



## Performance management system of the pharmaceutical sector in Bangladesh

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### Abstract

This study investigated how employee performance was managed in Bangladesh's pharmaceutical sector companies. It also aimed to show employees' views regarding their performance management systems. A questionnaire was used as the tool to collect data. Number of respondents was 306. Descriptive analysis was used to explain the data. The study concluded that formal performance management systems prevailed in the companies surveyed. Most of the organizations used annual confidential reports and rankings for performance appraisals.

**Keywords:** Performance appraisal, performance management system, human resources

### Introduction

The demand for pharmaceutical products was steady. It showed low-level sensitivity to changes in the business cycle because of their usage nature. Based on the continuously increasing annual turnover, the market size of Bangladesh's pharmaceutical sector stood at \$3 billion in 2019 and is estimated to surpass \$6 billion by 2025 (Pieal, 2023) [38]. In addition, Bangladesh was Exporting medicines to over 125 countries at the time.

There were many underlying reasons behind the tremendous growth of the sector. However, two effective policies accelerated the growth. Firstly, the Drug Control Ordinance 1982 banned foreign companies from selling imported pharmaceutical products in Bangladesh. Secondly, relaxation under Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) permitted Bangladesh, a developing country, to manufacture patented generic drugs by reverse engineering. A considerable number of employees are employed in different companies in this sector. Managing human resources is also vital for the steady growth of the sector and equitable distribution of rewards. In doing the same, the management of employee performance is very crucial.

In modern organizations, whether for profit or not for profit, performance management systems are an essential task of human resource management. The companies operating in Bangladesh's pharmaceutical sector were no exception to this. The companies have been practising Performance management systems (PMS) to achieve their organizational objectives.

### Literature Review

Chowdhury (2011) [8] conducted a study titled 'Performance Management Practices in Organizations Operating in Bangladesh: A Deeper Examination.' The study examined the performance management practices in local and multinational companies. It also tried to identify the link between performance evaluation output and other human resource decisions. It was found that local companies badly needed to adopt an appropriate and strategic performance management system that was more appropriate than that of multinational companies operating in Bangladesh.

Shafiullah *et al.* (2011) [32] conducted a study titled 'Practices of Performance Management System in Bangladesh: An Empirical Study among Three Different Industries.' The study's objective was to identify the level of practices of performance management systems and to examine whether these practices varied among three different industries, such as electronic media, commercial banks, and pharmaceuticals. It was found that those organizations practised PMS highly. The banking and pharmaceutical sectors maintained proper documentation, but the electronic media sector did not document the employees' performance for the future. Twelve variables out of twenty showed that PMS varied significantly among the three sectors.

Edward E Lawler (2003) [22] conducted a study titled 'Reward Practices and Performance Management Practices System Effectiveness.' The study aimed to determine the impact of tying performance management and reward systems. The study found clear guidance concerning the effect of tying performance appraisal results to employee pay and status changes. The study strongly supported the view that performance appraisal systems were more effective when there was a connection between the performance management system and the organization's reward system. It strongly argued that organizations made mistakes when they separated appraising performance from determining pay changes.

Liala Zaman (2011) [39] conducted a study titled 'Performance Appraisal Process of Pharmaceutical Companies in Bangladesh: A Case Study on GlaxoSmithKline Bangladesh Limited.' The study's objective was to learn the performance appraisal system of GlaxoSmithKline Bangladesh Limited to get ideas on the performance management system of a multinational pharmaceutical company and employees' attitudes regarding the PMS. The study found that the performance appraisal process was uniform, with other subsidiaries of the drug major having some strengths and weaknesses.

Mostafizur Rahman *et al.* (2013) [30] conducted a study titled 'HRM Practices and Its Impact on Employee Satisfaction: A Case of Pharmaceutical Companies in Bangladesh.' The study's objective was to investigate the impact of HRM

practices on employee satisfaction in Bangladeshi pharmaceutical companies. The study was conducted through a questionnaire survey. The study found that employees of pharmaceutical companies were satisfied with recruitment, selection, training, and development policies and practices. On the other hand, they were dissatisfied with human resource planning, working environment, compensation, performance appraisal, and industrial relations.

Serena Akter *et al.* (2012) <sup>[2]</sup> conducted a study, 'The Impact of Rewards on Employee Performance in Commercial Banks in Bangladesh: An Empirical Study.' The study aimed to examine the relationship between rewards and employee performance and identify the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. The study found the factors determining rewards and their impact on employee performance. The study found a positive correlation between employee performance and rewards in the commercial banks of Bangladesh.

Mosammod Mahamuda Parvin and M Nurul Kabir (2011) <sup>[28]</sup> conducted a study titled 'Factors Affecting Employee Job Satisfaction of Pharmaceutical Sector.' The study aimed to identify the job satisfaction of employees of different pharmaceutical companies in Bangladesh. The study found that salary, efficiency in work, fringe supervision, and coworker relations were the most critical factors contributing to job satisfaction. The overall job satisfaction of the pharmaceutical sector employees was positive. It also suggested taking measures to improve more to ensure the sustainable growth of pharmaceutical companies in Bangladesh.

Mohammad Ashraf Haque (2012) <sup>[5]</sup> conducted a study titled 'Performance Appraisal System of Bangladesh Civil Service: An Analysis of Its Efficacy.' The study aimed to identify the deficiencies of the prevailing ACR system and to develop a framework for an effective one. The study analyzed the historical development of the current ACR of Bangladesh Civil Service and its components to measure its validity, reliability and perceived fairness. It found that though the current ACR system held some degree of fairness, it significantly lacked validity and reliability and, therefore, was deficient in meeting its stated objectives.

