

Acknowledgement

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Abstract

North South University (NSU) is the first private university in Bangladesh. NSU has a very high reputation in the country for being the first private university of the country and for providing quality education. But this is not all that can make the students of this university satisfied. There are many determinants of students' satisfaction, which are found out through this research. Some of the determinants are internal factors (which are directly related to core study) and external factors (which are not directly related to core study). Survey was conducted among the students (30 samples were taken for the paper) of the university for coming to a conclusion and interviews were also taken. The paper found out that students of NSU are not that satisfied with the internal factors of the university but they are quite satisfied with the external factors. Overall, considering all the factors together and the country as a whole, the students are satisfied with their university, although they want some quick positive changes in some of the sectors. The results stated have proved all the hypotheses to be right.

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Introduction

According to Oxford Learners Dictionary satisfaction means the good feeling that you have when you have achieved something or when something that you wanted to happen does happen. Personally, being a student of NSU, I am concerned about some of the factors of the university. So I wanted to find out how the other students think about this university and what their satisfaction level is. Mostly people are emotional while judging something at once. Accordingly when someone is asked about his or her satisfaction level on something, he or she expresses the answer which is mostly influenced by emotion. Emotion: One way of thinking holds that the mental process of decision-making is (or should be) rational: a formal process based on optimizing utility. Rational thinking and decision-making does not leave much room for emotions. In fact, emotions are often considered irrational occurrences that may distort reasoning (Wikipedia). So, a systematic way was quite necessary to set up questionnaire to find the rational result, which is more accepted.

The public and private universities are responsible to provide higher education but due to profit-making motive of private universities and lack of awareness of public universities, it is quite impossible to ensure quality education (Uddin, et al, 2011). When the previous studies suggest things like this, it automatically comes in question about the performance of North South University, the first private university in Bangladesh, to satisfy the needs of the students and satisfy them.

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

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

This study shows that only 93% of the students under study are overall satisfied with their universities and the most influential factor concerning their satisfaction is the ‘teachers’ quality’ and the factors that make the university well known to all the people in and out of the country. Factors like arrangements of seminars, job fair, business fair, club activities, and most importantly the reputation of the university in Bangladesh and in job market make the students of NSU very satisfied to be a student of this university. The findings of the study may prove helpful for the policy-makers to formulate guiding principles in this sector.

Background

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). When the Private University Act was passed in 1992 (Amended 1998) and North South University (NSU) became the first private university in Bangladesh. Since its birth it has a good reputation all over the country for many reasons. Students, after completing their 12th grade, want to study in a good university. Of course, their first choice is to get admitted in Dhaka University (DU) or BUET. Since those universities are public and have limited number of seats for students, not all can fulfil their dreams. So the students try to get the next best alternative available to them. Private university is one of the best alternatives, although not all the students can afford to study there.

The cost of studies in the private universities is relatively higher than the costs in the public universities. Although quality of education in some private universities is encouraging, the admission and other fees are not affordable to the country's middle and lower-middle class families (UGC Bulletin, April-June_2011). Only rich parents can consider paying the high fees and other costs of studies for their children. In exchange for high tuition fees and other costs, the students that come from affluent families expect to receive high quality education from these private universities (Ashraf et al,2009). Hence, customer evaluations of the quality of education should be an integral part of overall quality management in any of the organizations (Haque, 2004). Several studies are available on the cost of studies, quality of education, parameters of the higher education in the private sectors of Bangladesh, but studies are rarely found on the students studying in the private universities in Bangladesh about their the opinion on satisfaction attitudes towards various issues and the factors affecting their satisfaction level. Under this context, the present study takes an initiative to conduct an empirical study on this particular issue.

Those students, whose parents can afford to make their child study in a better environment, tend to choose the best universities at first among the private universities of the country, NSU being their first choice in most of the cases.

Finally when a student gets admitted in the first private university, with very good reputation, they enter the new world with many expectations. But is NSU capable of satisfying the expectations properly? According to academicians, researchers, various committee (UGC led High Powered Committee, 2003) or commissions report (UGC, PSC), newspapers report and public perception, are the quality of education of the private university is deteriorating sharply. To know about students' perception, this research paper is done. The determinants of students' satisfaction level are very important to be identified. The factors that determine the satisfaction of the students are quality of education, quality of faculty members, resource, library, canteen, space, administration, overall reputation, reputation in the job market, arrangement of seminars, affiliation with foreign universities, club activities, arrangement of business fair, arrangement of job fair etc.

