

**ETHICAL ISSUES IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' BEHAVIORS:  
BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF BANGLADESHI STUDENTS**

Most. Najnin Jahan<sup>1</sup>  
Dr. Md. Serazul Islam<sup>2</sup>

**ABSTRACT**

*The degree of unethical activities by university students is increasing day by day. Taking it as a matter of important concern, the present study measures the extent to which Bangladeshi university students believe their behaviors as ethical and how often they practice those. The students' rating for each of the selected 28 behaviors was measured on a five-point Likert scale. 270 students of six universities participated in this study who were selected randomly and given a questionnaire to fill up and return to us instantly at their respective university campuses. Regarding the selected students' beliefs and practices on their ethical behaviors in and outside the classroom, the results indicate that 'intentionally irritating the teachers and making fun with them by mimicking their voice', and 'walking in and out the classroom during the class hour' are believed as the most unethical but are rarely practiced behaviors. On the examination related and other issues, the extreme unethical behaviors as believed by the most sample students are 'making misbehavior with invigilators and cheating in the examination hall' and 'willful damage of university property'. The frequency with which the students practice their believed unethical behaviors dominates the never-done alternative. That is, with few exceptions, the beliefs of most students on their ethical behaviors are reflected in their practices.*

**Keywords:** University students, ethical beliefs, and behaviors

**INTRODUCTION**

The word *ethics* commonly refers to principles of behaviors that distinguish between what is good, bad, right, and wrong. Right means the thing to which human beings are entitled to by law, morality, or tradition, such as "the right to life" or "the right to be free". McShane and Glinow (2008) defined ethics as "the interpretation of moral philosophies or principles that govern whether activities are correct or incorrect, and consequences are decent or corrupt. Weygandt et al (2018) termed ethics as the standards of conduct by which actions are judged as right or wrong, honest or dishonest, fair or not fair, are ethics. Ethical issues that arise in the cases should be evaluated regarding the appropriate rules and standards of professional conduct. In most situations, the issues raised are not clear cut and, therefore, we will have to go beyond the rules and standards in analyzing the ethical issues. When someone or something is actually harmed or potentially harmed, ethical issues arise. An individual or group can suffer harm from an action or a planned action in the sense of being made worse off by it. Ethical issues also arise in situations in which there are actual or potential conflicts of interest. Conflicts may occur because individuals have divergent interests (Mintz, 1992). In the present study, ethical issues in

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Open School, Bangladesh Open University.

<sup>2</sup>Professor, School of Business, Bangladesh Open University. (Corresponding Author)

educational institutions, particularly at the university levels, are mainly to be addressed at the student (learner) level. At this level, concerns are raised about the ethical dimensions of activities done by the students on the campus that affect the decisions of the teachers, students themselves, and others.

McCabe and Trevino (1993) investigated a batch of 6,000 students in thirty-one academic campuses. Two out of three investigated individuals admitted to having taken an active part in questionable behaviors during their academic years including cheating and abusing alcohol. The study of Reed and Kirkpatrick (1998) highlights the issue of student misbehavior that ranging from frequent to infrequent, mild to severe is a thorny issue that involves disruptive talking, chronic avoidance of work, clowning, interrupting teaching activities, and harassing classmates. In addition to retreading smoothness and effectiveness of teaching, student misbehaviors impede learning for the students and those around them. Furthermore, the work of Bryant et al (2000) revealed that school misbehavior escalated over time, lowering academic achievement, and increasing delinquent behavior.

