

Linking HR Reward Systems, Employee Loyalty, and Impulsive Workplace Behavior: A Review for Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract: The reason why reward systems are significant tools to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in a fast-growing country is that universities are competing to attract skilled teachers and staff. Rewards (financial and non-financial) have a significant impact on employee motivation and loyalty (salary and bonuses, recognition and career development, etc.). Organizational commitment or employee loyalty can be used to bridge the relationship between reward systems and positive behavior at the workplace. Nevertheless, impulsivity behavior, i.e. rushing to make decisions, emotional response, or lack of planning has become a major issue in most HEIs. This review examines the research conducted between 2010 and 2025 to learn the relationship between rewards, loyalty, and impulsive behavior with particular reference to Bangladesh. The results indicate that the reward systems based on fairness and support enhance loyalty and loyal workers are less inclined to act impulsively. The gaps in the past studies are also found in the review and future research directions are also provided.

1. Introduction

Institutions of higher learning (HEIs) are special fields where the intellectual creativity, academic service, and research productivity can define the quality of the institutions and the competitiveness of the countries. HEIs are dependent on the efforts of teachers, administrative staff, and academic support staff. The development of private universities has enhanced competition on academic talent in most emerging economies like Bangladesh, India, Kenya, and Pakistan (Ashraf et

al., 2020). Consequently, good Human Resource Management (HRM) practices particularly reward systems have been a critical concern in attracting, motivating and retaining skilled employees.

Reward systems are classified into financial rewards such as salary, allowances and bonuses and non-financial rewards such as recognition, career, autonomy and supportive leadership. Previous studies indicate that these incentives always affect motivation, performance, and behavior of the employees (Armstrong, 2020; CIPD, 2021). When reward systems are designed in a fair and transparent manner and communicated, employees demonstrate a stronger psychological commitment and fewer turnover intentions.

Nevertheless, spontaneous workplace conducts, including making quick decisions, emotional responses, not grading well academically, grading in a hurry, or avoiding communication, have been an increasingly challenging issue in HEIs. Impulsivity may harm the quality of education, interfere with collaboration, and have an adverse impact on student learning (Cyders et al., 2014; Briere et al., 2022). Despite the psychological studies on impulsivity, the role of the reward systems and employee loyalty in impulsive behavior has not been completely examined in the organizational research, particularly in the HEIs in developing countries.

The proposed article will address this gap by conducting a comprehensive secondary review. It integrates the existing research on the topic of reward systems, employee loyalty, and impulsive behavior; determines the gaps in the literature; and suggests the information that can be applied to the standards of first quartile journals.

2. Literature Review

2.1 HR Reward Systems in HEIs

Human Resource (HR) reward systems are financial and non-financial reward systems, which organizations use to attract, retain, and motivate employees (Adesina, 2024; WorldatWork, 2024). Monetary incentives are salaries, bonuses, increments, allowances, and full benefits package (Garbers and Konradt, 2014; Judge et al., 2010). Instead, non-financial rewards include career growth, recognition programs, job autonomy, supportive leadership, flexible work patterns, and work-life balance programs (CIPD, 2021b; Deci and Ryan, 2017; Gupta and Sharma, 2018).

The effectiveness of reward systems is not only related to the nature of reward, but also to fairness, transparency as well as alignment to the performance outcomes (Aguinis et al., 2013; Malhotra et al., 2007). Non-financial rewards are especially appreciated in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) since academic employees highly appreciate autonomy and academic freedom, research opportunities, and the acknowledgment of academic contributions (CIPD, 2021b; Gupta and Sharma, 2018). Monetary incentives are also important, particularly in emerging economies where an increase in the cost-of-living turn remuneration into an urgent issue (Judge et al., 2010; Ashraf et al., 2020a). Nevertheless, the excessive use of the monetary incentives will destroy intrinsic motivation that is the key to academic engagement and research productivity (Weibel et al., 2010; Woolley and Fishbach, 2018).

