

Students' Satisfaction: A Study among Private University Students of Bangladesh

Kazi Naeema Binte Faruky*, Md. Aslam Uddin** and Tarik Hossain***

Private education sector is growing rapidly in Bangladesh over the past few years. Competition in this sector has become very keen. To survive in the competition and for the sustainable growth, better satisfaction of the students is needed for the private universities. This paper is mainly attempted to identify the determinants of satisfaction of private university students in Bangladesh. An exploratory survey was conducted to analyze the consumers' (students) evaluation of private universities in Bangladesh with particular reference to the satisfaction attitude. The sample was taken from ten private universities in the Dhaka city. A total number of 517 students were taken as sample for the study. The results revealed that the most influential factor affecting the students' satisfaction under the study is the faculty credentials. This finding may be helpful for crafting and adopting a more complete version of the education policy for the country.

Field of Research: Student satisfaction, Private University

1. Introduction

Good education is probably the most important factor for the national economic development. Demand and quality of higher education remains a big concern for decades in Bangladesh.

1.1 Background

Public universities could not afford to accommodate the demand of the students. Huge number of students would go overseas creating a financial loss to the national economy. Under the Private University Act, 1992 private universities started their journey in Bangladesh. Up to the year 1996 there were only sixteen private universities in Bangladesh (Ashraf et al, 2009), the number has reached fifty four at present (BDNEWSCORNER, 2012). Obviously, this growth rate seems unhealthy in consideration of the per capita income of the country and also in terms of quality assurance in higher education, as education at these universities is much more expensive than at the public universities of Bangladesh (Ashraf et al, 2009). The public and private universities are responsible to provide higher education but due to profit-making motive of private universities and lack of awareness of public universities, it is quite impossible to ensure quality education (Uddin, et al, 2011).

*Kazi Naeema Binte Faruky, Assistant Professor of Accounting, Bangladesh University of Business and Technology (BUBT) email:shish07@yahoo.com

**Md. Aslam Uddin, Assistant Professor of Marketing, Bangladesh University of Business and Technology (BUBT), email: aslam.du213@gmail.com

***Tarik Hossain, Lecturer in Accounting and Information Systems, Comilla University, E-mail: online.tarik@yahoo.com

Faruky, Uddin &Hossain

The cost of studies in the private universities is relatively higher than the costs in the public universities. Although quality of education in some private universities is encouraging, the admission and other fees are not affordable to the country's middle and lower-middle class families (UGC Bulletin, April-June_2011). Only rich parents can consider paying the high fees and other costs of studies for their children. In exchange for high tuition fees and other costs, the students that come from affluent families expect to receive high quality education from these private universities (Ashraf et al,2009). Hence, customer evaluations of the quality of education should be an integral part of overall quality management in any of the organizations (Haque, 2004).

Several studies are available on the cost of studies, quality of education, parameters of the higher education in the private sectors of Bangladesh, but studies are rarely found on the students studying in the private universities in Bangladesh about their the opinion on satisfaction attitudes towards various issues and the factors affecting their satisfaction level. Under this context, the present study takes an initiative to conduct an empirical study on this particular issue.

This study shows that only 47% of the students under study are satisfied with their universities and the most influential factor concerning their satisfaction is the 'teachers' quality'. The findings of the study may prove helpful for the policy-makers to formulate guiding principles in this sector.

1.2 Research Questions

The primary objective of this study is to get idea about the satisfaction level of the students studying in the private universities in Bangladesh and to identify the factors that affect the satisfaction level of those students'.

The study deals with the following questions:

- a. What is the average score of the satisfaction level of the students under the study about their respective universities?
- b. What are the major factors that affect the satisfaction level of the respondents regarding their respective universities?

1.3. Structure of the Study

This paper consists of two major parts; the theoretical part and the empirical parts. In the theoretical part, a brief discussion has been given about the concept of students' satisfaction, factors concerning the quality of education, variables that may affect the satisfaction level of the students' etc. after going through the literature. The empirical part of this paper is based on a survey made on the students of some private universities of Bangladesh. The survey was conducted through face to face interview with the respondents by using a written questionnaire. A factor analysis has been made to gauge the major factors that are influential among the participating students about their attitude to their respective universities.

