

# Ethical Issues in University Teaching: Some Selected University Teachers' Perceptions and Practices

Najnin Jahan and Md. Serazul Islam

<sup>1</sup>Open School, Bangladesh Open University, Gazipur-1705, Bangladesh.

<sup>2</sup>School of Business, Bangladesh Open University, Gazipur-1705, Bangladesh.

Corresponding author: najraj\_bou@yahoo.com

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## Abstract

The present study is aimed at investigating what the university teachers think about and what they practice on the ethical issues rose in the teaching process. To conduct the study, descriptive survey design was employed. A total of 90 teachers participated in the study and completed questionnaires. In the selection of the sample population, simple random sampling was used. The data were analyzed using percentage and central score-median. The results of the study unveiled that almost all teachers have positive or favorable perceptions on the ethical issues in teaching but the ethics in some of the teachers' behavior and practices yet remains absent.

**Keywords:** Ethics, perceptions, practices, university teachers.

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Ethics is a branch of philosophy, which deals fundamentally with rules of human conduct from moral point of view. Broadly speaking, it addresses the issues of morality, such as good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice, etc. Therefore, it is sometimes called moral philosophy. In the present study, ethics is meant as the study of the rights and duties of educational stakeholders, the teachers and students in particular; the moral rules that they apply in making decisions, and the nature of the relationship among them. In the educational institutions particularly in the universities, it is expected that the teachers respect the rights, status, and dignity of their colleagues, students, staff, and others with whom they interact. Descriptive ethics is one of the main branches of ethics and it is a form of empirical research,

which aims to uncover people's beliefs about the rightness and wrongness. It may also involve empirical investigation of people's ethical ideals or what actions societies condemn or punish in law. The present study reveals the teachers' ethical perceptions and practices of their behaviors. Ethical behavior connotes conducts of an individual who deemed appropriate by society.

An ethical issue arises in situation when there is a conflict between two or more parties where one is benefiting at the expense of another. It may also arise in situation in which there is moral rules or when one is violated. In the present study, ethical questions in education were mainly addressed in the situation of violating the rules or disciplines at two

different levels- the teacher (faculty) level and the student (learner) level. The first level of analysis focuses on the perceptions, practices, and experiences of the teachers about their behaviors and this is the subject matter of the paper.

As per the statistics of Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS), 2011 there are 31 public universities including National University and 51 private universities for higher education in Bangladesh. Although these institutions have qualified teachers and some set of codes of ethical issues (confidentiality, sexual harassment, discrimination, academic dishonesty, etc.) in their policy but it would not be exaggerated that some of the teachers inadvertently or advertently commit unethical activities in teaching, and evaluating the students, dealing with their colleagues, students and others, and even in making research. At home and abroad, many studies on ethics and ethical issues in different areas were conducted. Very few studies were on ethical issues in education and no specific studies were carried out on ethical issues in university teaching especially in Bangladesh. The present study is an attempt to abridge the gap.

## Literature Review

Ethical issues are concerned with the ideas of right/ wrong, duties/ obligations, rights/ responsibilities. The issues involved in the teaching process in universities are reviewed below:

### Ethics in University

In a higher educational institution especially in a university, the ethics can play a vital role in building an ethical university with morally developed and ethically strong communities. If the stakeholders (e.g. teachers, officers, staff, guardian, and others) involved in the university education are ethical, the system to be developed and the practices to be made by them are expected to be ethical. Therefore, an ethical university teaches the students ethics and values and thereby tries to be a model university. It strives for all round development of students (emotional, moral, and physical). It makes the student an ethical individual as well as a useful member of the society where it disseminates knowledge. So to say, a university with ethics can lay the foundation on how to live ethically.