In the current study on total rewards, the strategic approach of integrating intrinsic and extrinsic motivation has been also outlined to ensure that the objectives of the employees are aligned with the goals of the institution (Maas et al., 2025; Zahirap & Subramanyachary, 2025). According to post-pandemic research, the reward systems created by HEIs should be able to guarantee financial stability in the workplace, as well as flexibility, recognition, and professional development (SHRM, 2024; WorldatWork, 2024).

2.2 Loyalty of employees and Organizational commitment.

The notion of employee loyalty is popularly understood as the readiness of employees to stay in an organization and perform some discretionary work that is not obligatory as stated in job specifications (Meyer and Allen, 1991; CIPD, 2020).

The three-component model of organizational commitment put forward by Meyer and Allen (1991) is quite powerful and includes:

- a. Affective commitment: Emotional affiliation and identification to the organization.
- b. Continuance commitment: It is a choice to stay because of perceived costs of exiting.
- c. Normative commitment: The moral obligation to remain.

Loyalty leads to consistent behavior, reduced turnover intentions, increased performance, and accordance with institutional objectives (Meyer and Maltin, 2010; Gallup, 2020). Loyalty is especially essential in the context of HEIs because faculty members play an important role in determining the reputation of the institution, its research output, and its student outcomes (Ashraf et al., 2020b; Masum et al., 2015).

One of the determinants of loyalty is perceived organizational support (POS). When employees are made to feel valued and supported, their affective and normative commitment will go up, and engagement will improve, as well as turnover will decrease (Eisenberger and Stinglhamber, 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2017). The leadership style, organizational culture, and inclusivity at the workplace also have an impact on employee commitment, which determines how much the staff is committed to organizational objectives (Jackson et al., 2013; Mor Barak et al., 2017).

2.3 Workplace Behavior which is impulsive

Impulsive workplace behavior refers to the behavior that is performed without proper thought, logical reasoning, and reflection of long-term implications (Briere et al., 2022; Lerner et al., 2015). In the HEIs, this behavior may be in the form of emotional responses to students, hasty grading, hasty administrative choices, overreacting during a meeting, failure to adhere to the set procedures, and ineffective staff coordination (Dorison et al., 2020).

Emotional stress, heavy workloads, ambiguous policies, psychological characteristics, including sensation-seeking and urgency, affect impulsivity (Hagger et al., 2020; Dorison et al., 2020). There are a number of instruments that have been proven to measure impulsivity on these dimensions, such as the UPPS-P scale and the I-8 scale (Cyders et al., 2014; Groskurth et al., 2022). Academic emotional reactive behavior does not only influence faculty performance, but it can also lead to poor student satisfaction, teamwork, and climate (Briere et al., 2022; Lerner et al., 2015).

2.4 Connection of Reward Systems and Loyalty

The beneficial effect of properly structured reward systems on the loyalty of employees and commitment to the organization is always pointed out in the research (Hossain and Sultana, 2020; Ahmed and Haque, 2020). Continuation commitment may be reinforced with financial incentives when they are administered fairly, but non-financial ones like recognition, professional development, autonomy, and supportive leadership reinforce affective and normative commitment as the primary ones (Gupta and Sharma, 2018; CIPD, 2021b).

The data in Bangladesh show that internal equity in salary, as well as recognition and career development, has a profound positive impact on the faculty commitment and turnover intentions (Sultana, 2025; Ashraf et al., 2020b). On the same note,

research in other developing economies indicates that intrinsic motivation practices in combination with equitable compensation strategies result in increased employee satisfaction, involvement, and retention (Islam et al., 2019; Maas et al., 2025).

2.5 Correlation between Loyalty and Impulsive Behavior

Though the studies directly related to impulsive behavior in the organizational environment are few, theoretical and empirical studies indicate that loyalty may eliminate impulsivity (Newman et al., 2017; Mor Barak et al., 2017). More affectively and normatively committed employees are less emotional reactivity, make better decisions and have better self-regulation (Meyer et al., 2006; Ryan and Deci, 2017). Faculty commitment would also mean that members of the academic community at HEIs would think deeper when confronted with academic and administrative problems, which will decrease the chances of engaged in behaviors that are counterproductive (Dorison et al., 2020; Lerner et al., 2015).

