

**INFLUENCE OF MOTIVATION ON  
EMPLOYEE INDUSTRIAL ACTION IN RMG  
INDUSTRY: A MODERATING EFFECT OF  
EGRS**

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to identify the influence of employee's motivation on industrial action in Bangladeshi Readymade Garments (RMG) industry. Limited study can be found that considered employee's motivation as the cause of industrial action in this sector. In the context of Bangladeshi's RMG industry, there seems to be a significant gap that exists on the influence of employee motivation on industrial actions. This study used a deductive approach and endeavours to bridge this gap by examining the influence of employee motivation on industrial action moderated by the Employee Grievance Redressal System (EGRS). A self-administrated questionnaire was distributed to 600 employees (Line supervisors) who were working in different garment factory in Bangladesh using the non-probability sampling (purposive sampling). A total of 403 set of questionnaires were returned out of the 600. Finally, after initial screening for missing information only 392 were found valid for further analysis. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed for data analysis and to test the hypothesis. The findings of this research confirm that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are the motivators that influence employee industrial actions. In addition, the findings also showed that the EGRS is a significant moderator with employee industrial action and employee motivation. These findings provide meaningful correlation between employee motivation on industrial actions and the EGRS.. The most important practical implication of the findings is that the management or the concerned authority should address intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and implement proper EGRS. Motivation is the force that converts intention into action. Dissatisfied employees execute unrests to voice their needs and industrial rights. Indeed, the findings of this research create a concrete base for supporting future research initiatives in addressing industrial grouses of RMG employees in general and RMG employees of Bangladesh in particular.

## خلاصة البحث

الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو تحديد تأثير الدافع للموظف على العمل الصناعي في صناعة الملابس الجاهزة في بنغلاديش (RMG). ويمكن العثور على دراسة محدودة تعتبر الدافع للموظف سببا للعمل الصناعي في هذا القطاع. في سياق صناعة RMG في بنغلاديش، يبدو أن هناك فجوة كبيرة تكون على تأثير دافع الموظفين على الإجراءات الصناعية. لقد وظفت هذه الدراسة نهجاً استقطاعياً ومساعدياً لسد هذه الفجوة من خلال دراسة تأثير دوافع الموظفين على العمل الصناعي الذي يديره نظام تعويض شكاوى الموظفين. وتم توزيع استبيان ذاتي الإدارة على 600 موظف (مشرفو الجودة) كانوا يعملون في مصنع مختلف للملابس في بنغلاديش باستخدام العينات غير الاحتمالية (العينات القصدية). وأعيد حوالي 403 استبيانه من مجموع 600 استبيان. وأخيراً، بعد الفرز الأولي للمعلومات المفقودة، تبين أن 392 منها فقط صالحة لمزيد من التحليل. واستخدمت نمذجة المعادلات الهيكلية (SEM) لتحليل البيانات واختبار الفرضية. تؤكد نتائج هذا البحث أن الدوافع الجوهرية والخارجية هي المحفزات التي تؤثر على الإجراءات الصناعية للموظفين. إضافة إلى ذلك، أظهرت النتائج أيضاً أن EGRS هو وسيط كبير مع العمل الصناعي للموظف وتحفيز الموظفين. توفر هذه النتائج علاقة ذات مغزى بين تحفيز الموظفين على الإجراءات الصناعية و EGRS. ومن أهم الآثار العملية المترتبة على النتائج هي أنه ينبغي للإدارة أو السلطة المعنية أن تعالج الدوافع المتأصلة والخارجية وأن تنفذ التبعات السليمة ل EGRS. وكان الدافع هو القوة التي تحول النية إلى العملية. الموظفون غير الراضين ينفذون الاضطرابات للتعبير عن احتياجاتهم وحقوقهم الصناعية. في الواقع، فإن نتائج هذا البحث تخلق قاعدة ملموسة لدعم المبادرات البحثية المستقبلية في معالجة الأخطار الصناعية لموظفي RMG بشكل عام وموظفي RMG في بنغلاديش بشكل خاص.

