

Variations and Barriers of GPA and CGPA in the Education System of Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT: The study aims to critically review and explore the Grade Point Average (GPA) and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) in the education system of Bangladesh. Qualitative method is applied in this research, and data were collected through document analysis as well as interviewing of some education specialists in Bangladesh. Interestingly, the GPA is practicing 5 scales in the secondary and higher secondary levels and 4 scales in the graduation level. The education boards in Bangladesh run as per the Ministry of Education criteria and follow the GPA in the secondary and higher secondary levels. But the universities of Bangladesh are following CGPA as per the benchmark set up by the government or University Grant Commission. Remarkably, this CGPA mark scale is not followed homogeneously in the private universities. Public universities follow a separate benchmark for grading the results, and the private universities follow a distinct grade standard set up by themselves. In this case, the marks range of grading in private universities is diversified and generating problems among the students, recruiters, and policymakers. Thus, it is recommended to resolve this problem and make a unique mark range for a specific grade.

Keywords: Variations and Barriers of GPA and CGPA; Education System; Bangladesh.

1. Introduction

Grading policy regarding the education system is a way to evaluate the performance and proficiency of a learner after sitting in on various types of assessments. Various types of grading systems can be seen in education academies [educational institutions]. Firstly, based on letter (A-F) where A is considered as excellent, and F is considered as failure in assessments. Secondly, based on percentage which can be 90, 80 or 40 percent out of 100 percent. Thirdly, based on a number where possible out of the numbers are given for example-15 out of 20 where total marks are 20. Many countries around the world are where grades are averaged which are known as Grade Point Average (GPA). GPA is calculated on the average of the performance of a learner. In high schools, universities and colleges are using GPA system for assessment as it helps to compare between candidates for selection in corporates and many other institutions. George W. Pierson, a historian from Yale University stated in 1983 that the first grade issued in 1785 at Yale University might be the first in the USA during the

period of President Ezra Stiles. President Ezra had recorded the first twenty students as Optimi, second sixteen students as the second optimi, the other twelve inferior students as Boni and the last ten students as Pejores. Educator Bob Marlin believed that the grading system for the students was improvised by William Farsh, a tutor and the grading system was inaugurated by the University of Cambridge in 1792. He invented this procedure in order to evaluate students within a short time. But another historian, Christopher Stray found this information not convincing as he believed that.

However, the education boards of Bangladesh secure GPA 5 when an examinee secures 80% or more marks in the secondary and higher secondary levels. More interestingly, the CGPA scale of 4 is followed diversely in terms of marks distributions. Some universities are following USA standards but their marks scale is not similar. Based on the literature, there are no specific reasons for why their marks calculation is different and why the GPA is calculated in the aspect of 4 and 5 scales in the Bangladeshi education system. In addition, researchers have talked with some of the faculty members who are working in the universities but they do not have actual idea concerning the application of the 4 and 5 scales of CGPA and GPA. It is also mentioned that as it is set by the government and Ministry of Education, educational institutions, educational boards and universities are mandatorily following this benchmark or standard.

The study contributes some rational ideas in the context of Bangladeshi education systems. Initially, why Bangladesh is following diverse scales of GPA or CGPA in their education system. The government and University Grant Commission of Bangladesh should provide a unique guideline for the overall education systems to minimize the variation of these marks scales and calculations.

2. Literature Review

Both CGPA and GPA are interconnected but applied in different stages of academic life. GPA is calculated on the basis of the average of all subject marks that a student has secured. On the other hand, Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) is the result of the previous semester. To secure a good CGPA, learners or students have to show a great performance and proficiency all through the semester. The major difference between these two systems is shown in the below Table 1.

Table 1: Difference between GAP and CGPA

GPA	CGPA
1. Full form of GPA is Grade Point Average.	1. Full form of GPA is Cumulative Grade Point Average.
2. It is calculated as the average of all the subjects for a particular semester.	2. It is calculated as the cumulative grades of the previous semester.
3. GPA calculation is shorter than CGPA as it calculates one single semester.	3. CGPA calculation is broader than GPA as calculated in previous semesters.
4. GPA formula (All the courses in a semester/Total Credit hours)	4. CGPA formula (All the courses taken in one semester/Total credit hours of all the semesters)

Source: Wikipedia

2.1 Steps to Convert CGPA to GPA

All the Canadian universities have followed their own grading system. The US universities have examined students using the GPA system in terms of their academic achievement but there is no

unique grading policy or official grading system in the USA but a four-point grading system is usually applied in the universities where a student can secure the highest 4 in this grading scale.