Mir Mohammad Nurul Absar and Monowar Mahmood (2011) <sup>[1]</sup> conducted a study titled 'New HRM Practices in the Public and Private Sector Industrial Enterprises of Bangladesh: A Comparative Assessment.' The study's objective was to compare the differences in HRM practice between the private sector and public sector industrial organizations of Chittagong. The result showed significant differences in private and public industrial organizations' adoption of new HRM practices. It was also revealed that employees of the private sector were more satisfied than those of the public sector.

Jack N. Kondrasuk (2011) <sup>[21]</sup> conducted a study titled 'So what would an Ideal Performance Appraisal Look Like?' The objective of the study was to determine the ideal performance appraisal system. The study identified 76 performance appraisal problems reduced into four broad categories. The study found that the performance appraisal system could be improved by overcoming shortcomings such as reducing biases, training employees involved, and using the format with research substantiation. Nevertheless, the most significant changes required 1) clarifying the goal of performance appraisal, 2) focusing on both results and

behaviour appraisals, 3) adding an appraisal category, 4) better timing, and 5) better-involving constituencies.

Mohammad Jasim Uddin *et al.* (2012) <sup>[37]</sup> conducted a study titled 'Impact of Organizational Culture on Performance and Productivity: A Case Study of Telecommunication Sector in Bangladesh.' The study's primary objective was to examine the impact of culture on employee productivity and performance from the perspectives of MNCs operating, especially in Bangladesh's telecommunication sector. The study applied qualitative methodology focusing on Grameen Phone Limited, Bangladesh's leading telecommunication service provider. The study argued that organizational culture had a significant impact on employee performance.

According to Amanda Trosten-Bloom *et al.* (2014) <sup>[4]</sup>, in their article 'Positive Performance Management: Bold Experiments, Provocative Possibilities,' to face accelerating technological, demographic, socioeconomic, and political changes, successful organizations were flattening hierarchies, establishing active communication networks, and supporting grassroots innovation. Traditional performance management practices were unable to help those cultural strategies. The article described a new performance management shape, an appreciative inquiry-inspired process that focused on strengths and put employees in the driving seat. It increases commitment and forges trusting relationships between employees and their leaders, facilitating the next generation of performance management systems.

Alfred Presbitero and Mendiola Teng-Calleja (2017) <sup>[3]</sup> conducted a study titled 'Subordinate's Proactivity in Performance Planning: Implications for Performance Management Systems.' The study's objective was to investigate subordinate's proactivity in performance planning. The study also examined employees' self-regulation through proactivity with performance planning. The result of the study showed that an individual's proactive personality or tendency is relatively unconstrained by situational factors. It was found to be positively and significantly related to proactive performance planning. It also showed that proactive feedback-seeking behaviour or actively soliciting feedback partially acted as a mediator.

David E. Guest (2011) <sup>[10]</sup> wrote an article titled 'Human Resource Management and Performance: Still Searching for Some Answers.' The article concluded that after over two decades of extensive research, people could not answer the core questions about the relationship between management and performance. This was attributed mainly to the limited amount of longitudinal research that had been able to address the linkages between HRM and performance.

C. Allen Gorman *et al.* (2017) <sup>[6]</sup> conducted a study titled 'An Exploratory Study of Current Performance Management Practices: Human Resource Executives' Perspective.' The study's objective was to explore whether the PMS of 101 selected US organizations, as perceived by human resource executives, reflect the best practices researchers advocate to benchmark current PM practices. The study found that many PM practices recommended in the research literature were employed across the organizations surveyed, but several gaps between research and practices remained. Results also indicated that HR executives viewed most of the PMS as effective and fair.

Karen Becker *et al.* (2011) <sup>[19]</sup> conducted a study titled 'Implementing an employee performance management system in a nonprofit organization.' The study's objective

was to analyze the design and implementation of the introduction of performance management systems in nonprofit organizations. The study explored how a performance management system could be introduced and used effectively within a nonprofit environment to benefit employees and the organization. The research also found initial employee challenges resulting in a spike in labour turnover. However, it also indicated that if nonprofit organizations were willing to implement PMS through consultation with employees, it could be a handy tool for managers and directly benefit employees.

Sumayya Begum *et al.* (2015) <sup>[34]</sup> conducted a study titled 'Factors Determining the Effectiveness of Performance Appraisal System: A Study on Pharmaceutical Industry in Bangladesh.' The study aimed to investigate the factors that ensure the effectiveness of the performance appraisal system (PAS) in Bangladesh's pharmaceutical industry. Through factor analysis, six factors were obtained: rater accuracy, training, performance appraisal process, employee attitude, communication, and interpersonal factors. The study found, using the results of regression analysis, that all the factors except interpersonal factors are significant in ensuring the effectiveness of the performance appraisal system in Bangladesh's pharmaceutical industry.

Sabnam Jahan (2016) <sup>[17]</sup> conducted a study titled 'Employee Performance Appraisal System: A Study on Square Pharmaceuticals Limited.' The study aimed to identify the company employees' acceptance level of performance appraisal practices used in Square Pharmaceuticals Limited. The study found that most employees are satisfied with the organization's performance appraisal practices. However, the employees demanded a more systematic and informative performance appraisal system.

Muralikrishna and Ch. Kameswari (2015) <sup>[26]</sup> conducted a study titled 'An Analytical Study on the Influence of Performance Appraisal on Pharma Sales Force Job Satisfaction.' The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of different factors influencing the performance evaluation process in the Pharmaceutical industry and to analyze the effect of performance evaluation on employee job satisfaction. The study found a significant relationship between performance appraisal and job satisfaction, and more than 50% of pharmaceutical sales forces agree that there is a positive relationship between performance evaluation tools and employee satisfaction.

