



Dominant Factors of Faculty Retention: An Empirical Study on Private Universities of Bangladesh

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Abstract

Employee retention is one of the most important strategies for achieving sustainable growth for any organization. It becomes more important for universities as faculty guides student for their education and career selection. Whenever it is an issue of private university it is a matter of huge concern as a large number of students are involved with this issue. Faculty retention is the willingness of the faculty members to stay with their existing university. This is dependent on several factors like demographic characteristics of the faculty members, policies and practices formulated and applied by universities, their remuneration package, working environment, university's reputation, curiosity to course, job satisfaction, opportunity to conduct research, growth opportunity, campus facility, faculty commitment etc. This paper reveals the dominant factors affecting faculty retention in private universities of Bangladesh. To conduct the study, closed ended structured questionnaire has been used to accumulate data from 194 faculty members from 28 private universities in Bangladesh. 5 point Likert scale has been used to design the questionnaire. Reliability, descriptive statistics, correlation, regression and ANOVA test have been run to analyze data. It has been found that policies & practices of university, role clarity of faculty members and social climate within the university have positive and significant relationship with faculty retention. Another finding from this study is remuneration package and research climate have insignificant but negative role in faculty retention. It is observed that when the universities increase salary and other benefits and provide research facility then faculty members have to go under tremendous pressure which leads to the turnover decision indirectly. As universities are running behind the ranking they should focus on faculty retention as they are the primary resource who will bring the pride for the institution through rendering the service to the community.

Keywords: Employee Retention, Job Satisfaction, Research Facility, Remuneration, Policies and Practices, Role Clarity, Social Climate.

1. Introduction

Due to tremendous competition in the globalization era sustainability is a main concern for any organization. Sustainability of an organization depends on various factors where employee retention plays a vital role. If an organization wants to achieve competitive advantage employee retention has no alternative. It is more important when the organization is service oriented in nature. In Bangladesh there are 114 private universities among those 106 universities are currently operating their academic activities (UGC, 2024). Private university is such a sector where enormous number of students is affiliated with their course teachers and mentors. According to a report published in The Daily Star dated 25th October 2022 a



total of 3,28,689 students are continuing their tertiary education in these universities. These students always seek aid and assistance from their teachers even after the completion of their degree. Most of the cases faculty members show their career path and guide them to explore their hidden talents. Teachers are those blessings to the students who refer students for higher studies and getting job opportunities. It is only possible when the senior faculties stay with the universities and students can connect with them. Therefore, faculty retention is the first priority for any university if they want to have competitive advantage and sustainable growth in this industry.

Employee retention means the willingness of the employees to stay with their current organization and to continue their job. It means the application of policies and practices for keeping the most valuable employees in the organizations for a longer time period. Because of turnover, it incurs huge cost to hire another one (Ahlrichs, 2000). Time and cost is associated with recruitment, arranging competitive tests, reference check, and police verification, finding out short term option, cost of training and orientation. Ultimately employee retention is more fruitful strategy than hiring a new one (Kotzé and Roodt, 2005). There are some hidden costs too. It includes costs associated with late submission, low employee morale, and customer's negative feedback regarding the organization (Hong et al, 2012). Therefore, most of the employers are concerned with retention strategies to become the market leader with knowledgeable experienced and skilled employees (Stovel & Bontis, 2002).

Various studies have been conducted for investigating the factors associated with employee retention decision but it is not yet conclusive and there is little consistency in those findings. Retention decision varies due to differences in culture, age, industry etc. Dominant factors for teachers' job satisfaction are salary, promotion, perceived support from co-worker, student quality, class control, access to organizational resources, training and development etc. Social status and respect are another two influential factors for female teachers working in private institution (Sharma & Jyoti, 2006). Most of the research indicates that job anxiety, lack of employee commitment and job dissatisfaction force employees to resign from the organization (Firth 2007). Anderson and Sullivan (1993) have shown the relation between employee satisfactions, retention and popularity of the organization.

