

Opinion on the Higher Education of Private Universities in Bangladesh

Md. Addur Rouf^{1, *}, Md. Habibulah², Md. Ariful Islam³

¹Department of Business Administration, City University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

²Department of Political Science, North Bengal International University, Rajshahi, Bangladesh

³Department of Business Administration, UITS, Rajshahi, Bangladesh

Abstract

The main purpose of this paper is to find out the level of quality of higher education of the private university in Bangladesh. To explore the subject matter of this study, considering the research questions and objectives, both the qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection have been used. To find out the answers of the research questions survey has been conducted with questions for students, officers and faculty members in 20 private universities in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. After collecting data and information and analyzing, researchers have found that the level of quality of education of all these universities is not same. It differs on the ground of their different size, location, stuffs, courses, funding authority, service rule, financial and managerial capacity etc. Only a few universities are providing the level of quality education but rests of them are not quality concerned, Most of them are depending on part time teachers, poor infrastructures, without service rules etc. In the same time, researchers have found that respondent' satisfaction level is very low on campus, lab and library facilities, though a few universities are trying to ensure standard classroom facility and library facilities. At last, based on findings, researchers have offered some suggestions that can be taken into consideration in policy level.

Keywords

Private University, UGC, Quality Education, Faculty Member, Officer, Student, Bangladesh

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1. Introduction

In early 1990s, private sector came forward to establish universities. Since then country experienced a spectacular growth in private universities– they were mostly in and around Dhaka. After deregulation program, private sectors' participation is increasing significantly in Bangladesh, especially in some area of service sectors. As a reform initiative of public sector management, government shifted its policy in early 1990s in higher education sector. This program makes a pressure to public universities and creates a competitive environment in country's higher education. Though 105 universities are providing higher education it is widely saying that the level of quality education has declined

steadily (UGC, 2014). Public university is the best option to the students for higher education and then comes private university. With a few exceptions, public universities are failing to meet the market demand and suffering from low governance. Private university emerged as an alternative to cope up with the expanded demand of higher education. Only a few of them are maintaining standard but a huge allegation are being raised against the rests. It was hoped that Higher Education Quality (HEQ) would be ensured with the competition of both the sectors: Public and Private. However, it is commonly saying that the quality of higher education is declining rapidly. According to academicians, researchers,

* Corresponding author

E-mail address: roufnakua@gmail.com (Md. A. Rouf), habib_umam@yahoo.com (Md. Habibulah), aislamru@yahoo.com (Md. A. Islam)

various committees (UGC led High Powered Committee, 2003) newspaper reports and public perception the quality of education of the private universities is deteriorating sharply.

UGC, the apex body for higher education in its report observed and expressed its concern about the quality of HE institutions. UGC (2007) identified that most of the universities have no quality teachers, fulltime faculties, updated curriculum, infrastructure facilities, libraries, teaching aids, etc. Poor governance, financial mismanagement, profit motive of the owners etc. seriously affect the governance and quality of the private higher educational institutions. Private universities are self financed and only to get approval of new curriculum, awarding degree and some other administrative matters they need to go to the UGC. But unfortunately UGC cannot take action against any allegation due to liberal Private University Act-2010.

It is very difficult to comment definitely on the quality of education in the private universities. There is no evaluation system for this. Of course, the public universities also do not have any system of quality monitoring. One advantage of the public universities is that they draw good quality students and also good quality teachers. They start with a better base; this may not be true for all the private universities of Bangladesh (Andaleeb, 2003).

Quality of education depends on a lot of issues. The broad areas are management, teaching quality, faculty resources, quality intake, method of teaching, technology support, update curriculum, direct and indirect infrastructure etc (Habibulah, et al. 2012). With all these, universities should have specific mission and vision to its goal. We have some successful stories in private universities in Bangladesh. Some are providing quality education and producing high quality graduates. On the other hand it is commonly saying that private universities are responsible for deteriorating the quality of higher education, even some institution are selling certificates. Quality teachers, teaching methods, physical facilities etc. are not at all in support for higher level. According to UGC report (2008), only a few universities have their own campus, but rests of them have been running in rented house in residential or industrial areas of the city. Even after 10 years of having approval they failed to establish permanent campus that was supposed to do within five years of approval. So, quality of the higher education and facilities are the major concerns for PUs in Bangladesh to ensure quality production.