O'Neil (1983) states "a university that teaches and preaches ethical responsibility to others must itself be a model of that very responsibility if it is to maintain credibility and public trust and continue to be regarded as an essential contributor to society's well-being." The academicians are, therefore, expected to exhibit a higher degree of professionalism and to be compatible with strict code of ethics than other professions. From ethical point of view, a university as an institution that provides normative guidance, standards for behavior, and goals for policy and practice at all levels (Saat et al., 2004). In their study on institutional culture and ethics, Smith and Reynolds (1990) direct attention to the active participation of the university in the community's and even in the nation's civic life through fostering ethical behavior. To meet these expectations, as they mentioned, the universities themselves should conduct their affairs in the highest ethical manner. With regards to the ethical responsibility of a university, O'Connell (1998) states "Our task in universities is not only to teach ethics and values for the marketplace but to model these values ourselves as we fulfill our own moral responsibility as educators in the universities where our students begin the business ethics journey in the first place."

### Ethics in Teaching

Teaching is an educating or instructing activity that imparts knowledge or skill. In this activity, the practitioners are expected to uphold ethical principles as their students are impressionable and constantly taking in lessons from their actions and decisions. The fundamental responsibilities of a university teacher include constructing courses and classroom environments that encourage learning, evaluating learning fairly, and treating students respectfully. Ethical teaching means engaging in behaviors that meet these responsibilities in ways expected by students, your institution, and your discipline (Keith-Spiegel, Whitley, Balogh, Perkins, and Wittig, 2002). According to them, ethical teaching includes attention to avoiding actions or inactions that may cause students educational or emotional harm. The responsibilities listed above form the foundational elements of ethical behavior in teaching and are embedded within ethical codes and principles for teachers. Unfortunately, like most ethical standards, these codes only provide general guidelines for ethical teaching.

In this regard, Barcena and Gil (1993) put emphasis on the ethical control over the teaching and interaction with human

beings. The degree of ethicalness of an individual can be found out by the complex interaction between his stage of moral development and several moderating variables including his characteristics, organization's structured design, the organization culture, and intensity of the ethical issues. Murray et al. (1996) provided a set of basic ethical principles in university teaching. These include competence in course contents, pedagogical competence, dealing with sensitive or discomfoting topics, intellectual development of students, avoiding dual relationship with students, maintaining confidentiality, paying respects to colleagues and valid assessment of students.

In respect of morality and values, the teachers should be the role model to students. Vargas (2001) made a study on the teachers' moral development and professional ethics and pointed out the teachers' behavior, attitudes, values, and priorities as the most powerful and model role playing factors towards transmission of values. Many times the teachers and students, through performing their academic duties, make moral judgments and express their values. Normally the students cannot be expected to show higher degree of ethicalness than their teachers if their relations with the teachers are strong (Saat et al., 2004).

Viewing teacher as a moral agent, Buzzelli and Johnston (2002) mentions, "teaching is an activity involving a deep awareness of the significance of one's choices and how those choices influence the development and well-being of others. An awareness of the moral significance of one's work enlarges the understanding of that work." The teachers can cultivate the degree of awareness through exemplification of moral and ethical values and principles in their own actions.

Campbell (2003) throughout her famous book *The Ethical Teacher* gives arguments in favor of the significance of applied ethics in teaching profession. According to her, a teacher is considered to be ethical if s/he makes ethical and moral decisions, possesses more heightened awareness and sensitivity to the decisions, instills ethics and morals in students and colleagues, and helps professionalize the field of teaching. She, however, found that most teachers are unconscious of the ethical decisions that they make on a daily basis. She argues that ethical knowledge can provide the basis of a renewed professionalism in teaching. She treats a teacher as a moral agent who is engaged in ethical professional conduct and as a moral educator who teaches to

students the same core virtues and principles that s/he strives to uphold in practice.

Almost all scholars put emphasis on teachers' ethical responsibilities but many of the university teachers are doing unethical behaviors through breaking their commitments to their professions and to the students. In curriculum development, classroom teaching, conducting examination, student evaluation, result publication, student-teacher interaction, research and publication, etc. the teachers traditionally, intentionally or unintentionally are adopting unfair means. The present study is an endeavor to measure the degree of ethicalness of the teachers' behaviors in addition to their perceptions.

## Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To disclose the selected university teachers' profile;
- To enumerate the key ethical issues involved in university teaching process;
- To portray what the university teachers perceive on ethical issues involved in teaching process; and
- To measure the degree of ethics the selected teachers maintain in their teaching practices.

## Methodology

This study was designed as a descriptive investigation of 3 public and 3 private university teachers' perceptions about their activities in the teaching-learning process. To the end, a survey questionnaire was administered to randomly selected 90 teachers. Questionnaires were distributed and collected via personal contacts. Before final collection of data, the questionnaire was validated by taking valuable comments and criticisms from senior colleagues, conducting pilot survey on 10 teachers, not included in the sample and reviewing relevant literature extensively (e.g. Tabachnick, Keith-Spiegel, and Pope, 1991; Marshall et al., 1998; Morgan and Korschgen, 2001; Vargas, 2001; Scales, 2002). The survey instrument used for the respondents consisted of two sections. The first section dealt with the teachers' background information. The second section was meant for themselves as to know what the teachers perceive and what they actually do on the ethical issues (53 items). The questions of last section were

of 5-point Likert -Style questions. The reliability of the items in the questionnaire was measured by Cronbach’s alpha coefficient which was (0.8751) within the acceptable limit as per Nunnally (1978). For collection of secondary data the books, journals, unpublished research reports, websites, and other publications were consulted. The data were analyzed and described with frequency distributions, percentages, and central score or median.

## Results and Discussion

### Sample Teachers’ Profile

It is observed from the Table 1 that more than one half (58.8 percent) of the sample teachers were young or middle aged

as they were not more than 35 years old. The average age of the teachers was 36.28 years. The reasons might be the dominance of young and middle aged group in the private universities. 74.4 percent of the randomly selected teachers were male that reflects the real picture of our male dominated teacher society. With regard to the educational level of the sample teachers as shown in Table 1, the present study found that more than one half of the teachers (55.6 percent) did not have degrees above masters level. The distribution of years of teaching among the respondent teachers shows that around 72 percent teachers have been teaching for not more than 10 years (the average experience is 9 years). Nearly fifty percent of the sample teachers held the position of lecturer. These figures indicate so as the selected private universities were young in age and do not have enough senior teachers.

**Table 1.** Profiles of the Sample University Teachers

Profiles of the Sample Teachers	No. of Teachers	Percentage
Age of the Teachers in Years		
Up to 30	31	34.4
31-35	22	24.4
36-40	13	14.4
41 and above	24	26.7
Total	90	100.0
Mean age	36.28 years	
Sex of the Teachers		
Male	67	74.4
Female	23	25.6
Total	90	100.0
Religion of the Teachers		
Muslim	78	86.7
Non-Muslim	12	13.3
Total	90	100.0
Educational Qualifications of the Teachers		
Masters	50	55.6
MPhil/MS	18	20.0
PhD	21	23.3
Post-Doc	1	1.1
Total	90	100.0
Teaching Position of the Teachers		
Lecturer	44	48.9

*Contd.*

Assistant Professor	21	23.3
Associate Professor	7	7.8
Professor	18	20.0
Total	90	100.0
Previous Teaching Experience of the Teachers		
Up to 5 years	40	44.4
6 to 10 years	24	26.7
11 years or above	26	28.9
Total	90	100.0
Mean experience	9 years	

