

## **The Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment in the Relationship between Equity Sensitivity and Faculty Retention: A Social Exchange Theory Perspective**

Kanis Fatema<sup>1</sup> and Mridul Kanti Das<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Southeast Business School, Southeast University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, Bangladesh Army University of Science and Technology, Nilphamari, Bangladesh.

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Faculty retention is a critical concern for private universities in Bangladesh, as turnover disrupts academic performance and increases institutional costs. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory (SET), this study investigates the relationship between equity sensitivity and employees' intention to stay, with organizational commitment as a mediating mechanism. A mixed-methods approach was employed: quantitative data were collected from 97 faculty members using validated scales for equity sensitivity, organizational commitment, and intention to stay, while qualitative insights were obtained through focus group discussions with 27 participants. Structural equation modeling results reveal that equity sensitivity significantly influences intention to stay, both directly and indirectly through organizational commitment, with the mediating effect being particularly strong. Qualitative findings corroborate that perceptions of fairness in promotion, compensation, training, job security, and work-life balance foster reciprocity, enhancing commitment and retention, whereas perceived inequities diminish employees' intention to remain. These findings highlight the importance of fair workplace practices and affective organizational commitment in retaining equity-sensitive faculty. The study provides practical guidance for HR managers in designing equitable policies and contributes theoretically to understanding retention dynamics in higher education.*

**Keywords:** Equity Sensitivity, Organizational Commitment, Intention to Stay, SET (Social Exchange Theory), Private Bangladeshi University.

## **1. Introduction**

The most valuable resources for an organization are the employees, who are working for achieving the organizational goals. But today, most of the organization has to face challenges to retain the employees with the organization, because they are the main resources for the organization. High turnover is not only disrupting productivity but also imposing significant costs on recruitment and training. Understanding the psychological and behavioral factors that influence employees' **intention to stay** has, therefore, become a critical area of organizational research. **Equity sensitivity** has now become a most crucial determinate among all the other elements. It reflects an individual's concern for fairness in social and organizational exchanges. Employees with high equity sensitivity are more likely to feel dissatisfied and consider leaving when they perceive unfair treatment, whereas those with lower sensitivity tend to be more tolerant of such inequities. (Huseman, Hatfield, & Miles, 1987). However, the impact of equity sensitivity on retention is not straightforward and is often mediated by employees' **organizational commitment**, especially affective commitment, which reflects their emotional attachment and identification with the organization. This study used **Social Exchange Theory (SET)**, which posits that workplace relationships are built upon reciprocal exchanges of resources, where fair treatment from the organization fosters loyalty and commitment from employees. By applying SET, this research provides a deeper understanding of how fairness perceptions and individual differences in equity sensitivity influence commitment and, in turn, employees' intentions to remain with the organization.

While prior studies have explored the relationship between equity perceptions and turnover intentions, limited attention has been given to the role of **equity sensitivity** as an individual difference variable influencing employees' reactions to fairness. Moreover, there is a lack of empirical studies examining **organizational commitment as a mediating mechanism** linking equity sensitivity to intention to stay, particularly within the framework of **Social Exchange Theory**. This gap leaves room for a more nuanced exploration of how fairness-related personality traits interact with commitment to influence retention outcomes.

This study contributes both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it enriches organizational behavior literature by integrating **equity sensitivity** into the retention framework and positioning **organizational commitment** as a mediator, explained through SET. Practically, the findings will guide managers and HR practitioners in designing fair reward systems, cultivating organizational commitment, and developing strategies that enhance employee retention, particularly among equity-sensitive individuals.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Equity sensitivity**

Equity sensitivity an extension of equity theory, proposes that individuals differ in their preferred input-to-outcome ratios (Huseman et al., 1987). Equity sensitivity refines traditional equity theory by acknowledging individual differences in responses to workplace inequity (Allen & White, 2002). This framework helps predict workplace attitudes and behaviors by categorizing individuals as Benevolents, Equity Sensitives, or Entitleds (Allen & White, 2002). In business settings, equity is typically understood through the lens of fairness and distributive justice (Nassè, 2021). While equity theory assumes that all individuals strive for proportional fairness between inputs and outcomes, equity sensitivity posits that people vary in their tolerance of inequity.

