

## Exploring the Effects of Contingent Rewards on Employee Responsiveness and Affective Commitment

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Abstract

*The leading attribute of 'transactional-leadership' is 'contingent-rewards' which is supposed to be generating positive outcomes from the employees' performance. For example, the 'employee-responsiveness' is increased when employees are rewarded for their worthy performances. The robotic behaviors by leadership have apprehensions of uninvited effects like employees' discouragement, on the other hand, commitment with work when rewards are attached only with physical and external behavior, efforts and outputs. The employees feel unrecognized; as human beings, it is obviously a critical objective of every single employee for seeking a good professional status. Data were collected from the employees, working in higher education institutions. The study statistically measured the contingent rewards links with employees' responsiveness and affective commitment. The results support the assumptions extracted from theoretical framework. The findings suggest that leadership in higher institution needs to implement the best suitable blend of different rewards as per distinct requirements of job and as per efforts and knowledge of workforces.*

**Key Words:** Contingent Rewards, Employees' Responsiveness & Effective Commitment.

### Introduction

The higher education institutions, being the highest seats of teaching and learning, are considered as the grooming fields for the individuals (students & employees) in nurturing their attitude and behavior as well as improving skills and knowledge (Cullen, Joyce, Hassall & Broadbent, 2003). In the present competitive scenario, institutions are direly needed to examine the factors which are dynamic in developing higher performances and greater commitment (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). Therefore, higher institutions are required to define suitable balance between certain motivators (reward & punishment) that inspire workforces towards consistent performances and resulting considerations (responsiveness & commitment) (Bucienien & Skudien, 2008). On the part of employees, rewards act as motivating forces in achieving desired objectives, therefore, as per existing literature, contingent rewards have a positive and significant influence on the employees' responsiveness but have a diverse impact on affective commitment (Steenbergen & Ellemers, 2009). The emotional attachment might not be hindered by rewards when the best performances of workforces are feasible with effective commitment and motivation which can be improved through the contingent rewards (Danish & Usman, 2010).

The engaged and committed workforces are expected to have different rewards which are to be contingent upon responsiveness and effective participation of workforces in organizational activities leading to higher productivity and greater competitive edge (Choong, Wong & Lau, 2011). The leaders who use the transactional approaches (rewards & punishments) are always focused upon the deviations from desired standards and assigned tasks thereby ensuring the transactional relationships in achieving desired objectives (Paracha, Qamar, Mirza & Waqas, 2012). The transactional leaders, over contingent rewards, accept the suitability over rewards and praises practices which are helpful in fulfilling the basic needs of the employees

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who in turn, are likely to show greater response, utmost efforts and higher commitment in chasing objectives of the institution ([Maryam, Suandi, Silong & Omar, 2013](#)). Thus, the engaged and responsive employees are always praised through variety of rewards which help them in nurturing their level of commitment. For this reason, institutional leaders offer rewards in exchange for the employees' compliance towards institutional goals through responsiveness and involvement towards the assigned responsibilities ([Candida, Maria & Parreiraa, 2014](#)).

The leaders' success in leading the groups of individuals is depending on abilities of leaders to hold authority and control more effectively over different available opportunistic situations ([Shah & Kamal, 2015](#)). The leaders through their artistic attributes like contingent rewards can inspire the employees towards achievement of predetermined objectives. However, the contingent rewards are somehow unsuccessful towards effective commitment as emotionally committed workforces' never opted rewards in realizations of their assigned responsibilities ([Muhammad & Kuchin, 2016](#)). The leaders through contingent rewards concentrated upon the social exchange ideas which are emphasized basically on the leaders' behavior towards change and workforce attitude towards their personal development ([Maryam, Bader & Faisal, 2017](#)). The leaders over contingent rewards always try to shape the attitude and behavior of the employees towards the assigned responsibilities which in turn nurture the sense of belongingness of the employees towards the concerned institution ([Kalsoom, Mukaram & Sohaib, 2018](#)). Resultantly, commitment is observed as individuals' virtual strength with regard to identification and responsiveness towards the institution along with their readiness to utilize the required efforts for the achievement of the assigned tasks/responsibilities.

