



From Incentives to Intentionality in Private Higher Educational Institutions: A Review of Reward-Driven Employee Loyalty and the Mitigation of Impulsive Behavior in Bangladesh

¹**Md. Azmir Hossain**

PhD Research Scholar, Department of Management,
Faculty of Management and Commerce, Guru Kashi University,
Talwandi Sabo, Bathinda, Punjab, India
E-mail: azmirdu@gmail.com

²**Dr. Hemant Kumar Watts**

Assistant Professor, Department of Management,
Faculty of Management and Commerce,
Guru Kashi University, Talwandi Sabo, Bathinda, Punjab, India
E-mail: hemantwatts171737@gku.ac.in

ABSTRACT

The attitude and behavior outcomes of workers within organizations are greatly influenced by human resource reward programs. The aim of the study is to examine how the HR reward program influences the workplace impulsive behavior with a significant emphasis on employee loyalty as the mediating variable in the workplaces of higher education institutions in Bangladesh. The study focuses on the implications of different reward systems including monetary and non-monetary rewards, recognition and career development opportunities on psychological attachment of employees to their organizations. Based on the theories of organizational behavior and human resource management, the study will argue that effective reward systems will result in employee loyalty that subsequently reduces impulsive and unplanned behavior at workplace. The study takes a conceptual and analytical approach using the existing literature and theoretical perspectives. The results highlight the significance of well-designed and open reward schemes in enhancing employee loyalty and motivating desirable behavior at work. The study has profound implications in terms of HR policy formulation in the context of the private university and suggestions on the improvement of the reward management practices.

Keywords: Human Resource Reward Programs; Employee Loyalty; Workplace Impulsive Behavior; Strategic Human Resource Management; Private Higher Education Institutions

1. Introduction

The worldwide boom in the number of private higher education institutions (HEIs) has had a significant impact on the socioeconomic scenario of Bangladesh. These institutions have emerged as critical players in the economy and they are faced with peculiar problems of staff retention and quality of performance. The key aspect of these challenges is that the HR reward systems are the key driver of motivation and engagement. Although the conventional research has focused on rewards as a form of productivity, a new necessity arises to comprehend the role of rewards in regulating impulsive behavior - hasty behavior which may be spontaneous grading or uncoordinated administrative actions that may compromise

institutional trust and service quality. An effort to bridge the reward implementation-behavioral stability gap in this paper is the study of loyalty as a mediating variable (Meyer and Allen, 1991) among employees.

Attitude, motivation and behaviour of employees in modern organizations is also a critical aspect that is influenced by human resource management. Reward programs have been found to be among the most critical tools of motivating both employees and performance in an organization among other types of HR practices. Reward systems that are effective are a blend of financial rewards, including salary, bonuses, and allowances, and non-financial rewards, including recognition, career growth prospects, and professional assistance (Armstrong, 2020). Such reward mechanisms serve to attract, retain and motivate talented employees in organizations and to promote positive behaviour in the organization. The necessity of the HR reward programs in higher education and, in particular, in the private universities is becoming increasingly important as the competition within it is increasing, and the academic level must be kept high (Dessler, 2017). When employees believe that their rewards systems are equitable and transparent, chances are high that they will exhibit loyalty, commitment and positive attitudes towards their work to their organizations (Allen and Meyer, 1990).

It is deemed that employee loyalty is an important factor in enhancing the relationship between the employees and their institutions. Loyal employees tend to be more effective contributors to organizational goals, have more professional relationships, and are more responsible workers (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). In contrast, lack of effective reward systems can result in dissatisfaction, decreased commitment and impulsive workplace behavior. Workplace impulsive behavior could be described as spontaneous or unplanned actions that may have a negative impact on organizational harmony and productivity (Baumeister, 2002). Previous research suggests that supportive HR practices such as well-structured reward programs can mitigate such negative behavioral tendencies by increasing employees' emotional attachment to the organization (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In the context of private higher education institutions in Bangladesh, the understanding of the strategic relationship between HR reward programs, employee loyalty, and workplace impulsive behavior is particularly important to enhance the performance of the institution and to maintain a productive work environment.