2. Literature Review

OXFORD Dictionaries defined the term 'satisfaction' as "fulfillment of one's wishes, expectations, or needs, or the pleasure derived from this". The concept of a student satisfaction is derived from the concept of customer satisfaction as students are considered to be the customers of the educational institutions. Customer satisfaction, a term frequently used in marketing, is a measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass customer expectation. (Wikipedia) The notion and the contents of customer satisfaction should be modified for educational application and should include constitutional amendments, administrative policies, educational goals and educational processes (Stone and Thomson, 1987; Chen, Hsiao & Lee, 2005). Student satisfaction has been defined as an indicator of the institution's responsiveness to students' needs and a measure of institutional effectiveness, success, and vitality by several researchers (Hallenbeck, 1978; Nichols, 1985; Low, 2000; etc.). Kaldenberg, Browne and Brown (1998) observed that college student satisfaction was driven by evaluating the quality of coursework and other curriculum activities and other factors related to the college.

Student satisfaction or dissatisfaction is important for the educational institutions as it leads to intentions to stay or quit which in turn leads to student retention or attrition (Kara & DeShields, 2004). Penn State Student Affairs (2007) asserted that understanding student's experiences and satisfaction is important in their efforts to enrich the students' experience and to make Penn State a more student-centered university. Perceptions formed by students on service performance are the result of the student attitudes which will be expressed either as positive or negative based on how far student expectations on the delivery of the services have been met by the university (Arambewela & Hall, 2008; Keaveney 1999; Boshoff 1997). If a negative attitude is formed it will be difficult to achieve overall satisfaction and could result in complaints, decreasing loyalty and negative Word Of Mouth (WOM) promotion (Kau and Loh 2006, Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002). Various factors may be associated with the satisfaction level of the students. Penn State Student Affairs (2007) observed that there are significant increases in satisfactions of the students for the following services: computer support services, student healthcare services, the campus bookstore, counseling and psychological services, financial aid, career planning services, job placement services, recreational sports facilities, library services, learning support services, food services, and resources for minority students. Kara et al. (2004) observed that educational institutions that understand consumer-oriented principles may have a better chance of satisfying the wants and needs of their students more effectively.

In Bangladesh several researchers conducted studies about the quality of education and indicators of quality education in the private universities in Bangladesh. Andaleeb (2003) analyzed that higher education in Bangladesh must become more responsive to the needs of a major constituency: its students. He examined a nine-factor model to explain the satisfaction of alumni with their education including teacher quality, method and content, peer quality, facilities and resources, the effectiveness of the administration, campus politics, gender, and year of graduation. Ashraf et al (2009) made a study investigating the factors affecting quality education in the private

Faruky, Uddin & Hossain

universities in Bangladesh. They identified six independent determinants (faculty credentials, classroom facilities, the academic calendar, campus facilities, research facilities and the cost of education) related to both human resources and organizational factors that are likely to affect the quality of higher education offered to the students of Bangladesh. Naser (2010) mentioned that an international workshop on the development of measurements for higher education quality assurance in Bangladesh held in 2007, proposed some areas with specific parameter such as; purpose and objective, faculty, instruction, student service, library, laboratories, infrastructure, research culture, etc.

Professor Sharma (2011) has commented that the standard of education in the universities depend upon 5 major factors such as; (01) the standard of students, (02) the standard of teachers, (03) system of education, (04) facilities for education and (05) facilities for research.

Kahn et al. (2009) mentioned that several studies have been made on the factors that affect the choice of the students to get admission in the private universities in Bangladesh by different researchers like; Hopper in 1999; Zahid, Chowdhury and Sogra in 2000, Gulshan and Paul in 2005 etc. They also conducted their study on the female students' enrollment behavior in the private universities of Bangladesh. By using descriptive statistics method, they identified several factors to measure the satisfaction level of the respondents including tuition fees, location, teaching quality, infrastructure etc. and found that the respondents from top ranked universities were mostly satisfied with those factors but the respondents from other universities were dissatisfied with the overall performance of their universities.

