

Education quality of public and private universities in Bangladesh: Comparative perspective

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ABSTRACT

The quality of a nation's higher education system significantly influences its socioeconomic progress. Universities have immense capacity to promote economic well-being in underdeveloped nations. This study examines the relative quality of education at both private and public universities in Bangladesh. The study used a quantitative research method, with a total of 220 respondents participating in a cross-sectional survey. Data was collected physically via a face-to-face interview and online using a standardized Google form. The cross-sectional survey respondents found both offline and online methods convenient. Data were analyzed using Excel and SPSS. The study used statistical data to analyze crucial elements that influence the quality of education. Results reveal considerable disparities in educational quality evaluations between public and private universities. Both kinds of universities have reasonable teacher-student ratios, but private universities do better. 45% of public university respondents rate library facilities highly, compared to 22% at private universities. Research facilities prefer public universities, with 44% of respondents evaluating them highly, compared to just 14% for private universities. The quality of ICT facilities is seen as superior at private universities, with 57% of participants rating them highly, in contrast to a mere 11% in public universities. Private universities perceive international collaboration as more effective, with 67% of respondents rating it as high, compared to 38% in public universities. This investigation emphasizes the strengths and weaknesses of both public and private universities in Bangladesh, offering valuable insights for educational administrators and policymakers who are endeavoring to improve the quality of education in both sectors.

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Introduction

Education is the backbone of a nation. Education encompasses various levels, including primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. One of the prime objectives of higher education is to meet the demands of the economy and equip individuals with the

necessary skills to enhance its competitiveness (Aditomo et al., 2013; Ashraf et al., 2022). The significance of this matter is particularly pronounced in the context of developing countries like Bangladesh. Higher education is widely recognized as a crucial factor in the development of human capital, fostering economic progress, and ensuring the availability of a skilled and competent workforce (Mamuli, 2020).

The inception of higher education in Bangladesh may be traced back to the era of British colonial rule when the University of Dhaka was established in 1921. The higher education system in Bangladesh has experienced significant growth during the past three decades (Alam, 2020). Currently, the number of universities in the country stands at 169, a significant increase from just seven that existed in the mid-1980s (BANBEIS, 2023). In Bangladesh, universities are classified into four distinct categories including public universities, which are owned and subsidized by the government; private universities, which are owned by the private sector; international universities, which are operated and funded by international organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Countries; and special universities, which consist of both national and open universities (Ashraf, 2019; Islam et al., 2019). In the context of the country, specialized universities are classified as public universities due to their funding being provided by the government. International universities are classified as private universities due to their funding sources, which primarily come from the private sector or international organizations (JIDS, 2024; Sarker & Mahmud, 2023).

Despite the considerable surge in enrolment in tertiary education over the past twenty years, the issue of educational quality continues to be a matter of significant concern (Rabbani & Chowdhury, 2014). According to the reviews and assessments conducted by the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC), which serves as the highest governing authority for higher education, both public and private universities in the country face challenges in providing excellent education (Rahman et al., 2023; UGC, 2018). UGC assessments have determined that most universities, with only a limited number of exceptions, lack adequate facilities for delivering high-quality education. Additionally, the faculty at these universities often lack the necessary credentials required for effective teaching (Chowdhury & Quader, 2023). A significant number of private universities have not been able to fulfill the minimum criteria pertaining to physical infrastructure, full-time faculty members possessing appropriate qualifications, libraries, instructional materials, and other necessary facilities that are crucial for improving the quality of education (Hasan, 2022; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2023; Rahman & Nasrin, 2024).

However, the quality of education is contingent upon a multitude of factors. The primary domains encompass management, academic excellence, faculty resources, quality of student intake, teaching methods, technological support, updated curriculum, and both direct and indirect infrastructure (Rakhsh & Izadpanah, 2014). Universities must develop a distinct mission and vision to effectively pursue their objectives. The demand for higher education has experienced a significant surge in recent years due to the proliferation of educational facilities at the secondary and upper secondary levels. In order to address this growing demand and mitigate the escalating costs, the government has initiated a policy allowing for private sector involvement in the realm of higher education. As a result, student enrolment in private universities has steadily increased.

Bangladesh's higher education system is segregated between public and private institutions, each with distinct characteristics and issues. Examining these institutions reveals significant disparities in their resources, distribution of teachers, and student enrollment, which might impact the perception of educational excellence. According to the BANBEIS (2023), and 16,399 teachers are working in public universities, out of a total of 55 (see Table 1). The majority of these teachers are men, with 11,930 males and 4,469 females. With 725,971 students enrolled, these universities provide a sizable male student body (428,131 against 297,840 females) (BANBEIS, 2023). The gender gap between teachers and students at public universities impacts the perceived value of education, potentially reflecting educational constraints and cultural prejudices. Public universities

in Bangladesh, often perceived as more prestigious and cost-effective due to their strong reputations, struggle with overloading and resource limitations, potentially lowering the quality of education.

Table 1. Number of University, teachers, and students in Bangladesh

Types of University	N	Number of Teachers			Enrolment		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Public	55	11930	4469	16399	428131	297840	725971
Private	114	11173	5072	16245	238464	100841	339305
Total	169	23103	9541	32644	666595	398681	1065276

Source: Bangladesh Education Statistics (2023) Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS)

On the other hand, the gender distribution of the 16,245 teachers at the 114 private universities is more balanced, with 11,173 men and 5,072 women. Compared to public institutions, these universities have a smaller gender difference, with 339,305 students enrolled and a male majority (238,464 men versus 100,841 girls). Although they are sometimes more costly, private institutions in Bangladesh are seen to have more up-to-date amenities, lower class numbers, and more opportunities for interaction between students and teachers. Because they provide a more customized and encouraging learning environment for students, these elements may improve the perception of the quality of education. The contrasting data reveals that public universities have a greater total enrollment and a higher proportion of male students and faculty members. In contrast, private universities have a more even gender distribution among both staff and students. The equilibrium between these factors, along with improved resource allocation and infrastructure in private education institutions, has the potential to enhance the perception of their educational excellence (BANBEIS, 2023). However, public universities continue to attract more students due to their affordability and established reputation, suggesting that socioeconomic conditions and institutional legacy shape the perception of excellence.

