

## **Media and Journalism Education in Bangladesh: What I Wish My Teachers Would Do and Would Not Do regarding my Career Preparation**

Jude William Genilo, Sarkar Barbaq Quarmal, Abdul Kabil Khan and Nandita Tabassum Khan

### **Abstract**

*The paper presents student feedback regarding career preparation initiatives undertaken by media and journalism teachers and schools in Bangladesh. Various stakeholders agree that graduate employability is one of the key objectives of higher education institutions. To know whether this objective is being met, it is necessary to ask student feedback regarding the five components of career preparation using the Career Development Center (CDC) model: self-awareness, educational-occupational information, taking action and life management. Using a Likert Scale (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest), the survey had 245 media studies and journalism students from all over Bangladesh as respondents. The findings indicated moderate results in all components – self-awareness (3.19 mean rating), educational-occupational information (3.35 mean rating), taking action (3.26 mean rating) and life management (3.45 mean rating). Overall, the mean rating was at 3.31 – students are moderately satisfied with the said career preparation initiatives.*

**Key Words:** Bangladesh, Student Feedback, Quality Assurance, Communication, Educators, Career Preparation

### **1. Introduction**

The paper presents student feedback regarding career preparation initiatives undertaken by media and journalism teachers and schools in Bangladesh. In so doing, it elaborates on two important variables – student feedback and career preparation. Student feedback systems have been in existence for about a century. Alderman, Towers and Bannah (2012) mentioned that the system was first introduced in the US in the mid-1920s to provide feedback to academics regarding their teaching. Nowadays, student evaluation surveys have become a routine practice all over the world. The results of which have been used to: (1) guide teaching practice; (2) measure teaching effectiveness; (3) inform students for the purpose of unit and teacher selection; (4) determine quality assurance measures and (5) serve as research data.

Manzano (2012) explained that student feedback may be used for measuring teaching effectiveness and/or developing teacher capacity. He identified three categories of strategies for teacher improvement – routine strategies (involves learning goals, student progress

tracking and establishing rules and procedures), content strategies (includes developing new content, knowledge application and hypothesis generation), and strategies enacted on the spot (for student engagement, adherence to rules and procedures, relationship development and communicate expectations for all students). He suggested incorporating 15 elements in the survey questionnaire for measuring teacher effectiveness and 41 elements for developing teacher capacity. Centra (1973), in an experimental study conducted at five colleges, found out that student feedback system may produce changes in instructional practices and that these changes occur over time.

However, Alderman, Towers and Bannah (2012) mentioned that although there has been increasing attention towards student feedback, there is a need to develop an overarching framework for evaluation to ensure the validity, multidimensionality and usefulness of the feedback survey. Moreover, student feedback survey should constitute only a part of teacher evaluation. Huxham et. al. (2008) suggested using methods to collect student feedback such as focus groups, reflective diaries, rapid feedback and H form. Marshall (2012) recommended the inclusion of classroom observation and student achievement gains to measure effective teaching.

Aside from improving teaching practice, student feedback systems have been used for program development and improvement. Richardson (2005) explained that most student feedback systems focus on evaluating particular course units in the context of modular programs of study. In this sense, there has been little information about student experience in the entire program of study. In light of this, the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory was designed to measure students' satisfaction with their entire experience of higher education. In this survey, students are asked to rate both the importance of their expectation and their level of satisfaction regarding a particular aspect of higher education. The overall scores are calculated that identify aspects of the students' experience; pinpointing which aspects an institution is failing to meet students' expectation. Richardson (2005) also mentioned that in-house satisfaction surveys have been developed to measure overall student satisfaction in higher education. In other words, the focus of student feedback would not be on individual units/teachers and on entire institutions; rather the attention would be on the program of study.

In this regard, Richardson (2005) listed some assessment instruments to look into students' perception of academic quality such as the Course Perception Questionnaire (measures experiences with particular degree programs and departments). The instrument contained 40 items in eight scales reflecting aspects of effective teaching. Later, the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) was developed as a performance indicator for monitoring the quality of teaching. The instrument consisted of 30 items in five scales reflecting effective instruction such as appropriate assessment, clear goals and standards, appropriate workload, appropriate assessment and emphasis on independence. In many universities, students' perceptions are gathered as they are about to graduate – leading to the term “graduate exit survey.” Graduate student exit surveys ask recent alumni about their overall satisfaction with their academic experience and professional development, quality of mentoring and career plans. Konting, Kamaruddin and Man (2009), for example, conducted an exit survey among 1,823 Universiti Putra Malaysia graduating students. Using a scale from 1.0 (lowest) to 5.0 (highest), they found out that Social Science students had higher satisfaction level (3.80) as compared to their counterparts in the Physical Science and Engineering (3.48) and Bioscience and Medicine (3.37).

