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## The Factors Influencing Students' Perceptions of the Bangladesh Police

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### ABSTRACT

Effective policing relies on public cooperation and attitudes towards the police. University students, who frequently engage with the police and discuss social justice issues, play a role in shaping community-police relations. This study examines university students' perceptions of the police and the factors influencing these views. A quantitative survey was conducted in February 2023, collecting 200 responses from public university students in Bangladesh through purposive sampling. The analysis focused on three independent variables—fear of crime, experiences of police corruption, and demographic characteristics and three dependent variables—procedural fairness, police effectiveness, and trust in the police. Findings indicate that students exhibit low trust in the Bangladesh Police, critically evaluate procedural fairness, and rate police effectiveness poorly. Multivariate linear regression results show that personal and vicarious experiences of police corruption are the strongest predictors, while age, education level, and religious affiliation significantly shape students' perceptions of police trust, fairness, and effectiveness. The study suggests practical implications for enhancing trust in the Bangladesh Police and promoting positive attitudes among university students.

### 1. Introduction

From the colonial period, police have maintained the public safety, law and order, and security of the state and its people. Since 16 March 1971, the primary law enforcement organization in Bangladesh has been the Bangladesh Police, which is fully committed to maintaining public order, peace, and security to secure life and property of the people of Bangladesh (Adil, 2022). The Bangladesh Police, led by the Inspector General of Police (IGP), is responsible for upholding the rule of law, preventing crime, and ensuring public safety. It operates specialized units for counter-terrorism, cybercrime, and narcotics control (Jabber et al., 2023). However, the police have faced criticism for corruption, excessive force use, and human rights violations (Kabir et al., 2021; Adil, 2022).

To modernize and reform the force, the government has invested in emerging technologies, enhanced training programs, and community policing. These functions have led the Bangladesh Police into frequent interaction with the public, which creates room for cooperation and public trust in police. Policing is effective only when there is public cooperation and, therefore, public trust is crucial. The police cannot build a collaborative relationship with the public without achieving public trust. Public cooperation depends on attitudes toward the police from

the general public's perspective (Goldsmith, 2005). Considering that university students constitute an important segment of the population and are expected to be the future leaders of society, it is crucial to concentrate on their perceptions of the police. Understanding the perceptions of the public can foster a better interaction between the police and the public (Boateng, 2016). University students are a crucial part of study as education can make them more liberal than other members of the general people, which indicates that they are more accepting of certain ideas and beliefs. However, this liberalizing effect is not universal and therefore may depend on the student's personality and other situational factors (Lambert et al., 2010). This indicates that the attitudes and perceptions of university students can support further making of public policy and also discourse analysis.

Research by Ahsan et al. (2024) indicates that public trust in the police in Bangladesh is very low, with only about 16% of respondents expressing trust in the police, compared to 89% for the armed forces. Positive correlates of trust included confidence in neighborhood safety, satisfaction with law enforcement, belief in favorable media coverage, and awareness of personal security. In contrast, factors associated with lower trust

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included rising crime rates, belief in negative media reports, and demographic characteristics such as age particularly among older citizens (Ahsan et al., 2024). Most university students have low levels of contact with the police unless they had negative life experiences or significant involvement in political matters (Lambert et al., 2012). In Canada and the U.S., past experiences with police influences the greatest of opinion about them. Negative experiences with the police tend to create a less positive opinion about the police while positive experiences do the opposite (Brown & Benedict, 2002). If the elite class has primary access to both a university education and the police services, then the results would be more positive than those of the view of the general public. When accounting the different opinion about police, racial discrimination has been an important factor in the practice of criminal justice system. Therefore, some students view the police as a tool through which government oppress the general, while others view as an essential legitimate institution for public safety (Merry et al., 2012; Wu & Sun, 2009). Major Bangladeshi university students generally hold negative perception of the police and they are “police acted too quickly, were corrupt, treated people unfairly, and used excessive force” (Boateng, 2012; Lambert et al., 2010; Okereke, 1993). Approximately 40% of surveyed university students reported paying bribes or experiencing harassment when seeking police services. A study conducted by the Department of Development Studies at Dhaka University found that 37.9% of respondents faced harassment, 31.2% resorted to bribes or gifts, and only 10.5% reported receiving smooth service. Additionally, 9% relied on recommendations from government officials, while 11.2% indicated they had never accessed police services (Daily Star, n.d.). The excessive use of force, involvement in corruption, and lack of accountability are making them ineffective day by day in combating crime and protecting citizens (Boateng, 2016; Khondaker et al., 2013; Lambert et al., 2012). Excessive force, brutality, discrimination and political interference are the main four features of an inefficient police system (Islam et al., 2021; Tang & Khan, 2018). Students’ perceptions of police differ based on personal experiences, cultural background, and political context. Factors influencing attitudes include media coverage, social movements, and community efforts (Rahman & Hossain, 2017). This study aims to determine the precise perception of university students, identifying factors that contribute to this perception, and providing practical measures to create a positive perception of the police using a quantitative approach, using direct interviews and standardized structured questionnaires. Acquiring knowledge of how university students specifically perceive the Bangladesh Police and the underlying factors influencing those perceptions among students are the goals of this study. To achieve this goal, the study has explored the following research queries:

