

ISSN: 2313-2515

Bangladesh Journal of Educational Research

VOLUME 1 | ISSUE 2 | JULY 2015



INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION & RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF RAJSHAHI



Bangladesh Journal of Educational Research (BJER)

A half-yearly journal published by Institute of Education and Research (IER),
University of Rajshahi with financial assistance from
HEQEP-UGC, Bangladesh.

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Bangladesh Journal of Educational Research (BJER), Volume 1, Issue 2, July 2015, published by Institute of Education and Research (IER), University of Rajshahi, Syed Ismail Hossain Siraji Bhaban (1st Floor), Motihar, Rajshahi in June 2016. Phone: +88 0721 711168, E-mail: bjerr@ru.ac.bd

Printed by: Shahpir Chisty Printing Press, Kadirgong, Rajshahi

Price: Bangladesh Tk. 200.00, Abroad US\$ 10.00

Editorial Note

Due to the interdisciplinary predominantly in nature, the horizon of educational research is wide and it is always challenging to pin down a particular set of ideas as a basis of publishing a journal. This issue of this journal plans to record various educational issues of the Bangladeshi context which either have practical implications or put light on the theoretical bases of teaching-learning. In doing so, this issue of publication hovers from parental perspective in relation to early childhood education to classroom teaching-learning challenges at the secondary levels of education; or research on a suggested framework that can potentially predict the teachers' intention to perform in an inclusive classroom to writing on the necessity of need based curriculum. In addition, this issue presents one article focusing on the practical challenges associated with collecting data using interview techniques.

It is almost after one year this second issue of this journal is published. Honesty speaking, it took longer than we expected and it is solely due to search for good research works that have contemporary weightage.

One a final note, I would like to thank my editorial board along with all the reviewers for their assistance in every possible way.

Thank you very much.



Chief-in-Editor
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Call for Paper

Bangladesh Journal of Educational Research (BJER)

ISSN: 2313-2515

Due Date for Submission: November 30, 2016

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1. **Language:** The language of the manuscript must be in English.
2. **Submission Method:** Contributors should submit their manuscripts in .doc format and font should be Times New Roman All submissions are subjected to a blind peer review process, and must accord with the style guidelines set forth in the *Publication Manual of APA (The American Psychological Association, 6th edition)*. Manuscripts should be double-spaced with 1" margin. Abstract of the paper/article would be 150 words maximum and should have 3-5 keywords.
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Theory of Planned Behaviour as a Potential Framework for Predicting Teachers' Performances in the Inclusive Classrooms: A Review

M. Tariq Ahsan¹

Abstract: *Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has been widely applied in different disciplines for predicting behaviour of different groups or individuals by measuring attitudes. This theory has been claimed to be an effective model for predicting teachers' intention to perform in the classroom by calculating their attitudes towards the notion. The theory has also been applied for predicting teachers' intention to perform in inclusive classrooms. Based on the findings, revealed by replicating and following the theory in different studies, some recommendations were made that tend to have policy and practice level implications. Along with global research trends, several studies have also been conducted in the context of Bangladesh for predicting teachers' intention to perform in inclusive classrooms. Those studies have made some significant recommendations for the improvement of teacher education for inclusive education in the context of Bangladesh. This review based article is an attempt to familiarize the Theory of Planned Behaviour and its applications in the arena of teacher education for inclusive education in the global context; and also comparison of those findings are made with the studies conducted in Bangladesh context. Specific recommendations have been made based on the analysis of the study findings.*

Key words: *TPB, Teachers Performance, Inclusive Education.*

Introduction

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was proposed by Icek Ajzen (1985, 1991, 2005), which provides a useful model for understanding of how attitudes are formed based on the impact of different background variables (i.e. age, gender etc.), and also provides information on how attitudes are interpreted in predicting

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the behaviour. The TPB has been widely applied in different disciplines and claimed to be a successful model for predicting behaviour of different groups or individuals (Ajzen, 2011). This article is an attempt to understand how this theory can assist to predict teachers' intention to perform in the inclusive classroom.

TPB is an extension of the original theory, the Theory of Reasoned Action [TRA] (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973; 1980). The original TRA postulates that a person's behaviour is influenced or motivated by the intention to behaviour, and two independent determinants influence the formation of intention. The determinants include a person's attitudes towards the behaviour and the subjective norm towards the behaviour. However, the recent development of TPB postulates that any person's intention to carry out a behavioural act is dependent on three factors:

- a) the person's disposition to the behaviour, which means 'attitudes';
- b) the person's perceived/normative beliefs, based on the views of other, associated people, to perform or not to perform a behavioural action, which is also known as 'subjective norm'; and
- c) the person's perception towards his or her control to perform or not to perform a behavioural action through analysis of available environmental components, which is also known as 'perceived behavioural control' (Ajzen, 1991; 2005).

Attitude towards behaviour was defined as an evaluation by a person of his or her performance of this particular behaviour, which could either be positive or negative. Perceived behavioural control describes a person's reading of the amount of control they have over performing a behavioural action, based on an examination of available environmental components such as opportunities and resources. Subjective norm referred to surrounding people's belief or opinion approving or disapproving of certain behaviour. Assumptions derived from the TPB (Ajzen, 1991, 2005) propose that the more favourable a person's attitudes and the subjective norm, as well as the greater the perceived behavioural control, the stronger should be his or her intention to perform the behaviour.

Ajzen (2005) in his model of TPB further explained the effects of several background factors on the three components that contribute in predicting intention of a person to perform a behavioural action. Ajzen (2011) in his most recent publication argued that this theory cannot identify the origin of a person's

beliefs, but it can definitely explore background factors that influence a person's beliefs. The background factors could be categorized in three areas:

- **Personal**-that include personality traits, intelligence, values, emotions,
- **Social**-that include gender, age, religion, race, ethnicity, education background, income &
- **Informational**-that include previous knowledge, previous experience, media exposure.

Ajzen (2005) mentioned that these three categories of background factors influence a person's attitudes, perceived behavioural control and subjective norms, which ultimately contribute to a person's intention to perform behaviour in a collective manner. Ajzen (2005) produced a summary analysis of studies conducted over a 20 year period to explore the strength of three components of the theory in predicting behavioural intentions. His analysis found that attitude was the most powerful predictor of intention, followed by perceived behavioural control and subjective norm, respectively.

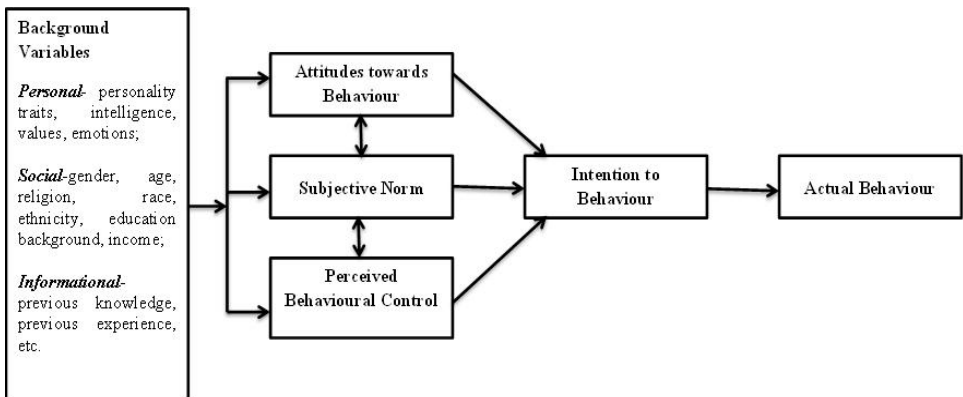


Figure 1: Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) derived from Ajzen (1991, 2005)

Application of the TPB in Predicting Teacher Preparedness for Inclusive Education

TPB has extensively been applied across different disciplines since its commencement (Ajzen, 2011). Applying this theory for predicting teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in Canada, Randoll (2008) measured teachers' attitudes toward the behaviour required for successful implementation of inclusive education in the classrooms (attitudes component). Then he measured teachers' self-efficacy, described as the teachers' beliefs in his or her

capabilities to organize and execute appropriate behaviour to implement the values of inclusive education in the classroom (perceived behavioural control component) and also explored how principals and colleagues' attitudes toward inclusive education could affect teachers' own attitudes (subjective norm component). Mahat (2008) also used the theory for predicting attitudes of regular primary and secondary school teachers in Victoria, Australia. The data analysis of this study indicated that the theory was successful in predicting teachers' intention towards inclusive education through measuring their attitudes towards inclusive education. Both the studies mentioned above also reported the fact that teachers' attitude towards inclusive education is influenced by teacher, school and course related variables.

Studies conducted on teachers' preparedness on inclusive education towards inclusive education have shown that their attitude towards inclusive education is a strong predictor of their teaching practices (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Kim, 2006; Martinez, 2003; Hastings & Oakford, 2003; Kalyva *et al.*, 2007; Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel & Malinen, 2011; Soodak, Podell & Lehman, 1998; Weisel & Dror, 2006). Teachers with favourable attitudes found to be more confident in teaching in inclusive classrooms (Kim, 2006; Weisel & Dror, 2006) and more welcoming towards children with disabilities (Shippen, Crites, Houchins, Ramsey & Simon, 2005). Other studies (e.g. Evans & Lunt, 2002; Scanlon & Barnes-Holmes, 2013) have reported that if teachers hold negative attitude towards inclusive education that may hinder the quality of interaction with children with disabilities. The influence of teachers' attitudes on their preparedness for inclusive education, as observed through the study findings, highlighted that understanding these attitudes may be useful to generate ideas for curriculum reform, selecting classroom management strategies and remodelling education policies in regard to inclusive education.

Several studies (Bechham & Rouse, 2011; Forlin, 2008, 2010; Lambe & Bones, 2006; Shade & Stewart, 2001) have demonstrated that the period during teacher education is the best time to develop teachers' confidence and positive attitudes towards inclusive education: teachers who participated in a pre-service teacher education program with specific inclusive education components appear to be more confident and optimistic about their ability to teach students with disabilities (Martinez, 2003; Romi & Leyser, 2006). Conversely, other studies found that, although there has been substantial reform in teacher education programs, some teachers felt less confident in inclusion of children with disabilities in the classrooms (Forlin, Loreman, Sharma & Earle, 2009; Kim,

2011; Shade & Stewart, 2001). Slee (2010) argued that teacher preparedness for inclusive classrooms is about more than embedding special education components into existing programs; rather it is more about the understanding, knowledge and expertise through practise gained from the teacher education program that ensures teachers are confident in teaching children from diverse backgrounds.

Ajzen (2005) reported perceived behavioural control to be a similar construct to Bandura (1997)'s perceived self-efficacy, which plays an important role in developing intention towards behaviour. Putting the self-efficacy issue in the context of teachers' preparedness (especially pre-service teachers) for inclusive education, several studies (e.g. Hofman & Kilimo, 2014; Kim, 2006; Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel & Malinen, 2011; Soodak, Podell & Lehman, 1998; Weisel & Dror, 2006) reported that teachers' teaching-efficacy appears to be a powerful predictor of their attitudes towards inclusive education. Moreover, teachers having higher teaching-efficacy seem to apply a wide range of behaviour management skills (Woolfolk, Rosoff & Hoy, 1990), conduct more practical activities (Guskey, 1988) and take more initiatives for addressing the learning needs of all students (Mergler & Tangen, 2010). Several studies reported that factors such as: age (Forlin *et al.*, 2010; Romi & Leyser, 2006), gender (Erdem & Demirel, 2007; Forlin *et al.*, 2010; Gao & Mager, 2011; Romi & Leyser, 2006; Tait & Mundia, 2014; Woodcock, 2008), previous training (Forlin *et al.*, 2010; Romi & Leyser, 2006), teaching experience (Forlin *et al.*, 2010; Romi & Leyser, 2006), previous interaction with people with disabilities (Forlin *et al.*, 2010; Malinen, 2013; Romi & Leyser, 2006), level of teaching (Baker, 2005; Forlin *et al.*, 2010; Woodcock, 2011), and knowledge about inclusive education policies in the course content (Lancaster & Bain, 2007, 2010; Romi & Leyser, 2006) may impact on teachers' teaching-efficacy for inclusive education. Hence, it is apparent from the wide range of studies conducted on teacher preparedness for inclusive education that the components identified by the researchers that have the impact on teachers' preparedness for inclusive education are similar to the factors mentioned in the Ajzen (1991, 2005)'s TPB for predicting persons' intention to performing actual behaviour.

TPB in Predicting Teacher Preparedness for Inclusive Education in Bangladesh

Some studies (Ahmmmed, Sharma & Deppeler, 2012; Ahsan, 2014) in the context of Bangladesh have tested Ajzen's (1991, 2005) assertion and support the concept that the factors of TPB have impact on predicting a person's intention to behaviour, however, the effect is not the same at all times.

Ahmed *et al.* (2012) study attempted to explore the impact of background variables on the key constructs of TPB (i.e. attitudes, perceived teaching efficacy, and behavioural intentions) of in-service teachers of Bangladesh. This study specifically examined the influence of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classrooms, predict in-service teachers' efficacy to undertake inclusive practices in classes, and their perceptions regarding school support for such practices. In addition to that the study also inspected the impact of demographic variables and of perceived school support for IE on teachers' attitudes and teacher efficacy. Ahmed *et al.*'s (2012) study applied survey questionnaires on 738 in-service teachers from government primary schools in Bangladesh's Dhaka division and conducted focus group interviews with 22 in-service teachers. The study found that male teachers had more positive attitudes towards inclusive education than female counterparts. This finding is contradictory to the global trends of research findings as it was found that females were more positive than males about inclusive education (Loreman *et al.*, 2005; Romi & Leyser, 2006; Wood-cock, 2008). However, this finding is consistent with the study conducted in Bangladesh context with government in-service primary school teachers by the Plan International Bangladesh (Ahsan *et al.*, 2013). The study result further revealed that variables such as previous success in teaching students with disabilities and direct contact with a student with a disability in the classroom of the participants contributed significantly to the prediction of teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion of children with disabilities in their classrooms. These findings have several implications for both at the policy and practice levels. Based on the findings it can be recommended that providing opportunity of teaching and interacting with children with disabilities during professional development programmes can significantly contribute to developing positive attitudes of in-service teachers towards inclusive education.

Ahsan (2014)'s study was conducted with pre-service teachers and used TPB as a guideline for the study. This study attempted to explore the impact of background variables on the key constructs of TPB that include: attitudes and perceived teaching efficacy of pre-service teachers, and beliefs of institutional heads towards inclusive education that act as a socio-cultural factor to impact on perceived behavioural control of pre-service teachers of Bangladesh to predict their intention to perform in inclusive classrooms. The mixed method design study applied survey questionnaire on 1623 pre-service teachers enrolled at both primary and secondary level pre-service teacher education institutions for predicting their attitudes and teaching-efficacy for inclusive education. The study

found significant positive correlations between attitudes and teaching-efficacy scores and significant negative correlations in concern scores for both attitudes and teaching-efficacy scores. This finding has the merit of indicating the importance of providing interventions during the enrolment period in teacher education programmes for better preparedness for inclusive education. This finding can be interpreted in a way that if pre-service teachers concerns are minimized during their pre-service teacher education programme, it can increase their confidence level and make them more positive towards inclusive education. The study further revealed that interaction with people with disabilities and knowledge about local legislation on inclusive education predicted of a high level of teaching-efficacy and low degrees of concerns. The study also found that as the level of experience in teaching students with disability increased, the level of concern decreased among pre-service teachers. Hence, these findings are very similar to the findings of Ahmmed *et al.* (2012) and it could be recommended that pre-service teachers should have scope to experience of teaching or interacting with children with disabilities during pre-service teacher education programmes. Besides, pre-service teacher education curriculums should include information regarding local legislations on inclusive education for the better preparedness of the pre-service teachers.

Ahsan's (2014) study further revealed that female pre-service teachers had lower level of teaching-efficacy for inclusive education than their male counterparts. This result is in sharp contrast with global research trends (Erdem & Demirel, 2007; Forlin *et al.*, 2010; Gao & Mager, 2011; Romi & Leyser, 2006; Woodcock, 2008). This study further found an interesting contextual factor behind such result through interviews with institutional heads, which is male dominating society providing less opportunity to female teachers to receive diverse experience of works. As a result, they possess less confidence to face any new challenge. The study found another interesting finding, which indicated that pre-service teachers of one-year programme had more positive attitudes and higher teaching-efficacy than those of four-year programme. The study further revealed that having better curriculum components on inclusive education and more interventions from the government for one-year programme contributed in better preparedness of those groups. This is another important finding that has policy implication as it can be recommended from the finding that it is more important to enrich contents than increasing the length of any teacher education programme.

Conclusion

Both the studies (Ahmmed *et al.*, 2012, Ahsan, 2014) conducted in the context of Bangladesh have made some significant contributions by drawing recommendation at both policy and teacher education levels. Besides, comparisons were also made with the global research trends. Several contextual factors were also identified through those research studies that do not match with the global trends. From the review, it can be presumed that the application of the Theory of Planned Behaviour could successfully predict both pre-service and in-service teachers' intention to teach in inclusive classrooms in Bangladesh. If the recommendations made through those research studies are considered by the proper authority, the teacher education programmes and the professional development programmes can be made more pro-inclusive.

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Rural Mothers' Perceptions of Play for Children's Learning and Development in Bangladesh

Shahidullah Sharif¹

Abstract: *The purpose of the study was to explore rural mothers' perceptions of play for children's development and learning in Bangladesh. Mixed methods have been used in the study and mothers with children of 3-5 years have been purposively selected. The results show that mothers in rural Bangladesh have lacks of clear and specific knowledge about the benefits of play. They prefer academic activities rather than play activities for their children. On the issue of gender differences in play, mothers' educational level makes differences in mothers' perceptions regarding gender orientation in child's play. Parents seldom play with their children and do so only when they are requested by their children. At best, they play supervisory role in their children play.*

Key words: *Mother's perceptions, Play in Bangladesh, Children's learning and development, Gender difference*

Introduction

During the early years of life, children's opportunities to develop appropriately are influenced by many different factors. These include parents' knowledge, attitudes, and practices; the cultural norms and values of the wider society; the initiative of their primary caregivers; and the availability of early child development (ECD) programs and services. While it is apparent that play is a very important element/source of child development and learning and "creates the zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1933: 552), parents' behaviors and beliefs toward play in Bangladesh, and how they are influenced by social and cultural values, have received less scrutiny.

More than 16 million children under 5 years old live in Bangladesh (BBS, 2001), which was one of the first countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Through this Convention, and the Convention on the Elimination

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of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the country is fully committed to improving the status of children and to addressing gender discrimination. But there is a lack of attention to early childhood development and education is still evident, and young children have been growing up without opportunities to develop through play.

Play is a joyful activity that occurs naturally for most children and fosters the social life and constructive activity of the child (Elkind, 2003; Piaget, 1980; Sluss, 2005). Many researchers across different disciplines have found that play is a main activity for children in all cultures and that parents have a significant role. As noted in the writing of Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky (1896-1934), playing with an adult or an older child enhances a child's skills and gives them confidence (Vygotsky, 1966, 1978, 1990). Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1917-2005) ecological model also provides an important framework for considering play as part of child development and the role of parents and family (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In Bangladesh, however, there are gaps in the research on this issue and very limited data has been available for development of an ECD education policy.

Research questions

The primary aim of this study is to answer the research question:

1. what are rural mothers' perceptions of play for children's (age 3–5) learning and development in Bangladesh? Additional research questions in Bangladesh context include:
2. What are the rural mothers' perceptions of gender difference in children's play?
3. Do rural mothers' perceptions of play vary with their level of education?
4. Do rural mothers' perceptions of play differ based on fathers' (husbands') level of education?
5. Do mothers in rural Bangladesh view play differently based on their family income?

Methodology

Information on mothers' perceptions of play was obtained using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Mothers with children 3–5 years of age were selected. At this early age (children 3–5 years of age), children are seen as "learners" and parents begin to consider the importance of "academic" learning rather than learning through play.

For the quantitative study, 60 mothers from two rural villages in Gazipur District—Singardighi and Kopatiyapara—were purposively selected to

participate. The data collection instrument was a structured survey, with a five-point Likert scale, created in collaboration with a team of ECD faculty of BRAC University and other experts working in the country. Eighteen statements regarding play were developed and covered six development domains: physical, social, cognitive, language and communication, emotional, and creativity. Contents were also evaluated for relevancy with life skills, learning and academics, play opportunity, gender, and parents' involvement in children's play. A validation panel of five experts was enlisted to rate the relevance and clarity of each item in the survey.

Because the majority of participants had low or no literacy, data was collected through face-to-face interviews. The surveys were conducted by the researcher and a trained research assistant who recorded each mother's responses to 18 statements during the interview.

Data analysis generated descriptive statistics of mothers' responses and included frequencies, percentages, and mean scores with range and standard deviation. Bivariate statistics were used to explore the variations in maternal responses by socioeconomic status, educational background, and child's age since responses may vary according to the age of the child.

For the qualitative study, eight mothers from each village participated in focus group discussions (FGD) after they completed the quantitative survey. An equal number of mothers with less than primary education and primary education and above were included, and assigned into FGD-A and FGD-B, respectively. Focus group discussions were held with mothers in a location of their choice. Each session was audio-taped with permission of the respondents. A hired research assistant moderated all FGD sessions on basis of study objectives and research questions that were shared by principle researcher, and the principle researcher took notes as well as organized and monitored the sessions. Each session was approximately 40 minutes.

The discussions were recorded and carefully transcribed by the principle researcher and research assistant and compared for accuracy and validity. No major inter-rater inconsistencies were found. Transcriptions were made in Bangla and translated into English. The focus group facilitator resolved any content discrepancies. Using content analysis, major themes were identified, coded, and categorized; excerpts from the transcripts were chosen to illustrate the summary statements, which were also used to validate the findings.

Findings

Based on the objectives and research questions of this study, we found significant findings from a survey and a focus group discussion that are presented separately below:

Survey

The results of this study are based on the data collected through the methods described above. Table 1 summarizes results from the survey of mothers' perceptions of play for children's learning and development in Bangladesh. As evident in the table, mothers' attitudes toward play and its role in early childhood development were very positive. Only some of the key findings are presented below.

Mothers' level of education

When the mean score was compared between mothers with different levels of education, no significant difference was found except for the following three statements. Mothers with lower levels of education were more likely to agree with the statement, "Through play, children learn to follow rules and instructions." Mothers in the lower education group were also more likely to agree that "children do not need play opportunities at home." However, mothers with higher education were more likely to agree with the statement, "Parents should play with their children."

Fathers' (husbands') level of education

Mean score comparisons were made between the level of fathers' (husbands') education and respondents' agreement with the 18 survey statements in the quantitative study. No significant differences were found.