Conversely, studies of the historical progression of the higher education systems of Bangladesh indicates a lack of consensus about their operational framework, regulatory framework, curriculum design, educational objectives, and program development (Islam et al., 2019; Sarker & Mahmud, 2023). Multiple commissions have been established since the 1960s with the purpose of addressing these challenges and promoting consistency in the policies and programs across various organizations (Ferdousi, et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2023). A prevalent characteristic of these committees was their inclination to place education within a comprehensive national framework, advocating for ongoing improvement in quality and emphasizing the importance of practical applicability (Chowdhury et al., 2020). Akareem and Hossain (2012) explored a study on the quality of education in private universities in Bangladesh. The study significantly articulates the numerous issues of quality education in private universities in Bangladesh. The findings indicate that the socio-economic status of students and the administrative capacity of the university significantly influence the quality of education at private universities in Bangladesh (Akareem & Hossain 2012). Moreover, Mazumder (2014) presents a comparative analysis of the characteristics of public and private universities in Bangladesh and the USA. Initially, the study highlights the current status and quality of public and private universities' education in Bangladesh. Both public and private universities in Bangladesh are struggling to ensure quality education due to the lack of regulatory oversight and the ineffectiveness of the government's regulatory agencies, according to the findings. Moreover, the findings reveal that although there is a high concern about the quality of education provided by private universities in Bangladesh, the cost of private universities is much higher than that of public universities. Even after that,

students of private universities are more satisfied than students of public universities. Similarly, the study compares the quality of education between Bangladeshi universities (both public and private) and universities in the USA based on the Noel-Levitz student satisfaction index (SSI) of the USA (Mazumder 2014).

In response, Rahnuma (2020) outlined the quality assurance framework for Bangladesh's tertiary education. The study specifies the requirements that universities must meet under the current framework for higher education. These requirements include internal quality assurance, review, monitoring, and external quality assurance, with the primary objective of operationalizing national protocols for a qualification framework. The research, in particular, demonstrated how crucial an internal quality assurance structure is to accelerating the program certification process (Rahnuma, 2020). Lim et al. (2020) provide a comprehensive notion about the significance of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the field of developing countries' education. The study demonstrates that ICT played a praiseworthy role in boosting equity, quality, and efficiency in higher education in South Asian countries. At the same time, the study highlights the critical issues behind implementing ICT in higher education, including lack of skilled manpower, poor internet access, infrastructural backwardness, and poor budget allocation that hinder the efficiency, equity, and quality of higher education in South Asian countries, including Bangladesh and Nepal (Lim et al., 2020).

Moreover, Kabir and Chowdhury (2021) discussed the geopolitical environment and how it relates to the current reality of higher education policy in Bangladesh and throughout the world. The research elucidates the historical background of higher education in Bangladesh and the ways in which neoliberal ideas have influenced the transformation of higher education reform in more recent times. This section of the debate places a lot of attention on the 1990s, a time when the government, business community, and civil society all experienced dramatic changes in their conceptions of the role of higher education (Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). Rahman et al. (2023) investigated that socioeconomic variables have a substantial influence on academic performance at private universities in Bangladesh. The study highlighted the need for family engagement, financial assistance, and teacher consultations to improve educational results. The study's findings indicate that age, gender, employment status, choice of study field, receiving proper guidance, previous academic performance, consultation with teachers, father's annual income, family status, and relationship with parents are all significant factors that determine academic performance, according to statistical analysis. As a result, the study suggests that to improve academic performance, it is critical to increase parental involvement and ensure that they provide both financial and material assistance to their children in order to promote their academic achievement (Rahman et al. 2023).

Ashraf et al. (2022) argued about the quality of education at the private universities in Bangladesh. The study highlights the significance of forming 'a search committee' for the selection of a top position, i.e., vice chancellor and treasurer in private universities in Bangladesh, who will intensely guide a private university in enlightening quality education, promoting scholarly research, and producing competent graduates (Ashraf et al., 2022). Similarly, Rahman and Nasrin (2024) explored the significance of the Total Quality Management (TQM) approach in higher education. In contrast to industrialized countries, which have been using TQM in higher education since the 1980s, the research emphasizes how emerging countries still need to be more familiar and fragmented. However, the results highlight important obstacles to students' perceptions of service quality at Bangladeshi higher education institutions, such as a poor learning environment, poor student relationship management, low student involvement, and a disappointing focus (Rahman & Nasrin 2024). Respectively, Stensaker and Matear (2024) uphold the necessity of involving students in quality assurance processes at the higher education level. The study shows that, despite certain challenges, there is a growing interest in involving students in quality assurance procedures, both within the institution and outside, as part of institutional or program evaluations for national and regional

accreditation (Stensaker & Matear, 2024). Nevertheless, a very limited amount of empirical work is available on this issue of quality higher education in Bangladesh. For instance, Rahman et al. (2023), Lim et al. (2020), Kabir and Chowdhury (2021), and Rahman and Nasrin (2024) have provided insights into the current state of quality higher education in Bangladesh. According to their opinions, Bangladesh continues to strive for quality higher education by integrating an effective quality assurance framework, effective ICT, and Total Quality Management (TQM) into higher education.

In this vein, there is a consensus among scholars, researchers in the field of education, and a number of stakeholders that the quality of tertiary education in Bangladesh has experienced a consistent and, in certain domains, concerning deterioration throughout the past thirty years. The decline in quality has emerged as a fundamental worry for authorities and other significant stakeholders. Although there have been several research studies conducted on the quality of higher education in Bangladesh, it remains challenging to identify those that specifically address the quality of education at both public and private universities in Bangladesh. This study in particular, seeks to explore the comparative analysis that reflects on the quality of higher education in public and private universities in Bangladesh.

Method

The study has been conducted by following a quantitative approach. To investigate the quality of education in both public and private universities in Bangladesh, researchers used a cross-sectional survey method to gather data from targeted respondents, students from both public and private institutions. The cross-sectional survey method enabled the researchers to depict the current state of quality education in Bangladesh. Moreover, the researchers conducted a descriptive analysis of the data to compare the quality of education between public and private universities in Bangladesh. The study's target respondents were students from both public and private universities in Bangladesh. The study primarily compared the quality of higher education provided by both public and private universities in Bangladesh.

The sample size has been chosen based on the calculation of the z-score with a 90% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. The total population of the study was 1065276; among them, the calculated sample size was 385. However, due to budget constraints (the study was self-funded), the researchers were unable to collect data from the 385 participants. The study's potential limitation led the researchers to suggest that future research should concentrate on collecting a larger volume of data. Consequently, a total of 220 respondents participated in the cross-sectional survey from both public and private universities in Bangladesh (see Table 2). In this vein, a stratified random sampling approach was used to settle the suitable participation of the respondents from the targeted education community in Bangladesh. In this context, a survey questionnaire was designed to investigate the principal research objectives.

However, the researchers collected data both physically and electronically using a structured questionnaire. A face-to-face interview was administered while collecting data in physical means, and a structured Google form was provided to the respondents while collecting information electronically. Both offline and online approaches were convenient for the respondents when they participated in the cross-sectional survey.

In particular, both closed-ended and Likert-scale (5-point Likert scale) questions were applied to gather appropriate data from the respondents related to the quality of higher education in Bangladesh. Data were analyzed using both MS-Excel and SPSS software. To gather participants' demographic information and validate substantial associations between dependent and independent variables, researchers conducted descriptive statistics simply. This method offers valuable insights into the respondents' perceptions of the quality of higher education offered by both public and private

universities in Bangladesh. It is worth mentioning that the researchers strictly followed ethical standards while collecting and analyzing cross-sectional survey data.

