Status of Private University Students in the Eye of Employers

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Abstract: The study has investigated the status of private university students in the eye of employers. The study collected information from 16 employers who are directly or indirectly involved in hiring process through open-ended questionnaire. Data was analyzed to have an idea about employers' attitude about private university students. The result shows both positive as well as negative picture about private university students. The study is going to contribute not only theoretically; fresh graduate will be benefited by getting the idea of employers' attitude toward them.
Keywords: Employers, Attitude, Status, Private University.

INTRODUCTION
Problem Statement

One of the major purposes of students to start university life is the expectation that after completing the study they will get and secure a good job on the basis of what they have learnt in their formal educational institutions. Though they have little awareness about the expectation/ attitude of employers toward them as well as their current position compare to employers expectation. On the other hand employers seem to have overly high expectations from graduates, including management experience, excellent grades, superior presentation and communication skills, positive attitude, and even expecting entry-level graduates to have done charity and volunteer work [1].

Sometimes they also make difference between public and private university students in case of recruitment. Especially in Bangladesh it is clearly seen that employers have different attitude for different universities. They make difference between public and private university students; particularly priority is given on public university [2]. Thus the conflict arises between employees' anticipations and the existent. So a central question is what the students of private university need to do to satisfy the employers?

Now to prepare themselves for employment battle it is very important primarily to know what sort of approach employers have toward private university students. Then based on these information private university students will be able to prepare themselves and meet the expectations of employers.

Overview of Bangladeshi Private Universities

Traditionally public universities manage the arena of higher education. In 1990s government of Bangladesh started realizing that existing public universities are not capable to meet the growing demand for higher education, as a matter of fact the need for setting up private universities was a burning issue. In 1992 the first government private university was established and with a short span of time it was followed by others. At present there are 115 government approved universities in Bangladesh. Among these 97 are private & 40 are public universities (including National & Open University), [3] for the year 2018.

The main commitments of the private universities are to meet the growing demand for higher education as well as creating efficient manpower for economic development of the country. Besides it ensures quality of services by welcoming new customers where they can place their voice, higher management standards with better paid and motivated staff are some of the innovative contribution of private universities [4].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Attitude is the one of the most central [5, 6], distinctive and indispensable [7] concept of social psychology which is outlined in a variety of way by several scholars. As per Droba [8] Attitude is someone's opinion or perception about something, which engenders from society or surroundings where

usually a person has an attachment. Myers [9] claimed that attitude refers to "feelings, often influenced by our beliefs that predispose us to respond in a particular way to objects, people, and events." Whereas Bhattacharyya [10] argued that attitude is a mental function of an individual that prepares a person to respond for or against objects or situations. Basically attitude is an important foundation of existence which helps to interact with others by influencing the behavior that allows people to stand on a decision. Moreover it is a predisposition to respond either favorably or unfavorably.

Employers' attitude involve how an employer considers his /her employee i.e. what is their view in terms of recruitment, selection, training, employee performance and so on. The requirements of employers' are increasing dramatically day by day because of rapid change in organizational and employment structure [11]. Having knowledge about employers attitude is very important, especially for potential jobseekers and fresh graduates as this knowledge will help the graduates to prepare themselves as per the requirement of employers.

A lot of research has been conducted regarding employers attitude toward diversified area such as race [12], drug testing [13], epilepsy [14], child labor [15], long-term unemployed people [16], disabled workforce [17], older workers [18], employability skills [19], sustainable business knowledge [20] and so on. Though some studies have been conducted regarding employers preferred competencies [21-29] in employee selection but very few researches have been conducted regarding the position of private university students in case of recruitment in the eye of employers.

Some research closer to existing study was pioneered by Kape [30] where employer attitudes toward Pennsylvania's one of vocational technical schools was analyzed and the study revealed that the students of that institution have a good personal relations skills, adequate job competency and better job attitudes. Later National Center for Postsecondary Improvement [31] made a study on employer perceptions of the work-readiness of college graduates. Another study by Ume-Amen [32] determined the gap between the performance of fresh graduates and employers' expectations through KSA (knowledge, skills and abilities) approach in service industry. In 2015 another research had been conducted by Badgujar

to explore the mindset of Indian employers in terms of hiring the engineers. At the same time another study was carried out by Kulkarni *et al.*, [33] where he examined the concept of over qualification, matched, and mismatched qualification of employers. And from that research it was found that employers get satisfied if they get overqualified applicant. A study nearer to existing study was conducted by Hossain and Naeema [2] which reflected the job possibilities of public and private university students of Bangladesh after accomplishing graduation. But none of the study so far has talked about employers' attitude toward private university students. By identifying the research gap this study is going to identify the attitude of employers about private university students.

Objective
The aim of the study is to find the employers attitude toward the status of private university students in staffing in Bangladesh. More specifically, this paper attempts to investigate the positive and negative viewpoint of employers before hiring graduate who is from private university.

METHODOLOGY
Qualitative research method was undertaken to investigate the attitude of employers. When it is important to know the meaning people ascribe and conceptualize the problems qualitative research cooperates significantly [34]. The data was gathered based on open-ended questionnaire survey by following the pioneering study of Kulkarni [33]. 25 questionnaire were sent via email to different level employers who are directly or indirectly involve with hiring process and 16 of them were returned with proper information. Data has been collected from mid-July to mid-August, 2016.

