

## Factors of Changing Patterns of Youth Culture: A Study among the Students of Selected Public and Private Universities of Bangladesh

Md. Masudur Rahman <sup>1\*</sup> , Shaira Tasnim Anika <sup>1</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> *Jatiya Kabi Kazir Nazrul Islam University, BANGLADESH*

\*Corresponding Author: [masud@jkkniu.edu.bd](mailto:masud@jkkniu.edu.bd)

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### ABSTRACT

This study attempts to explore the cultural practices and variations among the youth in rural and urban settings in Bangladesh, and investigate the key factors responsible for the changes in cultural practices, including the influence of globalization among the youth. Against this backdrop, this is a mixed-method study where both qualitative and quantitative approaches have been used. In the qualitative method, two focus group discussions and six case studies were conducted. On the contrary, in the quantitative method, a total of 220 surveys have been conducted. The students of three selected universities in Dhaka and Mymensingh city are mainly the respondents. The total sample size of this study is 228, including both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Convenience sampling was adopted to select the survey respondents and the purposive sampling technique was adopted to select the samples in the FGD and case studies. The 'cultural homogenization' theory by John Tomlinson and George Ritzer, and the 'McDonaldization' theory by George Ritzer are connected in this study. The study reveals various factors responsible for changes in youth culture, which include the proliferation of technology, cultural exchange, modern lifestyle, economic development, educational development, decrease of norms and values, and so on. Youths are the future of a nation, and their individuality can be deformed by foreign culture through globalization, making it crucial to explore current practices and cultural changes among them.

**Keywords:** globalization, youth culture, social change, modernization

### INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh, a developing country, has recently been promoted from one of the most successful least developed countries (LDC) due to its economic development and poverty reduction (World Bank, 2023). Traditional cultural distinctiveness is gradually eroding as a result of rural populations' increased adoption of urban lifestyles brought on by rapid urbanization and globalization. Globalization affects local cultural sovereignty and identity while also creating new opportunities (Chakravarty, 2019; Sunny et al., 2021). The growth of digital culture is also a significant driving force. As Tarannum et al. (2025) point out, the pandemic-induced transition to digital learning resulted in increased use of the internet for pleasure and socialization, increasing cross-border cultural connections. Similarly, Islam and Arannya (2023) discovered that urban young increasingly saw identity as a digital performance rather than a family or societal inheritance.

Globalization in Bangladesh is hindering the value of traditional culture, with urban people preferring fast food and Chinese restaurants to traditional food and western clothing. Adoption of Western cultural aspects has caused urban youth to merge their traditional and global identities, resulting in a hybrid cultural identity that reflects both

global and local influences (Kumar, 2023). Globalization is causing major cultural changes among Bangladesh's youth, especially in urban regions, which has resulted in differences between young people in rural and urban areas. Young people in cities have easier access to technology and international media, which shapes their cultural customs around social interactions, food, and attire. As technology advances, they become more advanced in the global development race. Rural youth face limited access to modern education, technology, and lifestyles. As smartphone technology becomes more prevalent, they try to adapt, leading to increased crime and crime rates. This adaptability is driven by the imitation of the dynamic and diverse nature of urban environments, where cultural practices are constantly evolving in response to new influences (Khan et al., 2025). Thus, it should be compared to understand these issues more clearly.

Recently the culture of Bangladesh is impacted by the advancement of society and globalization, particularly among the youth, who are more aware of technology and are more influenced by foreign cultures. While globalization is necessary for Bangladesh's financial and structural development, it can also negatively affect the uniqueness of the country's culture. Policymakers have a role to play in taking strategies minimizing the negative aspects as well as enhancing the positive aspects of globalization in Bangladesh (Tripura, 2022). This study is very significant as it highlights the variations of cultural practices and the importance of understanding globalization and culture, which influences our own culture and affects the availability of media and technology for young people. The study also provides insights for researchers, enhancing the scope of further research. Therefore, this study is crucial for policymakers and researchers. In particular, the specific objectives of this study are mentioned below:

- i) To explore the cultural practices and variations among the youth in rural and urban settings in Bangladesh
- ii) To investigate the key factors responsible for the changes in cultural practices, including the influence of globalization among the youth.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The changing patterns of youth culture among university students in Bangladesh are influenced by a variety of factors, including cultural globalization, technological advancements, and shifts in consumer behavior. These factors collectively contribute to the transformation of traditional cultural norms and the emergence of new cultural practices among the youth. According to Anthony Giddens (1991), globalization unites the entire planet on Social media platforms not only facilitate the diffusion of Western cultural elements but also shape the identity and behavior of young people globally, often at the expense of indigenous cultural values. Changes in eating habits, fashion sense, musical tastes, and interpersonal conventions are influenced by media exposure, consumerism, and socioeconomic variables (Hussain, 2021). Moreover, socioeconomic disparities between students of public and private universities influence cultural behavior. Students from private institutions, often from affluent backgrounds, tend to adopt Westernized consumption patterns and media habits more rapidly than their public university counterparts (Rubel et al., 2024). This bifurcation is also visible in leisure choices, career aspirations, and political participation. In Bengali society, native cultures influence attire, such as Saree, Panjabi, pajama, and lungi, while modern fashion trends focus on western and Indian styles. Hossain et al. (2020) examine how globalization has affected Bangladeshi culture, emphasizing changes in language, attire, media influence, and consumer behavior. Young people, particularly young women, are increasingly choosing Western clothing over Bengali ones. This trend is seen as a symbol of foreign cultures attacking Bengali culture (Bari and Jin 2021). Another study found that 70% of public university students believe globalization and modernization have influenced their dress taste, while 90% of private university students believe Bangladeshi dress patterns are threatened. Sexual knowledge is also influenced by various sources, with private university students showing higher rates (Hussain, 2021). Media and marketing shape youth aspirations toward Western consumerist culture. That's why urban middle-class students are particularly affected, reflecting a globalized neoliberal identity shift (Alam, 2020).

