Human resource development

3.) Compensation and benefits

4.) Safety and Health

5.) Employee and labor relations

6.) Research and development

The HRM process includes recruiting, selection, training, compensation and benefits, and maintaining employee relations in the organization. In this research work, we focus on the

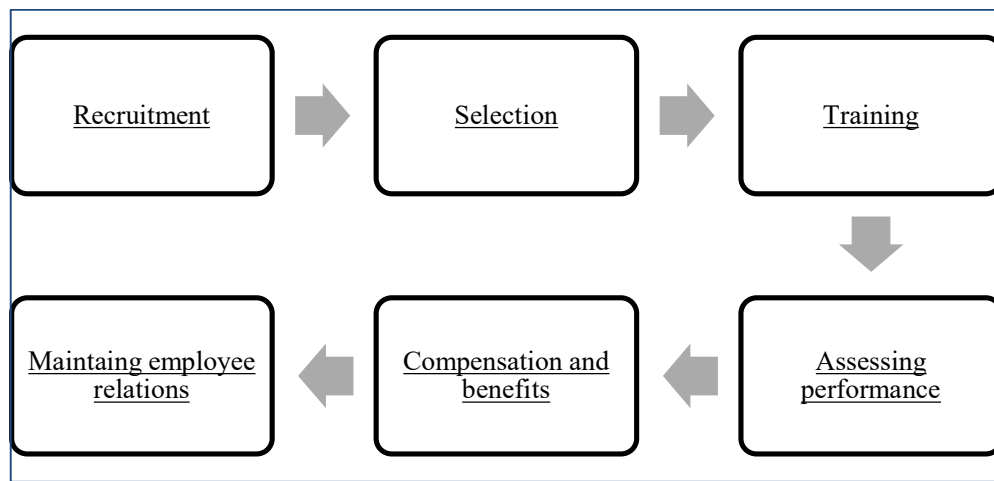first two steps of the HRM process i.e., Recruitment and Selection of the employees in the organization.

Figure 1. Human Resource Management Process

2.2. Recruitment

Recruitment is the practice of finding and attracting interested candidates to apply for the vacant position available in the organization. It is the process of identifying, attracting, selecting, and then hiring employees. It involves all the processes needed to fill an organization's vacant post (tutorialspoint.com, 2019). It is the process of hiring the right candidate for the right jobs. The recruitment process comprises five stages, i.e., I.) Planning, II.) Strategy development, III.) Searching, IV.) Screening and V.) Evaluation and controlling. The recruitment program is said to be an ideal program if they attract a large number of qualified participants who will pass the screening process and also achieve the position in the organization. Recruitment programs fail in such a condition that they fail to attract adequate participants for the interview, and inadequate screening of job applications before they enter the selection process (Heneman, 1986). Human resource managers or HR managers are responsible for conducting the recruitment process and must know about the detail of the position needed for their organization. When they recruit the employee, they must know about their qualification, skills, and interests that are needed for the position. Barber (1998) explained the recruitment function as related to strategic human resource

planning. An organization's recruitment strategy involves creating an advertisement, developing means to attract applicants, and reviewing job applications.

Recruitment processes are given below:

Figure 2. The Recruitment process

Recruitment can be performed in two methods:

Internal Recruitment

External Recruitment

2.2 Selection

The selection process is the process of selecting and shortlisting the candidates that qualify for the vacant post in the organization. The process can identify the person with the necessary qualifications and skills required for the post. The selection process can vary from company to company, industry to industry, and even amongst the company's different

departments (Mamgain & Mamgain, 2022). The Selection process is very lengthy and involves several steps before the employee's joining. The selection process focuses on the following things:

1.) Selection methods and skills

2.) The principles that follow in implementing the selection process

3.) Selection process consists of assumptions and commitments of the organization's top authority that reflects the organization's work culture (Mamgain & Mamgain, 2022).

Selection processes are given below:
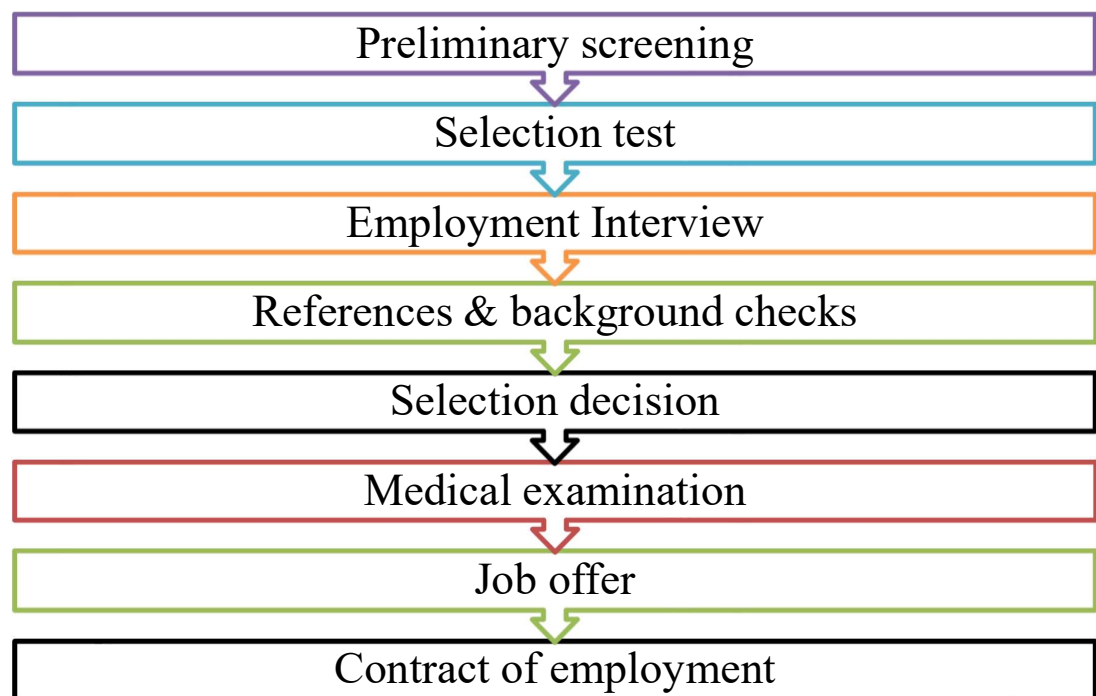
| Preliminary screening |
| Selection test |
| Employment Interview |
| References & background checks |
| Selection decision |
| Medical examination |
| Job offer |
| Contract of employment |

Figure 3. Steps of the Selection Process

2.3 Some Theories Based on Human Resource Management

2.3.1 Resource-based theory:

Resource-based Theory is applied as a theoretical basis in human resource management. In this theory, the HRM concept is discussed with the competitive advantages that if the firm distributed its resources heterogeneously, and maintained a stable environment in the organization can become a great competitor in the market (Wade & Hulland, 2004). The theory focused that an organization must focus on fostering the resources that are available internally in the organization. They are most probably unique, effective, and special for the firm.

- The human resource management practices may be copied by the company but the effective human capital cannot be copied by any other firm and this is the unique feature that can lead to competitive advantage.
- There are six resources available in the organization. These are:
  Financial resources, Human capital resources, Technological resources, Physical resources, Organizational resources, etc.

