

Exploring the Impact of Media on Social Culture: Evidence from the University of Chittagong, Bangladesh

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Abstract

Although global scholarship has extensively explored the cultural impact of media, Bangladeshi research has largely focused on media's political implications, misinformation, addiction, and psychological effects- all but overlooking its cultural dimensions within specific academic contexts. This study examines the influence of media on social culture among university teachers and students at the University of Chittagong, Bangladesh. Guided by the "Message Effect" concept within the Cultivation Theory, the study explores how the media shapes social culture. Employing a mixed-methods design and non-random complex sampling, it integrates quantitative analysis with qualitative insights. Statistical results reveal significant positive correlations between media consumption and preferences in spoken language, food, dance, and sports. Weaker, yet positive associations were found with music, clothing, and language prioritization. Thematic analysis indicates gendered patterns in media influence, with male students exhibiting more pronounced media-induced cultural shifts than female students and faculty members.

Keywords: Media influence, Social culture, Cultural diversity, Media consumption, Higher education

Introduction

Society is an organization formed by individuals and groups, ranging from small communities to a global scale. While living in society, people must adhere to various rules, regulations, and codes of conduct. They also need to maintain relationships with the fundamental concepts of society and various social institutions. One of the most significant concepts of society is culture. Society and culture are deeply interconnected, and culture plays a crucial role in shaping the lives of individuals within a society. Culture is central to societal identity, encompassing shared beliefs, values, customs, language, and behavioral norms. In an increasingly interconnected global environment, media has emerged as a dominant force in shaping and reshaping cultural practices and social interactions. Traditional media platforms such as television and newspapers now operate alongside digital and social media platforms, facilitating the rapid dissemination of content across geographic and cultural boundaries.

This transformation presents both opportunities and challenges. While media fosters intercultural awareness and connectivity, it also introduces external cultural influences that may overshadow indigenous traditions and values. Kellner (2014) mentioned that media narratives provide the symbols, myths, and resources that help forms a collective culture, allowing individuals to integrate themselves into this culture. Gamson et al. (1992) reveal in the cultural level analysis that our social world is constructed with pre-organized reported events rather than raw and unfiltered form. In Bangladesh, the rapid spread of digital technology has intensified media's role in daily life, particularly among the younger population. University campuses serve as critical environments where students and faculty engage with diverse media content that influences their language, dress, ethics, and social behaviors. The increasing accessibility of smartphones and social networking platforms has transformed modes of expression, taste, and communication, often blending

global influences with local traditions. This shift has raised questions about the preservation of indigenous culture, linguistic practices, and traditional values within a rapidly globalizing media environment.

In this national context, the University of Chittagong represents a vibrant social and cultural setting where students and teachers interact as both media consumers and cultural interpreters. Their exposure to diverse media platforms potentially affects their preferences in language, dress, food, music, dance and sports. However, empirical research exploring these dynamics in academic institutions in Bangladesh remains limited. Most existing studies focus on urban youth or general audiences, leaving a gap in understanding how media consumption impacts cultural diversity and social behavior within higher education settings. Therefore, this study investigates how media consumption influences on social culture practices among teachers and students at the University of Chittagong. By situating the research in a local academic context, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of media's role in shaping cultural transformation in Bangladesh's higher education environment.

Background of the study

Among all the social systems and cultures in world history, the society and culture of Bangladesh hold special significance. The society and culture of Bangladesh have been shaped by the integration of various elements. Through culture, the true nature of our social life is expressed, and our daily activities are reflected through cultural practices. Bangladesh's cultural evolution is rooted in a synthesis of diverse linguistic, religious, and ethnic traditions, where society operates as a system of structured relationships and culture reflects collectively shared values and practices (Gisbert, 1968; Schaefer, 1956; MacIver & Page, 1949). Human activities, through continuous practice, evolve into culture. Culture encompasses knowledge, beliefs, art, ethics, customs, and refined practices. It serves as the identity of a society or nation and plays a guiding role in shaping the behavior and functioning of that society or nation. Culture, transmitted through social interaction, encompasses norms, symbols, customs, and behaviors passed across generations (Kluckhohn et al., 1953; Hofstede et al., 2010). In contemporary society,

media has become a central mechanism for cultural transmission and transformation. The influence of media on social culture has been a subject of continuous academic discussion. Scholars generally agree that media functions not only as a source of information and entertainment but also as a powerful socializing agent it shapes values, beliefs, and lifestyles.