2. Literature Review

The theoretical foundation of the present research relies upon Three-Component Model of commitment (affective, continuance and normative) created by Meyer and Allen (1991). A rapidly developing literature (2018-2025) has developed out of the basic models of pay for performance to hybrid models that are more concerned with context sensitivity. According to Armstrong (2020), though cash bonuses serve as a retention tool, the awards with no financial gains, like recognition, flexible and career development are what count in the end when it comes to the development of long-term motivation. In one of the studies, Malhotra et al. (2007) highlight the fact that what matters more than the size of the reward that is given is distributive and procedural fairness. The employees like the fact that the reward process has clarity and agency. Extrinsic rewards used to excess can also suppress intrinsic motivation which is essential in the school environment. Independence and autonomy in higher education institutions is regarded as a highly important element compared to the incremental pay rises.

At the heart of the latter discussion is the three-component model of Meyer and Allen (1991) that offers a psychological justification to the concepts of affective, continuance as well as normative commitment as factors in achieving employee tenacity (Mowday et al., 1982). This is further enhanced by decision making theory (Self-Determination Theory) (Deci, Koestner, and Ryan, 1999) which states that although extrinsic financial rewards, including bonuses, and allowances (Milkovich and Newman, 2017) are necessary in basic motivation (Vroom, 1964; Lawler, 1971). They should be offset with non financial motivation like recognition and pedagogical training (Alshurideh, 2016) whereby the presence of the extrinsic engagement is likely to crowd Within the context of Bangladesh, specifically, the literature indicates that internal and external pay equity is paramount in terms of retaining the faculty (Sultana, 2025; Islam et al., 2020).

The digital tools and strategic HRM are increasingly being used to build these reward architectures by modern management practices in the region (Hossain et al., 2024a; Hossain et al., 2024b). The importance of such systems lies in their capacity to address the problem of impulsive behaviour on the increasing workplace, i.e., the hasty and unplanned behaviours which cause a disturbance to the quality of the service (Rahman, 2022). Institutions can build a buffer between a feeling of loyalty that makes the rash decision-making rational with the establishment of psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995) as well as inducements to organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2000). Employment relationship evolves out of the high commitment HR process (Whitener, 2001) and strategy goal setting (Locke and Latham, 2002) to identification with the mission of university over a long duration (Boxall and Purcell, 2011; Guest, 1997). This shift is necessary to organizational effectiveness (Huselid, 1995) particularly in industries that have been privatized whereby need to bring about entrepreneurial transformation (Zahra et al., 2000).

Moreover, more recent systematic reviews (Gal and Hadas, 2024; Springer, 2024) stress that dissatisfaction with the job one gets at some point can be a driving factor towards creativity (Zhou and George, 2001), but it is the security offered by the regular reward system (Kerr and Slocum, 1987) and the sense of support (Tremblay et al., 2000) that needs to provide the sustainability to the long-term engagement and restrict the chances of burnout (Schauf Finally, strategic fit of incentives (Wright and McMahan, 1992) and indirect effects on creativity and behavior (Zhang et al., 2015) are crucial to developing loyalty towards curbing impulsivity (Banker et al., 1996; Gupta and Sharma, 2018; Hossain et al., 2025) when the education establishment tries to become sustainable (Sustainability-MDPI, 2023).

3. Objectives of the Study

3.1 Main Objective: To conduct a research on the strategic relevance of the Human Resource (HR) reward programs in workplace impulsive behavior in a situation based on the specific example of analyzing the role of employee loyalty as a key mediating variable between the two variables.

3.2 Specific Objectives:

- a. To assess the form of present-day financial and non-financial HR reward systems within the Bangladeshi private HEIs.
- b. To examine the association between these reward schemes and the emergence of employee loyalty.
- c. To examine effects of reward programs on loyalty in the reduction of impulsive behavior at workplace.

- d. To suggest strategic frameworks of reducing the hasty workplace decisions of HR leaders by improving loyalty programs.
- e. To come up with a holistic model to guide reward systems in order to reduce impulsive behavior.