Source: Field Survey

**Table 2.** Teachers' Perceptions and Behaviors about their Activities

Teachers' Behaviors	Teachers' Perceptions						Teachers' Practices					
	Number of the Teachers					Central Score	Number of the Teachers					Central Score
	Completely Ethical	Slightly Ethical	Not Sure	Slightly Unethical	Completely Unethical		Forgotten	Never	Once or twice	More than twice	Always	
Taking a class without adequate preparation for subject matter.	1 (1.1)	7 (7.8)	2 (2.2)	28 (31.1)	52 (57.8)	5	3 (3.3)	46 (51.1)	40 (44.4)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	2
Not maintaining scheduled class time.	0 (0.0)	2 (2.2)	2 (2.2)	39 (43.3)	47 (52.2)	5	1 (1.1)	34 (37.8)	51 (56.7)	4 (4.4)	0 (0.0)	3
Using the same lecture notes when re-teaching a course.	1 (1.1)	32 (35.6)	7 (7.8)	31 (34.4)	19 (21.1)	4	4 (4.4)	29 (32.2)	33 (36.7)	18 (20.0)	6 (6.7)	3
Ignoring a student signing the attendance sheet for a classmate.	2 (2.2)	5 (5.6)	2 (2.2)	18 (20.0)	63 (70.0)	5	7 (7.8)	67 (74.4)	13 (14.4)	2 (2.2)	1 (1.1)	2
Dating a student.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (5.6)	3 (3.3)	82 (91.1)	5	4 (4.4)	85 (94.4)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	2
Canceling classes without proper reasons.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	12 (31.3)	76 (84.4)	5	7 (7.8)	74 (82.2)	9 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2
Teaching on topics significantly different from syllabus.	18 (20.0)	25 (27.8)	10 (11.1)	15 (16.7)	22 (24.4)	3	3 (3.3)	35 (38.9)	40 (44.4)	8 (8.9)	4 (4.4)	3
Discussing personal problems with students.	5 (5.6)	24 (26.7)	14 (15.6)	14 (15.6)	33 (36.7)	4	3 (3.3)	51 (56.7)	31 (34.4)	4 (4.4)	1 (1.1)	2
Receiving mobile phone calls during teaching hours.	2 (2.2)	13 (14.4)	4 (4.4)	35 (38.9)	36 (40.0)	4	2 (2.2)	31 (34.4)	51 (56.7)	4 (4.4)	2 (2.2)	3
Always insisting on rules, discipline, and good behavior.	35 (38.9)	39 (43.3)	6 (6.7)	7 (7.8)	3 (3.3)	2	0 (0.0)	14 (15.6)	26 (28.9)	9 (10.0)	41 (45.6)	4
Always giving lots of assignments.	13 (14.4)	31 (34.4)	11 (12.2)	24 (26.7)	11 (12.2)	3	0 (0.0)	30 (33.3)	32 (35.6)	15 (16.7)	13 (14.4)	3
Paying attention to only favorite students.	6 (6.7)	11 (12.2)	2 (2.2)	17 (18.9)	54 (60.0)	5	1 (1.1)	62 (68.9)	19 (21.1)	4 (4.4)	4 (4.4)	2

