

The Role of Social Media and ICT to Build Up Ethical Standard of Young Generation in Bangladesh: Challenges and Opportunities

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Declaration

We, undersigned, declare that this is an original report of my research work and it has been written by us and has not been submitted for any previous degree or project. Due references have been provided on all supporting literature and resources.

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Preface

The rapid expansion of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the pervasive influence of social media have fundamentally altered the cognitive and behavioral landscapes of the global youth. In Bangladesh, a nation experiencing a profound "demographic dividend" alongside a digital revolution, these technologies are not merely tools for communication but are the primary environments where identity and morality are negotiated. The research presented here, titled "The Role of Social Media and ICT to Build Up Ethical Standard of Young Generation in Bangladesh: Challenges and Opportunities," investigates this critical intersection of technology and character formation.

The digital sphere in Bangladesh operates as a double-edged sword. While ICT provides unprecedented access to global knowledge and ethical discourse, it also exposes the youth to a chaotic influx of misinformation, cyber-aggression, and fractured social norms. This study seeks to move beyond the alarmist narratives of digital "corruption" to explore how these platforms can be strategically leveraged to instill civic responsibility, integrity, and ethical leadership in the next generation.

A significant portion of this research focuses on the educational potential of ICT as a catalyst for ethical growth. In an era where traditional institutional influence is waning, digital platforms offer unique opportunities for "peer-led" ethical reinforcement. Through social advocacy, digital storytelling, and collaborative learning, Bangladeshi youth are increasingly engaging with global humanitarian values and social justice movements. This research analyzes how structured digital literacy and the "democratization of information" can empower young people to distinguish between constructive discourse and toxic online behaviors.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Professor Dr. Farhana Zaman and her research team for their dedication and hard work. I also extend my gratitude to all concerned members of NIMC for their relentless efforts in successfully completing this research.



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Acronym

ICT	Information and Communication Technology
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ISPs	Internet Service Providers
IT	Information Technology
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
FB	Facebook
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KII	Key Informant Interview
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
NIMC	National Institute of Mass Communication
BTRC	Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission
CSE	Computer Science and Engineering
CTF	Capture The Flag (cybersecurity training format)
VPN	Virtual Private Network
WS	Weighted Score
DYD	Department of Youth Development
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
SM	Social Media
MIL	Media Information and Literacy
NV	Normalized Value

Abstract

Digital platforms have become central spaces where youth express their culture, shape their identity, and interact socially. They also provide opportunities for inclusion, especially for marginalized groups, while at the same time creating challenges related to fragmented identities and shifting social roles. In this context, this study aims to examine the role of ICT and social media in strengthening ethical standards among the younger generation in Bangladesh by identifying the opportunities they create, the challenges they pose, and potential strategies to enhance ethical practices, digital literacy, and responsible use. A mixed-method approach was employed, combining a survey of 327 respondents from Dhaka and Chittagong with qualitative data from interviews with journalists, key informant interviews with academic experts and an IT programmer, focus group discussions with students, and Facebook page analysis, using purposive, snowball, and judgmental sampling techniques. The findings reveal that although youth demonstrate a basic awareness of digital citizenship and ethical standards, there are notable gaps in consistent practice, critical application, and structured understanding. These gaps are influenced by institutional, technological, and socio-cultural factors, including unclear ethical guidelines, absence of well-defined social norms, weak legal frameworks, insufficient monitoring systems, inadequate cybersecurity infrastructure, and lack of a clearly assigned regulatory authority. At the same time, the study identifies key opportunities such as enhanced digital literacy, cyber skills, ethical content creation, and improved platform trust, transparency, safety mechanisms, and inclusive digital systems that support responsible behavior and information integrity. It also highlights the importance of coordinated strategies involving education, awareness, technological safeguards such as AI-based monitoring, privacy-by-design, and content moderation, along with strengthened governance and enforcement by relevant authorities and platform providers to foster a more ethical digital environment.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) particularly the Internet has spread more rapidly than any earlier communications invention (UNESCO, 2023). Over the past few years, ICT-based social platforms, including social networking sites and mobile applications, have gained significant popularity among young digital users (Arcila Calderón, 2017). The rapid innovation and expansion of social media and ICT have opened up a new window of unlimited opportunities for interaction and global connectivity (Fazil et al., 2024; Areepattamannil & Khine, 2017; Azzaakiyyah, 2023; Womboiang et al., 2024). These technological advancements have played a transformative role in reshaping global communication, fostering unprecedented opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge exchange (Fazil et al., 2024; Ausat, 2023). Through social media and ICT, the modes of human interaction, information flow, and opinion expression have been fundamentally redefined (Ausat, 2023). ICT based social media has enhanced global connectivity, contributed to identity construction, and provided platforms for social movements (Azzaakiyyah, 2023). Thereby, parallel to the rise of social media, there has also been a large-scale global adoption of ICT among young audiences (Arcila Calderón, 2017).

Globally, an estimated 77 per cent of people aged between 15 and 24 used the Internet in 2023 (ITU, 2024). ICT is increasingly integrated into daily lives of young adults, particularly in education and learning. The Internet provides fast access to information technology in different fields and introduced new methods for learning and education (Szymkowiak, et al., 2021). A diverse set of ICT tools are now used in schools to communicate, produce, disseminate, store, and manage information. This has a direct bearing on the development of children, particularly during their experiences in school settings (UNESCO, 2023). Similarly, another study revealed positive effect of ICT on student learning, particularly in enhancing language skills (effect size = 0.24) and subject knowledge acquisition (effect size = 0.59) (Ruijia et al., 2025). Social media as

a significant platform of ICT also enhances learning by increasing engagement, enabling peer collaboration, and extending classroom discussions beyond the physical boundaries (Askari et al., 2023).

The process of digitalization and access to ICT and social media significantly influences Quality of Life (QoL) globally (Alhassan & Adam, 2021; Lin & Lachman, 2024). It is found in a study that people use social media to contact family and friends. The study statistically proved that using social media to contact close ties is positively related to perceived social support and well-being (Lin & Lachman, 2024). Besides, ICT has an impact on youth's social participation and social interaction. Björquist & Tryggvason (2023) explored how ICT can enhance social participation for youths with intellectual disabilities in Swedish institutions, using both staff and youths' perspectives. The study found that ICT helps youths build abilities, exercise independence, and reduce reliance on others. Technology also allows youths to connect, share experiences, and participate in social interactions.

Moreover, ICT helps youth to find necessary health related information. Youth often use the Internet for health information that they may not feel comfortable discussing offline. Zhao et al. (2022) showed that the rapid expansion of the internet has enabled older adults to access online health information. With a growing share of the global population entering old age, they are becoming more health-conscious and using this information to make better decisions about their health (Zhao et al., 2022). During COVID-19 pandemic, a heavy reliance on online platforms like social media has been observed to collect information about this virus (Neely et al., 2021).

The invention of ICT and the rapid expansion of social media have undoubtedly emerged as a blessing for humankind. ICT-based platforms, particularly social media, serve as a rich source of information and play a significant role in enhancing the educational learning of young adults. Beyond academics, these platforms create opportunities for various moral engagements, such as strengthening bonds among friends and families, maintaining social relationships,

encouraging active social participation, and providing avenues for social support. Moreover, they have increasingly become effective tools for promoting health-seeking behavior and awareness, thereby contributing to the overall well-being of young adults and communities.

However, young people sometimes misuse them in ways that create ethical, social, and legal concerns. This unethical use has grown with increasing digital access and anonymity. Young generation is often involved in cyberbullying (Sun et al., 2025; Hilty et al., 2023), plagiarism and academic dishonesty (Chen et al., 2025), spreading misinformation and fake news, privacy violation, irrational use (Muñoz-Miralles et al., 2016) and in different types of cybercrime and addictive behavior (Hilty et al., 2023; Gudmundsdottir et al., 2024). The unethical use of ICT and social media span multiple domains including political disinformation (Hasan and Ahmed, 2025; Stockwell, 2024) and commercial surveillance (Fülöp et al., 2025), unprofessional student behavior (Chen et al., 2025), breaching patient privacy (Clavier et al., 2024) etc. The misuse of technology can undermine trust (Dhagarra et al., 2020; McCrea et al., 2024), privacy (Dhagarra et al., 2020), and social cohesion (Sabatini & Sarracino, 2014). Due to growing unethical use of ICT, many studies have highlighted the need for internet ethics education (Wang et al., 2025), digital literacy (Yang, 2024; Tinmaz et al., 2022), ethical literacy and awareness (Mrisho, 2023), and strict regulations. ICT and social media can also play a vital role in fostering ethical standards among young adults.

Statement of the Problem

The invention of ICT and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become an integral part in everyday life. A survey conducted by BRAC (2021) revealed that 72% of Bangladeshi youth use the internet, and 28.3% have recently searched for materials and information related to technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Besides education and learning, these platforms have brought revolutionary changes in making communication faster (Fazil et al., 2024; Areepattamannil & Khine, 2017; Azzaakiyyah, 2023; Womboiang et al., 2024). Moreover, these platforms are serving as crucial arenas for economic activity (Song et al., 2024), and personal identity formation (Azzaakiyyah, 2023).

Digital platforms, thus, have become the central platforms for the youth to express their culture, construct identity and interact socially (Amin et al., 2023). Through interacting with digital media using Internet, young adults begin to understand who they are and who they aspire to become (Soh et al., 2024). They have got the opportunity to participate in global conversations, and foster their community beyond borders. Digital platforms also give marginalized youth a voice and community, as youth use online fandoms and global pop culture to express identity and build social capital (Amin et al., 2023). Besides, digital media including social media contributes to public discourse and youth civic engagement (Ye et al., 2017). Several studies have shown that social media enables decentralized, real-time activism, thereby giving youth the opportunity to engage in advocacy, promote social change, and participate in civic activities (Polozhentseva et al., 2021; Dobson, 2023). Thus, acquisition of digital skills is now considered as a cultural capital that can be utilized for many legitimate purposes (Amin et al., 2023).

Besides these legitimate uses, ICT based digital media including social media have brought forth a range of ethical challenges including misinformation, cyberbullying, privacy breaches, and algorithmic bias (Ahmed, 2025). Several studies have found a significant positive correlation between cyberbullying and mental health disorders among school-going children (Grigore and Maftai, 2020; Mallik and Radwan, 2020; Jin et al., 2021). In today's digital age, Bangladesh is struggling with the growing problem of misinformation, disinformation and even mal-information. False news is more novel than true news and thereby people are more likely to share novel information (Vosoughi et al., 2018). A study conducted in 2018 found that false news spreads six times faster than original content online. The study also found that 70 per cent of the users, especially school and college goers', are unable to distinguish real from fake news as they lack media literacy. This makes them more susceptible to spreading fake news on social media (Kamal et al., 2024). The spread of misinformation on Facebook in Bangladesh has resulted in chaos, hate attacks, and killings (Haque et al., 2020). Karim (2021) found that the users of social media in Bangladesh have no idea about fact-checker websites and thereby are not matured enough to deal with the online content. The study has shown a major concern for the future hazards created by netizens.

Thus, thriving in the digital landscape requires more than just technical skills. It demands critical thinking and ethical awareness (UNESCO, 2025). Building up ethical standard and making young adults informed is challenging due to lack of digital literacy initiatives (Buchan et al., 2024). Educators are now concerned about exploring opportunities that can be created by ICT or social media for the youth to handle the complexities of digital age. They are trying to incorporate digital literacy into curricula so that they can foster critical thinking ability of the youth and develop informed citizenship (Hagge, 2023; Chauke, 2024). A study has advocated for a novel approach that promotes self-directed ethical behavior, where individuals become conscious of their responsibilities in the digital realm and make informed decisions about their online activities. Besides this novel approach, many studies have advocated for internet ethics, cyber education, and media information and literacy (MIL) (Wang et al., 2025; Yang, 2024; Tinmaz et al., 2022; Mrisho, 2023; UNESCO, 2025). This will foster digital competencies for positive engagement in online spaces, learning to protect the privacy of others, combating misinformation, and bridging knowledge divides (UNESCO, 2025; Santhosh & Thiyagu, 2024). Moreover, a notable number of studies have highlighted the importance of fostering the role of digital media platforms, particularly social media, in supporting and encouraging users to adopt ethical practices (Song et al., 2024; Felton et al., 2023; Burr et al., 2020). Building on these appeals, the present study aims to explore the role of ICT and social media in strengthening the ethical standards of the young generation. More specifically, it seeks to identify the opportunities created by social media and ICT in promoting ethical practices among youth in Bangladesh. At the same time, the study examines the challenges posed by these technologies in maintaining ethical standards. Finally, it aims to provide recommendations for enhancing digital literacy, ethical awareness, and responsible use of ICT in Bangladesh.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to explore the role of ICT and social media in building ethical standards of young generation. More specifically, the study intends-

- a. to measure digital citizenship of youth in Bangladesh
- b. to identify the challenges posed by social media and ICT in maintaining ethical standards among youth

- c. to explore the opportunities created by social media and ICT for promoting ethical practices among young generation in Bangladesh
- d. to provide recommendations for enhancing digital literacy, ethical awareness, and responsible use of ICT in Bangladesh.

Research Questions

- a) What is the overall level of digital citizenship among the youth in Bangladesh?
- b) What challenges do ICT and social media pose to maintaining ethical standards among Bangladeshi youth?
- c) What opportunities do ICT and social media create for promoting ethical practices among the young generation in Bangladesh?
- d) In what ways can misuse or overuse of ICT and social media negatively impact the ethical standards of young people?
- e) What strategies can be implemented to enhance digital literacy and ethical awareness among youth in Bangladesh?
- f) How can ICT and social media platforms be effectively utilized to encourage responsible digital behavior and ethical practices?

Rationale of the Study

In the rapidly evolving digital era, young people are increasingly exposed to diverse online platforms that shape their communication, learning, and social interactions. However, thriving in this digital landscape demands more than technical proficiency; it requires critical thinking, responsible behavior, and strong ethical awareness (UNESCO, 2025). Despite the growing importance of digital ethics, building ethical standards among young adults remains a major challenge, particularly due to the limited availability and implementation of structured digital literacy initiatives (Buchan et al., 2024).

Recognizing this gap, educators across the globe are attempting to integrate digital literacy into academic curricula to nurture critical thinking, empower youth with informed decision-making skills, and promote active, responsible citizenship (Hagge, 2023; Chauke, 2024). A substantial body of research further highlights the importance of internet ethics, cyber education, and

media information and literacy (MIL) as essential components of 21st-century education (Wang et al., 2025; Yang, 2024; Tinmaz et al., 2022; Mrisho, 2023; UNESCO, 2025).

Strengthening ethical digital competencies will enable young learners to engage positively in online environments, safeguard personal and others' privacy, identify and combat misinformation, and contribute to reducing knowledge gaps (UNESCO, 2025; Santhosh & Thiyagu, 2024). Despite these recognized benefits, practical strategies, policy interventions, and context-specific approaches for fostering digital ethics among youth remain insufficient, especially in many developing contexts.

Given this background, the present study seeks to examine the existing status of digital ethics awareness, explore the challenges faced by educators and institutions, and propose effective strategies for developing ethical and digitally competent young citizens. This study is timely and significant, as it addresses a critical need for empowering youth to navigate digital spaces responsibly, thereby contributing to a safer, informed, and inclusive digital society.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: CONCEPTS, CONTEXTS AND THEORIES

Definitions of Key Concepts: Youth, ICT, Social media, Ethics

Youth is generally defined as the period of life when one is young, particularly the time between childhood and maturity (Merriam–Webster Dictionary, n.d.). Conceptually, youth can be analyzed from multiple perspectives, including age, ethnicity, and other socio-cultural factors that shape its composition. Generations of Youth examines how young people's autonomy and the very concept of youth are produced in negotiation with adult authority and institutions of socialization (Austin & Willard, 1998). This approach emphasizes the historical and social processes through which youth identity is constructed and situated within broader societal hierarchies, as explored in the definitive studies on American youth cultures.

Youth is also recognized as a dynamic social category, often representing visible manifestations of social change. Different forms of socialization impart normative roles and knowledge, allowing youth to participate in various social processes. As such, youth groups develop distinct patterns of life and provide expressive forms for social and material experiences. This highlights the cultural dimension of youth, where collective behaviors, lifestyles, and symbolic practices reflect broader societal transformations. Youth culture interacts closely with manufactured popular cultures and can be understood as a monolithic appeal to individuals under 30 (Austin & Willard, 1998). Scholars have emphasized different dimensions of youth experience. Cohen (1955) suggested that youth engage in activities shaped by the problems they face, while Miller (1958) argued that working-class youth are particularly concerned with toughness, trouble, smartness, excitement, fate, and autonomy. Youth subcultures emerge within these broader youth cultures, reflecting specific social, economic, and cultural contexts.

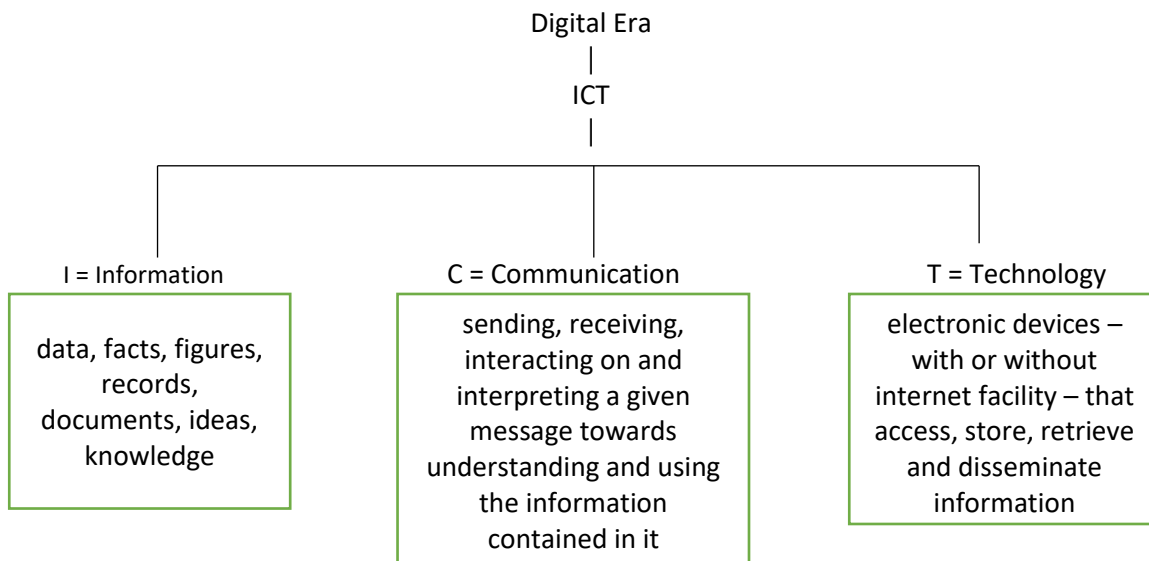
Social media refers to interactive and computational platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, where users create, share, and engage with electronic content. These platforms provide ordinary people with spaces for self-presentation, peer approval, and community-building (Banet-Weiser & Alexandra, 2011). Social media, particularly SNSs,

emphasize initiating relationships between strangers and maintaining connections with people with whom users feel affiliation (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Platforms such as Facebook serve multiple purposes, including meeting new friends, establishing romantic relationships, online dating, sending messages, planning activities, keeping in touch with old friends, viewing photos, entertainment, seeking academic help, advertising social events or club activities, avoiding socially uncomfortable situations, distraction or procrastination, posting photos, checking out others, tracking ex-partners, and monitoring peers' activities (Stern & Taylor, 2007).

A distinctive feature of social media is the ability to learn about friends' lives through passive observation of posts (self-disclosure) without direct interaction. Users often respond with "likes" or comments rather than engaging in active communication. This passive communication has become a common method of interaction, supplementing relationship maintenance but also influencing social behavior due to the lack of reciprocity (Orben & Sünbär, 2017). While reciprocal self-disclosure fosters trust and liking in face-to-face interactions, social media interactions often lack such reciprocity because the receivers of disclosures remain unknown, which can limit the development of relational bonds. Nonetheless, individuals can signal positivity and reward interaction partners through self-disclosures online, whether via status updates or private messages. Sharing positive content in this way enhances connectedness and contributes to the development and maintenance of online relationships, shaping how social ties are formed and sustained in digital environments (Orben & Sünbär, 2017).

ICT Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become an integral part of modern society. ICT is often referred to as the infrastructure as well as components enabling modern computing. However, there is no universal definition of ICT as because IC technologies, devices and even ideas are constantly changing. ICT includes both traditional technologies such as landline telephones, radio, television, and other broadcast systems as well as modern innovations like the internet, mobile networks, and many other wireless telecommunication systems. A more recent innovations include smartphones, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and the Internet of Things (IoT). In addition, more advanced developments like 5G, 6G, Web3, and quantum computing are gradually changing the landscape of ICT (Kirvan et al., 2025).

Figure 2.1: structure of ICT in the Digital society



Source: Naga and Uzuegbu (2015)

Naga and Uzuegbu (2015) presents a conceptual diagram showing the structure of ICT in the Digital society. The diagram consists of three key components: Information (I) including data, facts, figures, records, documents, ideas, and knowledge. These form the foundation of communication and interaction; Communication (C) Involving sending, receiving, interacting, and interpreting messages to understand and use the information that is shared; and finally, Technology (T) represents the electronic devices that are used to store, retrieve, process, and disseminate information. The diagram highlights the integration and coordination of information, communication, and technology to facilitate knowledge sharing as well as connecting individuals with systems.

Ethical standard

Ethical standards refer to a community's most widely shared values. People hold these beliefs and values so deeply that these ultimately become inseparable from the communities who create them. Aristotle emphasized the connectivity between community and ethics while writing about the goal of ethical enquiry. He stated that the purpose of ethical inquiry is to identify good that most benefits both the individual and the society. An individual is expected

to behave in an ethical way means he/she should act in a way that will not harm to others. In other words, an individual should be habituated to behave in a manner that contributes to the public welfare (Fried, 2003).

Fried (2003) has incorporated a conceptual framework in his book known as “ethics wheel” developed by Fried and Malley (2002) which, though an unpublished manuscript, has been used in many studies. This wheel helps individuals analyze ethical issues from multiple perspectives. It shows that ethical behavior not only means distinguishing between right or wrong, but also balancing four key issues: values, principles, context, and consequences. The inner circle shows basic moral beliefs of individuals that includes honesty, fairness, respect, integrity and compassion. The principles that an individual must follow include beneficence (do good), nonmaleficence (do no harm), autonomy (respect for choice), and justice (fairness). Everyone must follow professional rules and regulations established by the institutions. Finally, the outer circle represents external influences that include law, norms, customs, culture, religion etc. An individual is expected to consider local context while following global ethics.

In digital communication context, this wheel can be applied as it considers local context, phenomenology, time frame and dynamic interaction among all these three dimensions. An individual is expected to consider his local context while interacting in a global platform. He/she should understand the cultural aspects, local meaning of symbols and its connectivity to the global context, and consider the significance of interaction in a particular time period.

Following the framework of Fried and Malley (2002), an individual should be honest while sharing information, show respect in commenting online and act with integrity remaining away from misusing data. Besides, an individual must follow some moral principles. For example, she/she should use ICT and social media for positive purposes, avoid actions that cause harm to others, treat everyone equally irrespective of gender, ethnicity and beliefs, and respect others’ right to privacy and consent.

Digital citizenship

Digital citizenship helps protect personal privacy online. It also enables individuals to ensure the security of both themselves and others. According to Ribble (2008) digital citizen should possess a few characteristics that include understanding human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practicing legal and ethical behavior. Besides, advocating legal, and responsible use of information and technology is another major concern of digital citizenship. A digital citizen must exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology so that his interaction with technology supports collaboration, learning, and productivity. Besides, he/she must demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning; and exhibit leadership (Ribble, 2008). In short, responsible digital citizenship means behaving with technology lawfully, safely, respectfully and responsibly.

As already mentioned in literature review section, young people spend a huge amount of time online and often experience cyberbullying, doxxing, fraud, radicalization, and harassment. This may produce substantial psychological and social damage. As psychological harm in digital space is often experienced as the real harm by the young adults, safety and ethics cannot be considered as optional. Choi (2016) found four major criteria that are related to the construction of digital citizenship. These include ethics, media literacy, participation or engagement, and finally critical resistance.

The role of ICT and Social Media in Everyday Life

The section attempts to review literature that focus on the positive role of ICT and social media in everyday way of life. ICT and social media help young people learn in any time outside the school time. University students clarify many concepts from online based classes uploaded in YouTube channels. Digital technology has brought revolutionary changes in education and learning. In many developed nations, use of paper has become limited and sometimes replaced by the ICT based electronic screen (UNESCO, 2023).

Digital literacy is now considered as the key to empowerment and basic skill for future jobs. Young adults use these tools for searching information, creating content, basic coding, design, data handling and so on. These skills increase the scope of job market and provide them with opportunities of serving a new kind of global labor market such as online freelancing, digital entrepreneurship, and content creation (Kusuma et al., 2023; Alao and Brink, 2023).

An empirical analysis identified social media as serving three key functions: filling empty time slots, supporting everyday transformations, and managing mood (Bengtsson & Johansson, 2022) and thereby is tied to positive impacts on quality of life (Marzo et al., 2024).

Line et al. (2011) revealed that ICTs are quickly embedded into participants' daily travel and communication routines and are shaping the everyday lives of students (18–28 years old) and part-time working mothers. Using diaries and interviews, the research found that ICTs have a cumulative impact on daily practices. Technologies help people manage uncertainties in travel and activity scheduling. A very recent study conducted in 2025 has found the relevance of this previous study and showed that ICT reshapes daily routines and time budgets e.g. replacing travel or in-person tasks with digital ones. It may also generate new activities such as digital socializing or modify existing ones such as blended work/home routines (Lehner et al. 2025).

Besides, digital and technological resources also play a crucial role in the families' daily lives. Parent-child care relationships have been changed in recent years (Duek and Moguillansky, 2020). Altun (2019) emphasizes that because of technological progress, children are exposed to digital devices from an early stage of life. This makes parental involvement and guidance in their development, through digital parenting, crucial. In addition to parent-child interaction, Quan-Haase et al. (2021) explored how people in East York exchange social support and how communication technologies influence this process. Though the types of support, such as companionship, services, emotional and financial help, remain similar to past decades, technology now strengthens ties with siblings, extended family, and friends by enabling frequent interaction and long-distance support (Tariq et al., 2022; Quan-Haase et al., 2021). In addition, social media helps youth explore their identity. They can find reference group and ideology with which they are aligned. In such way, adolescents construct their identities through engaging in interaction in social media (Pérez-Torres, 2024).