Once the determinants are identified, the entire scenario of the country, the condition of the other private universities in Bangladesh, the quality in public universities need to be considered while measuring the students' satisfaction level at NSU. Some factors mentioned are directly related to the core study while the other factors are not directly related to the core study. But all the factors play important roles to build reputation and most importantly students' satisfaction.

Areas of research

The main objective of the research paper is to find out the overall satisfaction level of the students of North South University. As identified before, the determinants of students' satisfaction were tested to find the actual result. The factors that determine the satisfaction of the students are quality of education, quality of faculty members, resource, library, canteen, space, campus facilities, administration, overall reputation of the university, reputation in the job market, arrangement of seminars, affiliation with foreign universities, club activities, arrangement of business fair, arrangement of job fair, arrangements of cultural programs etc. All these factors are categorised into two sections, one being the internal factors' section (factors which are directly related to core study) and the other being the external factors' section (factors which are not directly related to core study).

The students, while filling up the surveys and giving interviews, expressed their deep concern and dissatisfaction towards the internal factors of the university. All the students are found to be quite dissatisfied with one common issue, "advising". They are also dissatisfied with many other issues like food at canteen, resource access, labs etc. Some students also questioned the quality of education here at NSU.

As the external factors came into consideration, all the students seemed to be very happy and satisfied with their university. They think NSU is the best among all the private universities in consideration of the external factors which consists of issues like overall reputation of the

university, reputation in the job market, arrangement of seminars, affiliation with foreign universities, club activities, arrangement of business fair, arrangement of job fair, arrangements of cultural programs etc.

Finally the overall satisfaction level (considering all the factors) of the students seemed to be quite satisfied. Out of 30 samples, an average score of 3.67 out of a scale of 5 of their satisfaction level was found out, meaning although there are many internal problems at NSU, because of the other factors, they are satisfied.

Hypotheses

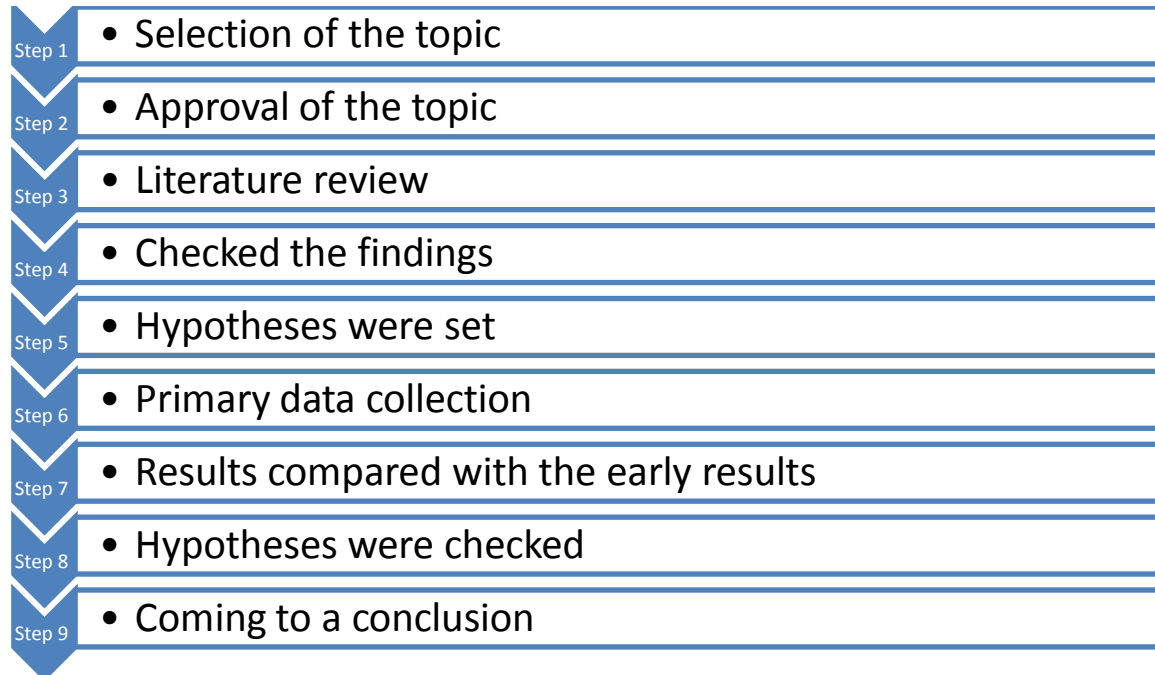
After going through the secondary sources and knowing about some of the earlier findings, I set three hypotheses before conducting my surveys based on which my questioner was set. The three hypotheses are that students are dissatisfied about multiple internal factors of the university, when external factors come into consideration, the students are quite satisfied and finally overall, considering all the factors, the students of NSU are satisfied.

