Media and Journalism Education in Bangladesh:
Challenges Ahead, Needed Response

Media and Journalism Education in Bangladesh: Challenges Ahead, Needed Response

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Abstract

The study objectives were two-fold: (1) to gather the perceptions of communication, media and journalism faculty in the country regarding the challenges ahead for the media industry and the needed response of academia, and (2) to find out the perceptions of the said faculty regarding the basic orientation of the Communication and Journalism Educators' Network (CJEN) Bangladesh. To fulfill the objectives, a survey was undertaken, which primarily utilized a Likert Scale (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest). Using quota sampling technique, a total of 46 media studies and journalism faculty participated. The findings indicated that the respondents agreed with regarding to the challenges encountered by media organizations – journalists' safety (4.06), audience access to media (3.86) and media functions (3.57) – but agree up to some extent about media viability (3.38). In terms of responses from academe, respondents strongly agree about adding new courses (4.22), conducting outreach programs (4.28), improving teaching-leaning (4.40), engaging in research (4.44) and establishing facilities/co-curricular programs (4.72). They likewise expressed their opinions regarding various aspects of the network – fields to be covered, member types, institutional member criteria, individual member criteria, main program areas of the network and membership fees.

Key Words: Bangladesh, Communication, Journalism, Educators, Networks, Sharing Society, Teacher Professional Development, Membership Survey

1. Introduction.

This paper takes off from the key message Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) Secretary General Ramon Tuazon delivered during the pre-conference session of the Communication and Journalism Educators' Network (CJEN) Bangladesh. It then proceeds with a discussion on media and communication scholars' associations and the attempts to set up such an organization in Bangladesh. To aid in establishing CJEN Bangladesh, the paper presents the results of a survey conducted among potential members. With these results, there is greater clarity regarding the sentiments, concerns and pressing needs of potential members, which can serve as a guide to the association's founding committee.

On 11 March 2022, Tuazon delivered a speech entitled: "Caring society is a sharing society. Why community of educators is important?" during CJEN's pre-conference session. His key message may be summarized as follows: "Networking is not an option or choice. Networking

is the only way to grow and survive." According to him, for educators to survive and thrive in this day and age, they need to collaborate and cooperate with each other. Being drivers of the knowledge society, they need to play a leading role in promoting and sustaining a sharing, caring and cooperative society. They may find it necessary to share virtual goods, knowledge, talent, expertise and creativity.

Tuazon's message reflects the transformation happening in the education sector. Vuorikari (2012) et. al. explained that the role of teachers has changed over the years given that learning has become more personalized – education becoming more accessible to diverse population groups. Moreover, the state and private sector have pushed educators to give more importance to transversal skills such as creativity, flexibility and learning how to learn. With these pressures, a new teaching and learning system has emerged – one that is student-centred and market-driven. The old education paradigm with an ivory tower, teacher-centred and one-size-fits-all method had become outdated. The role of a teacher has shifted towards becoming more like a mentor and facilitator. With this change, they need to be equipped in handling the diversity of resources (time, space, media and methods) and in maximizing both formal and informal learning. They should be at ease at navigating various learning modalities – synchronous, asynchronous, face-to-face, virtual, local and global.

The change in teaching and learning paradigm has caught the attention of international ranking bodies. Over the past few years, these bodies sought to encourage educators to explore new ways of undertaking education. For example, Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) and Wharton University in 2020 organized the Reimagine Education Awards and Conference, which emboldens educators to spot problems that prevent optimal learning/pedagogical outcomes and find creative, innovative solutions to these problems. The Worlds' Universities with Real Impacts (WURI), on the other hand, since 2020, ranks the impact of academic innovations under the categories – industrial application, entrepreneurial spirit, ethical value, student mobility, crisis management (added for 2021) and Fourth Industrial Revolution (added for 2022). Not to be outdone, the Times Higher Education (THE) has the THE Awards where it reviews hundreds of entries that exemplify talent, dedication and innovation of individuals and teams in universities. The said awards were a fixture in the UK higher education calendar for more than a decade. In 2019, the awards expanded to Ireland and in 2022, to Asia. These initiatives are motivating educators to reimagine how learning is conceived and conducted.

Amidst all these, a new academic culture has arisen – one that is caring, cooperating and networking and one that fits with the sharing and knowledge society. In this sense, educators will have to work as members of learning teams; which may be diverse – new teachers, experienced educators, subject-matter experts and students. Schools will have to transform into learning hubs and become part of a networked learning ecology. In his speech, Tuazon (2022) enumerated open data, open-sourced software and digital commons as examples of shared virtual goods. Vuorikari (2012) et. al. described the vast array of education materials posted online that are shared and re-used free of charge. These included open educational resources (OER), massive open online courses (MOOCs) and Coursera with 35 million plus learners, 150 plus university partners and 250 plus specializations.

Another platform the enabled educators to be "connected" is the social media. Teachers share ideas, thoughts, experiences, strategies and resources via Twitter and Facebook. They also upload the latest information and research in online communities such as academia.edu. These educators understand the importance of and responsibility for the sharing economy to propel the education sector forward. When someone puts his or her work out there, others can improve upon it; resulting in a better product for all. Tuazon (2022) argues that a sharing society levels the playing field so that all can be knowledge co-creators, contributors and generators. Everyone contributes to the co- creation of value. Equity and the common good are the end-goals of this practice.

1.1 Networking for Teacher Development. In the past, the school relied on its own resources for teacher training and development. However, in the past decade, Prenger, Poortman and Handelzalts (2020) observed that there has been a shift in focus from within-school to cross-school professional learning communities. Given the increased complexity of a fast-changing world, teacher professional development has become too great for any one school to address alone. During their period of study, the authors found several cross-school network types, including research-use teams, multi-site lesson study team and teacher design teams.

Aside from cross-school teacher development, several educators have turned to professional learning networks (PLN) to build on their skill sets. As defined by Trust (2012), PLNs is a "system of interpersonal connections and resources that support informal learning." Poortman and Brownman (2019) added to the definition; stating that "collaborative learning should be with others outside of their everyday community of practice." Trust, Krutka and Carpenter

(2016) explained that educators joined PLNs to hone their skills with peers who are accessible online due to reduced temporal and spatial constraints. In a survey among 732 P-12 (prekindergarten to grade 12 education), they found out that PLNs adequately responded to the educators' diverse interests and needs, appeared to offer possibilities for supporting their professional development. PLNs were also available anytime and anywhere.

Such research findings have greater significance given the challenges in teacher professional development. Opfer and Pedder (2011) sampled 388 schools from England's National Foundation of Education Research (NFER) database. They discovered that professional teacher development was generally ineffectual and lacks school level system and support. However, high performing schools tend to engage in practices to support teacher learning such as systems and support for learning, creation of social capital conditions and support for collaboration and networking. In other words, teachers utilized digital sites to cultivate and extend PLNs to grow as educators. Teachers select the professional development in which they will participate in from a number of options from different providers.

1.2 Network of Media and Communication Scholars. Media and communication scholars all over the world have joined academic networks for professional development. There are basically four types of academic networks in the discipline that have been developed so far – (1) global, (2) regional, (3) field-specific and (4) national/local. The two largest global media educators' networks are the International Association of Media and Communication Researchers (IAMCR) and the International Communication Association (ICA).

IAMCR's history may be traced to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), particularly its Committee on Technical Needs in the Mass Media. UNESCO is a specialized UN agency that promotes world peace and security through international cooperation in education, arts, sciences and culture. In 1946, the said committee drafted a constitution for an "international institute of the press and information, designed to promote the training of journalists and the study of press problems throughout the world." (Hamelink and Nordenstreng, 2016) In 1948, the UN Conference on Freedom of Information took note of the proposal and resolved that such an institute could be conducive to the improvement of the quality of information. The 1952 UNESCO General Conference authorized the Director General to proceed with the proposal, which resulted into two actions. The first was the establishment of training centers for journalists. The second was the creation of a separation international organization for the promotion and exchange of scientific research.