1. What are university students’ precise perceptions of the Bangladesh Police?

2. What are university students’ precise perceptions of the Bangladesh Police?

3. What factors influence university students’ perceptions of the Bangladesh Police?

The findings could help develop more effective police strategies and address general problems contributing to negative perceptions. The findings could also inform the development of policies and interventions to encourage a more positive perception among university students.

## 2. Literature review

David G. Barrie described the origin of police. The French term "police" originated from the Latin *politia*, meaning "civil administration." According to Radoslav Gacinovic in his article ‘Origins of Police in Modern State’, the word initially referred to government control and public behavior regulation. In the 17th century, it was associated with law enforcement functions. The term law enforcement was first used in English in the 18th century to refer to law enforcement in France (Mulone, 2019; Uchida, 1993). Today, police encompass local departments, security forces, and national organizations, with modern forces established in the 19th century (Whitehouse, 2012).

Police play a crucial role in promoting public safety and maintaining social order, but they face challenges in balancing their duty to protect the public with accountability and transparency (M. Rahman & Hossain, 2017). Effective policing depends on a collaborative relationship between the public and police, which in turn depends on public attitudes towards police. The vision and mission of police emphasize cooperation and trust, and the complexity of their job makes perspectives on the subject vary (Boateng, 2012). Open and honest discussions about the role of police can help in understanding public attitudes and student attitudes towards them. Researchers have studied public attitudes towards police, identifying activities such as excessive force, brutality, discrimination, vulgarity, extortion, neglect, and indifference as factors that reduce their image (Goldsmith, 2005). Citizens’ perceptions of the police can affect interactions and support (Cao & Dai, 2006). Hinds (2009) identified factors such as personal experiences, perceptions of police effectiveness and legitimacy, and societal attitudes. Avdija’s (2010) research found that police behavior is the strongest predictor of citizens’ attitudes towards the police, followed by demographic factors. Lambert et al. (2010) found that distributive justice and procedural justice significantly influence American and Bangladeshi views of the police. Trust in police is influenced by fairness, personal experiences, skepticism, and transparency (Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011). Improving public trust and cooperation with law enforcement is crucial.

Because students’ attitudes toward the police are important for societal safety and security, a positive relationship between police and students is essential for effective policing (Boateng, 2016). One study found that 46% of U.S. students and 52% of Bangladeshi students

viewed police patrols as a deterrent to crime, while 52% supported both formal and informal crime-control measures. However, some students develop unfavorable views due to personal experiences or perceptions of police misconduct or racial profiling.