A year ago, some universities like Rackham School of Graduate Studies, University of Michigan followed 10 points grading system but after 2013 it has changed its system and started following the four points grading system. For admitting overseas students in US universities, third-party agencies like World Education Services help the international students to enroll in these universities as it converts their CGPA into the prescribed form of the US universities. The universities of USA have not asked the foreign students to convert into the four grade points according to their system but it helps closely to evaluate the international student into them.

Germany has five points grading system grade 1 is considered as the best performance and the last five is considered as the lowest performance. The Modified Bavarian formula is followed in this country. For this grading system, three pieces of information will be needed which are maximum grade of the individual university, minimum grade of passing at the university, current overall grade of the applicant (student) of that university to convert into the German system.

$$x = \frac{N_{\max} - N_d}{N_{\max} - N_{\min}} 3 + 1$$

N_{\max} = Maximum grade of the individual university.

N_{\min} = Minimum grade of passing at the university.

N_d = Current overall grade of the applicant (student) of that university.

In the Canadian system, all of the universities have different parameters to assess international applicants. Some universities ask the applicants to convert their grades into university parameters like WES has done for the USA. Besides, McGill and some other universities have their own index where country basis grades are shown which are equivalent to their university grades. The Canadian University also goes through the GPA of the core or major subjects instead of total subjects' grade. For this reason, applicants have to mention clearly as the university has instructed.

2.2 GPA calculation based on 4 and 5 scales in Bangladesh

GPA and CGPA have similarities as both have taken the average grades of a student. But GPA is calculated on the overall performance of a semester and CGPA is calculated based on the performance of the total semesters which if any student achieves poor marks in one course, it will be affected in CGPA.

GPA is as same for all categories of the courses which have different difficulty levels. If any course is quite difficult to achieve a good grade, it will be measured on the same weighted scale where an easy course will be graded equally. Four-point grading system is for universities and the five-point grading system is for secondary and higher secondary exams in Bangladesh. Four points are for calculating CGPA and five points are for calculating GPA.

2.3 Grading system in Bangladesh

The University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGCB) recommended a Uniform Grading System for all types of universities and was executed from the 2006-2007 session. The authorities of all universities follow this system in order to provide transcripts. In these universities, 'I' (incomplete), 'F' (fail attempt) and 'W' (withdrawn) are used for grading. But the institutions and colleges where pass courses are offered are still using the old grading system. University Grants Commission of Bangladesh

has controlled the marking system all across the country. The following Table 2 is an estimated grade point measurement system and slightly some universities have modified the grades.

Table 2: Grading system of Bangladesh

Score	Letter for grading	Grade Point	Accomplishment
80-100	A Plus	4.00	Excellent
75-<80	A Regular	3.75	Excellent
70-<75	A Minus	3.50	Excellent
65-<70	B Plus	3.25	Good
60-<65	B Regular	3.00	Good
55-<65	B Minus	2.75	Good
50-<55	C Plus	2.50	Fair
45-<50	C Regular	2.25	Fair
40-<45	C Minus	2.00	Poor
0-<40	F	0.00	Fail

Source: UGC Bangladesh

3. The way of comparing Bangladeshi Grading System:

In Bangladesh, CGPA is for undergraduates and postgraduates and it is in 4 scales and GPA for schools and colleges. But the public and national universities such as the University of Dhaka, the University of Rajshahi or the National University of Bangladesh are using a British marking system where CGPA 3.00-4.00 is considered as first Class, 2.25-2.99 is second class and 2.00-2.24 is third class.

