

## Attitudes towards research and publication among the public University teachers: A case study of Bangladesh

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### ABSTRACT

As part of a large research project, the present study reports the attitudes of university academics toward engaging in research and publication. A quantitative research method was employed to collect data from 347 university academics from five public universities in Bangladesh. An attitude survey scale and background questionnaire were administered. The findings revealed that university academics held positive attitudes towards research and publication. Significant variations were found based on gender and overseas qualifications as participants' background variables. The research findings have promising implications for public universities, particularly in fostering an environment that is conducive to conducting high-quality research and publishing activities

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### Introduction

The modern university has shifted from its original purpose of creating, preserving, and sharing social knowledge to the production and dissemination of market knowledge in the neoliberal globalized world. However, research remains the core responsibility of the university, regardless of this shift (Habib & Saira, 2010). Forsyth (1903) noted that a university without research and innovation might be seen as nothing more than a “glorified secondary school” (p.24). Nevertheless, it remains unclear to what extent university faculty members in Bangladesh are prepared to expedite the transition from teaching-focused to research-focused universities.

Since the 1990s, the significant expansion of universities in Bangladesh, both in the public and commercial sectors, has accelerated due to neoliberal policy changes in the higher education sector (Kabir, 2010). During the past few years, there has been a significant increase in the number of students attending public and private universities and pursuing other intellectual

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activities (Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). In 2009, there were only 31 universities with 13,82,216 students. However, by 2021, this number had increased to 158 universities with 44, 41, 717 students, out of which 50 are public universities. Not only public universities, but private universities have also witnessed significant growth in numbers. In 2009, there were only 51 private universities, which increased to 108 by 2021. The total number of students attending private universities reached 3, 10, 107 which is comparable to the number of students attending public universities (University Grants Commission of Bangladesh, 2022).

Although the number of teachers and students in Bangladesh has increased in recent years, the amount of research conducted by universities remains limited. Except for the National University, Bangladesh Open University, and Islamic Arabic University, among the 50 public universities in Bangladesh, 15194 teachers produced 12533 publications in various formats in 2021. The universities that published the most research were Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Mawlana Bhasani Science and Technology University, Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology, Jahangirnagar University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, and the University of Dhaka, with 5400, 992, 638, 585, 495, and 445 publications respectively. However, it is worth noting that academics from 11 public universities did not produce any research in 2021, according to the University Grants Commission's 2022 report. Moreover, many academics working in public universities do not have higher degree research qualifications. For instance, about 60% (8112 out of 13580) of academics in 34 public universities have neither advanced nor research-based PhD nor MPhil degrees in their respective fields. On the other hand, only 33% of academics in these public universities and 21% (3416 [1405 full-time and 2010 part-time] out of 16020) of academics in private universities hold a research-based Ph.D. degree (University Grants Commission, 2018).

It is argued that public universities in Bangladesh face two main obstacles that prevent academics from engaging in rigorous research and publication-related activities. The first obstacle is the lack of an effective governance system and research-related facilities, including insufficient funding for new researchers and a heavy teaching load. The second obstacle is a lack of motivation among academics to engage in research-related activities. According to the University Grants Commission (2021), the government's funding for research at public institutions increased by 4.15% in the 2019–20 fiscal year, from Tk. 6190 lac in 2018–19 to Tk. 6458 lac in 2019–2020. Although a few scholars at public institutions in Bangladesh have been actively involved in conducting research and publishing their research findings in books, book chapters, and journals of reputed national and international publishers, the majority lack the necessary drive to accomplish the same.

Although academics working at public universities are often criticized for their lack of involvement in research-related activities in Bangladesh, little attention has been given to exploring the socioeconomic, political, and psychological factors that may be at play. It's also important to understand how these factors can be addressed to encourage public university

academics to engage in quality research and publication-related activities. Factors like the government-university relationship, research environment and culture, and individual knowledge and skills can all influence university academics to be involved in quality research and publication (Heng et al., 2020).

Against this backdrop, we conducted a large-scale study in attempting to understand both materials and affective epistemology to show the ontological knowledge of public university teachers involved in quality research and publication activities (Shahjahan et al, 2022). More specifically, we aimed to explore the attitudes of university academics toward engaging in quality research and publication, their support mechanisms within the university for conducting research, and their level of research skills or efficacy for conducting high-standard research and publication. The Theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) contributed to the design and research questions of the main study, which systematically examined public university academics' behavioral factors towards research and publication. In this paper, we report the findings of one of the four factors that influence faculty members' behavioral intention: measuring public university academics' attitudes towards high research and publication.

After this succinct introduction, we have a literature section that aims to provide an understanding of the global and Bangladesh higher education systems. This understanding is crucial to comprehend how the quality assurance process became an essential component of NPM across the world. Next, in the context of the neoliberal policy environment, we attempted to establish a connection between behavioral factors and their relation to quality issues of higher education. Afterward, we went over the research methods used in this study. We then presented the results and concluded with some closing thoughts.

## **Literature Review**

### **Global Higher Education System**

There has been a significant change in the global higher education system since the 1980s mainly due to the influence of neoliberal policy philosophy. The approach requires a redefinition of the university's societal role by reorganizing its financial and administrative framework. This neoliberal ideological revolution has led to the adoption of commercial models of knowledge, skills, curriculum, money, accounting, and management structure (Levidow, 2007; Kabir, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2020; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). The United States and the United Kingdom were the first Western countries to lead this reform program. US universities adopted commercial models, reduced expenses, limited scholarly pursuits, added teaching responsibilities to faculty, and privatized various institutional tasks (Johnstone, 1997). Similarly, UK universities had to adjust their financial strategy due to substantial cuts in government funding for colleges under the Thatcher administration. In 1986, the first research assessment was conducted concurrently at every university in the United Kingdom (Edwards, 1997).