Table 1: Quantitative Findings: Mothers' responses to statements on play and children's development, by percentage.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided/Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
"Through play, children learn to live with other people as a social being."	-	-	1.7%	3.3%	95.0%
"Play is detrimental to increasing children's knowledge."	71.7%	8.3%	10.0%	3.3%	6.7%
"Play encourages children's creativity."	-	-	1.7%	10.0%	88.3%
"Play does not help children's physical development."	70.0%	10.0%	-	3.3%	16.3%
"Through play, children learn to express their emotions appropriately."	6.7%	-	3.3%	5.0%	85.0%

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided/ Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
“Children’s development of language skills is hampered when they play.”	86.7%	5.0%	1.7%	-	6.7%
“Play helps children in learning math skills.”	1.7%	-	-	10.0%	88.3%
“Through play, children learn logical thinking.”	-	-	5.0%	6.7%	88.3%
“Through play, children are encouraged to solve problems on their own.”	3.3%	-	-	11.7%	85.0%
“Through play, children learn to follow rules and instructions.”	-	-	-	6.7%	93.3%
“Play is detrimental to children’s learning.”	75.0%	6.7%	1.7%	11.7%	5.0%
“Children learn to accept a victory or defeat in play.”	-	-	-	1.7%	98.3%
“For boys and girls, play should be different.”	58.3%	6.7%	1.7%	6.7%	26.7%
“For boys and girls, play materials should be different.”	3.83%	1.7%	-	6.7%	53.3%
“Children do not need to have play opportunities at home.”	90.0%	3.3%	-	-	6.7%
“There is no need to have an outdoor playing field (playground) for children.”	8.3%	5.0%	-	5.0%	6.7%
“Parents should play with their children.”	3.3%	-	-	6.7%	90.0%
“Play should be a regular routine as a class subject in preprimary education.”	6.7%	-	-	3.3%	90.0%

Family income

An analysis of variance, or ANOVA test, was carried out to determine the influence of income on maternal perceptions of play. No significant differences were found between participants’ responses when analyzed by their family income.

Focus Group

For fulfilling the objective of the study and obtaining in-depth data in qualitative study, two groups of mothers of different types were recruited purposively ($N=(8+8)16$). Some of the key findings and comparisons of the two focus groups—mothers with less than primary education (FGD-A) and mothers with primary education and above (FGD-B)—are presented below.

Defining play for children 3–5 years old

Participants in both focus groups responded similarly to the questions, “What do your children do throughout the day? Among those activities, which are play or games and which are not—and why?” The mothers said that children in this age group play all the time, with joy, pausing only when called for specific tasks such as eating, drinking, and bathing. Activities they defined as play include playing with dolls or toys; games such as football, cricket, and running competitively; rough-and-tumble play; cooking; collecting leaves from a banana tree; making things with mud and throwing things into a pond; dancing and wearing a sari; riding a bicycle; pretend shop-keeping with roles as a seller or a buyer; and digging in the mud like a farmer. They differentiated these activities from “risky” activities such as swimming or climbing trees, which they mentioned as “harmful play,” “unhealthy play,” or “naughty works.”

Benefits of play

Focus group participants were asked to discuss the positive and negative benefits of play for 3- to 5-year-old children. Both groups agreed that play increases knowledge, supports language and math skills, and increases psychological well-being. They regarded physical play as exercise that keeps children’s bodies healthy, enhancing children’s weight and physical strength. Some mothers, especially those in FGD-B, mentioned that children who are physically active become faster in all other activities, including academics. Regarding the negative aspects of play, the mothers’ opinion in both groups was very clear: they felt that there is no disadvantage to play unless children participate in hazardous games.

Gender differences in children’s play

Participants in both focus groups felt that boys and girls play differently. But there were some variations in the activities they identified as interesting to girls or boys, as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Gender differences in play, as identified by mothers during focus group discussions (FGD)

Interesting for girls	Mothers with less than primary education (FGD-A)	Mothers with primary education and above (FGD-B)
Cooking	X	X
Playing with dolls	X	X
Using utensils	X	X
Dancing	O	X
Wearing women’s dresses	O	X

Interesting for boys		
Playing ball	X	X
Playing flute	X	O
Cycling	X	O
Cricket	X	X
Running	O	X
Carom (indoor board game)	O	X

(X = activities identified by FGD; O = not mentioned by FGD)

Regarding the issue whether girls and boys should play together, the mothers in FGD-A said that boys like to play outside the home, in a playground or open space, and that girls like to play at home, in the courtyard or under the trees. Some mothers remarked that their girls were forbidden to go outside alone. They did not have any problem with boys and girls playing together when they were under age 5 but felt that it was inappropriate for older children. Mothers in FGD-B were more likely to understand the benefits of letting children choose activities, play materials, and playmates regardless of gender. And they were of the opinion that if given the opportunity boys and girls enjoy playing together and learn from each other.

Emphasis on play or academics

The basic opinion mothers expressed during the focus group discussions is that preschool-age children do learn through play and that it is the dominant activity compared to more formal academic learning. Their preference, however, would be an emphasis on more formal learning, indicated through such statements as, “Academic activities for children are very good. If they engage in play less and more in academic activities, that would be best for children.” With one exception, they felt that there is no need to have play materials in the classroom and that play should be an outdoor break from academics rather than incorporated into classroom activities. Only one respondent said that play opportunities should be part of school curricula for 3- to 5-year-old children, because academic learning can happen through play.

Play opportunities at home and beyond

Mothers in both focus groups had similar concerns about safety for children in this age group and expressed a preference for play at home/indoors. Slight differences were found between the groups, with mothers who had less than primary education preferring a specific space, such as a small cottage where four or five children could gather, arranged for calm, quiet, and safe play. Mothers with primary education and above felt that children could play any place in the

home, such as the balcony, open space in front of the house, or underneath a tree.

Both focus groups thought that outdoor playing areas should be safe and formally structured, providing natural light, fresh air, and a chance for their children to enjoy open space and refresh their mental state. FGD-B mothers, however, said that due to the social system in their village, mothers cannot go outside and that is why children do not get their mothers' participation in or support for outdoor play. FGD-A emphasized that there is a real need for spaces that are close to home and specifically modified for children's play. Existing outdoor play spaces, they said, are too small, informally developed, and not well organized.

Parents' Role in Children's Play

When mothers were asked, "*What do you think about parents' role in children's play?*" FGD-A and B mothers answered similarly that there is a need that the parents should play with their children. They should allocate a good amount of their time for playing with children. According to them, these little kids can not spend time alone. Again, if parents play with their children they don't go to any risky places. So, they do not face any risk and difficulty. And children become happy if parents play with them. Consequently they become attentive to the mother. That's also the time when children listen and obey, and follow the parents' instructions. Besides, when parents play with their children, they feel good, get pleasure, and become happy. By the way children get benefited.

Mother said that sometime they are bound to play when their children insist them to be play partners, generally due to lack of play partners. Some mothers (not all) feel proud to give time for play with their children and they enjoy it. Their positive opinion is- "through involving in play with children parents-child relation becomes friendly."

Mothers engage and support in their child's play at home (in indoor play).

Generally, fathers engage less in children's play. As mothers were mentioned the cause that, fathers stay outside of the home most of the time and return at night when young child go to bed. Although, in some cases, if fathers get time they do not give value the play; rather they like to get involved in other jobs. As because, mothers agreed that fathers are liable to other family work than childcare affairs.

Discussions

The findings of the study were obtained using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. However the focus group discussions (FGDs) complemented the information obtained from the quantitative survey and provided deeper

insight into the participants' rationalization and disagreement regarding play in early childhood.

Benefits of play

Quantitative findings show that relatively an important percentage of respondents were not aware about the benefit of play in development of children. Qualitative study findings in this theme also reveal that- they perceived physical play as exercise for the children. Besides this, they did not show their knowledge on how children's development as a whole gets benefited. However, only one mother was found exceptional who mentioned that those who do the physical activity based play become faster in all other side such as academic side than those who do not do so. But, rest of all sample groups of mothers is not aware of the total benefit of play in children's development.

The quantitative study findings show that mothers have knowledge about some benefits of play however qualitative study revealed that though a big number of mothers have positive attitude towards play but they have lack of clear and specific knowledge about the benefits of play for children's physical development, such as literatures show that play makes active and healthy bodies, support to healthy brain development and as curative strategy of the obesity epidemic (Ginsburg and the Committee on Communications and the Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, 2007).

Some of the mothers have wrong perception about play and children's cognitive development. Survey showed that about 20% of respondents' have lack of awareness on the benefits of play for children's cognitive development. Qualitative study findings also reveal the lack in this issue. Although some of the respondents mentioned that knowledge increases by play; but their example shows lack of clear understanding about the matter such as literatures show that through play children get mastery about world, and develop new knowledge and achieve competencies for facing future challenges (Tsao, 2002).

Emphasis on Play and Academics

Available literature shows that the conflict in focusing between children's academic learning and play opportunity at preschool classroom and beyond exist around the world and at the same time emphasis is being given to academics than play which is alarming (Sluss, 2004). In light of literature in the quantitative study two items were used to find the mothers perception in this issue. In the first item "play is detrimental to children's learning" found that about 16% mothers agreed.

In qualitative study, mothers perceived that 'play/game is not a detrimental to the learning/academics'. Mothers' opinion is that children have the right to play along with academic activities. So, they need to get time for play the same way need to get time for academic activities. For this reason, there is a need to determine the specific time for play, like there is time for eating and academic learning. But concerning emphasis on either play or academic activity mothers preferred academic activities rather than play. However, they perceived, 3-5 years child are not yet fully ready for academic activities. For that reason, at this age both academic activities and play are needed.

It is surprising that finding of quantitative second item in this issue and related qualitative findings is very conflicting. With the statement "play should have in regular class routine as a subject in preprimary education" 90% mothers strongly agreed. But, qualitative study has given a different clear perception. Their perception was negative concerning to have play in classroom as per routine work. They do not think that there is a need to have play with doll, ball, toys, and other play-materials in classroom like other academics or leaning activities. They thought that keeping play out of class activities rather than play can be going on simultaneously between academic activities. However, it was very surprising that among two FGD's 18 participants, only one respondent gave opinion with boldness, who said that there is a need to have opportunity to play as a routine activities for 3 to 5+ children in their school's regular activities as curriculum content. Her rationale was that academic learning could be happened through play. It is indeed true that apart from that exceptional mother, the rest of mothers' tendency is that the academic activities should get more emphasis than play. They expressed their views in a remark: "If our children engage in academic activities that makes us happy. Engaging in play makes us less happy. Academic activities for children are very good. If they engage less in play and much in academic activities it would be the best for children."

Gender Differences in Children's Play

Frost (2005) noted that "One source of gender segregation is culture. ...family and parenting are a factor in gender difference in play" (p-110).

To find out the answer to the research question 2, both quantitative and qualitative study was conducted. Both type of studies revealed that gender issue in children's play is a debatable subject to the mothers. For instance, among gender based two items, with one statement "for boys and girls play should be different" about 58% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 26% of respondents strongly agreed. In another statement, "for boys and girls play-

materials should be different” about 60% of the respondents responded in favour of the statement (53% strongly agreed + 7% agreed). But, rest of 40%, a big percentage of mothers’ respondents, disagreed with this statement. This is also clear from the focus group discussion. FGD-A mother keep them at home giving some girls’ stereotypical treatment and imposing play materials like utensils, dolls etc. They showed the reason that out of sight, their girl child might be hurt or face problem by aggressive boys. So, their girl children have been forbidden to go outside. So, children’s play has been dictated and influenced by mothers’ gender stereotypical attitude. These Mothers want most likely that it should be girls’ play with other girls, boys play with other boys. Specially, when adequate numbers of children join from neighboring families, mothers instruct their children to form boys group and girls group for playing together in gender oriented group.

FGD-B mothers stated that, mothers should not dictate in playing with different group as per gender identity. Rather, mother should give the opportunity to play together regardless of boys and girls differently. Because, if mother instruct them to play in different place that might be discrimination. Consequently, children may become mean minded. They have been deprived of getting to play with different gender child, from some specific play materials and specific type of play.

Some mothers expressed their thinking in this way that “girl may wish to play with ball; boys may wish to play with doll. If we differentiate play material for girl and boys differently that could be as deprivation for them.” So, FGD-B mothers agreed that there should be the scope to choose the play and play materials and meets with whom to play. Some of mothers from this FGD-B said that, “If boys and girl get opportunity to play together, children get fun and pleasure and enjoy a lot, and they learn from both sides.”

Besides, other literatures also suggest that “parents can foster play that is gender-neutral. Parents can treat their children’s play in an equitable manner. Equal time should be spent with children of either gender or equal emphasis placed on toys and activities. Fathers and mothers should include girls in traditional male games and engage their sons in cooking and other activities in the home once thought to be females territory” (Frost, Sue & Raifel, 2005:152).

Parents’ Role in Children’s Play

As frost, Sue & Raifel (2005) noted that in children’s play, parents play their role as facilitators, models, supervisors, and participants etc. In this study it has been

searched from the mothers' point of view. In quantitative study, it has been found that with the statement "parents should play with their children" 90.0% of mothers strongly agreed. In qualitative study, mothers however showed positive attitude toward their role in children's play. But as per mothers' opinion, in most of the case, their participation is the result of fulfilling their children's need and claims, rather than mothers' awareness and realizing importance of play for their children's development and learning.

Frost, Sue & Raifel (2005) added from different research study that "adult involvement is most effective when the adult becomes a co-player or provides suggestions and materials to enrich play. Adults are least effective when they are uninvolved or merely observe play. At the other extreme, they are equally ineffective when they become instructors or directors of play" (p. 152).

In the other side of this issue, we found that as mothers mentioned that generally fathers engage less in children's play. But literature shows that fathers' involvement in children's play is very important. Frost, Sue & Raifel (2005) noted that "mothers and fathers play differently with infants and toddlers. ...When parents play with toddlers, differences in play activities persist (p-115)." Mothers help their toddlers play one way, and fathers other ways. Even though, researches show that comparatively, toddlers are more responsive to fathers than to their mothers (Frost, Sue & Raifel, 2005). So, lack has been found in this issue; parents' both mothers and fathers role in children's play. Though mothers expressed positive attitudes towards facilitating and supervisory role in children's play and very limited time in participant role when asked by children, fathers are very lesser involved in children's play at all.

Conclusion

The results of the survey found that mothers in rural Bangladesh know about some of the benefits of play for children. But the more in-depth analysis of focus group data revealed that although mothers generally have a positive attitude toward play, they lack clear and specific knowledge about the benefits of play—including motor development, psychological well-being, and development of life skills.

Regarding emphasis on play or academics, mothers preferred academic activities. However, they also recognized that 3 to 5 year-old children are not fully ready for academic activities, and for this reason, both play and academic activities are needed.

On the issue of gender differences in play, the focus group discussions generated some surprising results. Perceptions among mothers who were illiterate or had less than primary education (FGD-A) were that children's play should be determined and influenced by them, and preferably, girls should play with other girls, boys with other boys. But those who had primary education or above (FGD-B) stated that mothers should not restrict girls and boys to playing in separate groups. Rather, mothers should give them the opportunity to play together.

Regarding their role in children's play, results of both the survey and focus groups found that mothers have positive perceptions. Focus group discussions, however, revealed that mothers' participation in play is limited because they are busy with chores. They seldom engage in play with their child and do so only for a very short time and in response to their child's request. The participants in this study perceive their role as supervising and protecting their children while they are playing. That's why mothers keep their children nearby when they are working. Although they sometimes support activities by giving children play material, buying toys, etc., mothers did not mention that they are involved in their children's play on their own initiative.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to express his sincere thanks to Dr. Saidur Rahman Mashreky, *Director – Public Health and Injury Prevention* department at the Centre for Injury Prevention, Health Development and Research, Bangladesh (CIPRB) and Dr. Steffen Saifer, President at Saifer Educational Consulting for their kind support and constructive comments as they mentored and supervised the thesis rigorously. The author would like to express gratitude to Ms. Catherine Rutgers, Catherine Rutgers Inc. for editing the summary report and Ms. Rashida Akter, Senior Research Officer, ICDDR-B for her assistance in collecting relevant information for the study.

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Changing Teacher Education of Bangladesh through Introducing ICT in Education: Educators' Perception

Iffat Naomee¹

Abstract: *This study has been carried out on change management and the accommodation of change in the education system of Bangladesh by focusing on the introduction of ICT in teacher education. To fulfil the purpose of the study, firstly policy documents have been reviewed to gain idea of the theoretical framework and then perception of six educators on the use of ICT and change management have been explored using semi-structured interview schedule. All the collected data have been categorised under four titles (perception, challenges and barriers, overcoming barriers, and coping with change) to analysed thematically. Analysis implies that there are some personal, cultural and infrastructural barriers that need to overcome with a view to accepting this change. Findings also suggest that teachers and educators not only need proper training on the use of ICT but also they need to break their traditional mind set to welcome this change in their teaching-learning activities.*

Key words: *ICT in education, teacher education, ICT in teacher education, change management*

Introduction

The world is gradually changing everyday and so is knowledge and the concept of education (Malek, 2007). In educational settings change can be seen with respect to different levels where the focus is solely on organisations and organisational change (Waks, 2007). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become a buzz word in today's changing Bangladesh. The world has now become a global village, reducing all the boundaries and allowing free trade of goods and services around the globe. Knowledge has now become a tradable commodity and through the use of ICT in education, knowledge is now being offered to people living anywhere in the world quickly and easily (Reddi, 2007). Bangladesh needs to cope with this changing trend of knowledge and education in order to keep pace with the world in terms of development.

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Bangladesh government has recently declared ICT as one of the most important factors to digitalise the country and increase the living standard of the people of the country (Hoque & Alam, 2010). ICT is now being considered as one of the most effective educational technology which promotes drastic changes in teaching-learning process (Keengwe, Onchwari & Wachira, 2008). This widespread use of ICT is now more of a revolution than anything else in the context of Bangladesh. However, this extensive use of ICT imposed some particular challenges in the education system of Bangladesh, specially in the way ICT changes the education process (Ali, 2003). To cope with these challenges, Bangladesh needs full proof plans regarding ICT in education policy, its management and implementation.

To ensure proper use of ICT in education, it is firstly necessary to make the teachers aware of the use of ICT in education. Thus teacher education and teacher training programs should focus on ICT in education and include the use of ICT in their education program. Bangladesh government is trying hard to introduce ICT in every sector of education including teacher education. But it is the educators who need to be aware and conscious about the use of ICT in teacher education. This study thus focuses on the perception of educators in implementing ICT use in teacher education programs and the challenges, obstacles and barriers they face in accommodating this change in the education system.

Review of Related Literature

Management of Change

Change management is a popular topic in organisational effectiveness and management literature. Identifying the need of change and leading the organisation through that change is one of the major responsibilities of organisational leadership (Hotho, 2013). Change is inhabitable and necessary in the context of Education. However, the education sector of Bangladesh is suffering from lack of managerial skills of the leaders regarding change (Khan, 2007). This hampers the introduction of ICT in teacher education as well, as this change seems not much accepted by the teachers and trainers in Bangladesh.

ICT and Change

ICT is believed as one of the catalysts of change which has been incorporated in education to enhance knowledge-based, student-centred learning, critical thinking and smooth transmission of knowledge (Roblyer & Doering, 2010). That is why different countries are adopting different policies and strategies so that ICT can be incorporated properly in the education system (Kozma, 2008).

However, it is a matter of regret that the full potential of ICT in education is yet to be comprehended (Moonen, 2008). The reason behind it can be the lack of knowledge of the education professionals of ICT which in turn ends up in their inefficiency and lack of preparation in using ICT for teaching (McDougall, 2008). Nevertheless, this is not sole responsibility of the teachers to incorporate ICT in their regular teaching activities. The government should have proper policy and the educators should implement those policies accordingly. Most often it is found that teacher educators and teacher trainers themselves struggle with understanding the full potential of the technologies (Swennen & Klink, 2009), let alone teach the teachers about the use of those technologies in their classroom teaching.

Enhancement of the quality of education program around the world is mainly focused on primary and secondary education (Khan, Hadi & Ashraf, 2013). Teacher education programs or training teacher educators is given lesser importance most of the time (Chowdhury, 2012) and this particular area is also under-researched (Koster, Brekelmans, Korthagen, & Wubbels, 2005; Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Shohel & Power, 2010; O'Sullivan, 2010; Peeraer & Petegem, 2011). However, there seemed no better way to incorporate the changing pattern of education effectively in the education system of Bangladesh than introducing it in the teacher education program.

Situation of Bangladesh

According to Chowdhury (2012), ICT has been claimed to be a western innovation which is being introduced into other countries by international commercial agencies. Similarly, in Bangladesh, ICT is being incorporated in education through support from international financial organisations. In addition, foreign consultants are being appointed to design ICT curricula and textbooks, and to train the educators so that the educators can then train the school teachers to implement ICT in education.

Bangladesh government has a vision of digitalising the country within 2021 through the use of ICT in every sector of human life (Khan, Hasan & Clement, 2012). However there are some common barriers to introduce ICT in education because of the difference between theory and practice (Ali, 2003; Khan, Hasan & Clement, 2012; Mndzebele, 2013; Shamim, Aktaruzzaman & Clement, 2011). However, all the barriers in one way or another have link with poor management of change.

Methodology

The aim of this study was to explore and underline the responses of the educators to change by focusing on introducing ICT in education for teacher education in Bangladesh. The objectives are-

- (1) Reviewing policy documents of Bangladesh focusing on ICT in education.
- (2) Exploring the perception of the educators on introducing ICT in education for teacher education.
- (3) Investigating the responses of the educators to change in policy and practice regarding the use of ICT in teacher education.

This small scale study was a qualitative one. Participants of this study were the educators of Bangladesh, specially the teachers of teacher training colleges and the teachers of institutes offering Bachelor of Education and Master of Education degrees.

Six educators have been selected for this study. This sample size has been selected as Grbich (1999) mentioned, sample size in qualitative research is determined by a desire to provide information-rich data and Braun and Clarke (2013) suggested 6 to 10 as an adequate sample size for a qualitative research. Purposive sampling has been used here to select most productive samples to fulfil the objectives as Marshall (1996) explained that some people can provide richer insight and understandings than others.

For data collection, semi-structured interview was selected as tool, as it is flexible and gives the participants opportunities to discuss their own issues rather than what the researcher anticipates (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). A semi-structured interview guide (Appendix 2) with 10 questions was prepared for the interview. Important documents have also been analysed in order to get an overview of the policies related to ICT in education in the context of Bangladesh. These documents include national ICT policy 2009 and national education policy 2010.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The analysis process was constituted of six phases adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006; 2013).

Ethical Considerations

BERA ethical guidelines for Educational Research (2011) have been followed throughout the research to maintain proper ethical practice. The work is authentic and solely the researchers own work. Any piece of literature used here has been referenced correctly to avoid plagiarism. The participants have been given an

information and consent sheet including their role and right in the study and verbal consent have been recorded from them (Appendix 1). No name or mean of identifying the participants has been disclosed here to maintain anonymity and privacy of the participants.

Limitations

As with all research studies, this study had some limitations. Firstly, small number of participants made it difficult to generalise the results of the study (Stake, 1980; Myers, 2000; Barnes et al, 2012) to all over Bangladesh. Secondly, as the interviews have been conducted in Bengali, it was not always possible to produce exact word to word translation of the interviews, however, the essence of the response of the interviewees were kept the same. Nevertheless, in spite of all these limitations this study has been a successful one providing the researcher with great insights about the overall situation regarding the area of the study.

