

STRUCTURAL PRECARITY AND PROFESSIONAL AVERSION:

Analyzing the Challenges of
Campus Journalists in Bangladesh



BANGLADESH MEDIA MONITOR

Structural Precarity and Professional Aversion: Analyzing the Challenges of Campus Journalists in Bangladesh

AUTHORS

Muhammad Abdul Mokim

Researcher, and Operations Coordinator
Bangladesh Media Monitor

Chadni Akter

Research & Monitoring Assistant
Bangladesh Media Monitor

Design & Visualization

The First Author

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CONNECT WITH US

 bdmediamonitor.org

 info@bdmediamonitor.org

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EXECUTIVE SUMARRY

While campus journalists in Bangladesh play a vital role in ensuring transparency and accountability within universities, they simultaneously face multifaceted structural challenges, including administrative pressure, political influence, and severe security risks.

This mixed-method study, conducted by the Bangladesh Media Monitor, analyzed the professional realities of 118 campus correspondents across 17 public and private universities. The core data identified three primary structural crises: financial insecurity, where 65 percent of participants receive no remuneration whatsoever; high security risks, as seventy-two percent of journalists reported facing direct threats and harassment from influential student bodies or dominant political groups; and institutional apathy, given a mere 22.6 percent of those who experienced threats received security, financial compensation, or any other form of support from their respective news organizations.

Qualitative analysis reveals that despite a strong ideological commitment to journalism among the younger generation (93.2 percent), 59 percent of students are unwilling to pursue it as a full-time profession due to extreme insecurity and economic instability. This ideological disillusionment effectively relegates the profession to a state of 'precarity' or structural uncertainty.

Furthermore, the negative impact on the academic performance of over 51 percent of students, alongside the negligible participation of women journalists (only 7 respondents), signals significant gender-based marginalization.

Addressing these challenges necessitates structural reforms through institutional protection, the implementation of a dignified remuneration structure, and the application of the 'Collaborative Framework' proposed by Tasmim and Atikuzzaman (2025) between university administrations and media houses.

KEY FINDINGS

FINANCIAL INSECURITY

65 percent of campus correspondents participating in the study receive no form of remuneration, effectively turning the profession into unpaid labor.

HIGH SECURITY RISKS

Approximately 72 percent of journalists have faced direct threats and harassment while performing their professional duties, primarily from influential student bodies or local political factions.

INSTITUTIONAL APATHY

Only 22.6 percent of journalists who faced threats received security or financial assistance from their news organizations, which indicates extreme institutional irresponsibility.

ACADEMIC IMPACT

51.7 percent of respondents feel that campus journalism has negatively affected their studies and exam results, and 4.1 percent fear falling out of favor with teachers.

PROFESSIONAL AVERSION

Despite ideological support, 59 percent of students are unwilling to pursue journalism as a full-time profession due to real-world adversities.

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH CONTEXT

In Bangladesh, campus correspondents play a crucial role in delivering university-based, important information to the national level, with a presence observed in 54 public universities and nearly every university campus. Campus journalists are also present in some renowned colleges. However, these correspondents often encounter various administrative pressures, political influences, security risks, and limitations in institutional support while performing their professional duties.

An observation published in the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) by O'Sullivan and Abdul-Hafeez (2022) revealed that, due to the lack of institutional and financial support from mainstream media, young journalists often face severe shortages of necessary funding and technical equipment. The absence of professional recognition often creates a trust deficit among sources, complicating the crucial process of information gathering. Furthermore, while conducting investigations, they frequently face non-cooperation from university administrations, invisible censorship, legal harassment from influential groups, and, in some cases, serious security risks such as direct physical attacks. Collectively, this multifaceted pressure threatens their personal safety, family life, and academic results. The lack of institutional support and these various adversities create a non-conducive work environment, leading to a feeling of isolation. This situation, combined with negligible or irregular remuneration and extreme uncertainty about their future careers, further complicates and jeopardizes the entire experience of student journalism.

The state of campus journalism in Bangladesh mirrors global concerns regarding student journalists. In a column published in Prothom Alo, M. A. Hakim (2023), a leader of the Rajshahi College Reporters' Unity, noted that campus journalists often incur the wrath of the administration and ruling student organizations when exposing irregularities, corruption, and crises within educational institutions. In many instances, they face physical assault, leading to various complications in their academic lives. Due to the degradation of politics, impunity, and the prevailing culture of fear in the country, the environment for campus journalists to work independently has severely narrowed.

Although the role of students as investigative journalists in contemporary journalism is growing, their professional environment is plagued by various structural challenges. Campus journalists in Bangladesh play a vital role in ensuring university transparency and information flow, but they are often met with administrative non-cooperation, political pressure, and structural barriers to accessing information (Tasmim & Atikuzzaman, 2025). In this context, a fresh consideration of the existing structure, recognition, and institutional support system for campus journalism is essential.

In the wake of the mass uprising formed in Bangladesh in July–August 2024, a ‘Media Reform Commission’ was established as part of state reform. After consulting with various stakeholders, they published a report on March 22, 2025, which included consultations with campus journalists. The Media Reform Commission Report (2025) stated that while campus journalism in Bangladesh is equivalent to professional journalism, it has become extremely risky due to intense competitive party politics and regular violence. The Commission further noted that media organizations are failing to provide campus journalists with regular salaries, allowances, or necessary security equipment, and they are deprived of institutional support in cases of attack or legal complexity.

The extreme deterioration of professional safety for journalists is highlighted in the Bangladesh Media Monitor's recent comprehensive ‘Safety Tracker’ report. The report reveals that during the interim government's rule, over a period of more than a year and a half (August 8, 2024, to February 16, 2026), at least 119 incidents of repression, violence, lawsuits, detentions, and institutional pressure affected more than 243 media workers in various ways (Rifat, 2026). While campus journalists constitute a part of this overall statistic, their actual number remains unknown due to the lack of a specific or separate tracking system for their data.

However, a subsequent analysis of the last 3 months of reports published on the Bangladesh Media Monitor's regular 'Safety Tracker', which details daily cases of journalist repression, shows that at least five incidents of direct violence against campus journalists in Chittagong, Jahangirnagar, and Jagannath Universities were documented between January and December 2026. Considering this alarming statistic and the growing insecurity of journalists at the campus level, the Bangladesh Media Monitor undertook this special research initiative to present a detailed and structural depiction of their current professional reality.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This research was primarily conducted using a Mixed-Method Research Design, analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data. For primary data collection, a structured questionnaire was created via Google Forms and circulated to campus correspondents using social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Messenger, starting from late March to early April 2026. A total of 118 respondents participated in the survey, including 111 male and 7 female journalists. To ensure depth and diversity of information, the questionnaire included both open-ended and closed-ended questions.

This method is highly relevant for deeply assessing the challenges of campus journalism. Recent studies on campus journalism in Bangladesh (Tasmim & Atikuzzaman, 2025) have also used a similar mixed-method approach, which involved surveying 217 campus journalists and conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGD) across 15 universities. The methodological framework of this previous research reinforces the validity of the data collection and analysis in the current study.

Campus correspondents from 17 public and private universities in Bangladesh spontaneously participated in the survey. The universities included were: Dhaka University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, Jahangirnagar University, Jagannath University, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Islamic University, Kushtia, Comilla University, Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University, Jessore University of Science and Technology, Noakhali Science and Technology University, Barisal University, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Begum Rokeya University, Gono Bishwabidyalay, Bangladesh University of Textiles, and Dhaka International University.

A demographic analysis of the participants shows that the highest number of representatives (37) came from Comilla University.

Data was collected from representatives working for a total of 93 different types of media outlets (television, print newspapers, and online news portals).

Participants showed diversity in terms of experience, ranging from less than 1 year to a maximum of 8 years in journalism. Of these, only 9 had less than 1 year of experience, with the rest having professional experience ranging from 1 to 8 years.

The main goal of this research is to analyze the current reality, structural limitations, and the nature of professional risks in campus journalism in Bangladesh. Specifically, the study aims to factually present the financial solvency, remuneration structure, political and administrative pressure, and the nature of institutional support during crises faced by campus correspondents. Simultaneously, a key objective is to identify and present a unified and analytical picture of the multifaceted challenges students face while performing their professional duties, such as security risks, academic disruption, mental stress, and negative social perceptions.