Several Western countries, following the lead of the US and UK, have adopted the reformation agenda to change the role of universities. For example, the Australian government, like the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom, introduced tuition fees and contributions for higher education in 1989 (Naidoo & Williams, 2015, as cited in Kabir, 2016). Similarly, New Zealand's government, which was previously considered the global welfare laboratory, embraced the neoliberal policy agenda centered on the "Third Way".

Developing countries have also embraced neoliberal reforms in higher education, following in the footsteps of Western countries (Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). For example, China incorporated the market into its higher education institutions during the post-Mao period (from 1978 to the present) (Mok, 2005), while India transitioned from a state-regulated economy to a neoliberal one in the early 1990s (Kamat, 2011). Moreover, several Asian nations—including Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, and Taiwan—adopted the idea of a knowledge-based economy in higher education (Altbach, 2004).

### **Quality Issues of Higher Education are on 'Spotlight'**

In the current neoliberal environment, quality issues and quality enhancement have become widespread in the higher education sector. To evaluate the quality of universities' programmes and institutions, several quality assurance techniques have been developed and implemented (Altbach et al., 2010; El-Khawas et al., 1998, as cited in Kabir, 2016). The phrases "quality assurance," "quality assessment," and "quality evaluation," for example, are often interchangeable with the more extensive procedures of quality management (Vlăsceanu, Grünberg, & Parlea, 2007). UNESCO (1998) in its Article 11 (a) of the *World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action* recognises that the issue of quality is multi-dimensional and various areas of higher education are measured:

Quality in higher education is a multidimensional concept, which should embrace all its functions, and activities: teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipments, and services to the community and the academic environment. Internal self-evaluation and external review conducted openly by independent specialists, if possible with international expertise, are vital for enhancing quality. Independent national bodies should be established and comparative standards of quality, recognized at the international level, should be defined. Due attention should be paid to specific institutional, national and regional contexts to take into account diversity and to avoid uniformity. Stakeholders should be an integral part of the institutional evaluation process. (cited in Van Ginkel & Rodrigues Dias, 2007, p. 39)

The quality of higher education is determined by students achieving a set of “worthwhile learning goals” (Gola, 2003). Hence, according to Sanyal and Martin (2007, p. 5), universities tie students’ learning objectives to meet “(i) society’s expectations, (ii) students’ aspirations, (iii) the needs of the government, business, and industry, and (iv) the requirements of professional institutions”.

Additionally, various systems have been established to ensure that degrees and institutions are comparable across borders. Several universities turn to certification groups outside of the country to verify the quality of degrees and provide them with international recognition. Consequently, national, regional, and international rankings of higher education are now available (Altbach et al., 2010, as cited in Kabir, 2016). The Times Higher Education Ranking (THER) and the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Institute of Higher Education (SJTUIHE) have developed several indicators to rank the best universities in the world. These indicators include the number of research and publications in ranked journals, the number of citations, research funds from external bodies, national and international students, and faculty ratio. The government and the general public use national, regional, and international rankings to evaluate higher education when deciding which ones to finance and admit (Altbach et al., 2010, as cited in Kabir, 2016).

### **Trends of Higher Education in Bangladesh**

Neoliberal principles have been applied in Bangladesh’s higher education since the 1990s (Kabir, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2021; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). These principles have been created in a unique form of neoliberalism that considers the socioeconomic and political environment of Bangladesh (Kabir, 2016; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). Although these principles have some similarities with Americanisation or Westernisation, they were adapted to suit the local context. For instance, the Private University Acts and the Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2006-2026 adopted the concepts of NPM and cost-sharing, but the government retained centralized control of these practices. While NPM is a governance system designed to ensure public accountability of state-run universities in the West, the government developed a localized form of NPM where it and its apparatuses play a crucial role in decision-making bodies such as the senate, syndicate, and regent board of both private and public universities (Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021).

Most importantly, quality-control measures have been adopted as part of NPM. For instance, the UGC directed each university to set up an internal quality cell to improve teaching-learning and research activities. The Bangladeshi government has also established an “accreditation council” as an independent agency to oversee the improvement of standards in higher education. The council’s objective is to set a benchmark for performance, integrity, and quality and assist students in accessing organized programs. The external evaluation aims to promote and increase quality, inform students and other stakeholders about university programs that meet national standards, identify shortcomings in higher education, and ensure accountability for the use of public funding. According to the University Grants Commission (2006), the accrediting council

will conduct formal accreditation assessments, encourage internal quality enhancement and improvement in universities, and conduct external audits of the self-assessment and self-review of quality. However, these quality-control measures often “deviate” from market standards and expectations (Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021).

Despite different policy initiatives, academics’ involvement in research and quality publications is a great concern in Bangladesh. Kitamura (2006) argues that many faculty members in Bangladeshi universities face issues such as a lack of research funding, insufficient access to labs with advanced scientific equipment, lack of technical support staff, an absence of staff development program, a heavy teaching load, and an ambiguous recruitment and promotion system, which make it difficult for them to conduct research. A significant number of university teachers do not hold doctorate degrees, and those who have completed their master’s programs are mostly employed as new teaching staff. Faculty members’ involvement in university politics, which are closely tied to national politics, is still common causing them to frequently lose interest and motivation in such an environment (as cited in University Grants Commission, 2018).