The second action ultimately led to the establishment of the IAMCR, which aims to facilitate exchanges of methods and findings between research institutes and to promote personal contacts among individual members.

ICA was established on 1 January 1950 as the National Society for the Study of Communication (NSSC). Several communication scholars, led by Elwood Murray, Paul Bagwell, Ralph Nichols and Wesley Wiksell, foresaw the growth in basic communication at colleges and universities through the United States. They likewise conducted, presented and published some of the initial research in the discipline. The founding scholars believed that the new organization would foster the development (methodologies, philosophies and curricula) of basic communication, which includes speech, journalism, radio and other mass media . . ." The change to its current name happened in 1967.

Today, IAMCR has more than 2,700 active members from 92 countries while ICA has 4,500 members from 82 countries. Both organizations have a network of emerging scholars to cater to provide special attention to this important group. They also boast of having several sections/divisions and working groups/interest groups – from health communication to visual communication, media industry studies to sports communication, international communication to comic art, among others. In many ways, these global associations attract communication scholars with varying philosophical paradigms and from several fields, sub-fields and related disciplines. After conducting a network analysis, using blockmodeling of joint memberships, Barnett and Danowski (1992) identified four dimensions of member networks in the ICA – humanistic, mediated, interpersonal and information technology. Doerfel and Barnett (1999) undertook a semantic network analysis of paper titles presented to ICA divisions and interest groups at its 1991 conference. They found out that papers presented had a high degree of correspondence with affiliation structure; networks differentiated the humanistic from the scientific divisions, the mediated from the interpersonal, and the theoretical from the applied.

Tuazon (2022) underscored the importance of having a big tent in the communication discipline; encouraging cross discipline paradigms, which may be inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and transdisciplinary. He mentioned that today's issues and challenges are too enormous and complex to be addressed by a single isolated discipline. In this sense, by having several sections/divisions working groups/interest groups, disciplinal theories, models and approaches are enriched, thus improving on their heuristic value.

In the Asian continent, the largest network of communication educators is the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) – an international, non-profit, non-government organization that serves as a regional research hub for media and communication issues. Established in 1971 and based in Manila, its main objective is to encourage ethical and social responsibility of the media to support democratic access and participation in media development and production. The association has developed strong links with industry and development partners, which became instrumental in knowledge sharing, collaboration and training.

Two of the more popular field-specific networks of communication scholars and practitioners are the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management (GA) and the World Journalism and Education Council (WJEC). With over 320,000 members, GA is a confederation of the world's major public relations and communication management associations and institutions. Based in Switzerland, the alliance's mission is to unify the public relations profession, raise professional standards, share knowledge and be the global voice of the sector. WJEC, on the other hand, is a worldwide coalition of academic associations involved in journalism education at the university level. It seeks to improve journalism worldwide through better professional and academic education in this field by linking journalism education organizations to cooperate and share knowledge and best practices. Around 35 communication scholars' networks have joined WJEC, including several national/local associations from Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Norway, the Philippines, Russia, Southern Africa and the United Kingdom.

1.3 Attempts at organizing Bangladeshi Communication Scholars. In Bangladesh, there is no sustained association of media and communication scholars. However, there have been a few attempts at form one. The earliest effort to organize Bangladesh communication scholars was in 13 December 2010 during the educators' roundtable "Challenges and Opportunities for Journalism Educators in the New Media World." During the meeting, the event organizer – Bangladesh Centre for Development, Journalism and Communication (BCDJC) – floated the idea of a communication educators' network to facilitate the country's membership in WJEC. However, the participants were not keen on the idea.

In March 2019, the World Communicators' Council (WCC) Bangladesh Chapter was launched (UNB News, 2019 March 29). The chapter would welcome teachers from diverse areas such as public relations, journalism, media studies, advertising, corporate communications and marketing. The chapter organized panel discussions at Chittagong University and Comilla University in the next few months. However, it remained inactive since then.

Another attempt was with the Global Communication Scholar Conclave where some Bangladeshi scholars were asked in January 2022 to participate in the activities of the association's chapter in India. Later on, they plan to establish a conclave among Bangladeshi media scholars.

The most serious initiative to establish a network of communication scholars in the country is the Communication and Journalism Educators' Network (CJEN) Bangladesh. Plans to form the association may be traced to Deutsche Welle (DW) Akademie project: "Media Development in Rural Areas: Supporting Community Radios and Journalism Education in Bangladesh." The project's overall aim was to professionalize the journalism sector so that it can better perform its roles as a fourth estate and as facilitators of dialogue. Concretely, the project sought to improve journalism education at the University of Rajshahi and University of Chittagong. In the External Evaluation Report (2017) on the project, it was suggested that the next phase move from the pilot approach, which only focused on two universities. It should look into other regional universities (in terms of sharing practice-oriented education elements); build a network of journalism departments; and interface with working journalists in public and private media-related institutions.

With these in mind, University of Rajshahi organized a networking conference among heads of journalism schools in the country in February 2018. After a workshop conducted by DW Akademie Policy and Concept Expert Udo Prenjel, the participants decided to form the Communication and Journalism Educators' Network (CJEN) Bangladesh. Several months later, in November 2018, Chittagong University conducted the second networking conference. A third and fourth networking conference were then held. In February 2020, Comilla University explored ways on how journalism education can become more practice-oriented. In August 2021, Jahangirnagar University look at the role of media educators during the time of the pandemic. In May 2022, the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh hosted the fifth networking conference. The conference was a self-assessment about journalism education as a sector – what is right and what is wrong with journalism education in the light of a changed mediascape. The network's founding committee was likewise formed during the conference. In light of this, this study presented the perceptions of potential CJEN Bangladesh members regarding the changed mediascape and the needed response of communication schools. It is hoped that the survey results can guide the founding committee as it endeavors to formally establish the network.

1.4 Study Objectives.

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- to gather the perceptions of communication, media and journalism faculty in the country regarding the challenges ahead for the media industry and the needed response of academia.

- to find out the perceptions of the said faculty regarding the basic orientation of the Communication and Journalism Educators' Network (CJEN) Bangladesh.

2. Study Framework.

The study aimed to take a snapshot of the perceptions of potential network members regarding the changed mediascape and needed response of the academic sector in the country. To undertake this, there is a need to check in on the future members to see what are important for them. The researchers consulted the Association Metrics' Guide to Member Survey (undated) in developing the study framework. According to the guide, there are six areas to be covered in membership surveys. This is shown in Matrix 1.

Matrix 1

Areas Covered in Member Surveys

No.	Areas	Description
1	Member Needs Analysis	• Association's ability to satisfy a variety of personal and professional needs. • Reasons why members choose to belong to the association.
2	Member Benefits Performance Analysis	• Quality of each member benefit. • Impact of each member benefit.
3	Member Benefit Awareness Analysis	• Level of use of member benefit. • Level of awareness of member benefit.
4	Association Performance Analysis	• Impact of the association's value proposition – member benefits, conference, communications, website, advocacy, staff, continuing education, committees, etc.
5	Member Loyalty Analysis	• Strength of relationship between member and the association.
6	Problem Analysis	• Problems experienced by members with the association.

Source: Association Metrics' Guide to Member Survey (undated)

Since CJEN Bangladesh has not yet been formally organized, the researchers focused on only three of the six areas. The three areas and the corresponding measurements under each area were presented in Matrix 2.

Matrix 2

Areas Covered and their Measurements in the Study

No.	Areas	Measurements
1	Member Needs	• Respondents' Perception/Importance given to challenges faced by the media industry – journalist safety, media viability/sustainability, audience access and media functions/roles. • Respondents' Perception regarding the response of the academic sector to the challenges – curriculum, teaching and learning, research, facilities, co-curricular programs and outreach.
2	Member Benefits	• Respondents' Perceptions regarding the association's priority areas – teaching, teaching materials, research, publications, networking and technology.
3	Member Loyalty	• Respondent's Perception regarding the eligibility and type of membership.