A past study found that 19% young adults aged between 18–25 has searched health information online. About 4 out of 10 young adults aged between 15–24-year-olds said that they could change their personal behavior based on the information they obtained on the Internet (The Children’s Partnership, 2006). Besides, health apps have brought revolutionary changes to telemedicine. By using these apps, patients in remote areas can easily maintain scheduled follow-up visits, which makes treatment more effective, reduces missed appointments, and improves overall patient outcomes (Haleem et al., 2021).

In China, digital platforms played a crucial role in fundraising by the youth during COVID-19. In Algeria, young people were using online platforms for protest. However, after the outbreak of COVID-19, they repurposed these platforms to encourage citizens to ‘stay home’ during the outbreak (Pelter, 2020). Thus, ICT based online platforms give youth a public voice. Young adults often use online platforms to express opinions, discuss social issues, organize campaigns, and form public opinion when traditional system disintegration takes place in a society (Unicef, 2020).

Thus, it is evident that ICT-based platforms such as social media have brought revolutionary changes to the everyday life of people, particularly young adults. ICT has opened new opportunities in several areas of life, including education and learning, economy and employment, psychological well-being, health-related quality of life, family ties and social network building, time management, managing work routines and mobility, civic engagement, and political opinion formation (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: The Role of ICT and Social Media in Everyday Life of Youth

Author(s) & Year	Main Theme / Key Finding	Dimensions
UNESCO (2023)	ICT reduces paper use in education and supports digital/online learning beyond school hours.	Education / Learning
Kusuma et al. (2023)	Digital literacy helps youth build skills (searching info, coding, design, data) for future jobs and freelancing.	Education / Skills / Employment
Alao & Brink (2023)	ICT creates new job market opportunities such as digital entrepreneurship and content creation.	Employment / Economic Opportunity
Bengtsson & Johansson (2022)	Social media fills spare time, supports daily self-management, and helps regulate mood.	Psychological Wellbeing / Lifestyle
Marzo et al. (2024)	Social media use is linked to higher quality of life.	Psychological Wellbeing / Quality of Life

Line et al. (2011)	ICT becomes part of daily routine (travel, scheduling, communication) and helps manage uncertainty in everyday life.	Everyday Life / Mobility / Time Management
Lehner et al. (2025)	ICT reshapes daily routines and time budgets by replacing physical tasks with digital ones and creating new activities.	Everyday Life / Work–Life Routine
Duek & Moguillansky (2020)	Digital technology changes family life and parent–child care relationships.	Family / Parenting
Altun (2019)	Children are exposed to digital devices from early age, so digital parenting and guidance become very important.	Family / Child Development / Parenting
Quan-Haase et al. (2021)	Technology supports social support (emotional, practical, financial) across family and friends through constant contact.	Social Support / Family Relations
Tariq et al. (2022)	ICT keeps strong ties with siblings, relatives, and friends by enabling frequent, long-distance connection.	Social Connectivity / Relationships
Pérez-Torres (2024)	Social media helps adolescents form identity by finding like-minded groups and expressing themselves.	Identity Formation / Youth Culture
The Children’s Partnership (2006)	Youth search health information online and many change their personal behavior based on what they learn.	Health Information / Self-care
Haleem et al. (2021)	Health apps and telemedicine help remote patients follow up on treatment, reduce missed visits, and improve outcomes.	Health / Telemedicine
Pelter (2020)	Youth use online platforms for collective action: fundraising, protest, and later public health messaging (“stay home”).	Civic Participation / Collective Action / Public Health Communication
UNICEF (2020)	ICT platforms give young people a public voice to express opinions, organize campaigns, and shape public opinion.	Civic / Political Voice (Youth Agency)

Source: Based on literature review

However, ICT based platforms have become a crucial source of inequality, social crime and negativity. A number of studies have highlighted the negative role of ICT and social media that influence the ethical standard of young people. The next section has reviewed the literature that have focused on the challenges related to ICT and social media.

Theoretical Framework

Cultivation theory, developed by George Gerbner and colleagues at the Annenberg School of Communication, explains how media dominates audiences’ symbolic environments and shapes

their beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of reality (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Media functions as a socializing agent that influences ethical orientations and moral understandings of individuals. Gerbner (1998) outlined three components of the cultural indicators project: institutional process analysis (how media messages are produced), message system analysis (the content and patterns of messages), and cultivation analysis (how long-term exposure influences social perceptions and behavior) (Gerbner, 1998; Shrum, 2017). Media thus cultivates shared worldviews, limits individual choices, and reinforces mainstream cultural values, reducing social and ideological differences among people.

In the digital era, cultivation theory has gained renewed relevance, particularly in examining social media and ICT's role in influencing youth behavior and ethics. Platforms like Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram serve as powerful storytelling and meaning-making environments that continuously expose users to cultural norms, consumer values, and social trends (Shrum, 2017). This constant engagement can simultaneously promote ethical awareness and normalize questionable moral standards. The accessibility model of cultivation effects explains how repeated media exposure shapes perceptions and judgments, while *online processing* describes real-time attitude formation during media engagement (Shrum, 2017). In Bangladesh, where young people are highly immersed in social media, cultivation theory helps explain how continuous ICT use shapes ethical standards, lifestyles, and values.

As ICT based platforms have the ability to shape perception and judgments of people by ensuring constant engagement through various contents, these platforms, thus, can play crucial role in developing ethical awareness and standard for using these platforms in a more responsible way. In other words, ICT based platforms can become an effective way of building digital citizenship among the people particularly youth. According to Ribble (2015), digital citizenship provides the framework that can help teachers or decision makers in schools to understand what is appropriate and what is inappropriate while communicating online. Oyedemi (2018) developed an opportunity-based theory named *Digital citizenship theory*. The theory states about preparing active citizens supported by access to technology. It is expected that digital citizenship will empower people so they can act ethically, organize themselves,

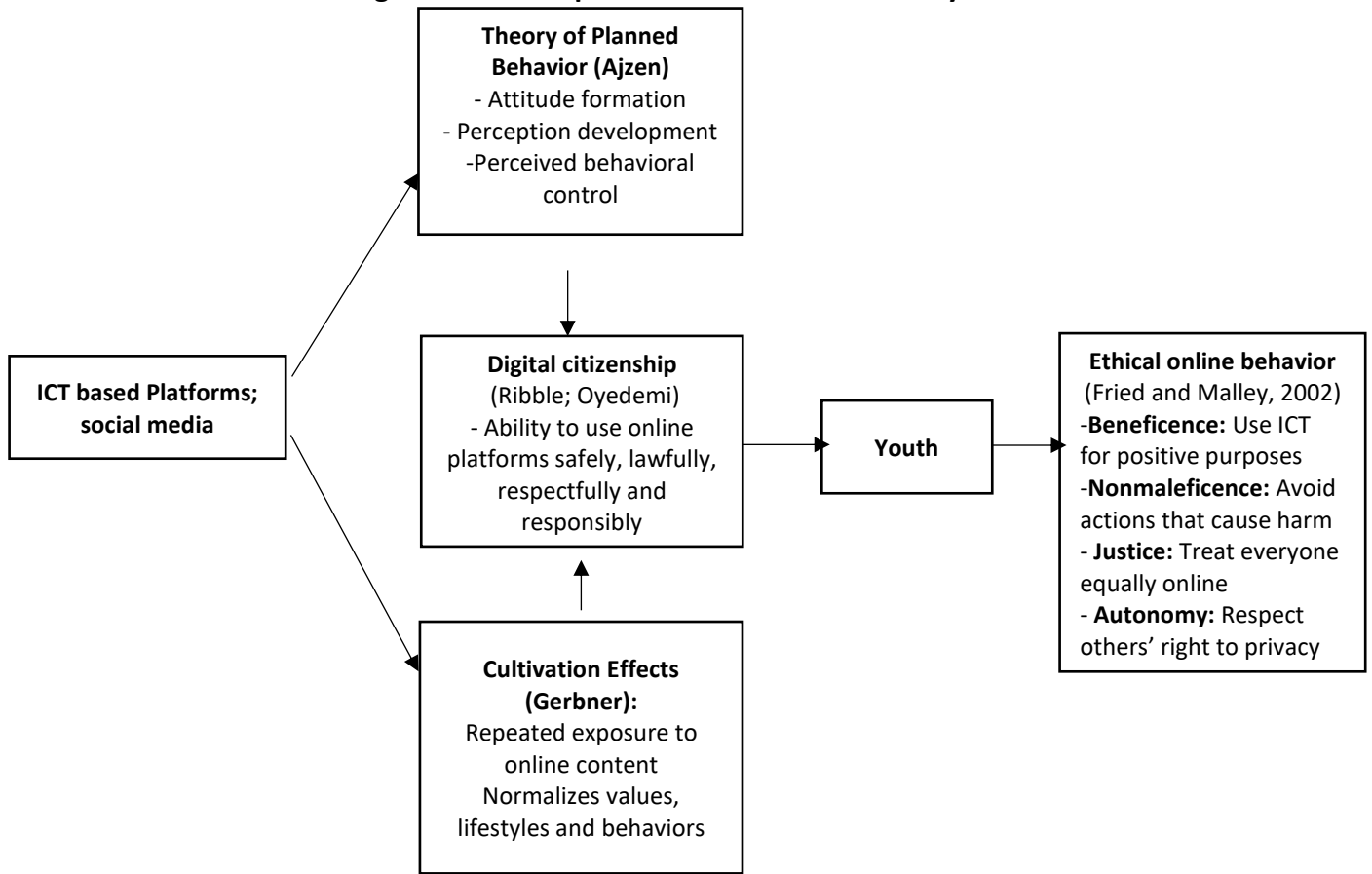
claim their rights, and drive social change (Oyedemi, 2018). Thus, the theory suggests how ICT can become a force for ethical development.

If digital citizenship can be cultivated by ICT based platforms, the youth can behave in a socially and culturally expected way. Ajzen (1991) developed *Theory of planned behavior* which suggests that a person's behavior is driven by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In other words, a person's behavior is driven by intentions which together with perceptions of behavioral control, may bring considerable changes in actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In the case of digital platforms, ICT based social media may change how youth *feel* about unethical behavior in online platforms such as honesty, respect, harassment, cyberbullying, plagiarism etc. They may feel peer pressure for not invading privacy of others if friends using different apps say that "leaking someone's personal information is disgusting. Finally, ICT literacy may equip them with skills and confidence that they can act ethically and can defend themselves and others.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Based on the concepts and theories discussed above, the study proposes a conceptual framework in which ICT-based platforms, particularly social media, exert a cultivating effect on youth by keeping them constantly engaged with online content. Gerbner showed that media can normalize certain values and ethics through repeated exposure. This can include harmful effects. However, it is important to note that the same platforms can also be used in a planned and intentional way by policymakers to cultivate positive values, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions. By promoting digital literacy and education, and by teaching clear ethical guidelines for online interaction, these platforms can help develop digital citizenship among youth. This development of digital citizenship will contribute to producing expected ethical behavior online.

Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source: Developed by the researcher

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach and Study Area

This study adopted a mixed-method approach following both positivist and constructivist paradigms. Positivism states that the scientific analysis of field data can reveal social facts about the role of social media and ICT in building ethical standards among youths. On the other hand, constructivism believes that reality is socially constructed. As part of positivism, the research relied on empirical data and aimed to generate generalized findings on how social media and ICT contributed to shaping ethical practices, including the challenges and opportunities. The study also collected subjective opinions. In addition, the study employed a qualitative research design to explore digital citizenship, ethical practices on social media, virtual interactions, and related responsibilities. The research focused on understanding motivational orientations of content creation, the quality of digital interactions, and adherence to ethical standards. The study targeted youth aged 18–35, as defined by the Bangladesh National Youth Policy (2017), in Dhaka and Chittagong cities. These cities were selected because they are the largest urban centers in Bangladesh and have high internet penetration rates. Dhaka has a significantly higher internet penetration rate compared to many other regions, while Chittagong is among the urban areas where internet access is most developed (GlobeNewswire, 2024). The locations were chosen based on convenience, potential, and suitability for effective data collection.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

A pilot study was conducted with 20 students who were familiar with the data collectors. These students were asked about their social media usage, lifestyle changes, and changes in ethical

codes in their lives. The pilot study provided insights into the general role of social media in building ethical standards, as well as the challenges and opportunities for ethical practices. Based on these findings, the researchers conducted a social survey using both face-to-face interviews and online survey methods.

Data were collected from students studying in different colleges and universities in Dhaka and Chittagong, as well as from employees who extensively used ICT and social media in their daily lives. To complement the quantitative findings, qualitative methods were also employed. Facebook pages of content creators were analyzed to explain the prevailing status of social media use, digital citizenship practices, and the level of ethical practices. In addition, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted to collect in-depth qualitative insights. The FGDs were designed to be open-ended and interactive, allowing participants to freely express their experiences, opinions, and perceptions regarding digital ethics and responsible online behavior. Key Informant Interviews provided expert insights on digital citizenship, ethical challenges, institutional opportunities, and strategies for strengthening digital ethics.

3.3 Sampling and Respondents

For this study, individuals who met the minimum qualification criteria and could comprehend the study's purpose were selected as respondents. The population of youth was approximately 55.05 million, representing roughly one-third of the total population within the age group of 18–35, according to the Department of Youth Development (DYD). Due to the substantial population size, the standardized formula of small sample techniques developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was followed, which indicates a required sample size of 384 for a population of 1,000,000 and above. Based on this formula, the required sample size was initially considered as 390 respondents, with half from Dhaka and the rest from Chittagong. After data collection and validation, 327 samples were finalized, of which 159 (49%) were from Dhaka and 168 (51%) from Chittagong. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling, considering their more than one-year experience of social media use, their age range of 18–35, and their ability to understand and complete the questionnaire.

For the qualitative components, participants were also selected using purposive sampling, targeting individuals actively engaged in social media practices, and snowball sampling was applied to reach additional participants. Three popular Facebook pages were purposively selected for case analysis, considering their large virtual followings, high engagement in terms of likes and comments, and overall influence. These included a female beautician, a female influencer, and a male entertainer.

Table 3.1: Research Methods and Sampling in Relation to Objectives

Research Methods	Sample Size	Sampling Techniques	Objectives
Social Survey (Face-to-face & Online)	327 respondents (159 Dhaka, 168 Chittagong)	Purposive sampling	To examine the role of social media and ICT in shaping ethical standards among youth
Case Study (Facebook Pages Analysis)	3 Facebook pages	Purposive sampling	To understand the nature of social media use, digital citizenship practices, and ethical standards
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) – Journalists	19 journalists	Purposive sampling	To gather expert insights on media practices, digital engagement, and ethical challenges
Key Informant Interview (2 Academic Experts, 1 IT Programmer)	3 experts	Judgmental sampling	To explore institutional perspectives on digital citizenship and ethical standards
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	2 FGDs (10 participants total)	Purposive Snowball sampling +	To explore in-depth perceptions, experiences, and attitudes toward digital ethics and online behavior

To gain expert insights on media practices, digital engagement, and information dissemination, a total of 19 journalists were purposively selected as Key Informant Interview (KII) participants from diverse media sectors, including print media, online news portals, television, and social media platforms, ensuring balanced professional representation. Most journalists had 3–8 years of experience, while a smaller proportion had 1–2 years or over 6 years of experience, capturing both early-career and experienced perspectives. These journalists were affiliated with

well-known national media outlets such as Daily Sun, The Daily Star, Samakal, Jugobarta, Banglanews24.com, Jamuna Television, and News24.

In addition, two KIIs were conducted with academic experts of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at Jagannath University, who were selected through judgmental sampling. Another IT programmer was selected as a KII through judgmental sampling for having basic knowledge of the challenges, opportunities, and strategies involved in building ethical standards. They provided expert insights on digital citizenship, ethical challenges, institutional opportunities, and strategies for strengthening digital ethics. All respondents participated based on their consent and willingness to provide information, and their identities were anonymized to ensure confidentiality. For FGD-1, the participants included Taijul (History), Nazmul (Pali), Sagar (English), Prodip (Sanskrit), and Mujahidul (Islamic History and Culture). For FGD-2, the participants included Hasibul (Bangla), Ansari (Public Administration), Pronoy (English), Sablul (Sanskrit), and Sakibul (Management Studies). The students' names were recorded with pseudo-names.

3.4 Data Collection Tools and Techniques

Utilizing the initial information gathered from the pilot study, both structured and unstructured questionnaires were developed, initially in English and later translated into Bengali to ensure that respondents could easily understand and respond to the questions. The questionnaire was written in clear and accessible language to facilitate effective communication during data collection. Survey and qualitative field data were collected from 28 October 2025 to 20 July 2026. Separate guidelines were developed to maintain consistency in data collection. A structured questionnaire was used for the survey, where respondents from Dhaka were selected online using a Google Form questionnaire, while respondents from Chittagong were approached through face-to-face data collection using hard copies of the questionnaire. During the data collection process, questionnaires were provided to respondents, and when necessary, the research team conducted face-to-face interviews.

The structured questionnaire comprised several sections, including socio-demographic information and different dimensions of the role of social media in building ethical standards, such as digital literacy, social responsibility, honesty and integrity, empathy and respect, civic engagement, collaboration and solidarity, privacy and security, and cultural and religious value sensitivity. It also included sections on challenges and opportunities in building ethical standards. Each FGD lasted approximately two hours and followed a semi-structured format guided by a checklist of topics, including the status of digital citizenship, ethical practices, responsibilities in virtual interactions, challenges in maintaining ethical standards, and potential solutions. The discussions were conducted in a friendly and open environment to encourage candid sharing. Responses were recorded both in written form and through audio recordings to ensure accuracy. After each session, the audio recordings were transcribed into Bengali and then translated into English. This process ensured the accurate capture and preservation of participants' perspectives for qualitative analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis followed several steps such as data reduction, data display, data transformation (from quantity to quality), data consolidation (quantitative data with literature support), and data comparison and data triangulation (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003). For the completion of those steps, we reduced quantitative data into generalized form with the use of statistical software SPSS 21. The software helped us to measure statistical data according to the input coding system. We calculated the demographic variables with the use of descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage. This research uses cross-tabulation and applies the Chi-square (χ^2) test to examine the association between the demographic variables and social media use relating to building ethical standard.

Table 3.2: Role of Social Media in Building Ethical Standard

Indicators	Variables	Scale	Normalized value	Interpretations
Digital Literacy (Information evaluation, technical skill, critical skill, creative problem-solving skill)	1. I can identify reliable and unreliable sources of information online.	4. Always	1.00	4 indicates high digital literacy and 1 indicates low digital literacy
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
	2. I know how to use different digital tools (e.g., email, word processing, online forms).	4. Always	1.00	
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
	3. I think critically before believing or sharing online information.	4. Always	1.00	
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
	4. I can solve basic online or device-related problems by myself.	4. Always	1.00	
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
5. I can create and share digital content responsibly (e.g., blogs, videos, posts).	4. Always	1.00		
	3. Often	0.67		
	2. Sometimes	0.33		
	1. Never	0.00		
Social Responsibility/ Digital Ethics and Responsibility	1.I use social media to share information that benefits others or society.	4. Always	1.00	4 indicates being mostly socially responsible through social media and 1 indicates mostly being irresponsible
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
	2.I feel responsible for promoting positive values through my online posts.	4. Always	1.00	
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
	3.I avoid posting or forwarding harmful or misleading content.	4. Always	1.00	
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
4.I report unethical or inappropriate content when I see it online.	4. Always	1.00		
	3. Often	0.67		
	2. Sometimes	0.33		
	1. Never	0.00		
Honesty and Integrity/ Digital Etiquette	1.I check the truth before sharing information on social media.	4. Always	1.00	4 indicates being mostly honest through social media and 1
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
	2.I avoid copying or using others' content without permission.	4. Always	1.00	
		3. Often	0.67	

		2. Sometimes	0.33	indicates mostly being dishonest
		1. Never	0.00	
	3. I use my real identity rather than fake profiles on social platforms.	4. Always	1.00	
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
Empathy and Respect/ Digital Etiquette	1. I show respect to others' opinions even when I disagree online.	4. Always	1.00	4 indicates being mostly empathy through social media and 1 indicates mostly being disrespectful
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
	2. I avoid making negative comments about others on social platforms.	4. Always	1.00	
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
	3. I feel empathy toward people who are targeted or bullied online.	4. Always	1.00	
3. Often		0.67		
2. Sometimes		0.33		
1. Never		0.00		
Civic Ethics/ Digital Civic Engagement	1. I use ICT to participate in community or civic activities (e.g., campaigns, charity).	4. Always	1.00	4 indicates having highest civic ethics and 1 indicates lowest civic ethics
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
	2. I discuss social or national issues online in a respectful way.	4. Always	1.00	
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
Cooperation and Solidarity/ Digital Collaboration and Solidarity	1. I collaborate with others through online study groups or projects.	4. Always	1.00	4 indicates mostly cooperative and 1 indicates mostly detached
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
	2. I support online initiatives that help people in need.	4. Always	1.00	
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
	3. I participate in social media campaigns promoting teamwork and cooperation.	4. Always	1.00	
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
Digital Privacy and Security	1. I maintain privacy settings to control who can see my content.	4. Always	1.00	4 indicates mostly maintained privacy and 1 indicates mostly violates privacy
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
	2. I don't violate the privacy of others online.	4. Always	1.00	
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	

Digital Cultural and Religious Value Sensitivity	1.I respect cultural and religious differences in online discussions.	4. Always	1.00	4 indicates mostly sensitive to culture and 1 indicates mostly unsensible
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
	2.I avoid sharing content that may hurt others' religious or cultural beliefs.	4. Always	1.00	
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	
	3.I feel blessed that I can learn about different cultures through the internet.	4. Always	1.00	
		3. Often	0.67	
		2. Sometimes	0.33	
		1. Never	0.00	

Table 3.3: Composite Challenge Index

	Question on Lack of Comprehensive Digital Policy	Categories	Code	Normalized value	Interpretation of the Scale
ICT policy status	1. What do you think about the existence of a national digital ethics policy for youth?	a. It clearly exists and is active	1	0.00	4 indicates biggest challenge and 1 indicates least challenge
		b. It exists but is not effective	2	0.33	
		c. It is being discussed but not implemented	3	0.67	
		d. There is no such policy at all	4	1.00	
	2. How would you describe the current ICT policies in addressing ethical issues?	A) They are modern and updated	1	0.00	
		B) They are partially updated	2	0.33	
		C) They are old and outdated	3	0.67	
		D) I am not aware of any ICT policy	4	1.00	
Policy effectivity	3. How often do authorities monitor unethical or harmful online content?	A) Very regularly	1	0.00	4 indicates mostly ineffective as biggest challenge and 1 as least challenge
		B) Occasionally	2	0.33	
		C) Rarely	3	0.67	
		D) Never	4	1.00	
	4. How effective are policies in controlling fake or misleading social media content?	A) Highly effective	1	0.00	
		B) Moderately effective	2	0.33	
		C) Slightly effective	3	0.67	
		D) Not effective at all	4	1.00	
Weak policy confession	5. Why do you think regulation of social media content is weak?	A) Too rapid change in technology	1	0.00	4 indicates highest cause of lack of policy implementation, 1 indicates least challenge
		B) Lack of manpower	2	0.33	
		C) Lack of implementation of Law	3	0.67	
		D) Lack of political will	4	1.00	
	6. What is the main reason for weak policy enforcement online?	A) Lack of trained staff	1	0.00	
		B) Lack of clear guidelines	2	0.33	
		C) Lack of monitoring tools	3	0.67	

		D) Corruption or negligence	4	1.00	
Law enforcement role	7. How do you evaluate law enforcement's ability to handle unethical online activity?	A) Very capable	1	0.00	4 indicates mostly unable to implement law and 1 indicates least challenge
		B) Somewhat capable	2	0.33	
		C) Not very capable	3	0.67	
		D) Not capable at all	4	1.00	
	8. What happens when someone violates digital ethics laws?	A) They are punished strictly	1	0.00	
		B) They get a mild warning	2	0.33	
		C) They are rarely punished	3	0.67	
		D) Nothing happens	4	1.00	
Digital literacy	9. Do schools teach digital ethics as part of ICT education?	A) Yes, formally	1	0.00	4 indicates least digital literacy and 1 indicates least challenge of literacy
		B) Only in some schools	2	0.33	
		C) Rarely, as a discussion topic	3	0.67	
		D) Not at all	4	1.00	
	10. What is the main reason behind poor digital literacy among youth?	A) Lack of training programs	1	0.00	
		B) Limited school curriculum	2	0.33	
		C) Lack of basic awareness	3	0.67	
		D) Lack of education	4	1.00	

The data analysis will follow the model of Digital Citizenship Index (DCI) following the coding that Always =4, Often =3, Sometimes =2, Never=1. The Index will follow the formula

$$CCI = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n Z_i \quad Z_i = \frac{X_i - X_{min}}{X_{max} - X_{min}}$$

[n = number of indicators used; Zi/NV = normalized value of each indicator]

To measure the Digital Citizenship Index (DCI) and the Composite Challenge Index, we first developed a coding system to calculate the Normalized Value (NV), where 1 represents the lowest role/ lowest opportunity/ lowest challenge and 4 represents the most effective role/ highest opportunity/ biggest challenge in building ethical standard of the youth. The formula for Normalized Value (NV) is: $NV = (X_i - X_{min}) / (X_{max} - X_{min})$, where X_i = actual score, X_{min} = minimum score observed, and X_{max} = maximum score observed. Next, we will calculate the Weighted Score (WS) using the formula: $WS = (f_i \times NV) / \text{Total frequency}$, where f_i = frequency, NV = normalized value (between 1-4), and Total frequency = total number of responses (Table 3.1). After that, we will compute the Digital Citizenship Index (DCI), and Composite Challenge Index. The research will explain planned behavior, focusing on both intentional and unintentional online actions, including hacking and vice-related behaviors.

The findings lead to structured, ministry-wise recommendations while maintaining sensitivity toward religious issues throughout the study. The survey and qualitative findings were analyzed using an integrated approach, incorporating data triangulation, comparison, and contrast. Both survey and qualitative data were used to address the first two objectives: assessing digital citizenship and ethical standards, and identifying challenges to upholding ethical standards. The remaining two objectives exploring opportunities and strategies for promoting ethical standards through social media and ICT were examined primarily through qualitative data.

3.6 Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations were strictly maintained throughout the research process. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. Participants were clearly informed about the purpose of the study and were given the right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by not disclosing any personal identifiers of the respondents. In the case of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Facebook page analysis, and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with journalists, participants' identities were kept anonymous, and all responses were used solely for academic purposes. Special care was taken during data collection and handling to ensure privacy and data security. Furthermore, the analysis of Facebook pages was conducted using publicly available content, maintaining ethical standards without violating individual privacy. Alongside, we attempted to verify students' responses by reviewing their Facebook timelines to assess the extent to which their answers were factual. However, this proved challenging, as a certain degree of bias in personal matters is a natural and expected aspect of respondents' behavior.