Methodology

After selection and approval of the research topic, at first I went through as many literature reviews as possible. Although no research was done on my research topic previously, I could not get the result based on my topic. But research on related topics like quality of education in private universities in Bangladesh, women enrollment in private universities, satisfaction of students of private universities, students' choice of private universities etc. helped me a lot to proceed with my research paper. TV talk shows on related topic, blog discussion, internet, daily newspaper, journals were also gone through before collecting the primary data on my research.

Based on the literature reviews the hypotheses were set to be tested on the students of NSU only since the research topic is about the satisfaction level of the students of NSU. A survey questionnaire was set based on the determinants of satisfaction of students which were found out by going through the literature review. The survey questionnaire was given to 50 students but at the end 30 were taken as sample for simplicity of the work. Personal and group interviews were also conducted to know in detail about the topic in question.

After the collection of primary data, the results obtained were compared with those results found earlier by other researchers. And finally the hypotheses were checked, whether the hypotheses were proved to be right or wrong so that the research paper can be brought to a conclusion.

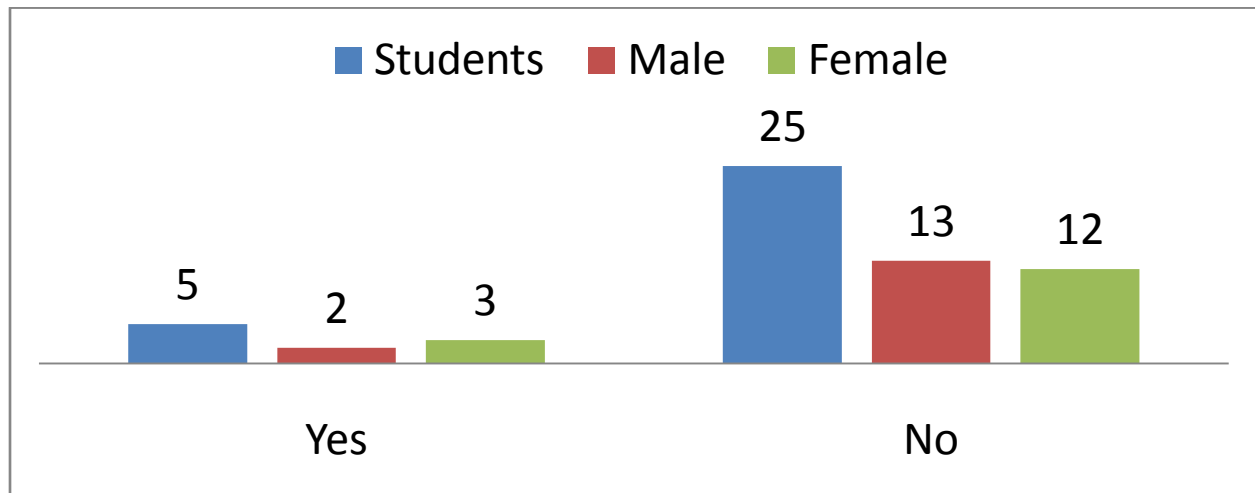


Primary data presentation and analysis

Primary data were collected by survey questionnaire, personal and group interviews. Since interview data are not measurable and were done only to know the reasons behind the satisfaction or dissatisfaction, data and results from survey questionnaire only are used in this section.

The survey questions were divided in two sections, first section was about internal factors of the university and the second section was about the external factors of the university. This was done because mostly students think about the internal factors only, which is more emotionally biased rather than rational judgment, when they judge their satisfaction.

- To know the first reaction of the students about the university, a very straight forward question was asked. The question was “Are you satisfied as a student of NSU?” The result appeared in the following way.