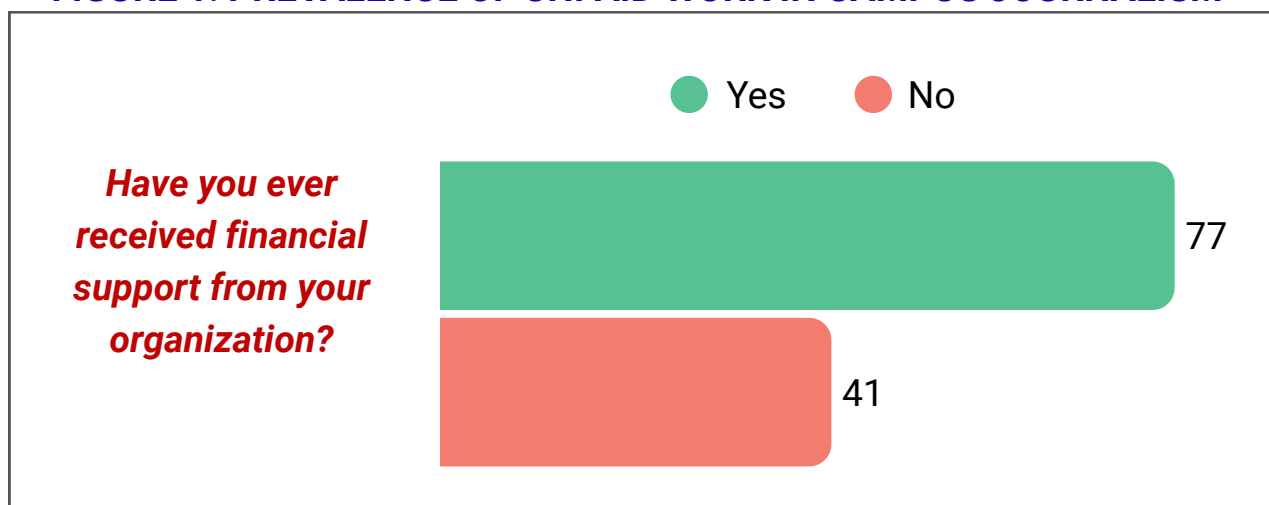
QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The quantitative analysis of this research primarily highlights the professional reality of campus journalists based on four main indicators: the weakness of the financial solvency and remuneration structure, the high security risks prevalent during duty, the nature of institutional support from media outlets during crises, and the necessity of young generations joining this courageous profession for the greater good of the country and society, viewing it as a noble social responsibility. To deeply review these multifaceted structural challenges and ideological positions, four specific questions were posed to the survey participants.

3.1 Financial Remuneration and Support Profile

The survey results show that a large segment of campus journalists work under extreme financial uncertainty. Out of 118 respondents, only 41 (approximately 35 percent) reported receiving some form of financial support or remuneration from their organization. Conversely, the remaining 77 individuals, or 65 percent of total participants, regularly continue journalism without any financial benefits. This statistic indicates that campus journalism is mostly unpaid labor, which is a major long-term obstacle for talented students to remain in this profession.

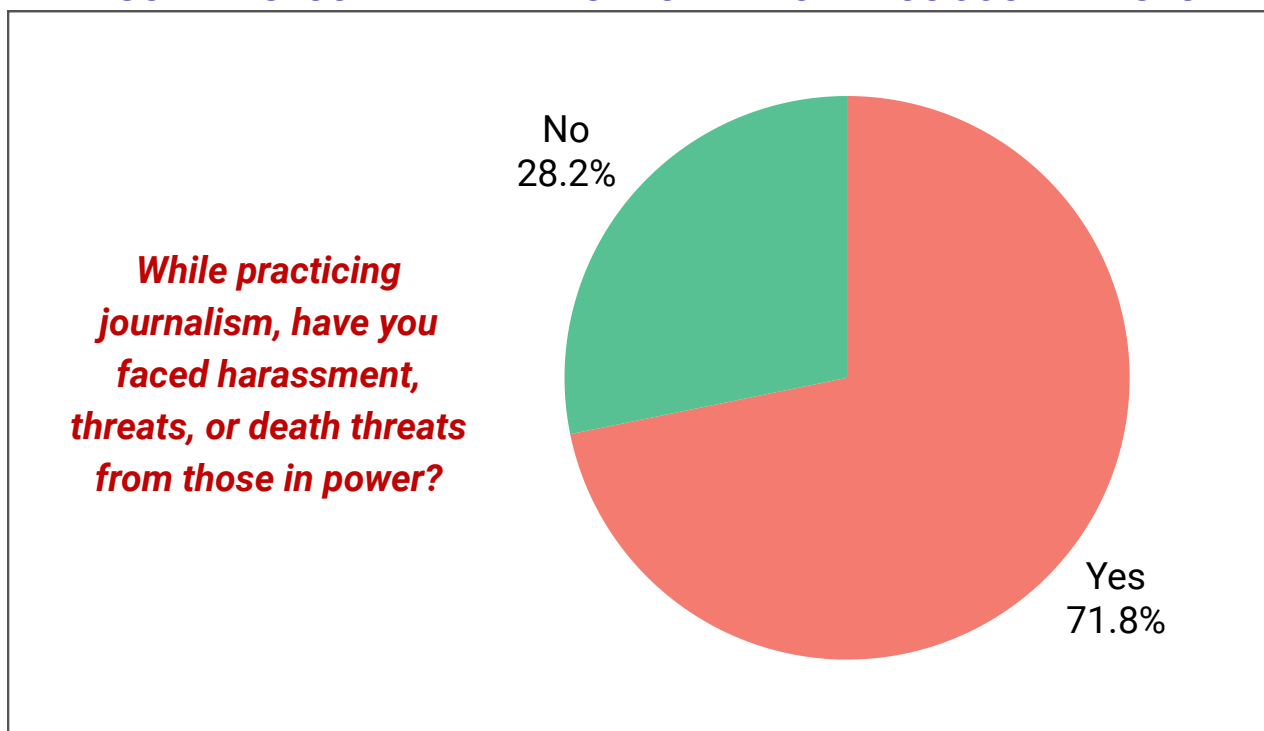
FIGURE 1: PREVALENCE OF UNPAID WORK IN CAMPUS JOURNALISM



3.2 Professional Risks and Nature of Threats

The survey reveals a highly alarming picture regarding security. Approximately 72 percent of campus journalists have faced direct threats while performing their professional duties. Numerically, 84 representatives reported that they have been subjected to harassment, physical and psychological threats, and even death threats by influential student organizations or ruling groups in the universities.

FIGURE 2: SECURITY THREATS FACED BY CAMPUS JOURNALISTS

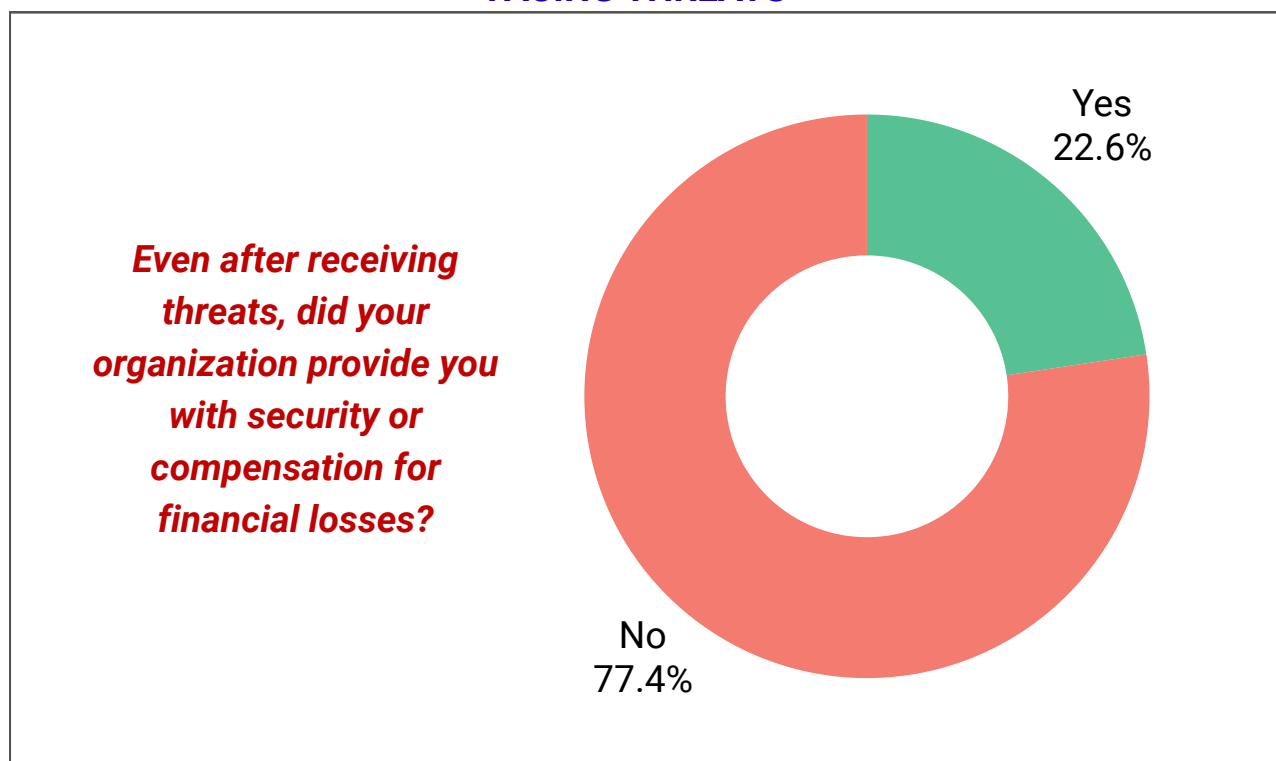


Data analysis indicates a direct and proportional relationship between the length of professional experience in campus journalism and facing high security risks and threats. Incidents of multifaceted threats during professional duties were documented among respondents with long experience, ranging from 1 year up to 8 years. Although a small fraction of representatives with 1 to 6 years of experience were included in the list of those who did not receive threats, a significant finding of the research is that none of the 9 respondents with less than 1 year of experience had faced any adversity or threat. This statistic suggests that as a journalistic career lengthens, the extent of falling into the crosshairs of influential groups and facing structural security risks increases.