Chapter 4

PRESENTATION OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

This section presents the quantitative findings of the study, based on survey data capturing respondents' demographic characteristics as well as the current status of digital citizenship in relation to ICT and social media use. The data cover key dimensions of digital citizenship, including digital literacy, digital ethics and responsibility, digital honesty and integrity, digital etiquette, digital civic engagement, digital collaboration and solidarity, digital privacy and security, and digital cultural and religious value sensitivity, providing a comprehensive assessment of individuals' behaviors and awareness in digital environments. In addition, the study examines the major challenges affecting the development of digital citizenship through a Composite Challenge Index, highlighting critical issues such as policy ineffectiveness, weak policy cohesion, insufficient law enforcement, and gaps in digital literacy and reasoning.

4.1 Demographic Responses

Among the 327 respondents, the majority belong to the 23–26 years age group, representing 165 participants (50.5%), which is the highest proportion in the sample (Table 4.1). This suggests that the study mainly reflects the perceptions and experiences of young adults in their early to mid-twenties, a demographic group that is typically highly active in using social media and ICT platforms. The second largest group is 18–22 years (44.6%), indicating that most respondents fall within the youth category. This concentration of young participants is particularly relevant to the study, as it focuses on the ethical standards of the young generation in Bangladesh. In terms of gender distribution, male respondents constitute the highest proportion with 175 participants (53.5%), while female respondents account for 152 (46.5%). Although males slightly outnumber females, the distribution remains relatively balanced. This balanced representation helps ensure that the findings reflect perspectives from both genders regarding the role of social media and ICT in shaping ethical attitudes and behavior.

Table 4.1: Demographic Information

Categories	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18–22 years	146	44.6
	23–26 years	165	50.5
	27–30 years	12	3.7
	31–35 years	4	1.2
	Total	327	100
Gender	Male	175	53.5
	Female	152	46.5
	Total	327	100
Education	Undergraduate	245	74.9
	Graduate	58	17.7
	Postgraduate	15	4.6
	Completed higher edu & employed	4	1.2
	Others	5	1.5
	Total	327	100
Employment	Full-time student	291	89.0
	Part-time Student & worker	14	4.3
	Full-time employee	11	3.4
	Self-employed	3	.9
	Unemployed	8	2.4
	Total	327	100
Location	Dhaka	159	48.6
	Chittagong	168	51.4
	Total	327	100
Monthly income	10,000 taka or less	109	33.3
	10,001– 20,000 taka	57	17.4
	20,001 – 30,000 taka	47	14.4
	30,001 – 40,000 taka	35	10.7
	40,001 – 50,000 taka	32	9.8
	More than 50,000 taka	42	12.8
	Not Mentioned	5	1.5
	Total	327	100

Source: Field Survey 2025-2026

Regarding educational background, the data show that undergraduate students represent the largest group with 245 respondents (74.9%). This indicates that most participants are currently pursuing higher education. University students are among the most active users of digital technologies and social networking platforms; therefore, their perspectives are particularly valuable for understanding how ICT and social media influence ethical awareness and practices

among young people. The employment status of respondents further supports this observation. The largest group consists of full-time students, totaling 291 respondents (89.0%). This suggests that the study primarily captures the views of students rather than working professionals. Since students frequently engage with digital learning environments, online communication, and social networking sites, their experiences provide important insights into the ethical implications of ICT usage. The monthly income distribution shows that the largest proportion of respondents earn 10,000 taka or less per month (109 respondents, 33.3%). This relatively low-income level is consistent with the high percentage of full-time students in the sample, as many students rely on limited personal income or family support.

In terms of geographical location, Chittagong has the highest number of respondents with 168 participants (51.4%), followed by Dhaka with 159 respondents (48.6%). The nearly balanced representation from these two major urban regions indicates that the study captures perspectives from important metropolitan areas where access to ICT and social media usage is comparatively high. The demographic profile above all suggests that the respondents are primarily young undergraduate students aged 23–26, slightly male-dominated, studying full-time, and mainly residing in Chittagong and Dhaka with relatively low monthly income levels. This demographic composition is highly relevant to the research topic, as young students are among the most active users of social media and ICT. Their experiences and perceptions therefore provide meaningful insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with using digital technologies to build ethical standards among the young generation in Bangladesh.

4.2 Current Status of Digital Citizenship with Understanding Role of ICT and Social Media

Table 4.2 presents the respondents' level of digital literacy regarding their ability to identify reliable and unreliable sources of information on ICT platforms and social media. The findings show that 52.9% (approximately 53%) of the respondents reported that they often can identify reliable and unreliable sources of information, while 24% indicated that they sometimes possess this ability. In contrast, only 3% of the respondents stated that they never can identify reliable and unreliable sources. The weighted score for this indicator is 0.64 on a 1-point scale. This score suggests a moderate to relatively good level of digital literacy among the respondents in terms of evaluating information sources. A value of 0.64 indicates that the

average response leans toward the higher end of the scale, implying that most respondents tend to frequently recognize the credibility of information encountered on digital platforms.

Table 4.2: Digital Literacy

Identifying reliable and unreliable sources					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
identify reliable sources					
Always	4	1.00	66	20.2	66.00
Often	3	0.67	173	52.9	115.91
Sometimes	2	0.33	78	23.9	25.74
Never	1	0.00	10	3.1	0.00
Total			327	100	207.65
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.64$				
Using digital tools					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	118	36.1	118.00
Often	3	0.67	108	33.0	72.36
Sometimes	2	0.33	89	27.2	29.37
Never	1	0.00	11	3.4	0.00
Not Mentioned			1	.3	0.00
Total			327	100	219.73
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.67$				
Thinking critically before sharing					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	215	65.7	215.00
Often	3	0.67	74	22.6	49.58
Sometimes	2	0.33	33	10.1	10.89
Never	1	0.00	4	1.2	0.00
Not Mentioned			1	.3	0.00
Total			327	100	275.47
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.84$				
Solving basic device problems					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	81	24.8	81.00
Often	3	0.67	143	43.7	95.81
Sometimes	2	0.33	91	27.8	30.03
Never	1	0.00	11	3.4	0.00
Not Mentioned			1	.3	0.00
Total			327	100	206.84
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.63$				

Sharing digital content responsibly					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	148	45.3	148.00
Often	3	0.67	63	19.3	42.21
Sometimes	2	0.33	83	25.4	27.39
Never	1	0.00	31	9.5	0.00
Not Mentioned			2	.6	0.00
Total			327	100	217.60
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.67$				
Combined Weighted Score (Avg)= (0.64+0.67+0.84+0.63+0.67)/5 = 0.69					

Source: Field Survey 2025-2026

Although the score does not reach the maximum value of 1, it still reflects that a considerable proportion of participants possess the ability to critically assess online information, while some still demonstrate occasional or limited capacity in this regard. Thus, the result indicates that digital literacy related to information credibility is present among the majority of respondents, but there remains scope for improvement to achieve a stronger and more consistent ability across all users.

Table 4.2 also presents data on the respondents' use of digital tools. When asked whether they use digital tools or not, 36% of the respondents reported that they always use different digital tools and applications. In addition, 33% stated that they often use digital tools, while 27% mentioned that they sometimes use such tools. In contrast, a very small proportion of respondents (3.4%) reported that they never use digital tools, and 0.3% did not provide any response. The weighted score for the use of digital tools is 0.67 on a 1-point scale, which indicates a relatively high level of ability among the respondents in using digital tools. This score suggests that, on average, respondents tend to use digital tools frequently, reflecting a good level of digital engagement and familiarity with technological applications.

The table also presents data on respondents' critical thinking before sharing information online. When respondents were asked whether they think critically before sharing any information, 66% reported that they always think critically before sharing information, indicating a strong level of awareness and caution when disseminating content on social media. In addition, 22.6% (approximately 23%) of the respondents stated that they often think critically before sharing information. In contrast, a very small proportion of respondents (1.2%) reported that they

never think critically before sharing information, while 0.3% did not provide any response. The weighted score for critical thinking before sharing information is 0.84 on a 1-point scale, which indicates a high level of digital literacy among the respondents in terms of evaluating information before sharing it online. This high score suggests that the majority of respondents tend to critically assess information prior to sharing, reflecting a strong sense of responsibility and awareness regarding information credibility on digital platforms.

Respondents were asked about their ability to solve basic device problems independently. Specifically, they were asked whether they can solve basic device-related problems by themselves or if they seek help from others. The findings show that 44% of the respondents reported that they often solve basic device problems on their own, while 25% stated that they always solve such problems independently. In addition, 28% of the respondents mentioned that they sometimes solve device problems themselves but occasionally seek assistance from others. In contrast, only 3.4% of the respondents reported that they can never solve device-related problems on their own, and 0.3% did not provide any response. The weighted score for solving basic device problems is 0.63 on a 1-point scale, which indicates a moderately high level of technical competence among the respondents. This result suggests that a significant proportion of youth possess the ability to manage and troubleshoot basic device-related issues independently, reflecting a reasonable level of digital literacy and technological confidence among today's youth.

The final indicator used to assess digital literacy is responsible sharing of digital content. Respondents were asked whether they share digital content responsibly. The findings reveal that 45% of the respondents reported that they always feel responsible when sharing digital content, indicating a strong sense of accountability regarding the information they disseminate online. In addition, 19% of the respondents stated that they often share digital content responsibly, while 25% mentioned that they sometimes do so. This suggests that a portion of respondents occasionally share content without carefully considering the potential consequences or accuracy of the information. On the other hand, 9.5% (approximately 10%) of the respondents reported that they never share digital content responsibly, meaning they do not consider the implications or reliability of the information before sharing. Additionally, 2.6%

of respondents did not provide any response. The weighted score for responsible sharing of digital content is 0.67 on a 1-point scale, which indicates a relatively high level of responsibility among respondents in terms of sharing digital content. This suggests that, youth demonstrate a reasonable level of awareness regarding responsible online behavior. However, despite this positive finding, real-life observations on social media often reveal instances where individuals share content irresponsibly. Therefore, while the respondents in this study appear to exhibit comparatively responsible behavior, there remains scope for further strengthening digital responsibility and awareness among youth.

Overall digital literacy score= $(0.64+0.67+0.84+0.63+0.67)/5$

$$= \frac{3.45}{5} = 0.69$$

The combined weighted score of all five indicators is 0.69 on a 1-point scale, which indicates a relatively high level of digital literacy among the respondents. This suggests that, on average, the youth in the study demonstrate a good level of competence in using digital technologies, evaluating online information, and engaging responsibly in digital environments. Among the indicators, critical thinking before sharing information scored the highest (0.84), reflecting a strong tendency among respondents to evaluate information before disseminating it online. Other indicators such as use of digital tools (0.67) and responsible sharing of digital content (0.67) also show a relatively high level of engagement with digital platforms. Meanwhile, identifying reliable sources (0.64) and solving basic device problems (0.63) indicate a moderately strong level of digital competence, though there is still scope for improvement. The combined score 0.69 suggests that today's youth possess a fairly strong foundation of digital literacy, but further efforts in digital education and awareness programs could help strengthen their ability to critically evaluate information and use digital technologies more effectively and responsibly.

Table 4.3: Digital Ethics and Responsibility

Sharing beneficial information online					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
Always	4	1.00	117	35.8	117.00
Often	3	0.67	117	35.8	78.39
Sometimes	2	0.33	88	26.9	29.04
Never	1	0.00	5	1.5	0.00
Total			327	100	224.43
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.69$				
Promoting positive values online					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	151	46.2	151.00
Often	3	0.67	109	33.3	73.03
Sometimes	2	0.33	59	18.0	19.47
Never	1	0.00	6	1.8	0.00
Not Mentioned			2	.6	0.00
Total			327	100	243.50
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.74$				
Avoiding misleading content					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	278	85.0	278.00
Often	3	0.67	32	9.8	21.44
Sometimes	2	0.33	13	4.0	4.29
Never	1	0.00	4	1.2	0.00
Total			327	100	303.73
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.93$				
Reporting unethical content					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	113	34.6	113.00
Often	3	0.67	90	27.5	60.30
Sometimes	2	0.33	98	30.0	32.34
Never	1	0.00	26	8.0	0.00
Total			327	100	205.64
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.63$				
Combined Weighted Score (Avg)= $(0.69+0.74+0.93+0.63=2.99)/4= 0.75$					

Source: Field Survey 2025-2026

The Table 4.3 represents data on digital ethics and responsibility, which is an important component of digital citizenship. Respondents were asked whether they share beneficial

information online. The findings show that 36% of the respondents reported that they always share beneficial information online, while another 36% stated that they often share beneficial information online, indicating that a large proportion of respondents actively consider the usefulness of the information they share on digital platforms. Additionally, 26.9% (approximately 27%) of the respondents mentioned that they sometimes share beneficial information, suggesting that their sharing behavior may vary depending on the situation. In contrast, only 1.5% of the respondents stated that they never share beneficial information online. The average weighted score for this indicator is 0.69 on a 1-point scale, which indicates a relatively high level of digital ethics and responsibility among the respondents. This finding suggests that the youth in the study generally demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility when sharing information online, as they tend to consider whether the information will be beneficial for others before disseminating it through digital platforms.

Respondents were also asked whether they promote positive values online. In response to this question, 56% of the respondents stated that they always try to promote positive values online, while 33% reported that they often promote positive values through digital platforms. This indicates that a large majority of the respondents consciously attempt to spread constructive and positive messages in the online environment. In contrast, only 1.8% of the respondents stated that they never think about promoting positive values online, while 2.6% did not provide any response. The average weighted score for promoting positive values online is 0.74 on a 1-point scale, which indicates a relatively strong level of ethical responsibility among the respondents regarding their online behavior. This finding suggests that most respondents are aware of the importance of maintaining a positive digital environment and are actively engaged in spreading constructive values through their online interactions.

Respondents were also asked whether they avoid misleading content online. In response to this question, 85% of the respondents stated that they always avoid misleading content, while 9.8% (approximately 10%) reported that they often avoid such content. This indicates that the majority of respondents are conscious about not engaging with or spreading information that could mislead others. In contrast, only 1.2% of the respondents stated that they never avoid misleading content, representing a very small proportion of the sample. The average weighted

score for avoiding misleading content is 0.93 on a 1-point scale, which is very close to the maximum value. This result indicates a very high level of digital responsibility among the respondents. It suggests that the youth in this study are highly aware of the potential harm caused by misinformation and demonstrate a strong commitment to avoiding the sharing or promotion of misleading information in the digital space.

Finally, respondents were asked about reporting unethical content online, which is an important aspect of digital ethics and responsibility. In response to this question, 35% of the respondents stated that they always report unethical content, while 28% reported that they often report such content. Additionally, 30% of the respondents mentioned that they sometimes report unethical content when they encounter it online. On the other hand, 8% of the respondents stated that they never report unethical content, although this proportion is relatively small compared to the majority who take some level of action. The average weighted score for reporting unethical content is 0.63 on a 1-point scale, which indicates a moderately high level of ethical awareness and responsibility among the respondents. This finding suggests that many young people are concerned about unethical or harmful content in digital spaces and are willing to take action by reporting such content. However, since the score is not very close to the maximum value, it also implies that there is still room for improvement in encouraging more consistent reporting behavior among users to maintain a safer and more ethical online environment.

The combined weighted average score for digital ethics & responsibility is 0.75 on a 1-point scale. This indicates a high level of ethical awareness and responsibility among respondents. Youth in this study generally demonstrate strong commitment to promoting positive values, sharing beneficial content, avoiding misleading content, and reporting unethical behavior online. The high score, especially driven by the avoidance of misleading content (0.93), reflects that today's youth are conscientious about their digital behavior and are largely responsible in maintaining a safe and ethical online environment.

Table 4.4: Digital Honesty and Integrity

Checking truth before digital sharing					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
Always	4	1.00	215	65.7	215.00
Often	3	0.67	83	25.4	55.61
Sometimes	2	0.33	26	8.0	8.58
Never	1	0.00	3	.9	0.00
Total			327	100	279.19
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.85$				
Avoiding digital copying others content					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	205	62.7	205.00
Often	3	0.67	80	24.5	53.60
Sometimes	2	0.33	34	10.4	11.22
Never	1	0.00	8	2.4	0.00
Total			327	100	269.82
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.83$				
Using real identity online					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	296	90.5	296.00
Often	3	0.67	16	4.9	10.72
Sometimes	2	0.33	9	2.8	2.97
Never	1	0.00	6	1.8	0.00
Total			327	100	309.69
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.95$				
	Combined Weighted Score (Avg)= $(0.85+0.83+0.95=2.99)/3= 0.88$				

Source: Field Survey 2025-2026

Table 4.4 presents data on digital honesty and integrity, which is a key component of digital citizenship. Respondents were asked several questions to assess their ethical behavior in online environments, including verifying information before sharing, avoiding copying others' content, and using their real identity online. First, respondents were asked whether they check the truth before sharing any information online. The findings indicate that 66% of the respondents always verify information before sharing, while 25% often check the truth. In addition, 8% reported that they sometimes verify information, and 0.9% stated that they never check the truth before sharing. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.85 on a 1-point scale, reflecting a very high level of self-reported digital honesty and integrity. This suggests that

many young users claim to be careful about verifying the accuracy of information before sharing it on digital platforms. However, it should be noted that actual online behavior may not always reflect these responses, as social media platforms are still widely affected by misinformation, propaganda, and unverified content.

The respondents were also asked whether they avoid copying others' content. The results show that 63% of the respondents always avoid copying content, while 25% reported that they often avoid copying. Additionally, 10% stated that they sometimes avoid copying, and 2.4% mentioned that they never avoid copying others' content. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.83 on a 1-point scale, which also indicates a very high level of digital honesty and integrity. These findings suggest that a large proportion of youth prefer to create original content rather than copying from others, reflecting a sense of responsibility and ethical awareness in digital content creation and sharing. Another important aspect examined was whether respondents use their real identity online or maintain fake accounts.

The findings reveal that 91% of the respondents always use their real identity online, while 4.9% reported that they often use their real identity but occasionally post or comment anonymously. Furthermore, 2.8% stated that they sometimes use their real identity, and only 1.8% reported that they never use their real identity, which may indicate the use of fake accounts. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.95 on a 1-point scale, representing an almost highest level of digital honesty and integrity. This suggests that most young users prefer transparency in their online activities and generally maintain accountability in digital spaces. The combined weighted score for Digital Honesty and Integrity is approximately 0.88 on a 1-point scale, indicating a very high level of ethical awareness among the respondents. The findings demonstrate that most youth in this study claim to verify information before sharing, avoid copying others' content, and maintain their real identity online. These behaviors collectively reflect a strong tendency toward responsible and ethical digital practices among the young generation.

Table 4.5: Digital Etiquette

Respecting opinions online					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
Always	4	1.00	196	59.9	196.00
Often	3	0.67	97	29.7	64.99
Sometimes	2	0.33	26	8.0	8.58
Never	1	0.00	8	2.4	0.00
Total			327	100	269.57
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.82$				
Avoiding negative comments online					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	252	77.1	252.00
Often	3	0.67	54	16.5	36.18
Sometimes	2	0.33	15	4.6	4.95
Never	1	0.00	6	1.8	0.00
Total			327	100	293.13
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.90$				
Having empathy toward bullied					
Always	4	1.00	100	30.6	100.00
Often	3	0.67	88	26.9	58.96
Sometimes	2	0.33	104	31.8	34.32
Never	1	0.00	32	9.8	0.00
Not Mentioned			3	.9	0.00
Total			327	100	193.28
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.59$				
	Combined Weighted Score (Avg)= $(0.82+0.90+0.59)/3 = 0.77$				

Source: Field Survey 2025-2026

Table 4.5 presents the findings on Digital Etiquette, an important dimension of digital citizenship that reflects how young people behave respectfully and responsibly in online environments. The analysis is based on three indicators: respecting opinions online, avoiding negative comments, and showing empathy toward bullied individuals. First, respondents were asked whether they respect others' opinions in online interactions. The findings indicate that 59.9% of respondents always respect others' opinions, while 29.7% often demonstrate respect during online discussions. In addition, 8.0% reported that they sometimes respect others' opinions, and 2.4% stated that they never respect opinions online. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.82 on a 1-point scale, which reflects a high level of digital etiquette among

the respondents. This result suggests that a large proportion of young people maintain respectful communication in digital spaces and recognize the importance of tolerance and constructive dialogue when engaging on social media and other ICT platforms.

The second indicator examined whether respondents avoid making negative comments online. The results show that 77.1% of respondents always avoid negative comments, while 16.5% often refrain from such behavior. Furthermore, 4.6% reported that they sometimes avoid making negative remarks, and 1.8% indicated that they never avoid negative comments. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.90 on a 1-point scale, representing a very high level of digital etiquette. These findings indicate that the majority of youth consciously try to maintain positive and respectful communication in online interactions, which plays a crucial role in fostering healthy and supportive digital communities. The third indicator focused on whether respondents show empathy toward individuals who experience online bullying. The findings reveal that 30.6% of respondents always express empathy toward bullied individuals, while 26.9% often show empathy. Additionally, 31.8% reported that they sometimes demonstrate empathy, while 9.8% stated that they never show empathy toward bullied individuals, and 0.9% did not mention their response. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.59 on a 1-point scale, indicating a moderate level of empathy among the respondents. Although many young people express concern for victims of online bullying, the comparatively lower score suggests that empathy and supportive behavior toward victims still need further improvement.

The combined weighted score for Digital Etiquette is 0.77 on a 1-point scale, indicating a generally high level of digital etiquette among the respondents. The results suggest that most youth tend to respect others' opinions and avoid negative comments while engaging in online activities. However, the relatively lower level of empathy toward bullied individuals highlights an important area where ethical awareness and digital citizenship education can be strengthened. In relation to the study objective of measuring digital citizenship among youth in Bangladesh, these findings indicate that social media and ICT platforms have contributed to the development of certain ethical behaviors, particularly respectful communication and avoidance of harmful comments. At the same time, the results also highlight opportunities for

improvement, especially in promoting stronger empathy and supportive actions against cyberbullying, which are essential for building a more ethical digital culture among the young generation.

Table 4.6: Digital Civic Engagement

Participating in online civic activities					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
Always	4	1.00	69	21.1	69.00
Often	3	0.67	112	34.3	74.96
Sometimes	2	0.33	120	36.7	39.60
Never	1	0.00	25	7.6	0.00
Not Mentioned			1	.3	0.00
Total			327	100	183.56
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.56$				
Discussing social issues respectfully online					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	54	16.5	54.00
Often	3	0.67	93	28.4	62.31
Sometimes	2	0.33	138	42.2	45.54
Never	1	0.00	39	11.9	0.00
Not Mentioned			3	.9	0.00
Total			327	100	161.85
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.50$				
Combined Weighted Score (Avg)= $(0.56+0.50)/2= 0.53$					

Source: Field Survey 2025-2026

Table 4.6 presents the findings on digital civic engagement, which is another important dimension of digital citizenship. This indicator reflects how young people participate in civic and social issues through ICT and social media platforms. The analysis focuses on two aspects: participating in civic activities via ICT and discussing social issues respectfully in digital spaces. First, respondents were asked whether they participate in civic activities through ICT platforms. The findings indicate that 21.1% of respondents always participate in civic activities through ICT, while 34.3% reported that they often engage in such activities. In addition, 36.7% stated that they sometimes participate in civic activities using digital platforms, whereas 7.6% mentioned that they never take part in such activities, and 0.3% did not provide a response. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.56 on a 1-point scale, which indicates a

moderate level of digital civic engagement among the respondents. This suggests that although a considerable proportion of youth participate in civic activities through digital technologies, their engagement is not consistently strong and often remains occasional.

The second indicator examined whether respondents discuss social issues respectfully in online environments. The findings show that 16.5% of respondents always discuss social issues respectfully online, while 28.4% often engage in respectful discussions on digital platforms. Furthermore, 42.2% reported that they sometimes discuss social issues respectfully, whereas 11.9% stated that they never engage in respectful discussions, and 0.9% did not mention their response. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.50 on a 1-point scale, indicating a moderate level of respectful civic discussion in digital spaces. These results suggest that while many young people occasionally participate in discussions on social issues online, consistent respectful engagement is still limited.

On average, the combined weighted score for digital civic engagement is 0.53 on a 1-point scale, indicating a moderate level of civic participation and discussion through ICT and social media platforms among the respondents. The findings imply that young people use digital technologies to some extent to engage in civic matters and social discussions, but their level of active and consistent participation remains relatively moderate. The results indicate that ICT and social media provide opportunities for young people to participate in civic activities and express opinions on social issues. However, the moderate level of engagement suggests that there is still significant potential to strengthen civic awareness, responsible participation, and respectful dialogue in digital spaces.

Table 4.7: Digital Collaboration and Solidarity

Collaborating with online study groups					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
Always	4	1.00	73	22.3	73.00
Often	3	0.67	120	36.7	80.40
Sometimes	2	0.33	109	33.3	35.97
Never	1	0.00	24	7.3	0.00
Not Mentioned			1	.3	0.00
Total			327	100	189.37
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.58$				
Supporting online initiatives					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	94	28.7	94.00
Often	3	0.67	114	34.9	76.38
Sometimes	2	0.33	104	31.8	34.32
Never	1	0.00	15	4.6	0.00
Total			327	100	204.70
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.63$				
Participating online teamwork campaigns					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	118	36.1	118.00
Often	3	0.67	117	35.8	78.39
Sometimes	2	0.33	79	24.2	26.07
Never	1	0.00	12	3.7	0.00
Not Mentioned			1	.3	0.00
Total			327	100	222.46
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.68$				
Combined Weighted Score (Avg)= $(0.58+0.63+0.68)/3= 0.63$					

Source: Field Survey 2025-2026

Table 4.7 presents the findings on digital collaboration and solidarity, which represent another important dimension of digital citizenship. This indicator reflects how young people cooperate, support others, and participate in collective activities through ICT and social media platforms. The analysis is based on three aspects: collaborating with online study groups, supporting online initiatives, and participating in teamwork campaigns. First, respondents were asked whether they collaborate with online study groups. The findings show that 22.3% of respondents always collaborate with online study groups, while 36.7% reported that they often

engage in such collaboration. Additionally, 33.3% stated that they sometimes participate in online study group activities, whereas 7.3% mentioned that they never collaborate with online study groups, and 0.3% did not provide a response. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.58 on a 1-point scale, indicating a moderate level of digital collaboration among the respondents. This suggests that many young people use ICT platforms for academic collaboration, although the level of consistent participation varies.