Shahi Md. Tanvir Alam (2015) <sup>[35]</sup> conducted a study titled 'Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction, Motivation and Turnover Rate of Medical Promotion Officer (MPO) in Pharmaceutical Industry: A Study Based in Khulna City.' The study aimed to identify the job satisfaction, motivation, and turnover factors of MPOs. The study found that most MPOs were unsatisfied with their jobs and were unmotivated, and the high turnover rate was high. The factors were lack of job security, low social status, high workload, visits to retailers' shops, sales target, no room for family, lack of retirement benefits, and lack of insurance facility.

Sultana, Mahbuba (2013) <sup>[33]</sup> conducted a study titled 'Impact of Training in Pharmaceutical Industry: An Assessment on Square Pharmaceuticals Limited, Bangladesh.' The purpose of the study was to focus on the training practices and the impact of training on the employees of Square Pharmaceuticals Limited. The study

found that training had a significant role in the development of employee performance in the organization.

Erratul Shela Eshak *et al.* (2016) <sup>[12]</sup> conducted a study titled 'The Relationship Between Rewards System with Employees' Performance.' The study aimed to identify the relationship between intrinsic rewards and employees' performance and determine the relationship between extrinsic relationships and employees' performance. The study found a positive and significant relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and employees' performance. Yi-Chi Zhang and Shu-Ling Li (2009) conducted a study titled 'High-performance work practices and firm performance: evidence from the pharmaceutical industry in China.' The objective of the study was to analyze the relationship between high-performance work practices and firm performance in a sample of pharmaceutical companies in China. The study found that high-performance work practices were significantly related to a firm's market performance. It also found that the positive effect of the HRM index on a firm's performance was influenced negatively by innovation strategy.

Lea Prevel Katsanis and Dennis A. Pitta (1999) <sup>[20]</sup> conducted a study titled 'The Performance Appraisal Process of Pharmaceutical Product Managers in Canada: An Empirical Study.' The purpose of the study was to examine how the performance of the pharmaceutical product managers was evaluated. The study found remarkable consensus between product managers and their supervisors in most areas of job performance and appraisal of that performance. It also suggested caution in areas where significant differences prevailed. Lastly, the existing systems proved helpful in managing performance.

## Methodology of the Study

### 1. Research type and approach

This study was quantitative research supplemented by qualitative data on a limited scale. This situation could be termed a dominant-less dominant design (Crewell 1994). Here, the dominant design was quantitative data, while the less dominant was qualitative data. Denzin (2017) called it triangulation, which means applying a combination of methodologies to study a similar phenomenon. Another reason to follow the approach was that the required data were mainly collected through questionnaire surveys.

### 2. Study Area and Population of the Study

Most of the pharmaceutical companies in Bangladesh were located in and around Dhaka. For this reason, Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, and Tangail districts were selected purposely as study areas. The study only covered the companies from the Allopathic pharmaceutical sector. All 11 medicine-producing 'A category' pharmaceutical companies under the Pharmaceutical and Chemical sector of the Dhaka Stock Exchange were selected for the study. All employees of chosen pharmaceutical companies were the study population of the research.

### 3. Sample Size Determination and Distribution of Samples

It was found that the 11 'A category' pharmaceutical companies had 37,187 employees. To obtain a representative sample, the following statistical formula was used for known population size  $N = 37187$  (Kothari, 2004).  

$$n = \frac{p \cdot q \cdot N}{e^2 (N-1) + Z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}$$

$$= (1.962 \times 0.5 \times 0.5 \times 37187) / 0.052(37187 - 1) + 1.962 \times 0.5 \times 0.5$$

$$= 385.1304 \approx 385$$

Where,

n = Sample size, N = 37187 = Total number of employees

Z = 1.96 at 95% Confidence Level

p = 0.5 is the estimated population proportion that maximizes the sample size

q = 1-p, e = Error limit at 5 % (0.05)

The 385 employees of pharmaceutical companies were selected by applying a purposive sampling method. Excluding non-response and unavailable respondents, complete responses were gathered from 306 respondents.

#### 4. Type and Sources of Data

The study used primary data from the study area's respondents through a questionnaire survey, FGD, and in-depth interviews. The study collected data from

- A. Questionnaire Survey
- B. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)
- C. In-depth Interview

#### 5. Techniques of Data Analysis

After collection, data were scrutinized thoroughly and edited manually to remove inconsistencies. The data was

processed by coding, classifying, and tabulating. Qualitative data were analyzed through deductive reasoning to draw appropriate inferences. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 22. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to explore the existing situation and, in some cases, to draw inferences or predictions of the PMS of the study. Data were also presented in tables, graphs, or charts. Errors and other pitfalls were addressed in compliance with the standard rules accepted by the research community.

#### 6. Selection of Respondents

All the publicly listed pharmaceutical companies dealing with manufacturing and selling human drugs had been included in the sample. Blue-collar employees were excluded from selecting respondents, and only white-collar employees were considered. This was done to ensure the respondents' understanding of the performance management systems of their respective organizations. These companies varied from one to another in terms of sales, number of drugs, market share, business nature, corporate culture, and so on. However, they all had to practice performance management systems to achieve goals and ensure regular operations. The researcher selected company-wise respondents in the following manner.