## **Literature Review**

In higher institutions, human resources (workforces) are considered an important factor in the credibility and success of institutions. For these institutions, it becomes vital to recognize the factors which are responsible in affecting the responsiveness and effective commitment of the workforces, as they are the most critical elements which take institutions from its survival to development ([Chughtai & Zafar, 2006](#)). Among many other factors, contingent rewards have been widely recognized as the most significant dynamic force in making the employees as . responsive and committed ([Esther & Michelle, 2010](#)). The academic leaders in institutions use different techniques to motivate and inspire their followers towards the success of the desired objectives and goals ([Johannes, Michael & Lang, 2012](#)). Therefore, contingent rewards are the motivation-based system which is used by the leaders to reward those employees who meet the desired outcomes with required standards ([Munyeka & Ngirande, 2014](#)). Therefore, rewards inspire the workforces to show their utmost efforts, commitment, and responsiveness towards completion of the assigned tasks and responsibilities in professional manners in the concerned institutions ([Sharma & Singh, 2017](#)).

## **Contingent Rewards**

For the leadership, the inspiration and motivation of the workforces towards the achievement of pre-defined objectives is a dynamic phenomenon. In this regard, the concerned leadership . uses different techniques and attributes for the employees' motivation, among which the contingent reward is the most dynamic issue ([Bass & Avolio, 1990](#)). Although, contingent rewards are the main attribute of transactional leadership, however, to some extent, each and every leader uses rewards as the motivating force towards the achievement of the desired objectives ([Judge & Piccolo, 2004](#)). It is an accredited fact that as and when the workforces perform their assigned responsibilities effectively, .they will definitely be rewarded for their efforts ([Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008](#)). The reward organisms (intrinsic & extrinsic) have been widely recognized as significant motivators for employees towards performances and achievements ([Armstrong & Reilly, 2011](#)). The employees always show high responsiveness to compete with the other colleagues when certain rewards are allied with the achievements of the tasks ([Munyeka & Ngirande, 2014](#)). The rewards help in developing the workforces' abilities, knowledge, and skills towards innovation, productivity, and creativity in the institutions ([Kalsoom, Mukaram & Sohaib, 2018](#)).

## **Employees Responsiveness**

The responsiveness of the employees generally possesses effective and efficient utilization of knowledge and skills towards achievements of predetermined goals allied with institutional objectives ([Philip, William, Nathan & Kenzie, 2006](#)). The responsiveness at workplaces is measured as major predictor in the current complex situation in diverse organizations together with higher institutions. For institutional success, the employees' responsiveness towards the technological changes and its adaptation is also vital for surviving in competitive environment ([Homburg, Grozdanovic & Klarmann, 2007](#)). The dynamic reaction to diverse eventualities marks the institutions towards different mechanisms which in turn help the concerned institutions in attaining their credibility and success ([Liang, Chang & Wang, 2011](#)). The responsiveness helps in building long-lasting environment of motivation, commitment, trust and involvement thereby sharing ideas for betterment of institution ([Malikeh & Zare, 2013](#)). On other hand, lack of dynamic responses might create an environment of misapprehension which may cause destruction of smooth working of institutional operations ([Menges, Tussing, Wihler & Grant, 2017](#)). Two types of responses are widely recognized like responsiveness about the social and emotional issues and responsiveness about tasks and institutional matters.

## **Affective Commitment**

The commitment (effective) is the employees' emotional attachment with their jobs as well as institutions beyond the economic considerations. Through effective commitment, the vision of employees gets broadened and in turn, they comprehend completely the responsibilities assigned to them for achieving different tasks ([Park & Rainey, 2007](#)). The employees, who have an emotional attachment with their institutions, are expected to be more responsive and inspired to invest their knowledge and skills for the prominence and betterment of institutions ([Ahmed, Nawaz & Iqbal, 2010](#)). The employees, who are committed emotionally with their institutions are expected to work beyond the economic consideration as they always have preference over affective commitment instead of the continuous commitment (cost-benefit concerns) ([Irfan, Nawaz, Farhat, Saqib & Bakht, 2014](#)). The effective commitment denotes to an individuals' positioning towards the institutions in terms of involvement, identification, and loyalty. Affective commitment reinforces the employees to work for the betterment of the institution ([Irfan, Nawaz & Qamar, 2016](#)). Eventually, the employees will show utmost efforts to perform whole-heartedly by presenting their strong willingness to continue as a member of the concerned institution for a prolonged period ([Kaplan & Kaplan, 2018](#)).