Aside from gathering perception and satisfaction data on study programs, student feedback has been utilized for curriculum design and course enhancement. McCuddy, Pinar and Gingerich (2007) utilized student feedback in designing student-focused curricula in the discipline of Organizational Development and Change, particularly in terms of (1) structure, operations and impact of an introductory business course in the first-year level; and (2) potential addition of majors, minors and course requirements in the business school. Jara and Mellar (2010), on the other hand, collected student feedback for quality enhancement of four e-learning courses.

In Bangladesh, the University Grants Commission or UGC (2016) had advised all Bangladeshi universities to include student satisfaction surveys in their self-assessment reports. The said survey instrument included questions on governance; curriculum; student entry qualifications; structures and facilities; teaching, learning and assessment; and research and extension. Aside from these, the UGC has provided a template for student feedback on teachers, which includes the parameters – subject matter knowledge, presentation and management, assessment of learning, student's development and professional behavior.

**Career Preparation.** Graduate employability has been recognized by various stakeholders (governments, accreditation bodies, parents and students) as one of the objectives of university education. Sumanasiri, Yajib and Khatibi (2015) followed the development of the graduate employability concept from focusing on employability skills to skills plus social and psychological attributes; from the USEM model (understanding, skills, efficacy belief and metacognition) to Career EDGE Model (USEM Models plus employability skills); from the Integrated Competence Model of Employability to the JET (Journey of Employment) and RAW (Rewarding, Ability and Wellness) models. In other words, higher education institutions have a responsibility to provide programs and activities that ensure the employability of their graduates.

One common approach of higher education institutions is the establishment of Career Development Centers (CDC), also called Career Resource Center or Career Information Center. Mc Daniels and Puryear (1991) described the attributes of CDCs – self-awareness (tools such as activities preference checklist, aptitude checklist, etc.); educational-occupational information (provision of information on careers); taking action (career decision-making); and life management (addressing life issues students may encounter). Universities have likewise utilized information technology to provide career information such as first-hand observations, action pictures and sound, still pictures and sounds, large visual displays, print media, automated and semi-automated systems and miscellaneous career sources.

Aside from CDCs, scholars have recognized the importance of mentoring programs for career development. Perna, Lerner and Yur (1995) explained that historically, older adults had an important role to play in developing young adults. Hence, assigned mentoring programs in professional and higher education settings may offer an alternative to the classic mentoring relationship. Teachers, acting as mentors, to their students would be helpful for the career development of the latter.

In Bangladesh, graduate employability has become an important factor in school and program selection of students. Genilo (2022) discussed that many universities in the country have adopted a market-driven approach. Private universities, for example, followed the professional orientation of North American education to ensure that their students dominate the job market, particularly landing lucrative placements. Citing Kabir (2012), parents

perceive market-oriented degrees as key to economic survival. Hence, parents convince their children to take courses that ensure absorption into the corporate sector.

In public universities, Islam, Rahman and Nibir (2021) surveyed 384 undergraduate students regarding the factors influencing their career choice. Using a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), the factors with strong influence included: Personality (4.28), Financial Benefits (4.22), Interest/Passion (4.20), Profession’s Prestige (4.13) and Career Flexibility (4.13). Basically, the top factors were a mixture of personal attributes and career perceptions. In this sense, graduate employability is also a major factor in choosing their programs of study.

In light of these discussion, the present study sought student feedback regarding the career development initiatives of Bangladeshi media studies and journalism programs. In so doing, it is hope that the said initiatives may improve considering documented perceptions and concerns.

### 1.1 Study Objective

The study objective was as follows:

- to gather the perceptions of communication, media and journalism students in the country regarding their career and the preparations needed for their careers.

### 2. Study Framework

The study framework follows the CDC Model mentioned by McDaniels and Puryear (1991) – self-awareness; educational-occupational information; taking action; and life management. However, these have been modified to fit the context of media and journalism schools in the country. The study framework was presented below:

Matrix 1: Study Framework

No.	Component	Parameter	Indicator
1	Self-Awareness	Career Coaching	Includes writing application letter, Curriculum Vitae, job interview preparation, and job written tests.
		Career Guidance	Refers to information provided about careers in the field, career prospects, career advice and career counseling.
2	Educational-Occupational Information	Job Benefits	Refers to awareness on the expected salary range, fringe benefits, allowances and regularization policy.
		Job Challenges	Mindfulness on the office hours, commuting, physical risks and psychological risks.
		Job Application Process	Information about the job application process, application strategy, recommendation letters and job referrals.

3	Taking Action	Career Preparation/ Practice	Includes apprenticeship programs, internship participation in research projects and project portfolio.
		Career Exposure	Involves doing relevant part-time jobs, meeting media professionals, career fairs, career talks and contributing articles/photos to media hubs/organizations.
4	Life Management	Career Networking	Includes forming informal working groups, joining student organizations and setting up social media account.
		Career Promotion and Pathways	Includes knowledge on job promotion policies, job hierarchy, alternative professional careers and media start-ups as a career option.
		Future Relationship with the University	Refers to the benefits of a graduate education, tracking of its graduates' whereabouts, alumni association's activities after graduation and participating in department activities after graduation.

