

## Students' Choice Criteria to select a Private University for their Higher Education in Bangladesh

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### Abstract

With the increasing demand of higher education in Bangladesh, first time the Private University Act (Bangladesh) was passed in 1992 to regulate the standard of higher education. The students, those who get admitted in the private universities consider few factors to select the institution. This paper evaluates some key factors in order to scrutinize the students' choice on the basis of some significant factors. By using Convenient Sampling Technique the data has been collected randomly from 100 students of 10 private universities. In this case various tests have been conducted such as Factor Analysis, Multiple Regression Analysis, and ANOVA. Study reveals that education quality of the university is the first important criteria to choose the private university and subsequently cost of the study factor and student politics factor are also important among them. This paper also shows the Socio-cultural background of the students studying at the Private Universities in Bangladesh.

**Keywords:** Public University, Private University, Socio-cultural Environment, UGC (University Grant Commission).

### 1. Introduction

At present there are total 94 universities in Bangladesh of which 57 are private, 34 are public and 3 are international universities in Bangladesh (source: UGC web portal). The demand for educational opportunities seems to have increased dramatically. Before the year of 1992, there was no Private University in Bangladesh. After completing the Higher Secondary Level the students were trying to get admission into different public universities, national universities or colleges but the admission test was very competitive and tough because of seat limitation. When the Private University Act was passed in 1992 (Amended 1998) and the private universities were establishing one after another, a small portion of the students that were weak and irregular students in terms of their academic results felt enthusiastic to get easy access and admission into private universities. After that this act has amended again in July 18, 2010 which is known as “**Private University Act–2010**”.

But today the situation has totally changed and the quality of the most of the private universities is enormously increasing day by day and among the private universities, a few universities have attained international standards through their academic achievements. At present there is a significant portion of the students who are eligible to get admission into public universities but willingly try to get admission into the top ranked private universities because of some important motivating factors such as session jam and unhealthy student politics of public universities, credit transfer facility of the private universities to the foreign universities, tough admission test of the public universities and so on for their higher education. As a result, the number of students in the private universities is increasing rapidly and recorded a phenomenal growth after the enactment of the private University Act in 1992. The private universities have potentials in case of development of the overall education quality. But there must have specific guidelines for the service providers (universities) as well as for government so that they can uphold the standard of higher education that our paper serves this purpose.

### 2. Objectives of the study

Our primary focus is to identify the factors those persuade the students' choice to select a Private University for their higher education in Bangladesh. After that, we have tried to reveal the reasons influencing the students' choice of Private University rather than Public University as well as the Socio-cultural background of the students studying at the Private Universities that will contribute to the service providers and government to formulate the higher education policies.

### 3. Literature Review

Private Universities are the higher education institutions established privately by a group of people or an organization with the Government permission with an aim to spreading the opportunities of higher education among larger number of students under Private University Act, 1992 (Amended 1998) that was passed on 9th August in 1992. Again this act has amended in July 18, 2010.

Jamal (2002) argued that in spite of many deficiencies, private universities offer a global zest to their students. A number of their facilities are of a very high standard. In fact, taking advantages of shortcomings of the Private University Act (PAU) 1992, many universities are likely to bring bad name to others who are providing high quality education in the country. Finally he argued that though at a high cost, private universities in Bangladesh definitely have contribution in human resource development [5]. The total number of students is increasing yearly by 20 percent compared to 5 percent yearly increase in the public universities (UGC: 2006) [2].

According to Zahid et al. (2000) teaching, medium of instructions, campus size and location, accommodation for the students, campus facilities (such as auditorium, parking, canteen, indoor and outdoor parking facilities) are the important factors of selecting private universities for their higher education [14]. Majid et al. (2000) at one study found the similar factors mentioned above and identified teaching quality, teaching learning methodology teaching aids and support facilities as the basic selection factors of business education in private institutions [8].