3.3 Lack of Institutional Accountability and Protection

The most alarming issue is the apathy of media organizations toward journalists who face threats. Among those who faced threats, only 19 received any security assurance or financial compensation from their respective organizations. This means the rate of institutional support after professional injury is merely 22.6 percent. This data clearly demonstrates that while media organizations collect news from their campus correspondents, they display extreme ethical and professional irresponsibility when it comes to supporting them during crises.

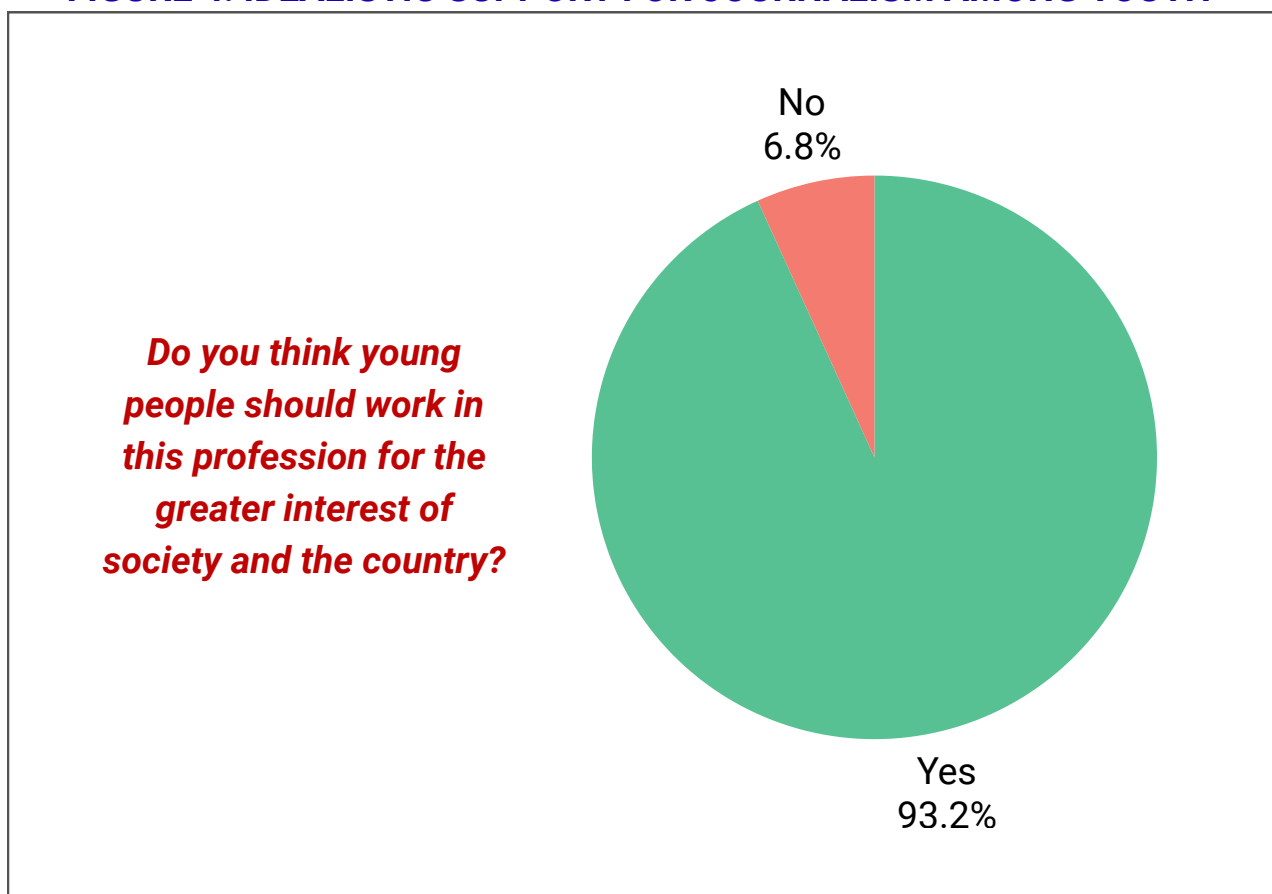
FIGURE 3: LOW RATE OF SUPPORT FOR CAMPUS JOURNALISTS FACING THREATS



3.4 Idealistic Support for Journalism among Youth

There was widespread positive sentiment among participants regarding the question of whether the younger generation should be involved in journalism for the greater good of society and the state. According to the survey data, 93.2 percent (110 people) of respondents believe that the involvement of youth is essential as an agent of social change. Only 6.8 percent (8 people) expressed a different opinion on this matter. This high rate of positive response proves that, theoretically, the youth have no hesitation in embracing journalism as a noble and necessary social responsibility.

FIGURE 4: IDEALISTIC SUPPORT FOR JOURNALISM AMONG YOUTH



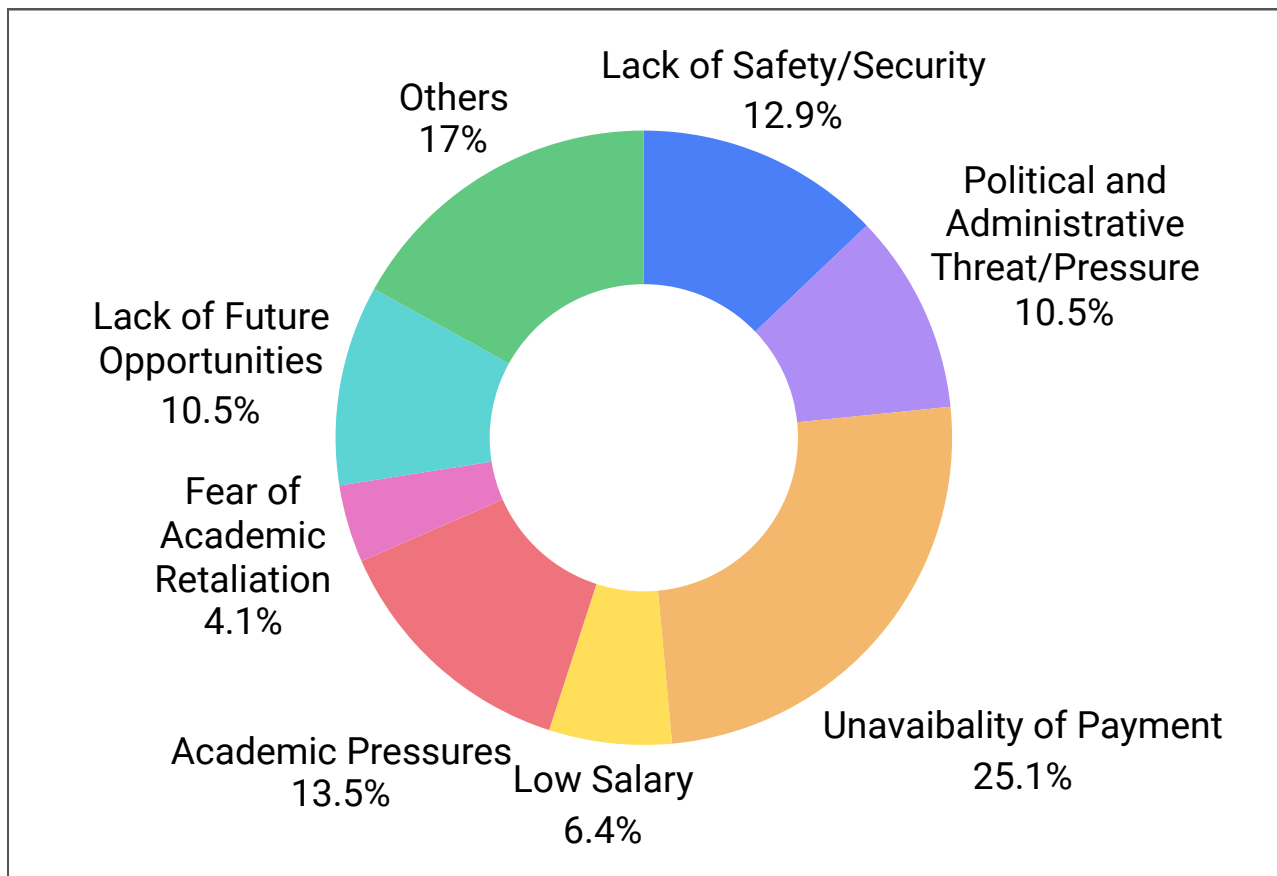
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ANALYSIS

This section is organized based on three main topics: an analysis of the impact of campus journalism on students' academic results and studies, the identification of the root causes of students' increasing professional aversion, and the logical reflection of their personal interest and disinterest in choosing journalism as a future career. It should be noted for qualitative data analysis that participants provided multiple reasons or arguments in response to the open-ended questions. Consequently, the number of respondents during theme-based analysis may appear higher than the total participants, which is a standard and acceptable practice in qualitative research data arrangement.

