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Cumulative Reluctance of Students towards Learning at University Level: A Study on the University of Dhaka

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ABSTRACT

Education is the most crucial precondition for the overall development of a nation. There have been numerous attempts to attain the veritable goal of education by multiple educational institutions in Bangladesh. Although a large number of graduates are added to the list of highly educated individuals, most of them are detached from the main objectives of acquiring education due to their cumulative reluctance towards learning. This study aims at finding out the reasons behind students' lack of interest in learning from socio-economic and psychological perspectives and incorporating congenial suggestions to overcome this intricate circumstance. Integration of qualitative and quantitative research has been used in conducting this study in order to get a general overview. A number of factors are located responsible for students' reluctance towards learning including incongruous curriculum, deficiency of teacher's pedagogical skills, unemployment issues, adversity of accommodation, lack of financial security, mental anxiety and so on. In order to surpass this alarming situation and to bring back students' interest in learning, they must be provided with a standardized curriculum, financial security, access to vocational studies, qualified teachers, and employment opportunities.

Keywords: Learning, Students' reluctance, Knowledge, Academic curriculum, Motivation, and Educational policy.

INTRODUCTION:

Students are considered one of the major contributors to the development of a country. Earlier, higher education was regarded as luxury in a society of low literacy rates. The government has been trying to reach the goal of achieving a hundred percent literacy rate since its independence. According to the last statistics, (2021) of UGC (University Grant Commission) 43, 62,187 students enrolled in the public universities of Bangladesh which marks the highest number of students' enrolment in public universities for the last ten

years. In spite of the increasing number of students in university level, the quality of education provided to the students is frustrating. The endeavors of the government to ensure quality education are flunked due to the growing apathy of students towards learning. Among the three major education level, only a half of the secondary level students get enrolled in tertiary level with 20.19% Gross Enrolment Ratio (BANBEIS-Bangladesh Education Statistics-2021). Since the students of Bangladesh have to face numerous challenges in their student life, these factors head for cumu-

relative reluctance of students to adhere to academic learning. Lack of interest in learning refers to lack of curiosity of students pursuing new knowledge, methods, concepts and techniques to ameliorate their intrinsic and extrinsic cognitive processes. Interest is the prerequisite to attain new skills and to sharpen one's prior capabilities. Thus, lack of interest can be defined as an alarming stage where students lack impulse, feelings, concerns and motivation to learn. Since interest is one of the determinants of learning, the correlation between objectives and outcomes of education remains unfulfilled without exquisite concentration of students. Reluctance to learning has become a universal issue which impedes purpose of education, students' academic progress and the goal of personality development (Rahman, 2021).

The main objectives of education will remain unexecuted if students get distracted by any internal and external repulses. In order to develop the potential capabilities of students, educational institutions need to adopt effective strides which are conducive to regenerating students' interest in academic learning. This study provides a wide overview of the factual reasons behind this cumulative reluctance of students towards learning based on their socio-economic as well as psychological circumstances, and also incorporates suggestions and recommendations to motivate students and to rejuvenate their inclination to learn.

Research Questions and Objectives

What are the influencing factors of losing learning attitudes regarding socio-economic and psychological circumstances among the university students? Some specific research questions are as follows:

- 1) What is the Socio-Economic and psychological condition of university students?
- 2) What are the factors responsible for losing learning attitudes among the university students?

Objectives

The main objective of this research is to know why the university students losing their learning attitude. It has also some specific objectives which are as follows:

- a) To understand the general psychological and social condition of university students.
- b) To know the causes of losing learning attitudes of the student.

METHODOLOGY:

This research is operated based on an integration of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to reach the roots of the problems, and to describe the factors using numerical and quantitative data. Since it is an exploratory study, sample survey and in-depth case study have been followed. Primary data have been gathered from study area and secondary data have been collected from journal, reports, articles and newspapers.

Locale of study and Sampling

For the convenience of this study, this research has been conducted at several departments of University of Dhaka. Students, who have recently completed their graduation and are currently studying in multiple disciplines, are the main subjects of this study. A total number of 42 correspondents have been selected through simple random method with an intention of exploring the reasons behind their disinclination to learn.

RESULTS:

Table 1: Demographic information of Respondents (%).