The number of contacts with the police, types of contacts with the police, satisfaction with police services, personal experiences with the police, trust in the police, the effect of the mass media, and demographic factors are the most researched factors at the individual level (Ackerman et al., 2001; Cao et al., 1998; O'Connor, 2008). Demographic factors such as race, age, gender, and socio-economic status have been shown to be empirically associated with shaping citizens' attitudes towards policing (Avdija, 2010). Fear of public from the police as a consequence of negative experiences with the police, is another major influencing factor on the process through which police are viewed in the eyes of the general public. This fear of public mainly is reasoned by police misconduct such as excessive force, corruption, verbal abuse etc. and questionable legitimacy of the police (Goldsmith, 2005). According to Tankebe (2008), the perception of police effectiveness have an immediate influence on how trustworthy people perceive the police and therefore, the perception of police procedural fairness has a significant mediating effect on police effectiveness. Similar observation was found in the work of Sunshine & Tyler (2003); Tyler (2005) that our judgments about the effective functions of police depend on how they treat people and how fair they are about their procedure.

Although Bangladesh have been a democratic country since its independence on 26th March in 1971, democracy has not yet been fully institutionalized, particularly within the police force. A major criticism about Bangladesh Police is that after independence of Bangladesh, the police have been working for upholding the interests of the ruling party's politicians and manipulated by politicians of different times (Islam, 2021). Islam et al. (2021) examined how people evaluate Bangladesh Police performance within a range of activities, including maintaining rule of law, protection of people and property, controlling mob, controlling traffic, combatting terrorism, patrolling and taking steps against various criminal offenses. The general people of Bangladesh view the police as a corrupt formal agent who violate the human rights and involve in extrajudicial killing with torture (Miah, 2017; Rahman & Hossain, 2017; Islam et al., 2021). Studies on public perception have mainly focused on general public of Bangladesh, leaving a gap in understanding students' perspectives of the Bangladesh Police (Avdija, 2010; Boateng, 2012; Khondaker et al., 2013; Lambert et al., 2012).

Rahman & Hossain (2017) indicated that public perception of police depends on visible services they provide and interactions with citizens. Islam et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of friendliness, sincerity, trustworthiness, and equal treatment. Trust in police is crucial for collaboration, support for law enforcement policies, and satisfaction with the criminal justice system.

Japanese people have less faith in their police than Americans, viewing them as repressive tools (Cao et al., 1998). A Lambert et al. (2010) study found that American respondents had the highest perception of police trust, while Bangladeshi and Nigerian college students had the lowest. Rahman & Hossain (2017) identified positive aspects of Bangladeshi police, such as responsiveness, quick arrival, transparency, and politeness. However, dark aspects like harassment, insufficient attention, and abuse of power contribute to the lack of trust (Miah, n.d.). The main causes of this lack of trust are corruption, kidnapping, excessive force, and misconduct (Tang & Khan, 2018).

Despite the fact that procedural fairness is crucial for citizens' trust in law enforcement and students' perception, police brutality and unfairness are undermining perceptions of procedural fairness in Bangladesh. Between 2014 and 2015, 205 people disappeared, with 112 unknowns (The Daily Star, n.d.; Tang & Khan, 2018). Extrajudicial killings and ransom abductions are also affecting perceptions (HRW, n.d.). Reforming the police force and increasing accountability could improve these perceptions (Miah, n.d.).

Police effectiveness is the capacity of law enforcement to uphold public safety, prevent crime, and capture offenders (Lambert et al., 2012; Okereke, 1993; Tankebe, 2008). Factors affecting effectiveness include crime rates, clearance rates, response times, citizen satisfaction, and officer morale (Tankebe, 2008). In Bangladesh, rising crime rates, police brutality, and corruption raise concerns about police effectiveness (Jabber et al., 2023; Tang & Khan, 2018).

Fear of crime refers to the perceived risk of being a victim of a crime, impacting individuals and communities' behavior, quality of life, and sense of safety (Science & Rahman, 2019; Tang & Khan, 2018). In Bangladesh, fear of criminals and law enforcement officials is significant due to numerous occurrences (Rahman, 2019). People tend to avoid unfamiliar areas and have few social contacts, leading to a moderate concern for safety while out alone. High crime rates and concerns about police effectiveness and corruption contribute to fear of crime (Lambert et al., 2012; O'Connor, 2008; Tang & Khan, 2018). This research tries to count the intensity of fear of crime as a dependent variable to understand its impact on perception of Bangladesh.

