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**Impact of
student-teacher relationships
on Bangladeshi students in
New Zealand**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education
at Massey University, Wellington campus,
New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of overseas students' relationships with their teachers on them. Nowadays the universities worldwide, especially the universities in the western world are increasingly having large numbers of overseas students in their tertiary education sectors. When students go abroad for higher study purpose they confront manifold problems and strains in their academic endeavours as well as in their personal and emotional lives through facing different academic systems, different language and teachers and peers of different cultures. One major concern directly related to their academic success and overall wellbeing is their interactions and relationships with their teachers who, obviously, are from diverse cultures. Although the literature and various research reports have already focused on the problems faced by overseas students and their teachers in teaching-learning activities, there is little research available on how overseas students perceive their relationships with their teachers and impact of these on them.

For this research eight Bangladeshi people with tertiary study experience in New Zealand were interviewed about their study experiences including their views regarding their relationships with their teachers, their feelings and realizations about the impacts of those relationships on them and about the overall importance of this relationship for an overseas student.

The findings of this research emphasize that an overseas student's relationship with teacher carries great significance in reducing her/his troubles and stress and offering mental and emotional support to enhance academic efforts and achievement.

This study recommends good understanding and sincere effort by both an overseas student and her/his teacher to know each other and increase cultural sharing to form a promising relationship.

Candidate's Statement

I certify that this research project has been undertaken and completed by me and the research report has been written by me except where otherwise acknowledged. It has not been presented, in part or in full, for any other papers or degrees for which credit or qualifications can be claimed.

Nazneen A. Chowdhury
(Signature)

Nazneen Afsana Chowdhury

Date *22/08/2005*

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This thesis has been written as part of my Masters in Adult Education and in it I explore how some Bangladeshi students during their tertiary study in New Zealand realised that the impact of overseas students' relationships with their teachers could be strong enough to enhance or impede their academic adventures.

1.1 Background

The relationship between teacher and student has long been a matter of interest for me since I started teaching English in an intermediate college in Bangladesh after finishing my tertiary study. Everyday my confrontations with my own students and interactions with them enriched my knowledge and inspired me to think more about the relationship existing between students and their teacher/s. I felt interested to know how to establish and maintain a relationship with students which might help me to be more useful to them and also enable them to get benefit.

In 2002 I came to settle in New Zealand as a permanent resident and became a post graduate student of Massey University at Wellington. A new academic world gradually opened before me through entering a different environment with lots of unfamiliar rules and regulations and encountering my teachers and classmates. All this led me towards confronting a world full of different ideas, systems, cultures and values; a challenging world which I was not acquainted with.

1.2 Overseas students in higher education

What is the experience of people who go abroad for higher study? How does the new academic environment affect the students from different worlds? How do they feel about their teachers, classmates and institutions that are culturally so much different? Whatever it might be, meeting large number of overseas students at Massey always reminded me the truth that learning, now-a-days, cannot be confined within the limits of country, culture, creed and colour.

To increase knowledge, self qualification and development people have got a natural tendency of going abroad for higher studies. Regarding job prospects at home and abroad, they are quite aware of the brighter demand of educational qualifications obtained from universities of technically and financially developed western countries. Again the possibilities of enjoying a more sophisticated life in a better environment also allure them for going abroad and studying. Their goals and efforts, merits and other capabilities vary according to their social, economic and personal backgrounds and desires.

But what experience awaits them when they reach a new world and start their academic venture?

Students come from different ethno-social and cultural environments. They are the products of dominant norms and established systems of their respective countries which stand in direct contrast with the prevailing norms and systems of those countries where they go for higher education. These impede their easy assimilation into another culture.

Then they find it difficult and sometimes stressful to understand the academic cultures of the country, their teachers, peers—the whole system in the institution. Gaps of understanding and dissimilarities in thoughts and works of overseas students with their new academic world can create obstacles and even disruptions in study. There come the language barriers and cultural shocks arousing shame, hesitation and inferiority complex in students. These are aggravated by the other problems connected with settling in a new country like financial struggles, accommodation problems, homesickness and alienation. Under these circumstances overseas students feel disheartened and fail to make accurate plans and take proper steps on time to proceed and prosper in study.

Lots of things are connected with reaching educational goals living in an unfamiliar and new country. For example, student's social status, financial factors, helpful education provider, housing and medical facilities, availabilities of familiar and preferable foods, opportunities of proper socialization and many other things which influence student's mental and academic worlds. But to my mind the most significant factors that influence the academic venture are students, their teachers and the relationship between them. Because most overseas students, coming in a new country, become more or less puzzled; clearly seeing and realising things appear difficult and time consuming for them. Then the advice, guidance and assistance of teachers can be of utmost help in enhancing a student's outcome.

1.3 The research question

During my own academic pursuit I discovered the meeting points and dissimilarities of different thoughts, opinions and cultures. Indeed the educational institutes have always been the meeting places of so many diversities. Seeing at Massey those students of different ethnicities like Chinese, Korean, Indian, Sri Lankan, African and Europeans I wondered what experiences these students were having during their study. Side by side I thought that teaching students of such diverse backgrounds could also become an interesting experience for teachers. I also thought that at different times it might appear troublesome, unpleasant as well as time consuming for them to set students in the right track tackling their manifold drawbacks and weaknesses. Thus I became interested to have a closer look in the relationship between an overseas student and her/his teacher/s. My personal experience also inspired me in this regard.

Studying at tertiary level in a foreign university includes lots of things that demand timely attention and adequate steps from a student who is, as a newcomer, stranger to the whole affair. Questions may arise whether a student needs to establish any relationship with the teacher at all. There are many departments with lots of teachers busy with teaching, studying, preparing lectures and question sheets, conducting exams, checking assignments, continuing research, arranging and attending various courses and seminars. Students are busy with collecting books, visiting libraries, venturing websites and having peer discussions inside and outside classes and so on. Through attending classes, joining discussions, submitting assignments and sitting for the exams they come in contact with their teachers and this is a relationship.

But I intended to explore a relationship different from that; a relationship with potential to enable an overseas student to be eager and courageous enough to disregard hindrances and accept any challenge in academic life; a relationship envisaging goodwill, compassion and sincere effort from the teacher to help the student reach his /her goal.

As I reflected on the relationship and its possibilities, several questions came to my mind such as:

- 1) What can be called a good relationship between a teacher and an overseas student?
- 2) What are the factors that inspire an overseas student to establish a relationship with his/her teacher/s?
- 3) How this relationship is influenced by the different socio-academic, linguistic and cultural gaps between an overseas student and her/his teacher?
- 4) What is the impact of this relationship on the student?
- 5) What can be done to improve the relationship?

Feeling a curiosity to know the answers I turned to the literature and research projects dealing with the experiences of overseas students and their teachers in different countries around the world.

1.4 Assumptions about the problems of overseas students and their teachers

With the growth in the number of overseas students especially in the tertiary institutions of developed countries many educationists and researchers started contemplating how

these students had been confronting the unfamiliar and different people, ideas and systems in their academic life. Plenty of studies had already been done discovering as well as analysing the problems both overseas students and their teachers had been facing.

The universities of the economically and technically developed western countries like the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand generally get thousands of students from different parts of less developed or developing continents like Asia and Africa. In the USA the total number of overseas students according to the 2002 statistics of overseas students was 582,996. This was about 4% of the total student population in that country. Higher education is the fifth largest service sector export in the USA. Business studies, engineering and technical subjects attract maximum overseas students. India, China and Korea have been the three major countries in sending students in the USA (Indian Student Enrolment in the United States, 2002).

A similar picture is viewed in Australia. A total of 303,324 full-fee overseas students were enrolled in Australia in 2003 which showed an increase of 10.8% from 2002. In Australia largest number of overseas students came from India (27%); then from China (20%), South Korea (19%) and also from Middle East and Africa (22.2%), North America (12.6%) and Europe (8.3%) (Australian Education International, n.d.).

As for the UK, apart from the European Union students, the total number of overseas students from Asian, African and American backgrounds in different levels of higher education was 184,690 in 2002/03. According to 2002/03 statistics overseas students constituted 10% of the whole undergraduate student population in the UK, 37% of taught

degree postgraduates (61% of full-time students) and 38% of research degree students (45% of full-time students). The three top Asian source countries were China, India and Malaysia. Business and administrative studies and engineering and technical subjects had maximum overseas student enrolments (UKCOSA: The Council for International Education, n.d.).

Lots of overseas students as well as their academic staff had been interviewed (Ballard and Clanchy, 1984, 1997; Choi, 1997; Cortazzi and Jin, 1997) revealing how along with the language gaps the vast differences of systems of teaching and learning, socio-cultural values and understandings and methods of works had made the whole procedure of study difficult. The surveys focused on different language, cultures, creeds and activities of students including their manifold reactions and suggestions for smooth running of academic life. Among many other problems mentioned by these overseas students one major issue causing considerable troubles was their interactions with teachers which were full of language, cultures and systems gaps leading to embarrassment and dissatisfaction in students.

Side by side the literature also portrayed teachers' difficulties in teaching foreign students (Macrae, 1997; Bennett, 1998; Knight, 1999). Many teachers described their prejudices about these students and problems involving maintaining institutional systems, social and personal norms and values. Many of them considered teaching overseas students really time consuming, unprofitable and a hazardous job, quickly draining out teachers' physical, mental and intellectual strengths. Many had also invented useful strategies to solve their problems in teaching as well as to eradicate or lessen student harassment. But

the literature did not seem to be giving necessary emphasis on the possibilities of a good rapport between an overseas student and her/his teacher that could reduce problems and enhance student achievement.

From the study of the literature I reached the point that in speeding up or thwarting the study of an overseas student the impact of his/her relationship with teacher/s is significantly important. Therefore I decided to think and see further into a relationship between teacher and overseas student which exercises great influence in the academic venture on a foreign soil.

1.5 The research setting

I chose to do a qualitative research about this relationship grounded on my findings from the literature plus interviews with selected students.

The books and research projects that I went through narrated the experiences and feelings of Southeast Asian students mainly from China, Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand who had been students in different universities in Australia, Great Britain and the USA. But I did not find that many books and research reports dealing with overseas students' experiences in New Zealand context, especially nothing significant about overseas students' relationships with their teachers in New Zealand though lots of them have been studying here. So I focused on overseas students' relationship with their teachers in New Zealand.

During my survey of the literature I did not find any book written about Bangladeshi people's study experience abroad. But I was interested to see how Bangladeshi students, who went abroad and had study experience there, felt about their life and education in a different and unfamiliar environment. Therefore in my research I selected people from my home country as the sample. Accordingly I interviewed eight Bangladeshis living in Wellington, New Zealand. One studied as an international student while one studied as a citizen and all the rest were permanent residents. They studied at tertiary level in different parts of New Zealand. All had academic backgrounds in their home country. I wanted to see how they perceived their academic endeavours in the different socio-cultural and academic setting in New Zealand. I was also willing to know what types of relationships they had with their teachers and how they were influenced by those during their study.

As a qualitative analyst and, more importantly, as a Bangladeshi postgraduate student I found it really difficult to stay apart from my thesis especially when I viewed the reflection of myself in the experiences and problems; views and feelings expressed by the participants of this research. Therefore at different stages of this study I also recaptured and evaluated my own experience as a student of diverse background. But I did not present my own experience in it. Expression of my own self remained implicit in it.

The next chapter presents a discussion based on the literature about the tertiary study experiences of Southeast Asian overseas students in different western institutions. It is followed by a description of methodological approaches used in collecting and analysing the data. Next come the chapters containing the presentation and discussion of the data

and, in the final chapter, conclusions are drawn and implications for future practice are presented.

CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY AND PERTINENT LITERATURE

This chapter reviews contemporary literature on the importance of a caring relationship between a student and her/his teacher. It also presents how overseas students and their teachers have been facing multifarious problems during their interaction for various gaps between them that have hampered establishing a good relationship between them. The chapter starts with presenting aspects, acceptability and possibilities of student-teacher relationship based on the views expressed by different writers and educationists (Noddings, 1984, 1992; Cottrell, 2001; Rogers, 2002). Secondly follows a description of the problems faced by Southeast Asian overseas students resulting from their various academic and socio-cultural gaps with their teachers during tertiary study in the institutions of Australia, Great Britain, the USA and New Zealand (Ballard and Clanchy, 1984, 1997; Choi, 1997; Cortazzi and Jin, 1997; Bennett, 1998; Knight, 1999). Besides portraying problems felt by overseas students, the writers and critics have also revealed the troubles encountered by teachers of overseas students. Lastly suggestions are presented from different writers, critics as well as researchers, about the steps that should be taken to reduce the socio-cultural and academic gaps between overseas students and their teachers to ensure a good teaching-learning environment for the benefit of both overseas students and their teachers (Shor, 1996; Cortazzi and Jin, 1997; Wisker, 2000).

2.1 Entity of human relationship

There are many views concerning a human relationship. The definition, purpose, scope and effect of relationship vary from person to person at different ages and phases of their lives. A human relationship is a connection between two or among several persons based on knowing and sharing ideas and activities which most concern them. In a relationship the persons involved show importance to, take care of and also participate in the thoughts and values and actions of one another and at the same time maintain their own individuality and independence. It is an encounter between two parties where both have some interests and some contributions resulting from the feeling or understanding they have for each other which is under a continuous process of development. A person receives something from the outer world that receives recognition in her/his inner world and is followed by a response from her/him. It is a need commonly felt by two parties who like to be advised and guided by each other, take risks for each other, share responsibilities and have compassion for each other (Noddings, 1984).

2.2 Power and possibilities of human relationships

Relationships exercise power over human race. They can be constructive or promising ones and can portray human excellence. Again they can be destructive and thwarting enough to crumble capabilities, efforts and hopes in a person.

In this world we notice various interplays of different relationships. For example, there are parent-children relationship, employer-worker relationship, leader-disciple relationship, relationship between business partners/organisations, service provider-

customer relationship, relationship between the rich and the poor and the like. Relationships can be spiritual, commercial, ethical or competitive. The attitudes, interests and goals of the persons involved dominate these relationships. An interesting and important one is teacher-student relationship which can be either caring and fruitful or a disastrous one.

Human beings develop mentally and intellectually in caring relationships. Milton Mayeroff's statement envisages a relationship that believes in the strengths and possibilities of human beings and seeks to nurture those qualities as he says (as cited in Beck, 1994, p.6):

"In caring as helping the other grow, I experience what I care for.....as an extension of myself and at the same time as something separate from me that I respect in its own right."

For the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber (as cited in Beck, 1994) the desire for creating relationship is the distinguishing mark of humanity. A human being cannot live alone. To realise her/his humanness, to utilise her/his human qualities and to make her/his existence a really meaningful one s/he needs to form relationships with others. S/he wants to see an extension of her/his views, values, attributes and principles through forming relationships with others. According to Mitchell (as cited in Beck, 1994) a caring, nurturing relationship can emanate a sense of belonging which ultimately speeds up the process of becoming (or development). A human relationship can act as a strong resource to

alleviate any loss suffered by a person and help her/him to find/renew strength to fight the odds of life. It offers a person the opportunity to stay away from a state of separateness (Beck, 1994).

2.3 Student-teacher relationship and its influence on students

The objective of this thesis is to find out the impact of the relationship between an overseas student and her/his teacher on the student.

There is a connection between the teacher and the student which starts with their respective roles in learning. Each of the two words, “teacher” and “student”, indicates the existence and activities of the other. The aim of education is mental and intellectual development towards moral excellence and worthy performance of individuals to enhance social change towards prosperity. The relationship between a student and her/his teacher needs to be mutual and complementary to implement the aim of education.

Proper, timely and successful implementation of this aim of education depends, to a large extent, on a trustworthy, fruitful relationship between student and teacher. In judging the utility of this relationship and its impact on the academic achievement of a student, we need to think more about our teachers and students-- what do they think of each other, what views and objectives they have got in mind about teaching and learning when they interact, what helps and impediments they confront in implementing their objectives, how do they react to them, in what environment they are working and what relationship they are maintaining.

The relationship with teacher carries importance in the study pursuit and also in the personal life of a student. A resourceful relationship can speed up the student's study, can enliven the mental world in moments of stress and can offer a better understanding and nourishment of her/his intellectual capabilities, as Cottrell (2001, p.23) has suggested:

What we do as lecturers, the type of assessments we set, the timing of assignments, the way we mark and offer feedback, the way we present information, the way we address students, the way we orientate students into their learning, the way we design our courses – all this and more can harness the natural propensity of our students to learn.

But if the relationship is a negative one, it may disrupt the academic life of a student; s/he may face adverse results, may be mentally distracted, may change institution and even may give up study.

At various stages of a student's life various types of relationships are established with her/his teacher/s because the relationship is influenced by the age, disposition, demand, workload and context of a student as well as of a teacher. A child's relationship with her/his teacher is significantly different from an adult student's relationship with the teacher. Certain types of relationships are expected and required at certain stages and in certain types of study. Demands and expectations from the relationship between a thesis student and her/his supervisor are different from demands and expectations from a

relationship between an undergraduate student and her/his lecturer. These variations also depend on the student's merit and capability, mindset and both student's and teacher's workloads.

The literature and research reports have stressed the great importance of a successful relationship between teacher and student in institutional education for enhancing academic achievement as well as personal nourishment. Educators and philosophers like Nel Noddings (1992) and Brad Mitchell (as cited in Beck, 1994) have emphasised adopting nurturing ways that can promote a sense of security and belonging in students. Mitchell has encouraged teachers to go beyond the limits of duties assigned by their job and establish a caring, committed relationship with students and thus increase and improve student performance. He has also advised administrators and policy makers to create policies to allow and support the development of such relationships between the student and the teacher. Writers like Webb and Blond (as cited in McGee and Penlington, 2001, p.12) have described caring for students *"as a process that involves teachers drawing upon their knowledge of students, which includes knowledge of how to respond to and how to act towards students"*. The whole process develops through the interaction between teacher and student.

Students, in general, want to form and maintain a relationship with their teacher/s. The relationship can act as a means to help in their endeavour to fulfil academic goals. The reasons behind the desire for establishing relationships vary according to different goals, educational systems, social and personal cultures and moral beliefs and values. Some

students tend to create relationships for better grades. Again a student may want to give the teacher a different image of herself/himself. Sometimes students are attracted by the teacher's personality and they are eager to come in closer contact. If the student comes from abroad, it takes a long time to know the systems prevailing in the institution and adapt herself/himself with the norms and practices of a new environment. Then s/he may feel the need of advice and guidance of the teacher to help her/him cope successfully with the new situation.

A student becomes interested in a relationship with the teacher not only for academic gain, but s/he also gets emotional support from the teacher in moments of stress. Most importantly, the teacher acts as an enriched and reliable source to help the student to be equipped with those qualities necessary to encounter the world and find out her/his suitable position in it. Noddings' analysis of student-teacher relationship clearly points out the roles of teachers and students. Noddings (1984, p.178) has declared that a caring teacher has two major tasks:

"to stretch the student's world by presenting an effective selection of that world with which she is in contact, and to work cooperatively with the student in his struggle toward competence in that world. "

Noddings (1992, p.108) has also emphasised student's voluntary, inspiring and energetic contribution to his/her relationship with teacher:

Student must also accept responsibility for communicating their needs to teachers. They must understand that their responses enliven or dampen their teachers' enthusiasm. Students have tremendous effects on their teachers, and these possibilities should be discussed openly. The contributions of teachers and students are necessarily unequal, but they are nonetheless mutual, the relationship is marked by reciprocity.