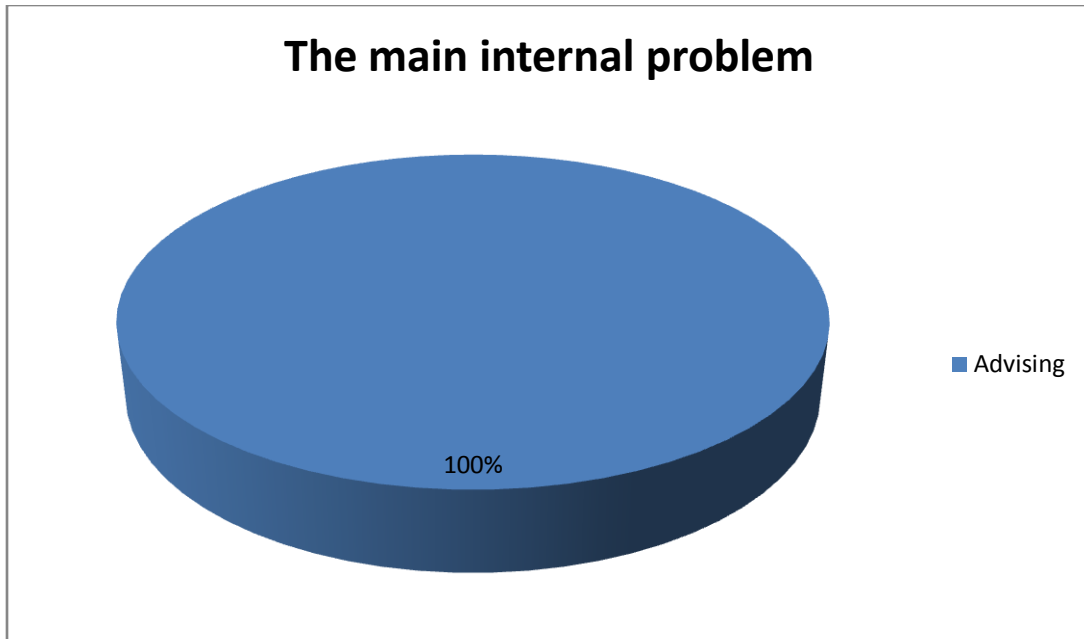


The above graph shows the number of students, among the 30 samples taken for this research paper, who said that they are satisfied to be a student of NSU at the very first reaction. It also shows the number of students who said that they are dissatisfied. The labels in the x-axis are the responds while the figures in the y-axis are the number of respondents for the independent variable in the x-axis.

From the graph it can be seen that total 5 out of 30 students (2 male and 3 female students) said that they are satisfied while 25 students (13 male and 12 female) said that they are not. This graph clearly indicates how people/students make judgment quickly and emotionally.

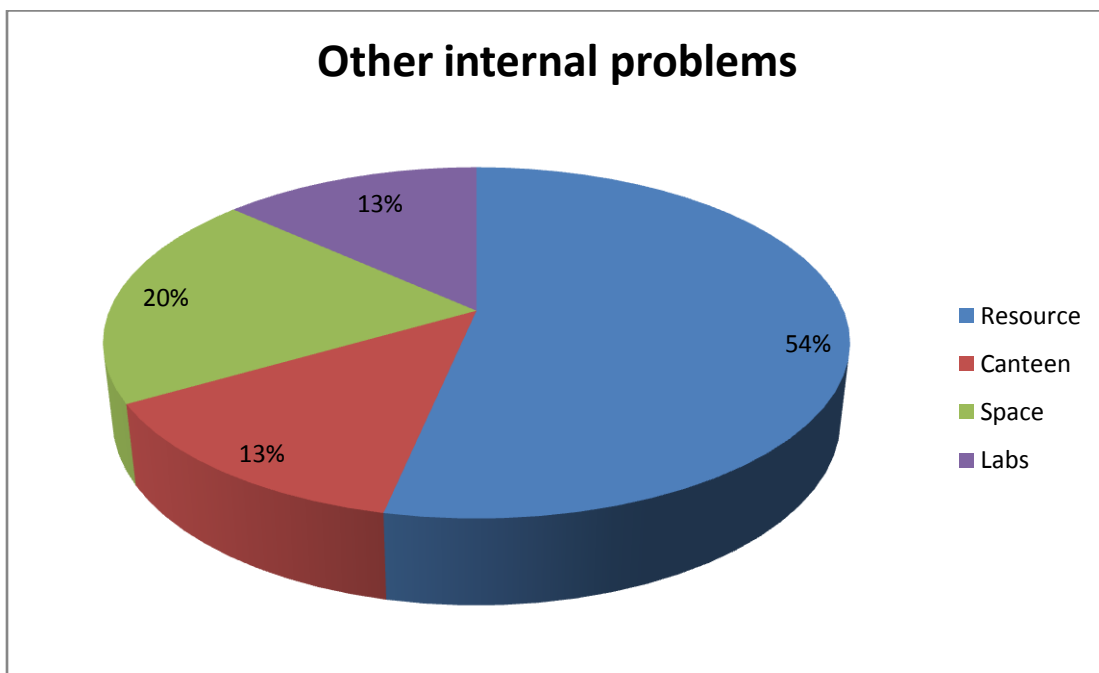
Internal factors:

- The most problematic issue of the university as stated by all the sample number of students is the advising problem.