Research conducted in higher education show that professors tend to be more satisfied than lecturers. Demographic characteristics like age, experience, and educational qualification influence the level of job satisfaction but marital status and gender do not have significant effect towards job satisfaction of academic staff (Toker, 2011). University teachers can be focused as academic staff or researcher. Those who are more involved with their job are more satisfied than those who are not involved (Oshagbemi, 1997). Job satisfaction is fundamental for researchers (Gautam et al., 2006). Satisfied teachers are essential for educational institutes and for any nation as because of their contribution to develop a nation (Syed et al., 2012). Research shows that job interest, family profession, inspiration from own teachers, proper knowledge of field, training and development, certifications to teaching profession increase job involvement and satisfaction which leads to retention decision (Mau, Ellsworth, & Hawley, 2008).



Employee retention is a crucial issue for any organization. Turnover decision of skills and experienced employees creates a vacuum for any organization. As a result organization needs to hire another employee which would incur further costing and it is a time consuming process too. Therefore, it is willingness of the employer whether they will retain the existing employees or to recruit right candidates for the betterment of the organization (Terera & Ngirande, 2014).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Retention

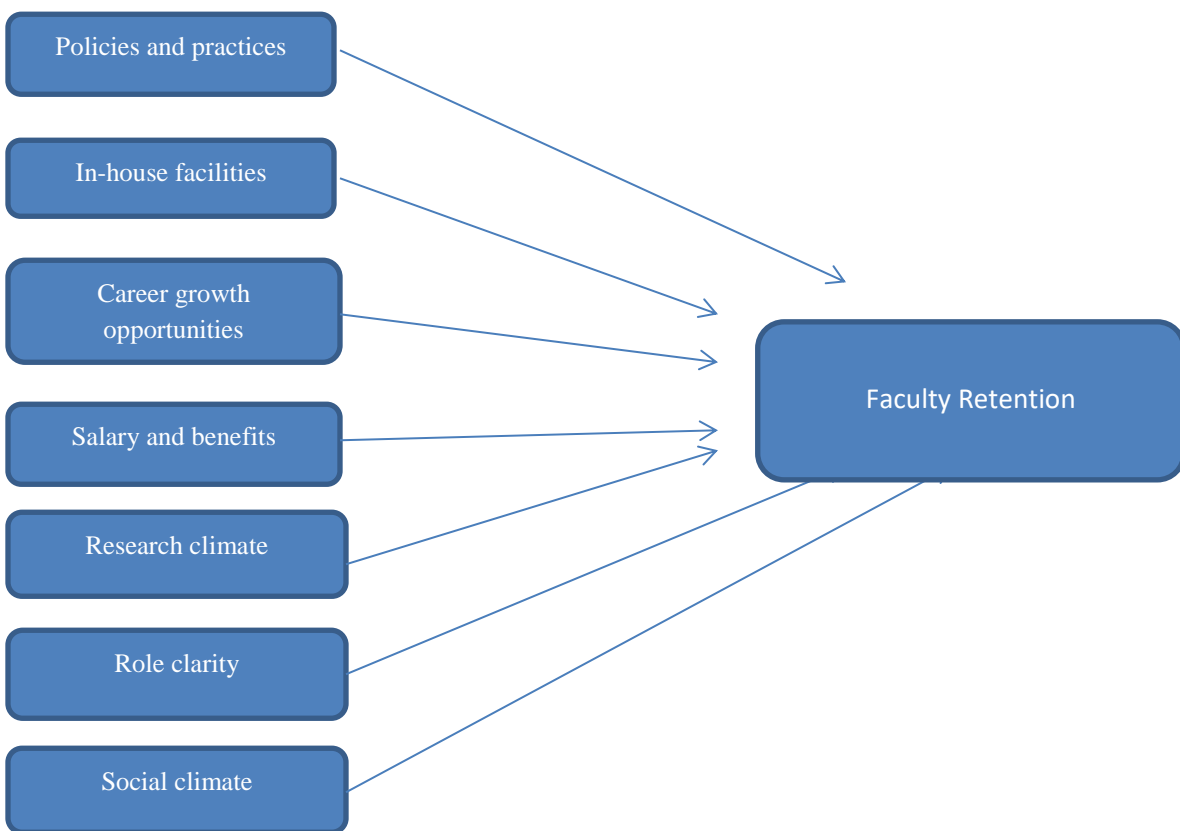
Retention means the continuation of job with current employer (Cascio, 1995). It is a strategy that organizations follow to keep such an environment where organization wants their employees to stay happily continuing their job. It is the mechanisms that an organization applies to encourage its employees to stay with their current employer for a long time period (Singh, 2019). Employee retention is important to keep the key and competent personnel of an organization as they are directly involved in the production, distribution and servicing points (Olowu and Adamolekun, 2005). And this thing is equally important for both private and public organizations. Retention strategy depends on four interlinked processes named as motivation, interaction, visioning, and learning process (Kaliprasad, 2006). If these can be successfully utilized then employees will be encouraged to continue their employment with current organization.