The moderate factors in this relationship are psychological safety and perceived organizational support. Feeling safe and appreciated, employees are able to be more self-contained, solve problems in a team, and avoid the stresses that usually provoke impulsive behavior (Newman et al., 2017; Eisenberger et al., 2017). This brings out the relationship of dependency between reward systems, loyalty and behavior control in the academic institutions.

3. Research Gaps

Although the literature on the topic is increasing, there are still a number of gaps:

- a. **Minimal studies on impulsive conduct in HEIs:** The majority of the studies are dedicated to psychological impulsivity but do not examine actual organizational behaviors in the academic environment (Briere et al., 2022).
- b. **Weak empirical correlations between reward systems, loyalty and impulsivity:** In as much as reward systems do affect loyalty, their direct contribution on impulsive behavior is understudied, and the mediating effect of loyalty is seldom done (Hossain and Sultana, 2020; Ahmed and Haque, 2020).
- c. **Lack of representation of emerging economies:** HEIs in the African countries, India, and Bangladesh are underrepresented, and critical contextual factors remain uninvestigated (Masum et al., 2015; World Bank, 2019a; World Bank, 2019b).
- d. **Methodological weaknesses:** The abundance of cross-sectional research restricts the ability to comprehend changes in behavior with time. They require longitudinal and mixed-methods studies (Ashraf et al., 2020b).

- e. **The lack of consideration of emotional, cognitive, and contextual aspects:** Stress, workload, cultural expectations, and structural constraints specific to HEIs are seldom incorporated into the HRM models, even though they have an impact on the motivation of employees and their impulsivity (Ahn et al., 2024; SHRM, 2024).

These gaps indicate that there is a need to conduct an extensive context-specific review and follow-up empirical studies to investigate the interplay between reward systems and loyalty in influencing impulsive workplace behaviors in HEIs, especially in developing economies (Zahirap & Subramanyachary, 2025; Maas et al., 2025).

4. Objectives of the Study

4.1 Main Objective

To investigate the effect of HR reward systems on employee loyalty within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the role of this relationship in ensuring impulsive behavior in the workplace is minimized and sustainable academic conditions are achieved.

4.2 Secondary Objectives

- a. To explore the mediation of the relationship between reward systems and impulsive workplace behavior by employee loyalty.
- b. To generalize the evidence on reward systems, loyalty and impulsive behavior in the world and regional level with a focus to emerging economies.
- c. To determine significant gaps in research and suggest areas of future scholarly research.
- d. To offer viable suggestions on the enhancement of HR practices and the stability and performance of HEIs.

5. Methodology of the Study

The present research relies on the secondary review methodology as it pays attention to various published peer-reviewed articles, books, government reports, and institutional studies. These databases included Scopus, Web of science, JSTOR, ResearchGate and Google scholar. This was a secondary review based on the current literature that were searched, summarized and analyzed in order to search high-quality sources.

5.1 Inclusion Criteria

The following criteria were used to include the studies:

- a. Studies that covered HR reward systems, organizational commitment, impulsive behavior, and higher education institutions (HEIs).
- b. Published 2010-2025 to make it up to date.
- c. Both developed and developing economies have studies that allow the comparison of the context.
- d. Studies that utilize quantitative, qualitative, or mixed research designs.
- e. Theoretical and empirical articles that shed some light on the HR practices, employee behavior, and institutional outcomes.

5.2 Exclusion Criteria

The studies were filtered out of the list when they:

- a. Was not concerned with HRM or behavioral results of employees.
- b. Focused on the impulsivity of students instead of that of faculty and organization.
- c. Were non-academic or had little or no credibility, such as unverified Internet sites.

5.3 Analysis Approach

The review utilized thematic analysis in order to integrate secondary information. The literature was clustered on major themes to give a systematic view on the interrelationship between HRM practices and employee behavior. The primary themes included:

- a. HR reward systems: financial and non-financial compensation systems and their impact on organization.
- b. Employee loyalty and organizational commitment: variables that determine faculty retention and involvement.
- c. Impulsive behavior in HEIs: symptoms, preconditions, and effects on the performance of institutions.
- d. Mediating and moderating relationships: how loyalty, perceived support and contextual factors mediate and moderate behavior.
- e. Context-specific evidence: comparison between regions and economies to explain cultural, structural, and developmental variations.