Syed Saad Andaleeb conducted a study in 2003 used 9 factor model to explain the satisfaction of alumni with their education. These factors include teacher quality, method and content, peer quality, facilities and resources, the effectiveness of the administration, campus politics, gender and year of graduation [1].

The students make their decision by using economic and sociologic theoretical frameworks to examine factors to choose an institution (Hearn, 1984; Jackson, 1978; Tierney, 1983; Somers, Haines, & Keene; 2006). These frameworks have been used to develop three theoretical, conceptual approaches to modeling institution choice: (a) economic models, (b) status-attainment models, and (c) combined models [4] [6] [7]. According to Hossler and Gallagher (1987) the economic models focus on the econometric assumptions that prospective college students think rationally and make careful cost-benefit analyses when choosing a university [3].

James et al. (1999) found that field of study preferences, course and institutional reputations, course entry scores, easy access to home and institutional characteristics significantly influenced applicants' choice of institution [8]. St. John, E. P. (1991) found that students consider more carefully economic factors in times of distress and financial difficulty. These factors include job opportunities to supplement their incomes, accommodation costs and family home proximity. Third, course of study decisions tend to be closely related to institutional choice decisions [11]. Moreover, mode of payment, quality of teaching, cost and environment as the key influencing factors for the students to get admitted into universities (Salahuddin 2008) [12].

From the above study it can be concluded that low session jam, low student politics, cost of the study, credit transfer facility to the abroad, high quality of the education, ease of course curriculum, tough admission test of the public universities, teachers' quality of the private universities, brand name of the private universities, high demand in the job market, attractive campus atmosphere, scholarship facility and part-time job facility are likely key factors in attracting students to private universities in Bangladesh.

### 4. Research Design

#### 4.1. Types of Research Design

In this study, the choice criteria of the students regarding different universities in terms of salient factors have been needed to determine. So, at first an exploratory research has conducted to gain a primary understanding about the persuading factors to choose a private university from the students then the descriptive research has been conducted.

#### 4.2. Information Needs

The Type of Information that is required for this research is mainly primary in nature and all data have been collected from primary sources by the personal interview method. The data are quantitative in nature. On the other hand, from the secondary sources we have developed literature review that gives us insight about the stated objectives.

#### 4.3. Scaling Technique

We have used 7 point Semantic Differential Scale to elicit the responses. The respondents have marked the point that the best indicate how they would describe the object being rated. The negative adjectives sometimes have been placed at the left side of the scale and sometime in the right side of the scale to avoid position bias.

#### 4.4. Questionnaire development

Both Open & Close Ended questions have been used. For getting the advantage of data processing the close ended questions are coded and the open ended questions are being post coded that means first we have collected the data from the respondents and then coded in different classes.

#### 4.5. Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Non probability sampling has been used because it is less costly and less time consuming to prepare a sampling frame. Among the various techniques of Non probability sampling, convenience sampling technique has been used because it is readily available, convenient and generates relatively low cost.

We have collected our primary data from 100 students of 10 private universities that are selected randomly on the basis of convenience and then collected the information from them through personal interview method. The total sample size is 100. Ten Universities are North South University (NSU), East West University (EWU), Southeast University (SUB), United International University (UIU), University of Development Alternative (UODA), University of Liberal Arts of Bangladesh (ULAB); Peoples University Bangladesh (PUB), Green University Bangladesh (GUB), American International University of Bangladesh (AIUB) and ASA University Bangladesh (ASAUB).

#### 4.6. Data Processing and Analyzing Technique

To process and analyze the data SPSS 14.0 and Microsoft Excel has used. The Microsoft Excel has used to identify the Socio-cultural background of the students studying at the Private Universities. Factor Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis have been used to evaluate the responses.

4.6.1. Factor Analysis: Factor analysis is applied to come up with a set of small number of uncorrelated factors. The variables used were highly correlated which could have been a problem for the subsequent analysis. The result of this factor analysis is used in subsequent multivariate analysis, specifically used to principle component analysis. So, we have two **Hypotheses** to test:

$H_0$ : Variables are uncorrelated

$H_1$ : The variables are highly correlated.