Jean Piaget (as cited in Shor, 1992) has urged that there should be a reciprocal relationship between teachers and students, where teachers will be respected by students for their cooperative, student-centred activities.

Today's developed world has produced various technical devices (projector, computer, internet and library) for students' convenience to equip them with manifold sources and thus increasing their confidence and capability. But a successful relationship can offer better self-evaluation, broadened outlook and reinforced confidence for the student. Thompson (1998, p.131) while talking about the impact of staff-student relationship on academic stress and student performance has said:

"the staff-student relationship is still the key to providing students with an enjoyable and successful university experience, despite the developing culture of student-centred learning and the increasing use of technology in higher education today".

Discussing students' opinions revealed through several interviews of some tertiary students of an undergraduate business programme, she narrates how those students developed annoyance and frustration following the insufficient support they received from their academic staff and emphasises that, more than formal classes, they desperately desired to see that their teachers cared about their progress. Those students who were interviewed (some were quite mature and some from overseas) raised their strong voices against those staff who did not have enough time for students to offer individual guidance or help with assignments.

2.4 Relationship and an adult student

This relationship, though it may appear important and easy to form for a student, has also some difficult and strange sides because of having unequal participants. Winston Churchill (as cited in Long, 2002) has declared that everybody has the normal desire to learn but few want to be taught. He has depicted learning as a pleasurable activity and teaching as a 'regimented, forced drill controlled by some other person' (as cited in Long, 2002, p.3). Churchill's comment points to the possibility of a problematic relationship between student and teacher.

Though teaching aims at learning and involves establishing a relationship between teacher and student, Bradford (as cited in Long, 2002) also has identified teaching as a human relational problem and that is true especially in case of adult learners. Since adult students have their own set values, beliefs, systems and principles, any changes or replacement of these, even if they are necessary, are time consuming and difficult for

them. Malcolm Knowles (as cited in Long, 2002) has based his concepts of andragogy upon some significant and positive attributes of an adult student who is self-directed and self-motivated, who positively evaluates own experience, who has great curiosity and preparation to learn and who voluntarily enters any educational activity with a focus on problem solving.

The same aspects of an adult student are highlighted by Rogers (as cited in Long, 2002) that adults bring with them a whole world of experiences and values, have specific intentions and expectations about the learning process, have competing interests and already possess their own set of patterns of learning. An adult learner has a vast and diverse world of experience and knowledge which influences everything s/he thinks and does, including study. S/he has own world of emotions, hopes, etiquettes and efficiencies about the goals and methods of learning and about the relationship with teachers and its impact. That is why teachers need to be aware of an adult learner's preferences regarding study. They will facilitate adult learners in acquiring knowledge. Rogers (2002, p.27) has said:

"...the facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities that exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner"

Rogers has emphasised that as a facilitator the teacher should convey her/his genuine feelings to the pupil/s through direct communication that is most effective. In expressing her/his own self teacher should expose her/his own personal world instead of representing

institutional policies or practices; s/he should not wear any mask of excessive or stern morality because to know students' feelings teacher's self-expression is necessary. Only then can teachers be familiar with the dreams of students, their fears, hesitation, occasional torpor, efforts, satisfaction and failures and all other feelings that promote or daunt learning. According to Rogers the facilitator's trust in and acceptance of the student arouses student's confidence in her/his own capabilities that is so important for intellectual growth and academic achievement and success in future life as well. Students like to be clearly understood by the teacher and from their own point of view. Rogers emphasises that the teacher should try to view the world through the student's eyes (Rogers, 2002).

Hence it is clear that in a real facilitating relationship between teacher and student, both of them feel, learn and act spontaneously, fruitfully towards achievement of best educational goal and also attain intellectual development as well as mental satisfaction.

2.5 Types of student-teacher relationship:

There are various types of relationships established between the teacher and the student. Generally the relationship is a formal one. But it also tends to be informal at different times and stages. Powerful factors that influence a student in forming different types of relationship with teacher are: student's age, capability, educational background, interest/ambition regarding study, habit and mindset. For a teacher, influencing factors can be teacher's own philosophy, assessment of her/his student's capability, needs and background, her/his own workload and other personal characteristics (Pratt, 2002). Again

with the passing of time, with changes in the demands and expectations and workloads of both student and teacher and with changes in the attitudes of both student and teacher towards each other there come significant changes in the established relationship between a student and her/his teacher. However there may be different types of relationships. These are as follows:

- 1) There can be a relationship between teacher as an authoritative *knowledge transmitter* and student as a passive *receiver* (Freire as cited in Shor, 1993) where the teacher plays the dominant role and one-sidedly supplies knowledge that the student accepts without any questions or argument.
- 2) There can be a relationship between teacher as the *leader* and student as the *disciple* (Socrates, Plato or Confucius are good examples in this regard) where the teacher may, personally or in collaboration with the student, have some missions and visions and some distinctive strategies to implement them that s/he wants the student to support and pursue with her/him. The student out of devotion and respect for the teacher enthusiastically follows the teacher.
- 3) The relationship of student and teacher can be like *expert-apprentice* (Pratt, 2002) where the teacher has some specific technical skill which the student wants to master. So s/he needs to follow the teacher and acts as a subordinate apprentice to the teacher.
- 4) And the relationship can be like *facilitator-learner* (Rogers, 2002) where the teacher does not directly transmit knowledge but facilitates the student's

procedure of learning. The student does not have to accept what the teacher says, but rather needs to show her/his individuality, creativity and innovation.

2.6 Stages in student-teacher relationship

Whatever may be the type of relationship, there are several stages in the process of developing a relationship between a teacher and a student (Ballard and Clanchy, 1984). These may be as follows:

1) *Introduction:* This is the first encounter between a student and her/his teacher. At this stage both are strangers to their backgrounds, thoughts, values, goals and methods of learning. Generally this first encounter is very vital to foretell what type of relationship will take place between student and teacher because both of them gather the first impression about each other that can be either good or bad and powerful enough to influence their future relationship. The teacher appears before a student as an expert of a particular area of knowledge which that student desires to explore with the guidance, inspiration and assistance from the teacher.

2) *Discoveries:* In this stage different phases of teacher's as well as student's personalities gradually open up enabling them to think and decide how to interact with each other, future plans are conceived and put into practice. A student proceeds in the academic struggle following teacher's guidelines. Occasionally a teacher can be disappointed especially whenever the student does not seem competent enough to understand and follow her/his directions. Also at some points the teacher can be embarrassed at some demands or expectations of the student who can be disappointed for not getting teacher's assistance as per expectation.

3) *Instructor/philosopher-follower*: In this stage the student comes across different philosophies and ideals and working /teaching devices of the teacher and tries to set them with her/his own ideas and principles. By this stage both student and teacher through meetings, discussions and interactions develop better understandings of each other's views, beliefs, cultures and techniques of actions. At this stage the teacher gives instructions in different steps of student's academic endeavour which are followed by the student. S/he also informs the student of her/his strengths as well as drawbacks through giving feedbacks on the student's performance.

4) *Collaborators/ Comrades*: In this developed stage of their relationship the teacher not only guides the student but acts like a friend and a co-learner. They both strive together to learn something new exchanging experiences and opinions and sharing urges, responsibilities and showing fellow-feelings and thus solving problems.

5) *Evaluator/critical commentator/judge-examinee*: At this final stage the teacher evaluates and comments on the performance of the student. Sometimes it becomes a critical stage in the relationship because the criticisms, judgments or evaluations done by the teacher upon the student's work affect the student academically as well as emotionally and personally.

But all relationships between student and teacher do not necessarily have these stages; different types of relationship are formed between students and their teachers based on their natures and needs.

2.7 Overseas students and their academic struggle

It is true that both teacher and student are influenced by the dominant norms and academic systems of the country. In fact the academic environments portray the cultures of teaching and learning of a country. Teachers and students are the upholders of these accepted cultures and philosophies which have been dominating the society for ages. Different countries have different practices of their own educational cultures and systems. That is why teaching and learning for teachers and students from different backgrounds become puzzling and hard for both of them.

The literature (Ballard and Clanchy, 1997; Choi, 1997; Cortazzi and Jin, 1997) describes that the academic life of overseas students in different countries worldwide are full of numerous problems caused from clashes of different language, values, cultures and educational and social systems. These factors have prolonged impact on students' mind. At the same time teachers are also encountering manifold difficulties in teaching them. In classes, meeting teachers, talking to classmates, using resources and facing systems at the institution an overseas student confronts unfamiliar rules and practices which are not only perplexing but sometimes really unnerving enough to leave a negative impact upon students, undermine his/her physical and mental strength, daunt her/his determination, endeavour and dreams regarding study. The literature talks about *language shock*, *culture shock* (Graham and Cookson, 1990) and other problems experienced by overseas students.

Language shock involves feelings of doubt, hesitation, fear and shame in a person trying a new language when s/he cannot make proper, timely and prompt use of newly learned language. S/he becomes suspicious whether her/his words will accurately express her/his feelings and concerns or will sound strange. Experiencing language shock a person is often reluctant to try using the new language because of these feelings. Again s/he faces difficulty in following the local colloquial terms and jargon and consequently cannot progress in the language.

Similarly *culture shock* includes the feelings of uneasiness and bewilderment experienced by people in a new country where cultural views, practices and expectations accepted in their native land and practised so far by them are not believed or followed in the new country they are now living. This arouses a feeling of adherence to one's own culture and a negative attitude to the new and different culture inducing a person to stay apart from the people of new culture in spite of their being classmates and teachers. All these are proven to be detrimental for learning. But critics have also considered culture shock important for more accurate self realization, self development and personal growth. They think culture shock is experienced by a newcomer during her/his period of transition from present to future. It involves further contemplation on new values, attitudes and behaviour patterns and leads to eventual acceptance of them.

Apart from these language and cultural clashes overseas students confront troubles like accommodation problems, heavy tuition fees, feelings of isolation and homesickness.

2.8 Overseas students in different countries

I present here how the Australian, British and American educationists and writers have viewed the problems faced by the overseas students from Asia, Africa and Europe studying in undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD levels in those countries.

A. Context of Australia

Critics and thinkers (Ballard and Clanchy, 1984, 1997; Knight, 1999) have emphasized how overseas students' weaknesses, like incompetence in speaking and writing good English, and unfamiliarity with Australian English have been accentuated with other problems like unfamiliar pedagogical practices which decide academic skill of students and their, as well as their teachers', roles in study differently. Often many overseas students, puzzled with so many problems, tend to rote memorisation (even without properly comprehending the subject-matter) and textbook copying or plagiarism. They find it hard to be open with their local classmates or teachers about these problems. Homesickness and lack of socialization bring in frustration, isolation and helplessness which are doubled by emotional and psychological dilemmas and financial hardships.

In her article "Korean Students in Australian Universities: Intercultural Issues" Myonghee Choi (1997) has portrayed how these students experienced difficulties in relationships with their teachers who could not understand the Korean students' difficulties in English and in adjustment to the different styles of teaching and learning. These students also complained about the teachers' not giving adequate time to them, having no knowledge of the Korean methods of education and of discrimination. Critics

like Farquhar (1999), Geake and Mainguard (1999) and Knight (1999) have talked about overseas research students in Australian universities who have different notions of and capacities for independent, creative study and who suffer from confusions about the relationship between a western supervisor and the student. Mismatches of expectations between them and their supervisors have made them dissatisfied and full of complaints against their supervisors who, in their eyes, are lacking enough expertise, are lazy; do not evaluate students' academic and cultural backgrounds and whose expectations from students are unclear. These students have expressed the idea that universities should be more attentive to select culturally sensitive supervisors who will be allocated less workload so that they can deal with overseas students in a better way.

The literature (Ballard and Clanchy, 1997; Knight, 1999) has also presented how teachers have been suffering in teaching overseas students whose academic cultures, competence, demands and expectations generally mismatch with those of the institution and the educators. The educators have frequently expressed dissatisfaction in the overseas students' excessive dependence on books as well as on their teachers and other resources instead of relying on their own ideas and capabilities. They have also criticised these students for their reticence and reluctance to participate in the discussion with their teachers and classmates, for not taking responsibility for their own work and for having very little or no skill in critical thinking.

Educators and critics like Brigid Ballard and John Clanchy (1997) have declared that one major cause of problems faced by overseas students is not the failure of using English up

to the desired standard of the universities of any developed country, but the different attitudes to knowledge and styles of teaching and learning in home countries. They have written specifically about Asian students and have revealed some points about academic systems in many countries of Asia which stand in direct contrast with the systems prevailing in the academic fields of developed countries like Australia and the United Kingdom. For example, the positions of the teacher and the student in the two worlds are discussed.

It is stated (Ballard and Clanchy, 1997) that in Asian tradition teachers are held in high esteem like an unquestionable authority. They are transmitters of knowledge who do not like or welcome students' free thinking, questioning and critiquing. Side by side it is said that teachers in western universities share power and encourage students to ask questions. They are not providers but facilitators of knowledge. It is also indicated that the Asian teachers are not always so much equipped with knowledge and to some extent their knowledge is confined and as a result their students cannot expect much from them.

It is also stated that Asian students are more or less rote learners who feel uneasy and even shocked at the informal talks and behaviours of their teachers which they are not accustomed to. Ballard and Clanchy (1997, p.16) have declared about Asian student:

"He is maintaining the 'passivity' of learning style which characterised his former educational experience, a style in which questioning, analysis and a critical approach to learning were not encouraged in the classroom."

It is also made clear that these students are more prone to give wrong answers to questions and have bad results. Overseas students from Asia are described to be habituated with reproductive learning. They cannot think critically about issues and say something correctly and confidently. Students' faulty and inappropriate use of English has been another major cause of their having misunderstandings with their teachers. Even overseas research students (Knight, 1999) do not take responsibility for their own study or understand the culture of innovation, independence, creativity and originality of a student strictly followed in western academic world. Knight (1999, p.100) has commented about overseas research students:

"It is a challenge for individual supervisors, many of whom may not previously have been confronted by NESB research students with their particular needs and characteristics."

He has pointed out that these students do not realize the dimensions of a supervisor's involvement in a student's research or thesis writing. So the supervisors feel perplexed, disturbed and disappointed about them. But a supervisor is the major or even the only help or source for many overseas research students to know or enter into the unfamiliar and new academic community. Thus the relationship which is a significant one turns out to be a failure for both an overseas research student and her/his supervisor.

In their books different Australian writers (Ballard and Clanchy, 1997; Knight, 1999) have suggested rethinking of teaching strategies accompanied with changing teachers' attitude towards overseas students' pre-existing knowledge and merit and increasing healthy interactions with them for removing students' problems and improving their performance. Hounsell (as cited in Mulligan & Kirkpatrick, 2000, p.312) has emphasised that:

The success with which students are able to achieve understanding [in lectures] may depend critically on the capacity of the higher education teacher to recognise and build from students' existing conceptions and to anchor new knowledge in a meaningful framework.

For successfully supporting these students to upgrade in performance, develop in confidence and pursue their expectations a good rapport between them and their teachers needs to be established. One key factor in forming rapport is a willingness in the teacher to listen to the students' problems with genuine interest as Wheeler (as cited in Cottrell 2001, p.164) has suggested:

"...the student in difficulties urgently needs to be understood; to be known; to be met on his own ground".

Critical thinkers like Biggs and Samuelowicz (as cited in Robertson, Line, Jones & Thomas, 2000) have declared that these students and their teachers, instead of criticising

one another, should try to find out ways for bridging gaps of intercultural differences. According to Biggs, teachers need to evaluate the pre-existing learning of overseas students and take initiative to understand their cultures and create a student-centred, safe and trusting teaching and learning environment so that students feel free to discuss their problems with teachers inside and outside class.

Ballard and Clanchy (1997) have advised Australian teachers to practice certain strategies to minimise the problems of overseas undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral students. These strategies include increasing teacher-student interaction to help students learn new academic cultures and organise themselves to fulfil the needs of higher studies in least possible time. Also included is teachers' showing sympathy towards language and other deficiencies of these students. They think teachers should make explicit their own expectations of these students. Ballard and Clanchy (1984) have admitted that there should be a relationship between student and teacher as it is important for both of them for knowing and understanding each other and for academic progress as well. And for overseas research students, relationship with their supervisors is a vital one that needs to be extended and modified in some important areas depending on the needs of these students as Knight (1999, p.100) has expressed:

"...the supervisor may need to provide more extensive personal and psychological support to NESB research students than is normally the case, ... the limits to this support will need to be considered by the supervisor and communicated to the student."

B. Context of the UK

Writers (Barker, 1997; Cortazzi and Jin, 1997) have described in their works how overseas tertiary students in Great Britain have been facing problems in their interactions with the British academics owing to their unfamiliarity with the British academic cultures and systems of learning which are vastly different from those of their respective home countries. In this regard the difference between the British and the Chinese students are discussed. In the British academic culture an individual student is expected to reveal individuality and creativity in ideas, methods, beliefs and attitudes even if they contradict with the teacher. In educational settings horizontal relationship is emphasised whereas it is declared that in China (and other Southeast Asian countries) students have got a hierarchical relationship with their teachers and they are expected to understand and acquire what the teacher says before showing independence of mind or difference in actions. Cortazzi and Jin (1997, p.79) have said:

“Where British tutors may expect active involvement and verbal explicitness from students, Chinese students prefer to listen to the teacher, as an expert”

They think these students have a culture of accepting the teacher as a master who should always be obeyed and should never be contradicted. So they neither oppose their British teachers nor clearly expose their problems to teachers as they think a student can be considered as an impudent or stupid by the teacher for showing excessive tendencies to talk and act or criticise something told by a teacher. They are described to be too careful of preserving the teacher's dignity and at the same time defending their own image. Even

overseas research students do not want to enter into any study related debate with the supervisors (Cryer and Okorocha, 1999). Therefore both these students and their British teachers face lots of problems and misunderstanding in interactions.

The literature (Cortazzi and Jin, 1997) has talked about language and cultural gaps between the British academics and their students from Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia and the Middle East. Their ways of speaking English, intonation, pauses, linguistic patterns and their indications are quite different from those of the British teachers as these are founded on their respective cultures. As a result both students and teachers face a dilemma.

The British academics are described to be unable to understand the overseas students and their problems and, very often, are quite puzzled by their demands and expressions, feel disturbed and doubt in these students' interest and competence in higher education. Many British supervisors are described as bringing complaints against their overseas research students for not taking initiatives and creating undue pressure on the supervisors. On the other hand these students have said that the supervisors are less competent or avoiding responsibility and thus the impasse continues between them.

Lewis (as cited in Barker, 1997) points out that the causes of those problems overseas students face in their relationships with their teachers in Britain are not language difficulties but mainly expectations produced by previous experiences, in other words cultural differences. Writers like Lewis, Elsey and Channell (as cited in Barker, 1997)

have said that students from different Asian countries studying in undergraduate and postgraduate levels in Britain generally give student-teacher relationship a great importance. Teachers, for belonging to a different academic and cultural background, cannot understand situations from students' point of view. When reality does not fulfil their expectations, students raise their voice against it. Overseas students find it difficult to adapt with the system of learning in British higher education and their difficulties increase for not having sufficient guidance from the academic staff. Students frequently feel they are misunderstood by their teachers. In Barker's opinion teachers have generated this feeling in students as he (1997, p.118) affirms:

"I suggest that their feelings of being misunderstood were largely caused by an inability or unwillingness on the part of staff to see a situation from the overseas students' point of view, coupled with other factors such as cultural stereotyping"

Many writers have stated that students' interest is in conflict with teachers' other concerns like involvement with research and publications connected with career promotion and status. In fact many British teachers consider overseas students burdensome for their excessive demands of teachers' time and attention. Macrae (1997, p.140) has expressed that *'supervising overseas students may require more time, effort and skill than supervising home British students'*.

