AALBORG UNIVERSITET

MASTER'S THESIS ON:

Fraudulent Practices of Educational Consultancies in Bangladesh and Impacts on Students Who are Studying in Denmark.

Submitted by

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International Relations- Global Refugee Studies

2025

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Acknowledgement

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Danny Raymond, for his unwavering support, valuable guidance, patience, and insightful feedback throughout the research. His guidance has significantly improved my scholastic perspective and encouraged my confidence in conducting this research, from the initial conception of this study to the final manuscript.

His thoughtful questions with my ideas encouraged me to think critically and helped me significantly with my intellectual and personal growth. I am sincerely grateful for his valuable time in reviewing my drafts and providing guidance.

I also want to mention that, without his crucial input and trust in my capabilities, this thesis would not have come to its present form. It has been a wonderful opportunity to work under his supervision, and I am deeply thankful for the privilege to learn from his expertise and experience.

I would also like to thank the Global Refugee Studies department of Aalborg University for giving me the opportunity to conduct the research.

Abstract

Educational consultancy in the global south, particularly in Bangladesh, has useful impacts on students who are planning to pursue higher education abroad, including choosing institutions, selecting courses, submitting applications, and documentation such as bank statements and visas. However, some educational consultancies exploit students for their benefit. Fraudulent practices involve intentional acts of dishonesty and deception aimed at obtaining illegal and unfair gains. These activities consist of exploiting others for financial and personal gain. In this study I have tried to explore the fraudulent practices of educational consultancies in Bangladesh with the students planning to study abroad and the impacts of these practices on students' academic and personal lives who are studying at private colleges in Denmark. The study identifies various types of fraudulent practices that have psychological and other impacts on the students. To conduct this research, I have applied the hermeneutic approach to interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to explore the lived experiences of the participants. Moreover, I used agency theory by Michael Jensen, the concept of migration infrastructure by Nina Glick Schiller and Noel B. Salazar, John Berry's acculturation theory, and Richard Jenkins' social identity theory to examine the collected data. This research employed thematic analysis to find out the answer of the research question of this study. The study identifies that educational consultancies in Bangladesh mislead students by providing misinformation and concealing the truth, such as they send students mostly to state non-approved institutions for their benefits with false dreams and hide the realities in Denmark. The study also reveals that these practices have a significant negative impact on students' personal and academic lives. Many of them struggle to find a job and uncertain about their careers and futures, which lead them to a state of psychological stress, anxiety, loneliness and depression.

Introduction

Fraudulent practices involve providing false information to individuals to induce purchases of goods or services (Darby & Karni, 1973). These kinds of activities are practiced by different sectors. Nowadays educational consultancies of the Global South can be considered one of them. In the global south, education consultancies have become a big business industry for providing the bureaucratic services to the students. They offer various tasks such as choosing universities, selecting subjects, and documentation for students who want to go abroad to pursue higher education (Kamble & Bobade, 2020). But mostly they exploit the students by providing misleading information, exaggerating the facilities, and neglecting the aftercare of students abroad. In Bangladesh, every year, almost 50,000 students leave the country to pursue higher education at different universities worldwide, including in Denmark (Alamgir, 2023). And Bangladeshi students who are interested in studying abroad generally seek the assistance of educational consultancies to get various information regarding the whole process of admission and visa application. Students prefer to go to the consultancies due to lack of proper access to relevant information, the intricacy of the visa and application process, and mental comfort. Many of these consultancies grab these lacking as their opportunities and they guide students focusing only on their own benefits without focusing on students' interests. As a result, after coming abroad including to Denmark, students experience a wide range of difficulties and challenges that impact them negatively. It is noted that the students who study in private institutions such as Niels Brook Copenhagen Business College or International Business Academy (IBA) suffer the most compared to the other Bangladeshi students who study in Danish universities. The university authorities and government allowed Danish universities' students to get different advantages, such as student housing benefits, using youth cards, and a three-year job-seeking period, which is not available for the students who are studying at private institutions such as Niels Brook and IBA. Previous studies have been conducted on the difficulties of academic writing by the international students who are from non-English-speaking backgrounds (Rahman & Hasan, 2019). Studies were also conducted on different aspects of the entrepreneurship and integration of Bangladeshi migrants in Denmark (Rana & Nipa, 2019). I also found that studies had been conducted on the integration of Bangladeshi immigrants in Denmark (Ahmed, 2022; Sharna, 2019). I have also found a study conducted on the identity negotiation of students in Denmark (Ahmed et al., 2024). But surprisingly, I have identified that there is no study on the fraudulent practices of educational consultancies with the students who are

interested in going abroad for higher education and the impact of these practices on the students after coming abroad, specifically to Denmark. Thus, my aim is to fill this literature and population gap and broaden the academic discourse on exploring the fraudulent practices of educational consultancies in Bangladesh with the students interested in going abroad for higher study as well as the impact of these practices on the Bangladeshi students who are studying at private institutions in Denmark, particularly at Niels Brock and IBA.

To explore the main objective of this study, I have set my research question as follows:

The Main Research Question of this Study is as follows,

How do educational consultancies in Bangladesh engage in fraudulent practices with students planning to study abroad, and how do these practices affect students who attend private educational institutions, particularly at Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College and International Business Academy IBA in Denmark?

Motivation of the study

Education is one of the basic needs of human beings. Every year a number of students are moving all around the world to get their desired studies. The Scandinavian countries, especially Denmark, are well known globally for their research-based quality education. Nowadays, many Bangladeshi students are going abroad for higher studies. Denmark has become one of the best preferred destinations for Bangladeshi students in both bachelor's and master's level studies. However, I am, the researcher of this study also from Bangladesh and doing master's degree at Aalborg university, one of the renowned Danish universities for its problem-based learning (PBL). After coming to Denmark and joining various Bangladeshi diaspora communities, I observed that most of the Bangladeshi students are studying in state non approved educational institutions such as private colleges. I also find that they are struggling with many things, including managing their houses and jobs, and some of them are even upset regarding their studies. Being curious to know why did they come to these institutions; I discuss with them about their motivation for coming here. According to them, educational consultancies in Bangladesh play a crucial role in the process of students' migration because they motivate and influence students to go abroad for their benefit. These matters make me curious to investigate the fraudulent practices of educational consultancies in Bangladesh with the students planning to study abroad and the impacts of these practices on students' academic and personal lives.

Rationale of the Study

In the modern era of globalization, education abroad has become a significant method of individual, academic, and professional enhancement. It offers students communication proficiency development, a broader outlook, experience in a multicultural environment, and an advantage in the global job market (Kubota, 2016). In Bangladesh, many students choose to go abroad for higher education every year and move all over the world, including to Denmark. Educational consultancies play a vital role in this process, such as motivating, influencing, and facilitating the journey of students. However, several studies have explored the role of educational consultancies in South Asia, including Bangladesh, but as per my own research, there is limited research on the fraudulent practices of these consultancies and the impacts of these practices on students' academic and personal lives. This study is aimed at exploring the fraudulent practices of educational consultancies in Bangladesh and how these activities affect those who are studying in private educational institutions, particularly Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College and International Business Academy IBA in Denmark. By exploring this study, it can offer the understanding of fraudulent practices of consultancies, reveal the realities, fill the existing research gap, and raise awareness among policymakers and students to avoid exploitation.

Methodology

This chapter will discuss the methodological section of the paper in detail. It includes the research design, sampling and sample size, data collection procedure, data analysis method, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. This study will adopt a qualitative research methodology. According to Smythe & Giddings, (2007) qualitative research methods deliver a substantial and intricate understanding of individuals' behaviours, feelings, and thoughts in the process of data collection and analysis.

Research Approach

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is a crucial approach to studying fraudulent practices of educational consultancy and their impact on students who want to pursue higher education abroad. It intends to reveal not only the lived experiences of students but also to interpret how different actors and contexts, such as family, social structure, and the state, shape and influence their experiences (Kafle, 2013). Hermeneutics offers a framework for recognizing both the deceptive activities of educational consultancies (such as hiding accurate information and misleading students) and their impact on students who go abroad to pursue higher studies. Furthermore, it provides an in-depth knowledge of how consultancies guide and deliver misinformation to the students and how the students, especially those who are studying in different private institutions in Denmark, are negotiating the complexities of diverse academic and cultural contexts after arrival in Denmark.

The term hermeneutics is often employed as equivalent to interpretive phenomenology (Dowling, 2004). I use these terms to show their importance and how people interpret their world. Typically, hermeneutics was mainly based on language, but gradually it has increased in meaning and turned into a key concept in social science and philosophy, where people use it as the medium for learning and explaining their experiences on different topics (Dowling, 2004).

Dowling (2004) identified two main central points for elucidating the connection between phenomenology and hermeneutics. Language is the key point in interpreting the experiences of people regarding their surroundings and gathering knowledge in hermeneutics, where phenomenology focuses on the lived experiences of individuals and clarifies the commonalities and shared meanings.

IPA

Since hiding information and misleading are considered dishonest activities by educational consultancies, interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) can provide valuable insights into how students describe these experiences and manage their identities in various social and cultural situations. To understand the complexity of the private college's students' identities in Denmark, IPA is particularly important for examining the subjective meanings and interpretations that people engage in based on their experiences. Moreover, it helps to explore how respondents make sense of their individual and communal surroundings and emphasize the significance of their experiences (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). It also assists the investigators to set up contact with study participants, allow them to reveal themselves openly, and get insights into their lived experiences (Alase, 2017).

Double hermeneutics is another name for the interpretative phenomenology approach. By applying a lens of hermeneutics, I can analyse the responses from interviews employing interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) in this study. This approach will allow for an in-depth understanding of the fraudulent practices of educational consultancies in Bangladesh with the students interested to study abroad and the impacts on students' academic and personal lives in Denmark through careful analysis of individual narratives.

A Hermeneutic Approach to Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

This study uses a hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenological approach to examine the widespread lived experiences of respondents in the context of the phenomenon. It is an effective qualitative method which depends on the expression of people's experiences in a specific matter, and researchers can draw a deep observation to have a proper understanding of how people experience the occurrence in their daily lives in an extensive context (Ramsook, 2018).

Heidegger and Gadamer contributed to the improvement of hermeneutics (interpretive) phenomenology, emphasizing the pursuit of the inner meaning of context by considering the historical and socio-cultural influences that shape participants' experiences (Peck & Mummery, 2018). It also focuses on reflection, illustration and the notion that the researcher's personal background influences the interpretation of the data (Kafle, 2013). Through the use of hermeneutic interpretative phenomenological approaches, researchers can get an intensive understanding of participants lived experiences. Hermeneutical phenomenology is used in the areas of sociology and pedagogy by researchers to interpret

and understand the experiences of individuals, keeping a focus on getting the complexity and richness of people's lived experiences (Guillen, 2019).

Moreover, it accommodates the researchers to thoroughly explain the importance and inside meaning of respondents' experiences by engaging them within the larger context of their environments and lives. By utilizing this approach, researchers can also unfold the intricacy of individual experiences and real-world contexts by analysing other outside components, such as social, cultural, and historical phenomena, that shape and influence people's everyday experiences (Bynum & Varpio, 2018).

As a Bangladeshi student, I have almost similar experience with educational consultancy back in my home country, though the situation in Denmark is different from the respondents because of being a master's level student and studying in a Danish university. I chose a hermeneutic phenomenological approach in this study because it will assist me in explaining the internal meaning, main theme, structures, or essence of participants' daily experiences in context (Bynum & Varpio, 2018). The intention of this study is to examine the educational consultancy in Bangladesh engaging in fraudulent practices with students planning to study abroad and how these practices affect students who are studying at private educational institutions particularly at Niels Brock and IBA in Denmark, by employing this approach. Since I belong to the same background, the data could be collected easily and be connected to the respondents in this study to interchange these usual grounds and interests.

Sampling and Sample Size

To do empirical research, sampling is inevitable for researchers. Sampling assists in selecting the accurate sample for study. A sample refers to a group of individuals, people, or even data that researchers select from a larger population based on the research objectives. Besides, it is influenced by the motive and the research methodologies used in the study (Guthrie, 2010). In this research, I have employed purposive sampling to choose the correct sample size because its characteristics are defined for a certain intention that is pertinent to this research (Andrade, 2021). Purposive sampling, in contrast to random sampling, depends on the researcher's knowledge and experiences to choose a sample that can deliver a meaningful outcome or appropriately represent the population (Lavrakas, 2008). The objective of this research is to investigate the involvement of educational consultancies in Bangladesh in fraudulent practices with students planning to study abroad and examine how these practices affect students studying at private educational institutions, particularly at Niels Brock and

IBA in Denmark. As a part of the Bangladeshi community, I use our community network to get the correct sample, which is a must for this research. Here the Bangladeshi community network assists me to find the accurate sample more easily. The selection of a sample size relies on different factors, such as the purpose of the research, the availability of essential resources, etc. I took six interviews from two different private colleges' bachelor's level Bangladeshi students. Overall, purposive sampling helps me get the correct participants, which I needed for this study. And through these participants, I have gotten essential information that can help me answer research questions.

Demographic details of sample size

Three of the respondents are studying at Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College and living in Copenhagen. The rest of the three are living in Kolding because they are studying for a bachelor's degree at the International Business Academy (IBA) in Kolding, Denmark. Five of the participants are male, and one is female. I chose both genders because I believe that various perspectives can help with different types of data. All of the respondents are studying for bachelor's degrees, and their age range is from 22 to 25.

I selected them as respondents because they all are doing bachelor's degrees at two different private colleges in Denmark. Moreover, they all took the assistance of educational consultancy before coming to Denmark. Their knowledge and experience can help me to collect information on whether they were victims of fraudulent practices of these consultancies and examine their experience with consultancies back in Bangladesh, expectations and reality in Denmark, and their future aspirations.

Data Collection

I have employed an interview method to get the appropriate data for this research. I chose semi-structured interviews, as it provides the facility to enquire about open-ended questions and also allows structured questions in the interview to collect more precise and deep data from the participants. A semi-structured interview gives a symmetry between structured and open-ended questions within a single interview. Semi-structured interviews accommodate asking the participants to explain and discuss their opinions and experiences with more transparency to get more extensive data (Dursun, 2023). Hence, one can ask more questions that the preliminary set of structured questions did not cover. In addition to this, semi-structured interviews allow examination of the research question in detail and gathering of a deep understanding of the experiences, knowledge and attitudes of the participants.