There are different levels of education in Bangladesh, such as primary, secondary, and higher secondary education. Education at universities is seen as a means to produce knowledgeable, responsible, and productive citizens within their communities, their nations, and the world. The university students' behavior must conform to the standards of ethics as expected by their professors, guardians, administrators, peers, etc. A clear demarcation line between ethical and unethical behavior or action needs to be drawn, but it is not an easy task. In academia, students are the ultimate customers and the main concern of stakeholders such as future employers, parents, and society. Therefore, actions would be considered unethical when the actions would directly or indirectly concern others. In this study, unethical actions are actions against the academic rules or code of conduct. The unethical actions may not be in any of the guidelines but if the actions will harm or give a negative impact, either little or enormous to other parties, it is generally understood that the actions are unethical. For example, 'using an electronic device during a teacher's lecture', 'asking irrelevant questions to teachers' may not be in the code of ethics, but when students do this, this commonly would not be accepted by the teachers. In the present study, we defined ethical issues in student behavior as those that involve breaking rules, violating implicit norms or expectations, being inappropriate in the classroom or examination hall, and disrupting teaching and learning, which required the intervention of teachers.

Students after participating in a competitive examination or admission test admit themselves to the universities, particularly in the public universities of Bangladesh. It is expected by the public, parents, future employers, and government that they as qualified and mature students perform no unethical activities that are against the academic rules or code of conduct. But surprisingly some of the students are doing some activities that harm or give a negative impact, either little or enormous to other parties directly or indirectly. The students are also misbehaving with their teachers and others in the academic environment. No doubt, students' unethical behaviors decelerated the smoothness and effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. Moreover, previous research findings have shown that over time students' unethical behaviors were not only being intensified but also lowered academic achievement and increased delinquent behavior. To minimize the immediate and gradual adverse impact of student misbehaviors, it is of time demand to carry out more study to identify what exactly are these unethical behaviors in and outside the class and exam rooms. At home and abroad numerous studies focused on ethics and ethical issues in different areas. Very few studies were on ethical issues in education and no specific studies were carried out on students' ethical beliefs and behaviors on these activities, especially at the university level of Bangladesh. Thus, there is a need to further measure the degree of ethics in behaviors as believed and practiced by the selected university students. The study will contribute

to the existing body of knowledge by shedding light on the specific ethical issues that students encounter, exploring the alignment between their beliefs and actual behaviors. By examining the ethical landscape within the unique cultural and educational context of Bangladesh, the study strives to provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to develop strategies that promote ethical conduct and foster a culture of integrity within the university setting.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Miller (2000) argues that values are expressed in ethics. The purpose of higher education is to provide students with a value framework within which they can amend their views of the world. Institutional culture, including the degree to which institutions make ethical decisions, falls within this framework. In 1994, Theodore Hesburgh, former president of Notre Dame University, explained the importance of articulating a strong institutional vision through the development of a culture that is supportive of it (Johnson & Meyerson, 1994).

Grimes (2004) reported that more than 85 percent of the US students (40 percent of the transitional economies students) believed that cheating in college/university is ethically wrong, while 49 percent felt it was nevertheless acceptable which means that although academic dishonesty is an unethical practice they do it even knowing it. Harding (2001) also reported that 95 percent of students believe that they were less involved in cheating activities as compared to their peers. Based on Grime's study, the present study utilizes two categories(i) to measure whether the university students of Bangladesh consider their behaviors as ethical or unethical, and (ii) to measure whether they perform these behaviors even after knowing them as completely unethical.

Organizations, including colleges, can suffer from unethical behavior. Inappropriate conduct on university campuses can undermine public trust, damage the reputations of institutions, and result in the loss of funds (Trevino & Ball, 1992).

In Tehran, Khodaie, Moghadamzadeh, and Salehi (2011) identified the factors that were associated with academic cheating among school students across all regions. Considering 336 students, the results of the survey revealed a significant relationship between social and economic status, commitment to discipline and rules, and the history of cheating. Education level, age, formal study habits, and father's education all play an important role in motivating cheating, according to the regression logistic analysis. Additionally, 95.6 percent of the students in their study confessed to cheating on their exams or homework during one academic year. In this regard, 95.8 percent of students have mentioned cheating they have witnessed performed by their friends, but when asked how many students cheat in general, they believed that 70 percent cheat during examinations. The reasons and motivations that students have given for cheating are presented in two parts; the first part includes samples' direct answers such as difficulty in the subject matter, or not taking the teacher seriously. These reasons are confirmed by statistical correlations and by the research study. They suggest a set of committees, research programs, and lectures to promote the standards during the academic year. In a survey of 392 students from two prominent Universities in the South, Sun and Shek (2012) surveyed to identify the most problematic and problematic behaviors students engaged in at junior secondary schools in Hong Kong according to the views of teachers. To the end, they conducted twelve individual interviews with teachers, which led to a list of 17 student problem behaviors. They found that talking out of turn was a common and disruptive problem behavior, mainly related to discussions about irrelevant topics that disrupt the lesson or making comments about someone or something that students made without permission. Students are increasingly using electronic devices, such