Brief literature review

In the literature of communication and cultural studies scholars mentioned about the influence of media on social culture. By using pre-made judgments, informing public even forces them to think in a particular way rather than allowing them to freely explore and establish their ideas and opinions. Consequently, the information aspect starts to be dominated by the effect of media anxieties on the collective unconscious. At the same time involuntarily, but most often intentionally the media achieve the goals set, influencing the psyche and human behavior. Media influences perception, identity, emotion, and social behavior by exposing audiences to diverse values and worldviews (Bandura, 2001). At the same time, scholars have identified its potential risks, including stereotyping, emotional manipulation, and the construction of cultural myths that obscure lived realities (Barthes, 1996; Zheltukhina et al., 2017). In the age of globalization, media has become one of the strongest forces influencing cultural transformation by transmitting symbols, styles, and narratives across boundaries (Tomlinson, 1999). A large body of research has demonstrated how mass media and digital platforms contribute to cultural homogenization and hybridization. McQuail (2010) notes that continuous exposure to global media encourages audiences to adopt new behavioral and aesthetic patterns. In Asian contexts, Thussu (2007) argued that transnational television and social media serve as agents of cultural globalization, influencing clothing, music, and language preferences among youth.

Within education, media contributes to informal learning and digital literacy (McQuail, 2010; Selwyn, 2012; Prensky, 2001), but excessive exposure may reduce attention span, disrupt critical thinking, and propagate misinformation (Carr, 2010; Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Primack et al., 2017). Particularly Social media platforms have reshaped

identity construction, civic participation, and minority student engagement necessitating pedagogical adaptations (Linville, 2019; Horsman & Cormack, 2018; Agyeman & Malherbe, 2021; Valiente, 2020). In the era of rapid digital evolution, misinformation has become a weapon employed by ideologues from various perspectives against traditional media outlets. Hence, alongside critical thinking a skill, fostering digital media education is essential within education system. With the advancement of modern technology, social media, television, newspapers, and online platforms have expanded cultural diversity while also fostering interactions between global and local cultures. Excessive media influence can sometimes challenge local traditions and cultural heritage, with the dominance of Western culture becoming evident. In this context, the current study investigates the influence of media on the social culture of students and teachers at the University of Chittagong in Bangladesh.

Several empirical studies have examined these changes within educational settings. For instance, Alam (2018) found that social media significantly affects students' communication styles and interpersonal values in Bangladeshi universities. Rahman and Sultana (2021) observed that digital entertainment has reshaped language practices and cultural tastes among young adults. However, most studies have focused exclusively on students, while the perspectives of university teachers remain largely underexplored. Furthermore, few studies have analyzed the comparative influence of media on both teachers and students within a single academic environment. This study, therefore, fills this gap by examining how teachers and students of the University of Chittagong experience media's influence on their cultural practices, social values, and everyday behaviors. By integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches, it provides an in-depth understanding of the broader social and cultural consequences of media consumption in an educational context.

Chittagong University: Profile, characteristics and demographics

The University of Chittagong (CU), established in 1966, is one of the largest public universities in Bangladesh, located about 22 kilometers north of Chittagong city amid a scenic hilly landscape. The university occupies a vast area of approximately 2,100

acres, fostering a unique academic environment enriched by both natural beauty and cultural diversity. CU accommodates students from all divisions of the country, reflecting a microcosm of Bangladesh's socio-cultural fabric.

The university comprises nine faculties and 54 academic departments, offering programs in arts & humanities, social sciences, business administration, science, law, biological sciences, education, engineering, and marine sciences. As of 2024, the total student population is approximately 27,139, including 16,860 males and 10,279 females. The teaching community consists of around 993 faculty members, of whom 694 are male and 299 are female, representing a diverse range of academic disciplines and research expertise.

The campus serves as an important social and intellectual hub where teachers and students interact across disciplines, exchanging ideas and perspectives. Media plays a central role in shaping these interactions, with widespread use of digital platforms, online classrooms, and social media networks becoming integral to both academic communication and social engagement. This media-rich environment makes the University of Chittagong an appropriate and dynamic setting for studying media's influence on cultural diversity, lifestyle, and social behavior among university students and faculty members.

Conceptual framework

This study proposes a conceptual framework (MMMO, figure 1) based on three major communication theories that explain how media exposure influences attitudes and cultural behaviors: Cultivation Theory, Modeling (Social Learning) Theory, and Uses and Gratifications Theory.

Cultivation Theory: Gerbner's (1976) Cultivation theory posits that prolonged and repetitive exposure to media content gradually shapes people's perceptions of social reality. Over time, audiences begin to view the world in ways consistent with the dominant portrayals presented in media. In this study, the theory helps to explain how continuous exposure to news, entertainment, and online content may cultivate new cultural expectations, values, and social norms among teachers and students.

Modeling or Social Learning Theory: According to Bandura (1977), individuals learn behavior by observing and imitating others, including characters or influencers in media. Media thus becomes a symbolic environment for behavioral learning. This perspective is particularly relevant for explaining how university audiences adopt new speech styles, clothing patterns, or ethical attitudes modeled through television dramas, films, and social media personalities.

Uses and Gratifications Theory: Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1974) emphasizes that audiences are active users who select specific media

to fulfill particular needs, such as: entertainment, education, or social interaction. It helps to clarify why teachers and students engage with different media platforms and how their motivations (information seeking, recreation, socialization) influence the extent and type of cultural impact experienced.