### 3. Methodology

The study was descriptive by design. It adopted a quantitative approach; an online survey was done using a semi-structured questionnaire formulated using the Google Form. Respondents of the survey included communication, media and journalism students in Bangladesh. Quota sampling technique was used to include the respondents in the survey. The researchers set a target of having 200 respondents which was exceeded by 45 respondents. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary.

A Semi-structured survey questionnaire was used for the survey. The questionnaire included mostly rating questions presented using a five-point Likert scale (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest).

Mean ratings and descriptive statistical analysis were used to interpret the data. MS Excel was used for the analysis. To interpret the mean ratings an analytical framework suggested by Mohammed (2016) was used.

As Mohammed (2016) suggested, for formulating the framework for inference of the mean ratings, first the minimum and the maximum length of the 5-point Likert scale has been determined; the range is calculated by subtracting the minimum from the maximum ( $5 - 1 = 4$ ) and then dividing by five – the greatest value of the scale ( $4 \div 5 = 0.80$ ). Afterwards, it was added with the least value in the scale (1.0) to identify the maximum of this cell. Likewise, as shown in Matrix 2, the minimum and maximum of each cell have been determined:

**Matrix 2: Framework for inference of the mean ratings**

Score Range	Mean Rating	Interpretation
1 to 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Extremely Negative
1.81 to 2.60	Do not agree	Negative
2.61 to 3.40	Agree up to some extent	Moderate
3.41 to 4.20	Agree	Positive
4.21 to 5.00	Strongly agree	Extremely Positive

#### 4. Results and Discussion

**4.1 Demographic profile.** The participants of the survey included students of mass communication and journalism in different universities across the country. Among the total 245 respondents, 61% (150) was male and 39% (95) was female. The male-female ratio of the respondents is apparently imbalanced; however, it is natural for a male-dominated discipline; interestingly, the male-female ratio in public (61:39) and private (62:38) universities were very close. Also, the researchers did not try to control the numbers in terms of genders. More details are in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

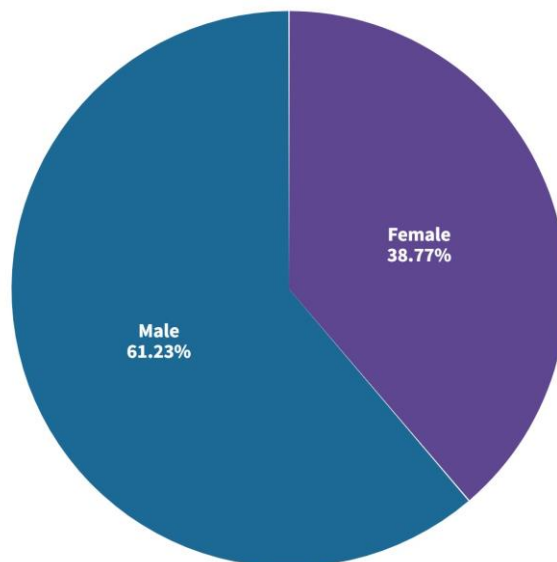


Figure 1. Respondents in terms of sex

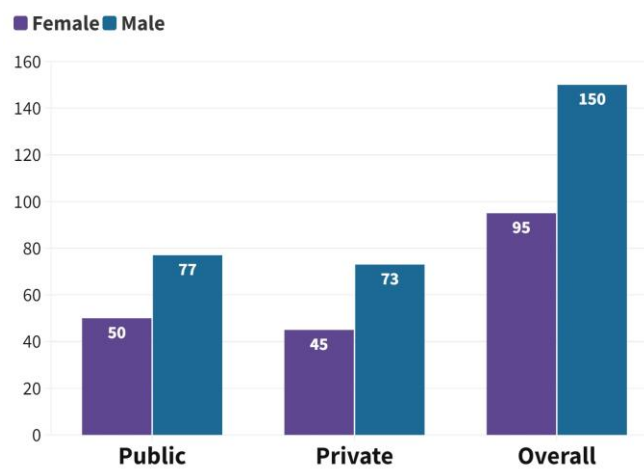


Figure 2. Demographics in terms of university-type



**4.2 Feedback on “Self-awareness”.** As mentioned in the framework, the “self-awareness” component of the survey included two elements – career coaching and career guidance. According to the findings, respondents’ feedback on both the elements is “moderate” as the overall mean ratings were found to be 3.34 and 3.03. More details are presented in the subsequent sub-sections.

**4.2.1 On career guidance.** The respondents’ feedback was “moderate” on the career guidance (overall mean rating 3.34) they receive from their teachers/department/university; Respondents from private universities rated (3.49) this relatively higher than the respondents from public universities (3.13). Among the different aspects, the respondents rated the aspect “My teacher/department/university has explained clearly about careers in the field” (mean rating: 3.53) was perceived most positively among different aspects of career guidance which is “positive” (satisfactory) according to the analytical framework, and they rated “referral to career counsellors” (mean rating: 3.02 – moderate) the lowest. More details are presented in Figure 3.