Although Bangladesh nowadays has a secular parliamentary system of government and is a democratic country, Transparency International ranked Bangladesh 139th out of 180 nations on its 2009 Corruption Perceptions Index, with a higher number indicating a higher amount of perceived corruption (Kabir et al., 2021; Rahman, 2019; Rashid & Johara, 2020). In the reports, the Bangladesh Police were found as one of the most corrupt departments of the Bangladesh government and 74% households have been affected by police (Rahman & Hossain, 2017; Islam et al., 2021). Corruption and abuse of force among the police are more commonplace in Bangladesh than four other countries (Lambert et al.,

2010). Many respondents who hold negative opinions about the police alleged corruption as one of the fundamental barriers for police to perform better (Rahman & Hossain, 2017). Corruption among police officers was a working reason in creating dissatisfaction of people with the police and direct experiences of police corruption explain the reason for it in a better way (Boateng, 2016). Therefore, corruption among police officials is also a very important factor in shaping the perception of police among people (Boateng, 2012).

This study aims to address the gap by focusing specifically on Bangladeshi university students' perceptions of the police and the factors influencing these perceptions. Similar to Boateng's (2016) study on Ghanaian students, this research examines Bangladeshi university students' views of the police and seeks to identify key explanatory factors. The study tests the following hypotheses:

1. University students' fear of crime negatively affects their perceptions of the Bangladesh Police.
2. Students who have experienced police corruption have lower trust in the Bangladesh Police.
3. Students' perceptions of the Bangladesh Police vary based on their demographic characteristics.

### 3. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional descriptive research design to examine university students' perceptions of the police. Data were collected between January and March 2023 from Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU), Bangladesh. The target population comprised 5,783 students enrolled across six faculties and 18 academic departments.

Due to time and access constraints, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was adopted. A total of 200 students were selected to ensure representation across faculties, departments, gender, age groups, and academic levels (from first-year undergraduate to master's level students). This approach was considered appropriate given the researcher's resource constraints and the need to capture demographic diversity within the university.

Primary data were obtained through a structured questionnaire administered via face-to-face interviews. The questionnaire included standardized items designed to measure perceptions of procedural fairness, police effectiveness, and trust in law enforcement. Secondary data were sourced from peer-reviewed articles and journals to contextualize findings and support interpretation.

Prior to participation, respondents were provided with a clear explanation of the study's objectives and procedures. Informed consent was obtained verbally, and participants were assured that their involvement was voluntary and that refusal would not affect their academic standing. To maintain confidentiality, students were instructed not to include names or personally identifiable information on the survey forms.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of MBSTU. All procedures

adhered to ethical standards for research involving human participants. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Multivariate linear regression models were employed to examine the relationship between independent variables (fear of crime, experiences of police corruption, demographic characteristics) and dependent variables (procedural fairness, police effectiveness, trust in police). Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS and MS Excel.

## 4. Findings of the study

### 4.1. Demographic information of the respondents

A total of 200 student interviews were conducted, yielding a 100% response rate. Table 1 presents the respondents' demographic characteristics and frequency distributions. Participants' ages ranged from 19 to 27 years ( $M = 22.54$ ,  $SD = 1.659$ ). Of the respondents, 53% were male, 85% identified as Muslim, and 29.5% were second-year students. Nearly all participants (93.5%) reported no affiliation with any political party. Only a small proportion of respondents were married (5.5%).

### 4.2. Measurement of dependent variable

Three dependent variables were used to measure several aspects of university students' perceptions of the Bangladesh Police. These were procedural fairness, police effectiveness, and trust in the police. The first dependent variable, which was assessed using a five-item additive scale, was the trust in the police. Respondents were asked whether they agreed with statements such as 'They trust the police in their neighborhoods to protect lives and property,' 'The police can be trusted to make decisions that are right for the people in your neighborhood,' 'The police in your neighborhood are generally honest,' 'I have absolute confidence that the police can do their job well,' and 'The police care about the well-being of everyone they deal with'. Participants' responses were ranked from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The factor loading usually ranged from 0.662 to 0.729. With an internal consistency of 0.82, the scale demonstrated acceptable reliability. The second dependent variable in this study was the perception of procedural fairness, which was assessed using a five-item additive scale. If the presumptions were true, respondents were questioned that 'The police make decisions about how to handle problems in fairways,' 'The police treat people fairly,' 'The police treat everyone in your neighborhood equally,' 'The police accurately understand and apply the law,' and 'The police make decisions based upon facts, not their personal biases or opinions'. Participants' responses were ranked from 1 = almost never to 5 = almost always. The value of factor loading was 0.589 to 0.717. The items on this scale appear to have satisfactory levels of internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.802. The third dependent variable in this research was the perception of police effectiveness, which was assessed using a seven-item additive scale. In this study, respondents were asked to

Table 1. Demographic composition of participants in this study (N = 200).