Globalization has combined global and local cultural traditions among Bangladeshi youth. "Smart Bangladesh" initiatives indirectly promote global digital culture among university students (Hossen et al., 2025). Moreover, young people in metropolitan regions are more likely to embrace Western dress, music, and lifestyles (McKenzie, 2024; Kumar, 2023). This cultural transition is fueled by the availability of global media and the internet, which expose urban youth to global trends and ideas (Wheatley, 2024). Globalization's impact on cultural customs is less obvious in rural places. While traditional customs and values persist, there is evidence of cultural hybridization. For example, rural youth are increasingly embracing global fashion trends while adhering to local conventions (Ardina et al., 2024). This blending of cultures reflects the dynamic interplay between global and local influences.

Among the factors of changing patterns of youth culture, the fastest growth of digital media and internet availability is the most frequently mentioned factor. According to Tarannum et al. (2025), the widespread use of the internet in higher education has increased students' exposure to global cultural norms. More than 78% of

Bangladeshi university students, according to their study, utilize social media to access cultural content such as Western music, fashion, and values. Through these exchanges, local norms and international aesthetics are combined to produce hybrid identities. Moreover, a cross-sectional survey of 1,500 students from five different universities revealed that 54% of them felt more a part of the global culture than the indigenous culture of Bangladesh (Haque et al., 2023).

Younger generations are struggling with attitudes, elderly care, and societal shifts towards mechanical methods, while cultural relationships and identities are deteriorating, making this the most significant threat to our society (Islam and Hossain, 2022). The music and film industries are also significant globalization instruments. Technological and political changes have widened the globalization of TV and televisual landscapes, with transnational corporations producing records, importing and exporting musical products, and transferring styles and images (Mridha, 2021). Globalization provides Bangladesh with immense opportunities for global communication and interaction, benefiting civilization but also posing risks to culture, community norms, ethics, and values, widening the rich-poor divide, and foreign influence. Urban adolescents now marry later and have more autonomy as a result of the economic empowerment (Antu et al., 2022).

However, the literature review barely highlights the existence of different studies on the changing patterns of cultural practices among the youth in Bangladesh. Notably, there are not sufficient studies showing the differences of cultural practices between private and public university students and factors behind the changes. This study attempts to address the gap exploring new knowledge in academia.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework illustrates how various independent variables influence the dependent variable, the changing pattern of culture among youth. The independent variable interacts with multiple dimensions including individual, educational, socio-economic, family background, economic, cultural, and technological factors to shape youth culture (Figure 1).

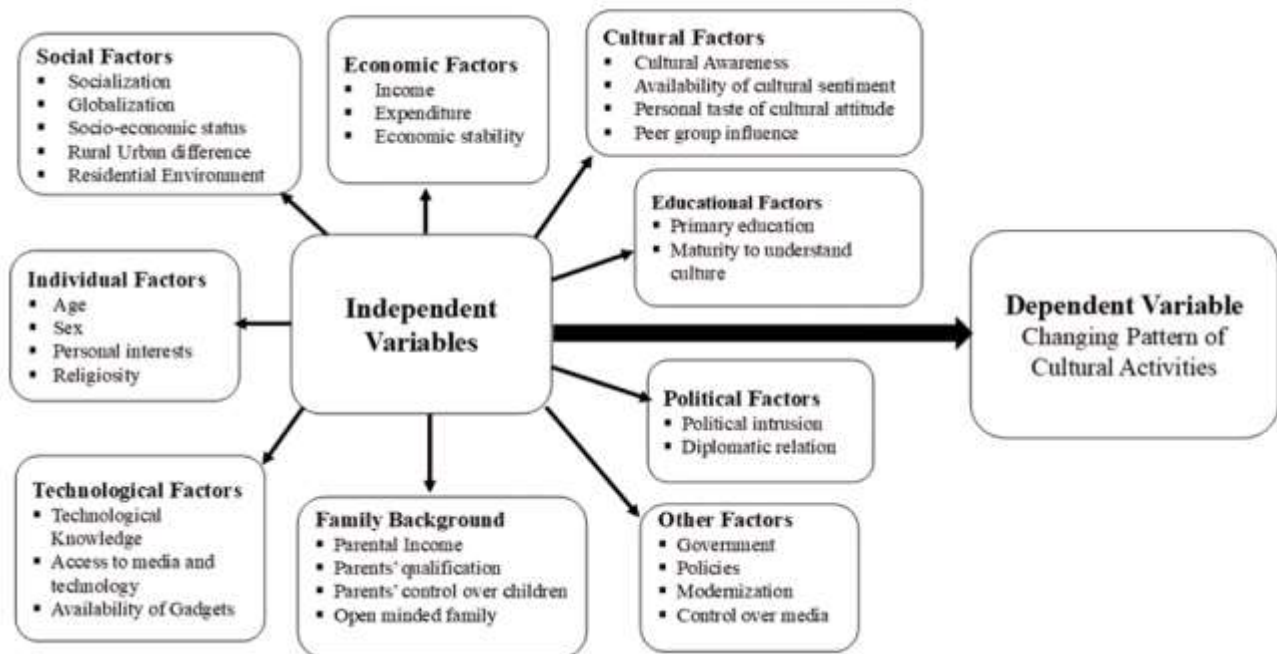


Figure 1. Conceptual framework (the authors' own creation).