as mobile phones for texting, playing video games, searching the web, or listening to music, as pointed out by some teachers. Among students' unacceptable problem behaviors, disrespect towards teachers was the most prevalent. Students disobeyed, were rude, talked back, and confronted teachers. In their study, students reported teasing, attacking, quarreling, and using foul language with classmates, sleeping, changing seats purposefully, wandering around classrooms, catching, and running out of the classroom without permission as common school misconduct behaviors.

To identify unethical behaviors of students at one of the main Romanian university centers, Iorga, Ciuhodaru, and Romedea (2013) surveyed 369 students across various institutions of higher education in Romania. Approximately 70 percent of students engage in unethical behavior according to the results of the study. Among them these behaviors are worth mentioning: writing an academic paper under the name of another student (9.15 percent), visiting a teacher or his family after an exam to influence him (4.0 percent), lying to the teacher about the reason for turning in a paper past its deadline (7.5 percent), illegal access to computer databases (1.1 percent), sabotaging lab experiments (1.9 percent), buying academic essays, papers, etc. (4.2 percent), offering "gifts" to teaching staff in cases of exam failure (3percent), buying the subjects to be given in future exams (1.5 percent), paper or written material fabrication, by inventing quotation sources (4.5 percent). A high degree of difficulty in courses and a short period for preparation were also identified as the most frequent reason for unethical behavior, followed by the leniency of teachers and the importance of a quality grade for the student.

Yukhymenko-Lescroart (2014) examined and compared the beliefs of 270 undergraduate students of the United States and Ukraine regarding twenty-two forms of plagiarism, cheating, and questionable academic behaviors. According to her research, students in the United States and Ukraine believe academic dishonesty in a statistically significant way. Comparing Ukrainian students to students in the United States, the study indicates that Ukrainian students are less likely to view academic misconduct as wrong, and also appear to hold different beliefs on what is and is not academic misconduct.

During the academic misconduct period, Rehman and Waheed (2014) investigated behavior patterns of doctoral and postdoctoral students as well as their perception of such conduct. Furthermore, they identified the ethical limits set by the students regarding academic dishonesty. According to their findings, about 51 percent of respondents with an age ranging from 21 to 35 years believe academic dishonesty has become a normal part of life while 48 percent of students believe it is an ethically wrong activity. However, 47.5 percent of students considered academic dishonesty to be unethical yet normal in Pakistan and identified it as an unwise habit that should be avoided.

Jones (2001 & 2011) found that many students have difficulty identifying academic dishonesty. Students correctly identified only nine of the 20 scenarios in this sample. Among them, 'turning in another person's assignment as your own assignment (100 percent)', 'cutting and pasting a paper together using online materials without appropriate citations (92 percent)', 'purchasing a paper from a research service or downloading one from the internet (75 percent)', and 'delivering an oral/ digital presentation based on information copied directly from the internet without appropriate citations (75 percent)' were identified as the top scenarios.

