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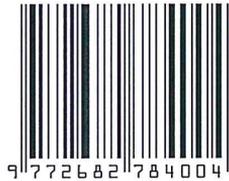
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# Exploring The Factors Of Employee Retention In Bangladesh Private Universities

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## ABSTRACT

*The main objective of this study is to explore the factors affecting employee retention in Bangladesh Private Universities. This study adopted a qualitative method using semi-structured interview. 10 lecturers from three different private universities in Bangladesh were selected as the sample for this research. Data was analysed through the coding method and member checking technique was used to check the validity and reliability of the data. Result clearly showed that employee retention was influenced by the compensation most, followed by work life balance, employee empowerment and training and development facilities. The study also found that factors such as transportation facilities and preferable subject also affect employee retention. As this study explores the factors of employee retention, management of the private universities will be benefited to develop their retention strategies by considering the significant factors. Furthermore, this study will add more research value on employee retention in Bangladesh higher educational organization which is currently limited.*

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## 1. Introduction

According to Naris & Ukpere (2010), educational organizations depend on their employees' skills, knowledge, and abilities to provides quality services and to achieve the mission and vision of the organization. Robyn (2012) stated that as organization's strength lies on its human capital, retention of skilled employee becomes a major concern for the higher educational sector. On the other hand, Netswera, Rankhumise & Mavundla (2005) argued that though employee retention has been widely explored in corporate sector but still it remains undocumented in higher educational organizations. As scholars believe employee retention in higher educational organization is a major concern but still limitedly explored, it is very important to conduct a research in this context. If management fail to retain their own employee it will increase their employee turnover rate which will be costly for the organization. Such as Jo (2008) mentioned that in higher educational organizations, the turnover rates have been disruptive and costly. Cascio, Wayne & Boudreau (2008) stated that there is a timely and costly process of recruiting and training for a new employee. By retaining their own employee, the organization can easily avoid from recurring recruitment procedure which involved a lot of time and money. According to Mark (2008), many researchers found that the

total value of losing an employee can range from 1.5-2 times more than annual salary. An effective management can reduce the high rates of employee turnover. Employee turnover always interrupts the working flow of an organization. When an employee leaves his job, it creates more pressure on the remaining team member as they have to keep up with their ex-colleague's work. Ultimately organizations are facing organizations' loss as they are getting less output compared to their requirement.

In Bangladesh, educational organisations especially private university need more expert and experienced employees to fulfil the increasing demand of this sector. In this kind of organization, the major challenge is to retain its valuable employee as they switch their job very often. The faculty member of private universities frequently switch their job and now it's become a major problem in this sector (Ashraf, 2009). According to Joarder & Sharif (2011), in Bangladesh the faculty turnover rate among the private universities varies from 10% to 19% per year compared to only 2% to 3% for public universities. They also considered this rate as high and mention that it can create effects on the quality of education in these institutions. As employee turnover now becomes a problem for private universities, it is crucial for the management to focus on the retention program. Although this industry is facing a problem on employee turnover, there are very few studies conducted on this issue in Bangladesh. Joarder & Sharif (2011) stated that there are not many research initiatives to address the faculty turnover issue in private universities in the context of Bangladesh. On the other hand, Masum, Azad & Beh (2015) pointed out that many private universities of Bangladesh are facing severe turnover of skilled academics. Rahman, Abedin & Mohiuddin (2016) also mentioned about the high faculty member turnover rate in Bangladesh private universities. While scholars are talking about the high turnover rate in private universities in Bangladesh, Sultana, Islam & Hasan (2017) argued that it is a cause of huge loss for the organization and an effective retention program can prevent this. They also mentioned that in Bangladesh, employers are not that much concerned about the factors responsible for employee retention though retention policy should not be same for different types of organizations, like private universities' retention policy should be different from private bank or IT sectors. While an effective retention program can change the scenario of this turnover but still employers are not much concerned about the retention factors, moreover there is lack of research in context of Bangladesh private universities. Therefore, researcher has chosen this sector for this study. The objective of this study is to explore the factors affecting the employee retention in Bangladesh private universities and to develop the factors of employee retention in Bangladesh private universities. This study was conducted based on two research questions namely what are the factors influencing employee retention and how these factors are influencing in Bangladesh private universities and its answer to fill the research gap in Bangladesh private universities.