Because of employee retention organizations can save cost as they are not required to recruit and train up new employees. Moreover, recruiting new employee is more difficult and complex than to keep the existing employees (Baker, 2006). Employee retention is not an outcome of any single factor. Remuneration package, secured job, training & developments, supervisor support, organizational culture, work environment and organizational justice towards employees are the primary factors influencing retention (Fitzenz, 1990). Broadly retention is the end result of 3 dimensions such as social, mental and physical. The social factor includes relationship of employees with their colleagues and peer groups and employer. It also includes the relationship with other people within and outside the organization. The mental factor incorporates the job description. Employees always prefer to have flexible and clearly defined job towards which they will provide their physical and mental effort. Finally, physical factor is composed of the working environment and payment for the job (Osteraker, 1999). Smart (1990) a famous research on retention, classified as individual factor, work factor and context factor influencing retention decision.

Employees can leave an organization in ways. First one is they voluntarily resign and the other one is organization terminates them. First one is known as voluntary turnover and the last one is termed as involuntary turnover. Involuntary turnover happens because of the restructuring of an organization. It may also happen if employee's performance is not satisfactory to the employer (Allen et al., 2010). Whereas voluntary turnover takes place because of employee dissatisfaction, job insecurity, poor compensation package, lack of freedom, lack of interpersonal relationship among the teams, suffocating working environment, low career development opportunity (James & Mathew, 2012).



Walker (2001) identified seven factors stimulating employee retention named salary and benefits, gratitude of the work, challenging work, promotion and learning scope, invitational environment, good peer relationship, work-life balance and good communication. Another research says that career growth opportunities, training and development supporting research climate positively affect faculty's job satisfaction while compensation and working environment are insignificant to irrespective to the gender of faculty members (Syed, Shaikh & Shah, 20112). By reviewing the literature this paper tries to categories the factors into seven points as independent variable to see the impact on faculty retention as the dependent variable. The factors responsible for faculty retention are policies and practices, in-house facilities, career growth opportunities, salary and benefits, research climate, role clarity and social climate.



2.2 Policies & Practices

Johnsrud & Heck (1994) have found that excessive working hour and work overload stimulates faculties to switch from their job. Another study shows that opportunity to participate in the decision-making process, required support and facilities for professional activities promote faculty retention (McGee & Ford, 1987). Stress created from job lead to faculty dissatisfaction which will finally direct to faculty turnover (Sanderson et al., 2000). When university sets a faculty friendly policy then it becomes a positive point for the organization as it will lead to the concerned institution to have faculty retention for a better future.



2.3 In-House Facilities

One well researched topic is importance of campus life on faculty retention (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Dee, 2004; Gardner, 2012; Piercy et al., 2005). Supportive Infrastructural facility within campus can satisfy faculty which helps to retention decision (Anderman et al., 1991). Hence, authors have given emphasis on schedule-based rewards and providing an environment with suitable stimulus. Recent study has shown the importance of organizational rewards to retain star faculty (Desselle et al., 2021). Campus location, logistical support motivates employees to stay with an organization. Study shows that many faculty mostly female faculties switch their job only because of location. They can sacrifice salary for having a nearest location.