Some critics think that though accepting overseas students means taking greater responsibility but it also enhances the international image of the universities. Therefore

teachers should be praised and rewarded by their institutions (Wisker, 2000). Todd (1997) believes that dealing with overseas students may be more time consuming but meeting their needs provides an opportunity for western teachers to understand more about teaching and learning processes in a broader and deeper level and thus to develop an appropriate culture that may offer an improved postgraduate education.

Again some critics think that supervisors' offering extra support for overseas students will be criticised by home students as Denicolo and Pope (1999, p.73) proclaim:

"Home students will become disaffected and vocal if their resources, including supervision time, are reduced to meet the needs of overseas students."

However writers and critics think that all overseas undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD students and their teachers and supervisors in Britain need to be aware of and understand well their mutual responsibilities which need to be clarified to them if necessary. In fact in dealing with overseas students both students and teachers require adjustments. It is impossible for both teachers and overseas students to alter the attitudes and values they have been acquainted with and have practised so far and to assimilate into or think and work according to others' cultures only for the sake of the circumstances. So they should both gather ideas about the cultures, values and systems of each other which will help them in a more fruitful interaction. Cortazzi and Jin (1997, p.88) have termed this effort as learning across cultures that *"could be defined as the mutual effort of both teachers*

and students to understand each other's academic cultures, cultures of communication and cultures of learning."

This strategy will invite a cultural synergy which will bring profit for both students as well as teachers because none will need to sacrifice her/his own cultural identity and all will have intellectual and cultural development as Cortazzi and Jin (1997, p.89) have expressed it:

"Learning across cultures through cultural synergy is therefore of mutual benefit for both students and teachers. In this reciprocal relationship between cultures, the whole is more than the sum of the parts. Everybody learns."

Many educationists, critics and thinkers have put stress on teachers of overseas students to have cross-cultural expertise to properly meet and evaluate intercultural confrontations and to show cultural empathy. Gudykunst and Kim (as cited in Grant and Ladson-Billings, 1997, p.54) have expressed:

"The intercultural person possesses an intellectual and emotional commitment to the fundamental unity of all humans, and at the same time, accepts and appreciates the differences that lie between people of different cultures."

As a culturally competent person a teacher can understand and respect students' cultures without necessarily emerging into new cultures and even s/he can show reactions against

cultural practices that s/he thinks unapprovable without provoking or hurting others. Teachers who are cross-culturally competent feel comfort with students' different cultural styles, easily understands students' verbal communication and body language. They value students' socio-religious beliefs and styles of learning. Because they know ignoring students' cultural attributes can destroy teacher's image and can influence the student to take her/his teacher as a biased or prejudiced person. The impact on the students will be devastating.

The literature has talked about culturally relevant pedagogy (Grant and Ladson-Billings, 1997) --- an approach to teaching and learning helpful especially for overseas students and their teachers. Teachers who believe and practice this pedagogy demonstrate deep care and interest in relationship with their students and show a connectedness with them. Overseas students value high this type of relationship with their teachers.

C. Context of the USA

Writers like Sleeter (2004) and Nieto (2004) have depicted in their writings how the African-American, Latino and Puerto Rican students, who represent black ethno-cultural minorities in different parts of North America, who have poor financial condition and lower social status and bad reputation connected with drug and other antisocial/illegal activities, have been struggling with the negative and racist attitudes and remarks expressed by their white American teachers.

Nieto (2004) has described how the white-dominated and racist American school curricula and pedagogical systems together with socio-cultural classification have alienated, marginalised and deprived these students who have histories of enslavement and domination. As a result they now lack interest in education, do badly in study, are frequently dropped out from their schools and are unable to implement their dreams of higher education and a sophisticated and secure life in future.

Referring to her case studies of two socially and culturally diverse students, Nieto has pointed out how, along with other issues, their bad relationships with their teachers have been at the roots of their expulsion from the schools. During interviews both these students revealed their histories of bad schooling and working with bad teachers who overtly exposed negative ideas and low expectations about them, considering them social, cultural and financial threats for their country, having no accurate knowledge of their histories as well as no respect or sympathies for them or their kind of students (Nieto, 2004). But these students also mentioned having at least some teachers (very few in numbers) who really understood them, cared for them, respected them and their backgrounds and expressed great expectations of these students' academic and social possibilities.

Nieto (as cited in Jacobson, 2000) has declared that it is not actually the students who have the problems but the responsibility lies with their teachers. Because as teachers' inspiration, guidance and assistance enhance students' achievement, in the same way teachers' indifference, negative observation and comments about student's competence,

different background and performance can easily crash the possibilities, efforts and dreams of students.

Sleeter (2004) considers the position of Euroamerican white teachers from a different point of view. She explains that these teachers are largely the products of the white-domineering, privileged society which generally looks down upon African American black people, Latinos and Asian Americans and consider themselves superior to them. White Americans' stereotyped views regarding the people of colour have always associated them with various social, moral and financial problems and deficiencies. As a result people of colour have been marginalised in different sectors of society, are deprived of equal rights and advantages and education is one of these where these people are victims of misperceptions and ill treatment. Sleeter emphasises that steps should be taken to eradicate these stereotyped attitudes of white American teachers towards culturally minor students. Teachers should attain proper education and training through mixing with the members of these minor groups which will gradually change their preconceived views about their students and establish good relationship among them.

Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educationist and social reformer (as cited in Shor, 1992) has referred to the separation of teachers and students as the first obstacle to learning and has urged that teachers should ask students to be co- investigators in the learning process. He talks about emancipatory education based on, complemented with camaraderie, that is, mutuality between teacher and student where students' remarks are respected, questions

are encouraged, thoughts and feelings matter. Freire (as cited in Shor, 1992, p.86) has asserted:

"Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students."

What happens when this relationship between teacher and student is absent? The answer is found in the writings of Ira Shor. In "When Students Have Power" (1996) Shor has narrated his confrontation with a very remote and unfriendly relationship between teacher and students during his job in an institution in Staten Island, New York. He calls it the "*Siberian Syndrome*" which is students' defensive reaction to the unequal power relations of schooling. He describes how most students in his class placed themselves at the back of the class in the Siberian corners to expose their silent revolt against the educational system that they found dissatisfying, unfriendly and unsupportive. These types of reactions of students arouse feelings of failure and desperation in the teacher and ridicule the whole system. Shor (1996, p. 21) tried to bridge his gap with students by moving to Siberia himself:

"I went to Siberia to deal with its obstacle to learning --- unnerved by and unhappy with student alienation, I rejected lecturing from the front and began teaching dialogically from the back of the room."

His students were mainly working class and they were from different backgrounds, cultures, attitudes and capabilities. Through sincere efforts, showing a compassionate mind, inviting manners and a real interest to know their problems about academic and personal life accompanied with their suggestions to solve their problems, Ira Shor was successful in going nearer to his students. Shor has made it clear that lively students' participation makes teachers feel rewarded just as unresponsive students make classes dull, embarrassing and frustrating for teachers. Both teachers and students develop in relationships when each stands and acts like the comrade of other. This relationship should not exclude minority students. The liberating education envisaged by both Freire and Shor seeks equal participation for students from minority, female and working class groups, asks for their comments and insists on their involvement.

Teachers, therefore, through inspiring and supportive relationships with their students, can create an educational environment that will actively value and celebrate students' strengths and uniqueness, will provide them with specific information to acquire necessary skills, increase their expectations as learners and feel a greater commitment to continuing their education (Jacobson, 2000).

D. Context of New Zealand

Like other western countries New Zealand has been having lots of overseas students in its tertiary institutions -- universities, polytechnics and colleges of education (and also in primary and secondary schools). Students have been coming mainly from China,

Malaysia, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh and also from African and European countries.

In recent years the number of overseas students from Asia has been growing very rapidly. According to Tarling (2004) in the year 2000 the total number of overseas students in New Zealand was 7931 with 6275 from Asia. In 2001 the total number became 12,649 with 10,543 from Asia. In 2002 the total number increased to 20,767 with 17,682 from Asia (Tarling, 2004). It is noted that in 2002 85.1% of full fee paying students of public tertiary institutions were from Asia.

It is said (Back, Davis and Olsen, 1998) that overseas students' choice of New Zealand for higher education reflects that New Zealand's tertiary education offers curriculum and qualifications which are internationally recognised. Increasing number of overseas students is significant regarding New Zealand's financial benefit, educational development and cultural and social enrichment. It is expected that the international marketing of education in New Zealand will accelerate a growth in foreign exchange from NZ\$500 million to over NZ\$1 billion by 2005 (IDP Education Australia, 2001). It is admitted that overseas students bring knowledge of and tolerance for other creeds and cultures which are significant helps for New Zealanders to engage successfully in the new international environment. Bennett's statement (1998, p.20) can be cited here:

An influx of foreign students, in addition to increasing international affinities, broadens and deepens the country's educational capacity, allowing some

economies of scale. Financial strength is improved, and the institution increases its capacity to attract, retain and reward staff. Every group of ten students creates one job for a teacher, administrator or member of a support staff.

Though it is being told that the overseas students are significant sources for the internationalisation of New Zealand education, in the academic institutions both staff and students are encountering lots of troubles in interactions and a suitable teaching-learning environment is being hampered by the vast breach of academic, cultural and linguistic gaps between overseas students and the New Zealand academics (Walker, 1995). According to Bennett (1998) New Zealand's universities with large numbers of overseas students have a good number of academic staff having culturally stereotyped views about overseas students. They have limited awareness and sympathy for the predicaments of overseas students.

According to the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee *Code of Practice* for the provision of Education Programmes and Services for International Students by New Zealand Universities some steps are recommended for better staff support so that staff can deal with these students' special circumstances competently and satisfactorily. Recommended steps include: recognising overseas students' different types of demands on their teachers and arranging appropriate cross-cultural training programmes for the teachers. But it is stated (Walker, 1995; Back, Davis and Olsen, 1998) that many universities, polytechnics and tertiary education providing institutions do not provide any regular/compulsory cross-cultural training programmes or teaching and refresher courses

for their academics teaching overseas students. There is also a scarcity of incentives or reward programmes for staff.

Different research projects dealing with overseas students' problems in New Zealand have emphasised to increase interactions between them and New Zealand students (Back, Davis and Olsen, 1998). But the attitudes of New Zealanders (local students and people in general) are still not that much friendly or supportive, rather indifferent (Walker, 1995) and often negative, racist (Butcher, 2002).

Among overseas students in New Zealand those from Asia are greatest in number. These students are generally considered to be passive in tutorials, uncritical of lectures and textbooks, inclined to disturb staff for 'tips', too dependent on memory and unaware of referencing rules (Bennett, 1998) though they are also appreciated for being achievement-oriented, causing relatively few disciplinary troubles and showing good performance in New Zealand institutions. But their study strategies and methods are considered to be significantly different from those New Zealand academics are familiar with and hence they find teaching them quite puzzling and difficult, embarrassing and frustrating (Walker, 1995; Bennett, 1998; Hooper and Davey, 2002). It is pointed out by Bennett (1998, p.58):

"...in most Asian societies teachers are highly respected and extremely committed to their pupils. Students are encouraged to consult their teachers on matters which western teachers might feel are not part of their orbit."

Overseas students are also described to be critical of New Zealand academic staff's teaching skills, systems of marking and systems of offering feedback to their students which they consider as inadequate to fulfil their needs and expectations. They also want easier access to their teachers as well as longer consulting hours (Walker, 1995).

Again working in English, which is their second language, also affects overseas students' interaction with New Zealand academics and their efforts and performances eventually as Bennett (1998, p.62) has admitted:

"Language seems to be a particular problem, initially with oral English, lexis, slang and idiom. Then, once oral problems are overcome, problems may arise with heavy reading loads, or formal academic writing."

Walker (1995) has stated that in spite of having good scores in IELTS and TOEFL maximum tertiary overseas students in New Zealand have been facing problems in fulfilling the need for necessary written and spoken English skills in tertiary education. Again unfamiliarity with New Zealand terms and jargon and accents are at the roots of their gaps in communicating with their teachers and peers.

Another important thing Walker (1995) has mentioned is overseas students' initial ignorance of the policies and pictures of New Zealand's different sectors like politics, law, finance and cultures of everyday life -- all which have connections with their

academic life. Unfamiliarity with these things often makes overseas students feel alienated, ashamed and helpless at different moments of their study. Culture gaps bring misperceptions in overseas students and their teachers regarding their individual and mutual roles and responsibilities leading to misunderstanding. Owing to cultural differences they also suffer from lack of socialization in the institutions and in society in general.

Nuthall (as cited in McGee and Penlington, 2001), from a research on intellectual climate in culturally diverse classes has reached the point that if teachers feel the need to fulfil the different socio-cultural needs of their students, they should gather information about the various socio-cultural attributes of those diverse groups of their class.

The description of problems faced by overseas students in tertiary study in New Zealand clearly manifests that condition of overseas students from Asian background is the same in New Zealand as has been described before in the contexts of other countries.

2.9 Conclusion of the review:

From the survey of the literature regarding the problems overseas students are facing during their study in the western institutions, and especially in their interactions/relationships with their teachers, it appears that these problems have originated from their unfamiliarity with the different academic approaches to knowledge and different styles in western teaching and learning and unawareness of the socio-cultural norms. Their skill in English also becomes insufficient to meet the demands of a

much different and more extended use of English in academic as well as all other levels of life in the developed western countries where they go for study. It is true that each English speaking country in the world has its own ways of using English in speaking, writing, reading and comprehending. Realising and learning the different and new English become really hard for an overseas student already bewildered with encountering other problems of academic life in a foreign land.

From different strategies and recommendations derived from the literature about reducing the troubles in the interactions between teachers and overseas students the point becomes clear that to ensure sound teaching and learning in tertiary level good relationships between foreign students and their teachers carry great importance. In fact educationists and thinkers have urged teachers and students to know each other, to listen to each other and explore knowledge collaboratively because these will enable teachers to find out specific and best ways to teach each student. Each student has a definite learning style; each teacher has a specific teaching style and through a promising relationship their personal worlds are exposed before them enabling them to work happily, confidently and academic goal is achieved. A harmonious relationship is the criteria of good performance for both teacher and student as knowledge is best acquired in relation.

The next chapter presents the methods used in the fieldwork of this project.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

In a research project, generally the technical sides and procedures like the type and approach of that research, the methods of data collection and analysis, the advantages/strengths and disadvantages/limitations of those techniques are described in the methodology chapter. Thus it can be called the foundation of the research. According to Kaplan (as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.45) the aim of methodology is:

to describe and analyse these methods, throwing light on their limitations and resources, clarifying their presuppositions and consequences, relating their potentialities to the twilight zone at the frontiers of knowledge. It is to venture generalizations from the success of particular techniques, suggesting new applications, and to unfold the specific bearings of logical and metaphysical principles on concrete problems, suggesting new formulations.

So methodology indicates the process through which a research is conducted along with the present success and future implications of those methods used in the research.

The purpose of this thesis is to discover the impact of Bangladeshi students' relationships with their teachers upon them during their tertiary study in New Zealand. The methods used in collecting and interpreting the data of this project are discussed here.

3.1 The research strategy:

There are two well-established modes of inquiry followed separately or combined in doing research. These are quantitative and qualitative modes of inquiry.

According to Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001), the quantitative research approach that employs scientific method tries to establish general laws and principles assuming that social reality is objective and external to the individual. In this type of research the quantity of data is large and it is collected and analysed in numeric forms.

But qualitative research, they have pointed out, is a naturalistic approach that values subjective experiences of individuals and collects and analyses data in chiefly non-numeric form. It emphasises exploring smaller data that are rich and illuminating and aims to achieve “depth” rather than “breadth”.

The strength of a qualitative research is described by Burns (2000) as similar to the nets of deep-sea explorers; qualitative research can pull up unexpected and marvellous things for us.

According to Davidson and Tolich (2003) quantitative data analysis seeks consensus and the norm in the data; qualitative research, on the other hand, celebrates the diversity and difference in it. Quantitative data analysis seeks patterns that can be generalised to a wider group. In contrast, qualitative research is interested in interpretation and contextualisation. Davidson and Tolich (2003) regard the structure of qualitative research

as being more flexible than quantitative research. The focus of the research and technique of collection of data in a quantitative investigation are very structured. Therefore after starting the research it is hard to change these even if the change appears necessary. But in a qualitative research there are ways open for necessary changes.

I chose to do a *qualitative* research because I wanted to hear people's stories, their experiences, opinions, feelings, frustrations and expectations, reactions and endeavours when important changes took place in their lives. Burns (2000, p.11) comments:

The task of the qualitative methodologist is to capture what people say and do as a product of how they interpret the complexity of their world, to understand events from the viewpoints of the participants; it is the lifeworld of the participants that constitutes the investigative field.

In this project I used eight Bangladeshi people as my sample who told me about their experiences of academic life in New Zealand. They described the problems they faced during their interactions with their teachers inside and outside classes, and the problems they encountered as students of different socio-academic and cultural backgrounds. These participants told me how much help they received from their teachers. At the same time they also revealed their occasional disappointment and perplexities caused by different cultural and linguistic gaps with their teachers. They highlighted their relationships with their teachers and how they were influenced by those relationships. Most importantly, they offered some recommendations regarding the potential of student-teacher

relationship. Therefore my interviews with these people constituted the valuable data of this research.

Again, my own experience as a postgraduate student of different background remained implicit behind the whole process of data interpretation. I think it is very difficult for a researcher to remain objective when s/he looks at the lifeworld of the research participants and the way they accept and explain the situations and their feelings at different phases of their lives. This may be because, as a human being, the researcher has remarkable similarities with her/his research participants especially when both have similar pre-existing backgrounds and similar predicaments related to the changes in the settings of life. However I did not include my own experience as the data in this thesis.

I preferred the qualitative method which believes that the thoughts, feelings and perceptions of the informants are vital, since people are conscious of the intention, justification and ways of their own behaviour. This research method is not concerned with objective truth but rather with the truth as the informants perceive it as expressed by Davidson and Tolich (2003, p.124):

“Quantitative research starts from a position of detachment and impartiality toward the thing being researched (‘objectivity’) whereas qualitative research values personal involvement and partiality (‘subjectivity’).”

Qualitative mode of inquiry offered me advantages like methodological variety, a freedom from set hypotheses and an implicit recognition of the natural arrangement of things (Burns, 2000). It allowed me to look carefully at the qualities of social and educational interactions in the small but rich data.

3.2 Techniques of data collection

Documents, observation, questionnaires and interviews are the common techniques used for collecting data for a qualitative research. In this research I used *interviews* as the method of data collection.

I intended to explore the impact of student-teacher relationships on Bangladeshi students in New Zealand. I could not locate any recorded document regarding this subject available online or in the form of any published books or journals or research reports or any audio-visual system. Again it was not possible on my part to observe these Bangladeshi people during their interactions with their teachers as many of them had already finished their study, while visiting the rest in their respective universities was not feasible for me either.