Social factors, including socialization, residential surroundings, and distinctions between rural and urban living, further shape how youth navigate cultural transitions. Economic factors govern the extent of engagement with global culture, impacting access to technology and digital platforms while cultural awareness influences whether youth prioritize national heritage or adopt global norms. In addition, educational exposure is vital, as primary education and cultural awareness enable individuals to harmonize global influences with local traditions. Moreover, family background is also crucial, as parental education, economic status, and openness influence attitudes towards tradition versus modernization. Furthermore, technological advancements, especially media exposure and digital accessibility, act as gateways to global culture. The government policies and media regulation also affect broader cultural trends, shaping how youth engage with both local and international influences. Significantly, personal or

individual factors such as age, level of religiosity, and financial circumstances significantly affect cultural choices, with financial stability frequently determining access to global trends. Last but not least, political aspects of a nation or an institution shape how youth are engaged in what kind of cultural activities.

This framework provides a structured analysis of the factors driving cultural evolution among youth, offering insights into the dynamic interplay between tradition and globalization. Afterwards, this section gives a comprehensive understanding of the factors on which the changing cultural patterns among the youth of rural and urban areas of Bangladesh is intensely dependent.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study analyzes the impact of globalization on changing cultural patterns among youth in rural Bangladesh, using two theoretical perspectives: ‘cultural homogenization’ by John Tomlinson and George Ritzer, and the theory of ‘McDonaldization’ by George Ritzer to understand the changing cultural landscape.

### **‘Homogenization’ Theory by John Tomlinson and George Ritzer**

Globalization and culture are interconnected, with globalization being the foundation of contemporary social existence. As Tomlinson has so well described it:

“Globalization lies in the heart of modern culture; cultural practices lie in the heart of globalization” (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 1).

According to Tomlinson (1999), globalization is a continually expanding network of interdependence and linkages that is the foundation of contemporary social existence. Globalization is a constantly expanding network of interdependence and linkages, reflected in daily activities, communication, environment, food, and leisure. This dependency is evident in the changing cultural attitudes of youth in Bangladesh. The study intends to analyze whether modern culture influences youth to avoid their own culture, focusing on modern food, clothing, and time-passing relationships. Cultural theories of globalization, such as Homogenization, Heterogeneity, and Hybridization, are relevant in this context.

Ritzer (2003) defines globalization of culture as-

“The transnational expansion of common codes and practices (heterogeneity) or as a process in which many global and local cultural inputs interact to create a kind of pastiche or blend, leading to a variety of cultural hybrids (homogeneity)” (Ritzer, 2003, p. 539).

Globalization of culture refers to the transnational expansion of common codes and practices, leading to a variety of cultural hybrids. Cultural homogeneity is a form of cultural imperialism, where a culture imposes itself on other cultures, destroying local culture. In Bangladesh, the traditional culture is being replaced by modern trends, with dominant global cultures like western, Korean, and Japanese cultures becoming ideal for the young generation. This study highlights the changing practices of culture and the influence of global culture on traditional practices.

### **‘McDonaldization’ Theory by George Ritzer**

McDonaldization, a theory by George Ritzer, refers to the dominance of fast-food restaurants in American and global society. It operates on five elements: efficiency, calculability, predictability, control, and irrationality of rationality. McDonaldization is a reinterpretation of rationalization, which is the process of replacing societal norms with logical ones. Ritzer defines McDonaldization as:

“The process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world” (George Ritzer, 1993).

In Bangladesh, fast-food restaurants have evolved into a more representative modern paradigm than bureaucracy. Customers now have to wait in lines to order food and follow regulations enforced by fast-food establishments like McDonald’s and KFC. This study aims to analyze the changing cultural patterns due to globalization and the impact of McDonaldization on food consumption culture among youth. This theory made the way easy for this study to analyze how the cultural institutions are changing through the concept of McDonaldization. People, mostly the youths now opt to quick food, quick shopping through online, watch movies/dramas in online platform which may save their time but affects the culture. The online seller also gets benefitted by this system. This practice approves the McDonaldization theory of Modernization.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

This is a mixed-method study that includes both quantitative and qualitative methods. In the quantitative method, a survey is conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire to collect numeric data on the socio-economic and cultural practices of youth in Bangladesh. In contrast, the qualitative method constitutes the use of case studies and focus group discussions to understand the factors behind changes in cultural pattern among youth in Bangladesh. This study conveniently selected three universities in which two private universities are located in Dhaka city, the Shanta Mariam University of Creative Technology and the North South University. Moreover, a public university, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Mymensingh, represents rural setting where young people may have different cultural preferences due to various factors. A total of 228 respondents were selected including six case studies and two Focus Group Discussion. Among them 120 surveys with three in-depth case interviews and one FGD were conducted in Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, while 100 surveys, three in-depth case interviews and one FGD were conducted in the two private universities in Dhaka city. To make the easy access of the respondents, convenience sampling technic was used for the quantitative survey, while purposive sampling technic was used for case studies and focus group discussions. The quantitative data has been analyzed by using SPSS and MS Excel. The qualitative data has been used to strengthen the stories of the youth. All the ethical issues were considered during the data collection and data analysis periods. Before collecting data, informed consent has been taken from the respondents specially before starting the record in qualitative interviews. The opinion of the respondents has been kept confidential and no identity is disclosed. Although the sample size is small, and the survey respondents were selected by using convenient sampling technic, which can be the limitation of this study, the triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative approach makes this study representative.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Socio-Economic Background of the Respondents