The member needs will serve as the basis of unity of the association. Member benefits indicate the priority areas/program of the association that will benefit members. Member loyalty spells out the eligibility for membership and the type of membership.

3. Methodology.

The study, descriptive by design, adopted a quantitative approach through an online survey by a semi-structured questionnaire formulated using Google Form. Faculty members working at communication, media and journalism schools in Bangladesh were the study population. Quota sampling technique was used to include the respondents in the survey. The survey was administered following the data gathering procedure suggested by Church and Waclawski (2017). The detailed procedure is presented in the later part of the section. The researchers set a target of gathering 50 responses.

A semi-structured questionnaire was used for the survey that included close-ended questions requiring single and multiple response(s), and rating questions presented using a five-point Likert scale (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest).

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

As Mohammed (2016) suggested, the framework for inference of the mean ratings was formulated following the steps below:

- 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 $(4 \div 5 = 0.80)$.
- Range 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 3

Framework for interpretation 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

3.1 Data Gathering Procedure. The researchers followed the data gathering procedure suggested by Church and Waclawski (2017) in designing organizational surveys. The seven-step process and their descriptions as applied to the current study were presented below:

Step 1. Building Alliances. The researchers identified institutions from both public and private universities with programs in media studies and journalism. Then, from these institutions, they listed who can potentially help them in conducting the survey. These are people who they can count on for support, commitment and energy.

Step 2. Developing the Survey Instrument. The researchers then developed the survey instruments – consulting Association Metrics Guide to Member Surveys in the process. The survey instrument was divided into respondent's profile, member needs, member benefits and member loyalty.

Step 3. Communicating Objectives. The researchers wrote a cover letter for respondents, which communicated the purpose, objectives and content of the survey. Since the survey was conducted online, the questionnaire had to be clear to the respondents. One way to ensure clarity is through face validity, which was undertaken with a few faculty from public and private universities.

Step 4. Administering the Survey. The researchers created a database communication, media studies and journalism faculty working in recognized universities in the country auditing their websites. The researchers also used their professional network to make the list as complete as possible because changes in faculty line-up is obvious and many institutes are not very prompt in updating websites. The survey link was sent to each person on the list; another reminder email was also sent later. Alongside, the survey link was posted in the CJEN Bangladesh Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/2050230458528776. Also, the researchers themselves disseminated the link through Facebook messenger in their personal network. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary.

Step 5. Interpreting Results. Once the data have been collected, the researchers analyzed the results. They identified the main issues and important relationships among the mass of data. In this study, this included member needs, member benefits and member loyalty.

Step 6. Delivering the Findings. The survey results were presented in the Fifth CJEN Bangladesh Networking conference held from 13 and 14 May 2022.

Step 7. Learning into Action. The survey results were intended to be a guide for the founding committees of CJEN Bangladesh. From these data, the committee can formulate plans based on perceived member needs, member benefits and member loyalty.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Respondents' Profile. A total of 46 faculty members participated in the survey. The number may seem low. However, according to the information available on the university websites, the total number of full-time faculty members in the discipline is about 170. Considering this, the number of respondents (46) was 27.06%. Figure 1 presents demographic profile of the respondents in terms of sex and the type of university they work for while figure 2 presents the ranks of the respondents.
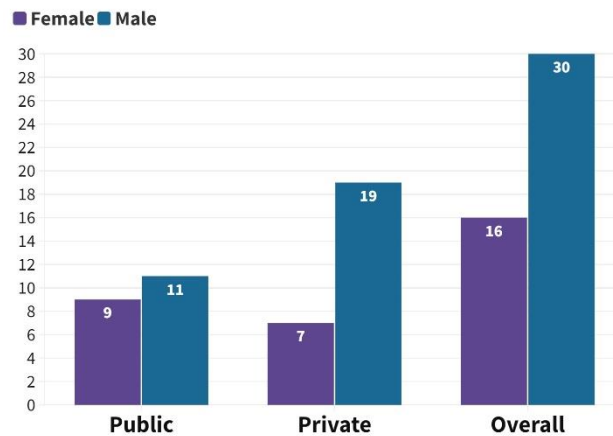
Figure 1. Respondents' Profile 1 - Sex and University type
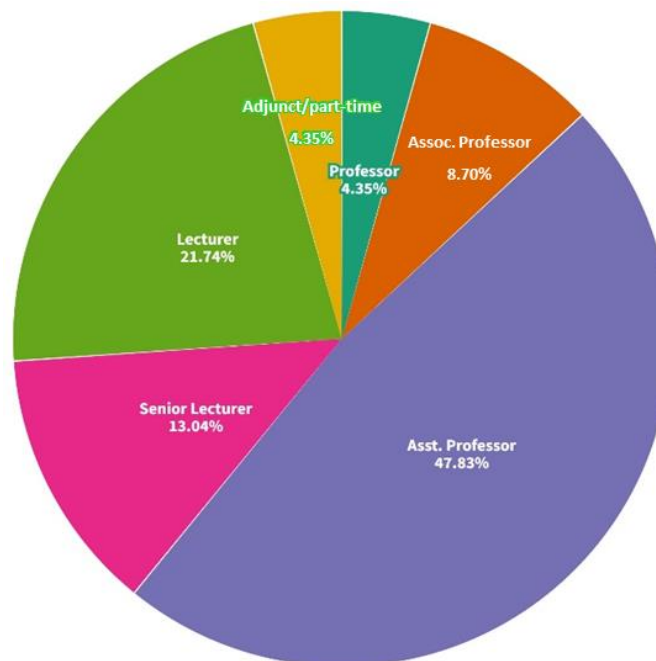
Figure 2. Respondents' ranks

The most significant aspect of the respondents' profile in this survey was their ranks; a negligible number of senior faculty members (2 professors, and 4 associate professors) participated in the survey. On the other hand, mid-level faculty members (assistant professors) participated in numbers; almost half the respondents (48%) belonged to this rank.

4.2 On Challenges Encountered by Media Organizations. Respondents' perception of the challenges encountered by media organizations in terms of (i) Journalist Safety; (ii) Media Viability; (iii) Audience Access, and (iv) Media Functions. The findings were presented in the following subsections.

4.2.1 *Journalist Safety.* The respondents perceived journalists' safety as a matter of concern as the overall mean rating (4.06) is in the "positive" cell of the interpretation framework. Among the respondents, 82.6% either 'Strongly Agreed' or 'Agreed' on the statement "journalists are being silenced" while 72.26% perceived "journalists are being threatened"; 82.6% of them think "journalists need trauma training". Figure 3 presents the findings in the form of 'mean ratings' and Table 1 shows the response details.
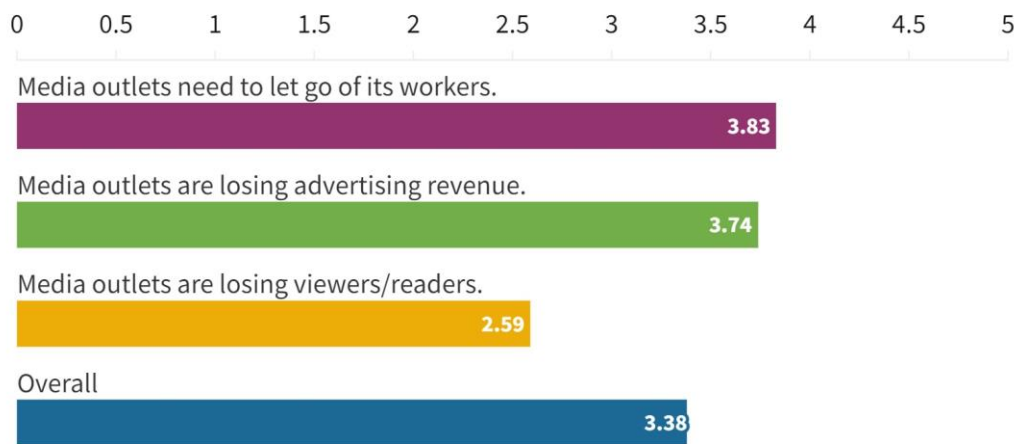