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics of respondents

Particulars		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	264	86.3
	Female	42	13.7
Age	24-34	219	71.6
	35-44	79	25.8
	45-60	8	2.6
	Total	306	100
Marital Status	Unmarried	117	38.2
	Married	189	61.8
Education Qualification	Undergraduate	11	3.6
	Graduate	125	40.8
	Postgraduate	170	55.6
Occupational status	Entry	137	44.8
	Executive	116	37.9
	Mid-level	52	17.0
	Top-level	1	.3
Experience	1 to 5 years	150	49.0
	6 to 10 years	116	37.9
	11 to 15 years	25	8.2
	Above 15 years	15	4.9
Annual Income	Less than 300,000	109	35.6
	From 300,001 to 450,000	123	40.2
	From 450,001 to 600,000	39	12.7
	From 600,001 to 900,000	26	8.5
	900,001 plus	9	2.9

*Based on the sample survey*

Among them, 61.8% were married, and 38.2% of employees were unmarried. Only 3.6% of employees were undergraduates, 40.8% were graduates, and 55.6% were postgraduate employees. 44.8% Entry level, 37.9% Executive level, 17% Mid-level, and 0.3% Top-level employees. 49% of employees were 1 to 5 years, 37.9% were 6 to 10 years, 8.2% were 11 to 15 years, and 4.9% had 15 years plus experience. Like any other sector, remunerations here are also associated with several factors,

*viz.*, specific Company, Age, Gender, Marital Status, Occupational Status, Experience, and Level of Education. Multiple regression equation could be used to show the relationship of dependence of employee income on the above-quoted factors.

35% of employees earned less than 300,000 taka, 40.2% earned from 300,001 to 450,000 taka, 12.7% earned 450,001 to 600,000 taka, 8.5% earned 600,001 to 900,000 taka., 2.9% employees earned Taka900,001 plus.

**Table 2:** PMS issues of pharmaceutical companies in Bangladesh

Particulars	Per cent
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The Organization Operates a Formal PMS	Strongly disagree	0.07
	Disagree	3.3
	Neutral	22.2
	Agree	42.5
	Strongly Agree	31.4
Conductor of Performance Management System	Senior managers	81.0
	Other managers	11.4
	Professionals	7.5
PM process for employees	Different methods for different groups	32
	Extensive use of self-appraisal for a specific band	7.5
	Different periods for different groups	9.5
	All of them	50.7
	Others	0.3
PA methods	ACR	60.1
	Written essays	3.6
	Ranking	29.1
	Graphic rating scale	1.6
	Critical incident method	0.7
	Forced distribution	2
	Others	2.9
Performance goal setter of employees across organizations	Senior manager	62.1
	Line manager	26.1
	HR manager	5.2
	Appraisee	2
	Appraisee and appraiser	3.9
Evaluator of employee performance in organizations	Line managers	67
	HR managers	21.1
	Employees	5.2
	Professionals	5.56
	Others	1.00
Reasons for using PMS in organizations	Retention strategy	29.74
	Reward allocation	11.77
	Identify T&D need	33.66
	Facilities	1.31
	Promotion, transfer, and termination	13.73
	Clarifying job requirement	1.31
	Identifying barriers to performance	3.92
	Motivational strategy	4.58
Factors that affect job performance	Salary	39.5
	Work environment	27.1
	Organizational culture	19.9
	Competency of the employees	12.7
	Others	0.8
No difference between PA and PMS	Strongly disagree	10.8
	Disagree	28.8
	Neutral	44.1
	Agree	13.7
	Strongly Agree	2.6
Employees considered performance management as a routine task	Strongly disagree	2.9
	Disagree	14.4
	Neutral	38.9
	Agree	36.9
	Strongly Agree	7.5
PM distracts from important activities.	Strongly disagree	33
	Disagree	
	Neutral	36
	Agree	31
	Strongly Agree	
Human judgment is essential in PM.	Strongly disagree	0.7
	Disagree	12.1
	Neutral	44.8
	Agree	38.2
	Strongly Agree	4.2
Availability of average performance rating	Strongly disagree	7.5
	Disagree	13.7
	Neutral	35.6
	Agree	35.6
	Strongly Agree	7.5

Responsibility for documentation of performance review	Line manager	54.9
	HR manager	28.8
	Appraiser	10.5
	Individual	5.6
	Others	0.3
Separate system for appraising team performance	Strongly disagree	3.6
	Disagree	13.7
	Neutral	46.7
	Agree	29.1
Organizations always undertake performance planning	Strongly agree	6.9
	Strongly disagree	1.6
	Disagree	6.2
	Neutral	41.8
	Agree	44.4
Organizations carried out performance planning at the time of	Strongly agree	5.9
	Hiring or transferring employees	10.1
	Developing business plan	44.8
	Annual performance reviews	26.8
	sub-standard performance	2.3
	At any time	15.0
Number of yearly meetings with employees	Not done at all	1.0
	One meeting	5.6
	Two meetings	24.5
	Three meetings	40.2
	more than three meetings	18.6
The following people received training in PM techniques	There is no meeting at all.	11.1
	All employees	10.1
	Managers	49.3
	Head of departments	26.8
	Appraisers	2.9
	HR team	4.2
Availability of trade unions in the organization	None	6.5
	Yes	81.6
The current PM arrangements were agreed with the union	No	18.4
	Strongly disagree	1.6
	Disagree	9.5
	Neutral	24.2
	Agree	33.3
	Strongly agree	12.7
The attitude of the union regarding the current PMS	Positive	45.8
	Negative	11.1
	Neutral	20.9
	Unaware of this	2.0
	Others	1.6
The causes of failure of Performance management system	Lack of trained rater	46.7
	Lack of role clarity	11.1
	Interval of appraisal	12.4
	Lack of communication with Superior	14.7
	Unfair practices	6.5
	Others	8.5
Communication with employees during the following stages of PM	Goal setting stage	49.0
	Data gathering stage	15.7
	Mid-term review	16.7
	Annual review	17.6
	Others	1.0
Organizational practice to reduce bias in the PAS	Multiple raters	33.0
	Critical incidents	11.1
	Continuous observation	32.0
	Peer review outcome	9.2
	Selective evaluations	6.5
	Training evaluators	4.9
Supervisors steps after identifying poor performers	Others	3.3
	Training	49.3
	Improvement Coaching	24.2
	Relocations	12.4
	Degradation	9.8
	Removal or discharge	2.6
	Others	1.6