Even sending questionnaires did not appear to be a resourceful device because of its propensity to limit and control the respondent's views and liberty of expressing those views and thus narrowing the richness and uniqueness of the data. I wanted to offer enough freedom to the respondents to be open and genuine in expressing their experiences with their teachers and their relationships with them while a pre-planned,

fixed and structured questionnaire could have imposed restriction on their eagerness and effort to express themselves.

Therefore in this research project I selected individual face-to-face *interview* of the participants as method for collecting data. An interview is defined by Anderson (1990) as a special type of purposeful communication between people about some agreed subject matter. It creates a learning process for both the interviewer and the interviewee in a natural, social setting. In the words of Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001, p.172):

“It can be a very useful technique for collecting data which would probably not be accessible using techniques such as observation or questionnaires.”

Through interviews we can probe a person’s thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives. Interviews empower a person or a group of people through providing a platform, a chance to make the world aware of their viewpoints by hearing or reading them. In the words of Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p. 267):

Interviews enable participants – be they interviewers or interviewees – to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. In these senses the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable.

3.3 Interview process:

I used a *semi-structured* interview method. A structured interview was not chosen for, like a questionnaire, it narrows the scopes for both the interviewer and the informant to talk spontaneously and independently. The interview could not be done over the telephone or by email as these processes did not seem to adequately fulfil the requirements of the purposes of this research. Again a focus group interview was not chosen because there was a propensity of losing control over the members or over the situation that might lead to a digression from the main point bringing about an undesirable disruption in the whole process. A fully unstructured interview did not seem to be reliable enough either because it required specific expertise for the interviewer to ask important and relevant questions at the right time and to exercise necessary authority over the situation simultaneously offering enough liberty and opportunity to the interviewee.

But in a semi-structured interview an interview guide or checklist is used with some freedom that offers the interviewer considerable flexibility to ask some more questions if necessary excluding the interview schedule. The questions are a mixture of closed and open questions. Open-ended questions have a number of advantages: for being flexible they allow the interviewer to probe and thus enable her/him to go into more depth as per need or clear up any point misunderstood by the interviewer and let the interviewee emphasise any point. Open-ended questions enable the interviewer to perfectly assess what the interviewee really believes, values and wants to express. They can also create

situations for the interviewee to unveil her/his real feelings and ideas and thus reveal some unexpected or unanticipated information (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

A tape recorder was used in this project during the interviews. Using a tape recorder is important to maintain the individuality and clarity of the data without any invasion of bias. By tape recording, a researcher can focus her/his total attention on the interviewee maintaining appropriate eye contact and non-verbal communication (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2001). The researcher can also have some reflections on her/his interviewing style and technique, can analyse, change and improve them according to the purpose and development of the research project. It is sometimes also considered to be a compliment to the interviewee. Stenhouse (as cited in Wellington, 2000, p.85) has declared:

Part of my job is to give people the feeling not merely that they have my ear, my mind and my thoughts concentrated on them but that they want to give an account of themselves because they see the interview as in some way an opportunity: an opportunity of telling someone how they see the world.

3.4 Selection of sample:

As the sample in this research project I worked with some Bangladeshi people living in different parts of Wellington. There are not many Bangladeshi people living in Wellington. Again, all of them have not been engaged in tertiary study in New Zealand. I selected eight people who had tertiary study experience in New Zealand.

Two of them had studied in two polytechnics while all others had studied different subjects in tertiary level in different universities in New Zealand. Six did different courses in undergraduate level while one did a Masters and another one was a PhD candidate. All participants had study experiences of graduate level, while some had postgraduate level study experience in Bangladesh.

I emailed each of them a short overview (Appendix 2) of my research project detailing clearly the purpose of it and the areas of their involvement in it, along with a sample of the interview questions and its duration, and the information that the interview would be tape recorded. They were informed of their full liberty to stop the tape recorder or stop the interview at any time. They were also informed that the project was approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (Appendix 1). They voluntarily agreed to participate in this programme and signed the consent forms (Appendix 3).

Purposes of selecting them in the sample:

1) As I am a Bangladeshi studying at post-graduate level, I thought in conducting the research my choice of sample would help me from similar educational systems and culture-related backgrounds as well as moral ideologies and philosophies of life.

2) The literature I have so far come across has focused on the experiences of overseas students mainly from Southeast Asian countries. But apart from very few and insignificant occasional references, little has been written about the Bangladeshi students' experiences in studying abroad. That is one main reason why I used participants from

Bangladeshi ethnicity and their perceptions and suggestions had enriched my explorations in this field.

3) Most of the literature I have studied so far has different universities from Australia, Britain and the USA as their settings where the teaching philosophies, practices and propositions of academics of those places are noted. However I did not find much information written in the New Zealand context. Therefore, in my thesis I decided to portray the situation faced by Bangladeshi students in different academic institutions of New Zealand, how these students and their teachers perceived one another in the study pursuit. These participants are the sources of information in this thesis. It is their experiences and perceptions that are the focus of this research.

3.5 The interviews

The interviewees, each one separately and privately, took part in the interview. Each interview lasted one hour and sometimes more than that. Before formally starting the interview I talked privately to each participant over the telephone about the purpose of this project. I explained the causes for which I considered them suitable for participating in it along with a brief introduction to this project. During my telephone conversation with each of them I orally supplied ideas about the types of questions I would be asking them in the interview along with other relevant information concerning this programme.

As per their interest and desire I emailed each of them a sample of questions from the interview schedule together with the information sheet and consent form to help them

gather lucid and adequate knowledge about my project and also judge their eligibility and reach consequent decision to take part in it. Each of them individually, through either telephone or email, informed me of her/his decision to participate in the project. The first interview was held at the residence of the participant according to her desire. All others declared that they did not have any preference about the venue for interviews to take place. Consequently it was decided through private discussion with each of the seven participants to hold the interviews at my residence and dates and time for the interviews were also fixed upon the participants' choices.

At the outset of every interview I again outlined the purpose of my project, the aims it would try to achieve together with other aspects of it and handed over the interview schedule, information sheet and consent form to the interviewee. Each of them went through these relevant papers and I answered all their questions whenever they asked me. They signed the consent forms before starting the interviews.

The following questions were asked in the interviews:

- 1) What is your experience of studying in New Zealand?
- 2) What has mostly influenced your study? Are they useful or are they obstacles?
- 3) What is your reaction towards your culturally diverse classroom, peers and teacher/s?
- 4) How do your teachers handle this diversity?
- 5) Do you understand lectures/ class proceedings clearly and satisfactorily?
- 6) How do you take preparations for exams/assignments?
- 7) Are you happy with your class performance/result/grade?

- 8) What do you mean by student-teacher relationship? What relationship have you got with your teacher? Is it one-sided or reciprocal?
- 9) Do you think it necessary? If yes why?
- 10) Do your teachers understand your problems? Do you feel free to inform her/him about your problems?
- 11) What is their reaction towards it? Are they helping-minded or indifferent?
- 12) Do you think your relationship with your teacher can further develop?
- 13) What sides do you approve/admire and what sides do you disapprove in your teacher? Why? How does it influence your study?
- 14) How fruitfully can you contribute in forming, maintaining and improving relationship with your teacher?

The questions were asked to ascertain how the participants felt during their academic life in the unfamiliar socio-cultural environment of New Zealand which was very different from their study experiences in Bangladesh, what their relationships were with their teachers and what influences these relationships had in their academic endeavour as well as in their personal lives. Besides these above-mentioned questions, I also asked them a number of questions that appeared relevant and useful for this thesis.

Seven interviews were tape recorded with full consent from the participants. One interview was noted down as one participant did not agree to tape recording. Some interviews were done in October, 2003, while the rest of them took place between March and April, 2004.

Transcriptions of the interviews

The tape recorded interviews were transcribed by me within two or three days of holding each interview. In transcribing each interview I listened to the tapes repeatedly for understanding each of them clearly and accurately. Then after writing them down manually I again listened to the tapes and checked the written notes several times to confirm they were transcribed word for word. Those were later transferred to my computer.

3.6 Data analysis

The purpose of analysing the data is to get the meaning of it through systematically arranging and presenting it so that comparisons, contrasts, connections and insights can be made and demonstrated. Wiersma (2000, p. 204) declares:

"Data analysis in qualitative research is a process of categorization, description, and synthesis. Data reduction is necessary for the description and interpretation of the phenomenon under study."

Wellington (2000) has regarded qualitative data analysis as an intellectual craftsmanship where no hard and fast rule is followed and at the same time the researcher is not allowed to do it entirely in her/his self-invented way as he (2000, p.150) has expressed:

“Qualitative analysis can and should be done ‘artfully’, even ‘playfully’, but it also requires a great amount of methodological knowledge and intellectual competence.”

My aim in undertaking this project (as described in the Introduction chapter) was to know what would motivate an overseas student to form a relationship with her/his teacher and what type of relationship s/he would like to maintain with the teacher. I also wanted to find out how that relationship would be influenced by the various linguistic, cultural and socio-academic gaps between the overseas student and her/his teacher and what would be the ultimate effect in the student. The questions of the interviews were designed to collect information to implement the aim of this project.

Process of analysis:

The first stage in analysing the interview data is coding, or classifying material into themes, issues, topics, concepts and propositions. This is generally done by repeatedly reading the data in order to be thoroughly familiar with them through noting the similar themes and patterns together with perplexing or unexpected features, inconsistencies or contradictions (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

I printed out all transcribed interviews from the computer. Keeping the main issues under investigation clearly in my mind, I went through the hard copies of each transcribed interview several times and noted down significant points about each interview beside the margins of each of them, such as:

- 1) Causes behind the participant’s decision to study in New Zealand

- 2) Problems faced by individual participants in a new academic environment for example, problems related to different academic systems, language and culture gaps and the like
- 3) Circumstances for which and process through which each individual participant approached her/his teachers
- 4) The assistance their teachers offered them as well as frustrations and problems they experienced during their interactions with their teachers
- 5) The participants' impressions about their teachers
- 6) Their views about student-teacher relationship
- 7) Their individual relationship with their respective teachers
- 8) The influential factors in these relationships
- 9) Effects of the relationships on them
- 10) And the roles and responsibilities of an overseas student in forming and maintaining a good relationship with her/his teacher.

Then I summarized the contents of each transcribed interview with all specific notes and key words and emphases from each of them and put them in my computer as separate texts under specific identity of each participant. Each version then became more lively, lucid and vivid with resources as to quickly supply necessary information in finding and affirming similar and dissimilar issues and connecting them with each other basing on their importance and proceeding towards further interpretation. To preserve confidentiality I used different names for the participants and avoided using the names of their institutions.

From eight interviews I prepared eight summaries which were printed out to further reflect upon and scrutinize individually and collectively for gathering information to detect important ideas, identify similarities and dissimilarities in the experiences of the participants with their teachers, their expectations and happiness and disappointment resulting from different gaps with their teachers, including the views and beliefs of the participants regarding their relationships with their teachers.

Thus I went on forming assumptions and concepts and checking their connections/difference/relevance and evaluating their validities and reliabilities, and consequently presented them in the Findings chapter. Similar and dissimilar points were separated and arranged in two separate parts for further reflection and analysis. Important parts were synthesized and evaluated according to their strength and relevance to the research topic while the insignificant parts were discarded from the data to make it more meaningful and authentic. The Findings chapter also reveals answers to many questions pertinent to the research topic. These were directly derived from the perceptions and interpretations of the participants.

As already mentioned in the Introduction chapter, examining and interpreting of many issues in this project were influenced by my own understandings of and reactions to those issues basing on my real life experiences. Therefore the perceptions of the participants together with the findings from the literature were mingled with my own views and

beliefs, suggesting the pervasive subjectivity of this research --- an important strength of qualitative investigation.

Limitations of this research

I would like to mention that there are some limitations in the process of this research. The research was done based on the data collected through interviewing eight Bangladeshi persons. There was the scarcity of participants because, as mentioned earlier, there were only a few Bangladeshi people available with eligibility for me to conduct this research and the quantity of the data also, at times, appeared insufficient whenever different issues arose which were really difficult to satisfactorily explain.

But this thesis powerfully presents some worthy propositions regarding a relationship that can help overseas students (and also their teachers) to solve the problems met at different stages during student-teacher interaction.

3.7 Ethical Issues:

Wellington (2000, p.54) says: *"An 'ethic' is a moral principle or a code of conduct which actually governs what people do. It is concerned with the way people act or behave."*

Ethics play a significant role in every type of research because research is done by people, with people (though very often with many other objects), on people, about people and for people (there are exceptions). The effect of a research is not limited within the researcher only, it, more or less, involves others. Therefore other people's interests are

concerned with it. It is a common view held by the critics that each stage in the research sequence carries powerful implications of ethical problems as Cohen, Manion and Morrison have said (2000, p. 49):

...they may arise from the nature of the research project itself (ethnic differences in intelligence, for example); the context for the research (a remand home); the procedures to be adopted (producing high level of anxiety); methods of data collection (covert observation); the nature of the participants (emotionally disturbed adolescents); the type of data collected (highly personal information of a sensitive kind); and what is to be done with the data (publishing in a manner that causes the participants embarrassment).

Hence it is important that the research project, be it a social research or a scientific one, needs to be done in an ethically approvable way so that its purpose, process and aftermath cannot be, in any way, detrimental to any other person or thing, group, institution or country.

There are certain ethical codes of conducts that must be maintained by any researcher in carrying out her/his research. For example clarity and certainty of the research project's being totally harmless, informed and voluntary consent of the participants in the research, privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, avoiding betrayal and deception, analysing and reporting data faithfully, that is, the researcher's overall commitment to truth and honesty

(Davidson and Tolich, 2003; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Wellington, 2000; Burns, 2000).

This research project was initiated as a requirement of my post graduate study programme at Massey University, Wellington. Before starting the fieldwork I submitted my research proposal to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee for approval. An ethical scrutiny was administered which was followed by some necessary amendments and finally the proposal of the project was approved by the Committee (Appendix 1).

Here I like to discuss how the ethical issues were addressed in this research.

Informed consent:

From ethical considerations the participants' informed consent is given much importance. Davidson and Tolich (2003, p.73) say:

All those who take part in research must give their informed consent: they must be accurately informed about the procedures to be followed, and given the opportunity either to consent or to decline to be involved. Their questions must be satisfactorily answered and they must be told that they may withdraw from the research at any time.

The participants should be sufficiently informed about the purpose and procedures of the research as well as the researcher's identity and the extent of her/his involvement in the research and her/his total freedom regarding this. If a tape recorder has to be used,

permission of the participant/s should be sought beforehand. It should also be made clear if there is any possibility of physical harm or psychological or emotional injury or any other type of social or personal risk or danger. However, full information of the research project and voluntarism of participation also depend on the age and comprehensive power, physical and mental conditions and other circumstances of the participants and on the requirements of the research itself. But a consent, while it respects and protects the individual rights of the participant, also *"places some of the responsibility on the participant should anything go wrong in the research."* (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.51)

In order to abide by this principle I prepared Information Sheets (Appendix 2) and Consent Forms (Appendix 3). I sent them to each of the eight participants. I also talked to them individually over telephone before and after sending them those papers to make all relevant and necessary information regarding my research project clear to them. I also explained my background and purpose of this research and that this project had been approved by Massey University Human Ethics Committee or MUHEC.

Through the Information Sheet (Appendix 2) I made it clear, too, that the interview would be tape recorded only with the permission of the participant and the recorder could be turned off at any moment upon the participant's request. I also pointed out that the participant was free to participate in the project and could withdraw her/his participation at any moment.

Privacy

Another sensitive point among the ethical issues is the participant's privacy which is at risk with her/his disclosure of personal valuable information for the sake of the research. When the data or the report is published, the personal information of the participant might make her/his life jeopardised or disrupted making her/him vulnerable before the society. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p.61) comment: *"the greater the sensitivity of the information, the more safeguards are called for to protect the privacy of the research participant."*

In this project the participants were provided with information by me about maintaining the privacy of their personal information during and after the investigation. Each interview took place separately and privately and the information was kept with all possible secrecy so that no tampering was possible. None of these personal issues were openly discussed with anyone.

Anonymity

In order to protect and respect the privacy of the participant one fruitful device is to maintain anonymity or not to reveal individual participant's identity. Before starting the interviews, through the Information Sheet (Appendix 2) the participants were made aware that their real names would not appear in the research report. They were given options either to choose pseudonyms for themselves or to allow the researcher to imagine a name for each of them. Accordingly some participants chose names themselves while the rest

of the names were imagined by me. The institutions' names were not published in the report.

Confidentiality

Burns (2000, p.20) asserts: "*Confidentiality involves a clear understanding between researcher and participant concerning the use to be made of the data provided.*"

This means that the researcher will be responsible, honest and faithful in preserving the secrecy of the private information given by the participants. When confidentiality is promised to be kept, it must be kept seriously.

However before taking part in this project the respondents were made aware through the Information Sheet (Appendix 2) that as the Bangladeshi community is very small in Wellington, it would not be possible by me to keep total confidentiality. So the participants joined this programme with full knowledge of that.

Betrayal

Betrayal is just the opposite of confidentiality and is highly embarrassing and shocking for the participants on the one hand and a very selfish and treacherous offence for the researcher on the other. Betrayal has the potential to generate enmity between the researcher and the subject. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p.63) have declared:

“The term ‘betrayal’ is usually applied to those occasions where data disclosed in confidence are revealed publicly in such a way as to cause embarrassment, anxiety, or perhaps suffering to the subject or participant disclosing the information.”

In this project all the information collected from the participants had been considered valuable by me and I took it to be my moral obligation to honour the trust of the participants and treat the data in a way so that it could never be any source of tension or unhappiness in the participants.

Deception

Deception takes place in a situation where the researcher intentionally keeps the real purpose and conditions of the research in secret and wrong information is supplied to the participant. S/he may then face humiliation and stress and even danger for no fault of her/his own (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

So far I am concerned no relevant and important information regarding this project had been kept away from or had been misinterpreted to any participant. There had not been any breach from the original information provided to the participants at the outset of the project.

Finally I would like to say that all the research participants (and myself as well) were clearly and sufficiently informed that in keeping the secrecy of the collected data, in analysing it and in subsequent result of the project and in writing up the report utmost

honesty, truthfulness and sincerity would be maintained. The truth that all these were being done for my academic purpose only and there had not been any unethical or harmful intention or endeavour behind these had always been maintained.

The next chapter presents summarised versions of eight interviews followed by a description of findings based on them.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The aim of this thesis is to find out the impact of student-teacher relationship on Bangladeshi students in New Zealand from the data procured through interviewing eight Bangladeshi people.

4.1 Summarised versions of the transcribed interviews

Below are presented individual summarised version of eight interviews:

Mahbub:

Mahbub, a Bangladeshi, is now a New Zealand citizen working in an organization. After arriving in New Zealand he did an English linguistic course and a Graduate Diploma in two different institutions.

About the cause of his study in New Zealand Mahbub has declared that he decided to study as it became very difficult to enter the New Zealand job market without New Zealand qualifications and experience. He has admitted that studying was an exposure to the New Zealand educational world and culture and social systems that helped in his later life. Mahbub had a helpful relationship with his teachers that assisted him with his academic life. About the language gap he asserts:

"Though English was my second language, it didn't matter much in dealing with my teachers. They always welcomed asking questions and always helped me."