The second indicator examined whether respondents support online initiatives. The results indicate that 28.7% of respondents always support online initiatives, while 34.9% often participate in such activities. Furthermore, 31.8% reported that they sometimes support online initiatives, and 4.6% stated that they never participate in supporting such initiatives. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.63 on a 1-point scale, which reflects a relatively moderate to moderately high level of solidarity and support for digital initiatives among the respondents. These findings suggest that a considerable number of youth are willing to support social, educational, or awareness-related initiatives through digital platforms. The third indicator focused on whether respondents participate in teamwork campaigns conducted through digital platforms. The findings reveal that 36.1% of respondents always participate in teamwork campaigns, while 35.8% often take part in such activities. In addition, 24.2% reported that they sometimes participate in teamwork campaigns, whereas 3.7% stated that they never engage in such collaborative efforts, and 0.3% did not mention their response. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.68 on a 1-point scale, indicating a moderately high level of teamwork participation among the respondents. This result suggests that many young people actively engage in collaborative campaigns and group-based activities through ICT and social media platforms.

On average, the combined weighted score for digital collaboration and solidarity is 0.63 on a 1-point scale, indicating a moderate level of collaborative engagement among the respondents. The findings suggest that youth in Bangladesh use ICT and social media to collaborate academically, support online initiatives, and participate in teamwork campaigns, although the level of participation varies across different activities. The results indicate that ICT and social

media provide important opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and collective participation among young people.

Table 4.8: Digital Privacy and Security

Maintaining privacy settings online					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
Always	4	1.00	186	56.9	186.00
Often	3	0.67	64	19.6	42.88
Sometimes	2	0.33	49	15.0	16.17
Never	1	0.00	26	8.0	0.00
Not Mentioned			2	.6	0.00
Total			Total	100	245.05
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f$ = 0.75				
Updating privacy settings online					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	190	58.1	190.00
Often	3	0.67	72	22.0	48.24
Sometimes	2	0.33	55	16.8	18.15
Never	1	0.00	10	3.1	0.00
Total			327	100	256.39
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f$ = 0.78				
Violating others privacy online					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	33	10.1	33.00
Often	3	0.67	14	4.3	9.38
Sometimes	2	0.33	15	4.6	4.95
Never	1	0.00	263	80.4	0.00
Not Mentioned			2	.6	0.00
Total			327	100	47.33
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f$ = 0.15 (Not violating privacy online=0.85)				
Combined Weighted Score (Avg)= (0.75+0.78+0.85)/3= 0.79					

Source: Field Survey 2025-2026

Table 4.8 presents the findings on digital privacy and security, which represent an important dimension of digital citizenship. This indicator reflects how young people manage their personal privacy and respect the privacy of others while using ICT and social media platforms. The analysis focuses on three aspects: maintaining privacy settings, updating privacy settings, and violating others' privacy online. First, respondents were asked whether they maintain privacy

settings on their digital accounts. The findings show that 56.9% of respondents always maintain their privacy settings, while 19.6% reported that they often manage their privacy controls. In addition, 15.0% stated that they sometimes maintain privacy settings, whereas 8.0% mentioned that they never maintain such settings, and 0.6% did not provide a response. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.75 on a 1-point scale, indicating a relatively high level of awareness and practice of maintaining privacy among the respondents. This suggests that a majority of youth recognize the importance of protecting their personal information in digital environments.

The second indicator examined whether respondents update their privacy settings regularly. The results indicate that 58.1% of respondents always update their privacy settings, while 22.0% reported that they often make such updates. Furthermore, 16.8% stated that they sometimes update their privacy settings, and 3.1% mentioned that they never update them. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.78 on a 1-point scale, reflecting a high level of awareness regarding digital privacy and security. This finding suggests that many young people actively monitor and adjust their privacy controls to protect their personal data on digital platforms. The third indicator focused on whether respondents violate others' privacy online. The findings reveal that 10.1% of respondents stated that they always violate others' privacy online, while 4.3% reported that they often do so. Additionally, 4.6% mentioned that they sometimes engage in such behavior. However, a large majority, 80.4% of respondents, stated that they never violate others' privacy online, and 0.6% did not mention their response. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.15 on a 1-point scale, which indicates a very low level of privacy violation behavior among the respondents. This suggests that most youth tend to respect others' privacy in digital spaces.

In aggregate, the combined weighted score for digital privacy and security is 0.79 on a 1-point scale, indicating a higher level of digital privacy awareness and responsible behavior among the respondents. The findings suggest that many young people actively maintain and update their privacy settings, which reflects a good level of personal data protection practices. At the same time, the results show that the majority of respondents avoid violating others' privacy in online

environments. The results indicate that ICT and social media platforms have contributed to developing awareness about digital privacy and security among young users.

Table 4.9: Digital Cultural and Religious Value Sensitivity

Respecting cultural differences online					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
Always	4	1.00	269	82.3	269.00
Often	3	0.67	45	13.8	30.15
Sometimes	2	0.33	9	2.8	2.97
Never	1	0.00	4	1.2	0.00
Total			327	100	302.12
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f$ = 0.92				
Avoiding hurting religious beliefs online					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS (NV*f)
Always	4	1.00	265	81.0	265.00
Often	3	0.67	37	11.3	24.79
Sometimes	2	0.33	9	2.8	2.97
Never	1	0.00	15	4.6	0.00
Not Mentioned			1	.3	0.00
Total			327	100	292.76
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f$ = 0.90				
Combined Weighted Score (Avg)= $(0.92+0.90)/2$ = 0.91					

Source: Field Survey 2025-2026

Table 4.9 presents the findings on digital cultural and religious value sensitivity, which represents an important component of digital citizenship. This indicator reflects how young people respect cultural diversity and religious beliefs while interacting on ICT and social media platforms. The analysis focuses on two aspects: respecting cultural differences online and avoiding actions that may hurt religious beliefs in digital spaces. First, respondents were asked whether they respect cultural differences in online interactions. The findings show that 82.3% of respondents always respect cultural differences online, while 13.8% reported that they often demonstrate such respect. Additionally, 2.8% stated that they sometimes respect cultural differences, and 1.2% mentioned that they never show respect for cultural differences in online environments. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.92 on a 1-point scale, which indicates a very high level of cultural sensitivity among the respondents. This result suggests

that the majority of youth are highly aware of cultural diversity and tend to maintain respectful attitudes toward different cultural backgrounds when communicating through digital platforms.

The second indicator examined whether respondents avoid hurting religious beliefs in online spaces. The results indicate that 81.0% of respondents always avoid actions that may hurt religious beliefs, while 11.3% reported that they often avoid such behavior. Furthermore, 2.8% stated that they sometimes avoid hurting religious beliefs, whereas 4.6% mentioned that they never avoid such actions, and 0.3% did not provide a response. The weighted average score for this indicator is 0.90 on a 1-point scale, which also reflects a very high level of religious sensitivity among the respondents. These findings suggest that most young people are careful about expressing opinions online in ways that do not offend religious values or sentiments.

In aggregate, the combined weighted score for digital cultural and religious value sensitivity is 0.91 on a 1-point scale, indicating a very high level of awareness and ethical behavior among the respondents. The findings demonstrate that youth in Bangladesh largely respect cultural diversity and religious beliefs while interacting on social media and ICT platforms. The results suggest that ICT and social media platforms play a positive role in encouraging tolerance, cultural respect, and religious sensitivity among young users. The very high score indicates that these values are strongly embedded in the digital behavior of the respondents, contributing to the development of ethical standards and responsible online interactions among the young generation.

4.3 Composite Challenge Index

Based on the data provided in Table 4.10, several insights emerge regarding the challenges posed by social media and ICT in maintaining ethical standards among youth in Bangladesh. The first indicator, existence of a digital ethics policy, shows that only a small portion of respondents (9.5%) perceive that an effective policy is clearly in place. The majority (59.3%) feel that such a policy exists but is not effective, while 22.9% indicate that there is no policy at all. This results in a weighted average score of 0.48, indicating a moderate gap in policy effectiveness. The second indicator, the extent to which ICT policies address ethical issues,

reveals that just over a quarter of respondents (28.1%) consider policies modern and updated. A larger proportion (40.7%) note that policies are only partially updated, while 14.4% describe them as old and outdated. Furthermore, 16.2% of respondents are not aware of any ICT policy, leading to a weighted average score of 0.39.

Table 4.10: Lack of Ethical ICT Policy

Lacking digital ethics policy					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
It clearly exists and is active	1	0.00	31	9.5	0.00
It exists but is not effective	2	0.33	194	59.3	64.02
It is being discussed but not implemented	3	0.67	27	8.3	18.09
There is no such policy at all	4	1.00	75	22.9	75.00
Total			327	100	157.11
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.48$				
Backdated ICT policy on ethical issues					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
They are modern and updated	1	0.00	92	28.1	0.00
They are partially updated	2	0.33	133	40.7	43.89
They are old and outdated	3	0.67	47	14.4	31.49
I am not aware of any ICT policy	4	1.00	53	16.2	53.00
Not Mentioned			2	.6	0.00
Total			327	100	128.38
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.39$				
Combined Weighted Score (Avg)= $(0.48+0.39)/2= 0.44$					

Source: Field Survey 2025-2026

The combined weighted score of 0.44 highlights a significant challenge in the governance of digital ethics. These findings suggest that the lack of clear, effective, and updated ICT policies contributes to difficulties in fostering ethical standards among youth. Without robust guidance and enforcement, social media and ICT environments may fail to promote responsible behavior, potentially allowing unethical practices to proliferate. The data underscores that weak policy existence and outdated or partially enforced ICT guidelines are key obstacles in building ethical awareness and standards in the younger generation through digital platforms in Bangladesh.

Table 4.11: Policy Effectivity Crisis

Ineffective social media regulation					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
Highly effective	1	0.00	98	30.0	0.00
Moderately effective	2	0.33	102	31.2	33.66
Slightly effective	3	0.67	84	25.7	56.28
Not effective at all	4	1.00	42	12.8	42.00
Not Mentioned			1	.3	0.00
Total			327	100	131.94
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.40$				
Regulatory reason not effective					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
Too rapid change in technology	1	0.00	69	21.1	0.00
Lack of manpower	2	0.33	21	6.4	6.93
Lack of implementation of Law	3	0.67	208	63.6	139.36
Lack of political will	4	1.00	27	8.3	27.00
Not Mentioned			2	.6	0.00
Total			327	100	173.29
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.53$				
Combined Weighted Score (Avg)= $(0.40+0.53)/2= 0.47$					

Source: Field Survey 2025-2026

The data in Table 4.11 highlights challenges related to the effectiveness of social media regulation in Bangladesh and its impact on maintaining ethical standards among youth. Regarding the effectiveness of social media regulation, only 30% of respondents consider regulations highly effective, while 31.2% view them as moderately effective. A significant proportion (25.7%) see them as slightly effective, and 12.8% feel regulations are not effective at all. The weighted average score of 0.40 indicates moderate concern about the practical impact of existing regulations. When examining the reasons for regulatory ineffectiveness, the dominant issue appears to be lack of law implementation, cited by 63.6% of respondents. Other factors include rapid technological changes (21.1%), lack of political will (8.3%), and insufficient manpower (6.4%), resulting in a higher weighted average score of 0.53. The combined weighted score of 0.47 suggests that policy effectiveness is a significant challenge in promoting ethical behavior among youth. Even when social media regulations exist, their inconsistent application and enforcement, combined with rapid technological shifts, limit their ability to guide young users toward ethical standards. This reflects a broader crisis in policy effectivity,

where the gap between regulation design and practical enforcement undermines efforts to build ethical digital practices among the younger generation.

Table 4.12: Weak Policy Confession

Reason for weak policy enforcement					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
Lack of trained staff	1	0.00	59	18.0	0.00
Lack of clear guidelines	2	0.33	47	14.4	15.51
Lack of monitoring tools	3	0.67	99	30.3	66.33
Corruption or negligence	4	1.00	119	36.4	119.00
Not Mentioned			3	.9	0.00
Total			327	100	200.84
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.61$				
Lacking law enforcement ability					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
Very capable	1	0.00	28	8.6	0.00
Somewhat capable	2	0.33	83	25.4	27.39
Not very capable	3	0.67	169	51.7	113.23
Not capable at all	4	1.00	43	13.1	43.00
Not Mentioned			4	1.2	0.00
Total			327	100	183.62
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.56$				
Combined Weighted Score (Avg)= $(0.61+0.56)/2=0.59$					

Source: Field Survey 2025-2026

Table 4.12 highlights issues related to weak policy enforcement and law enforcement capacity, which pose challenges to maintaining ethical standards among youth through social media and ICT. For the reasons behind weak policy enforcement, the largest proportion of respondents (36.4%) point to corruption or negligence, followed by 30.3% citing lack of monitoring tools. Other factors include lack of trained staff (18%) and unclear guidelines (14.4%). The resulting weighted average score of 0.61 indicates a relatively high level of concern regarding the weaknesses in policy enforcement. Regarding law enforcement ability, only 8.6% of respondents perceive law enforcement as very capable, while 25.4% view it as somewhat capable. A majority (51.7%) consider it not very capable, and 13.1% feel it is not capable at all, giving a weighted average score of 0.56. The combined weighted score of 0.59 suggests that weak enforcement and limited law enforcement capacity are major challenges in promoting ethical behavior online. Even with policies in place, ineffective enforcement mechanisms,

monitoring deficiencies, and instances of negligence or corruption reduce the ability of authorities to guide youth toward responsible ICT use. This underscores that without stronger institutional capacity, social media and ICT regulation struggles to uphold ethical standards.

Table 4.13: Lack of Law Enforcement

Lacking Punishment for digital ethics violation					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
They are punished strictly	1	0.00	41	12.5	0.00
They get a mild warning	2	0.33	76	23.2	25.08
They are rarely punished	3	0.67	160	48.9	107.20
Nothing happens	4	1.00	47	14.4	47.00
Not Mentioned			3	.9	0.00
Total			327	100	179.28
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.55$				
Absence of digital ethics teaching in schools					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
Yes, formally	1	0.00	39	11.9	0.00
Only in some schools	2	0.33	100	30.6	33.00
Rarely, as a discussion topic	3	0.67	152	46.5	101.84
Not at all	4	1.00	34	10.4	34.00
Not Mentioned			2	.6	0.00
Total			327	100	168.84
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\sum WS/\sum f = 0.52$				
Combined Weighted Score (Avg)= $(0.55+0.52)/2=0.54$					

Source: Field Survey 2025-2026

Table 4.13 highlights the challenges associated with lack of law enforcement in promoting ethical standards among youth in Bangladesh. Regarding punishment for digital ethics violations, only 12.5% of respondents believe that offenders are punished strictly, while 23.2% receive mild warnings. Nearly half (48.9%) report that violations are rarely punished, and 14.4% state that nothing happens at all. The weighted average score of 0.55 reflects a considerable gap in the enforcement of digital ethics.

When it comes to digital ethics education in schools, only 11.9% of respondents report that it is formally taught, 30.6% say it occurs in some schools, 46.5% note it is rarely covered even as a discussion topic, and 10.4% indicate that it is not addressed at all. This results in a weighted average score of 0.52, showing that formal education on digital ethics is limited. The combined

weighted score of 0.54 suggests that insufficient law enforcement and inadequate digital ethics education are significant obstacles to fostering ethical behavior among young people. Without strict punishment mechanisms and widespread, structured teaching on digital ethics, social media and ICT environments fail to effectively guide youth in understanding and practicing ethical standards.

Table 4.14: Poor Digital Literacy Reasoning

Reason for poor digital literacy					
	Scale	NV	f	%	WS
Lack of training programs	1	0.00	171	52.3	0.00
Limited school curriculum	2	0.33	32	9.8	10.56
Lack of basic awareness	3	0.67	99	30.3	66.33
Lack of education	4	1.00	24	7.3	24.00
Not Mentioned			1	.3	0.00
Total			327	100	100.89
Weighted Score (avg)	Weighted Score (Avg)= $\frac{\sum WS}{\sum f} = 0.31$				

Source: Field Survey 2025-2026

Table 4.14 highlights the reasons behind poor digital literacy, which is an important challenge for fostering ethical standards among youth in Bangladesh. The majority of respondents (52.3%) attribute poor digital literacy to a lack of training programs. About 30.3% cite a lack of basic awareness, while 9.8% point to limited coverage in school curricula, and 7.3% identify lack of general education as a contributing factor. The weighted average score of 0.31 indicates that digital literacy challenges are significant but somewhat less severe compared to policy enforcement or law enforcement issues. These findings suggest that insufficient training and awareness programs, combined with gaps in educational curricula, hinder young people’s understanding of ethical ICT use. Without addressing digital literacy comprehensively, efforts to promote ethical standards through social media and ICT are likely to remain limited in effectiveness.

Chapter 5

PRESENTATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA

This qualitative data presentation is based on multiple sources, including Facebook case analysis, interviews with 19 journalists, key informant interview with two academic experts, and one IT programmer and two focus group discussions. The data provide a comprehensive understanding of the current status of digital citizenship, the challenges in upholding ethical standards, the opportunities for promoting ethical practices, and the strategies for enhancing the ethical use of ICT.

5.1 Facebook Case Analysis

This section analyzes three controversial creators who receive frequent bullying and mocking in comment sections. One of them has been alleged for her content that harmed or abused children to get views. Her controversy moved beyond “people laughing” into legal and child-rights concerns. Another one gets mocked because many viewers see his content style as “low-standard” and “obscene”. The third one’s controversy is primarily driven by public relationship drama and legal conflict that became highly visible online. Despite that, they maintain large “top fan” style communities and strong follower bases and their followers. This is a great concern for the thinkers, particularly the critical thinkers, of how negative attention can still produce growth. This analysis includes a number of themes such as 1. number of followers and the nature of content; b) Reasons for creating this content; c) content mechanics; d) engagement logic e) ethical risk level and f) likely impact on youth.

Number of Followers and the Nature of Content

Social media and other ICT-based platforms have become major sources of entertainment in contemporary society. People from different social classes spend a significant portion of their leisure time on social media. These platforms allow anyone with a smartphone to create and manage a page, enabling users to become content creators. As a result, social media platforms have gained immense popularity among people with diverse tastes and preferences. In

Bangladesh, the number of content creators has increased rapidly in recent years. Among them, three controversial content creators have been purposively selected for this study, as they have repeatedly appeared in news headlines for various reasons. To maintain privacy, their real names are not disclosed. Despite ongoing controversies, these creators have achieved significant online visibility. One creator's Facebook page has 175,046 likes; another has 1.98 million YouTube subscribers and approximately 76,000–80,000 Facebook page likes; and the third creator's Facebook page has 1,289,996 likes along with 213,000 Instagram followers.

The first content creator is a female beautician who initially began her online career by marketing and selling homemade cosmetic creams. She also posted makeup tutorial videos, which helped establish her content identity. Over time, she gained widespread attention on Facebook, TikTok, and other platforms by frequently uploading videos that featured her young children, which later became a source of controversy. The second content creator is a male social media personality who aspired to become a film hero. He is known in Bangladesh for producing viral, low-budget entertainment videos and for gaining public recognition through online attention and controversy. Academic discussions frame his popularity within the broader context of Bangladesh's changing media culture, highlighting themes such as viral fame, "bad taste," and digital politics. His content primarily consists of short entertainment videos (Reels-style), including performance-based clips featuring acting, dance, music-video-style presentation, and exaggerated emotional expressions. His videos typically rely on simple production techniques, quick scene transitions, catchy framing, and high-frequency posting to maintain algorithmic visibility.

The third content creator is also a female influencer who describes herself in her bio as an influencer, motivational speaker, and "voice of hope." Analysis of her publicly available Instagram posts and Facebook reels shows that her content largely revolves around persona-driven and lifestyle-based narratives. These include short clips centered on self-presentation, emotional expression, daily life moments, self-branding through hashtags, and relationship-oriented themes. Her Facebook reels additionally feature "Queen" branding and fan-oriented

content. In sum, the content can be categorized as short-form, emotion-driven, identity-focused lifestyle and relationship narrative content.

Table 5.1: Number of Followers of Content Creators

Content Creator	Facebook Page Likes	Instagram Followers	YouTube Subscribers
Female beautician	175,046	Not available	Not available
Male entertainer	76,000–80,000	Not available	1.98 million
Female influencer	1,289,996	213,000	Not available

Source: Content analysis, 2026

Motive of Content Creators

The primary motive behind the first creator’s content appears to be content monetization driven by attention maximization. Initially, her online presence focused on marketing homemade cosmetic products and providing makeup tutorials. However, over time, the nature of her content shifted toward featuring her young children in emotionally provocative videos. Available news reports and public discussions suggest that these videos were created with the intention of going viral and generating online income. In the social media economy, higher levels of engagement, such as views, shares, and comments, are closely linked to monetization opportunities, including advertising revenue, brand promotion, and product sales. As competition for attention intensifies, some creators adopt increasingly sensational strategies to secure visibility, often at the cost of ethical responsibility. Additionally, her case reflects a significant imbalance between attention-seeking and parental responsibility. Rather than conventional family or parenting content, many of her posts appeared designed to provoke strong emotional reactions. This aligns with broader trends in “shock content,” where controversy is strategically used to maximize reach. Discussions surrounding her case also indicate a lack of ethical awareness.

The second creator’s motives can be best understood through the lens of platform incentives and viral celebrity culture. His aspiration to become a film hero and public figure has been pursued primarily through short, low-budget entertainment videos designed for rapid

circulation on social media. His content strategy reflects an effort to maximize reach and engagement by aligning with platform algorithms that prioritize frequent posting, quick visual impact, exaggerated performance, and emotional appeal. A key motive is the pursuit of visibility over conventional legitimacy. In viral culture, criticism and mockery do not necessarily reduce reach; instead, they often amplify it. Negative attention, including ridicule, still contributes to engagement metrics and algorithmic promotion. His low-cost, high-output production model fits well within the fast-paced attention economy, making sustained visibility achievable even without high production quality.

The third content creator's motives appear to be closely connected to personal branding, narrative continuity, and emotional engagement. By presenting herself as an influencer, motivational speaker, and "voice of hope," she positions her content within a persona-driven framework. Her posts mainly consist of lifestyle-oriented reels, emotional self-expression, relationship-related narratives, and symbolic self-branding. One central motive behind her continued posting seems to be the maintenance of relevance through sustained visibility. Content related to personal relationships or public disputes generally attracts heightened audience attention, and her posting behavior suggests a deliberate effort to remain present in public discourse. Even during periods of personal crisis, she continued to post and interact with her audience, indicating a prioritization of online presence over withdrawal from public attention. Her content practices also suggest a tendency to publicly frame and circulate deeply personal emotional experiences, which are often treated as private in conventional social settings. By transforming emotional struggles into shareable content, she appears to expand her reach and strengthen audience engagement. Although she is not primarily dependent on social media income, her actions indicate that popularity and celebrity status, rather than immediate financial gain, may be the dominant motivating factors. Despite recurrent negative public reactions, she has continued to receive invitations for commercial and promotional activities, such as shop openings, bridal photoshoots, and brand promotions. This suggests that sustained visibility— even when shaped by controversy—can translate into future opportunities. In sum, her behavior appears to reflect a strategic investment in long-term visibility and influence, rather than a short-term focus on monetary returns.

Table 5.2: Motives of Content Creators

Content Creator	Primary Motives	Secondary Motives	Motivational orientation
Female beautician	Content monetization through viral reach	Product promotion, audience growth	Sympathy, outrage, high emotional reaction
Male entertainer	Viral visibility and public recognition; Monetization	Aspirations for celebrity status	Humor, ridicule, debate, negative and positive attention
Female influencer	Personal branding and sustained popularity	Long-term influence and future opportunities	Emotional attachment, controversy-driven engagement

Source: Content analysis, 2026

Ethical Consideration of the Contents

Social media platforms are structurally designed to reward novelty, controversy, emotional intensity, and the transgression of social norms. Algorithmic systems prioritize content that generates high engagement, often incentivizing creators consciously or unconsciously to adopt sensational, provocative, or boundary-crossing representations to remain visible. This dynamic reflects algorithmic pressure, where platform logic significantly shapes content behavior beyond individual moral intent.

However, controversial content is not inherently unethical. From an ethical and legal standpoint, unethical social media behavior involves actions that cause harm, violate consent, exploit vulnerability, deceive audiences, or infringe on privacy. Examples include cyberbullying, misinformation, fraud, non-disclosure of sponsored content, manipulation through fake identities, and the exploitation of minors. Content that does not meet these criteria generally remains within the boundaries of ethical permissibility, even if it generates public discomfort or criticism. Among the three content creators examined, the first creator clearly crossed ethical and legal boundaries. Her case moved beyond moral debate into formal legal accountability after videos depicting physical and verbal mistreatment of her minor children were widely circulated online. A formal complaint was filed under the Children Act 2013, leading to her arrest. The content repeatedly exposed children to distressing and harmful situations—such as forced hair cutting, hair dyeing, wearing heavy accessories, force-feeding, and physical

scolding—primarily for dramatic or entertaining effect. These actions constituted direct harm to vulnerable individuals, thereby justifying both ethical condemnation and legal intervention.

The second content creator, by contrast, operates largely within the domain of controversial but not inherently unethical content. Although his videos are frequently criticized as “cringe,” low-quality, or culturally inappropriate, ethical judgment cannot be based on aesthetic taste alone. His content typically involves adult participants who appear to provide consent, does not rely on deception, and does not promote demonstrably harmful false claims. Ethical concern would arise only if the content involved coercion, humiliation, objectification, or the encouragement of harassment. Thus, despite widespread trolling and mockery, his content does not cross the threshold of ethical or legal violation. The third content creator occupies a more ambiguous ethical position. Her content is primarily persona-driven and emotionally expressive, often centered on lifestyle presentation, relationship narratives, and symbolic self-branding. While her content does not directly involve illegal activity or the exploitation of minors, ethical concerns emerge in relation to emotional commodification, normalization of controversial relationship dynamics, and sustained visibility through controversy. By repeatedly transforming deeply personal emotional experiences and conflicts into public content, she contributes to a form of self-commodification where private suffering becomes a tool for engagement and reach. Although her content may challenge prevailing social norms—particularly regarding age hierarchy, intimacy, and public display of personal relationships—it does not automatically qualify as unethical. Ethical concern arises only insofar as such representations may normalize unhealthy relational patterns, influence young audiences, or rely on emotional manipulation to sustain attention. Importantly, no formal legal action has been taken against her, indicating that her actions remain within the boundaries of platform rules and legal permissibility, even if they provoke moral discomfort and public debate.