2.3.2. Organization behavior theory:

Organizational behavior includes those areas of research that involve improving performance at work, increasing job stability, nurturing creativity, and nurturing leadership. This theory focuses on different behaviors that affected the worker's work efficiency and the effects of different policies that manage human resources (Taha, 2020). There are several aspects related to this theory, these are:

1. People are more social beings, so they can easily be affected by others' sayings.

2. As equality and justice are the right of every person, people are more concerned about them.

3. Competitive advantage is one of the popular terms, so organizations may partly or fully work like others to achieve high market growth.

So, Organizational behavior is the study that examines the impact of human beings' behavior within the organization and applies this knowledge to improve the effectiveness of an organization (Taha, 2020).

3. Introduction to Ahmed Bag Private Limited

Ahmed Bag Industry Private Traders (ABI) was established in 2014. It is located in Bscic Industrial Area, in Rajshahi, Bangladesh. ABI is a manufacturing company, that introduced multicolor shopping bags in Bangladesh. They are the leader in manufacturing bags using polyester cotton mix fabrics in Rajshahi, Bangladesh. These multicolor bags are also known as multicolor tissue bags. They also manufacture non-woven PP bags, player jerseys, and customized jute bags. Today as we know the countries' promises towards Sustainable development goals and Net carbon zero-emission, this company makes environment-friendly bags for the ease of the people of Bangladesh. Their products are:

Figure 4. Customized non-woven bags (www.ahmedbagindustry.com)

Figure 5. Player's jersey (www.ahmedbagindustry.com)

Figure 6. Customized jute bags (www.ahmedbagindustry.com)

3.1 Organizational Structure of the Company

The company is a small-scale industry that works in the area of Bangladesh. The main customer attraction towards the company is its USP i.e., PP and Jute bags. They believe in

providing efficient quality and printing to the customers. As we attached images above, their printing quality is very good that's the main reason for their popularity in Bangladesh and nearby countries. The idea for these bags came with the owner's visit to China. China makes also PP bags with supreme quality. The organizational structure of the company is:
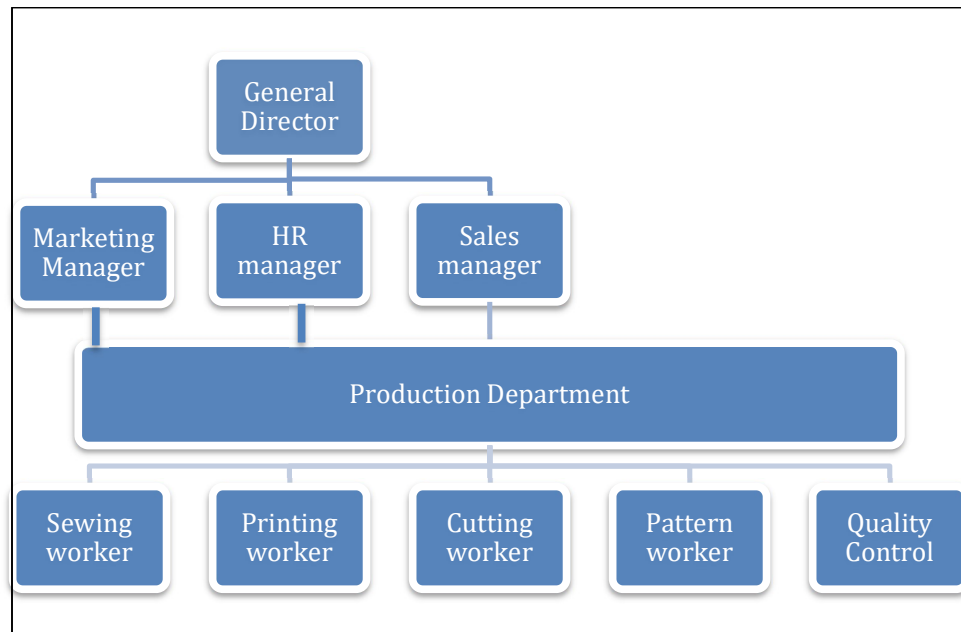
Figure 7. The Organizational structure of the company

The company has more than 30 employees. The company's turnover is near about 22,250 €. The company has three different managers i.e., Marketing manager, Sales manager, and Human resource manager. These three are responsible for the production department. In the production department, we have further divisions, i.e., sewing workers, printing workers, cutting workers, pattern workers, and quality control.

In the sewing department, they employ mainly women. Women that worked in the company are generally divorced, single mothers, etc. So, in that way, they also promote women's empowerment. They have an equal number of employees both women and men. They also promote gender equality. They have a division of workers in each department in the production department. In the sewing section, they mainly employ women. So, in that section one worker is allotted to one machine. In the cutting section, they allotted two workers in one machine. Then in the printing section, 3 workers for 1 machine, and there are 4 printing machines in the company.

The work culture of the company is remarkable. They provide proper job training with full salary to their employees and appraisals and benefits afterward. The managers of the departments are responsible to the top authority. They reported regularly regarding the challenges and problems faced by them. There is healthy work culture in the organization.

3.2 Recruitment and Selection Process in the Company
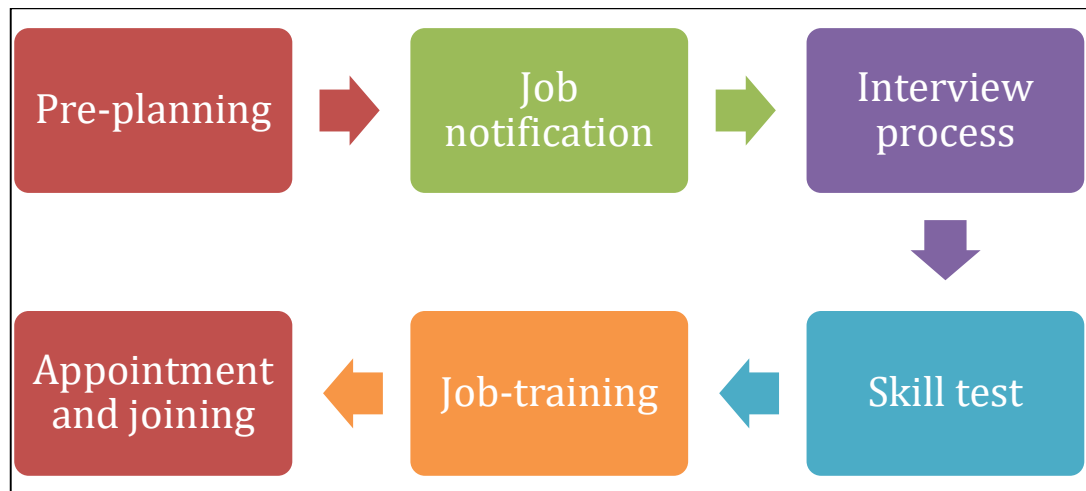
Figure 8. Recruitment and selection process in Ahmed Bag Industry

The recruitment and selection process in the Ahmed Bag industry is given below:

Pre-planning: Before the recruitment process, they are planning the various vacant posts available in the company's different departments. They get detailed of proper requirements related to it. The industry is bagging woven industry so there focus on a more skilled work-force to work in their company.

Job notification: When they plan employee requirements in the various departments, they generate a job notification. This can be advertised with the means of newspapers, Facebook, and other social media.

Interview: The interview is conducted when the applicants reach the company for a job. The company conducted Interviews at two levels. Initially, The Human resource managers conducted interviews that include their background information, skills, past work

experiences, etc. Then, the owner of the company had interviews with the selected candidates. In this interview, the candidate is questioned about their salary expectations, job profile, etc.