Jahirul Haque, et al (2011) evaluated some key factors in order to scrutinize the tertiary students' satisfaction at tertiary level. They found that the variables – classrooms comfort ability for teaching and learning, students support by the institution for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and lab facilities for conducting lab oriented courses —are highly associated with students' facilities at tertiary education in Bangladesh.

Ashraf et.al (2009) observed that the students under the study feel most of the private universities in Bangladesh provide quality education at unreasonably higher cost. Naser (2010) found that most of the students under his study were satisfied with their respective universities regarding the quality of the faculties and the infrastructural facilities.

Sadrul Hyda et al (2010) conducted a study on the private university students' perception about their universities. From the survey, it is observed that most of the students are satisfied with the services provided by the private universities. They considered several independent variables such as; examination and other course works, class time, time provided by teaching staff, course curriculum, library condition, computer labs facilities, class rooms, the tuition fees, extracurricular activities, location of campus, social acceptability. Factor Analysis was only made to measure the

Faruky, Uddin & Hossain

satisfaction level of the students about the physical environment and extracurricular facilities.

After going through the literature it has been found that studies are rarely available about the overall satisfaction level of the students of the private universities in Bangladesh and the major factors affecting their satisfaction level as per the students' view by using the factor analysis method. Thus the present study is an attempt to shed a light on this particular issue. It has been presumed that the most of the students of private universities in Bangladesh are satisfied with their respective universities.

3. Methodology

This research is mainly exploratory in nature. Some variables relating to the satisfaction of the students of the private universities in Bangladesh have been identified through literature review. A pilot study has been conducted among some students from one of the private universities in Dhaka city to grasp their idea about the major variables that affect their satisfaction level. Then the following variables were selected as leading to the satisfaction level of the students of private universities in Bangladesh: (i) tuition fee, (ii) waiver facilities, (iii) games room, canteen, computer lab, library etc. facilities, (iv) quality of the curriculum, (v) arrangements of exams at scheduled time, (vi) class size, (vii) arrangement of seminars, (viii) emergency medical services, (ix) arrangements for casualties, (x) provision of recreational facilities, (xi) existence of own campus, (xii) location of the university campus, (xiii) participation of the university in social activities, (xiv) students-teachers relationship, (xv) number of PhD holder teachers in your program, (xvi) availability of the teachers, (xvii) capacity of the teachers in practical-oriented teaching and (xviii) teachers turnover rate. These variables have been treated as the independent variables while 'satisfaction of the students' was considered as the dependent variables.

Then a likert scale type questionnaire (from 1= strongly dissatisfied to 5= strongly satisfied) was developed to collect the opinion of the respondents about those selected variables. Our target population was all the private university students in Bangladesh and the sampling unit was individual student studying in the private universities.

The study was limited to ten private universities of Dhaka city. According to the press briefing of the Ministry of Education of Bangladesh published in The daily Prothom Alo (2010) the private universities of Bangladesh have been classified into three groups resembling green, yellow and red signs. For the purpose of the study ten universities were selected representing two from the green group, six from the yellow group and two from the red group. The selected universities are; Bangladesh University of Business & Technology (BUBT) Daffodil International University (DIU), United international University (UIU), University of Liberal Arts (ULAB) Stamford University, North South University (NSU) Independent University (IUB) East west University (EWU) Manarat International University (MIU) and Prime University. A face to face interview was made among the students of those universities from 4th November, 2010 to 10th April, 2011. Non-probability convenience sampling method was used for the survey. It was

Faruky, Uddin &Hossain

possible to collect from 517 students of the universities under the study during this period.