2. Statement of the Problem

Private Universities are providing Higher Education. After 1990, there is a dramatic growth in the country's higher education. Instead of rapid expansion, the quality of

education is declining. Private universities are profit-oriented and some allegations are there against them. Islam, Fakhrol (2006), according to newspaper report, they are selling certificates and thus responsible for declining education quality. But all universities are not equal in terms of providing inputs to produce output as productive and employable graduates. It is commonly saying that faculty selection is not based on merit and universities are depending on part-time teachers. On the other side, most of the universities are failing to provide infrastructure facilities like laboratory, classroom, library etc. Universities are running their activities in industrial or residential areas. In the same building, some floors are rented for university and others are for restaurant, beauty parlor, furniture shop and like. Computer Science and communications related subjects are common but there are no sufficient lab facility, networking, ICT infrastructure and library facilities (Rouf, Abdur, 2006). To ensure the quality of a program these issues are related. So, quality of education cannot be ensured without quality teacher and other facilities.

3. Objectives of the Study

Objectives of this study have been divided into general and specific objective. The general objective of the study is to explore the level of quality higher education of Private Universities in Bangladesh.

The specific objectives are;

- (a) To explore the infrastructure facilities those are provided by the Private Universities.
- (b) To assess the quality of teachers of Private Universities.

4. Literature Review

In Bangladesh, only a few studies have been done to explore the education quality of private universities. Syed Saad Andaleeb (2003) conducted a study in 2003 used 9 factors model to explain the satisfaction of alumni with their education. These factors include quality of the teachers, method and content, peer quality, facilities and resources, the effectiveness of the administration, campus politics, gender and year of graduation. A study by Jamal (2002) explored the role of private universities in human resource development. The aim of the study is to analyze the effectiveness of private universities in promoting quality higher education in Bangladesh and their contribution to human resource development (HRD) in the country. He argued that despite many shortcomings, private universities provide a global flavor to their students. Some of their facilities are of a very high standard. In fact, taking advantages of shortcomings of

the Private University Act (PAU) - 1992, many universities have been established that lack essential academic infrastructures. These 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. Andrea Bonaccorsi *et. al* (2007) in the book “University: Strategic Knowledge Creation” identified variables in six broad areas to analyze the quality of higher education. Those areas are; general information on HEIs, revenues, expenditures, personnel, education production and research and technology production. International workshop on the development of measurement for the assurance of quality higher education in Bangladesh (2007) proposed indicators/measures to assess the quality of higher education in Bangladesh. In working paper-2, the workshop proposed some areas with specific parameters. Some of the areas are purpose and objective, faculty, instruction, student service, library, laboratories, infrastructure, research culture, etc. Islam, Zahidul. (2007) established performance evaluation indicators for higher education. The study concluded with 18 important evaluation items and 84 indicators through the Delphi Method. They divided the areas in input, process and output aspect. Every area has some factors or items those are explained by various indicators. According to Shun-Hsing Study factors are 1. Input aspect: Student quality, faculty resources, financial resources, teaching resources, student structure, and development target. 2. Process Aspect: Teaching quality, research results, curriculum planning, tutorship result, retention rate, and 3. Output Aspect: School reputation, financial donation, Strategic Planning for Higher Education in Bangladesh etc. This report pointed out that a large number of private universities are operating in make-shift arrangements in hired accommodation. They have failed to meet the minimum requirements of physical infrastructures, full time qualified faculties, teaching aids and other facilities that are essential for imparting proper education (Habibullah, *et al.* 2012). According to the annual report of the UGC in 2008 students’ intake should be merit-based, more transparent and legitimized. Moreover, report focused on the infrastructure and quality faculties. It says, more education facilities should be provided. UGC prescribed rules must be followed at the faculty selection. Masum (2008) in his book “Higher Education Governance in Bangladesh” focused that qualified full time faculty members must be recruited in the private universities, at least 80 percent faculty members should be full time. Ehsan expressed his concern, unless campus facilities are upgraded largely, we cannot expect vibrant academic atmosphere in the private universities. In his book he tried to explore the status of governance in Public and Private Universities in Bangladesh.

5. Research Methodology

In this study, infrastructure facilities and teacher’s quality will be analyzed to explore the quality of education in Private Universities. To conduct the study 20 private universities have taken by using random sampling. The study has been conducted based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data has been collected through interviews and Questionnaire survey. Structured questionnaire containing closed ended was used. A survey through a standardized questionnaire was conducted to collect both quantitative and qualitative information from the 134 respondents in private universities. A questionnaire has been used for collecting primary data, which have been selected using the justification method under non-probability sampling technique.. We interviewed students, officers and faculty members. After collection of primary data, hypotheses were formulated and χ^2 test is used to test the hypotheses with 1% level of statistical significance. For analysis of data SPSS software has been used. This operation performed by the χ^2 (chi-square test) and here also develop a Ho (null hypothesis) based on the without significant difference between the opinions of the respondents

Secondary data and information has been collected besides the primary sources. Secondary data has been taken from journal articles, published books, government documents, education commissions’ report, policies, reports of various committees related to higher education etc. a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods have been used In this study.