Semi-structured interviews are primarily used to get respondents' own opinions or perspectives regarding a particular situation. In this research, I focused on how the educational consultancy in Bangladesh engages in fraudulent practices with students planning to study abroad and how these practices affect students who are studying at private educational institutions, particularly at Niels Brock and IBA in Denmark. I conducted the interviews according to the interview guide or schedule, such as asking the main questions, using follow-up questions when needed, staying focused on the objectives, ensuring start and end times and covering all topics within the timeframe. The questions of the interview are simple and easy to understand. I have tried to avoid unnecessary questions because the time of interview is very important (Dursun, 2023). I started the interviews with greetings, and after that, I asked for the consent and permission of the respondents to record their voice in the interview. All of the participants have agreed and given their oral consent for recording and using their data to do this research. Before that, I explain the objectives, interview time, and location of the meeting with the participants over the phone call. All of the interviews are conducted in person. I conducted three interviews in Copenhagen who are studying at Niels Brock. Besides, I visited Kolding for the last three interviews of the students of IBA, where I also observed them in person.

The time of the interviews was between 45 to 60 minutes. The respondent invited me to their house for the interviews in Kolding, where I received warm hospitality and enjoyed dinner and snacks together. This increased the comfortable atmosphere for doing the interviews. For ensuring their privacy and confidentiality, I used pseudonyms for the participants while scripting their data. Both the researcher and the participants conducted all the conversation in Bangla during the interviews, our mother language; however, I wrote the interview questions in English and transcribed these in the same language. I finished the interviews by thanking them and expressing my gratitude to the respondents. I tried to maintain full professionalism during the research and make an atmosphere where participants feel free to explain their ideas and thinking.

Data Analysis Method

Data analysis is a significant part of qualitative research that involves detailed exploration and interpreting hidden trends and patterns in the collected data (Flick, 2014). There are a wide range of approaches for examining qualitative data analysis. I choose thematic data analysis for this study based on the work of Braun and Clarke's "Using thematic analysis in

psychology" from 2006 (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to them, researchers use thematic analysis to discover, explain, and report themes and patterns in the data. However, I pursue the six stages of Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis in this research that direct me in the process of data analysis by themes.

In the first step of thematic analysis, the researchers should engage deeply with the collected data to get insights thoroughly about what it contains. It focuses on dive, which means not only reading the data repeatedly but also reading actively in search of inherent meanings, understanding trends and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this research, I read all of the interviews very carefully. I took important notes on various matters, including interesting ideas, similarities, dissimilarities, structure and patterns in the different interviews, which would give a framework for next steps.

The second phase of the data analysis contains the codes and categories creation; it allows detecting the features or aspects of the collected data which are very significant in the research. Coding is very important to do the study systematically and identify complex characteristics of the whole data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There are different methods in coding essence. In this study, I conduct manual coding of all the data by taking notes from the texts while using highlighters and different colours to identify potential patterns and separate various data segments. Initially I identified some codes and assigned them immediate names. Later, I gathered all the codes into one document and aligned them to particular parts of the data, such as phrases, sentences, and paragraphs.

The third step of the thematic analysis is searching for themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I began to search for themes from the long lists of the preliminary codes that I had identified in the interview data. After analysing the codes, I combined them to structure relevant themes.

In the fourth phase, researchers review the selected themes. Once a probable set of themes has been selected, the refinement process begins, involving the merging and elimination of overlapping, problematic, or unfit themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I reread all the parts of each theme again and again. I check and verify all the themes, whether they align with the data or any data missed out on during the stages of coding.

The fifth stage of thematic analysis involves defining and naming the themes. It also includes analysing data inside themes, identifying their essence, connecting them with data and research questions, and the creation of short but informative names of these themes (Braun &

Clarke, 2006). I got the following codes and categories in this step. These help me to create the themes according to the interview scripts and quotes.

The first theme is "Information Hiding", created from the following codes or categories: 'background or ECTS', 'proper information', 'Danish university', 'permanent residency', 'earning', 'success stories', 'jobs and housing', 'equivalent', 'jobs searching period', and 'language'.

The second theme, "Consultancies as Push Actors in Migration and Negligence in Post-arrival Assistance", is generated from the following codes: 'social media', 'pictures', 'income', 'lifestyle', 'agents in Denmark', 'initial supports', 'opposite', 'finding places to live', and 'sorrow'.

The next theme, "Psychological Distress", emerged from the following codes and categories: 'restricted', 'hassle', 'freedom', 'worried', 'in a fix', 'weather', 'sickness', 'homesickness', 'lonely', 'stressed', and 'depressed'.

And lastly, the theme "Uncertainty of the Future" has been derived from the following codes: 'unaware', 'nightmare', 'Danish standard', 'settle', 'move', 'opportunity', 'insufficient', 'concern', and 'insecure future'.

Lastly, the sixth stage of thematic analysis includes creating and writing the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to their guideline, I present data analysis narratively in the step. To examine the collected data and cover the research question, relevant and meaningful extracts were used to reinforce the themes and validate their significance.

Ethical Consideration

Human beings are the inventors of science, and their appearance is inevitable to create ideas, beliefs, theories, and formulas. Social science is particularly vulnerable to subjectivity because it involves those matters that are pertinent to individual experiences and the daily lives of researchers. Researchers might be influenced by the subjects of research emotionally, practically, or conceptually. In qualitative research, subjectivity can be both an advantage and a disadvantage that brings essential innovation to both science and social science (Diefenbach, 2009).

However, in this research, I follow the codes of conduct in qualitative research by Creswell (2007) to reduce the bias in the exploration of data. Before taking interviews, I asked the

consent of the participants and clearly informed them about the purpose, nature, potential risks, and benefits of this study. For avoiding potential risks, I assured the confidentiality of the data by securing it with strong, password-protected files. During analysis I remove all identifiers and use pseudonyms to keep anonymity. I also ensure the respondents that they have the right to withdraw themselves from this research at any time without experiencing any consequences. To assure the ethical integrity and credibility of the researcher, I maintain reflexivity that includes self-awareness of the data collection process and analysis in the research.

Researchers and respondents might have similarities in terms of experiences in a hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenological study, and those background experiences could impact the exploration of the data (Ramsook, 2018). I follow the hermeneutical circle for maintaining the credibility and authenticity of the data. This approach includes the iterative process (reading and re-reading), reflexivity (self-awareness) and repeated refinement of the interpretation that helps to understand the profound insights of respondents in many contexts. Finally, I triangulate the data by incorporating these with various previously published relevant literature to get insights and understanding and minimize bias in interpretation. It checks and ensures the validity and assures the consistency of findings.

Limitations and Challenges

The research is bound by the subjective character of hermeneutic interpretive phenomenology, which could potentially expose the researcher to subjective bias. Besides, keeping up the consistency of the data due to its big size was another challenge in this research. Moreover, the sample size is small, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings to a larger population, but it can't diminish the typicality of the research. Furthermore, limited time may impede researchers from fully examining the context, which could potentially lead to comprehensive insights. Despite this, the research is brief, as I only collected and transcribed primary data to get a comprehensive overview of the educational consultancy in Bangladesh engaging in fraudulent practices with students planning to study abroad and how these practices affect students who are studying at private educational institutions, particularly at Niels Brock and IBA in Denmark.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework is an essential part of a research that play a vital role in analytical structure, theoretical orientation and interpretation of data (Ennis, 1999). Theoretical frameworks act as a lens, and through this lens researchers can observe their data and literature. They assist in defining the aim and research questions, enhance the data collection tools, and provide the framework for analysis and interpretation of data (Stewart & Klein, 2016). According to Mueller & Urbach (2017), theory gives a structured framework to the researcher; using these theories, they can identify gaps, understand and interpret data, refine ideas, and check the credibility of the academic spheres. This research is focused on understanding fraudulent practices of educational consultancies in Bangladesh with the students planning to study abroad and impacts of these practices on students' personal and academic lives in Denmark. I will use three theories and a concept to analyse the collected data. I will use agency theory to analyse the roles of various consulting firms in Bangladesh and their relationships with students. Migration infrastructure will help to examine the process of mobility and its actors, which facilitate migration. To investigate the process of Bangladeshi students' navigation and integration into a new society in Denmark, acculturation theory will be used. Lastly, social identity theory will assist to examine the process of identity formation and its navigation for Bangladeshi students within the community and broader Danish society.

Agency Theory by Jensen & Meckling

Agency theory examines the relationship between principals and agents (those who are hired to work on behalf of the principals). (Bendickson et al., 2016). Adolf Berle and Gardiner Means introduced the foundation for future explorations of agency theory. Inspired by the earlier work of both of them, Michael Jensen and William Meckling play a pivotal role in shaping it into a theory in 1976. They articulated the idea of agency costs and its significance within management, economics, and finance. (Bendickson et al., 2016).

According to Jensen & Meckling, (1976), the main concern of this theory is the influence of competing interests between the two sides, which can lead to ineptness and agency costs. They explained this two-party system as: A. Principal and B. Agent

The principal is the one side that entrusts consent to another one (the agent) to perform on their behalf. Generally, the principal has their definite goals or interests that they want to

gain. They appointed an agent to assist them in achieving these objectives. Shareholders, clients, and employers are some examples of principals who hire an entity or individual to do the specific job or roles. The principal mainly focuses on the outcomes, and they anticipate that the agent will work and make decisions to fulfil their desires. (Jensen & Meckling, 1976).

On the other hand, the agent is the entity or individual who works on behalf of the principal. Within a corporation, the agent is generally referred to as the company's executive or manager. They are responsible for doing specific work and making decisions that will be effective for the principal. While their own motivation can be different, they wanted to utilize their knowledge and power for the benefit of the principal (Jensen & Meckling, 1976).

According to Kivistö, (2008), agency theory emphasizes the challenge of unequal access to information, which is information asymmetry and opportunistic behavior within the relationship between agent and principal. Because agents may have much more access to information and detailed knowledge of their ability and work reality than principals. They may use this information and skill, focusing on their own interest. This can create a mismatch of what the principal expected from them and what the agent is actually performing.

Jensen & Meckling, (1976) discuss moral hazard to illustrate taking risks and bearing consequences. They added that it occurs when one party takes risks or acts recklessly because they know that another party will carry the burden of the outcome. In agency relationships, this happens post-contract, as the agent has more information about their actions than the principal.

When agents are entrusted with decision-making power, there is a risk that they may make choices that do not align with the best interest of the principal, particularly if they are not accountable for the outcome of their actions. For instance, an agent might pursue a high-risk task with the hope of a high return, as he knows that the impact of losses will fall on the principal, not on them. This kind of action can undermine the principal's long-term interest by favouring agents' short-term benefits. (Jensen & Meckling, 1976).

The agency theory focuses on the relationship between the principals and agents. In this relationship, students and their families act as principals, while educational consultancies serve as agents. The agents always have more access to relevant information, and they know about their ability to work. Due to information asymmetry, agents often engage in opportunistic behavior with their principals. On top of that, agents take risks and commit

fraud knowing that the consequences will fall on the principals. However, this framework will help to understand the dynamic relationship between principals and agents as well as how the agents engage in fraudulent practices in the higher education sector. It will also assist in analysing how the information asymmetry of studying at private institutions in Denmark impacts students, especially in terms of their academic and personal lives.

Migration infrastructure concept by Schiller and Salazar

The concept of migration infrastructure is introduced by Nina Glick Schiller and Noel B. Salazar. They argue that migration is deeply interconnected within several infrastructures, such as institutional frameworks, social relations, and cultural norms (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013). These infrastructures form the pathways of migration, and the experiences of migrated people make smoother or more compelling their move across national boundaries and within society. The process of migration is shaped by interconnected ties of network and interactions, which enable mobility. These networks involve family binding, community organizations, and social contacts that arrange necessary materials and information. The concept of migration infrastructure considers mobility as an associative outlook in which migration is an element of broader social systems rather than viewing it as a separate act (Xiang & Lindquist, 2014).

According to Glick Schiller & Salazar (2013), migration processes are comprised of both formal and informal institutional structures, which include government policies, legal systems, and regulatory rules that direct who, where, and under which conditions can move. These structures can either encourage migration or constrain it by creating barriers, revealing the underlying power distribution of a society, and examining how structural inequalities affect the migrants differently. For instance, due to discriminatory power practices and policies, certain groups of individuals may face more obstacles than others in the migration process. Economic factors are central to migration, including job availability, wage differences, and global shifts in the economy that influence people to move. Inequalities of wealth in both national and international avenues significantly motivate individuals to relocate. (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013).

The concept of migration infrastructure also examines the significance of cultural narratives and norms in deciding on migration. The notion of home, belonging, and identity dominance influences how people pursue mobility and their eagerness to commence it. The reception of

migrants in the host country often relies on the cultural norms and social beliefs of the society (Xiang & Lindquist, 2014).

According to Glick Schiller & Salazar (2013), the relationship between mobility and immobility is an interconnected process. The effect of migration not only affects the lives of the migrants but also those who remain in the home country, illustrating the repetitive and interconnected nature of migration.

This concept emphasizes that mobility is not only a person's decision but is also deeply rooted in and influenced by an extensive institutional infrastructure, including government policies, financial situations, and social structures that form the capability for migration. In this research about fraudulent practices of educational consultancies in Bangladesh with students who are willing to go abroad for study, the concept of migration infrastructure could help to analyse how specific networks are exploited by these consultancies to mislead or take advantage of the potential students. It indicates that the broader mobility framework influences and enables movement while it also makes room where fraud and abuse can happen. This concept will also assist in examining how different actors play important roles in the migration process of Bangladeshi students in different private colleges in Denmark and how these impact their lives in the host country.

Acculturation theory by Berry

Acculturation refers to the way of adjustment in which community or individual come contact to a new cultural context, which may change their value, tradition and interactions (Berry, 2005). According to Berry, (1997) this process is complex and it is not limited to only cultural encounter but also involves into addressing one's identity negotiations and behaviours in cultural context in the host society. The result of acculturation can be vary significantly, individual may experience successful integration or suffer of psychological stress and social difficulties (Berry et al., 2006). The theoretical framework of acculturation is an important lens of examining how people adapt to a new cultural setting.

Individual or a group of people may adopt four strategies during the process of acculturation (Berry, 1997).

Integration: in this process people involves maintaining their culture of origin as well as adopting various aspects of new culture. Integration is defined by acceptance to engage with the host society, nurturing a dual cultural identity that the combination of both cultural

elements. Study has found that the people who are participating integration generally face less acculturative stress and get better adaptation result (Berry, 1997;Berry, 2005).

Assimilation: according to Berry, (2005) assimilation refers to the strategy where individual totally accept the culture of new society and abandon their original culture and identity. Although the strategy of assimilation might drive to an easy acclimation process but it can be resulting loss of people's cultural tradition. The people who take this strategy of acculturation may experience medium levels of stress due to their translocation of culture of origin.

Separation: separation is that strategy where individual choose to maintain strong connection to their own culture and identity as well as desist to engage with the new culture. By taking this policy people can feel a sense of security and identity. However, it may make individual socially isolated and stressed when they engage with the greater society. The person who pursuing the strategy of separation may experience the intermediate levels of acclimation and acculturative stress (Berry, 1997;Berry, 2005).