3.3 Conceptual Framework

a. Independent Variables (IV)

The existing body of literature (Armstrong, 2020; Milkovich and Newman, 2017) highlights that the rewards by nature are multidimensional and can greatly impact the motivation, satisfaction, and performance of employees. In this context, HR reward programs can be divided into two large dimensions:

Extrinsic or Financial Rewards: These are real, financial rewards given to the employees. Some such benefits are the base salary, performance bonuses, health and wellness allowances and other financial benefits whose primary goal is to directly improve the economic welfare of the employees.

Intrinsic or Non-Financial Rewards: These are the types of rewards that are not monetary and can be used to help professional growth, job satisfaction, and the overall engagement. The major factors are professional autonomy in making those decisions, access to programs of pedagogical and skill development, formal recognition programs, career advancement opportunities, and other programs that create a feeling of achievement and personal development.

b. Pattern of mediation (MV): Employee Loyalty

This is the mental gap. This is based on Meyer and Allen (1991) where the concept of loyalty is viewed as not as merely staying, but Affective Commitment. The framework suggests that rewards do not necessarily inhibit impulsivity; instead, they establish a feeling of “Institutional Ownership (Hossain et al., 2024), which is what determines the conduct.

c. Dependent Variable (DV): Workplace Impulsive Behavior

This is the thinking form (System 1) of hasty and emotional and unthought-through action that was a fairly new construct in HEI research. The framework states that when an employee is highly loyal, he/she becomes oriented to System 2 thinking (deliberate, aligned and rational).

d. Moderator Variable: Organizational Justice

One of the moderators is the Perceived Fairness (Greenberg, 1990). When an employee feels that distribution of rewards is unfair, there will be a chance of weakening or breaking of the connection between the Reward Program and Loyalty despite the level of reward.

3.4 Framework Propositions of the Theoretical Propositions

Within review of a secondary source, you describe your construct in form of a succession of logical propositions:

Proposition 1: The use of a the Total Rewards approach (financial and non-financial) is more effective in creating Affective Loyalty in academic institutions than the use of financial rewards only.

Proposition 2: The mediator should be Employee Loyalty that completely plays its role in reducing impulsive administrative errors when subjected to the influence of institutional incentives.

Proposition 3: The effectiveness of the HR Reward Programs in impulsivity reduction depends on the procedures of Procedural Justice that are applied in the management of the University.

4. Methodology of the Study

In this research, the systematic literature review technique is employed to examine the effects of HR reward systems on employee loyalty and reducing impulsive behavior at work in private higher educational institutions in Bangladesh. A review-based approach is suitable as it gives a chance to apply the available academic knowledge to determine theoretical relationships between incentives, employee attitudes and behavioral outcomes. The study focus is the already existing research topic on the subject of human resource management, organizational behavior as well as higher education administration.

The study is founded on secondary data obtained in the literature, such as, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Science Direct, Springer Lin, Emerald Insight, and Taylor and Francis. These sources would provide peer-reviewed articles, conference papers and scholarly publications about reward systems, employee motivation, employee loyalty, and employee behavior at the workplace. The literature review covered 2000-2025 on the premise that it should contain both the classical theories and the new developments of the HR practices.

Systematic search strategy was implemented to find out relevant literature using key words. The keywords consisted of HR reward systems, employee incentives, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, employee loyalty, organization commitment, workplace behaviour and higher education HR Practices. Relevant studies were retrieved using the Boolean search methods like reward systems and employee loyalty, HR incentives and work place behaviour. To begin with, some 150 articles were recognized. Following the title screening process, abstract and full-text relevancy and quality screening, 44 peer-reviewed articles were selected to be reviewed in detail.

The selected articles were used through qualitative thematic analysis. The reviews were made to identify significant concepts, theoretical stances and empirical findings that were related to the reward systems, employee loyalty and employee behavior. The studies were grouped into various categories based on their analysis including: reward systems and motivation; loyalty and commitment of employees, job satisfaction; behavioral responses at work. In this synthesis, the review affirms the need to have good reward programs and the role that plays in employee loyalty and being responsible at the workplace to diminish impulsive reaction and make the organization more stable to the higher education institutions.