6. Hypotheses Test and Results

6.1. Opinion of the Respondents Regarding the Influence to Admit into Private University

Table 1. Influence to admit.

Details	Respondents			Total	χ^2
	Student	officer	Faculty		
Parents	n	12	11	28	51
	%	27.9	28.2	53.8	
Friends	n	26	20	8	54
	%	60.5	51.3	15.4	
Teachers	n	5	8	0	13
	%	11.6	20.5	.0	
None	n	0	0	16	16
	%	.0	.0	30.8	
Total	n	43	39	52	134
	%	100	100	100	

df = 6, Mood = 2, P = 0.000

Table-1 presets opinion among different groups. The questionnaires suggested three possible categories of groups. Opinion groups are students, officers of the university and

Faculty members. Table shows those 38.1% respondents opinion, students are influenced by parents; 40.3% respondents opinion, students are influenced by friends; 9.7% respondents opinion, students are influenced by teachers and 11.9% respondents opinion, students are influenced by none.

The significance of the differences was tested by undertaking a Pearson Chi-Square test (χ^2) to find any relationship between respondents' groups and influence to admit into private university. The following null-hypothesis was tested to ascertain whether there is a difference among groups in this regard.

H0 = There is no significant difference among respondent groups regarding their opinion by the influence to admit into private university

The results of the Pearson χ^2 test showed that influence to admit into private university is statistically significant among the respondent groups at the 1% level (Chi-Square=54.22, df= 6, P=0.000). This indicates that there is no homogeneity in opinion on the influence to admit into private university between the respondent groups and mode value 2 indicate that students are influenced by the friend to admit into private university in Bangladesh. So the null hypothesis rejected.

6.2. Opinion of the Respondents Regarding the Location of Private University

Table 2. The location of private university.

Details	Respondents			Total	χ^2
	Student	officer	Faculty		
Residential	n 23	0	16	39	51.27
	% 53.5	.0	30.8	29.1	
Commercial	n 12	31	14	57	
	% 27.9	79.5	26.9	42.5	
Non-residential	n 0	0	8	8	
	% .0	.0	15.4	6.0	
Highly residential	n 8	8	14	30	
	% 18.6	20.5	26.9	22.4	
Total	n 43	39	52	134	
	% 100	100	100	100	

SD= df=6, Mood= 2, P=0.000

Table-2 shows those 29.1% respondents opinion, location of private university is residential area; 42.5% respondents opinion, location of private university is commercial area; 6.0% respondents opinion, location of private university is non-residential area and 22.4% respondents opinion, location of private university is highly residential area The significance of the differences was tested by undertaking a Pearson Chi-Square test (χ^2) to find any relationship between respondents' opinion and location of private university. The following null-hypothesis was tested to ascertain whether there is a

difference among groups in this regard.

H0 = There is no significant difference among respondent groups regarding their opinion on the location of private university The results of the Pearson χ^2 test showed that location of private university is statistically significant among the respondent groups at the 1% level (Chi-Square=51.27, df= 6, P=0.000). This indicates that there is no homogeneity in opinion on the location of private university between the respondent groups and mode value 2 indicate that location of private university in Bangladesh is commercial area. So the null hypothesis rejected.

6.3. Opinion of the Respondents Regarding the Establishment Problems of Private University

Table 3. Establishment problems of private university.

Details	Respondents			Total	χ^2
	Students	Officer	Faculty		
Sound pollution	n 14	17	24	55	15.00
	% 32.6	43.6	46.2	41.0	
Traffic Jam	n 24	8	14	46	
	% 55.8	20.5	26.9	34.3	
Hew and Cry	n 5	14	14	33	
	% 11.6	35.9	26.9	24.6	
Total	n 43	39	52	134	
	% 100	100	100	100	

SD= df=4, Mood=1, P=0.005

Table-3 shows those 41% respondents opinion are sound pollution; 34.3% respondents opinion are traffic jam; 24.6% respondents opinion are hew and cry establishment problems of private university in Bangladesh.