Table 5.3: Ethical Consideration

Content Creator	Primary Ethical Issues	Affected Group(s)	Level of Ethical Concern
Content creator 1	Child exploitation; Lack of informed consent; Emotional and physical harm; Monetization of suffering	Minor children	Severe / Unethical
Content creator 2	Cultural insensitivity; Low social value content; Normalization of superficial fame	Adult participants and viewers	Low / Debatable
Content creator 3	Emotional commodification; Normalization of controversial relationship dynamics; Influence on young audiences; Blurring of private–public boundaries	Young followers, impressionable audiences	Moderate / Ethically Ambiguous

Source: Content analysis, 2026

From a platform governance perspective, preventing such content is structurally difficult. Not all controversial material violates platform policies, and engagement-based ranking systems often amplify content that generates strong emotional reactions—including negative ones. Moreover, the sheer scale of social media platforms, characterized by billions of uploads and frequent re-uploads, makes complete control unrealistic. Meta and similar platforms prioritize combating spam, coordinated manipulation, and deceptive practices rather than regulating content based on taste, morality, or public approval. Thus, this comparative analysis underscores the importance of distinguishing between moral unease, ethical violation, and legal accountability. While platform incentives encourage boundary-crossing behavior across all three cases, ethical and legal intervention becomes justified only when demonstrable harm—particularly to vulnerable individuals—is present. The third creator’s case thus illustrates how controversy can remain ethically debatable yet legally permissible within contemporary digital culture.

5.2 Key Informant Interview with Journalists

Perceived Reasons for the Persistence of Unethical Content on Social Media/ ICT based Platforms

Respondents largely attributed the persistence of unethical content on social media to weak monitoring and ineffective control mechanisms. They also felt that the state has not taken adequate steps to address the problem. One participant expressed clear disappointment, stating, *“we are not civilized.”* Several responses pointed to limited or inconsistent law enforcement, suggesting that relevant laws are not actively implemented and that many users are not sufficiently aware of legal consequences. Some respondents added that the public rarely protests or files complaints, which further reduces pressure for accountability. One participant answered in detail -

“The spread of unethical content was also linked to the ‘view business’ and attention-driven incentives, alongside practical challenges such as fake IDs, algorithmic limitations, and low user awareness.”

Beyond these platform-level issues, respondents highlighted broader societal factors, including declining human values, a shortage of skilled developers, and a growing obsession with becoming social media celebrities. In addition, participants noted that reporting systems are often slow and that the scale of content creation is far greater than available monitoring capacity. One respondent further argued that

“Enforcement agencies may lack the will to act.”

Thereby, the respondents suggested that mass people’s curiosity toward unethical content, low digital literacy, and the prioritization of fake news, misinformation, and propaganda collectively sustain this ecosystem and make effective control difficult. Table 1 has categorized the causes under three subheadings including

Table 5.4: Perceived Reasons for the Persistence of Unethical Content on Social Media/ICT based Platforms

Categories	Key factors
Governance	State steps lacking; Weak enforcement, lack of will
Technical limitations	Weak moderation; Slow reporting; Fake IDs; Algorithm limits; Resource shortage
Social behavior	View economy; mass people’s curiosity; Low awareness, low literacy; misinformation preference; values decline; celebrity culture

Source: KII, 2026 (Journalists)

Digital Citizenship Awareness and Preferred Measures to Reduce Misinformation

From the 19 journalist responses, most of the respondents (13) said they know what digital citizenship is, while a few (6) said they do not. When asked how to reduce unverified news sharing and the instability it can create, “fact-checking and verification training” was recommended by 13 out of 19 respondents. The remaining suggestions include media literacy education at school/college level, responsible reporting with rapid corrections by news outlets, improving platform technology to detect and block fake news, and public awareness/anti-rumor campaigns.

Table 5.5: Suggested Measure to Reduce Unverified News Sharing

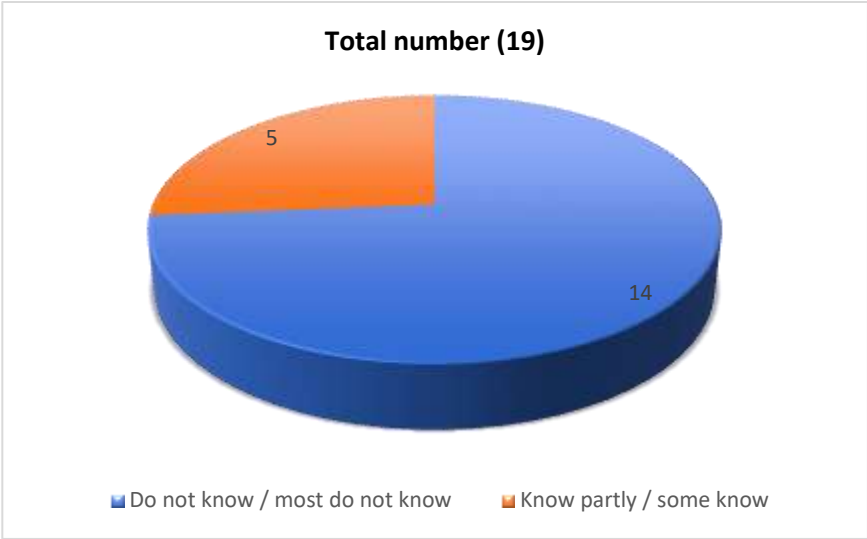
Suggested measure to reduce unverified news sharing (N=19)	Reference Number
1. Fact-checking & verification training (increase)	13
2. Media literacy education in school/college	2
3. Responsible reporting & rapid corrections by news outlets	2
4. Platform technology to detect/block fake news	1
5. Public awareness / anti-rumor campaigns	1
Total	19

Source: KII, 2026

Media respondents who do not know digital citizenship (6 respondents), they also prioritized fact-checking training (4/6). Thus, data suggest that respondents frame the problem primarily as a skills-and-verification deficit rather than only a policy or technology issue. Journalists basically perceive misinformation control as best achieved through verification skills, supported

by education-system media literacy. In addition, stronger newsroom accountability, with technology and campaigns were viewed as secondary measures (see Table 2.1). Though media respondents emphasized fact-checking as the most dominant remedy, most of them perceived that young people do not know how to do fact-checking. Specifically, 14 media respondents stated that youth mostly do not know fact-checking or do not know it properly, while only 5 respondents suggested that some youth know it partly though they are small in number and practice is insufficient (see Figure 1). Thus, the data indicates a strong knowledge and skills gap in fact-checking among youth, with limited awareness concentrated in a small segment.

Figure 5.1. Perceived Youth Knowledge of Fact-Checking



Source: KII, 2026

Media respondents were asked about news coverage of punishment for sharing fake news. Most stated that they had never heard of any punishment for fake news sharing and suggested that those who spread misinformation often face no visible consequences. One respondent remarked,

“The agents who spread disinformation... might get happy by spreading them!”

Another participant noted that,

“In Bangladesh, receiving punishment for spreading fake news is rare.”

A further respondent stated that fake news spreaders are sometimes rewarded rather than punished. A few participants acknowledged that punishment incidents might exist, but they could not recall any specific cases at that moment. Taken together, these responses indicate a strong perception that punishment for sharing fake news is uncommon, poorly visible in public discourse, and not memorable enough to function as a deterrent. The combination of limited recall, claims of rarity, and perceptions of reward reinforces the view that accountability mechanisms are seen as weak, inconsistently applied, or insufficiently communicated.

Journalists' Perceptions of Children's Online Game Addiction and its Prevention

Responses suggest that journalists have not mobilized sustained protests to ban online games, and many participants questioned whether protest is even part of journalists' professional role. Several explicitly framed journalism as reporting rather than activism, stating that

"A journalist's job is not to protest but to highlight the harmful aspects."

Another respondent challenged the premise directly stating that-

"Why would a journalist take any step to stop children's access to games?"

On the other hand, most of the participants commonly described protest activity as limited. Responsibility was frequently directed to the state and regulators, as participants mostly emphasized that the state must play the main role through strong laws, age-based control, content blocking, and, in particular, filtering systems in internet services and app stores. One participant specifically named the government and BTRC as key actors. Alongside state action, a second cluster of responses highlighted family-level responsibility, arguing that family awareness is needed and that parents must be careful. The data thus indicates a preference for a multi-layered response in which journalists mainly inform and problematize the issue, while regulation and technical enforcement are led by the state, supplemented by parental monitoring and public awareness initiatives.

Table 5.6: Perceived Stakeholders Responsible for Restricting Children’s Access to Harmful Online Games

Stakeholder category	Who it includes	Main responsibility
State / Government	Government, ministers, policymakers	Make strict policy, regulate, enforce laws, restrict harmful games
Regulator	BTRC	Age-based regulation, blocking harmful content, technical oversight
Platform & Tech gatekeepers	App stores, internet service providers, mobile ecosystem	Filtering, restricting downloads, access control mechanisms
Media / Journalists	Journalists, news media	Report harms, raise discussion, awareness-building (not necessarily protest)
Family / Parents	Parents/guardians, household	Supervision, parental control, family-level awareness and restriction
Public / Society	General public, communities	Awareness campaigns, social pressure against harmful use
Task-force / Committee mechanism	Special team/committee	Coordinated monitoring and implementation support

Source: KII, 2026

Journalists’ Perceptions of Intolerance and the Media’s Role in Promoting Respect for Diverse Opinions

Journalists largely explained intolerance of diverse opinion as a product of weak social learning and a polarized political environment. They emphasized that many people lack the habit of understanding diversity. One stated that

“We are living in a culture where people attack different opinions instead of understanding them.”

Several respondents identified unhealthy political climate and even argued that “the media itself is largely responsible. They suggested that improving tolerance requires structural reforms including freeing media from “corporate control.” Across responses, media was positioned as a key educator through public-facing communication, with repeated suggestions for awareness campaigns, producing awareness-raising content, and maintaining rational presentation and non-partisan conduct. One participant stated that-

“Media should not behave in a biased manner”.

Importantly, respondents framed journalistic responsibility as ethical and restraint-based. One stated that-

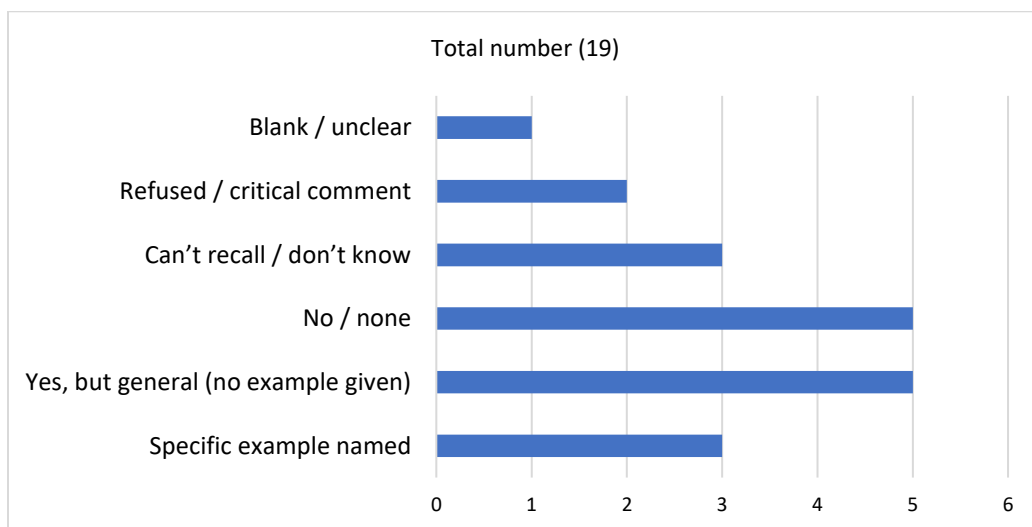
“Our duty is to present information truthfully and fairly.”

Another emphasized that a journalist’s role is not to provoke but to foreground truth and humane values. In addition to media action, respondents stressed upstream socialization highlighting the gaps like lack of family education and weaknesses in the education system. Finally, they stated that tolerance and respect require coordinated efforts across media, family, and institutions, supported by training for journalists themselves.

Journalists’ Responses on any Successful Feature Stories Influencing Youth Ethical Behavior

Participants were asked to give any example, feature story or media initiative that positively influenced youth ethical behavior. In response, only 3 journalists named specific examples such as BBC Media Action’s “Young Voices” project and Prothom Alo’s “Values & Ethics” series. The largest shares were split between those who claimed such content exists though could not cite an instance (5 participants) and those who denied any examples (5 participants). Another 3 participants could not recall or did not know any example, using statements like *“I can’t recall any right now”* or *“I don’t know”*. A smaller portion either refused to share and stated that *“Sorry. I am not interested to share”* while others criticized media practice stating that *“Everyone behaves in a biased way”*.

Figure 5.2: Responses on any Successful Feature Stories Influencing Youth Ethical Behavior



Source: KII, 2026

Nature of Social Media/ICT Content in Building the Ethical Standards of the Young Generation

Most journalists stated that value-based and educational content plays a vital role in shaping the ethical standards of young people. They emphasized the importance of moral instruction, social values, and educational messaging in media content. According to them, contents such as short videos, infographics, and live discussions disseminated through various media channels can effectively promote ethical awareness. Such content was widely regarded by the journalists as socially beneficial.

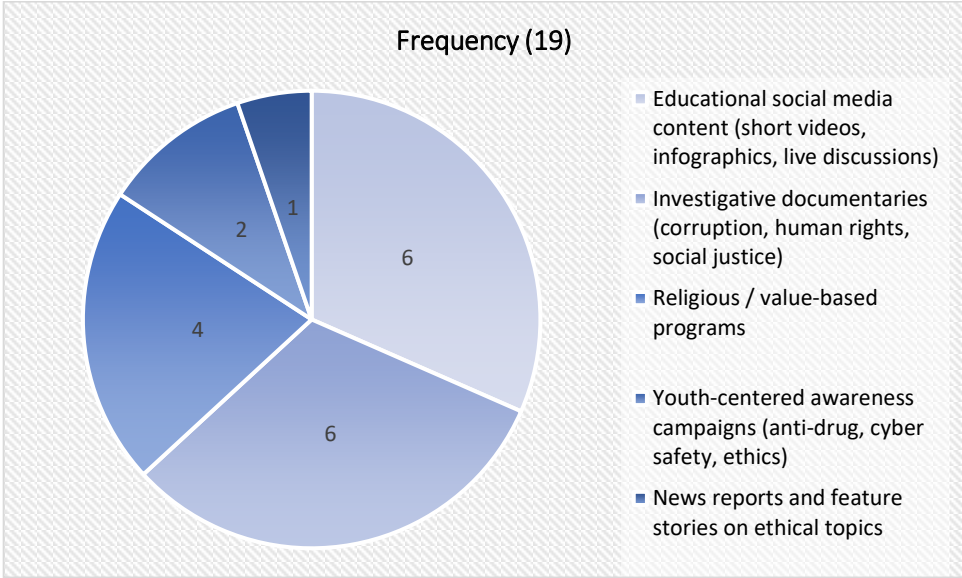
In addition, several journalists prioritized religious and value-based content over purely instructional material. They argued that value-based content is more socially meaningful and encourages audience engagement through discussion and commentary. A few journalists also highlighted youth-centered awareness campaigns, including anti-drug initiatives, cyber safety programs, and ethics-building activities. They suggested that such awareness and discussion-oriented programs should be disseminated more extensively through social media platforms and television channels. These types of content generally aim to generate public dialogue on social issues, family matters, and everyday problems.

Nearly half of the journalists emphasized the importance of investigative documentaries focusing on issues such as corruption, human rights, and social justice. They argued that when justice-related issues are reported accurately and disseminated promptly through social media and other media channels, young people become more cautious about cybercrime, cyberbullying, and other cyber-related offenses. In this regard, they suggested that law enforcement agencies should publish more reports and informational content on such issues. Additionally, journalists noted that news reports and feature stories on ethical issues should be promoted more widely, as feature stories often present positive role models. They believed that if stories of ethically responsible individuals are made visible and go viral, young people may be highly motivated to emulate such behavior.

However, a few journalists observed that the young generation primarily uses social media for entertainment purposes. They expressed concern that entertainment-dominated content often lacks ethical considerations and may exploit personal or sensitive situations, thereby attracting public criticism. The findings thereby suggest that while most media content should be framed

within moral, educational, and awareness-based narratives, there is widespread concern among journalists about the growth of unethical and problematic entertainment content. This concern highlights the ongoing tension between social responsibility and platform-driven monetization in contemporary digital media.

Figure 5.3: Reference Number for Each Type of Content



Source: KII, 2026 (Journalists)

Most media respondents stated that ethical feature stories, positive human-interest narratives, educational/value-based programs, stories about marginalized people, and genuine investigative journalism, including coverage of corruption issues, are less visible in the media. Among the journalists, three respondents said that they do not notice ethical content in the media at all and therefore argued that such content does not exist. They claim ethical content is under-produced, under-promoted, or pushed out by trend/view incentives, and replaced by weaker-quality content. This indicates a distinct visibility gap rather than a total absence of ethical content. They also explained the reasons for this visibility gap and held media incentive structures responsible. According to them, an excessive focus on trends, views, and breaking news leads to lower-quality headlines, reduces ethical news and feature coverage, and weakens audience trust. They repeatedly called for greater scale and consistency in the production and promotion of ethical content.

Proposed Media Role for Youth Ethical Development

Journalists’ responses suggested that media can strengthen youths’ ethical development by enabling participation, redesigning digital systems, and using immersive or AI-based tools. The most repeated recommendation is to create youth-led spaces where young people can learn ethics through lived experience, such as building a platform for youths to create and share their own moral stories or social experiences.

A second cluster emphasized system-level changes, including designing algorithms so that empathetic and ethical content gets more priority, which reflects a belief that recommendation systems shape what youth see and normalize online. Others proposed real-time support and prevention measures, for example, using artificial intelligence to provide instant moral warnings on harmful content. Some also highlight the importance of moral reasoning through consequences. They recommended presenting the long-term social outcomes of behavior in a visual way. Finally, respondents propose stronger experiential learning and accountability tools, such as a transparent rating system to evaluate influencers’ ethical behavior and using virtual reality (VR) or immersive content to make youths feel real-life moral dilemmas. Thus, the responses position the media’s future role as moving beyond awareness-only messaging toward interactive, design-driven, and system-level interventions that promote ethical choices (see Table 3).

Table 5.7: Proposed Media Role for Youth Ethical Development

Proposed Media Role	Responses
Platform for youths to create/share moral stories & experiences	8
AI-based instant moral warnings on harmful content	2
Algorithm design to prioritize empathetic/ethical content	2
Visual presentation of long-term social outcomes of behaviour	2
Other	2
Gamification to improve ethical decision-making skills	1
Transparent rating system for influencers’ ethical behaviour	1
VR/immersive content to experience moral dilemmas	1
Total	19

Source: KII, 2026

5.3 Key Informant Interview with CSE Faculty Members

This section presents qualitative data derived from two Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted with academic experts from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at Jagannath University, Bangladesh. The interviews explore expert perspectives on digital citizenship, the ethical use of ICT, and the roles of educational and regulatory institutions in shaping responsible digital behavior among youth. The KIIs were conducted with Professor A and Professor B (pseudonyms used to ensure anonymity), both of whom have extensive experience in ICT education and cybersecurity. Their insights provide a comparative understanding of how digital ethics is conceptualized, taught, and regulated within higher education and beyond. For analytical clarity, the findings are organized into six major themes: (1) digital citizenship in the academic curriculum, (2) institutional responsibility, (3) governance and policy: capacity versus implementation gap, (4) preventive education and early intervention, (5) ICT as a dual space of risk and opportunity, and (6) limitations of strict control and punishment. These themes allow a structured examination of both convergences and divergences in their perspectives, contributing to a deeper understanding of digital citizenship in Bangladesh.

Digital Citizenship in the Academic Curriculum: Embedded vs. Absent

A key divergence emerges in how digital citizenship is positioned within the curriculum. Professor A presents a functional perspective, suggesting that ethical dimensions are already embedded in courses such as cybersecurity, research ethics, and netiquette. His emphasis on topics like ethical hacking and data privacy indicates that students engage with practical ethical dilemmas within technical contexts, reflecting an implicit or “hidden” curriculum. In contrast, Professor B highlights the lack of formalization and coherence. He argues that without a dedicated course, digital citizenship remains fragmented and insufficiently addressed. While both acknowledge the presence of ethical content, they agree that it lacks integration into a unified framework encompassing digital rights, responsibilities, and behavior.

Institutional Responsibility: Intervention vs. Timing Debate

The two experts also differ in their views on the role of universities. Professor A adopts a proactive stance, emphasizing that universities shape students' digital behavior through training, awareness programs, and ethical instruction. This positions higher education institutions as key agents of ethical socialization. Professor B, however, emphasizes timing, arguing that digital habits are formed earlier in life. From this perspective, universities serve more as reinforcing institutions rather than transformative ones. This suggests that digital citizenship education should follow a multi-stage approach, beginning at the school level and continuing through higher education.

Governance and Policy: Capacity vs. Implementation Gap

Both experts agree that governance challenges are significant. Professor A notes that institutions such as the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) possess technical capabilities for monitoring and regulating digital activities but lack consistent implementation and system updates. Professor B extends this critique by pointing to the absence of expert consultation in policymaking. He argues that decisions are often made without involving ICT professionals, leading to ineffective regulations. Together, their perspectives highlight a clear policy–practice gap, where technical capacity exists but coordination, expertise, and execution remain weak.

Preventive Education and Early Intervention

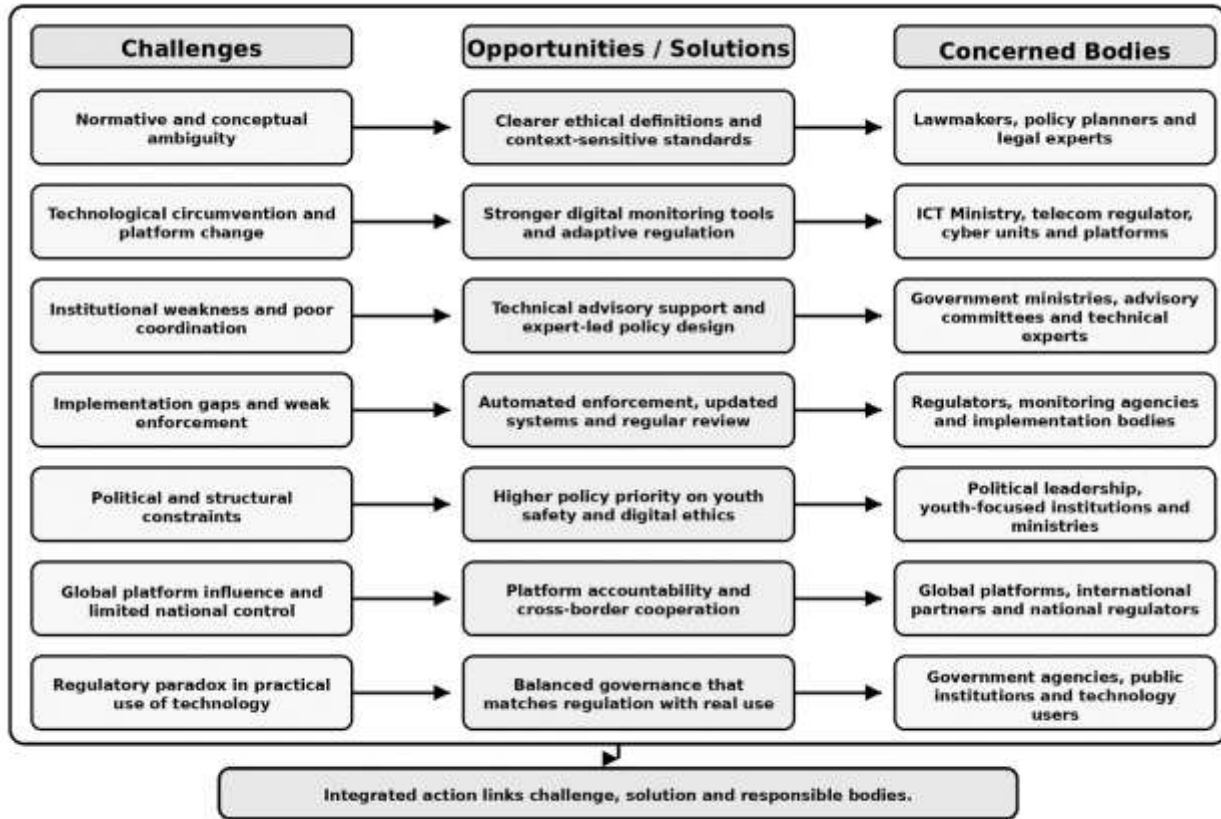
There is strong consensus on the importance of early education. Both experts emphasize that digital ethics should be introduced at the school level to build responsible habits from an early age. Professor A suggests structured guidelines outlining appropriate online behavior, while Professor B advocates for curriculum integration and regulatory measures such as age verification systems. These views reinforce the importance of preventive education as a foundation for responsible digital engagement.

ICT as a Dual Space: Risk and Opportunity

Both informants recognize ICT as a space that presents both risks and opportunities. Professor A highlights educational tools and interactive games that promote constructive engagement, while Professor B refers to initiatives such as UNICEF-supported programs that teach ethical

behavior through interactive methods. This reflects the dual nature of ICT: it can facilitate both harmful practices and ethical learning, depending on how it is designed and used.

Figure 5.4. Key challenges, Opportunities, and Concerned Bodies



Source: KII, 2026

Limits of Regulation: Structural and Technological Constraints

Both experts express skepticism about the effectiveness of strict regulation. Professor A emphasizes the subjective nature of online content, noting that definitions of harm are often context-dependent. He also highlights the challenges posed by global, profit-driven platforms that operate beyond national control. Additionally, the widespread use of tools such as VPNs creates a regulatory paradox, as these technologies cannot be fully restricted. Professor B focuses on institutional weaknesses, including the lack of technical expertise in decision-making and limited consultation with professionals. He also points to practical challenges such as fake accounts, enforcement difficulties, and insufficient government prioritization of digital risks.

Together, these insights suggest that regulatory limitations are not only technical but also structural and institutional, making regulation alone insufficient.

Socio-Economic Dimensions of Digital Misuse

Professor B further connects digital misuse to broader socio-economic factors, particularly unemployment. He argues that individuals lacking productive engagement are more likely to misuse digital platforms. This highlights that digital citizenship is influenced not only by education and policy but also by wider social and economic conditions.