### **Behavioral Factors and Quality Issues of Higher Education**

The global higher education system heavily emphasizes the development of policies and programs that promote innovative research and publications, to shape national policies toward promoting “economization” through education (Lingard & Rawolle, 2011, p. 492). The idea of the economization of education was first proposed by Schultz (1961) and Becker (1993) and has since been embraced by universities across the globe, with policies designed to encourage academics to engage in research and publish innovative research papers for a global audience. For example, in the early 2000s, China began to focus on enhancing cross-border education to ensure its top universities had the capacity for global research and international training (Altbach, 2004). Many governments have also set up higher education research institutes to promote research culture in academics and researchers. In India, for instance, the government set up the National Institutes of Science Education and Research (NISER) and the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER) to encourage research and publication culture among academics.

Research activities have become a significant part of determining the quality of higher education, which puts pressure on academics to be involved in research and publish research papers regularly in high-ranked journals and reputed publishers. Several studies (Nguyen et al., 2016; Wood, 1990) conducted in Australia and South East Asia indicated that a wide range of factors influences faculty members to engage in research and publication including individual research interests, styles, methods to dependence on funding, and teaching load. In a systematic review of university academic research engagement and publication in the context of developing countries, Heng, Hamid, and Khan (2020) pointed out three distinct

factors: individual (knowledge and skills), institutional (research environment and culture) and national (linkage between university and the government). There are many other contemporary literature sources available that investigate university academics' quality aspects of research productivity (e.g. see Agarwal et al., 2016; Carpenter et al., 2014).

While there is some high-quality research exploring the general quality aspect of higher education in Bangladesh (e.g. Kabir, 2020), the issue of 'research and publication' engagement among public university academics has not been substantially located in academia. Therefore, this study could be one of the key studies to explore the attitudinal factors of public university academics in the context of Bangladesh.

## **Methodology**

This study is part of a large research project that involves measuring university faculty members' attitudes towards research activities, level of efficacy belief to conduct high standard research, behavioral intention and subjective norms and their interrelation by teachers demographics. This study mainly reports on the attitudes of the university faculty members toward research endeavors. The study employed a quantitative research design to collect and analyze data. The data were collected from five leading public universities in Bangladesh. To ensure a representative sample, 500 academics were approached with a survey questionnaire based on availability in their respective office. However, only 347 faculty members finally participated in the survey from five public universities. The participating universities included the University of Dhaka (N-88), University of Rajshahi (N-58), Jahangirnagar University (N-68), Khulna University (N-71) and Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (62). A survey questionnaire was developed incorporating determinants to examine the attitudes of academics towards research and publication-related activities. A comprehensive review of the relevant literature and existing scales (e.g., see Landino & Owen, 1988) contributed to developing the key indicators of faculty members' attitudinal aspects of research and publication. The development of the scale followed the step-by-step process of instrument development (i.e. content validation, pilot testing, reliability analysis) suggested by DeVellis (2011). Faculty members were asked to rate their attitudes on a 4-point scale, which included 15 items.

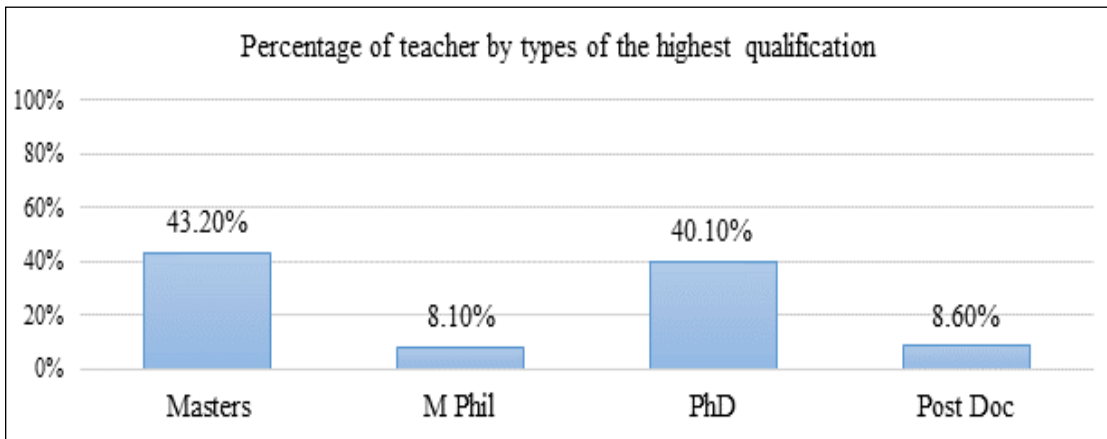
The respondents were from various faculties including Science (31.40%), Social Science Faculty (25.60%), Arts and Humanities faculty (20.70%) and Business studies (10.70%). The designations of the teachers were termed in four categories: Lecturer (16.70%), Assistant Professor, (32%), Associate Professor(25.40%), and Professors (26% ) participated in the survey. A total of 64.30% of the participants were male, and 35.70% were female respondents. In terms of the participants' age, the majority of the respondents, which were close to half (46.10%) in the participation rate, were identified as between 31-40 years old. About 22.50% of the participants were 41-50 years old, 18.40% were below 30 years old, and 11.80% were more than 50 years old findings showed that nearly half of the participants (44.70%) had 6 to

15 years of teaching and research experience. About 28.50% of teachers had below five years of teaching and research experience, 17% of teachers had 16 to 25 years of experience, and the rest of the participants (8.10%) had more than 25 years of experience in teaching and research.