### **2.2 Equity Theory and Equity Sensitivity**

The conceptual backbone of fairness perceptions in organizations lies in Equity Theory, originally proposed by Adams (1963, 1965). This theory posits that individuals constantly compare their ratio of inputs (e.g., effort, skill, loyalty, time, education) to outcomes (e.g., pay, recognition, benefits, job security) with that of relevant others.

Equity Theory, explains how individuals evaluate fairness in social and organizational exchanges by comparing the ratio of their inputs (e.g., effort, skills, experience) to outcomes (e.g., pay, recognition) against those of referent others. It assumes that all individuals universally prefer equity and experience distress when either under-rewarded or over-rewarded, which can lead to corrective actions such as adjusting effort, seeking changes in outcomes, or withdrawing (Greenberg, 1990). However, later research demonstrated that people differ in how they react to equity and inequity, which led to the development of Equity Sensitivity Theory (Huseman, et, al. 1987) When these ratios are perceived as equal, a state of equity exists, leading to satisfaction. However, a perceived imbalance, whether over-reward or under-reward, creates psychological tension or distress, motivating individuals to restore equity (Adams, 1965; Kickul & Lester 2001).

### **2.3 Organizational Commitment**

Organizational commitment is a deeply investigated construct in organizational behavior, recognized as a crucial predictor of various employee outcomes, including turnover (Meyer a& Allen, 1991; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). The most widely accepted framework for understanding organizational commitment is the Three-Component Model (TCM) developed by Meyer & Allen

(1991, 1997). This model proposes that commitment is a multi-dimensional construct comprising:

**2.3.1. Affective Commitment (AC):** This refers to an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Employees with high affective commitment stay because they *want* to. It is often linked to positive work experiences and a perceived congruence of values between the individual and the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

**2.3.2. Continuance Commitment (CC):** This component reflects an employee's awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization. These costs can be economic (e.g., loss of salary, benefits) or social (e.g., loss of friends, disruption of routines). Employees with high continuance commitment stay because they *need* to (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

**2.3.3. Normative Commitment (NC):** Normative commitment represents employees feeling of obligation to remain with the organization. This dimension represents an employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organization. This sense of obligation can be internalized norms of reciprocity (e.g., the organization invested in their training) or from personal values (e.g., a belief in loyalty). Employees with high normative commitment stay because they feel they *ought* to (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

## **2.4 Intention to Stay**

Intention to stay is a well-established predictor of actual employee retention or turnover (Tett & Meyer, 1993). It represents an employee's deliberate choice and willingness to continue working with their current organization, with higher levels of intention indicating a reduced likelihood of voluntary departure. A higher intention to stay indicates a lower likelihood of voluntary turnover. Studies have consistently found strong negative correlations between turnover intention and various positive employee attitudes, including job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Currivan, 1999). Employees intention to stay is mostly depended on some factors, such as perceived organizational justice, supportive work environments, and opportunities for growth (Suifan et al., 2017; Aboobaker et al., 2018).

## **2.5 The Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment**

### **2.5.1 Equity Sensitivity and Organizational Commitment**

The literature provides a strong basis for linking fairness perceptions to organizational commitment. When employees, especially equity-sensitive individuals, perceive that they are being treated fairly in terms of their inputs and outcomes, it fosters a sense of trust and positive

regard for the organization. This positive perception is likely to translate into stronger affective commitment (emotional attachment). For benevolent individuals, the opportunity to contribute without demanding immediate equal return can also enhance their commitment, as it aligns with their preference for giving (Huseman et al., 1987). Conversely, entitled individuals, constantly seeking an over-benefited state, may experience lower commitment if their expectations of superior treatment are not met, even in objectively equitable situations. Perceived organizational justice, a broader concept encompassing distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice, has been consistently shown to positively influence organizational commitment (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001). This aligns with the idea that individuals' perceptions of fairness are fundamental to their emotional connection and identification with the organization. 1<sup>st</sup> Hypothesis of this study is-