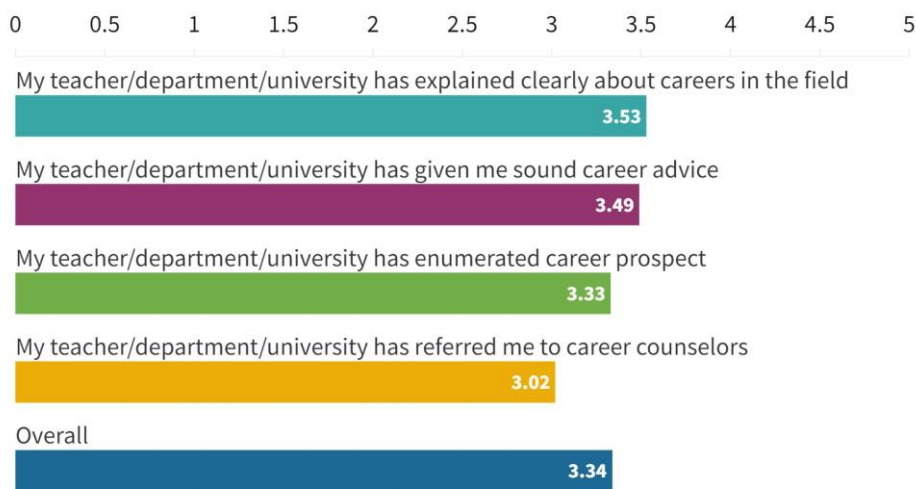


Figure 3. Respondents' Perception of Career Guidance they receive from their teacher/department/university (mean ratings – all respondents)

**4.2.2 On career coaching.** The respondents’ feedback on career coaching (overall mean rating: 3.03) was “moderate” with all the aspects of career coaching they receive from their teachers/department/university. However, respondents from private universities provided relatively higher ratings (3.28) compared to the public university respondents (2.8). The aspect “My teacher/department/university has taught me how to write an application letter” received the most positive feedback from all respondents (3.34) and by both public and private university respondents (3.15 and 3.54 respectively). On the other hand, the aspect

“My teacher/department/university has guided me about preparing for job written tests” received the lowest rating (2.81). The details are shown in Figure 4.

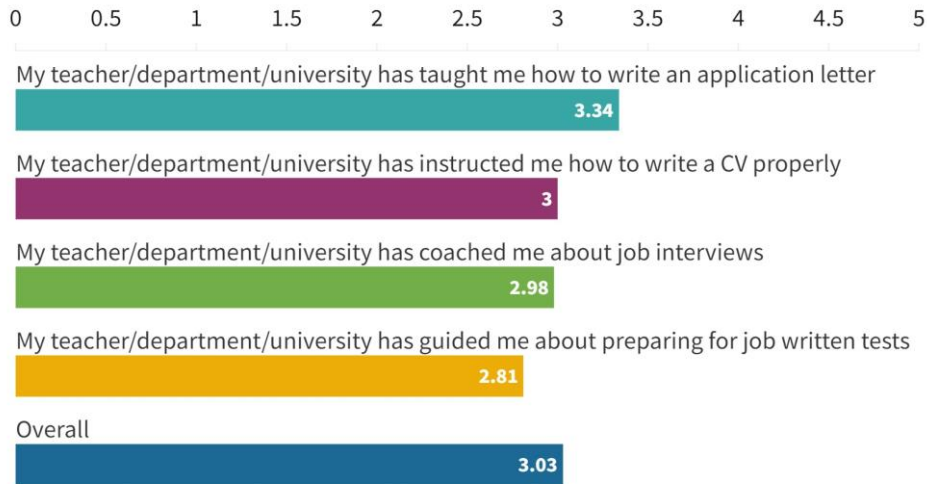


Figure 4. Respondents' Perception of Career Coaching they receive from their teacher/department/university (mean ratings)

**4.3 Feedback on “Educational-Occupational Information”.** The respondents were asked to provide feedback on three elements of “educational-occupational information” mentioned in the CDC model. These are: job benefits, job challenges and job application process. Feedback provided by the respondents on these were “moderate” and “positive” (mean ratings: 3.36, 3.56 and 3.14). The subsequent sections present the findings elaborately:

**4.3.1 On job benefits.** As can be gleaned from Figure 5, the respondents perceived themselves as “moderately aware” regarding job benefits (mean rating: 3.36), i. e., they somewhat know what they can expect from the profession they aspire for. The overall mean ratings of different aspects under this element ranged between 3.28 and 3.40; the ratings provided by the respondents from public and private universities were close too.