## 2. Literature Review

In all sectors, retention becomes one of the major issues for all the organizations. Phillips & Connell (2003) opined that it's really hard to manage the employee retention and keep the turnover rate below the target. For Human Resource now it's become the main duty to retain their talented employee for all the organizations, especially for the higher educational organizations. Due to the extreme demand of the experienced and talented employees, it is one of the major challenges for higher educational organizations to recruit and retain its employees. According to Naris & Ukpere (2010), competence employee turnover in higher education could lead to decrease student enrolment numbers and make frustration among the rest of the employee due to additional workload. One study was conducted in 2016 by Cornerstone OnDemand, Ellucian, Human Capital Media Research and Advisory Group in USA and the study revealed that academic institutions are having hard time

to retaining their top talent both the faculty members and staffs. There were 469 participants and among them 1 percent of the participants agreed that staff turnover rate is above average at their organization while 27 percent said this is true for the faculty members as well. Nearly threequarters of the respondents think that there is a significant relation between employee retention and employee engagement. On the other hand, Gallup (2017) stated that only 34% of university faculty members and staffs are engaged in their job. According to Boerebach, Kiki & Arah (2014), academics' person decision depends on their personal and professional interests, research agenda, course load and work life balance with family. Now-a-days job scope in higher educational organization is increasing day by day. Experienced employees are switching their job very often as they are getting better opportunities. Such as Erasmus, Grobler & Niekerk (2015) narrated that as higher educational organizations are losing their highlyqualified staffs to the private sector or other HE organizations due to the better rewards and benefit offer from them to the employee, so talent retention becomes a major concern for them.

A research report called "Higher Education Employment Report on U.S." which has been published in 2016 is stating that job vacancy in higher education increased during Q2 2016 at the fastest second quarter rate in last four years Management can play a vital role to retain their employees from different departments in educational organizations. Their support and good relation with the employees can create an impact on employee's decision to remaining in the organizations. Nguyen, Nguyen & Nguyen (2013) showed that in higher educational organizations, there is an affirmative relationship between supervision support and job satisfaction among the academics' staffs. Some scholars are also taking about some factors like compensation and reward program, professional development can be factors for employee retention. According to Grace & Khalsa (2003), at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Pay packages and professional development were influencing employee retention. On the other hand, Noordin & Jusoff (2009) observed that good salary is one of the most important factor among Malaysian academic staffs for their job satisfaction. Though Human Resources Management plays the most vital role to retain its existing employee but in higher educational organizations they are facing difficulties to formulate retention strategies because among all the organizational resources, people are the most difficult to control (Perez & Orodenez, 2003). According to Joarder & Sharif (2011), in Bangladesh, private universities are enjoying the superior position to public universities in terms of the number of students' enrolment and establishment growth. But unfortunately, the turnover of academics at most of these private universities is critical in Bangladesh (Akhter, Muniruddin, & Sogra, 2008). In a study, Joarder et al. (2015) suggested that the management of Bangladesh private universities should focus on the job security of the employee with a good pay and should become more supportive for them to retain the employees. On the other hand, Rahman et. al (2016) discussed about the high faculty member turnover rate in Bangladesh private universities and found that employers, who offer competitive salaries along with good benefits, will most likely retain their employees.

On the other hand, Budhwar & Debrah (2004) found that in developed countries there are several studies conducted regarding human resource practices and turnover issue but developing countries like Bangladesh still there is lack of research evidence in this particular issue. According to University Grand Commission (UGC) Bangladesh, there are 40 public universities and 101 private universities those who are providing higher educations in Bangladesh. Though this sector is growing day by day but still this sectors is facing high turnover problems (Akhter et al., 2008). They also mention that faculty turnover rate is alarming in many private universities in Bangladesh. On the other hand, Mannan (2009) observed that in comparison to the public universities the attrition rate of faculty members in private universities is much higher. An article was published by Jalil M. on 2009 in a

national daily newspaper in Bangladesh based on the human resource management in private university in Bangladesh. He stated that while academics turnover in public universities 2% to 3% then in private universities it comes 16% to 17% or sometimes the rate goes more than higher.

Though there are several valuable studies are available on higher educational organizations at global stage but in Bangladesh higher educational organizations this studies are limited (Joarder & Sharif, 2011). They also added that as there is lack of research studies therefore faculty member retention has long been a research concern in higher educational organizations especially in private universities in Bangladesh. On the other hand, Sultana et al. (2017) discribed that in Bangladesh, study on employee retention factors on different types of organizations are rare. They also mentioned that the methods imparted on the available researches are not up to the mark. This research gap has induced the researchers to undertake the present study. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore and develop the factors which are influencing employee retention in private universities in Bangladesh.