Employees viewed the role of the appraiser as	Judge	19.0
	Helper	25.8
	Both	44.8
	Disrupter	7.2
	Others	3.3
Psychological barriers to effective performance appraisal	Feeling insecurity	11.4
	Being too sceptical or modest	29.1
	Worrying that PA might cause resentment to subordinate	26.5
	Fear to evaluator	8.5
	All of them	16.7
Linking rewards to performance would motivate employees	None of them	7.8
	Strongly disagree	1.6
	Disagree	7.2
	Neutral	26.8
	Agree	50.0
One can carry the entire process of PA objectively	Strongly agree	14.4
	Strongly disagree	3.3
	Disagree	5.6
	Neutral	29.4
	Agree	49.0
Employees self-appraisal was beneficial	Strongly agree	12.7
	Strongly disagree	.3
	Disagree	6.2
	Neutral	45.1
	Agree	34.3
	Strongly agree	14.1

**Issues of Performance Management System**

**1. Formal performance management system**

Organizations could use a formal or informal performance management system to manage employee performance. Usually, small organizations use informally, while large ones use formal performance management systems. Research showed that using a formal PMS led to stronger links with critical success factors than using an informal PMS (Tarmo Kadak and Erkki Laitinen, 2016) [36].

In the survey, 31.4% strongly argued, a total of 73.9% argued that their organization operated a formal PMS, while 7% strongly disagreed and 3.3% disagreed regarding having a formal PMS in their respective organizations. On the other hand, 22.2% replied neither positive nor negative, which meant they were unaware of the existence of a formal PMS. The mean value was 4.0 on a 5-point Likert scale with a standard deviation of 0.853, indicating an organization's formal performance management system.

**2. Conductor of PMS process**

In the survey of selected companies, 81% of respondents replied that senior managers conducted the PMS process in their respective organizations. 11.4% of respondents replied that other managers conducted the PMS process. 7.5% responded that human resource professionals with expertise in PMS were hired to do the job for a contractual period.

**3. Performance management process**

In the survey, 32% of respondents replied that they observed different methods of appraisals for different employee groups. 7.5% of respondents replied that they observed extensive use of self-appraisal for specific employee groups. 9.5% of respondents replied that different time-span appraisal systems were practised in their organizations. In addition, 50.7% of respondents observed a mix of all the said practices in their respective organizations.

**4. Performance appraisal method**

Organizations use different performance appraisal methods according to their necessity and choice. Different industries and jobs need different appraisal methods (Anon, 2016). In the survey, a whopping number of total respondents, 60.1%, replied that their organizations used the Annual Confidential Report (ACR) method as the performance appraisal method. This was a standard method in Bangladesh for ACR to evaluate performance once a year. ACR was followed by the ranking method. 29.1% of respondents replied that their organizations used ranking as a performance appraisal method. After these two dominating methods, 3.6% replied with written essays, 2% replied with force distribution, 1.6% replied with a graphic rating scale, 0.7% replied with the critical incident method, and 2.9% replied with other methods as their respective organization's practising performance appraisal method.

**5. Performance goal setting**

As per a Gallup survey, 50% of employees said they did not know precisely what was expected from them at work (Gupta, 2023) [42]. There was no universal rule to designate the person to set performance goals. In the survey, 62.1% of respondents said senior managers set performance goals. 26.1% of respondents replied that line managers were responsible for performance goal setting. 5.2% of respondents experienced the human resource department doing that goal-setting job. 2% of respondents replied that employees themselves were the performance goal setters, and finally, only 3.9% responded that performance goal setting was the joint task of appraise and appraiser.

**6. Evaluation of employee performance**

In the survey, 67% of respondents said line managers were employee evaluators. After that, 21.1% of respondents replied that human resource managers conducted their performance evaluation per the respective rules of the organizations. 5.2% of respondents replied that employees

evaluated performance. It should be noted that such evaluation was done through self-evaluation and evaluation by equal-level employees.

### 7. Reasons for using PMS

Not all organizations used PMS for the same reason, as they did not similarly use similar or different methods. Some organizations use it as a strategic tool to transform talents and motivation into strategic business advantages (Ashwini Walhekar and Anita Khatke, 2020).

In the survey, 33.7% of the respondents replied that using PMS in their organizations was to identify the training and development needs to build up a skilled human resource pool for attaining organizational objectives. After that, 29.7% of the respondents replied that retaining employees to reduce employee turnover was the prime cause of using PMS in their respective organizations. 13.7% of respondents replied that organizational PMS was the basis of organizational promotion, transfer, and termination decisions. 11.8% of respondents replied that reward allocation was the main reason for using PMS. 4.6% of respondents termed the use of PMS as a motivational strategy. 3.9% of respondents replied that PMS was used to identify and remove performance barriers. A minor 1.3% of respondents pointed out that finding out how to distribute facilities is the reason for using PMS in the organization. Another 1.3% of respondents replied that organizations used PMS to clarify employee job requirements in their respective organizations.

### 8. Factors influencing job performance

Different factors influence employee job performance differently. In the survey, the respondents replied that salary was the most crucial factor influencing job performance. 39.5% of respondents selected salary as the most affecting job performance factor. It was 48.3% in a study in Jordan (M. R. Abuhashesh *et al.*, 2018) <sup>[27]</sup>. After salary, the working environment was the second most crucial factor influencing job performance. 27.1% of respondents voted for this. 19.9% of respondents identified organizational culture as the third most important factor influencing job performance. 12.7% of respondents replied that employee competency is the most important factor for job performance.

### 9. Difference between performance appraisal (PA) and PMS

Performance management was continuous on purpose, whereas performance appraisal was occasional (Hamoonga, Academia). Unfortunately, this concept was not clear to most of the employees. Most respondents were unaware of the difference between PA and PMS in the survey.