Figure 3. Respondents' perception of journalists' safety (mean ratings)

Table 1. Responses on Journalist Safety (N = 46)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Journalists are being Silenced	19 (41.30%)	19 (41.30%)	6 (7.04%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.35%)
Journalists need Trauma Training	18 (39.13%)	20 (43.48%)	3 (6.52%)	2 (4.35%)	3 (6.52%)
Journalists are being threatened	16 (34.78%)	20 (43.48%)	5 (10.87%)	3 (6.52%)	2 (4.35%)

4.2.2 *Media Viability.* The overall mean ratings (3.38) indicated that the respondents perceived media viability as a "moderate" challenge. Majority of the respondents (54.34%)

either 'Disagreed' (36.95%) or "Strongly Disagreed" (17.39%) with the idea "media outlets are losing viewers/readers"; alongside, 21.73% respondents remained "neutral" on this. The mean rating (2.59) indicates the respondents' disagreement with the statement. However, their responses on the other two aspects are somewhat contradictory to this as 67.39% perceived that "media outlets are losing advertising revenue" and 78.26% perceived that in the current situation "media outlet need to let go of their its workers". Figure 4 presents the mean ratings of respondents' perception on different aspects of media viability while Table 2 presents the responses provided by the respondents on each statement.

Figure 4. Respondents' perception of media viability

Table 2. Responses on Media Viability (N = 46)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Media outlets need to let go of its workers.	10 (21.73%)	26 (56.52%)	4 (8.70%)	4 (8.70%)	2 (4.35%)
Media outlets are losing advertising revenue.	16 (34.80%)	15 (32.61%)	4 (8.70%)	9 (19.57%)	2 (4.35%)
Media outlets are losing viewers/readers.	3 (6.52%)	8 (17.40%)	10 (21.73%)	17 (36.96%)	8 (17.40%)

4.2.3 Audience Access. The overall mean rating (3.86) indicated that respondents perceived social media as an important apparatus as a media gateway. However, from the mean ratings of the respondents' perception on different aspects suggested that they have identified social media as more of a medium of entertainment as the statement "audience prefer social media for entertainment content" received the highest rating (4.41) which is "extremely positive" according to the analytical framework; furthermore, 91.3% respondents either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" on this. However, majority of the respondents also perceived

that audience prefer social media as news source (71.73%) as well as for political commentary (58.69%). Only a handful of respondents rated negatively these two statements – 17.39% and 23.91% respectively. The mean ratings of respondents' perception are presented in Figure 5 and response details in Table 3.
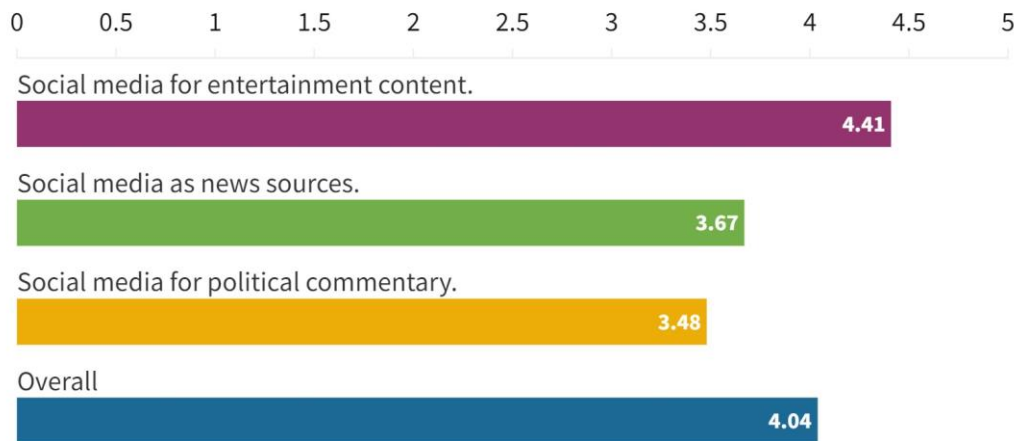

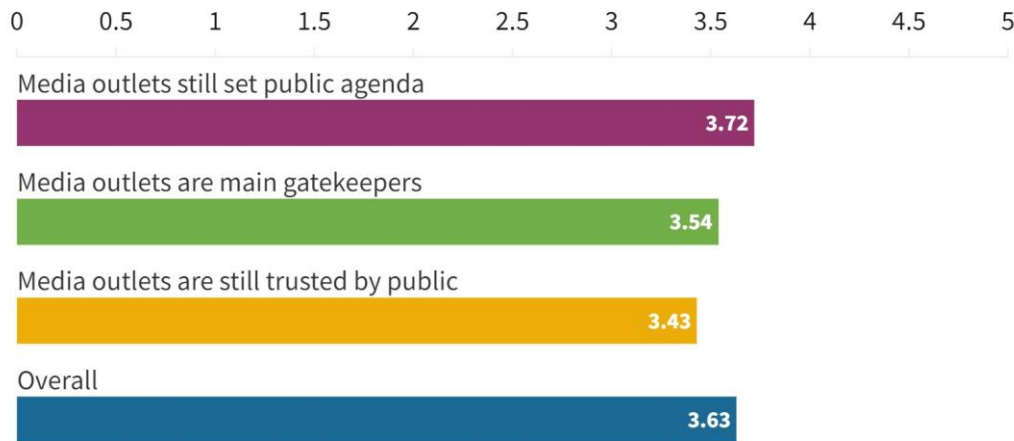**Figure 5. Respondents' Perception of Audience Access**

Table 3. Responses on Audience Access (N = 46)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Audience prefers social media for entertainment content.	27 (58.70%)	15 (32.61%)	1 (2.17%)	2 (4.35%)	1 (2.17%)
Audience prefers social media as news sources.	8 (17.40%)	25 (54.35%)	5 (10.87%)	6 (7.04%)	2 (4.35%)
Audience prefers social media for political commentary.	8 (17.40%)	19 (41.30%)	8 (17.40%)	9 (19.57%)	2 (4.35%)

4.2.4 Media Functions. The overall mean rating (3.57) of this element indicated that the respondents are still "positive" towards the traditional roles of media, i. e. media outlets (i) are the main information get keepers; (ii) set the public agenda; (iii) are trusted by public. It was not so long ago when media was the main (only!) information gatekeeper as well as the agenda setter. However, media outlets are no longer the main information gatekeeper – social media, professional strategists, citizen journalists, online activist groups etc. have emerged as the other gatekeepers in the digital age. Likewise, they often set agenda too. Also, people's trust in the conventional media outlets is no longer at the level it was a decade or two ago. However, the contemporary trends are not reflected in the responses as the respondents rated

positively all the statements: media outlets are the main information get keepers (mean rating: (3.54), media outlets still set the public agenda (3.72) and media outlets are still trusted by public (3.43). Figure 6 and Table 4 present the details.