The findings indicate that digital citizenship in Bangladesh operates within a fragmented system characterized by partial educational integration, weak policy implementation, and broader structural challenges. While universities provide some exposure to ethical issues, early education is critical for developing responsible digital behavior. Government institutions possess regulatory authority but face challenges in effective execution and expert integration. ICT platforms, meanwhile, function as both opportunities for learning and sources of risk. Addressing these complexities requires a coordinated approach that combines early education, institutional support, effective governance, and attention to socio-economic factors. Such an integrated strategy is essential for promoting responsible and ethical digital engagement among youth.

5.4 Key Informant Interview with IT Programmer

The key informant, an IT programmer, highlighted a range of challenges affecting ethical ICT use among youth in Bangladesh. Cyber hacking and exploratory digital behavior often lack regulation, creating potential for misuse. The widespread presence of fake and anonymous accounts facilitates impersonation, fraud, and coordinated inauthentic behavior. Youth are also vulnerable to financial scams due to insufficient monitoring and awareness. Cyberbullying persists in online spaces, with limited early intervention or support. Harmful gaming practices, including addictive engagement loops and opaque monetization, affect children and adolescents, while insufficient understanding of data privacy and consent exposes youth to risks. The rapid spread of fake news and misinformation, coupled with exposure to harmful websites and age-inappropriate content, further challenges ethical digital behavior. In addition,

gambling-like mechanics in digital platforms can exploit vulnerable users. These user-level risks are compounded by structural and systemic issues, including the absence of clear ethical guidelines, weak governance and enforcement, and profit-driven platform algorithms, all of which hinder consistent ethical practices.

Addressing these challenges, however, presents several opportunities to strengthen digital citizenship and responsible ICT use. Exploratory hacking behavior can be redirected to build national cyber talent and enhance workforce readiness. Reducing impersonation, fraud, and inauthentic behavior can improve trust in digital platforms while preserving legitimate privacy. Improved monitoring and interventions can lower financial risk exposure, reduce harm from cyberbullying, and promote healthier digital communication norms. Sustainable gaming practices can protect children from exploitative design and encourage balanced digital recreation. Strengthening data privacy measures supports user trust and fosters privacy-conscious digital ecosystems. Enhancing information integrity and combating misinformation enables informed civic participation. Safer browsing environments, parental oversight, and age-appropriate content controls reduce exposure to harmful or inappropriate material. Finally, reducing early financial exposure and limiting predatory monetization protects vulnerable users from addictive or exploitative digital practices.

To overcome these challenges and realize these opportunities, the informant proposed a comprehensive set of strategies. Developing adaptive national and institutional digital ethics frameworks, regularly reviewed and informed by multidisciplinary experts, can guide ethical behavior. Establishing a cross-sector oversight authority ensures standard-setting, compliance monitoring, technical audits, and inter-agency coordination. Integrating digital citizenship, online conduct, consent, and responsible participation into formal curricula and reinforcing these concepts through public awareness campaigns helps shape norms. Technology-neutral legal frameworks, coupled with strengthened enforcement mechanisms, institutional capacity building, and pilot regulatory programs, provide practical support for compliance. Structured digital literacy pathways for students, teachers, and parents improve knowledge of privacy, misinformation, cyber risks, platform manipulation, and responsible participation. Monitoring

and enforcement can be enhanced through reporting obligations, auditable safety procedures, automated tools, and faster inter-agency response mechanisms. Proportionate identity assurance balances legitimate pseudonymity with accountability for harmful activities, while investments in secure cybersecurity infrastructure and skilled personnel ensure operational readiness. Strengthened inter-agency coordination, increased algorithmic transparency, and regional cooperation help address systemic challenges and mitigate the influence of global platform dominance. Collectively, these measures offer a coordinated approach to promoting ethical ICT use and building stronger digital citizenship among youth in Bangladesh.

Table 5.8: Challenges and Overcoming Strategies for Ethical Development

Major Challenges	Overcoming Strategies
1. Lack of ethical guidelines	Develop adaptive national and institutional digital ethics frameworks that are reviewed regularly and informed by technologists, educators, legal scholars, psychologists, and child protection stakeholders.
2. No specific regulatory body clearly assigned	Create a clearly mandated cross-sector oversight authority responsible for standard-setting, compliance monitoring, technical audit, and inter-agency coordination on youth digital safety.
3. Absence of clear social boundary norms	Integrate digital citizenship, online conduct, consent, and responsible participation into the core curriculum and reinforce these norms through public communication and community engagement.
4. Legal structure often does not support	Move toward technology-neutral legal drafting that regulates harmful conduct, foreseeable impact, and duty of care rather than focusing narrowly on specific software, devices, or platforms.
5. Weak or insufficient legal structure	Strengthen legal enforceability through clearer compliance obligations, institutional capacity building, and pilot implementation mechanisms such as controlled regulatory testing before full-scale adoption.
6. No digital literacy	Introduce structured digital literacy pathways for students, teachers, and parents, covering privacy, misinformation, cyber risk, platform manipulation, consent, and responsible digital participation.
7. Weak monitoring and	Improve compliance oversight through reporting obligations, auditable

enforcement mechanisms	platform safety procedures, automated monitoring interfaces where appropriate, and faster escalation pathways across institutions.
8. Easy anonymity and fake identity creation	Preserve legitimate public pseudonymity while enabling backend accountability for high-risk transactions, repeat abuse, and platform-level enforcement through proportionate identity assurance mechanisms.
9. Inadequate cybersecurity infrastructure	Invest in secure infrastructure, incident response capacity, institutional security baselines, and specialized technical personnel so that ethical protections are supported by actual operational capability.
10. Poor coordination between agencies and ministries	Establish secure inter-agency coordination protocols, shared response frameworks, and trusted data exchange mechanisms among ICT authorities, schools, law enforcement, and child protection bodies.
11. Profit-driven algorithms	Require greater transparency in recommender and ranking systems, incentivize safer default settings, and discourage platform designs that reward outrage, manipulation, or compulsive engagement at the expense of youth well-being.
12. Others (including global platform dominance)	Strengthen regional cooperation, harmonize child-safety standards, and develop collective regulatory approaches so that national protections are not undermined by the scale and influence of transnational platforms.

5.5 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Authentication of Online Information

Participants were aware of the importance of verifying online information, but they also admitted that such verification is not done consistently. The discussion suggests that truth-checking is often partial and depends on personal assumption rather than a formal process. One participant openly stated, “No, no one fully verifies it. It is done on the basis of assumption.” This reflects a weak culture of careful verification before sharing information online. Other responses such as “50-50” and “sometimes it is checked, sometimes it is not” further indicate that verification is irregular. At the same time, some participants described a basic process of verification. One participant explained, “I give it some time and watch which direction it is going, and then try to share it.” This means that participants sometimes delay

sharing in order to observe whether the information becomes clearer or gains more confirmation. Another participant said that if the information appears true, then he shares it, but if it does not feel true, he avoids sharing it. This shows that participants often rely on personal judgment. The discussion also reveals that authenticity is mostly judged through the source and the platform. One participant explained, “I check whether there is a source, which platform it is from, and who is reporting the news.” This suggests that source credibility is a key marker of truth for the participants. They appear to trust large or familiar platforms more than unknown ones. FGD, thus, suggests that while participants understand that truthfulness matters, their actual practice of verification remains informal, selective, and dependent on personal confidence in the source.

Responsible Use of Online Information

Participants understood responsible online information use mainly as checking the truth before sharing and ensuring that the source of the information is visible. Their responses show that responsibility is viewed in a practical sense rather than in a policy-based or legal sense. One participant described responsibility as checking whether the source is really authentic before passing the information to others. This indicates that participants connect responsibility with caution and honesty in online sharing. The strongest practical idea in this theme was the importance of including links. One participant said, “I try to give the portal link or the source link with the information that I share.” Another repeated the same idea by saying that giving the source link is a way to show responsibility. This suggests that participants believe source citation itself is an ethical act. However, as per the Bangladesh ICT Policy, the participants did not have a strong formal understanding of it. One participant admitted, “No, I don’t have any idea about the ethical guideline regarding responsible sharing of information as per the ICT policy though I know that it has many restrictions.” This shows that participants’ sense of responsibility comes more from personal ethics than from institutional or legal awareness. Thus, results reveal a practical idea of digital responsibility. Participants think responsible behavior means checking accuracy and sharing sources, but they have limited knowledge of wider policy frameworks.

Privacy and Respect for Others' Opinions

The discussion on privacy and respect suggests that participants see these issues mainly as matters of individual ethics. One participant stated that respecting others' opinion depends on personal morality. This indicates that privacy is not understood as a strict social rule, but rather as something shaped by personal values. Participants also showed a situational attitude as one participant explained that he might react with "Haha" to a friend's post, but would not do so in the case of a senior. He also added, "If I do not like it, I will ignore it and move on." This shows that online behavior changes according to relationship, respect, and social position. Another participant also behaves similarly. This reveals that restraint and avoidance are common strategies among participants.

However, participants do not avoid negative reaction in all cases. One participant argued that if a content truly deserves an angry reaction, then reacting strongly may be justified. But he also drew a moral boundary by saying that if a reaction is driven by personal anger and causes harm, then it should be seen negatively. In addition, participants suggested practical options such as hiding content, blocking people, or unfollowing accounts that repeatedly share offensive or irritating material. FGD results, thus, show that participants value privacy and respect, but they approach them as personal moral choices. Avoidance and self-control seem more common than direct confrontation, although harmful content is considered an exception.

Awareness about Fake Accounts

Participants did not see fake accounts as entirely negative. Instead, they judged fake accounts according to the purpose for which they are used. One participant explained that a fake account may be opened to stay away from the chaos created by friends' excessive sharing. He also noted that this is not necessarily bad. Another participant made the distinction even clearer by identifying both positive and negative reasons. According to him, fake accounts may be used for educational purposes, for distancing oneself from unnecessary social interaction, or for hiding from friends in order to maintain privacy. Thus, fake accounts may be seen as useful tools for focus and self-management. But he also added that fake accounts are used for harmful purposes such as contacting girls dishonestly, eve-teasing, body shaming, and spreading political ideology. This shows that participants do not judge fake identity itself as the main

problem; rather, they judge the intention behind it. However, participants suggested reporting fake accounts, especially when they regularly engage in harmful acts.

Practice of Online Gaming

Participants described gaming addiction as a complex issue connected with emotion, environment, family, and technology. One participant stated, “Loneliness is one issue. Gaming gives dopamine. Playgrounds are decreasing. The family is the most responsible. The COVID period had the biggest impact.” This quotation captures the central thinking of the group. Gaming addiction is not seen as a simple matter of choice. It is presented as something encouraged by emotional isolation, pleasure, limited outdoor activity, and social change. Participants also discussed why addiction is difficult to reduce. One participant suggested that young people may be moved away from addiction if meaningful alternatives are provided. He said that if something better than gaming can be shown to them, they may be guided in a better direction. Another participant simply suggested focusing on other work and spending time with friends. One participant gave a personal example. He explained that during the COVID period he was addicted to the game Free Fire, later deleted it during exams, and then became more attached to Reels. Another participant sharply replied, “But the addiction is still remaining.” Thus, addiction may not disappear but change form. The participants also linked this problem to age and control. They felt that university students may understand self-control better, but school-level students are more vulnerable because digital devices were introduced too suddenly and without enough guidance. Family was repeatedly mentioned as the key factor that could either control or worsen the problem.

Unethical Behavior on Social Media

Participants repeatedly connected unethical posting with economic benefit. Results reveal a strong perception that unethical content is often a business strategy. The group also believed that such content spreads because it attracts more viewers. One participant said that these types of content often become very viral. Another participant added that some people create such content deliberately to push society toward moral decline, and that if income from views were stopped, they would look for some other path. This shows that participants understand

unethical content not only as an individual moral failure, but also as something linked with the online attention economy.

A deeper explanation came when one participant described how repeated action becomes a regular behavior. He explained that when someone repeatedly does something and gains pleasure from it, dopamine is released and the person becomes tempted to repeat the behavior again and again. This means participants see unethical content creation as reinforced by pleasure, habit, privacy, and economic interest. When the discussion moved to negative comments, one participant said, "Everyone has their own perspective. It may be bad in my case, but not bad in your case." He then added that if a person personally thinks something is bad, he/she may avoid it instead of commenting negatively. Participants, thus, see unethical online behavior mainly as profit-driven and habit-forming. They also show awareness that different people judge content differently, so restraint may sometimes be more ethical than attacking others.

Religious and Cultural Sensitivity

Participants considered respect for others' culture important, but they also believed that such respect varies from person to person. One participant stated, "It depends entirely on the individual." Another said that everything depends on the person's perspective. These responses suggest that participants do not see cultural respect as equally practiced by everyone. A more elaborate opinion came from a participant who said that society needs greater awareness of multiculturalism. He explained that religious harmony is taught from childhood, but many people do not understand its real meaning or significance. He argued that because people lack a correct understanding of religious culture, they often get involved in conflict or go in the wrong direction. This introduces the idea that the problem is not simply disrespect, but shallow understanding. Another participant stated, "Personally, I always try to treat everyone with respect, because I believe that the core teaching of every religion is to become a good human being." This statement adds depth to the theme because it recognizes the gap between outward claim and inner belief.

He suggests that visible support and positive social interaction are considered signs of cultural respect. Thus, though participants recognize the value of religious and cultural respect, they

believe it depends heavily on personal values and awareness. Genuine harmony, in their view, requires deeper understanding rather than only polite public behavior.

Online Consumer Behavior

Participants spend much of their online time on routine activities such as watching news, seeing Reels, messaging, and browsing different kinds of content. This indicates that online engagement is woven into daily life in a casual and regular manner. The most significant point is participants’ awareness of how the algorithm shapes preference. One participant explained, “When I watch one full video on a particular topic, because of the algorithm, the same kind of videos keep coming later. As I continue watching them, they eventually enter my list of preferences.” This is a strong reflection of how participants understand digital platforms as actively shaping taste.

Table 5.9: FGD themes and the dominant opinion

Theme	Dominant opinion
Online information truthfulness	Verification is irregular. Trust depends mainly on source and platform.
Responsible use of online information	Responsibility means checking truth and giving source links.
Privacy and respect for opinions	Respect is seen as personal ethics. Ignore, hide, unfollow, and block are preferred responses.
Awareness about fake accounts	Fake accounts are viewed as both useful and harmful depending on purpose.
Online gaming practice	Addiction is linked to loneliness, family gap, device exposure, COVID habits, and fewer playgrounds.
Unethical behavior on social media	Unethical content is seen as profit-driven, viral, and reinforced by repeated exposure.
Religious and cultural sensitivity	Respect depends on individual mindset. More awareness is needed.
Online consumer behavior	Online choices are shaped by routine use and platform algorithms.

Source: FGD, 2026

Thus, the FGD shows that participants possess a practical understanding of digital ethics, but that understanding is not always supported by structured knowledge or consistent action. They repeatedly emphasized truth-checking, source credibility, self-restraint, awareness, and family

guidance. At the same time, their discussions reveal uncertainty, inconsistency, and strong dependence on personal judgment. The following table shows the dominant views of FGD under each theme. Another participant added, “But if I stop watching them, then they start appearing less.” He gave examples such as National Geography and dress-related videos appearing more often on her feed. Others mentioned cooking, food, and philosophical content. These responses show that participants are aware that their likes are partly personal, but also partly generated through repeated platform recommendation. Participants basically see online consumer behavior as both self-directed and algorithmically influenced. Their preferences are shaped not only by what they already like, but also by what platforms repeatedly show them.

Chapter 6

Findings and Discussions

The discussion section provides an integrated interpretation of findings derived from survey results, Facebook case analysis, journalist interviews, expert opinions, and focus group discussions. Drawing on these multiple sources offers a comprehensive understanding of how social media and ICT influence ethical behavior and digital practices among youth in Bangladesh. The survey and qualitative findings are analyzed with attention to relevance, similarities, and contrasts, following a data triangulation approach. To address all research objectives, the analysis is organized around four interconnected dimensions, reflecting the broader landscape of digital engagement, the challenges in upholding ethical standards, the opportunities presented by digital platforms, and the strategies necessary to strengthen digital literacy and promote responsible ICT use. Besides, the key findings of the Cyber Security Act (2023) of Bangladesh and the core theoretical framework were incorporated into the discussion.

6.1 Assessment of Digital Citizenship Among Youth in Bangladesh

The demographic profile of the respondents shows that most participants are young undergraduate students aged 23–26, with a nearly equal number of males and females. They are studying full-time and are almost evenly distributed between Chittagong (51.4%) and Dhaka (48.6%). Most of them have relatively low monthly incomes. This group represents active users of social media and ICT, making their responses useful for understanding both the opportunities and challenges of digital citizenship among youth in Bangladesh.

Survey results indicate that the Composite Digital Citizenship Index (0.74) reflects a generally good level of digital citizenship, though approximately 26% of respondents still lack consistent digital citizenship practices. The Digital Literacy Index (0.69) shows that respondents have a solid foundation in using digital technologies and evaluating online information. Critical thinking

before sharing content scored the highest (0.84), suggesting that many young users attempt to verify the credibility of information before dissemination. Moderate competence was observed in using digital tools (0.67) and responsible sharing of content (0.67), while lower scores in identifying reliable sources (0.64) and solving basic technical problems (0.63) indicate areas requiring further improvement. These findings suggest that although youth are active digital users, their ability to assess information credibility and address technical challenges remains limited.

Table 6.1: Composite Digital Citizenship Index

Categories	Weighted Score (Avg)	Opposite Meaning of Categories	%
1. Combined Digital Literacy Index	0.69	Digital Literacy Gap	31%
<i>Identifying reliable and unreliable sources</i>	0.64	Difficulty distinguishing sources	36%
<i>Using digital tools</i>	0.67	Poor digital tool usage	33%
<i>Thinking critically before sharing</i>	0.84	Impulsive sharing	16%
<i>Solving basic device problems</i>	0.63	Inability to solve device problems	37%
<i>Sharing digital content responsibly</i>	0.67	Irresponsible content sharing	33%
2. Combined Digital Ethics and Responsibility Index	0.75	Ethical Gaps in Digital Behavior	25%
<i>Sharing beneficial information online</i>	0.69	Sharing harmful or irrelevant information	31%
<i>Promoting positive values online</i>	0.74	Spreading negative or harmful values	26%
<i>Avoiding misleading content</i>	0.93	Spreading misleading content	7%
<i>Reporting unethical content</i>	0.63	Ignoring unethical content	37%
3. Combined Digital Honesty and Integrity Index	0.88	Risk of Dishonest Digital Behavior	12%
<i>Checking truth before digital sharing</i>	0.85	Sharing without verification	15%
<i>Avoiding digital copying others content</i>	0.83	Plagiarizing digital content	17%
<i>Using real identity online</i>	0.95	Hiding or faking identity online	5%
4. Combined Digital Etiquette Index	0.77	Lack of Digital Etiquette	23%
<i>Respecting opinions online</i>	0.82	Disrespecting others' opinions online	18%
<i>Avoiding negative comments online</i>	0.90	Posting negative or harmful comments	10%
<i>Having empathy toward bullied</i>	0.59	Lacking empathy toward victims	41%
5. Combined Digital Civic Engagement Index	0.53	Lack of Digital Civic Engagement	47%
<i>Participating in online civic activities</i>	0.56	Not engaging in civic activities	44%
<i>Discussing social issues respectfully online</i>	0.50	Disrespectful online discussions	50%

6. Combined Digital Collaboration and Solidarity Index	0.63	Lack of Digital Collaboration	37%
<i>Collaborating with online study groups</i>	0.58	Not collaborating with peers online	42%
<i>Supporting online initiatives</i>	0.63	Ignoring online initiatives	37%
<i>Participating online teamwork campaigns</i>	0.68	Avoiding teamwork campaigns	32%
7. Combined Digital Privacy and Security Index	0.56	Weak Digital Safety Practices	44%
<i>Maintaining privacy settings online</i>	0.75	Poor maintenance of privacy settings	25%
<i>Updating privacy settings online</i>	0.78	Neglecting privacy updates	22%
<i>Not violating privacy online</i>	0.85	Violating others' privacy	15%
8. Combined Digital Cultural and Religious Value Sensitivity Index	0.91	Weak Digital Cultural and Religious Sensitivity	9%
<i>Respecting cultural differences online</i>	0.92	Disrespecting cultural differences	8%
<i>Avoiding hurting religious beliefs online</i>	0.90	Insensitive to religious beliefs	10%
Composite Digital Citizenship Index	0.74	Lack of Digital Citizenship	26%

Note: Composite Digital Citizenship Index = $(0.69+0.75+0.88 +0.77+0.53+0.63+0.79+0.91)/ 8=0.74$.

Ethical awareness and responsibility were generally stronger. The Digital Ethics and Responsibility Index (0.75) and Digital Honesty and Integrity Index (0.88) reflect high levels of ethical consciousness, with respondents avoiding misleading content (0.93) and maintaining authenticity online (Table 6.1). Digital etiquette also shows a positive trend (0.77), with respondents generally respecting others' opinions and refraining from posting harmful comments. However, empathy toward victims of cyberbullying was weaker (0.59), highlighting a gap in supportive digital behavior. Similarly, civic engagement scored lowest (0.53), indicating that youth participation in discussions of social issues remains limited, and digital collaboration (0.63) also shows inconsistent practice.

The composite digital citizenship score of 0.74 indicates notable gaps in digital citizenship of youth, suggests the need for educational interventions focusing on cultivating core ethical competencies such as respect for others, cultural and religious sensitivity, responsible information sharing, and accountability in online interactions. Therefore, integrating digital citizenship into school and college curricula should not only teach the "do's and don'ts" of online behavior but also systematically build intentions, norms, and competencies that enable young people to practice responsible, engaged, and secure digital citizenship in their everyday lives (Oyedemi, 2018).

Qualitative findings from focus group discussions (FGDs) and expert interviews support and contextualize these survey results. Social media and ICT-based platforms have become central to youth life, functioning as spaces for entertainment, communication, and self-expression. The rapid rise of content creators shows that access to digital tools, such as smartphones, enables widespread participation. Case analyses of three controversial content creators illustrate how youth engagement is often driven by visibility, emotional appeal, and algorithmic reach, rather than ethical considerations alone. Despite criticisms, these creators maintain high engagement, reflecting the active and responsive nature of youth participation. Journalists’ perspectives further indicate that awareness of digital citizenship exists but is uneven. While many youth understand the concept theoretically, practical application is limited, particularly in areas such as fact-checking and verification. This aligns with survey findings that indicate moderate competence in evaluating sources and technical problem-solving. Youth engagement is largely entertainment-oriented, reinforcing passive consumption over critical engagement.

Table 6.2: Key findings of Digital Citizenship

Dimensions of Digital Citizenship	Present Status
Digital Literacy	Basic knowledge with weak verification skills, absence of structured concept, Gaps exist in critical information evaluation
Digital Ethics & Responsibility	Guided by personal judgment, ethical practices remain fragmented, inconsistent, and largely informal
Digital Honesty & Integrity	Selective and unsystematic information sharing
Digital Etiquette	Context-dependent respectful behavior, weak empathy toward victims of cyberbullying
Digital Civic Engagement	Mostly entertainment-focused participation
Digital Collaboration & Solidarity	Unstructured and limited collaboration
Privacy & Security Awareness	Basic but shallow understanding, lack of understanding of formal policies
Cultural & Religious Sensitivity	Influenced by personal and social context

From an academic perspective, universities play a dual and somewhat contradictory role. On one hand, curricula incorporate research ethics, digital literacy, cybersecurity, and netiquette, contributing to responsible technology use. On the other hand, as highlighted by Professor B, digital citizenship is largely absent as a structured concept in technical disciplines. Universities prioritize technical skills, leaving limited scope for ethical or behavioral training. Although topics

such as ethical hacking are included, they do not address broader issues of responsible digital behavior. By the time students reach university, their digital habits are already formed, suggesting that higher education contributes more to reinforcing awareness than establishing foundational digital citizenship. These observations resonate with survey findings showing strong ethical awareness but fragmented practice among youth.

FGD participants further illustrate the informal and practice-based nature of youth digital citizenship. They demonstrate a basic understanding of responsible behavior—verifying information, sharing credible sources, and maintaining respectful interactions—but practices remain inconsistent. Verification is often selective, guided by personal judgment or familiarity with sources, rather than systematic evaluation. Responsibility is framed practically rather than through awareness of formal policies or legal frameworks. Privacy, respect, and handling of fake identities are also approached situationally. Youth exhibit an awareness of algorithmic influence, acknowledging how repeated exposure shapes interests and engagement patterns, which reinforces survey findings that algorithmic and entertainment-driven factors strongly shape digital participation.

Integrating survey results and qualitative insights thus shows that youth in Bangladesh have a foundational awareness of digital ethics, particularly in honesty, authenticity, respect for diversity, and responsible sharing. However, ethical practices remain fragmented, inconsistent, and largely informal. Gaps exist in critical information evaluation, civic engagement, empathetic behavior, technical digital skills, and understanding of formal policies. While universities contribute to awareness, early-life exposure, entertainment-driven content, algorithmic influence, and personal judgment continue to shape behaviors, highlighting the need for structured education, policy integration, and interventions that strengthen both knowledge and practical application of digital citizenship.

6.2 Challenges to Digital Citizenship, Social Media, and ICT in Upholding Ethical Standards

The survey findings indicate that youth in Bangladesh face significant challenges in upholding ethical standards in digital environments. The overall Composite Challenge Index score of 0.47,

or 47%, suggests that nearly half of the factors affecting the development of digital citizenship are influenced by institutional, policy, and educational limitations (Table 6.3). While some progress has been made in areas such as digital literacy and ethical awareness, critical gaps remain, particularly in policy frameworks, enforcement capacity, and formal education. Variations across subcategories indicate that certain areas—such as ICT policy frameworks, law enforcement, and digital ethics education—pose greater obstacles than others.

Table 6.3: Composite Challenge Index

Main Categories	Weighted Score (Avg)	Percentage
1. Lack of Ethical ICT Policy	0.44	44%
<i>Lacking digital ethics policy</i>	0.48	48%
<i>Backdated ICT policy on ethical issues</i>	0.39	39%
2. Policy Effectivity Crisis	0.47	47%
<i>Ineffective social media regulation</i>	0.40	40%
<i>Regulatory reason not effective</i>	0.53	53%
3. Weak Policy Confession	0.59	59%
<i>Reason for weak policy enforcement</i>	0.61	61%
<i>Lacking law enforcement ability</i>	0.56	56%
4. Lack of Law Enforcement	0.54	54%
<i>Lacking Punishment for digital ethics violation</i>	0.55	55%
<i>Absence of digital ethics teaching in schools</i>	0.52	52%
5. Poor Digital Literacy Reasoning	0.31	31%
Composite Challenge Index	0.47	47%

Note: Composite Challenge Index = $(0.44+0.47+0.59+0.54+0.31)/ 5=0.47$

Survey results show that the weakness of ICT policy frameworks is a major concern, reflected in a score of 0.44. Nearly half of respondents report the absence of formal digital ethics policies (48%), and backdated ICT guidelines (44%) fail to address emerging challenges such as misinformation, privacy protection, cyber harassment, and responsible social media use. Similarly, policy implementation is limited, with a score of 0.47, highlighting ineffective social media regulation (40%) and administrative inefficiencies (47%). Institutional enforcement capacity also shows significant gaps (score of 0.59), with high values for weak policy enforcement (61%) and lack of law enforcement ability (56%). Law enforcement and

educational support systems are equally limited (score 0.54), indicated by minimal punishment for digital ethics violations (55%) and insufficient structured digital ethics education in schools (52%). In contrast, digital literacy challenges appear less severe (score 0.31), although gaps in training, awareness programs, and curriculum integration limit young people's ability to critically evaluate information, solve technical problems, and engage responsibly online.