CAUSES OF PROFESSIONAL AVERSION TO CAMPUS JOURNALISM

The primary causes of students' reluctance toward campus journalism were identified by analyzing the experiential opinions of participants through an open-ended question. According to the responses of 99 total respondents, four main themes contribute to this aversion: Economic Insecurity, Security Risk and Threat, Academic Disruption, and Lack of Future Opportunities.

**FIGURE 5: CAUSES OF PROFESSIONAL AVERSION
TO CAMPUS JOURNALISM**



5.1 Economic Insecurity and Weakness of Remuneration Structure

One of the main obstacles in campus journalism is economic uncertainty and the extreme weakness of the remuneration structure. The picture of this financial crisis is clearly reflected in the experiential opinions of the survey participants. Qualitative analysis shows that 25.1 percent of total respondents believe that the lack of any remuneration from media organizations causes ordinary students to lose interest in the profession. Additionally, 6.4 percent of respondents described the current salary structure as negligible. A notable point is that at least three respondents—who reported receiving financial assistance in the quantitative section—also expressed their severe financial dissatisfaction in open-ended questions by commenting on 'low salary,' 'very low salary,' or 'poor salary structure.'

The quantitative statistics of the research show that 65 percent of campus journalists perform their professional duties without any financial benefits or remuneration. This information indicates that campus journalism in Bangladesh has essentially become 'unpaid labor.' Consequently, 25.1 percent of students have identified financial uncertainty as the main determinant for their lack of interest in this profession. Even for those receiving a nominal salary, the amount is grossly insufficient relative to the cost of living. This overall picture proves that campus journalism has largely transformed into a form of exploitative or inadequately compensated labor. According to the statements of multiple respondents, they sometimes have to pay a fee to the authorities to join online portals, which makes news gathering more costly and detrimental rather than financially profitable.

This lack of financial protection or adequate funding in campus journalism is not just a problem in Bangladesh but a global challenge. A recent study on campus journalism in the Philippines by Docallas (2025) showed that 86.7 percent of participants (teachers and student journalists) identified inadequate funding as the main obstacle to achieving the core goals of campus journalism. This international context demonstrates that the lack of institutional and financial sponsorship is globally hindering the professionalism and development of campus journalism.

5.2 Security Risks, Threats, and Political-Administrative Pressure

Professional security is a serious concern in this field. Approximately 13 percent of participants raised the issue of a lack of security or protection. In addition, 10.5 percent of respondents cited facing direct political and administrative threats or pressure as a reason for their disinterest.

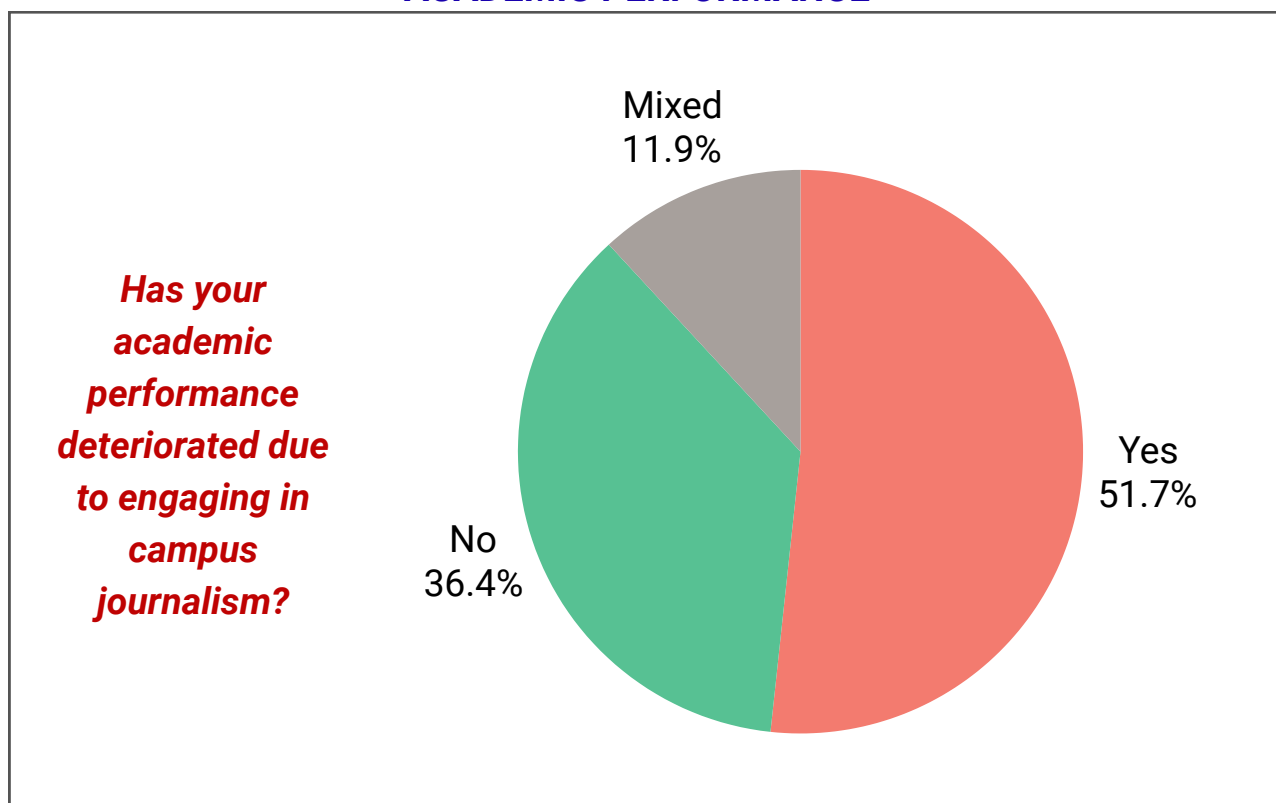
The quantitative analysis of the research shows that approximately 72 percent of campus journalists have faced direct threats while performing their professional duties. Numerically, 84 representatives reported that they have been subjected to harassment, physical and psychological threats, and even death threats by influential student organizations or ruling groups in the universities. This high risk rate marks the environment of campus journalism in Bangladesh as extremely hostile.

This finding of the research is fully consistent with previous studies, where political pressure and physical and sexual harassment were identified as major obstacles to campus journalism (Tasmim & Atikuzzaman, 2025).

5.3 Academic Disruption and Fear of Institutional Retaliation

Journalism work is also significantly affecting students' academic activities. Thirteen point five percent of participants mentioned academic pressure. Alarming, 4.1 percent of students suffer from the fear of academic retaliation (Fear of Academic Retaliation), including falling out of favor with teachers, threats of grade reduction, or 'invisible pressure'.

FIGURE 6: PERCEIVED IMPACT OF JOURNALISM ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE



This fear among students is not unfounded. Ahmed (2025), in the context of Bangladesh, specifically citing the example of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at Rajshahi University, showed that teachers sometimes practice a "patron-client" model or "pocketing students." Students who are not subservient to teachers or who express independent opinions face intentional grade reductions, discrimination in internal evaluations, deprivation of various academic facilities, and mental harassment.

The extent of academic disruption becomes clearer in the response to a separate question. 51.7 percent of total respondents feel that campus journalism has negatively affected their studies and exam results. The occurrence of academic disruption is a major concern for students. Tasmim and Atikuzzaman (2025) noted in their research that campus journalists suffer from intense mental and time pressure due to the dual-role pressure of academic expectations and journalistic responsibilities.

5.4 Lack of Future Career Assurance

One of the main reasons for young people's aversion is the uncertain future of journalism as a profession. Ten point five percent of participants mentioned a lack of adequate future opportunities. Several individuals mentioned that there is 'no job security' or 'low job security' in this profession. According to one respondent, journalism lacks the assurance of other professions and is uncertain.