Marginalization: according to (Berry, 1997;Berry, 2005) marginalization is the strategy in which people do not intertwine with both the culture of origin and to the new culture. This strategy can emerge when there is neither social reception nor enough accumulation to integrate into either cultural community. Marginalized people may encounter the highest levels of acculturative stress along with weakened adaptation which drive to various negative psychological issues such as anxiety, frustration, stress, loneliness and so on.

Acculturative stress is the negative mental condition of individual when they try to adapt and navigate to a new cultural society. They may face difficulties such as discrimination, language barriers and conflicts of interest between their cultural belief and these of the host environment. Berry, (1997) explains that the acculturative stress individual face is very related to the strategies they choose to involve during the process of acculturation. The least amount of stress creates with the integration where marginalization produces the highest level of those.

According to Berry, (1997) there are two types of adaptation in the acculturation process; psychological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation.

Psychological adaptation is related to the mental health of an individual namely self-respect, life satisfaction and appearance or disappearance of psychological issues. Study suggests that the people who tend to adopt integration strategy to execute psychological adaptation, they

experience less stress, mental pressure and have better self-esteem in comparison to others who take different acculturation strategies (Berry, 1997).

Berry, (1997) refers to the sociocultural adaptation of individual ability of adjustment the social norms and value in the new culture. It includes various things such as educational institute's environments, building friendships and participating community activities. In addition to this, similarly to psychological adaptation, it is increased the opportunity of acculturation for those who take integration, because it helps to navigate and adapt to the host society and assist to retain their original cultural tradition.

The acculturation theory of Berry provides an understanding of how people communicate and interact within different cultures and societies. According to him, the four strategies, namely integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization depict the various pathways individuals take in the time of navigation in the host culture. Moreover, this theory underscores the concept of acculturative stress and the two ways of adaptation in the acculturation process. However, in this study, this theory could help to analyse how Bangladeshi students who are studying in private colleges in Denmark are navigating their personal and academic lives. It will also shed light on what types of approaches they have taken in the acculturation process. Finally, it will assist in investigating whether they are experiencing acculturative stress and how they adapt themselves psychologically and socio-culturally.

Social Identity Theory by Jenkins

The identity is a universal concept that is applicable equally to humans as well as all entities in existence. Jenkins (2014) stated that identity can be defined by two basic meanings; one is sameness or similarity of identity and another one is continuity of identity across time. Jenkins highlighted that identity is not a rigid or an unchanging concept; rather, it is an active process. The process of identification allows people to associate themselves with groups or others including friends, sports teams, or shared ideologies. (Jenkins, 2014, as cited in (Roy et al., 2024, p. 24)

According to (Jenkins, 2014), all human identities are fundamentally social, formed through interactions, innovations, agreements, disagreements, customs, norms, negotiations, and communication. He criticized the contemporary literatures of identity due to their static concept about it. Identity is a fluid and dynamic process of 'being' and 'becoming' shaped by

continuous interactions and institutional frameworks (Jenkins, 2014, as cited in (Roy et al., 2024, p. 24).

Identity is the human capacity to understand who is who and what is what, and it is fundamentally rooted in language. We should not take something as given or granted (Jenkins, 2014, as cited in Roy et al., 2024, p. 25). According to (Martin, 1995) identity is not a static or fixed attribute that individuals carry with them but rather it's a dynamic and evolving process referred to as 'identification'. The process involves individuals constantly interpreting or reinterpreting their understandings of who they are in relation to their surroundings. This process also includes knowing or understanding oneself, gaining recognition from others and identifying others within diverse social settings. Identity is not an attribute that people possess; instead, it's an ongoing activity that people are involved in. And this activity is essential for understanding social interactions, but it does not strictly control or determine people's decisions or actions. (Jenkins, 2014, as cited in Roy et al., 2024, p. 25)

The concept of identity is essential because it allows us to understand and differentiate ourselves and others, both personally and collectively. Identification doesn't rigidly control behavior to understand social structures. Based on identity, the ability to predict actions is constrained due to its involvement in complex and changing patterns that are often vague and inconsistent. In addition, the relationship between personal identity and individual interests is very complicated to predict behavior reliably (Jenkins, 2014, as cited in Roy et al., 2024, p. 25)

Many scholars have criticized the identity concept for its unclear nature. From the perspective of essentialists, identity is fixed, static, and fundamental, while constructivists think identity is fluid, dynamic, and socially formed. This dual nature increases the concept's utility in sociological analysis (Jenkins, 2014, as cited in Roy et al., 2024, p. 25). However, Jenkins criticizes the traditional differences between individual and collective identity and argues that it oversimplifies and neglects the intricate interactions and processes that contribute to forming identity. He stated that individual and collective identity are both closely interrelated and suggests that individual identity cannot be fully understood without considering its involvement with collective identity (Jenkins, 2014, as cited in Roy et al., 2024, p. 25). Both individual and collective identity develop through interactions and bring out both commonalities and contrasts. Therefore, acknowledging the interconnected nature of identity theories, we should treat individual and collective identity with equal emphasis. There are

three interrelated orders, namely, individual order,' 'institutional order,' and 'interaction order,' which together comprise the social world. Individual order highlights the personal reflections, thoughts, and experiences; in the interaction order, priority is given to the interactions and relationships among individuals, and institutional order focuses on patterns and structure of society. Instead of being separated, these three orders are interconnected and simultaneously interacting, influencing, and coexisting with one another (Jenkins, 2014, as cited in Roy et al., 2024, p. 26).

There is a constant tension between internal and external identity. Internal identity means how we perceive ourselves, while external identity refers to how other people view us. Jenkins admits that the terms 'internal' and 'external can be misleading due to their oversimplification of intricate realities. These terms act as useful metaphors to describe how individuals and groups both define themselves and others in a particular setting. Identity formation is a more dynamic, ongoing, and interconnected process. Internal and external processes of identification can happen together, known as "moments of identification", and it challenges the typical, sequential view of how language and thought usually function. Identification happens in a common space where internal and external processes constantly interact and influence one another and exist as inseparable. However, internal and external influences may change due to dependence on various contexts and situations (Jenkins, 2014, as cited in Roy et al., 2024, p. 25).

Time and space play significant roles in shaping our identity based on our experiences. And the interrelation between time, space, and identity is essential to understanding the individual and collective identity. Both individual memory and shared history are vital in the process of identification, impacting both present identity and future expectations (Jenkins, 2014, as cited in Roy et al., 2024, p. 25).

Jenkins (2014) critiques the perspectives of Emile Durkheim and Margaret Thatcher about society and highlights the collectivises like social networks, nations, or corporations are more intricate and abstract than just the total of their members. These groups are shaped by several layers of social, economic, political, and cultural dynamics that interact and influence one another in diverse ways. Jenkins (2014) contends that, despite the theoretical shifts and emergence of postmodernism, the concept of community remains vital and essential in daily life. It plays a role as a key source of collective identity and assists in addressing basic human needs. Being a part of a community does not necessarily imply the sameness in the thoughts

and behavior of its members (Jenkins, 2014, as cited in Roy et al., 2024, p. 25). As an example, Jenkins (2014) says about a rugby club situated in South Wales that acts as a centre of diverse meanings and significance for various people, such as a former player, a spouse dealing with financial difficulties, and a new local teacher. A community and its symbols can encompass a variety of meanings that demonstrate the identity of a community is both collective and individually shaped (Jenkins, 2014). As a core sociological concept, identity bridges individual experience to group interactions. These ideas are fundamental to understanding how societies work and change because they illustrate human behavior across history and address the difficulties of the present world. Moreover, understanding identity and the way we interact with others is vital to capturing the modern human relationship and the structural framework of society. (Jenkins, 2014, as cited in Roy et al., 2024, p. 26).

This theory will help me to examine how Bangladeshi students who are studying at private institutions in Denmark are treated in their internal society, such as by other Bangladeshi students, which strengthens their internal identity and may impact their psychology. Similarly, it will assist me in exploring how external society, like Danish society, is viewing them, which shapes their external identity. I will also examine whether they are getting integrated into Danish society or not. This theory can also assist me in exploring, as a part of Danish society, how Bangladeshi students who are studying in different private institutions in Denmark are conducting their functions, such as interactions, innovations, agreements, disagreements, customs, norms, negotiations, and communication, which together contribute to shaping their collective identity.

Justifications of using Agency theory, Migration Infrastructure, Acculturation and Social Identity theory.

I have chosen agency theory, the concept of migration infrastructure, acculturation theory, and social identity theory to understand, analyse, and describe the collected data from different perspectives; this type of analysis may not be possible by using one or two theories. Agency theory and the concept of migration infrastructure help me to understand and analyse how multiple actors have influenced the students in migration and, in some cases, how they have been misled by agencies. The acculturation theory and the social identity theory assist me to explore the impacts of fraudulent practices on students academic and personal lives in Denmark. Besides, the last two theory also provided me the insights into how these private

colleges' students are adapting and integrating into their Bangladeshi community and broader Danish society.

Literature Review

Here in this section, the literature review part will be discussed. A literature review is a very crucial part of a research paper. It examines previous studies, interprets existing knowledge, and suggests a foundation for upcoming studies (Pandey, 2024). Literature review functions as a valuable resource for early-stage researchers, providing essential guidance to navigate the research process properly, including locating, assessing, and organizing the scholarly sources (Ebidor & Ikhide, 2024). The literature review part will explore some significant articles regarding academic consultancy and fraudulent practices in higher education that are published in different well-known journals. I have divided this part into two themes: the first one, "Consultancy and Fraudulent Practices", will cover the role of educational consultancy in higher studies abroad, while "Impacts on Students" will discuss the challenges and difficulties that international students face in other countries. However, in this study, I will explore the fraudulent practices of educational consultancies in Bangladesh and impacts of these practices on students' academic and personal lives who are studying in private colleges in Denmark. This section will provide information about some methodological aspects of existing literature, fraudulent practices of educational consultancies and impacts on students. Finally, it will offer a comprehensive overview of some existing articles and identify gaps.

Consultancy and Fraudulent Practices

A study was conducted by Dahal, (2023) to analyse the increasing pattern among Nepali students seeking higher education abroad, mainly for pursuing undergraduate education rather than graduate or postgraduate programs. This article is based on ethnographic research using qualitative methods focusing on interviews and observation in the Kathmandu Valley. The study highlights that a number of young students are choosing to study abroad for their higher education, primarily bachelor's degrees, compared to the relatively older students who intended to do master's or Ph.D. degrees overseas. One of the main reasons for this growing number of students is because of the influence of International Educational Consultancies (IECs). The researcher finds out that these agencies play a very crucial role in motivating and helping students to go abroad for higher education. In addition to this, these consultancies

convince students and their families by telling them about the value and importance of higher education abroad. This article also finds out that most of these agencies recruit and motivate candidates by offering them various opportunities, such as better job facilities, permanent residency, quality education, and lifestyles. It also revealed how globalization influences educational migration, which explores various social, political, and economic contexts that drive people to study overseas. In this article, I can find out the role of IECs and how these agencies are contributing to the decision-making processes of candidates and their families, as well as the strategies taken by consultancies and their impacts on students. The knowledge of this literature will help me to explore the role of educational consultancies in Bangladesh in decision making process of students planning to study abroad.

The article by Kamble & Bobade, (2020) highlights the prevalence of Indian students relying on consultancies for overseas higher education and focuses on the rate of participation and the advantages they get from these agencies. This study employs a descriptive research framework, collecting quantitative data and presenting insights through graphical tools like charts and graphs. The study employed the concept of guidance and support, along with the service benefit theory, to examine the role of consultancies in India. This study mainly focuses on the role of international education consultancies in assisting Indian students to make plans and get higher education overseas. It also shows how dominant these consultancies are and how students benefit through them. The study examines that consultancies are basically experts or counsellors who provide everything to candidates that they need. The Indian educational consultancies offer various facilities to their customers, namely profile matching (suggesting the right course and university) and documentation (assisting in applications and visas). On top of that, agencies help make decisions and provide counselling to the candidates. Furthermore, the study reveals a significant increase in the number of Indian students pursuing degrees abroad, a trend that has resulted in the growth of numerous educational consultancies across India. This study provides the data that around 67.7% of Indian students visit educational consultancies to get guidelines to study abroad; 88.5% of students stated that they benefit from joining these consultancies. After reviewing this study, it has some insights about Indian students, including how many of them actually visit consultancies and how satisfied they are with their services. It also shows how these agencies help candidates in many ways on their journey to study abroad. This study will assist me to examine the role of educational consultancies in Bangladesh and also reveal the type of services that they provide to students.

Serra Hagedorn & Zhang, (2011) discuss in their article the increasing tendency of international students' mobility, especially emphasizing the Chinese students who were studying in the USA. A mixed-method design was applied in this study to analyse the growing number of Chinese undergraduate students rather than graduate-level students from mainland China to America. This study explores the experience of Chinese students who use agents (widely known as consultancy) to go abroad for higher study and also highlights the role of these agents in the process. According to the authors, the number of international students in the US is rising, but the Chinese growth is significant. They also point out that the majority of Chinese students are at the graduate level, but nowadays the rise of enrolled undergraduate-level students is significantly increasing. Moreover, the study finds out that Chinese students mostly depend on academic agents to choose and apply to US universities. All of these agents work as mediators and help them with profiling (matching with academic background and goals). However, the researchers reveal in their study that many of the agents take fees from both students and university sides, which creates conflicts of interest, such as a portion of these agents providing wrong and misleading information about universities. In this article, I have noticed that Chinese students rely on educational agents to get admission to US universities. Many of these agents provide various assistance to the candidates, but some of them give misleading information, which has deep impacts on the students' personal and academic lives. In my study, I will also explore the fraudulent and misleading practices of educational consultancies in Bangladesh and the impacts on students' lives.

The study of Hulme et al. (2014) examines the contribution of educational agents in recruiting African students for higher education abroad. The study explores the viewpoints of multiple stakeholders, including educational agents, university representatives, and students. It highlights how the reduction of government subsidies to the UK universities has driven the strategy of recruiting more international students. It sheds light on the commercialization of higher education, where students are portrayed as consumers, academics as business-minded professionals, and universities as corporate brands. As state subsidies decrease for higher studies, universities in the UK start relying on the recruitment of international students to generate revenue. The study also reveals that universities engage agents to expand their markets and increase international students' enrolment. It also emphasises that agents play a vital role in attracting African students, facilitating market insights, and maintaining continuity in unstable regions. Moreover, the study raises the implication of ethical practices of education agents, focusing on the commission-based model and its consequences for

academic quality. After reviewing this article, it can be understood that universities in the UK are recruiting international students to improve their financial solvency. They recruit students through agents focusing on revenue, where in some cases they compromise the quality of education. I will examine in my study whether Bangladeshi students are being used in this way by the particular colleges and agencies for their own financial benefits.