His teachers gave him extra time after formal classes whenever he needed. About assignments, teachers discussed how to gather information and made it clear what their expectations were. He believes that an informal, more open and flexible relationship between student and teacher can minimize student's problems and help to reach academic goal. He comments:

"I think teacher is like a mentor, a senior and respectable friend, not like an equal friend, someone who will understand instead of keeping a reserved attitude".

He believes teacher's inviting manners can encourage students. He emphasizes that teacher should not discriminate among students on the basis of ethnicity, religion and socio-cultural systems. He wants teacher to make explicit what he expects from an overseas student. Mahbub values clarity in student-teacher relationship.

He faced some incidents in study life during which he could not be satisfied with some of his teachers. He had a teacher who seemed happy with those students who understood him easily but did not bother about whether others were having problems. He cannot correctly tell the reasons behind the behavior of that teacher.

He considers a student-teacher relationship important for an overseas student. To form this relationship student should learn the cultures and systems of the institution and the society in general. In this regard people of his own ethnicity already residing in that country can help him. He declares that an overseas student should also get some ideas

about the likes and dislikes of his teacher/s; their values and principles; demands and expectations. He has also put stress on overseas student's keeping contacts with other students and other available resources instead of being a burden for teachers.

Farzana:

Farzana is a New Zealand citizen living in Wellington. She did a one year course at a polytechnic. She had 21 classmates, with 18 New Zealanders and others from different ethnicities.

She says that at the outset of her study she was very anxious about herself for being a student of different culture and language, about the teachers, classmates and study environment. Afterwards she found 80-90% teachers understood her well but it was difficult to follow those who talked too fast. She did not approach them even after the class for fear of not understanding them. Rather she sought help from her classmate. She declares:

"I didn't go to them as I thought I might not be able to understand them. Rather I studied repeatedly at home and went to my classmate who was really very helpful."

According to Farzana student-teacher relationship means a state when an overseas student feels free to discuss any issue with her teacher, ask any question, can easily phone or send e-mail and does not feel anxious and scared. She has affirmed that her teachers

made the environment easier for her to study as they told her: *"Don't be nervous. We understand you are from a different culture."*

She did not find teachers discriminating among students regarding cultures, language, ethnicity and such other things. Her teachers had been good to her, had understood her well and helped a lot.

Farzana had different relationships with different teachers. She felt free especially with those who were friendly and cooperative. They helped her to shake off fear and hesitation and be open with them. They appeared to be aware of and sympathetic to her problems resulted from language and culture gaps. So it seems students should proceed in their relationships with teachers depending on their understanding of the personalities, likes and dislikes of teachers.

Farzana's view is that in the academic field teachers know best and students must listen to them, but they should have freedom to raise objection. A teacher can make mistakes and students' duty is to draw teacher's attention towards it. She was thanked by her teacher for showing teacher's mistake. But there are moments in her study life when one of her teachers did not seem to realize her problem, and let her finish and go early to pick up her daughter from the babysitter. Rather that teacher told that it was nothing of her concern and she (Farzana) would be considered absent in that class. But the same teacher let another student depart earlier on another occasion. She still does not know the cause behind it.

Masud:

Masud came to New Zealand in quest of a job. He studied two subjects in undergraduate level in New Zealand. He lived and worked in Wellington. He no longer lives here now.

As for reasons of studying here Masud has said that he felt interested to know more about technology and he also needed some qualifications to improve himself to enter the job market in New Zealand.

About his study experiences in New Zealand Masud describes that at the beginning he had to struggle hard but he could not achieve much as he was a stranger to New Zealand cultures and systems. He also felt shy and scared to talk to his teachers. There were lots of Asian students who were helpful. Later he decided to approach his teachers and found them helpful. Masud found academic systems difficult to understand but his teachers always encouraged him and provided useful information to make his ideas clear. He states:

"In first year I had lots of difficulties and I was not having results up to my expectations. My teachers showed me exam sheets and helped me to understand my mistakes and they did it in a very friendly way. I felt I had a power to talk about my result."

To Masud student-teacher relationship is important but not essential for overseas students if they have lots of other resources. It appears from his speech that he had a very formal relationship with his teachers that did not go deep. However he received much

inspiration and help from his teachers. They were patient and sympathetic towards the problems he faced as an overseas student. He was new to the systems and cultures of his university and could not follow them properly at the beginning of his academic life. He sometimes would ask questions he should not have asked that way. But teachers never showed any embarrassment rather provided useful information.

Masud's opinion is that a good student-teacher relationship can save time, can empower a student to ask any question at any time or send an e-mail or talk face to face. But a student needs to prepare himself carefully to reach her/his academic goal instead of too much dependence on teachers. He should strictly follow the academic rules and regulations, read the lecture notes, get online information. There are lots of facilities/resources which a student should be familiar with. He affirms:

" I think a student doesn't need the teacher's help so much if s/he has sufficient lecture notes,... goes to the lab, follows tutorials and uses other resources like student forum etc. "

Abir:

Abir is a doctor in a hospital. He completed a qualification in Bangladesh. After coming to New Zealand he did a diploma followed by a Masters in science areas. He sat for the exam for registration here and afterwards got a job. He is living in Wellington with his family.

About his study experience Abir has described that his first year was a bit difficult as lectures, lecturers and tutorials were different from Bangladesh. He found studying here more independent and more a student's own effort. Teacher here acts as a guide for the student to be self reliant and to follow New Zealand culture.

Abir's description of his relationship with his teachers sounds formal or ascribed. Like any other overseas student he experienced some problems at the outset of academic life but his teachers always helped. He found them really cooperative and they never showed any irritability. About student-teacher relationship he points out:

"... teachers are like friends whom we can talk to keeping eye contact. Here system of respect is different ... teachers know the psychology of student ... no bossing. They don't consider themselves supreme authority in class... leadership is shared... new thoughts are welcomed."

Abir has praised all these qualities in teachers here. He seems to be an introvert who did not so much want to tell his problems to teachers. He has mentioned confronting some troubles caused from not having experiences of post-graduate studies in a foreign country. But he did not expose them to teachers. Rather he took them to be his own fault.

According to him the student-teacher relationship is important for those coming from different background as they do need the guidance and assistance of teachers without which achieving academic goals will be troublesome. About developing this relationship

his view is that a student should not confine his discussion with teachers within only academic affairs. He should chat with them in a friendly way which will help him know the various aspects of teachers' character, their principles, likes and dislikes. This better understanding of teacher's personality will help the student form a better relationship. He has also emphasized learning the academic and social cultures of New Zealand first which teachers will appreciate.

He asserts that teachers never did any discrimination among students though his classes were culturally diverse. Abir does not like much flexibility in teachers. He believes that this can puzzle overseas students who are not so familiar with the systems here. Then they may not properly use the time and may face academic strain in future. He has pointed out:

"I think here is too much freedom ... no pressure unlike our system ... too much flexibility which might initially bring some uncertainties for an overseas student who is not familiar with the systems here."

Shaon:

Shaon, now a New Zealand citizen, works in a company and lives in Wellington. He did a Bachelor's degree at a polytechnic. He has a family.

He studied part time and came to night classes as he worked at daytime and the number of his classmates was less than 20. In some semesters there were only 5/6 students.

Students were of 5/6 different nationalities and from mainly Asian countries. He did not face many problems in following class lectures or taking preparation for exams and assignments. He did 16 papers and had 13-15 different teachers and tutors and 30% of them were from different nationalities.

According to Shaon a student-teacher relationship is based on their proper understanding of each other. Both will play their individual roles cooperatively --- no bossing. He affirms that it is the institutional practice here to allow student/s to come to the teacher and discuss. The teacher will consider student's problem that may be subject-related or personal and student will try best to use the help and inspiration derived from teacher and will realize that the teacher is a human being who is there to help her/him study. They will trust each other, learn, feel free and enjoy study.

He did not find teachers discriminating. He never felt discomfort to discuss academic issues with them. They welcomed discussion on cultural or personal affairs also. He was working and studying and very often missed classes. His teachers gave him time after formal classes and also extended time for submitting assignments. They also gave him valuable advice regarding jobs. Shaon's relationship with teacher is expressed in his words: "*-- without my teachers' help I wouldn't have finished study*".

He had a trustworthy, supportive relationship with his teachers. But Shaon had troubles in Math as the teacher used to go very fast:

"...too fast for me to follow. She expected all students to be of the same level as she. But I couldn't cope and frequently implored her to go slow. In fact she didn't realize somebody might have problem."

But when he informed her of his problems she responded positively and helped him. Shaon does not blame her: *"I realized it was not caused by her attitude, rather she thought the students should know this at that level."* In Shaon's view teachers do not do any discrimination. On an occasion he was not happy with the grade of an assignment and put an objection. His assignment was sent to another university for opinion and it was proved that his tutor had not checked it properly. He says:

"I believe it didn't happen for my different ethnic background. I don't want to describe it as discrimination. He just overlooked."

He puts stress on two traits which an overseas student must have --- honesty and commitment to work as he emphasizes:

"Student should be honest and prove their sincerity in studies. They should not take any unfair advantage from anybody. This is the first thing that can help."

Shaon describes student-teacher relationship as two-sided --- student's eagerness to study would encourage teacher to help him; even a teacher could offer a student

emotional support to overcome his problem. He urges that overseas students should be open with their teachers about their problems so that teachers understand them.

Hasan:

Hasan, a Bangladeshi, is now living in Wellington as a New Zealand citizen. He had done a qualification before coming to New Zealand. He did another after arriving here. He is working part time. He has a family.

After being unable to get a job in New Zealand Hasan decided to study and get a New Zealand qualification. In 1996-97 there was a great demand of computing skill which was a flourishing area in job market. He decided to study in that field. Through study he got a better idea about the New Zealand culture and academic environment. He also developed better written and communicating skill in English.

His classes were culturally very diverse. There were students from countries like China, Korea and India. There were some teachers from the UK, South Africa and Germany. But their behaviour was uniform and there was no discrimination. He did some extra papers and it took 4 semesters to complete. He had 7/8 teachers and in some papers there were 50-60 students while in some other papers there were 200-250 students.

Hasan had a rather formal relationship with his teachers. His teachers were quite helpful, managed extra time for solving his problems and did not express embarrassment or disturbance for seeking their help. But sometimes when he sought their help he noticed

some unexpected reactions in some of them. His view is that those reactions resulted from teacher's heavy workload or some gaps between them in understanding the systems and cultures. Teachers thought some topics or questions were easy enough for students. So students should try to solve them independently. This expectation might result from teachers' assumptions about student's knowledge and capability. Once knowing his problem a teacher told Hasan that it was an easy one and he should have known this as he (Hasan) was doing a graduate diploma. But Hasan had not done the undergraduate courses in that subject and there was a gap of knowledge that made some topics hard to comprehend. There was also a gap of understanding between him and his teacher. The teacher also told Hasan that he had not sufficient time and was under pressure to complete the course. But there were occasions when that same teacher had helped Hasan.

In a culturally diverse class the students are of different calibers and their questions and comprehending power can never be the same. But Hasan found teachers having an assumption that students' English would be of the same level. Once in a class an Indian student complained to the teacher about the timing of an exam that had 100 questions to be answered in half an hour which was insufficient. The teacher replied that they assumed all students in the class to be equally competent in English as they got admission into the institution for that.

In another occasion in a class of nearly 200 students a student asked the teacher to explain something and the teacher replied that if he continued doing that way, he would never finish the syllabus. Another time Hasan and some other students sought help from a

lab tutor who was a graduate student. He told that students should find the answer themselves. Hasan declares that that tutor always showed the same behaviour, especially to the Indian students.

Hasan also remembers facing some other troubles. Once a teacher got sick and another teacher took over his classes and set in the exam different types of questions. But the students were not prepared for those as they were not given any ideas about those questions which were also hard to understand. When they talked to the teacher about this after the exam, he just declared those questions did not cover so many marks and the students did not need to bother so much for that.

But in general, Hasan found teachers friendly and helpful as he comments: *"I stuck in one assignment and contacted my teacher over telephone who managed extra time for me and told me to go to him and showed me how to do that."*

Teachers appreciated overseas students as hard workers. Hasan found teachers to be flexible and empowering students. Most of his exams were okay and the grades were better than he had expected. But he did not find some of his tutors so helpful.

Among other things Hasan has mentioned two points which he considers as noticeable cultural gaps between Bangladesh and New Zealand. Very often he found students especially local students gossiping during the class but the teacher did not bother. He also found that students in New Zealand did not care about types of questions; even did not

express disappointment in exam results or grades they got. He says: *"Only the sub-continent students like us cared about that."*

Hasan's view is that forming a relationship with teacher/s is important for an overseas student of non-English speaking background as class is not sufficient for him and he needs extra time. He thinks that teachers should be inviting in their behaviour so that students can feel free to go and discuss their problems because *"if they aren't informal it is very hard to get in for people like us who are in this process for the first time. So it's important."*

He believes when a student feels free to tell his/her problems to teachers and they help – this healthy condition signifies a healthy relationship between student and teacher. Hasan has declared that an overseas student should be careful about certain limits which he should not cross while dealing with his teachers. He also emphasizes that student should never offend teachers as culturally they are different:

"... we can discuss academic and other cultural and general knowledge and even personal matters. But we should not ask things that may offend a teacher, that may be a personal attack... We should maintain a limit. They are helpful, friendly but culturally different from us."

Monowar:

Monowar did a Bachelor's degree in New Zealand as an overseas student. He is single.

As for causes behind his coming to New Zealand Monowar has expressed that he always had an interest to study in a foreign country and learn more in technical affairs. His one relative living here had encouraged him to come and study. He also heard about New Zealand having less crime and corruption and more or less peaceful environment. Therefore he came here.

About his study experience here Monowar describes how he was affected with cultural and language differences, differences in teaching systems and the systems in the university. There were about 10-12 teachers in his faculty and there were 300 students in one class with about 150 from overseas. He describes that his condition was like other overseas students here. He experienced troubles caused from language and culture gaps, unfamiliarity with New Zealand terms and jargon and institutional rules and demands. He has also mentioned some other things like teachers' attitudes, beliefs and working systems; academic workloads; financial hardships and job scarcity. He comments that all these are connected with the underperformance, ill performance, disappointment and bad luck of overseas students. Obviously in such a circumstance, according to him, an overseas student and his/her teacher are unable to form that relationship which can help in academic achievement.

About his language problem Monowar describes: *"My accent wasn't good and I felt shy -- people couldn't understand me and I couldn't understand lectures, local words, slang*

and the way teachers lectured – they went so fast – they thought we had same background knowledge and ability to catch lectures as fast as the local students.”

He has declared that many of his teachers did not encourage asking questions in the class even if a student did not understand anything: *“Some teachers are so Kiwi, so much New Zealander that they ask questions in their own language which the outsiders don't know. For example, once in the exam hall a teacher uses local term which is a Kiwi name for a game that I don't know.... The teacher thinks it's such a common game in New Zealand why not people know it.”*

Monowar is critical of teachers' time shortage: *“why will one student have only one hour for consultation?”* Shortage of teachers' number in the university is another concern for him: *“They can't really cope with the large number of students.”* Again many teachers, he says, were busy with doing their own research work, attending seminars where promotion, name and fame everything is related. Moreover the university is financing them for that but students are getting little benefit out of it. When he has been asked how much help he had received from his teachers in his first two years, he declares: *“...in the whole semester I didn't get more than three appointments from any teacher in any subject.”*

But he does not blame any teacher. He rather considers teachers helpless owing to their heavy student load and workload. In response to a question whether teachers provide extra care for an overseas student with financial and emotional stress Monowar asserts:

"If a teacher becomes sympathetic to international students, it'll be discrimination to local students. Teachers don't worry about student's personal life. It doesn't matter why you have done badly in exam...and why he should give so much importance to international students where local students may have problems too."

Monowar is critical of teachers' habit of setting hard and puzzling questions in the exam. That makes the situation worse for overseas students who are already weak and unfamiliar with these practices. He has also expressed that his teachers could not correctly pronounce names of overseas students which was 'very shocking'.

He is full of criticisms of the tutoring system too. The tutors do not understand when overseas students talk and students need to repeat the same question again and again. He says: *"Actually it's just a joke when the tutor doesn't understand."* He is dissatisfied with the inadequateness and costliness of learning supports in the university: *"... only 10-20 people are able to avail those facilities whereas there are 15-20 thousand students."*

Monowar's relationship with his teachers seems rather remote, inadequate, non-spontaneous, limited and full of many deficiencies and disappointments from the student's side. He thinks an overseas student cannot get much benefit out of his/her relationship with teacher at a stage when teachers are very busy with work load, student load, research and administrative works and both students and teachers are troubled by language, culture and system gaps. He considers this student-teacher relationship to be

undeveloped, impeded and even unthinkable in a situation where both students and teachers are helplessly doing their respective jobs under the hard-established systems and cultures of institutions and the society in general. He compares student-teacher relationship with that of customer and seller of groceries which is a fully commercial relationship. He does not see any hope or possibility out of it.

He blames the systems – rules and regulations in universities, immigration rules, business policies and whimsical or prejudiced employers – their cultures and values and established principles. He recommends that public policy making agencies can make some laws to help overseas students survive well and study well. They should make learning resources and other helps more available for students by making these less expensive.

Alongside these, Monowar has stated that teachers can gather some ideas of overseas students' academic systems and social cultures, their emotional and psychological make-ups, capabilities and limitations, expectations and possibilities as they are having lots of students every year. These things can, to a large extent, bridge the inevitable gaps of thinking and working, cultures and systems between them and overseas students. Monowar says:

"I don't blame any teacher... they're trying to improve themselves... but the problem is the whole thing is actually going again to the culture.... But teachers are trying and students are trying their best to communicate with their teacher. May be they both

struggle, but teachers have to have some knowledge about the background, culture of foreign students so that they can understand. Students have to have some ideas about teachers' cultures."

Side by side, Monowar has suggested overseas students becoming more hard working and determined regarding their studies. In order to survive and cope with it successfully, these students should be eager to know and accept where possible, the systems and cultures of the institution and the society.

Abul Kashem:

Abul Kashem is a permanent resident doing a postgraduate qualification at a university. He has a family.

About his study experience in New Zealand Kashem has expressed that his teachers were more or less same as in Bangladesh but teaching systems and teaching materials used here were different and more modern. Therefore these were helpful for him to understand things easily and quickly.

About language Kashem states that it was not an acute problem for him as he was more or less familiar with English but the problem was with the accent of his supervisors which was unfamiliar and sometimes appeared difficult to follow. However his supervisors had been used to dealing with lots of overseas students and they knew how to communicate in the right way. They discussed things in a way that was understandable to

Kashem and they never expressed any embarrassment or disturbance when Kashem requested them to explain something again. Kashem has declared that his supervisors were sympathetic towards the problems he faced as a student of different background as he comments:

"They are sympathetic and they are experienced persons to handle all these as they have not only me but a number of foreign students, they know how to communicate in the right way. So no acute problem is found."

His relationship with his supervisors appears to be a matured one. Kashem seems to know well what student-teacher relationship is like and he appears satisfied with his existing relationship with his supervisors. Kashem's relationship with his supervisors seems to be based on some ideas accepted and shared by both Abul Kashem and his supervisors; demands and expectations seem known to all.