Based on the theoretical assumptions, the following conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between media consumption and social-cultural outcomes among teachers and students of the University of Chittagong.

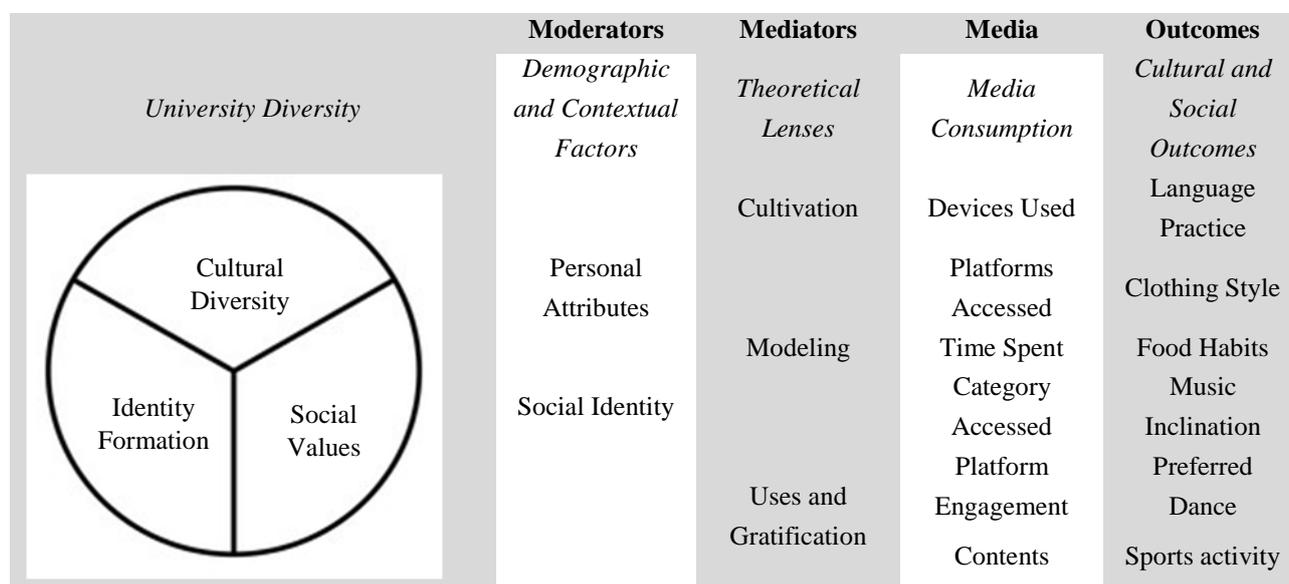


Figure 1 MMMO-conceptual framework of the study

Moderating variables: Demographic and contextual factors (gender, profession, age, education level, residence, income).

Mediating processes: Cultivation (perceptual shaping), Modeling (behavioral imitation) and Gratification (purposeful media use).

Independent variables: Media Consumption (devices, platforms, time spent, media categories accessed, media platform engagement, exposure to contents).

Dependent variables: Cultural and Social Outcomes (language practice, clothing style, food habits, music inclination, preferred dance, sports activity).

Conceptual linkage: The framework assumes that the degree and nature of media consumption influence

cultural practices and social attitudes through cultivation, modeling, and gratification processes. Demographic and motivational factors may moderate this relationship, leading to varied impacts among teachers and students. Therefore, higher exposure and active engagement with media are expected to contribute to greater cultural transformation within the university environment.

Research objectives

The main purpose of the study is to examine the influence of media on the social culture of students and teachers at the University of Chittagong. The objectives of the study are as following:

1. To assess cultural diversity among teachers and students.

2. To analyze media consumption patterns across these groups.
3. To examine the correlation between media consumption and cultural diversity.

Research hypotheses

The study aims to examine the influence of media in shaping social culture within the academic environment of the University of Chittagong. It focuses on understanding the extent of cultural diversity, patterns of media consumption, correlation between media consumption and cultural diversity among teachers and students. Based on the research objectives, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1: There is significant cultural diversity among teachers and students at the University of Chittagong.

H2: Media consumption patterns differ significantly between teachers and students.

H3: Media consumption time is significantly correlated with cultural diversity levels among the participants.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative surveys with qualitative focus group discussions (FGDs). A total of 200 respondents, 170 students and 30 faculty members were selected using cluster and purposive sampling from nine faculties at the University of Chittagong. Although the number of student respondents and faculty members appears numerically unequal, this ratio closely reflects the actual population distribution of the University of Chittagong, which comprises approximately 27,139 students and 993 faculty members. Given the substantially larger student population, a purposive selection was made at the rate of 30 students per 5,000 individuals, while 30 teachers per 1,000 faculty members were chosen across six faculty clusters (where nine faculties were grouped into six clusters based on population size and disciplinary characteristics). This approach allowed both groups to be represented proportionately, maintaining diversity in gender, academic background, and departmental affiliation.