44.1% of respondents replied that they were unaware whether there was any difference between PA and PM. Only 39.5% of respondents replied that PA and PMS were not the same and that they indicated there were differences between the two. Only 13.7% plus 2.6% of the total 16.3% of respondents agreed there was no difference between PA and PMS. Therefore, 16.3% of respondents believed that PA and PMS were the same. The mean value of this statement was 4.01 with a standard deviation of .853, which indicated that the respondents had viewed performance appraisal and performance management as the same.

### 10. Performance management - a routine task

Performance management should not be treated as a routine administrative task but as a critical and indispensable aspect that directly affects the success of an organization (Stanciu, 2023) <sup>[45]</sup>. In the survey, the respondents were asked whether they viewed performance management as a routine task. 44.4% of respondents agreed that PM was a routine task, among whom 7.5% agreed strongly. 17.3% of respondents opposed the statement that PM was a routine task. They viewed it as a serious task and very essential for the organization. 38.9% of respondents viewed neutrally. This statement had a mean value of 3.32, which reflected the respondent's view of performance management as a routine task.

### 11. Distractions from important activities

In the survey, the researcher asked the respondents whether performance management distracted employees from essential activities. 31% of respondents replied affirmatively. They viewed PM as a time-wasting activity, which hampered other organizational activities. On the other hand, a nearly equal number of respondents, i.e., 33.00%, opposed the statement. According to them, the PM focused employees on essential activities. 36% of respondents replied neutrally. This statement had a mean value of 2.91 and a standard deviation of 1.009, which meant that the respondents rejected the statement.

### 12. Human judgment in the performance management system

42.4% of respondents to the survey emphasized the relevance of human judgment in the PMS, with 4.2% emphasizing it strongly. On the contrary, 12.7% of respondents ignored the importance of human judgment, while 0.7% ignored it firmly. The rest, 44.8% of the survey respondents, had held a neutral attitude regarding the statement. The mean value of the responses was 3.33 on a 5-point Likert scale. It meant that respondents moderately supported the statement.

### 13. Average performance rating in PMS

In the survey, the researcher asked the respondents whether an average rating was given to all employees. 43% of the respondents replied affirmatively that an average rating for performance was given in their organizations; among them, 7.5% agreed strongly. 21.2% of respondents responded negatively that no average rating was given in their organizations. Among them, 7.5% disagreed strongly. However, 35.6% of respondents were neutral regarding this statement. The mean value of these responses was 3.22, and the standard deviation was 1.025, indicating a moderate tendency to give an average performance rating in the organizations.

### 14. Documentation of performance review

Respondents were asked to name the person/department responsible for performance review documentation in the survey. 54.9% of the respondents replied that line managers were responsible for documenting the performance reviews in their respective organizations. 28.8% of the respondents replied that it was the duty of the human resource department to document the performance reviews. 10.5% replied that performance appraisers were responsible for documenting performance reviews in their organizations.

5.6% mentioned that individuals meant employees whose performance was to be reviewed were responsible for such tasks. Only .3% mentioned others to be responsible for performance review documentation.

### 15. Separate system of appraising team performance

In evaluating the team, members of the same had to participate as they were aware of the contributions of each member of the team (Daniel Lavi and David A. Askay, 2020) <sup>[9]</sup>. The respondents were asked whether there was a separate system for evaluating team performance.

36% of the respondents replied affirmatively that there was a separate system for evaluating team performance, of which 6.9% agreed strongly. 46.7% of respondents were neutral regarding the statement. 20.90% of respondents replied that there was no separate appraisal system for evaluating team performance. The statement had a mean value of 3.22 and a standard deviation of .895, meaning respondents moderately supported the separate appraisal system for team performance.

### 16. Performance planning

A study concluded that adequately designed performance management plans were essential for employee performance (Muhammad Lutaaya and Dr Samuel Obino Mokaya, 2018) <sup>[25]</sup>. However, in interviews, many respondents told the researcher that their supervisors only bothered to accomplish performance planning after acknowledging the respective employees (Interview with the researcher, Dhaka, May 2019) <sup>[16]</sup>.

A total of 7.8%, of which 1.6% strongly disagreed respondent, responded that there were no performance planning practices in their respective organizations. 41.8% of respondents expressed their neutral position regarding having or the absence of a performance planning practice in their organizations. On the other hand, 50.30% of respondents, of whom 5.9% strongly agreed, replied that performance-planning practices existed in their respective organizations. The mean value of this statement was 3.47, with a standard deviation of .769, which showed a moderate practice of performance planning in the organizations surveyed.

### 17. Time of preparing performance plan

All the survey respondents were asked to mention the time of performance planning. 10.1% of respondents replied that performance planning was done when hiring employees, and 44.8% of respondents replied that their respective organizations did this when developing a business plan. They meant that the performance plan was closely associated with the organization's business plan.

26.8% of respondents to the survey responded that the performance plan in their respective organizations was done after the completion of annual performance and development reviews. They opined that ensuring a good performance plan was only possible with the review of annual performance and the development of the employees of the respective organization (Interview with researcher, Dhaka, May 2019) <sup>[16]</sup>. A tiny number of respondents, only 2.3%, replied that the performance plan was only done when substandard performance was experienced. 15% of survey respondents replied that performance planning in their respective organizations was an ongoing process conducted at any time per the organization's need. Only 1% of

employees replied that their organizations had no performance planning.

### 18. Meeting with employees

Meetings were an undeniable part of most organizations, and employees appeared to love and hate them (Joseph A. Allen *et al.*, 2012) <sup>[18]</sup>. In the survey, the researcher asked the respondents about the number of yearly meetings to discuss employee performance-related issues. 5.60% of respondents replied that there was only one annual performance meeting in their organization. 24.5% of respondents to the survey replied that there were two scheduled employee performance review meetings in their respective organizations.