The study developed a list of questions to capture the perceptions of various types of employers who belong to diverse levels and organization background. The first question was about the role of individual respondents in hiring decisions (What is your role in hiring decisions?). This helped to have an idea about the range of employers and their role in the selection process. The second question (In terms of hiring how you consider private university students?) is based on the consideration of employers headed for private university students is hiring. This aided to understand employers mind set i.e. whether they make any discrimination in hiring on the basis of the candidates' universities.

Table-1: Profile Variable

Respondent number	Gender	Position/designation	Organization type
1	Female	Head of HR	Enterprises & Co. Ltd.
2	Male	Assistant Vice President	Commercial Bank (1)
3	Male	Area Manager	Telecommunication (1)
4	Female	Principal Officer	Commercial Bank (2)
5	Male	Deputy Manager (Finance)	Power Distribution Co.
6	Male	Senior Officer	Commercial Bank (3)
7	Male	Senior Executive Officer	Commercial Bank (4)
8	Male	Associate Manager	Commercial Bank (5)
9	Male	Deputy Manager	Foreign Aided Govt. Project
10	Male	Deputy General Manager	Telecommunication (2)
11	Female	Management Trainee Officer	Financial Institution
12	Male	Head Of HR	Freight Forwarding
13	Male	Regional Sales Manager	Foods & Beverage Co.
14	Male	Principal officer	Commercial Bank (6)
15	Male	Manager, Treasury & Investment Banking Operations	Commercial Bank (7)
16	Male	Project Coordination Officer	UNDP

The third (Any positive….) and fourth (Any negative….) questions covered the positive and negative side of the private university students that the employers think, which indicates the advantages and as well as negative aspects of the private university students that employers might face during their employment lifetime.

FINDINGS

Most of the respondents are directly/indirectly related to the hiring decision. So it helped to collect the real market scenario about employers' attitude toward private university students. One respondent said "*I can recommend/ strongly recommend, can take part in interviews of sales personals for roles below me.*" Another respondent defined "*I recommend for other department and take decision for hiring in my team.*" Another response was "*I am Member Secretary of Project Recruitment Committee.*"

In the second part of the questionnaire the respondents were asked, how they consider private university students in case of hiring. One respondent mentioned, "*I consider private university students as a prospective candidate like other candidates from public universities. Everybody has to go through a recruitment process. Anybody can be hired if he/she can prove themselves for the post. However, our organization has some preferences due to organizational culture. Many private universities have not even permanent campus. Thus they have little extracurricular activities thereon and not preferred by the organization.*" Another respondent hold, "*We strongly consider well-reputed private university students, a good chunk of our team members are from private universities.*" Another respondent explained that, "*Our organization has some specific private universities listed by the board/management to be considered while recruiting.*" One of the respondents extended that, "*We consider candidates having excellent academic results from reputed private university.*" Another respondent reflected, "*Private University students are good as well, have good potentials to become professionals. Worrying about the declining quality and readiness to feed industry talent pipeline. While they have very good computer & English language knowledge/skills often they are found overconfident and over ambitious ... which can bring frustrations and dis-engagement in work life.*"

In the third and fourth part of the questionnaire the respondents gave their opinions about some positive and negative sides that work as important factors in terms of private university students in hiring. Some of the positive aspects are

"*They are good at presentation/public speaking, customer service, computer application, skillful in English language, smart, enthusiastic, better presenter and good business understanding and communication capability.*"

"*Good dress up & get up.*"

"*They are smart & well decorated.*"

"*Good presentation skill, good convincing ability, greater focus on sales and marketing, easily motivated, lobbying power, candidates from private university complete their course in time.*"

"*Got good body language, good posture. Skillful in English language, Computer application, Can take lead to talk on a topic in public easily, Good presentation skills.*"

"*Many students of few private universities are from English medium schools. Thus, to some extent,*

their communication and presentation skills are better than students of other universities. Moreover, in few cases, student of private universities get better amenities than public universities at remote areas. So they have better knowledge on modern technologies than students from other universities of remote areas."

Different respondents gave different answers regarding the negative aspects. Some common responses, "*Power of understanding, eagerness to work, sincerity, respectability, & timeliness is so poor. They are basically weak in Mathematics & General Knowledge. So they are not perfect for core & analytical function.*"

"*Candidates from Private University have less exposed to real problems of the society. They also have lack of in depth knowledge and lack of confidence in challenging situation.*"

"*I think getting admission to a private university is not a matter of merit since these universities are simply run for profit motive so students have a shallow knowledge about what he/she has been studied for.*"

"*At times their aspirations and expectations from employer are too high and their perception about corporates sometimes away from reality and low job loyalty. They are less willing to work outside of their current city where they live.*"

CONCLUSION

Most of the respondents prefer those students of private universities who has good grades as well as that university belong to top 10 in the rank. Furthermore they think that private university students are smart, well decorated with good presentation, convincing and lobbying ability. They have sound knowledge about computer and other technological devices. And they complete their course in time and easily motivated.

On the other hand their level of understanding, eagerness to work, sincerity, timeliness, role as a team player is quite poor. In addition they are not ready to serve anywhere in the country and lack of confidence when there is something challenging. They are reluctant to enter into depth of works/subject, fail to understand the global effects/side effects, their aspirations and expectations from employer are too high and have a tendency to show off. Exclusively in case of research related or other analytical work, the employers' mostly prefer public universities students because of their rich subject knowledge.

Overall employer also argued that graduates have to prove themselves doesn't matter whether s/he is from public or private university and have to have those qualification that are job specific.

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