## Findings

The findings of the study found that the majority of the participants had Master's degree (43.20%) as their highest qualification. Our data also suggest that a substantial proportion of the cohort earned PhD degree (40.10%) as their highest qualification. A few of the participants had an M.Phil (8.10%) degree and a Post-Doctoral experience (8.60%) as their highest academic qualification.

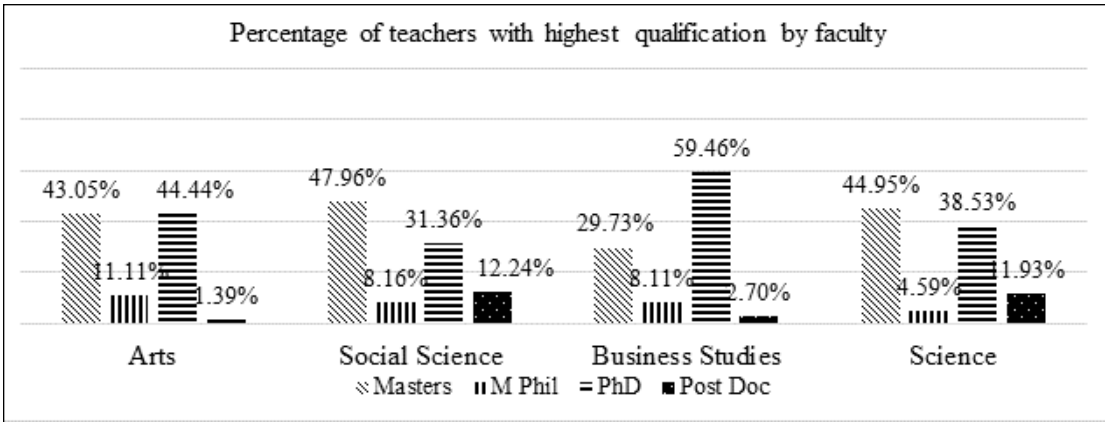
*Figure 1 Percentage of teacher by types of highest qualification*



Among all surveyed faculties, the data revealed that participants from the Business faculty (59.46%) had the highest proportion of PhD degrees. The Arts and Humanities faculty had 44.44% of participants with a Ph.D. degree as their highest academic qualification, while the Science faculty had 38.53%, the Social Science faculty had 31.36%, and other faculties had 36% of individuals with Ph.D. degrees.



Figure 2 Percentage of teachers with the highest qualification by faculty

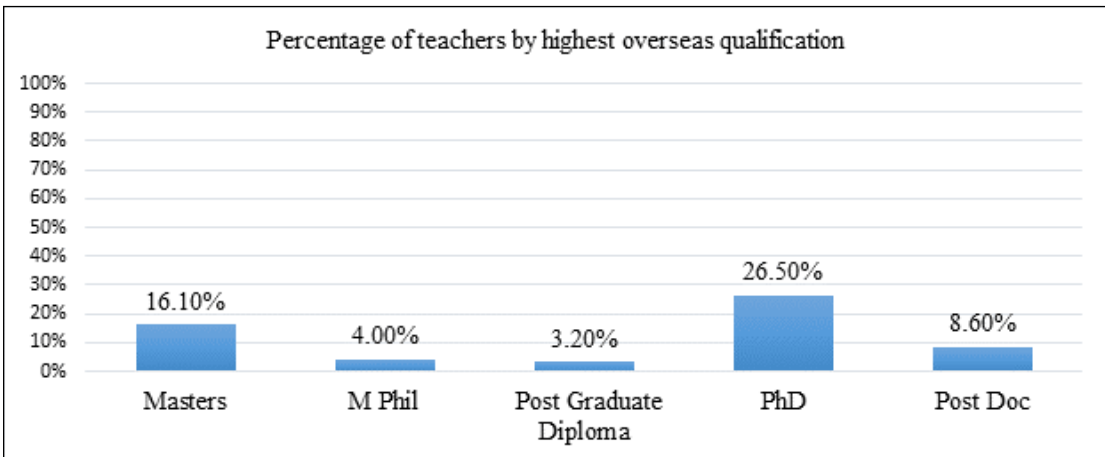


When it comes to Post-Doctoral degrees, only a small number of participants were found to possess this highest qualification experience, with the highest percentage being 12.24% in the Social Science faculty. Notable variation was observed between the Arts (1.39%), Business studies (2.70%), and the Social Science and Science (11.93%) faculties.