A study by Greene & Saxe (1992) confirms that academic dishonesty is perceived to be normal behavior among students. Similarly, Davis, Grover, Becker, and McGregor (1992) found that the actual action of students to commit academic dishonesty was in direct opposition to their perceptions of the act. Of the sampled students (90 percent who think academic dishonesty is

wrong), 76 percent engaged in unethical academic activities. Lack of awareness leads to unethical academic activities, according to the study. Alam (2016) in a survey on 63 students of public universities of Bangladesh found some most frequent misconducts including unauthorized facilitation in the examination hall, assignment preparation by copying and pasting from internet sources, using others' works without citation, group presentations without group work. To stop these issues, the study suggested students' regular attendance in the class, proper preparation and profound concentration on the study, and above all the their moral development, teachers' responsibility and pro-activity, counseling and motivation, proper invigilation in the examination hall, punishing students for cheating, proper dissemination of university rules, participatory teaching method, creative questioning, action and fieldwork based assignments, course on ethics in education, and development of teacher-teacher collaboration etc.

A study conducted by Arefeen, Mohyuddin, and Khan (2020) examined academic misconduct among 380 students at nine public and private universities. They identified that students attending private universities were more likely to be involved in academic integrity violations compared to their counterparts at public universities. Additionally, they examined religion, gender, and course of study as well as other relative factors that influence academic integrity. The researchers found no significant differences in ethical misconduct across types of universities (public and private). Compared to male students, female students were less likely to observe various academic misconducts. As a result, they emphasize the formation and development of a culture of academic integrity in university students, both in terms of their awareness and their behavior.

According to the results of a study conducted by Bacore (2014), students are prepared to face a wide range of issues, both in life and in society. Families were proud and neighbors respected their university students for years because of their honor, integrity, and sincerity. University students are also looked up to as role models by students in schools and colleges. Society expects higher education institutions to adhere to high standards of academic integrity, fairness, and impartiality. He found that academic dishonesty, in violation of these social values, has reached alarming proportions in all higher education institutions, resulting in widespread cynicism and public disbelief.

In another study, Arefeen, Mohyuddin, & Khan (2020) identified causes of unethical behavior among tertiary students in Bangladesh and recommended possible solutions. They identified parents and family, society, teachers and educational institutions, religious institutions (mosque, temple, church, etc.), friends (clubs, social networks), media (electronic, social, and print), course content, etc. As control variables that affect unethical behaviors like violations of school regulations, selfishness, academic cheating, computer ethics, etc. As a result, they asked the university administration to include ethics courses in addition to the mandatory core courses as university requirements.

The significance of the study also lies in its potential to contribute valuable insights and knowledge in several key areas. Understanding the ethical issues faced by Bangladeshi university students can aid in the development of targeted strategies and interventions to enhance academic integrity. Policymakers can utilize the findings to create and implement effective ethical guidelines and policies within university settings. This can help establish clear expectations for student behavior, fostering a culture of integrity and responsible conduct that extends beyond the academic environment. By integrating ethics education into various disciplines, universities can contribute to the holistic development of students and prepare them for ethical decision-making in their professional and personal lives. The study provides an opportunity for students to critically examine their beliefs and behaviors, fostering a sense of responsibility and ethical consciousness that can benefit them in their future careers. A heightened awareness of ethical considerations can

lead to a more respectful and inclusive environment, promoting positive social interactions among students, teachers, and staff.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The literature relating to ethical issues in university teaching and learning supports the need for studying the university students' beliefs and behaviors and leads to achieve the following objectives:

1. To describe the characteristics the selected university students possess that influence their beliefs and behaviors.
2. To measure the extent to which the sample students believe the students' activities as ethical.
3. To assess behaviors sample students practice in and out of the classroom and with their teachers and others.