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Punishing students unequally based on political and other backgrounds.	0 (0.0)	4 (4.4)	3 (3.3)	7 (7.8)	76 (84.4)	5	1 (1.1)	84 (93.3)	5 (5.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2
Bringing up certain class-related topics that are sexually or racially charged.	10 (11.1)	25 (27.8)	6 (6.7)	12 (13.3)	37 (41.1)	4	6 (6.7)	48 (53.3)	22 (24.4)	7 (7.8)	7 (7.8)	2
Providing students with copying notes directly from the reference books.	8 (8.9)	30 (33.3)	12 (13.3)	20 (22.2)	20 (22.2)	3	0 (0.0)	36 (40.0)	40 (44.4)	9 (10.0)	5 (5.6)	3
Scolding students immediately when they ask for any explanation.	0 (0.0)	4 (4.4)	2 (2.2)	8 (8.9)	76 (84.4)	5	7 (7.8)	76 (84.4)	5 (5.6)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	2
Making deliberate or repeated teasing with students especially with female students.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	3 (3.3)	86 (95.6)	5	1 (1.1)	87 (96.7)	2 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2
Encouraging competition among students.	80 (88.9)	6 (6.7)	2 (2.2)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	1	0 (0.0)	6 (6.7)	1 (1.1)	8 (8.9)	75 (83.3)	5
Using profanity in lectures when teaching.	0 (0.0)	8 (8.9)	4 (4.4)	7 (7.8)	71 (78.9)	5	3 (3.3)	74 (82.2)	9 (10.0)	2 (2.2)	2 (2.2)	2
Suspending offending students from the class.	19 (21.1)	33 (36.7)	6 (6.7)	16 (17.8)	16 (17.8)	2	5 (5.6)	37 (41.1)	30 (33.3)	10 (11.1)	8 (8.9)	3
Making negative comments in the classroom about other teachers.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	5 (5.6)	83 (92.2)	5	5 (5.6)	79 (87.8)	5 (5.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	2
Telling personal political views in the classroom.	5 (5.6)	10 (11.1)	4 (4.4)	11 (12.2)	60 (66.7)	5	2 (2.2)	66 (73.3)	18 (20.0)	1 (1.1)	3 (3.3)	2
Not submitting question papers in time	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.2)	20 (22.2)	68 (75.6)	5	2 (2.2)	73 (81.1)	15 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2
Giving easy tests to ensure popularity.	5 (5.6)	16 (17.8)	3 (3.3)	11 (12.2)	55 (61.1)	5	3 (3.3)	57 (63.3)	22 (24.4)	2 (2.2)	6 (6.7)	2
Ignoring strong evidence of cheating (copying in the exam).	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	4 (4.4)	85 (94.4)	5	2 (2.2)	84 (93.3)	4 (4.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2
Making negligence in the evaluation of answer scripts.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.2)	7 (7.8)	81 (90.0)	5	1 (1.1)	80 (88.9)	8 (8.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	2
Allowing students receiving phone calls during examination.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	13 (14.4)	75 (83.3)	5	5 (5.6)	76 (84.4)	7 (7.8)	2 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	2
Doing private work (e.g. writing a letter, reading newspaper, etc.) in the examination hall.	0 (0.0)	14 (15.6)	5 (5.6)	14 (15.6)	57 (63.3)	5	4 (4.4)	53 (58.9)	28 (31.1)	4 (4.4)	1 (1.1)	2
Having an intimate relationship with a student.	11 (12.2)	29 (32.2)	4 (4.4)	21 (23.3)	25 (27.8)	4	3 (3.3)	35 (38.9)	23 (25.6)	7 (7.8)	22 (24.4)	3
Sharing with colleagues a confidential disclosure told by a student.	4 (4.4)	12 (13.3)	5 (5.6)	9 (10.0)	60 (66.7)	5	5 (5.6)	65 (72.2)	16 (17.8)	3 (3.3)	1 (1.1)	2
Ignoring/supporting unethical behavior of colleagues.	0 (0.0)	11 (12.2)	2 (2.2)	10 (11.1)	67 (74.4)	5	2 (2.2)	72 (80.0)	13 (14.4)	2 (2.2)	1 (1.1)	2
Engaging in other institutions or universities during office hours.	1 (1.1)	7 (7.8)	2 (2.2)	14 (15.6)	66 (73.3)	5	1 (1.1)	73 (81.1)	11 (12.2)	3 (3.3)	2 (2.2)	2
Engaging in other institutions or universities after office hours.	55 (61.1)	13 (14.4)	6 (6.7)	8 (8.9)	8 (8.9)	1	1 (1.1)	33 (36.7)	21 (23.3)	15 (16.7)	20 (22.2)	3
Omitting significant negative information when writing a letter of recommendation for a questionable student.	0 (0.0)	13 (14.4)	4 (4.4)	30 (33.3)	43 (47.8)	4	4 (4.4)	60 (66.7)	20 (22.2)	5 (5.6)	1 (1.1)	2