2.4 Career Growth Opportunities

Opportunity to learn and getting promotion in the academic career is a big concern for faculty members. Universities where such scope is available faculties are interested to stay for a long time period. (Mubarak et al., 2012). Keyndt et.al. (2009) explored that if employees get promotion opportunities in their current organization then they would be encouraged to stay rather to resign. Now a day organization treat the cost of training and development as an investment cost for retaining the valuable resources. Employees give return in the form of better service to the organization (Messmer, 2000).

Long and complicated promotion process discourages academics from applying for promotion. Thus, faculties invest their time after research rather than utilizing a smart time for teaching and community engagement. Eventually they leave the organization for better balance among research, teaching and community engagement (Selesho & Naile, 2014).

2.5 Salary & Benefits

Most of the organizations do not use salary and benefits strategically with the view of retaining employees, increasing their morale and achieving targets for general employees. It is designed only for the top-level management (Davies et al., 2001). Salary plays a vital role in faculty retention decision (AL- Omari et.al., 2008). Previous study shows that (Ambrose et al., 2005) the turnover rate is comparatively higher for faculties who have family responsibilities. Indirect compensation has greater positive association with employee job loyalty rather than direct compensation. Hence, it would add much value towards employee loyalty if attractive indirect compensation can be offered with direct one (Manurung & Kasenda, 2017).

Highly attractive rewards like extrinsic, intrinsic and recognition rewards have very high positive association with job performance of public knowledge employees. As universities offer poor rewards and recognition to the employees, job dissatisfaction takes place with results in a downward trend in their performance. Teachers are not offered attractive compensation packages in exchange of their services though it is positively related with their satisfaction level (Mensah et al., 2017).



2.6 Research Climate

One of the major retention factors of academics is the research climate. Necessary support for a positive research environment works as an incentive to academics (Bernerd, 2012). Teachers have many responsibilities including teaching many courses, student advising and other administrative job. These work pressure sets a boundary for them to get involved in research in true sense (Al-Omari et.al. 2008). Even if faculty members felt good about their institution, the strain of their time demands contributed to their intention to leave the academy (Al-Omari et.al. 2008). Research interest has a positive affiliation with faculty retention for any university (Blackburn & Havinghurst, 1979). Metcalf et.al. (2005) explained that academics find most of their job satisfaction when it is research oriented. The more hours they spend investing after research the more satisfaction they found.

2.7 Role Clarity

Society expects diversified role from faculty members. Innovating research related to industrial community, heavy teaching load, professional service towards students, administrative service towards university and social service for the development of society etc. are some expectations as role from them (Kiang et al., 2001). It is also seen that huge expectations from faculty lead to dissatisfaction when they cannot fulfill those because of some constraints.

2.8 Social Climate

Employee's perception towards their organization is mostly dependent on their relationship with their supervisor. Doh et al., (2011) found that responsible leadership is composed of three elements such as stakeholder culture, fair and inclusive HR practices and managerial support. It is also found that if there is a good working environment where employees have a cordial relationship with their supervisor and where employees have the scope play leadership role, they own the company (Cloutier et al., 2015).

Al Omari (2007) found out that head of the department helps to promote team work among the faculty members which lead to faculty retention. According to Barners et.el, (1998) frustration due to resource constraints and lack of team work are the two crucial elements for faculty turnover. Even if faculty members felt good about their institution, the anxiety of their time demands subsidized to their intention to leave the academy (Al Omari et.el, 2008). Rewards and recognition, participation, relationship with peer group and management, training and development play significant role in faculty job satisfaction and loyalty. Ultimately organization is benefited as they can complete goals in an effective and efficient manner (Turkyilmaz et el., 2011). Employee's perception towards their organization is mostly dependent on their relationship with their supervisor. Chung et.el., (2009) have shown that positive leadership style can affect employee job satisfaction, commitment and their performance which will turn to effect on employee retention.



