Challenges and Academic achievement of international students in Bangladesh'sUniversities

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Abstract: This research "A Study on Challenges and Academic Achievement International Students' in Bangladeshi's Universities"; it primarily aimed to explore the challenges and academic achievements made by the international students. The objectives identified the differences in among demographic factors such as gender, region, and level of education, challenges, and academic achievement among international students. It also examined the relationship between challenges with academic achievement of students among others. The sampling technique used in this research was purposive sampling, as it required the researcher to select the sample that is known to possess a particular characteristic under investigation In Bangladesh the public and private universities academic system assume to be the same and homogeneous in nature. Hence the study selected two public universities and two private universities that have foreign student. The number of 186 respondents was selected from the selected universities using simple random sampling techniques. A significant difference between the international undergraduate and postgraduate students studying in Bangladesh was found when considering the university activities, cultural stress, communication challenges and socio-demographic variables of the students. The results of the stepwise regression also indicated that university challenges and cultural stress have significantly predicted international student achievement in university. The study recommends that universities may organize class for providing training in local communication skills in order to prepare the international students for interaction and successful life in the host community.

Keywords: Academic achievement, International Students, Challenges, Cultural stress

Introduction

Internationalisationof higher education has becomevery imperative issue in most countries around the world, of which Bangladesh is of no exception. Many international students are living in Bangladesh in order to gain education. Majority of these students left their families back in their countries; hence they face great challenges on their own in a new country. Those students struggled in the process of adapting a new culture, learning a new language and understanding a new way of life. It takes hard work to succeed and conquer these challenges of living in different countries. Since each human being identifies him/herself with a particular group; it is important to understand the values and norms of other cultures, in order for yours to be understood as well.

In this era of globalization, a great number of students are crossing their national boundaries and entering other countries for educational purposes (Li and Gasser, 2005).

Paige (1990), higher education is undergoing a change with the emerging trends of international exchange of students and scholars along with increasing interdependence among nations. He defines international students as individuals who are temporary residents of a country, other than their own, for educational purposes and they are culturally distinguishable from their hosts

The study conducted by Brown and Holloway (2008) found that the stress caused by the struggle to cope with the challenges of an unfamiliar academic and socio-cultural environment was at its height in the initial stage of the academic sojourn when students were beset with homesickness and loneliness. They made an association between passage of time and gradual decrease in acculturative stress. However, adjustment process was not found to be generalizable, rather, it was subjected to individual experiences and student's subjective sense of success in different aspects of life

Gareis (2012). A research study published in the Journal of International and Intercultural Communication, found that nearly 40 % of international student's report having no close American friends and say that they wish had more interactions with American students

(Akanwa, 2015). Linguistic proficiency affects international students' ability to understand lectures, participate in class, to keep up with the reading or to write assignments. As such, language ability plays a crucial role in student academic learning and success. Moreover, linguistic difficulty obstructs communication with classmates and university staff so that it is harder for international students to ask for the help they need or create friendships with native speakers.

Andrade (2006), the term refers to evidence of learning, which may be measured by successful completion of course requirements, grade point average (GPA), satisfactory academic standing or retention. In this study it is measured by international students' GPAs.

Academic achievement, which is measured by the examination results, is one of the major goals of a school. Hoyle (1986) argued that schools are established with the aim of imparting knowledge and skills to those who go through them and behind all this is the idea of enhancing good academic achievement.

The significance of this study is not only able to achieve their academic and personal goals but also a source of cultural diversity, enlightenment, and revenue for government and these universities by the international students.The study explored the challenges faced by international students in the Bangladesh's universities using quantitative research. The findings may show how international students dealt with university activities challenges, cultural challenges and communication challenges.

This study aims to explore the key challenging factors that influence international students' academic achievement in Bangladesh to identify the differences among demographic factors such as gender, region, level of education, travelling experience, university activities, cultural stress, communication challenges and academic achievement. It also examined the relationship between university activities, cultural stress and communication challenges with academic achievement. And lastly, examined the demographic characteristics as the significant predictors of academic achievement of international students in Bangladesh.