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage (%)
Age (19-27 years)	22.54	1.659	
Gender	1.47	0.500	
Male			53.0
Female			47.0
Religion	1.17	0.438	
Islam			85.0
Hinduism			13.5
Buddhism			1.0
Christianity			0.5
Level of education	3.23	1.306	
First year			5.5
Second year			29.0
Third year			24.5
Fourth year			27.5
Fifth year			5.0
M.S			8.5
Marital Status	1.95	0.229	
Married			5.5
Not married			94.5
Political affiliation	1.94	0.247	
Yes			6.5
No			93.5

rate how effective they thought the police were at carrying out specific tasks 'The police are effective in controlling public disturbances in your neighborhood,' 'The police always provide assistance to the general public when needed,' 'The police respond quickly when they are called for help,' 'The police are always ready to provide satisfactory assistance to victims of crime,' 'When the police stop people, they usually handle the situation well,' 'Overall, the police are doing a good job in my neighborhood' and 'My overall impression about the performance of the police in my neighborhood is good'. Participants' responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The range of the factor loading was 0.502 to 0.759. The internal consistency score of the scale's items is 0.832, indicating that they fall within acceptable bounds.

#### 4.3. Measurement of independent variable

The three independent variables in this study were fear of crime, experiences of police corruption, and individual demographic characteristics. They were examined for their effects on the dependent variables. The first independent variable in this study was fear of crime, which was assessed using a five-item scale. In the interest of measuring the respondents' level of fear of crime, certain statements were put to them and asked if they agreed that 'I am afraid to walk in my neighborhood at day time,' 'I am afraid to walk in my neighborhood at night time by myself,' 'I feel safer to stay outside my neighborhood than to stay in my neighborhood,' 'The level of security in my neighborhood is very high' and 'Overall, I am afraid to be attacked in my neighborhood'. The responses of the students were ranked from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The 4-no. item's factor loading is negative with a value of 0.604. This negative value denotes a response that is contrary to the respondent's response to

the fourth no item. The factor loading for the remaining items was positive and varied from 0.584 to 0.703. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is 0.057, which is likewise unacceptable. To maintain the right value for the factors, I reversed the coding of Item No 4, and I then calculated Cronbach's  $\alpha$  once more to ensure internal consistency. After reverse coding the 4 Write properly, like item no. 4no. item, the factor loadings of all items range from 0.584 to 0.703, and all of the values are positive. The internal consistency is in an acceptable range as indicated by the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  rating of 0.659. The second independent variable in this study, experiences of police corruption, was measured using a five-item Likert-type scale and asked respondents to share their experiences with police corruption in Bangladesh. The two subscales of police corruption, personal experience of police corruption and vicarious experience of police corruption, were combined to create the five-item Likert-type scale. Three items were used to measure the subscale "personal experience of police corruption," and they are 'In the past, have you paid money or made a promise to a police officer to overlook your unlawful behavior?', 'The police refused to investigate, arrest, charge or prosecute you because of your relations to a police officer?', 'Have you used somebody related to a police officer to prevent a case being pursued against you?'. Two items were used to measure the "vicarious experience of police corruption" subscale and they are 'Have you witnessed anybody making payment to a police officer to overlook his/her unlawful behavior?' 'Do you know of any situation where the police refused to investigate, arrest, charge or prosecute someone because of his/her relations to a police officer?'. The responses of the students were ranked from 1 = never to 5 = always in the cases of both subscales. The factor loadings for the items on the subscale "personal experience of police corruption" were