Through the secondary sources, this study will combine theoretical construct and empirical results in determining patterns, gaps, and future research findings that will offer a sound basis of knowledge relating to HR reward systems and employee behavior in HEIs.

6. Discussion and Analysis

The current review indicates how HR reward systems, employee loyalty, and impulsive behavior at the workplace intertwine and become complicated in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The results show that financial and non-financial rewards can be very significant to the organizational outcomes, but the extent of their value depends on the situation, culture, and personal motivations (Adesina, 2024; CIPD, 2021a).

6.1 HR Reward Systems and their Impact

Salaries, bonuses, benefits packages are still important to HEIs, and especially in the developing countries where faculty experience the increasing cost of living and economic uncertainties (Judge et al., 2010; Ashraf et al., 2020b). Nevertheless, it is always demonstrated that monetary rewards are inadequate to motivate long-term, loyalty, and intrinsic commitment (Aguinis et al., 2013; Weibel et al., 2010; Woolley and Fishbach, 2018). Overemphasis on financial incentives may lead unintentionally to the decline in intrinsic motivation, which decreases academic creativity, research output, and job satisfaction (Deci and Ryan, 2017).

Non-financial incentives, such as career development, recognition, job autonomy, and work-life balance, tend to have a greater effect in HEIs where faculty members are more likely to appreciate autonomy, academic freedom, and the ability to make a scholarly contribution (CIPD, 2021b; Gupta and Sharma, 2018; Masum et al., 2015). Professional development and recognition are powerful indicators of affective and normative commitment, which provide emotional attachment and moral commitment to stay in the organization (Sultana, 2025; Hossain and Sultana, 2020). Flexible working hours and conducive management also improve faculty involvement and minimize stress which can otherwise cause impulsive reactions or counterproductive conduct (SHRM, 2024; Newman et al., 2017).

The post-COVID-19 HEIs reward systems strategic design focuses on a total rewards approach, which combines both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators to serve the multiple expectations of the faculty and respond to the changing organizational needs (Maas et al., 2025; Zahirap & Subramanyachary, 2025). The given strategy corresponds to self-determination theory, which assumes that the satisfaction of the primary psychological needs, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness, promotes motivation and engagement (Deci and Ryan, 2017; Ryan and Deci, 2017).

6.2 Employee Loyalty and Commitment

HR reward systems are closely related to employee loyalty that can be defined as the desire to stay in an organization and work discretionally. The three-component model of organizational commitment is the affective, continuance, and normative model which forms a strong model on the understanding of faculty retention in HEIs (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Recognition, autonomy, and career development opportunities play a significant role in affective commitment, which is an emotional attachment (CIPD, 2020; Gupta and Sharma, 2018). Although continuance commitment is commonly reinforced with financial rewards, it also represents perceived costs of leaving, and it might not be able to maintain intrinsic motivation or engagement (Judge et al., 2010; Ashraf et al., 2020b). Moral obligation is associated with normative commitment, which is enhanced when faculty feel organizational fairness and support, which points to the paramount role of HR practices in developing ethical and long-term loyalty (Eisenberger and Stinglhamber, 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Faculty loyalty in HEIs has multidimensional effects, such as increased research productivity, improved interaction with students, and maintenance of a positive institutional image (Masum et al., 2015; Ashraf et al., 2020a). Perceived organizational support (POS) is a way to increase loyalty by sending a message that faculty input is important, eliminating emotional distress and improving the overall climate in the institution (Eisenberger et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2017). This relationship is further moderated by leadership, culture, and inclusiveness, which imply that the institution ethos and managerial practices, in addition to rewards, result in the loyalty (Jackson et al., 2013; Mor Barak et al., 2017).