**Table 1.** Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents (n=220) (Field Data, 2023)

Characteristics	Categories	Private university (n=100)	Public university (n=120)
Sex	Male	58 (58%)	56 (46.67%)
	Female	42 (42%)	63 (52.5%)
	Transgender	0	1 (0.83%)
Religion	Muslim	70 (70%)	90 (75%)
	Hindu	20 (20%)	15 (12.5%)
	Christian	6 (6%)	10 (8.4%)
	Buddhist	4 (4%)	5 (4.17%)
Age	18–20	16 (16%)	11 (9.1%)
	21–23	42 (42%)	65 (54.24%)
	24–26	38 (38%)	37 (30.83%)
	27–29	2 (2%)	7 (5.83%)
	30+	2 (2%)	0
Educational qualification	Undergraduate	75 (75%)	96 (80%)
	Postgraduate	25 (25%)	24 (20%)
Family monthly income	Less than BDT 10000	2 (2%)	19 (15.83%)
	BDT 11000–20000	4 (4%)	31 (25.83%)
	BDT 21000–30000	15 (15%)	25 (20.85%)
	BDT 31000–40000	19 (19%)	11 (9.16%)
	BDT 41000–50000	23 (23%)	18 (15%)

BDT 51000 and above

37 (37%)

16 (13.33%)

This study represent the population from universities in both rural and urban areas who has a variety of socio-economic characteristics where almost equal participation of both the male and female students (Table 1). The female representation in the private universities were 42% and it was 52.5% in public university including one transgender respondent. It also depicts that the respondents were mostly Muslim (private=70%, public 75%), but youth of different religious background participated in this study. The respondents were mostly from the age group 21–23 (private=42%, public=54.24%) and 24–26 years (private=38%, public=30.83%) in both the private and public universities. Regarding the educational qualification, three quarter of the total respondents were undergraduate students (private=75%, public=80%) and extension were the postgraduate students (private=25%, public=20%). The family monthly income of the respondents is comparatively different in the public and private universities. With regard to parental income, among the students of private university, more than one-third of the respondents (37%) belong to the group whose monthly income is BDT 51000 and above, while it is only one-tenth (13%) among the students of public university. Significantly, in public university, the family monthly income of more than half of the respondents (around 60%) is below BDT 30000 where a majority of the respondents of private university (around 80%) has parental income from BDT 31000–51000 and above. However, the different socioeconomic background of the respondents represent the diverse response.

### Cultural Variations among the University Students

**Table 2.** Variation in cultural practices among youth (n=220) (Field Data, 2023)

Major cultural aspects	Characteristics	Category	Private university (n=100)	Public university (n=120)		
Food	Daily food preference	Home cooked/local food	70 (70%)	108 (90%)		
		Foreign food (Indian, Thai, Chinese, continental or others)	20 (20%)	4 (3.33%)		
		Fast food	4 (4%)	4 (3.33%)		
		Healthy salad or light food	6 (6%)	4 (3.34%)		
	Frequency of preferring local food	Always	52 (52%)	78 (65%)		
		Never	4 (4%)	4 (3.33%)		
		Once in a day	9 (9%)	5 (4.17%)		
		Sometimes	32 (32%)	24 (20%)		
		Occasionally	3 (3%)	9 (7.5%)		
Fashion	Preferable clothing	Salwar-Kamij/shirt/t-shirt-pant	50 (50%)	80 (66.67%)		
		Panjabi/saree	18 (18%)	20 (16.67%)		
		Western	26 (26%)	10 (8.33%)		
		Borkha	2 (2%)	5 (4.17%)		
		Ethnic	0	1 (0.83%)		
		All type	4 (4%)	4 (3.33%)		
	Frequency of preferring traditional cloth	Always	21 (21%)	35 (29.16%)		
		Occasionally	42 (42%)	56 (46.67%)		
		Sometimes	31 (31%)	24 (20%)		
		Never	6 (6%)	5 (4.17%)		
Entertainment	Types of movies or drama	Bangladeshi	10 (10%)	22 (18.33%)		
		English	24 (24%)	15 (12.5%)		
		Hindi	20 (20%)	33 (27.5%)		
		Korean	16 (16%)	11 (9.17%)		
		Pakistani	6 (6%)	9 (7.5%)		
		Turkish	4 (4%)	8 (6.67%)		
		Any language	20 (20%)	22 (18.33%)		
		Hollywood/Bollywood/K-pop, etc.	46 (46%)	40 (33.33%)		
	Preferred music	Bengali (classical)	21 (21%)	26 (21.67%)		
		Bengali (modern/folk)	23 (23%)	32 (26.67%)		
		All types depending on mood	10 (10%)	20 (16.67%)		
		Religious	0	2 (1.67%)		
		Preferred culture for entertainment	Bangladeshi	37 (37%)	54 (45%)	
			Foreign	15 (15%)	4 (3.33%)	
Both	48 (48%)		62 (51.67%)			

Festival/occasions	Religious festival (Eid, Puja, Christmas, etc.)	50 (50%)	80 (66.67%)
	Pohela Boishakh/Bengali or ethnic cultural program	10 (10%)	12 (10%)
	Others (English New Year, Holi, Halloween, Valentines, etc.)	40 (40%)	28 (23.33%)
Preferred relationship status	Married life	57 (57%)	83 (69.17%)
	Single life	29 (29%)	24 (20%)
	Live together	14 (14%)	13 (10.83%)
Relationship status	Yes	25 (25%)	18 (15%)
	No	57 (57%)	89 (74.17%)
	Prefer not to say	18 (18%)	13 (10.83%)