To Kashem student-teacher relationship should be something where student has easy access to his teacher. Both of them will feel free to discuss anything and both will know how to communicate in the right way. He proclaims:

"I think it is a close contact between students and their teachers and through frequent contacts the relationship will improve. It is a direct communication. The more I visit my supervisors, the more it helps to improve my research."

Kashem has admired his supervisors' concerns about regularity and time limits of students. He declares that teachers appreciate student's eagerness and regular hard work. He believes that this relationship depends mostly and mainly on the student who should take initiative to form relationship if he is to upgrade his academic achievement. He affirms that without this a student cannot build his academic career:

"My study depends on my relationship with my supervisors. If I don't pay frequent visits and get their suggestions, if they don't offer proper, regular and sincere guidance, my study doesn't proceed. Their attempts are my basis to complete my study in due time."

Kashem considers the relationship to be a two-way traffic. If the teacher is not cooperative or responsive the relationship will never run. He proclaims that he had an informal relationship with his supervisors who took his personal problems, family condition and financial sides under sympathetic consideration. He seems to be quite aware of his supervisors' likes and dislikes and seems to value their beliefs and principles. Kashem considers these necessary to form and maintain a helpful relationship with teachers.

He has emphasized that a student of different background also needs to know the cultures and practices of the institution and the society in a greater sense. Thus s/he can organize herself/himself to establish a good relationship. About knowing the culture he recommends:

“S/he can study the social context that can help to be acquainted with the customs of the country, s/he can have social relationships, local friends; then one can know the systems as quickly as possible.”

4.2 Analysis:

From the statements of the interviewees it is evident that all of them, at different moments of their academic lives in New Zealand, had different types of relationships with their teachers that influenced them and had positive as well as negative impacts on their study pursuits, thoughts and actions, desires and efforts. Many of them have expressed similar views regarding some general issues in their academic lives. But regarding some other issues they have also expressed different opinions. However, their opinions regarding an overseas student's relationship with her/his teacher are presented below:

Their general view of the relationship between the teacher and an overseas student:

According to the participants student-teacher relationship means a student's easy access to her/his teacher/s, availability of an environment where an overseas student feels free to discuss any matter with the teacher. It is a two-way traffic. When a student becomes inspired by the friendly, welcoming manners of the teacher, s/he proceeds in her/his academic pursuit with greater courage and commitment. The teacher appreciates the student's interest, determination and sincere endeavour to learn. Though both are representatives of diverse cultures, their relationship is based on mutual sincerity, honesty, understanding and trust where no one will consider the other burden or boss.

Importance of student-teacher relationship:

All participants have considered forming relationships with teacher/s *important* for overseas students because:

- 1) Overseas students are newcomers in an environment where approaches to knowledge, academic systems and institutional rules are totally or to a great extent unknown to them. So they need help from someone to properly understand/follow new systems, remove their perplexity and tension, increase their self reliance and attention to study. In this procedure there may be various sources to offer assistance but teachers can offer most desirable and supportive assistance in time and in the most encouraging and acceptable way that an overseas student can expect. Therefore the participants have thought affirmatively about an overseas student's relationship with her/his teacher.
- 2) This relationship helps not in academic areas only but can provide mental and emotional support in moments of tension and stress, can enliven an overseas student through free discussion with teachers about her/his cultural and social practices. It can generate feelings of cultural and intellectual exposure and sharing which are important for the sound mental health of overseas students. A student may not have many friends or relatives in a foreign country, but s/he will less suffer from loneliness and homesickness and will not consider her or him helpless if s/he has a good rapport with teacher.

- 3) The relationship can speed up educational activities of an overseas student and lead her/him towards better outcome. By freely talking to and understanding what the teacher expects her/him to do regarding study, a student becomes aware of and careful about individual problems. S/he estimates personal merits and realizes what s/he should develop and what s/he should shun for academic and personal success in a foreign soil.
- 4) In some cases the relationship can offer better understanding of life in that country and can offer good help in other fields like job prospects and so on.

The participants seem to have several expectations from the student-teacher relationship. They all have described this relationship as a very important one no matter what relationship they individually had with their own respective teachers and how much their teachers contributed in their achievements.

Type of relationship preferred by them:

All have talked for a *good* and *informal* relationship. Because it reduces the distance between student and teacher and eases doubt, tension, hesitation and embarrassment between two unequal partners. Unequal in the sense that a student is more or less dependent on her/his teacher in the process of having a goal and striving to reach that goal. An informal relationship with teacher, through motivating and energising a student mentally, intellectually and even physically, makes learning an easier, less troublesome

and enjoyable experience for that student. All participants have considered a good student-teacher relationship very important for the academic success as well as personal/intellectual nourishment of a student. Especially when the student comes from overseas a good rapport with the teacher can save the student from many of those inevitable problems which s/he is bound to meet as a result of her/his different background. They have also admitted that a *bad* relationship with teacher may have devastating effect upon a student.

Impact of their relationships with their teachers on them:

From their statements it appears that they had more or less *formal* relationships with teachers and those were subject to many limitations. From the speeches of some participants, like Shaon, Kashem and Farzana, it seems they had *better* relationships with their teachers in comparison with some other participants like Hasan and Monowar. Shaon and Kashem have expressed satisfaction and complained less about their teachers. Shaon has proclaimed that he never felt any discomfort or hesitation to discuss anything with his teachers if it was study related or job, culture or personal life related. He was quite happy with his results though he was doing a part time job during study. He thinks his academic achievement was possible for his trustworthy, supportive relationship with his teachers.

Kashem also considers that his relationship with his supervisors enhanced his study outcome. He considers his supervisors' regular and sincere guidance as preconditions for his research to proceed and complete in due time. He has stated that his supervisors also

took his personal problems, family condition and financial sides under sympathetic consideration. Farzana has declared that most of her teachers understood well her problems. They exhibited good behaviour, sympathy and cooperation which reduced her anxiety, shame and hesitation and made the environment easier for her to study. Mahbub, too, appears quite happy with his academic performance. He believes his teachers contributed a lot through welcoming questions from him, giving him extra time and making their expectations clear before him.

But participants like Hasan and Monowar have expressed dissatisfaction and have occasionally complained about their teachers. This indicates at their not having helpful relationships with their teachers. Though they do not seem unhappy with their academic results, they seem unhappy personally, emotionally and psychologically for not having expected relationships with their teachers. This unhappiness seems to be resulted from their academic, cultural and linguistic gaps with their teachers.

Some influential factors in the relationship:

Their relationships seem to be greatly influenced by their unawareness of or not being properly adapted to the academic systems in New Zealand and existing cultures of student-teacher interactions. Some other influential factors are language gaps, gaps in their as well as their teachers' mutual expectations, advantages and disadvantages of their individual academic contexts and their mutual attitudes to each other. Besides these, other dominant points are teachers' workloads, teaching philosophies, institutional systems and availabilities of other resources and learning supports inside and outside classes.

Problems faced by them owing to their diverse backgrounds:

There are many issues found *common* in the comments of eight interviewees. For example, as Bangladeshi students they faced some common *problems* during their academic experience in New Zealand. They have identified several causes of these problems which are presented below:

A. Different academic approach and style: All participants have admitted that they confronted different approach to knowledge and different styles of teaching and learning in which they did not have any previous experience. Therefore understanding and adapting to these unfamiliar systems were very difficult and time consuming for them.

B. Unfamiliarity with cultures of student-teacher interaction: Another problem they encountered was their unfamiliarity with the social norms and especially the cultures of student-teacher interaction in New Zealand. As a result they experienced gaps of understandings, gaps of communication and became puzzled, miserable and felt dissatisfied with their teachers.

C. Language problems: All have talked about language problem that resulted especially from their unfamiliarity with New Zealand English, New Zealand academic jargon, teachers' personal accents, lexis and social slang. In fact language incompetence was a barrier in their academic struggle, in interaction with their peers and especially with their teachers.

Their general impression about their teachers:

All participants studied technical subjects in New Zealand. They have acknowledged that they received guidance, assistance, compassion and inspiration from their teachers. Teachers reduced their academic strain by extending deadlines of submitting assignments, giving time after classes for solving problems and realizing the issues related to their different background. They have made it clear that their teachers did not discriminate in dealing with students of diverse backgrounds. They have expressed satisfaction with their results/grades where, they believe, teachers had not done any injustice.

Their general impression of teachers is positive though they have also talked about some negative sides. They appreciate the non-boss like trait of teachers here and the way teachers welcome and praise students' individuality and efforts.

From the comments of the participants it is evident that overseas students want the teachers of foreign universities welcome students of different background, give them opportunities to talk and to be open with their problems and help them in their needs. Nearly all have expressed satisfaction at teacher's showing concern over student's personal, emotional and financial factors of life. They enthusiastically support teachers' revealing interest in the cultures and backgrounds of overseas students. The participants who simultaneously worked and studied have admitted that teachers realized their financial issues, showed flexibility and offered assistance to reduce study load. So they were able to do full-time or part-time jobs for maintaining livelihood.

All of them have emphasized knowing teachers' cultures, values and beliefs, likes and dislikes and social cultures of New Zealand as well because student-teacher relationship is greatly affected by all these factors. They express that they found it easier to establish relationship with those teachers who were more cooperative, friendly, flexible and sympathetic. It signifies that students may have different relationships with different teachers.

Among the participants Masud and Monowar have expressed some opinions which are different from others. Masud thinks that an overseas student can carry on without forming and expecting from a relationship with his teacher/s. Monowar's view is that in today's busy commercial world nothing can be expected from student-teacher relationship.

Their views about the duties and responsibilities of an overseas student in forming and maintaining a good relationship with the teacher:

All participants have urged that overseas students should always be conscious of their own duties and responsibilities and should perform their job properly, timely and satisfactorily. In fact they believe students are to take initiative to build relationship with teachers. They should be sincere and hard working, should be committed to their study.

The participants have made it clear that overseas students should not be excessively or fully dependent on their teachers, they should not become extra burdens for teachers who have limited time and vast workload. Instead they should have confidence in their own

merit and competence and should take help from other resources. Putting stress on student's honesty they have asserted that overseas students should not take any unfair advantage of teacher's flexibility. They should not offend any teacher and should maintain some certain limits during interactions with them.

Points which are dissimilar:

While all have appreciated and supported flexibility in teachers, Abir has pointed out that too much flexibility can be puzzling for a student and can impede taking the right decision at right moment. As a result s/he may not estimate study load and may face academic and mental stress. Hasan has warned against doing things that may offend a teacher in a foreign university. He wants overseas students to be careful about keeping some limits while dealing with their teachers. He has focused on the cultural differences existing between teachers and students of different backgrounds.

But Monowar has described the student -teacher relationship with all negative aspects, deficiencies and improbabilities. He has illuminated the poor predicament of an overseas student, who is stressed with academic load and financial hardship; who is struggling with different and unknown cultures and systems; who is suffering from disillusion and also from academic degradation. Interestingly he has revealed side by side a sad and helpless plight of teachers who are surrounded with heavy workload, institutional pressure and puzzling demands and expectations of students of different ethno-cultural background.

Monowar accuses the university authority and other policy making organizations including immigration for the bad as well as sad plight of overseas students in New Zealand. He compares the student-teacher relationship with that between customer and seller – totally commercial and he does not see any other objective, illustration or possibility of it. He also highlights manifold limitations of teachers and overseas students to build a successful relationship. But he also emphasizes that this relationship may really be a meaningful one through cultural learning and sharing between students and teachers.

Masud, another participant, has proclaimed that instead of forming and expecting from relationship, an overseas student should use other resources available around him like peer discussion, internet, library, student forum and learning support center.

Issues related to an overseas student's relationship with the teacher:

From the findings derived from analysing the comments of the participants about their views as well as experiences regarding the student-teacher relationship (and its eventual impact upon students) it appears that the feelings and views, expectations and suggestions expressed by them have some links with their pre-existing views and beliefs related to their academic and socio-cultural backgrounds. These participants more or less accepted their predicaments in the foreign soil and tried their best to form and maintain relationships with their respective teachers.

There are some other significant factors which seem influencing a student's relationship with her/his teacher in this situation. These are student's age, capabilities and outlooks,

number of students and teachers, availability of peer discussion and other resources inside and outside university. A student like Monowar or Hasan will expect something from his teacher that a student like Kashem may not expect. Again Kashem has an easy access to his teachers that Monowar does not have. Farzana feels free to talk to her teacher shaking off all her fear, anxiety and hesitation whereas Hasan wants to be careful enough not to cross certain limits and not to offend teachers who are culturally different. Again according to Masud a student with lots of peers and other resources may not think of forming any relationship at all.

From analysing the comments of the participants it seems that this relationship is largely connected with teachers' personal characteristics, teaching philosophies and workload and their own cultures of thinking and working as well as institutional systems under which they work. Many of these things can come in direct contrast with an overseas student's expectations and cultures of thinking and working which have been evident in the review of the literature. Therefore in the next chapter these issues are further analysed and discussed in relation to the review of the literature.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

In this chapter I bring together the literature and field data which will illustrate how the Bangladeshi students were influenced by their relationship with their teachers during their tertiary study in New Zealand.

Following the research questions I will discuss why these Bangladeshi participants gave great importance on an overseas student's relationship with her/his teacher.

5.1 Academic traditions in Bangladesh

These Bangladeshi people have academic backgrounds in their home country and those are dominated by the systems and cultures of education in that country. In the socio-academic culture in Bangladesh teaching-learning is not that much student centered as it is in western countries. Bangladesh has a teacher centered education system and in school level students' thinking and acting freely is not that much in practice though in tertiary level students enjoy much more academic liberty. In Bangladesh from primary to tertiary level education is very structured and it is presented, suggested, guided and regulated by teachers.

Educational systems are different in Bangladesh. In schools teachers' knowledge and knowledge from the books are more or less achieved and reproduced by students. There are lots of quizzes and year final exams every year for promoting to the next class and also public examinations which students need to pass. But in tertiary level students enjoy

much more freedom and innovation. Teachers have important influences in a student's life, teachers have a significant image in the whole society. Students in Bangladesh, in general, are habituated to explore knowledge not independently like a western student but in collaboration with peers and teacher (there are exceptions). Teachers in Bangladesh do welcome creative, innovative ideas from students and encourage students to present their ideas in their study logically and systematically. But generally students prefer consulting teachers about their plans and procedures which teachers appreciate. It is true that every student and every teacher is different. Even there are teachers in Bangladesh who do not want to be that much involved with their students. There are also students who do not bother about consulting their teacher in study related or any other issue. But, in general, relationship, advice, sharing, compassion, assistance, similarities in ideas and opinions, unity in action – these concepts are greatly desired, welcomed, practiced and accepted as educational cultures in Bangladesh which influence students' relationships with other students as well as their relationships with their teachers.

Therefore not only owing to their various study problems in a foreign country, but these participants, also from their academic backgrounds in Bangladesh, gave much importance to the relationship of an overseas student with her/his teachers and their demands and expectations towards their teachers in New Zealand were the results of their pre-existing notions regarding a teacher's role in a student's life and activities.

5.2 Connections with Asian tradition

In the survey of the literature on Southeast Asian students in the tertiary institutions of Australia, New Zealand and the UK different writers and critics have been found talking about one significant issue. The issue is the tendency of overseas students to depend on their teachers instead of relying on their own competence and creativity. They are described as burdens for their teachers who are critical about them (Ballard and Clanchy, 1997; Cortazzi and Jin, 1997; Knight, 1999). Many writers have talked negatively regarding this issue. But some have toiled hard to find out the causes behind this nature of these students. From the literature it appears that actually this nature is embedded in the socio-academic cultures of Asian students. In Asian socio-academic cultures co-operation and dependence, group discussion and harmony, advice, intuition and reflection are highly encouraged, supported and valued. Thus the teaching-learning system in Asia is mostly based on structure, guidance and immediate feedback from teachers and support of peers (Fam and Simpson, 2001; Hooper and Davey, 2002).

Now it is necessary to discuss western academic cultures and systems which are followed in New Zealand. These have influenced the Bangladeshi respondents.

5.3 Picture of western world

In western academic world cultures of teaching and learning, cultures and limits of teacher-student interaction and involvement of each of them in study, institutional systems and social norms are largely different from those prevailing in the educational

context of Asian countries. That is why adjusting to a different teaching-learning environment becomes difficult for overseas students from Asia as Wisker (2000, p.69) sees it:

“Beginning to work in a different knowledge culture could produce in students at all levels a mismatch between expectations, learning paradigms and their previous learning behaviours.”

The dimensions, capacities and attributes of a western teacher’s role as a facilitator appear vague and puzzling to overseas students and they sometimes find teachers not that much supportive, expert, sincere or sympathetic towards them or their study. In the same way teachers cannot understand or justify the demands and expectations of overseas students. In the meeting of two diverse cultures overseas students and their teachers ----

- 1) do not realize very well cultural, psychological, emotional issues;
- 2) do not receive or show expected/satisfactory behaviour;
- 3) cannot talk freely, understand each other’s views, demands;
- 4) both become perplexed, shocked, embarrassed and disappointed very easily and
- 5) often out of misunderstanding, tension and embarrassment both avoid raising various issues that need to be discussed for mutual benefit.

Along with these students’ lack of requisite competence (academic and technical), ignorance of academic cultures, institutional systems and linguistic weakness increase gaps between overseas students and their teachers.

In western academia student's initiatives, activeness, individuality, uniqueness, freedom of ideas, reflective and innovative skill in evaluating something are given priority and support instead of relationship, unity and sharing. So overseas students find teachers not sufficiently helping or giving time in need, not showing compassion at the moments of stress or welcoming them in discussion. They miscalculate teachers' responsibilities as well as their own. They also, either do not properly know or deliberately misunderstand western academic cultures and systems of institutions. They fail to assess the correct dimensions of seeking teachers' help. Similarly teachers do not clearly understand students' expectations and weaknesses. Therefore gaps between them increase and adverse impacts on students become unavoidable.

5.4 Overseas students in New Zealand

New Zealand is a small country located far away in the South Pacific zone. It is geographically, politically, commercially and culturally isolated from Asia which has closer involvement with the UK, the USA, Europe, Africa and Australia. New Zealanders, mostly followers of western civilization, are still not that much acquainted with the cultures, histories and systems of Asian countries. Lots of people from Asia have been coming to New Zealand for manifold reasons connected with education, business, migration and the like. But Asian countries are still viewed by New Zealanders as in the words of Vasil (1995, p.37):

“parts of a largely unknown and distant, distinctively different and mysterious world where, as informed by the media, only natural disasters and bizarre happenings occur.”

It has already been mentioned in the review of the literature that the attitudes of New Zealanders (local students and people in general) are still not that much friendly or supportive, rather very often negative, racist (Butcher, 2002). Asian students are sometimes considered as social and cultural threats to New Zealand students. Asians, in general, are criticised for their poor level of English, for their supposed possibilities of spoiling New Zealand and her environment, for threatening the tangata whenua, the Maori. Therefore Asian overseas students find it difficult to mix with local students especially in tertiary level. The New Zealand students do not take interest in Asian students' topics of discussion. They rather consider Asian students bookish and too busy with study instead of fun or games. Thus New Zealand students and Asian students stay in two separate groups and, naturally, as the dominant group New Zealand students reveal stereotype resentment towards Asian students (Butcher, 2002).