Name	Percentage of age
Age of respondents	
19-20	19.05%
21-22	35.71%
23-25	45.24%
Name	Percentage of Gender
Sex of respondents	
Male	66.66%
Female	33.34%
Name	Level of occupation

Occupation of respondents parents	
Farmer	57.14%
Day laborer	14.28%
Job holder	9.54%
Business	14.28%
Others	4.76%
Name	Portion of income
Income of respondent parents	
5000-9000	19.04%
9000-13000	46.50%
13000-17000	23.80%
17000-21000	7.14%
21000-25000	2.38%
25000- Above	1.14%

This **Table 1** indicates that there are no significant age variations among these students. The highest average age belongs to 23-25 which is about 46% of the total respondents. The second highest age level belongs to 21-22 which is almost 36%. And there are 18% students who are about 19-20. It also shows that 67% students are male and 33% students are female respondents in this study which indicates that tertiary level education is male dominated. The highest (57%) percentage of the respondents' parents' occupation indicates that most of the university students come from agriculture

based family. And a large portion (47%) of their parent's income is between 9,000-13,000 tk which indicates that they are not come from enough solvent family. From the in depth case study, it is clear that the profession and income of the student's parents have very significant impact on achieving good result and for developing learning attitude. For this reason, one female student of the Institute of Education and research said, "If my financial status was fair enough, I could spend much more time in study than doing tuition."

Table 2: Economic Factor (%).

Name	
Working condition	
Employed	9.52
Unemployed	90.48
Source of income	
Family	83.34
Tuition	9.52
Part times job	4.76
Others	2.38
Economic status	
High	11.90
Middle	73.82
Lower	14.28
Sectors of expenditure	
Education	52.3
Buying books	7.15
Teaching materials	4.76
Others (living and consuming)	35.71

The data from above **Table 2** shows that most of the selected students are unemployed and the percentage is about 90%. Most of them (83%) acknowledge that

they have to depend on their family. Only 10 % the respondents are involved in different sectors for financial solvency. Among the employed respondents, 10%

students are engaged in tuition, 5% students are doing part time job. The data also indicates that 73% of the students belong to middle economic class, 14.28% of them are from lower economic class and 12% of the students come from higher economic class. The **Table 2** shows that most of the students belong to middle and lower economic class and they have to struggle in their university life. The **Table 2** also demonstrates that about 52% of the total expenditure of the students is expended for educational purposes like admission fees, sem-

ester fees etc. They also spend 7% for buying books and 5% for teaching materials. It is also seen that a large portion (36%) of their expenditure is spent for living and consuming. From the case study, one of the respondents from department of History said, *“My family cannot provide sufficient money every month. Consequently, I always have to think of bearing my expenses which lead to mental stress. So, I cannot focus on my study properly.”*

Table 3: Relation between economic condition and education.

Name	Economic condition affects education of the students	Savings status	Debt status
Yes	83.33%	26.20%	16.66%
No	16.67%	73.80%	83.34%

The **Table 3** demonstrates that about 83% students consider economic condition as an influential fact in achieving education and 17% students think that economic condition has less impact on education. It also shows that about 26% students have their own savings and 74% students have no savings. Again, about 17% students have debt and 83% students do not have any debt.

From the case study, one female student of Rokeya Hall of Dhaka University said, *“Though I always go through financial crisis which hampers my education, I never borrow money from others. I have no savings and during illness I cannot afford good food or medicine.”*

Table 4: Views of students toward political involvement.

Name	Level of view point (%)
Passion	11.90%
Interest in student politics	14.28%
For taking advantage	9.52%
Uncertain future	40.52%
Hampers learning	21.78%
Others	2%

This **Table 4** shows that about 12% students are passionately engaged in students’ politics and more or less 14% students are interested in it. Among the respondents, about 41% and 22% students consider students’ politics as a factor leading to uncertain future

and driving to hampering learning. Again, some of them about 10% students are involved in politics for taking advantages and other 2% students for several reasons.

Table 5: Daily activities of students on hourly basis (%).

Time(hours)	Class	Study	Sleep	Friends	Social activities and voluntary work	Social media	Recreation	Alone
1 to 2	23.81%	11.90%	–	64.28%	64.29%	23.80%	35.71%	38.09%
2 to 3	35.71%	23.81%	–	23.80%	28.57%	61.90%	52.38%	57.14%
3 to 4	35.71%	38.09%	11.90%	7.14%	7.14%	11.90%	9.52%	4.76%
4 to 5	4.76%	19.05%	26.19%	4.76%	–	2.38%	2.38%	–
5 to 6	–	4.76%	38.09%	–	–	–	–	–
6 to 7	–	23.38%	23.81%	–	–	–	–	–

In another in-depth case study, one male respondent mentioned, “some senior students, who are actively involved in politics utilize their junior for own interest which is one of the barriers on the way of learning by consuming valuable time.”