Respondents' profile

Descriptive statistics

Item	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	Below 20	78	15.1
	20 - Below30	435	84.1
	30 - Below 40	2	.4
	50 - Below 60	2	.4
Gender	Male	345	66.7
	Female	172	33.3
Year of Studying in the present university	Less than 1 year	114	22.1
	1 to 2 years	162	31.3
	3 to 4 years	229	44.3
	5 to 6 years	12	2.3

The average score of satisfaction level of the respondents was measured by descriptive statistics method of SPSS version 16. A principal component factor analysis based on varimaxrotation method has been resorted to identify the major factors concerning the respondents' satisfaction. In this regard we used the process followed by Malhotra (2008). The Bartlett's test of sphericity significantly indicated high correlation among the variables showing that the appropriate chi-square statistics is 3.117E3 with 153 degree of freedom, at 5% level of significance. The value of KMO statistics (0.860) is also larger (> 0.5). So factor analysis can be used as appropriate technique to analysis. Hence, the factor analysis was proved to be an appropriate choice for the study.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretations

The study observed that the mean score of satisfaction of the students is slightly above average (3.4101). Most of the respondents are not satisfied with the service of their respective universities. Among them 9.3% are dissatisfied and 7.5% are extremely dissatisfied. On the other hand a large portion 36.2% is neutral. Only 47% of the respondents are satisfied including 18.4% respondents as extremely satisfied. This finding of the present study do not resemble to the previous studies made by Naser (2010), Khan (2009), Sadrul Hyda et al (2010)etc. that most of the students of the private universities are satisfied with the service of their respective universities

Faruky, Uddin & Hossain

Table 1: Satisfaction of the Students with Present University

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Satisfaction of the Students with Present University	517	3.4101	1.11809
Variables	Frequency	%	Cumulative (%)
Extremely Dissatisfied	39	7.5	7.5
Dissatisfied	48	9.3	16.8
Neutral	187	36.2	53.0
Satisfied	148	28.6	81.6
Extremely Satisfied	95	18.4	100.0
Total	517	100.0	

A principal component factor analysis was conducted on the 17 variables related to the satisfaction of the students. This analysis yielded a 4-factor solution that explained 56.13% of the variance as represented in Table 2. According to the variables having higher load under one factor, the name of the four major factors have been identified as (1) Faculty credentials; (2) Students' personal development and safety measurement, (3) Academic and supportive facilities, and (4) Social status of the university. Thus, focusing on these factors would enable the concerning authorities to achieve quality in private education.

Table 2: Student Satisfaction Situations on Satisfaction Factors

	Factor Named as	Initial Eigen Values	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	Faculty credentials	5.799	32.215	32.215
2	Students' personal development and safety measurement	1.645	9.138	41.354
3	Academic and supportive facilities	1.519	8.438	49.792
4	Social status of the university	1.141	6.339	56.131

Our study showed that 'faculty credentials' is the most important factors explaining the maximum variance (32.22%) in the dependent variable. This result is quite similar to the study of Ashraf et al. (2009) where they identified faculty credentials as the most

Faruky, Uddin &Hossain

important factor to the quality of education of the private universities. The six variables contained in this key factor are: participation of the university in social activities, students – teachers’ relationship, capacity of the teachers in practical-oriented teaching, availability of the teachers, teachers’ turnover rate. The factor loading points for these variables are considerably higher than .60 except for the element “number of PhD holder teachers in your program”. Hence, policymakers at private universities should be more concerned about these variables if they wish to increase students’ satisfaction in higher education programs.

The second important factor is ‘students’ personal development and safety measurement’, which explains 9.14% of the variation in students’ evaluations for their satisfaction. This factor includes arrangement of seminars, emergency medical services, and arrangements for casualties, provision of recreational facilities. The factor loading points for three of these variables are also higher than .60 except for ‘provision of recreational facilities’.

The third influential factor is the ‘academic and supportive facilities’ explains 8.44% of variance. Variables included in this component are waiver facilities, games room, canteen, computer lab, library etc., quality of the curriculum, arrangements of exams at scheduled time and class size. The factor loading points are also substantially higher, which shows the significant level of students’ judgment for determining their satisfaction.