This study found multi-variation of cultural practices among the university students. It includes food, fashion, entertainment, and relationship preferences among the university students (Table 2). Regarding daily food preferences, a large majority of the students (90%) in public university prefer home cooked or local food where the rate among the students of private university is slightly less (70%). In addition, one-fifth of the students of private university (20%) prefer foreign food in their daily food preference where as it is minimal in public university (3.33%). Moreover, there are also limited preference of fast food and light food among the students of both universities. Noticeably, near one-third of the students of public university prefer local food always (65%) in their dishes where as it is only half in private university (52%). The students of both universities prefer local food sometimes in the rate of 20% and 32% respectively. In addition, regarding fashion, half of the private (50%) and two-third of the respondents in public universities (66.67%) prefer wearing Salwar Kamij/Shirt, T-Shirt-Pant. Moreover, the students of private university prefer Panjabi/Saree (18%) and Western dress (26%) to the students of public university (Panjabi/Saree=16.67%, Western=8.33%). Furthermore, the preference of wearing Borkha also visible in public university (4.17%) where as it is ignorable in private university (2%). Notably, the near one-third of the students of private university (62%) prefer traditional cloth always and occasionally and it is three-quarter in public university (75%). However, it means the students of both universities has the sense of fashion and design with the advancement of the society.

Watching movies and dramas are inseparable part of the entertainment of today's youths. It also reveals only one-tenth of the students of private university (10%) and near one-fifth of the students of public university (18.33%) enjoy Bangladeshi movies or dramas. Significantly, the rest of the students prefer to enjoy foreign movies or drama series where English (24%), Hindi (20%) and Korean (16%) movies are on priority list of the students of private university while Hindi (27%), English (12%) and Korean (9.17%) on the priority list of the students of public university. Moreover, there also Pakistani and Turkish movie in their preference. With regard to music preference, near half of the students of private university (46%) prefer Hollywood/Bollywood/K-Pop music where as it only one-third (33.33%). Moreover, below half of the students of private university (44%) prefer Bengali classic and modern/folk song, on the contrary while it is three-quarter (75%) in the public university. It means the student of both universities has the preference of foreign movies and music rather than the Bengali movies and music. Certainly, the students has both Bangladeshi and Foreign cultural preferences in both private (48%) and public university (51.67%). Furthermore, regarding the festival/occasion, the students of private university prefer religious events (50%), Pohela Boishakh (Bengali New Year)/Bengali/Ethnic events (10%) and other events like English New Year, Holi, Halloween, Valentines and so on (40%). Conversely, the preference of religious occasions is high in public university students (66.67%) while the preference of Bengali New Year/Bengali/Ethnic programs (10%) and other events like English New Year, Holi, Halloween, Valentines and so on (23.33%) is quite lower than private university.

The preferred relationship status of the students also portrays about the cultural advancement and changing cultural practices. Though the students of private university prefer married life (57%), they also prefer single life (29%) and live together (14%) as their relationship status. Conversely, the students of public university prefer married life (69.17%) than the private university, including preferring single life (20%) and live together (10.83%). Significantly, a quarter of the respondents prefer pre-marital sex (25%) in the private university where as it is 15% in the public university. In addition, a significant number of respondents do not prefer to say anything about this issue, which means a hidden and positive turn to pre-marital sex. Case one and case two reflected by two different scenarios regarding cultural practices, illustrated below:

#### Case one

Arko Shaha (pseudonym), a 2nd-year BSc student at Shanto Mariam University of Creative Technology. His Monthly expenditure is BDT 20000 and above per month. He talked about the rapid changes in society and

culture due to modernization and increased entertainment options. He believes that Bangladeshi culture is changing rapidly which is a positive sign to him.

Arko is a fast-food freak, preferring luxury restaurants with Italian, Chinese, or western cuisines. He rarely eats home-cooked food and is addicted to beverages like beer, Coke, Fanta, and juice. He mentioned an increasing trend of junk food among urban youth due to trends and taste preferences, especially during early mornings. He discussed his interests in TV dramas, movies, cricket, and football, primarily watching English Movies on Star Cineplex. He also travels to foreign countries frequently. Arko believes that modern youth are addicted to foreign culture due to its interesting and attractive aspects. He is active on social media, using platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube almost half of the day. He enjoys being fashionable and smart, preferring branded clothes. When visiting foreign countries, he often visits famous shopping malls or does online shopping.

### **Case two**

Sharmin, a 24-year-old Anthropology student at Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, believes that globalization's impact on youth culture is less significant in rural areas due to poverty and lack of access to education. Despite living in a residential hall with a monthly cost of 4500 taka, Sharmin tries to support her family financially. Though she has financial barriers, still she is determined to study at the university.

Sharmin's food choices differ from her friends, as she cooks her own meals daily and avoids fast food due to financial constraints. She follows religious ideals in her clothing, wearing Burkha outside and salwar-kamij inside home. She does not follow anyone for her dress up. Sharmin doesn't have much time for entertainment, but she watches Bengali and Hindi movies on her phone when she has time. She does not grow up watching many movies and enjoys Bengali and Hindi music. Sharmin only observes religious occasions and had no phone until she was admitted to Varsity. After joining university, she became active on social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube, but only spends a small amount of time on them for the purpose of class schedules and entertainment. She tries to keep it away as long as possible to avoid addiction. Sharmin thinks globalization has altered youth morals, leading to a competition on social media, promoting lavish lifestyles and unreal relationships. This has resulted in a loss of modesty and cultural differences, prompting calls for a cessation of such practices among the youth.

These two cases above show the difference of cultural practices between two students from different socioeconomic background.

### **Influence of Globalization and Factors of Changes in Cultural Practices among Youth**

Globalization is the interconnectedness of global economies, cultures, and populations facilitates economic growth, cultural exchange, and technological innovation and so many more things. Bangladesh's culture is evolving due to globalization, technology, and young people's trends, as respondents revealed various factors influencing its cultural transformations. The subsequent sections critically examine the factors responsible for the changing patterns of cultural practices among youth.