4.6.2. Multiple Regression Analysis: By conducting multiple regression analysis, the study has shown how dependent variable changes according to the changes in independent variables. Therefore, we can formulate the following **Hypotheses**:

$H_0$ :  $b_1 = b_2 = b_3 = b_4 = \dots = 0$  (there is no relationship between dependent variable and independent variables)

$H_1$ :  $b_1 \neq b_2 \neq b_3 \neq b_4 \neq 0$  (there is significant relationship between dependent variable and independent variables)

At last, different types of graphical representations have been used to show the Socio-cultural background of the students studying at the Private Universities.

### 5. Conceptual Framework

This study aims at identifying the factors that affect the students' choice to select a private university for their higher education in Bangladesh. In order to conduct the study, fourteen independent variables have been selected from the literature review.

➤ **The independent variables used in this study are—**

Low Session Jam	Low Student Politics
High Tuition Fee	Credit Transfer Facility to the Abroad
High Quality of the Education	Stress of the Study (Ease of Course Carriculum)
Strong Brand Name of the Private Universities	Teachers' Quality of the Private Universities
High demand in the Job Market	Influence of the Family Members & Friends
Tough Admission Test of the Public Universities	Part-time Job Facility
Attractive Campus Atmosphere	Available Scholarship Facility;

➤ **The Dependent Variable is PREFERENCE to the private university.**

**The basic model for the study is therefore as follows:**

$$P_U = a + b_1P_{Sj} + b_2P_{SP} + b_3P_{CS} + b_4P_{CT} + b_5P_{QE} + b_6P_{SS} + b_7P_{AT} + b_8P_{TA} + b_9P_{BN} + b_{10}P_{DJ} + b_{11}P_{IF} + b_{12}P_{CA} + b_{13}P_{SF} + b_{14}P_{PJ}$$

Here, a= Constant; bi= Slope;

$$P_U = f(P_{Sj}, P_{SP}, P_{CS}, P_{CT}, P_{QE}, P_{SS}, P_{AT}, P_{TA}, P_{BN}, P_{DJ}, P_{IF}, P_{CA}, P_{SF}, P_{PJ})$$

Here,  $P_U$  = Preference to the Private University rather than the Public, Foreign or Other Universities;

$P_{Sj}$ = Preference regarding Low Session Jam;	$P_{SP}$ = Preference regarding Low Student Politics;
$P_{CS}$ = Preference regarding High Tuition Fee;	$P_{CT}$ = Preference regarding Credit Transfer Facility to the Abroad;
$P_{QE}$ = Preference regarding High Quality of the Education;	$P_{SS}$ = Stress of the Study (Ease of Course Carriculum);
$P_{TA}$ = Preference regarding Tough Admission Test of the Public Universities;	$P_{TA}$ = Teachers' Quality of the Private Universities;
$P_{BN}$ = Preference regarding Strong Brand Name of the Private Universities;	$P_{DJ}$ = Preference regarding High demand in the Job Market;
$P_{IF}$ = Preference regarding influence of the Family Members & Friends ;	$P_{CA}$ = Preference regarding Attractive Campus Atmosphere;
$P_{SF}$ = Preference regarding Available Scholarship Facility;	$P_{PJ}$ = Preference regarding Part-time Job Facility.

**6. Empirical Results and Analysis**

*6.1. Factor Analysis*

The Principle Component Analysis has used and total 14 variables have included in the factor analysis. At first a correlation matrix has constructed and then tests the appropriateness of factor model. Bartlett's test of Sphericity has been used to test the hypothesis that variables are uncorrelated in the population.

Table – 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.636
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	457.172
	df	91
	Sig.	.000

From the table, it is found that the approximate chi-square statistics is 457.172 with 91 degrees of freedom which is significant at .05 levels and the value of KMO statistics (0.636) is also greater than 0.5. So the factor analysis may be considered an approximate technique for analyzing the data.