### Overseas qualification

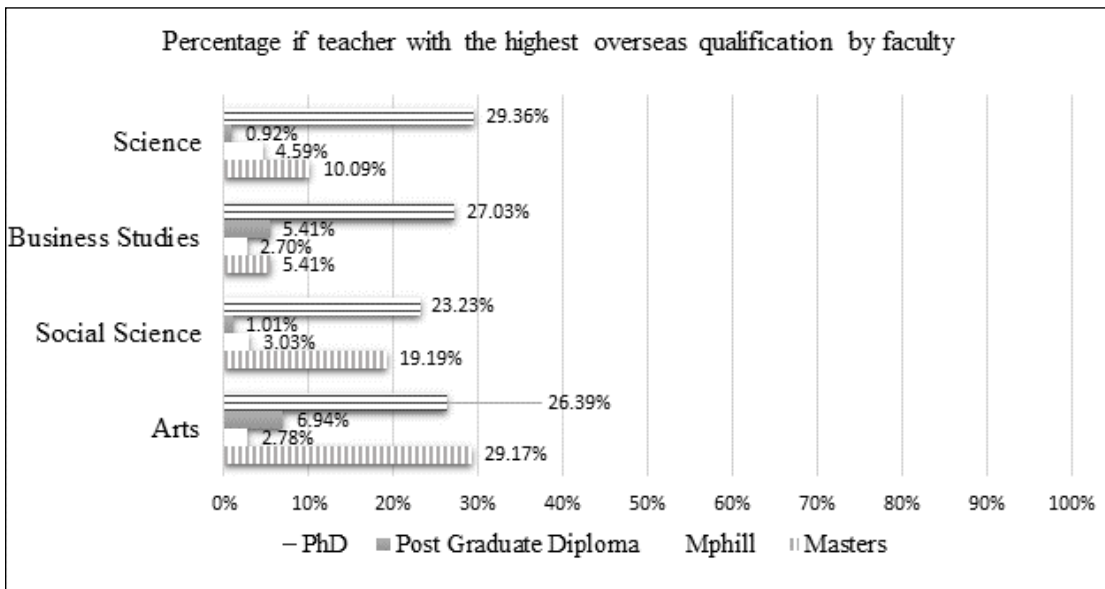
The study findings reveal that over half (58.4%) of the participating faculty members possessed overseas degrees. More than a quarter of the participants (26.50%) possessed PhD degrees from overseas across faculties.

Figure 3 Percentage of teachers with the highest overseas qualification



Furthermore, 16.10% of participants held Master's degrees, while 8.60% had achieved Post-Doctoral degrees. Additionally, 4.00% possessed Master's in Philosophy degrees, with the remaining 3.20% having completed Post-Graduate Diplomas from abroad.

Figure 4 Percentage of teachers with the highest overseas qualification by faculty



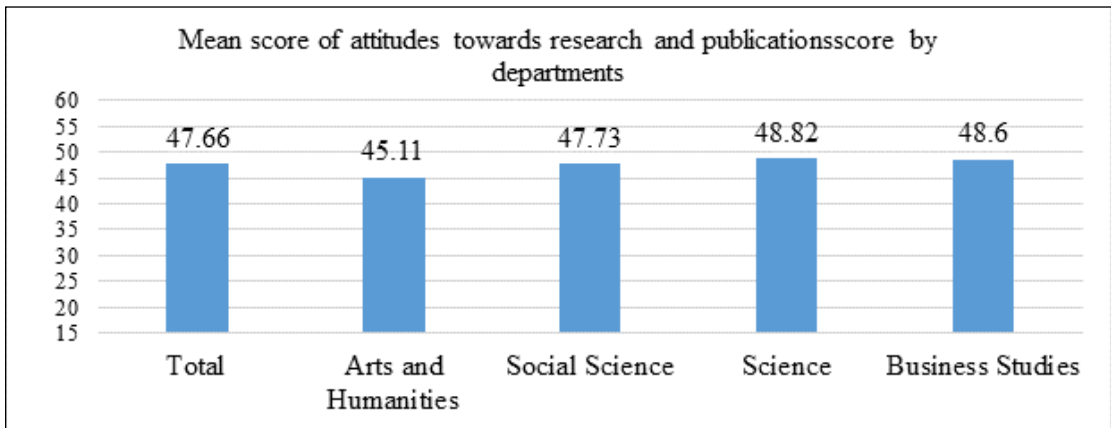
Furthermore, there was variability noted in the highest overseas qualifications across faculties. Participants from the Arts (29.17%) and Social Science (19.19%) faculties exhibited a greater proportion of Master's degrees from abroad compared to those from the Science (10.09%) and Business (5.14%) faculties.

#### ***Findings of the participants' attitudes towards research/publication***

The study found that the mean score ( $M=47.66$ ,  $SD= 4.95$ ) of participants' attitudes towards research and publications is above the midpoint of the scale (scale mid-point 37.5 and scale range 15-60) referring to teachers having a higher attitude towards research/publication. In terms of gender, male respondents showed more positive attitudes ( $M = 48.42$ ) towards research/publication than their female counterparts ( $M = 46.38$ ).

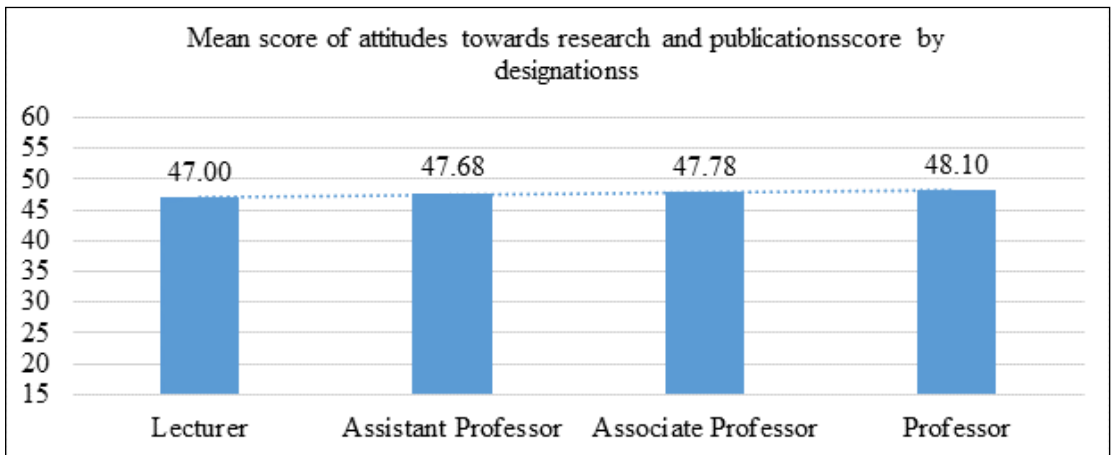
The overall mean scores for the selected attitudinal components differ by faculty. The highest mean score both in the Science faculty ( $M =48.82$ ) and Business Studies faculty ( $M =48.60$ ) had a notable difference while comparing it with other faculties, including Arts and Humanities ( $M =45.11$ ) and Social Science ( $M =47.73$ ) faculties.