***H1: Equity Sensitivity has a positive relationship with Organizational Commitment.***

### **2.5.2 Organizational Commitment and Intention to Stay**

As previously discussed, a robust body of research consistently demonstrates a strong negative relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention (Meyer et al., 2002). Employees who are affectively committed to their organization are more likely to want to stay, exhibiting loyalty and a desire to contribute to the organization's success. Similarly, normative commitment, driven by a sense of obligation, and continuance commitment, influenced by the costs of leaving, also contribute to an employee's intention to remain. Studies have consistently shown that higher levels of commitment across all three components are associated with a greater likelihood of staying with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Tett & Meyer, 1993). Hence the 2<sup>nd</sup> hypothesis is-

***H2: Organizational Commitment has a positive relationship with Intention to Stay.***

### **2.5.3 The Mediating Link: Equity Sensitivity, Organizational Commitment and Intention to Stay**

If employees' equity sensitivity leads them to perceive an equitable work environment, they are more likely to develop a stronger bond with the organization (higher organizational commitment). This heightened commitment then acts as the direct driver of their intention to remain with the company. For example, a benevolent employee who feels their contributions are valued and reciprocated by the organization, even if not immediately equal in tangible rewards, may develop strong affective commitment, which then translates into a strong desire to stay. Beside this, when employee perceive constant under-benefit, regardless of objective reality, may experience diminished commitment, leading to a higher intention to leave. Previously most of the researcher focused on investigating the direct relationship of organizational commitment and

turnover intention. Recent studies highlight the critical role of organizational commitment as a mediator in the relationships between psychological constructs, such as emotional intelligence, and turnover intention (Galanis et al., 2024; Li et al., 2024). Therefore, the 3<sup>rd</sup> hypothesis of this study is-

***H3: Organizational Commitment positively mediates the relationship between Equity Sensitivity and Intention to Stay.***

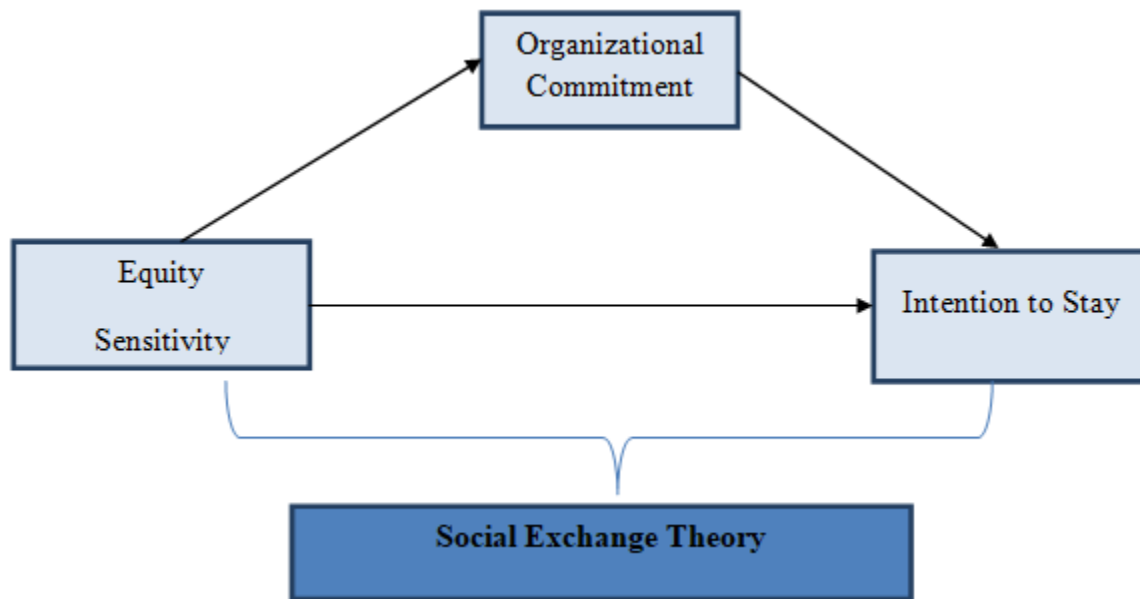
## **2.6 Social Exchange Theory Alignment**