This **Table 5** presents the daily activities of the students with specific time distribution. About 36% students spend 2 - 4 hours in attending classes, 24% students attend classes for 1 - 2 hours. Only 5% students spend 4-5 hours for attending classes. It shows that students are not so inclined to attend lengthy classes. In addition, a large number of students 38% study about 3 - 4 hours, 23% study 6 - 7 hours and 24% stu-

dents spend 2-3 hours in study daily. Most of the students, almost 38% students sleep 5 - 6 hours. A notable fact is that maximum students 64% spend 1 -2 hours with their friends as well as are engaged into various activities which shows their friendly and benevolent nature. Moreover, a large number of students about 61% spend valuable time in social media. It is a more shocking fact that respectively 11% and 2% students spend 3-5 hours in tab social media on daily basis. Students about 52% like to have recreation for 2-3 hours in solitude on daily basis. So it can be said that there are diversified activities among the students which makes their own personality.

Table 6: Opinions on Quality of education verses of university facilities (%).

Name	Library facilities	Book facilities	Internet facilities	Quality education	Social environment	Residential facilities	Political environment
Very good	4.76%	2.38%	4.76%	23.80%	-	-	2.38%
Good	19.04%	28.57%	23.80%	64.28%	28.57%	28.57%	19.04%
Average	57.14%	57.14%	42.85%	9.54%	42.86%	26.19%	23.80%
Bad	7.14%	11.90%	21.42%	2.38%	23.80%	16.66%	26.19%
Very bad	11.90%	-	7.14%	-	4.77%	30.95%	28.57%

Table 6 presents the quality of education & the socio-political status or facilities of the students. It is found that about 57% students regards that the library facilities and book facilities are average in standard. Very few of them, about 2 - 5% think the facilities very good. And about 7 - 12% students think that the facilities they are provided with are very bad in quality. Again, 43% students comment that the internet facilities are average standard. Here, the quality education parameter indicates that 64% think the quality of education good. An astonishing fact is that the parameter of social environment and residential facilities show

that none of the students regard those facilities very good. About 26 - 43% students claim these facilities as good or average. Moreover, 31% students think that the condition of residential environment is very bad. About 26% and 29% students consider the political environment bad or very bad. Only 2% students regard the political environment good. From the case study, a respondent from Mohsin Hall said, “I stay at hall and there are about 30 students living in one room in a overcrowding manner. Instead of devoting to study, I have to attend political program for my shelter.”

Table 7: Causes of losing learning attitude (%).

Name	Percentage of liability
Poor curriculum	47.61
Poor residence	42.85
Poor health	14.28
Poor university administration	35.71
Poor library facilities	33.33
Poor internet systems	26.19
Poor political situation	35.71
Poor social environment	17.28
Teacher’s poor educational quality	45.23

Poor teachers' guideline	42.85
Lack of teaching materials	21.42
Poor psychological support	23.80
Poor extra curriculum activities	11.90
Poor students-teachers relation	23.80
Others	9.52

The **Table 7** pointed out that there are many reasons behind students' losing learning attitude. The survey shows that about 35% to 45% students think that poor university administration, poor political situation, lack of quality education and poor teacher's guideline are the main reasons behind students losing learning attitude. In the second stage, 15%-35% students mention poor library facilities, poor internet systems, poor social environment, lack of teaching materials, poor psychological support and poor students- teachers' relation as the factor liable for losing students learning attitude.

A few numbers of students (about 10%-12%) consider poor curriculum activities and other reason as responsible for this situation. By analyzing the opinion of the respondents, it is seen that the overall education environment of Dhaka University is average. In addition, most of the students emphasize on poor teachers guideline, poor university administration, poor political en-

vironment and lack of teacher's educational qualification as responsible for students losing learning attitude which hamper their overall studies.

In another in-depth case study, one female respondent mentioned, "Some aspects which are creating barriers in her learning. Among all criteria, lack of proper accommodation, financial crisis, lack of motivation and worried about getting job are the major barriers which distract her from learning. She says that students are losing learning attitude for many social, psychological and economic problems. For example, lack of employment opportunities leads students to think of job oriented learning and they lose the interest of academic learning. Also, political instability, in addition to social media, frustration gradually results in losing learning attitude."

Table 8: Nature and types of mental anxiety of the students (%).

Name	Frequency	Percentage
Frustration	28	66.66
Loneliness	6	14.28
Low self esteem	11	26.19
Financial crisis	18	42.85
Lack of friendship	4	9.52
Others	4	9.52

The above **Table 8** asserts that most of the respondents choose frustration as a reason of their mental anxiety which is about 67%. According to them this sort of frustration generally takes place due to lack of coherence between academic activities and job market as from a student of public university. The parent and relatives have more expectation. This situation creates pressure on them which leads to ultimate frustration. The second most influential reason of anxiety is financial crisis and 43% students suffer from this condition. Also, 26% students consider low self – esteem as a fact

of their mental anxiety because most of the respondents belong to middle class or lower economic class and their family cannot provide financial support to them. Another 14% students think of loneliness as a reason of mental depression and about 10% students lack friendship which leads them to mental breakdown.