0.720 to 0.782, and the calculated Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value for this subscale was 0.833. Furthermore, the factor loadings for the subscale items measuring "vicarious experience of police corruption" were 0.679 and 0.605, respectively. For this subscale, the computed Cronbach's value was 0.760. The third independent variable of this study, which is a student's individual demographic characteristics. Different characteristics of students that were measured, including age, gender, marital status, level of education, political party affiliation, and religious affiliation. The age was measured as a continuous variable by asking respondents about their age during the survey. Gender was measured using a dichotomous variable with the values of 1 for male and 2 for female. Marital status was also measured using a dichotomous variable with the values of 1 for married and 2 for not married. Education level was assessed using a categorical variable with values ranging from 1 to 6 (1= First year, 2= Second year, 3= Third year, 4= Fourth year, 5= Fifth year, 6= M.S.) with the first year as the reference category. Political party affiliation was measured using a dichotomous variable with the values of 1 for yes and 2 for no. Religious affiliation was measured using a categorical variable with options ranging from 1 to 5 (1= Islam, 2= Hinduism, 3= Buddhism, 4= Christianity, 5 = Other) with Islam religious group as the reference category.

#### 4.4. Distribution of dependent variables

Three dependent variables were utilized to examine how students perceived Bangladeshi police and the factors that

influenced their perceptions. Descriptive statistics distributions were used to measure the items of these three dependent variables so that inferences could be drawn from them. The results are shown in Table 2. from which three general conclusions can be made about the observed patterns.

First of all, it explores the trust university students have in the Bangladesh Police and the lack of faith they have in their actions. The survey results show that 45.5% of students trust the police to protect people and property, but only 35.5% agree with their decisions. 45% of students disagree with the police's honesty in their judgment, suggesting they do not trust them to make fair decisions. However, 38% of students believe the police can execute their duties competently, indicating some confidence in their ability to perform their duties. Lastly, 39.5% of students disagree with the fact that the police prioritize the welfare of everyone they deal with.

Secondly, it shows how university students perceive the procedural fairness of the police, revealing a lack of confidence among students in the police's fairness. A majority (63.5%) of students believe that police sometimes handle issues, whereas only 21.5% believe that they always or almost always do so. Merely 16% of students believe that the police always treat individuals fairly, while 66.5% do so sometimes. The findings also underscore a perceived lack of equality in police treatment, with only 12% reporting that the police always treat everyone equally. It also discusses police decision-making based on facts, with 22% believing that police

Table 2. Percentage distributions of students' perceptions and trust in the police (N = 200).

Items	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	SD
<b>A. Trust in the police</b>						14.44	3.779
Trust the police to protect lives and properties.	10.0	21.0	23.5	41.5	4.0	3.09	1.088
The police can be trusted to make decisions that are right.	6.5	27.0	31.0	35.0	0.5	2.96	0.950
The police are generally honest.	9.0	36.0	34.5	20.0	0.5	2.67	0.914
I have absolute confidence that the police can do its job well.	7.5	30.5	30.0	28.0	4.0	2.91	1.020
The police care about the well-being of everyone they deal with.	8.0	31.5	33.0	26.0	1.5	2.82	0.962
<b>B. Procedural fairness</b>						14.60	3.261
The police make decisions about how to handle problems in fairways.	5.0	10.0	63.5	14.5	7.0	3.09	0.849
The police treat people fairly.	4.0	13.5	66.5	11.5	4.5	2.99	0.770
The police treat everyone equally.	9.0	41.0	38.0	6.5	5.5	2.59	0.942
The police accurately understand and apply the law.	6.0	15.5	56.5	17.0	5.0	3.00	0.877
The police make decisions based on fact, not opinions.	7.0	19.0	52.0	17.0	5.0	2.94	0.917
<b>C. Police effectiveness</b>						21.20	4.453
The police are effective in controlling disturbances.	3.5	13.5	31.0	50.5	1.5	3.33	0.857
The police always provide assistance when needed.	4.0	24.5	35.0	34.0	2.5	3.07	0.919
The police respond quickly when they are called for help.	8.5	25.0	39.0	25.5	2.0	2.88	0.956
The police are always ready to assist victims of crime.	5.0	24.5	39.5	29.5	1.5	2.98	0.896
When the police stop people, they usually handle situations well.	5.5	20.5	45.0	27.5	1.5	2.99	0.874
Overall, the police are doing a good job in my neighborhood.	4.0	20.0	45.0	30.5	0.5	3.04	0.829
My overall impression about the performance of the police is good.	7.0	27.5	34.0	29.0	2.5	2.93	0.972

A. (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Either agree or disagree, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly agree.