40.2% of respondents replied that there were three scheduled performance review meetings in their respective organizations, whereas 18.6% of respondents replied that there were more than three meetings in their organizations. 11.1% of respondents of the survey replied that there was no such employee performance review meeting in their organizations.

### 19. Training on performance management techniques

10.1% of survey respondents replied that all their organizations' employees were subject to training in performance management systems. The highest number of the respondents, 49.30%, replied that only managers were given PMS training in their respective organizations. 26.80% of employees who participated in the survey replied that different departmental heads of their respective organizations were provided training regarding PMS.

2.9% of respondents in the survey replied that appraisers were provided training in their organizations, whereas 4.2% of respondents replied that training regarding PMS was provided to the human resource department team. On the other hand, 6.5% of respondents replied that no such training existed for any employees in their organization.

### 20. Trade unions in the organization

Trade unions were organizations of workers of a particular organization formed to protect the interest of workers. Workers' ability to defend their rights and ensure decent working conditions depended on their capacity to cooperate at the national, regional, and global levels (International Labor Organization).

In the survey, 81.4% of the respondents replied that trade unions existed in their respective organizations. 18.6% replied that there was no trade union.

### 21. Performance management and the role of trade union

Union activities affected workers' workplace performance and their performance at work (Osman Chilala, 2015). In the survey, the respondents were asked whether the trade unions supported or agreed upon their PMS. 2% of respondents strongly disagreed that the unions supported performance management, whereas 11.6% disagreed, making the number 13.6%. 29.7% of respondents to the survey reported that they held neither a negative attitude nor a positive attitude regarding the PMS arrangement. 56.7% of respondents replied affirmatively that the trade unions supported the PMS arrangement, to which 15.7% strongly agreed. The mean value of the responses to the statement was 3.57, and

the standard deviation was .957, indicating the trade union's acceptance of the PM arrangement.

## 22. Attitude of trade union regarding PMS

56.2% of respondents to the survey replied that trade unions had a positive attitude regarding the PMS of the organization. 13.7% of respondents replied negatively that trade unions had a negative attitude regarding the PMS of the organization. 25.7% of respondents were neutral regarding the attitude of the trade union. 2.4% of respondents were unaware of the attitude of the trade union regarding the PMS, whereas only 2% of respondents had a mixed attitude regarding the organization's PMS.

## 23. Causes of failure of performance appraisal system

Performance appraisals had a very high failure rate; up to 90% of organizational appraisal systems were considered ineffective (Elaine D. Pulakos, 2015) <sup>[11]</sup>. In the survey, the researcher tried to know the core cause of the failure of the PA system. 46.7% of respondents identified the lack of trained raters to rate employee performance as the cause of the failure of the PA system in the organization. 11.1% of respondents answered that lack of role clarity was why PA failed in the organization. 12.4% of respondents in the survey replied that the interval between appraisals was the cause of the failure of the PA system in the organization.

14.7% of respondents replied that lack of communication from the supervisor to the employee was the cause of the failure of performance appraisal. 6.5% of the respondents identified unfair practices as the reason behind the failure of the PA system. 8.5% of respondents to the survey replied that the performance appraisal system failed for reasons other than those specified in the questionnaire.

## 24. Communication with the employees in performance management

Communication with the employees has always been considered an ongoing process for all organizational affairs. A study indicated that downward and horizontal communication positively impacted employee performance (Ong Choon Hee, 2019). In the survey, the researcher asked the respondents about the time at which employees were communicated by their supervisors. In response, 49% of respondents replied that the supervisors communicated with the employees at the goal-setting stage. 17.6% responded that they were communicated at the annual performance review stage. This meant that supervisors communicated with the employees once a year regarding PMS affairs.

16.7% of employees who participated in the survey replied that their supervisors communicated with them at the midterm review stage. 15.7% of the survey respondents replied that, in their organization, the supervisors communicated with them at the data gathering stage. Only 1% of employees replied that the supervisors did not contact them at any specified stages regarding the PMS issues.

## 25. Mechanism used in reducing bias in performance appraisal

Bias in performance appraisal has always been a problem for employee performance appraisal systems. A decrease in errors and bias could bring about employee performance improvement as well as an increase in satisfaction with and efficiency of the evaluation system (Mahmoud Javidmehr and Mehrdad Ebrahimpour, 2015) <sup>[24]</sup>. In the survey, the

respondents were asked regarding the mechanism of reducing bias in their respective organizations. In response, 33% of survey respondents replied that their respective organizations used multiple raters to evaluate employee performance to minimize bias in PA.

32% of survey respondents replied that continuous observation was done to evaluate employee performance in their organizations free from bias. 11.1% responded that critical incidents were used to evaluate the performance of employees to make it unbiased. 9.2% of respondents replied that the peer review method was used to reduce evaluation bias in their organizations. 6.5% of respondents in the survey replied that their organizations used selective evaluations to reduce performance appraisal bias. 4.9% of respondents replied that, in their organizations, the authority provided training to the evaluators to reduce performance appraisal bias. Only 3.3% of respondents replied that other techniques are used to reduce bias in PA.

## 26. Addressing poor performance

Poor performance should be attended to immediately by applying the correct procedures. Interventions that would assist members to perform better had to be implemented (Hlengane *et al.*, 2013) <sup>[15]</sup>. In the survey, 49.3% of respondents replied that organizations provided training opportunities to poor performers to improve performance. 24.3% of respondents replied that their organizations arranged improvement coaching for poor performers to help them overcome substandard performance. 12.4% of respondents replied that the supervisors used relocating employees to improve the poor performance of the employees. 9.8% of respondents replied that supervisors used to degrade the poor-performing employees after the review session. 2.6% of the respondents replied that supervisors removed or discharged poor-performing employees.