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data on demographics, media usage habits, and selected cultural dimensions (language, music, dance, food, dress, sports). In addition, three FGDs (two with

students and one with faculty) were conducted to explore nuanced perspectives on media's influence on cultural behavior.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics and chi-square tests to identify patterns and associations. Qualitative data from FGDs were subjected to thematic analysis to capture interpretive insights. Ethical protocols were strictly followed, including informed consent and participant confidentiality.

Results and discussion

The results and discussion are structured in accordance with the research objectives and hypotheses, offering a systematic analysis of cultural diversity, media consumption patterns, the relationship between media use and cultural diversity. Quantitative data are analyzed using statistical methods, while qualitative insights are derived through thematic analysis.

Demographic characteristics of the study participants

Gender and profession status: This study's sample comprises 111 males (55.5%) and 89 females (44.5%), reflecting a relatively balanced gender distribution considering to the gender of population. As the sample was proportionally selected from both teachers and students, the majority (85%, n=170) are students, while 15% (n=30) are university teachers.

Age distribution: The respondents predominantly belong to the younger demographic, with 74% aged between 21 and 27 years. A smaller proportion, 11%, are below 20 years, while 15% are 28 years or older, representing faculty members and postgraduate students. This age distribution suggests that the findings will be significantly influenced by the perspectives of young adults, who are more likely to engage with contemporary media trends.

Academic background: The sample includes respondents from various academic disciplines. The highest representation is from BBA, Science, and Biological Sciences faculties (47%), comprising Biological Sciences (19%), Science (16%) and BBA (12%). The Social Science and Arts & Humanities faculties (44%) include Arts & Humanities (27.5%) and

Social Science (16.5%). The remaining 9% belong to faculties such as Law, Engineering, Marine Science & Fisheries, and Education. This distribution ensures a diverse academic perspective in the study.

Educational level: Most respondents are undergraduate students at different stages of their studies. Additionally, 25% are pursuing master's degrees, while 9% are enrolled in M.Phil. or Ph.D. programs.

Economic status: Nearly 47% of the respondents report no personal income, which aligns with their student status. Among those earning, the majority have a monthly income of BDT 10,000 or less. Only 16.5% report earnings above BDT 30,000, primarily representing university teachers. This financial distribution may influence respondents' media consumption patterns and access to various media platforms.

Residential status: A significant proportion of respondents (64%) reside on campus, while 36% live in urban areas. This indicates that most students are immersed in the university environment, which may impact their social and cultural experiences, including media engagement.

Religious and marital status: The respondents predominantly identify as Muslim (87.5%), with 12.5% belonging to other religious backgrounds. Additionally, 82.5% of the respondents are unmarried, while 17.5% are married, a trend reflective of the student-dominated sample.

The study incorporates a representative sample from 54 academic departments and nine faculties at the University of University, ensuring diversity in academic backgrounds, age groups, and socioeconomic status. This demographic variation is crucial for understanding the complex relationship between media consumption and cultural transformation.

Background of FGD participants: To ensure representativeness, participants were purposively selected based on varying academic designations and educational levels. Both faculty members and students were included to capture a wide range of perspectives.

FGD 1 comprised faculty members, including two Professors, two Associate Professors, one Assistant Professor, and one Lecturer. FGD 2 and FGD 3 involved male and female students respectively, drawn from different academic years to reflect a diversity of academic experiences. For the purpose of maintaining anonymity and facilitating analysis, each participant was assigned a unique identifier. In FGD 1, six faculty members were coded from A1 to F1. In FGD 2, six male students were coded from A2 to F2, while in FGD 3, eight female students were coded from A3 to H3. The duration of each discussion session FGD1 to FGD3 respectively 90, 70, and 65 minutes was also recorded for reference.

Cultural diversity between teachers and students: How do media influence the socio-cultural diversity of teachers and students at the University of Chittagong? To measure this point, the researchers designed a cultural diversity variable. This cultural diversity variable was measured using six primary dimensions: language, music, dance, food, dress, and sports. Under the first-dimension, researchers created two questions about respondents preferred language and spoken language. These six dimensions adopted from Identify features and patterns of culture (Brusnahant et al., 2022) and questions was designed considering participants nature, characteristics and social contexts.

Language: Survey result showed, Standard Bangla is overwhelmingly favored, with 66.5% (n=133) identifying it as respondents preferred language in their daily communication. Usually, media use Standard Bangla in maximum contents. This affirms the dominant role of Standard Bangla in both academic and everyday discourse among the participants. Furthermore, 29% (n=58) expressed a preference for local dialects, illustrating that the priority of local language has not disappeared yet. A small proportion of respondents (3%, n=6) indicated a preference for Sadhu (formal form of Bangla) language, while only 1.5% (n=3) preferred other languages, suggesting respondents' minimal comfort on foreign or non-native languages in their daily communication. In terms of language proficiency, the data show that all respondents (100%, n=200) are fluent in Standard Bangla, reinforcing its foundational position within the cultural and educational context. A

substantial proportion (69.5, n=139) reported proficiency in English, which reflects a high level of bilingualism that is likely linked to academic requirements and global media exposure. Additionally, 31.5, (n=63) of respondents can speak in Hindi, possibly influenced by regional media and cross-border cultural interactions. Only 5%, (n=10) reported the ability to speak languages other than Bengali, English, or Hindi, indicating limited multilingualism beyond the dominant linguistic spheres.