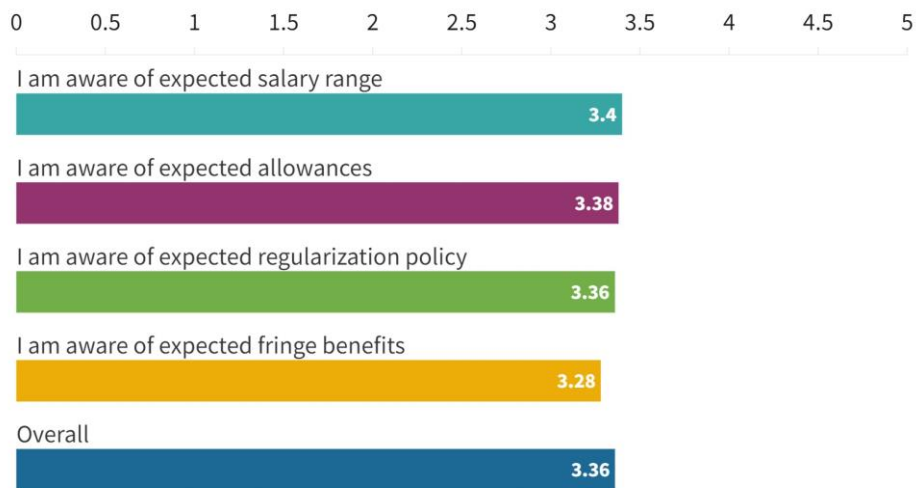


Figure 5. Respondents' Perception regarding their Awareness of Job Benefits (mean ratings)

4.3.2 *On job challenges.* The respondents perceived their understanding of job challenges as “high” with an overall mean rating of 3.56. Their feedback on different aspects of job challenges, ranged from 3.55 to 3.58, clearly indicate that as all the mean ratings are “positive” according to the analytical framework. The findings are summarized in Figure 6.

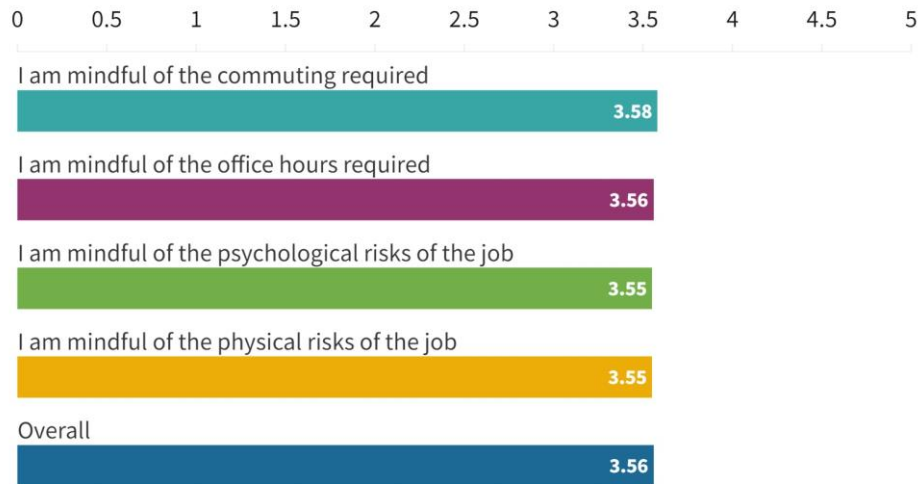


Figure 6. Respondents’ Awareness of Job Challenges

4.3.3 *Job application process.* The respondents’ feedback on the role of their teachers/department/university in the job application process was “moderate” (overall mean rating: 3.14). Though the overall mean ratings provided by both public and private university respondents were “moderate,” private university respondents’ feedback (mean rating: 3.28) was relative “more positive” compared to the public university respondents (mean rating: 3.02). Furthermore, the public university respondents rated their teachers/department/university quite lower compared to that of the private university respondents on the aspects “my teacher/department/university has informed me about the job application process” (mean ratings – public: 2.79; private: 3.26) and “my teacher/department/university has encouraged me to apply to as many organizations as possible” (public: 3.05; private: 3.49). The findings are presented in Figure 7.

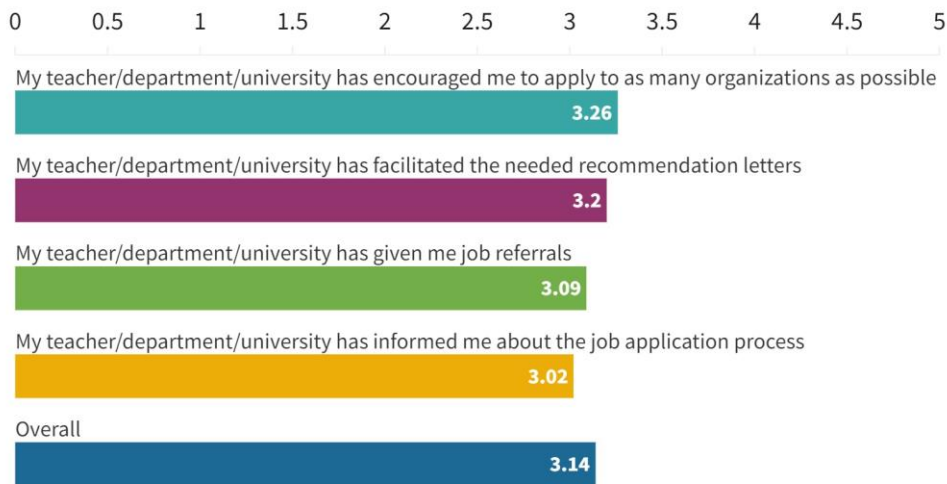


Figure 7. Respondents' Feedback on the Role of their Teacher/Department/University in Job Application Process (Mean ratings)