Methodology

The study distributed 360 questionnaires as the target population for both undergraduate and postgraduate international students from four different Universities, consisting of two privates and two public universities which were considered as the population during the study. Thesampling technique used in this research was purposive sampling, as it required the researcher to select the sample that is known to possess a particular characteristic under investigation. As both the public and private universities academic system assume to be the same and homogeneous in nature in the country. The sample size of 186 was determined from sampling table guide for sample size or using the mathematical expression for decisions provided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

The interviewed sample was self-selected and drawn from participating universities in the country; they're Daffodil, Dhaka, and Hajee Mohammad Danesh and Rajshahi universities.

The data obtained was analyzed using SPSS 22. Various statistical measures were used to find out relationship among the variables and the impact of independent variables on the dependent variables. Correlation analysis was performed for measuring the relationship between demographic characteristics, UA challenge, communication challenges and academic achievement. Product moment correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the correlation among the variables and multiple and stepwise regression analysis was performed to predict the variance accounted for by independent variables in the scores. Moreover, stepwise regression analysis was performed to predict the variance accounted for by UA, communication, cultural stress challenges and academic achievement. While t-test were performed for measuring the differences in UA, communication and cultural stress challenges scores of the sub-groups such as gender, country of origin, and level of degree studying. Hypotheses were tested at alpha .05.

Results and Discussions

Demographic information of the respondents is summarized. Out of 186 respondents who took part in the study, the sample universities have the following response that shows HSTU with highest respondents, followed by DIU then Daffodil and lastly RU, with their proportion of 51.6%, 21.5%, 19.9% and 7% respectively. For the gender of the respondents with proportion81.7% for male and 18.3 % were female. It also illustrated the distribution of age range among the respondents majority of the students fallswithin the age group of 21-23 years old contributing to 41.5% of the total sample population. Islam is the most dominated religion represented by 61.3%, followed by Hindu 35.5%, while others has 3.2% respondent. 86.6% were single, 12.4% are married students and 0.5% for the divorce and widower. Looking at the country of origin of respondents, 39.2% of them were from Nepal, 38.7% were from Somalia, 19.9% from Nigeria, 1.6% from Bhutan and 0.5% were from India.

In terms of educational level, 68.8% were undergraduate students, followed by the postgraduate (master's degree) students with 31.2%. Approximately about 87.6% of the respondents have no experience of studying abroad before coming to Bangladesh, and 12.4% had experience of studying abroad before coming to Bangladesh. The results also illustrate the present accommodation in the university among respondents. Out of 186 respondents, 62.9% of them were living in hall/hostel, 28.0% of them were in the mess, 5.4% are staying in lodging and 3.0% of them were with their family. For the major sources of financial support, most of the respondents were supported by parents/family with (78.0%), followed by 15.6 % of them who were on scholarship, 5.4% are from their personal earnings, and 1.1% were on saving before coming Bangladesh.

Effectof level of degree on international students' Last CGPA, challenges andadjustment to university

Table 1shows the mean, standard error of mean values of different university activities, cultural stress, communication challenges, adjustments to university and socio-demographic variables among the undergraduate and graduate international students' in Bangladesh universities. Independent t-test was employed and all the variables tested were found to be significantly different at 0.05 levels of significance with various P – values ranging from 0.00 to 0.03. While the Cultural Stress and Number of study hours per day and last academic result during your study in home country are found to be insignificant with P – values of 0.50, 0.82 and 0.16 respectively. This show that there is a significant different between the international undergraduate and postgraduate students studying in Bangladesh when considering the university activities, cultural stress, communication challenges and socio-demographic variables of the international students. And this shows that the most important variables (Last CGPA, all the challenging variables with the exception of cultural stress) were found to be significantly different among the levels of degree.

Table 1 academic achievement, university activities, cultural stress, communication challenges and socio-demographic variables among the undergraduate and graduate international students in Bangladesh universities (undergraduate n =128, postgraduate n=58).