### **3. Methodology**

This study adopted a qualitative research method. A semi-structured Interview was used to collect the data. The interview questionnaires were consisted of two parts. All the interviewees were asked the same questions. From the questionnaire, Part A has gathered the biographic data from the respondents like their educational background, marital status and working experience. and part B has collected factors influencing employee retention. For the Part B questionnaire, respondents were asked about different employee retention factors, how it was influencing them, what was their opinions and experiences about those factors. A set of a selfadministered questionnaire inspired from job embeddedness theory which deals with the employee retention and some previous studies about employee retention factors were asked to the interviewees.

#### ***Sampling Design and Data Analysis***

To complete the study, 10 lecturers from three different department of three different private universities in Bangladesh were chosen as the research sample by using the convenience sampling method from the population for the qualitative data. After gathering the data, it was analysed by the coding method.

#### ***Validity and Reliability***

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, interview questionnaires were pre-tested before its administration. The questionnaires were pre-tested on one lecturer from the chosen sample. After analysing the data, member checking technique was used to check the validity and reliability of the finding data. The finding part was given to the respondents to determine to accuracy. The respondents agreed that the summaries of the finding reflect their views, feelings, and experiences as well as their opinions. Thus, this study was validated by the pretesting and member checking method.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

There were 10 interviewees from three different private universities in Bangladesh. Among them 4 were female lectures and 6 were male lectures. All the interviewees were lectures from different departments. Lectures were from Mechanical Engineering Department, BBA Department

and English Department. Among the 10 lectures 3 were completed Masters of Science in Mechanical Engineering, 2 were completed Masters of Business Administration in Business Management and 2 were completed Masters of Arts in English. Rest of the 3 lectures were pursuing their PhD degree under Mechanical Department, Business Department and English Department respectively. Between the lectures 8 lectures were married and 2 were unmarried. All the female lectures were married. Among all the lectures, 4 were had 5 years working experience, 3 were had 3 years working experience and 3 were had 2 years working experience.

The outcomes of the discussion with the respondents stands as the most prolific issue are compensations contents like retirement plans and life insurances. Its preferable for them to keep themselves remain in those universities who provides a satisfactory retirement plans and life insurance facilities. Such as one of the respondent said:

“In most other countries where people usually grant life insurance as one of the most influential right, on the other hand for Bangladesh it’s kind of valueless particularly referring to the employee insurance. Any time soon I may suffer from a huge physical breakdown and in the meantime if the insurance coverage not supported by the university then that will be a big complicacy for me.”

In Bangladesh, public universities provide enormous funds for prospective candidates which is not usually done by the private universities. So, it’s not better to keep expectation for such opportunities. On that time insurance facility is comparably vital then convenes. Someone else put emphasizes on retirement plan. He said:

“Most of the people usually think about their retirement plan. Public jobs provide monthly pension plans after retirement but such facilities are not available at the private sectors jobs. On the same way, though there some exceptions like some private universities grant one time amount after retirement but by most private universities this opportunity is not given. And definitely it’s not viable for me that after retirement I spend my life by depending on others. So, having retirement plan is must for us while choosing a university for our teaching career which adds a safety precaution after retiring from jobs.”

Soon after that the secondary concerning issue is maintaining work life balance. They truly feel that the importance of family is no less than a professional career. The particular university sector which creates more opportunities for a person to spend comparatively more time with their family by decreasing work load is the most desirable workplace for them. For an example one respondent expressed that:

“In a week, usually I need to take classes for 6 consecutive days starting from 8.30 AM to 9.30 PM. Though I got some resting period in between, but it’s not possible to go home as I am not allowed to do so, I need to keep myself busy in the university task. So, weekend is the only time when actually I get some time to spend with my family. So, for spending some more times with my family I will switch to such Universities where salary may little low but there be will no work pressure.”

A female respondent said that:

:As a Bangladeshi woman when I need to balance the professional life and family life, so the value of time is definitely important for me. After having excessive teaching responsibilities its quite hectic for me to cook again for my family. So, I prefer that universities where I can get more free time in between classes.”

Thirdly for the sake of job they display indispensability towards self-independence. Domination is one galling issue what they usually put aside. So, it’s pretty irritating for them to keep acquaintance with such universities where domination is a daily routine. A female respondent described with extreme sadness that:

“Sometimes I feel a corporate job is far better than teaching in a private university because when there is no self-independence, there is no place for self-satisfaction.”

Fourthly, their concern about the training and developing facilities given by the respective universities. For example, a lecturer shared that:

“In every occasion, we prefer training and workshops since it expands our performance and quality to a great extent. As a lecturer, I have huge liabilities to my students to achieve the best for them. So, we prefer those universities the most where availability the training and workshops is more than others universities.”