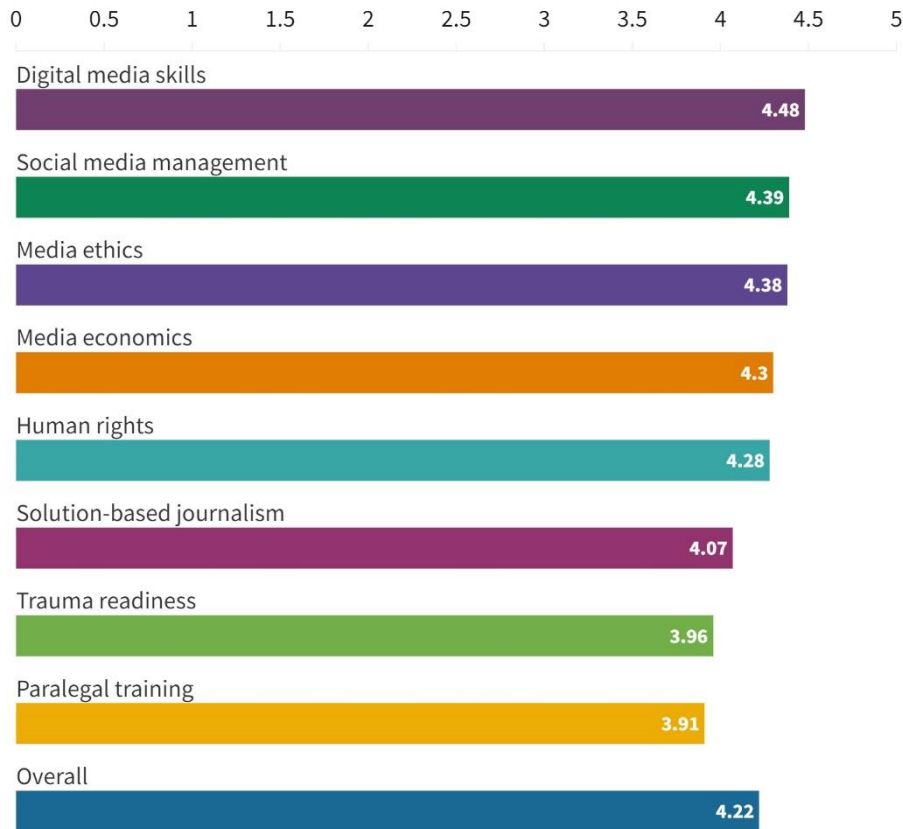**Figure 6. Respondents Perception of Media Functions**

Table 4. Responses on Media Functions (N = 46)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Media outlets still set the public agenda.	7 (15.22%)	26 (56.52%)	7 (15.22%)	5 (10.87%)	1 (2.17%)
Media outlets are the main information gatekeepers.	7 (15.22%)	24 (52.17%)	5 (10.87%)	7 (15.22%)	3 (6.52%)
Media outlets are still trusted by the public.	8 (17.40%)	20 (43.48%)	6 (7.04%)	8 (17.40%)	4 (8.70%)

4.3 Response Needed from the Academe. The survey found out the academics' perception on the response needed from the academe to hurdle the challenges the media industry is facing. As presented in the framework earlier academics were asked to provide opinion on (i) Curriculum; (ii) Teaching and Learning; (iii) Research; (iv) Facilities/Co-curricular, and (v) Outreach. The findings are presented in the following sub-sections.

4.3.1 Curriculum. The academics participated in the survey identified curriculum as a high priority area to pay attention to for tackling the challenges the media industry is facing. Specially, they stressed on inclusion and/or paying more attention to the following in the curriculum: digital media skills (mean rating 4.48), social media management (4.39), media ethics (4.38), media economics (4.30), human rights (4.28) which reflects their awareness of the skills required for journalism in the digital age. A good number of respondents perceived inclusion of trauma readiness (3.96) and paralegal training (3.91) in the curriculum as

important which reflected their awareness on preparing future journalists to handle the professional stresses in an environment where they perceive journalists are being threatened and silenced. The details are presented in Figure 7 and Table 5.
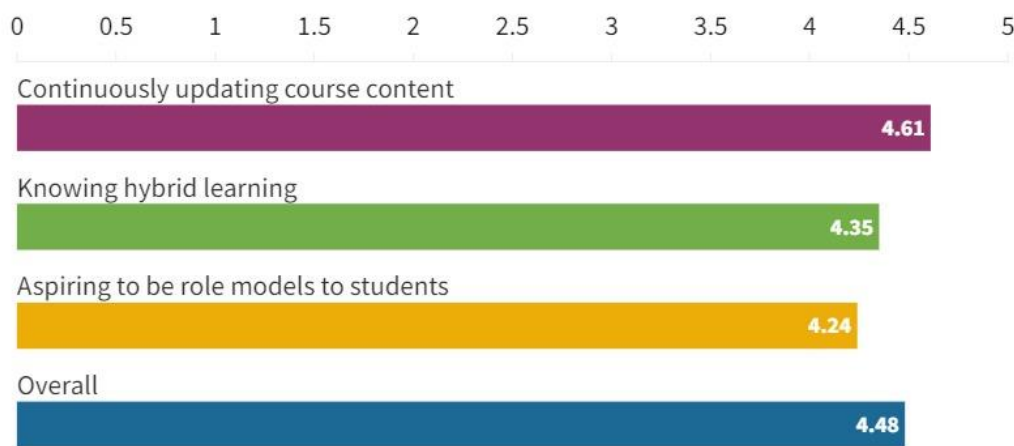

Figure 7. Respondents Perception on Needed Response in Curriculum (Topics to emphasize – Top 10)

Table 5. Responses on Topics to Emphasize in Curriculum

Topics	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Digital media skills	33 (71.74%)	8 (17.40%)	2 (4.35%)	0 (0%)	3 (6.52%)
Social media management	28 (60.87%)	12 (26.09%)	4 (8.70%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.35%)
Media ethics	22 (47.83%)	9 (19.57%)	5 (10.87%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.17%)
Media economics	22 (47.83%)	18 (39.13%)	5 (10.87%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.17%)
Human rights	26 (56.52%)	12 (26.09%)	5 (10.87%)	1 (2.17%)	2 (4.35%)
Solution-based journalism	21 (45.65%)	14 (30.43%)	6 (13.04%)	3 (6.52%)	2 (4.35%)
Trauma readiness	14 (30.43%)	23 (50.0%)	4 (8.70%)	3 (6.52%)	2 (4.35%)
Paralegal training	14 (30.43%)	20 (43.48%)	8 (17.40%)	2 (4.35%)	2 (4.35%)

4.3.2 Teaching and Learning. The roles of educators are changing, especially due to the advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). In this era of digital

technologies, hybrid learning has become an important aspect of teaching-learning activities that include teaching-learning activities in both classroom and through online platforms. The COVID 19 pandemic clarified further the importance of online and hybrid learning. The academics participated in the survey seemed to be well aware of the fact and provided strong responses in favor of having knowledge and skills of hybrid learning. Likewise, they perceived the importance of continuously updating course contents which will help them teaching the aspiring journalists the skills required for the contemporary industry. The respondents also perceived that the educators should aspire to be role models to their students; 93.47% of the respondents either "strongly agreed" (76.08%) or "agreed" (17.39%) on this. The results are summarized in Figure 8 and Table 6.

Figure 8. Respondents' Perception on Needed Response in Teaching-Learning

Table 6. Response-details: Responses needed in teaching-learning

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Educators should continuously update their course content.	35 (76.09%)	8 (17.40%)	1 (2.17%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.35%)
Educators should know hybrid learning.	26 (56.52%)	15 (32.61%)	2 (4.35%)	1 (2.17%)	2 (4.35%)
Educators should aspire to be role models to their students.	23 (50.0%)	16 (34.80%)	4 (8.70%)	1 (2.17%)	2 (4.35%)