Variables	Mean±S.E		T	P-Value
	Undergraduate	Postgraduate		
UA	68.91±1.02	76.83±1.75	-4.14	0.00
Cultural Stress	38.13±.61	38.86±.91	-.67	0.50
Communication	13.67±.38	16.10±.63	-3.45	0.00
Last CGPA/GPA	3.21±.03	3.41±.04	-3.79	0.00
Average monthly expenses in (BDT)	9053.13±441.62	12131.66±901.69	-3.45	0.00
No. of hours spent calling family/week	3.81±.47	5.58±.67	-2.14	0.03
Number of study hours per day	4.77±.25	5.58±.40	-1.75	0.82
No. of study yrs before Bangladesh	12.77±.12	15.88±.08	-17.11	0.00
Last result in home country	3.35±.04	3.44±.05	-1.40	0.16
Age of student (Years)	22.48±.28	27.62±.55	-9.20	0.00

Sources: Field study 2018

Table 2found that the mean, standard error of mean values of different university activities, cultural stress, communication challenges, adjustments to university and socio-demographic variables among the continents (African and Asian) international students in Bangladesh universities all the variables tested were found to be significantly different at 0.05 level of significance with various P – values ranging from 0.00 to 0.029. While the cultural stress, communication and number of study hours per day was in-significant with P – values of 0.954, 0.111 and 0.392 respectively.

Hence it indicated that there is a significant different between the African and Asian international students studying in Bangladesh when considering the university activities, cultural stress, communication challenges, adjustments to university and socio-demographic variables of the international students. And this shows that the most important variables (Last CGPA, all the challenges and adjustment variables with the exception of cultural stress and communication) are found to be significantly different among the two different continents.

Table 2 academic achievement, university activities, cultural stress, communication challenges, adjustments to university and socio-demographic variables among the African and Asian international students in Bangladesh universities (African n =109, Asian n=77).

Variables	Mean±S.E		T	P-Value
	African	Asian		
UA	73.45±1.24	68.45±1.31	2.707	.001
Cultural stress	38.33±.66	38.39±.80	-.057	.954
Communication	14.88±.44	13.79±.52	1.603	.111
Last CGPA/GPA	3.32±.03	3.21±.04	2.239	.026
Average monthly expenses in (BDT)	12297.58±609.15	6779.22±290.62	7.211	.000
No. of hours calling family per week	5.07±.54	3.36±.50	2.203	.029
Number of study hours per day	5.18±.28	4.81±.32	.858	.392
No. of study yrs before Bangladesh	14.31±.19	12.92±.15	5.435	.000
Last result in home country	3.47±.04	3.25±.04	3.632	.000
Age of student (Years)	25.83±.44	21.62±.22	7.634	.000

Sources: Field study 2018

Table 3found that the mean, standard error of mean values of different university activities, cultural stress, communication challenges and socio-demographic variables among the gender (male and female) international students in Bangladesh universities all the variables tested were found to be not significant at 0.05 level of significance.

This showed that there is no significant different between the male and female international students studying in Bangladesh when considering the academic achievement, university activities, cultural stress, communication challenges, a variables of the international students. And this shows that both sexes are the same in terms of the examined variables.

Table 3 academic achievement, university activities, cultural stress, communication challenges, adjustments to university and socio-demographic variables among the Male and Female international students in Bangladesh universities (Male n =152, Female n=54).

Variables	Mean±S.E		T	P-Value
	Male	Female		
UA	71.40±.11	71.29±1.87	.045	.964
Cultural Stress	38.20±.58	39.03±.1.11	-.627	.531
Communication	14.14±.38	15.74±.70	-1.850	.066
Last CGPA/GPA	3.25±.03	3.37±.05	-1.801	.073
Average monthly expenses in(BDT)	9963.39±462.42	10235.29±1087.37	-.246	.806
No. of hours calling family per week	4.43±.45	4.07±.67	.353	.724

Number of study hours per day	5.14±.25	4.5±.38	1.158	.248
No. of study yrs before Bangladesh	13.612±.15	14.29±.32	-1.964	.051
Last result in home country	3.38±.04	3.36±.06	.256	.798
Age of student (Years)	24.13±.35	23.88±.62	.310	.757

Sources: Field study 2018

Table 4 found that the mean, standard error of mean values of different university activities, cultural stress, communication challenges and socio-demographic variables among the universities ownership (private and public) international students in Bangladesh universities all the variables tested were found to be significantly different at 0.05 level of significance with various P – values ranging from 0.00 to 0.009. While the cultural stress, no. of hours calling family per week, number of study hours per day, number of study years completed before coming Bangladesh and last academic result in home country were not significant with P – values of 0.705, .975,.206, .219 and 0.289 respectively.