From the case study, a student of Shahidullah hall said, "My father cannot afford all my expenses and always pressurizes me for getting job. This situation makes me frustrated about my future life and leads to mental breakdown."

Table 9: Suggestion to overcome the factors that inhibit learning (%).

Name	Level of importance
Ensuring quality education	42.87%
Providing stipends and financial support	33.33%
Creating more access to research work or curriculum activities	28.57%
Upgrading teacher student relationship	35.71%
Eliminating political influences in job sectors	40.47%
Emphasizing vocational education	42.55%
Assuring wide range of job sectors after graduation	3.95%
Motivation students for learning	30.95%
Others	0%

Table 9 contains a number of suggestions on behalf of the students for improving their learning attitudes. In this part of the survey, the respondents answer to give their suggestion to overcome this situation and how to make study more attractive to them. About 35% - 45% students emphasize on ensuring quality educations, upgrading teachers-students relationship, eliminating political influences in job sectors and spending vocational studies. Also, 33.33% students recommend that students should be provided with stipends and financial support. Another 31% students consider motivating students for learning is an essential factor to reduce losing learning attitude among the students. About 4% students thinks that if they are assured of having a wide range of job sectors which is related to their academic studies, it will be help them to reduce their tendency of losing learning attitude. From the case study, a student of Surjasen hall recommended, *“If quality education, teachers – students relationship and vocational studies are upgraded, we will be more benefited and attracted to learning. Political influence and nepotism should be eliminated so that students can learn spontaneously without be press unused and frustration.”*

DISCUSSION

This study evidences that majority of the respondents belong to middle to lower middle class families and are mostly dependent on families for educational expenditures. Since most of them have come from rural areas, the excessive living costs of urban area have an adverse impact on them. In addition, discrepancy between academic studies and job market extends to unemployment problem, creates a sense of dissatisfaction and apathy towards learning among the students.

Lack of financial security and insufficient employment opportunities further intensify students' inclination to job-oriented studies rather than academic learning. Infelicitous curriculums and lack of pedagogical skills of the university teachers also exacerbate students' disinclination to learning. There has been an incoherence between the number of students and infrastructure receptivity of the university which results in inadequate seats and unsteadiness in residential halls, deficiency of educational materials and degradation of suitable environment for learning. It is observed that very few students are inclined to academic learning and are interested in pedagogic research in the near future. Again, a significant number of students are suffering from mental anxiety and depression sprung up from incongruous social expectations, familial pressure, lack of mental support and guidances, and low self-esteem. All these negative apprehension affect students' idiosyncrasies as well as cognitive development.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Bangladesh has developed remarkably in the literacy rate over the last ten years to all time high. In spite of achieving notable progress in literacy rate, the standard of higher education has still remained dissatisfying due to failure of ensuring quality education at universities. Students are distracted from attaining the main goal of education because of their reluctance towards learning. This study ensures a circumstantial exploration of the factors responsible for their lack of interest in learning. Several factors such as inept curriculums, financial insecurity, and unemployment issue, lack of teachers' pedagogical efficiency, mental anxiety and negligence of the authority are identified as the liable issues resulting students' reluctance towards learning. These

issues must be addressed sincerely to revive students' interest in learning. The findings and discussion of this study present the factual reasons behind students' reluctance to learn. The overall situation is getting worse day by day. If proper steps are not adopted immediately, it will lead to serious loss of the nation. To minimize the existing challenges and to bring back students' interest in learning, proper steps should be taken integrating students' opinions. Following is a list of recommendations based on this study-

- 1) First of all, quality education must be ensured through emendation of inconsistent curriculum & academic activities, considering modern education system.
- 2) Students, faced with financial crisis, should be provided with scholarship & subsidiary job opportunities.
- 3) Unemployment issue needs to be eliminated and a wide range of job opportunities must be ensured to regenerate students' interest in learning rather than job sectors.
- 4) Research oriented sessions and vocational studies can be adopted to make students attract towards study and to provide them practical scope of learning.
- 5) A suitable environment of residential halls must be developed with modern facilities to help students focus on learning.
- 6) With a view of eliminating mental anxiety and frustration of the students, psychological counselling services can be arranged.
- 7) The teacher can play the most crucial role to motivate students and to revive their interest in learning.
- 8) The attention of higher authority and policy makers should be addressed to explore these issues for the best implementation of educational policy.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

The author and co-authors announced that there were no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research work.

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