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

The present quantitative study examined both primary and secondary data. As per the UGC Annual Report of 2021, 47 public universities excluding National University, Bangladesh Open University, and Islamic Arabic University and 99 private universities with direct students are in active academic activities. The primary data were collected from the sample students of the selected universities. Considering the time and resource constraints, 270 students (fulfilling the law of a large sample) from 6 universities (3 public and 3 private) were randomly selected as a sample size. It is very difficult to obtain information about people's unethical behavior through face-to-face interviews as these are mostly confidential. The researchers were bound to distribute a semi-structured questionnaire to the selected students in their classes and collect the same from them instantly after filling it up by them. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section dealt with the students' characteristics where the second section was meant for themselves to know what the students believe and what they do in their ethical activities (28 items-12 items that affect the class and 16 items that are observed in the examination hall and other places of the university). The questions of the latter section were of 5-point Likertscale ranging from 1 = "Completely ethical" to 5 = "Completely unethical" for measuring the students' beliefs on their ethical activities and for measuring their behaviors on the same items it ranges from 1="Forgotten" to 5="Always". The validity of the instruments was measured through extensive literature review and taking expert opinion and the reliability of items of the questionnaire was measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.798), falling within the acceptable limit in Nunnally (1978). A variety of books, journals, unpublished reports, websites, and other publications contributed to the gathering of secondary data. Simple frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the data. The weighted average mean was used to determine the extent of ethical beliefs and practices on the students' ethical activities in their respective universities.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table 1: Characteristics of the Sample University Students (n=270)**

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>No. of Students</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Age	Below 20 years	86	31.9	22 years
	20 years to 25 years	152	56.3	
	25 years to 30 years	28	10.4	
	30 years and above	4	1.5	
Gender	Male	157	58.1	
	Female	113	41.9	
Religion	Islam	238	88.1	
	Hinduism	25	9.3	
	Christianity	4	1.5	
	Buddhism	3	1.1	
Class of Study	Hons. 2nd year	127	47.0	
	Hons. 3rd year	59	21.9	
	Hons. 4th year	43	15.9	
	Masters	41	15.2	
Areas of Study	Humanities	56	20.7	
	Business studies	147	54.4	
	Science	67	24.8	

Source: Compiled by Researchers

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the students who were interviewed to know their ethical beliefs on the university students' activities and their practices thereon. During the survey, the majority (47 percent) of the sampled students were in honors 2<sup>nd</sup> year and the least respondents were in master's class level. Out of the 270 surveyed students, 113 are female, representing 41.9 percent of the total, and 157 are male (58.1 percent). The data on their area of study shows that 54.4 percent were studying business studies, 24.8 percent in science, and the remaining 20.7 percent were in the humanities group.

To examine students' ethical beliefs on the 28 behaviors, each student was asked to rank the behaviors on a five-point Likert scale with 5 being completely unethical; 4 slightly unethical, 3 being not sure, 2 being slightly ethical, and 1 being completely ethical. The higher the weighted mean score, the more unethical the group viewed the behavior. The ratings of the practices of these behaviors by the sample students were done using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (forgotten) to 5 (always). Descriptive statistics and the weighted mean scores of the individual beliefs and behaviors are organized in the following table.

In achieving the second objective of this study, the weighted mean score for each of the statements of the students' beliefs and behaviors was computed. Almost all statements are generally assumed to be negative of ethics. For these statements, the high level of unethical beliefs is considered if students' weighted mean score is 4 or above. Similarly, if the students' weighted mean score of ethical practices of any behavior is 3 or above, there is a gap between their beliefs and practices.