Analysis and Findings

Document Analysis

Bangladesh National Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy-2009

According to the Ministry of Science and Information and Communication Technology Bangladesh (2009), ICT is an essential means of socio-economic development. The National ICT Policy 2009 defined ICT as electronic technology supporting the creation, preservation, transmission and dissemination of information. The policy outlines strategies to implement ICT in every sector of human life. In terms of education, this policy aims to promote computer literacy to all the people including every level and stage of education as well as encourage research and developmental work related to ICT.

The policy addressed the use of ICT as one of the most fundamental skills for 21st century and thus conveyed some recommendations. The recommendations related to teachers, teachers' training and teacher education were of particular interest to this study. Those recommendations included-

- Infrastructure should be developed in the schools and teachers' training institutions, to promote the use of ICT in educational settings.
- Multimedia based contents and materials should be developed for teachers' training programs.
- ICT loans and incentives should be provided to the teachers and educators to buy necessary equipment so that they can enhance their practice of using ICT in their teaching-learning situations.

- Peer-learning method and action research should be introduced to increase the teachers' efficiency in using ICT in the classrooms.
- More new teachers with enough ICT knowledge and skills should be recruited.

Bangladesh National Education Policy-2010

Emphasizing on the integrations of ICT in the education system, Ministry of Education, Bangladesh (2010) declared that ICT is one of the most important elements to improve the quality of education. Bangladesh National Education Policy (2010) portrayed the use of ICT as one of the major objectives of national education. To highlight the importance of ICT in the education system of Bangladesh, the education policy has sketched one whole chapter on ICT in education. The policy suggested introducing ICT as a compulsory subject in secondary level as well as reforming the teachers' training and teacher education curriculum by adding areas to promote ICT knowledge and skills.

Analysis of Interview

Perception of introducing ICT in education for teacher education

By analysing the interviews it has been found that most of the educators are aware of the use of ICT in education though they do not necessarily know how to use ICT in education and thus do not practice using ICT in their education and/or training programs. Most of the educators agreed that some of the educators need proper training on the use of ICT in education so that they can incorporate ICT in their teaching-learning programs effectively. It has also been found that proper knowledge of ICT is needed for the educators so that they can encourage the teachers to use ICT in the classroom settings.

However, all of the educators agreed that it is very important to implement the new education policy effectively by introducing ICT in education for teacher education programs as teachers are the key players to enhance the use of ICT in the classrooms and can efficiently encourage the students in using ICT in their everyday activities.

Challenges and Potential Barriers

Some potential barriers as the educators identified are, lack of infrastructural facilities in educational institutions to use ICT in education, policy makers' lack of understanding of ICT in education, the gap between theory and practice in the education system of Bangladesh and educators' lack of knowledge and skills of ICT. Other common problems in introducing ICT in education in general are time barriers, electricity and internet problems, insufficient funds and maintenance problem.

However, the main problem in introducing ICT for teacher education, as the findings suggest is the lack of educators' interest in using ICT in their training programs. The majority of the educators participating in this study have more than 20 years of experience which make it hard for them to undergo any sudden change in their teaching-learning strategies. Moreover, computer and other technologies develop so fast nowadays that it made the situation even worse for these educators. Every now and then a new technology is being introduced which makes it difficult for these educators to learn and incorporate these in their teaching-learning plans.

Overcoming Challenges

To overcome all the above mentioned challenges, the educators opined that they need more young and efficient educators who have enough knowledge and understanding of the use of ICT. However, the problem in this regard as stated by one of the young and less experienced educator, is that in Bangladesh educator means some "old and wise" experienced teachers who have "more than enough" knowledge of the world. This set definition of educator impact the recruitment of new young educators for teacher training programs which eventually hampers the overall development of education. Another way of overcoming the barriers of introducing ICT in teacher education as the findings suggest is maintaining liaison with developed countries regarding the integration of ICT in education. Bangladesh should follow some developed countries with high literacy rates and incorporate those countries ICT usage strategies to get the best result and overcome challenges.

Coping with the Change

After analysing the interviews it has been found that the main problem in introducing ICT in teacher education is teachers' and educators' non-response and unwillingness to cope up with change. Most of the educators in Bangladesh lack knowledge of change and thus remains static in their teaching styles. The educators opined that they have their own mechanism to response to change. They accept and manage change in their own styles without any external support. This is another reason of not introducing ICT in teacher education of Bangladesh as there is no one to take responsibility and no organisational mechanism or strategy to familiarise the teachers and educators to adapt to the change.

Discussion

Though change is inevitable, it is not always easy for the teachers and the students to adapt to those changes quickly. They need time to think through and prepare themselves to accept the change and act accordingly. Advice and support

from experts is needed for the teachers to make sense of the change and acknowledge new approaches. Most teachers now-a-days are trying to teach the way they have not been taught. Coping with this change is emotionally and intellectually demanding (Hargreaves et al, 2001). They thus need time, advice, support and encouragement to deal with all the rapid changes that are occurring within the education system including the use of ICT in education.

The researcher's personal experience in this regard is that in Bangladesh the education system is still quite traditional. Teachers and students still follow the "Jug and Mug" theory of education which is mostly lecture based and involvement of students is limited. Though there is a well-established and modern framework for teachers training; there exists professional deficiency. Lack of efficient teacher trainers and educators, lack of professionalism, self-initiative and self-incentive of the teachers, poor quality of academic supervision and no institutional or organisational strategy of change management have established an institutional culture that does not always welcome change which hampers development.

Fact remains, most of the educators of Bangladesh are unaware of the concept of the management of change and the theories and models of change that a leader needs to have idea of in order to establish a professional culture of education which influence development and ensures quality. Thus they face various problems in coping with change. Yet, they sometimes try to change the traditional way of their teaching-learning activities and try to incorporate modern technologies in their classroom practices. However, they fail most of the times because of the infrastructural barriers, time constraints and lack of training. Thus it is a necessity now to introduce ICT in teacher education in Bangladesh not only to help teachers teach well but also for their own personal and professional development.

From the researcher's own experience and from the collected data it can be summed up that, to introduce ICT in teacher education, firstly Lewin's Model of change should be applied to broaden up the minds of the educators. Secondly, proper support should be provided to the educators in line with considering infrastructural development. Thirdly, policy makers should focus more on practice than theory while making policies so that the policies can actually be implemented in the real life situation. Finally, the set definition of educator and teacher trainer should be changed and more young educators should be recruited for the development of education.

Recommendations

Some recommendation for introducing ICT in education for teacher education in the context of Bangladesh can be portrayed here in lights with other research recommendations. Those are as follows-

- (1) Technology should be integrated in teacher education programs to help teachers develop skills so that they can support their students in their classroom practices by using ICT in their classrooms as well as to prepare teachers for ICT education (Hennessy, Ruthven & Brindley, 2005; Mndzebele, 2013).
- (2) As Ali (2003) described, modern and effective ICT networks need to be built to support traditional methods of teaching and learning and to increase the quantity and range of education and training. This will help the students and the teachers as well as the educators.
- (3) Awareness should be built and educators' mentality towards change should be liberalised. Educators should be provided with proper support so that they can easily cope up with change.
- (4) Liaison with some top ranked teacher education institutes should be built in order to generate new ideas about different uses of ICT in education and train the teachers accordingly. Developed countries' strategies of using ICT in education should be followed to increase the scopes of ICT use in the field of education including teacher education.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Information and Consent Form

Dear Participants,

This is an individual study of the researcher that seeks to explore the policies and the perception of the educators of Bangladesh to find out the scope of introducing ICT in education for teacher education in Bangladesh and what challenges are there in introducing this. Your opinion is thus very precious for this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw yourself from being part of this study at anytime during the study without provision of reason. Data will be collected from you through face to face interviews and the interview sessions will be audio recorded. The audio recordings will then be transcribed and used for the study. However, for your privacy and confidentiality, no name or means of identification will be included in the transcribed data or in any reporting following the interview. The audio recorded data will be kept safe in a password protected file accessible only to the researcher to ensure privacy. Data will be kept till the end of the study and will be destroyed afterwards.

Your rights as a participant in this study are-

- You may decide to withdraw your participation from the study at any time without explanation. You have the right to ask that any information you have provided to that point be destroyed.
- You have the right to omit or decline to respond to any question that is asked to you.
- Any additional information you may require will be discussed with you before you make a decision to take part.
- You need to give a verbal consent before starting the interview to ensure that you understood your role, responsibilities and rights during the study and you have no objection in participating in this study.

Thank you for participating in this study.

Appendix 2*Interview Guide*

Name:

Designation:

Name of Institution:

Work Experience:

Gender:

Age:

- (1) What do you mean by ICT in Education?
- (2) Do you think ICT is important for education? Yes/No
 - Why?
- (3) What, in your views, are the impacts of using ICT in the education system of Bangladesh?
- (4) Do you feel comfortable using ICT for teaching/training teachers? Yes/No
 - If no,
 - Why?
 - What problems do you face?
- (5) Do you think that our teachers are well aware of the use of ICT in education? Yes/No
 - If yes, how successful are they in implementing ICT in their classroom practices?
 - If no, what do you think is the problem and what measures should be taken to solve this problem?
- (6) Do you think use of ICT should be introduced in teacher education? Yes/No
 - Why?
- (7) Do you think introducing ICT in education in teacher education curriculum will be beneficial? Yes/No
 - If yes,
 - Who will it benefit?
 - How will it benefit?
- (8) Why is ICT for teacher education not being introduced in Bangladesh?
- (9) What are the barriers/challenges/key issues in introducing ICT for teacher education curriculum?
- (10) How do you think these problems can be solved?

Exploring the Need of Objective-based Curriculum in Tertiary Education

Asif Bayezid¹

Abstract: Tertiary education plays an important role in a nation's development. But it is important to have a course of study, a curriculum for that goal. Investigations found that the departments of the universities in Bangladesh lack an actual curriculum to guide the teachers and students towards achieving the desired goal. Only list of contents are mentioned in the 'handbooks' provided by the university. Specific, achievable and measurable objectives and methods that could be followed were found absent in the curriculum. Most of the prospective departments of the University of Dhaka had not yet felt the need to develop their own respective OBC (Objective-based Curriculum). This study intended to explore the current status of the course-outline documents that the departments already have. The study also envisioned to explore the opinions of the teachers and the students of those departments regarding the necessity of an OBC to prepare the students for the real life analytic problems when they pass out. After reviewing 4 course-outline documents of 4 departments (selected through convenient sampling, analysed quantitatively), 20 students were surveyed and 8 teachers of the sampled departments were interviewed to find out their stand/opinion/suggestions regarding the issue. A checklist was used based on the elements of objective-based curriculum to review the course-outlines, an in-depth interview schedule was used to collect data from the teachers and a mixed questionnaire was used for the students were used. Their responses were analysed thematically and the results show that the teachers have positive attitudes towards maintaining objective-content-method-evaluation alignment, but at the same time they are unwilling to take the hustle to develop one. As for the students, due to lack of clear direction, they feel to have a complete documents for objective guidance.

Key words: Objective-based Curriculum, Tertiary Education Curriculum, Tertiary Education of Bangladesh

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Introduction

In Bangladesh there was a time when higher education used to be considered a luxury in a society of mass illiteracy. However, towards the turn of the last century the need for highly skilled manpower started to be felt in every sphere of the society for self-sustained development and poverty alleviation. Highly trained manpower not only contributes towards human resource development of a society through supplying teachers, instructors, researchers and scholars in the feeder institutions like schools, colleges, technical institutes and universities. They are also instrumental in bringing about technological revolution in the field of agriculture, industry, business and commerce, medicine, engineering, transport and communication etc. (UGC, 2012). In order to create new knowledge (Creswell, 2012) and to contribute to the relevant field towards true development, each and every stream of higher education needs to initiate basic researches. However, it is a matter of regret that in spite of having 34 Research Centers, University of Dhaka has not been initiating any basic research in past 88 years (Amin, 2009). The situation is even worse in the case of other public and private universities of the country. The relevance and quality of professional education and the needs of the new economy require collaboration of stakeholders including employers (Jones, 2002). There are plenty of research literatures available on university-industry collaborations in the area of research and development, however, the focus of this review is on the role of industry in education, new program development, and curriculum development. Barnett (1994) argues that the relationship between knowledge, higher education and society is in constant interaction and undergoing complete transformation. The higher education system is an integral part of the knowledge industry and society expects it to develop operationally competent and efficient students (Barnett, 1994).

Real evidences and interactions with students of the most cherished departments shows that, each year, thousands of students are admitted in the universities to attain higher education. They dream to have a fascinating career after completing higher studies. However, frustration keeps on building as their expectation towards higher education does not meet with the pathway of their careers. Thus this study focuses on the investigation of the need of objective based curriculum in the tertiary education of Bangladesh, and examines to what extent the present curriculum of different departments are objective based curriculum.

Rational of the Study

Curriculum is a tool which guides both the facilitators and the students to achieve a set of objectives. Without defining the objectives, it would be hard for

both the parties to explore the area of knowledge (Pratt, 1994). Bangladesh Education Policy 2012 refers that the prime goals of higher education should be to obtain culture knowledge, initiate basic and applied research, extend the horizon of knowledge and create new knowledge through innovation and creativity (Ministry of Education, 2010). To achieve these goals, the ministry has developed some achievable objectives. However, from the individual higher education curricula of different departments and universities of Bangladesh it is not very clear whether these goals and objectives are included in the curricula or not and even though these are included, the outcome of that is not very visible in the context of Bangladesh. That is why this topic is of particular interest to the researcher.

Purpose of the Study

The study aims to investigate if the teachers and students of the higher education institutions of Bangladesh feel the need of developing Objective/Competency based Curriculum, to keep it aligned with the overall educational goal of the nation, given that many of the departments and faculties are still using decade-old list of contents, syllabus etc.

Research Questions

To meet the purpose of the study, the present research tries to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do the current course-outlines of tertiary education contain the elements of a complete Objective-based Curriculum?
2. To what extent do the faculty members feel that the programs of tertiary education should be based upon curriculum with specific objectives?
3. To what extent do the students expect to be provided with an Objective-based Curriculum in order to have a clear idea of what they are studying?

Limitations of the Study

As with all research studies, this study had some shortcomings. Firstly, the study was conducted on curriculum documents, teachers and students of only 4 departments of the selected university. Because of this small number of sample, it is very hard to generalize the findings of the study. Secondly, question regarding the 'objective-content' alignment was missed because of time constrain.

Theoretical Framework

Need of Objective Based Curriculum

Curriculum development based on the objective of the course or the program is

not a new concept. Tyler's Objective Model of Curriculum (1949, revised in 2013) is counted as one of the basic models followed across the globe. With the help of his "Objective Model", a specialist can always develop a curriculum with measurable outcomes. This model was then further developed by Hilda Taba (1962), vastly focusing on content and learning experience (Chen et al, 2004). Over the years different authors used different phrases like "behavioural objectives" (Mager, 1988), "performance objectives" (Dick, 2005), "outcome based learning" (Psifidou, 2009) to describe the need of objectives of the curriculum. Even the behaviourists and psychologists like Pavlov (1849-1936), Watson (1858-1958) and Skinner (1904-1990) have proved the necessity of stimuli to get response in human behaviour. Li (2006) explained that objective based curriculum can provide students with better problem-solving skills, innovation and creativity.

Objective Based Curriculum in Tertiary Education

According to a report of Indiana Department of Education (2010) competency based curriculum is necessary to give all the stakeholders a brief idea of what specific skills and knowledge are the students gaining which in turn will help students' future careers. Similarly, Chile's tertiary education has identified competency based curriculum to be the most appropriate one to ensure quality (Ministry of Education of Chile, 2007). Weber (2008) also agreed by explaining how Africa changed tertiary curriculum to objective based curriculum to gain proper output. Obanya (2000) explained that higher education curriculum should be based on a set objectives in order to filling up the gap between education and job market as well as to respond to the need of the society.

Maher (2004) explained that increasing number of non-traditional students in higher education has created some serious issues in the education sector which can only be solved by assuring quality and efficiency in higher education which is only possible through providing a specified set of learning outcomes. She included that learning outcomes based curriculum helps the universities describe courses in a less ambiguous way to open up education for more audience. Learning outcomes enable universities to express student achievement beyond the narrow boundaries of subject knowledge and articulate other important skills that are developed during the educational process. Maher (2004) adds, key or transferable skills, relevant professional skills and personal qualities, formerly seen as by-products of the educational progress, are now regarded as a core part of studying for a degree.

UDACE (1989) declared that higher education has tended to focus on the content and process of learning rather than on its outcomes. Universities described their provision in terms of courses and syllabus. However, he believes that this is not the right way to proceed. Robertson (2001) agreeing with this included that the past decades have witnessed a culture of change in higher education and much is to be gained by moving away from the conception of content-based focus of curriculum to a more student centric approach.

In an influential paper by Barr and Tagg (1955) strongly advocated the need to move from what the authors termed the traditional 'instructional paradigm' with its focus on teaching and instruction to a 'learning paradigm' that enables students to discover and construct knowledge from themselves. Their powerful argument supported the shift towards an environment in which students are empowered to take responsibility for what they learn (guided by explicit learning outcomes that clearly link to assessment). This finding gained credence in both academic circles and public domain.

Learning outcomes offer a means by which attention can be focused on the actual achievements of students and this represents a more realistic and genuine measure of the value of education than measures of teaching input. Thus the adoption of a 'learning paradigm' in higher education puts the learner at the heart of the education process, a proposition that appeals to both teachers and students alike (UDACE, 1992). Knight and Trowler (2001) argued that if students are given a real stake in their own learning in this way, they will learn better and will be more motivated and enthusiastic about what they are learning. That will in future help them pursuing their dream career and job.

David Bridges (2000) elaborates his expectations regarding the current trend of HE in the UK and how the stakeholders are expecting the reform to be. The expectation is to have a more open educational system for public information, quality and accountability which again focuses on the objective based curriculum of tertiary education.

A major turning point in the literature of Tertiary Education has been in the proposed triangular typology to establish a complete coordination in its governance system. Clark (1983) produced a model focusing upon direct correlation between professional, managerial and market-oriented elements of tertiary education. Thematic Review of tertiary education by OECD also emphasized on steering tertiary education and an important point of the review was to establish targeted funding to achieve explicit objectives and develop 'objectives-based contractual arrangements with institutions' (Paolo Santiago, 2008)

OBC in Tertiary Education of Bangladesh

Peter Eckel (2004) explained, “general education is delivered predominantly through either a core curriculum, in which all undergraduate students take the same courses, or an elective or distributive format, in which students choose courses from a pre-specified list representing a range of topics (such as science, art and aesthetic appreciation, mathematics, humanities, etc.).” This poses an indication that, the US higher education system has a lot of breathing spaces in it for the students where the learners can choose from a diverse pool of disciplines of study. Bangladeshi higher education system, as per the students’ realization, does not have that freedom for the learners (Monem, 2010). At a very early, secondary stage, the students are moulded into 3 streams. Some of them are moulded at an even earlier age where the division comes in while selecting schools: mainstream, English Medium or Madrasah (Ministry of Education, 2012). The classification continues till the universities, one cannot pursue whatever degree s/he wants to. So, in this format, the students are not able to change their tracks once they are in, and they are just about to begin contributing in the national economy after their graduation. So, logically, this close ended format has a better scope of forming a Competence-based or Objective-based Curriculum (OBC) in Bangladesh (Chowdhury, 2012).

Islam (2008) believes that the ‘syllabus’ must be modernized in the light of new knowledge preceded by careful research. It was found that, against all odds of authoritative issues, higher education needs “to transform it so as that it becomes related to life, needs and aspirations of the people and serves as an instrument of socioeconomic development and the realization of national goals” (Islam, 2008).

Methodology***Research Design***

Exploring and determining the need of objective based curriculum demands a whole lot of qualitative responds from the possible respondents as qualitative researches are widely accepted in the field of educational research (Creswell, 2012), but it also needs a rich amount of quantitative data. To provide space to both the types of data, the design of this study has broadly been determined to be conducted in a *Mixed Method Design*.

Sampling

The curriculum documents, faculty members and the students who are pursuing tertiary education all over Bangladesh were the population of the study. However the study was conducted in one single university of Bangladesh.

Four departments were selected for this study through Simple Random Sampling technique and 2 teachers and 10 students from each department were chosen as respondents using convenient sampling.

Instruments

A total of 3 (three) instruments were used to collect data focusing on the 3 research questions. The curriculum documents were analyzed using checklist while Semi-structured interview schedule was used for faculty member's interview and mixed questionnaire was used to collect students' opinion.

Data Processing and Analysis

Quantitative Data

Data from the checklist was tallied and the frequency of the tallies was counted to be processed. Data from the Students' Mixed Questionnaire was pre-coded and divided into 6 major themes. Answer to the multiple choice questions and Likert scale, were tallied and frequency of the tallies was counted to be processed. To bring out the holistic perspective of the questionnaire, each of the alternatives were scored/ coded and later each respondent's score was calculated statistically.

Qualitative Data

The semi-structured interview schedule for collecting qualitative data was built with 6 major themes. The data collected from the interviews were first transcribed and later the pre-coded themes were identified from the transcriptions. The ideas were then generalized thematically.

Ethical Considerations

Proper ethical guidelines have been followed throughout this research study.

1. Permission was sought from the schools in writing prior to the research and participants were provided with information regarding the topic of the research.
2. Participation in this research was fully voluntary and privacy and anonymity of the participants have been maintained throughout the study.
3. A summary of the results of the whole study was submitted to the participating faculty members and will be available from the researcher, upon request.
4. The study is an original work of the researcher and any information used from other sources have been referenced correctly in order to avoid plagiarism.

Analysis and Findings

Present status of curriculum document

The curricula documents of the sampled departments contain list of contents for all the courses and a thorough description of assessment methods. But whatever documents the students are provided, lack objectives and classroom delivery method. It has been found that only 2 of 4 (50%) departments had a written goal of their program. None (0%) of the departments had any objectives of the courses/ program written in the curricula. All (100%) the departments had semester-wise list of contents to be taught, but only one department had provided the students with a list of references. Nowhere (0%) in any of the curricula was specified what method are to be used for delivering the contents by the teacher or any suggested methods to be followed for the demand of different courses. These characteristics of the reviewed documents can throw a conclusion that they resemble syllabi, rather than curricula with set goals and objectives.

Importance of defining the objectives

Teachers felt that announcing/publishing the objectives for the students at the very beginning of the course is useful and important for both the facilitator and the students. Some of the faculty members agreed that learning and following course objectives can make a better understanding of the course as well as the whole bachelors program. “The students can perform as better researchers in the field if they are well aware of the objectives meant for the bachelors program”, said a faculty member. “It is important to follow the objectives of the course to have a better understanding of the current trend of the courses the student is majoring in...” said another respected faculty.