These survey-based findings align with insights from qualitative data. Case analysis demonstrates that platform-driven incentives often conflict with ethical responsibility. Social media algorithms prioritize engagement, promoting content that generates strong emotional reactions, including outrage, humor, and controversy. As a result, even negative attention increases visibility, encouraging creators to adopt sensational or boundary-crossing strategies. For example, one case involved content that exploited minors, highlighting risks to vulnerable individuals in pursuit of monetization. Other content, while legally permissible, raises concerns about superficial fame and audience amplification of ethically ambiguous material, such as the public sharing of personal and emotional experiences. This mirrors survey observations where youth report moderate competence in critical evaluation (0.64 for identifying reliable sources) but still rely heavily on entertainment-driven content.

Journalist interviews and FGDs corroborate survey findings, showing that youth in Bangladesh possess foundational awareness of digital citizenship, particularly in areas such as honesty, authenticity, and respect for cultural and religious diversity. However, practical application remains inconsistent, with ethical decision-making often guided by personal judgment rather than systematic verification or formal frameworks. Youth practices are selective, context-dependent, and influenced by social relationships, reflecting survey evidence of lower engagement in civic participation and digital collaboration. Repeated exposure to sensational or emotionally provocative content further reinforces behavior through psychological mechanisms such as habit formation and pleasure, explaining the persistence of unethical practices despite general awareness of responsible conduct.

The key informant, an IT programmer, highlighted additional challenges affecting ethical ICT use among youth. Cyber hacking and exploratory digital behavior often lack regulation, creating potential for misuse. Fake and anonymous accounts facilitate impersonation, fraud, and coordinated inauthentic behavior, while youth are vulnerable to financial scams due to insufficient monitoring and awareness. Cyberbullying persists, with limited early intervention or support, and harmful gaming practices including addictive engagement loops and opaque monetization affecting children and adolescents. Insufficient understanding of data privacy, consent, and platform manipulation exposes youth to additional risks. Rapid dissemination of fake news, misinformation, age-inappropriate content, and gambling-like mechanics further compromise ethical digital behavior.

The Cyber Security Act (2023) was formed to ensure the security and ethical life of citizens. However, the proposed law faces several key challenges related to security, ethics, and human rights. From a security perspective, although the law aims to control rising cybercrime, it struggles to effectively address complex issues such as organized cyber syndicates, large-scale data breaches, and different levels of hacking, as current provisions often treat all offenses similarly. From an ethical standpoint, the use of vague and unclear terms such as “annoying,” “defamation,” or “hurting religious sentiment” creates risks of misinterpretation and misuse, leading to unfair or disproportionate punishment. This lack of clarity also raises concerns about bias and inconsistency in enforcement. From a human rights perspective, the potential misuse of power, fear of arrest, and unclear legal boundaries may restrict freedom of expression, particularly for journalists and ordinary citizens. The absence of clear safeguards, such as strict limits on arrest without warrant and proper differentiation between minor and serious offenses, further increases the risk of violating individual rights.

These user-level challenges are compounded by structural and systemic issues. Weak governance, ineffective policy implementation, limited expert consultation, profit-driven platform algorithms, technological barriers such as delayed moderation, VPN use, and insufficient cybersecurity infrastructure, all hinder consistent ethical practices. Socio-economic factors, including limited government attention, weak regulatory mechanisms, and

unemployment, reinforce these challenges, while gaps in digital literacy, critical reasoning, and policy awareness further constrain responsible digital engagement.

Integrating survey, FGD, journalist, and KII insights shows that challenges to ethical digital behavior among youth are systemic rather than solely individual. Platform-driven incentives, weak governance, technological limitations, socio-cultural factors, and structural conditions collectively shape user behavior, making unethical practices persistent. While youth demonstrate awareness of responsible behavior, these systemic barriers highlight the need for coordinated interventions spanning education, policy reform, enforcement, and behavioral guidance to strengthen digital citizenship in Bangladesh.

Table 6.4: Key findings of Challenges

Key Themes	Major Challenges
Platform Incentives	Profit-driven algorithms that prioritize sensational or emotional content to maximize engagement; absence of expert consultation in policymaking.
Ethical Ambiguity in Content	Absence of clear social boundary norms; unclear distinctions between ethical, unethical, and legally acceptable digital practices.
Governance & Enforcement	Lack of ethical guidelines; no specific regulatory body clearly assigned; weak or insufficient legal structure; legal frameworks often do not support enforcement; weak monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, rising concerns about bias and inconsistency in enforcement
Technological Constraints	Easy anonymity and fake identity creation; inadequate cybersecurity infrastructure; ineffective content moderation; delays in content removal.
User Behavior & Practices	Poor verification habits; reliance on personal judgment; exploratory behavior without formal guidance increases risk of misuse.
Digital Literacy Gap	No structured digital literacy; limited awareness of ethical standards, ICT policies, privacy, consent, and responsible digital participation.
Socio-Psychological Factors	Attraction to sensational content reinforced through habit, pleasure, and algorithmic amplification; susceptibility to addictive or manipulative digital behaviors.
Structural & Cultural Challenges	Poor coordination between agencies and ministries; no specific regulatory body; ineffective social media regulation; cultural misunderstandings complicate enforcement and consistent ethical behavior.

6.3 Opportunities of Social Media and ICT for Promoting Ethical Practices

Despite the challenges, findings from case analysis, journalist interviews, expert opinion, KII, and FGDs highlight significant opportunities for promoting ethical awareness and positive engagement through social media and ICT. These platforms provide accessible spaces for creativity, entrepreneurship, and self-expression, enabling individuals to connect with wide audiences and build careers without reliance on traditional media structures. The rise of diverse content creators demonstrates the democratization of content production, where visibility and influence can be achieved through consistent engagement and strategic use of digital platforms. At the same time, strengthening trust within digital ecosystems and by reducing impersonation, fraud, and inauthentic behavior can further enhance the credibility and sustainability of these opportunities while preserving legitimate privacy.

The case analysis further illustrates how digital platforms can support economic and professional opportunities. Content creation can enable small-scale entrepreneurship, personal branding, and long-term influence. Sustained visibility, even when shaped by controversy, can translate into commercial opportunities such as brand promotions and public engagement. Moreover, exploratory digital behaviors, including curiosity-driven or “hacking” tendencies, can be positively redirected toward building national cyber talent and enhancing workforce readiness. At the same time, the interactive nature of these platforms allows for public discourse, where controversial content can stimulate debate and encourage reflection on ethical issues, social norms, and acceptable behavior among audiences. Enhancing information integrity and combating misinformation within such discourse further supports informed civic participation.

Journalists emphasized the importance of value-based, educational, and awareness-oriented content as effective tools for shaping ethical behavior. Various formats including short videos, infographics, live discussions, and awareness campaigns—are seen as particularly effective in communicating ethical messages. Content rooted in social values or cultural and religious perspectives can further enhance engagement and reflection. Investigative journalism also plays a crucial role by exposing issues such as corruption, human rights violations, and social

injustice, thereby encouraging responsible digital behavior. Similarly, feature stories that highlight positive role models have the potential to inspire ethical practices among youth. Strengthened monitoring and timely interventions can complement these efforts by reducing cyberbullying, limiting harmful interactions, and promoting healthier digital communication norms.

However, a key issue identified is the visibility gap, where ethical and educational content is often overshadowed by entertainment-driven and trend-based material. This suggests that the challenge lies not in the absence of ethical content, but in its limited promotion and reach within the media ecosystem. From an educational and technological perspective, ICT platforms provide significant opportunities for constructive learning and the development of digital skills. Interactive tools, including educational and ethical digital games, combine engagement with learning, promoting productive and responsible use of digital platforms. Sustainable gaming practices, along with safeguards against exploitative design, can further protect children and encourage balanced digital recreation.

Initiatives led by organizations such as UNICEF, in collaboration with the ICT Ministry, employ quiz-based and interactive programs to teach children appropriate online behavior and the “do’s and don’ts” of digital engagement. Expanding these programs, alongside safer browsing environments, parental oversight, and age-appropriate content controls, can reduce exposure to harmful or inappropriate material. Integrating such initiatives into formal education systems can further encourage responsible, informed, and ethical use of digital technologies among youth. At the same time, strengthening data privacy measures can build user trust and foster more privacy-conscious digital ecosystems, while limiting early financial exposure and predatory monetization can protect vulnerable users from addictive or exploitative digital practices.

FGD findings further reveal that youth already possess partial awareness and adaptive strategies that can be leveraged for ethical development. Participants demonstrate an understanding of source credibility, verification practices, and the importance of sharing

authentic information, even though these practices are not always consistent. Their tendency to use self-regulation strategies—such as avoiding harmful content, blocking problematic users, or disengaging from negative interactions that indicates an existing capacity for ethical decision-making. Additionally, participants show awareness of how algorithms influence their content preferences through repeated exposure. This understanding provides an opportunity to promote critical digital literacy by educating users about algorithmic bias and encouraging more conscious engagement with online content. Their complex perspective on issues such as fake accounts also suggests that ethical awareness campaigns can focus on responsible intent and behavior rather than treating digital tools as inherently harmful. Recognition of broader issues, such as gaming addiction, also creates opportunities for intervention. By promoting meaningful alternatives, balanced digital habits, and constructive engagement, ICT platforms can help guide youth toward healthier and more ethical usage patterns.

Table 6.5: Key findings of Opportunities

Key Theme	Major Opportunities
Cyber Talent Development	Transforms exploratory behavior into skilled workforce capacity and strengthens cyber resilience
Secure Digital Economy	Enhances trust in e-commerce and digital payment systems
Accessibility & Participation	Open platforms enable inclusive participation, supported by safer environments and reduced harmful exposure
Economic & Professional Growth	Content creation and digital platforms foster entrepreneurship, strengthened by secure e-commerce and trust
Educational & Awareness Content	Ethical awareness content is enhanced by accurate information flow and improved information integrity
Media & Journalism Role	Investigative and feature content promote ethics, supported by reduced misinformation and platform trust mechanisms
Interactive Engagement	Public discourse encourages reflection, strengthened by healthier communication norms and reduced online harm
ICT for Learning	Digital tools support learning, complemented by workforce readiness
Youth Capacity & Self-Regulation	Existing awareness is strengthened by safer environments, reduced exploitation, and balanced digital practices
Algorithmic Awareness	Critical content consumption is reinforced by transparency, reduced manipulation, and information integrity
Platform Trust & Safety	Reduces fraud, impersonation, and harmful behavior while ensuring user privacy

The findings suggest that social media and ICT platforms hold substantial potential for promoting ethical practices through education, engagement, and awareness. While ethical content currently faces visibility challenges, youth already demonstrate foundational awareness, self-regulation strategies, and understanding of digital environments. These existing capacities, combined with improved content design, stronger monitoring, enhanced privacy and safety measures, educational initiatives, and platform-level support, can be effectively leveraged to foster more consistent, informed, and responsible digital behavior among the young generation. Drawing on cultivation theory, this potential can be strategically enhanced by reshaping the digital content environment itself, as repeated exposure to certain types of content gradually cultivates users' perceptions and behaviors (Gerbner, 1998). Therefore, ethical, educational, and prosocial content should be made more visible, frequent, and engaging through algorithmic prioritization, influencer participation, and interactive formats. By consistently exposing youth to responsible digital practices, ICT platforms can cultivate these behaviors as normalized standards over time. In this way, rather than relying solely on individual awareness, a sustained and structured digital environment can reinforce ethical conduct, making responsible digital citizenship a routine and socially expected behavior among the young generation.

6.4 Strategies for Enhancing Digital Literacy and Ethical Use of ICT

The findings from case analysis, journalist interviews, expert opinion, KII, and FGDs collectively suggest that enhancing digital literacy and promoting ethical use of ICT requires a multi-layered and coordinated approach involving education, policy, platform responsibility, and user awareness. A key strategy is strengthening education at both early and higher levels, supported by the development of adaptive national and institutional digital ethics frameworks that are regularly reviewed and informed by multidisciplinary experts. Educational institutions should integrate digital ethics, media literacy, and critical thinking into curricula to build a strong foundation of ethical awareness, while structured guidelines, awareness materials, and training programs can help young users understand issues such as consent, privacy, responsible sharing, and the protection of vulnerable groups. Integrating digital citizenship, online conduct, consent, and responsible participation into formal curricula, reinforced through public awareness

campaigns, can further shape ethical norms. In addition, training on cybersecurity, safe online practices, and ethical boundaries can equip students with practical skills to identify risks and behave responsibly in digital environments, complemented by structured digital literacy pathways for students, teachers, and parents covering privacy, misinformation, cyber risks, platform manipulation, and responsible participation.

Developing critical digital literacy is another important strategy. Youth should be encouraged to understand how algorithms function and how engagement-driven systems influence content visibility, supported by increased transparency in recommender systems and safer platform design practices. Awareness of these mechanisms can help users distinguish between ethical and unethical content, reduce uncritical consumption, and promote more informed decision-making. Similarly, structured training in verification and fact-checking methods is essential, as current practices are often informal and based on assumptions. Strengthening these skills can reduce the spread of misinformation and improve content credibility. Content creators and media professionals also have a significant role to play. They should be guided toward responsible practices, including transparency, respect for privacy, and avoidance of harmful or exploitative content. Journalists emphasized the importance of ethical reporting, timely corrections, and maintaining objectivity and fairness to build public trust. At the same time, awareness campaigns, fact-checking initiatives, and value-based content can help promote ethical awareness among audiences.

From a technological and platform perspective, improvements are necessary to support ethical use. Platforms should strengthen moderation systems, enhance monitoring mechanisms, and improve the detection of harmful content, including misinformation, exploitation, and deceptive practices. Monitoring and enforcement can be enhanced through reporting obligations, auditable platform safety procedures, automated tools, and faster inter-agency response mechanisms. Advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence can be used to provide real-time warnings against harmful content, while redesigned algorithms can prioritize ethical and value-based material and discourage manipulative amplification. At the same time, gamification, immersive simulations, and interactive tools can be used to help users understand ethical dilemmas and improve decision-making skills. Proportionate identity assurance

mechanisms can also help balance legitimate pseudonymity with accountability for high-risk or harmful activities.

Policy and governance play a crucial role in ensuring the effective implementation of the Cyber Security Act. This requires consistent monitoring, strong enforcement, and accountability, supported by technology-neutral legal frameworks that focus on harmful conduct and duty of care rather than specific platforms. Establishing a clearly mandated cross-sector oversight authority can help ensure standard-setting, compliance monitoring, technical audits, and coordinated responses across institutions. However, reliance solely on punishment is not sufficient. To mitigate the challenges of the Cyber Security Act, the law should clearly define offenses, categorize crimes by severity, and introduce separate provisions with stricter measures for organized cyber syndicates to strengthen security. Ethical concerns can be addressed by removing vague terms, ensuring precise legal definitions, and applying consistent and proportionate enforcement to prevent misuse and bias. To protect human rights, safeguards such as no arrest without warrant, independent oversight mechanisms, and strong public awareness through education and media are essential to uphold freedom of expression and promote responsible digital citizenship.

Improving digital citizenship requires a balanced and multi-layered approach that combines early education, awareness, practical application of policies, and effective governance. Early preventive education is critical, with courses on online safety, ethical internet use, and responsible digital conduct integrated at the school level, complemented by measures such as age verification to protect children from inappropriate content. At the governance level, stronger government involvement is essential, including the formation of expert advisory committees, strengthened institutional capacity, pilot regulatory programs, and more effective enforcement of existing policies. Multi-layered governance should also involve state authorities, regulatory bodies, platforms, families, and educational institutions to address issues such as misinformation and children's exposure to harmful content. Strengthened inter-agency coordination, secure data-sharing protocols, and regional cooperation can further help address systemic challenges and the cross-border nature of digital platforms.

Table 6.6: Key findings of Strategies

Key Theme	Major Strategies
Education & Curriculum Development	Integrate digital ethics, media literacy, and critical thinking into education at all levels; embed digital citizenship and ethical conduct in curricula and public awareness initiatives
Critical Digital Literacy	Train users on algorithms, fact-checking, and informed content evaluation; expand digital literacy for students, teachers, and parents on privacy, risks, and responsible use
Content Creator & Media Responsibility	Promote ethical content creation, transparency, and responsible journalism practices to build public trust and accountability
Technological & Platform Improvements	Strengthen moderation systems, AI-based monitoring, and ethical content promotion; ensure platform accountability through algorithm transparency, safer design, and age-appropriate protections
Policy & Governance	Ensure effective policy implementation through adaptive governance frameworks, technology-neutral laws, stronger enforcement mechanisms, and central cross-sector oversight authority
Awareness & Capacity Building	Conduct campaigns, training, and initiatives to build ethical awareness; support infrastructure investment, skilled workforce development, and institutional capacity building
Monitoring & Enforcement Mechanisms	Enhance compliance through reporting systems, audits, rapid response mechanisms, and inter-agency coordination among ICT, education, and law enforcement bodies
Privacy & Accountability Balance	Preserve user privacy while enabling accountable anonymity through proportionate identity assurance mechanisms
Behavioral & Social Interventions	Address psychological factors, attention economy, and issues like gaming addiction through social, educational, and family-based interventions
Self-Regulation & Positive Engagement	Encourage responsible user behavior, selective engagement, and participatory digital spaces for constructive interaction
Global & Regional Cooperation	Promote cross-border collaboration, harmonized standards, and coordinated regulatory approaches to address global platform challenges

Interventions must consider behavioral, psychological, and social factors influencing unethical digital practices, including the effects of the attention economy, repeated exposure, and psychological reinforcement. Addressing challenges like gaming addiction requires providing alternative activities, promoting social interaction, and encouraging family involvement, particularly for younger users. Promoting cultural and ethical sensitivity is another important strategy. Awareness programs should focus on developing a deeper understanding of religious and cultural values, moving beyond surface-level respect to foster meaningful tolerance and

harmony in online interactions. At the individual level, encouraging self-regulation such as selective engagement, responsible sharing, avoiding harmful content, and using tools like blocking or filtering can support ethical behavior in digital spaces. Finally, fostering participatory platforms and positive digital engagement can further enhance ethical practices by providing spaces where youth can share experiences, engage in constructive discussions, and learn from positive role models.

The findings indicate that while youth in Bangladesh already possess a foundational awareness of digital ethics, their practices remain fragmented and inconsistent. Enhancing digital literacy and ethical use of ICT therefore requires a comprehensive approach that combines early preventive education with strengthened governance and systemic support, including investments in secure cybersecurity infrastructure, incident response capacity, and skilled technical personnel to ensure operational readiness. This includes introducing structured courses on online safety, ethical internet use, and responsible digital conduct at the school level, supported by protective measures such as age verification, to build foundational knowledge and habits before harmful behaviors develop. Simultaneously, government involvement should be enhanced through expert advisory committees, effective policy enforcement, institutional collaboration, and coordinated oversight mechanisms, while universities can contribute by offering formal courses on digital ethics. By integrating education, policy, platform accountability, behavioral awareness, technological capacity, and self-regulation, this approach bridges the gap between awareness and practice, enabling young users to engage more responsibly and ethically in digital environments. From the perspective of theory of planned behavior, interventions should aim to strengthen positive attitudes toward ethical online behavior, reinforce supportive social norms through peers and institutions, and enhance youths' perceived behavioral control by equipping them with practical digital skills, so that their intentions to act responsibly are more consistently translated into actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Chapter 7

CONCLUSIONS

The study aims to examine the role of ICT and social media in shaping ethical standards among the younger generation in Bangladesh. Specifically, it assesses the level of digital citizenship among youth, identifies key challenges in maintaining ethical standards, explores opportunities for promoting ethical practices, and provides recommendations for enhancing digital literacy and responsible ICT use. The findings indicate that youth in Bangladesh demonstrate a generally positive level of digital citizenship, particularly in terms of ethical awareness, honesty, and responsible online behavior. Many tend to avoid misleading content, maintain authenticity, and engage in respectful communication. However, this awareness is not consistently translated into practice. Digital citizenship remains largely informal and guided by personal judgment rather than structured frameworks, resulting in selective and unsystematic behaviors.

Several gaps are evident across key dimensions. Digital literacy is limited by weak verification skills and insufficient critical evaluation of information. Empathy toward victims of cyberbullying remains low, and supportive online behavior is not consistently practiced. Participation in civic and social issues is limited, with digital engagement largely driven by entertainment, while collaboration and collective online activities remain inconsistent. Awareness of privacy and security exists but lacks depth, particularly in understanding formal policies and systematic protection measures. In contrast, cultural and religious sensitivity is relatively strong, although it is shaped more by personal and social contexts than by institutional guidance. The findings suggest that while youth possess foundational awareness of digital citizenship and ethical standards, significant gaps remain in consistency, critical application, and structured understanding, indicating the need for more comprehensive and coordinated efforts to strengthen ethical digital practices.

The quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that youth in Bangladesh face significant and systemic challenges in upholding ethical standards in digital environments. These challenges arise from institutional, technological, and socio-cultural factors. Key issues include the lack of

clear ethical guidelines, absence of well-defined social norms, weak or insufficient legal frameworks, and the lack of a clearly assigned regulatory authority. Limited coordination among relevant agencies further weakens governance and policy implementation. From a technological perspective, profit-driven algorithms often promote sensational and controversial content, while weak monitoring systems, inadequate cybersecurity infrastructure, and the ease of anonymity and fake identity creation complicate accountability. At the user level, low digital literacy and reliance on informal verification practices increase vulnerability to misinformation and unethical engagement. Combined with socio-psychological and structural factors, these interconnected challenges make it difficult for youth to consistently practice ethical behavior in digital spaces.

There are several key opportunities for promoting ethical development in ICT and social media environments. Cyber talent development can transform users' exploratory behavior into skilled digital competencies, strengthening overall cyber resilience. The growth of a secure digital economy enhances trust in e-commerce and digital payment systems, while accessible and inclusive platforms encourage broader participation in safer online spaces. ICT and social media also support economic and professional growth by enabling entrepreneurship, content creation, and innovation within trusted digital ecosystems. Educational and awareness-building content plays a vital role in improving ethical understanding through accurate information flow and stronger information integrity. The role of media and journalism further contributes by promoting investigative reporting and ethical discourse, supported by mechanisms that reduce misinformation. Interactive engagement on digital platforms encourages critical reflection and healthier communication norms, while ICT tools in education enhance learning outcomes and workforce readiness. Additionally, strengthening youth capacity and self-regulation, along with increasing algorithmic awareness, helps users engage more critically and responsibly with digital content. Platform trust and safety mechanisms further reduce fraud, impersonation, and harmful behaviors while protecting user privacy. Together, these opportunities create a supportive environment for fostering ethical practices and responsible digital citizenship among youth.

A range of coordinated strategies is essential to address ethical challenges in ICT and social media, involving education, technology, governance, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Strengthening digital ethics, media literacy, and critical thinking within education systems, led by the Ministry of Education and academic institutions, can build strong foundations for responsible digital citizenship. In parallel, cyber risks such as hacking can be reduced through ethical hacking training and supervised cyber ranges under the Ministry of ICT and related technical bodies. Identity misuse and fake accounts can be managed using privacy-preserving verification, behavioral analytics, and bot-detection systems coordinated by digital economy authorities, telecom regulators, and platform providers. Financial fraud requires AI-based detection, transaction monitoring, and rapid response mechanisms involving central banking authorities, financial intelligence units, and cybercrime agencies. Cyberbullying and harmful online interactions can be mitigated through reporting tools, content friction mechanisms, and awareness programs supported by education authorities, child protection agencies, and platform regulators.

Specifically, data privacy issues should be addressed through privacy-by-design principles, data minimization, and consent-based systems led by data protection authorities and ICT regulators, while misinformation can be countered through fact-checking, content labeling, and media literacy initiatives coordinated by the Ministry of Information and media institutions. Harmful or age-inappropriate content can be controlled using filtering tools, safe search settings, and guardian dashboards implemented by telecom regulators, ISPs, and families. Additionally, harmful gaming can be regulated through age-appropriate design, time limits, and parental controls under youth and consumer protection authorities, while gambling-related risks can be reduced through strict regulation, age verification, and transaction monitoring involving revenue authorities, financial regulators, and law enforcement. Alongside these measures, improving platform governance through algorithmic transparency, stronger content moderation, awareness campaigns, enforcement mechanisms, and global cooperation ensures a more accountable and ethically sound digital environment

Table 7.1: Summary of Challenges, Opportunities, Strategies, and Concerned Authorities

Key Areas	Challenges	Opportunities	Overcoming Strategies	Concerned Authorities
Governance & Policy	Lack of clear ethical guidelines, weak legal frameworks, unclear regulatory authority, poor coordination	Improved governance can strengthen trust and compliance	Adaptive laws, clear regulations, inter-agency coordination, enforcement mechanisms	Ministry of ICT, Ministry of Information, regulatory bodies
Technological Environment	Algorithm-driven harmful content, weak monitoring, cybersecurity gaps, anonymity misuse	Safer platforms, algorithm transparency, platform trust systems	AI-based moderation, cybersecurity infrastructure, identity verification, platform accountability	Platform providers, telecom regulators, cyber agencies
User & Digital Literacy	Low digital literacy, reliance on informal verification, vulnerability to misinformation	Digital literacy enhances critical thinking and responsible engagement	Digital literacy education, fact-checking skills, awareness programs	Ministry of Education, educational institutions
Cyber Risks	Hacking, fraud, impersonation, cyberbullying	Development of cyber talent and skilled workforce	Ethical hacking labs, fraud detection systems, reporting tools, monitoring systems	Ministry of ICT, cybercrime units, financial institutions
Information Integrity	Misinformation, fake news, lack of verification practices	Ethical journalism, accurate information flow, media trust	Fact-checking, content labeling, media literacy initiatives	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, media organizations
Privacy & Safety	Data privacy violations, unsafe platforms, harmful content exposure	Privacy-enhancing systems and safer digital environments	Privacy-by-design, consent systems, filtering tools, guardian controls	Data protection authorities, telecom regulators, ISPs
Economic & Social Use	Misuse of platforms, addiction, harmful engagement patterns	E-commerce growth, entrepreneurship, digital participation	Trust-building systems, awareness, platform safety features	Financial regulators, platform providers, consumer bodies
Youth & Behavior	Psychological influences, self-regulation issues, attraction to sensational content	Capacity building, self-regulation, responsible digital citizenship	Awareness campaigns, digital citizenship education, parental controls	Ministry of Education, youth authorities, families
Global Platform Influence	Cross-border platform dominance limiting national control	Access to global platforms and knowledge exchange	Global cooperation, harmonized standards, coordinated regulation	National regulators, international bodies

All of the findings provide the key recommendations such as:

1. The National Institute of Mass Communication (NIMC) should establish an official digital platform, such as a Facebook page, and enhance its website to provide fact-checking content, promote media literacy, and support journalists with reliable information.
2. NIMC should regularly publish accessible content to support journalists with verification skills and help the public identify misinformation.
3. The government should provide effective training to all journalists to ensure unbiased reporting and 100% fact-checking standards.
4. Public–private partnerships should be encouraged to develop software and digital tools for proper surveillance of social media while maintaining ethical standards.
5. Digital ethics and citizenship education should be integrated early into the formal education system, starting from Class 5 at the primary level.
6. Ethical online behavior should be taught from an early age to develop critical thinking, responsible digital habits, and awareness of misinformation.
7. All students should be provided with knowledge of information technology along with training on its ethical application.
8. The Cyber Security Act should be implemented through strong policy and governance with clear legal frameworks, consistent monitoring, cross-sector oversight, and accountability mechanisms.
9. The updated Cyber Security Act should be made widely accessible through all media, including social media platforms and online advertisements.
10. The Cyber Security Act should be incorporated into the high school curriculum to increase students’ awareness of cyber laws, safety, and responsible digital behavior.
11. A coordinated multi-sectoral approach should be adopted involving ministries such as Education, Information and Broadcasting, Health and Family Welfare, Women and Children Affairs, and Social Welfare.