A study conducted by S.B et al., (2021) in India examines the quality of services provided by educational consultancies, especially their effectiveness in guiding students to select colleges and courses. The researchers used both primary and secondary data sources for the study, where primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from clients of various educational consultancy firms. The study explores various dimensions of service quality provided by educational consultancies. However, it reveals that among the five dimensions of service quality, assurance is the most important factor. Assurance refers to the trust and confidence in the consultancy's expertise. Students value firms that are well knowledgeable about universities, various courses, visa procedures, scholarships, and proper career guidance, as these factors enhance credibility and confidence. Moreover, factors like gender and course do not play a crucial role in the service quality dimensions. In addition to this, this research indicates that consumers prefer educational consultancies for advice and facilitating admission to various courses and colleges, which highlights the importance of these agencies in assisting candidates to choose the best educational opportunities. After reviewing this article, I can understand why students visit numerous educational consultancies, what things make them confident, and what kinds of services they expect from these firms. This knowledge will assist in analyzing what types of expectations they had in times of visiting Bangladeshi educational consultancies and what they achieved in returns.

According to Thieme, (2017) international student mobility serves as a vital livelihood strategy for middle-class youth and their families in Nepal. Many families in Nepal regard overseas study as a way to enhance career opportunity and social mobility. It underscores the role of educational consultants and their effect on students' migration process. Besides, the study utilizes the idea of migration infrastructure,' highlighting that a student's migration is not just moving students abroad. Instead, it includes a system of actors, regulations, and technologies that facilitate and control the process of migration. Education consultants, also known as brokers, serve as facilitators, assisting students through the complexities of university applications, visa procedures, and enrolment processes. This study challenges the widespread notion of brokers as purely profit-driven or exploitative, showing that their

professional activities often involve a balance between financial gain and social responsibility. In response to fraud and unethical behavior, consultants create business associations to bring better professionalism, uphold standards, and improve credibility. The study also examines the technological components of migration infrastructure, such as advertisements, posters, and information boards in consultancy offices. In this article, I can see that the use of 'migration infrastructure' highlights that a student's mobility is not just a person's decision; rather, it includes multiple actors. In my research, I may examine the role of Bangladeshi consultancies in shaping student migration and the extent to which these firms influence students' careers.

In an article, Mohamedbhai, (2016) examines the global prevalence of corruption in higher education, highlighting the impacts on educational institutions in both developed and developing countries, although the underlying factors differ. It underscores that corruption in higher education in the West is driven by the commercialization of learning while the pressure of competition on admission and academic success in developing countries. Furthermore, the article explores different kinds of corrupt practices, such as degree mills, bribery in admission, and exploitation of students. The researcher provides some examples of fraudulent practices in various countries, including a significant number of admission and recruitment fraudulent cases in India and Australia, compromising academic quality to meet the recruitment demand of international students. The study also emphasizes the importance of institutional and organizational efforts to address these issues through policymaking, advocacy, and international cooperation. This study sheds light on the prevalence of fraudulent practices across the globe and the types of fraud that currently exist. By reviewing this article, I can utilize the knowledge in my research on whether Bangladeshi undergraduates are facing fraudulent practices in the admission process by different Bangladeshi educational consultancies.

The study conducted by Bista (2017) examines the role of educational agents helping Nepalese students preparing to study in the US. It highlights the useful impacts of these agents on students, how they are assisting learners in the preparation process, including choosing institutions, selecting courses, submitting applications, and getting important documents such as bank statements and visas. However, this study also reveals some fraudulent and unethical practices on the part of these agents regarding the preparedness of international students. Firstly, some of these agents provide false or misleading information about tuition fees and processes. In some cases, they charge more than the actual amount of

the initial tuition fee. Similarly, many of them take high service fees from students without following the instruction of the Educational Consultancy Association of Nepal (ECAN). Furthermore, this study reveals that some agents use fear-based tactics, warning students that they could face immigration complications or be deported if they do not fulfill their demanded payment. It also highlights the lack of transparency between the relationship of institutions and agents. Agents get a commission at a percentage of students' admission; this may create a conflict of interest. Agents often prioritize their own financial interests over the interests of students, potentially leading students towards an uncertain future. At the end, this paper provides valuable insights into how educational agents do fraudulent and unethical practices in various steps of the preparation process to go abroad for higher education. This article has the potential to motivate me to explore the various types of fraudulent practices of Bangladeshi agents and their impacts on the personal and academic lives of students in Denmark.

Wit (2016) writes in the well-known academic journal 'Inside Higher Ed' about the growing trend of dependency in commercial agencies on recruiting international students in many western countries such as the USA, UK, and Australia, which has raised the risk of unethical practices and commodification of international education. According to the writer, a number of US universities use academic agents to attract international students; 37% of institutions rely on agents. These universities get 22% of their international students through educational agents. Although many of these universities depend on agents for international students, the majority of them are concerned about the potential risk of fraud. They are also concerned about lack of trust, risk of reputation, financial matters, accountability, and others. This report also highlights that lower-listed institutions struggle to attract international students and start offering foundation courses. Moreover, many of those institutions face financial pressure and use these pathway programs for their benefit. For instance, Western Kentucky University recruited Indian students through agents without proper quality control, and nearly half of them were subsequently sent back home due to their failure to meet the minimum academic requirements. However, the increasing tendency to commercialize recruiting international students raises the risk of exploitation and corruption. International students who are less familiar with the recruitment process are the main vulnerable ones to these kinds of fraudulent practices. After reading this report, I can understand how various lower-listed educational institutions target international students for their financial benefit through agents.

It also reveals the sufferings of underinformed learners, which will help explore the experiences of private institutions' Bangladeshi graduates in Denmark.

Impacts on Students

Sherry et al. (2010) conducted a qualitative study on the challenges faced by international students at Toledo University, USA. The study reveals several difficulties encountered by these foreign students during their academic journey. The common challenges that most of the students were facing are language and cultural barriers, financial crises, feelings of isolation, and the absence of social support. The study also finds out that because of the differences in speaking, they were unable to communicate effectively, and they feel isolated and lonely due to a lack of cultural understanding. These challenges hindered their ability to navigate the academic and social environments of the new society, ultimately impacting their psychological well-being. After reviewing this study, I can utilize the knowledge from this article about what types of challenges are facing Bangladeshi students who are studying in different private colleges in Denmark.

In an article, Alasmari (2023) examines the psychological and cultural challenges in non-Western academic settings of international students in Saudi Arabia. The author explains several psychological difficulties of foreign students, such as nostalgia, homesickness, loneliness, depression, anxiety, and stress, which affect their capability to express themselves in academic and social spheres. The study also examines that language barriers and cultural shock are significant obstacles for the students in navigating their everyday activities in the host society and country. The investigation offers insightful information regarding the challenges of international students abroad. This information can assist me in exploring the numerous difficulties that Bangladeshi students face in Danish private education settings.

Akhtaruzzaman & Hoque (2012) conducted a study to examine the challenges faced by Bangladeshi students who are studying in Malaysia. The study reveals several difficulties of those students, including difficulties in maintaining work and study, workload in the time of exams, technical issues in study, various academic demands, financial challenges in managing tuition fees and supporting themselves, loneliness, cultural differences, and language barriers. The authors explore that all of these factors have a direct or indirect impact on the physical and mental well-being of students. However, the study also reveals their strategies of navigation and adaptation to overcome these obstacles, such as doing part-time work to manage tuition fees and support themselves. Besides, they manage their time of work

and study effectively to adapt to the new environmental settings. By reviewing this article, I can reflect on how Bangladeshi students are facing difficulties in private colleges in Denmark in the social and psychological spheres and how they are trying to overcome these challenges.

A study conducted by Calonge et al. (2023) examines the employment challenges and opportunities as well as future prospects of international graduates. The authors explain that many countries seek foreign talent to cover their shortages of labour in various sectors. Despite the considerable amount of money, the students invest in their education, many international graduates face challenges and difficulties in their transition into the host country's labour market. The study reveals that the restrictive and complex visa regulations negatively impact many students. Temporary visas, such as student visas, often lack the pathway to permanent residency and employment security. The authors argue that many host countries give priority to temporary work facilities, which makes it challenging for immediate graduates to get secure and stable jobs or transition into permanent status. These policies work as a significant obstruction and discourage international students from staying and working long-term. According to the authors, a big challenge is the disconnection between the knowledge that international graduates achieve and what employers demand. While many graduates possess technical knowledge or academic skills, they often lack the practical, local-market experience that employers require. This gap is often attributed to curricula that do not adequately prepare students for the particular demands of the local job market or the fewer opportunities for internships, placements, or cooperative education. Language is another barrier for international students getting jobs. Many employers demand the host country's language proficiency to ensure a better work environment and maintain smooth communication. Due to these challenges, many of them become uncertain about the future and could not get into the host country's labor market. The insights from this article could assist me in explaining the employment challenges and difficulties faced by Bangladeshi students studying in private colleges in Denmark, as well as their future prospects after graduation.

The existing literature has provided very important insights into different aspects and the role of educational consultancy and fraudulent practices in higher education. Besides, some literature reveals the challenges, difficulties and impacts of students studying abroad. In this chapter, I also find the use of methodology and theories to examine the fraudulent practices of agencies and their impacts on students. The majority of the literature concentrates on the function of international education consultancy in diverse countries. However, there are very

few resources about the role and fraudulent practices of Bangladeshi educational consultancy. Notably, according to my searching, there is little evidence of any scholarly work so far in the Bangladeshi context. Hence, the study should explore the role of Bangladeshi educational consultancy, fraudulent practices in higher education, and what impacts these practices have on Bangladeshi students' personal and academic lives here in Denmark. Additionally, to conduct the study, I could employ qualitative research methodology to examine the experience of students, and for the interpretation of data, I could use the agency theory and the concept of migration infrastructure.

Analytical Design

I will discuss the process of data analysis in this section of analytical design. I have selected four themes based on the collected data, namely information hiding, consultancies as push actors in migration and negligence in post-arrival assistance, psychological distress, and uncertainty of the future. Similarly, according to the collected data, I have chosen four theories that are relevant to this study. In the first two themes, I will discuss the fraudulent practices of educational consultancies with potential students and their families in Bangladesh. Agency theory will assist me in interpreting data related to the misinformation and misleading activities of educational consultancies in Bangladesh, as well as the concept of migration infrastructure, which helps to examine how different actors across national and international borders facilitate migration. In the last two themes, which focus on psychological distress and uncertainty about the future, I will discuss the difficulties students face after arriving in Denmark. In some cases, they are worried about the future. The acculturation theory and social identity theory will help me to explore the impacts of consultancies' fraudulent practices on students' personal and academic lives in Denmark as well as the identity negotiation and the process of integration of Bangladeshi private colleges' students in Denmark. Additionally, I will connect the data with some previously published relevant literature to validate the findings.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a systematic way of explaining, examining, organizing, and interpreting collected data to extract patterns and insights (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). It often involves identifying themes and patterns in non-numerical data such as interview transcripts. Békés & Kézdi (2020) also explain in their study that the analytical process refers to the systematic data collection, refining, organization, interpretation, and visualization of the data to help illustrate and understand the outcomes. In this section I will discuss the data analysis part of the study. To ensure anonymity, I referred to the respondents as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, Respondent 3, Respondent 4, Respondent 5 and Respondent 6.

Information Hiding

According to agency theory, agents may have much more access to information and detailed knowledge about their abilities and work realities than principals. They may use this information and skill, focusing on their interest. This can create a mismatch of what the principal expected from them and what the agent is actually performing (Kivistö, 2008). In this study, the respondents discussed their experiences that consultancies hide or did not share much information regarding admission at state-approved institutions in Denmark. Danish universities mandate a match in ECTS and other criteria prior to admitting students, a requirement that private colleges do not impose. Besides, I find out from the respondents that many consultancies have agreements with private colleges, and if they send students, the particular consultancy would get a percentage of revenue from these institutions. Respondent 2 shared

"Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College has agreements with many consultancies in Bangladesh; if they send students, they will get a certain amount of money."

"I know they have a connection to our college. We heard that they get a percentage of the amount from the tuition fee if they send a student to IBA" Respondent 5.

Moreover, it is easier to get admission to private colleges in Denmark for a bachelor's programme compared to this at Danish universities. According to respondent 1

"One important thing is, as far as I know, CBC (Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College) doesn't assess about ECTS or background where these are mandatory at Danish universities."

As per the contract with students, if they get admission and a visa, students must pay the service charges of consultancies. Due to these reasons, when a student goes to any consultancies for suggestions and assistance for higher study in Denmark, they direct the

student to private colleges and hide the information of Danish universities. Wit (2016) writes in the well-known academic journal 'Inside Higher Ed' about the growing trend of dependency in commercial agencies on recruiting international students. He added that lower-listed institutions struggle to attract international students and start offering foundation courses. Moreover, many of those institutions face financial pressure and use pathway programmes for their benefit. For instance, Western Kentucky University recruited Indian students through agents without proper quality control, and nearly half of them were subsequently sent back home due to their failure to meet the minimum academic requirements (Wit, 2016). The respondents of this research said that they were academically capable enough to apply to bachelor's programmes at reputed Danish universities. However, due to misguidance and misinformation, they were forced to apply to and attend private colleges instead. Respondent 1 shared,

"On top of this, I must say that they did not provide me with proper information about Danish universities. They told me that I am only eligible to apply on Niels Brock for a bachelor. But after coming here, I get to know about Danish universities that one can apply for a bachelor's program if he or she has completed 13 years of education in their home country I completed the first year of my bachelor's at National University in Bangladesh. This meant that I was qualified to apply to public universities in Denmark. But they lied to me about this. They focus mainly on visa ratio rather than quality education."

An agent might pursue a high-risk task with the hope of a high return, as he knows that the impact of losses will fall on the principal, not on them. This kind of action can undermine the principal's long-term interests by favouring the agents' short-term benefits (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). I have found a reflection of this in my study. In Bangladesh, many educational consultancies give false assurances to potential students and their families, such as about quality education, lifestyles, careers, and future establishments. Though I am the researcher of this study, I also have almost similar experience with consultancies back in Bangladesh. The respondents shared that when they visited consultancies for guidance and other assistance, most of them (consultancies) concealed a lot of truth about Denmark. In addition to this, they gave students false hopes and dreams. Respondent 1 shared his experience

"They said that I could easily get PR in Denmark. This is particularly beneficial for students hailing from developing countries. They also said that after staying 7-8 years in Denmark,

you could get Danish PR. But they did not mention that a student from CBC could not stay 7-8 years in Denmark. We can only extend our stay by 6 months after completing a 3-year bachelor's degree."