## **APPROVAL PAGE**

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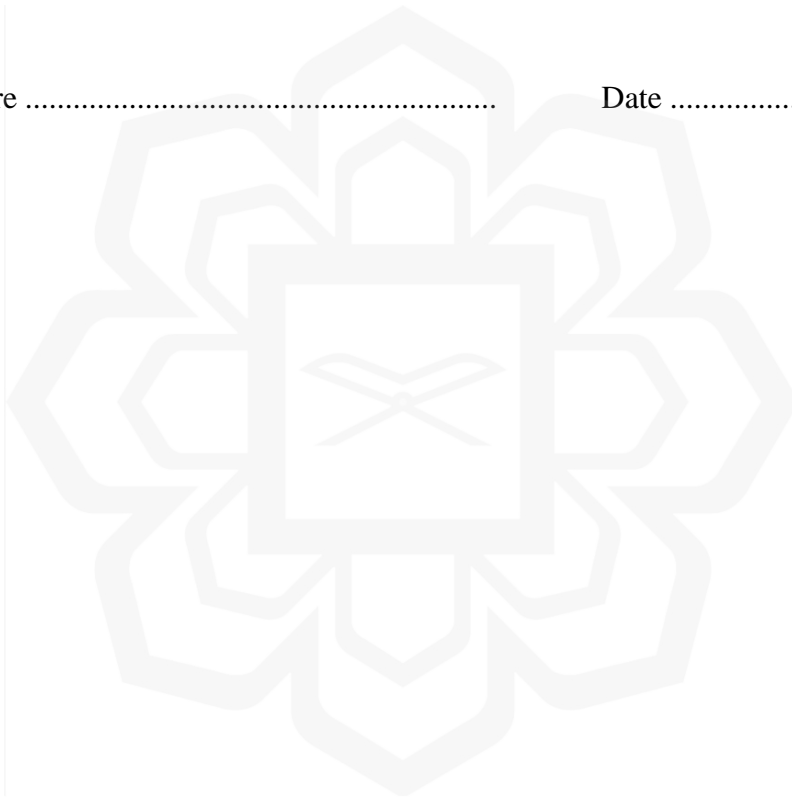
## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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*Dear Allah,*

*I pray to have eyes that see the best, A heart that forgives the worst,*

*A mind that forgets the bad, And a soul that never loses faith.*

*Aamin.*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structure
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BILS	Bangladesh institute of labour studies
CEWA	Compliance and Employee Welfare Association
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CR	Composite Reliability
CR	Critical Ratio
DF	Degree of Freedom
DV	Dependent Variable
EX	Extrinsic
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
EGRS	Employee grievance redressal systems
EIA	Employee industrial action
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index
IN	Intrinsic
IV	Independent Variable
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
MBWA	Management By Walking Around
OHS	Organization Health and safety
RMG	Readymade garments
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SE	Standard Error
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Healthy job environment is a vital component in this challenging era of the 21st century's business enterprises, government, non-government and private sectors, as far as employees are concerned. Employees of Readymade Garments (RMG) industry in Bangladesh is no exception. This industry has been a major contributor towards employment provision of this very populated country. In fact, RMG industry serves as one of the main sources of foreign revenue earner for Bangladesh. Unfortunately, the RMG industry in Bangladesh has been notoriously affected by the highest employee industrial disputes compared to other industrial sectors (Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies, 2017). Even though policies have been enacted to safeguard employees' welfare but they have not been effectuated. More often than not employers are only bothered about how to prosper their businesses without considering employee motivational needs. Worse, job security is very low at RMG sector (Islam, 2015). Where employer can terminate employees without any prior notice, not given fair salary and lack employee recognition. Employee motivation is essential as it is the most valuable resource in any organization. A study revealed that low motivation influences employees' negative attitudes at workplace (Garima, 2017). In the long run, this will adversely affect the industry and the country.

It is necessary to address employee intrinsic and extrinsic motivational needs and perceptions, because employees play essential roles and contribute to the success of an organization (Van der Kolk, van Veen-Dirks, & Ter Bogt, 2019). If employees are not pleased and dissatisfied with their jobs, they negatively affect the healthy

working atmosphere resulting in negative organizational outcomes in the form of reduced productivity, absenteeism, disobedience and engaging in rampant undisciplined behaviours like industrial actions (Obiekwe & Eke, 2019).

Motivational policies and practices of organizations should be guided in such a way, that they are aligned with organizational strategies and employers should consider the motivational needs and expectations of employees (Al-Zawahreh & Al- Madi, 2012). Generally, employee grievances happen due to the existence of the gap between what the employee expects and what he receives from the employer (Ngetich, 2016). Thus, this is where the Employee Grievance Redressal System (EGRS) plays a vital role in an organization in order to address employee-employer issues amicably.