Thematic analysis revealed a complex relationship between media and local dialects practices. The role of media in promoting and preserving local dialects was acknowledged. Media was largely seen as a tool for both the preservation of local dialects and promoter of standard language. “Media promotes a standard language, and local dialects like Chittagongor others may be suppressed in formal media” (B1). The modernizing influence of media is seen as a contributing factor to the decline of local dialects. “With everything modernizing, the use of local dialects is declining, even though some people are trying to promote them.” (B3). There is an alternative view where media is seen as a tool for local dialects promotion. “Media serves as a valuable tool for spreading local dialects. Old Dhaka dialect, and Ripon videos¹ are becoming popular, which helps in the wider dissemination of these languages” (F2).

Music: Regarding music consumption, the majority of respondents (55%, n=110) stated that they listen to all types of music, suggesting an openness to diverse musical genres and a broad spectrum of cultural influences. Interestingly, 21.5% (n=43) reported that they do not listen to music at all, which may reflect personal preferences, religious beliefs, or lifestyle choices. Meanwhile, 8% (n=16) of participants expressed a preference for Bollywood, 6% (n=12) for Hollywood, 5% (n=10) favored indigenous, 3.5% (n=7) favored Dhallywood², and only 1% (n=2) favored

Tollywood³ music. This trend indicates a relatively greater inclination toward globally dominant music industries over local or regional ones. Thematic analysis presented media role in shaping both taste and cultural representations, there is a clear desire for authenticity and meaningful content among participants. “Current music focuses too much on instruments, with little attention to meaningful lyrics” (C1). Many participants actively search for specific music and dance forms rather than relying on mainstream media, emphasizing individual choice. “I prefer searching for instrumental music on my own, as mainstream media does not cater to my taste” (F1). Participants prefer music and dance that offer cultural or emotional depth, rejecting superficial media portrayals. “I prefer songs with meaningful lyrics, like those by Humayun Ahmed” (C1).

Dance: The findings indicated that the largest proportion of respondents (35%, equivalent to 100 individuals) reported no interest in dance. This was followed by 25% (72 individuals) who indicated a preference for dance styles categorized as “Others.” Preferences for Traditional and Folk Dance and Modern Dance are equally represented, with each category receiving 20% of the responses (n=55 individuals). These results suggest that while traditional and modern dance styles maintain a balanced level of interest among participants, a substantial segment of the population either prefers other unspecified styles or does not participate in dance activities at all. Thematic analysis displayed media plays a substantial role in shaping the selection and preference of dance and music by serving as a primary source of inspiration. “I prefer listening to songs that are popular, especially those that are trendy in media platforms,” (C3, F3). “DJ music was not common in our country previously, but due to the influence of media, it has spread throughout the nation. The type of dance we want to see or the style that becomes trendy is largely dictated by media. The more

¹A YouTube channel and social media content creator popular among Bangladeshi youth for humorous and locally relatable short videos, reflecting rural and urban cultural blends.

²The Bangladeshi film industry centered in Dhaka, producing mainstream Bangla films.

³The film industry of Bangla language based in Tollygunge, Kolkata, India, often associated with art and cultural cinema.

media promotes a particular trend, the more likely it is to capture our interest,” (D2).

Food: The data on food preferences indicated that a majority of respondents (52% , n=104) prefer a combination of both Bengali and foreign cuisines. This suggests an evolving food culture where traditional tastes coexist with global culinary influences. A considerable portion of participants (37.5% , n=75) expressed a preference for traditional Bengali food, reflecting a strong attachment to cultural roots and local culinary heritage. In contrast, a relatively small segment (10.5% , n=21) reported a preference for exclusively foreign food, indicating limited but present engagement with global dietary trends. Qualitative analysis demonstrated that Media, particularly through influencers and celebrities, has significantly altered eating habits, particularly in the younger generation, with a focus on external dining and new food trends. “The new generation follows celebrities' food habits, like eating out, without knowing what to order. I stick to traditional food, but see how media impacts others, especially with food bloggers” (A1). Despite media trends, participants maintain a preference for traditional foods and are not heavily influenced by media in their food choices. “Now, through media exposure, foods like sushi from Japan have become popular in Bangladesh. Regardless of whether I like them or not, I tend to try these foods simply because they are popularized by the media” (A2).