Using varimax rotation, reducing the 14 variables, we have got 5 uncorrelated factors having Eigen value greater than 1.

Table – 2: Rotated Component Matrix (a)

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Low Session Jam	.818	.208	.200	.098	-.079
2. Low Student's Politics	.058	.062	.854	-.124	.186
3. Tuition Fee	-.046	-.258	-.469	.234	-.028
4. Credit Transfer Facility	.439	.417	.062	-.172	-.123
5. Quality of Education	.523	.313	.166	.226	-.120
6. Stress of Study	-.257	.049	-.028	.660	.178
7. Tough Admission Test in the Public University	.007	.163	.095	.044	.911
8. Teacher Quality	.645	.195	.142	.221	.446
9. Strong Brand name	.036	.856	-.012	.148	.166
10. Demand in Job Market	-.023	.839	.120	.187	.005
11. Influence of Family Member & Friends	.277	.517	-.162	.498	.225
12. Campus Atmosphere	.788	.329	.143	.128	.108
13. Scholarship Facility	.516	-.027	.099	.670	.201
14. Part Time Job Facility	.099	.178	.162	.703	-.176

From the above Rotated Component Matrix we get the following uncorrelated variables:

Table – 3: Uncorrelated Factors

No	Name of the Variables	Loaded Factors
1	<b>Education Quality Of The University</b>	Low Session Jam, Credit Transfer Facility, Quality of Education, Teacher Quality, Campus Atmosphere.
2	<b>Reputation of the University</b>	Strong Brand name, Demand in Job Market, Influence of Family Members & Friends.
3	<b>Student politics</b>	Low Student's Politics
4	<b>Cost of the Study</b>	Tuition Fee, Stress of Study, Scholarship Facility, Part Time Job Facility
5	<b>Admission test</b>	Tough Admission Test in the Public University

### 6.2. Regression Analysis

From the factor analysis we get 5 uncorrelated factors, those are - Education Quality of the University, Reputation of the University, Student Politics, Cost of the Study and Admission Test. These factors are selected as the independent variables and preference as the dependent variable for the multiple regression analysis.

Table – 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.815(a)	.664	.646	.57631

a Predictors: (Constant), Education Quality of the University, Reputation of the University, Student Politics, Cost of the Study, Admission Test

Table – 5: ANOVA (b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	61.640	5	12.328	37.117	.000(a)
	Residual	31.221	94	.332		
	Total	92.861	99			

a Predictors: (Constant), Education Quality of the University, Reputation of the University, Student Politics, Cost of the Study, Admission Test

b Dependent Variable: PRFRNC

Here the value of  $R^2 = .664$  & adjusted  $R^2 = .646$  (from table - 4). It suggests that addition of other independent variables with education quality of the university contribute in explaining the variation in preference to the private university. The value of  $F = 37.117$  (from table - 5) with 5 and 95 degrees of freedom which is significant at .05 level. This result indicates that this model is significant and there are strong relationship between dependent and independent variables.

Table – 6: Coefficients (a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	3.697	.058		64.143	.000
	Education Quality of the University	.579	.058	.598	10.001	.000
	Reputation of the University	.170	.058	.175	2.934	.004
	Student Politics	.314	.058	.324	5.423	.000
	Cost of Study	.383	.058	.396	6.618	.000
	Tough Admission Test	.112	.058	.116	1.934	.056

a Dependent Variable: PREFERENCE

From the Coefficient table, we got the following measure:

- Education Quality of the University ( $\beta_1$ ) = 0.579. The value of T statistics,  $T = 10.001$ , with 95 degrees of freedom which is significant at the level of 0.05.
- For Reputation of the University ( $\beta_2$ ) = 0.170. The value of T statistics,  $T = 2.934$ , with 95 degrees of freedom which is significant at the level of 0.05.