B. (1) Almost never, (2) Never, (3) Sometimes, (4) Always, (5) Almost always.

C. (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Either agree or disagree, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly agree.

always or almost always understand and apply the law, and 52% stating that decisions are sometimes based on facts rather than opinions.

Thirdly, it reveals a diverse perception of police effectiveness among university students. 52% believe police are effective in controlling disturbances, and 36.5% aid when needed. However, 33.5% disagreed with police response to help requests, 39.5% felt they were sometimes ready to assist victims of crime, and 29.5% disagreed with their handling of situations properly. Despite these concerns, 31% of students felt the police were doing a good job, and 31.5% had a positive opinion.

In conclusion, University students' perceptions of police are complex, which is low in trusting police, negative about the procedural fairness, and indicate ineffectiveness of police.

**4.5. Intercorrelations among the independent variables**

This study examined the impact of three independent variables on dependent variables through the calculation of the internal correlation among these variables. Table 3 showed that none of the correlation coefficients exceeded 0.70, indicating that the independent variables were not highly correlated with each other. This suggests that changes in one variable may be related to shifts in another,

making it more challenging to adjust without changing another. The intercorrelations between the independent variables also showed no correlation coefficient exceeding 0.70, indicating that the regression analysis was flawless and multicollinearity was not violated.

**4.6. Determinants of the perceptions of the Bangladesh Police among university students**

This study used multivariate regression models to analyze university students' perceptions of the Bangladesh Police. It aimed to determine the connections between students' perceptions of fairness, effectiveness, and overall trust in the police. The study included ordinary least squares regression and examined intercorrelations among independent variables. Three models were used: effectiveness of police, fairness of police procedure, and overall students' trust in the police. Table 4 shows the allowance for the determination of the factor's level of influence.

First of all, students' trust in the police is similarly influenced by personal and vicarious experiences of police corruption. Personal experiences decrease trust by 0.35 units, while vicarious experiences have a marginally larger impact. Trust in the police is negatively associated with age and gender, with male students having greater faith. Unmarried students have a higher degree of trust, while

Table 3. Inter correlation coefficients among independent variables (N = 200).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<b>1. Fear of Crime</b>	1																
<b>2. Personal Experience</b>	0.138	1															
<b>3. Vicarious Experience</b>	0.087	0.222	1														
<b>4. Age</b>	0.091	0.335	0.163	1													
<b>5. Male</b>	-0.113	0.111	0.137	0.153	1												
<b>6. Not Married</b>	-0.090	-0.460	0.056	-0.200	0.036	1											
<b>7. First Year</b>	0.000	-0.126	-0.110	-0.343	0.183	0.058	1										
<b>8. Second Year</b>	-0.109	-0.222	-0.023	-0.566	-0.281	0.106	-0.154	1									
<b>9. Third Year</b>	-0.024	-0.186	-0.137	-0.016	0.140	-0.016	-0.137	-0.364	1								
<b>10. Fourth Year</b>	0.087	0.426	0.088	0.322	0.019	0.099	-0.149	-0.394	-0.351	1							
<b>11. Fifth Year</b>	-0.005	0.031	0.122	0.314	0.032	-0.247	-0.055	-0.147	-0.131	-0.141	1						
<b>12. M. S</b>	0.079	0.044	0.103	0.465	0.036	-0.162	-0.074	-0.195	-0.174	-0.188	-0.070	1					
<b>13. Political Party Affiliation</b>	-0.052	0.242	0.117	0.062	0.208	-0.025	-0.064	-0.034	-0.056	0.065	0.033	0.065	1				
<b>14. Muslims</b>	-0.038	-0.034	0.066	-0.042	-0.059	0.083	0.101	-0.040	-0.021	0.039	0.096	-0.123	-0.116	1			
<b>15. Hindus</b>	0.037	0.048	-0.047	0.023	0.079	-0.097	-0.095	0.038	0.013	-0.014	-0.091	0.089	0.133	-0.094	1		
<b>16. Buddhists</b>	0.019	-0.081	-0.050	-0.002	-0.006	0.024	-0.024	0.047	0.060	-0.062	-0.023	-0.031	-0.026	-0.239	-0.040	1	
<b>17. Christians</b>	-0.016	0.054	-0.036	0.106	-0.075	0.017	-0.017	-0.045	-0.040	-0.044	-0.016	0.233	-0.019	-0.169	-0.028	-0.007	1