## **Research Hypotheses**

- H<sub>1</sub>**: There is positive and significant Association among the Research Variables
- H<sub>2</sub>**: The contingent Rewards has Significant Impact (positive) on Employees Responsiveness
- H<sub>3</sub>**: The contingent Rewards has Significant Impact (Negative) on Effective Commitment
- H<sub>4</sub>**: Respondents (Gender) have Significant Differences in Opinion about Research Variables
- H<sub>5</sub>**: Respondents (Program) have Significant Differences in Opinion about Research Variables

## **Research Design**

The research methodology of present study has been designed as per requirement of the study in exploring the research concepts like the contingent rewards, employees' responsiveness and affective commitment in a native environment. In this regard, the focus of the research methods for conducting the research study systematically comprises research philosophy and approach, sampling representation, data collection methods and data analysis procedures.

## **Philosophy and Approach**

To examine the realities (contingent rewards, employees' responsiveness and the affective commitment) objectively and scientifically, researcher used the assumptions of positivism approach ([Creswell, 2003](#)). Based upon the assumptions of positivism, the researcher used the quantitative tools to collect the data through instrument (questionnaire) and to analyze the data to statistically to answer the research questions. For this

purpose, to access the population of the study, survey approach has been widely recommended ([Saunders, 2011](#)) and thus, also used by the researcher in this study.

### Context and Population

This study is executed in the context of higher education institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The public sector higher institutions have been carefully chosen for the study due to their vital role in the socio-academic and socio-economic development with the employees (administrative staff) as target population by examining their views about the relationships and critical role of contingent rewards, employees' responsiveness and affective commitment in institutions. However, data has been collected from the sample size thereby generalizing the findings towards the population.

### Sample-size Determination

The probability sampling techniques has been widely recommended by the researchers which is best suited with collection of data through questionnaire ([Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010](#)). Every unit in probability sampling has a chance and supposed to be selected randomly. The proper selection of the adequate sample-size is most crucial issue to produce the accurate outcomes thereby meeting the main objectives of the research ([Saunders, 2011](#)). From the selected higher institutions (Gomal, Bannu, Kohat), a sample of 294 has been selected by using the statistical formula of [Taro Yamani \(1967\)](#). Therefore, total 294 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 280 were recollected.

### Instrumentation (Questionnaire)

In the empirical studies, the selection of questionnaire is critical step for primary data collection. For this purpose, the researcher used the adapted version of instrument which was recommended by many .the researchers previously. In this regard, for contingent rewards, [Bass & Avalio \(2004\)](#), for employees' responsiveness, [Uphoff & Muharir \(1994\)](#) and for affective commitment, [Allen & Meyer \(1996\)](#) questionnaires have been adapted. All the constructs have been measured by using the 7-point Likert Scale. Subsequently, reliability and validity of the adapted scales have been also discussed in this section.

### Data Analysis Methods

Different statistical procedures have been used to analyze the primary data that has been collected from the respondents. Likewise, for authenticity of adapted questionnaire, reliability and validity tools have been applied to examine the validity of each item of the scale as well model fitness ([Hair et al., 2010](#)). The descriptive statistics were used to examine mean, standard deviation and maximum and minimum responses of the respondents. The testing of hypotheses (inferential statistics) was used to examine relationships (association & cause-&-affect) among the research variables through correlation and regression procedures ([Patricia & Nandhini, 2013](#)).

### Reliability and Validity Statistics

**Table 1.** Reliability Statistics (Cronbach Alpha)

S. No.	Research Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Contingent Rewards	10	.837
2	Employees Responsiveness	10	.888
3	Effective Commitment	10	.935
4	Questionnaire	30	.837

**Table 2.** Validity Statistics on Contingent Rewards

KMO and Bartlett's Test			Matrix		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.			.800	Items	Scores
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square		1037.124	CR1	.826
	Df		55	CR2	.498
	Sig.		.000	CR3	.776
				CR4	.687
	Required	Computed		CR5	.750
KMO test	= or >.7	.800		CR6	.666
Bartlett's test	= or <.05	.000		CR7	.484
Factor loadings	= or >.4			CR8	.633

**Table 3.** Validity Statistics on Employee Responsiveness

KMO and Bartlett's Test			Matrix		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.			.903	Items	Score
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square		1774.018	ER1	.899
	df		45	ER2	.858
	Sig.		.000	ER3	.799
				ER5	.633
				ER6	.748
	Required	Computed		ER7	.849
KMO test	= or >.7	.903		ER8	.649
Bartlett's test	= or <.05	.000		ER9	.806
Factor loadings	= or >.4			ER10	.577

**Table 4.** Validity Statistics on Effective Commitment

KMO and Bartlett's Test			Matrix		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.			.886	Items	Score
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square		3943.159	AC1	.943
	df		45	AC2	.826
	Sig.		.000	AC3	.723
				AC4	.847
				AC5	.849
	Required	Computed		AC6	.760
KMO test	= or >.7	.886		AC7	.816
Bartlett's test	= or <.05	.000		AC8	.547
Factor loadings	= or >.4			AC9	.817