In 1958, Homans proposed the SET theory to explain social behavior as a series of reciprocity. In the context of Organizational Behavior, SET suggests that employees evaluate the fairness of their interactions with the employer and respond through attitudes and behaviors. In this study SET provides a robust framework for understanding how equity sensitivity influences employees' intention to stay, with organizational commitment acting as a key mediating mechanism. SET posits that social behavior is guided by exchanges in which individuals seek to maximize benefits and minimize costs. In organizational contexts, employees evaluate the fairness of their exchanges with the employer and respond through behaviors such as commitment, engagement, and retention. Equity sensitivity plays a moderating role in this process, as individuals differ in their perceptions of fairness, which affects how organizational commitment mediates their intention to remain. When employees experience fair treatment, they are more likely to exhibit positive behaviors, including organizational citizenship and stronger commitment, which in turn enhances their intention to stay with the organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005). Empirical evidence supports this perspective: Naidu, Majid, & Chuah (2023) found that employees with high equity sensitivity reciprocate fair treatment with increased commitment and a stronger intention to remain, reflecting the reciprocity principle central to SET. Similarly, Ko & Hur (2014) reported that employees are more likely to stay loyal when they perceive fair and equitable rewards, reinforcing the notion that fairness-driven exchanges promote retention.

## **2.7 Conceptual Framework**

In organizations, workplace relationships are reciprocal, meaning that employees tend to respond to fair treatment and organizational support with positive attitudes and behaviors. Thus, the conceptual framework would be-

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Study



### 3. Methods

#### 3.1 Demographic profile

To analysis the study, 57.7% responses have been collected from male, and 40.2% responses from female. Most respondents are aged 35–44 years (40.2%) and hold a Master’s degree (60.8%), while 39.2% have a PhD. Teaching experience is fairly distributed, with the largest group having 6–10 years (30.9%). In terms of designation, Lecturers (30.9%) and Assistant Professors (27.8%) constitute the majority, indicating a workforce concentrated in entry- and mid-level positions. Overall, the faculty is relatively young and mid-career, with opportunities for further academic development.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the Respondents

Category	Sub-category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	56	57.7%
	Female	41	42.3%
Age Group	25–34 years	28	28.9%
	35–44 years	39	40.2%
	45–54 years	20	20.6%

	55 years and above	10	10.3%
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	Master’s	59	60.8%
	PhD	38	39.2%
<b>Teaching Experience</b>	0–5 years	22	22.7%
	6–10 years	30	30.9%
	11–15 years	26	26.8%
	16 years and above	19	19.6%
<b>Designation</b>	Lecturer	30	30.9%
	Assistant Professor	27	27.8%
	Associate Professor	25	25.8%
	Professor	15	15.5%

### 3.2 Research Instrument

The table presents the measurement items for **Equity Sensitivity (ES)**, **Organizational Commitment (OC)**, and **Intention to Stay (IS)**.

**Table 2: Research Instrument Used for the study**

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Item Name</b>	<b>Item Statement</b>
	ES1	I prefer doing as little as possible at work while receiving maximum benefits.
	ES2	I feel most satisfied when my work requires minimal effort.
	ES3	At my job, I often look for ways to avoid work.
	ES4	If possible, I would work slightly slower than what my boss expects.
	ES5	I find it satisfying to gain something at work without putting in much effort.
	ES6	A smart employee maximizes personal gain while minimizing effort.
	ES7	Employees who focus more on what they receive than what they contribute are wise.

Equity Sensitivity	ES8	If my job required me to work hard all day, I would likely quit.
	ES9	My main concern at work is whether I am performing my best.
	ES10	I prefer a job that keeps me busy over one that allows frequent idling.
	ES11	I feel uneasy when I have little work to do.
	ES12	I would become very dissatisfied if my job had minimal or no responsibilities.
	ES13	All else being equal, a job with many duties is preferable to one with few.
	ES14	After completing my tasks, I help other employees who still have work remaining.
	ES15	Even with low pay and poor benefits, I strive to do my best at work.
	ES16	I feel obligated to contribute more than what I am compensated for.
Organizational Commitment	OC1	I intend to continue working at this company and see it as my long-term workplace.
	OC2	I am happy to have chosen this company as my employer.
	OC3	Even if I had other opportunities, I would prioritize staying with this company.
	OC4	I accept the future of the company as my own.
	OC5	I consider this company the best workplace for me.
Intention to Stay	IS1	I plan to remain in my current job for as long as possible.
	IS2	I am likely to seek a new job in the near future.
	IS3	I plan to stay in this job for at least the next two to three years.