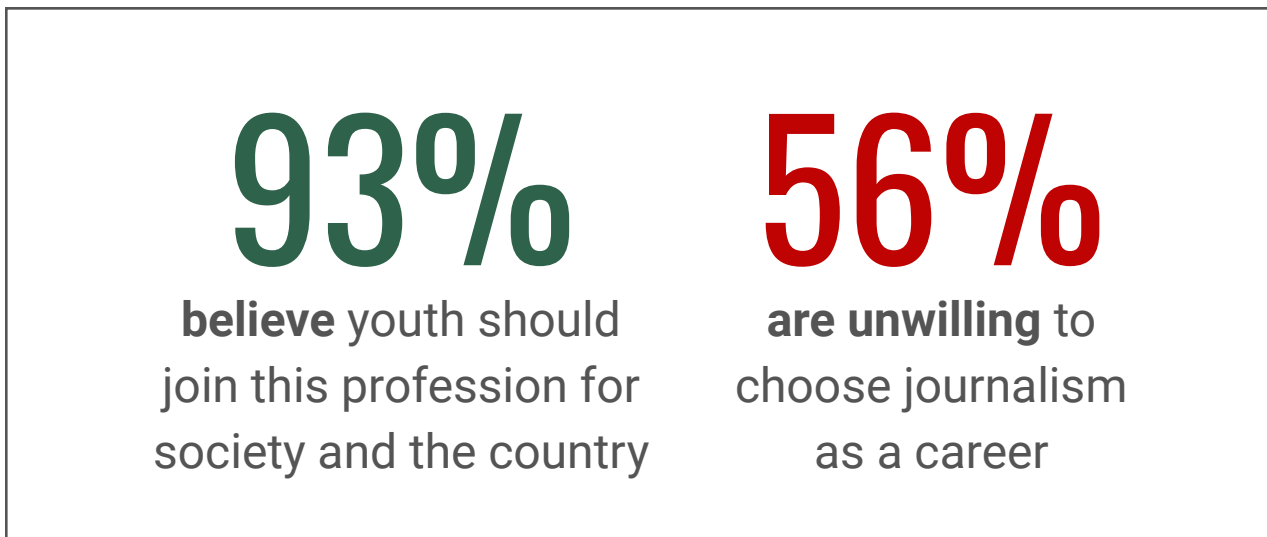
5.5 Other Relevant Challenges

Seventeen percent of participants raised other issues. The main problems include: it is highly time consuming, a lack of environment for independent journalism, mental stress, lack of proper evaluation of work by media and educational institutions, and a lack of suitable skills and motivation.

In addition, campus journalists face negative social perceptions and do not receive any Instant Reward. Another commentator remarked that the responsibility for the aversion to campus journalism also lies with journalist associations, as a kind of inactivity has been observed among university journalist associations, particularly after the recent mass uprising.

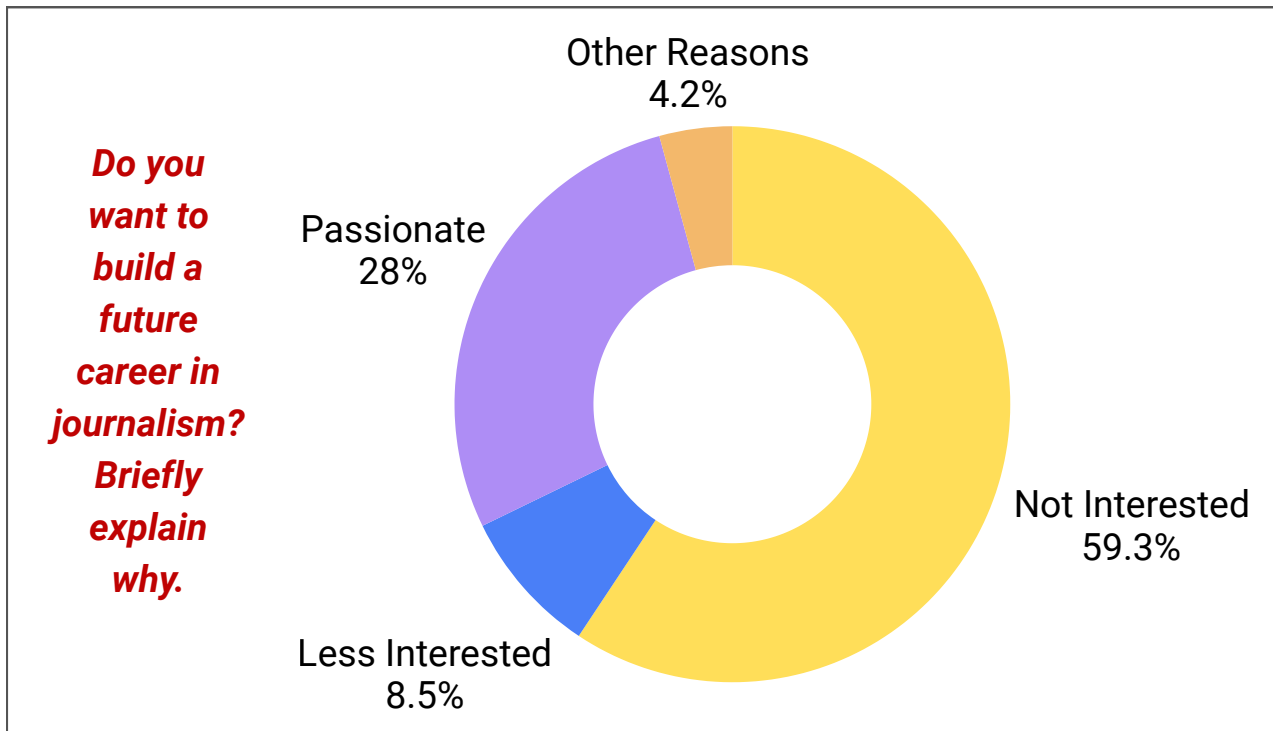
**JOURNALISM'S IDEOLOGICAL SUPPORT
VERSUS PROFESSIONAL AVERSION:
A DIALECTICAL ANALYSIS**

A significant ideological paradox is observed at this stage of the research. Data from the quantitative section (93.2 percent) shows that, theoretically, the youth have no hesitation in embracing journalism as a noble and necessary social responsibility.



However, in contrast to this idealistic support, a deep aversion or pragmatic reluctance emerges when it comes to personal career selection. More than half of the 110 respondents who believe the younger generation should be involved in journalism for the greater good of society and the state show deep pragmatic reluctance. When asked, 'Do you want to build a future career in journalism,' 56.36 percent (62 individuals) clearly stated that they are not interested in pursuing journalism as a profession in the future. This statistic indicates that although they consider journalism a noble social responsibility, they are unwilling to accept the risks and uncertainties of this profession in their personal lives. In other words, a large portion of those who deem journalism essential for the country and its people are reluctant to take on the risks and uncertainties of this profession personally. This contradiction indicates that the current structural crisis and professional insecurity in Bangladeshi journalism are so profound that they override the idealistic drive of the youth.

FIGURE 7: FUTURE CAREER INTEREST IN JOURNALISM AND REASONS



Qualitative analysis shows that 59 percent of total participants (70 out of 118) expressed clear reluctance to adopt journalism as a full-time profession. However, 8.5 percent of participants expressed a conditional or wavering stance. In their words, journalism is merely an 'Option B'. Many stated they might pursue journalism as a hobby after ensuring a stable income, but not as a full-time profession. One respondent's comment is noteworthy: "Only if a good platform and stability of work are assured can one consider building a career." Furthermore, the desire to pursue a career in academia or to see oneself merely as a columnist was expressed by many, which can be viewed as a tendency to avoid the harsh realities of fieldwork journalism.

On the other hand, the inspiration for the 28 percent of respondents who are interested in journalism as a profession is primarily rooted in ethical responsibility and emotion. Qualitative analysis shows that they view the profession not merely as a livelihood but as a 'Passion' or a means of public service. Their responses reflect a strong desire to present objective information, stand up against corruption, and be the voice of marginalized people in society. The dream of building an equitable society by ensuring transparency and accountability is what motivates them to be interested in journalism, even in this adverse environment.

For the remaining 4.2 percent of interested candidates, opportunities for personal skill development and networking serve as the main determinants. They believe that journalism offers a unique opportunity to enhance their communication skills and establish connections with people from various classes and professions.