Analysis found that the objectives being informed can bring out a better understanding among the students. But a very few practices have been found to let the students know the specific objectives of the courses. Teachers stated that a broad goal of the course is mentioned in the first lectures, but specific objectives are merely mentioned. They also mentioned that they were not sure how to provide with a printed document of objectives in a situation where the prospective subjects have rapidly changing issues round the world. Nevertheless, findings revealed that students tend to learn the objectives from various sources like their teachers, seniors and text-books which represent the students’ urge to be informed about the objectives.

Criteria of suitable contents

Findings suggest that the content materials taught in tertiary education are mostly foreign. None of the reference books, text-books and study materials

is produced nationally/ domestically. Most of the teachers (67.5%) agreed that all these reference books are not fully appropriate for the context of Bangladesh. Some of them added that the foreign books can expose a vision of global trends and perspectives of the subject/ course taught, which will help the students compete within as well as beyond the country. Teachers also mentioned that, though foreign, the contents are selected by roughly reviewing the job market traits while the students disagreed. 31 of 40 (77.5%) student-respondents realised the necessity of local content in line with the foreign reference materials in order to conduct basic researches. However, they also agreed that, Bangladesh is not yet prepared to produce its own reference materials.

Methods used to implement contents

The teachers mostly use power point presentation to conduct lectures. A very few cases were found where pair work among the students are conducted to involve them in learning the content. Students are given group assignments which lead to in-class presentations. Some of the teachers were found conducting real life case study or problem solving while some other faculty members impose project-works upon the students. Some of the faculty members mentioned that they are taking surprise quizzes. Teachers feel that if the methods were more participatory, it would be better, but it is very hard to conduct such interactive methods. 92.5% of the total 40 students said that the teachers use Lecture method mostly. 70% (28 among 40) students agreed that their course teachers were able to clarify the future purposes of studying their respective courses.

The current courses' strength in preparing students for specific job sectors

Faculty members stated that, if the students' basic knowledge and prior knowledge are strong enough, they can fit in any job sector they want. Teachers agreed with the researcher that there is a very significant gap between what is taught in the universities and what the job sectors require. They acknowledged that the university puts effort in producing efficient human resources who can fit in the jobs, but the efficiency of the students are not the only factors to reduce that gap. One teacher said that he felt that the needs of job market should be aligned with the university curricula. But he placed a big question regarding the rate of possibility of such achievement. 12 students (30%) said that the courses are making them more qualified for their future jobs, whereas others remained neutral about it.

Methods of Current Evaluation

Teachers are very concerned about the evaluation and assessment system. They make sure that the students be informed about the whole exam system and distribution of marks at the very beginning. According to the students, they are

mostly assessed through regular attendance in classes, mid-term or in-course examinations, semester final examinations and they have to submit assignments.

Teachers seem to disagree that the evaluation process in the university are measuring whether the students if they are getting prepared for the real world situations and jobs, but some of the assessment methods are helping the students to prepare for the real life challenges ahead.

Teachers' and Students' Attitude towards having an objective-based curriculum

On the question of having an objective based curriculum, 100% of the teachers and more than 92% of the students agreed that to cope up with the world of professional challenge and to build a better career in the students' dream profession, it is very important to have a set goal and some subject specific objectives for the students' achievement for the tertiary education curriculum. Teachers admitted that there is a very significant gap between higher education and job market which can be minimized only by changing the higher education contents, curricula and teaching-learning style.

Discussion

According to the findings, as it is summed up for Research Question 1, there is no well written curriculum for the sample departments except for an arbitrary list. According to Pillai (2012) Curriculum is a comprehensive plan for an educational/ training program/course to offer new/improved manpower to fulfil the rising needs of a dynamic society. While, the sampled departments do not have specified/written comprehensive curricular plan which can define the very purpose of any goal oriented learning activity, neither they have any details on the process to explain how it will be achieved, nor they have the assessment system- how the achieved skills will be measured. Thus the learning activities, as there is no strategic guidelines, become anonyms and different from group to group, batch to batch which may drastically affect the uniformity of education quality among the peer group. With the support of literature and evidence, it can be learned that the existing documents resemble a lot with syllabus, not a curriculum.

For Research Question 2 and 3, this study's findings are similar to that of Tai and Li (2006), Weber (2008), Obanya (2000) and Maher's (2004). There is certainly a burning need of objective based curriculum in the tertiary education of Bangladesh. Faculty members agreed that learning and following course objectives can make a better understanding of the course as well as the whole bachelors program. They believe that the students can perform as a better researcher in the field if s/he is well aware of the objectives meant for the

bachelors program. They also feel that it is important to follow the objectives of the course to have a better understanding of the current trend of the courses the students are majoring in. The students felt the urge of learning the course objectives more concretely. As Pratt (1994) asserts that a curriculum is a tool which guides both the facilitators and the students to achieve a set of exact objectives. Without defining the objectives, it would be hard for both the party to explore the area of knowledge.

Reviewing the works of Nicholls and Nicholls (1978), Burstein and Winters (1994), Anderson (2002) and Tai and Li (2006), it has been found that whatever the contents to be taught, and they must be aligned with predetermined objectives. Even Benjamin Bloom (1956) has described the alignment in his Taxonomy of Cognitive Domains. As evidently understood, a curriculum works like a map, a pathway, for the teachers and the students in a teaching-learning process. A curriculum guides the stakeholders to fix what to achieve, what the specific outcomes should be, what content to be taught, what to measure and how. This study also found similar results as the faculty members all agreed on the need of a set objective based curriculum for tertiary education, and the students are all confused about their course as well as future because of not being properly aware of what they are learning and why.

However, this study also found that though all the teachers agreed to have an objective based curriculum and provide the students with proper guideline of what they are supposed to attain after completing their course, they also agreed that it is very hard to change the written curriculum in this continuously changing world and keep the curriculum always up-to-date. The researcher believes that this problem needs to be addressed as soon as possible and it needs more research based studies to find proper solution to this problem.

Findings also suggest that there is a very significant gap between what is taught in the universities and what the job sectors require. It has been acknowledged that the university puts effort in producing efficient human resources who can fit in the jobs, but the efficiency of the students are not the only factor to reduce that gap. This finding is somewhat similar to the report of UDACE (1989). The students are unsure of how their course of study will fit in their job and career. This frustration was addressed by UDACE (1992) and thus the educational reform of UK happened.

The researcher also found that most of the contents delivered to the students are not very suitable in the context of Bangladesh. The reference materials are all foreign and those do not always fulfil the requirement of the courses. Though the

faculty members are sure of providing world class education for creating suitable human resource for the country, the students as well as the researcher are not very sure of this claim. The researcher's opinion is that there should be proper local contents and reference materials to prepare the graduates for their future career in their prospective field in the country.

Through this study, the researcher finally realised that the tertiary education situation of Bangladesh is messed up and needs thorough reformation. Findings suggest that majors offered nationally can handle the issue through centrally controlled national education authority but it is yet a burning question as all the public universities of Bangladesh are autonomous. Thus this study shades light on some new emerging questions in the field of tertiary education of Bangladesh.

Conclusion

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, here are some recommendations:

1. There should be a proper curriculum for every department of each university of Bangladesh in order to give the students an overview of what they are learning and what they imply for their future career.
2. It is now high time to change the focus of the tertiary educational in Bangladesh from a teacher based approach to a more student centred approach and design objective based curriculum for tertiary education.
3. Higher education in Bangladesh should be used to produce more basic research in the core fields of different discipline in order to create new knowledge.
4. Universities should try not to provide the students with knowledge only but to prepare them for future career, job market and professions in their respective fields. Higher education should provide the country with human resource who can bring about positive changes to the country.
5. The education policy makers and the educators along with the professionals engaged in the tertiary education sector should emphasize on creating an overall framework for tertiary education to be followed by all the tertiary education institutions all over the country in order to align the goals and objectives of the tertiary education set in the Education Policy Document 2010.
6. Educational goals and objectives of tertiary education in Bangladesh should align with those of the first world in order to keep pace with the challenges in a changing world.

Concluding Remarks

Developed countries like the United States and the United Kingdom have always

focused on their HE very seriously. They have planned and took long term actions in developing the HE sector. World rankings show that the best research centers are situated in the first world countries. This can be an indication of how they have produced generations of human resources that contributed significantly for their national development. Their 'flexibly structured' formation of HE led the students towards achieving a different level of analytical thinking. Through this research, this is evident that the HE of Bangladesh lacks specific objectives of the courses, which leads the whole system towards unsure decisions regarding selecting content, materials, teaching- learning methods, and testing teachers and students both to agree regarding the huge gap between what the students learn in university and what they do in their jobs. This study tried to find out if the stakeholders of the HE in Bangladesh would like to give it a formation which is run worldwide. Though each university has its own way of forming structures, the curricula of different universities are different, but all of them have curricula with specific objectives which are revised at certain intervals. So this study is a humble attempt to find a scope for establishing OBC in the HE of Bangladesh.

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Surface and Deep Approaches to Learning in Higher Education: Global Practice and Lessons for Bangladesh

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Abstract: *The purpose of this essay is to examine surface and deep approaches to learning in the context of higher education of Bangladesh in light of policy influence. To develop a clear understanding, the essay will begin with an outline of surface and deep approaches to learning in higher education with reference to international literature. Subsequently, the essay will shed light on the role of students and teachers as practitioners of these approaches in higher educational institutions. Moreover, the influence of policy on teaching which, in turn, influences students' approach to learning will be examined afterwards. There is a lack of relevant literature of this issue in the context of Bangladesh; therefore, most of the literatures we review for this essay are from the developed parts of the world, largely from a small number of countries. In this regard, our own teaching and learning experiences in universities will be critically reflected on the related aspects in order to explain the intrinsic factor of these approaches, from the teachers' as well as students' perspective. Finally, considering the transferability of international research findings, implications for the development of quality learning in higher education of Bangladesh has been recommended.*

Key words: *Learning approaches, Higher education, Teachers' and students' role.*

Introduction

As a developing country with a massive population (160 million), where 1.5 million students are studying in universities (Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics [BANBEIS], 2014), Bangladesh is experiencing varied challenges to ensure quality learning in the context of higher education.

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Evidently, managing quality in education becomes challenging when the necessity for higher education develops very fast among students than the number of institutions. As Coombs (1968) mentions, when the population expands faster, then, either the participation rate of students will be lower or classrooms will be overcrowded with poor quality; Bangladesh seems to struggle with both.

Therefore, to meet the rising demands of higher education, along with public universities, many private universities are contributing greatly to higher education in Bangladesh (Das & Haque, 2013). Just two decades ago, there were about 20 public universities only and no private university, now there are 125 universities among them 37 are public universities, 3 are international universities and 85 are private universities (University Grants Commission [UGC], 2016). Along with the ministry of education, University Grants Commission (UGC) is the apex body for the management of higher education in Bangladesh. However, both public and private universities suffer with quality problem in terms of infrastructures, teachers, students, teaching and learning process, and assessment system (UGC, 2006). Public universities rely on their own mechanism for ensuring quality and there is no practice of external review from UGC or any other monitoring bodies, though UGC is responsible for funding these universities. Besides, UGC monitors private universities to a very limited extent. Most of the private universities have failed to ensure minimum requirements of quality education (World Bank, 2016). Hence, public universities are the first choice to the majority students for higher education because of their wide range of subjects, quality teachers compared to private universities, low tuition fees, and low-priced boarding facilities (Monem & Beniamin, 2010).

In my experience of teaching and learning in the university, most of the teachers teach on the basis of assessment requirements, ignoring the underlying meaning of the text and objectives of the curriculum. Their main target is to prepare students for the examination. Moreover, they teach in a way which helps them assess the exam scripts with minimum effort. This is a very common scenario in most of the universities in Bangladesh, even the worst in some cases. From their early childhood education, being inspired by teachers, students follow rote learning, instead of real learning, that apparently compartmentalizes them in the comfort zone. However, some students try to follow deep approaches and learn

in-depth with their own effort, and rarely with the help of a few a special teachers.

Deep approach of learning motivates students towards active inquiry to understand the materials or subject, to interact vigorously with the contents, to relate the concepts with previous knowledge and real life experience (Lubin, 2003). It enables students to acquire desired knowledge, skills and personal attributes; empowers them to optimize their potential; promotes deep understanding, reasoning and higher-order thinking; and fosters self-directed and lifelong learning (Malhi, 2013). However, surface approach tends to jump through the necessary hoops in order to acquire the mark, or the grade, or the qualification instead of becoming interested and understanding the subject or content (Lubin, 2003). It treats students as passive learners and lacks the quality acquirement through deep approach to learning. Thus learning approach denotes how students prepare themselves for further stage of life and what the quality they achieve through the higher education programme. Along with the quality of higher education, it explicits the teaching-learning style and assessment system is also developed. Moreover, the policy perspective regarding higher education and further deployment can be understood through the followed approach (Malhi, 2013). Hence, we need to examine the global practice and learn from them with a view to reviewing our existing practices.

Compared to the optimistic view of different policy papers of Bangladesh this discussion might seem contradictory. In this case, it is important to note that the government (political parties) develops ‘symbolic policy’ rather than ‘material policy’ in Bangladesh, where political responses are reflected significantly in the policies but little or no commitment to the actual implementation (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Therefore, it is necessary to learn the lesson from global practices for shaping the practice exists in our higher education system.

Conceptual understanding of Learning Approaches

Before embarking on the analysis, it is important to clarify the conceptual understanding of surface and deep approaches to learning in higher education. In the literature, there is semantic slippage of these terms, where they are used as synonymous to ‘deep and surface level of approach’, ‘deep and surface approach’, and sometimes ‘deep and surface learning’ (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Ramsden, 2003; Biggs, 2003). These terms were originally coined by Marton and Saljo (1976a) as deep-level and surface-level processing. However,

in this essay these terms will be used as ‘deep and surface approaches to learning’.

Research on students’ approaches to learning was first conducted in Sweden by Marton and Saljo (1976a, 1976b) as I mentioned above. Then further studies, led by Entwistle and Ramsden (1983) United Kingdom and by Biggs (1979), established these approaches to learning in the context of higher education. Marton and Saljo (1976a) argues, as there are differences in the outcome of learning so there are differences in the process of learning. Based on this, in their empirical study with university students, they found two deep-level and surface-level processing were followed by students when they confronted learning materials.

On the one hand, surface approach to learning refers to the students’ intention to complete task requirements with minimum efforts. In this case, they focus on the different elements of the task separately e.g. signs, factual data, words and formulae rather than the whole. In addition, students see tasks as external impositions and isolated phenomenon, where they follow rote memorization to pass assessment instead of understanding or reflecting (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Ramsden, 2003; Biggs, 2003; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999). In surface approach, “Low-level activities are used when high-level activities are required to do the task properly” (Biggs, 2003). It is kind of skating on the surface rather than going under the surface.

On the other hand, deep approach to learning refers to the use of the most appropriate cognitive activities for completing the task properly and meaningfully. Here students analyze, synthesize and evaluate main ideas, author’s argument, themes, principles or successful applications to get the proper underlying meaning of the task as a whole. They integrate the task with real life situations to compare with their personal experiences and with other relevant knowledge (Biggs, 2003; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Ramsden, 2003). Moreover, students, who follow deep approach, ‘have a focus on the meaning in the argument, the message, or the relationships but they are aware that the meanings are carried by the words, the text, the formulae’ (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the terms ‘deep’ and ‘surface’ is used here as the approach to learning, but not to describe the students’ characteristics (Ramsden, 2003; Biggs, 2003).

In this paper our conceptual understanding will be developed based on existing theories on deep and surface learning in the world. Based on the theoretical understanding discussed above teachers' and students' role will be discussed in global and local perspective to understand the practices according to their levels, as students and teachers are the two main element of teaching-learning process. Then state policy influence is examined in the light of theoretical understanding and practice. From this discussion lessons will be taken from global practices and will be suggested for the betterment of higher education practices in Bangladesh.

Role of Students and Teachers

Two core elements of any education system are teachers and students, who practice the teaching and learning approaches in classroom. In addition, there are some other important elements (e.g. assessment, tests, policy, curriculum etc.) that influence the learning process as well. In this section, firstly, the role of students and teachers will be examined in the light of surface and deep approaches practitioner, then, another important element 'policy' influence on them will be investigated afterwards.

Role of students

Students adopt their approaches to learning based on their conception of what is required of them, and thus type of tests has a significant impact on students' learning (Marton & Saljo, 1976b). Along with this, students use different strategies and approaches according to the subject content, learning context and situations (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Ramsden, 2003). Due to the differences in previous educational and personal experience of students, which develop their study pattern (Entwistle, 1998), different students follow different approaches to learning. Their personal interest and prior subject knowledge play an important role to select any approach to learning. Although every student is capable of both deep and surface approaches from early childhood, as Ramsden (2003) argues, as it appears in most of the cases the Bangladeshi universities students follow surface approaches.

Prosser and Trigwell (1999) mentions that, "in adopting deep approach, students have an intrinsic interest in the task and an expectation of enjoyment in carrying it out." In addition, good teaching and appropriate assessment system foster students' interest in a subject, which are crucial factors for adopting deep approaches to learning in higher education. Moreover, students' background

knowledge and their level of interest provide favourable conditions for deep approaches (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983).

On the other hand, students adopt surface approaches in higher education due to insufficient time, heavy workload, high anxiety, and lack of freedom in choice of learning strategies. Furthermore, inappropriate assessment procedure, cynical view of education, and misunderstanding requirements are basic constraints for the students that discourage deep approaches to learning and encourage rote learning instead of understanding the underlying meaning of the content (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Biggs, 2003). In this case, it is important to note that, public university students in Bangladesh get admission to the universities through competitive admission tests; and in most cases students do not get his/her desired subject to study. They compromise with their personal commitment to studying a particular subject to study in public universities (public universities better than other postgraduate colleges and less expensive than private universities) and at the very beginning of their higher educational life they lose their interest to the subject they study, which is one of the reasons for adapting surface approaches to learning. However, education policy 2010 (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2010) of Bangladesh suggests competencies of the university students but does not explain the strategies to attain them.

Nevertheless, surface approach does not lead students to achieve understanding the content, but it leads to poor-quality learning, whereas deep approaches are necessary for high-quality learning in higher education (Ramsden, 2003). However, the quality of learning of the students depends on their engagement with the specific task materials and on the teaching process, where teachers are important role-players.

Role of teachers

“Teaching is a matter of changing the learner’s perspectives, the way the learner sees the world” (Biggs, 2003). Teachers are responsible to motivate and inspire students, which guide them to adopt appropriate approach to learning.

Students’ interest to the subject content and attitude towards learning are related to the quality of teaching in the classroom (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983). Therefore, along with the students, teachers have significant role on students’ learning approaches. When teachers discuss the subject topic using bullet lists (not bringing out the intrinsic structure of the topic), assess independent facts

using short answer and multiple choice tests that encourages cynicism among students, and do not provide sufficient time to engage with the tasks, and emphasize on syllabus coverage rather than going deep are the major components that lead students to surface approaches to learning (Biggs, 2003). Thus, most of the student-based factors are considerably affected by teaching.

It is very unfortunate for teachers that the surface approaches are easier to support to adopt than the deep approaches for students' learning. In this regard, the first step in improving teaching is to avoid those factors that encourage surface approaches (Biggs, 2003). In addition, as understanding 'the distinction between characteristics of students and the nature of different approaches to learning is a critical one for teachers; they can improve their teaching skill by studying students learning (Ramsden, 2003).

Responsibility of State: Policy Influence

The quality of higher education and its assessment are key determining factors for social and economic development of a country (UNESCO, 2005). In knowledge-based economies, universities are seen as engine for social change and economic prosperity. To keep pace with the competitive world markets, distinguish number of research suggests to invest in higher education (Ramsden, 2003), though the actual scenario is quite different in Bangladesh, where only 2.4% of GDP on total education system is spent (Global Education Digest, 2011). Government's negligence to higher education keeps the quality of higher education at poor stage (Mohsin & Kamal, 2012). Along with this, politicization of higher education and political control over teachers, students and other stakeholders, damage the accountability and quality of higher education and change the universities in to the field of politics rather than developing quality manpower and professionals (Alam, Hoque, & Siddiqui 2007).

However, both public and private universities has been failed to ensure quality education except for a few in Bangladesh. Among 125 universities only one university from Bangladesh (University of Dhaka) is on the ranking list (between 600th- 800th) of Times Higher Education survey (2016). To overcome the situation, since 1971 (from the early period of independence) to 2015, in 44 years, Bangladesh got four different education commission reports and two education policies as the guiding principles. But the irony is, those policy papers have been kept to the shelves for years and some parts have been implemented according to the political interest of government.

Together with teaching and assessment methods in universities, the assessment system for recruiting graduates in government service encourages students to surface approaches. For instance, in Bangladesh, the highest government job is Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) Cadre that is highly desirable to students from their early career life. The selection process is extremely competitive and time consuming. The syllabus for this exam is quite different from the subjects that students study in undergraduate level. Emphasizing on this exam syllabus, most of the students prepare themselves for this BCS exam from the beginning of their university lives ignoring their subject content. The whole assessment process for this exam encourages students to follow surface approach to learning, to overcome with minimal efforts, and continue their university degree in order to get a certificate to appear at this exam. Marton and Saljo (1976a) argues that students adopt the approaches to learning based on the requirements of evaluation. Type of tests and types of questions affects the selection of learning approaches significantly. Therefore, difference between graduating subjects' content and BCS exam syllabus is real threat for the teachers to encourage students towards deep approaches to learning. No policy documents noticed this issue so far.

Along with national education policies and education commission reports, Bangladesh government formulated ICT in Education Master Plan (2012-21), 20 year (2006-2025) strategic plan for higher education, Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project for the development of higher education. Nevertheless, implementation of previous policies is more important than formulating new policies to resolve these issues for quality teaching and learning.

Recommendation

Knowledge is developed by the teaching and learning activities of the students and teachers. Surface approaches to learning cannot ensure high cognitive level of engagement in this development process whereas deep approaches yield the underlying meaning of the content (Biggs, 2003). Moreover, evidence shows that students who adopt deep approaches in learning get better marks (Ramsden, 2003). Entwistle and Ramsden (1983) suggests that intervention for students and change in teaching and assessment system is required to foster the versatility among university students. Along with this, surface approaches should be discouraged and deep approaches should be encouraged by the university management and policymakers.

Moreover, to direct university students towards deep approaches, Biggs (2003) suggests teachers to follow such teaching strategies that elicit an active response from students, ensure active involvement of students, consider the previous knowledge of students, and emphasize depth learning rather than breadth of coverage instead of spoon feeding and lecturing on only which is necessary for exam. In addition, they can use teaching and assessment methods in relation to aims and objectives of the course.

Besides, students have to have the intention to be engaged with the task meaningfully and appropriately. Personal interest and motivation should be raised to focus at a high conceptual level (Biggs, 2003). They have to make connection between the current and previous knowledge to understand the content comparing with surroundings.

Supportive environment for deep learning should be ensured, e.g. increasing library and reading room facilities, residential facilities for each students with necessary study space. Moreover, allocation of seats in residential hall and allocation of stipend and other facilities based on academic excellence, increasing rang circle practice, seminar and symposium on academic subject, employment opportunity based on academic achievement etc. could be effective ways for motivating towards deep learning.