Dress: In terms of clothing preferences, over half of the respondents (51% , n=102) favored a mix of traditional and modern attire, demonstrating a fusion of cultural identity with contemporary fashion sensibilities. This preference highlights an adaptive approach to dress that balances cultural heritage with global fashion influences. Meanwhile, 42% of the respondents (n=84) preferred Asian- style clothing, underscoring the continued relevance of regional dress norms in shaping identity. Only 7% (n=14) expressed a preference for

Western clothing, suggesting that Western fashion, while present, is not predominant among the surveyed group yet.

Thematic analysis revealed that the introduction of new clothing items and the widespread promotion of fashion trends through media platforms such as social media, television, and celebrity endorsements were highlighted as pivotal influences. Respondents emphasized that media informs and guides their clothing preferences, and the visibility of popular styles through media platforms plays a substantial role in shaping their fashion choices. Media's role is not limited to informing but also to reinforcing trends and shaping tastes in clothing. “Every year, new clothing items are introduced through media platforms, and we learn about which items are trendy. We become accustomed to various styles promoted by media” (B2). “I prefer Asian clothing, but watching Pakistani dramas makes me attracted to the outfits shown there. Media significantly influences what I choose to wear.” (B3)

Sports: With respect to sports preferences, cricket was the most popular sport, preferred by 34.5% (n=69) of respondents, which is reflective of its cultural significance and widespread popularity in South Asia. Badminton (34%) and football (29%) were also among the top choices, indicating active engagement with both indoor and international sports. In contrast, traditional games such as Ha-du-du⁴ were favored by only 2.5% of respondents. This distribution illustrates a dominant inclination towards mainstream sports, with traditional receiving minimal attention. Thematic analysis presented that media has played a role in promoting certain sports like European football, while diminishing interest in traditional national sports. “European football has become more popular due to media, while Kabaddi⁵ is fading” (C1). The shift from physical to virtual gaming, such as PUBG and Free Fire, also highlights how media is influencing not just sports viewership but also the way individuals engage with physical activities.

⁴A traditional rural sport of Bangladesh, internationally known as Kabaddi, played between two teams where players attempt to tag opponents and return to their own half without being caught.

⁵A popular South Asian contact sport combining wrestling and tag, officially recognized as the national game of Bangladesh.

The decline in physical sports participation, coupled with the increasing prevalence of online gaming, indicates a shift in how media shapes not only preferences but also behaviors related to physical activity. “I enjoy cricket, football, and badminton. However, in my childhood, I used to play traditional games like Kabaddi and Ha-du-du. Nowadays, we tend to play more online games. We have become more sedentary and prefer playing games like PUBG or Free Fire, as opposed to engaging in physical sports” (A2).

Chi-square analyses identified significant differences between the two groups (students and teachers) in several cultural domains:

Language ($\chi^2 = 163.264, p < .001$)

Music ($\chi^2 = 8.483, p = .037$)

Dance ($\chi^2 = 64.126, p < .001$)

Sports ($\chi^2 = 62.907, p < .001$)

No significant differences were observed in:

Food preferences ($\chi^2 = 2.474, p = .290$)

Dress styles ($\chi^2 = 4.685, p = .096$)

FGD findings support the statistical results. Teachers preferred traditional forms of language and classical culture, while students particularly, males demonstrated more diverse and media-influenced tastes. Female students tended to prioritize standard Bengali and mainstream cultural expressions.

Media consumption patterns: What is the media consumption pattern among teachers and students at the University of Chittagong? To measure the media consumption pattern, the study included six questions about respondents using device, connection way, spending time, media types, platforms and contents consumption. These six dimensions adopted from Yuan et al. (2023) and survey questions was modified and designed considering the study goal, participants' nature, characteristics and social contexts of the University of Chittagong.

Types of devices: In terms of device usage, the survey data depicted the types of devices primarily used by the respondents. The majority (83% , or 167 individuals) reported using Smartphone as their main device. Laptops were used by 13% of respondents (26 individuals), while only 4% (8 individuals) utilized other types of devices. This data indicates a strong preference for Smartphone, underscoring their central

role in digital engagement among the surveyed population. The relatively low usage of laptops and other devices may reflect the convenience, accessibility, and multi- functionality offered by Smartphone in contemporary settings.

Internet connection way: Quantitative data illustrated the modes of internet connectivity among the respondents. A majority of respondents (57%, n=114) reported utilizing both mobile data and Wi- Fi for internet access, indicating a preference for consistent and flexible connectivity across different environments. A considerable proportion (36%, n=72) relied solely on mobile data, suggesting a dependence on mobile network infrastructure, possibly due to accessibility or affordability. Only 7% (n=14) of respondents indicated exclusive use of Wi-Fi, which may reflect limited access to mobile data or a preference for stationary internet usage. These findings highlight the prominence of mobile internet solutions among the surveyed population.