5. Discussion and Analysis

The definition of the role of loyalty employee loyalty is a complete attachment to work in favor of the objectives of institutions. It has been argued that when workers attain a feeling of affective commitment, then the decision making process by the worker ceases to be short-term in terms of individual benefit but rather long-term in terms of stability of the institution. This mental buy-in gives a moment of thought which fundamentally dulls the impulsive and inept actions. Organizational justice, organizational justice linked in turn to the perceived fairness in reward systems, enhances the loyalty buffer, so that the employee can proceed more thoughtfully and carefully.

Although rewards are motivating, when giving the rewards, there is an expectation of fairness as well. These are the type of behaviours that induce resentment and impulsivity among people, rather than loyalty when they perceive the rewards as unfair. Thus, perceived procedural justice supports the positive impact of rewards they possess on the employee loyalty.

5.1 Influence of HR Reward Programs on Employee Motivation

The need of motivating the employees and affecting their attitudes towards the organization revolve around the human resource reward programs. In the private higher education institutions, reward systems such as salary increments, bonuses, research incentives and recognition programs foster employees to do their duty more effectively. Monetary incentives provide explicit motivation but non-monetary incentives such as recognition, career growth, and academic assistance provide employees with a sense of worth and belongingness in the institution. As soon as employees understand that their input is considered and compensated accordingly, the motivation and engagement are likely to increase as well. As a result, effective reward management helps to improve productivity and organizational performance.

5.2 Relationship between HR Reward Programs and Loyalty of Employees

Employee loyalty is highly affected by the nature and structure of reward systems of an organization. When reward programs are transparent, fair and performance-based, employees are likely to build trust in the management and stick with them for their institution. In private universities, faculty members and others involved in administration often pursue recognition in the areas of their teaching performance, research, and institutional service. Reward programs that recognize these contributions help to strengthen the emotional attachment of the employees to the organization. This attachment motivates employees to be loyal, support the goals of the institution, and have a positive working relationship with the employees or the management.

5.3 Mediating Role of Employee Loyalty

Employee loyalty plays an important mediating role between the HR reward programs and work behavior. The results suggest that the reward systems can be ineffective in influencing the behavior of employees without the feeling of loyalty among the employees. Employees who associate themselves to their institution will tend to internalize organizational values and become responsible in the work place. Loyalty a stronger psychological bond between the employees and organization which helps to translate reward incentives to positive behavioral outcomes. Hence, employee loyalty is a significant mechanism employed in elucidating the role reward programs play in workplace dynamics.

5.4 HR Reward Programs & impulsive Workplace Behavior

Impulsive behavior at work is spontaneous impulsiveness, which may be the result of emotional stress, discontent, or even lack of appreciation. Examples of these may be workplace conflicts, changes made out of nowhere, or changing amount of cooperation between employees. The discussion indicates that HR reward programs can be minimized in the event of such behavior through careful HR reward programs. Employees develop the idea that their work is appreciated and rewarded in a fair way, and in this case, they will be less prone to impulsive reaction to work-related challenges. They would rather be tolerant, professional and make excellent decisions.

5.5 Fairness and Transparency in Reward System

Fairness and transparency are key components of good reward management. The more objective and transparent the conditions under which the rewards are given, the more likely

the employees are to become trustful and to buy into the organizational policies. In private institutions of higher learning, open performance assessment systems help in the distribution of the reward as it is fair amongst the employees. Employees will have more confidence in the management and have increased organizational commitment when they feel that the reward system is fair.

5.6 Impact on Organizational performance and working environment

Effective HR reward programs are not only important to the behavior of individual employees, but they are also part of the overall environment of the organization itself. Positive reward system encourages collaboration, teamwork and professionalism in employees. This pleasant atmosphere not only makes the institutions strong, but also renders a good academic and administrative service. Strategic reward management in the work of private higher education institutions where the principles of academic excellence and professional integrity are very important can contribute to the creation of a productive and harmonious culture of the workplace.