12. Collaboration among government bodies should be strengthened to promote ethical awareness, psychological well-being, and responsible digital engagement among the younger generation.
13. Online and social media monitoring should be strong, so that users are restricted from using indecent words, images, and photos. For this, a well-designed algorithm should be developed by Information and Communication Technology Division (ICT) to ensure ethical use of digital platforms.
14. Government should develop an independent platform with a native algorithm, following the structure of China's WeChat, in order to improve regulatory control and enhance the ethical environment of digital platforms.

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APPENDIX

1. Bengali Questionnaire for Survey

জরিপ প্রশ্নাবলী (Survey Questionnaire)

অংশ A: জনমিতিক তথ্য (Demographic Information)

১. বয়সের শ্রেণি:

- ১৮-২২ বছর
- ২৩-২৬ বছর
- ২৭-৩০ বছর
- ৩১-৩৫ বছর

২. লিঙ্গ:

- পুরুষ
- নারী

৩. শিক্ষাগত অবস্থা:

- স্নাতক
- স্নাতকোত্তর
- উচ্চতর শিক্ষায় অধ্যয়নরত (পোস্টগ্রাজুয়েট)
- উচ্চশিক্ষা সম্পন্ন ও কর্মরত
- অন্যান্য (অনুগ্রহ করে উল্লেখ করুন): _____

৪. বর্তমান পেশা:

- পূর্ণকালীন ছাত্র/ছাত্রী
- আংশিকভাবে পড়াশোনা ও আংশিকভাবে চাকরিজীবী
- পূর্ণকালীন কর্মচারী (সরকারি/বেসরকারি খাত)
- স্বনিয়োজিত / উদ্যোক্তা
- বেকার কিন্তু কাজের সন্ধানে আছেন
- ফ্রিল্যান্সার অথবা প্রাইভেট টিউটর

৫. বাসস্থানের এলাকা:

- ঢাকা
- চট্টগ্রাম

৬. মাসিক পারিবারিক আয় (আনুমানিক):

- ২০,০০০ টাকার কম
- ২০,০০০ - ৪০,০০০ টাকা
- ৪০,০০১ - ৬০,০০০ টাকা

4. ৬০,০০১ – ১,০০,০০০ টাকা

5. ১,০০,০০০ টাকার বেশি

Part B : অংশ B : ডিজিটাল নাগরিকত্বের বর্তমান অবস্থা (Current status of digital citizenship with understanding role of ICT and social media)

সূচক (Indicators)	ভেরিয়েবল (Variables)	মানের স্কেল (Mark Tick)
ডিজিটাল সাক্ষরতা (Digital Literacy) (তথ্য মূল্যায়ন, প্রযুক্তিগত দক্ষতা, সমালোচনামূলক চিন্তা, সৃজনশীল সমস্যা সমাধান দক্ষতা)	১. আমি অনলাইনে নির্ভরযোগ্য ও অবিশ্বস্ত তথ্যের উৎস আলাদা করতে পারি।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1. কখনো না
	২. আমি বিভিন্ন ডিজিটাল টুল (যেমন: ইমেইল, ওয়ার্ড প্রসেসিং, অনলাইন ফর্ম ইত্যাদি) ব্যবহার করি	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1. কখনো না
	৩. আমি অনলাইনতথ্য বিশ্বাস বা শেয়ার করার আগে সমালোচনামূলক চিন্তা করি।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1. কখনো না
	৪. আমি নিজে নিজে মৌলিক অনলাইন বা ডিভাইস সম্পর্কিত সমস্যা সমাধান করতে পারি।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1. কখনো না
	৫. আমি দায়িত্বশীলতার সাথে ডিজিটাল কন্টেন্ট (যেমন: ব্লগ, ভিডিও, পোস্ট) শেয়ার করি।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1. কখনো না
ডিজিটাল নীতি ও দায়িত্ববোধ (Digital Ethics and Responsibility)	১. আমি এমন তথ্য শেয়ার করি যা অন্যদের বা সমাজের উপকারে আসে।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1. কখনো না
	২. আমি আমার অনলাইন পোস্টের মাধ্যমে ইতিবাচক মূল্যবোধ প্রচারে দায়িত্বশীল বোধ করি।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1. কখনো না
	৩. আমি ক্ষতিকর বা বিভ্রান্তিকর কন্টেন্ট পোস্ট বা ফরওয়ার্ড করা এড়িয়ে চলি।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1. কখনো না
	৪. আমি অনৈতিক বা অনুপযুক্ত কন্টেন্ট দেখলে রিপোর্ট করি।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1. কখনো না

		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1.কখনো না
ডিজিটাল সততা ও নৈতিকতা (Digital Honesty and Integrity)	১. আমি সামাজিক যোগাযোগ মাধ্যমে কিছু শেয়ার করার আগে এর সততা যাচাই করি।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1.কখনো না
	২. আমি অনুমতি ছাড়া অন্যের কন্টেন্ট ব্যবহার করা বা কপি করা এড়িয়ে চলি।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1.কখনো না
	৩. আমি ভুয়া প্রোফাইলের পরিবর্তে নিজের প্রকৃত পরিচয় ব্যবহার করি।	4. সব সময়
	3. প্রায়ই	
	2. কখনো কখনো	
	1.কখনো না	
ডিজিটাল আচরণ (Digital Etiquette)	১. আমি অনলাইনে অন্যের মতামতের প্রতি সম্মান দেখাই, এমনকি অসম্মতি থাকলেও।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1.কখনো না
	২. আমি সামাজিক মাধ্যমে অন্যদের সম্পর্কে নেতিবাচক মন্তব্য করা এড়িয়ে চলি।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1.কখনো না
	৩. আমি অনলাইনে নিপীড়িত বা হয়রানির শিকার ব্যক্তিদের প্রতি সহানুভূতি অনুভব করি।	4. সব সময়
	3. প্রায়ই	
	2. কখনো কখনো	
	1.কখনো না	
ডিজিটাল নাগরিক অংশগ্রহণ (Digital Civic Engagement)	১. আমি আইসিটি ব্যবহার করে সামাজিক বা নাগরিক কার্যক্রমে (যেমন: ক্যাম্পেইন, চ্যারিটি) অংশ নিই।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1.কখনো না
	২. আমি অনলাইনে সামাজিক বা জাতীয় বিষয় নিয়ে সম্মানজনকভাবে আলোচনা করি।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
	2. কখনো কখনো	
	1.কখনো না	
ডিজিটাল সহযোগিতা ও সংহতি (Digital Collaboration and	১. আমি অনলাইন স্টাডি গ্রুপ বা প্রজেক্টে অন্যদের সঙ্গে কাজ করি।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1.কখনো না

Solidarity)	২. আমি অনলাইনে এমন উদ্যোগে সহায়তা করি যা মানুষের উপকারে আসে।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
	৩. আমি দলগত কাজ ও সহযোগিতা প্রচারের জন্য সামাজিক মাধ্যম ক্যাম্পেইনে অংশগ্রহণ করি।	1.কখনো না
		4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
ডিজিটাল গোপনীয়তা ও নিরাপত্তা (Digital Privacy and Security)	১. আমি আমার কনটেন্ট কে দেখতে পারবে তা নিয়ন্ত্রণ করতে প্রাইভেসি সেটিংস ব্যবহার করি।	2. কখনো কখনো
		1.কখনো না
		4. সব সময়
	২। আমি আমার একাউন্টের প্রাইভেসি সেটিং আপডেট	3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
		1.কখনো না
	২. আমি অনলাইনে অন্যের গোপনীয়তা লঙ্ঘন করি না।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
ডিজিটাল সাংস্কৃতিক ও ধর্মীয় সংবেদনশীলতা (Digital Cultural and Religious Value Sensitivity)	১. আমি অনলাইন আলোচনায় সাংস্কৃতিক ও ধর্মীয় পার্থক্যের প্রতি সম্মান দেখাই।	1.কখনো না
		2. কখনো কখনো
		3. প্রায়ই
	২. আমি এমন কিছু শেয়ার করা এড়িয়ে চলি যা অন্যের ধর্মীয় বা সাংস্কৃতিক বিশ্বাসে আঘাত করতে পারে।	4. সব সময়
		3. প্রায়ই
		2. কখনো কখনো
	1. কখনো না	

Part C: Composite Challenge Index

	সমগ্রিক ডিজিটাল নীতির ঘাটতির উপর প্রশ্ন	চলক	Code
ডিজিটাল নীতির অভাব	১. আপনি যুব সমাজের জন্য জাতীয় ডিজিটাল নৈতিকতা নীতি সম্পর্কে কী মনে করেন?	ক) এটি স্পষ্টভাবে আছে এবং কার্যকরভাবে চলছে	1
		খ) এটি আছে কিন্তু কার্যকর নয়	2
		গ) এটি নিয়ে আলোচনা হচ্ছে কিন্তু এখনো বাস্তবায়ন হয়নি	3 4
	২. নৈতিক বিষয়গুলো মোকাবিলায় বর্তমান আইসিটি নীতিগুলো আপনি	ক) আধুনিক ও হালনাগাদ (updated)	1
		খ) আংশিকভাবে হালনাগাদ (updated)	2

	কীভাবে মূল্যায়ন করবেন?	গ) পুরনো ও সেকেন্ডে	3
		ঘ) আমি কোনো আইসিটি নীতি সম্পর্কে জানি না	4
নীতি কার্যকারিতা	৩. কর্তৃপক্ষ কতবার অনৈতিক বা ক্ষতিকর অনলাইন কনটেন্ট পর্যবেক্ষণ করে?	ক) খুব নিয়মিতভাবে	1
		খ) মাঝে মাঝে	2
		গ) খুব কম	3
		ঘ) কখনোই না	4
	৪. সামাজিক যোগাযোগমাধ্যমের কনটেন্ট নিয়ন্ত্রণ কতটা কার্যকর?	ক) অত্যন্ত কার্যকর	1
		খ) মাঝারি কার্যকর	2
		গ) সামান্য কার্যকর	3
		ঘ) একদম কার্যকর নয়	4
দুর্বল নীতি প্রয়োগের কারণ	৫. আপনার মতে সামাজিক যোগাযোগমাধ্যমের কনটেন্ট নিয়ন্ত্রণ কেন খুব বেশি কার্যকর নয়?	ক) প্রযুক্তির দ্রুত পরিবর্তন	1
		খ) জনবল স্বল্পতা	2
		গ) আইনের বাস্তবায়নের অভাব	3
		ঘ) রাজনৈতিক সদিচ্ছার অভাব	4
	৬. অনলাইনে নীতি প্রয়োগ দুর্বল হওয়ার মূল কারণ কী?	ক) প্রশিক্ষিত কর্মীর অভাব	1
		খ) স্পষ্ট নির্দেশিকার অভাব	2
		গ) মনিটরিং টুলের অভাব	3
		ঘ) দুর্নীতি বা অবহেলা	4
আইন প্রয়োগকারী সংস্থার ভূমিকা	৭. অনৈতিক অনলাইন কার্যক্রম মোকাবিলায় আইন প্রয়োগকারী সংস্থার সক্ষমতা কেমন বলে মনে করেন?	ক) অত্যন্ত সক্ষম	1
		খ) কিছুটা সক্ষম	2
		গ) খুব বেশি সক্ষম নয়	3
		ঘ) একদম সক্ষম নয়	4
	৮. কেউ ডিজিটাল নৈতিকতা আইন ভঙ্গ করলে সাধারণত কী হয়?	ক) কঠোরভাবে শাস্তি দেওয়া হয়	1
		খ) সামান্য সতর্ক করা হয়	2
		গ) খুব কমই শাস্তি দেওয়া হয়	3
		ঘ) কিছুই হয় না	4
ডিজিটাল সাক্ষরতা (Digital Literacy)	৯. স্কুলে কি আইসিটি শিক্ষার অংশ হিসেবে ডিজিটাল নৈতিকতা শেখানো হয়?	ক) হ্যাঁ, আনুষ্ঠানিকভাবে শেখানো হয়	1
		খ) শুধু কিছু কিছু স্কুলে শেখানো হয়	2
		গ) খুব কম, আলোচনা হিসেবে উঠে আসে	3
		ঘ) একদম শেখানো হয় না	4
	১০. তরুণদের মধ্যে দুর্বল ডিজিটাল সাক্ষরতার প্রধান কারণ কী?	ক) প্রশিক্ষণ কর্মসূচির অভাব	1
		খ) সীমিত স্কুল পাঠ্যক্রম	2
		গ) মৌলিক সচেতনতার অভাব	3
		ঘ) শিক্ষার ঘাটতি	4

2. Checklist for Qualitative Study

গুণগত গবেষণার জন্য অসংগঠিত প্রশ্নাবলী

(আইসিটি বিশেষজ্ঞ / সফটওয়্যার ডেভেলপার / প্রোগ্রামারদের জন্য)

1. আপনি কীভাবে দেখেন যে ডিজিটাল প্ল্যাটফর্মগুলো আজকের যুব সমাজের আচরণ ও নৈতিকতাকে প্রভাবিত করছে?
2. আপনার অভিজ্ঞতায়, কোন ধরনের আইসিটি-ভিত্তিক টুল বা উদ্যোগ তরুণদের মধ্যে নৈতিক আচরণ গঠনে সহায়তা করতে পারে?
3. তরুণদের জন্য ডিজিটাল প্রযুক্তিতে নৈতিক নির্দেশিকা বাস্তবায়নে প্রধান চ্যালেঞ্জগুলো কী?
4. আপনার মতে, প্রযুক্তি কীভাবে নিজেই নৈতিক সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ শেখানো বা উৎসাহিত করতে পারে?
5. আপনি কীভাবে মনে করেন যে সোশ্যাল মিডিয়ার অ্যালগরিদম বা আইসিটি সিস্টেমগুলোকে এমনভাবে ডিজাইন করা যেতে পারে যাতে অনৈতিক আচরণ নিরুৎসাহিত হয়?
6. তরুণদের মধ্যে ডিজিটাল নীতিশাস্ত্র উন্নত করতে আইসিটি পেশাজীবীরা সরকারের কাছ থেকে কী ধরনের সহায়তা বা সহযোগিতা প্রয়োজন মনে করেন?

(আইসিটি মন্ত্রণালয়ের সচিব / কর্মকর্তাদের জন্য)

1. তরুণদের মধ্যে নৈতিক আইসিটি ব্যবহারের প্রচারে মন্ত্রণালয়ের বর্তমানে কী ধরনের উদ্যোগ রয়েছে?
2. আপনি কোথায় মনে করেন যে নীতিনির্ভর কর্মসূচির মাধ্যমে ডিজিটাল পরিসরে নৈতিক সচেতনতা বাড়ানো যেতে পারে?
3. সরকার কীভাবে শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান বা গণমাধ্যমের সঙ্গে সহযোগিতা করে তরুণদের ডিজিটাল নৈতিকতা শেখার সুযোগ তৈরি করতে পারে?
4. তরুণদের মধ্যে ডিজিটাল নৈতিকতা নিয়ন্ত্রণ বা অপব্যবহার রোধে মন্ত্রণালয় কী ধরনের চ্যালেঞ্জের মুখোমুখি হয়?
5. ভবিষ্যতে কি এমন কোনো কর্মসূচি বা প্রচারণা পরিকল্পনা করা হয়েছে, যেখানে আইসিটি ও নৈতিক শিক্ষাকে জাতীয় পর্যায়ে একীভূত করা হবে?

(মিডিয়া বিশেষজ্ঞ / সাংবাদিক / কন্টেন্ট ক্রিয়েটরদের জন্য)

1. মিডিয়া (সোশ্যাল, প্রচলিত বা ডিজিটাল) কীভাবে তরুণদের নৈতিক আচরণে প্রভাব ফেলতে পারে বলে আপনি মনে করেন?
2. আপনার অভিজ্ঞতায়, কোন ধরনের মিডিয়া প্রচারণা বা কন্টেন্ট তরুণদের নৈতিক মূল্যবোধ শেখাতে সবচেয়ে কার্যকর?

3. নৈতিক ডিজিটাল নাগরিকত্ব গড়ে তুলতে মিডিয়ার আইসিটি প্ল্যাটফর্মের সঙ্গে সহযোগিতার কী সুযোগ রয়েছে?
4. এমন কোনো সফল প্রকল্প বা গল্পের উদাহরণ দিতে পারেন কি, যেখানে মিডিয়ার মাধ্যমে তরুণদের নৈতিক আচরণ উৎসাহিত হয়েছে?

(কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স অ্যান্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং (CSE) অনুষদের শিক্ষক / শিক্ষাবিদদের জন্য)

1. আপনি বর্তমানে কীভাবে আপনার পাঠদানে নৈতিক আচরণ ও ডিজিটাল নাগরিকত্বের বিষয়টি অন্তর্ভুক্ত করেন?
2. স্কুল বা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় পর্যায়ে আইসিটি-ভিত্তিক নৈতিক শিক্ষা একীভূত করার কী সুযোগ রয়েছে?
3. শিক্ষার্থীদের মধ্যে সোশ্যাল মিডিয়া ও প্রযুক্তির নৈতিক ব্যবহারে আপনি কী ধরনের চ্যালেঞ্জের সম্মুখীন হন?
4. শিক্ষকেরা কীভাবে মিডিয়া বা আইসিটি বিশেষজ্ঞদের সঙ্গে মিলে তরুণদের নৈতিক সচেতনতা বাড়াতে পারেন?
5. আপনি কি এমন কোনো নতুন পদ্ধতি বা কর্মসূচি প্রস্তাব করবেন যা শিক্ষার্থীদের জন্য নৈতিক শিক্ষা আরও আকর্ষণীয় করে তুলতে পারে?

এফজিডি (FGD) আলোচ্য বিষয়সমূহ:

1. অনলাইনে তথ্যের সত্যতা
2. অনলাইন তথ্য ব্যবহারে দায়িত্বশীলতা
3. গোপনীয়তা ও অন্যের মতামতের প্রতি সম্মান
4. ভুয়া (ফেক) অ্যাকাউন্ট সম্পর্কে সচেতনতা
5. অনলাইন গেমিং-এর চর্চা
6. সোশ্যাল মিডিয়ায় ইচ্ছাকৃত ও অনিচ্ছাকৃত অনৈতিক আচরণ
7. ধর্মীয় ও সাংস্কৃতিক সংবেদনশীলতা
8. অনলাইন ভোক্তা আচরণ বিষয়ে মতামত

3. KII with IT Programmer

1. In your experience, what kind of ICT-based tools or interventions could promote ethical Behavior among young people?

Unethical Behaviour	Measures to be Taken	Concerned Department	Opportunities
Cyber hacking	Establish state-supported ethical hacking laboratories, supervised cyber ranges, and Capture-the-Flag (CTF) ecosystems within secondary and tertiary education. These should be linked with formal instruction on cyber law, responsible disclosure, and defensive security practice so that technical curiosity is redirected into legitimate skill formation.	Ministry of ICT, National Cyber Security Agency, universities, technical education boards	Converts exploratory hacking Behaviour into national cyber talent, strengthens workforce readiness, and improves long-term cyber resilience.
Fake accounts	Introduce risk-tiered identity assurance using privacy-preserving verification, device reputation analysis, Behavioural biometrics, and bot-detection pipelines. Stronger verification should be reserved for repeat abuse, high-reach accounts, and high-risk digital services.	Department of Digital Economy, Ministry of Home Affairs, platform providers, telecom regulators	Reduces impersonation, fraud, spam, and coordinated inauthentic Behaviour while preserving legitimate privacy interests.
Financial scams	Deploy AI-assisted fraud analytics, anomaly-based transaction monitoring, contextual warning systems, and step-up authentication for unusual or high-value transfers. These measures should be integrated with rapid reporting channels and cross-institutional threat intelligence sharing.	Central Bank, Financial Intelligence Units, cyber crime units, commercial banks	Lowers fraud exposure, improves trust in digital payments, and supports the secure expansion of e-commerce and fintech.
Cyberbullying	Build client-side language friction tools that prompt	Ministry of Education, child protection	Enables earlier intervention, reduces

	message reconsideration, anonymous reporting channels, evidence-preservation workflows, and escalation pathways linking schools, guardians, and child protection services. These controls should be paired with digital citizenship education.	agencies, social media regulatory bodies, school authorities	peer-to-peer harm, and supports the development of healthier digital communication norms.
Harmful gaming for children	Enforce age-appropriate design standards, transparent monetization rules, session-time controls, cooldown architecture, and parental oversight dashboards. Game ecosystems should avoid manipulative engagement loops and reward structures that normalize compulsive use.	Ministry of Youth and Sports, game regulatory authorities, consumer protection bodies, parents	Promotes sustainable play, protects children from exploitative design, and supports healthier patterns of digital recreation.
Data privacy violation	Apply privacy-by-design principles, data minimization, age-appropriate default settings, consent simplification, role-based access control, and privacy-preserving analytics where possible. Youth-focused digital services should collect only what is operationally necessary.	Data Protection Authority, Ministry of Justice, ICT Ministry, platform providers	Strengthens trust in digital services, reduces unnecessary data exposure, and supports the development of a privacy-conscious digital ecosystem.
Fake news / misinformation	Combine provenance labelling, fact-check integration, friction sharing for unverified content, source reliability cues, and media literacy interventions. Public-interest communication should be supported through trusted information verification mechanisms.	Ministry of Information, media regulatory bodies, educational institutions, fact-checking organizations	Improves information integrity, reduces manipulative amplification, and supports informed civic participation.
Harmful website access / age-inappropriate	Use context-aware filtering, safe-search defaults, guardian dashboards, and age-sensitive access controls	Telecom Regulatory Authority, internet service providers, child protection agencies,	Creates safer browsing environments, improves parental visibility, and reduces exposure to

content	rather than relying only on simple domain blocking. The aim should be proportionate protection rather than blanket restriction.	schools, parents	harmful or developmentally inappropriate content.
Gambling	Require age verification, payment friction, advertising restrictions, transaction monitoring, and tighter regulation of gambling-like mechanics in digital platforms, including loot-box-style systems where relevant.	Revenue Department, financial regulators, consumer protection agencies, law enforcement	Reduces early exposure to financial risk, limits predatory monetization, and protects vulnerable users from addictive digital practices.

2. What are the main challenges in implementing ethical guidelines in digital technologies for youth?

Challenges	How to Overcome
1. Lack of ethical guidelines	Develop adaptive national and institutional digital ethics frameworks that are reviewed regularly and informed by technologists, educators, legal scholars, psychologists, and child protection stakeholders.
2. No specific regulatory body clearly assigned	Create a clearly mandated cross-sector oversight authority responsible for standard-setting, compliance monitoring, technical audit, and inter-agency coordination on youth digital safety.
3. Absence of clear social boundary norms	Integrate digital citizenship, online conduct, consent, and responsible participation into the core curriculum and reinforce these norms through public communication and community engagement.
4. Legal structure often does not support	Move toward technology-neutral legal drafting that regulates harmful conduct, foreseeable impact, and duty of care rather than focusing narrowly on specific software, devices, or platforms.
5. Weak or insufficient legal structure	Strengthen legal enforceability through clearer compliance obligations, institutional capacity building, and pilot implementation mechanisms such as controlled regulatory testing before full-scale adoption.
6. No digital literacy	Introduce structured digital literacy pathways for students, teachers, and parents, covering privacy, misinformation, cyber risk, platform manipulation, consent, and responsible digital participation.
7. Weak monitoring and enforcement mechanisms	Improve compliance oversight through reporting obligations, auditable platform safety procedures, automated monitoring interfaces where appropriate, and faster escalation pathways across institutions.
8. Easy anonymity and fake identity creation	Preserve legitimate public pseudonymity while enabling backend accountability for high-risk transactions, repeat abuse, and platform-level enforcement through proportionate identity assurance mechanisms.
9. Inadequate cybersecurity infrastructure	Invest in secure infrastructure, incident response capacity, institutional security baselines, and specialized technical personnel so that ethical protections are supported by actual operational capability.
10. Poor coordination	Establish secure inter-agency coordination protocols, shared response

between agencies and ministries	frameworks, and trusted data exchange mechanisms among ICT authorities, schools, law enforcement, and child protection bodies.
11. Profit-driven algorithms	Require greater transparency in recommender and ranking systems, incentivize safer default settings, and discourage platform designs that reward outrage, manipulation, or compulsive engagement at the expense of youth well-being.
12. Others (including global platform dominance)	Strengthen regional cooperation, harmonize child-safety standards, and develop collective regulatory approaches so that national protections are not undermined by the scale and influence of transnational platforms.