According to Butts (2019), employee motivation is an important issue for all organizations as its impact involves the level of effort and happiness of employees. Motivational needs influence employee and usually employees are willing to accomplish their job properly with the right kind of motivation given by the employer. Although the RMG factory is a mechanistic organization, the authority reflects a well-defined hierarchy, where top-level managers make the majority of decisions. However, according to the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS, 2017) the RMG sector is one of the most volatile industries in Bangladesh because of numerous accidents at work, violence and industrial disputes. Because of this vulnerability, the management of RMG factories should be wise enough to listen to the voice of employees for their motivational needs directly like an organic organization. Normally, in an organic organization decision-making is decentralized because employee needs can change rapidly in any situation. Hence, management should be sensitive towards these changes to avoid conflicts.

Motivational factors of employees to enhance their organization operations can be supported by some important management field theories. These theories include the Adam's Equity Theory, Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, and Herzberg's Two-factor Theory. Nevertheless, a study asserts that no single motivation theory describes all the facets of peoples' motivations or lack of motivation and each theoretical description can serve as a basis for the development of motivational techniques (Jain, Gupta & Bindal, 2019). Other past researches (Varma, 2017; De Bruin & Yiannakis, 2012; Jain, Gupta & Bindal, 2019) have extensively demonstrated the connection of linking job satisfaction, employee's feeling of accomplishment and achievement to be straightforwardly connected to profitability and to individual prosperity. Al-Ababneh (2013) maintains that a satisfied employee is creative, adaptive, inventive and steadfast. Satisfied employee's motivation involves developing enthusiasm, joyful environment, positive communication, team engagements, performance-based reward system and so on. Hence, ensuring a peaceful and cordial workplace environment to boost productivity is important. Failure to meet these employees' needs results in lack of motivation and diminishes work spirits. Obiekwe & Eke (2019) stress that if employee needs are left unchecked for a prolonged period it can take a worse turn and result in chronic employee grievances and attitudes towards their workplace. As evidenced, long-standing grievances of the RMG employees of their working conditions had caused unrests (Hasan, Islam & Arifuzzaman, 2015). Employee grievance is an important issue to be addressed and management should take care of their employee grievances by executing the EGRS (Walker & Hamilton, 2011).

Lack of motivational efforts from the employers creates grievances among employees. EGRS ensures that employees' complaints are dealt with in an effective

manner. If organization implements and follows proper EGRS, then it gives various benefits both for the organization as well as for the employees (Geetika, Ghosh, Joshi & Singh, 2014). Employee grievance represents a feeling of dissatisfaction and a signal for motivational needs in the organization. In other words, there is a significant relationship between grievance procedure and employee satisfactions (Obiekwe & Eke 2019). Employee's grievance can be about extrinsic motivations like good salary, optimum working hours, comfortable condition of work premises, fair employment conditions etc. (Ramlal & Mozumder, 2016).

According to Bartol, Martin and Kromkowski (2003) motivation is a powerful force that controls human behaviour. This also provides the right direction that helps an individual to work correctly. Therefore, a clear idea and appropriate attention are necessary to motivate the employees to achieve the organization's target. Motivated employees are an asset to an organization. Here, the role of the Human Resource (HR) Department is vital as they are the management personnel who handle employees in every aspect of their career (Martin and Beaumont, 2001; Zheng & Lamond, 2009). An efficient organizational management try to keep record of every single individual and motivate them to fulfil the objectives of the organization. Makki and Abid (2017) explain that the real purpose of management is motivation of the group to use its energy to achieve its objectives. Moreover, Kuswati, (2019) accentuates that it is apparent that motivation is one of the main factors influencing the work performance of employees. Highly motivated workers is crucial to the success of the company, while employers are responsible for creating peaceful work environments in which workers could develop their fullest potential and productivity.

Failure would tentatively increase employees' frustration and resulting in comparatively low performance, low job-satisfaction, increased grievance and

withdrawal from the organization. An effective grievance redressal system can enhance positive organizational results and contribute to management efficiency, as well as to the establishment of harmonious management-employee relationships (Obiekwe & Eke 2019).