Figure 5 Mean score of attitudes towards research and publications by departments



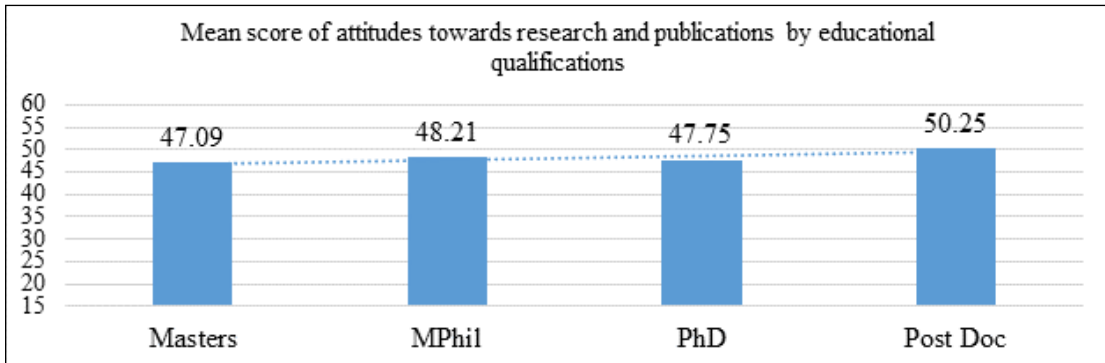
The average score according to the respondents' position or designation showed differences. The participating professors had the highest mean score ( $M=48.10$ ) among all respondents, whereas lecturers scored 47.00, assistant professors scored 47.68, and associate professors scored 47.78, respectively. Interestingly, a subtle gradual increase in the mean score of attitude towards research and publication.

Figure 6 Mean score of attitudes towards research and publications by designations



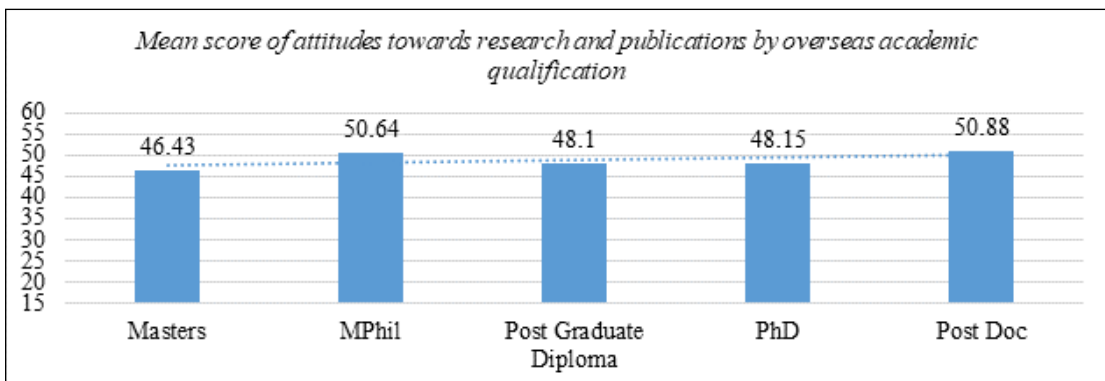
The result concerning participants' highest academic qualifications showed a significant difference in their attitudes toward research and publications. The participants with Post-Doctoral degrees experiences were identified as having the highest mean score, 50.25. However, the lowest mean score was 47.09 found in the Master's qualified teachers.

Figure 7 Mean score of attitudes towards research and publications score by educational qualifications



The mean scores of the respondents vary depending on the participants' highest overseas academic qualification. Participants with a Post-Doctoral degree scored 50.88, and similarly, those who had a Master of Philosophy degree had a mean score of 50.64, as their highest academic qualification from abroad. These scores had a distinct gap with Masters qualified (M =46.43), Post Graduate Diploma Qualified (M =48.10), and PhD qualified (M =48.15) respondents.

Figure 8 Mean score of attitudes towards research and publications by overseas academic qualification



### **Faculty members' attitudes towards research and publication**

As mentioned in the methodology, Faculty members' attitudes towards research and publication were measured based on a 15-item scale (self-reported, 4-point scale) developed systematically for this research. The following table summarises the Mean and Standard Deviation- SD of

the 15 indicators set out to examine university academic attitudes. Overall, the results indicate that participants held positive attitudes toward research and publication as 13 indicators (out of 15) secured a Mean score higher than 3 on a scale of 4. Indicator securing the highest score is indicator 5: *I can contribute to my university's rank by publishing research papers* (M=3.40 SD=.634 ) followed by indicator 14: *I want to build up my reputation as an academic scholar through research* (M=3.39 SD=.629 ) and 15: *I believe that research and teaching are mutually supportive activities* (M=3.38 SD=.793).