It revealed that there was a significant different between the private and public international students studying in Bangladesh for their university activities, cultural stress, communication challenges, adjustments to university and socio-demographic variables. And this shows that the most important variables (Last CGPA, all the challenging variables with the exception of cultural Stress, No. of hours calling family per week, number of study hours per day, number of study years completed before coming Bangladesh and last academic result in home country are found to be significantly different among the two different continents.

Table 4 academic achievement, university activities, cultural stress, communication challenges, and socio-demographic variables among the Private and Public international students in Bangladesh universities (Private n =77, Public n=109).

Variables	Mean±S.E		t	P-Value
	Private	Public		
University Activities	74.29±1.37	69.33±1.22	2.684	.008
Cultural Stress	38.58±.76	38.19±.68	.379	.705
Communication	15.51±.47	13.67±.46	2.741	.007
Social Adjustment	12.78±.43	11.46±.33	2.462	.015
Academic Adjustment	14.96±.44	13.80±.38	1.977	.050
Adjustment to University	27.74±.79	25.26±.58	2.609	.010
Last CGPA/GPA	3.35±.04	3.22±.03	2.654	.009
Average monthly expenses in (BDT)	13988.91±746.74	7204.50±275.95	9.585	.000
No. of hours calling family per week	4.38±.62	4.35±.50	.032	.975
Number of study hours per day	4.70±.31	5.25±.29	-1.269	.206
No. of study yrs before Bangladesh	13.94±22	13.60±.17	1.235	.219
Last result in home country	3.42±.05	3.35±.04	1.063	.289
Age of student (Years)	25.56±.52	23.05±.35	4.161	.000

Sources: Field study 2018

Relationship between Challenges and Academic Achievements.

To examine the relationship between university activities, cultural stress and communication challenges on academic achievements' of international students' in Bangladesh.

Stepwise and multiple regressions were conducted to examine the effect of university activities, cultural stress and communication challenges on academic achievement. It was conducted to evaluate the effects of both challenges on student's achievement at university. The results of the stepwise regression are presented in Table 5

Table 5 stepwise regression for university activities, cultural Stress

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.313[a]	.098	.093	.32314
2	.358[b]	.128	.119	.31854

a. Predictors: (Constant), university activities

b. Predictors: (Constant), university activities, Cultural Stress

At the first step, the university activities challenges scale was entered into the regression equation and was significantly related to international student academic achievement with Adjusted R^2=0.093, F (1,184) =19.963, p=0.000[b].

At the second step, the cultural stress scale was entered into the regression equation and was also significantly related to students' academic achievement, and the Adjusted R^2= 0.119, F (2,183) = 13.448, p=0.000[c]. Table 9 below, presented the results of the ANOVA test for the stepwise regression analyses when university activities and Cultural Stress to university was entered into the analysis.

At the second step of analysis, when Cultural Stress was added, as it is presented in Table 6, the model accounted for 12 % of the variance in international student achievement, F (2,183) = 13.448, p=0.000[c], which was significantly more variance. The summary of stepwise regression statistics, including the Standardized and Unstandardized Coefficients for variables predicting student's academic achievement (university activities and Cultural Stress) were presented in Table 6.

Table 6 ANOVA results for stepwise regression givinguniversity activities, cultural stress

Model			df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.084	1	2.084	19.963	.000[b]
	Residual	19.213	184	.104		
	Total	21.297	185			
2	Regression	2.729	2	1.365	13.448	.000[c]
	Residual	18.568	183	.101		
	Total	21.297	185			

a. Dependent Variable: Last CGPA/GPA

b. Predictors: (Constant), university activities

c. Predictors: (Constant), university activities, Cultural Stress

The Beta coefficients for the stepwise regression are presented in Table 7. The results of the stepwise regression also indicated that university challenges (Beta=0.386, p=0.000) and cultural stress (Beta= -0.189, p=0.013) significantly predicted international student achievement in university. The Beta in this model also indicated that university activities positively affect student's achievement and, in contrast, Cultural Stress has a negative correlation with students' adjustment. In other word, a unit increase in students' university challenges leads to a 0.10-unit increase in students' GPA. Similarly, a unit increase in student's cultural stress (which is reverse coded), leads to a 0.009-unit increase in students' GPA. Based on the data presented in Table 10, the regression equation for stepwise regression is presented in the following:

Prediction Model (2):

Your last CGPA/GPA = 2.885+0.10(university activities)-0.009(Cultural Stress)

Table 7 Summary of stepwise regression statistics for variables predicting academic achievement

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.670	.137		19.551	.000
	University Activities	.008	.002	.313	4.468	.000
2	(Constant)	2.885	.159		18.112	.000
	University Activities	.010	.002	.386	5.155	.000

Cultural Stress	-.009	.004	-.189	-2.521	.013

a. Dependent Variable: Your last CGPA/GPA

Stepwise regression was used to examine the relationship between international students' challenges and academic achievement. The results of the tests showed that about 12% of the variance in international student's achievement can be explained by challenges to university. Thus hypothesis two was supported by the data. However, as the results of the stepwise regression test show, the Beta weight for cultural stress is negative (Beta=-0.189). This indicates that the better level of cultural stress to university (which is reverse coded here) leads to a better students' achievement. In contrast, as it was shown in Table 10, the Beta weight for university activities was positive (Beta=0.389), which indicates that university activities positively affects student's achievement at university; a higher university activity correlates with higher Last CGPA.

Prediction of academic achievement with demographic characteristics

Multiple regressions was conducted to examined the effect of demographic characteristics on international student achievement. Multiple regression analysis was performed utilizing international students' GPAs as dependent variable, and demographic characteristics as predictors. Multiple regressions was used to determine if student success could be predicted as a function of student academic achievement, and to find which of these demographic characteristics best predicts student's success in university. The results of multiple regression analysis for all demographic characteristics are presented in Table 8.

Table 8 stepwise regression for demographic characteristics

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.999a	.997	.973	.05537

a. Predictors: (Constant), Major source/s of Financial Support, Number of hours spent calling family per week, Number of study hours during final semester, Gender of student, Age of student (Years), Name of University, Number of study hours per day, Religion, Level of Degree studying in Bangladesh, Previous experience studying abroad before coming Bangladesh, Average monthly expenses in University (BDT), Last academic result during study in home country, If yes result, Marital Status, Number of study years completed before coming Bangladesh, Length of stay in this university in (years), Country of Origin, Present accommodation in University

According to Table 8 demographic characteristics predicts academic adjustment, the multiple regression analysis indicated that all demographic characteristics explained nearly 100% of the variance (Adjusted R^2=0.973, F (18, 2) = 40.699, p=0.024b) in student success. The summary of multiple regression statistics for the variables predicting students' success is presented in Table 9.

Table 9 ANOVA results for stepwise regression giving demographic characteristics with last CGPA

Model		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.246	18	.125	40.699	.024b
	Residual	.006	2	.003		
	Total	2.252	20			

a. Dependent Variable: Last CGPA/GPA

b. Predictors: (Constant), Major source/s of Financial Support, Number of hours spent calling family per week, Number of study hours during final semester, Gender of student, Age of student (Years), Name of University, Number of study hours per day, Religion, Level of Degree studying in Bangladesh, Previous experience studying abroad before coming Bangladesh, Average monthly expenses in University (BDT), Last academic result during study in home country, If yes result, Marital Status, Number of study years completed before coming Bangladesh, Length of stay in this university in (years), Country of Origin, Present accommodation in University.