3. Methodology

3.1 Target group

As per UGC list, currently there are 112 private universities in Bangladesh. Some of these have not yet started their academic activities. However, all fulltime faculty members serving under all private universities in Bangladesh are treated as target group for this research purpose.

3.2 Location of the study

Data have been collected through both online and offline media using google form and distribution of questionnaires physically. Respondents from 34 different universities located at Dhaka, Kishorganj, Cumilla, Sylhet, Manikgani and Chuadanga participated in this research by sharing their opinion.

3.3 Sampling technique

As comprehensive faculty list not available Convenient Sampling Technique has been used to collect data. As concerned authority did not share comprehensive faculty list it was not possible to go through other sampling techniques except Convenient Sampling Technique. Same technique was adopted in previous studies conducted in different industry in Bangladesh (Syed, 2020; Syed et al, 2021). For this research purpose a total of 194 responses were collected from respondents.

3.4 Data collection

Primary data have been collected through a structured questionnaire. Prior to survey questionnaire was prepared and pre-tested. Afterwards, it was finalized and released to the respondents. Questionnaire includes demographic information, respondents' opinion regarding policies & practices, in-house facilities, career growth opportunities, salary & benefits, research climate, role clarity, social climate and faculties' intention to continue their service with current university.

3.5 Construction of the dependent variable

In previous studies several researches have been conducted by using 5 point Likert Scale to collect data (Syed & Mahmud, 2022; Mahmud et al. 2017; Kabir et al 2018; Syed, 2020; Hossain et al. 2017). A total of 49 statements under 8 variables and 7 questions related to demographic information were asked to respondents. Each factor consist 4-7 statements. 5 point Likert Scale has been used to design the questionnaire. Statements were scored under 5 points named strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4) and strongly agree (5)

3.6 Data reliability

Cronbach's alpha is used to see internal consistency of the variables. It indicates data reliability. If the value of Cronbach's alpha is close to 1 it represents high reliability of data (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). To check the reliability each variable was tested individually and the all the variables as a group was tested. Cronbach's alpha value for independent variables is .826, .896, .890, .851, .904, .836, .660, .854 individually and overall Cronbach's alpha for all variables is .926. In both cases there is very good internal consistency of data.



| Factor | Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Policies & Practices | .826 | 6 |
| In-House Facilities | .896 | 8 |
| Career Growth Opportunities | .890 | 5 |
| Salary & Benefits | .851 | 5 |
| Research Climate | .904 | 6 |
| Role Clarity | .836 | 5 |
| Social Climate | .660 | 6 |
| Retention decision | .854 | 8 |

3.7 Analytical strategies

To analyze data the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) method was used to evaluate the responses of faculty members regarding their intention to stay with their current university. Therefore, dependent variable for this study is faculty retention. The model is explained as-

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \beta_5X_5 + \beta_6X_6 + \beta_7X_7 + \mu$$

where Y=faculty retention score; β_0 =is constant; X1= Policies & Practices; X2= In-House Facilities; X3= Career Growth Opportunities; X4=Salary & Benefits; X5= Research Climate; X6= Role Clarity; X7= Social Climate; β_i is the coefficient to be estimated, and μ is the error term of equation.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic profiles of respondents

Respondents were asked some basic questions regarding their gender, age, educational qualification, their current university, school, designation and their marital status. Survey findings show that about 64.9% respondents are male and rests are female faculties. Maximum (39.2%) response came from faculty members aging 31-40 years old. More than half (55.7%) respondents have post graduate degrees. A large number of responses have come from Business faculty. Most the respondents (67.5%) are married.