**4.4 Feedback on "Taking Action".** As presented in the study framework, respondents' perceptions on their career preparation/practice and career exposure were collected in the survey. They provided moderate feedback on both the elements – 3.35 and 3.17 respectively. Detailed findings are presented in the following sub-sections:

**4.4.1 Career Preparation.** The overall rating shows the respondent were "moderately satisfied" with their "career preparation" (overall mean ratings: 3.35). However, private university respondents rated their career preparation relatively higher (3.56 – satisfied) than the public university respondents (3.16 – moderately satisfied). The respondents rated the aspect "I am expecting to participate in research projects with my teachers" (3.63) the highest among the four aspects under "career preparation" while the aspect "I am going to complete an internship in an organization" was rated the lowest (3.15); this probably indicate that there are lack of internship opportunities at the communication, media and journalism schools in Bangladesh. Furthermore, respondents from private universities provided relatively higher ratings than public university respondents in all aspects, especially on "I am going to complete an internship in an organization" (private: 3.47 and public: 2.86) and "I am progressing towards finishing my project portfolio" (private: 3.55 and public: 2.96). Mean ratings of different aspects of "career preparation" are shown in Figure 7.

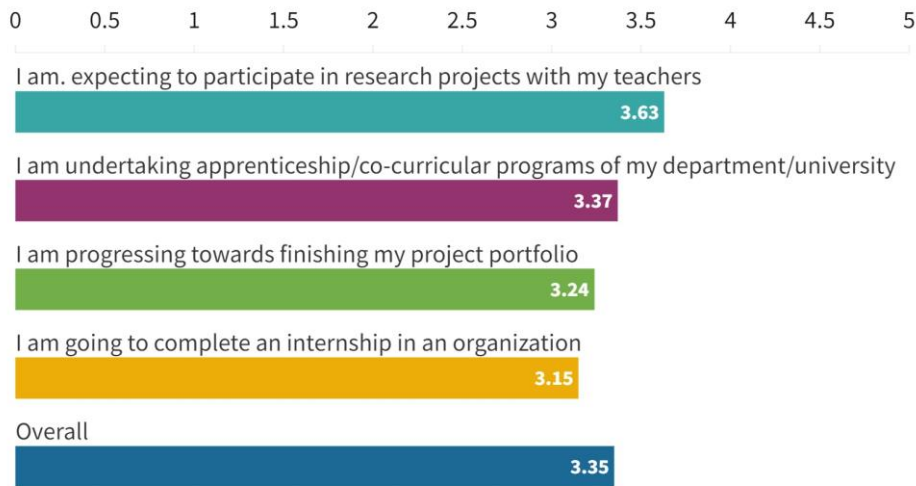


Figure 8. Respondents' Perception of Career Preparation (mean ratings)

4.4.2 Career Exposure. Respondents' perceptions of their career exposure were presented in Figure 7. As can be gleaned from the figure, the respondents are “moderately satisfied” with their career exposure (overall mean ratings: 3.17); the private university respondents rated their career exposure relatively higher (3.29) than the public university respondents (3.02); however, according to the analytical framework both ratings were “moderate”. The ratings provided by the respondents on different aspects of career exposure were not much different as were “moderate”, except the aspect “I am doing part-time jobs in the field” where private university respondents (3.4) rated themselves a lot higher than the public university respondent (2.76). This probably indicates that private university students are more engaged with different media outlets as “contributors” or in other part-time positions.

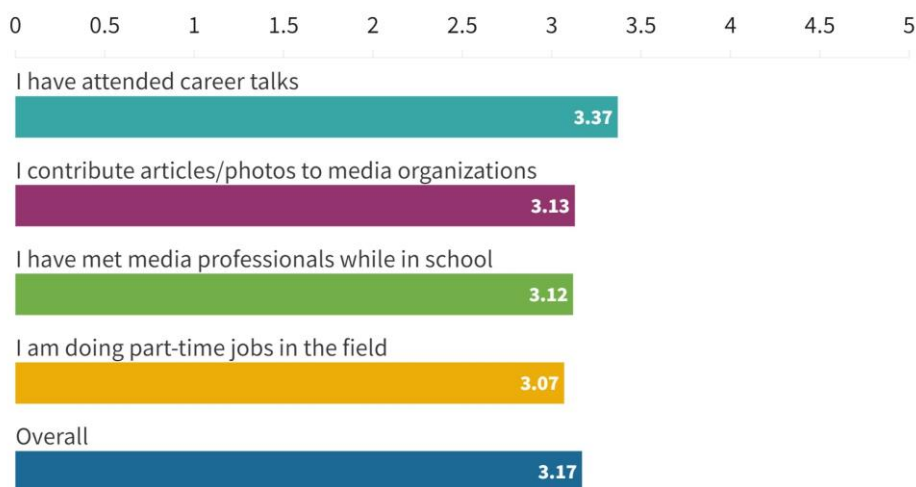


Figure 9. Respondents' Perception of their Career Exposure

**4.5 Feedback on “Life Management”.** The life management section of the survey included three elements: career networking, career promotion and pathways and future relationship with the university. The feedback on these were either “moderate” or “positive”.