Table 2. Sample determination

Study Area	Stratified Sampling Approach (Respondent Criteria)					
	Educational Background		Gender Status		Total Participation	
	Bachelor Degree	Master's Degree	Male	Female	No. of Respondents	Total Respondents
Public Universities in Bangladesh	55	55	30	25	(55+ 55+30+ 25=110)	110
Private Universities in Bangladesh	55	55	30	25	(55+ 55+30+ 25=110)	110
Total Respondents						220

Source: Survey on Different Public and Private Universities in Bangladesh, December 2021 – December 2022

Results

The study, based on the field survey, investigates students' perceptions of significant concerns related to the quality of higher education provided by both public and private universities in Bangladesh and provides an analysis of potential policy options for higher education in Bangladesh. In essence, the study aims at exploring the comparative analysis that reflects on the quality of tertiary education in public and private universities in Bangladesh.

Respondents' demographic information

Since the demographic information demonstrates the inclusive scenario of the participants of any study, it has been discussed below in the context of this study. This information focuses on the respondents' gender, age, education, and study discipline (see [Table 3](#)), as the study aims to compare the quality of higher education between public and private universities in Bangladesh.

Table 3. Demographic analysis of the respondents

Variables		Frequency	Per (%)	Cumulative Per (%)
Gender	Male	75	34	34
	Female	145	66	100.0
Age Range	18-25	158	72	72
	26-30	62	28	100.0
Education Level	Under Graduates	128	58	58
	Graduates	53	24	82
	Post-Graduates	39	18	100.0
Discipline of Study	Arts and Humanities	51	23	23
	Social Science	73	33	56
	Science and Engendering	59	27	83
	Business Administration	37	17	100.0

The demographic characteristics of this study provide a holistic overview of the respondents who participated from public and private universities in Bangladesh. The field survey revealed that 66% of the respondents were female, while 34% were male participants. These statistics clearly indicate that female learners are ahead of male students in terms of taking higher education in Bangladesh. It's important to note that female students in Bangladesh today are more focused on their studies and careers. This phenomenon is attributed to the increased care and empowerment of women in Bangladesh. Besides, the findings of the study revealed that the majority of the respondents, i.e., 72%, belonged to the age group 18-25, indicating that they are currently studying at undergraduate and graduate levels in both public and private universities in Bangladesh.

On the other hand, a small group of respondents, i.e., 28%, studied at the postgraduate level, indicating that they were much more concerned about their career and job preparation than the undergrad or graduate students in Bangladesh. Moreover, the survey findings revealed that a significant proportion of respondents, specifically 58%, were undergraduate students, demonstrating a higher level of concern about the quality of education offered by both public and private universities in Bangladesh compared to graduates and postgraduate students. The field survey also demonstrated that participants were from a diverse discipline, including arts and humanities (23%), social sciences (33%), science and engineering (27%), business administration (17%), etc. These statistics clearly indicate that the concern for quality education at the university level is not only for a particular discipline or student community, but also for the overall student community. However, the participants were from both public and private universities in Bangladesh, which indicates the inclusive participation of students from diverse education communities in Bangladesh.

The comparative analysis of quality education at public and private Universities in Bangladesh

The quality of education at both public and private universities has been measured using several independent variables, including teacher-student ratio, library facilities, research facilities, ICT facilities, accommodation facilities, collaboration opportunities with foreign universities, capability of upgrading the curriculum, teacher-student cooperation, and session jam.

Teacher-student ratio

A vital component in assessing the quality of education is the teacher-to-student ratio, which affects both the whole learning environment and the amount of individualized attention each student gets. In this survey, participants were asked to evaluate Bangladesh's public and private universities' teacher-to-student ratios. The results show that public and private universities in Bangladesh have fairly different perspectives on teacher-to-student ratios.

According to the survey, the study indicates that 29% of participants perceive there is a low teacher-to-student ratio at public universities. This suggests that about one-third of the participants believe that teachers at public universities provide significant personal attention to their students. Furthermore, the majority of respondents (43%) believe that public universities have a fair teacher-to-student ratio. This implies that a sizable segment of the student group enjoys a balanced ratio, meaning that there are enough teachers to suit the demands of students without pushing either direction. In the same vein, a comparable percentage of respondents (29%) believe that public universities have a poor teacher-student ratio, which implies that the number of teachers is insufficient in public universities to provide quality education.

In private universities, 27% of participants hold the belief that there exists a low teacher-student ratio. Figure 1 is somewhat smaller in comparison to that of public universities in Bangladesh, although it still constitutes a substantial proportion of the student community. This view is attributed to the lower-class sizes and individualized education strategies often used by private universities. Besides, half of the respondents claim that private universities have a modest teacher-student ratio. This implies that the majority of students at private universities have a well-proportioned and stable ratio, which enables them to get sufficient attention from their teachers. Only 23% of respondents perceive the teacher-student ratio in private universities as high, which is lower than the corresponding percentage in public universities. This decreased percentage suggests that a smaller number of students in private universities experience feelings of neglect as a result of a shortage of teachers. This is indicative of more effective management of teacher recruitment and retention.

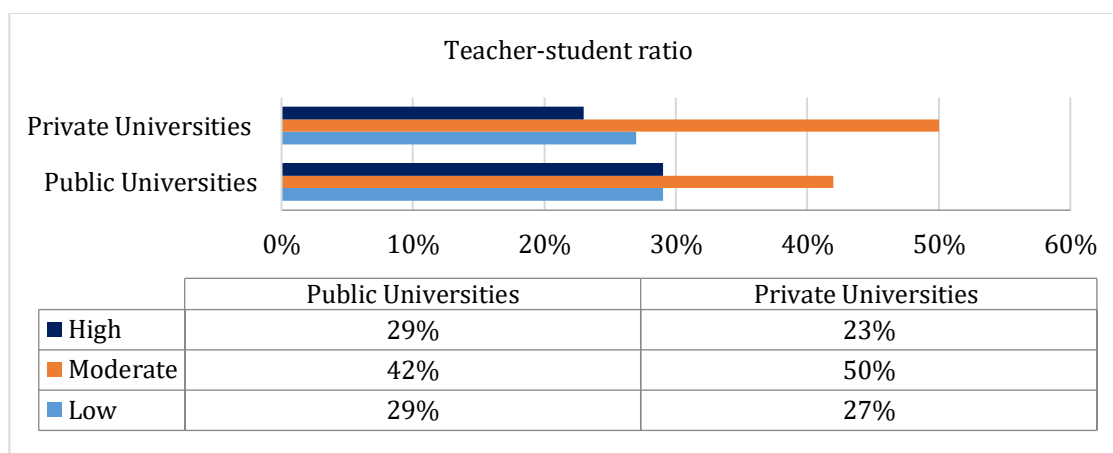


Figure 1: Teacher-student ratio at both public and private universities

The comparative evaluation of the teacher-student ratio across both private and public universities uncovers varied and complex perspectives. The majority of both public and private universities have a modest teacher-student ratio. Public universities have a slightly larger percentage of participants reporting both low and high ratios in comparison to private universities. This observation implies that there is a broader range of class sizes and distribution of resources at public universities in Bangladesh compared to private universities. The impact of the perceived ratios between the two categories of universities on academic outcomes, student engagement, and teaching effectiveness is investigated. This analysis illuminates one of the primary factors that affect the quality of education in both public and private universities, thereby establishing a foundation for a more comprehensive comparative assessment of educational standards and practices in Bangladesh.