Mohsin and Kamal (2012) suggests that Bangladesh should initiate some education reform programmes following the footsteps of the developed world to raise its quality of higher education. Government should allocate sufficient budget to encourage the knowledge development through research activities among teachers and students in higher education. Besides, Collaboration among universities and industries must be encouraged in this regard. Policy makers of Bangladesh should focus on policy implementation by integrating the education policies with national development policies. Universities should be given greater autonomy along with accountability that could ensure quality teaching and learning. Quality teachers for universities should be ensured without being politically biased to ensure quality teaching and assessment in higher education. To monitor the activities in universities a monitoring board under UGC can be established (Monem & Beniamin, 2010).

Conclusion

Deep and surface approaches to learning are foundation stones for the research, theory and practice in higher education for more than thirty years (Webb, 1997). During this time, students' approaches to learning have been revealed by a numerous number of distinguished researchers (Marton & Saljo, 1976; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Ramsden, 2003; Biggs, 2003).

Surface approaches are found to be disastrous for students' leaning in higher education, whereas deep approaches ensure quality learning. However, Webb (1997) challenges the destructive forms of surface approaches. He argues that if surface learning approaches produce high academic achievement then what is the problem with it. Ramsden (2003) clarifies this discourse and points out that surface approaches may permit students to imitate authentic learning that might be best bet to survive the exam but not for long run. Along with this, Marton and Saljo (1948) state, 'we are not arguing that the deep approach is always "best": only that it is the best, indeed the only, way to understand learning materials'.

However, the surface approaches to learning manifests in many ways the "banking concept of education" in which students are the depositories and teachers are the depositor. This banking system of education considers students as objects rather than subject where students receive information, memorize and repeat, and their creative power is minimized. The oppressors (i.e. government, political leaders, and policymakers) maintain this system to preserve a profitable situation (Freire, 1970).

Nevertheless, to resolve the quality issues in higher education Bangladesh sets up different education commissions in different times but the policy suggestions have not seen the light of implementation due to the political changes over last forty years. Therefore, teaching and learning practices in this these universities remain at poor stage (Monem & Beniamin, 2010).

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A Comparison of Children's Verbal Skill and Cognitive Performance by Parents' Level of Education in Urban and Rural Areas in Bangladesh

Ratan Kumar Sarkar¹

Abstract: This cross sectional study compared the verbal skill and cognitive performance of children of low educated parents with that of high educated parents. The participants were 100 preschool age children, 49 from rural areas and 51 from urban areas. Children's mean (SD) score of verbal, performance and full scale IQ were 83.13 (9), 80.23 (10.57) and 79.78 (10.46) respectively. The scores were 4-5 points higher among urban children than their rural counterparts. Children's IQ scores were found strongly correlated with fathers' and mothers' educational level individually. Mothers' education contributed to 18.6% of variation in Verbal IQ, 15.6% of performance IQ and 23.5% of full scale IQ. The impact of mothers' education on IQ scores is more prominent. Fathers' education has also linear relationship with IQ scores. The relation is more prominent in case of 0-5 years and again in 9 years + strata.

Key words: Verbal skill, cognitive performance, parent education

Language and Cognitive Development

Overview

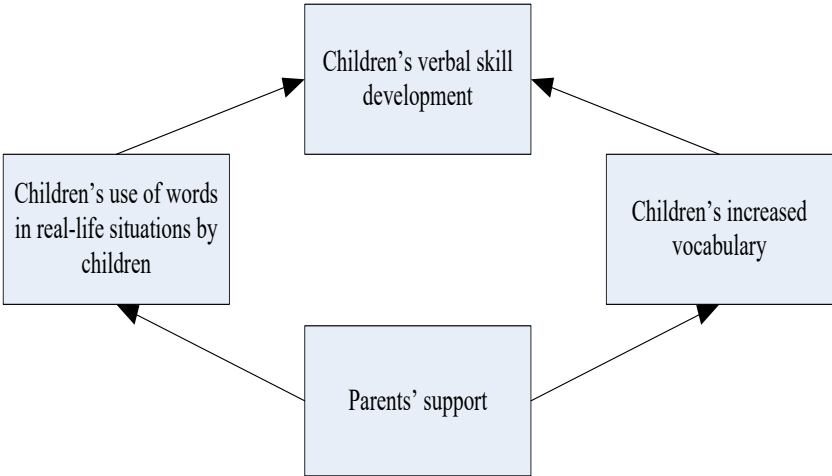
General Overview

The importance of early childhood development (ECD) has captured the attention and enthusiasm of families and caregivers all over the world. The implications of this attention for young children in Bangladesh are particularly significant.

During early childhood, parents and other caregivers influence development of the children by providing social support and contextual influences that encourage

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them to experiment and young children to understand vocabulary and, eventually, form sentences.ⁱ This process is often referred to as scaffolding. The diagram below outlines this process:



This study explores the relationship between children’s verbal skill and cognitive performance and their parents’ education level, and compares these factors in rural versus urban residential contexts. The findings from this preliminary study will encourage more in-depth investigation, and thus enhance our understanding of young children’s development throughout Bangladesh.

Without knowing the parents’ perspective in providing inputs derived from parent level of education with a view to developing the language and cognition of children, the influencing factors of scaffolding by parents would not be comprehensible. Exploring the relationship among the verbal skill and cognitive development of children with their parents’ level of education, the process of transferring skill would be explicit. This effort will open the window focusing the depicted relationship between language and cognitive performance of children and their parents’ education from urban rural areas.

Focus of the Study

There are many factors that can affect a young child’s facility with language, and their ability to learn verbal skill can be broadly divided into innate factors and environmental factors. Environmental factors can be further differentiated into human factors and physical environment factors. Innate factors (such as age and gender) and environmental factors (such as the socio-economic level or literacy

of the child's family) affect a young child's verbal skill language development, and the course of this development can eventually change depending on these factors. There are research in the world even in Asian context on family's socio-economic status and other variables. But there should have focus on parents' ability and family environment related to parents' literacy. If it can be found out the relationship between parents' education level and the development of child especially in childhood, there will be a need and social awareness for necessity of parent education. In addition, it might be the national policy issue for the policy makers, educators and other stakeholders of the society.

Bangladesh perspective as small state

Bangladesh is a small country having 143,998 square km area. But in term of the population, it may not be considered as small country as it holds 157,714,713 (BBS, 2014) people appear in a very densely arranged. Economically Bangladesh is also a small country, could be stated as fragile as its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is US\$ 150 billion and GNI per capita is US\$ 1010 (World Bank, 2014). The population below poverty line is 31% (World Bank, 2010).

The education status of the country is not well and strong. The adult literacy rate is 57%, the enrollment rate in primary education is 95%, and primary school survival rate up to last grade is 67% (UNICEF).

The effects of financial hardship have implications for both the sexes, but almost invariably have greater impact on girls, since families seem to be reluctant to invest scarce resources in girls; girls are a major source of household assistance, and are also needed for "domestic services" outside the household, some legitimate and others do not.

As the literacy rate of parents is low here in Bangladesh, the process of scaffolding for the children provided by the parents is not significant that would impact on the verbal and cognitive development of the children. Having this context of Bangladesh in view, exploring the relationship of parents' level of education with the verbal and cognitive development of their children will contribute to the society as well as nation for getting emphasis on further education. This study will add value for social awareness and policy level implication for education ensuring development of children.

Background and Literature Review

Children grow up in family environment and learn language proximally from their parents and they explore environment with the support from the parents that build cognition. Parents and caregivers engage children in relationship-building

communications and speak to them in ways that build language (Bardige & Bardige, 2008). All the children of age group 4 to 5 years are virtually have achieved an amazing language competence (Browne, 2001). The average 5 year old children had known a lot of vocabularies that have been revealed in studies of the vocabulary development. A child of this age knows at least 2000 words and may know over 10,000 (Crystal, 1987). While accumulating this extensive vocabulary, most of the young children could possess most of the phonemes or sound units of the speech used in their home or community. Having speaking competency simultaneously, young learners become competent listeners and with this ability they grasp new words from adults especially from the parents as they spend most of the time around them. Listening provides children clues about the sounds and sound combinations which are used to form acceptable words and provide children with an understanding of how sentences are constructed.

Therefore, parent's conversation with the children would be significant in achieving verbal skill of children, and simultaneously it would help children in achieving their cognitive competence. There would be differences in child's language development if parents vary in the way they interact, and amount and style of talk with the child about events and objects in the environment (Keown, Woodward & Field, 2002; Hart & Risley, 1995). In addition, there might be differences in using words and sentences by the children living in rural and urban context and their cognitive performance might vary also.

As it appears, parent's vocabulary, trend of use of words, and scaffolding in constructing language shape up the language skill of children. The education level of parents could contribute to their children's vocabulary and framing words in sentence formation. As Wagner, Torgesen, & Rashotte (1994) shown, mothers having fewer years of education read to their children less frequently (Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994). Mothers having low level of education exhibit less sophisticated language and literacy skills themselves (Rowe, Pan & Ayoub, 2005) and that influences the quantity and quality of mothers' verbal exchanges with their children (Hoff, 2003; Arriaga, Cronan, Fenson & Pethick, 1998). In addition to that parental education conversely relates to household income, and parents living in poverty have children who are at risk for cognitive, academic and social-emotional problems (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan 1997; Macloyed 1998). The way the adult, especially, parents and caregivers' responses provide a basis on which children can build vocabulary that sounds increasingly like that of adults. Gradually children begin with increasing accuracy, to imitate the articulation of sounds that they hear others use, especially by their parents. In

course of time, children's communications increasingly resemble the words and phrases used by the adults around them. When children's utterances that transmit meaning (Brown and Belugi, 1966), the typical adult response to an utterance is to acknowledge the meaning. In such context parent could play a vital role in helping children build more meaningful phrases. As a consequence adults and more prominently parents interpret, repeat, support, extend and provide models of speech for children as they communicate with them (Browne, 2001). Evans et al. (2004) detected parents support in a study that revealed as 'graphophonemic', in which parents rated phonics, sounding out words, and using books with structured vocabulary and familiar spelling patterns were among the most important issues

Recent research and theory in cognitive neuroscience have produced insights into how the development of the brain, especially the cerebral cortex, relates to thinking and learning (Fischer & Rose, 1996; Thatcher, 1994). Present work with the rich biological concept of a recurring growth cycle: both behavior and the brain change in repeating patterns that seem to involve common growth cycles (Case, 1991; Fischer, 1980). Development involves a long series of new levels, each constructed independently in parallel for each strand or domain (Fischer, 1980). Achievement of skill in a particular stage of life contributes and provoke for the achievement in the next stage of life (Cunha et al., 2006). Contemporary discoveries about the brain functioning have led to the first evidence of recurring cortical growth cycles. The striking parallels of these cortical cycles with the cognitive developmental cycles for levels and tiers are the amazing thing (Fischer & Rose, 1996; Matousek & Petersen, 1973). Another important factor, environment, plays a greater role than genetics, unlike the theory of Arnold Gesell suggested. According to Zigler, engaging children to use their genetically determined intelligence optimally is the way to improve achievement.

Objectives of the Study

Many parents living in villages have low levels of education and limited access to information regarding their child's development. Bangladesh has been ranked 57 out of 100 countries in preparing children below five years of age for success in primary school (Save the Children, 2009). A survey on knowledge, attitudes, and practices found that 50% of rural mothers did not know the importance of fostering curiosity and self-confidence in a child (UNICEF, 2001).

Extensive studies on the relationship between parents' education and children's language and cognitive development have been conducted in developed countries (Harris, 1992; Hurt, & Risley, 1995). Although the International Centre for

Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDRDB) has conducted research on children’s language and cognitive development, not enough is known about the impact of parents’ education levels on children’s early language and cognitive development.

The overall goal of this study is to examine the relationship between parents’ education and children’s language and cognitive development. The influence of rural and urban home environments on children’s language and cognitive development will also be explored. The specific objectives are to:

1. Find out whether there is any association between *children’s verbal skills* and *parents’ level of education*.
2. Explore the relationship between *children’s cognitive performance* and the *education level of their parents*.
3. Compare the *verbal skills* of children living in *rural* areas and in *urban* areas.
4. Compare the *cognitive performance* of children living in *rural* versus *urban* areas.

Methodology

Design and Population of the Study

This cross-sectional comparative study included 100 preschool–age children: 49 from rural areas (Daspara, Khadergaon, and Poipara, under the Matlab Upazilla/ subdistrict) and 51 from urban areas (Agargaon, Mohammadpur, and Vashantek). Participants were purposively selected from families of low and moderate levels of socioeconomic status. As shown in table 1, children from the urban and rural areas were comparable in respect of age, sex ratio, religion, and parental education.

Table 1: Distribution of study children, by age, sex, religion, and residence

Parameters		Rural Number (%)	Urban Number (%)	Total Number (%)
Age:	60–64 months	33(67.3%)	28(54.9%)	61(61.0%)
	65–69 months	12(24.5%)	19(37.3%)	31(31.0%)
	70 months or more	04(08.2%)	04(07.8%)	08(08.0%)
Sex:	Boys	18(36.7%)	23(45.1%)	41(41.0%)
	Girls	31(63.3%)	28(54.9%)	59(59.0%)
Religion:	Muslim	47(95.9%)	49(96.1%)	96(96.0%)
	Hindu	02(04.1%)	02(03.9%)	04(04.0%)
Total of participating children		49(49%)	51(51%)	100(100%)

Data collection and Tool

The Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI-III), composed of 14 subtests, was used to measure children's verbal skill and cognitive performance (Wechsler, 2002). A pretested questionnaire was developed to collect socioeconomic and demographic information, including mothers' and fathers' education levels and other family information. Parents' level of education was defined by years of schooling.

Sampling Strategy

Purposive convenience sampling has been used to meet the objectives of the study. To get desired samples in urban area, for comparatively better educated and better socio-economic group, two primary schools at Agargaon and Mohammadpur were selected purposively; 2 other schools in Vasantek area having play group was selected for lower socioeconomic group of children. As our intended age group is very narrow at 5-6 yrs, we had to take 4 schools.

In rural area, villages of Matlab sub-district and Municipal area have been selected purposively and children of 5 – 6 years age group have been identified. For better-off children, municipal area has been selected and for lower socio-economic group, 2 villages have been selected. Children of 5-6 years age group have been identified using ICDDR,B database.

Inclusion criteria: The children have been included from low to moderate socio-economic family status of urban and rural context.

Exclusion criteria: Obvious intellectually retarded and children with impairment hearing children have been excluded from the study. Very sick children who would not be able to take the WPPSI test have been excluded.

Data Collection Process and Analysis

Data was collected by researchers who had experience and training from ICDDR,B. Data collection procedures were carefully designed to reduce systematic error, and proper documentation of all data was strictly maintained. The outcome variables include verbal IQ, cognitive performance IQ, and full scale IQ scores; they are strongly correlated, indicating internal validity of the instrument. The data was analyzed with SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

Main Findings

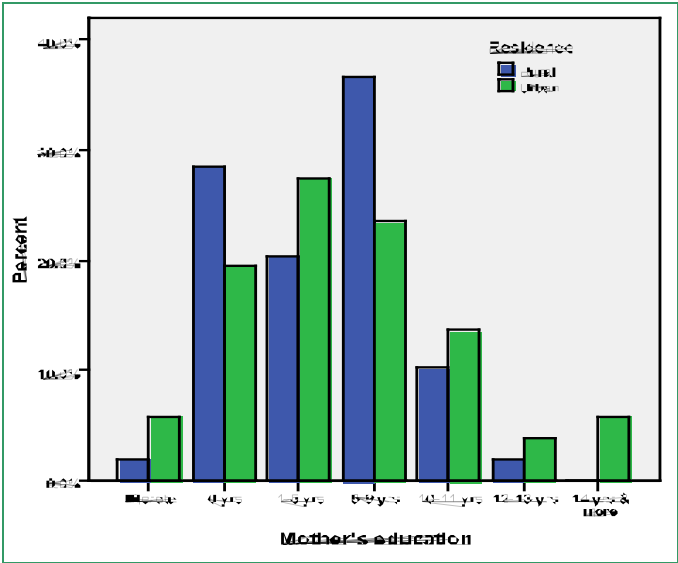
As indicated in the following tables, children's IQ scores were found to be strongly correlated with parents' education levels. Scores for verbal,

performance, and full scale IQ were all associated with years of education for both fathers and mothers, with mothers’ education playing a stronger role.

Mothers’ education. Regression analysis shows that there is significant association between mothers’ years of education and children’s verbal IQ, performance IQ, and full scale IQ ($p < 0.001$). Mothers’ education has a strong correlation with children’s IQ scores, contributing to 21% of variation in verbal IQ, 17% of performance IQ and 22% of full scale IQ.

The distribution of maternal education by residence is illustrated in figure 1. In rural areas, the impact of maternal education on children’s IQ scores is particularly strong. Five years of maternal education has a significant effect on children’s IQs compared to children of mothers with no formal education; education of 9+ years also has a significant positive effect on IQ scores.

Figure 1: Mothers’ education level, by residence



Figures 2 and 3 illustrate study findings on the effects of mothers’ education on children’s verbal IQ and full scale IQ, respectively.

Figure 2: Children's mean verbal IQ, by mothers' education, in rural and urban areas

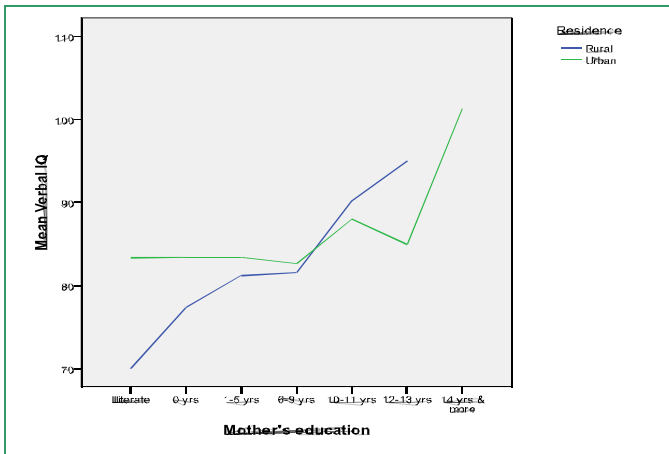
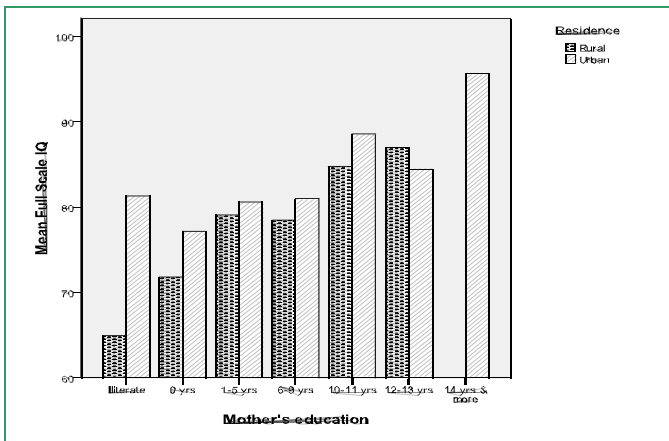


Figure 3: Children's mean full scale IQ, by mothers' education, in rural and urban areas



Fathers' education. As evident in Table 2, regression analysis shows that there is significant association between fathers' years of education and children's verbal IQ, performance IQ, and full scale IQ ($p < 0.001$). Fathers' education explained 11% of variation in children's verbal IQ, 12% in performance IQ, and 14% in full scale IQ. The gradual increment of children's verbal, performance, and full scale IQ with the increasing level of their fathers' education is seen table 2.

Table 2: Children’s verbal, performance, and full scale IQ, by father’s education level

Case summaries				
Father’s education		Verbal IQ*	Performance IQ**	Full Scale IQ***
0 years	Mean	79.700	76.900	76.100
	SD	7.699	11.634	11.276
1–5 years	Mean	83.840	81.240	79.960
	SD	7.685	08.690	7.971
6–9 years	Mean	80.420	77.470	77.260
	SD	7.358	7.982	7.964
10–11 years	Mean	85.440	82.440	82.330
	SD	10.829	10.039	9.785
12–13 years	Mean	82.500	74.500	79.000
	SD	17.678	13.435	11.314
14 years or more	Mean	91.130	89.270	90.470
	SD	9.180	10.720	10.211
Total	Mean	83.130	80.230	79.780
	SD	9.0140	10.573	10.455

SD=standard deviation; *F=3.66, *p=0.003; **F=3.38, **p=0.005; ***F=4.87, ***p<0.001

• **When comparing rural and urban participants**, children’s verbal, performance, and full scale IQ scores all varied significantly. The mean (SD) scores were 4–5 points higher (p<0.05) among urban children than among their rural counterparts, as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Verbal, performance, and full scale IQ, by residence

	Rural (n=49)	Urban (n=51)	All areas (n=100)
Verbal IQ, mean (SD)*	81.20 (09.17)	84.98 (08.55)	83.13 (09.01)
Performance IQ, mean (SD)**	78.04 (10.24)	82.33 (10.56)	80.23 (10.57)
Full scale IQ, mean (SD)***	77.24 (10.42)	82.22 (09.99)	79.78 (10.46)

* p = 0.036; ** p = 0.042; *** p = 0.017

In summary, this study found that parents’ level of education affected child development outcomes for both rural and urban children. Five years of maternal education had a significant effect on IQs when compared to children whose mothers had no education; mothers’ education of 9+ years also had a significant positive effect on IQ scores. Fathers’ education also has a linear relationship with IQ scores, both in rural and in urban areas. The correlation is strongest at the lower and upper end of the education continuum.

The impact of mothers’ education on children’s IQ scores is stronger for children living in rural areas than urban areas, showing a steeper increase in IQ scores

with mothers' increasing education level in rural areas.

Parents' socioeconomic status also affected the verbal skill and cognitive development of children in both rural and urban areas. Low socioeconomic status was associated with lower language-promoting experiences, and both rural and urban children's IQ scores had a significant linear correlation with socioeconomic status.

It is likely that children living in urban areas have greater exposure to language and greater access to early learning opportunities than children from rural areas. Among the study children, verbal, performance, and full scale IQ scores varied significantly with the duration of their preschool study opportunity (p values were 0.001–0.004).

The extent of preschool experience was also found to be significantly different when comparing rural and urban residents. Among children in rural areas, 74% had no preschool experience, 12% had attended preschool for 1–6 months, and 14% for 7–12 months. Among urban children, only 8% had no preschool experience, 10% had 1–6 months, and 78% had 7–12 months. None of the rural children had more than 12 months of preschool experience; two in the urban areas had 19–24 months.