4.3.3 Research. Research is undoubtedly a crucial aspect for a discipline to progress. Through research new knowledge and insights are produced that can help the industry to solve problems and progress day by day. The academics participated in the survey also perceived research as highly important. They perceived that the educators should continuously remain engaged in research activities as overall mean rating (4.44) indicates "extremely positive"

response on the issue. Mean ratings on each of the aspects namely, conducting research (mean rating: 4.48), presenting in conferences (mean rating: 4.3) and publishing the research findings (mean rating: 4.58) in various forms, e. g. academic journals and books were also in the "extremely positive" which clearly showed the perception of the respondents about research engagement. Figure 9 and Table 7 present the details on this.
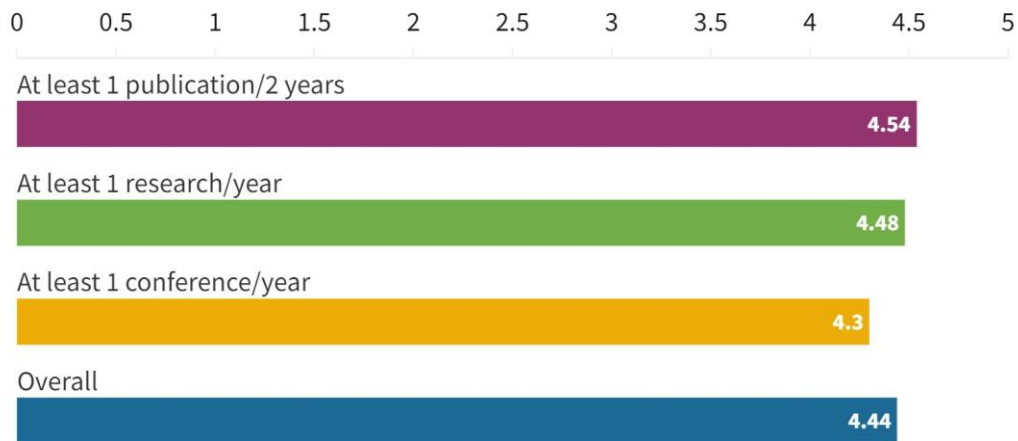

Figure 9. Respondents' Perception on Engagement in Research (mean ratings)

Table 7: Response-details: Perception on Engagement in Research (N=46)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Educators should publish at least once every two years	32 (69.57%)	11 (23.91%)	1 (2.17%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.35%)
Educators should conduct at least one research per year	27 (58.70%)	17 (36.96%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.17%)	1 (2.17%)
Educators should present in at least one conference per year	23 (50.0%)	18 (39.13%)	3 (6.52%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.35%)

4.3.4 Facilities/Co-curricular. Learning does not happen only in classrooms. For a discipline like journalism, students' exposures to the 'reality' or 'real-like situations' are important for developing required skills for the industry. As such, it is imperative for the journalism schools to have lab and studio facilities. Likewise, to acquire necessary skills to navigate today's digital-professional world, students need adequate access to equipment for digital production, e. g. camera, computer, smartphone etc. Apprenticeship programs can provide the students with the idea of how a professional organization functions alongside providing them opportunities to learn and practice necessary professional skills hands on,

hence, having student-run apprenticeship programs is very important for journalism schools. The overall mean rating (4.72) and mean ratings on different aspects clearly indicated that the respondents perceived these facilities/programs as extremely important for communication, media studies and journalism schools to have. Figure 10 presents the findings in terms of mean ratings and Table 8 presents the response details.
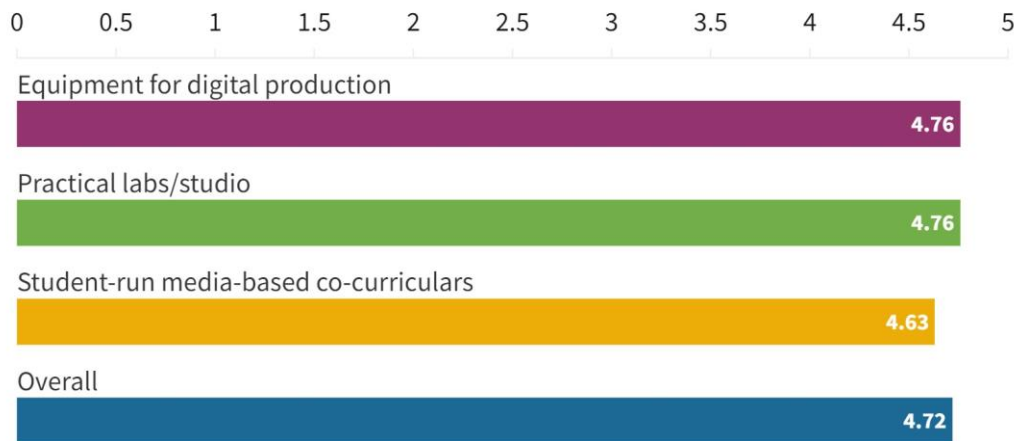

Figure 10. Respondents' Perception on Facilities/Co-curricular programs (mean ratings)

Table 8. Response-details: Perception on Facilities/Co-curricular Programs (N=46)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Schools should have equipment for digital production.	41 (89.13%)	3 (6.52%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.35%)
Schools should have practical labs/studio.	41 (89.13%)	3 (6.52%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.35%)
Schools should have student-run media-based co-curricular programs.	35 (76.09%)	9 (19.57%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.35%)

4.4.4 Outreach. Outreach programs are important for academic institutions for continuous improvement. As can be seen from Figure 11, the respondents also perceived the same. They stressed on having academia-industry collaborations (mean ratings: 4.5) which will help both the sides help each other grow as the relationship between the journalism academe and industry is symbiotic; one depends on the other for existence. The respondents also perceived that for journalism schools to liaise with external stakeholders is extremely important (mean rating: 4.35) as this will help the schools get important insights to continuously improve their curriculum, teaching-learning activities/strategies and facilities which in turn will enable them to help further the journalism industry and community at large. The respondents also

perceived presenting policy briefs to government as important (mean rating: 3.98). However, some of the respondents opposed the idea (8.69%) and some others remained 'neutral' (17.39%). The findings are summarized in Figure 11 and Table 9.
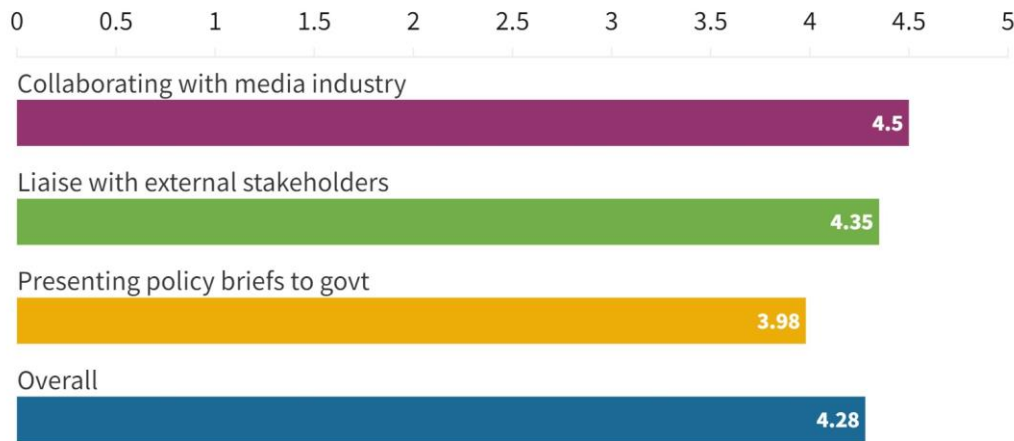