Library facilities

The results demonstrate substantial differences in the perceived quality of library facilities at both private and public universities, both of which are important components of quality education around the globe. According to Figure 2, the majority of respondents (48%) at public universities assess library facilities as moderate, with a significant 45% rating them as good. This suggests that public universities often have adequate to exceptional library resources to support academic activities and improve the learning environment. Conversely, a considerable proportion of participants (37%) from private universities articulated that the library facilities are average, while 41% regard them as inadequate. This indicates a discrepancy in the caliber of library resources across private

universities, with a significant number of participants highlighting insufficiencies. Only a minority (22%) views the facilities as excellent, highlighting specific areas that require improvement.

The comparative assessment suggests that public universities are considered to have robust library resources, which can enhance the quality of education by offering sufficient study materials and conducive learning conditions. This highlights possible areas of enhancement in private university libraries, which might impact the entire educational experience and students' access to essential academic materials.

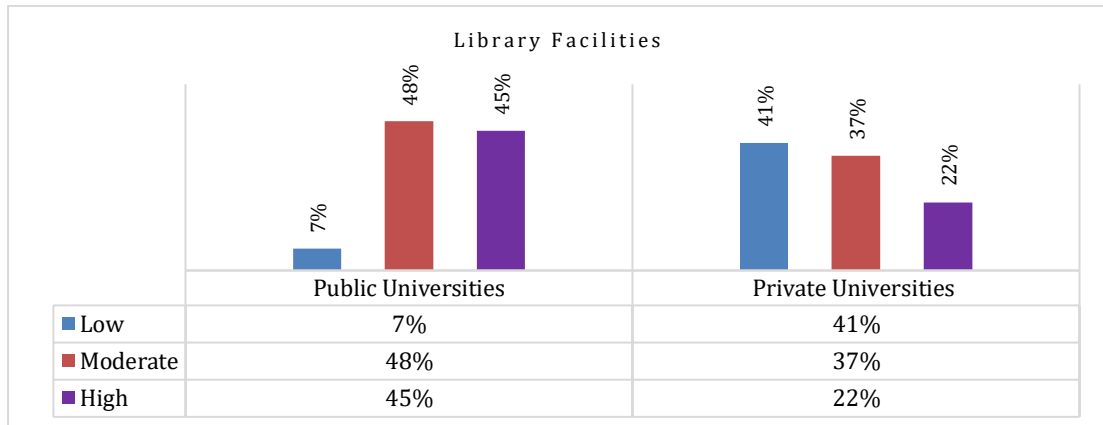


Figure 2: Library facilities at both public and private universities

Research facilities

The study investigated the research facilities provided by both public and private universities in Bangladesh. Respondents had different views on the standard of research facilities, which are essential for encouraging academic achievement and creativity. There is a clear difference in research facilities at public and private universities when they are compared. Public university research facilities are typically seen in a favorable light.

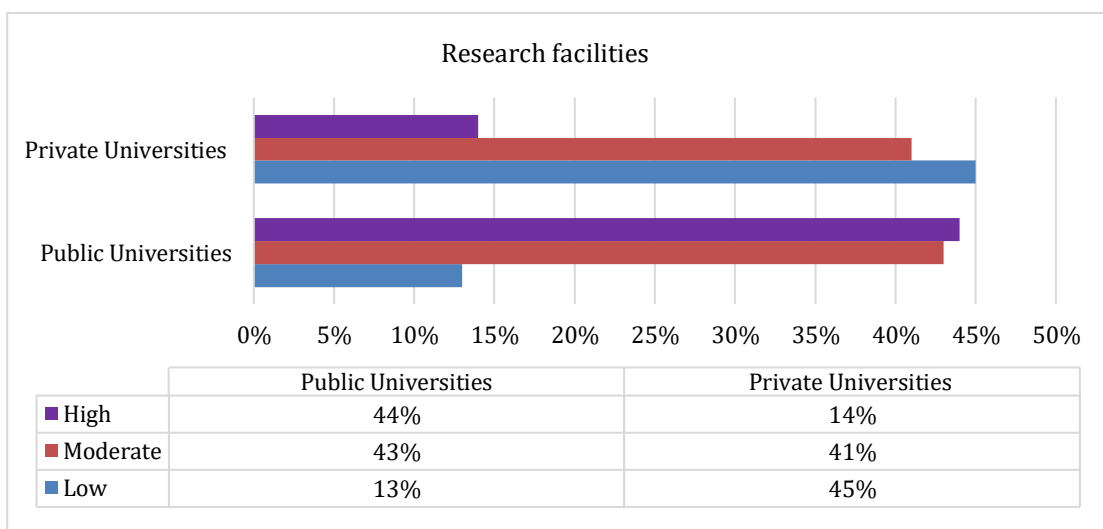


Figure 3: Research facilities at both public and private universities

According to Figure 3, 87% of respondents rated the research facilities in public universities as moderate or high. More precisely, 43% of the participants see the facilities as moderate, while 44% perceive them as high. These findings indicate that public universities in Bangladesh are seen as having robust research infrastructures, which can

improve the quality of education by offering plenty of opportunities for academic research and advancement.

Conversely, according to the respondents, the research facilities at private universities are less positive. Approximately 45% of the participants hold the belief that research facilities are inadequate, suggesting a perceived lack of support and infrastructure for research. Meanwhile, 41% of the participants evaluate the facilities as average, while a mere 14% perceive them to be of outstanding quality. This distribution implies that private universities might have to devote additional resources to their research capabilities in order to satisfy the academic requirements and expectations of their students and faculty.

By analyzing these distinctions, the study provides valuable insights into the strengths and limitations of each type of university. It appears that public universities are more adequately endowed with research facilities, which can attract high-quality faculty and students and foster scholarly activities. In contrast, the lower perceived quality of research facilities in private universities indicates that there is a significant area in need of enhancement in order to improve their educational offerings and research output.