Similarly the New Zealand academics are also facing troubles teaching them. In New Zealand (Bennett, 1998) students from Southeast Asia are described as having the tendency of not being properly active in class and seeing teachers individually after class for guidance and special tips. But it is also declared that the needs of overseas students are often neglected because staff are not always adequately trained to meet those needs. This aggravates their other problems related to different learning styles, cultural differences, linguistic gaps, homesickness, problems of social adjustments and the like. Among other things writers have suggested offering effective training programme for the

staff so that they understand overseas students' issues more easily and quickly and provide more prompt and timely redress.

5.5 Connections between the review and the data:

It is pertinent to discuss here the factors that have influenced the relationships of these Bangladeshi participants with their teachers during their academic pursuits in New Zealand. Then it will also be clear if their experiences had relations to the experiences of overseas students with their teachers as described in the review of the literature.

Any relationship between a student and her/his teacher is influenced by some factors like student's subject, workload, interest, competence and sincerity in academic endeavour. It is greatly influenced, too, by the teacher whose principles, teaching philosophies, personal interests, workload, sense of responsibility and sensitivity play dominant roles in it. According to the points presented in the Findings chapter it seems the utility/potential of this relationship of overseas students with their teachers is connected with some important factors that concern both these students as well as their teachers. Among other things an overseas student's unfamiliarity with and problems in adjusting to a new and different mode of teaching and learning seems to be the most influential factor in deciding her/his relationship with teachers. Next come different socio-cultural background and language problems.

Confrontation with different system of education:

According to writers like Ballard and Clanchy (1997), Cortazzi and Jin (1997) and Wisker (2000) a significant reason of overseas students' difficulty in interaction with teachers is the clash of their pre-existing attitudes to knowledge and previously followed styles of learning with those they newly encounter during study in a foreign country. They think much of the mismatches of demands and expectations between overseas students and staff originate from this difference in educational cultures.

The participants have admitted confronting different systems of teaching and learning in New Zealand where initially it was very difficult to understand the different role of teachers. They have considered an overseas student's relationship with her/his teacher important in the sense that it will reduce the gaps between the student and the teacher, will enable the student to understand and eventually follow the new academic rules that initially appear puzzling. They hope it will also help the teacher to gather ideas about their students' different systems of learning with which they have been brought up.

Participants like Shaon, Hasan and Monowar have narrated experiencing various gaps of understanding with their teachers which have aroused perplexity and dissatisfaction in them. An overseas student is not initially familiar with the educational cultures of the country where s/he has come for higher study. It takes time and effort to be familiar with these. Therefore many aspects of teachers can appear puzzling to her/him and s/he may not always be able to discuss all these things with the teacher owing to absence of

opportunities or feeling hesitation and shame. As a result this unfamiliarity with academic systems may bring about problems for the student.

According to the western tradition of learning students have more independence regarding their higher study which is not that much under direction and control of teachers (Ballard and Clanchy, 1997; Barker, 1997; Knight, 1999). In fact teachers have a different image here, s/he appears more like a guide, a friend (senior friend and mentor in the words of Mahbub) in her/his speeches and behaviour with students. Ballard and Clanchy (1984) have pointed out the 'outward equality' between the western teachers and postgraduate students which is the cultural aspect of western teaching and learning. Shor (1992) has talked about maintaining a horizontal relationship between a student and her/his teacher that he considers important for ensuring good practice in teaching and learning.

Many writers (Cryer and Okorochoa, 1999) have also expressed that overseas students are generally confused and disoriented when they notice so much equality and liberty in their relationship with their teacher. But following the comments of the participants it seems this is also important because it contributes to the easing of tension in an overseas student's mind about the staff-student relationship in a different environment. An overseas student may feel encouraged at this teacher's and student's apparent positioning at the same level. This feeling is expressed by Abir:

"...here in New Zealand teachers are like friends to whom we can talk keeping eye contact. Here system of respect is different ... teachers know the psychology of students ... no bossing. They do not consider themselves supreme authority in class ... leadership is shared ... new thoughts are welcomed."

In fact teachers' supervision and control are present here but not that much visibly as these are in the home countries of many overseas students.

But this academic culture has also got different sides. A student who has experienced academic pressure and different types of teacher involvement during study in home country can explain the friendliness and flexibility of a teacher in a foreign university in a different way. Sometimes (as expressed by Abir) feeling no academic pressure an overseas student may fail to correctly judge the workload and the responsibility of the teacher/s and her/his own regarding study. Then s/he may not use time properly and ultimately this may lead to some academic strain, some personal and emotional suffering in student. The teacher may feel baffled too.

But it is interesting that though teacher's flexibility often causes problem, these students have generally appreciated flexibility in teachers' attitude towards them, in teachers' principles and above all in student-teacher relationship. They have judged excessive rigidity academically unhelpful and emotionally unnerving for overseas students. Many participants have admitted having more fruitful relationships with teachers who have been more flexible in nature, thought and action.

It is evident from the review of the literature that different roles played by students and teachers in different socio-cultural settings are at the roots of much of the mismatching of their mutual expectations. The role of teacher as a transmitter of knowledge, commonly talked about in the literature dealing with education in Asian countries, is found to be in conflict with the role of teacher as a facilitator of knowledge in western countries. Critics have talked about the tendency of Asian students' rote learning or memorization and deficiency in or unfamiliarity with analytical approach to study or critical thinking. From the participants' occasional dissatisfaction with their teachers' role, it seems the cause of disparity lies with these different educational practices in New Zealand which they were not initially familiar with. But they have also admired the facilitating roles of their teachers. They have appreciated the horizontal relationship between teacher and students in New Zealand.

The participants have praised and supported teachers' giving extra time to them as they think formal classes are not enough for overseas students. But it is found in the review that teachers are generally critical of overseas students' demanding extra time. All these troubles have been caused from teachers and students being of diverse backgrounds and their ignorance or insufficient knowledge of each other's academic cultures and systems.

Problems with different cultures of student-teacher interaction:

Students are the products/upholders of the prevailing socio-cultural traditions and norms, values and beliefs of their countries. Different students come with different social and cultural values and beliefs related to her/his respective background. Hence we get the word 'culture shock', an issue given much importance in the literature (Graham and Cookson, 1990). Many of the mismatches of demands and expectations; ideas and activities and gaps of communication between overseas students and their teachers have resulted from their dissimilar social norms and cultures (Ballard and Clanchy, 1997; Barker, 1997). These cultural values are vital parts of any adult human being and discarding or changing those to accept or adapt to a different culture may be time consuming and may cause pain, disappointment and trouble (Cortazzi and Jin, 1997).

The participants of this project have mentioned encountering various gaps in their speeches and activities with their teachers. Monowar describes how in one occasion after doing badly in an exam he became emotional in front of his teacher and the teacher advised him to seek help from some emotional support centre. He thinks it is inconceivable in his own country. Actually it is the way people look at things in different cultures. Masud has admitted that during his initial days of study he sometimes used to ask his teachers some questions that he later realized that he should not have asked that way. These things happened for the participants' unawareness of the New Zealand cultures of student-teacher interaction.

Hasan and Monowar have mentioned facing unexpected/uncommon questions in some exams that led overseas students to lose marks. These incidents can be explained as culture gaps or gaps of communication where students and teachers explain things from their respective points of view. As a result there are possibilities of mismatches between them. Rogers (2002), in the review of the literature, has urged on empathetic understanding of the student by the teacher, on viewing the world through the student's eyes. But it really seems difficult where student and teacher are from diverse backgrounds and know little about each other. It also indicates some limitations in both of them.

Language incompetence

In the academic struggle of overseas students of non-English speaking background (NESB) language is a very powerful barrier (Graham and Cookson, 1990; Ballard and Clanchy, 1984; 1997; Choi, 1997; Bennett, 1998; Wisker, 2000). Bennett's (1998, p.62) quotation about the language problems of overseas students in New Zealand can be used here again –

"Language seems to be a particular problem, initially with oral English, lexis, slang and idiom. Then, once oral problems are overcome, problems may arise with heavy reading loads, or formal academic writing."

Working in English, which is not their first language, affects overseas students' interaction with New Zealand academics and their efforts and performances eventually.

Language incompetence and problems ensuing from it have been expressed by Farzana, Monowar, Hasan and Kashem. They have talked about facing language related troubles in following class procedure and also verbalizing their academic problems to their teachers. Some powerful factors in this regard were their unfamiliarity with New Zealand English, not understanding teachers' accent and New Zealand academic jargon. Farzana did not approach her teachers even after classes in spite of having problems; instead she sought help from her classmate thinking she would not understand her teachers' English. Owing to language barrier overseas students cannot spontaneously participate in class discussion, cannot be open with their problems with their peers and teachers during and after classes, cannot answer questions or question answers which arouse frustration, shame and grief in students with a sense of not belonging. Language related failures also slow down their effort and energy to a great extent. Language problem has been considered by Monowar as one major problem and he talks against teachers' frequent use of New Zealand terms and jargon during classes which make lectures difficult for overseas students to comprehend.

Students' number and workload:

Overseas students' excessive workload often thrusts them to memorization and plagiarism for which they are frequently criticised by their teachers as well as institutions (Ballard and Clanchy, 1997).

Again student numbers in a class also affect their opportunity to get individual attention from a teacher or ask questions or raise any issue in a class. Those participants, who had

smaller number of classmates, have mentioned having rather closer relationships with their teachers. From the descriptions given by Mahbub, Farzana, Shaon and Kashem of their academic lives, from their opinions about student-teacher relationship it seems they enjoyed an easier access to their teachers. It appears their teachers were less burdened with students and could offer timely, sincere and supportive guidance to their students which had positive contributions in these persons' achievements.

But Hasan and Monowar have described their relationships with their teachers as remote, more formal and less supportive. It seems their teachers were burdened with students who were too large in number to give individual attention to or maintain cordial relationship with each of them. Therefore student's number and teacher's ability of caring of each student are much closely related and can influence the relationship between them.

Another significant issue is the student's level of study that discerns her/his workload. The relationship of a postgraduate or doctorate student with her/his teacher carries more importance than the relationship between the teacher and an undergraduate student. In case of a research student and the supervisor the relationship is connected with the student's workload and the availability of the supervisor's caring attention, proper and timely feedback and guidance which are essentially the conditions of the success of a novice researcher. That is why there are great variations in the speeches of Kashem and Monowar. In the whole semester Monowar, an undergraduate student, did not have more than three appointments with any of his teachers in any subject. But for Kashem, the PhD candidate – *"The more I visit my supervisors, the more it helps to improve my research."*

Generally in undergraduate courses there are regular classes with opportunities for students to ask questions in the class, to enter into group discussion inside and outside class, to attend seminars and tutorials and to avail other learning supports. So students can get help for any academic or any other type of problem.

But with a research student the circumstances are different. Because in most cases a research student may not have the advantages mentioned above and her/his supervisor can be the only source of help. Therefore a good relationship with supervisor is very vital for a research student. In case of an overseas postgraduate research student who does not have enough acquaintance with the academic systems as well as the cultures of student-teacher interaction in the country where s/he goes for study, the relationship with supervisor is really crucial.

From the study of the literature and research projects it appears the relationship between research student and supervisor of different backgrounds can sometimes become really puzzling and stressful for both of them. Many writers and critics (Ballard and Clanchy, 1997; Knight, 1999; Cryer and Okorochoa, 1999; Sandeman-Gay, 1999; Wisker, 2000) have talked about the problems felt by the western supervisors in handling their research students of diverse backgrounds (mainly from Asian background). Writers have pointed out that overseas research students are considered as burdensome by the Australian and British supervisors. Instead of going for self-directed and innovative study which is expected from them at their level, these students demand help from their supervisors at

every step breaking the academic policies. This arouses embarrassment, frustration and indignation in supervisors.

These research students are also described to bring complaints against their supervisors for not being adequately skilled to provide timely, supportive guidance and constructive feedback (Barker, 1997).

In this project Kashem, a research student, has described his relationship with his supervisor as a very resourceful one. Kashem seems to know well his own responsibilities as well as his supervisors' responsibilities regarding his research. He appears to be aware of the boundaries of seeking help to supervisors. So he has not experienced so much troubles and disappointment in his relationship with his supervisors.

Student's disposition and efforts:

The student-teacher relationship is connected with a student's disposition or nature – how far s/he can be open with the teacher; what initiative s/he can take to come in contact of the teacher. It is found that if the student has a reserved attitude, if s/he is too anxious with the cultural and other gaps with the teacher, if s/he is timid or hesitant or too much introvert; then a student cannot form the relationship or expect anything from it. Writers and critics (Cortazzi and Jin, 1997; Barker, 1997; Ballard and Clanchy, 1997; Bennett, 1998) think that overseas students' tendency to be silent and inactive in the class and not making their problems explicit before their teachers are associated with their socio-

cultural backgrounds. But the way a student interacts with her/his teacher/s is also connected with the student's individual nature.

Among the participants Shaon and Kashem are of the disposition to feel free to raise any study related or personal issue before their teachers. Kashem says: *"It's the student's duty to go to the teacher, raise the issue/problem and solve it."*

But students can be introvert like Hasan who seems to be too careful about his cultural gaps with his teachers. Monowar appears too much busy generalizing the problems of an overseas student and accepting them as part of destiny. But he does not seem that much interested in approaching his teachers regarding his problems. To form relationship students need to be open with their teachers about their problems otherwise teachers will never understand. But it is a really difficult job for an overseas student.

Another point needs to be mentioned here. An overseas student can feel free to talk to her/his teacher and discuss any study-related or other problems, but that should not necessarily prompt a student to expect too much from teacher. If an overseas student becomes too dependent on teacher/s instead of relying on her/his own capacities and confidence and thus forgets her/his own responsibilities regarding study her/his teacher will get bad impression not about the student only but also about that student's country and cultures. Students should be honest and portray their sincerity and effort in studies without taking unfair advantage from anybody as Shaon and Mahbub have asserted that overseas students *" – should never make themselves burdens for the teachers."* Because

on the one hand, teachers have their workload, on the other hand, they are not aware of the educational cultures and practices of an overseas student's home country and can naturally expect them to follow the systems of the institution and society as well where they are now. That is why nearly all the participants have emphasized that an overseas student should know the institutional rules and social systems of the country where s/he is now studying.

Student's age and level of maturity:

Student's age, maturity, commonsense and social status are related to his/her effort to form relationship with his/her teacher. Monowar is in his 20s. His views about the mutual roles of student and teacher in study are different from those of Kashem who is in his 30s. Kashem, who was a tertiary teacher in Bangladesh, has been doing a research at doctorate level. He seems quite aware of the duties and limitations of students as well as teachers. So this relationship is influenced by student's age, social condition, level of maturity and outlook. That is why writers have emphasized that students are individuals and each student should be judged by the teacher in a different way.

Opportunities of peer discussion:

The relationship between student and teacher is connected with other circumstances like number of students in a class and relationships among them, number of students of same ethnicity, academic pressure, and availability of help from the teacher and scope of group discussion. Friends and classmates have significant positive and negative influence on a student's thoughts and actions, study process and outcomes as well. Generally a student

tends to discuss everything academic, social and personal with his/her classmates who are naturally the first choice to seek help. Peer discussion can solve many academic problems that do not need teacher's time and attention. It also generates fellow-feelings, compassion and camaraderie among students. It increases confidence in students, expands their intellectual capacities and enhances academic and personal as well as cultural developments.

In a class of multiethnic students the relationship among peers depends on context, content and students' attitudes towards the culture and ethnicity of peers. Through relationships among themselves in a multicultural class students' cultural understanding develops, their overall knowledge expands and their outlook broadens. Participants like Farzana and Masud have admitted getting help from their classmates. That is the reason for Masud's not being interested in any relationship with teachers.

Whenever an overseas student becomes unable to maintain a healthy liaison with peers or do not have any classmate owing to some academic or institutional practice, s/he becomes more interested to get help from teachers. Wisker (2000) says that departments and teachers may help overseas students to mix with local students so that they can find similarities of study experiences and share tension and stress with one another. She thinks this is helpful especially for overseas postgraduate students. She suggests that both local and overseas students may learn from each other's experiences by valuing and sharing their mutual knowledge and skills.

Availability of learning supports and other resources:

Availability of learning supports on campus and overseas students' easy access to them are important factors that, too, can influence an overseas student's relationship with teachers. Masud's preference for visiting libraries and laboratories and websites and other resources justifies the importance of these in a student's life. Generally the aim of learning support centers in the universities is to help students to cover their learning deficiencies and provide useful information/materials to familiarize students with various academic systems and procedures and thus help them meet up different academic demands. They enable students to improve their outcomes. When overseas students have easy access to and meet friendly and timely responses from them, their study on a foreign soil becomes smooth and sound. But often they appear pretty expensive and also time consuming for overseas students who remain busy coping with other troubles.

Teacher's shortage and workload:

Overseas students' numbers are increasing but teachers' numbers are not increasing that way. From the experiences of the participants it is evident that heavy workload of teachers and their shortage in proportion with the number of students are significantly influential factors. Teachers are human beings with limits of their capability, perseverance, tenacity and goodwill to invite, encourage and help students. Students are a part of a teacher's job and s/he has to pay attention to other parts of his/her job as well. When a teacher has an excessive workload in one part of job, naturally other parts are deprived of equal attention and care from her/him. S/he has also got time limits. A teacher with large numbers of students has other duties too for which a teacher may not

get any extra time or help from the department/faculty. That is why critics and writers (Macrae, 1997; Knight, 1999) have warned that teaching overseas students requires more time, effort, energy and skill than teaching local students. They think accepting overseas students means taking greater responsibility.

Participants like Monowar and Hasan have considered teacher's shortage a crucial problem of their study. Monowar has affirmed that the low number of teachers and their excessive workloads and limited time are at the root of much of the sufferings of overseas students at New Zealand tertiary institutions. He has stated that teachers are too busy to notice if a student fails to take necessary preparation for exams or assignments owing to some part time jobs or for being under some stress.

Attitudes and initiatives of teachers; teaching philosophies:

No relationship can be formed only by a student if teacher is not responsive or welcoming. If a teacher thinks 'these students are like beggars; approaching me so much', the relationship never runs. In Mahbub's words teacher will be a mentor, a friend "*who will understand instead of keeping a reserved attitude*".

From the review of the literature it has been clear that teachers of western tertiary institutions are having rather bad impressions about Asian overseas students (there are exceptions). Writers (Ballard and Clanchy, 1997; Choi, 1997; Barker, 1997; Bennett, 1998) have declared that academics in Australia, New Zealand and the UK consider overseas students disturbing and burdensome and express doubt in overseas students'

interest and competence in higher education. Critics believe that these adverse attitudes and reactions revealed by the academics towards these students are aggravating students' already existing problems and deficiencies. Writers have urged teachers to change their attitudes and try to understand their students (Cortazzi and Jin, 1997; Gudykunst and Kim as cited in Grant and Ladson-Billings, 1997).

However, participants in this project overall have declared that their teachers did not do any discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, culture and language. But some participants have mentioned noticing in some of their teachers covert prejudices against overseas students' cultures. Hasan had a lab tutor who did not want to help Indian students. Monowar found his New Zealand teachers and classmates unwilling to learn from the cultures of overseas students. Monowar's view is that they thought their culture supreme and considered all other cultures 'rubbish'. The participants have declared having relationships with especially those teachers who were helping-minded, sympathetic and easily approachable than those who were prejudiced against overseas students, who kept reserved attitude, whose manners thwarted students instead of inviting them.