According to Jensen & Meckling (1976), agents (consultancies) did these types of activities to benefit themselves, and they are well aware that the outcomes of these decisions will fall on the principals (students). Similar activities of educational consultancies have been found in other countries. Serra Hagedorn & Zhang (2011) discuss in their article the increasing tendency of international students' mobility, especially highlighting Chinese students who are studying in the USA. This study explores the experience of Chinese students who use agents (widely known consultancy) to go abroad for higher study and also highlights the role of these agents in the process. The researchers reveal in their study that many of the agents take fees from both students and university sides, which creates conflicts of interest. Additionally, some of these agents provide incorrect and misleading information about universities and the future prospects of students in the USA (Serra Hagedorn & Zhang, 2011).

Agents often prioritize their own financial interests over the interests of students, potentially leading them towards an uncertain future (Bista, 2017). Respondent 4 has stated,

"Basically, many consultancies in Bangladesh advertise that after completing studies, you will get a 3-year job searching period to find a job. But they do not mention that it is only for Danish university students, not for all, including private students. I believe there is a significant amount of information being concealed."

Consultancies as Push Actors in Migration and Negligence in Post-arrival Assistance.

According to Glick Schiller & Salazar (2013) migration infrastructures form the pathways of migration, and the experiences of migrated people make smoother or more compelling their move across national boundaries and within society. They also asserted that the interconnected ties of networks and interactions, which facilitate mobility, shape the process of migration. These networks include family ties, community organizations, and social contacts that provide essential materials and information (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013). In my study, I reflected on the perspective of Glick Schiller & Salazar (2013), where I found that various infrastructures, including family, society, state, and consultancies, collectively push participants towards mobility and facilitate the migration process for students abroad. These infrastructures play a role as active factors which influence individuals to make decisions and make migration possible and profitable for the individuals. In this process,

consultancies act as mediators which influence the students' migration process and purposes of mobility. I found in this study that educational consultancies in Bangladesh serve as a brand ambassador of a foreign country or educational institution. They advertised on banners, festoons and their social media platforms the positivity about a particular country and institution to attract students. According to respondent 2

"After a few days, I found a consultancy that shared a picture of one of my close friends on their social media pages who got a Danish student visa through them. After that, my family and I decided to take the services from this consultancy."

This significantly influences how students and their families make decisions about pursuing higher education overseas. According to Thieme (2017) international student mobility serves as a vital livelihood strategy for middle-class youth and their families in Nepal. This article underscores the role of educational consultants and their effect on students' migration process. Dahal (2023) explains in his article that consultancies convince students and their families by telling them about the value and importance of higher education abroad. He also finds out that most of these agencies recruit and motivate candidates by offering them various opportunities, such as better job facilities, permanent residency, quality education, and lifestyles. According to participant 1,

"Another thing is that, during my first meeting with them, they showed me some pictures of a student who is studying here; he earns almost 15-20 thousand DKK per month, and after paying his tuition fees, he could have a handsome amount for himself. This story greatly influenced my belief that I could not only complete my higher education in Denmark but also earn a substantial salary"

When consultancies (agents) convince students (principals) to migrate, they start working on behalf of those students. As an actor of migration infrastructure, consultancies do all the bureaucratic work for students to facilitate migration. They help students choose subjects, organize documentation, submit applications, and more. According to Kamble & Bobade (2020) educational consultancies offer various facilities to their customers (students), namely profile matching (suggesting the course and university) and documentation (assisting in applications and visas). Respondent 5 said,

"They helped me throughout the whole process in Bangladesh. They helped us to choose a college and select subjects. They applied at the college on behalf of us. After getting the offer letter, they helped me to ready the whole file for submission at the embassy."

According to Jensen & Meckling (1976) agency theory emphasizes the challenge posed by unequal access to information, known as information asymmetry, and the potential for opportunistic behavior in the relationship between agents and principals. Agents may possess significantly more information and in-depth understanding of their capabilities and work environment compared to principals. They may use this information and skill, focusing on their interest. This can create a mismatch of what the principal expected from them and what the agent is actually performing (Kivistö, 2008). Educational consultancies have more access to information and expertise regarding study in abroad. Usually, educational consultancies use this information and expertise to benefit themselves. To attract students, they offered and promised them various facilities before and after coming to Denmark. The respondents expressed their experiences that consultancies said they have agents or partners in Denmark, and they will help the students find accommodation and jobs and provide initial support. Respondent 4 shared his experience

"My consultancy said that they would assist me in finding a place to live. Because I had no friends or relatives here in Denmark. But at the end, they did not talk about this matter."

Most of the students do not have any friends and family members in the destination country. Besides, they do not have proper knowledge about the new country. In this circumstance, they expect someone to assist them in their initial days, such as receiving them at the airport, finding a place to live, etc. Educational consultancy picks up these points as opportunities and gives assurances to help in these matters. But at the end, they (consultancies) do not fulfil their promises, which is called "opportunistic behavior" within the relationship between agent (consultancy) and principal (student) (Kivistö, 2008). Respondent 1 shared,

"However, almost all Bangladeshi consultancies told students they have agents in Denmark. They will help students to get housing, jobs, and all the initial supports. But the reality is totally opposite. The consultancy does not offer any assistance to students further. As they have our contact information, sometimes they knock on us to give them other students who are willing to come to Denmark. Otherwise, they never ask anything about what I am doing here. Do I manage the job? They ask nothing about these."

Psychological Distress

A house is a personal place for an individual where he or she can feel privacy and freedom. Additionally, it provides people with a feeling of mental peace and lessens stress. It's a key foundation of individuals' dignity, strength, and self-determination. Living as sublets with others affects individuals' decisions on various everyday issues, which restricts their movements within the house and negatively impacts their psychological well-being. As a result, people experience tension, instability, anxiety, and depression; Berry identified it as "acculturation stress' (Berry, 2005). In this study, I found similar experiences among my study respondents: they are not allowed to get any houses from the Danish student housing authority because they are studying at non-Danish-authorised educational institutions. According to respondent 1,

"I live in private houses, which are expensive compared to student housing. Additionally, we are restricted from many things in a shared rented house. So, it is a hassle for me because I feel like I do not have freedom."

Acculturative stress refers to the negative mental condition experienced by individuals as they attempt to adapt to and navigate a new cultural society. They may face difficulties in adopting new culture and behavior, which leads to conflicts, uncertainty, stress, and depression (Berry, 1997). Since student housing benefits are not available for the private colleges' students, they are forced to live in rented houses with others, which is more expensive for them. On top of that, students feel less freedom and find themselves controlled and restricted in many things, which affects them psychologically. Similar results have been found in other studies. Franzoi et al. (2022) also explored the same issues in their studies: individuals' housing conditions not only play a significant role in their overall well-being but also lead to various physical and mental problems such as depression and anxiety.

Besides, after arriving in Denmark, students of private institutions experience the reality, which is almost opposite of what they dreamt of before, because there are many complexities in the process of doing a master's at Danish universities for them. Additionally, the job-searching period after graduation is very limited, which hampers students' ability to think clearly about their careers. It leads to a loss of motivation or inspiration to do well in building their careers. As a result, students experience anxiety and a sense of failure in life, which affects their mental growth as well as their internal identity. Respondent 2 shared

"I will get a 6-month job searching period after finishing my bachelor's degree. I will look for a job during that time; if I find a job, I will try to work and settle down here. But I think 6-months is not enough to find out a job with a degree from a private college. So, I am not sure what will happen in future."

According to Jenkins (2014), there is a constant tension between internal and external identity. Internal identity means how we perceive ourselves, while external identity refers to how other people view us. I found the reflection of it in my study. Respondents of the study bear a huge amount of expense for their education and expect to build their career in the Danish or global job market after completing studies. But as they are not studying in state-approved educational institutions, their degree is not considered to be at a standard Danish level. These situations lead to a sense of discrimination, anxiety, and stress among the students. Respondent 1 shared in this regard,

"But the reality is quite different for us. I need to pay almost 100 thousand DKK in tuition fees every year. It is huge amount for us and in return we get a certificate which is not Danish standard level. So, we are not eligible to do a master's here. I could not stay longer than 6 months in Denmark after finishing my bachelor's degree."

After coming abroad, any international students can feel initial isolation as they are not close to their family and known environment. This isolation can become more intense if international students perceive the host environment as significantly more challenging than they had anticipated before arriving abroad. Difficulties such as struggling to manage jobs and financial constraints lead international students to experience a sense of isolation and stress, which limits their ability to engage with the new culture (Berry, 2005, 1997). I identified it in my study where the respondents feel isolated because they were unable to manage a job to support themselves as well as face difficulties finding a place to live. These challenges lead them to the state of separation. According to Berry (1997), separation is that strategy where individuals choose to maintain strong connections to their own culture and identity as well as desist from engaging with the new culture. He also explains that separation occurs during the acculturation process when individuals feel socially isolated and stressed. Separation can lead individuals to experience intermediate levels of acclimation and acculturative stress. In a study Alasmari (2023) explains several psychological difficulties of foreign students, such as nostalgia, homesickness, loneliness, depression, anxiety, and stress, which affect their capability to express themselves in academic and social spheres. The study

conducted by Richardson et al. (2017) has explored a similar thing: financial difficulties are linked to higher levels of depression, stress, and anxiety in most undergraduates in Britain over time. According to Respondent 2,

"My loneliness intensified when I realized that I had been unable to manage both my house and job for nearly a month. It was such a tough time for me. I am from a middle-class family, so I need to do some part-time jobs along with study to support my own expenses. I was jobless for almost 3 to 4 months."

The respondents come from relatively warmer weather; they feel colder compared to Bangladesh, seasonal affective disorders, and these physical discomforts show as a symbol of not belonging, which led to psychological distress, loneliness, and anxiety. Moreover, food is an important element of culture. When people do not have access to familiar food, they experience a sense of disruption of self-understanding, one kind of internal identity crisis. Besides, external identity requires recognition from others; poor communication skills or language proficiency can result in being ignored or rejected, which can lead to stress, loneliness, and anxiety (Jenkins, 2014). Jenkins' identity perspective reflects on this study. According to Jenkins (2014), all human identities are fundamentally social, formed through interactions, innovations, agreements, disagreements, customs, norms, negotiations, and communication. He mainly emphasizes that internal identity means how we perceive ourselves, while external identity refers to how other people view us. The weather, food, and cultures are entirely different in Denmark compared to Bangladesh, which implies the cultural shock and acculturative stress (Berry, 2005, 1997) in a new cultural environment. And these cultural shocks and acculturation stress lead to loss of the confidence of people to form relationships with others, impact on building internal and external identity (Jenkins, 2014), loss of the quality of getting a job, and affect psychological well-being. Similar challenges and difficulties have found in other studies. According to Alasmari (2023), psychological and cultural challenges in academic settings impose several mental difficulties on foreign students, such as nostalgia, homesickness, loneliness, depression, anxiety, and stress, which affect their capability to express themselves in academic and social spheres. Weather, language barriers, and cultural differences (food) are mostly responsible for these psychological difficulties (Alasmari, 2023). Akhtaruzzaman & Hoque (2012) conducted a study to examine the challenges faced by Bangladeshi students who are studying in Malaysia. He reveals several difficulties among those students, including loneliness, cultural differences, and language barriers.

Respondents have shared that

"When I came to Denmark, the weather was so different from my home country. It was frigid compared to Bangladesh. So, I faced some difficulties with a dry skin problem initially. Another thing is food; for the first couple of months in Kolding, I was dependent on chicken only. As a Muslim, I consume halal food, but locating it in Kolding is challenging due to the scarcity of halal meat shops." Respondent 6.

"I have visited so many shops, restaurants, and other places for a job, but first of all, many of them ask me about my Danish language skills. Lack of Danish language skills is a drawback for our ability to get a job." Respondent 4.

Uncertainty of the Future

Calonge et al. (2023) explored in his study that despite the considerable amount of investment the students make in their education, many international graduates face challenges and difficulties in their transition into the host country's labor market. I have found similarities in my study. Generally, a graduate wants to do further study or enter into a job market related to their study, stay legally in the country, gather professional experience, and ensure a stable and prosperous future either in the host country or globally. Respondent 4 shared

"I want to complete my bachelor's degree here in Denmark. I have completed the first semester already, and I am pleased with my overall performance in the exam. I want to do further studies in Denmark and enter the job market here."

However, many international students do not get these facilities, which affect them psychologically, and these lead to them experiencing stress, anxiety, mental pressure, and loss of identity. I found the reflection of this in the berry's marginalization strategy, where he explained marginalization is a strategy in which people do not intertwine with both the culture of origin and the new culture. This strategy can emerge when there is neither social reception nor enough accumulation to integrate into either cultural community. Marginalized people may encounter the highest levels of acculturative stress along with weakened adaptation, which drives various negative psychological issues such as anxiety, frustration, stress, loneliness, and so on (Berry, 2005, 1997). Respondent 1 shared his experience.

"We cannot do anything with this degree in Denmark. I don't know what will happen to me. Here we pay a huge amount of money to study, but no one knows what will come after that.

However, I want to finish my study now; then I want to complete my master's here, if
possible, but I don't know if that opportunity will come; if not, I have to go back to
Bangladesh."

Berry (1997) refers to the sociocultural adaptation of individual ability to adjust to the social norms and values in the new culture. It includes various things, such as educational institutes' environments, building friendships (networks), and participating in community activities. People often try to negotiate through sociocultural adaptation in new cultural settings, such as learning language, building networks, and so on. However, the adaptation process can be hindered if the future is uncertain, including internships, post-graduation employment, and residency. I found similar reflections in my study, where respondents shared their experiences. Internships or cooperative education prepare graduates for the application of their learned knowledge, build up professional connections and job market understanding, improve problem-solving skills, and bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world experience. However, many students do not get these facilities in their educational institutions, which affects them professionally and psychologically. These also reduce their employability and make it difficult for them to enter the job market. As a result, they feel isolated, depressed, and uncertain about the future (Berry, 2005). According to Calonge et al. (2023), many graduates possess technical knowledge or academic skills, but they often lack the practical, local-market experience that employers require. This gap is often attributed to curricula that do not adequately prepare students for the particular demands of the local job market or the fewer opportunities for internships, placements, or cooperative education. Anjum (2020) explored similar things in her study that internship programs help students with personal growth and professional skills development. Respondent 6 shared

"I will try to complete higher education in another country. Because there is no security for
the future, I will get 6 months time to search for a job after finishing my bachelor's. But
without an internship, it is not possible to get a job in any company. So, it is quite difficult to
do an internship and find a job within 6 months. When I think about all this, I find it difficult
to concentrate on my studies effectively."