The above pie chart clearly demonstrates that 100% of the sample faces problems with the advising issue of the university. This is one of the major factors of students' dissatisfaction. Students from all departments agreed that they have serious problems with the advising system of the university and they think this problem needs to be solved immediately before solving any other problems.

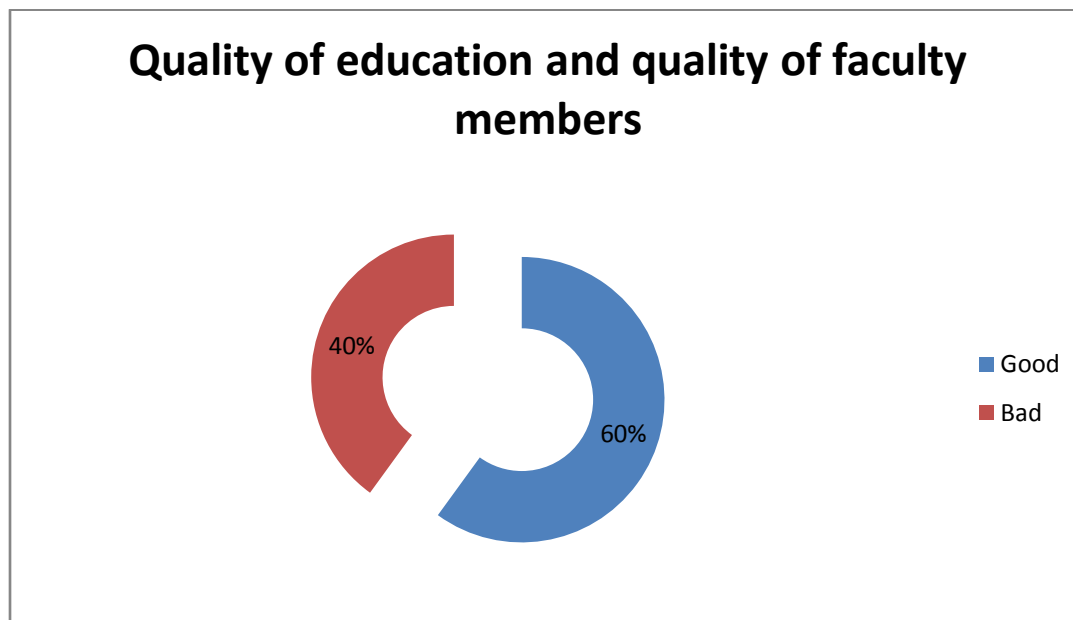
- There are also other problems in the university which make students dissatisfy.