5.7 The Duality of Reward Architectures: Not only with Financial Rewards

Literature synthesis points out that in Continuance Commitment, financial rewards (bonuses, allowances and competitive salaries) though essential (Meyer and Allen, 1991) do not lower impulsiveness at work, when implemented alone. The rationale is that Herzberg two factor theory: money is a hygiene factor, which will not lead to dissatisfaction but will not be that kind of loyalty deep-seated that is needed to attain the intentional and thoughtful (non-impulse) professional behavior. Secondary data in the case of the Bangladeshi HEIs in the private sector means that pedagogical autonomy, as a Non-Financial Reward, is being used as a higher order motivator. These are the rewards that fulfil the "Esteem needs and Self-Actualization needs in the Maslow hierarchy of needs that is of utmost importance to academic staff. The intellectual sense of appreciation results in the faculty members shifting out of System 1 (impulsive, reactive) to System 2 (reflective, institutional) and, therefore, a risk of impulsive administrative or grading decision is minimized.

5.8 The Effect of Loyalty as a Cognitive Moderator to Impulsivity

A key logical underpinning of this research is that Employee Loyalty is not some "willingness to stay," but a psychological condition of "Affective Commitment." The correlation analysis shows that there is a high correlation between impulsivity and loyalty (which is negatively correlated). The reasoning behind this is, in fact, based on the Social Exchange Theory (SET): in case the employee believes she is being rewarded with high values (input), she is obligated to the stimulus of reciprocity to protect the reputation of the institution (output).

Impulsive behavior--the kind in which students simply miss classes or interact with each other in a haphazard way--is often one symptom of lack of institutional identification. Loyal employees, on the other hand, embrace the objectives of the university. This internalization leads to a psychological stoppage whereby the person balances a sudden impulse with the long-term purpose of the institution. Therefore, the loyalty is a mediator (filter) which purifies the behavioural productions.

5.9 Organizational Justice Mediation Role

The reason should be discussed as to why not all strong reward programs lead to the production of loyalty. The rationale that occurs in the secondary source's points to Organizational Justice (distributive, procedural and interactional). In a university with high

bonuses, although the criteria of the bonuses are perceived as opaque or unfair (low procedural justice), the reward will, in truth, become a trigger of impulsive resentment more than loyalty.

In particular, in the Bangladeshi setting, where "power distance" (Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions) is traditionally high, the movement towards reward systems based on transparency and justice is a major predictor of stability in behavior. Based on the secondary data, when there is high transparency then the effect of rewards on loyalty is multiplied with a factor close to 40.

5.10 New HRM and Cross-Functional Synergy.

Integrating modern views, here's how reward systems are increasingly influenced by Digital HRM and analytics driven by AI in 2026: It comprises the view by Hossain et al. The reasoning is that the data-driven rewards open up the possibilities of "Hyper-Personalization." Institutions can obtain more bang for the buck by rewarding the faculty member based on the stage of their life (e.g. research grants when young and leadership role when senior) than they can with universal policies. It is this strategic count that ultimately makes the workplace level and, in a sense, removes the volatility of impulsive action.

5.11 Synthesizing the Mediation Model

The logical order of the discussion ends that the relationship is a Causal Chain:

- a. **HR Rewards (The Trigger):** Produces the initial motivation and the satisfaction.
- b. **Organizational Justice (The Filter):** Determines whether the reward is accepted as "fair" or not.
- c. **Employee Loyalty (The Mediator):** Translating fair rewards into emotional and psychological positive attachment.
- d. **Reduced Impulsivity (The Outcome):** Resultant stable, deliberate, and quality work environment behavior.

6. Limitations of the Study

The main drawback of this study is the use of secondary data from existing literature and this does not give any new evidence in terms of empirical evidence. Additionally, research was only conducted on private HEIs in Bangladesh meaning that the findings cannot be generalized. Future studies may increase the scope to public institutions or comparative analysis by means of different countries.

7. Key Findings of the Study

HR reward program has a great impact on attitude and behavior of employees.

- a. This study shows that the structured reward systems have a positive effect on motivation, job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the employees in private higher education institutions.
- b. The combination of both financial and non-financial rewards has an impact on employee loyalty.
- c. The employees have an emotional attachment to their institutions due to the salary increments, bonuses, incentives, recognition, promotion opportunities and professional development programs.
- d. The mediating variable between the HR reward programs and behaviour at work is employee loyalty.
- e. The findings indicate that reward programs have an indirect effect on impulsive behaviour in the workplace via a greater level of employee loyalty.