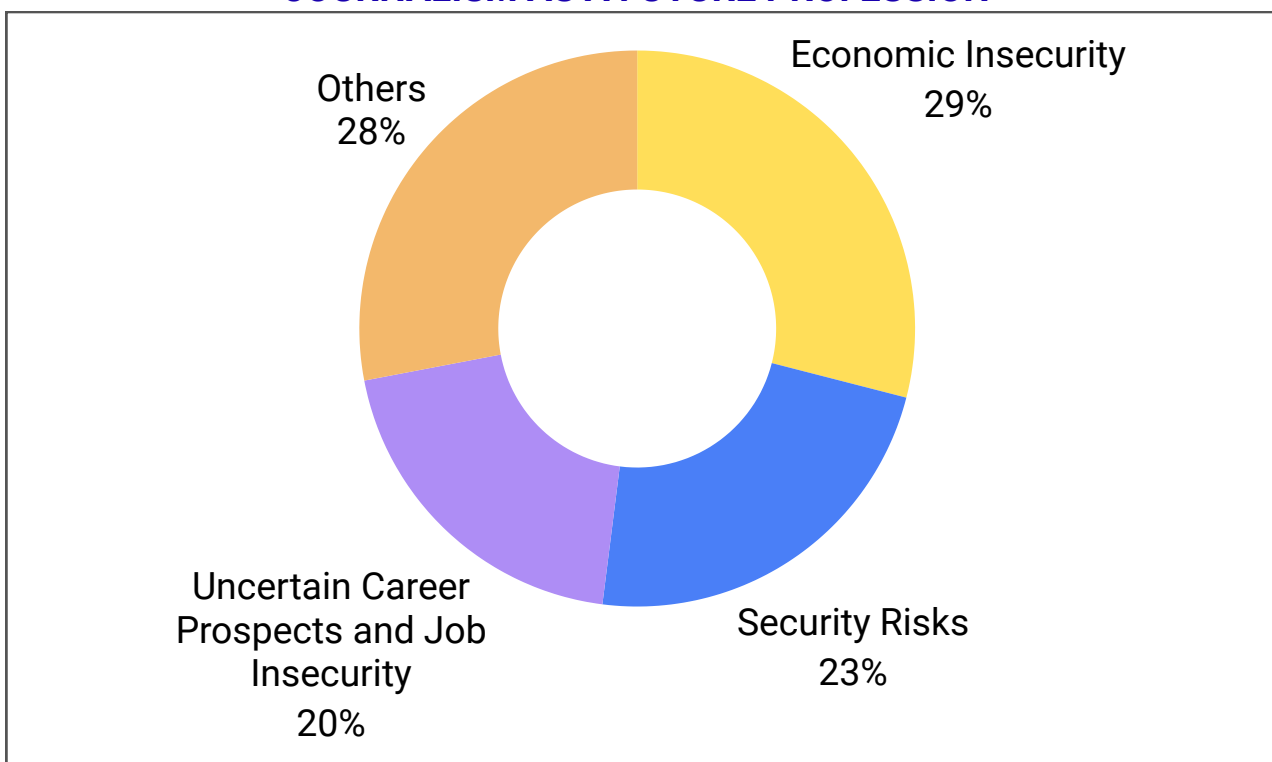
In conclusion, while a lofty ideal about journalism exists among campus journalists in Bangladesh, the prevailing institutional discrimination and security crisis prevent that ideal from manifesting into a professional reality.

REASONS FOR DISINTEREST IN CHOOSING JOURNALISM AS A FUTURE PROFESSION

In this part of the qualitative analysis, another open-ended question, 'If you are not interested in building a future career in journalism, briefly state the reason,' was posed. Sixty-six out of 118 participants expressed their specific opinions in response to this question. The remaining respondents are either interested in the profession, did not comment, or provided irrelevant answers.

Qualitative analysis of the participants' opinions identified three main factors contributing to disinterest: Economic Insecurity, Security Risks, and Uncertain Career Prospects and Job Insecurity.

FIGURE 8: REASONS FOR DISINTEREST IN CHOOSING JOURNALISM AS A FUTURE PROFESSION



7.1 Economic Insecurity

Financial uncertainty emerged as the biggest obstacle in this section of the qualitative analysis, with 29 respondents directly citing this crisis as the reason for their professional aversion. Analyzing the information they provided reveals three main themes:

First, the prevalence of an extremely low and irregular remuneration structure. A large portion of respondents mentioned the crisis of 'extremely low' remuneration and 'not receiving salary on time.' According to one participant, "low pay, high labor," which indicates the imbalance between effort and reward in this profession. Some even described the current salary situation as "insulting."

Second, the lack of a specific institutional wage structure or the implementation of a formal wage board remains a significant structural barrier. Many respondents identified the lack of a specific "salary structure" or "wage board" implementation as a structural problem. In their opinion, the financial benefits of media houses are disappointing compared to other professional sectors, which is driving talented individuals away from this profession.

Third, the lack of financial solvency directly impacts 'Job Security' or professional stability. Respondents believe that building a long-term future is impossible where there is "no financial and social security." They view the absence of a "proper salary structure and security benefits" as a combined risk. The lack of financial solvency directly impacts 'Job Security' or professional stability. Respondents believe that building a long-term future is impossible where there is "no financial and social security." They view the absence of a "proper salary structure and security benefits" as a combined risk.

The impact of this financial uncertainty on the broader journalism profession in Bangladesh is profound. Mursalin, Huda, and Hosen (2026) noted in their research that low wages and insecure contracts in journalism discourage students, especially those from lower- and middle-income families, from joining the profession. Financial uncertainty and unstable jobs compel students to gravitate toward other secure professions, serving as a major structural barrier to retaining talented individuals in journalism.

FIGURE 9: KEY BARRIERS TO PURSUING JOURNALISM AS A PROFESSION

Key Reason	Description	Quotes
Economic Insecurity	Low & irregular pay	"low pay, high labor"
	No wage structure	"no proper salary structure"
Security Risks	Life-threatening risk	"risky profession"
	Professional pressure	"enemy of all parties"
Uncertain Career Prospects and Job Insecurity	No future certainty	"no future" good"
	Lack of job security	"no job security",
	Poor career growth	"career structure not
Other Factors	Low social respect	"lack of respect"
	Work-life imbalance	"less holidays"

7.2 Security Risks

This theme was identified as the second important factor in the qualitative analysis, with 23 respondents directly citing security concerns as the reason for their disinterest in journalism. Analysis of participants' comments shows that this risk is multidimensional and deeply related to personal, professional, and institutional insecurity.

First, many respondents described journalism as a "risky" profession where the nature of the work creates direct threats, intimidation, or fear of life threat. Many respondents described journalism as a "risky" profession where the nature of the work creates direct threats, intimidation, or fear of life threat. This risk becomes more acute, especially when publishing sensitive or critical reports against powerful entities.

Second, the lack of a specific institutional protection structure or state safeguard remains a significant structural barrier. A large portion of respondents believe that no effective protection structure or security system exists for journalists. Comments like "There is no security or protection for journalists in Bangladesh" or "Journalists have no security in the current time" point to a structural weakness where professionals suffer from insecurity regarding their safety.

Thirdly, the lack of professional security and the burden of multifaceted structural pressure. Many noted that journalists often have to work as the "enemy of all parties," which further increases their social and professional risk. Combined with low pay, excessive working hours, and job uncertainty, this collectively makes the profession even more insecure.

Overall, the participants' experiences and perceptions indicate that the lack of security in journalism is not limited to personal risk; rather, it is a pervasive structural crisis that plays a significant role in reducing interest in the profession.

7.3 Uncertain Career Prospects and Job Insecurity

This theme was identified as the third important factor in the qualitative analysis, with 20 respondents citing future uncertainty and lack of job security as the reasons for their disinterest in journalism. Analysis of participants' opinions shows that this uncertainty is deeply related to the structural weaknesses of the profession, financial instability, and the lack of long-term career planning.

To begin with, the profession is characterized by persistent long-term career instability. Many respondents identified journalism as an "uncertain" or "futureless" profession. Comments like "Uncertainty always," "No future," or "Future is not good" indicate that participants lack confidence in the potential for a stable and sustainable career in this profession.

Second, the absence of job security is a major concern. A significant number of participants explicitly highlighted a "lack of job assurance" or "no job security," expressing fear that reporting on powerful entities could lead to termination. This threat to professional stability and independence is further exacerbated by the lack of institutional protection and a formalized salary structure. A large portion of respondents explicitly stated "No job security" or "Lack of job assurance." Many believe that there is a risk of losing one's job for publishing critical reports against powerful figures, which limits both professional independence and stability. Moreover, the lack of a specific salary structure and institutional protection intensifies this uncertainty.

Third, the lack of long-term career planning and the persistence of professional stagnation within the industry. Some respondents noted that as one ages, work opportunities and income decrease, and there is also the possibility of suddenly losing one's job. Experiences like "When you get old... the office will say goodbye" raise questions about the long-term sustainability of the profession. Additionally, comments like "Journalism's career structure is not good" or "There are fundamental problems" indicate the institutional weaknesses of the profession.

Overall, it is evident from the participants' opinions that future uncertainty and lack of job security in journalism are fundamental structural problems that are making the profession unattractive in the long run and discouraging the promising new generation.