Uncertainty about the future is itself a stressor that drives individuals toward marginalization. According to Berry (1997;2005), marginalization is a strategy in which people do not intertwine with both the culture of origin and the new culture. This strategy can emerge when there is neither social reception nor enough accumulation to integrate into either cultural

community; as a result, people experience the highest level of stress, anxiety, loneliness, and uncertainty. I have found the reflection of this in my study, where respondents shared their experiences regarding the temporary job-searching period after completing the study. It hampers them from being stable and focusing on career prosperity. Additionally, it leaves students in a brittle position and impacts mental health and sense of belonging (Jenkins, 2014). Moreover, many host countries give priority to temporary work facilities, which makes it challenging for immediate graduates to get secure and stable jobs or transition into permanent status. Students of private institutions are given only a six-month job-searching period, which they believe is not sufficient to find a job. These policies work as a significant obstruction and discourage international students from staying and working long-term (Calonge et al. 2023). Temporary work stay refers to a short-time legal stay for an international student after completing study. It not only offers a limited opportunity for international students to find study-related jobs, but it also creates pressure, imposes limitations, and generates uncertainty about their future, which contributes to their marginalization. Alif et al. (2019) explored similar things in their study; they explained that temporary work visas after study create a fear of deportation, high psychological distress, lower self-esteem, and less concentration on academic activities and performance among students (Alif et al. 2019). Respondent 5 shared his experience.

"I do not know whether I will get this opportunity in the near future. As far as I know, we are not eligible to do a master's at any Danish university with a bachelor's degree from a private college. In terms of seeking jobs, I will get only six months to find a job relevant to my study; this time is not sufficient, it is challenging to predict future events. I don't know what will happen in the near future. In fact, I am deeply concerned about everything."

Conclusion

In this section of the study, the research question will be answered in accordance with the data analysis based on the four different themes. The fraudulent practices of educational consultancies in Bangladesh with the students planning to go abroad and the impacts of these practices on students' academic and personal lives can be understood by exploring the experiences of affected students who have gotten the services of these consultancies back in Bangladesh.

I have found that educational consultancies in Bangladesh mislead students by providing misinformation and concealing the truth. Potential students who are willing to go abroad for higher studies often rely on consultancies. They take the assistance of these consultancies for many reasons, such as lack of proper information, intricate application and visa processes, and psychological comfort. Similar activities of educational consultancies have found in other literature. Serra Hagedorn & Zhang, (2011) find out that Chinese students mostly depend on academic agents to choose and apply to US universities. All of these agents work as mediators and help them with profiling (matching with academic background and goals). Bista (2017) examines the role of educational agents helping Nepalese students preparing to study in the US. It highlights the useful impacts of these agents on students, how they are assisting learners in the preparation process, including choosing institutions, selecting courses, submitting applications, and getting important documents such as bank statements and visas. However, in many cases agencies take it as an opportunity and exploit students by providing misinformation for their own interests, including commission from their partner institutions. According to Kivistö, (2008), agency theory emphasizes the challenge of unequal access to information, which is information asymmetry and opportunistic behavior within the relationship between agent and principal. Because agents may have much more access to information and detailed knowledge of their ability and work reality than principals. They may use this information and skill, focusing on their own interest. I have found that some students had the adequate qualifications for applying to Danish universities, but the agencies hid the truth and influenced the students to apply to private colleges. Because the application process and chance of admission are higher in these colleges compared to public universities, allowing agencies to receive a high percentage of commission from their partner institutions for as many students as they can provide. Moreover, consultancies said to the students that they would get a three-year job-searching period after study, but the truth is this facility is only applicable for master's-level students at Danish universities. Additionally, they also

mislead students that they could do a master's at Danish universities after completing a bachelor's at private colleges, but the reality is different; there are some complexities in doing a master's with a bachelor's degree from a private college. Furthermore, many consultancies assured students that they would provide them with initial support, such as receiving them at airports, finding a place to live, and managing jobs in Denmark, as they have agents here. But the consultancies maintain a safe distance from the students after getting their service charges.

I also explored the impacts of these practices on students' personal and academic lives, such as loneliness, psychological distress, uncertainty about the future, and so on. The private colleges' students do not get student housing benefits anymore; they have to live in shared apartments with others where they are more controlled and restricted in many things by the owner, which makes them less free. Besides, some students came to Kolding due to the influence of consultancies, and they have been jobless for a long time. They struggle to support themselves, which leads them to psychological distress, anxiety, a sense of isolation, and loneliness. According to acculturation theory (Berry, 1997) stress is the negative mental condition of individual when they try to adapt and navigate to a new cultural society. They may face difficulties such as discrimination, language barriers and conflicts of interest between their cultural belief and these of the host environment. I found other literature where they reveal the similar difficulties and challenges of international students. Sherry et al. (2010) reveals several difficulties encountered by foreign students during their academic journey. The common challenges that most of the students were facing are language and cultural barriers, financial crises, feelings of isolation, and the absence of social support. Alasmari (2023) examines several psychological difficulties of foreign students, such as nostalgia, homesickness, loneliness, depression, anxiety, and stress, which affect their capability to express themselves in academic and social spheres. Apart from this, there are some difficulties in doing a master's in Danish universities with a bachelor's degree from a state-non-approved educational institution. Because of these matters, they are uncertain regarding the future and encountering difficulties focusing on their studies. All of these hamper their integration process into the native Bangladeshi community and broader Danish society.

While this study has explored the fraudulent practices of educational consultancies in Bangladesh and their impacts on the academic and psychological lives of students studying at private colleges in Denmark, it can also suggest related areas for future research. Such as a

study could be conducted to identify the factors that lead students to be exploited by educational consultancies in Bangladesh. In addition to this, potential researchers could focus on understanding the role of social networks in the spread of misinformation and advertisement by educational consultancies.

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Appendixes

#Interview 1

Date - 20/02/2025

Time - 10:00am to 10:45am

Interview Place - Norrebro Library.

Pseudonym: Tarek (a student of Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College)

1)Could you explain your journey of coming to Denmark, including your background, how you chose a consultancy and your initial interactions with them?

My name is Nahid, and I am a student at Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College. I came here in September 2023 for my bachelor's study; my major is business management. I have been here for more than one and a half years.

My journey to study abroad was a lengthy one, involving numerous visits to various consultancies. I went and talked to them, heard about their success stories, and learned how many students they have sent into various countries, including Denmark. Some of the candidates were my friends. So, sometimes my friends suggested me to go to these consultancies. I chose one among all the others at the suggestion of one of my friends. I went there with my parents. The consultancy wanted to see all my documents. Then, they told me that I can get the visa easily because my profile is good. Later, they talked about the facilities in Denmark and the income ratio. They also discussed their processing fees. It was 80 thousand Bangladeshi taka.

I went there two or three times. Most of the time, I communicated with them via WhatsApp, as I was employed at that time by an educational institution. When they needed any information or documents from my side, they just asked me via WhatsApp, and I sent them without visiting their office. I talked to them about studying in Denmark, initially they asked me to send them academic certificates, transcripts, IELTS results, and a working certificate, as I was working for an educational institution. Later, they called me to send them my passport.

2)What kinds of assistance did you get from the consultancy and how did their promises compare to your real experiences in Denmark?

As per my own experience and also hearing from some of my friends, most of the consultancies in Bangladesh take extra money and provide wrong information about college and university. Sometimes they take more money as tuition fees from students because 1st semester tuition fees need to be paid before coming to Denmark. The majority of students pay their first tuition fees through the agency. In this case, my consultancy did not take an extra amount of money as I paid all the fees, such as tuition fees, case order ID fees, VFS fees, and all the things by myself. In addition to this, I must say that they help me whenever I need them in time. The most important thing is that they handled all the necessary tasks for me. I just told them that I want to study in Denmark, and then they choose my college, subject, and submit an application for admission. They said to me that I do not need to take any pressure regarding anything; they will take over everything. I told them that I am a science background student; I would love to study in any science-related subject, but they said that it will make the process harder for me from application to visa. It is better to get admission in business management, though I don't have any previous touch with this subject. One important thing is, as far as I know, Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College doesn't assess about ECTS or background where these are mandatory at Danish universities. On top of this, I must say that they did not provide me with proper information about Danish universities. They told me that I am only eligible to apply on Niels Brock for a bachelor. But after coming here, I get to know about Danish universities that one can apply for a bachelor's program if he or she has completed 13 years of education in their home country. I completed the first year of my bachelor's at National University in Bangladesh. This meant that I was qualified to apply to public universities in Denmark. But they lied to me about this. They focus mainly on visa ratio rather than quality education.

I don't have any contact with them now. It is very common in Bangladesh that when students get visas, they just pay the processing fees of consultancy. Take all the documents provided to them previously. However, almost all Bangladeshi consultancies told students they have agents in Denmark. They will help students to get housing, jobs, and all the initial supports. But the reality is totally opposite. The consultancy does not offer any assistance to students further. As they have our contact information, sometimes they knock on us to give them other students who are willing to come to Denmark. Otherwise, they never ask anything about what

I am doing here. Do I manage the job? They ask nothing about these. I don't have any idea of how many Bangladeshi students are studying in my college.

3)How did you navigate essential aspects of life in Denmark such as accommodation, work and settling in during your first couple of months?

They talk about many things to attract students; they said that I could easily get PR in Denmark. This is particularly beneficial for students hailing from developing countries. They also said that after staying 7-8 years in Denmark, you could get Danish PR. But they did not mention that a student from Niels Brock could not stay 7-8 years in Denmark. We can only extend our stay by 6 months after completing a 3-year bachelor's degree. Another thing is that we cannot do a master's at Danish universities, as they do not recognize Niels Brock's degrees as the equivalent of Danish standards. So, there is very little chance to pursue a master's in Denmark after finishing a bachelor's at Niels Brock. But consultancy never talked about these realities during the processing time. Another thing is that, during my first meeting with them, they showed me some pictures of a student who is studying here; he earns almost 15-20 thousand DKK per month, and after paying his tuition fees, he could have a handsome amount for himself. This story greatly influenced my belief that I could not only complete my higher education in Denmark but also earn a substantial salary. But the reality is very hard. It is not so easy to manage a job here because many employers require Danish language as a quality to get hired. Besides, a student never earns 15–20,000 DKK per month because we are allowed to work 90 hours a month. So, there is a huge gap between what they said before coming to Denmark and what the actual situation is here. Moreover, they mention that Denmark is one of the happiest countries in the world. So, you don't think about housing and jobs. Apart from this, our own agents will guide you always. But the reality is Niels Brock's students do not get students housing benefits. We could not apply for housing in student housing because Danish authorities do not accept Niels Brock's degrees as equivalent to other Danish institutions. So, we started to rely on rented houses. We live in private houses, which are expensive compared to student housing. Additionally, we are restricted from many things in a shared rented house. So, it is a hassle for me because I feel like I do not have freedom. Another thing is related to jobs; they said to me that Denmark has lots of job opportunities, but they did not talk about Danish language skills being nearly mandatory for getting jobs. I visited numerous shops and restaurants for a job, but almost all of these asked me about Danish skills, which I do not have. As far as I know, an international student

doesn't face a language barrier in terms of getting jobs in other countries like the UK, USA, and Canada.

4)What are your future plans and how has your experience in Denmark shaped your outlook on your career and education?

As Niels Brock's students do not get the student housing facilities, we mainly depend on rented houses for living. When I knew that I got a Danish visa, I was looking for housing. We have some Bangladeshi community-based organizations in Denmark. They have their social media platform to communicate within the community. I was lucky that I managed my housing through community assistance in Denmark. However, to get a job, I walked into almost hundreds of shops and restaurants in Copenhagen. The job market in Denmark is extremely competitive for international students.

Initially I thought that I would stay in Denmark for higher study. When I was visiting consultancy firm, they said that Denmark is one of the best countries in the world. There is a lot of job opportunity, and one can easily settle down here. I can lead a healthy life here because Denmark provides free treatment for all its residents. But the reality is quite different for us. I need to pay almost 100 thousand DKK in tuition fees every year. It is huge amount for us and in return we get a certificate which is not Danish standard level. So, we are not eligible to do a master's here. I could not stay longer than 6 months in Denmark after finishing my bachelor's degree. Either I have to move to another country or Bangladesh. However, we are unable to pursue any further education in Bangladesh, as the country typically requires a 4-year bachelor's degree. To be honest, I am worried about my future. Actually, I am in a fix about what to do. Before coming to Denmark, I was unaware that I could not complete my master's here; even my consultancy did not talk about it to me. I think Niels Brock is a nightmare for South Asian students because the majority of international students at this college are from the Indian subcontinent. The education system and pattern of this college is different and based in the UK, does not meet the Danish standard for international students. We cannot do anything with this degree in Denmark. I don't know what will happen to me. This is not only my situation; it is the problem of almost every student at this college. Here we pay a huge amount of money to study, but no one knows what will come after that. However, I want to finish my study now; then I want to complete my master's here, if possible, but I don't know if that opportunity will come; if not, I will go back to Bangladesh.

#Interview NO. 2

05/03/2025

Time- 14:00 to 14:55

Interview Place- Veksovej.

Pseudonym: Arafat (a student of Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College)

1)Could you explain your journey of coming to Denmark, including your background, how you chose a consultancy and your initial interactions with them?

My name is Arafat. I am from Sylhet, Bangladesh. I completed my higher secondary in 2022, and my background was science. I came here in September 2023 as a bachelor student at Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College in Denmark. My major is business management, and I have completed three semesters so far.

We are three siblings. My elder brother is studying in Canada, and my younger sister is studying in Bangladesh. After completing my higher secondary school certificate, parents thought to send me abroad for higher education. At first, I wanted to do everything related to the application myself. But I was a little bit confused about whether I would be able to do it properly. So, I decided to have the processing done by an experienced person. I was looking for a reliable consultancy in my hometown. After a few days, I found a consultancy that shared a picture of one of my close friends on their social media pages who got a Danish student visa through them. Then, I communicated with my friend and asked him about all the services he has gotten from this agency. After that, my family and I decided to take the services from this consultancy.

I visited their office approximately 7/8 times. Sometimes they give me 30 minutes, sometimes for an hour. I have also interacted with them online on many occasions. Besides, I give them all my academic certificates, along with my national identity card and passport. Furthermore, I provided them my IELTS results. If they needed additional details, they reached out to me online, and I provided them.

2)What types of support did the consultancy offer, and do you still maintain contact with them?

For studying abroad, our family discussed the US, Australia, and European countries. I did not go to Australia due to some limitations; my family wanted me to go to Canada since my elder brother is in there. But I wanted to come to Europe. Within Europe, I wanted to go to either the UK or Denmark. Despite Denmark being a Danish-speaking country, English is the most widely spoken language in these two countries. I showed them all my academic certificates and told them about my interest in studying in these two countries. They told me that I can easily go if I want to study in Denmark because my academic profile is excellent. They added that I can apply only at Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College in Denmark because I studied 12 years in Bangladesh. To apply to a public university in Denmark, I need to have a minimum of 13 years of education. Since I completed my higher secondary education, that is, 12 years. I had this option in Denmark. Then we discussed selecting a subject; they looked at my academic certificates and said that I would get a chance in business management because it would go with me. Moreover, I have an agreement with them that they will do all the processing for me, and after I get my visa, I will pay them 80 thousand Bangladeshi taka as remuneration. I pay this money after I get my visa. They helped me in many ways; first, they assisted me in selecting the country. Then they helped me choose my college and subject. They applied for me since I have to apply with a lot of information. I gave them all my information, and they applied with it. Moreover, if any other documents are required, they arrange them.

Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College has agreements with many consultancies in Bangladesh; if they send students, they will get a certain amount of money. When I applied, I did not know that they had any such agreements with my agency. Maybe they do now. However, I do not have any communication with the consultancy after coming to Denmark. Moreover, I do not have a clear idea of how many Bangladeshi students are studying in Niels Brock at bachelor level, but if there are approximately 30 students in a class, there are 5 Bangladeshi students.

3)How did the consultancy's promises compare to the reality of life in Denmark and how did you settle in during your first couple of months?

Before coming to Denmark, I did some research on my own to learn a little about the education and job market here, but the current situation is very different from the situation 2/3 years ago. For example, jobs were available before, but now the competition is much higher. For instance, I got a job at Foodora without any skills, but now many employers add various conditions. I knew a lot about these things because of research, and I did not ask my consultancy to learn much about Denmark as I had some friends over here; I could know anything from them. The agency doesn't come here; they won't tell me what the situation is here without seeing or understanding reality. I just let them do the application-related work.

I have had mixed experiences since coming here. First of all, the weather is quite cold, much colder than our country. It took me some time to adjust to the cold weather. Moreover, I had to ride a bicycle because I work in food delivery. Last year, due to a lot of cold and snowfall, the roads were very slippery sometimes; I had a few minor accidents. On top of that, I remember once I was going somewhere by bus; my zone card was only for zones 1 and 2. After I went out of the one stop without knowing, the checker caught me and gave me a fine. I made many requests that I was new and I did not know that it was a different zone. But they did not hear my request. As I was a newcomer, I did not have a bank account. At that time, I had to face some difficulties to pay the fine. Besides, the environment, traffic, transportation system, and public safety here are excellent. Especially the air quality is very good. These helped me to adapt a lot. Also, the people are very nice, everyone is smiling, and they come forward a lot if you ask for help. Initially, I struggled to locate the address for food delivery, but numerous passersby assisted me in finding the house. This is amazing.

4)How did you find accommodation and manage employment upon arriving in Denmark, could you tell me about your future prospects?

When I came, private college students could apply for student housing. I arranged my first housing through a friend of mine. He was studying here. Then I thought I would also apply for student housing, but later I found out that the Danish authorities had closed it for us, so I have been living in a rented apartment ever since. In terms of jobs, as I have some friends in Denmark, they recommended me to a shop owned by a Bangladeshi businessman. I got my first job in this shop, and I worked there one day a week. After a few days, I applied for a job at Foodora; at that time, it was a popular food delivery company. I get the job easily because they do not ask me for any experience or skill, as many other job employers often ask for Danish language skills. I would say that I was able to get housing and a job easily.

My future plan is to complete a bachelor's degree here; I have already completed three semesters, and the rest of three are ahead of me. After that, I would try to complete my master's in Denmark if possible. If not, I will try to move to other countries, such as Canada or other European countries, for higher education. Besides, I will get a 6-month job searching period after finishing my bachelor's degree. I will look for a job during that time; if I find a job, I will try to work and settle down here. But I think 6-months is not enough to find out a job with a degree from a private college. So, I am not sure what will happen in future.

#Interview NO. 3

07/03/2025

Time- 12:30 to 13:30

Interview Place- Husum.

Pseudonym: Tanveer (a student of Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College)

1)Could you explain your journey of coming to Denmark, including your background, how you chose a consultancy and your initial interactions with them?

I am Tanveer Islam. I completed my secondary education in 2019 from my home city, Sylhet. In 2021, I finished my higher secondary education in science from Dhaka. After completing these, I started preparing for medical admission in Bangladesh because it was my childhood dream to be a doctor. But unfortunately, I could not secure a seat in the first admission test because the medical admission test is one of the most competitive exams in my country. Then I prepared myself for a second attempt next year. This time I missed the opportunity to get admission to a government medical college by a very low margin. After that, I was so depressed about myself. Although my parents wanted me to get admitted to a private medical college, it is highly expensive to study privately in Bangladesh. Then I give up my dream and start thinking about studying abroad. Some of my friends live abroad, and one of my cousins was also studying in Denmark. They motivated me to go abroad for study. I started preparing for studying abroad. First, I think about English-speaking countries because language is a big barrier. I do some research on my own about studying Australia, Canada, the USA, and Denmark. I found that at the bachelor level, only Canada and the US provide scholarships. I was very much into Australia, but unfortunately, due to the academic year gap, I could not apply there. Then I applied to the USA; it was difficult to find the slot from Bangladesh. I

waited more than six months for a slot, and finally I got it. Although I got a scholarship, the embassy did not give me a visa. Along with that, I also applied at Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College; they gave me an offer letter. Afterward, I had no option left, and I paid the tuition fee and got a visa. Then I came to Denmark in September 2024. I made a mistake in choosing the subject. I could apply in computer science, but I applied in business management, which is not related to my previous academic background.

As I mentioned earlier, one of my cousins was studying here in Denmark; he suggested this consultancy to go to. They mainly work with students who want to come to Denmark. Because the owner of this consultancy studied in Denmark. So, he is more reliable and trustworthy, and my cousin recommended I go there. So, I contacted them for my application and all the necessary things. I never visited him or his office, as he maintains all the things online. I talked to him through WhatsApp multiple times during the processing. Apart from this, I never met him face to face. I sent my documents online. In addition to this, I sent him all of my academic certificates and transcripts. He also asked for a recommendation letter from my teacher. Then I provided my passport, my IELTS results, and some other documents that he needed for my application.

2) What kinds of assistance did you get from the consultancy and how did their promises compare to your real experiences in Denmark?

When I was planning to go abroad to study, my cousin, who resides in Denmark, told me about this consultancy. I talked to the owner of this consultancy online; he lives in Denmark. In our first online meeting, we mainly discussed the process. He wanted to know about my academic background and my IELTS results. He asked me how many years I had studied in Bangladesh; at that time, I had completed 12 years. Because of the medical admission test, I did not get admission to any other institutions. For this reason, I was unable to apply to any Danish universities for a bachelor's degree. That time the only option was Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College for me. Then he told me what kind of documents of mine he needs for the application. He assured me that my academic profile is good, so my offer letter will come, and so will the visa. Lastly, we talked about the service charge of his consultancy. They wanted 80,000 Bangladeshi taka after getting a visa. After bargaining, we agreed that I would pay them 65 thousand after all the processing.

They help me in many ways. The owner of this consultancy is a friend of my cousin who resides in Denmark. So, I got some extra facilities or advice from him. He guided me from the beginning of my preparation. I can remember they said to me that after completing one year at Niels Brock, I could apply to a Danish university. But this system may be shut down now. They help me all the way from application to college to filing my submission at the embassy. I chose my subject, and it is my mistake or knowledge gap that I could apply in computer science but applied in business management.

I have no knowledge regarding to this that is there any connection between my consultancy and the college. But I heard that some consultancies have authorization from various educational institutions. As I have done some research on my own, I found that Australia's and the UK's universities have their authorized consultancy in Bangladesh. But I do not know about the connection between Niels Brock and my consultancy. However, when I came to Denmark in September 2024, the consultancy just wanted to know how I was doing here. After that, I do not have any communication with them. Furthermore, I am a new student in Niels Brock, so I do not have exact information about this. However, I have heard that almost 1000 students are studying here. However, I cannot confirm the accuracy of this number.

3)How did the consultancy's promises compare to the reality of life in Denmark and how did you settle in during your first couple of months?

First of all, I would like to point out that the weather here is completely different from that in Bangladesh. I feel some sickness due to cold weather initially. Maybe you know that we can not get student housing, so I had difficulty managing a house for myself. Before coming to Denmark, I could not manage housing at the same time my class was almost at the point of starting. Then I decided to come without ensuring housing. Initially, I got hospitality from some of my friends and my cousin. At that time, maybe due to weather or another reason, I found some allergic problems in my body. For lack of an address and health card, I could not receive treatment. Later I got to know that I could get treatment without it, as I was a newcomer. It was a knowledge gap of mine. My homesickness is very much. When I came to Denmark, I felt lonely without my parents. My loneliness intensified when I realized that I had been unable to manage both my house and job for nearly a month. It was such a tough time for me. I am from a middle-class family, so I need to do some part-time jobs to support my own expenses. However, Denmark is currently experiencing a significant job shortage. I

was jobless for almost 3 to 4 months. During that difficult time, my friends and cousin helped me in many ways.

One of my cousins and some friends were studying here in Denmark before I came. I talked to them about Denmark. Therefore, I didn't ask my consultant any specific questions. But they shared some realities about Denmark and Danish people. Denmark is one of the happiest countries in the world, and the crime rate is very low here. People are so friendly and open to talking with a smile on their face, which is really amazing. When I go outside, I see most of the people talk to each other with a smile. I lived in Dhaka, one of the most densely populated cities in the world. I was used to walking in crowds, but coming here was a completely different picture. These are the amazing things about Denmark. But as an international student, reality is quite different for me. I was jobless and homeless for a long time. I pay a huge amount of tuition fees every semester but could get the opportunity to do further study in Danish universities with my degree from Niels Brock because they do not consider this degree as equivalent to a Danish degree. So, Denmark is an absolutely joyful and beautiful country, but not for all, especially those who are non-European and studying in private institutions, because EU students get many benefits.

4)What are your future plans and how has your experience in Denmark shaped your outlook on your career and education?

We do not get students housing benefits, so it was tough to find a place to live. For almost one month, I was homeless and stayed with friends and cousins with their hospitality. Then I contacted some Bangladeshi community members regarding housing and jobs. They assisted me in securing my initial housing. I am living in a rented house with other private college students. I was unemployed for approximately three to four months due to the winter job crisis in Denmark. I went to many shops and restaurants physically and applied on their website as well. They took my CV and said that they would contact me later, but I do not get any reply from any of them still now. Similarly, the Bangladeshi community helped me get my first job. There are some Bangladeshi-origin business owners who provide jobs for students in the restaurant sector. Despite the peculiar nature of most of these jobs, I was left with no other options. So, I started working as a part-timer for his company, and now I can support my own expenses by myself.

My future plan is not to stay in Denmark. To be honest, I am not satisfied with my job and study here. Because here, language is a big barrier that needs to be settled. I talked to some of my Danish colleagues about their jobs and skills. The main skill is learning Danish if you want a self-satisfactory job, though the majority of Danish people are good English speakers. As per my own thinking, Danish is one of the toughest languages to learn. According to my own research, if I want to settle here after graduation, I must learn the Danish language because my major is business management, and this subject-related employment requires Danish skills, whereas other subjects or IT- and engineering-related jobs do not need Danish, and they can manage in English. So, I am planning to move to another country, such as the UK, Australia, or Canada, after completing one year of education by credit transfer if possible. But I do not know what will happen in the future.

#Interview NO. 4

09/03/2025

Time- 12:30 to 13:20

Interview Place- Kolding.

Pseudonym: Shouvik (a student of International Business Academy-IBA)

1) Could you explain your journey of coming to Denmark, including your background, how you chose a consultancy and your initial interactions with them?

My name is Shouvik. I am from Bangladesh. I completed secondary school education in 2019 and higher secondary in 2021. Then I started getting prepared for university admission because to get a seat in a public university in Bangladesh, everyone must take part in the admission test. Unfortunately, I did not get the opportunity to be admitted because university admission tests are very competitive in Bangladesh, and a huge number of students compete against each seat. Afterward, I decided to go abroad for my higher education and started preparing for it. At first, I applied for Australia but got a rejection from the Australian embassy. A consultant then introduced me to Denmark. I thought it would be a viable option for higher study because of their quality education. I came to Denmark in September 2024.

When I decided to go abroad for higher study, I was looking for a trustworthy consultancy to do all the processing tasks professionally. Some friends of mine moved to Australia through a consultancy located in my hometown. They suggested I go there and observe their professionalism in terms of student's file handling. I was satisfied with their commitment and activities. This is how I learned about them and made my way there.

I visited their office multiple times during my Australian application processing. But after rejection from Australia, I was demotivated and limited in going outside of my home. Therefore, I did not spend a significant amount of time in their office during Denmark's processing period. In addition to this, they already had all of my necessary documents regarding education. They used this information for Denmark.

As mentioned earlier, they had all my documents during the processing time of Australia, so they did not need to ask me much more about my information. However, I provided them with all of my academic certificates, transcripts, bank statements, solvency documents, IELTS results, and my passport. These are the documents I have supplied them with.

2)What types of support did the consultancy offer, and do you still maintain contact with them?

I applied to Australia through them, but unfortunately, I got a rejection from there. Then I discussed with them my desire to study abroad. They suggested that I should consider studying in Denmark, as it is currently a popular destination for Bangladeshi students. They also said that there are two suitable colleges where I can apply for a bachelor's because I completed 12 years of education in Bangladesh. One is Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College, and another one is International Business Academy in Kolding. I asked them which one would be better for me, as I did not have any idea about Denmark or Danish education because my focus was always on Australia. The consultancy said to me that these two institutions are almost similar, but IBA (International Business Academy) has comparatively lower tuition fees. So, it would be better for you to go on Kolding. Later the consultancy talked about their service charge. They requested 60 thousand Bangladeshi taka for the processing of my file, and I would pay the full amount once I received my visa.

They helped me in many ways in terms of Denmark due to my lack of knowledge about it. First of all, they assist me in selecting the college. They explained to me Niels Brock's tuition fees are nearly 13000 euros per year, while IBA is a little bit lower, approximately 10000 euros per year. Afterward, I chose IBA to go. Moreover, they helped me to apply and get an

offer letter. They organized all the documents of mine accordingly at the time of submission in the embassy.

I think there is no relation between my college and consultancy. I have never heard of any connection between IBA and consultancy. However, I cannot confirm this information. Similarly, I do not have any connection with my consultancy right now. After getting the visa, I collected all my documents from them and paid their servicing fees; that was the last meeting with them. However, I think approximately 90 students are studying in the bachelor's program at IBA.

3) How did the consultancy's promises compare to the reality of life in Denmark and how did you settle in during your first couple of months?

Housing problems are one of the main problems for international students in Denmark, particularly for private college students. My consultancy said that they would assist me in finding a place to live. Because I had no friends or relatives here in Denmark. But at the end, they did not talk about this matter. It was such a difficult time for me to find someone who could help manage my place of residence. The youth card was only for public university students, but I didn't know this, so it was a shock when I learned I wasn't eligible for it after moving to Denmark. Basically, many consultancies in Bangladesh advertise that after completing studies, you will get a 3-year job searching period to find a job. But they do not mention that it is only for Danish university students, not for all, including private students. I believe there is a significant amount of information being concealed. Furthermore, we heard that there are a lot of job opportunities in Denmark, but the reality is quite different. Many students are looking for a part-time job to support themselves. However, it is so difficult to find a job right now.