On the other hand, employee commitment and performance appraisal are pretty considerable issue still in respect of Bangladesh they take it little lightly regarding employee retention. They think that its important but it’s not mandatory to assign it as a primary factor for employee retention. For an instance one lecturer added that:

“The culture of keeping employee commitment is not usual in Bangladesh. Both the employer and employees are not much concern about this particular fact.”

Another lecturer opined that: “Performance appraisal always motivate to work harder but as we are not used to it so, we take it bit normally.”

Last but not the least they consider the issue of maintaining the relation with their colleague as a personal issue. Some voted in favour of it and some were against. But all of them agreed to that this issue is not universal. Among those who believe it really impact expressed that: “If my relation with my colleague is not cordial, I am not at all interested for doing that job because I need to confront that particular face every day and then who I am not comfortable to keep relation with. Sometimes it feels it is rather better to switch that job and join any other university.”

Among the other believers one said: “I want to stick in my own course without thinking about maintaining good relations with other colleagues, it doesn’t bother me as I am not in a bad relation with everyone. So why should I care? So according to me it has no connection with the job, it’s an utterly distinct matter.”

From the recent issues, they have specially echoed about transport facility and preferable subject. They also quoted transportation facilities of Bangladesh as a precise inconvenience. So, possessing such facilities for them should be a must have issue for sustainable job arena. One of

female lecturer said: “As there is not much separated public transportation available for women in Bangladesh as well as majority portion of private universities do not possess such facilities so I tried to assure that the distance from my home to workplace covers less area. So, I appreciate those universities who provide distinguish transportation facilities for educator and pupils.”

On second note, it also identified by them that for attaining job satisfaction its essential. They want to consider their job as their passion not as a burden. Preferable subject possesses considerable role in job switching. Another theme was expressed by a respondent: “It’s not palatable for such a person who is usually debuted to one specific subject and he is loaded with an extensive pressure of another nonpreferable course. So, it’s better for me to avoid such universities where preferable options are really not accessible.”

From the findings, it has been clearly revealed that Compensation, work life balance, employee empowerment, training and development are crucial causes of influencing employee retention. Moreover, sometimes causes like transportation facility and preferable subject also causes the influence of employee retention. In regardless manner of all the factors compensation truly acts a huge role. All the employees want to sustain a retire life with the help of a well categorized retirement plan. The Soon after that they simultaneously mention about the other two vital factors work life balance and employee empowerment. With researched opinions training and development holds the next positions to be a factor of employee retention. On the reverse side, though employee commitment and performance appraisal bears undamental significance but still on their opinion it doesn’t fulfil up to the mark. Adding to that relation with colleagues has both ways opinion, some are affirmative and some are exact opposite.

## 5. Conclusion

The primary objective of this thesis is to study the crucial factors of employee retention as well as to acquire a well organised scenario of how this factors are influencing the employees of Bangladesh Private universities. To clarify the factors of employee retention, in this whole research divergent articles and research work have been studied. At present for private universities in Bangladesh a major concern is employee turnover. It’s not only waste of credits but also waste of vast amount of invaluable time for an organization. If soon this complication doesn’t prevent so in near future it will grow epidemically. Employee retention is the most preferable solution for this complicity when it comes to the matter of compensation based on acquired outcome, as the lecturers discussed its vitality about this matter researcher highly recommends it to make the university management conscious. In order to retain the existing employees, they should design a fruitful life insurance plan as well as exquisite retirement solution. This research as well articulate that by reducing workload the university should stand beside any or all of the employees with the creation of personal and professional career equilibrium. If the employees get relief from extensive workload, it assists them to fetch out some extra time spending with their families. Which will not only profitable for them but also their satisfactoriness make the university management assure of its employees’ reliability towards the university.

As it is clearly noticeable in this research that domination is one of those improper acts which the employees are dislike off, so a specific recommendation reflected from the research that management should arrange most facilities related to self-independence for the comfort of employees. The study more suggests that by conducting additional training and skills development program the university should create opportunity for employees to enhance their skills and performance. On

the basis research result it could be mentioned that management should emphasize on individual transportation facilities and subject preference for the employees. As informed by the respondents the listed factors are noteworthy for employee retention.

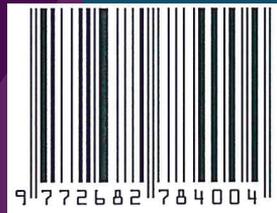
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