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Attending a meeting at university expense and not substantively participating (most of the time spent sight-seeing, etc).	0 (0.0)	3 (3.3)	6 (6.7)	14 (15.6)	67 (74.4)	5	1 (1.1)	77 (85.6)	9 (10.0)	1 (1.1)	2 (2.2)	2
Using student assistance for personal work (e.g., computer compose, script evaluation of other universities, etc.).	0 (0.0)	22 (24.4)	3 (3.3)	19 (21.1)	46 (51.1)	5	0 (0.0)	52 (57.8)	34 (37.8)	3 (3.3)	1 (1.1)	2
Giving academic credit for student assistance.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	3 (3.3)	2 (2.2)	84 (93.3)	5	1 (1.1)	83 (92.2)	4 (4.4)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	2
Accepting money or gifts for grades.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.2)	88 (97.8)	5	2 (2.2)	87 (96.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	2
Using university equipment for personal activities.	0 (0.0)	13 (14.4)	5 (5.6)	18 (20.0)	54 (60.0)	5	0 (0.0)	59 (65.6)	23 (25.6)	3 (3.3)	5 (5.6)	2
Making transactions (lending, selling etc.) with students	2 (2.2)	13 (14.4)	3 (3.3)	24 (26.7)	48 (53.3)	5	3 (3.3)	70 (77.8)	15 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.2)	2
Engaging in a sexual relationship with another faculty member.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	5 (5.6)	83 (92.2)	5	0 (0.0)	84 (93.3)	4 (4.4)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.2)	2
Smoking or using other illegal drugs in personal life.	4 (4.4)	5 (5.6)	4 (4.4)	14 (15.6)	63 (70.0)	5	2 (2.2)	70 (77.8)	7 (7.8)	3 (3.3)	7 (7.8)	2
Patronizing student politics.	2 (2.2)	7 (7.8)	5 (5.6)	12 (13.3)	64 (71.1)	5	0 (0.0)	80 (88.9)	9 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	2
Giving more marks to avoid negative evaluations from students.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	7 (7.8)	82 (91.1)	5	3 (3.3)	81 (90.0)	5 (5.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	2
Relaxing rules (e.g., late papers, attendance) for students' favor.	6 (6.7)	21 (23.3)	1 (1.1)	19 (21.1)	43 (47.8)	4	0 (0.0)	52 (57.8)	26 (28.9)	6 (6.7)	6 (6.7)	2
Favoring students belonging to a particular party or a group or a religion or an area.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	11 (12.2)	77 (85.6)	5	1 (1.1)	77 (85.6)	11 (12.2)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	2
Beating or affronting junior colleagues.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	5 (5.6)	84 (93.3)	5	1 (1.1)	87 (96.7)	2 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2
Plagiarizing (copying without referencing from someone else's writing or speech) research.	1 (1.1)	4 (4.4)	2 (2.2)	6 (6.7)	77 (85.6)	5	0 (0.0)	86 (95.6)	3 (3.3)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	2
Submitting a manuscript to two or more journals in violation of journal policy.	3 (3.3)	20 (22.2)	2 (2.2)	5 (5.6)	60 (66.7)	5	2 (2.2)	70 (77.8)	16 (17.8)	2 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	2
Falsifying research data.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	4 (4.4)	84 (93.3)	5	1 (1.1)	89 (98.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2
Not giving student(s) co-authorship on publications when the student(s) contribution justified co-authorship.	0 (0.0)	2 (2.2)	1 (1.1)	13 (14.4)	74 (82.2)	5	2 (2.2)	86 (95.6)	2 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2
Inappropriately giving a colleague a co-authorship status.	0 (0.0)	6 (6.7)	1 (1.1)	19 (21.1)	64 (71.1)	5	0 (0.0)	72 (80.0)	17 (18.9)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	2
Presenting the same research paper (article) to more than one seminar.	1 (1.1)	15 (16.7)	5 (5.6)	16 (17.8)	53 (58.9)	5	0 (0.0)	71 (78.9)	17 (18.9)	2 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	2

Note: Figures in the bracket indicate percentages to total.