**4.5.1 On career networking.** The respondents’ perception of their “career networking” came out to be “moderately satisfactory” with an overall mean rating of 3.17. The feedback on the aspect “I have formed informal working groups with my classmates” (mean ratings: 3.56 – positive) was the “most positive” among different aspects of career networking while the respondents from both public and private universities rated the aspect “I have a business card” the lowest (mean ratings: all respondents – 2.41; public: 2.2; private: 2.64). The aspect “I have joined student organization” was rated relatively higher by public university respondents (3.47) than the respondents from private universities (3.21). The findings are presented in Figure 10.

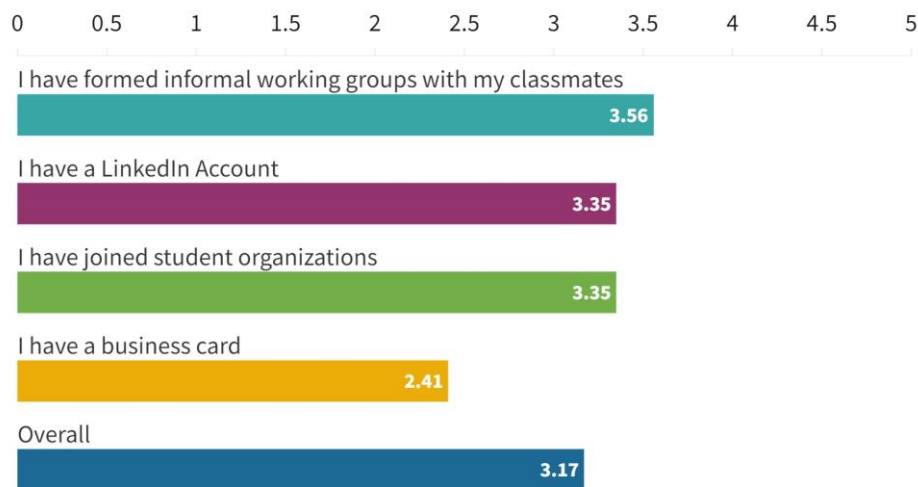


Figure 10. Respondents' Perception of their Career Networking (mean ratings)

4.5.2 *On career promotion and pathways.* According to the findings presented in Figure 11, the respondents perceived themselves as “knowledgeable” on career promotion and pathways as the overall mean rating (3.4) was “positive”. The mean ratings on different aspects of career promotion and pathways were “moderate,” except on “I am knowledgeable about alternative professional careers” (3.46 – positive). These probably indicate that the respondents are conscious about their future career up to some extent and they do not think of only one career but keep the alternatives in mind.

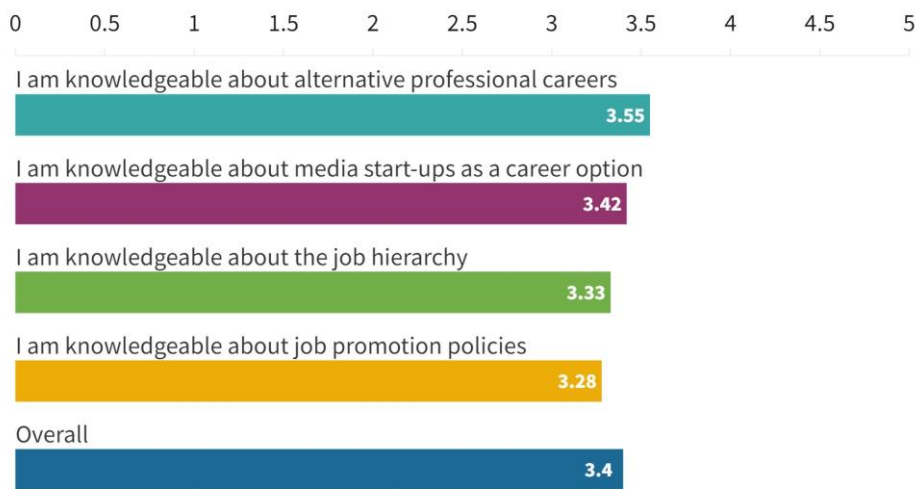


Figure 11. Respondents' perception of their Knowledge on Career Promotion and Pathways (mean ratings – all respondents)



4.5.3 *On future relationship with the university.* Feedback (mean rating: 3.76) on “future relationship with the university” as well as on different aspects of it (ranging from 3.56 to 3.94) were found to be “positive” across the respondents. These might provide the impression that the respondents were “knowledgeable” of “the benefits of a graduate education” (mean rating: 3.94) and “the department’s/university’s tracking of its graduates’ whereabouts” (mean rating: 3.56); likewise, they showed “willingness” to “participate in the alumni association’s activities after graduation” (mean rating: 3.8) and “to participate in department/university activities after graduation” (mean rating: 3.76). The findings are presented in Figure 12.