I was so excited when I came to Denmark. Denmark is one of the happiest countries in the world; it is so beautiful and environmentally friendly. After landing in Copenhagen, I felt severely homesick because I had never been away from my family before. So, for the first couple of months, I almost always talked to my family on audio and video calls to be stable. Moreover, I am jobless, and it impacts my mind: how can I support myself here? After a few days, my class started, and I found it to be a remedy for my worry. I tried to focus on my studies in order to overcome my feelings of homesickness and concerns about joblessness. Upon my return to campus, I found that my class included some Bangladeshi students. So, it was easy to make some friends, and this also helped me to be stable.

4)How did you find accommodation and manage employment upon arriving in Denmark, could you tell me about your future prospects?

I was extremely concerned about finding a place to live, as my consultant was unable to assist me with this issue. Fortunately, I found a senior brother from my hometown in Denmark on social media. Then I contacted him and described my situation. He had an apartment in Kolding; he helped me a lot and shared his housing with me. So, this is how I found a place to live in Kolding. In terms of jobs, I came to Denmark in September 2024. It is almost mid-March, and I am still jobless in Kolding. I have visited so many shops, restaurants, and other places for a job, but first of all, many of them ask me about my Danish skills. Lack of Danish skills is a drawback for our ability to get a job. On top of that, Kolding is a remote area, and their economy is not like that of Copenhagen. So, job opportunities are lower in Kolding, and this is the reality. I don't have a job to support myself; instead, I rely entirely on my family for everything. But the consultancy did not discuss these facts with me, if I had known them earlier, I would have been more careful in making decisions. One benefit of living in Kolding is that it's less expensive than Copenhagen. So, somehow, I am managing myself here with the support of my family.

I want to complete my bachelor's degree here in Denmark. I have completed the first semester already, and I am pleased with my overall performance in the exam. During the orientation class, my teacher informed us that if we achieve 60 to 80% marks in our bachelor's degree, we may be eligible to pursue a master's degree in IBA. So, there is a chance to complete a master's degree. I want to do further studies in Denmark and enter the job market here. But in Denmark, if I want to settle down here, I must learn Danish, which is a bit tough for me to learn as a new language. So, overall, this is my future plan for right now.

#Interview NO. 5

09/03/2025

Time- 15:00 to 15:50

Interview Place- Kolding.

Pseudonym: Lupa (a student of International Business Academy-IBA)

1)Could you explain your journey of coming to Denmark, including your background, how you chose a consultancy and your initial interactions with them?

My name is Sanjida Lupa. I am 21 years old. I completed secondary school education in 2020 and higher secondary school education in 2022. Then, I was planning to go to the UK for higher education, but unfortunately it did not happen because I am married and I wanted my husband to be with me. It was not possible in the UK at the bachelor's level of study. Afterward, a consultancy offered to have me come to Denmark because Denmark allows students to come with spouses. Then, we applied for the September 2024 intake at International Business Academy. I got an offer letter from them, and now I am studying business management at IBA.

It is an educational consultancy located in my hometown. When we were planning to come abroad for higher study, we were also looking for a reliable consultancy to assist us throughout the journey. Then my husband and I did some research on our own about some consultancies located in my hometown. At the same time, we posted on our social media accounts asking for suggestions about which consultancy would be trustworthy and professional for student visa processing. Then, some of our friends suggested this consultancy.

I have visited them many times because we were nervous about what would happen and for everything. On the first day, my husband and I went there to discuss all the details, and then we returned to deliver all the necessary documents and other materials. Therefore, I can confidently count the number of times we've visited. It was 12 times I have visited there.

I provided them all my academic certificates and IELTS results. In addition to this, as I am married and wanted to apply with my spouse, we provided them our marriage certificate, marriage registration documents, and passports. Moreover, there is a rule to submit students' bank statements and solvency if they want to apply for their spouse. Therefore, I provided them with my bank statement and solvency documents to ensure the proper processing of my application.

2)What kinds of assistance did you get from the consultancy and could you give an insight into your first conversation with the consultancy?

In our first meeting, we mainly talked about admission in Denmark. They said to me that I have two options for Denmark, either Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College or

International Business Academy. They explained to us which one will be beneficial for us; they added that tuition fees are lower in IBA than Niels Brock. They also said to us that IBA is far from Copenhagen, but nowadays many students like to study there. Then, we decided to apply at IBA. On top of that, they talked about their servicing fees. They demanded 100 thousand Bangladeshi taka for all the services after getting the visa. Then, we came to an agreement that we would give them 95 thousand Bangladeshi taka.

They helped me throughout the whole process in Bangladesh. They helped us to choose a college and select subjects. They applied at the college on behalf of us. After getting the offer letter, they helped me to ready the whole file for submission at the embassy. But the matter of sorrow is that they did not assist me to find a place to live in Denmark. I didn't know the ins and outs of managing housing. I expected them to help me in this matter because they worked and sent many students to Denmark before. But I did not get any help or suggestions from them in this matter.

I know they have a connection to our college. We heard that they get a percentage of the amount from the tuition fee if they send a student to IBA. However, I do not have any connection with them now. Moreover, as far as I know, there are maybe around 100 Bangladeshi students studying at IBA in bachelor's degrees. I have no idea about the master's program.

3)How did the consultancy's promises compare to the reality of life in Denmark and how did you settle in during your first couple of months?

I wanted to go abroad for higher study with my husband because my family would not agree to send me out of the country alone. Then, we were looking for a country where we could go together. My consultant informed me that we could arrive in Denmark simultaneously. The reality is I got a visa in August 2024, and my class was about to start on the first of September. But my husband did not get his visa during that time. I was confused and worried about housing and being alone in Denmark since I didn't know anyone. I had to come to Denmark alone without knowing anyone. Furthermore, they told us that IBA is in Kolding, far from Copenhagen, and you will find work to support yourself. However, the reality is that Kolding is quite different; there is a scarcity of jobs. A number of students are looking for a job, but no one is getting one.

The first thing I would say is that I was so stressed to come here without my husband. I expected that we would get visas together and come here at the same time. But coming alone

is the main drawback for me. I had no friends or relatives in Denmark. I always thought about how I could help myself overcome any difficulties I faced. Before that, when I got my visa, I went to the consultancy to talk about housing. They replied that they could not assist me in this matter. Consequently, my husband began searching for the Bangladeshi community in Denmark on social media. Fortunately, we found a student through the Bengali community who resides in Kolding. We convinced him to rent his apartment to us. I stayed there almost one month, and later I moved to another apartment. At the same time, I also applied for student housing. So, a couple of months later, I got my own housing. Besides, I applied for jobs in many places; they said to me to drop my CV; they will knock me. But I did get a very few replies from them. I was jobless and mentally depressed. When I started going to college, I found some Bengali students in my class. I made some friends over there to overcome loneliness. It was such a difficult time for me because I felt extremely lonely and severe homesickness, so overall it was so tough for me for a couple of months. After 3 months, my husband got his visa and came to Denmark. Then, I became more relax and free from tension.

4)How did you find accommodation and manage employment upon arriving in Denmark, could you tell me about your future prospects?

I took community help to find a place to live in Denmark. Neither my husband nor I were able to secure housing. We were tense about what would happen next. Then we found the Bengali community in Denmark and their social media. We contacted them before coming to Denmark; they are basically Copenhagen-based. But they helped us find a place to live, and they also received me at the airport. Therefore, the community played a significant role in helping me secure a place to live. I was jobless for almost 3 months in Kolding. During this time, I applied for jobs in multiple companies. They took my CV and assured me to call later. But very few of them actually reply later. One day, someone knocked me for a trial shift for a job. I went there, and they picked me up. So, this is how I managed my first job after three months.

My future plan is to complete my study here. I want to complete my master's at any public university, but I do not know whether I will get this opportunity in the near future. As far as I know, we are not eligible to do a master's at any Danish university with a bachelor's degree from a private college. In terms of seeking jobs, I will get only six months to find a job relevant to my study; this time is not sufficient, according to me. If this opportunity does not arise, I plan to pursue higher education in the UK. Therefore, it is challenging to predict

future events. I don't know what will happen in the near future. In fact, I am deeply concerned about everything.

#Interview NO. 6

10/03/2025

Time- 12:30 to 13:20

Interview Place- Kolding.

Pseudonym: Tuhin (a student of International Business Academy-IBA)

1)Could you explain your journey of coming to Denmark, including your background, how you chose a consultancy and your initial interactions with them?

My name is Tuhin, and I am from Sylhet, Bangladesh. I completed my secondary school education in 2020 and higher secondary school in 2022. I was planning to go abroad for higher study before completing higher secondary school. I took the IELTS exam in 2021. I applied to Canada for higher study in 2022, but they rejected my visa application. Then, I attempted to apply again, but the outcome was the same as the first time. Then, I applied for Australia, and fortunately I got a visa. But my sufferings started with the misconduct of my consultancy firm. They hide my information from the university and the Australian High Commission. I mentioned in my SOP that I got rejected twice from Canada, but the consultancy submitted it except for this matter without my consent. When the Australian embassy found this thing, they revoked my visa. Due to some difficulties, I did not get my tuition fee refund in time and properly. Because of the general election in Bangladesh, it was challenging to send money abroad. The agency told me that they would pay the tuition fee for me if I paid them a similar amount in Bangladesh. Afterward, they paid my tuition fees from their UAE bank account. However, my rejection resulted in the crediting of my tuition fee refund to their UAE account. Because of this, the consultancy was unable to pay my money back. Then, they offered me the opportunity to come to Denmark. They said that if I apply to Denmark, they will help me through the whole process, and they also added that they will help me pay tuition fees. They will reciprocate my money by paying tuition in Denmark. After that, I agreed to apply to Denmark because I wanted to go abroad for study and also

wanted to get my money back. In September 2024, I got a Danish visa and came to this country.

One of my neighbours was working for this consultancy, and their reputation is excellent in my hometown. That's why I chose this one for my processing. I visited their office multiple times, nearly 15 times. First, I went there for Canada and Australian processing and later for Denmark.

I went there to talk about my refund from Australia that day; they said that it may take a longer time. They added that if you want to go abroad for higher study, then we have another education-friendly country, which is Denmark. They said that the visa ratio in Denmark is higher than in any other country right now. Furthermore, the cost of studying in Denmark is comparable to that of Australia. Then, they discussed Denmark and my chances of being accepted into various universities. According to them, I could apply only to IBA and Niels Brock because I did not complete 13 years of education, and studying at Danish universities is a little bit difficult. Matching the ECTS is a crucial factor. Therefore, applying to these two private colleges would be the best option. After discussion with them, my family and I decided to apply to IBA. We did not talk about any service charge from them because they owed me almost 1000 Bangladeshi taka at that time. But I think they will cut 100 thousand Bangladeshi taka as their service charge. On top of that, they said to us that Denmark is a fantastic destination for international students because its education quality is high and the lifestyle is standard. Any student can easily support themselves because the job market is enormous in Denmark. So, basically, this was the first conversation with them. Moreover, I provided them all of their academic certificates along with IELTS and passports.

2)What kinds of assistance did you get from the consultancy and how did their promises compare to your real experiences in Denmark?

They helped me in many ways; first of all, when I was disappointed due to rejection from Canada and Australia, they encouraged me to come to Denmark. I got help from them to apply to college and select a subject. Later, they pay all the necessary fees on behalf of me as a reciprocation of my money. Besides, I provided them with all of my documents, and they helped me to fill out all the forms. Moreover, they assisted in organizing documents when I had an appointment to submit a file at the Danish embassy.

They said there were many facilities for studying Denmark. It is a wonderful country, and the Danish people are amazing. The weather here is much cooler than in my country. I am from a completely different country and environment, so it was difficult for me to cope up here. I was homeless almost a month after coming to Denmark because of a knowledge gap. The primary cause of this situation is the lengthy waiting period for student housing. Despite having the capacity to secure student housing, I waited nearly two months for an offer from housing authority. This delay was due to my lack of awareness about the availability of student housing and my agency did not talk to me about this matter. By this time, I was living in a rented house. Another problem I am facing is regarding employment. My consultant told me that Denmark has a big job market, and I can easily support myself. But the reality is different, particularly in Kolding. There is a scarcity of jobs; I applied to many companies and shops, but they demand Danish as a skill. But in Bangladesh, almost every consultancy said to students that it is an English-speaking country and there is no language barrier.

Since they owe a big amount of money to me for my Australian tuition fees, I haven't received the full amount of my refund money. Because the money will be credited to their account. They only paid a part of it when I paid my tuition fees in Denmark. So, I am still in contact with them for the remaining money. However, as per my own knowledge, around 80 to 90 Bangladeshi students are studying for a bachelor's degree at IBA Kolding. Apart from this, I am not sure whether my consultancy has any contract with IBA or not.

3)How did you navigate essential aspects of life in Denmark such as accommodation, work and settling in during your first couple of months?

My experience in Denmark is not so smooth in the first couple of months. I had a strong desire to study abroad, especially in a developed country. I came to Denmark with a big dream to study in one of the best countries in the world. I was so excited about thinking of it. Apart from this, the lifestyle of the Danes also attracted me. When I came to Denmark, the weather was so different from my home country. It was frigid compared to Bangladesh. So, I faced some difficulties with a dry skin problem initially. Another thing is food; for the first couple of months in Kolding, I was dependent on chicken only. As a Muslim, I consume halal food, but locating it in Kolding is challenging due to the scarcity of halal meat shops. But recently a halal meat shop opened. My primary struggle was a lack of housing at the time, leaving me homeless for nearly a month. During that time, some Bangladeshi community members gave me hospitality in their homes. That was amazing, truly. Then, after

two months I stayed in a rented house, and finally I got my own housing. I have been jobless since I came to Denmark, and I am still jobless. So, I am dependent on my family for everything here; it is a stressful thing for me, and I am consistently searching for a job. In the first month, I got hospitality from some friends and community members. Then, I applied for my own housing. Later I got my own place to live in. In terms of jobs, I have been jobless from the very beginning of coming to Denmark. During this time, I have created a profile on various job-related websites. Sometimes, they knock me. But there is nothing fixed, and I am jobless.

4)What are your future plans and how has your experience in Denmark shaped your outlook on your career and education?

I am planning to complete a bachelor's degree here at IBA, and then I will try to do a master's at any Danish public university. But I am not sure if there is any possibility of studying at a public university after completing a bachelor's in IBA. But they may give us a chance to study for a master's if we ensure more than 80% in our bachelor's. If this is not possible, I will try to complete higher education in another country. Because there is no security for the future, I will get 6 months time to search for a job after finishing my bachelor's. But without an internship, it is not possible to get a job in any company. So, it is quite difficult to do an internship and find a job within 6 months. When I think about all this, I find it difficult to concentrate on my studies effectively.