ICT facilities

The study also investigated the significant differences in perceptions of ICT facilities in both public and private universities in Bangladesh, which are crucial for modern education. The comparative analysis of ICT facilities between public and private universities shows a stark contrast.

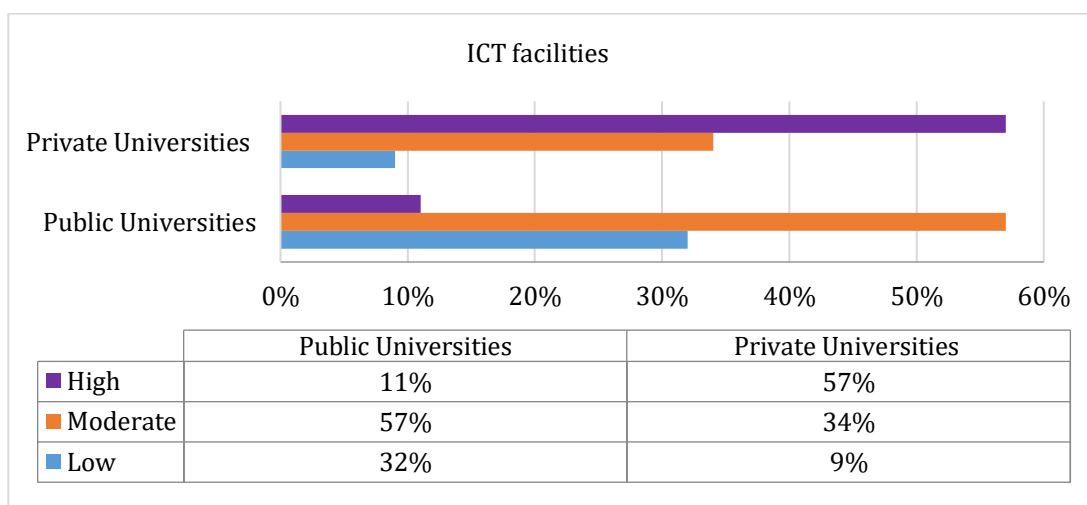


Figure 4: ICT facilities at both public and private universities

In public universities, As shown in Figure 4, the majority of respondents (57%) argued that ICT facilities are of moderate quality. However, a considerable percentage (32%) view them as being of poor quality, while just 11% believe them to be of good quality. This implies that public universities might face constraints in offering state-of-the-art ICT resources, which are crucial for a complete educational experience in the current era of digital technology.

However, private universities receive higher ratings for their ICT facilities. An overwhelming 57% of respondents rate the ICT facilities highly, suggesting that private universities have superior access to cutting-edge technology. Just 9% consider the facilities to be inadequate, and none give them a negative grade. The prioritization of robust ICT infrastructure at private universities can greatly improve the learning environment by facilitating easier access to digital tools, online resources, and interactive learning platforms. The analysis emphasizes the essential role of ICT infrastructure in

providing excellent education and highlights the major differences between public and private universities. Through a comparison of these perspectives, the research provides unique insights into the advantages and disadvantages of each category of university, thereby contributing to a thorough assessment of educational excellence in Bangladesh.

Accommodation facilities

In a similar vein, the study demonstrates the accommodation facilities of both public and private universities in Bangladesh. The results indicate notable disparities in the assessment of accommodation facilities, which are critical for creating an environment that is conducive to learning (see Figure 5). Public universities typically receive positive reviews for their accommodation facilities, with 38% of respondents rating them as average and 45% assuming they are of good quality. Only a mere 17% of individuals view them as being low. This suggests that public universities might have more well-developed infrastructure for student housing, which in turn enhances the quality of the living and learning environment.

On the other hand, private universities are often regarded as having notably more dire housing amenities, in sharp contrast to other types of institutions. The majority of respondents (67%) rated the accommodation facilities as poor, while just 22% saw them as average and a meager 11% considered them outstanding. Private universities might encounter challenges in providing sufficient accommodation for students, thereby affecting their entire university experience and academic achievement. This research emphasizes a crucial part of high-quality education, which is the provision of accommodation, and it also highlights the notable disparities between public and private universities in Bangladesh.

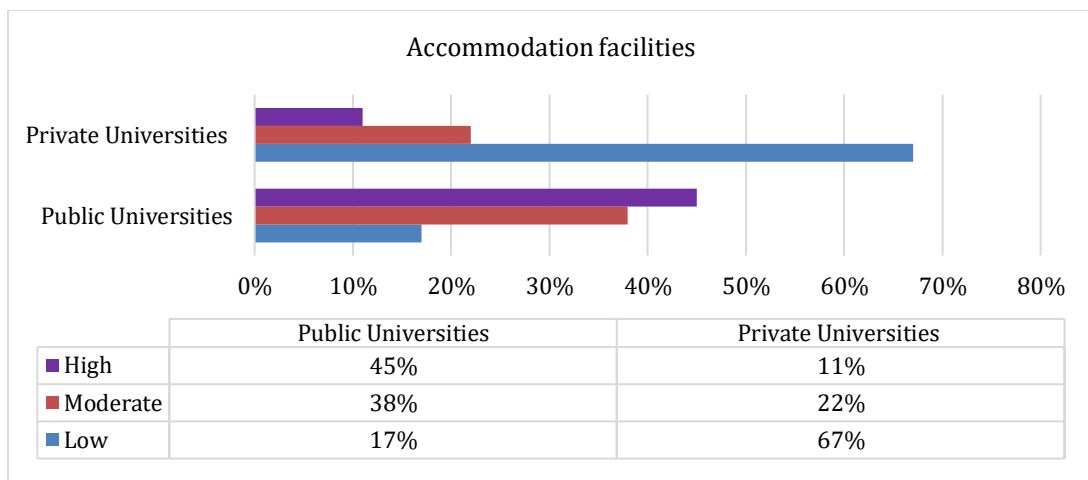


Figure 5: Accommodation facilities at both public and private universities

Collaboration with foreign universities

The findings demonstrate the respondents' perceptions of the level of international collaboration. According to Figure 6, the survey reveals that both public and private universities perceive their level of international collaboration as distinct, a crucial factor in enhancing educational quality through resource sharing and exposure to a global environment.

According to the survey, a significant 17% of respondents at public universities in Bangladesh consider the level of international cooperation to be poor, despite 45% seeing it as moderate and 38% as high. This finding suggests that despite good international cooperation, public universities should do more to maximize their global partnerships. Private universities, on the other hand, have a better reputation when it comes to working

with other countries. Among those who took the survey, 67% rated the level of cooperation a high rating, and 22% rated it a moderate one. Just 11% think it's low. This suggests that private universities are more likely to prioritize establishing and sustaining foreign partnerships, which may improve student learning by exposing them to new ideas, expanding their research possibilities, and connecting them with people all over the world. However, the study provides a comprehensive evaluation of educational quality in Bangladesh by comparing these viewpoints, which shed light on the strengths and possible development areas of each kind of university.