#### ***Proliferation of technology***

Technological proliferation is the term used to describe its expansion, which can have both beneficial and detrimental effects. The innovations of technology are added to culture as a result of globalization gradually. Our lives have been completely transformed by technology, from healthcare to communication. Automation and quick access to information are made possible by the Internet, smartphones, and artificial intelligence (AI). All things considered, technology's ubiquitous presence continuously propels society progress by influencing everyday routines, social relationships, and economic activity. On this context one respondent opined:

“Latest technology come to the hand of young generation first. That's why they are the most vulnerable to the exchanging cultural patterns. Globalization increases learning and sharing for which change increases.”

The proliferation of technology also enhanced connectivity through digital platforms and infrastructure that facilitates global communication and collaboration. Innovations in telecommunications, transportation, and information technology bridge geographical gaps, fostering economic integration and cultural exchange. Lots of inventions and discovery drives shifts in communication, work, and lifestyle, increasing use and dependency on social media. One FGD respondent shared his thought:

“Now there are a lot of TV channels and social media platforms from where people come to know the foreign culture in easily. Bengali people also try to practice other culture to show that Bengalis are also globalized and modern. People practice foreign culture to be modern and advance, and this is how the culture is exchanging and the traditional culture is getting to loss.”

The story of Sayem (pseudonym) explains the effect of technology on cultural practice:

### **Case three**

Sayem Ahamed (pseudonym) is a 26 years old student of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University. He has completed his graduation from Population Science Department. His hometown is in Gazipur. He moved to Trishal, Mymensingh for study Purpose. His Monthly Expenditure is BDT 10000 per month. Sayem thinks the vast use of Internet is helping in the development of a country but it is lessening the activity of young generation. When they did not had availability of gadgets, they had the culture of playing outside home with friends in the playground. Their entertainment was healthy. Now a days, they play video games, keep scrolling social media and adopt unhealthy entertainment methods. According to him, this rapid change of culture among the young generation is affecting negatively on their future career by decreasing productivity. It is also affecting their health as they stay up until late night scrolling social media.

Sayem is active on social media for having information and entertainment. Nevertheless, he is not very influenced by this and sometimes felt difficulties to avoid social media. He can make himself aware when it puts negative effect on his life. He thinks young people should know where to start and when to stop using internet. Because it hampers their career and overall life condition.

### ***Influence in cultural exchange***

As we know the concept of global village, it is easy to exchange cultures between nations due to global cultural flow. Travel, media, and migration contribute to cultural interchange, which enriches society by encouraging diversity, ingenuity, and creativity. It celebrates human diversity, dispels myths, and extends viewpoints. This method promotes tolerance and understanding of diverse cultures, which helps people live in peace and harmony with one another in a world that is interrelated. Therefore, interactions between different cultures can lead to the borrowing and blending of cultural elements. On that issue, one FGD respondent said:

“I think foreign cultures and social media influencers are influencing our relationship because we are regularly following social media content. Social media suggest a new life to everyone and try to spread the others societies culture among country to country. As a result, we feel the complex relationship within our cultural relations. We are entirely influenced by social media to adapt with new culture and through the entire process destroy our own culture silently.”

Another respondent opined:

“Foreign culture and social media influencers are influencing our relationship preference. My girlfriend wants me to dress like Hollywood heroes, cut my hair like them, talk like them, etc.”

In the same manner, influence of neighboring countries is also an impact of globalization that boost the cultural change. Geopolitical dynamics and regional cooperation affect trade, security, and cultural interaction. Shared boundaries enhance societies through migration, economic collaboration, and cultural blending. Understanding neighboring nations’ impacts promotes international interactions and mutual gain. Our culture is also changing due to the change of culture in the surroundings. Relating these issues, the respondents had different views. One FGD respondent opined:

“The culture of Bangladesh is very beautiful. Recently, western culture is melting into our own culture. Social media is playing an important role in spreading foreign culture. Youth are getting interested in adapting with the new cultural activities instead of our traditional culture.”

Another respondent shared:

“The culture of Bangladesh is intertwined with the culture of the Bengal region of the Indian subcontinent. It has evolved over the centuries and encompasses the cultural diversity of several social groups of Bangladesh.”

### ***Spread of modern lifestyle***

Modernization, driven by urbanization, industrialization, and technological innovation, influences business practices, social standards, and lifestyles, leading to higher living standards and economic expansion. All of these are considered as the consequences of globalization. Gradually the country is improving and advanced foreign technology is being used in our country. Modernization and globalization are bringing changes in culture. Availability and widespread access of internet and opportunity to get information about other cultures, following other cultural fashion (food, clothes, movies etc.) also included. One respondent said the spread of modernity also shortens spatial distance among people saying:

“Our family has four members, but we are living in three different places because of study, and job purposes. As we all have access to the internet, we all can contact with everyone at the same time. So, though cultural change happened among us but we can be connected by the help of modernization.”

This case is suitable in this context:

**Case four**

A 23-year-old girl, Afrin Hossain (Pseudonym) a student of North-South University lives in Baridhara, Dhaka with her family, studying in Department of Law. Her expenditure per month is BDT 18,000–20,000. Asking her about the change in cultural pattern among the youth, she said, culture has become very different from before. As people used to read lot of printed books before but now, they are more engaged with electronic devices. Even if they are reading, they prefer Pdf. Or else they are engaged into social media all the time.

She is very much active on social media accounts. To her social media is a blessing because she has an online business platform and she follows social media influencers regularly for latest fashion. She thinks social media is also useful for staying connected with friends and outer world.

**Table 3** displays the perception of the students on the recent condition of Bangladeshi culture. In both private and public universities, more than three-quarter of the students (78%) think that the cultural practices are mixed with foreign culture while a smaller portion think that the Bangladeshi culture remain same as before (12%). Instead, one-tenth of them shared that the cultural practice has been totally changed.