Skill test: When the candidate passes both interviews, the next step is the skill test. The candidate that has work experience needs to give this test otherwise it is not compulsory for the fresher in this field.

Job training: When the candidate passes all these phases, then the company provides salary-based training of one month to the candidate.

Appointment and Joining: The candidate will join the company after one month's training.

4. Recruitment Process

The recruitment process is defined as the method that attracts and finds the potential manpower that fills up the required post in the organization. The recruitment process is hiring a candidate that has skills and attitudes that are essential for fulfilling the organizational goals. This is the most important function of human resource management. In today's competitive market, the main attraction of the company is to acquire skilled and capable employees that can work efficiently to achieve the organization's goal (De Cooman & Pepermans, 2012).

Recruiting the most talented workers is the priority for top management. It is crucial for a company to efficiently approach talent and attract them for the job- requirements. It is an understanding of the company, and how the job-choice decisions are made so, that they can gain the interest of suitable candidates. (Rynes & Barber 1990).

Effective recruitment is a tool that can attract suitable candidates for the job position and also enhance the image of the organization. Firms should keep in mind saving the costs that spending on other processes such as screening and selecting phases. (De Cooman & Pepermans 2012). The job-choice decision consists of two interlinked components i.e., job attributes and recruitment practices. The primary strategy for a company to strengthen the attraction of applicants is to provide proper descriptions of the job, the nature of work or salary offered by the company, etc. (Rynes & Barber, 1990).

Recruitment is the process of finding a set of candidates for a particular job that's why it is the first process of hiring. (Gomez-Mejia, 2016). The purpose of recruitment is to explore the individuals that have the potential to fill the vacant position and help the organization to achieve its goals. (Raghavi and Gopinathan, 2013).

4.1 Sources of Recruitment

Two sources of recruitment are Internal Recruitment and External recruitment. The figure given below discussed the various sources of recruitment (Chand, 2014).

Sources of Recruitment	Internal recruitment	Present Employees
		Employees referrals
		Former employees
		Previous applicants
	External Recruitment	Advertisement
		Campus recruitment
		Employment agencies
		Deputation
		Raiding
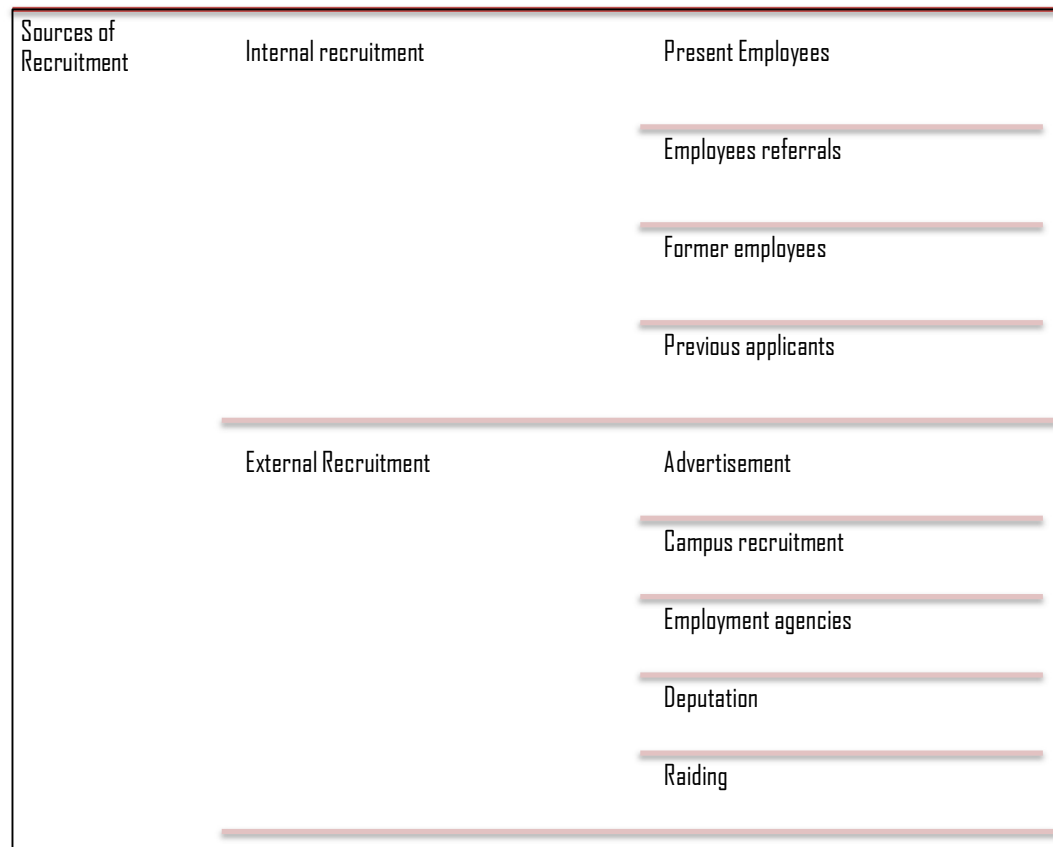
Figure 9. Sources of Recruitment (Chand, 2014)

<u>Internal Recruitment</u>

Internal recruitment can be performed internally in the organization. The HR publish the notification of vacant post on the notice board and online recruitment portal of the company. The deserving candidate can participate in the interview process to enhance their position in the company. In the internal recruitment process, the employees can refer their resumes to the HR department personally or with any reference of a higher authority (Personio, 2020).

<u>The advantages of internal recruitment are:</u>

Familiarity with employees

Career growth for the individuals within the organization

Improve the morale

Less expensive than external recruitment.

Source of motivation for employees

The disadvantages of internal recruitment are:

Limit the pool of talent

Reduces the chances of fresh viewpoints

External Recruitment

External recruitment is referred to as recruitment of the employees from outside the organization. It can be from any other organization, company, college, etc. It is an intensive process where the company posts the vacant posts and requirements on various sources like online job portals, advertises in newspapers, etc then conduct interviews and skill tests and employs them in the organization. The individual who has a job requirement can apply for these jobs (Gigli, 2014).

The advantages of External recruitment

Fresh ideas and new skills.

Reduction in work internal environment.

Freshers are more motivated towards the work.

Help to set up a healthier and fresh work environment.

The disadvantages of External recruitment

A time-consuming process

High spending costs on conducting external recruitments.

4.2 Stages of the Recruitment Process

The recruitment process consists of the following steps:

Recruitment planning: This is the first step of the recruitment process. In this, the vacant positions in the company are analyzed. This includes the job's specifications and the job's nature, experiences, qualifications, skills required for it, etc. A recruitment plan is need to be structured properly because it plays a vital role to attract candidates (*7 Stages of the Full Recruitment Life Cycle | Recuritment Process Steps | Oorwin*, 2022).

Identifying job vacancies: The foremost step of the recruitment plan is identifying the department vacancy. This process is start with the demand for recruitment in the different departments of the organization. They tell their requirements to the HR department. The job vacancy detail has the number of posts to be filled by the departments, position to be held by the employee, qualification and skills required, duties and responsibilities of the employees. The HR manager will identify that if the position is required or not, full-time or part-time, etc (Chand, 2014).