6.3 Impulsive Behavior in HEIs

Impulsive workplace behavior which is described as a behavior performed without proper consideration or planning is a problem in HEIs. Faculty can be impulsive by rushing with grades, making hasty administrative choices, or reacting emotionally when dealing with students (Dorison et al., 2020; Briere et al., 2022). Workload pressures, stress, ambiguous policies, and some personality characteristics, including urgency or sensation-seeking, result in impulsivity (Lerner et al., 2015; Hagger et al., 2020). These behaviors have the potential to adversely affect the institutional processes, decrease collaboration, and deteriorate student outcomes, which underscores the importance of organizational mechanisms that can curb impulsivity.

Studies show that loyalty may serve as a buffer. The more affective and normative commitment employees have, the more they tend to practice self-regulation, deliberate decisions, and be less emotional (Meyer et al., 2006; Ryan and Deci, 2017). Faculty members who are dedicated in HEIs have a lower probability of deploying counterproductive actions since they feel that their long-term success is interconnected with the goals of the institution (Newman et al., 2017; Mor Barak et al., 2017).

6.4 Correlation of Reward Systems, Loyalty, and Impulsivity

This review shows that there is a triangular relationship between the reward systems, the loyalty and impulsive behavior. Affective and normative commitment is strengthened with good HR reward systems and especially those that focus on non-financial incentives and fairness. Increased loyalty, in its turn, makes impulsive actions less likely by making the person more emotionally stable, deliberate, and compliant with the organizational norms (Hossain and Sultana, 2020; Gupta and Sharma, 2018).

Contextual factors, including economic pressures, shortages of faculty, and cultural expectations, do moderate this relationship in developing economies like Bangladesh, India, and parts of Africa (Ashraf et al., 2020a; World Bank, 2019a; World Bank, 2019b). In such situations, financial incentives might be more prominent, but in the absence of non-financial reinforcement, intrinsic motivation and retention rates might be low, and faculty are prone to react impulsively to stress (Islam et al., 2019; Judge et al., 2010).

This combined knowledge is related to the self-determination theory and organizational support theory, which imply that motivation, loyalty, and behavioral control depend on the internal satisfaction and perceived external support (Deci and Ryan, 2017; Eisenberger et al., 2017). These factors interact in such a way that they can be used to design strategic HRM interventions in HEIs that can not only attract and retain faculty but also promote rational and deliberate as well as constructive workplace behavior.

6.5 Practical and Policy Implications.

The results have great implications to HRM practice in HEIs. Institutions should:

- a. Implement the concept of total rewards, which entails the use of non-financial and financial rewards to meet extrinsic and intrinsic motivational needs (Maas et al., 2025; WorldatWork, 2024).

- b. Stress the fairness and transparency in promotions, recognition, and salary scales to enhance the normative and affective commitment (CIPD, 2021b; Sultana, 2025).
- c. Offer professional growth and independence, allowing faculty to advance academic interests in addition to boosting loyalty (Gupta & Sharma, 2018).
- d. Adopt measures against impulsivity, such as stress management, work schedule, established procedural guidelines, and supportive leadership (Newman et al., 2017; Dorison et al., 2020).
- e. Understand contextual variations, particularly in the emerging economies, where financial and cultural conditions affect the performance of rewards and loyalty systems (Ashraf et al., 2020a; World Bank, 2019b).

6.6 Future Directions

In spite of these observations, there are significant gaps. Longitudinal studies that study the dynamic interaction of rewards, loyalty and impulsive behavior across time are also lacking (Ashraf et al., 2020b). There are a few direct empirical studies that can be performed in connection to a link between HR systems and impulsivity in HEIs, and the mediating impact of loyalty is underresearched (Hossain and Sultana, 2020; Ahmed and Haque, 2020). Also, underrepresented areas require more studies to cover cultural, structural, and economic disparities that inform faculty conduct (Masum et al., 2015; World Bank, 2019a). The HRM models will incorporate emotional, cognitive, and contextual factors and will give a more comprehensive view of how faculty is motivated, how they make decisions, and their behavioral outcomes in HEIs (Ahn et al., 2024; SHRM, 2024).