7.4 Other Factors

In the qualitative analysis, 28 respondents mentioned various isolated but significant problems contributing to the aversion to journalism, which collectively play a role in reducing interest in the profession. Analysis of these opinions shows that they extend across social, institutional, personal, and structural dimensions.

Social and structural weaknesses are important causes behind the aversion to the journalism profession. Many respondents believe that journalists lack proper respect in society, and families also discourage entry into this profession. Institutional problems such as "office politics" and "exploitation by less experienced people" exist internally. However, the most serious concern is the lack of independent journalism. Participants feel that the current media structure is controlled by specific parties and business groups, which hinders ethical journalism and creates limitations on personal freedom in the workplace.

Imbalance between personal and professional life and future uncertainty have also intensified this aversion. Many students view journalism not as a main career but as a means of "co-curricular activities" or "Skill Development," and many are leaning towards law or higher education. Furthermore, the practical limitations and frustrations of the profession have caused many to lose interest and "Passion."

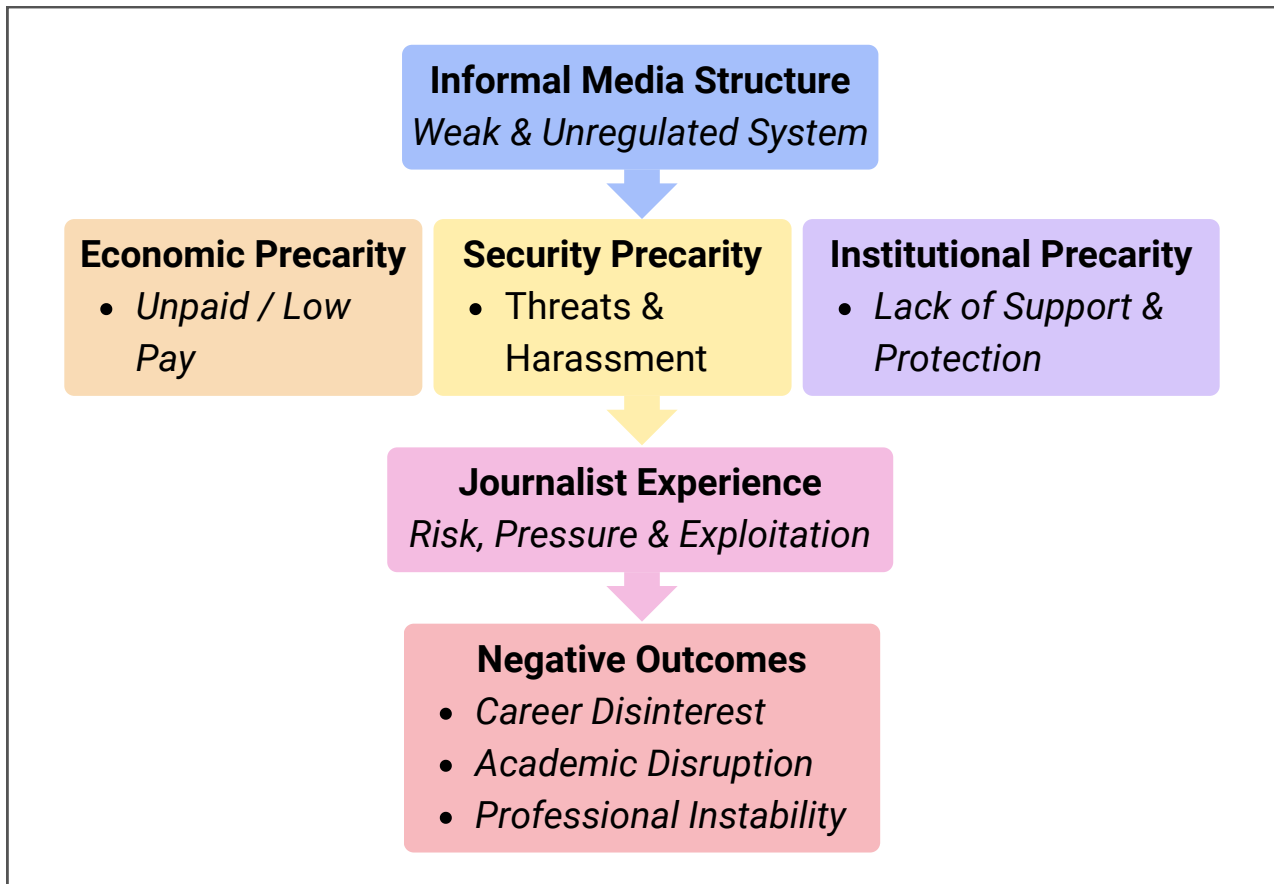
Notably, excessive workload, "less holidays," and the inability to give time to family have created a serious labor rights and work-life balance crisis, which raises questions about the long-term sustainability of the profession. The issue of "less holidays" came up multiple times, which appears to be a serious labor rights issue in the profession. In this context, a news report from Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (2025) indicates that on March 20, 2025, the Journalist Community of Bangladesh sent a letter to the government demanding an end to holiday-related discrimination against journalists. According to their statement, many media organizations have arbitrary policies regarding leave and do not provide proper compensation for work done on holidays. Therefore, the necessity for policy intervention to ensure holidays as a fundamental right of journalists is clearly reflected.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The economic uncertainty, security risks, uncertain career prospects, and excessive workload and labor rights violations (such as fewer holidays and the culture of unpaid labor) identified as reasons for professional aversion among campus journalists in the preceding qualitative analysis, reveal an existing situation that is profoundly consistent with the theoretical framework of 'Precarity' or structural uncertainty described by Kasmir (2018). According to Kasmir's (2018) analysis, 'Precarity' is a structural component of contemporary capitalism where employment becomes highly temporary and insecure, and workers lack the minimum assurance of stable income or employment. This is not merely an economic crisis but a pervasive state of vulnerability or 'ontological' insecurity integrated with the individual's existence. Kasmir (2018) noted that such uncertain situations intensify in people the "feelings of anxiety, disenfranchisement, and loss of hope for the future." This structural crisis plunges individuals into a reality where they are constantly "at the mercy of marginality, anxiety, and paranoia," which ultimately exerts a long-term negative impact on their daily lives and mental stability.

The data obtained from the research shows that the reality of campus journalism in Bangladesh is fully consistent with Kasmir's theoretical framework of structural uncertainty. Firstly, financial uncertainty and unpaid labor (65% of campus correspondents receiving no remuneration) directly fulfill the condition of 'lacking the minimum assurance of stable income or employment.' Secondly, the high security risk faced by 72 percent of journalists and the lack of institutional protection intensify the 'ontological' insecurity and 'anxiety' described by Kasmir. This combined structural crisis leads to the professional aversion (59 percent) of the younger generation, despite their idealistic support (93.2 percent), which suggests a loss of hope for the future and succumbing to marginality.

FIGURE 10: PRECARIY FRAMEWORK FOR CAMPUS JOURNALISTS



The ideological disillusionment and professional aversion prevailing among students are theoretically well-established in both national and global contexts. Mursalin, Huda, and Hosen (2026) noted in their research that the intense excitement for a media career among first-year university students drastically decreases by the time they reach the end of their undergraduate studies, in light of reality.

Mursalin et al. (2026) explain this trend through the "Human Capital Theory" (HCT) and "Social Cognitive Career Theory" (SCCT). As students face low pay, insecure contracts, and institutional interference, their professional confidence wanes. Socio-economic factors further drive this; students from lower-income backgrounds often prioritize stable careers over the financial risks and structural crises inherent in the current media landscape.

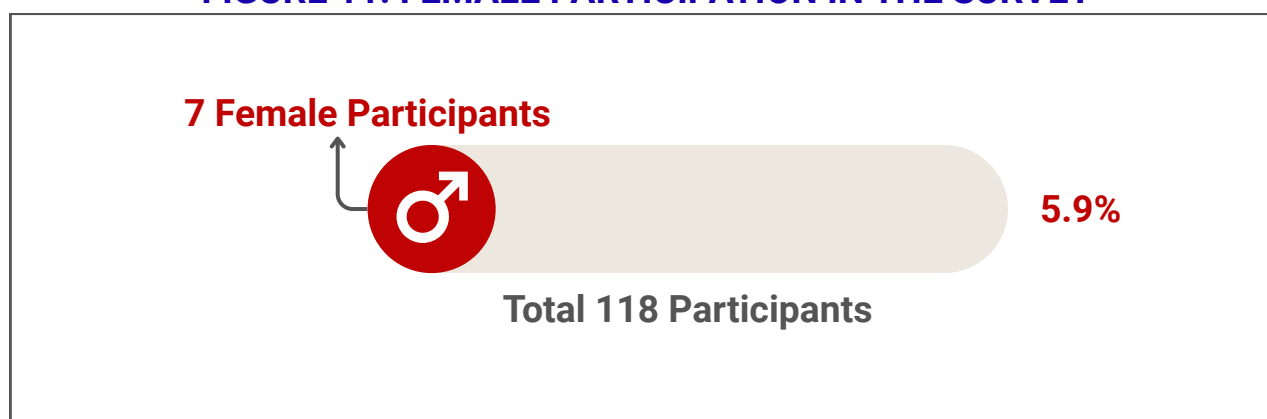
Globally, this situation is essentially a reflection of Örnebring's (2018) theoretical concept of "Non-exclusivity." Örnebring (2018) demonstrated in his research analysis that, in the current era of extreme professional uncertainty, earning a respectable livelihood based solely on journalism has become nearly impossible. Consequently, emerging young professionals are compelled to rely on public relations (PR), teaching, or other alternative professions (Fallback option) for their survival. This multifaceted dependence on the labor market and structural crisis ultimately deeply undermines the inherent distinctiveness and singular status of the journalism profession.