Individual's work output is influenced not only by his personality and working ability, but also by work motivation. Past evidence shows that there are many ways organizations can motivate their employees. The reward to satisfy the employee needs are either in the form of rewards as described by Stone (2002) reward can either be monetary or non-monetary rewards. Financial rewards include salary, pension, healthcare benefits and so on (Hendry et al., 1995; Zheng & Lamond, 2009), while the non-financial rewards are good working condition, job environment, job security, flexible working hours, training and development etc. (Chiang & Birtch, 2011; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Leopold and Harris, 2009). Besides, according to Hendry et al., 1995; Zheng & Lamond, (2009) for any industry to function well social relations among employees and superiors have been identified as a major motivational force for workers. However, to encourage healthy employees' motivation, there is a need for increased job satisfaction.

Many literatures on employee motivation have already given special focus on mentoring relationship like those of Noypayak & Speece, (1998); Higgins & Kram, (2001); Leopold and Harris, (2009). Therefore, providing continuous employees' motivation with employee satisfaction is a key issue for today's organizational performance enhancement and efficient use of resources. All over the world most reputed organizations institute employee motivation mechanism for great outputs. They recognize that there is a significant relationship between grievance procedure and employee satisfactions (Obiekwe & Eke 2019). Consequently a proper policy and

right procedure to meet employee motivational needs are a necessary factor at any workplace; where employees give more dedication towards their work, while employers strive to achieve their organizational goals and targets. On the other hand, higher employees' motivation promises to raise the propensity of high commitment among the employees, and it will likewise build their dedication towards the organization (Wickremasinghe & Samaratunga, 2016). In this way, top management should work on acquiring positive changes in the states of mind of employees and to expand organization efficiency.

In Bangladesh most of the incidents of Employee Industrial Actions (EIA) of RMG factories reveal that the factories do not provide standard and good working environment, do not give due recognition, advancement and fail to pay on-time salary. These create employee frustration and grievance, which eventually impact negatively on employee attitude in the organization (Khayer, Khondker & Hye, 2017). As a result, employees carry out the EIA in the organization.

In fact, EIA is one of the basic issues of the RMG sector of Bangladesh. The reason behind the industrial action indicates that there are misdemeanours in many areas such as wage, handling general workers, recognition, factory policies, control of trade union and political intervention (Haider, 2007). Interestingly, even though political parties do not have a strong presence in workplaces but political unrests at the national level often influence violence at the RMG sector (Uddin and Jahed 2007). Generally, the discord and dissatisfaction of employees have resulted in numerous cases of industrial action such as picketing, *gherao* [gherao means a barricade made by human chain including all workers, those who are involved with industrial actions, remain on the street until they have noticed about their demand issues]. Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS, 2016), defines industrial actions as

strikes, riots, violence, and a host of other untoward incidents (Chowdhury, Ali & Rahman, 2006; Khayer et al., 2017). However, industrial actions could be avoided if employee's work is intriguing, pay is reasonable, limited time openings are great, his or her administrator is steady, and colleagues are agreeable, then the top-level management anticipates that the employee is happy with the occupation (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2014). In addition, higher motivations for employees will ensure that they do their jobs better. As a result of incorporating effective strategies the business benefits, mutinies, strikes, rebellions, grievances, non-appearance, turnover, and other undesirable industrial incidents become lessened. It also enhances dependability and labourer resolve. Suppressing workplace demotivation, job dissatisfaction, and work-related successes are the main considerations in individual fulfilment, sense of pride, self-interest, and self-advancement (Thorntwaite & Sheldon, 2004). Apparently, for most RMG factory workers in Bangladesh the situation is not positive in as far as wages are concerned for it has been found that to increase their take-home pay, most employees have to resort to overtime hours (Ahmed, Greenleaf & Sacks, 2014).

For business success and organization, motivational components should be dealt with carefully by the management (ALDamoe, Yazam & Ahmid, 2012). Peters Addison (2014) emphasizes that employees with low job satisfaction can negatively affect the performance of an organization. This is because they clearly lack motivation, perform poorly, and pose negative attitudes. Likewise, if Bangladeshi employers of the RMG sector do not meet motivational needs of the employees, gradually the employees' performance will go down and employees will migrate to other countries like China, Vietnam and Malaysia working in the same industry for better work-life prospects.