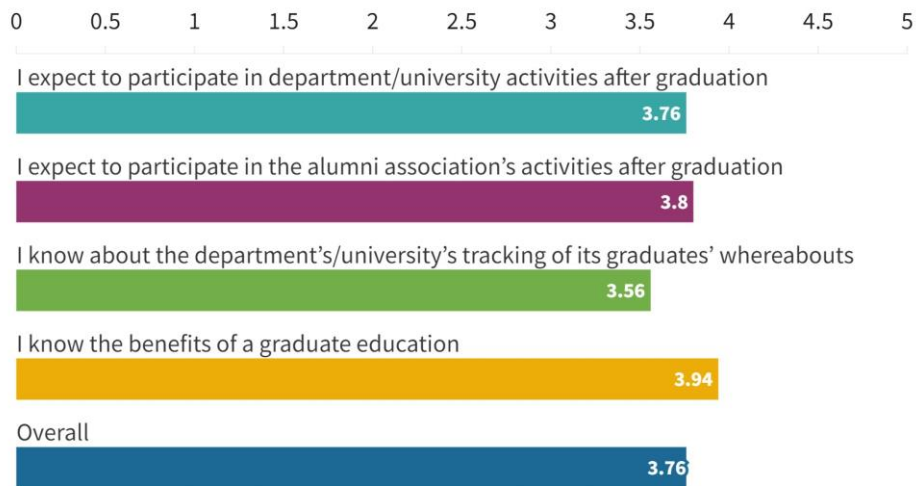


Figure 12. Respondents' Feedback on Future Relationship with the university

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

The findings of the different sections of the survey have been summarized in Figure 13.

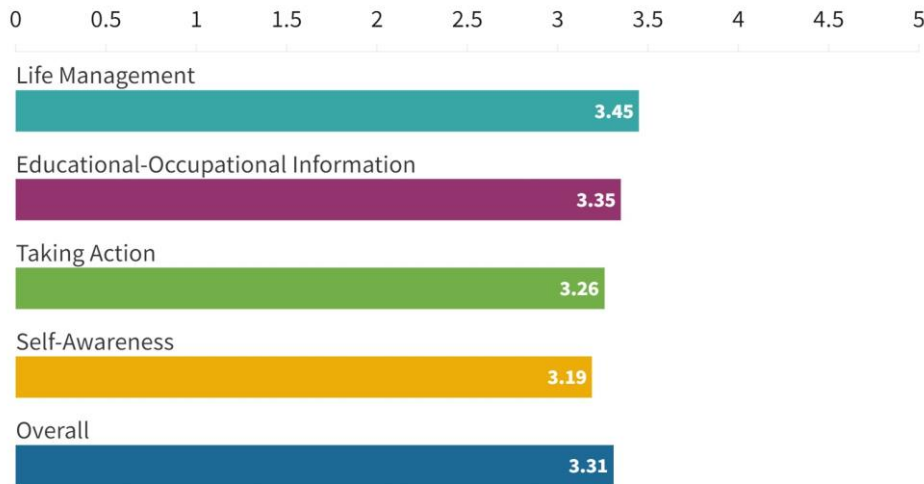


Figure 13. Summary of Respondents' Feedback (mean ratings – weighted average)

It can be gleaned from Figure 13 that the respondents' overall feedback and their feedback on the role of their teachers/department/university on most of the components were “moderate”, and their feedback on “life management” was “positive”. Also, it was found that respondents' feedback on different aspects of the components included in the survey, namely “Self-Awareness,” “Educational-Occupational information,” “Taking Action” and “Life Management,” were either “moderate” or “positive”. This means, the teachers/departments/universities are fulfilling the expectations of the students up to some extent; however, there are spaces for a lot more; especially, more attention should be provided on the elements of “Self-Awareness” (received the lowest feedback), especially “career coaching”. Alongside, students need more guidance, attention and care from their teachers/department/university on “Taking Action” and “Educational-Occupational information” so that they know better the career the aspire for and can prepare well for it. To do this, the universities/departments should create more spaces for the students to interact with the faculty members as well as with the professionals. Universities/departments should also establish different apprenticeship programs and/or enhance the existing ones so that the students can develop/enhance the skills required for the contemporary industry by practicing hands-on. Curriculum should include internship and portfolio as requirements so that the students leave the schools well-prepared for the industry and with proofs of their ability (portfolio). Universities should establish and/or activate career centers to help students be

more prepared for their professional life by providing different trainings, for example, on application writing, CV writing, taking written and viva exams for job etc. Career centers can help students in finding internships/jobs as well. Faculty members should be more accessible to the students so that they can get recommendation letters easily when they need one as well as advice on career preparation, career exposure and career networking. Faculty members should also use their personal and professional networks to help the students find jobs.

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