Additionally, Örnebring (2018) showed in his research that securing full-time and Permanent Employment in the current journalism industry has become a rare occurrence. Adjusting to this growing labor market insecurity has now become established as the "New Normal" for journalists. Consequently, emerging young journalists are continually being forced toward an uncertain and precarious professional future.

**MARGINALIZATION AND LOW
REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN
JOURNALISTS**

Analysis of the survey results shows that against 111 male representatives, the number of female participants was only 7, which clearly highlights the extreme professional marginalization of female students in campus journalism. Female students often face multifaceted challenges when entering this profession due to gender discrimination, social and familial obstacles, and security risks in the workplace, which deprives them of performing important duties.

FIGURE 11: FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN THE SURVEY



A report in The Daily Campus also depicted a similar reality for women in campus journalism. Modok (2023) noted that various institutional limitations and a lack of proper evaluation of work restrict the advancement of women journalists. Furthermore, a significant deficit in the representation of women in the leadership of journalist organizations is observed, which serves as a major barrier to their professional development.

Female students in campus journalism face more social stereotypes and security risks compared to their male colleagues. In many cases, they are labeled as 'rebellious' if they try to work independently. Dani, Ridwan, and Mustafa (2025), based on Judith Butler's 'Gender Social Construction' theory, showed that this negative attitude towards women is not a natural phenomenon, but a specific construction of the patriarchal social system, which further deepens the gender gap in journalism.

Moreover, an institutional tendency to suppress the voices of female students is observed from the beginning of student journalism. Bobkowski and Belmas (2017) noted in their research that female students face more pressure for censorship from the administration when reporting on sensitive or controversial topics, and they are forced to accept these limitations. This tendency to suppress voices proves that female students are systematically subjected to discrimination in expressing independent opinions, even within educational institutions.

This struggle is more intense in the patriarchal social structure of South Asia. Kausar, Iqbal, and Shah (2024) showed in the context of Pakistan that due to deeply ingrained social norms, female journalists frequently face salary cuts, layoffs, and professional uncertainty. This systematic discrimination, in addition to hindering their empowerment, pushes them toward an unstable professional future.

In conclusion, it is clear that the low participation of female students observed in Bangladesh's campus journalism is essentially an integral part of the globally existing structural gender discrimination, patriarchal mindset, and institutional censorship.

POLICY GAP ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this research highlight an adverse and insecure professional environment for campus journalists in Bangladesh. A specific and effective reform plan is essential to address structural problems like financial uncertainty, security risks, and institutional apathy. In this context, based on the core findings of the research, the following policy recommendations can be proposed to ensure the professionalism and security of campus journalism.

FIGURE 12: POLICY GAP AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Expected Condition	Gap Identified	Recommendations
Institutional support	Organizational apathy	Collaborative framework
Safe environment	Security threats	Protection policies
Labor rights	No wage structure	Minimum wage
Law compliance	Weak enforcement	Strict monitoring
Women participation	Harassment barriers	Anti-harassment

The most alarming aspect of the research is the extreme apathy of media organizations toward journalists who face threats, where only 22.6 percent of victims received any security assurance or financial assistance from their respective organizations. To resolve this lack of institutional accountability and structural crisis, the application of the ‘Collaborative Framework’ proposed by Tasmim and Atikuzzaman (2025) between the university administration and media houses is imperative. The ‘Collaborative Framework’ proposed by Tasmim and Atikuzzaman (2025) is essentially a theoretical framework for establishing a constructive and professional relationship between campus journalists and university authorities. Its main goal is to increase transparency and accountability on campus by resolving existing structural barriers to journalists' information gathering.

This framework is primarily based on two main pillars: first, enhancing the capacity of campus journalists, which includes professional skill development, ensuring the right to information, fact-checking, and effective time management. Second, structural support from university authorities, which emphasizes ensuring journalists' free access to information, adopting a 'zero tolerance' policy for professional protection, and maintaining institutional transparency and integrity.

Simultaneously, formulating gender-sensitive policies and ensuring institutional protection for student journalists' security are essential (Dani, Ridwan, & Mustafa, 2025). To avoid administrative censorship and wrath, legal safeguards such as the 'New Voices' law in the United States and the provision of independent legal counsel should be in place so that students can work freely from teachers' political biases or harassment (Orland, 2019; Ahmed, 2025). However, how this foreign law can be adapted in the domestic context remains an area for future research and an important topic for expert discussion.

To remove financial and infrastructural limitations, adequate funding, modern equipment, and lab facilities should be arranged, and respectable scholarships or financial incentives should be ensured for student journalists, which would help retain their professional interest and reduce the globally existing 'Precarity' or structural uncertainty (Docallas, 2025; Mursalin, Huda, & Hosen, 2026).

The 'Media Reform Commission Report (2025)', formed for media reform in Bangladesh, provided specific recommendations to ensure the financial security and labor rights of journalists. The report noted that a separate Employment Regulation and a respectable Minimum Wage Structure must be established for campus journalists to end the currently prevailing culture of unpaid labor. According to the Commission's statement, under no circumstances should anyone be engaged in professional journalism without remuneration or proper financial protection.

The appropriate authority must also focus on the mandatory compliance with the law once enacted. As per the observation of the Media Reform Commission (2025), extreme reluctance to comply with the law is observed among media organizations despite the mandatory provisions of the existing legal framework and Labor Law-2006, which greatly hinders professionalism. Especially, the absence of provisions for providing notice and appropriate financial compensation to laid-off workers, festival allowance and alternative leave for working on holidays, and maternity leave and benefits for women journalists reflects a deep institutional discrimination. This systemic apathy and maternity discrimination are not only restricting the professional journey of women journalists but are driving the entire journalism industry toward a severe structural crisis.

A coordinated and academic initiative is necessary to address the structural challenges in campus journalism, such as financial uncertainty, institutional pressure, and professional security. As per previous research recommendations, effective Time-Management and peer networking are extremely vital to tackle academic pressure (Tasmim & Atikuzzaman, 2025).

To enhance students' skills, regular mentorship programs on fact-checking and digital media literacy should be organized, and issues of discrimination and equality should be included in the academic curriculum (Tasmim & Atikuzzaman, 2025; Swanson, 2016).

To increase the participation of women journalists, anti-harassment policies should be ensured, and specific press officers should be appointed to ensure the free flow of information (Kausar, Iqbal, & Shah, 2024; Tasmim & Atikuzzaman, 2025).

Finally, universities can ensure an environment for independent journalism only by dismantling the theoretical 'patron-client' relationship between teachers and students and creating a democratic and transparent academic environment (Ahmed, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This research highlights a stark paradox in Bangladesh's campus journalism: while 93.2% of youth ideologically support the profession, 59% are reluctant to pursue it full-time due to structural precarity. The study identifies three critical crises: extreme financial insecurity (65% unpaid), high professional risks (72% facing threats), and a severe lack of institutional support (only 22.6% assistance rate). Furthermore, gender-based marginalization and academic disruption remain significant barriers. Addressing these challenges requires immediate policy reforms, including institutional accountability frameworks, gender-sensitive protection policies, and a dignified remuneration structure to ensure the sustainability of campus journalism.

LIMITATIONS

Several structural limitations are noted in the analysis of the findings of this research. Firstly, there is a severe gender imbalance among participants, with only 7 female representatives against 111 males, which indicates gender-based marginalization. Secondly, as the survey was conducted through social media promotion, the participation rate of universities was unequal; particularly, the highest number of responses (37) came from Comilla University, indicating a lack of geographical balance. Furthermore, this research primarily relies on the personal and subjective experiences of the respondents, and there is a significant lack of specific and coordinated structural data for the protection of campus journalists at the national level. Finally, to ensure the grammatical precision and linguistic rigor of this report, various artificial intelligence tools were employed for the purposes of language enhancement and structural refinement.

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info@bdmediamonitor.org
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