Table 1: Faculty members' attitudes toward research and publication by scale item

| SL | Statement   | N   | Mean | SD   |
|----|---|-----|------|------|
| 1  | <i>I believe that research-oriented thinking plays an important role in everyday life</i>   | 342 | 3.34 | .69  |
| 2  | <i>I view myself primarily as a researcher</i>  | 347 | 3.13 | .64  |
| 3  | <i>I feel professional satisfaction by conducting research</i>  | 345 | 3.11 | .73  |
| 4  | <i>I believe that universities should retain faculty members who exhibit research production</i>                                    | 344 | 3.22 | .62  |
| 5  | <i>I can contribute to my university's rank by publishing research papers</i>   | 346 | 3.40 | .63  |
| 6  | <i>The intellectual challenge of academic research inspires me to work harder</i>   | 344 | 3.26 | .60  |
| 7  | <i>I think rewards are effective means of influencing faculty performance in research</i>   | 343 | 3.32 | 1.73 |
| 8  | <i>I think reward influences faculty for research activities</i>  | 345 | 3.24 | .75  |
| 9  | <i>I think faculty members must be productive researchers or lose their jobs</i>  | 339 | 2.49 | 1.02 |
| 10 | <i>I think that if tenure/promotions were not binding on research, most faculties would devote less time and effort to research</i> | 340 | 2.92 | .85  |
| 11 | <i>I can become an effective professional if I am able to have an educated critique of the quality of research</i>                  | 342 | 3.16 | .53  |
| 12 | <i>I think that personal interests are the most important factors in determining the allocation of time to research</i>             | 345 | 3.32 | 2.29 |
| 13 | <i>I feel free to pursue my academic interests (within the context of research)</i>   | 346 | 3.22 | .61  |
| 14 | <i>I want to build up my reputation as an academic scholar through research</i>   | 347 | 3.39 | .62  |
| 15 | <i>I believe that research and teaching are mutually supportive activities</i>  | 346 | 3.38 | .79  |

In contrast, participants' lower scores ( $M < 3$ ) secured by 2 indicators suggest that they held relatively negative attitudes towards linking research and publication with their job security. For Example, indicator 9: *I think faculty members must be productive researchers or lose their jobs* ( $M=2.49$   $SD=1.022$ ), and indicator 10: *I think that if tenure/promotions were not binding on research, most faculties would devote less time and effort to research* ( $M=2.92$   $SD=.857$ )

We utilized several 'T' tests and ANOVA to see if there was any significant variation in participants' attitudes considering their background variables.

Table 2: Composite scores for attitudes toward research and publication

| Background variables | Specifics | N   | Mean  | SD   | Std. Error |
|----------------------|-----------|-----|-------|------|------------|
| Overseas degree      | Yes       | 206 | 48.33 | 6.40 | .45        |
|                      | No        | 141 | 46.33 | 5.16 | .43        |
| Gender               | Male      | 221 | 48.19 | 5.47 | .37        |
|                      | Female    | 120 | 46.36 | 6.77 | .62        |

Composite Mean has been used to analyze the differences. Only 2 variables, Overseas qualification (Y/N) and Gender (male/ female) were found to show significant differences in participants' attitudes towards research and publication. The following Tables specify the values for the significant differences.

Table 3: Significant difference in attitudes based on overseas qualification and gender

| Background variables | Assumption of variances     | F     | t     | df     | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------|-------|--------|-----------------|
| Overseas degree      | Equal variances assumed     | 0.075 | 3.075 | 345    | .002            |
|                      | Equal variances not assumed |       | 3.200 | 335.66 | .002            |
| Gender               | Equal variances assumed     | 0.082 | 2.717 | 339    | .007            |
|                      | Equal variances not assumed |       | 2.552 | 204.47 | .011            |

## Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that university teachers in Bangladesh hold a positive view ( $M=47.66$ , scale mid-point 37.5) regarding publications and research. Based on similar findings from other studies (Khan et al., 2018; Kostoulas et al., 2019; Shahzad et al., 2018; Mehta et al., 2017), it appears that there are widespread patterns in which university teachers demonstrate a favorable attitude toward research endeavors. Achievement-based incentives, research funding, and a conducive research environment are factors that could potentially benefit educators who engage in research (Rheinberg, 2020; Hammad & Al-Ani, 2021). Teachers' motivations and reasons for engaging in research can be categorized into four main factors:

professional development, instrumental and personal incentives, organizational expectations, and educational benefits (Mehranirad, 2023) that could potentially be linked to the findings of this study.

A separate study (Niles et al., 2020) found that teacher motivation to produce a greater number of research articles annually was also highly influenced by factors such as tenure prospects, career advancements, and teacher evaluation (Niles et al., 2020). This is because, in the majority of academic institutions of higher learning, university faculty members are obligated to publish research in addition to their teaching duties in order to secure tenure or promotion. Several public universities in Bangladesh, for example, a minimum of three to fifteen publications, in addition to teaching experience, is required for individuals seeking assistant professor, associate professor, and professor posts as they progress through the hierarchy (Tamim, 2021). Chen et al. (2006) confirm the connection between teachers' research productivity and their tenured status. They also note that the motivational intentions of instructors differ based on their academic position. Tenured faculty members are motivated by intrinsic rewards, while untenured faculty members are motivated by extrinsic rewards (Chen et al. (2006). In Bangladesh, in addition to tenure, advancement to the next higher position is contingent on research publication, which further encourages teachers to dedicate effort towards publication (Tamim, 2021). Therefore, it is plausible that instructors at universities in Bangladesh hold a positive view of research and publications as a result of institutional pressure, professional development, or educational progress.