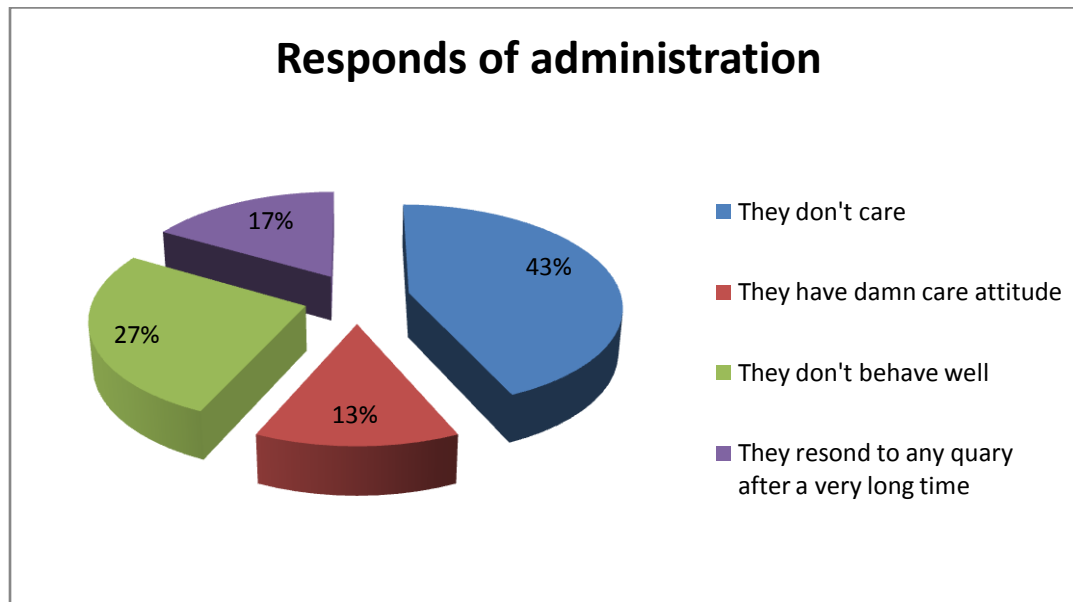
The above pie chart shows the other internal problems that exist in the university about which the students are highly concerned. From the graph it is seen that 54% of the sample students are dissatisfied with the resource access problem while 13% are dissatisfied with the university's canteen, 13% with lab facilities and 20% dissatisfied with the available space inside the campus for so many number of students. 54% of the sample is actually 100% of the BBA department, which means that all the business students are facing immense problem with resource access while mostly the engineering students and the pharmaceuticals students face problems with labs. The rest 20% are students from other departments of the university.

- The quality of education and quality of faculty members:

When students were asked about their opinion on the quality of education and quality of faculty members, 60% of the sample students said that the quality is good, very good or excellent while the rest of the 40% thinks that the quality is below average. This may be well because some students may have faced some difficulties with some of the courses or with the faculty members for which they came to a conclusion. But it does not measure sincerity of the students. A good student may also face various problems studying in university.



- About the administration of the university, no student was found to be happy. 30 out of 30 samples gave negative answers about the administration of the university.



As shown in the above pie chart, 43% of the students think the administration of the university actually do not care about the students and their problems. 27% of the students think that the administration officials do not behave well with the students, 17% said that they get respond about any query from the administration after a very long time, after so long that the students no longer need that information. Finally 13% of the students think the administration has a damn care attitude, which is a pity for any university.

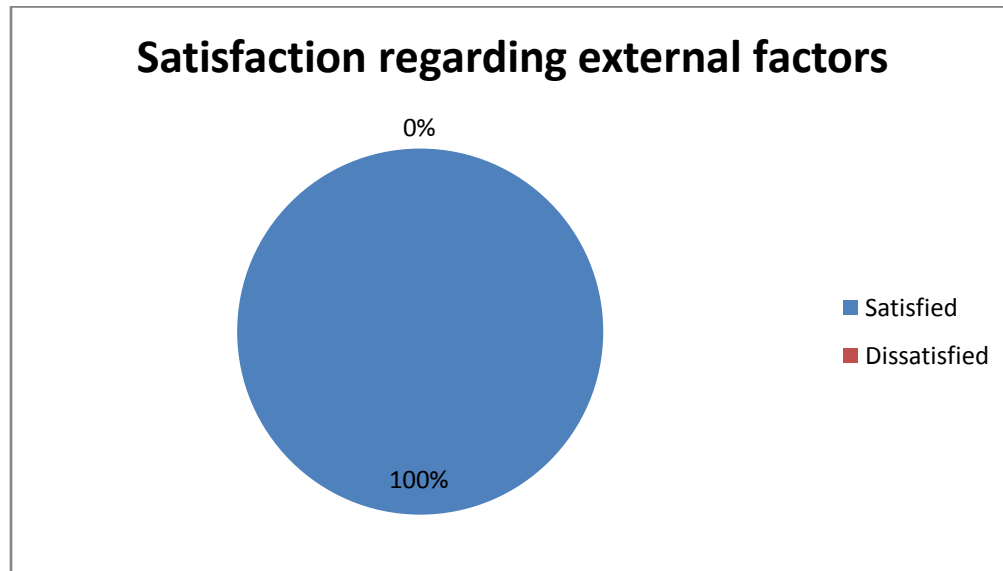
None of the students were happy about the administration of the university as they filled out the survey with negative responds while answering the question regarding the administration of NSU.

External factors:

Not a single student had any negative answer in this particular section. All the students seemed to be happy about various external factors of the university. All the students (30 samples) believe that NSU is very good and sometimes the best in arranging seminars, having affiliation with foreign universities, club activities, arranging business fair, arranging of job fair etc.