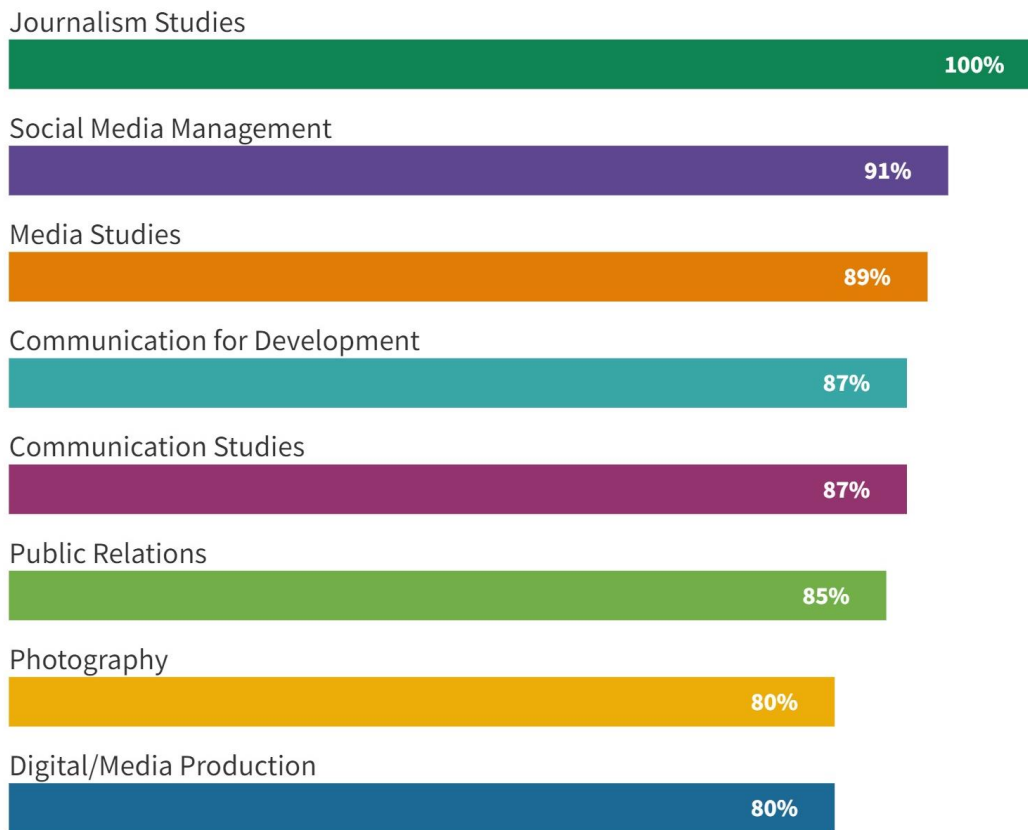**Figure 11. Respondents Perception on Outreach (mean ratings)**

Table 9. Response-details: Perception on Outreach (N=46)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Schools should collaborate with media industry	30 (65.22%)	13 (28.26%)	1 (2.17%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.35%)
Schools should liaise with external stakeholders	23 (50%)	19 (41.30%)	2 (4.35%)	1 (2.17%)	1 (2.17%)
Schools should present policy briefs to government	16 (34.78%)	20 (43.48%)	6 (13.04%)	1 (2.17%)	3 (6.52%)

4.5 Basic Orientation regarding CJEN Bangladesh. The survey respondents were potential members of the Communication and Journalism Educators' Network (CJEN) Bangladesh. They were requested to provide opinions on the composition of the network (disciplines, people, membership types, institutions to include) and areas of collaborations and/welfare activities. Also, they were asked whether willing to join the network. The findings are presented in the following subsections.

4.5.1 Fields/disciplines under the scope of the association. The respondents opined literally all disciplines/fields related to communication to be under the scope of the association.

Naturally, some fields/disciplines received more "support" than the others. Figure 12 presents the top 8 fields/disciplines listed by at least 80% of the respondents.

Journalism Studies — 100%
Social Media Management — 91%
Media Studies — 89%
Communication for Development — 87%
Communication Studies — 87%
Public Relations — 85%
Photography — 80%
Digital/Media Production — 80%

Figure 12. Respondents' Perception on Fields/Disciplines to be Under the Scope of the Association – mentioned by 80% or more academics (multiple response; N=46)
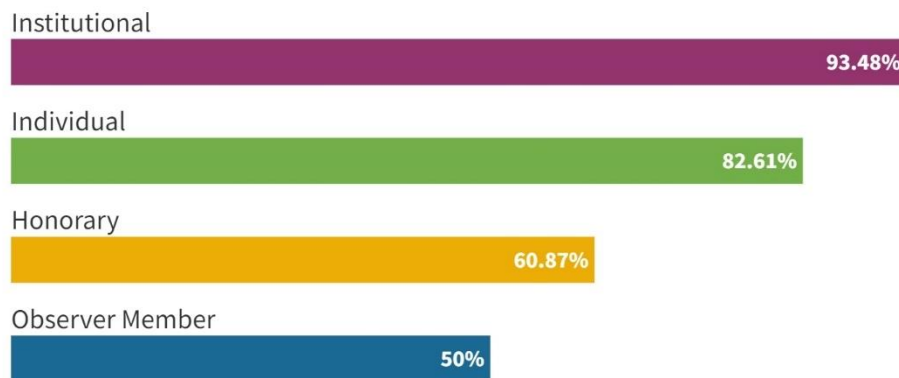
4.5.2 Membership in the Association. The respondents were asked to make suggestions on who can be included as members in the association. Suggestions from the respondents included faculty members (98%), media professionals (91%), researchers (89%), graduate students (74%), civil society members (39%), government officials (39%), undergraduate

students (28%) and artists (26%). Clearly, the general consensus is to include faculty members, media professionals and researchers.

Figure 13. Individual Member Types to Include in the Association (Multiple response; N=46)

Likewise, as can be seen from Figure 14, the consensus on membership types suggested keeping provisions for institutional (93.48%) and individual (82.61%) membership.

**Figure 14. Membership Types Suggested by the Respondents (Multiple-response; N=46)**

The respondents were asked to provide suggestions regarding the eligibility of the institutes to be included in the association and the consensus indicated that they set offering at least a four-year Bachelor's degree as the eligibility criteria. The details are presented in Figure 15.
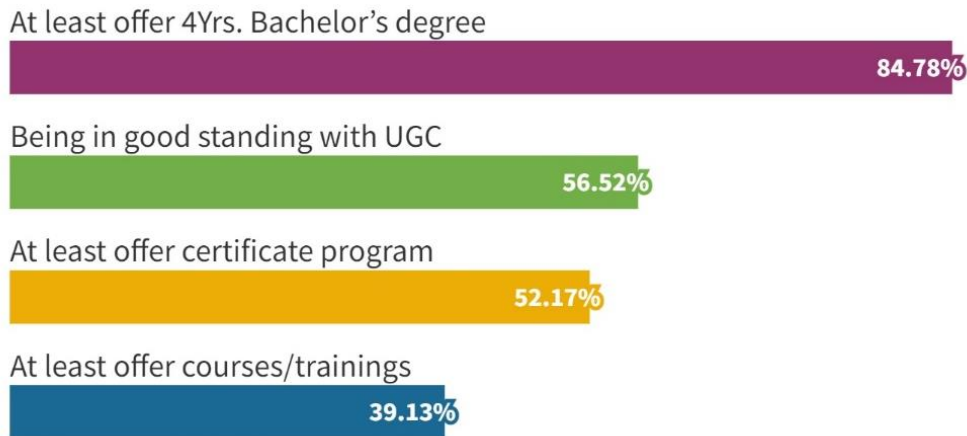
Figure 15. Respondents Perception on Eligibility of Institutes to Include in the Association (Multiple-response)

4.5.3 Association's Main Areas of Concern. The academics participated in the survey identified many areas as the association's main areas concern. Among these the followings were mentioned by at least 75% of the respondents, hence may be considered as "high priority" areas: (i) Teaching and Learning Resources; (ii) Liaison with International Education Associations; (iii) Teacher Training (iv) Liaison with Media Industry; (v) Teacher Networking; (vii) Research Collaborations; (viii) Research Trainings; (ix) Teacher Recognition and Awards; and (x) Annual Conference. Figure 16 presents the details.