The above tables provide the information about reliability and validity statistics of the construct concerning the research variables (contingent rewards, employee responsiveness & affective commitment). The reliability statistics shows that all the Cronbach values are above in range with the acceptable range (.6) for all the research variables. The validity statistics concerning the research variables shows that the required range for the values of the diverse test likewise KMO test (= or >.7), Bartlett's test (= or <.05) and factor leading (= or >.4) shows that all the computed values respecting the above said tests about all the research variables are within the required range with respect to the authenticity of the research instrument concerning the research variables under considerations. However, the items which have the factor loading values below the required range (.4), have been excluded in . further statistical procedures to obtain more accurate results. Therefore,

the above information from reliability and validity recommends that the present data are suitable for factor analysis.

### Statistical Results

This is the main section which provides the information about the statistical relationships among the research variables under considerations. These results/findings are mainly related with the descriptive as well as the inferential analysis.

### Descriptive Results

The descriptive results are helpful in describing the research variables with respect to sample-size, mean, standard deviation and minimum and maximum response rate of the respondents concerning the statements about the research variables.

**Table 5.** Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Contingent Rewards	280	3.73	7.00	6.0110	.62615
Employees Responsiveness	280	3.20	5.10	4.3630	.47212
Affective Commitment	280	2.00	6.60	2.8379	.77375

### Testing of Hypotheses

The inferential analysis provides the data about the existence of the relationships among the research variables concerning the association (correlation) and effect (regression) of the variables under study.

**H<sub>1</sub>.** There is positive and significant association among the Research Variables

**Table 6.** Correlation Analysis

		Contingent Rewards	Employees Responsiveness
Employee Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	<b>.503**</b>	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	280	280
Affective Commitment	Pearson Correlation	<b>-.359**</b>	<b>.232</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.098
	N	280	280

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation tool has been used to examine the association between contingent rewards, employees' responsiveness and the affective commitment. The results show that contingent rewards are positive and significantly associated with employees' responsiveness (R = .503 & P-value = .000). The main reason behind, as per the hints of the existing research studies, is effective response of workforces towards institutional activities and responsibilities assigned to them by the leadership concerned. Similarly, the contingent rewards are significantly but negatively associated with the affective commitment (R= -.359 & P-value = .000). Again, as per the hints from the previous research studies, the reason behind is emotional attachment of the workforces with the institutions, which may not be influenced by any type of economic rewards due to the emotional affiliations of the employees with the concerned institutions. However, the employees' responsiveness is positively and insignificantly associated with the affective commitment (R= .232 & P-value = .098). Therefore, from results, hypothesis # 1 is partially accepted.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** The contingent Rewards has Significant Impact (positive) on Employees Responsiveness

**Table 7.** Regression Analysis

Model Summary						
Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.503a	<b>.353</b>	.350	.40879	108.161	.000b
Coefficients						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	2.085	.220		9.468	.000
	Contingent Rewards	<b>.379</b>	.036	.503	10.400	<b>.000</b>
a. Predictors: Contingent Rewards			b. Dependent Variable: Employee Responsiveness			

To examine the predictability of employees' responsiveness through contingent rewards, the regression procedure was run. The results show 35% variance in employees' responsiveness is due to contingent rewards. However, the beta value (.379) and the significant value (.000) shows the significant impact of contingent rewards on employees' responsiveness. The main theme behind this relationship as per the hints of the previous literature is the workforces' effective and positive reactions towards institutional objectives due to the contingent rewards (intrinsic & extrinsic) offered to them by concerned leadership in the institutions. Thus, from the regression results, hypothesis # 2 is accepted.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** The contingent Rewards has Significant Impact (Negative) on Effective Commitment

**Table 8:** Regression Analysis

Model Summary						
Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.259a	<b>.067</b>	.064	.74856	22.965	.000b
Coefficients						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	4.760	.403		11.804	.000
	Contingent Rewards	<b>-.320</b>	.067	-.259	-4.792	<b>.000</b>
a. Predictors: Contingent Rewards			b. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment			