The table presents the measurement items for **Equity Sensitivity (ES)**, **Organizational Commitment (OC)**, and **Intention to Stay (IS)**. The **Equity Sensitivity** items (ES1–ES16) were adapted from **Huseman, Hatfield, & Miles (1987)**, assessing employees’ perceptions of fairness and effort–reward balance at work. The **Organizational Commitment** items (OC1–OC5) were adopted from **Meyer & Allen (1991)**, capturing affective attachment and loyalty toward the organization. The **Intention to Stay** items (IS1–IS3) were adapted from **Mobley, Horner, & Hollingsworth (1978)**, measuring employees’ likelihood of remaining with their

current organization. These scales collectively examine how perceptions of equity and commitment relate to employees’ retention intentions.

**3.3 Data Analysis Techniques**

The study employed a **mixed-methods approach**, combining quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. Quantitative analysis has been done through the Smart-PLS by collecting the responses from faculty members using questionnaire. Qualitative data collected from **Focus Group Discussions (FGD)** with 27 faculty members using **thematic and content analysis** to identify recurring patterns related to reciprocity, organizational support, and fairness perceptions. Integrating both approaches allowed the study to provide a comprehensive understanding of how faculty perceptions and organizational practices influence commitment and retention intentions.

**3.4 Qualitative analysis**

**3.4.1 Convergent Validity**

The reliability and validity analysis indicates that all three constructs—Equity Sensitivity, Intention to Stay, and Organizational Commitment—demonstrate strong psychometric properties. For Equity Sensitivity, individual item Cronbach’s Alpha values range from 0.757 to 0.882, with an overall Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.970, Composite Reliability of 0.971, and AVE of 0.672, reflecting excellent internal consistency and adequate convergent validity. Similarly, Intention to Stay shows high reliability, with item Cronbach’s Alpha between 0.865 and 0.927, overall Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.921, Composite Reliability of 0.922, and AVE of 0.796, indicating that the construct is well-measured by its items. Organizational Commitment also exhibits good reliability, with item Cronbach’s Alpha ranging from 0.817 to 0.887, overall Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.936, Composite Reliability of 0.937, and AVE of 0.746, confirming that the items effectively capture the underlying construct. Overall, these results suggest that the measurement scales are both reliable and valid, making them suitable for subsequent analyses such as correlation, regression, and structural equation modeling.

**Table 3: Convergent Validity and Reliability**

	<b>Equity Sensitivity</b>	<b>Cronbach</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>ES1</b>	0.779	0.970	0.971	0.672
<b>ES10</b>	0.850			
<b>ES11</b>	0.852			

<b>ES12</b>	0.764			
<b>ES13</b>	0.837			
<b>ES14</b>	0.823			
<b>ES15</b>	0.789			
<b>ES16</b>	0.832			
<b>ES2</b>	0.858			
<b>ES3</b>	0.767			
<b>ES4</b>	0.808			
<b>ES5</b>	0.815			
<b>ES6</b>	0.757			
<b>ES7</b>	0.853			
<b>ES8</b>	0.834			
<b>ES9</b>	0.882			
<b>IS1</b>	0.883			0.796
<b>IS2</b>	0.865	0.921	0.922	
<b>IS3</b>	0.927			
<b>OC1</b>	0.872			0.746
<b>OC2</b>	0.864			
<b>OC3</b>	0.876	0.936	0.937	
<b>OC4</b>	0.817			
<b>OC5</b>	0.887			

### 3.4.2 Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity analysis indicates that the constructs of **Equity Sensitivity, Intention to Stay, and Organizational Commitment** are conceptually distinct. The diagonal values represent the square root of the AVE for each construct (Equity Sensitivity = 0.820, Intention to Stay = 0.892, Organizational Commitment = 0.863), which are higher than the corresponding inter-construct correlations. The correlations between Equity Sensitivity and Intention to Stay (0.623), Equity Sensitivity and Organizational Commitment (0.866), and Organizational

Commitment and Intention to Stay (0.845) are all lower than their respective square roots of AVE, satisfying the **Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion**. This indicates that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs, confirming **adequate discriminant validity**. Therefore, the measures used for this study reliably capture distinct theoretical concepts, allowing meaningful examination of the relationships among Equity Sensitivity, Organizational Commitment, and Intention to Stay.