Table 3: National University Grading System in Bangladesh

Numerical Grade	Letter Grade (LG)	Grade Point (GP)
80% or above	A+ (Plus)	4.00
75% to less than 80%	A (Plain)	3.75
70% to less than 75%	A- (Minus)	3.50
65% to less than 70%	B+ (Plus)	3.25
60% to less than 65%	B (Plain)	3.00
55% to less than 60%	B- (Minus)	2.75
50% to less than 55%	C+ (Plus)	2.50
45% to less than 50%	C (Plain)	2.25
40% to less than 45%	D (Plain)	2.00
<40%(less than 40%)	F (Fail)	0.00

Source: National University Website¹

Table-4: Grading System in Public Universities

Class Interval	Letter for Grading	Grade Point	Accomplishment
80-100	A Plus	4.00	First Class
75-79	A Regular	3.75	First Class
70-74	A Minus	3.50	First Class
65-69	B Plus	3.25	First Class
60-64	B Regular	3.00	First Class
55-59	B Minus	2.75	Second Class
50-54	C Plus	2.50	Second Class
45-49	C	2.25	Second Class Upper
40-44	D	2.00	Third Class
0-39	F	0.00	Fail

Source: UGC Bangladesh²

Table 5: Grading system of private universities in Bangladesh

Score	Letter for Grading	Grade Point	Accomplishment
90-100	A Plus	4.00	Outstanding
85-89	A	3.70	Excellent
80-84	A Minus	3.30	Excellent
75-79	B Plus	3.00	Good
70-74	B	2.70	Good
65-69	C Plus	2.30	Good
60-64	C	2.00	Fair
57-59	C Minus	1.70	Fair
55-56	D Plus	1.30	Poor
51-54	D Minus	0.70	Poor

¹<https://nubd24.com/national-university-grading-system-gpa-cgpa/>

²<http://www.bu.edu.bd/academic-policies/>

Source: Wikipedia³

Furthermore, top private universities like North South University, BRAC University, East West University, American International University of Bangladesh, United International University and University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh are following the North American marking system and due to these reasons, these universities have some variations with typical Bangladesh's marking system.

4. Variations and Barriers of GPA and CGPA in the Education System of Bangladesh

In the event that you circumvent a college and ask irregular understudies: "what is your GPA?" Chances are you will be given:

- a) a terrible look;
 - b) a CGPA, GPA, in Major GPA or a personnel GPA — whether or not your respondent knows the distinction; or
 - c) "I don't have the foggiest idea",
- or then again, a mix of every one of the three.

Anyway, for what reason is it so difficult to report your grades?

However, researchers have talked with some of the university faculty members regarding the variations and barriers of GPA and CGPA. The faculty members mentioned that the variations of GPA and CGPA should be minimized as it is within a similar environment. They do not mention any specific reasons for this variation rather than university motivations and practices. They mentioned that these standards are set by the government and we are practicing GPA 4 and 5 scale in the secondary and graduation levels respectively. Now, the government is thinking of making a 4 scale for the betterment of the students, and their higher studies. This is a good sign for us to follow a unique system. In addition, the marks scales practiced by the numerous private universities are different. Though they follow GPA on a 4 scale but their marks calculations are diversified. These create problems for the students and recruiters in terms of grade calculations. Sometimes, students get higher marks but get a lower grade or CGPA compared to other universities. Some students get a higher CGPA by getting a lower mark in their examinations. Researchers found that aggression had significant negative effects on students' current academic achievement (GPA) and cumulative academic achievement score (CGPA) (Uludag, 2013; Barriga et al., 2002; Caprara et al., 2000). Moreover, students who want to study abroad also face problems in their mark diversifications and grade calculations. Thus, it is recommended to follow a similar marking scale in grade or CGPA calculations by private universities.

5. Concluding Remarks

The paper aimed to critically review the GPA and CGPA in the education system in Bangladesh. It is assessed that the GPA is diversified in the context of Bangladesh but no specific reasons are identified in the literature. The faculty members replied that these variations are due to the government and the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh. In addition, this study highlights that university motivation and intention, as well as curriculum, are responsible for diversified practices. As it is a government standard, educational boards and universities follow GPA in 4 and 5 scales in the secondary and graduation levels

respectively.

³<http://www.bu.edu.bd/academic-policies/>

The study is heavily dependent on the prior available data in the website and literature and also observations on some faculty members without any policymakers or UGC members. There should be an empirical investigation to find out broad perceptions of policymakers.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts to declare.

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