To examine the prediction about impact of contingent rewards on the affective commitment, again the regression procedure was run. The results showed the very nominal variance (6%) in affective commitment due to the contingent rewards. The coefficient of regression shows that negative but significant impact (beta value = -.320 & p-value = .000) of the contingent rewards on affective commitment of workforces in institutions. The motivation behind this relationship as per the clues from the existing studies is the undaunted emotional affiliation of workforces with the institutions which cannot be influenced by any kind of rewards (financial & non-financial rewards). Thus, from results, hypothesis # 3 is accepted.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Respondents (Gender) have Significant Differences in Opinion about Research Variables

**Table 9.** Group Mean Differences (Gender)

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Contingent Rewards	Male	177	6.4052	.35035	320	.000
	Female	145	5.5298	.54749	235.16	.000
Employees Responsiveness	Male	177	4.5243	.46847	320	.000
	Female	145	4.1662	.39708	319.61	.000

Affective	Male	177	2.8017	.51505	320	.355
Commitment	Female	145	2.8821	1.00337	205.06	.383

The group mean difference, concerning the gender (males & females) with regard to research variables, shows that males and females have significant group mean difference regarding the contingent rewards and employees' responsiveness while they have similar views about the affective commitment. The previous literature revealed that each employee has their own commitment level with their institutions. Both males and females have no compromise on the commitment level towards their institutions. Thus, from the results, hypothesis # 4 is accepted.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Respondents (Program) have Significant Differences in Opinion about Research Variables

**Table 10.** Group Mean Differences (Program)

	Program	N	Mean	SD	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Contingent	Social Science	181	6.0894	.67280	320	.011
Rewards	Natural Sciences	141	5.9104	.54664	319.41	.009
Employees	Social Science	181	4.4017	.49783	320	.096
Responsiveness	Natural Sciences	141	4.3135	.43363	315.98	.091
Affective	Social Science	181	2.8867	.81141	320	.200
Commitment	Natural Sciences	141	2.7752	.72053	314.51	.193

The group mean difference concerning respondents from social science and natural science shows that again respondents have significant group mean differences in opinion concerning the contingent rewards and employees' responsiveness. However, the workforces again have similar/same and have no different in opinions regarding the affective commitment. Thus, from the findings, hypothesis # 5 is substantiated.

### Discussions and Conclusions

The issues addressed in this research work can be discussed from several angles and aspects. For instance, transactional leadership is also called managerial leadership because the main focus of this type of leadership is on the organization, management and group behavior of the employees, which is generated through maximum execution of rules and regulations available in the form of a cookbook. Obviously, transactional leaders have to ignore human dimensions of employees at work. If emotional and invisible contributions of the employees are not accepted over and over, these feelings hit back in the form of distorting the employees' behavior in the organization thereby disturbing and deviating from the standards required for organizational performance. For instance, the contingent rewards are effective in attracting the employees to give quick outputs to earn the defined rewards thereby increasing the employees' responsiveness to the call of exchange-behavior. However, the existence of affective commitment among the employees needs effective rewards too. Practically, presence of contingent rewards is considered enough to motivate the employees and human values that are ignored at the cost of standard rewards for defined observable behaviors.

It is thus concluded, that none of leadership styles are enough for any organization including the public and private sectors organizations including higher educational institutions. Each style has positives and negatives that must be considered while selecting a style for specific organization. The workforces are humans; therefore, they need to be treated as such as well irrespective of the work environment. The intrinsic rewards help in meeting the hierarchical needs of the workforces like the social needs, self-esteem and self-actualization needs which are the real motivators whereas extrinsic rewards satisfy lower level needs of the workforces at the workplaces. An effective reward system involves the employees' expectations towards rewards offered to workforces for their efforts. Only task-oriented behavior of the leadership is not enough, it must be accompanied by required human behavior as well. If best-required mesh of different leadership styles is not practiced, the problems are natural to emerge and sometimes exhibit in a manner, which is anti to the expected performance of the workforce. It is concluded that contingent rewards have significant impact on employees'

responsiveness and have significant but negative impact upon affective commitment due to the above mentioned whys and wherefores.

### **Recommendations**

- The management of higher institutions are required to provide fair and transparent system of rewards (intrinsic & extrinsic) to their workforces for their utmost efforts and contribution towards the institutional objectives.
- The effective responsiveness is a critical factor for the institutions to attain competitive edge in the competitive environment. Therefore, institutions are required to introduce certain packages of training programs to make the workforces more responsive.
- The institutional management is required to put their emphasis more on those efforts which are vital in developing the affective commitment of the workforces. Therefore, the committed workforces are the vital assets of the institutions.
- For institutional success, the management of institutions are required to provide more respect to contingent rewards, employees' responsiveness and affective commitment to achieve their institutional objectives more effectively and efficiently.

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