The significance of the differences was tested by undertaking a Pearson Chi-Square test (χ^2) to find any relationship between respondents' opinion and establishment problems of private university. The following null-hypothesis was tested to ascertain whether there is a difference among groups in this regard.

H0 = There is no significant difference among respondent groups regarding their opinion on establishment problems of private university

The results of the Pearson χ^2 test showed that establishment problems of private university is statistically significant among the respondent groups at the 1% level (Chi-Square=15, df= 4, P=0.005). This indicates that there is no homogeneity in opinion on establishment problems of private university between the respondent groups and mode value 1 indicate that Sound pollution is the major problem of private university in Bangladesh. So the null hypothesis rejected.

6.4. Opinion of the Respondents Regarding the Quality of Teacher of Private University

Table 4. Quality of Teacher of private university.

Details	Respondents			Total	χ^2
	Student	officer	Faculty		
Good	n	0	6	14	20
	%	.0	15.4	26.9	
Satisfactory	n	17	25	8	50
	%	39.5	64.1	15.4	
Average	n	26	0	22	48
	%	60.5	.0	42.3	
Not good	n	0	8	8	16
	%	.0	20.5	15.4	
Total	n	43	39	52	134
	%	100	100	100	

SD= df = 6, Mood = 2, P=0.000

Table-4 shows those 14.9% respondents opinion, Quality of Teacher is good; 37.3% respondents' opinion, Quality of Teacher is satisfactory; 35.8 % respondents' opinion Quality of Teacher is average and 11.9% respondents' opinion, quality of teacher in private university is not good.

The significance of the differences was tested by undertaking a Pearson Chi-Square test (χ^2) to find any relationship between respondents' opinion and quality of teacher in private university. The following null-hypothesis was tested to ascertain whether there is a difference among groups in this regard.

H0 = There is no significant difference among respondent groups regarding their opinion on quality of teacher in private university

The results of the Pearson χ^2 test showed that quality of teacher in private university is statistically significant among the respondent groups at the 1% level (Chi-Square = 55.62, df = 6, P= 0.000). This indicates that there is no homogeneity in opinion on the quality of teacher in private university between the respondent groups and mode value 2 indicate that quality of teacher in private university in Bangladesh is satisfactory. So the null hypothesis rejected.

6.5. Opinion of the Respondents Regarding the Tuition Fee of Private University

Table 5. Tuition fee of private university.

Details	Respondents			Total	χ^2
	Student	officer	Faculty		
Satisfactory	n	6	14	30	50
	%	14.0	35.9	57.7	
Tolerable	n	24	17	8	49
	%	55.8	43.6	15.4	
Burden	n	13	8	14	35
	%	30.2	20.5	26.9	
Total	n	43	39	52	134
	%	100	100	100	

SD= df = 4, Mood = 2, P = 0.000

Table-5 shows those 37.3% respondents opinion, Tuition fee is satisfactory; 36.6% respondents' opinion, Tuition fee is tolerable and 26.1 % respondents' opinion Tuition fee is Burden in private university.

The significance of the differences was tested by undertaking a Pearson Chi-Square test (χ^2) to find any relationship between respondents' opinion and tuition fee in private university. The following null-hypothesis was tested to ascertain whether there is a difference among groups in this regard.

H0 = There is no significant difference among respondent groups regarding their opinion on tuition fee in private university

The results of the Pearson χ^2 test showed that tuition fee in private university is statistically significant among the respondent groups at the 1% level (Chi-Square = 24.12, df = 4, P= 0.000). This indicates that there is no homogeneity in opinion on the Tuition fee in private university between the respondent groups and mode value 2 indicate that tuition fee in private university in Bangladesh is tolerable. So the null hypothesis rejected.

6.6. Opinion of the Respondents Regarding the Tuition Fee of Private University

Table 6. Subject dealing in private university.

Details	Respondents			Total	χ^2
	Student	officer	Faculty		
Job Market Related	n	32	25	30	87
	%	74.4	64.1	57.7	
Art and Culture	n	0	6	14	20
	%	.0	15.4	26.9	
Social Science	n	6	0	0	6
	%	14.0	.0	.0	
Religion and Ethics	n	5	8	8	21
	%	11.6	20.5	15.4	
Total	n	43	39	52	134
	%	100	100	100	

SD=, df= 6, Mood=1, P= 0.000

Table-6 shows those 64.9% respondents opinion, subject dealing in private university is job market related; 14.9% respondents' opinion, subject dealing is art and culture; 4.5% respondents' opinion, subject dealing is social science and 15.7 % respondents' opinion subject dealing is religion and ethics in private university.