**Table 4 : Discriminant validity HTMT (Ratio)**

	<b>Equity Sensitivity</b>	<b>Intention to Stay</b>	<b>Organizational Commitment</b>
<b>Equity Sensitivity</b>	0.820		
<b>Intention to Stay</b>	0.623	0.892	
<b>Organizational Commitment</b>	0.866	0.845	0.863

### 3.5 Structural Model Analysis

The analysis revealed that **Equity Sensitivity (ES)** has a significant direct effect on **Intention to Stay (IS)** ( $t = 1.996, p = .046$ ), indicating that employees who are more sensitive to fairness are more likely to remain with their organization. In addition, ES demonstrated a strong and statistically significant positive effect on **Organizational Commitment (OC)** ( $t = 25.22, p < .001$ ), suggesting that employees with higher equity sensitivity exhibit greater emotional attachment and loyalty to the organization.

**Table 5: Hypothesis Testing**

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Paths</b>	<b>t-values</b>	<b>p-values</b>	<b>Decision</b>
H1	ES>IS	1.996	0.046	Accepted (significant)
H2	ES>OC	25.22	0.000	Accepted (significant)
H3	ES>OC>IS	6.056	0.000	Accepted (significant)

Furthermore, the indirect effect of ES on IS through OC was also significant ( $t = 6.056, p < .001$ ), confirming the mediating role of OC. These results suggest that while ES directly influences employees' intentions to stay, its indirect effect through increased organizational commitment is even more substantial. This pattern is consistent with findings by Sultan &

Kamran (2011), who observed that equity-sensitive individuals report significantly higher organizational commitment; similarly, Naidu, Majid, & Chuah (2023) found that equity sensitivity positively influences retention intentions among specialist doctors, with commitment serving as a key mechanism. These results underscore the importance of fostering fair workplace environments and strengthening organizational commitment to enhance employee retention.

**3.6 SET Alignment with the hypothesis**

**Table 6: Hypothesis and SET Interpretation**

Hypothesis	path	Decision	Interpretation Based on Social Exchange Theory (SET)
H1	ES>IS	Accepted (significant)	From the SET perspective, employees who are more equity-sensitive are more aware of fairness in workplace exchanges. When they perceive equity, they feel a sense of obligation to reciprocate by showing loyalty, via a greater intention to stay. However, the modest effect suggests that reciprocity may be limited unless deeper emotional bonds are formed.
H2	ES>OC	Accepted (significant)	When employees perceive fair and balanced exchanges, especially those highly sensitive to equity, they reciprocate with affective commitment. This commitment is not merely transactional but represents an emotional investment in the relationship with the

			organization.
H3	ES>OC>IS	Accepted  (significant)	SET posits that reciprocal exchanges unfold over time, often moving from perception to attitude to behavior. The mediation supports this by showing that perceived fairness (ES) enhances commitment (OC), which in turn strengthens intention to stay (IS). This illustrates a multi-stage exchange relationship, where commitment is the social currency.

**3.7 Qualitative Analysis**

**3.7.1 Demographic Profile**

The researchers have also included a FGD (Focus Group Discussion) with 27 faculty members across four private universities. Participants shared insights on how their efforts, performance, and commitment were **recognized or rewarded by their institutions**, reflecting the principles of **Social Exchange Theory (SET)**.

**Table 7: Demographic Profile of FDG**

<b>University</b>	<b>Number of Respondents (n)</b>
Southeast University	12
Green University of Bangladesh	7
Dhaka International University	3
Sonargoan University	6
<b>Total</b>	27

**3.7.2 FGD Summary**

The table summarizes the perceptions of workplace practices across five key themes—Promotion Opportunities, Salary & Increments, Training & Development, Job Security & Policies, and Work–Life aligning with the Social Exchange Theory.