**Table 3.** Perception on recent condition of cultural practice of Bangladesh (n=220) (Field Data, 2023)

Responses	Percentage (%) (n=220)
Same as before	26 (12%)
Mixed with foreign culture	172 (78%)
Totally changed	22 (10%)
Total	220 (100%)

**Demographic changes**

Culture and cultural identity can be greatly impacted by demographic changes, including population shifts, migration, and changes in social conventions. Population dynamics influence social services, healthcare systems, and labor markets. These factors include urbanization, migration, and ageing populations. Migration affects labor composition and cultural diversity. People come into contact with different cultures through migrating into different regions. As one respondent from ethnic community opined:

“Our hill tracts culture is very different from the plain land people. I had to migrate in plain land for my studies and had to adapt too many cultural traits to cope up with my university friends. Now I have to adapt with new cultural activities, sometimes it reduces opportunity of my own cultural practices.”

It is reflected by the case mentioned below:

**Case five**

Rafsan (pseudonym), a 23-year-old boy studying sat Shanto-Mariam university. He lives in Uttara, Dhaka with his aunt. He came here from a small village of Kishoreganj. His monthly expenditure is BDT 8000–10000 per month. He gets a small amount of pocket money from his family. Therefore, he has to do part time job to bear his educational and other expenses.

As he came from a rural area to Dhaka, he saw many different cultures. Here he observed that the young people are different from his village. They go to concert, party, restaurants regularly, but he cannot afford that often. If he has to sustain here, he must have to adapt some of those cultures, such as being used to

internet, fast food etc. Consequently, he feels financial barriers. He says that his classmates in his university are very fond of foreign culture. Asking if the change is more rapid for affecting young people, he said he just came here for one year, and now his accent, food and lifestyle has been changed little from previous life. Therefore, the change is of course rapid.

### ***Economic development***

Economic growth and development strategies aim to improve living standards, reduce poverty, and promote inclusive economies through investments in technology, education, and infrastructure. However, resource disparities and wealth distribution issues hinder development. This study reveals, increasing industrialization and global trade changed family structure and morality. People of the rural area move to urban areas for economic development by breaking extended families into nuclear one. Moving to urban areas, they try to adapt to modern cultural practices. Concurring on that circumstance one respondent shared:

“My family moved to Dhaka city for economic purpose, but this affected the morals and norms of my siblings as they constantly try to adapt with the growing western culture in our country.”

### ***Social movements***

Social movements and activism promote social fairness, environmental preservation, and civil rights, which propels societal transformation. In order to address injustices, they mobilize communities, change policies, and increase awareness. Examples from the past and present, such as climate action and civil rights, show their influence. Movements for civil rights, gender equality, and other causes can drive cultural shifts by challenging established norms. Observing the new social movements, one of the respondents said:

“Today we see movements like LGBTQ+ in western countries, which is influencing the youth of Bangladesh. Recently, we have also seen movement about women’s clothing freedom in Bangladesh. All of these are images of changes in our cultural practice among the youth.”

### ***Spread of education***

Modern education can be the cause of many changes. The light of education is now spreading in rural areas. New dimension of education is being added to the culture. Women empowerment and women education is also included in this. Global education system expansion has increased literacy rates and created new economic opportunities. Poverty is decreased, social mobility is encouraged, and people are better equipped to engage in society when they have access to education. International partnerships, online learning environments, and technological advancements in education all support inclusive and egalitarian education. Talking about this factor, one respondent said:

“Through the modern education, we have come into touch with the knowledge of technology and modernity, which introduces us with different cultures.”

### ***Decrease of norms, morals and values***

Globalization and media have influenced traditional norms and values, leading to varying perceptions of progress and moral standards. Factors like technology, economic pressures, and cultural interaction shape social landscapes. Peaceful coexistence and cultural resilience depend on balancing tradition and adaptability in a rapidly changing world. Society advances, but norms are not developing due to online time, less family time, lack of social education, rapid cultural influence, and changes in religious beliefs and norms. One respondent opined in this issue:

“In past time, we used to see joint family much. Now we can see they are breaking into nuclear families. Girls and boys are being involved into live-in relationship, pre-marital sex and other immoral activities. Divorce is also getting more frequent due to the freedom of life.”

According to another FGD respondent:

“People are becoming self-dependent for which the divorce rate is also increasing. People don’t want to stay in one relation.”

## Attitudes Toward Changes in Cultural Practices

As the cultural practices changes rapidly with the advancement of society, the students has diverse attitudes towards the changes. **Table 4** displays the perception of the students where they accept the cultural changing pattern positively (private=23%, public=13.33%), instead a few of them accept it negatively (private=17%, public=14.17%). Moreover, near about two-third of the private university students accept the cultural changes both positively and negatively (60%) whereas near about three-quarter of the students of public university accept the changes both positively and negatively (72.5%).

**Table 4.** Perception of students towards cultural changes (n=220) (Field Data, 2023)

Categories	Responses	Private university (n= 100)	Public university (n= 120)
Changing cultural pattern among youth	Positively	23 (23%)	16 (13.33%)
	Negatively	17 (17%)	17 (14.17%)
	Both	60 (60%)	87 (72.5%)
Necessity to protect our traditional culture	Yes	82 (82%)	114 (95%)
	No	18 (18%)	6 (5%)

The study also reveals that a majority of the students of both university think that it is necessary to protect and preserve the traditional culture (private=82%, public=95%). Still, there are a smaller number of students who do not think that it is necessary to protect the traditional culture (private=18%, public=5%). It means the students of private university are ultra-modern, culturally advanced. A respondent expressed her opinion:

“The positive side of the cultural change is that we are being updated and can understand the foreign culture. Conversely, the negative side is that we are ignoring our own culture and mixing other culture with ours.”