Despite the university teachers in Bangladesh have a positive attitude towards doing research, teachers are often accused having minimal amount of publications and research (Rahman, 2022). Bland et al. (2002) found that both individual and institutional variables had an impact on teacher research output. Key institutional issues, such as inadequate research funding, limited access to instrumental equipment, insufficient time allocations, inadequate remuneration, and lack of recognition, consistently emerge as the primary obstacles hindering faculty research output across countries and disciplines (Hedjazi & Behravan, 2011; Wills et al., 2013; Hammad & Al-Ani, 2021; Armijos-Valdivieso et al. 2021; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). However, Hammad and Al-Ani (2021) further indicated that limited collaborative research culture, training on research and absence of a clear research agenda prevent teachers to initiate research and publication efforts. In addition to English as not native language, poor research grant for public universities in Bangladesh, higher education teachers may face similar barriers regarding conducting research and publishing. According to the recent report of Bangladesh University Grants Commission report (2020), only BDT 137 crore spent in university research sector (Rahman, 2022). Further, among 150 universities, 35 universities did not have any budget in research sector while some of the notable universities have no publications despite of investing on research sectors (Rahman, 2022). Andaleeb (2023) referring a vice chancellor of a public university in Bangladesh marked limited research allocation and budget make teacher disinterested in research initiatives. Insufficient fund, thus, in the research sectors remain as

one of the most significant factors for limited research productivity in the higher education sub-sector in Bangladesh. Along with limited funding and research enabling environment, Lund (2022) argued that the dominance of Western or English-language publications made it further challenging for faculty members who spoke languages other than English to publish their articles.

In terms of gender, the study indicates that male faculty members are more willingly to participate in the research work than that of their female counter-part. Interestingly, quite a number studies (Gul et al., 2016; Jung, 2012; Sá et al., 2020 & Armijos-Valdivieso et al., 2021) in across continents and subjects indicated similar trends. Hosseini and Sharifzad (2021) argued that family responsibilities, gender roles, gender bias, and negative perceptions of female expertise and accomplishments have a detrimental impact on female research engagement and productivity.. Male dominated work culture and society in Bangladesh also play a significant role in less female participations in research work (Kohtamäki et al., 2023). Women are viewed as having exclusive responsibility of family matters and household chores even if those women are working prevent limited time allotment for engaging in research. In addition, Kwiek and Roszka (2021) noted that male researchers typically engage in collaboration with other male researchers, whereas female researchers generally face challenges in finding sufficient collaborators for their studies, which can limit their research motivation and effort.

The study also found a significant attitudinal differences between the teachers with overseas degrees and teachers without overseas degrees towards research and publications. Teachers who have overseas degrees usually demonstrate an affirmative effect on not only their teaching but also research attitude and activities for professional development (Wang, 2014 & Hong et al., 2023). Teachers who studied abroad gained global experience in education. It aids in their comprehension of international educational trends and positions. Student's intellectual and cultural understanding developed more while they are studying abroad (Cohen et al., 2005). Bangladesh being a developing country, needs to be updated in the educational context as per global trend. Research based education is the necessity in today's world. When a teacher has that global experience, s/he incorporates this on their teaching applications. One study stated that, teachers tend to apply their overseas study experience on their teaching-learning activities in classrooms and in their personal growth (Kaowiwattanakul, 2016). Probably this understanding pushes the teachers in building more positive attitude regarding research and publications as research possess a high spot in global education than the teachers who do not have overseas study experience. Sometimes overseas study experience gives the teachers an exclusive opportunity in conducting meaningful independent research (Streitwieser & Leephaibul, 2007), which might increase the confidence and experience in conducting research. Experience and confidence can be a motivating factor for teachers to engage in research, and these elements may contribute to the favorable attitudes that teachers with degrees from abroad have regarding research and publishing in Bangladesh.



## **Conclusion**

This paper aimed to measure public university academics's attitudes towards research and publications. The findings revealed that academics in public universities held positive attitudes towards engaging in research and publication. In addition, the findings also suggested that academics with degrees from overseas are more likely to engage with research and publication than those without overseas degrees. The findings related to gender differences indicate that male academics are more willing to engage in research and publication compared to their female colleagues.

Although the overall attitudes of the participants are positive towards participating in research and publication-related activities, female academics and faculty members without overseas degrees have shown critical attitudes towards the recent effort of public universities in Bangladesh to strive towards global recognition, such as ranking. Further studies engaging multiple qualitative approaches might shed some light on why faculty members without overseas qualifications as well as female academics are less likely to be motivated in research and publication-related activities.

The study found that having an overseas qualification significantly impacted the attitudes and efficacy of participants toward research and publication. In the large-scale analysis (which is in progress) combining other predictors (Efficacy, support mechanism, and behavioral intention), hierarchical regression analysis may identify potential relationship of university academics' attitudes and support mechanisms (subjective norm) with their behavioral intention to do research and publication.

The findings of the research have promising implications in the context of public universities especially in motivating university academics to engage in high-quality research and publication activities that could enhance university rankings globally. Also, the findings of this study have the potential to contribute to the literature by examining the behavioral factors of public university teachers in the Global South, with a specific focus on Bangladesh, where little research has been conducted in this area. Such an understanding could make strategic contributions to the benefit of Bangladesh's economic development and the public universities' roles in fostering the quality of higher education and the economy.

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