The fourth important factor is ‘social status of the university’, which accounts for 6.34% of the variance and covers tuition fee, existence of own campus, and location of the university campus.

Faruky, Uddin & Hossain

Table 3: Principal factor analysis: Satisfaction of the students

Factor Name	Variables	Factor loading	% of variance explained
Faculty credentials	V13 (Participation of the university in social activities)	.732	32.22%
	V14 (Students-teachers relationship)	.754	
	V15 (Number of PhD holder teachers in your program)	.543	
	V16 (Availability of the teachers)	.691	
	V17 (Capacity of the teachers in practical-oriented teaching)	.753	
	V18 (Teachers turnover rate in your program)	.653	
Students' personal development and safety measurement	V7 (Arrangement of seminars)	.726	9.14%
	V8 (Emergency medical services)	.784	
	V9 (Arrangements for casualties)	.758	
	V10 (Provision of recreational facilities)	.530	
Academic and supportive facilities	V2 (Waiver facilities)	.689	8.44%
	V3 (Games room, canteen, computer lab, library etc)	.578	
	V4 (Quality of the curriculum)	.590	
	V5 (Arrangements of exams at scheduled time)	.655	
	V6 (Class Size)	.513	
	V1 (Tuition fee)	.537	
Social status of the university	V11 (Existence of own campus)	.775	6.34%
	V12 (Location of the university campus)	.644	

Then we have employed regression technique by considering students' satisfaction and the four factors as dependent and independent variables, respectively. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Results of regression

Variables	Betas	Computed <i>t</i>	Significance
Faculty credentials	.517	15.834	.000
Students' personal development and safety measurement	.270	8.260	.000
Academic and supportive facilities	.225	6.899	.000
Social status of the university	.253	7.753	.000

The results of the regression analysis revealed that all (four) of the control variables had statistically significant effects on the rating of attitudes towards the students' satisfaction of the universities under his study that equivalently correspond to the factor analysis results.

5. Conclusion

Although Bangladesh has seen a tremendous growth in the private education sector in higher level studies, the quality of education in this sector has been questioned by several researchers and government regulatory bodies. The present research may have a contribution to the literature since it has been observed that faculty credentials as the most important factor concerning the satisfaction level of the students of the private universities under study. From the end user perspective both private university authorities and the regulatory bodies may attach more importance to the linkage between the quality of teachers and the level of satisfaction of the students studying in the private universities of Bangladesh. This may be helpful for crafting and adopting a more complete version of the education policy for the country. The present research may have a contribution for the academicians for further research on the faculty credentials in the non-government education in tertiary level in developing countries for having an insight about cross border analysis. Hence there may be some important variables affecting the satisfaction of the students left for the consideration of the present study. Further studies may be conducted including those issues.