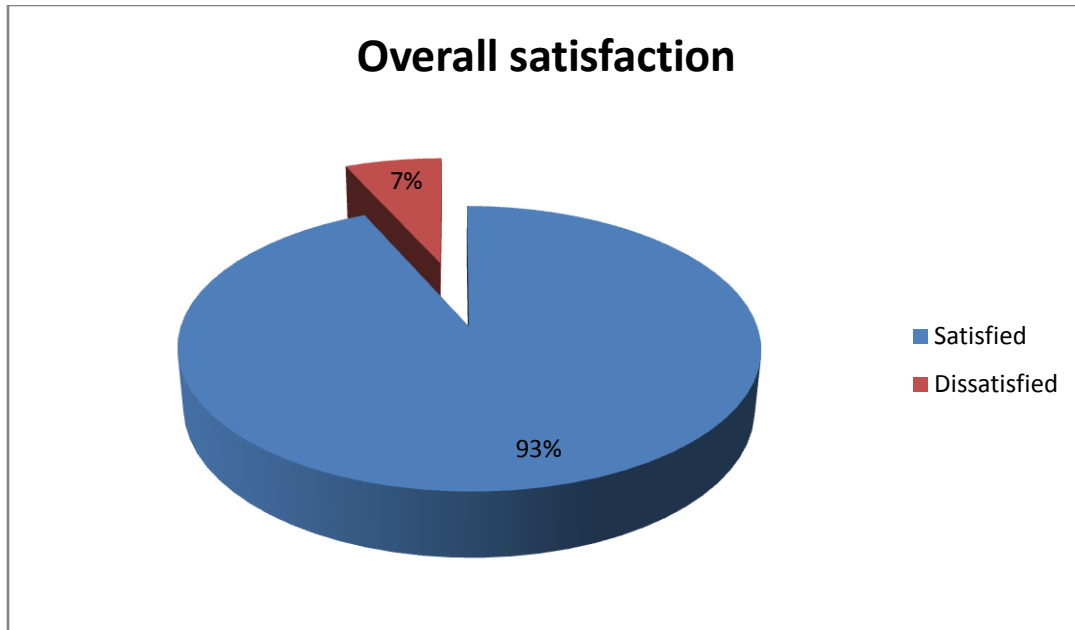
Students also firmly believe that NSU has a very high reputation as a university in Bangladesh and has a very high reputation in the job market for being able to produce good quality students.

- When students were asked about their satisfaction level about the external factors of NSU, all the students said that they are happy and satisfied.



Overall findings:

Considering all the factors (internal and external), the surrounding and the country as a whole, when students were asked to express their satisfaction level, almost all the students changed their initial answer from being dissatisfied (answer of the very first question in the survey) to being satisfied. At the end of the survey it was found that 28 out of 30 students were found to be satisfied while 2 students remained unsatisfied despite their good response in the external factors' section. This clearly suggests that the initial answers of the students were mostly judged emotionally and not rationally.



The above pie chart is a representation of the overall satisfaction of the students of the university. 93% of NSU, at the end of the survey said that they are satisfied while 7% still remained dissatisfied. But initially the result was the other way round, with only 17% of the students found to be initially satisfied while the rest were found to be dissatisfied. 92% of the students who were initially dissatisfied changed their answers at the end of the survey.

Rating:

Finally, at the very end of the survey, students were asked to rate their satisfaction level out of a scale of 5, 5 being the maximum rating. And the result appeared as follows:



The above pie chart shows how the sample rated their satisfaction level. 60% of the sample rated their satisfaction level to be 4, 27% rated their satisfaction level to be 3, while 6% of the students rate 5 and 7% rated 2. There was no rating as 1, which means no student is extremely dissatisfied about NSU. From this chart it can be easily understood that students of NSU are in fact satisfied, if not fully, with their university. Most of the ratings were high, making the average score of satisfaction level 3.67 out of 5.

Secondary data presentation and analysis

Collecting data from secondary sources was a difficult task as no research was previously done on this topic. But results from previous researches were found which helped in the preparation of this research paper.

The secondary sources include journals, daily news paper, TV talk shows, blogs, related research papers.