## 27. View of employees regarding the role of the appraiser

Research and practice demonstrated that employees enjoy performance appraisal about as much as a trip to the dentist, but at least the dentist gave them something for the pain! (Gary Roberts and Michael Pregitzer, 2007) <sup>[13]</sup>. In the survey, the researcher asked each respondent about their view on the role of the appraisers in the performance management process. In response, 25.8% of respondents replied that the appraiser's role was a helper facilitating employee performance. 19% of employees replied that they viewed the appraiser's role as a judge of employee performance. 44.8% of respondents to the survey replied that they regarded the performance appraiser's role as both judge and helper. 7.2% of respondents replied that the role of an appraiser was like that of a disrupter who had been disrupting employee performance rather than facilitating them. 3.3% of respondents replied that they viewed their performance appraiser's role as none of the above but others.

## 28. Psychological barrier to performance

In the survey, employees identified doubtfulness or modesty as the top psychological barrier to effective performance evaluation. 29.1% of respondents replied that they viewed being too skeptical or too modest as the reason to constitute a psychological barrier to effective performance appraisal. 26.5% of respondents replied that appraisers' worrying

about the resentment of subordinates because of PA had been acting as a psychological barrier to ensure effective performance appraisal. 11.4% of respondents replied that appraisers' insecurity, especially during negative ratings, was a psychological barrier to effective performance appraisal. In the survey, 8.5% of respondents replied that some employees feared their appraiser would communicate performance data that hampered accurate performance appraisal. Too modest employees were the victims of this category. 16.7% of respondents in the survey replied that all the factors mentioned above, *viz.* being skeptical, appraisers' worrying about subordinates' resentment, feeling insecurity, and fear of the appraisers, were responsible for constituting a psychological barrier to effective PA. Lastly, 7.8% of the respondents replied that none of the abovementioned factors acted as a psychological barrier to effective performance appraisal. Overcoming these barriers would require shifting from performance management to performance leadership (Robert D Behn, 2002) <sup>[31]</sup>.

### 29. Employee motivation and linking reward to performance

Studies showed that rewards, especially financial rewards, had a significant positive relationship with performance (Pınar Güngör, 2011) <sup>[29]</sup>. The survey asked respondents whether linking their performance to reward would motivate them. In response, 50% of respondents agreed that linking rewards to performance would motivate them. In addition, 14.4% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. 26.8% of respondents were neutral in replying to the statement. This meant they were unsure whether linking performance to reward would motivate employees. 8.8% of respondents disagreed, of whom 1.6% disagreed strongly with the statement. According to them, linking rewards to performance would not motivate employees.

### 30. Conducting PMS objectively

Most performance evaluations were ambiguous and biased. Fortunately, individuals could take action to reduce that ambiguity and be more objective (Lori Mackenzie, 2019). In the survey, the respondents were asked whether conducting the entire process objectively as possible. 61.7% of respondents agreed that the process could be conducted impartially. Of this, 12.7% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. 29.4% of respondents to the survey reported a neutral attitude regarding the statement, which meant that they were unsure whether PMS could be conducted objectively. 8.8% of respondents in the survey opined that the process could not be conducted without bias, of which 3.3% of respondents held this view firmly.

### 31. Employees self-appraisal and PMS

In the survey, 48.4% of respondents agreed, of whom 14.1% agreed strongly. Employees' self-appraisal benefited both the employees and the organization. 6.5% of respondents disagreed with the statement, of which only 0.3% disagreed strongly. 45.1% of respondents reported their neutral views regarding the statement. This segment of employees was neutral about any benefit or harm from self-appraisal.

### Results

Organizations operated formal PMs (73.9%). Senior managers mainly conducted performance management (81%). Most organizations used different methods for

different groups, self for some employees, and variable time spans for different employees (50.7%). Organizations used mostly ACR (60.1) and ranking (29.1) for performance appraisal. Mostly senior managers set performance goals (62.1%), followed by line managers (26.1%). Line managers evaluated employee performance (67%), followed mainly by HR managers (21.1%). Reasons for using PMS were identifying training and development needs (33.66%), retaining employees (29.74%), and reward allocation (11.77%). Job performance was affected by salary, work environment, and organizational culture. Most employees were unaware of the difference between PA and PM. They viewed PMS as a routine task (44.4%). 33% of employees believed that PM distracts them from essential activities. 42.4% of employees believed in the importance of human judgment in PMS. There was a practice of average rating in appraisals (43.1%). Line managers should document performance data (54.9%), followed by HR (28.8%). A separate team performance appraisal (36%) was also available. Performance planning was usually done (50.3%). Usually, such planning was prepared during the business development plan (44.8%), followed by an annual performance review (26.8%). There were two performance meetings (40.2%). Most managers received PM training (49.3%). There were trade unions in organizations (81.6%). PM issues were agreed with trade unions (46%) with a positive attitude (45%). PM failed due to the lack of rater training (46.7%). Management communicated with employees at the goal-setting stage (49%). Organizations used multiple raters (33%) and continuous observation (32%) to reduce bias. Training (49.3) was given to poor performers, followed by improvement coaching (24.2). Appraisers were viewed as judges and helpers (44.8%). 64.4% of employees believed that linking rewards to performance would motivate them. Most employees (61.7%) believed the PM process could be conducted impartially. 48.8% of employees opined for self-appraisal.

### Conclusion

The performance management system of the pharmaceutical sector in Bangladesh is doing well. They could do more things to achieve more efficacy and smooth running of organizational human resources, *viz.* introducing unbiased PA method, ensuring training for all the employees regarding PMS, making PMS the basis for all employee-related activities, and the like. By implementing proper PMS in organizations, management could ensure the optimum and efficient use of human resources.

### Limitations and future study guidelines

The study was based on a sample of publicly listed pharmaceutical companies. Many unlisted and similar companies were not included in the study. Future studies could consist of both listed and non-listed companies. Other sector companies could also be included in the comparison with their PMS.

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