Discussion

Many studies have shown that parents have a crucial impact on their children's development, particularly on verbal skill (Cunha et al., 2006) and cognitive development. Children acquire "voice" and words from adults: grasping the adult's tone and experiencing the situation, a child becomes able to use language to communicate. As reading to preschooler impact on their language growth (Bus et al., 1995), parents with higher language skills are more likely to provide the scaffolding children need for optimal language and cognitive development. But as the parents in Bangladesh lag behind in providing support because of their literacy capacity (UNICEF, 2001), the children could not grasp the skill in language and cognition in time although it impacts on children's higher education and economic returns (Heckman & Masterov, 2007).

Children exposed to enriched language environments gain knowledge more rapidly than children who receive ordinary input. One study found that children between one and three years of age in "highly verbal 'professional' families heard nearly three times as many words per week as children from low verbal 'welfare' families" (Judith, 2005) ⁱⁱ Parents with high levels of education are better equipped to provide diversified language input.

The results generated from this small study support the findings generated from other research conducted in both developed and developing countries. There is a powerful and significant relationship between early childhood development and parents' education levels in both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh. These results have important implications for the design of ECD interventions. It is clear that development is interrelated and the most effective programs are those that include parent education as well as health, nutrition, and stimulating early learning environments for children.

Moreover, research indicates that effective early child development programs should begin from the moment of birth. Parent education programs must also take into account the broader social context by recognizing and addressing the barriers created by poverty and low parental education. Due to be small and fragile in terms of economy, food and nutrition, awareness in child care and rare and low program coverage Bangladesh could not afford nationally to establish a strong child development structure. In Education Policy 2010, the country ratifies the need of early child development, incorporating the preschool in primary education, still the coverage is small and pertinent infrastructure is insufficient grasping the intended development.

This study has been done rigorously and methodically to ensure optimum quality. There are, however, some limitations: the sample size could be larger to increase the power of the study, probability sampling could be adopted if enough time and resources could be ensured, and the rural and urban samples could be better matched. Future research should continue to investigate the ways that parent support combined with stimulating home environments could jointly contribute to child development in Bangladesh.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

Policy makers and educators have been ignoring the impact of family environment and parental support on children's verbal skill and cognitive development. The current study on children's verbal skill, cognitive performance, and full scale IQ underscores the need for effective parental education programs and for creating rich and stimulating early opportunities for children in both rural and urban areas. Policy makers need to concentrate on the root causes of the variations in children's developmental outcomes.

The following recommendations are important for all relevant stakeholders, including parents, educators, and policy makers who search for ways to promote sustainable development of children and their families:

- Policy makers, educators, and ECD practitioners should find ways to increase parents' capacity to provide language-enriched home learning environments.
- ECD interventions should be linked to other poverty reduction strategies.
- ECD programs and services for children in rural areas should be increased.
- Nationwide parenting interventions should be implemented.

Acknowledgement

I take this opportunity to convey my sincere thanks to Dr. M Quamrul Hassan, Professor & Coordinator, Appollo Hospital, Dhaka who guided and facilitated me in making the study in reality. My special thanks to Dr. Pia Rebello Britto, Assistant Professor, Child Study Centre, Yale School of Medicine who provided me valuable inputs as international mentor of this study.

The three data collectors Mita, Roni and Asma working in ICDDRDB contributed their best in collecting data. I would like to convey my special thanks to Dr. Jena D Hamadani who lends me a hand in getting hands on notion on WPPSI.

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Parents' Perceptions of Social Support for Their Children with Deaf-blindness

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Abstract: Deaf-blindness in the Bangladeshi context appears to be relatively a new concept in the arena of disability and inclusive education. The purpose of this small-scale qualitative study was to understand the issues involved in parental perceptions of social support as required for their children with deaf-blindness. For this study, semi-structured one-to-one interviews were conducted with purposively sampled 10 parents whose children were enrolled in two different special schools in Dhaka city. Thematic analysis framework adopted from Braun and Clarke (2006) was used for analysing the data of this research. The findings reveal that most of the parents seemed to be unsatisfied with the prevalent social support system for their children with deaf-blindness. The concerns showed by the parents for their children with deaf-blindness include 'isolation', 'rejection' and 'abuse'. Factors involved in parental concerns about their children's educational development are also discussed in this study.

Key words: Deaf-blindness; disability; special education; social inclusion.

Introduction

Over the past few decades, significant attention has been paid to explore the diverse needs of children with deaf-blindness in varied educational settings. Children with deaf-blindness seem to be the most isolated group in society due to their difficulties with both vision and hearing. The National Center on Deaf-blindness (2008) states that deaf-blindness may seem to be a total inability of vision and hearing, but in reality persons with deaf-blindness have a combination of visual or hearing impairment in a varying degree may also be accompanied by other sets of disability. This condition leads children to live an extremely isolated

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life from the society (Chowdhury, 2011). Research has identified a number of challenges, namely, restricted daily living activities, inimical workplaces or other social activities (Sense, 2012) for children with deaf-blindness, and in a sense the world has become very limited to them. The situation of children or persons with deaf-blindness may be more vulnerable in the context of Bangladesh compared to elsewhere in the world as little evidence exists there in Bangladesh to support the fact that there is any established support mechanism exists in Bangladesh for them. Hence, it is important to understand the issues embedded in the children with deaf-blindness in the context of Bangladesh, specially when inclusion of children with special education needs (SEN) into mainstream classrooms has widely been underpinned by relevant policy framework (e.g., National Education Policy, 2010) and legislation (e.g., The Right and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2013).

Concept of Deaf-blindness

According to IDEA (2004), **deaf-blindness** means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes severe communication, and developmental and educational needs that the children with deaf-blindness cannot be accommodated in special education programmes solely either for children with deafness or children with blindness. There are two main types of deaf-blindness, namely congenital and acquired. **Congenital**, where somebody is born with both visual and hearing problems, and **Acquired**, where somebody loses some or all of their hearing and sight at any stage of their life (Sense, 2012).

The possible causes of deaf-blindness might emerge at the time of birth or in early childhood time, also sometimes it might develop later in life (Center for Disabilities, 2014). A few key causes of deaf-blindness include problems of prematurity, genetic disorders including CHARGE Syndrome, Down Syndrome, Usher Syndrome Type I, II and III, prenatal problems such as Congenital Rubella and postnatal complications such as asphyxia, infections, severe head injury, etc. which can occur at any time in a life cycle (Center for Disabilities, 2014).

Concept of Social Support for Deaf-blindness

Social support in relation to disability means social relationships that provide material and interpersonal resources (Thompson, 1995). To ensure participation of the persons with deaf-blindness in the community, society provides services and assistance at some specific areas according to their needs (Seybold, Fritz, & Macphee, 1991). Figure 1 shows some areas of social support:

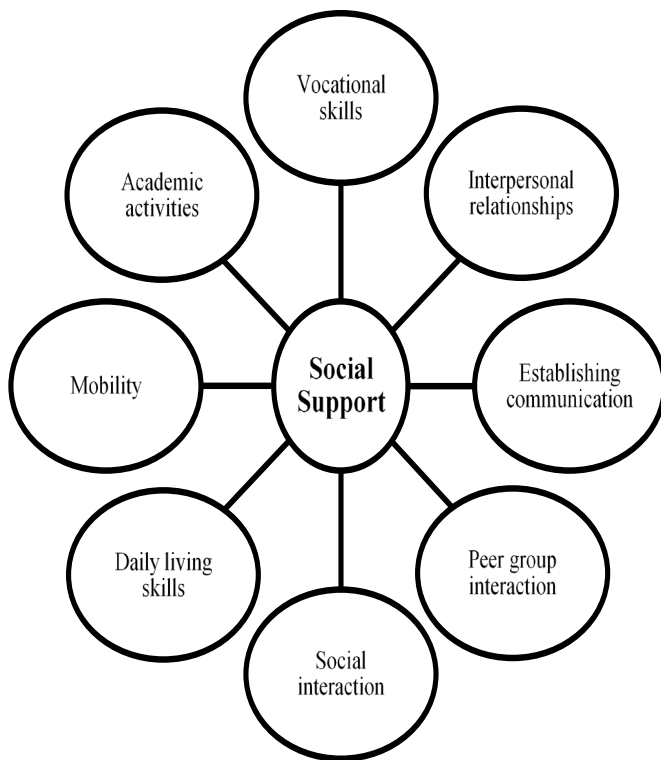


Figure 1: Indicators of Social Support

There are furthermore other forms of social support, such as, supportive behaviour of others, social recognition, social roles and social network (Lakey & Cohen, 2000). While researchers seem to acknowledge the need for professional, emotional and practical support for families of children with deaf-blindness, in addition to those forms of support Goransson (2008) emphasised the environmental or ecological support for ensuring appropriate development of children with deaf-blindness.

Social inclusion of children with deaf-blindness

Social inclusion is predominantly recognised as the primary step of social support for the people with deaf-blindness (Prain, 2012). A welcoming social relationships for children with deaf-blindness were found to be crucial by Hostyn (2008) who argued that these children may reliant on others to explore the

environment. A rationally designed support system which covers social inclusion is crucial for the children with deaf-blindness, though the availability of support for this group seems very limited (Best & Herbst, 2006).

Hearing and Vision

Generally, the normal developing person receives over 90% of information through vision and hearing (Minnesota Department of Human Services, 2007). It indicates that persons with deaf-blindness can have very limited access to information due to their disability. Therefore, it is important to provide them a reactive stimulation that helps the child to interact with the environment (McInnes, 2001).

Communication and Interaction

Communication is the key issue regarding social support for children with deaf-blindness. Hartshorne (2005) suggests that a child may have deaf-blindness; however, positive interaction helps them develop social competences. Previous research has revealed that the most difficult part for the families having members with deaf-blindness is to develop communication with the children with deaf-blindness (New England Center Deafblind, 2005)

Early Intervention and Related Services

Giangreco (1999) found that students with deaf-blindness have highly complex and individualised educational needs. With continuity and teamwork, successful educational service can be provided even in general classroom that may provide them positive benefits academically, functionally and socially (Giangreco, 1999).

Schooling

The school factors influencing the inclusion of deafblind students in primary school were investigated by Masha (2013). She suggested that a teacher might have positive intention to teach a child with deaf-blindness, but she/he needs appropriate training on varied teaching-learning strategies and accessible environment to effectively teach children with deaf-blindness.

Background of the study

Children with deaf-blindness in Bangladesh are among the most isolated group of disadvantaged population (Sense, 2012). Despite having favourable policy guidelines for meeting the rights of children with SEN in general, Bangladesh is yet to enact any governmental initiative for children with deaf-blindness in particular. There is very limited provisions so far in Bangladesh that could

arrange any support for children with deaf-blindness. Accordingly, lack of awareness about this particular disability may have created conservative preservation in the society which in-turn may bring serious consequences for children with deaf-blindness as well as for their families. For example, mothers appeared to be stigmatised as they are solely blamed by the society for their children with deaf-blindness (Chowdhury, 2011).

Although there is an existence of a National Resource Centre (NRC) for providing information, specialised training, and resource materials to families, teachers and organisations on deaf-blindness, the effectiveness of this centre on the children with deaf-blindness seems not to meet the expectations. In 2009, The Centre for Disability in Development (CDD), a non-government organisation, initiated a specialist service for persons with deaf-blindness in Bangladesh. Recently, the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act-2013 has identified deaf-blindness as a separate category of disability (Malak, 2014) which could be a step forward to the promotion of children with deaf-blindness. However, without having appropriately designed research to understand this particular disability, it is hard to map any further development. Currently, deaf-blindness is an under-research area in Bangladesh and studies investigating issues on deaf-blindness are almost non-existent. Thus, the present study has potential to be one of those fundamental investigations in understanding deaf-blindness in the context of Bangladesh.

Theoretical foundation of the indicators of social support

The ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1992) explains how everything in a child's environment impacts on the child's growth and development. This theory underpins the social support indicators which are important for proper development of children with or without deaf-blindness. The environment that influences the child development are described in four complex layers: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem. The *microsystem* is the small and the closest environment the child lives in, such as, their family or caregivers, school, neighbourhood. The *mesosystem* labels how the different parts of a child's microsystem work together for the child. The *exosystem* includes other people and places that the child him/herself does not directly interact with but still have a large effect, such as, the parent's workplaces. The outermost layer is the *macrosystem*, which is the largest and most isolated set of people and things to a child but still has a great effect. To determine the indicator of social support, selective components from different layers have been explored. The selective components are family, peer,

classroom, school, health agencies, community and society. The areas are highlighted in the following diagram-

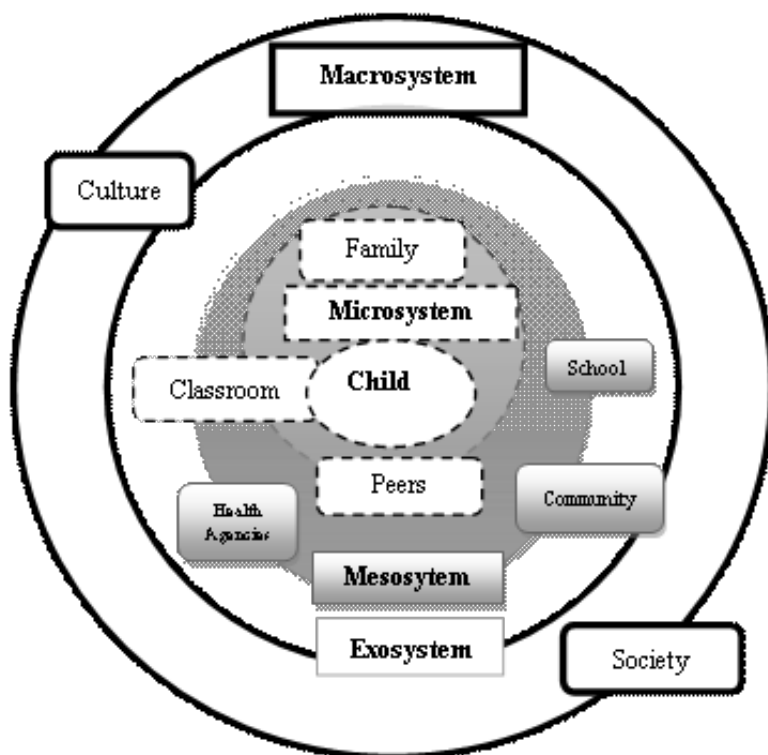


Figure 2: Explored indicators of social support

Research Questions

This study investigated the construct of 'how parents do perceive of social support for their children with deaf-blindness'. The supplementary questions developed are based on the construct were -

1. What sorts of support do parents receive from the community for their children with deaf-blindness?
2. What types of support do they receive from the school for their children with deaf-blindness?
3. What are the challenges do they perceive to support their children with deaf-blindness?

Methodology

A qualitative research design was followed to conduct this study. Purposive sampling technique was used to nominate participants ($n = 10$) who were parents of children with deaf-blindness studying in two different special schools in the capital city, Dhaka. The age of the participants ranged from 30 to 45 years, with a majority ($n = 7$) of around 35 years old. Two of the participants were fathers and the rest were mothers. They were from different socio-economic backgrounds with different monthly incomes ranged from Tk 4,000 to Tk 70,000. Each participant is mentioned by a designated number in this study – such as Parent -01 (P-01).

One-to-one, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participating parents. A semi-structured interview protocol was used to conduct the interviews. The protocol has been developed based on a number of research (e.g., Dijk, 2002; Prain, 2012) on the relevant area. Also, this protocol was prepared considering the research questions so that the data could address all necessary information. Chosen components of the theoretical framework of this research were also considered while developing the protocol. Before the finalization of the protocol, two parents were interviewed for piloting and data extracted from the piloting was not used in this study. The participants of the study were ensured the anonymity of this research for the obvious ethical issues. An audio recorder was used to record the interview with permission of the participants. Thematic analysis framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to analyse data. The findings emerged from the analysis are presented according to key themes.

Findings

This study aimed at exploring the issues involved in parental perceptions of social support for their children with deaf-blindness. A total of 9 themes emerged from data are described below:

Theme 1: Interaction with family

Participants were asked how their children with deaf-blindness interacted with their family members. They described that children with deaf-blindness had severe difficulties with interaction even with the family members. One mother of a child with deaf-blindness said,

My son recognises me by smell. He knows the smell of his father and grandmother too (P-06).

Data revealed that, some children with deaf-blindness try to interact by touch. One mother shared her experience,

He communicates with me, my husband and my sister. He tries to touch when he wants to interact (P-02).

When asking about friendship, participants claimed that children with deaf-blindness tended to make friendships with those who behave gently with them. A mother shared,

A boy lives in my brother-in-laws house. My son feels free playing with him. My sister-in-law also visits us very often. He seems very happy when they visit us (P-03).

Theme 2: Interaction with Peer group

Data suggested that a child with deaf-blindness encounters problems in interacting with his or her peer group. Participants were asked to describe how children with deaf-blindness interacted with their peer group.

Some participants shared that their children with disability did not find it easy to interact with their peers. Although the normal developing children may be enthusiastic in communication, interactions could not be done because of the unwillingness of the child with deaf-blindness. A mother shared,

My son doesn't want to interact with the kids of his same age. Sometimes a kid from the next door neighbour tries to play with him but he never responds (P-02).

Participants shared that some children with deaf-blindness might have challenging behaviours which sometimes impede interaction with peer group. A father said,

Kids from the neighbourhood sometimes try to play with my son but my son ends up beating them (P-04).

Participants also indicated that even the normal developing peers are not interested to interact with another child who cannot behave like them. Like one mother said,

Here, kids from other apartments play every evening. But they do not like to play with him (P-7).

Theme 3: Interaction in classroom

Participants were asked to describe how children with deaf-blindness interact in classroom. Majority of the participants shared that a few children with deaf-blindness stay quiet and aloof in classroom. One of the mothers said,

She doesn't talk much in classroom. She likes to stay alone in a side (P-01).

On the other hand, there are a number of children with deaf-blindness who may try to interact. A mother said,

In the classroom, he talks to those who try to talk to him but he can't talk like us in a well-organised pattern (P-03).

Participants were also asked about how they perceived of teacher-student interaction. They described that in general classroom a teacher gets no extra time to communicate with children with disability. One of the participants said,

The teacher gets only one hour for a class. Where is the extra time for interacting with my child? Sometimes the teacher tries to give her extra 1 or 2 minutes. But that is not enough (P-08).

Theme 4: Schooling

Participants were asked about prevalent situation of schooling of children with deaf-blindness. Some of the participants said that they did not know which school is appropriate for the children with deaf-blindness. A father said,

I consulted doctors for my children. I did not know which school would be suitable for him (P-04).

Some participants said that when the child with deaf-blindness has additional health problems, they find it difficult to continue schooling with sickness of their child. One mother shared,

Our first challenge was to make him survive. We often needed to admit him in hospitals. We had to feed him by NG tube. He had many other health problems. So we could not get him admitted to any school (P-07).

Some of the parents experienced that in Bangladesh general classrooms are not ready for the children special needs. As it appears from the statements of the participants, many parents tried to enroll their child in regular school, but they failed to do and that fact in a sense contributes in enhancing the dropout rates of students with SEN. A participant said

In regular school he used to stay quiet in the classroom and never interacted with anyone. It was like just attending school for no reason. (P-03)

There are other participants who stated that the fact that the school environment was unwelcoming, peers were unfriendly and teachers were unaware of how to handle a child with deaf-blindness. A mother shared,

One day, I saw while the teacher is in the class, my daughter came out and lie down in the balcony. Then I requested the teacher to give me permission to sit with her in the class so that I can manage her to seat with me. But they said it cannot be permitted. I also saw some of her peers were pinching her (P-01).

However, there are also some parents who stated that teachers in the regular school tried harder to support their children with deaf-blindness. One participant noted,

In Regular school, teachers were very nice to him. She always tried to talk to him, to teach him (P-03).

Theme 5: Social Gathering

When participants were asked how their child with deaf-blindness usually behaves in social occasions like birthdays or wedding parties, most of them replied that their children are interested in attending such occasions and they usually enjoy outing. Several participants, however, expressed their disappointments by claiming that their children with deaf-blindness were not cordially accepted everywhere. One participant shared her experience,

She becomes very happy when we took her outside. But some people feel annoyed if we visit them with our child. But there are also some families who insist us to visit them taking her with us (P-01).

Conversely, some parents argued that their children with deaf-blindness had unwillingness for outing. One of the participants shared,

My son doesn't like to stay outside home. When we go out he usually doesn't want to leave my lap (P-02).

Theme 6: Social insecurity

When participants were also asked whether or not their children with deaf-blindness could go out alone, as the data of this study suggests, majority of the participants argued that the Bangladeshi society is not prepared for supporting a child with deaf-blindness. In case of girls with deaf-blindness, their parents appeared to be worried for their children and felt insecure in the sense that abuse and harassments may happen in the crowded places. A participant mentioned,

We used to go to school by bus in crowd and rush. Her teacher always alerted me she is a girl. I should help her out (P-01).

Theme 7: Support from family

Participants were asked how they were supporting their children with deaf-blindness. Most of them said that the mother is the primary caregiver of their child. A participant said,

Mostly I take care of him. If I am busy, he stays with his aunt. His father also takes care of him when he gets time (P-02).

However, it was found that in some of the families the primary caregiver was another member of the family. A participant said,

I remain very busy all day long working. He stays with my mother (P-06).

When the participants were asked that how fathers supported their children with deaf-blindness, some of them said fathers played a little role. One participant assumed,

His father sometimes takes the child to his lap. If I ask his father to help him wash his mouth, he says fathers are not meant to do these things (P-06).

Theme 8: Support from community

In response to discussing what kind of support they were receiving from the community, most of the parents seemed to be unsure or somewhat confused about the nature of support the community might provide to their children with deaf-blindness. This is an overall indication that how little support a child with deaf-blindness could expect from the community where she/he lives in. one participant expressed,

How community supposed to help me? Will they provide financial support or they should try to manage my child with me (P-01)?

As the data reveals, even though community was believed to be sympathetic by some participants to their children with deaf-blindness, a few of the participants argued that most of the people in the community held negative attitudes towards these children. At the same time, some people in the community were viewed as being frighten of these children. The following statements are the examples of these thoughts:

Here everybody shows sympathy toward him. They sometimes suggest me to do what they think is the best for my son (P-02.)

Some people say maybe we did something wrong. That's why we got a baby like this. Some people say malnutrition and many other things (P-05).

Not only the kids, but also the adults become afraid when they see my child (P-01).

Some people say in our back that our son is mad. They do not let their child to play with my son (P-10).

Theme 9: Support from School

When the participants were asked about effectiveness of the support they were receiving from school for their children with deaf-blindness, most of the participants stated that they were getting adequate early intervention and care from their school. One of the parents said,

Doctors did not tell me the things that school did. I would never know how to properly care my child if I hadn't gone to school. In school, my child properly practices how to eat, how to wash hands or how to sign for toilet etc (P-01).

Some participants shared that the most effective support from school they got was the development of communication skills of the children with deaf-blindness. A participant acclaimed,

My child developed all of communications procedure in school. It is never possible for any mother to help their child this way (P-07).

Data revealed that, schools provide need based support. For example, therapeutic support, academic support, and vocational and life-skill training are provided by schools. A participant said,

My child is hyper active. They use task analysis, stimulation and therapeutic support to my child (P-04).