From the journals various topics about different universities both public and private, including NSU, were taken. This helped to compare the state of NSU with all the other

universities in Bangladesh. Various issues and events of different universities were reported in the journals of The Daily Star, The Independent, The Bangladesh Observer, The Daily Ittefaq, The Daily Prothom Alo etc. Various issues of North South University were also reported in those journals. From these journals, many news things could have been identified about the university, which, later, were used as determinants of satisfaction of the students of NSU. Various problems that exist in private universities, including NSU, were also reported in those journals from where the sectors of dissatisfaction were also identified. Students' perceptions about their universities were also identified by going through the journals.

The daily news paper like The Daily Star, The Independent, The Bangladesh Observer, The Daily Ittefaq, The Daily Prothom Alo etc. reported many incidents and problems that take place in the universities of our country. The reports on such incidents and problems helped me to identify the condition of NSU and compare the university with the other private universities in the country. From this section as well, the determinants of students' satisfaction were identified which were used in this research paper.

TV talk shows, which mainly is a place to share and exchange opinions, helped me to find out the satisfaction level of the universities, including NSU. Students' way of thinking, what makes them satisfied and what does not make them satisfied could have been studied after going through the TV talk shows which appear in various Bangladeshi TV channels like Channel I, ATN Bangla, ATN News, Independent News, NTV, Bangla Vision etc.

Internet blogs were also important secondary source for the preparing of this research paper. Mostly discussion of students in various blogs about their studies and university condition were taken into consideration. Blogs are a space in internet where people can share their ideas and opinions freely and this helped me to get detailed idea about various aspects of satisfaction among students of various universities across Bangladesh, including NSU.

Most important of all the secondary sources that I went through before I prepared my research paper was the research paper done earlier by other people on related topics. Although no research was done exactly on my topic, but the research papers on closely related topics helped me proceed with ease. The research papers helped me to set my methodology, set a systematic way for arranging questions in the survey questionnaire, conduct the survey keeping

various things into consideration. Research paper “Students' Satisfaction: A Study among Private University Students of Bangladesh” helped me to identify the most important determinants of students’ satisfaction in private universities in Bangladesh. Identifying the determinants helped me to set the questionnaire in a systematic order which helped to bring out the outcomes of my primary data with much ease.

There were other research papers as well which concentrated on education quality of private universities in Bangladesh, students’ choice criteria to select a private university for their higher education in Bangladesh, consumers’ perception of quality towards private universities in Bangladesh, the state of private universities in Bangladesh: an evaluation of student’s perception, quality education management at private universities in Bangladesh. The mention research papers also helped to set a standard based on which the test at NSU was carried out and then compared.

Although previous studies by others found that only 47% of the students of private universities are satisfied with all that they receive from the university, the majority, 53% remained unhappy with their universities. Of course when students get enrolled in private universities, they get there with many expectations and when those are not found at the universities, they are found to be dissatisfied and in some cases, extremely dissatisfied.

Keeping this result in mind and all the factors that were identified through all the secondary sources, when research was done at NSU, it was found that compared to many other private universities in Bangladesh, NSU has a much better infrastructure, and other facilities which ultimately make many of the students of NSU satisfied with their university.

Limitations

Finding secondary sources exactly related to my research topic was a very difficult task. Since no earlier research was conducted on this very topic, closely related researches conducted earlier were taken into consideration for literature review.

NSU is a university where more than 10,000 students are enrolled. A very small sample (a sample of 30 students) was taken to test the hypotheses. It may well happen that the 30 students do not represent the satisfaction level of the other students truly.

Only students from undergraduate programs were surveyed and interviewed. Students from graduate program were not surveyed. So, how satisfaction varied with age group or maturity, could not be found out accurately.

Students who have already completed their studies from NSU were not included in the survey. Had it been possible to conduct survey on those students, then those students current status could have been compared with their survey results and more new information could have been found out, making the research paper a rich one, with more information.

Conclusion

The research helped me to find out many new things about students' behaviour, attitude towards university, their feeling on various issues, and most importantly the satisfaction level of the students of the university. Hopefully this research paper will help me in the future for a bigger project or a bigger research paper.

This topic is quite an important topic for me because this helped me to compare my satisfaction level as a student of NSU with the other students in the university and find out my state. This research paper can also help the authority of the university to look deep into the matters which are causing dissatisfaction, sometimes extreme dissatisfaction, among the students of the university.

This research paper was completed by taking into consideration the results from secondary sources which were not directly related to this research topic. This is one of the limitations alongside the other limitations mentioned in the appropriate section of this research paper. So if anyone wants to do their research work on this topic, they are advised to look into the limitations and take those into consideration, so that their findings are more meaningful.

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