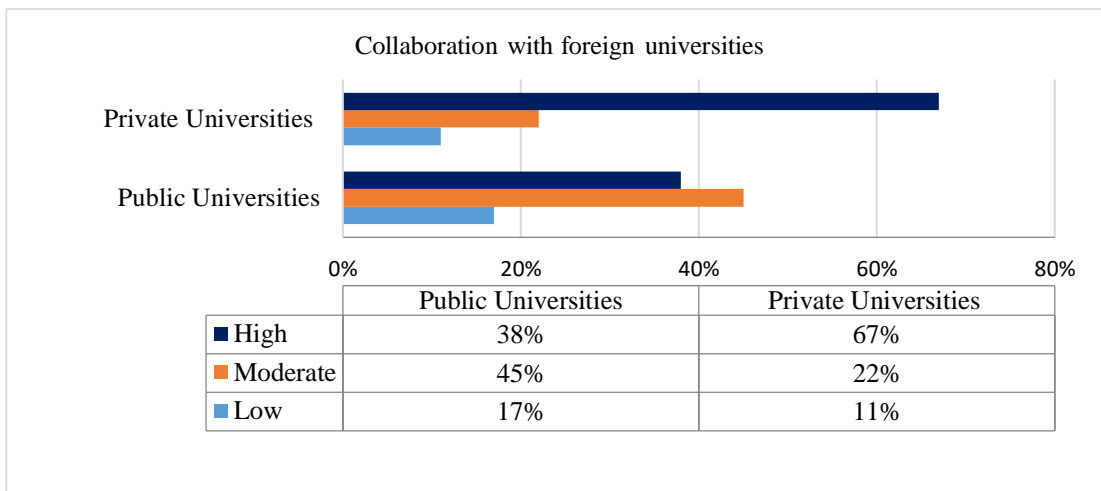


Figure 6: Collaboration with foreign universities of both public and private universities

Curriculum development

The study provides valuable insights into the respondents' thoughts of which kind of university is more adept at modifying the curriculum to accommodate changing national and international circumstances. Public universities have a significant inclination towards enhancing the curriculum, as shown by the comparison study.

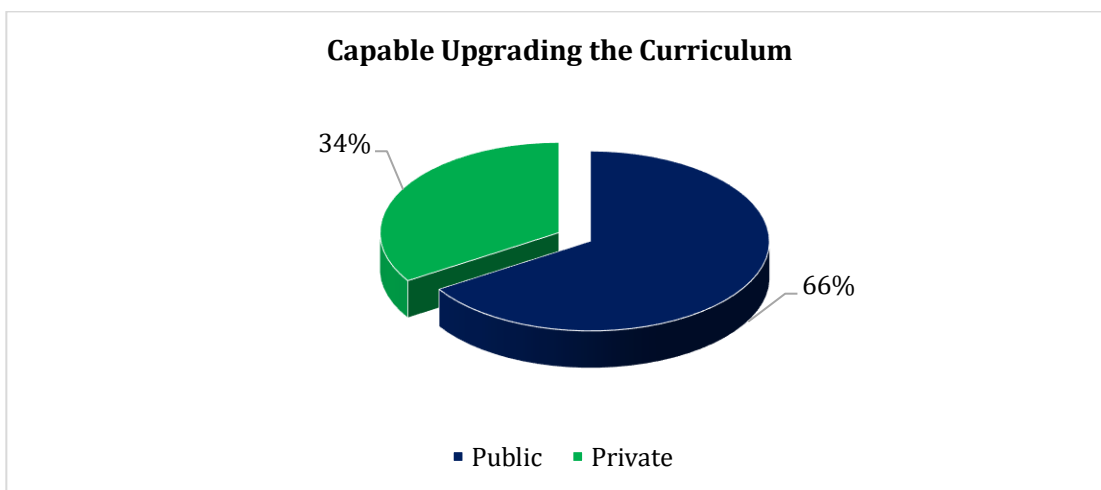


Figure 7: Curriculum development at both public and private universities

According to the field survey, Figure 7 demonstrates that 66% of respondents contemplate that public universities are more capable of upgrading the curriculum. This belief is ascribed to the long-standing involvement, developed academic frameworks, and access to national resources of public universities, which could facilitate periodic curriculum reviews and improvements. In contrast, a mere 34% of participants believe

that a private university has a greater capacity for enhancing the curriculum. The lower proportion indicates that private universities might encounter difficulties in designing their curriculum, either owing to constraints in resources, being relatively new institutions, or having distinct academic objectives. The respondent's assertion that the curriculum should be adapted to changing circumstances highlights the significance of this capacity in providing high-quality education. An updated curriculum can ensure that students are adequately equipped for the national and international job markets by providing them with pertinent and current information. In this context, respondents argue that the curriculum of higher education should adapt to the changing national and international contexts.

Cooperation between teachers and students

The present study examines and contrasts the educational standards at public and private institutions in Bangladesh, with a specific emphasis on the level of interaction between teachers and students. The results convey valuable insights into the frequency with which teachers devote time for student interaction, a critical component of successful teaching and student assistance in quality education.

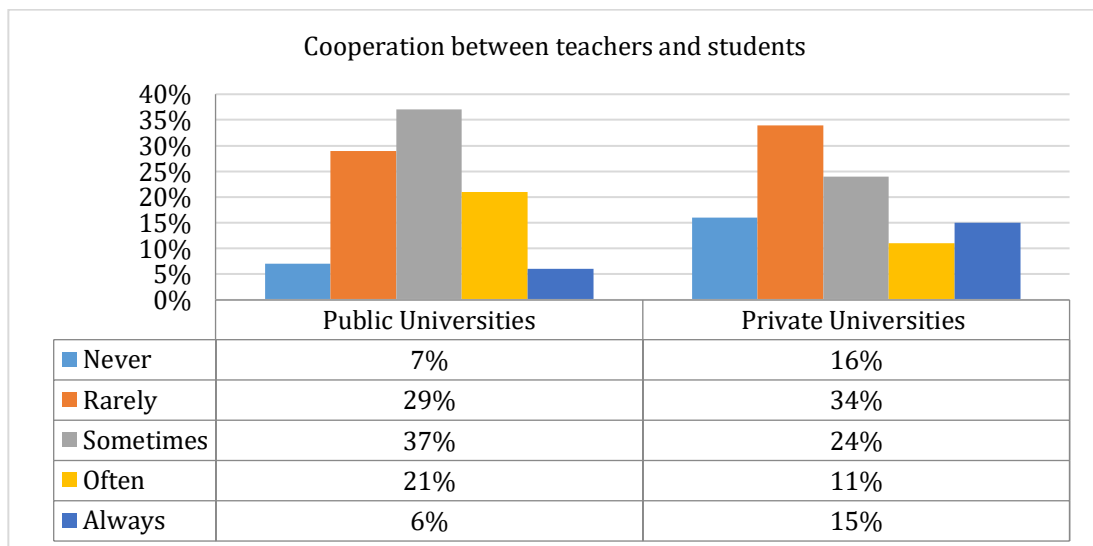


Figure 8: Cooperation between teachers and students at both public and private universities