The focus group discussion highlights the growing trend of developing individuals following foreign culture, resulting in the loss of their own cultural aspects. It emphasizes the need to protect and preserve our culture and traditions, while maintaining a balance between accepting foreign culture and practicing our own.

One FGD participant opined:

“We should practice our culture in corporate sectors also. Moreover, we should practice our cultural and traditional occasions more vibrantly to make these attractive to youngsters.”

## DISCUSSION

This study provides an in-depth investigation of the changing cultural patterns among Bangladeshi university students, which is primarily influenced by globalization, socioeconomic disparity, and technological advancement. The findings highlight a subtle process of cultural hybridization in which local and global influences coexist, resulting in a generation that balances tradition and modernity. An important finding is that students from public and private universities adapt global culture differently. Students at private universities, many of whom come from metropolitan and economically privileged backgrounds, are more exposed to and favor global consumer behaviors such as Western fashion, fast food, digital entertainment, and progressive attitudes toward open relationships. Conversely, students from public university, particularly those whose family monthly income is below BDT 30000, are more likely to adhere to conventional cultural standards, because of limited digital access, economic barriers, and conservative social contexts. These findings are reflected by the findings of previous study conducted by Rubel et al. (2024), Tarannum et al. (2025) and Hussain (2021). Significantly, the findings of the study shows, most respondents both in public and private universities still prefer local food, with fast food. The trend of having foreign food is more common in private universities, but public university respondents often eat these to maintain social status or taste change. In addition, a shift in clothing preferences has been noticed among respondents where nearly half of the respondents from both the private (42%) and public universities (46.67%) wear traditional clothes only in occasions. Female respondents prefer foreign clothes for fashion, comfort, and standard. In the scenario of entertainment, the private students are more likely to watch English movies and dramas (24%) where the public university students are mostly fond of Hindi contents (27.5%). K-pop seems popular among private university students due to social media hype as, near half of the respondents (46%) opted for Hollywood/Bollywood/K-pop while near three-quarter of the public students (70%) opted for Bengali songs (classis, modern/folk). Furthermore, a quarter of the private students (25%) prefer to premarital sex, which a sign of modern and advance social change in relationship. The case studies reflect with the individual stories of the variations and changes in cultural practice among the youth. This study reveals some crucial factors of changes in cultural practices among the students,

which include proliferation of technology, influence of cultural exchange, spread of modern lifestyle, demographic change, economic development, social movements, spread of education, and the decrease of norms, morals and values.

These findings are consistent with Tomlinson and Ritzer's theories of cultural homogenization and McDonaldization, implying that cultural practice is now dependent on globalization. According to the view of Tomlinson (1999), globalization and culture are inseparably linked, with growing global interdependence manifested in everyday activities such as communication, consumption, and leisure. This interconnectivity is particularly evident in the changing cultural attitudes of Bangladeshi youth. Ritzer (2003) deepens this analysis by highlighting the globalization as a process of spreading common cultural codes leading to cultural hybridization or, in some contexts, cultural homogenization. The use of the McDonaldization theory of George Ritzer (1993) in this theory supports the findings. These theories are used as because of the connection with the study findings. As the study shows from the findings that the students opt to quick food, quick shopping through online, watch movies/dramas in online platforms which may save their time but affects the culture. In this study, the private university students seem more influenced by the global culture and have the opportunity to practice it more because of better socioeconomic background. Conversely, the public university students, who are more or less influenced by the globalization also but have less opportunity to practice. These findings affirm that both cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity coexist as outcomes of globalization, shaped by socio-economic status, technology access, and geographic context. After all, though the traditional cultural practices are decreasing among youth, but still it is not fading entirely. Still majority of the respondents from both the public and private respondents are affirmative about the necessity of preserving the traditional culture.

## **CONCLUSION**

The cultural practice in Bangladesh is changing rapidly noteworthy among the youths the most. The traditional local culture is being mixed-up with foreign culture. The study reveals that global trends are increasingly influencing cultural practices in food, fashion, entertainment, and intimate relationships especially among the students of private and public university. Noticeably, the students of private university slightly more influenced in foreign culture rather than public university students, reflecting a pattern of cultural hybridization rather than complete cultural displacement. The data shows that while cultural practices are changing, the students are not changing entirely. Students from different universities are mixing with foreign cultures to be updated with modern and advance lifestyles. Proliferation of advance technology, social media, socio-economic and educational factors, global trends with advance lifestyle, and other demographic factor play a significant role in changing the cultural patterns among the students. However, the respondents have good knowledge about their culture and they believe that traditional culture should be preserved and protected. This study attempts to fill the research gap, which will contribute to the development of national policy to protect and preserve the traditional cultural heritage instead of the global cultural hybridization among youth. The readers, policy makers and researchers can get new knowledge about the factors of changes in youth culture in 21<sup>st</sup> century in the age of globalization. The acknowledgement of the key limitation of this study is that it could not cover the larger number of sample in the universities. The longitudinal researches should be conducted in future on a broader aspect to understand the in-depth of global influence on cultural practices and the consequences of changes among youth. While the cultural assimilation and global cultural flow is a continuous process, the practices of traditional culture is at risk among the new generation. The changes of the cultural practices among youth cannot be controlled rather policymakers should highlight the native culture.

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## Author Contributions

**Md. Masudur Rahman:** conceptualization, investigation, methodology, formal analysis, writing – review & editing, supervision; **Shaira Tasnim Anika:** conceptualization, data collection, data analysis, writing – original draft.

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