One participant shared,

In school teacher tried to teach him how to block print. But he couldn't learn very well. Then the teacher tried to take him to a sunglass factory. But he did do well there. Now school is trying to give him a job at school's store (P-03).

Some of the participants shared that the school provided financial support to the family in order to provide financial backup for the child with deaf-blindness. One participant shared,

The School has made me a tea stall to support my child with money. When my son will be able to take responsibility, the school will support him (P-06).

Discussion

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of the present study was to understand the issues involved in parental perceptions regarding their children with deaf-blindness. The factors identified as influential on parental perceptions include interactions with family members, peers and teachers, social security, and support from a number of agents such as family, school and community. The following section discusses these issues with relevant literature support as well as with contextual variables of the research setting.

A child with deaf-blindness interacts with their family members by touch or smell. At an early age children with deaf-blindness interact relatively less than their normal developing peers do. Murdoch (2002) found that children with deaf-blindness are unable to see or hear their mother's presence. Therefore, if a mother suddenly touches her baby, it will create uncomfortable and insecure feeling for the child with deaf-blindness (Murdoch, 2002). However, gradually they become accustomed in recognising close ones through touch and smell. Children with deaf-blindness can also develop friendships with their siblings or near relatives. Heller et al. (1999) clarified that relationships between children with deaf-blindness and their siblings usually consisted of unequal roles, where siblings might take a helping role for their brothers or sisters with deaf-blindness.

Sometimes the peers of children with deaf-blindness may find it boring as they get less response from the child with deaf-blindness. Sall (2000) claimed that it becomes difficult for a nondisabled child of that age to establish a reciprocal relationship with the child with deaf-blindness. Agnes (2006) mentioned of some factors that trigger the isolation of deafblind children and that include assumed fear on part of the children with deaf-blindness such as fear of failure, fear of people, fear of new situations, fear of sudden noises, and fear of being slighted.

Children with deaf-blindness keep themselves isolated in the classroom (Kaisla & Stjernvall, 2003), it is possibly because they do not like the classroom environment. It is evident that children with deaf-blindness try to interact in the classroom but their effort proves to be in vein in many a time because they cannot maintain the continuum of interaction with their peer group. They interact less with their teacher. In mainstream schools, perhaps because of the large number of students in a class usually there exists little scope of interaction between the teacher and students. Sometimes teachers may overlook their student with deaf-blindness and it can happen due to teacher's insufficient information about the student with deaf-blindness (Kaisla & Stjernvall, 2003)

In Bangladesh, schooling of a child with deaf-blindness starts late in most cases, and in most of the cases the parents do not know about the schools where they should admit their child. Moreover, children with deaf-blindness often have other health related problems such as neurological damage or other health issues (Murdoch, 2002). Sometimes the parents are busy seeing doctors and other health agencies for their child's treatment procedure which, possibly, causes the late schooling of the child with deaf-blindness. On the other hand, parents experienced that the general classrooms are not environmental friendly for a child with deaf-blindness. One possible reason is that perhaps the teachers do not have any prior training about the dealing of students who are deafblind (Chowdhury, 2011).

In some cases, children with deaf-blindness show interests in attending social gatherings or occasions such as birthdays and weddings. However, some of the participants stated that their children with deaf-blindness are not easily accepted everywhere, and possibly it is due to the unawareness of the mass people about the children with deaf-blindness. These facts basically creates obstacles in the Bangladeshi community to integrate these children in the society. Data revealed that social insecurity is another barrier to the children with deaf-blindness. In this study, some parents showed their concern about child abuse. Higgins and Swain (2010) also opined that children with any kind of disability are at the increased rate of child sexual abuse. In the context of Bangladesh, the rejection and negative attitudes of the society towards children with SEN might have a plausible link with this.

Findings also suggest that mother is the primary caregiver of children with deaf-blindness of a family. Also, there is a possibility that the rejection tendency of the fathers could make them averse from taking care of their children with deaf-blindness (Chowdhury, 2011). Although anyone from family or outside can be the caregiver of a child with disability, a child with deaf-blindness needs to interact adequately with all of the members of a family to make him/her understand the essence of family life (McInnes & Treffry, 2001).

Data revealed that in some of the cases community is sympathetic towards a child with deaf-blindness. In Bangladesh, specialist support providers are hard to find who can give home based managements and other support. It was found that sometimes the parents became confused about what they should expect from the society because of the apparent least supportive environment. Sometimes society may reject the child with deaf-blindness and accuse the family of having a child

with deaf-blindness (Chowdhury, 2011). As mentioned earlier, it is possible that the society is superstitious about accepting a child with deaf-blindness.

Findings of this study highlighted the nature and effectiveness of support provided by the schools of children with deaf-blindness. The mainstream schools are lagging far behind in providing support to the children with deaf-blindness. According to the participants' response, there are a few of the inclusive and special schools that provide support for children with deaf-blindness. Primarily a child with deaf-blindness gets support for learning daily living skills, sign language, and tactile language. Early interventions and care are also provided in those schools. It is, however, important that the support provided by the schools are practical and context oriented rather than theory based.

Conclusion

Through the lens of the parents' perspectives, this study provides an understanding of the need of a child with deaf-blindness as well as the challenges that remain in the existing facilities. Findings of this study may help the parents to explore the ways to support their children more intensively to ensure maximum participation. It may also help to establish a platform to make the parents aware of the detrimental effects of consulting traditional healers or quack doctors. Parents may also become aware of social concerns regarding their children with deaf-blindness, which may help them addressing the negative attitudes of people more courageously. Attending mainstream school is a challenging issue for children with deaf-blindness. The findings of this research will provide supportive ways to address this challenge. This study may help teachers to create a welcoming learning environment for the children with deaf-blindness. It will help to strategize the ways to integrate the participation of children with deaf-blindness in regular classrooms activities. Therefore, the findings of this study have some potentials to provide an insight into the social issues that hinder the acceptance and support of a child with deaf-blindness.

Recommendations

Data of this study indicates that children with deaf-blindness may face severe isolation from social life. Parents and teachers of a child with deaf-blindness should try to minimise the isolation developed in the existing environment around the child. Based on the need of individual child, parents and teachers could establish a communication strategy to interact with the child with deaf-blindness, and instruct others to interact with the child using that particular strategy.

Appropriately designed teacher training programme could also be a part to address the challenges of the children with deaf-blindness for their schooling issues. If teachers could be prepared adequately for an inclusive classroom, children with deaf-blindness would be able to participate with full access and equity.

This study underlined the views of only 10 parents about their children with deaf-blindness. More in-depth as well as large scale studies are required to investigate the social and educational issues of deaf-blindness in the context of Bangladesh.

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Methodological Challenges and Concerns of Using Interview Method to Conduct Socio-culturally Sensitive Research

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***Abstract:** Researching Muslim women in the west could be challenging for some researchers with different socio-cultural or religious background. This includes sensitivity associated with religious identity, feminist view and socio-cultural aspects of the research subjects. This article used interview method, a frequently used tool for collecting data in the qualitative research paradigm by applied social scientists. The success of the interview method largely depends on the interviewees and their understanding of the research contexts. This article looks into the authors' understanding of using traditional interview method in a different cultural setting and tries to find out the challenges of using the method with Muslim women going for higher education. The interview process poses some distinct challenges to the interviewing process and needs to be addressed for a rigorous research. This article also reflects on a number of issues related to the interview process, working with the equipment (tape-recorder), flexibility of proposed schedule, and the way of posing research questions for in-depth inquiry. More importantly, it draws on both advantages and disadvantages of interview method for exploring this sensitive issue. The process of data analysis is also summarised along with the consideration of reflexivity and trustworthiness of the generated data. This article also highlights the issues related to gaining access to the participants, sampling, and ethical consideration.*

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Key words: *Research methodology, interview method, Muslim women, ethnic minority, qualitative research.*

Introduction

The process of interview may be challenging and fatiguing, even for the very competent researchers in varied cultural settings (Kvale, 1996). During the fieldwork for collecting data, the researchers may face challenges and unexpected problems dealing with real life situation (Robson, 1993). Different kinds of difficulties and barriers may arise in the field as social world is very complex and very contextual which also coiled with the lack of experience and understanding related to unfamiliarity with different cultures and fear of being rejected by interviewees (Mullings, 1999). It is more so when researchers are engaged in sensitive issues which could be helpful or harmful for individuals or communities by the conduct, publicity, and results of the research (Sieber, 1992:14). There are a few research conducted on Muslim women's education in Britain including research on Muslim women in Manchester (Scantlebury, 1995), Pakistani women in Yorkshire (Afshar, 1989; 1994), young Muslim women in Bradford (Knott and Khokher, 1993) and young women of South Asian origin in Hertfordshire (Dwyer, 2000). Based on an empirical fieldwork, this article aims to describe the challenges encountered in the process of interviewing Muslim women studying at a British university by a non-Muslim non-British female researcher.

Context of the Study

Manchester is one of the ethnically diverse cities in the United Kingdom and the home of world renowned university- the University of Manchester. This university has a very diverse student population from home and overseas. Historically this is the first university in England which allow female to pursue higher education. There are many Muslim women studying in this university from different nationalities including third generation British. But still problem remains as many Muslim women going to the university are facing challenges for their aspiration for higher education within their own family or community as well as from the wider society. This article focuses on the issue as a sensitive one and looks into the methodological challenges and concerns to explore the phenomenon.

Methodology

It was a qualitative interpretative study based on traditional face-to-face interview. There is no comprehensive study on the challenges and barriers of Muslim female students studying at the British universities. Therefore, there is lack of understanding of Muslim female students' higher education aspirations

and their identity (Ahmad, 2001). Regarding developing a methodology for this study, we followed Crotty's (1998) suggestion that researchers need to ask themselves what methodologies and methods will be employed in the research they are going to carry out. Considering the research problem, semi-structured interview was employed as the main method of data collection to carry out the research.

Ahmad (2001) used detailed semi-structured interview when she carried out her research on British South Asian Muslim women and their post-school experience. However, semi-structured interview is not the only method to interview Muslim women as we see that Afshar (1989) used a structured questionnaire and free ranging interviews lasting anything between four and eight hours. Her research was ethnographic in nature and lasted for four years.

As a research tool, *interviewing* can provide the researchers access to explore the detailed 'insider's' points of view of their research subjects, as their aim is to understand and document others' understanding (Miller and Glassner, 1997). According to May (1993:91), interview 'can yield rich sources of data on people's experiences, opinions, aspirations and feelings'.

The purpose of interviews in phenomenology research is to gain research perspective on a lived experience, familiar to those participants taking part in the research. These perspectives are best obtained via a semi-structured interview of the participant's lived experiences - one that takes the form of an everyday conversation but focused on getting to the essence of the phenomena by centering on certain themes as guiding the conversation and questions asked (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:27). In the light of this, the semi-structured interview was chosen as the main method in this study. As Robson (1993:231) puts it:

"Through semi-structured interview, where the interviewer has worked out a set of questions in advance, but is free to modify their order based upon her perception of what seems most appropriate in the context of the 'conversation', can change the way they are worded, give explanations, leave out particular questions which seem inappropriate with a particular interviewee or include additional ones".

Both open-ended and close-ended questions were used with the hope that they could function more effectively. Five open ended questions were designed focusing on the relationship between Islam and higher education, between parents and girls, university study and life. Several back up 'small questions'

related to those five questions were also devised in order to get necessary information without asking the research participants directly to avoid any kind of awkwardness and impoliteness since these Muslim women and the interviewer come from different religious backgrounds and cultures which may lead to different understanding, value and perspectives. The interviewer came up with a few ‘politically correct’ sentence in framing questions such as ‘Do you think Muslim women are facing special difficulties in the university?’ to probe the information meticulously.

Sampling and Getting Access to the Field

As the interviewer for this study was an ‘outsider’ in the cross-cultural setting (Mullings, 1999) and it was difficult to get access to the field, ‘snow-ball sampling’ (Heckathorn, 1997 and 2002) strategy was chosen for selecting research participants. Snowball sampling technique was chosen for this study as the main sampling technique since the study involves religion, culture and other issues on which there are on-going debates, it was difficult to find out research participants who were interested to take part in the study (Marshall, 1996). Biernacki and Waldorf (1981:141) state that:

“The method [snowball sampling] is well suited for a number of research purposes and is particularly applicable when the focus of the study is on a sensitive issue, possibly concerning a relatively private matter, and this requires the knowledge of insiders to locate people for study”.

As it appeared, there was no alternative access to the research field despite another co-author’s effort to make it easy, and only the snowball sampling was the way to get access by finding the first research participant and then establish link with other research participants. In a similar context, Ahmad (2001) provides an example of the advantage of snow ball sampling. She contacted her interviewee with the research participants through the Pakistan Society, the Islamic Society and other various societies, thereafter via a process of snowballing. However, the snowball sampling can only represent a part of population and it may gather people who have same ideas or characters rather than a representative sample of the study population (Atkinson and Flint, 2001).

Getting access to the research field is more difficult in practice if the research focus is somewhat socio-culturally sensitive. As a non-Muslim, non-British female researcher, the interviewer of this study had experienced hardships while trying every possible way to get access to the research participants. Despite the assistance of an academic from the University of Manchester to contact the

leader of the Islamic Society Manchester, a student organisation for Muslim students studying at the higher educational institutions in Manchester, to see the possibility of finding some female Muslim members of the society who might be interested and willing to talk about their attitudes towards higher education for women in relation to their Islamic faith. While waiting to meet Muslim female students, the interviewer as a non-Muslim was reading some verses of the Quran to know more about Islam.

Although someone from the Islamic society of the university gave a light of hope, the interviewer was getting worried and began to suspect the futility of the study. What does it imply in practice? Perhaps the topic is so sensitive that these Muslim women were not willing to talk to an outsider like the interviewer who does not share the same religion, culture and ethnicity with them. Or they were busy with their personal life generally. These were the assumptions working in the interviewer's mind until the first participant attended in the interview. This primary shocking experience made the interviewer think that even if they are willing to talk, accurate information may not be obtained from them (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997). Alternatively, the interviewer tried to stop a few female Muslim students who were wearing hijabs at the university library without any success. When the interviewer had reached the deepest despair, an e-mail from Ayesha (pseudonym) from the Islamic Society lit the hope again. Ayesha was very happy to assist with getting access to female Muslim students and assured providing researcher of as many research participants as the study requires. This happened because of another co-author's effort to assist the interviewer to get access through his personal network.

Decision was made to have an informal talk with Ayesha which could work out as piloting the semi-structured interview schedule with her to make sure what questions could be asked directly, what questions could be offensive, what should be consider as sensitive to the research participants when asking questions, or exploring taboos in relation to their socio-cultural practice.

Considering the difficulty to get access, still at that stage, the interviewer was thinking of other possible ways to ensure participation of enough research participants for the project. That is why, the researcher contacted a female Muslim student at the Faculty of Education, the University of Manchester. She also emailed one of her friends, a male Muslim student from Bahrain to find out prospective research participants. Both of them got back with positive news, the former was willing to be interviewed, and the latter had found a female Muslim student from his country. At last interview process was started.

Research Participants

Data was collected from seven research participants over three months in different places of the university campus. Five women were individually interviewed face-to-face and two of them were interviewed twice. Two other participants were interviewed together. Thus altogether eight interviews were conducted but only five transcriptions were made considering the usefulness of the contents of the recorded conversations.

Seven Muslim female students studying at the University of Manchester agreed to be research participants. Among them three were postgraduates and four were undergraduate students. Among the participants, some were British-born, but one of the British-born had lived in the Middle East for five years. Some are non-British-born, but one of them came to Britain at the age of sixteen. They are majoring in medicine, finance, education, etc. On the one hand, they are totally different individuals and their backgrounds vary greatly. On the other hand, as Muslims, they may have something in common because of such interrelation as faith, religion influence and values.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues in research (specially when dealing with human subjects) are concerned with the application of a series of moral principles to impede harming or wrong doing to others, to promote the good, to respect the research participants (Strauss, 2001). Therefore, considering the ethical issues as well as the privacy of the participants all research participants were given a pseudonym that means names used in this article are not real. Durations of the interviews were at least an hour or more except for two interviews. That helped to establish a rapport with the interviewees to foster a climate of trust and being natural (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Robson, 1993).

In this research, a code of practice was adopted as follows from the guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011), the British Sociological Association (BSA, 2002) and the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2010):

a. Informed consent: A consent form was provided to all the participants prior to conducting the interviews. Through that consent form all the participants were informed of the research and the methodological approach of face to face interview. Before each interview, the use of the tape-recorder was agreed by the interviewees who were informed that when they felt the questions or the way of asking questions unacceptable or offensive, they could tell the interviewer and refuse to answer or withdraw at any time during the research process.

b. Confidentiality and anonymity: All information recorded during the interviews was confidential, and to maintain the anonymity of the participants' pseudonyms could be provided. For this reason, all names have been changed. And all information was used only for the purpose of the study. Collected data was used only for the academic and research purposes.

c. Avoid sensitive words: In order to respect the research participants as well as their views and culture, sensitive words such as restriction, marriage, oppression, freedom, discrimination were technically avoided. The interviewer tried his best to use neutral way to elicit answers rather than in a direct way. For example, words such as discrimination, restriction were not chosen in interviews unless they were employed by the interviewees.

Limitations

There are some limitations regarding sample size. As already mentioned, snowball sampling procedure was used in this study which usually provides the researcher those who are homogeneous to some extent as people with the same character and attitudes are more likely to mix with each other and influence each other (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981). Same answers for some questions were obtained from different interviewees. However, considering all limitations, the researchers tried to understand and unfold the underlying factors associated with Muslim women's aspiration and challenges for higher education especially in the British context.

Data Analysis

The data is mainly based on transcriptions of the interviews along with small parts of research diaries and two informants' e-mails. Research diaries and e-mails from the research participants were used cautiously because of the difference between written language and spoken language. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and a native speaker, a female Muslim student who grew up in Britain was invited to check all transcriptions to guarantee their accuracy.

'All researchers develop their own way of analyzing qualitative data' (Taylor and Bogdan, 1989: 129). Some researchers believe that each person may have his or her own understanding and interpretation in the process of data analysis. Therefore, Marshall (1981: 395) says that 'Whatever methods are used to make sense of data, in the end it turns out to be a very personal and individual process'. This will be further discussed in the next section as reflexivity is a great concern in the qualitative research.

Data analysis mainly depends on an individual process. But whatever the researchers are going to do, it is the norm to start with coding which is a systematic way of developing and refining interpretations of the data (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). Every researcher should organise and summarise the most meaningful bits of data (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). ‘What to code’ or ‘what categories to create’ always rely on the researchers’ intent of the data analysis. In other word, coding is widely used in qualitative research, but is applied in more than one way (Bryman and Burgess, 1994).

The data was analysed through the following steps. Firstly, a number of codes were designed to retain some of the details of the conversations such as intonation, pauses, repetition, laugh etc. Different words were used to describe these details rather than using symbols or numbers. Then the data was divided into small isolated ‘bits’ and set up a list of themes and headings using grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Glaser and Strauss, 1967) approach. For instance, headings that arose from the data were listed as follows:

- Difficulties in the university
- Choosing subjects
- Pre-university concerns
- Parental influence
- Tensions between theory and practice
- Experiences in schools and universities

Of course, it was reconciled the ‘bits’ of data under each theme, and then all relevant information was brought together on a particular theme, the headings listed already would be changed for further analysis going on.

“The application of equivalent codes, reflecting substantive research question, would be one basic way of organizing the data” (Coffey, 1996: 35).

Most research participants mentioned the most obvious identity of Muslim women- the headscarves, difficulties and discriminations against female Muslim students both in schools and university without being asked about it. So all these relevant information about these themes were put together to see how women described themselves. Finally, results of each transcription were compared to show their differences and similarities, and then summarised. They were also compared with other researchers’ findings, theorised them based on understanding and presented them in their own words.

The processes of interviewing and data analysis cannot be separated as they are always connected to each other. At the beginning, transcriptions were put aside,

hoping to analyse them later with a clear mind. But the more they were kept away, the more reading and listening were needed to do. After a while it became obvious to analyse the data immediately after the interview while the interviewer has the fresh memories to save time and effort.

Data analysis and interpretation is a time consuming task and a painstaking process. According to Silverman (1997), data analysis includes coding, grouping or summarising the descriptions to show the dynamic interrelations of *whats* and *hows*. A lot of time was invested for reading and rereading, thinking and rethinking, coding and recoding, summarising and re-summarising the collected data. In other words, the process of analysing and interpreting data is dynamic and seemingly endless. It is obvious from the experience that the more you study the data, the more you think about something valuable to discuss or present. It could be excellent if we can represent everything found in the data which is already proved as impossible within the limited scope of an article.

Reflexivity and Reliability

One of the problems related to all qualitative research is that of reflexivity and reliability of the generated data (McNiff, 1997; Silverman, 1996). When talking about the facts and feelings of the research participants, one has to be careful for using the word 'true'. As mentioned earlier, interview is a dynamic process, the response obtained through an interview depends not only on how we ask the questions, but also on other factors such as the environment, situations, the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, interviewee's mood, character and so on. It is possible for the interviewer to get different and contradictory answers for the same question from the same interviewee.

It is wrong to judge that one is true and the other is false. These are the genuine or real facts for the research participants. However, the character of qualitative research itself is dynamic as well, it changes all the time and it provides multiple realities of 'truths'. As a result, validity becomes challenging for all qualitative researchers. They often ask themselves whether the research is a scientific, systematic, measurable or objective one or not, as Guba and Lincoln (1982:57) argue:

“Naturalistic inquirers...focus upon the multiple realities that, like 'the layers of an onion, nest within or complement one another. Each layer provides a different perspective of reality, and none can be considered more 'true' than any other. Phenomena do not converge into a single form, a single 'truth', but diverge into many forms, multiple 'truths'”.

The challenge here is how the researchers find out the layers of realities and when and where to stop interpretation since they are confronting a complicated world.

Validity cannot be defined simply, but it should be aspired in every research. Results from the proper application of procedures to the methodology functioning in the research always influence validity. Therefore, researchers are required to provide evidence to their hypothesis to work, to propose and conduct researchers enhancing the probability of having reliable results.

How the researchers present themselves also influence the interviewee's ability and willingness to response (Silverman, 1997). In this study, the interviewer was an overseas student like some of the women interviewed and she was minority in the British academic setting and also in her own country and she was a female who would like to hear female voice. This might be one of the possible reasons why these women told her their stories. As Punch (1994:89) puts it:

“the gender and ethnic solidarity between researcher and researched welds that relationship into one of cooperation and collaboration that represents a personal commitment and also a contribution to the interests of women in general. In this sense, the personal is related to the ethical, the moral, and the political standpoint. And you do not rip off your sister”.

The other possible reason might be that they were aware of misconception of Muslim women in general in the media as so in the mainstream British society. Therefore, they wanted to make it clear to a non-Muslim non-British interviewer (one of the researchers) that what you heard is not always the real fact. It might be that they understand Islam more than others so that they are longing to express their ideas and share them with somebody else and get the message across. They would like to show the positive side of Islam and their own interpretation of Islamic principles in relation to education and women rights. That is what non-Muslim believe is not what they believe.