As presented in Figure 8, there are significant disparities between public and private universities when comparing teachers' cooperation with students. According to the survey, a sizable percentage of respondents (37%) at public universities acknowledge that teachers sometimes set aside time to engage with students, and 21% perceive this occurs often. Nonetheless, a total of 36% said that teachers either never or very seldom interact with their students. Although there is some teacher-student engagement at public universities, it seems uneven and in need of development based on this diversity. However, a concerning trend has emerged at private universities, where approximately half of the respondents reported that teachers rarely or never spend time with their students. This implies that student-teacher commitment at private universities is significantly lacking. Just 24% of respondents said that teachers spend time with students sometimes, 31% said that they do so often, and 15% said that this engagement occurs constantly.

These findings suggest that private universities might experience difficulties in ensuring consistent and significant interaction between teachers and students. The results emphasize the significance of teacher-student collision in ensuring high-quality

education. Consistent involvement can enhance academic assistance, student drive, and overall educational interaction. The difference between private and public universities in this aspect highlights the need for both kinds of institutions to focus on and enhance teacher-student interaction to effectively facilitate student learning and growth.

Student counselling opportunities

Counselling is critical in assisting students and promoting their academic and personal growth. There are notable disparities between public and private universities in Bangladesh when examining the counseling opportunities, they provide.

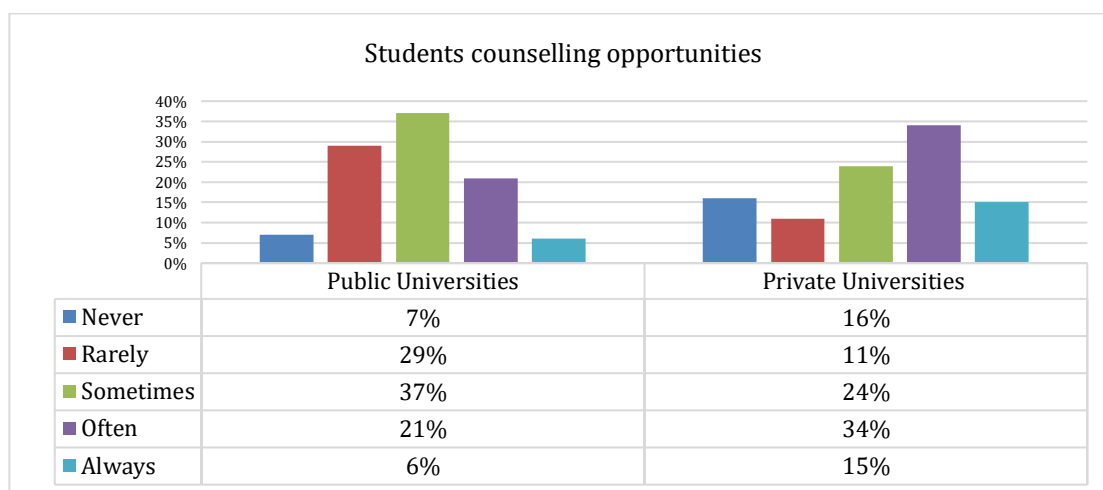


Figure 9: Student counselling opportunities at both public and private universities

According to the survey as depicted in Figure 9, only 27% of respondents (always 6% and 21% often) at public universities said that they were able to find opportunities for counselling on a regular basis, while a significant 29% of respondents reported that they only experienced these services on a rare or never basis. In light of this, it seems that public universities might encounter difficulties in providing students with counseling services that are both consistent and easily available.

Private universities, on the other hand, are regarded more favorably in terms of the counseling services they provide prospective students. 49% of respondents (always 15% and 34% often) believe that they have access to counseling services often or on a regular basis, whereas just 27% have experienced these services seldom or never. It seems from this that public universities might have more effective counseling services, which would contribute to improved student support and overall satisfaction. The results emphasize the importance of consistent and easily available counseling services in improving students' education quality and well-being. In this aspect, the discrepancy between private and public universities highlights the need for government support to improve their counseling services to provide greater assistance for their students.

Session jam

Session jam plagues the higher education system in Bangladesh due to a lack of skilled manpower, an inadequate management system, political instability, and numerous other factors. Session jam creates many problems that interrupt regular academic activities, especially accommodation and examination schedules. This study also investigated the extent of session jams that exist between the public and private universities in Bangladesh. Among respondents at public universities, a significant majority (84%) report experiencing moderate to high levels of session jam, with 45% specifically expressing high levels (see Figure 10). In this aspect, inadequate human

resources, ineffective administrative processes, and political instability pose significant obstacles for public universities in maintaining punctual academic calendars.

Conversely, private universities have fewer instances of academic session jams (2%). Although there are not many session jams in private universities, the comparative context suggests that these institutions likely employ more efficient management strategies and experience fewer disruptions that disrupt their academic schedules. Both kinds of institutions need to address this problem to ensure that credentials are completed on time and to enhance educational results. The research offers useful insights into systemic difficulties and possible areas for change in the higher education sector in Bangladesh by emphasizing these discrepancies.