Searching: These steps attract job seekers for the vacant post in the organization. As we discuss above there are two sources of recruitment, i.e., Internal and External recruitment. (Chand, 2014)

Screening: Some of the points, screening we can say is the starting point of the selection process, but it is considered under the recruitment part. The selection process starts once the applications of applicants are shortlisted and properly screened. Applications are screened properly about the related qualifications, skills, potentials, abilities, etc (*7 Stages of the Full Recruitment Life Cycle | Recuritment Process Steps | Oorwin*, 2022).

Evaluation and Control: In the last step, there is a proper evaluation of the process of recruitment, which include salaries offered to employees, costs spend on the recruitment process, administrative expenses, etc. (Chand, 2014).
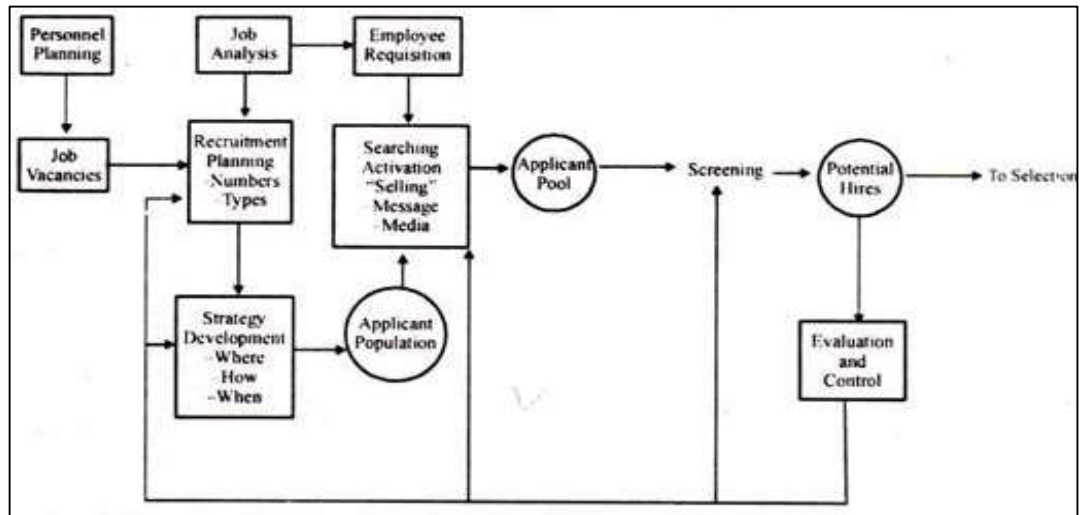
Figure 10. Recruitment Process

The recruitment process is positive in nature because it maximizes the number of personnel in the company. If a large number of candidates are on the recruitment list, there will be a high chance of getting more talent into the organization.

5. Selection Process

Selection is the process of selecting individuals with relevant qualifications and skills related to the vacant post in the company. Selection is a procedure that defines what an applicant can do in the company and what the actually organization wants from him. (Kumari, 2012). The organization spends costs on conducting the recruitment process so, there are not many chances for the company to organize it again and again. So, the company needs to select the right candidate for the organization. The recruitment process results in having several competent candidates from the pool of applicants. After that, Selection means selecting the most production person for the company according to the job vacancy requirements. Candidates must be selected by properly assessing their knowledge and skills. Castetter (1992) explains that the basic aim of selection is to fill the vacancies in the organization with a person who has the quality self-motivating, consistent, disciplined, dedicated to his or her work, and works efficiently to achieve the organization's goals.

The goals and objectives of the selection process are:

1. Gather all the relevant information related to the candidate to analyze the fact (Yaseen, 2016).

2. Organize and evaluate the informational data later to make a sensible decision (Yaseen, 2016).

3. Assessing the proper detail of the candidate and choosing the best person for the job. Analyze the performance and compatibility of candidates related to the job profile (Yaseen, 2016).

4. Provide proper information to applicants related to their job positions, salaries, work hours, etc. So, that they can decide to opt the jobs or not (Yaseen, 2016).

5.1 Stages of the Selection Process
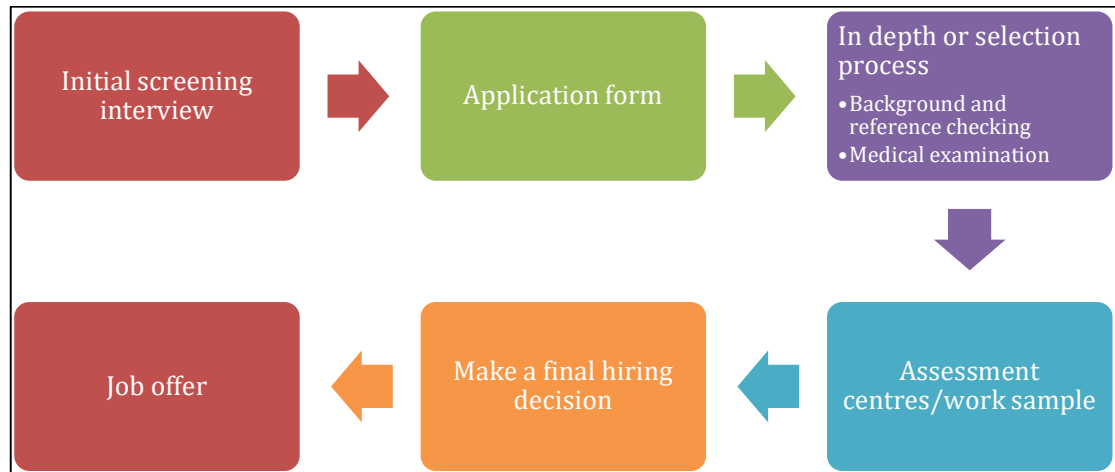
Figure 11. Stages of Selection Process (Mustapha et al., 2013)

There are the following stages of the Selection process (Mustapha et al., 2013):

Initial or preliminary interview: the initial interview is quite a short brief about their introduction, skills, hobbies, etc. In this process, the unqualified candidates are eliminated.

Application procedure: The written applications of applicants are screened or analyzed. The factual information is given by the candidate in this application.

References: The company checks the references from past companies given by the candidate to check the organizational behavior of the candidate.

Skill tests or personality tests: the next step of the selection process is a written test of the candidate. The organization conducted tests for the candidate either general IQ or skill test to check the capability of the employee.

Interview: After clearing all the steps, in the last the candidate gets the interview call from the top authority. In this, the company asked the questions like salary expectations of the candidate, the aim of the candidate, role or position in the company, etc are discussed. Then, after all the discussion, the candidate gets the job appointment letter.

6. Research Methodology

Research methodology is a method that is used to solve problems systematically. The Qualitative method is the method that involves the analysis of the emotion, and behavior of the person associated with the research. The result can be obtained through open-ended and conversation methods. The qualitative method is one of the methods that allow us to obtain the data through in-depth analysis of the target participants (Pathak et al., 2013).

Case study: Case studies are the research method in which a researcher can research the event, activity, company, place, etc. Case studies are bound with time and activity.

The company **AHMED BAG INDUSTRY PRIVATE TRADER, BANGLADESH** was used as case study to pursue the research and find the solutions of research questions.

6.1 Data Collection

Primary data can be collected in the form of interviews. Semi-structured Interview was conducted with the employees and employers of the Ahmed Bag Industry Private Traders (ABI) company to detect the problem faced by them during the COVID-19 times regarding the recruitment phases and HRM practices.