Time spent on media: The data in survey presented the duration of daily media consumption among respondents. The highest proportion of participants (35.5%, 71 individuals) reported spending between four to six hours per day on media. This is closely followed by 70 individuals (35%) who spend between one to four hours daily. A total of 47 respondents (23.5%) indicated that they spend more than six hours on media, reflecting a high level of media engagement. Conversely, only 12 participants (6%) reported spending less than one hour on media each day. These findings suggest that the majority of respondents are engaged in moderate to high levels of media consumption on a daily basis.

The Researchers have categorized media users based on the duration of their daily media consumption into two distinct groups: light users and heavy users. Individuals who spend between less than one hour to up to four hours per day engaging with media fall under the category of light users. In contrast, those who spend more than four to six hours or more daily are classified as heavy users. According to the findings, 59% of the participants were identified as heavy users, whereas the remaining 41% were categorized as light users. This classification provides a foundational framework for

analyzing the patterns of media engagement and its potential impact on user behavior.

Types of media consumed: The survey data provided a clear representation of the types of media consumed by the respondents in the study. Social media is the most widely consumed type, accounting for 87% (n=174) of total respondents. In contrast, only 13% (n=26) of respondents reported primarily consuming mainstream media, which includes traditional outlets such as television, print newspapers, news wave sites and podcast.

Platform's consumption: A significant proportion of participants (55.5%, n=111) reported using the Facebook, indicating its dominance as the primary platform for media engagement. YouTube followed, with 22% (n=44) of respondents identifying it as their preferred platform. Communication-based platforms, including messaging and calling applications, were utilized by 13% (n=26) of the respondents. Additionally, 9.5% (n=19) of participants reported using other unspecified platforms. These findings suggest that social media, particularly the Facebook, remains the most utilized medium for content access, while video-sharing services and communication tools also hold a notable presence.

Consumed media contents: The study provided insight into the types of media content accessed by respondents. The most frequently consumed content category was entertainment-comprising videos, movies, and sports-cited by 35% (n=70) of participants. News and educational content were similarly prominent, with 18% (n=36) of respondents indicating regular consumption. A total of 26% (n=52) of participants reported consuming all types of media content, reflecting diverse media engagement. Meanwhile, 21% (n=42) of respondents indicated a preference for personal posts and product reviews. These results demonstrate a balanced engagement between recreational and informative content, with entertainment slightly leading in preference.

Statistically significant differences were found in all six indicators:

Device used ($\chi^2 = 19.261$, $p < 0.001$)

Internet connection type ($\chi^2 = 7.316$, $p = 0.026$)

Media usage time ($\chi^2 = 39.960$, $p < 0.001$)

Types of media consumed ($\chi^2 = 42.721$, $p < 0.001$)

Preferred platforms ($\chi^2 = 18.833$, $p < 0.001$)

Nature of content ($\chi^2 = 101.812$, $p < 0.001$)

FGDs revealed that teachers primarily used laptops to access news and educational material, while students predominantly used Smartphone to consume entertainment content via Facebook and YouTube.

Correlation between media use and cultural diversity

A chi-square test was conducted to assess the relationship between time spent on media consumption and various indicators of cultural diversity among teachers and students at the University of Chittagong. Respondents were categorized as light users (≤ 4 hours per day) and heavy users (> 4 to ≤ 6 hours per day). While weaker statistically significant association was found between media usage and language preference ($\chi^2 = 7.030$, $p = 0.071$), a significant correlation was observed with spoken language ($\chi^2 = 29.600$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, significant associations were found in dance preference ($\chi^2 = 12.932$, $p = 0.005$), food preference ($\chi^2 = 7.358$, $p = 0.025$), and sports preference ($\chi^2 = 11.641$, $p = 0.009$), suggesting that increased media consumption is linked with broader cultural engagement. This indicates that individuals with higher media usage tend to experience a greater cultural influence from media.

While media does not significantly affect the choice of language used for communication, it does have a notable impact on the way language is spoken. Similarly, media plays a considerable role in shaping preferences related to food, dance, and sports. However, weaker significant relationships were observed for music preference ($\chi^2 = 11.008$, $p = 0.088$) and no significant relationships were noticed for dress style ($\chi^2 = 1.015$, $p = 0.602$). Although media has a considerable influence on preferences related to food, dance, and sports, its impact on the selection of music and clothing styles is present but relatively limited. This means that heavy users influenced most and light users influenced less by media.

These quantitative findings were further supported by qualitative data from focus group discussions, which revealed that male students-predominantly heavy users, experienced the most cultural influence from media,

followed by female students and teachers. Based on the statistical analysis and qualitative findings, multiple dimensions of cultural diversity particularly in spoken language, dance, food, and sports preferences showed that statistically significant associations with media consumption levels.

Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. There is a statistically significant correlation between media consumption and cultural diversity among teachers and students at the University of Chittagong. These findings suggest that increased media exposure plays an influential role in shaping and transforming cultural behaviors and preferences, particularly among student populations.