Table 10 Summary of multiple regression statistics for variables predicting academic achievement

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	2.503	.609		4.111	.054
AS (Years)	-.002	.007	-.039	-.299	.793
LARHC	.241	.070	.263	3.459	.074
LSTU (years)	-.127	.019	-.630	-6.522	.023
NSHD	.078	.014	.592	5.644	.030
NSHDFS	-.007	.007	-.117	-.975	.432
NHSCFW	.001	.002	.020	.333	.771
AMEU(BDT)	-.0000072	.000	-.142	-.817	.500
NU	-.099	.069	-.274	-1.442	.286
GS	.569	.066	.740	8.656	.013
Rel	-.180	.058	-.274	-3.106	.090
MS	-.111	.062	-.153	-1.785	.216
CO	-.418	.064	-1.106	-6.527	.023
NSYCBB	.074	.028	.392	2.607	.121
LDB	.253	.036	.647	7.064	.019
PESBD	.584	.072	.624	8.155	.015
PRSA	.454	.099	.505	4.579	.045
YPAU	-.495	.150	-1.101	-3.309	.080
MSFS	-.111	.035	-.257	-3.157	.087

a. Dependent Variable: Last CGPA/GPA

b. Predictors: (Constant), Major source/s of Financial Support, Number of hours spent calling family per week, Number of study hours during final semester, Gender of student, Age of student (Years), Name of University, Number of study hours per day, Religion, Level of Degree studying in Bangladesh, Previous experience studying abroad before coming Bangladesh, Average monthly expenses in University (BDT), Last academic result during study in home country, If yes result, Marital Status, Number of study years completed before coming Bangladesh, Length of stay in this university in (years), Country of Origin, Present accommodation in University

Table 11 shows the summary of multiple regression statistics for the variables predicting students' achievement. The results of the table indicated that gender of student (Beta=.740, p=0.013), Previous experience studying abroad before coming Bangladesh (Beta= 0.624, p=0.015), Level of Degree you are studying in Bangladesh (Beta= 0.647, p=0.019), How long do you been in this university in (years) (Beta= -0.630, p=0.023), Country of Origin (Beta= .505, p=0.045), Number of study hours per day (Beta= 1.592, p=0.030), Previous result abroad (Beta= 1.592, p=0.030) demographic characteristics are significantly predicted international student achievement in university. The Betas for gender of student, Previous experience studying abroad before coming Bangladesh, Level of Degree you are studying in Bangladesh, duration of in this university in (years), Country of Origin, Number of study hours per day and Previous result abroad indicate that the gender of student, Previous experience studying abroad before coming Bangladesh, Level of Degree studying in Bangladesh, Number of study hours per day, Previous result abroad has positive correlation with student's GPA and, in contrast, Country of Origin, duration of in this university in (years) has a negative correction with student achievement (GPA). Since the Country of Origin and duration of in this university in (years) are reverse coded and the beta weight is negative, these results show that it was positively affecting international students' achievement at university: the better the gender of student, Previous experience studying abroad before coming Bangladesh, Level of Degree studying in Bangladesh, How long do you been in this university in (years), Country of Origin, Number of study hours per day and Previous result abroad are, the better the last CGPA gets. The regression equation for the multiple regressions is presented in the following:
Y=2.503-.127(LSTU)+.078(NSHD)+.569(GS)-.418(CO)+.253(LDB)+.584(PESBD)+.454(PRSA)

Multiple regressions were used to examine the relationship between demographic characteristics and academic achievement. The results of the tests showed that 97 % of the variance in international student's achievement can be explained by demographic characteristics to university. Thus hypothesis five is supported by the data.

Conclusion

Generally, from the results found it was concluded that UA indicates a median access towards the use of the facilities as their counterpart do "local students" do. Hence it brings in challenges among them for not utilizing the university facilities to its fullest.

The second challenge experienced is CS among the international student which shows that occasionally CS occurred during their stay in Bangladesh as majority of the respondents said they receive unequal treatment and also feeling homesick for their country. This shows cultural stress among the international students.

Communication is another challenge experienced by the international students based on the current study. It was found that the respondents were neutral as their overall mean stands below the general mean and the level of communication in their respective universities is English as their mode of communication in class.

Recommendations

1. Universities should organize a class on local communication skills in order to prepare the international students for interaction and successful life in the host community.
2. Provide multicultural activities on campus to raise awareness about international students' needs and their presence in the school.
3. Encourage the International Center to conduct periodic surveys to assess the experience of international students.
4. Enhance the communications between the director of the International Center and the instructors/teachers interacting with of international students.

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