**Table 2: Ethical Beliefs and Practices on University Students' Behaviors in and outside the Classroom**

Students' Behaviors in and outside the Classroom	Students' Ethical Beliefs(n=270)						Students' Ethical Practices(n=270)					
	Completely Ethical (1)	Slightly Ethical (2)	Not Sure(3)	Slightly Unethical(4)	Completely Unethical(5)	Weighted Mean Score	Forgotten(1)	Never(2)	Once or twice(3)	More than twice(4)	Always(5)	Weighted Mean Score
Using mobile phones in class during class time.	28 (10.4)	6 (2.2)	6 (2.2)	48 (17.8)	182 (67.4)	4.30	8 (3.0)	83 (30.7)	135 (50.0)	39 (14.4)	5 (1.9)	2.81
Walking in and out of the classroom during class time.	12 (4.4)	3 (1.1)	7 (2.6)	38 (14.1)	210 (77.8)	4.60	7 (2.6)	161 (59.6)	84 (31.1)	12 (4.4)	6 (2.2)	2.44
Intentionally irritating teachers.	10 (3.7)	6 (2.2)	5 (1.9)	41 (15.2)	208 (77.0)	4.60	2 (0.7)	203 (75.2)	36 (13.3)	17 (6.3)	2 (0.7)	2.24
Teasing classmates.	17 (6.3)	3 (1.1)	12 (4.4)	41 (15.2)	197 (73.0)	4.47	16 (5.9)	169 (62.6)	60 (22.2)	18 (6.7)	7 (2.6)	2.37
Mongering & whispering in class.	16 (5.9)	5 (1.9)	15 (5.6)	72 (26.7)	162 (60.0)	4.33	15 (5.6)	118 (43.7)	103 (38.1)	30 (11.1)	4 (1.5)	2.59
Making fun of the teachers by mimicking their voices.	9 (1.9)	11 (4.1)	13 (4.8)	28 (10.4)	213 (78.9)	4.6	9 (1.9)	182 (67.4)	63 (23.3)	15 (5.6)	5 (1.9)	2.38
Sleeping in class.	25 (9.3)	10 (3.7)	31 (11.5)	80 (29.6)	124 (45.9)	3.99	21 (7.8)	118 (43.7)	89 (33.0)	38 (14.1)	4 (1.5)	2.58
Going out of the classroom without the teachers' permission.	28 (10.4)	15 (5.6)	25 (9.3)	55 (20.4)	147 (54.4)	4.03	11 (4.1)	155 (57.4)	68 (25.2)	25 (9.3)	11 (4.1)	2.52
Talking about teachers' ways of dressing.	44 (16.3)	15 (5.6)	34 (12.6)	67 (24.8)	110 (40.7)	3.68	15 (5.6)	117 (43.3)	98 (36.3)	34 (12.6)	6 (2.2)	2.63
Having discipline problems such as keeping long hair & french-cut beard, and using bracelet, earphone, etc.	32 (11.9)	39 (14.4)	61 (22.6)	60 (22.2)	78 (28.9)	3.42	8 (3.0)	193 (71.5)	37 (13.7)	15 (5.6)	17 (6.3)	2.41
Deliberately remaining absent & late for classes.	13 (4.8)	4 (1.5)	20 (7.4)	61 (22.6)	172 (63.7)	4.39	11 (4.1)	124 (45.9)	106 (39.3)	24 (8.9)	5 (1.9)	2.59
Cramming into the study	42 (15.6)	17 (6.3)	37 (13.7)	63 (23.3)	111 (41.1)	3.68	7 (2.6)	67 (24.8)	116 (43.0)	68 (25.2)	12 (4.4)	3.04

Note: Figures in the bracket indicate percentages to the total.

Source: Researchers' Field Survey

Table 2 reveals the degree of ethics as believed by the sample university students on their activities in the classroom. The weighted mean score as shown in Table 2, testifies that 'walking in and out of the classroom' and 'irritating teachers intentionally by asking irrelevant questions or raising irrelevant issues' during class time were believed as the most unethical behaviors by the sample students. No activity listed in the table is believed by the students as even slightly ethical activity. However, the students are somewhat indifferent whether keeping long hair & the french-cut beard and using the bracelet & earphone in the classroom is ethical or unethical. It is observed in their many practices that the students did not do the activities ever what they believed completely unethical (e.g. intentionally irritating teachers by asking irrelevant questions or raising irrelevant issues). Some students, however, admitted that they often talked about the teachers' ways of dressing in the class but not of all teachers. The weighted mean score of all items is more than 2.0, which indicates the unethical practices of all activities once or twice by some students. Around 70 percent of the surveyed students agreed that they used mobile phones in the class at least once during class time what they believed unethical. Sixty-five percent of students confessed that they used mobile phones in the class as they felt no or low interest in their teachers' lectures.