- c) For Student Politics ( $\beta_3$ ) = 0.314. The value of T statistics,  $T = 5.423$ , with 95 degrees of freedom which is significant at the level of 0.05.
- d) For Cost of the Study ( $\beta_4$ ) = 0.383. The value of T statistics,  $T = 6.618$ , with 95 degrees of freedom which is significant at the level of 0.05.
- e) Finally for Admission test ( $\beta_5$ ) = 0.112. The value of T statistics,  $T = 1.934$ , with 95 degrees of freedom which is not significant at the level of 0.05.

So, the regression model will be, **Preference to the private university = 3.697+ Education Quality of the University (0.579) + Reputation of the University (0.170) + Student Politics (0.314) + Cost of the Study (0.383)**

### 6.3. Socio-cultural Background of the Students

In our study, we have collected primary information from 100 students from 10 different universities. We asked them about their education board in HSC level, income of their guardians and their guardians' profession to know their socio-cultural status. The following tables show the extracted information from the sample:

Table-7: Education Board wise Number of students passed their HSC Examination

Education Boards	No. of Students
Dhaka	81
Jessore	2
Comilla	7
Sylhet	1
Barishal	1
Rajshahi	3
Chittagong	5

Source: Primary Data

Table - 8: Income level of Guardians of Private Universities' Students

Income Level (BDT)	No. of Guardian
15,000 - 25,000	4
25,001 - 35,000	11
35,001 - 45,000	35
45,001 - 55,000	30
55,001 to more	20

Source: Primary Data

Table - 9: Profession of Guardians of Private Universities' Students

Profession	No. of Guardian
Service	28
Business	37
Doctor	12
Engineer	7
Creative	4
Defense	10
Others	2

Source: Primary Data

From the above information we get, there are seven Education Boards in Bangladesh which are Dhaka, Jessore, Cumilla, Sylhet, Barisal, Rajshahi and Chittagong. The maximum number of students (81 students) of Private Universities passed their HSC from Dhaka Board. Out of 100 students 7 from Comilla Board, 5 from Chittagong Board, 2 from Jessore Board, 1 from Barisal Board, 3 from Rajshahi Board, and 1 from Sylhet passed their HSC. The most of the guardians' income level is BDT 35,001 to BDT 45,000 (35 of Guardians) per month. 85 Guardians' monthly income is more than BDT 35,000 whereas only 15 guardians' per month income is lower than equal BDT 35000. Considering the occupation of their guardians, maximum 37 guardians involve in business. Other 28 involves in service. Therefore, it is noticeable that significant portion of the private universities students come from urban areas whose families are middle income class and above.

### **7. Implication of the findings**

Our study reveals the four important criteria that persuade the students to select the private university for higher study. In spite of having few limitations, our findings provide the insight about the student demand criteria to the education service provider organizations (universities). Decision makers from different universities will also be able to formulate their service offerings to attract the new students. Though our study is confined to only private university context, service providers from public universities and private universities as well as government will get the useful guidelines to operate and regulate the institutions to meet the standard quality of higher education.

### **8. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study shows that there are fourteen important factors that influence the students more or less to get admission into private universities willingly rather than other universities like public or foreign universities. Among the fourteen factors, session jam is the main problem to the reputed public universities and the other persuading factors are low involvement of students in politics, credit transfer facility to foreign universities of other countries, part time job facility, influence of family member & friends, teacher quality and so on. In the present situation one can barely imagine a flourishing educational institution without eminence services to the students. So, quality of education in higher educational institutions needs to be ensured. Otherwise this may create an immense problem for the students to complete their graduation and post graduation degrees. Though the number and quality of private universities of Bangladesh is rapidly increasing day by day, the total costs of the education in private universities is so high and that is quite impossible for maximum number of students and their guardians in our country. Since, UGC regulates and monitors the activities of universities, they should take initiatives to control the education sector in an effective and efficient manner with government.

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