| Characteristics | | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Gender | Male | 126 | 64.9 |
| | Female | 68 | 35.1 |
| | Total | 194 | 100.0 |
| Age | 21-30 | 65 | 33.5 |
| | 31-40 | 76 | 39.2 |
| | 41-50 | 40 | 20.6 |
| | 51-60 | 13 | 6.7 |
| | Total | 194 | 100.0 |



| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------|
| Education | Doctorate | 34 | 17.5 |
| | Pursuing PhD | 27 | 13.9 |
| | Post-Graduation | 108 | 55.7 |
| | Graduation | 25 | 12.9 |
| | Total | 194 | 100.0 |
| Designation | Lecturer | 83 | 42.8 |
| | Senior Lecturer | 36 | 18.6 |
| | Assistant Professor | 43 | 22.2 |
| | Associate Professor | 20 | 10.3 |
| | Professor | 12 | 6.2 |
| | Total | 194 | 100.0 |
| Department | Science | 62 | 32.0 |
| | Arts & Social Science | 32 | 16.5 |
| | Business | 100 | 51.5 |
| | Total | 194 | 100.0 |
| Marital Status | Single | 63 | 32.5 |
| | Married | 131 | 67.5 |
| | Total | 194 | 100.0 |

4.2 Dominant factors of faculty retention

| Factors | Coefficient | t value | Level of Significance |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| Policies & Practices | .190 | 2.104 | .037 |
| In-House Facilities | .170 | 1.878 | .062 |
| Career Growth Opportunities | .059 | .742 | .459 |
| Salary & Benefits | -.049 | -.760 | .448 |
| Research Climate | -.008 | -.113 | .910 |
| Role Clarity | .339 | 5.032 | .000 |
| Social Climate | .147 | 2.830 | .005 |

Results show that policies & practices of university, role clarity of faculty members and social climate within the university are significantly affiliated with faculty retention. These 3 factors have positive relationship with faculty's intention to stay with their current university. I unit of changes in policies and practices which is faculty friendly will bring 0.19 unit increase in faculty retention decision. Similarly if university can increase role clarity by 1 unit then retention will be increased by 0.339 unit. Similarly 1 unit increase in Social climate facility can lead to 0.147 unit increase of faculty retention. Rewards to employees can play a significant role in employee retention but they do not have any relationship with employee job satisfaction (Terera, 2014). Same findings also received from Pillay (2009) that rewards do not have



significant role in employee job satisfaction. Therefore, it can be concluded that only rewards cannot be a major determinant of faculty retention as they are not supported by a positive social environment and their role is clearly defined.

| ANOVA | F | Sig. | R Square | Adjusted R Square |
|-------|--------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| | 33.864 | .000 ^b | .560 | .544 |

Multiple linear regression analysis reveals coefficient of determination (adjusted R square) is 0.544 which says that 54.4% of the variation in faculty retention can be explained by the variation of the above stated seven variables. Remaining 45.6% is influenced by other variables which are excluded in this study.

5. Limitations and Future Research

This research is quantitative in nature. 5 point Likert scale has been used to collect data from respondents where it was difficult to collect qualitative data from them. The research findings could be much more valid if those qualitative data could be incorporated in this study. Adding more samples from other private universities located outside Dhaka city could make the research more effective to make decision for the university management authority. Findings could be different based on different location, age, gender and designation (Rizwan & Rao, 2013). The impact of demographic variables could be different if those were categorized. In future, another scope of study for the impact of remuneration is created through this research.

6. Conclusions and Implications

This paper was intended to foster and flourish the dominant factors responsible for faculty retention in the private universities in Bangladesh. After analysis it is found that among all factors role clarity and social climate have a strong positive significant relationship with faculty retention. Other factors influence retention decision too but some of them are not too much influential as the previous factors. Ironically the role of salary and benefits have found as a negative indicator for faculty retention which is unusual. The reason behind the scene is whenever salary is increased role expectations from faculty members is also increased. Therefore, team relationship is hampered because of role ambiguity. The findings can be useful for the management of the private universities to set their retention strategy. This finding will give a pathway for keeping most committed faculty members. It becomes a buzzword as now a day all private universities are concerned to take their local and internal accreditation. Recently UGC has declared that private universities will have the eligibility to offer PhD degree which will have an extra demand for faculty retention.

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