The master's thesis aims to identify the challenges faced by the company during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study examined the significant relationships between employee recruitment and the selection process during the last year. Despite that, the changes that occur in business management and organizational performance during the COVID-19 pandemic were considered. To obtain the result of the above research questions, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the HR managers and employees of the company. These interviews were conducted through either video conferencing or telephonic conversations. Each interview was 40 to 45 minutes long and discussed every aspect of the organization's work culture and HRM practices during COVID-19. There were 10 interviewees associated with the organization. The interview guide was prepared before the interviewee and also shared with the interviewees for their preparedness. The interviewee details are given below:

Sr. no.	Department	Gender	Number of interviewees	Job Functions
1.	Human Resource	Male	2	Manager
2.	Human Resource	Female		
3.	Production department	Male	1	Supervisor
4.	IT department	Male	3	Designing
5.	IT department	Female		Technology advisory
6.	IT department	Female		Web developer
7.	Finance department	Female	1	Accounts
8.	Manufacturing	Female	2	Stitching
9.	Manufacturing	Male		Printing
10.	Marketing	Male	1	Sales

Table 1. Interviewee's details

The results show how HR managers responded to the situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic and how the increasing trend of working at home affected the employee's behavior. The impact of coronavirus had affected many areas of working life in an organization and also associated management like HRM practices, Recruitment and selection process, disturbed supply chain, etc. That time organizations need to prepare quickly in response to the pandemic.

6.2 Data Analysis

The interview process was coded into Gioia's methodology which was proposed by Gioia et al. (2013). It is the systematic approach to bringing rigor to qualitative research (Gioia et al. (2013)). This methodology helps in reliable interpretations of data that will convince the readers that the conclusions are reasonable and justifiable (Gioia et al. (2013). The first stage is referred to as "1st-order concepts" where a group of words, or phrases that were spoken by the interviewee's participants earlier in the research process. At this time, little effort was made to arrange the data into distill categories. When the research progresses, then categories and themes emerged and collaborate according to similarities and differences, thus these deep structure arrays called are "2nd-order themes". Once these concepts and themes were clear, then it leads to the theoretical saturation known as "aggregate dimensions". This methodology represents the research findings through a data structure i.e., a visual representation. These data structures elaborate the link between the data and the concepts, themes, and dimensions (Gioia et al. (2013)).

Following the procedure described by Gioia's methodology, the data were transcribed by an inductively developed coding scheme that include all three steps. To gather in-depth knowledge of the research questions, the data was split into three forms manufacturing, service sectors, and human resource After preparing the transcripts, the initial ideas were identified and then represented into different raw terms that were used by the interviewees. These initial raw terms depicted the 1st-order, then collaborating terms with theoretical data and generating themes represented the 2nd-order. Finally, similar themes were collaborated and created a meaningful aggregate dimension, the last step of methodology. The coding process involved several iterations to obtain a perfect data structure (Fig. 20). (Appendix 2)

7. Results

The result derived from the above data analysis, the themes and dimensions related to challenges faced by the company during COVID-19 related to recruitment and selection processes and the impact of work from home on employees and organizational behavior. There are four dimensions role improvisation, stress, creativity, and isolation.

Role improvisation

During the pandemic, there was closure of offices and factories, that were resulted in changes in the work culture, and also the characteristics of both manufacturing and service sector employees. These modifications were increased in several working hours, changes in their roles, online skill training, etc.
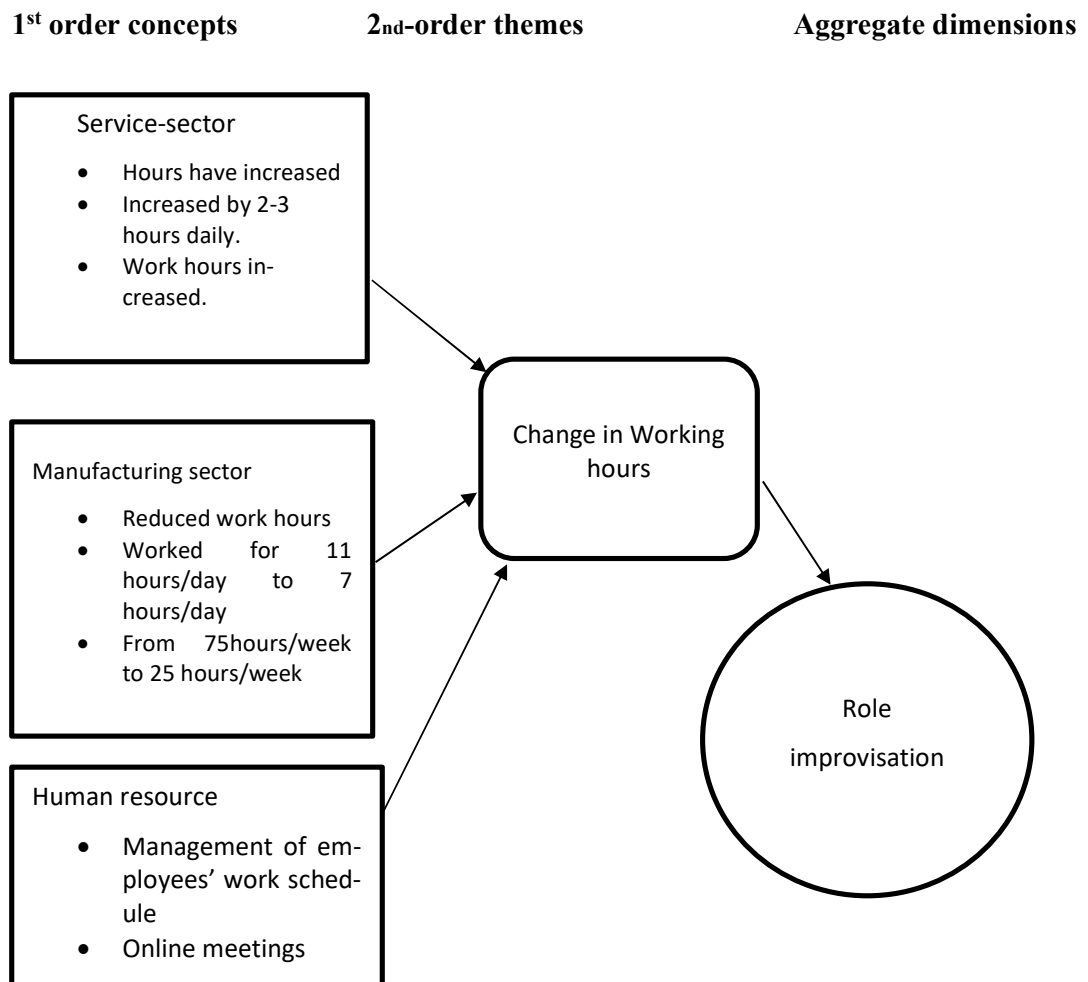
1st order concepts **2$_{nd}$-order themes** **Aggregate dimensions**

Figure 12. Data structure related to the interview

Change in working hours

Most of the interviewees that worked in the service sector reported that there was an increase in the number of hours of their work. One of the interviewees responded

"that time the family and employee's health was a priority…People's safety was more important, so, working from home was an efficient way to perform our work and also follow the proper guidelines. Earlier, I used to work from 9 am to 6 pm, but after this work from home I usually, work from 9 am to 9 pm."

On the other hand, the employees that work in the manufacturing sector, they had less scope to work from home. They need to perform their work on machines that were installed in the industry. Thus, they reported reduced in their number of working hours. One of the interviewees that worked in the manufacturing sector responded,

"During the pandemic, there were restrictions in gathering of people so the hours of daily shifts were reduced to half and this also impacted the production of products."