Teaching and Learning Resources — 95.65%

Liaison with International Education Associations — 89.13%

Liaison with Media Industry — 86.96%

Teacher Training — 86.96%

Research Collaborations — 84.78%

Teacher Networking — 84.78%

Research Training — 82.61%

Annual Conference — 78.26%

Teacher Recognition and Awards — 78.26%
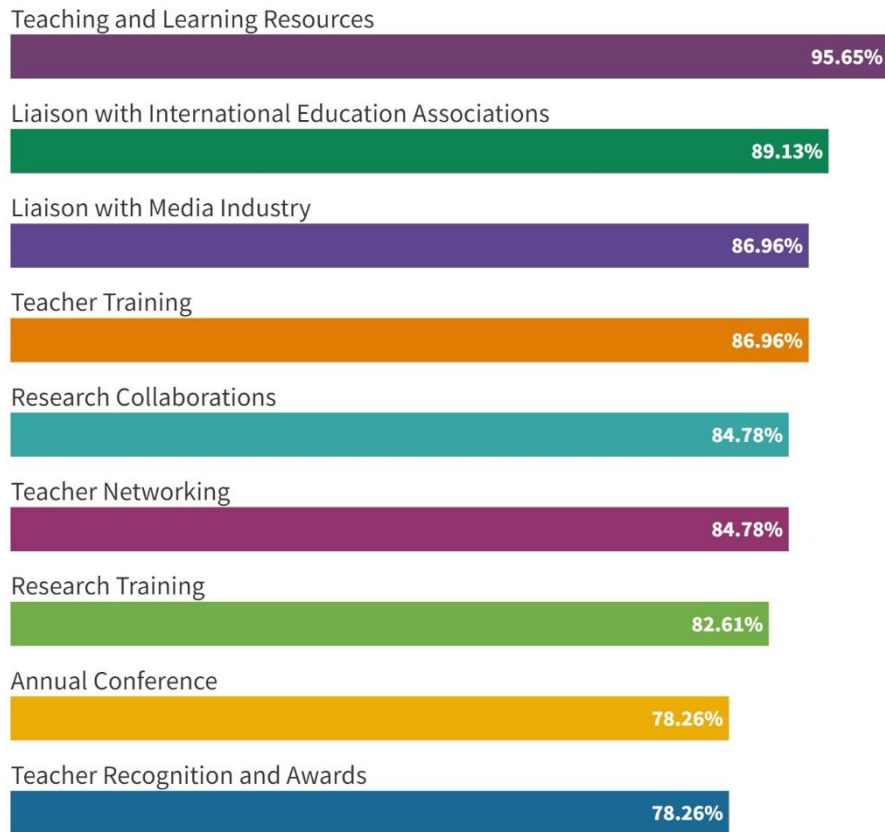
Figure 16. Respondents Perception on Main Areas of Concern for the Association

4.5.4 Loyalty to the Association. As can be seen from Figure 17, majority of the respondents expressed willingness to join the association while some were still undecided.

May Be 15.22%

No 4.35%

Yes 80.43%
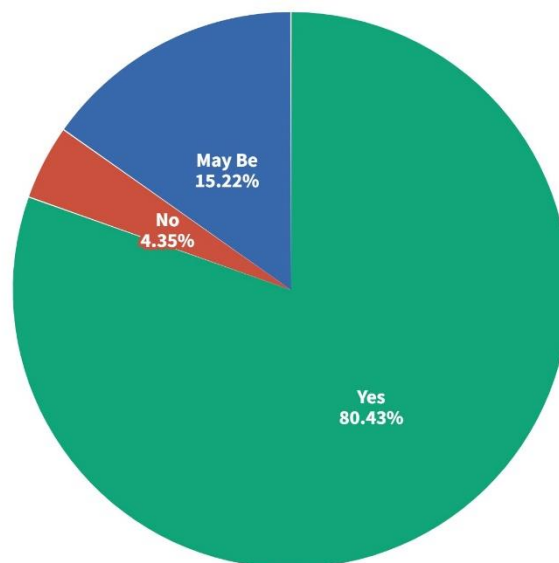
Figure 17. Respondents' Willingness to Join CJEN-Bangladesh (N=46)

As Figure 18 presents, two strong opinions were found regarding the membership fee. Half the respondents thought the annual membership fee should not be more than BDT 1000 while a closer number of respondents (41%) suggested the annual fee to be between BDT 1,000 and 2,500.
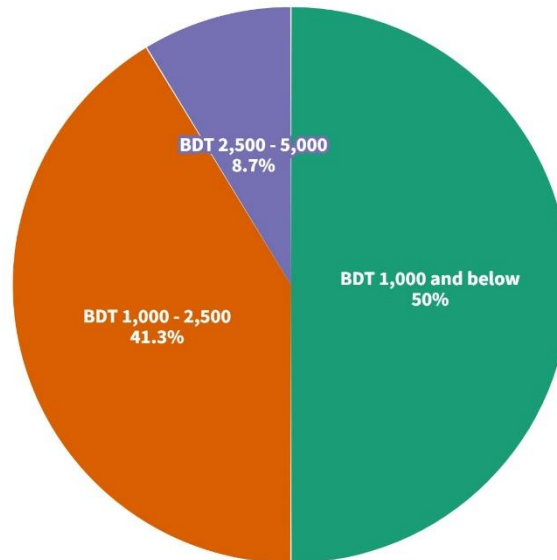
Figure 18. Respondents' Perception on Membership Fee of CJEN-Bangladesh

5. Summary

The survey has shown that the academics were aware of some of the challenges (e. g. journalist safety) the media industry is facing. However, they are still not much concerned of some other challenges (e. g. media viability, media functions, audience access).

According to the respondents, there is a strong need for making changes/upgradation in curriculum, teaching and learning and, facilities and co-curricular activities to prepare the aspiring journalists for the contemporary industry. The respondents also perceived that continuous engagement in research activities is extremely important for the academics to help the industry tackle their challenges. The respondents perceived outreach programs/activities as extremely important too.

The respondents identified Teaching and Learning Resources, Liaison with International Educational Associations, Teacher Training, Liaison with Media Industry, Teacher Networking, Research Collaborations, Research Training, Teacher Recognition and Awards and Annual Conference as high priority areas of concern for CJEN-Bangladesh; At least 75% of the respondents identified these as the main areas of concern. The respondents suggested almost all the fields/disciplines related to communication should be included in the association. However, some fields/disciplines, namely, Journalism Studies, Social Media Management,

Media Studies, Communication Studies, Communication for Development, Public Relations, Digital/Media Production and Photography, were deemed more important from their responses; these were mentioned by at least 80% of the respondents. Alongside, the respondents suggested that there should be both institutional and individual memberships; the institutions to be included should offer at least a four-year Bachelor's degree and should be in good standing with the government regulatory agency (like University Grants Commission). According to the respondents, faculty members, media professionals and researchers should be included as members.

The association seems to have a good initial acceptance among the academics as 81% respondents acknowledged about their willingness to join the association. According to them there should be an annual membership fee which 50% of the respondents suggested to keep BDT 1000 or below while 41% thought it to be BDT 1,000 to BDT 2,500.

6. Way Forward

CJEN-Bangladesh was formed in 2019 during the 2nd Networking Conference. However, the association could not establish itself yet as an active entity due to several reasons. There is still no constitution nor any collaborative activities to enhance curriculum, teaching-learning or research. There isn't any formal body to lead the association, not even any registration procedure to include members. Based on the findings the researchers recommend the following:

- Forming a founding (steering) committee that will work for formulating the constitution for CJEN-Bangladesh, conducting campaigns for member registration and holding an election once the numbers of members reach 70 (about one-third of the full-time faculty members working in different universities).

- Primarily faculty members working in UGC-approved universities offering degree programs in communication, journalism and related fields may be included in the association. Alongside, researchers, journalists and media professionals who are teaching as adjunct/part-time faculty members may be included as members. The association may keep provisions of individual and institutional memberships. For institutional membership, the minimum number of members from the institution might be set at 5.

- The association should create spaces for dialogues to make people from both the academia and industry more aware of the "symbiotic/reciprocal" relationship of the journalism schools and industry, so to say the fact that the challenges of journalism/media industry would affect equally the academe and vice-versa, as well as the challenges the industry is currently facing and how those may affect the academia and industry. For this, the association may organize conferences, seminars, public lectures etc. to enable academia-industry dialogue.

- The association may organize workshops and masterclasses that will allow students from all institutions to participate. This will help them be more prepared with the skills required for the contemporary industry.

- The association may initiate collaborative research projects as well as research workshop to enhance the research skills of the academics, especially the junior faculty members.

- The association may initiate a resource sharing platform that will help the members share their curricula, teaching materials and research findings.

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