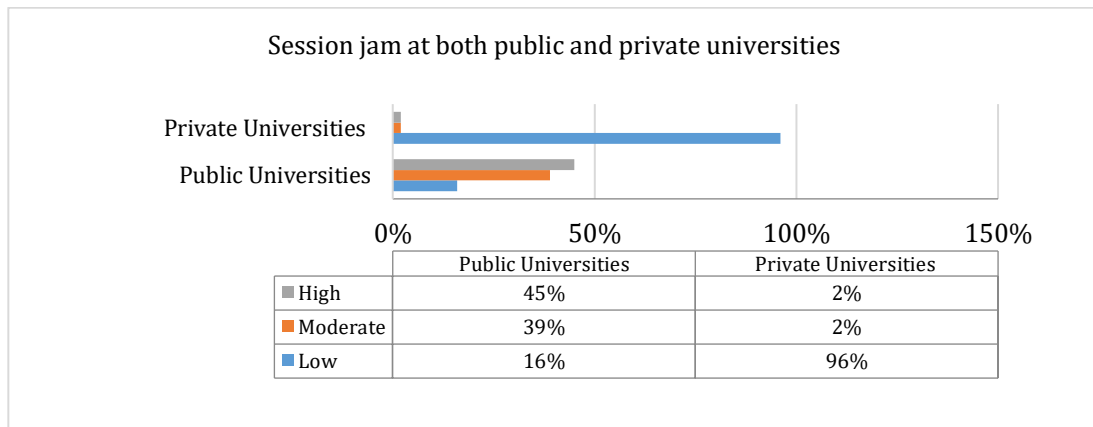


Figure 10: Session jam at both public and private universities

Discussion

The study offers a thorough examination of the variables that impact the quality of higher education in Bangladesh. It provides useful insights into the strengths and shortcomings of both public and private universities by examining important factors including teacher-student ratios, library and research facilities, ICT infrastructure, accommodation, international cooperation, and counselling opportunities. The most significant finding is the disparity in library amenities between public and private universities in Bangladesh. 45% of respondents evaluate public universities' library resources as excellent, compared to just 22% for private universities. The advantage could be traced to the more prolonged historical background and greater financial support of public universities, which enables the development of enormous library resources (Alam, 2020). Ullah and Usman (2023) supported these findings and stated that library facilities are closely related to the quality of higher education. In a similar vein, they assert that libraries are essential for providing access to knowledge, facilitating research, promoting literacy, creating a conducive learning environment, and advocating for ongoing learning among students and teachers (Ullah & Usman 2023). Besides, research facilities are critical for cultivating a culture of innovation and academic excellence (Islam et al., 2019; Sarker & Mahmud, 2023). Private institutions, often collaborating with business partners, have demonstrated significant funding for research facilities. Public universities, on the other hand, have good research facilities (44%) compared to just 14% for private universities. However, to ensure high-quality education in Bangladesh, both public and private institutions must enhance their research facilities to meet quantifiable requirements. In this context, Ahmed et al. (2023) articulated that research in the field of education plays a vital role in enhancing student learning outcomes.

Nevertheless, despite this formidable capability, public universities have difficulties in other domains. Public universities are particularly prone to session jams, a significant problem in Bangladesh's higher education system. This problem, worsened by variables

such as political instability and ineffective administration, hinders students' timely advancement in their degrees. In this context, [Haque \(2020\)](#) argued that political upheaval is causing inadvertent session jams in public universities in Bangladesh. These jams have a significant impact on students' future careers ([Haque, 2020](#)). In a similar spirit, [Jasim \(2024\)](#) explains that students entering public universities sometimes experience inadvertent session jams as a result of many national events. For example, there is likely to be yet another significant session jam at public universities in Bangladesh as a result of the continuing quota movement and the ongoing teachers' protest campaign against the Universal Pension Scheme ([Jasim, 2024](#)). Conversely, private universities demonstrate exceptional performance in terms of ICT facilities and counseling opportunities ([Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021](#)). The strong evaluations for ICT infrastructure in private universities, with 57% of participants acknowledging outstanding facilities, demonstrate their commitment to integrating contemporary technology into education. The focus on ICT can enhance the learning experience by providing students access to digital tools and materials. In this perspective, [Lim et al. \(2020\)](#) state that information and communication technology (ICT) performed a commendable role in improving fairness, quality, and efficiency in higher education ([Lim et al., 2020](#)). In addition, [Ahmed et al. \(2023\)](#) assert that the use of ICT and advanced technologies such as IoT, AI, blockchain technology, and big data analysis is crucial for facilitating the advancement of quality education and the development of a smart Bangladesh ([Ahmed et al., 2023](#)). [Ahmed \(2023\)](#) also endorsed these findings and contended that e-governance, namely ICT, may augment the caliber and efficacy of the country's education system ([Ahmed, 2023](#)).

Furthermore, the fact that 49% of respondents (always 15% and 34% often) reported the presence of regular counselling services at private universities indicates a more organized approach to supporting students. This can have a positive effect on student happiness and academic achievement. However, private universities have their own set of difficulties. The relatively poor scores for accommodation facilities, as indicated by 67% of respondents, highlight a notable area that needs development. Insufficient housing might have a detrimental impact on students' general welfare and intellectual achievements. From this aspect, [Ashraf et al. \(2022\)](#) proposed the establishment of a 'search committee' to select individuals for top positions, such as vice chancellor and treasurer, in private universities in Bangladesh. These individuals would be responsible for providing strong leadership in enhancing the quality of education, fostering scholarly research, and producing highly skilled graduates ([Ashraf et al., 2022](#)). Furthermore, while private universities often demonstrate superior handling of session delays, the existence of some setbacks indicates the potential for further efficiency improvements ([Rahman et al., 2023](#)). The comparative analysis also demonstrates that there is a clear disparity in the efficacy of global cooperation. Nearly half of respondents (67%) believe that private institutions have better international connections than public universities (38%). This international involvement may improve students' educational experiences by exposing them to other cultures and allowing them to collaborate on projects. In this vein, [Rahman \(2023\)](#) said that the integration and collaboration of higher educational institutions on a worldwide scale, both in terms of technology and finances, may foster ethical innovation among students and have a substantial impact on enhancing the quality of higher education in Bangladesh ([Rahman, 2024](#)).

In a nutshell, the study highlights the need for both public and private universities to tackle the specific difficulties they face. Public universities should prioritize enhancing their ICT infrastructure and implementing more efficient strategies to manage session bottlenecks. Private universities, on the other hand, must improve their accommodation facilities and capitalize on their expertise in information and communication technology (ICT) and counseling. By tackling these concerns, both categories of universities may strive to provide a superior standard of education and offer greater support to their students in Bangladesh. Moreover, association between these institutions, as well as

strategic government interventions, can contribute to an overall enhancement of education quality in Bangladesh.

Conclusion

An investigation of both private and public universities in Bangladesh demonstrates considerable disparities in educational quality across many aspects. Public universities are often regarded as having superior library and research facilities, which is a result of their well-developed infrastructure and abundant resources. Nevertheless, they have difficulties in domains such as ICT facilities and session congestion, which impede their capacity to provide a prompt and technologically sophisticated educational experience. When compared to public universities, private universities show a significant improvement in student support and technological integration through their stronger information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure and more regular counselling options. Regardless of these positives, private universities are perceived to have more problems with accommodation, libraries, and research facilities, which affect the quality of life for students.

In light of these results, it is clear that public and private universities alike need focused reforms. If public universities were more serious about improving the quality of their education, they would put more effort into improving their information and communication technology infrastructure and fixing session jams. On the other hand, private universities must tackle accommodation issues and devise plans to improve research and library resources. Therefore, both public and private universities in Bangladesh should strengthen their educational offerings by focusing on these areas. This would improve educational outcomes and strengthen the country's quality of higher education.

Conflict of Interest

The authors affirmed that there is no conflict of interest in this article. Author 1 conducted the field work, prepared the literature review, and researched the article's methodology. Author 2 has conducted the statistical analysis, interpreted the data, and completed the remaining tasks.

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