Status and job profile changes

During the pandemic, the service-sector employees continued to work as they did earlier. Interviewees indicated some minor changes in their job profile and a major focus were given to customer dealing and employee training. The major focus of the industry to skilled their employees by providing internal or virtual training. They also organized webinars with the subject-matter experts to enhance the knowledge of the employees. One of the interviewees responded that work in the service sector,

"*In this competitive market, the skills of the employees are assets of the company. So, webinars, online trainings, group discussions play a vital role in enhancing our performance and skills."*

The other employee who worked in the human resource manager responded

"*This coronavirus had made the process of recruitment and selection more difficult. The company shifted to online recruiting process, by the use virtual means like zoom or skype interviews, online test, etc. The search for required talent from the pool of candidates through just online interview quite difficult for us.*"

The manufacturing sector had suffered a lot during this time. Participant 3 who worked as supervisor in the company said,

" *the work in the manufacturing sector became more complicated. Earlier, the product was manufactured by the company then the distributors and retailer sold the products to customers. Now, due to disrupted supply chain, the company sold their products mostly online. We had direct contact with the customers, that was never a part of my portfolio in the last 20 years.*"

1st order concepts	2nd-order themes	Aggregate dimensions

Service-sector

- Additional query handling, previous ongoing work
- Engaged in customer relationships buildings
- Enhanced knowledge with online trainings.
- Completely shift to online through Work from home.

Manufacturing sector

- No work for a long period
- Waited for the situation to be normal
- Huge losses in production and manufacturing.

Human resource

- No new physical recruitment
- Online or virtual recruitment had started
- Search for new talent to work in these circumstances.

Status and Job profiles changes
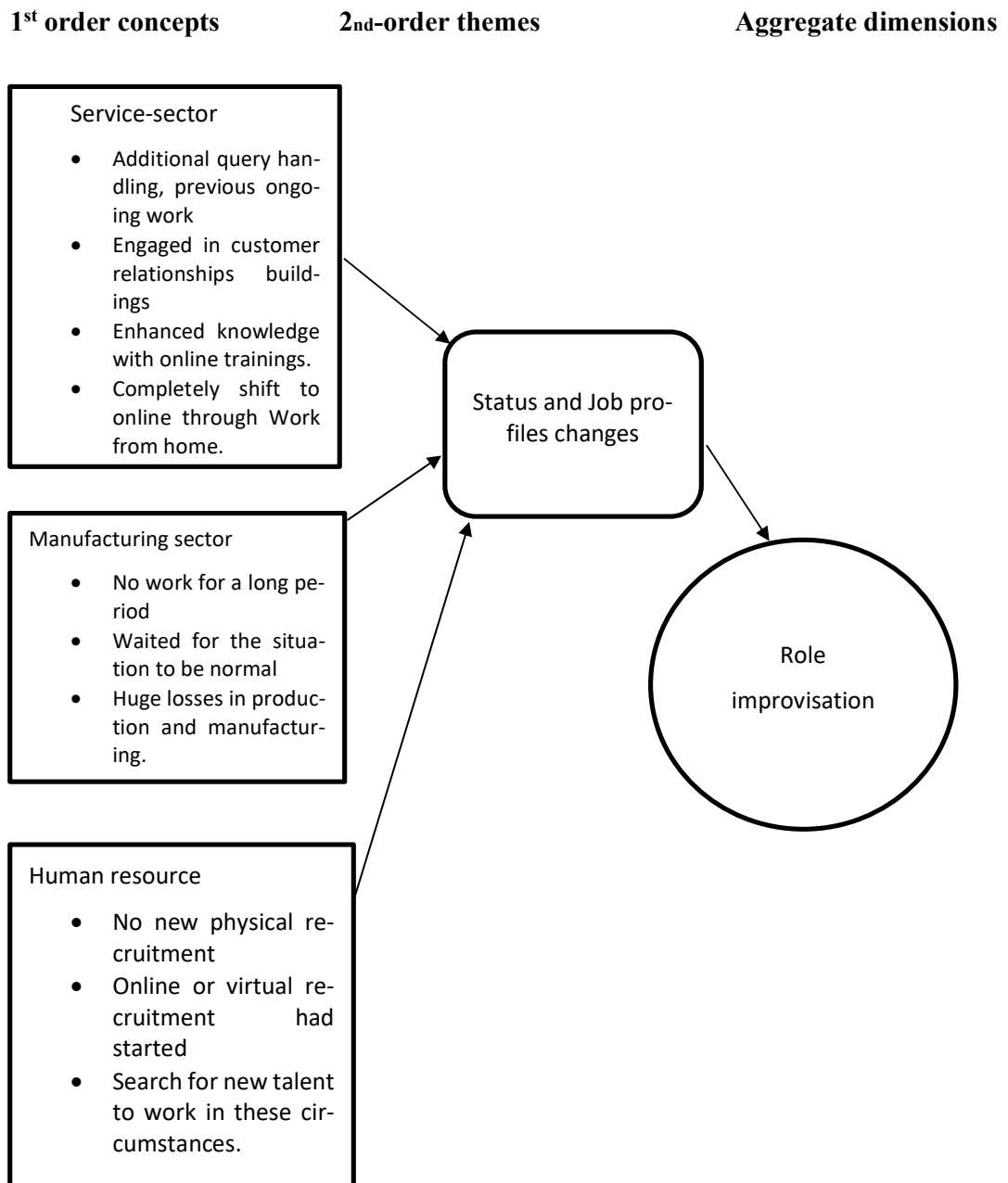
Role improvisation

Figure 12. Data structure related to the interview (contd.)

Stress

During the pandemic, the stress level of employees was increased. Some had work-related stress, future-related stress, social well-beings related stress. The health of family was important but buying bread and butter for their family was more important. A high number of unemployment, job losses, and lack of jobs in the market increased the stress level of the employees. Interview 2 said,

"*during the pandemic, we had to manage both our family as well as our job. Working from home just make us a slave to computers, we generally log in from one meeting to another, and there was no quality time with our colleagues and also no breaks sometimes. This makes our work more hectic. The productivity of our work had reduced*".

In the manufacturing sector, the stress was related to their future. Due to restrictions, plants were closed for a long time. During that, the company also shut down their operational plants due to losses, a number of employees had lost their jobs. They already suffered during the lockdown because of reduce in their salaries, but once the lockdown lifted, they had more stressed about the future of the economy, the future of organization and the future of their jobs. Interviewee 9 said,

"*the company was based on the manufacturing and production unit but during the pandemic, the industries was closed and no productions were made. There were huge revenue losses to the company. Due to this, the company had fired their number of employees. We always had the stress of fired from the job.*"

Besides the work-related stress, the employees had stressed related to the health of their well-beings. As the case of COVID-19 increased, the stress of spreading of virus also increased. The employees that work after the restrictions lifted, need to follow the proper guidelines to control the spread of the virus.

1st order concepts

2nd-order themes

Aggregate dimensions

- Work pressure was increased.
- Shift from one online meeting to another.
- Working hours increased.
- No break between meetings.
- Lots of ambiguity occurs in work.
- No coordination among colleagues.

Work-related stress

- Huge revenue losses due to shutdown of production and manufacturing.
- A number of employees were fired from their jobs.
- Fear of job loss.
- Not sure about job security.
- How will economy revive?