**Table 3: University Students' Ethical Beliefs and Practices on Exam-Related and Other Behaviors**

Students' Behaviors Related to Examination and Other Issues	Students' Ethical Beliefs (n=270)					Weighted Mean Score	Students' Ethical Practices(n=270)					Weighted Mean Score
	Completely Ethical(1)	Slightly Ethical(2)	Not Sure(3)	Slightly Unethical(4)	Completely Unethical(5)		Forgotten(1)	Never(2)	Once or twice(3)	More than twice(4)	Always(5)	
Requesting teachers for short suggestions before the examination.	69 (25.6)	35 (13.0)	20 (7.4)	83 (30.7)	63 (23.3)	3.13	10 (3.7)	59 (21.9)	131 (48.5)	47 (17.4)	23 (8.5)	3.05
Cheating on a homework assignment and in the examination.	7 (2.6)	3 (1.1)	2 (0.7)	5 (1.9)	253 (93.7)	4.83	7 (2.6)	213 (78.9)	45 (16.7)	1 (0.4)	4 (1.5)	2.19
Making misbehavior with the invigilators & hall staff.	1 (.4)	5 (1.9)	3 (1.1)	9 (3.3)	252 (93.3)	4.87	9 (3.3)	250 (92.6)	10 (3.7)	1 (.4)	0 (0.0)	2.01
Writing name on the answer script.	7 (2.6)	4 (1.5)	19 (7.0)	31 (11.5)	209 (77.4)	4.60	13 (4.8)	231 (85.6)	19 (7.0)	1 (0.4)	6 (2.2)	2.10
Going to the bathroom frequently during the examination.	27 (10.0)	8 (3.0)	37 (13.7)	87 (32.2)	111 (41.1)	3.91	17 (6.3)	186 (68.9)	54 (20.0)	10 (3.7)	3 (1.1)	2.24
Using mobile phones in the examination hall.	9 (3.3)	3 (1.1)	9 (3.3)	34 (12.6)	215 (79.6)	4.64	6 (2.2)	227 (84.1)	27 (10.0)	7 (2.6)	3 (1.1)	2.16
Submitting Assignments or Internship Reports that were copied from the internet or from other students.	28 (10.4)	8 (3.0)	20 (7.4)	76 (28.1)	138 (51.1)	4.07	8 (3.0)	129 (47.8)	98 (36.3)	23 (8.5)	12 (4.4)	2.64
Making phone calls to course teachers after the examination in their favor.	13 (4.8)	4 (1.5)	9 (3.3)	44 (16.3)	200 (74.1)	4.53	8 (3.0)	232 (85.9)	26 (9.6)	2 (.7)	2 (0.7)	2.10
Not paying respect to departmental & other teachers.	3 (1.1)	5 (1.9)	1 (.4)	17 (6.3)	244 (90.4)	4.83	8 (3.0)	243 (90.0)	14 (5.2)	4 (1.5)	1 (.4)	2.06
Showing interest in doing course teachers' personal work.	67 (24.8)	46 (17.0)	47 (17.4)	45 (16.7)	65 (24.1)	2.98	21 (7.8)	146 (54.1)	79 (29.3)	17 (6.3)	7 (2.6)	2.42
Visiting the course teachers' residence frequently.	30 (11.1)	8 (3.0)	56 (20.7)	71 (26.3)	105 (38.9)	3.79	15 (5.6)	209 (77.4)	39 (14.4)	4 (1.5)	3 (1.1)	2.15
Giving gifts to the course teachers in case of failure in the examination.	77 (28.5)	50 (18.5)	48 (17.4)	38 (14.1)	57 (21.1)	2.81	10 (3.7)	145 (53.7)	91 (33.7)	18 (6.7)	6 (2.2)	2.5
Smoking or taking illegal drugs with friends on university grounds.	7 (2.6)	3 (1.1)	9 (3.3)	28 (10.4)	223 (82.6)	4.69	8 (3.0)	225 (83.3)	20 (7.4)	8 (3.0)	9 (3.3)	2.20
Willfully damaging university property.	3 (1.1)	3 (1.1)	5 (1.9)	18 (6.7)	241 (89.3)	4.82	8 (3.0)	233 (86.3)	25 (9.3)	4 (1.5)	0 (0.0)	2.09
Acting as a proxy for another student during the admission test.	7 (2.6)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.1)	21 (7.8)	239 (88.5)	4.80	8 (3.0)	238 (88.1)	20 (7.4)	3 (1.1)	1 (0.4)	2.08
Exerting political influence on teachers, staff, & other students.	8 (3.0)	2 (0.7)	9 (3.3)	13 (4.8)	238 (88.1)	4.74	8 (3.0)	241 (89.3)	15 (5.6)	5 (1.9)	1 (0.4)	2.07