The significance of the differences was tested by undertaking a Pearson Chi-Square test (χ^2) to find any relationship between respondents' opinion and subject dealing in private university. The following null-hypothesis was tested to ascertain whether there is a difference among groups in this regard.

H0 = There is no significant difference among respondent groups regarding their opinion on subject dealing in private

university

The results of the Pearson χ^2 test showed that subject dealing in private university is statistically significant among the respondent groups at the 1% level (Chi-Square = 26.19, df = 6, P= 0.000). This indicates that there is no homogeneity in opinion on the subject dealing in private university between the respondent groups and mode value 1 indicate that subject dealing in private university in Bangladesh is job market related. So the null hypothesis rejected.

6.7. Opinion of the Respondents Regarding the Obstacle to Ensure the Quality Education of Private University

Table 7. The obstacle to ensure the quality education.

Details	Respondents			Total	χ^2
	Student	officer	Faculty		
Insufficient teacher	n	12	31	20	63
	%	27.9	79.5	38.5	
Modern library	n	11	0	8	19
	%	25.6	.0	15.4	
Extra curriculum	n	20	0	16	36
	%	46.5	.0	30.8	
Technological	n	0	8	8	16
	%	.0	20.5	15.4	
Total	n	43	39	52	134
	%	100	100	100	

df = 6, Mood = 1, P = 0.000

Table-7 shows those 47% respondents opinion, the obstacle to ensure the quality education in private university is insufficient teacher; 14.2% respondents' opinion, the obstacle to ensure the quality education is modern library; 26.9% respondents' opinion, the obstacle to ensure the quality education is extra curriculum activities and 11.9 % respondents' opinion the obstacle to ensure the quality education is insufficiency of technological opportunities in private university.

The significance of the differences was tested by undertaking a Pearson Chi-Square test (χ^2) to find any relationship between respondents' opinion and obstacle to ensure the quality education in private university. The following null-hypothesis was tested to ascertain whether there is a difference among groups in this regard.

H0 = There is no significant difference among respondent groups regarding their opinion on obstacle to ensure the quality education in private university

The results of the Pearson χ^2 test showed that obstacle to ensure the quality education in private university is statistically significant among the respondent groups at the 1% level (Chi-Square = 47.42, df = 6, P= 0.000). This indicates that there is no homogeneity in opinion on the obstacle to ensure the quality education in private university between the respondent groups and mode value 1 indicate that obstacle to

ensure the quality education in private university in Bangladesh is insufficient of qualified full time teacher. So the null hypothesis rejected.

7. Recommendations

Improving the quality of higher education in Bangladesh is a difficult job, much difficult than the teachers of a university in developed countries. But it would be easy if the people concerned in this area try to find out the root causes of the obstacle to ensure the quality education. According to the findings and data analysis, researchers have tried to offer some suggestions in the light of the problems they have got during their study:

- A strong Private University Act is essential to ensure quality education in this field.
- UGC should play a vital role ensuring them to follow specific guideline needed for library considering space, sitting arrangement, reading environment, budget allocation for resource collection, electronic catalog system, online resources use, up to date journals, software for searching and using books, alternative power supply facility, photocopy facility, sufficient number of books etc.
- Govt. should offer subsidy to some universities to open some other subjects like literature, history, philosophy, sociology, political science etc rather than the subjects which have the market demand to maintain the social balance.
- Universities should ensure their permanent campuses, playground, restaurant, gymnasium etc. And UGC should monitor these issues strictly.
- Universities need to ensure the club activities that help the students to develop their leadership quality to meet mental thirst, to develop patriotism and create opportunity to involve in social work.
- As UGC, an apex body, cannot fight against irregularities with weak legal strength and logistics, a new act with the consultation of stakeholders is immensely needed for this sector.
- A unified service and teachers' recruitment rules can be formulated under the guidance of UGC and private universities must follow these rules.
- Before finalizing any new act a national debate can be arranged with the participation of various stakeholders.

8. Conclusion

That private universities have opened a new era in the field of higher education is undeniable. But higher education must be ensured in terms of quality education. However, most of

the universities are very away from such kind of infrastructure facilities like insufficient lab facilities, ICT instrument, teaching aids, laboratories, classrooms, restaurants, debate club, playground, quite and calm atmosphere etc.

To check the financial motive and at the same time ensuring quality education is really a difficult job. Nevertheless, every private university must fulfill the minimum requirements set by the UGC in terms of quality and infrastructure. What is the most essential is to take collective efforts of these universities in the growth of higher education in Bangladesh.

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