**Table 8: FGD Summary**

Theme	Sample Quote	Response Type	Frequency	SET Interpretation	Impact on IS
Promotion Opportunities	“Promotions are based on merit, and I feel recognized for my contributions.”	Positive	18	Fair promotion represents positive social exchange; equity-sensitive employees feel valued.	Increases Intention to Stay (IS)
	“Promotions often depend on connections rather than merit.”	Negative	9	Perceived unfair promotion is negative exchange; employees feel undervalued.	Reduces Intention to Stay (IS)
Salary & Increments	“Our increments reflect performance and effort.”	Positive	22	Performance-based rewards signal fairness.	Increases Intention to Stay (IS)
	“Increments are the same for everyone, regardless of	Negative	5	Lack of differentiation disrupts exchange	Reduces Intention to Stay (IS)

	workload or research.”			balance.	
Training & Development	“Workshops and training programs improve my skills and career prospects.”	Positive	7	Organizational investment fosters positive exchange.	Increases Intention to Stay (IS)
Training & Development	“Funding for conferences is limited, which affects our research visibility.”	Negative	20	Lack of support represents insufficient reciprocity.	Reduces Intention to Stay (IS)
Job Security & Policies	“Clear HR policies and contract stability give me confidence in my future here.”	Positive	6	Job security strengthens trust and fairness perception.	Increases Intention to Stay (IS)
Job Security & Policies	“Scenario of Private University in Bangladesh is risky to plan for the future.”	Negative	21	Job insecurity undermines fairness perception.	Reduces Intention to Stay (IS)
Work–Life	“Flexible	Positive	19	Supportive	Increases

Balance Work–Life Balance	schedules help me balance work and personal life.”			arrangements enhance perceived organizational care.	Intention to Stay (IS)
	“Sometimes the workload is so heavy that I can’t maintain a balance with family life.”	Negative	8	Heavy workload reduces perceived resource exchange.	Reduces Intention to Stay (IS)

The focus group discussions with faculty members revealed that perceptions of fairness and organizational support strongly influence their intention to stay, in line with Social Exchange Theory (SET). Positive experiences, such as merit-based promotions, performance-linked salary increments, access to training, job security, and flexible work–life arrangements, foster a sense of reciprocal exchange, enhancing faculty loyalty and intention to remain with the university. Conversely, negative experiences—including favoritism in promotions, uniform increments regardless of effort, limited professional development opportunities, job insecurity, and heavy workloads—disrupt perceived fairness and reciprocity, reducing faculty commitment and increasing the likelihood of turnover. Overall, the findings highlight that equitable treatment and organizational support are critical drivers of retention among faculty in private universities in Bangladesh.

**5. Conclusion**

This study underlined the importance of equity sensitivity and organizational commitment on faculty’s retention particularly of private universities in Bangladesh, highlighting organizational commitment as a central mediating factor. The results of SET suggest that faculty who perceive fairness in workplace interactions tend to develop stronger emotional attachment to their institution, which in turn supports their intention to stay. While equity sensitivity has only a modest direct influence on retention intentions, its effect through organizational commitment is much stronger, supporting findings from previous studies (Sultan & Kamran, 2011; Naidu, Majid, & Chuah, 2023) that emphasizes the role of fairness and affective commitment in employee retention. Besides the quantitative analysis, Qualitative findings reinforce these

patterns, indicating that practices such as merit-based promotions, performance-related salary increases, professional development opportunities, job security, and supportive work-life arrangements foster a sense of reciprocal exchange. Based on Social Exchange Theory (SET), private universities should prioritize fair and transparent workplace practices to strengthen faculty retention. This includes merit-based promotions, performance-linked compensation, opportunities for professional development, and supportive work-life policies. By fostering a culture of recognition, providing job security, and addressing individual differences in equity sensitivity, universities can enhance affective organizational commitment. Such equitable and supportive exchanges encourage faculty to reciprocate with loyalty and continued engagement, ultimately improving retention outcomes.

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