Future-related stress

Stress

- Family was not around me what about their health
- Spreading of virus
- Restrictions imposed by the government
- Heath security

Social well-being stress

Figure 12. Data structure related to the interview (contd.)

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Isolation

Due to restrictions imposed by the government, people need to stay at their home. Despite the working for long period, there was a lack of productivity in the employee's work. When the employee work in an office, there was a physical connection between the employees. But when the working from home started, people feel more disconnected, isolated, alone. Interviewee 3 said,

"*I literally feel like a robot doing a work rather than human being*".

The reason behind this was lack of coordination among the employees. The company organized training or the manufacturing team, but the employees feel lack of interest and engagement in those trainings. One of the interviewees responded

"*The company needs skilled labor and experienced employee. During the time of pandemic, provide proper training through a practical practice than online training is not possible. Most of employee in manufacturing were labor, they were not highly educated, so the online trainings were not interesting for them.*"

Self-personalized creativity

During this time, the employees related to manufacturing had worked on several organization pending issues, that related to cost-optimization, planning, research etc. The employees had work on launching of new products and providing solutions to customers pending issues. One of the interviewees that work in manufacturing department responded

"*Better supply chain management is necessity for the company. During that time, I had prepared a logistics channel to reach the different parts of country. We had talk with several logistics service company for their service. In this plan, we reduce our cost of logistics spending by 20%.*"