Synthesis of findings

Objective 1: Partially fulfilled. The findings derived from the hypothesis testing indicate that statistically significant differences exist in four out of six dimensions used to assess cultural diversity (specifically in language, music, dance, and sports). Furthermore, the qualitative data taken from the FGDs also reflect relatively limited variation in food and clothing preferences between teachers and students. Based on the quantitative and qualitative evidence, it can be concluded that this objective has been partially achieved.

Objective 2: Fully achieved, the second objective focused on investigating media consumption patterns among teachers and students. Chi-square analysis for each indicator under this objective (including devices used, internet connectivity, time spent on media, platforms used, etc.) showed statistically significant results. Therefore, it can be confidently stated that this research objective has been fully achieved.

Objective 3: Partially fulfilled. The third objective was to analyze the correlations between media consumption time and cultural diversity. Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between media consumption time and certain aspects of cultural diversity, such as the use of diverse languages, food preferences, dance, and sports engagement. Other aspects namely music preferences, dress styles, and language prioritization exhibited weaker but positive correlations. The FGD findings similarly indicate that media has a limited influence on participants' choices on

this area, while in the remaining aspects, media appears to have a comparatively greater influence. Overall, most dimensions of cultural diversity demonstrated a significant relationship with media consumption. Hence, this objective can be considered as partially achieved.

Collectively, these findings suggest that media plays an active role in shaping cultural diversity and identity within academic settings.

Theoretical implications

The findings of this study provide important theoretical insights, particularly in relation to Cultivation Theory and its "Message Effect". This concept suggests that repeated and consistent exposure to media messages gradually shapes individuals' perceptions, values, and cultural behaviors. In the context of this study, such messages include:

Language: Media consistently portrays Standard Bangla and English as markers of education, professionalism, and social prestige, encouraging participants to adopt these languages while discouraging the use of local dialects in daily communication.

Food: Food vlog, pop drama, series, films and lifestyle content highlight urban, modern, and international cuisines, creating symbolic associations with sophistication and modernity.

Dance: Trendy songs, entertainment videos, reels, shows and social media platforms emphasize urban or Western-style dance and leisure activities, shaping recreational preferences, particularly among students.

In the dimensions of clothing and music, media influence, though limited, remains evident, suggesting that subtle exposure still contributes to gradual cultural transformation.

Sports: Media promotes international sports like European football and cricket while traditional games such as Kabaddi are declining. Exposure to online gaming also reflects a shift from physical to virtual recreational practices, indicating that media shapes both preferences and behaviors in sports.

These repeated media portrayals reinforce Cultivation Theory's assertion that media is a powerful agent of gradual cultural shaping. However, the study also nuances the theory by revealing differential susceptibility: male students exhibited stronger cultural adaptation to media messages, while female students

and faculty members showed comparatively lower influence. Additionally, weaker correlations in some domains (music, dress, language prioritization) indicate selective internalization, highlighting that audiences are active participants in meaning-making.

Overall, the study suggests that Cultivation Theory should account for individual-level variability, social roles, cultural context, and audience agency, especially in non-Western settings like Bangladesh, where media exposure interacts with local cultural practices to shape social and cultural preferences.

Limitations of the study

Despite its valuable contributions, this study acknowledges several limitations:

First, it employed a non-random complex sampling approach combining cluster and purposive sampling, which limits the generalizability of the findings beyond the University of Chittagong. As purposive sampling is a non-probability method, the results primarily reflect the characteristics of the selected participants rather than the entire population.

Second, there is a sample size imbalance between students (n=170) and faculty members (n=30). Although the selection was carried out systematically to ensure diversity across faculties, the uneven distribution may have restricted comparative analysis. Future studies are encouraged to use a more balanced sampling design to improve representativeness and enhance the validity of group comparisons.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that media significantly influences the cultural orientations of university students and teachers. Students particularly, males exhibit greater media-induced cultural shifts compared to faculty members. Media consumption was strongly linked to evolving preferences in language, food, dance, and sports, indicating its transformative potential. While media offers pathways for global engagement and learning, it also poses risks to local cultural integrity. Therefore, educational institutions must foster critical media literacy and promote culturally grounded practices to ensure a balanced and informed engagement with media.

Declaration of generative AI in scientific writing

This research utilized generative artificial intelligence (AI), specifically ChatGPT free version (GPT-5) only for language refinement, academic structuring, and improving the clarity and coherence of written contents. The AI-assisted contents were thoroughly reviewed and verified to ensure accuracy, originality, and compliance with academic ethics. The AI was not used to generate survey data, FGD responses, thematic analysis, statistical outputs, or research findings. All interpretations, theoretical insights (including the application of Cultivation Theory), and analysis related to media's influence on social culture of teachers and students at the University of Chittagong were fully conducted and critically evaluated by the researchers.

CRedit author statement

Afroja Akter: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Data curation. Writing - Original Draft, Formal analysis. **Md. Shahidul Haque:** Supervision, Writing - Review & Editing, Resources, Project administration. **Shahab Uddin:** Conceptualization, Supervision, Visualization, Investigation, Formal analysis, Writing- Reviewing and Editing, Project administration.

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