References

- Andaleeb, Syed Saad 2003, 'Revitalizing Higher Education in Bangladesh: Insights from alumni and policy prescriptions', *Higher Education Policy* (2003) 16, pp. 487–504. doi:10.1057/palgrave.hep.8300036 viewed on 16, may, 2012 <<http://www.palgrave-journals.com/hep/journal/v16/n4/abs/8300036a.html>>
- Ashraf, Mohammad A. and Ibrahim, Yusnidah, Joarder, Mohd. H. R. 2009, 'Quality education Management at private universities In Bangladesh: An Exploratory Study' *Jurnal Pendidikdan Pendidikan*, Jil. 24, pp. 17–32.
- BDNEWSCORNER 2012, 'UGC approved private university list in Bangladesh', 22 January viewed on 20 may 2012, <http://bdnewscorner.com/ugc-approved-private-university-list-in-bangladesh>
- Boshoff, C 1997, 'An Experimental study of service recovery options', *International Journal of Service industry Management*, vol. 8, no.2, pp. 110-130.
- Chen, Yu-Fen, Hsiao, Chin-Hui & Lee, Wen-Ching, 2005, 'How does student satisfaction influence student loyalty – from the relationship marketing perspective' ><http://www.ncue.edu.tw/ezcatfiles/b004/img/img/316/96-1-4p.com>>
- Hallenbeck, T. R. 1978, 'College student satisfaction: An indication of institutional vitality', *N.A.S.P.A. Journal*, vol.16, no. 2, pp. 19-24.
- Haque, HM Jahirul; Das, Debashish and Farzana, Riaheen 2011, 'Satisfaction of student services in tertiary level: perspective Bangladesh', *European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol.19, No. 2, pp. 286.
- Haque, MS 2004, 'Quality management issues in business education in Bangladesh: A synoptic review based on Canadian and European papers', *Management Forum* 2004.
- Kara, A & DeShields, WO 2004, 'Business student satisfaction, intention and retention in higher education: An empirical investigation', *MEQ*, vol. 3 fall 2004. http://www.realmarcom.com/uop/documents/research/student_satisfaction.pdf
- Kau, A.-K., Loh, E. W.-Y. 2006, 'The effects of service recovery on consumer satisfaction: a comparison between complainants and non-complainants', *Journal of Services Marketing*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 101-111.
- Keaveney, SM 1995, 'Customer switching behavior in service industries: an exploratory study', *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 59, no. 2, 71-82.
- Khan, Rezwanul Huque, Mridha, Ali Haider Al Mamun & Barua, Suborna 2009, 'Higher education in private universities of Bangladesh: a study on female students' enrollment behavior', *BRAC University Journal*, vol.6, no.2, pp. 33-48.
- Low, L 2000, 'Are college students satisfied? A notional analysis of changing expectations'. *The USA Group Foundation New Agenda Series*, vol. 2, no. 1 Indianapolis, IN: USA Group Foundation.
- Malhotra, Naresh. K 2008, *Marketing research: an applied orientation*, Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, New Delhi.
- Maxham, JG, Netemeyer, RG 2002, 'A longitudinal study of complaining customers' evaluations of multiple service failures and recovery efforts'. *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol.66, no. 4, pp. 57-71.

Faruky, Uddin & Hossain

- Naser, Md. Abu 2010, 'Education quality of private universities in Bangladesh: faculty resources and infrastructure perspective' viewed on 16th may, http://mppg-nsu.org/attachments/119_Nasr_edu.pdf
- Nichols, H. J. 1985, 'Black college student satisfaction as a measure of effectiveness of higher education', *Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.*
- Penn State Student Affairs 2007' *Student Satisfaction Survey 2007.* <<http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/satisfaction.shtml>.>
- The Daily Prothom Alo 2010, 'Shikha Montrolay Breif: 22 Bishwabidyalayke Lal Shanket', 13th December, 2010.
- Sadrul Huda, SSM, Ahmed Taneem Mujaffar, Akhtar, Afsana Ahmed, Jashim Uddin 2010, 'The state of private universities in bangladesh: an evaluation of students perception', *Information Management and Business Review* vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 16-27,
- Sarma, Prof. Bijon B 2011, 'Private universities in Bangladesh', *Blitz Comprehensive Tabloid Weekly*, viewed May 14 2012, www.weeklyblitz.net/1633/private-universities-in-bangladesh.
- Stone, MA & Thomson, S 1987, 'How far can marketing be applied within the further education sector?' *The Quarterly Review of Marketing*, pp.16-19.
- Uddin, Mohammad Nasir, Hamiduzzaman, Mohammad, Salahuddin, AFM & Siraj, Shahin 2011, 'Promotion of higher education in Bangladesh: A comparative analysis between public and private universities', *Journal of Research in International Business and Management*, vol.1, no. 5, pp. 136-146.
- UGC *Bulletin*, Vol. 11, No. 2, April-June_2011, <[http://www.ugc.gov.bd/activities/UGCBulletin\(April-June_2011\).pdf](http://www.ugc.gov.bd/activities/UGCBulletin(April-June_2011).pdf).>
- Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, *Customer Satisfaction*. www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Customer_satisfaction.