In this free time, many employees thought for innovation of products that benefits the customers in the long run and also gain proper training and learn new skill that are relevant for the products.
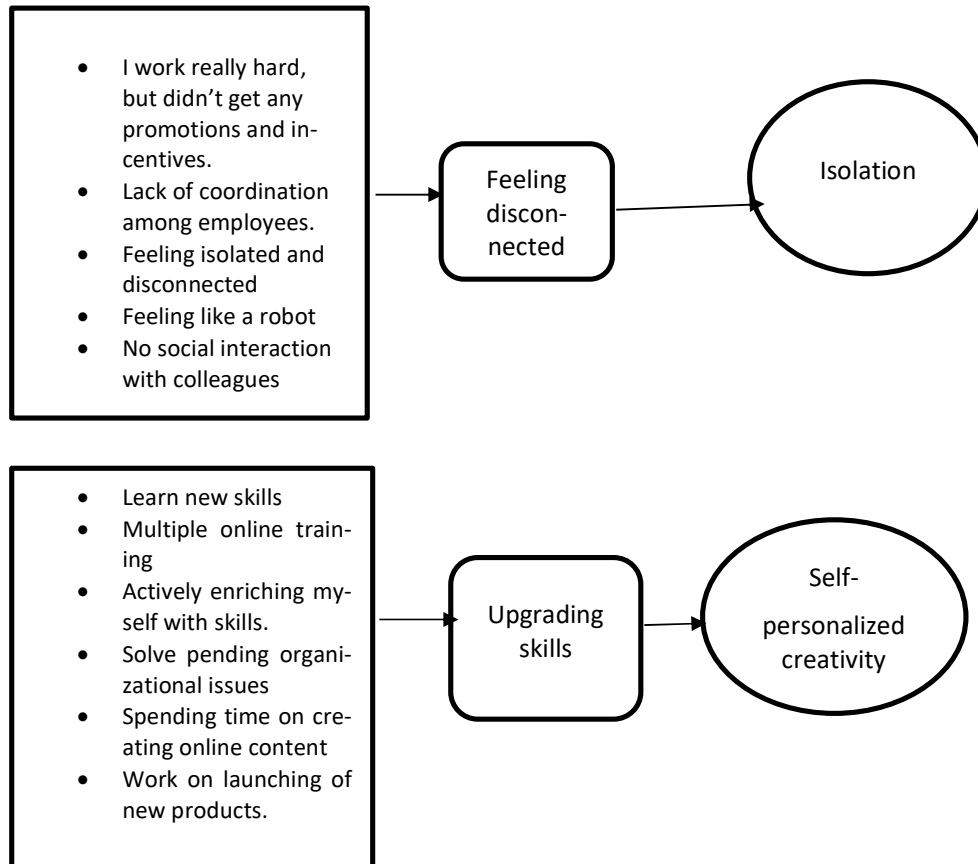
```
┌─────────────────────────┐
│  • I work really hard,  │
│    but didn't get any   │
│    promotions and in-   │          ┌──────────┐        ╭────────────╮
│    centives.            │          │ Feeling  │        │            │
│  • Lack of coordination │ ───────► │ discon-  │ ─────► │  Isolation │
│    among employees.     │          │ nected   │        │            │
│  • Feeling isolated and │          └──────────┘        ╰────────────╯
│    disconnected         │
│  • Feeling like a robot │
│  • No social interaction│
│    with colleagues      │
└─────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────┐
│  • Learn new skills     │
│  • Multiple online train-│
│    ing                  │          ┌──────────┐        ╭────────────╮
│  • Actively enriching my-│          │          │        │   Self-    │
│    self with skills.    │ ───────► │ Upgrading│ ─────► │personalized│
│  • Solve pending organi-│          │ skills   │        │ creativity │
│    zational issues      │          └──────────┘        ╰────────────╯
│  • Spending time on cre-│
│    ating online content │
│  • Work on launching of │
│    new products.        │
└─────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 12. Data structure related to the interview (contd.)

8. Discussions

The COVID-19 pandemic is the unprecedented global humanitarian challenges that impact adversely on the various aspects of life of humans. Businesses were shut down, employees were fired, lack of skilled labor, virtual recruitment process, work from home etc. In order to gain knowledge about these, the present study was designed to assess the changes in recruitment and selection process, the impact of working from home on organization performance and employee's behavior. Past work of scholars discussed that the role improvisation is a central aspect while managing the crisis in an organization (Crossan, 1998). The changes in occupational roles generally didn't occur in an organization. But in the time of crises, role improvisations are needed to enhance the efficiency of business (Lundberg and Rankin (2014)). In the role improvisation, the study analysed as changing in working hours and change in status and job profiles.

There were changes in the job profiles and additional work were assigned to the employers to manage the crisis effectively. Due to ongoing situation, the working hours of the employees were increased. They need to even work for 12 to 15 hours to meet the demand of the ongoing projects. Most of interviewees felt very depressed and stressed during the pandemic because of fear of loss of jobs, shutdown of businesses, shutdown of operation plants etc. They feel isolated during their work hours because of lack of coordination and communication between the colleagues. They were also worried about the managing their home, families and even their work together.

Working from home during the pandemic, led to feelings of isolation and stress among the employees. The recent study added the past experiences of the scholars such as Cooper & Kurland, 2002; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; and also, recent experiences such as Ashforth, 2020; Galanti et al., 2021 to support the study. The major stressed to the employees related to future job security. The employees that work in the manufacturing sector had more stressed related to their job security and the reduction in their work hours. The ambiguity that occurred between the employees during the pandemic, had arose due to lack of communication between the employees. The fear of spreading of virus, management of family and work together created a stressed situation for the employees. Likewise, employees were more focused in upgrading their skills during the pandemic. They focus more on

enhancing their knowledge by learning new skills in the time of pandemic. The people that had less work during that time, utilized their timing to solve the organization's pending issue. They work on cost-optimization, planning, improving supply chain management, etc.

The COVID-19 pandemic had created a difficult situation for both recruiters and candidates. As the theory discussed above, the changing pattern in the recruitment and selection process, are change in hiring needs, change in recruiting way, and also change in the job market. These three changes indicated the situation of the industry in the post-covid era. There were lots of challenges that faced by the industry during and after COVID-19.

Recommendations for Ahmed Bag Industry Private Traders

i.) <u>Virtual hiring and video interviews become common</u>: Industries now prefer the virtual interview process to hire the right candidate for the job. This task can be a challenge for HR managers and recruiters. But, to find the right candidate, and the right talent from video conferencing is quite normal and easy than the time-consuming physical recruitment process. (Page Personnel, n.d.).

ii.) <u>Companies will emphasize Internal Hiring</u>: Internal recruitment can be promoted. According to the study, 66% of respondents will increase their budget for learning and development (L&D). Some experts also recommend that to reskilling their employees to gain competitive advantages. Skills are considered new assets for employees. So, there should be a need to skill the workforce to achieve the organizational goals. (Maurer, 2021).

iii.) <u>Use of social media for recruitment</u>: COVID-19 had changed the recruitment strategies of the company. Social media like LinkedIn gives a great platform for recruiting the right candidate for the position available in the organization. So, HR should adopt new technologies with time. (Economic Times, n.d.).

iv.) <u>Location is no barrier to hiring the right talent:</u> During the time of the pandemic, companies shifted their operations completely online. This transformation allowed employees to work from their remote locations. Some companies also allow work from home even though the restrictions had lifted out and also make

it permanent. Companies can now hire the right talent anywhere in the world. (Page personnel, n.d.).

v.)   Companies and Industries demand is shifting: Some companies or industries require hiring a candidate with the talent and also allow them to remote workplace but on the other hand industries where work is performed by technology, there is still a need for highly skilled employees with professional experiences. So, they both will hire according to their preferences. (Page personnel, n.d.).

These recommendations will be beneficial for H.R. managers and employers of Ahmed Bag industry to change their recruiting policy efficiency and adapting the new changes with time. Lincoln & Guba (1985) explained trustworthiness is important for the evaluation of qualitative research. Trustworthiness can be established with confidence in finding the truth, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The trustworthiness of research was validated from the commissioner company. Validity refers to as to check whether the research process is accurate and whether the outcome that generates is authentic or not. So, to ensure the validity of the research, the master's thesis focused on collecting the same data from different sources. Maxwell, 1992 also explains the use of the word "Understanding" instead of "Validity" because it ensures a clear understanding of data. The richness of the data is identified from the various authentic sources that are used throughout the research process. The reliability refers to the consistency, trustworthiness of the results. The results of the research are considered to be reliable if consistent results are obtained in same situations [Twycross & Shields, 2004].

9. Conclusion

For a company to succeed, it is very important to effectively implement the recruitment and selection strategies for the company. Human resource management is one of the core departments of the company that is responsible for these responsibilities. The study emphasizes the fact that the recruitment and selection process is integrated with the other processes of the company that includes training, incentives, compensation, performance appraisal, etc. In this research paper, we have studied the recruitment and selection process that is used in the company, their importance, and methods.

Nowadays, people are shifting from office work to work from home basis which is quite effective and easy to maintain work and personal life balance. But, working from home still has some limitations. People became more workaholics and don't lead a corporate and social life better. As the commissioner company, they faced a lot of problems during the COVID-19 regarding recruitment and selection processes of the employees, and also the previous employees left their job. They are adapting to changes in their recruitment and selection processes in the future. They are planning to adopt an online recruitment framework for the recruitment of new employees.

In the last, the COVID-19 pandemic had adversely impacted the industry. They are reviving back but they are shortages of skilled workers in the market. There is need to change n human resource management practices in the organization in order to gain the high profit and to achieve organizational goals. Human Resources are assets for the organization and there is a need to proper nurturing the employees and enhancing their skills. This will help them to increase their output and efficiency.

10. Further Research

Recruitment and selection are the core subject for human resource management in the company. The company is fully dependent on its employees to achieve the organizational goals. Not only that employees can help the company to stay in the market for a longer period and also work on competitive advantage. In our study, we discussed the recruitment and selection processes, which are necessary phases in the company, and also a growing trend of working from home has reduced the interest of the employees in sitting in the office. The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected these processes, people shifted to work as freelancers, part-time and left their jobs earlier. Now, there is a huge shortage of skilled labor which is a necessity in today's corporate world.

The steps used for the recruitment and selection process remain the same, but some changes occur timely. COVID-19 had changed the whole world and also the work environment forever. The new virtual world is emerging with new technology like Artificial Intelligence, Chatgpt, etc. The concept of Human resource management and recruitment and selection is very vast and a less-discussed topic. These keep changing with the change in time. So, further research will be on this topic is needed, and also new recruitment framework can be developed for the company that will benefit them to recruit new employees in the future. What will be the hiring criteria for the employees? How will managers measure the employee productivity and review the performance of the employees? How the leaders manage the virtual workforce better? These are few topics that need to be discussed.

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Appendix 1 Interview Guide

Question 1. What changes that happened during the pandemic?

Question 2 How employees are currently working in your industry?

Question 3: What are the usually stress during the days of pandemic?

Question 4: What is your current recruitment strategy?

Question 5: Do you provide any job training for the employees?

Question 6: What are the main challenges that you faced in the recruitment process during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Question 7: What is the new recruitment policy that you adapted after the pandemic?

Question 8: How connected you feel with your colleagues?

Question 9: Personal information, gender, sector etc.

Appendix 2 Content Analysis

DIMENSIONS AND THEMES	REPRESENTATIVE QUOTATIONS FROM THE TRANSCRIPTS
1. ROLE IMPROVISATION	
CHANGES IN WORKING HOURS	I did the same work as earlier, but timing has increased…now my work is more than 9 am to 9 pm. (Interviewee 4)
	I am connected through technology all the time. (Interviewee 6)
	My job is from 10 am to 7 pm focusing on selling and maintaining customer relationships. (Interviewee 9)
CHANGE IN JOB PROFILES	My new addition work is to maintain customer relationships and their dealing…I need to call the customers that not in my portfolio earlier. (Interviewee 3)
	Usually, I worked for more than 70 h/week but now it's reduced to 25 h/week (Interviewee 8)
	Management of employees' work schedule and organizing online meetings is really hectic work. (Interviewee 1)
STRESS	
WORK-RELATED STRESS	During the pandemic, we had to manage both our family as well as our job. Working from home just make us a slave to computers, we

	generally log in from one meeting to another, and there was no quality time with our colleagues and also no breaks sometimes. This makes our work more hectic. The productivity of our work had reduced. (Interviewee 2)
FUTURE RELATED STRESS	the company was based on the manufacturing and production unit but during the pandemic, the industries was closed and no productions were made. There were huge revenue losses to the company. Due to this, the company had fired their number of employees. We always had the stress of fired from the job. (Interviewee 9)
ISOLATION	I literally feel like a robot doing a work rather than human being. (Interviewee 2) the company needs skilled labor and provide proper training through an online means but in the manufacturing department, we need to practice by own to run the machines, so we need practical practice than online training. Most of employee in manufacturing were labor, they were not highly educated, so the online trainings were not interesting for them. (Interviewee 3).
SELF-PERSONALIZED CREATIVITY	I always wanted to better supply chain management for the supply of our product. During that time, I had prepared a logistics channel to reach the different parts of country. We had talk with several logistics service company for their service. In this plan, we reduce our cost of logistics spending by 20%. (Interviewee 7)