Note: Figures in the bracket indicate percentages to the total.

Source: Researchers' Field Survey

Table 3 shows the students' ethical beliefs on their behaviors related to examination and other issues and also the frequencies of practices or occurrences of these behaviors or activities by themselves. The results reveal that almost all students (93.7 percent) believed 'cheating on a homework assignment and in the examination hall' completely unethical. Among the examination related behaviors, the next completely unethical behaviors as believed by the students are 'making misbehaviors with the invigilators and hall staff ( 93.3 percent)', 'not paying respect to the

departmental and other teachers (90.4 percent)', 'willfully damaging university property (89.3 percent)' and 'acting as a proxy for another student during admission test (88.5 percent)'. The highest weighted mean score of students' ethical practices is more than 3, which indicates that students requested their teachers for short suggestions before their examinations as they believed them as not so unethical. The majority of the students did never misbehave with invigilators and staff in their examination hall because they believed these behaviors as completely unethical. Regarding political pressure on teachers, staff, and other students, more than 90 percent of students did not do as they believed this behavior was unethical. One-half of the selected students admitted saying that they submitted their assignments or internship reports copying at least once from the internet or other students though four-fifth of the sample believed this activity unethical. The least weighted mean score (2.81) belongs to the behavior of giving gifts to the course teachers in case of failure in examination that they (47 percent) believed as ethical. Thus, the higher weighted mean score in ethical beliefs and the lower score in ethical practices demonstrate the commitment of students' ethical activities as per their ethical beliefs.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The preceding findings and discussions help to make the generalization that Bangladeshi University students' ratings on their beliefs and behaviors on ethical issues are congruent. What activities they believe as completely unethical are rarely performed by them. The findings of this study carry several policy implications for educational institutions, government bodies, and other stakeholders in Bangladesh. Universities should incorporate ethics education into their curricula to promote ethical awareness and decision-making among students. Educational institutions should provide counseling and support services to help students navigate ethical dilemmas and personal crises. Policymakers and educators must consider the cultural context in ethical education, acknowledging the unique cultural values and norms of Bangladeshi society. Universities should implement and enforce clear and comprehensive codes of conduct that define ethical expectations for students. These codes can serve as a guide for students and ensure accountability. During the survey, the researchers encountered several challenges in collecting questionnaires distributed to students. Many students even after committing unethical activities did not admit during filling up of the questionnaire. However, the answers provided by them are assumed to be honest and true. It would be better if the reasons for the students' unethical behavior could be identified. The sample of the study may not be fully representative of all Bangladeshi university students, as it may not encompass all regions, institutions, or demographic groups. The findings might not be directly applicable to university students in other cultural contexts, and caution should be exercised when drawing comparisons. Ethical beliefs and practices can evolve over time, and this study provides a snapshot, making it challenging to track long-term trends. A longitudinal research to track changes in ethical behaviors and beliefs among Bangladeshi university students over time could be conducted. The beliefs and practices of Bangladeshi students are deeply rooted in the context of their family, societal norms, educational environments, economy, culture, etc. A future comprehensive study of these factors could be undertaken. By addressing these policy implications, recognizing the study's limitations, and pursuing future research directions, the study on ethical issues among Bangladeshi university students can contribute to the development of more ethical and culturally sensitive education systems, helping students make ethically sound decisions in their academic and personal lives.

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