Source: Field Survey

Contd.

## University Teachers' Ethical Perceptions and Practices

The present study has been undertaken to examine what the selected teachers believe and what they actually do about the 53 behaviors (see Table 2). The study contains questions relating to the 10 distinct areas of teaching process namely course content (syllabus), preparation of lecture notes, taking class in the class room, question setting, student evaluation, education environment, research and publication issues, financial and material transactions, social relationships with students, and sexual relationships with students and colleagues.

Respondents were asked to respond to the items using the scale from 1 to 5 namely: 1-completely ethical, 2- slightly ethical, 3- not sure, 4-slightly unethical, and 5-completely unethical. The study found that survey participants (university teachers) engaged in few of the behaviors and only reported three actions as ethical namely, encouraging competition among students, suspending offending students from the class, and always insisting on rules, discipline, and good behaviors. Among these behaviors, teachers claimed their all time involvement only in creating competition among their students.

Out of the total selected 53 behaviors, 38 behaviors were perceived as completely unethical and were found rare among the university teachers' practices. The top ranked (see the percentage of Table 2) 5 unethical behaviors, as more than 90 percent teachers perceived, include (i) accepting money or gifts from students for grades;(ii) making deliberate or repeated teasing with female students; (iii) ignoring strong evidence of cheating; (iv) beating or affronting junior colleagues/falsifying research data (same central score); and (v) engaging in sexual relationship with another faculty member/making negative comments in the class room about other teachers. Interestingly it is found that failure to maintaining scheduled class time, using the same lecture notes while re-teaching a course, receiving mobile phone calls during teaching hours, and having intimate relationship with students were perceived by the teachers as unethical behaviors (since median score is  $\geq 4$ ) but were performed by them at least once in their teaching tenure.

The behaviors on which the teachers were somewhat indifferent about ethicalness (right or wrong) were often committed by them. These behaviors include teaching on topics significantly different from syllabus, always giving

lots of assignments, and providing students with copying notes directly from the reference book.

## Conclusion

From the preceding discussion of the present study, it can be concluded that Bangladeshi university teachers, though there are no prescribed ethical codes of conduct, are aware of or able to distinguishing the ethical and unethical behaviors. Because of the outdated university ordinance, long tradition, no or low penalty, educational environment, teacher-student relationship, etc. the teachers are sometimes adopting unfair means in teaching and making interactions with students and colleagues. In the present study, the only areas of agreement among the majority of the teachers were that the behaviors that act as guides to the students like motivating students on rules, discipline, and good behaviors are ethical. Almost all teachers are less likely to believe that the behaviors of taking advantages of students financially or otherwise, sparing the students from misconduct or any other offences, and the act of plagiarizing should be tolerated as ethical. Practices of the majority of the university teachers represented in the study are consistent with their perceptions about ethical and unethical behaviors. In other words, if they believe the behavior to be unethical, most of the teachers in this situation will not practice such behavior. If they, on the other hand, believe a behavior is ethical, they will more often than not, have engaged in the behavior. Some teaching practices (e.g. cutting class hours short by being late or leaving early, receiving mobile phone during class time, using the same lecture notes without updating them, etc.) of most of the teachers of the selected universities particularly of public universities are reverse of their perceptions. In a university, the members (members of the Board of Governors or syndicate, administrators, staff, faculty and students) are expected to honor the principles of integrity, natural justice, and due process in their handling of all issues. Unfortunately, the selected universities do not have handbooks to guide them on appropriate behavior in relation to the university. Though the university ordinance, service rules, university act, etc. act as a guide to the ethical behaviors, these are not enough. The courses are being taught in the university should, therefore, contain the causes, punishment, and remedies of unethical academic issues. Although the results cannot be generalized to the entire university teachers, there is at least evidence that punitive measures are desirable where professionals have failed to

honor written or unwritten ethical standards. A further study covering other ethical issues and other universities may be conducted to explore the scenario as a whole.

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