A teacher's systems of teaching and her/his behaviour with students are largely connected with her/his philosophy of teaching that includes things like what s/he thinks to be the aim of teaching, what should be the device of teaching, how will be the content presented before students, how s/he will judge the context and evaluate/harmonize relationship among teacher, content and learner. The teaching philosophies of a teacher are the combined effects of the upbringing, education, socio-political and cultural environment,

knowledge, wisdom, beliefs, outlooks and attitudes of a teacher towards her/his own self and towards the outer world where s/he lives (Pratt, 1998). A teacher decides, according to her/his philosophy, how much attention a student deserves from her/him and how is that going to affect the student's study. It is initially difficult for all students to have ideas about that philosophy and it becomes possible, at least to some extent, only after a student's many encounters and interactions with the teacher and their mutual understanding of each other and sharing of ideas and feelings, views and beliefs, principles, likes and dislikes.

Naturally for overseas students this whole process becomes more perplexing, difficult and time consuming and it may affect her/his relationship with teacher. At the same time the student may be totally unaware of the causes behind the actions and reactions of a teacher. From the participants' experiences it seems much of the mismatches of their expectations with those of their teachers, gaps, consequent troubles and frustrations have been originated from their ignorance of or inability to estimate the teaching philosophies of their teachers.

But in general their opinion is that teachers in foreign universities, for having lots of overseas students each year, are gradually becoming aware of the various troubles these students are facing in study owing to their academic and socio-cultural diversities. Therefore they sincerely try to help as Kashem says about his supervisors:

"They are sympathetic and they are experienced persons to handle all these as they have not only me but a number of foreign students, they know how to communicate in the right way."

Human sides in relationship:

All participants have stated that an overseas student's good rapport with teachers not only contributes to better academic achievement but in addition to that it has a positive impact on the personal and emotional world of a student. This needs to be cited here that similar views have been expressed by writers in the review of the literature (Noddings, 1984, 1992; Cottrell, 2001; Rogers, 2002).

In judging the impact of student-teacher relationship writers, philosophers and educationists have looked not only at the academic attainment of the students because it is not the only aim of education. They have given considerable importance on students' overall development as human beings towards successful existence in the world. Noddings (1992) has affirmed that a student's encouraging, supportive relationship with her/his teacher nourishes and develops the student's mental and intellectual faculties and broadens her/his outlook. It also helps to achieve better self-realization through generating a sense of security and belonging in students. Rogers (2002) thinks that a teacher needs to express her/his real feelings, ideas, dreams and expectations before the student which will enable the student to be open with the teacher about her/his own joys and sorrows, drawbacks and strengths, interests and efforts, problems, failures and achievements. This expression of each other leads to better understanding that can

mitigate any stress in a student and arouse/increase trust in her/his potential that is really important for intellectual growth and success in future life.

It is important that the participants have preferred forming informal relationships with teachers though from their experiences it is evident that majority of them had rather formal relationships with their teachers. It is suggestive that overseas students, despite having language, systems and culture gaps with their teachers, strongly desire to come in close contacts with them. We can call this the very tendency of students to know his/her teacher/s and let them know their students, expect to feel and share teachers' ideas, emotions and spirits, philosophies and expertise occasionally exposing their own desires and expectations and efforts to form connections with them.

It is noticeable in the comments of the participants that overseas students do expect some initiatives, positive reactions from teachers' side also. Whenever they do not get this they feel disappointed and isolated. Facing an unfamiliar circumstance these students are initially puzzled and can lose hope and confidence. At that moment they badly need inspiration and assistance from their teachers no matter how much help they get from other sources. Teachers' negative behaviour can worsen their condition. But if a teacher becomes considerate and sensitive towards an overseas student, that student can become bold enough to strive successfully in a new world (Jacobson, 2000; Cottrell, 2001).

The participants have expressed desires to have not only academic assistance from their teachers, but emotional help as well. Nearly all of them have revealed satisfaction at

their teachers' showing concern over their personal, emotional and financial sides. Shaon discussed with his teachers cultural and personal affairs along with academic affairs. He insists on proper understanding between student and teacher that is important for sound mental health of an overseas student:

"Because there are some problems the student can't sometimes express. Overseas students don't always have families and parents with them. If the teacher offers mental help and support, the student can easily overcome that problem."

Actually it is wise for overseas students not to limit their relationships with teachers only within academic boundaries. As human beings they not only seek inspiration and guidance from teachers; they also want mental support in moments of misery and tension. They want someone to share feelings with ... feelings of happiness as well as of distress. But it is really a question how much a teacher, amid tremendous workload in today's world, can help an overseas student regarding her/his mental wellbeing. Monowar points to this:

"Teachers don't worry about student's personal life. It doesn't matter why you have done bad in exam, but you'll be given marks on what you've written in exam. There is no soft corner, no help—"

Monowar indicates two things: first, the limitations of the whole systems which have created so much workload on teachers; secondly, gaps of cultures which have blocked the ways for an overseas student to get from teachers emotional support in need.

Student and teacher: knowing each other

Any relationship between student and teacher is more possible when it is based on their proper knowledge and mutual understanding of each other. It is a very natural and important issue for both student and teacher that each of them will know the other and let himself or herself to be known to the other at least regarding academic affairs. Their knowledge of each other develops through their interactions with each other.

Knowing becomes easier when teacher and student are in the same socio-cultural context and share the same academic systems, social norms and cultural environment. But in case of students and teachers of diverse backgrounds knowledge of each other becomes too inadequate to contribute in any fruitful relationship. That is why different writers and educationists have emphasized that both student and teacher need to have knowledge of each other's learning, culture and social setting. Wisker (2000) has pointed out that teachers need to be aware of and sensitive to their overseas students' pre-existing academic experience and beliefs. Students should be given opportunities to discuss with their teachers how they are influenced by the different systems of education and assessment during their academic life in a foreign soil. Wisker urges that thus students' capabilities to adapt and succeed in a new education system will be significantly increased.

The participants have recommended that overseas students need to know their teachers as individuals. There are different types of teachers. Some teachers do not want so much involvement with their students while some are more interested in students. There are teachers who keep discussion with students limited within academic areas while some others welcome discussion about family affairs, personal issues, likes and dislikes. It is clear that the participants' views regarding their relationships with their teachers are based on their knowledge of their teachers.

Mahbub, Abir and Kashem have emphasized that an overseas student should have some knowledge about the academic principles and personal values and choices of their teachers besides knowing the institutional policies and social systems. Teachers appreciate this effort in their students and this knowledge helps students in forming relationships with their teachers.

Side by side they have also expressed desire that teachers should know something about their overseas students as they are having lots of them every year. Monowar has suggested: *"...teachers have to have some knowledge about the background, culture of foreign students so that they can understand."* If teachers can have some knowledge about overseas student's academic and social cultures, s/he will be better able to understand a student. Then teaching and learning both will be easier and more enjoyable for them and will yield more positive result. For knowing an overseas student well and let

her/him know the teacher well both teacher and student should increase interactions between themselves.

From a comparative discussion of the review of the literature and the research data it has been clearly portrayed that an overseas student's relationship with her/his teacher is susceptible to occasional mismatches and gaps in thoughts and actions. That is because both of them are upholders of two different cultures; products of different socio-academic systems. It is really a question how a teacher in a western academia, who has not been used to the culture of a close relationship with a student, will take interest, amid all other workload, to form a relationship desired by or supportive for the student and fulfill the needs/expectations of that student. It is also hard for a teacher to ascertain an overseas student's problems and student's level of competence to solve those problems and thereby offer help. Again for not coming from the same background, a teacher cannot be sure of what role and responsibilities an overseas student is expecting from her/him. So it is not easy for a teacher to decide where to start from and how.

In the same way it becomes difficult for an overseas student to properly comprehend and proceed in a different academic environment where s/he confronts different study approaches and requirements which s/he is not habituated with. This confrontation with a new academic world may make her/him skeptical and baffled about her/his existing eligibility/competence, knowledge and ways of acquiring that knowledge which hitherto have been the foundations for the student. Again the different role played by her/his teacher and ignorance of her/his own role appropriate in the new environment also

become disheartening for the student. From the study of these Bangladeshi students' relationships with their teachers it is apparent that all of them have suffered from tension, disappointment and cultural limitations at different stages of their relationships with their teachers. This study reminds us of the vulnerable aspects of this relationship.

5.6 Impact of the respondents' relationships with their teachers on them

Though these Bangladeshi participants faced manifold problems in academic life, their relationships with teachers had various *positive impacts* on them which have been apparent from the discussion of the data.

Because –

- 1) if their relationships had been totally bad/negative/disastrous, none of them would have completed study in New Zealand. But these participants seem happy with their performances. Though they had linguistic, socio-academic and cultural gaps with their teachers in New Zealand, they and their teachers worked collaboratively and tried to overcome those gaps. Despite experiencing dissatisfaction and problems during their relationships with their teachers, all participants, more or less, have admitted that they individually got inspiration, guidance and assistance from their teachers. They have also praised many qualities in their teachers that helped to reduce gaps between them;
- 2) the relationships not only had positive impact on their academic life, but they also significantly contributed in their individual intellectual, moral, mental and socio-cultural developments and enriched their experience exposing the academic world of New Zealand before them;

- 3) their relationships are good portrayals of human endeavours and achievements.

Despite having troubles these participants, with the gradual development of their relationships with teachers, understood teachers' ideologies, cultures, sincerity, goodwill and limitations. They realized teachers' ultimate scopes to help overseas students. They also developed clearer ideas of the perfect dimensions of their own responsibilities as well as their teachers' responsibilities regarding their study. From their views it appears that their teachers also, through handling of lots of overseas students, were more or less aware of the problems in teaching them. Therefore teachers also tried to understand them and offered help as much as they could. Both put effort on the basis of mutual understanding that enhanced the desired achievement.

In fact the impact was the result of a relationship that was sometimes satisfactory, sometimes unexpected, perplexing or frustrating, sometimes limited and sometimes very encouraging. It was the result of a process during which these people learned new things, became more aware of the things already learned and realized the similarities, differences and connections between two academic and cultural worlds. They learned how to reach and handle the meeting points of two different cultures and to adapt themselves to those.

5.7 Conclusion of the discussion:

In teaching-learning enterprise students and teachers become engaged in performing a job that requires and establishes a relationship between them. Nowadays education is delivered online, extramurally, through correspondence and through other different

modes. These have minimized student-teacher contact. Academic explorations are much more a student's own job especially in mature level where self reliance, innovation, individuality, analytical skill and power of critical thinking need to be employed and projected well (Ballard and Clanchy, 1997; Knight, 1999; Wisker, 2000). A teacher's job is facilitating a student in the process of learning.

But do we want to see our teachers only within this limited role? Why are then all those writings and research about caring relationship between student and teacher? Why are there so many complaints from students and from teachers as well?

Achievement of education becomes incomplete, poor, dull, time consuming and difficult when it is not based on a trust worthy, progressive relationship between student and teacher. Because what a student derives from her/his teacher serves as a basis for that student to start her/his own study enterprise. A teacher has a part in her/his student's outcome be it a success or a failure. That is why critics have argued for a caring, supportive relationship between student and teacher. Nobody wants teachers and students staying in two different worlds like that mentioned by Shor (1996) where one party criticizes another for not giving what is expected and both become frustrated, face troubles, lose peace, hope and energy and cannot reach satisfactory outcome. In case of students and teachers of diverse backgrounds the propensity of these problems is greater. That is why writers and critics have talked about the terms like "culturally relevant pedagogy" (Grant and Ladson-Billings, 1997), "cross-cultural competence" (Gudykunst and Kim as cited in Grant and Ladson-Billings, 1997) and "cultural synergy" (Cortazzi

and Jin, 1997) – all envisaging to reduce various gaps and obstacles between overseas students and their teachers, remove their individual drawbacks and increase as well as improve interaction between them that can lead students towards better outcomes.

Following the views of the participants some recommendations for a better relationship between overseas students and their teachers are presented in the next and final chapter of this thesis.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study offers some recommendations for a good relationship between overseas students and their teachers.

6.1 Recommendations

According to the opinions of the participants an overseas student should have a clear understanding of her/his academic goal, efforts essential to implement that goal and her/his personal, academic and other skills. S/he should also have clear ideas of her/his own deficiencies that will help to understand what s/he wants from the teacher. Because the student has to take into consideration that teachers are busy, they have limited time and, moreover, there are lots of gaps between them. Therefore an overseas student needs to be well organized whenever s/he has an appointment with the teacher. S/he has to realize her/his responsibility regarding study and should be attentive in performing her own part well. A student should value the likes and dislikes of the teacher and consider teacher's limitations and should never be dependent on the teacher or seek any unfair advantage from the teacher. S/he should act in a way that both student and teacher can respect each other and act their own parts well so the relationship will run well.

These participants have expressed the idea that teachers are trying their best to overcome gaps and communicate with their overseas students, know their problems and encourage and assist them solving their problems. They have supported their teachers' flexibilities and inviting manners which they call positive traits in a teacher as without these it becomes hard for the overseas students to get in the whole process. Teachers of overseas

students are expected to have some knowledge of the culture and personal life of their students and also offer help for the mental well being of the students. Their sympathy and understanding will boost up the eagerness and strengths in these students and thus will exercise positive effect in students' outcomes.

For reducing gaps in academic systems and cultures –

An overseas student should be mentally and emotionally prepared for and expose eagerness and effort to learn the academic principles and cultures as well as institutional systems which are new to them. Despite feeling frustrated and intimidated a student should patiently accept own mistakes and deficiencies as interpreted by teachers and peers.

The teacher can help in this process of acculturation by showing tolerance, praising, supporting and not openly and vehemently disapproving student's own academic cultures though these may not be followed or existing in New Zealand.

For reducing language gap –

An overseas student should increase socialization, try to improve oral and written English, follow New Zealand English and follow teacher's face expression and body language.

A teacher of overseas students needs to practice slow speaking, repeating discussion if necessary, introducing New Zealand jargon and explaining it well before students. S/he is expected to be sympathetic to student's linguistic errors and incompetence in oral and written English.

For reducing socio-personal culture gaps –

Every culture has good as well as bad sides and every culture is important to its upholder. It is really difficult and stressful to part with one's own cultures. Therefore both overseas student and her/his teacher need to try to know and understand each other's cultures, show verbal interest in and appreciation of it even if s/he does not like or support it. A person should not show open disapproval and overreaction to other's cultures.

For reducing gaps in knowledge and understanding –

An overseas student should try to understand the causes of these gaps and be open with the teacher about these otherwise the teacher will never realize.

A teacher is expected to realize that every student, local or overseas, is a different human being despite having similar linguistic, cultural, socio-academic and ethnic backgrounds. Thinking, speaking or working from any set assumptions or prejudices (s/he may have them internally) should be avoided. Seeing and explaining a thing from student's point of view is difficult for a teacher. Still these can help a lot.

Understanding the context--

An overseas student and her/his teacher need to understand each other's circumstances, probabilities and limitations in forming relationship and expecting from it. It is not possible without mutual intention and collaboration.

6.2 Final comments and implications for future research:

The tertiary institutions of New Zealand are increasingly having lots of overseas students. There is a scarcity of books and research done in New Zealand about the discovery and consequent eradication of the problems overseas students have been encountering in their interactions with their teachers. The powerful data, valuable findings from the data and useful recommendations supplied by this research about the possibilities of a good relationship between an overseas student and her/his teacher, I hope, will provide information in future research and successfully contribute to the eradication of those problems to a great extent.

APPENDIX 1:



Human Ethics Committee: Wellington

Wellington Campus
Private Box 756,
Wellington,
New Zealand
Telephone: 64 4 801 2794
Facsimile: 64 4 801 2692

6 October 2003

Nazneen Chowdhury



Dear Nazneen

Re: MUHEC: WGTN Protocol - 03/131
Impact of student-teacher relationship on the outcome of New Zealand resident students from Bangladesh

Thank you for your letter of 3 October 2003 together with the amended documents, as required by the Massey University Wellington Human Ethics Committee.

The amendments you have made now meet the requirements of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee and the ethics of your protocol are approved. Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, a new application must be submitted at that time.

Any departure from the approved protocol will require the researcher to return this project to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee for further consideration and approval.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents: "This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, WGTN Protocol 03/131. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Mr Jeremy Hubbard, Acting Chair, Massey University Wellington Human Ethics Committee, telephone 04 801 2794 ext 6358, email J.J.Hubbard@massey.ac.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. Hubbard".

Jeremy Hubbard (Acting Chair)
Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Wellington

Cc: Marg Gilling, Linda Leach, College of Education

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

Inception to Infinity: Massey University's commitment to learning as a life-long journey

Information Sheet

Impact of student-teacher relationship on the outcomes of the New Zealand resident students from Bangladesh

Aim of the research :

In this work I want to investigate the impact of student-teacher relationship on the student's learning --
- how it can enhance as well as impede the student's academic achievement. I want to interview 8 to 10 people to ask about their experiences, reactions as well as opinions in this matter.

Your involvement in this research:

If you feel interested to join my research, I will invite you to participate in an interview where I will ask you a number of questions related to your experience of various interactions with your teachers while studying in New Zealand, how you have felt about them and your propositions regarding this relationship.

The whole interview will be tape recorded and the tape recorded interview will be transcribed and the transcript will be shown to you for your approval. You may change and add something to it if you like. The data collected from these interviews will be further analysed later by me to form concepts relating to my research.

Your choice about being identified in the research:

Your name won't be used in this work. You can choose a pseudonym yourself or let me choose a name for you.

The information you give will be used for my research and for publications and presentations related with it.

However as our Bangladeshi community in Wellington is very small I would like to make it clear that I can't guarantee confidentiality of information.

About withdrawal from the study:

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

For any other questions or concerns about the research contact me or my supervisors. Please use my phone number or e-mail address mentioned in the introductory letter.

My supervisors' contact information is :

marg gilling
College of Education
Massey University Wellington Campus
Private Box 756
Telephone: 801 2794 x 6662
E-mail: m.gilling@massey.ac.nz

Linda Leach
College of Education
Massey University Wellington Campus

Private Box 756
Telephone : 801 2794 x 6947
E-mail : L.J.Leach@massey.ac.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, WGTN Protocol 03/131. If you are concerned about the conduct of this research, please contact :

Mr. Jeremy Hubbard
Acting Chairperson
Massey University Wellington Human Ethics Committee
Telephone : 04 802 1794 x 6358
E-mail J.J. Hubbard@massey.ac.nz

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Nazneen Afsana Chowdhury

APPENDIX 3:

Massey University
College of Education
Wellington Campus

Consent Form

Impact of student-teacher relationship on the outcomes of New Zealand resident students from Bangladesh

Researcher : Nazneen Afsana Chowdhury

I have read the information sheet and have been satisfactorily informed about the aim of this research and my involvement in it.

I understand that the interview will be tape recorded and the tape recorder can be turned off any time if I want. I also realise that the tape recorded interview will be transcribed and I will have the opportunity to see and to change it.

I am also aware that I have freedom to ask the researcher any relevant question at any time and also to withdraw myself from the study at any time.

I understand that my real name will not appear in this thesis even if the researcher uses my words directly or indirectly. However our community is very small and I know that my identity can be revealed at any stage for which the researcher will not be responsible. (Please indicate your choice about a pseudonym by putting a tick mark)

- 1) I would like to be referred to as ----- instead of my real name.
- 2) I would like the researcher to select a name for me.

I agree to participate in this research project.

Name :

Signature :

Date :

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