Findings and Discussion

A. Understanding of interviewing process

1. Number of interviews (amount of data)

Before embarking on the interviews, we often wonder how many interviews will be enough for a specific study. It is a very common question to plague a researcher, especially a novice one (Shohel, 2010). Ely et al. (1991) experiencing the fear that they had not collected all the necessary data, but once they returned to the field to continue observation, they found the data enough because they

were repeating themselves. With regards to this, Taylor and Bogdan (1984:83) give the following advice:

“After completing interviews with several informants, you would consciously vary the type of people interviewed until you had uncovered the full range of perspectives held by the people in whom you are interested. You would have an idea that you had reached this point when interviews with additional people yield no genuinely new insights”.

In this study the exact numbers of interviews were not predicted, instead, eyes were kept on each step of each interview, and then carried out the next interview until it appeared that no new data was being unearthed. When enough information was obtained from the interviews to answer the research questions, the interviewer stopped interviewing further. Basically, how many interviews are enough, it depends on the constraints of time, energy, availability of participants, and other conditions that influence data collection (Strauss, 1998). Also, in-depth interviews tend to shed light on understanding the phenomena of the given issues rather than to generalise the findings. Hence, sample size is not really an area of concern when a qualitative research usually is done by using interview technique.

2. Working well with the equipment

If the researcher proposes to use interviews as the core source of data collection, the use of the tape-recorder is the essence. If the researcher as an interviewer is familiar with using the machine and the participants have the experience, the presence of the tape-recorder fades to the background (Markut and Morehouse, 1994). Otherwise, the presence of mic or tape-recorder can make the participants nervous and so thus it may hamper the participants' spontaneous responses.

In the process of fieldwork, the problem was not the interviewees' attitudes towards the machine, rather the interviewer's know-how. It is very essential for an interviewer to be confident with any recording equipment, but should not be embarrassed to check the tape-recorder and other accessories work well in order to capture useful data. However, in this research, the interviewer failed to do so and as a result some of her interview data was missing. After knowing the fact, the interviewee promised to answer those questions by e-mail. In fact, she did and the answers were different from what she said during the face-to-face interview. This raised another issue that interviewees' response to questions differently in different settings and times.

3. Being flexible with the research participants whenever necessary

Robson (2001) states that planning time for schedule and budgeting time for events are the crucial skills of a successful enquiry. However in the real world

settings, the researchers experience rearrangements, reconfirming and rescheduling appointments to cover absences and crises. For example, during fieldwork, the interviewer arrived at the common room on the third floor in the Department of Education to meet Fatima at 1:30pm. She waited and waited, checked e-mail again to make sure that she was in the right place at the right time. Fatima did not turn up and half an hour later the interviewer went back to the computer cluster and e-mailed her to rearrange the time. The same thing happened with Sumayyah from Bahrain. It took at least a month to find a suitable time for the interviewee. On one Friday, the researcher went to the mosque as planned to meet a girl, but she did not come because she forgot the arrangement of the interview, in such a case, it would be better to remind them or confirm their coming if there is a period of time between the appointment and the due time. All these things pushed the interviewer to reorganise her schedule and spent a lot of time without seeming to achieve anything. But obviously it was a learning process for her.

B. Sensitivity of researching Muslim women

With sensitive research topics, researchers may have difficulties to obtain accurate information (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997). For example, Azim (1997) carried out a research on Muslim women in Bangalore, India. She argued that Muslim women did not speak frankly or freely before strangers. Sometimes they needed permission from male members of the family, thus, and they would like to speak only in the presence of men. In this study, one thing must be paid close attention to that is the location of interview which may have great impact on the interviewee's talking. Almost of the women were chosen the mosque as the location to conduct the interview. This might prove that these women were not willing to talk at other places when issues related to their religion. However, the interviewer wanted to respect these women's choice so that they feel comfortable to express themselves and she could carry out the study smoothly.

1. The role of interviewer

According to Cannell and Kahn (1968), as cited by Cohen and Manion (1980), also by Robson (2001:307),

“interview is defined as a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation”.

The role of the interviewer is to ask questions and get answers relevant to the research questions, while the interviewee's role is to answer questions and

provide relevant information. Thus, some researchers suggest that the interviewer should talk less than the interviewee and listen to the answer very carefully. However, one of the issues arising here is how the interviewer should control the interview. There is a danger that the interviewee may take over the interview if the interviewer cannot handle this well, and he or she will easily be led by the informants (Smith, 1981). For instance, interview with Sumayyah was a real blow for the researcher. During the interview, she asked questions which made the interviewer feel incapable to be an interviewer. Another problem was that she had a very long story to tell. The interviewer knew she should listen to her carefully and patiently, but some stories were no evidence and no help to the topic, at least at this stage. CARE (1994) suggests that we develop a sense when and where to interrupt a garrulous interviewee, but, it is very difficult to make a judgment during the interview. As previously mentioned, when Sumayyah asked the interviewer if she could have a chance to tell a story during the interview, the interviewer could refuse her politely but failed to do so. As a result interview time lasted longer than expected. Therefore, a successful interviewer is not only a good listener, but also a good moderator and knows how to manoeuvre or moderate the interview, when and where to stop during the interview to avoid wasting time and energy.

This is also problematic when the interviewee talks less and gives very short answer to the interviewer's question. For example, Haleem always gave short answers which required the interviewer to search for back up questions after using up all ones. So the interviewer began to talk about Muslim women in her home country. It is interesting to notice that the interviewer became the story teller and forgot the interviewer's role. There is a danger here to waste time as well as manipulate the answers of the interviewee. As a result this could damage the interview process as well as quality of the responses to the interview questions.

2. The ways of asking questions

Question-asking is always improved through practice and persistence, but it is only partly true in this fieldwork. Each research, with different purpose each time, is always dynamic (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). A researcher encounters different people, environments, interview locations and stages in different times. Every interview is unique and there are a lot of new things to learn and practice because research deals with a cluster of interviewees who have thinking abilities. Obviously, a researcher may obtain different answers for the same question when employing the different way of asking. During the fieldwork, the interviewer wanted to know why quite a lot of Muslim women

could not go to higher education. In one interview, the question focused on the difficulties of pursuing higher education while in another interview, the interviewee was inquired directly about it without any probe; as a result, two different answers were obtained as follows:

R: So, what do you think why quite a lot of Muslim women do not go to university?

I1: I think (rising voice, excited), first I think more are going to university definitely, I think those who are not going university for a number of factors...

R: Are there any difficulties for Muslim women to go to university, special difficulties?

I2: I would (pause) I would say there are still a lot of Muslim women out there who have a lot of difficulties trying to pursue their education because of...

There are quite a lot of examples in this fieldwork to prove the significance of the way of asking questions. However, in the real world, the researcher found it difficult to choose the way which is considered the best or the proper during the interviews, especially when further questions were put forward according to interviewees' answers because the process of the interview is dynamic, it changes all the time. It is not probably wrong to claim that the way of asking question is the most difficult thing in the interviews. The interviewer paid close attention to it, but she had to confess some ways adopted in the interview might not be appropriate in this fieldwork.

Conclusion

Conducting research is indeed an interesting as well as challenging experience on the part of the researcher. It is difficult to say which part or stage is the most important in the research process. In reality, every single step or stage converges into a full research. In case of research conducted using semi-structured open-ended interview technique, interpretability of the analysed data is one key issue on the part of the researcher specially when findings aim to underline socio-culturally sensitive issues. For this study, socio-cultural and religious sensitivity aspects of research certainly add extra challenges for researchers to collect, analyse and interpret data. Therefore, reflective research practice always enhances understanding of developing research methodology for using interview method to explore sensitive issues in different contexts.

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Students' Anxiety in Learning English as a Foreign Language: Language Skills Perspective

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Abstract: This article has been primed to reveal the state of students' anxiety in learning English concentrating four language skills in classroom situations. Ninety students and thirty subject teachers from ten selected schools of Dhaka city were engaged to provide data with the involvement of questionnaire and interview. Congregated data was analyzed as well as interpreted both in qualitative and quantitative approaches to serve the purpose of discussing that issue. It has been unearthed that students' undergo anxiety due to lack of motivation, teacher-students interaction and supportive environment. Besides, as the data suggests students primarily undergo speaking anxiety and writing anxiety along with listening and reading anxiety to an extent.

Key words: Anxiety, English Learning, and Language Skills.

Introduction

Anxiety is one of the most widely investigated areas and a crucial factor in learning English. In case of language learning, anxiety has been defined as a feeling of tension, apprehension and nervousness associated with the situation of the respective language learning (Horwitz *et al.*, 1986). In general, considering anxiety to be an important affective variable, it can be correlated with learning English among the different groups of people in various contexts. Likewise, if we take a look at the scenario of learning English in Bangladesh, here English is taught as an academic subject only and the students tend to study English in

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order to sit for examination in many a cases (Roshid, 2009). As a result it remains unclear whether the students undergo anxiety in learning English as a foreign language or not, whereas anxiety makes hindrance in their way of learning English (Sultana et al.; 2015). For that reason, in spite of giving preference in learning English, it appears that we could not achieve proficiency in using it for academic or other purposes.

Since teaching-learning is a bipolar process, we should be more concerned with the students so that they might get more access to be involved in this process by overcoming various obstacles or barriers (such as anxiety) in learning English.

Theoretical Background

There are some emotional factors in foreign language learning which affect our learning abilities. These are mainly thought to be intelligence, motivation, attitudes and anxiety. Among these, anxiety stands out as one of the main influential factors for effective language learning (Horwitz et al. 1986). Foreign Language anxiety, recognized as an affective factor in foreign language learning and normally discussed alongside other individual learner differences (Ellis, 1994), is still considered to be a relatively new and developing area within foreign language research.

Von Worde (2003) described possible causes of language anxiety as major sources of anxiety, that were (a) Non-comprehension, (b) Speaking activities and (c) Error correction (3-4). As regards of (a) Non-comprehension, some students reported feeling nervous when they could not understand what teachers said during delivery as that was too rapid or not use of L1 at all. Concerning (b) Speaking activities, the respondents complained of the apprehension they often suffered in oral classroom activities. They were worried about the opinions of peers and of their instructor, and about being asked to speak in class, even if they had time to prepare their intervention beforehand. As regards of (c) Error correction, students were worried about being reprimanded (3) for making mistakes, and about being corrected before they had time to finish answering the question, making them unable to concentrate. That is why; these sorts of possible causes should be taken into consideration so that the teaching environment would not be the cause of learning anxiety for the students of Bangladesh.

Anxiety in Listening Skill

Krashen (1980) theorised that listening or the extracting meaning from messages in L2 was the primary process in the development of a second language, and consequently postulated that anxiety formed an affective filter that interfered with an individual's capacity to receive and process oral messages successfully.

Vogely (cited in Wilson, 1998) carried out a descriptive study on what she called listening comprehension anxiety (LC). As far as features of input were concerned, the speed of delivery was the most frequently reported cause of LC anxiety, followed by bad diction, variety of accents, and teachers who spoke too quietly. As to the level of difficulty, exercises that were too complex, unknown vocabulary, difficult syntax and unfamiliar topics were other sources of LC anxiety. Students reported feeling anxious if they could only listen to texts twice before having to respond. This feeling was particularly prevalent in listening tests. Though these sorts of practices are not followed in the schools of Bangladesh, yet the researcher, by taking into consideration, was intended to observe the overall situation of language learning.

Anxiety in Speaking Skill

Indeed, Daly (1991; cited in Von Worde, 2003) reported that

“in some individuals fear of giving a speech in public exceeded such phobias as fear of snakes, elevators, and heights”.

Horwitz et al. (1986) found that in counselling sessions at the Learning Skills Centre at the University of Texas students said that they had most problems in speaking, with difficulty in speaking in class being probably the most frequently cited concern of the anxious foreign language students. Learners said that they did not feel too apprehensive during drills or about speaking if they had time to plan their spoken interventions, but would freeze if they had to speak spontaneously. This is seemingly identical with the Bangladeshi students. He also noted that students who are apprehensive about making mistake in front of others

“seem to feel constantly tested and to perceive every correction as a failure” (Horwitz et al., 1986:130).

Besides, classroom activities and the learning/teaching environment seem to bear directly on students' anxiety and on their performance in speaking.

Anxiety in Reading Skill

Saito et al. (1999; cited in Wilson, 2006: 114) asserted that reading in a foreign language could elicit anxiety due to two key reasons: one is the unfamiliar writing systems and scripts and the other one is unfamiliar cultural background. Anxiety is also anticipated when a reader can decipher the words of a Foreign Language (FL) text, but not its sense, because of incomplete knowledge of the cultural material underlying the text. This sort of reason of reading anxiety is postulated in case of the Bangladeshi students. Yuan (1998; cited in Chen, 2007:32) wrote that

“most L2 readers complain about having problems to understand the passage they read even though they have checked every vocabulary word by word. Thus, whenever uncomfortable feelings are associated with reading a foreign language, the higher the reading anxiety would become”.

In this sense anxiety in reading could be expected also. Along with the remark of Saito et al. (1999; cited in Chen, 2007: 32), it is convincing that reading anxiety can be aroused through reading the foreign language itself.

Anxiety in Writing Skill

Writing has long been claimed to be a very difficult skill to acquire and is dreaded by Second Language (L2) learners. According to Daly (1978; cited in Onwuegbuzie & Anthony, 2009: 1):

“Writing anxiety is a situation- and subject-specific individual difference concerned with people's general tendencies to approach or avoid writing”

Basturkmen and Lewis (2002; cited in Daud, 2006: 5) asserted that:

“the notion of success in writing is associated with self-expression, flow of ideas, outsider expectations, growing confidence and enjoyment of L2 language academic writing and L2 learners are known to have problems coping with this”

That could be a question in Bangladesh context, whether the students get opportunity to follow the notion of success in writing or not. Researchers Daly & Miller (1975a,b,c; Daly & Shamo 1976, 1978; cited in Onwuegbuzie & Anthony, 2009: 1) have identified several characteristics of people suffering from writing anxiety, including: (a) they are apprehensive about demands for writing competency; (b) they fear their writing being evaluated, because they think that they will be rated negatively, and thus fail the task, assignment, or examination; (c) they avoid writing whenever possible; and (d) when they are forced to write, they tend to focus less energy and attention on the task itself, and thus allow concern to interfere with pertinent thought processes. In this case, there might be a question about do the students go through these for writing or its' development, because writing, here, is only used as a means of giving home works and sit for examinations.

Rationality of the Study

Though English has been being treated as an academic subject in most of the schools in our country but it is a matter of fact that language learning is a cognitive activity that relies on encoding, storage, and retrieval processes (Mahmud, 2009), and anxiety can interfere with each of these by creating a divided attention scenario for students who are anxious. As a result, English

learners who suffer from language anxiety might have a hard time carrying out some specific language tasks as well as language skills. Therefore, this study involves a worthwhile contribution to unveil the reasons behind the students getting anxious in learning English at lower secondary level (grades VI-VIII) and it aims to explore in which basic skills of learning English students undergo anxiety.

Methodology

Participants

Purposive selection of 90 students for sampling refers to 9 students from each school of the selected classes (6, 7 and 8) of the selected schools in Dhaka city. More specifically, it was ensured that each selected class of that very school provided 3 students of balanced gender. A total of 30 subject teachers, 3 from each school had been chosen by self-selective sampling and the decision of school authority.

Instruments

For the data assortment, two instruments were developed for the study. They are listed below:

- a. One mixed questionnaire for the students of selected grades.
- b. One semi-structured interview schedule for the subject teachers.

Procedure of Data Analysis

Two courses of action for data analysing have been employed to serve the purpose of receiving findings of this study: a) quantitative analysis and b) qualitative analysis. To deal with data processing and analysing systematically and then to illustrate them visibly the researchers had to go through the Statistical Package for Social sciences (SPSS, 16.01 version). The responses of each statement were analysed in terms of the frequency of the responses. The frequencies were further converted into descriptive statistics to get the findings.

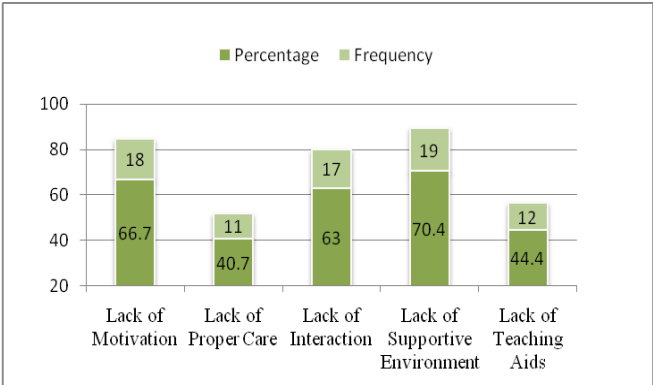
Findings and Discussion

For the study, when the researchers came close to the students with question about their consideration of studying English 81 (90.0%) of them asserted very good. Only 19 (21.1%) students declared that they feel quite anxiety in English as a result it seems to them a difficult one. On the other hand, 25 (83.3%) teachers think students undergo anxiety in different extents. 20 (66.7%) teachers stated that students are afraid of English. The real fact is that institutionally language learning is not executed in the way of foreign or second language is

acquired. As a result, students cannot realize whether they undergo anxiety in learning English or not.

In response to why students undergo anxiety the respective teachers asserted that lack of motivation, proper care, supportive environment of learning and practice, teaching aids and proper patronization of concerned authority. By the help of graphical presentation the evidence with this regard is given underneath:

Figure 1: Reasons behind the Students Getting Anxious in Learning English



Considering few independent variables the researchers endeavoured to seek out students' anxiety in the light of their attitude towards English. The following table represents significant statistical evidence in this respect:

Table 1: Summary Table of V on Students' Attitude towards English by Independent Variables

Independent variables	Attitude towards English
	Cramer's V values
Reading other English books	V = .33**
Hiding themselves in the class	V = .32**
Feelings in reading English	V = .48***
Reading English to pass examination	V = .31**
Considering English as difficult one	V = .27**
Looking outside the classroom during lecture	V = .26*

Note ***p < 0.001 **p < 0.01 *p < 0.05

The aforementioned variables concerning learning English in and outside the classroom emerged as imperative determinants of attitude towards English for this study. Table 1 which gives only V values, proves that attitude towards

English is significantly associated with the independent variables like: reading other English books ($p < 0.01$), hiding themselves in the class ($p < 0.01$), feeling to read English ($p < 0.001$), reading English to pass examination ($p < 0.01$), considering English as difficult one ($p < 0.01$) and Looking outside the classroom during lecture ($p < 0.05$). That means students' attitude towards English is not positive as they study English to pass examination, consider English as difficult, feel bad to read the textbook and hide themselves in the class.

The interviewee teachers revealed that students face anxiety in different spheres of learning English in classroom setting.

Table 2: Sphere of Students' Anxiety

Sphere	Frequency	Percentage
Class Participation	15	50.0
Group Work	2	6.7
Speaking/Oral Activities	27	90.0
Class Test	20	66.7

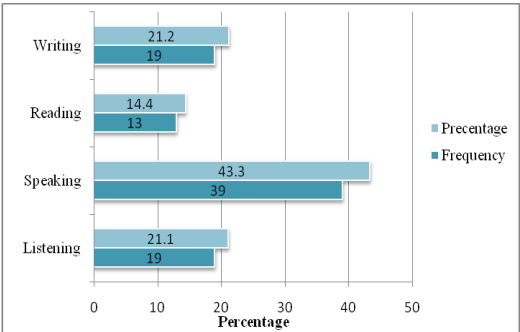
Sphere of Students' Anxiety

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Vitality it is a matter of fact that as the students more hanker after result instead of learning English they endure anxiety for the examination that is known as test anxiety, the most common and prevalent type of foreign language anxiety.

It has been found that among four language skills 43.3% of 90 respondents affirmed they feel nervous and worried in speaking. Because when they attempt to speak up about something they are anxious as they think they are not good in speaking, their friends might laugh at when they speak, they cannot find suitable words to disclose the meaning or thoughts or they cannot think of what to say and how to say it and most importantly the fear of doing mistake does not lead them go ahead for speaking. Here a complete picture of students' anxiety considering the language skills has been given underneath:

Figure 2: Anxiety in Language Skills



It notably provides evidence of Horwitz and Cope (1986) comment, “speaking the target language is the most frightening thing when learning a second or foreign language”.

Supporting that issue 29 (96.7%) class teachers affirmed the students specially undergo in speaking. 21.1% (19) of respondents proclaimed that they feel anxiety in writing. They cannot write down anything in the class unless they memorise the topic or content even they cannot form a sentence accurately. Students asserted that when they write something they become anxious about whether they write correct spelling or not. In this respect 12 (40.0%) teachers affirmed that students feel less anxiety in writing than speaking. Moreover, taking the shelter of writing, they want to get rid of speaking. So it does not match up with the character of people suffering from writing anxiety indentified by Daly & Miller and Daly & Shamo (1975a,b,c, Daly & Shamo 1976, 1978).

Thirdly, 14.4% (13) of the respondents declared that (based on their own evaluation) they suffer from anxiety in reading. In most of the cases, students are obstructed to pronounce a word that is not known to them and they become nervous in facing those sorts of words. Similar to speaking, students think their classmates will laugh at their reading if they read out mistakenly, in the class as students are supposed to read any text from the textbook in front of the whole class. In addition, sometimes they could not comprehend the meaning of words and complex sentence structure after reading and became perplexed. Therefore, that result is significantly related to anxiety that seemed to be a

“mediating variables that intervenes at some point between the decoding of a text and the actual processing of textual meaning” (Saito et al., 1999: 215).

According to students' own evaluation 21.1% (19) of the respondents asserted they experience anxiety in listening. They are not quite sure of understanding teachers' speech in English. Consequently they face problem in comprehending the full meaning or context of the lesson through teacher's speech in English. Even so, they are blamed negatively that they are not attentive to teacher's lecture. Sometimes students could not listen properly due to the noisy atmosphere of the classroom. On that issue all the respondents were divided into two portions, one portion (52.3%) thinks (based on their own judgment) they undergo anxiety in listening and they are quite competent in listening skills. This result goes against for the feature of input in Listening Comprehension (LC) found in the study of Vogely (1998) in where bad diction, variety of accents and teachers who speak too quickly are involved as factors. And the students of second portion are debilitated by anxiety in listening that harms to students in the listening context.

Conclusion

As Kleinmann (1977) says, anxiety is a complex and multidimensional factor that is not easy to be scored nor put into numbers. Considering that view this study was a diminutive effort to explore the status of students' anxiety in learning English. Students frequently go for English as an academic subject but in case of language learning they are in quite backward position. Taking the findings of this study and the importance of effective English learning for Bangladeshi students into account immediate scheme should be taken in this respect to achieve the ultimate goals of English learning in Bangladesh. We should bear in mind that to ensure anxiety free English learning is not only for carrying out good result in English but also for using English language as a mean of communication to compete in the contemporary world .

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