In general, the discussion highlights the fact that effective HR reward programs, when properly matched with the organizational support and equity, can increase loyalty and decrease impulsive behavior among the faculty members of HEIs. The importance of non-financial rewards and recognition, autonomy, and professional development as determinants of affective and normative commitment and the role of financial incentives as a guarantee of the minimum economic stability becomes evident. By incorporating these insights into its institutions, one can create a more active, sensible, and productive academic workforce to better research, teaching and organizational performance. The evidence also reveals that more empirical studies, particularly in the developing economies and longitudinal settings are required to enhance the knowledge and maximize HR practices in HEIs.

7. Bangladesh and Global Evidences

7.1 Bangladesh and Emerging Economies Evidence

- a. Research indicates that the equity of rewards is crucial in Bangladesh because there exist broad institutional disparities (Ashraf et al., 2020).
- b. Opportunities to grow in the career enhance loyalty (Masum et al., 2015).
- c. The internal pay equity increases the affective commitment (Sultana, 2025).
- d. Salary is as important to faculty as value and respect.

7.2 Global Evidence

- a. It is proven all over the world that:
- b. There is an impact of rewards on 153,000 teachers in the OECD (Sustainability-MDPI, 2023).
- c. In Kenya, total rewards enhance the performance of academic staff (Asemota et al., 2022).
- d. The stronger commitment across the globe is predicted by recognition and autonomy.

7.3 Implications

- a. HEIs are required to concentrate on balanced reward portfolios.
- b. Low-resource HEIs can find it cheaper to use non-financial rewards.
- c. Loyalty-building strategies ensure that impulsiveness is minimized and that there is improved quality of decisions.
- d. HR departments are supposed to be on a lookout of emotional and cognitive stressors.

8. Limitations of the Study

This review has a number of limitations:

- a. It is founded on the secondary data instead of the primary empirical analysis.
- b. There are areas (Latin America, Middle East) where there is a lack of studies.
- c. In organizational research on impulsivity, the research remains limited.
- d. Research differs in terms of method, context, and size of sample.
- e. The review fails to carry out statistical meta-analysis because of the absence of similar data.
- f. In spite of such drawbacks, the review contains solid theoretical and contextual information.

9. Findings of the Study

The review finds a number of important results:

- a. Employee loyalty is a strong factor controlled by reward systems.
- b. In HEIs, non-financial rewards are particularly essential.
- c. Loyalty of employees minimizes unplanned behavior at the workplace.
- d. Indirectly, reward systems affect impulsivity in the form of loyalty.
- e. The emerging economies are dependent on intrinsic rewards because of lack of resources.
- f. Stress in work, emotional, and vague procedures enhance impulsivity.
- g. Academic staff are motivated by fairness, recognition, and autonomy.

10. Recommendations

According to the review, HEIs are supposed to:

- a. Provide equity and equity in salaries, promotions and workloads.
- b. Improve non-monetary incentives, particularly recognition and autonomy.
- c. Develop a systematic career development program to faculty.
- d. Lessen work stress by balancing workload and clarifying policies.
- e. Train executives so as to control emotions and impulsive decision-making.
- f. Implement impulsive behavior early warning systems.
- g. Establish an encouraging environment that leads to psychological safety.
- h. Engage in participative decision making to enhance the level of commitment and minimize impulsive responses.

11. Conclusion

The conclusion made in this review is that HR reward systems, employee loyalty and impulse behavior in the workplace are interrelated in HEIs. Loyalty is promoted with the use of effective reward systems, particularly the ones that focus on fairness, recognition, autonomy, and development. Loyalty makes behavior more consistent, which minimizes the chances of making decisions that are based on impulse and the emotional reaction. These links are all the more crucial in HEIs of emerging economies such as Bangladesh where the financial constraints and the pace of expansion are putting pressure on the HR systems. Despite the fact that the direct correlation between rewards and impulsive behavior has scarcely been studied, there is a theoretical and empirical evidence of the mediating effect of loyalty. Higher learning institutions that embrace balanced, open, and nurturing reward systems are able to develop more dedicated, emotionally stable and high performing academic cultures. These relationships need to be tested in future empirical studies to enhance the knowledge and improve the policies, by conducting longitudinal and mixed-method studies.

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