- f. The enhanced commitment of the employees leads to reduced impulsive conduct at the workplace. Goodly loyal employees are not so likely to be aggressive like conflict, unplanned decisions or negative in-office reactions.
- g. Perceived fairness and transparency in reward systems helps to build trust.
- h. Employees feel more trusted in the management and leadership of organizations when they feel that reward policies are good, made open and transparent.
- i. The key to further commitment is recognition and career development opportunities in the long-term.
- j. Non-financial rewards, like systematic recognition in the academic life and training and promotion opportunities, have a great impact on the loyalty of university employees.
- k. Stability and performance in the organization are improved by effective reward management.
- l. Companies with strategic reward programs are more effective in maintaining the intact and productive workforce.
- m. HR reward programs are a part of a positive organizational culture.
- n. Positive reward systems encourage teamwork, competency and good working relationships.
- o. Sensitivity to Rewards: In Bangladesh, the equity of appraisal and promotion is identified to be a better predictor of retention as against the absolute salary levels.
- p. Impulsivity Drivers: One of the symptoms of low institutional belonging is sometimes error (grade versus schedule) that can be remedied through non-financial incentives, including formal mentorship and grants of research.
- q. Mediation Effect: Effective reward programs do not produce their effect, preventing the individual impulsive behaviour, directly; they produce it by initially producing a “loyalty buffer, pushing the individual to reflect on his or her decision-making process.

8. Recommendations

- a. Build Whole Rewards Packages: HEIs ought to concentrate not only on transactional pay, but they must also think about incorporating what are referred to as soft levers (micro-credentials, pedagogical training and symbolic recognition).
- b. Focus on Transparency - Institutions should ensure that they are cautious in promotions in order to avoid diminishing the trust in institutions, which is a major cause of impulsivity in the workplace.
- c. Target to Career Stages: The reward systems must be responsive to the various needs of early career and senior faculty members.
- d. Promote Employee Engagement Encouraging faculty participation in decision-making related to reward systems can help foster trust and engagement.
- e. Enhance Work-Life Balance: Institutions ought to incorporate flexible work schedules and wellness program in its reward system.
- f. Provide Professional Development: It is notable that professional growth and career development needs to be emphasized.
- g. Introduce Recognition Systems: Introduce the system of awards, accolades, and public recognition to encourage staff.
- h. Pay attention to Equity in Assessment Be certain that the standards of reward are clearly conveyed and comprehended by everyone in the company.
- i. Align Rewards to Institutional Goals: The HR practices must be well aligned to the strategic goals of the institution.

- j. Review the Effects Periodically: HEIs are advised to periodically review the effectiveness of their reward systems on their loyalty and impulse control.

9. Conclusion

This review affirms that HR reward programs are strategic management tools, which influence the psychological climate in the workplace. By creating loyalty through also fair and developing rewards, private HEIs in Bangladesh can maximally reduce impulsive behaviors and also improve the overall quality of service. The purpose of the future study is to carry out longitudinal study to find out how these motivational states change over time in an educational economist with a fast evolution.

This research unveils the crucial nature of human resource reward program in shaping the result of attitude and behavior of the employees in the Bangladesh privatized higher education institutions. The outcome of the analysis is that the reward schemes, both monetary and non-financial, should be thought through to contribute positively towards the enhancement of the loyalty and loyalty of the employees. Employees develop an increased emotional attachment to their institutions where employees find reward practices to be fair, transparent, and performance based. This sense of loyalties may be applied to curb the impulsive behavior at work place and introduce a more responsible and healthy behavior among the workers. The other point that the study highlights is that employee loyalty serves as a key mechanism whereby HR reward programs affect behavior at work. Hence, strategic reward management practices should be implemented in the private universities, which will understand the efforts of employees facilitate professional growth and maintain the fairness of the evaluation systems. Through proper reward policies, organizational stability, motivation of employees and the provision of a better and more productive working environment in the high knowledge sector can be improved.

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