politically affiliated students have a higher amount. The trust model's explanatory power is demonstrated by R<sup>2</sup>, explaining 22.6% of the difference in trust in Bangladesh Police. Secondly, the regression analysis revealed that students' perceptions of police procedure fairness are negatively influenced by personal and vicarious experiences of corruption. Demographic factors such as marital status, political affiliation, and religious affiliation also significantly influence this perception. Male students gave higher ratings, while politically affiliated students gave higher ratings. First-year and fifth-year students had more significant opinions. Thirdly, the study found that students' perceptions of police effectiveness are significantly influenced by personal and vicarious experiences of corruption. Male students gave a more negative assessment, while demographic factors like marital status, political party affiliation, and religious affiliation influenced their ratings. First-year students rated police effectiveness higher than second-year students, and Christian students gave the highest rating.

## 5. Discussion

The study surveyed university students to investigate their perceptions of the Bangladeshi police and the factors affecting these perceptions. The survey revealed that students generally have unfavorable opinions of the police and critically assess their fairness and effectiveness. The majority of students reported that the police in Bangladesh do not respond quickly or handle situations appropriately when individuals seek emergency assistance.

There are a number of reasonable explanations for why university students have negative perceptions of the police. First, during protests, university students frequently have an unfavorable view of the police. To prevent avoidable injuries and the chance of fatalities, policing large-scale demonstrations requires specialized training, intelligence, and communication techniques (Tankebe, 2008). Yet, prior studies indicate that Bangladeshi police officers lack the requisite or any specialized training to effectively put down such demonstrations without suffering losses (Jabber et al., 2023). As a result, serious injuries are frequently inflicted during police clashes with student protesters. Second, previous studies have shown that older individuals are likely to have more favorable attitudes toward the police than younger people (Rahman & Hossain, 2017). Consequently, university students and those who are, on average, younger will assess the police more critically than the public in general.

Secondly, research shows that perceptions of police corruption have a big impact on how the public perceives about the police (Tankebe, 2010). These studies suggest that police corruption lowers public confidence on the police. The findings of the current study, which confirm this assumption, show that university students' trust in the police is decreased when they have personally or indirectly witnessed police corruption. In particular, the analysis of this study demonstrates how students' perceptions of police fairness and effectiveness are harmed by their experiences with police corruption, both personally and

Table 4. Regression analysis of factors influencing students' perceptions of the police (N =200).

	Trust in the police		Procedural fairness		Police effectiveness	
	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE
<b>Constant</b>	25.773*	6.181	23.682*	5.203	27.851*	7.324
<b>Fear of Crime</b>	-0.056	0.105	-0.003	0.089	0.017	0.125
<b>Personal experience of police corruption</b>	-0.350	0.153	-0.474*	0.129	-0.327	0.182
<b>Vicarious experience of police corruption</b>	-0.416	0.129	-0.434*	0.109	-0.566*	0.153
<b>Age</b>	-0.309	0.281	-0.202	0.237	-0.162	0.333
<b>Male</b>	-0.783	0.557	-0.828	0.469	-1.639	0.660
<b>Not married</b>	0.500	1.156	0.269	0.973	1.033	1.369
<b>Political party affiliation</b>	0.179	1.064	1.351	0.896	1.694	1.261
<b>Level of education <sup>a</sup></b>						
<b>First year</b>	-0.049	1.247	0.554	1.049	1.668	1.477
<b>Third year</b>	-0.586	0.796	-0.341	0.670	1.419	0.944
<b>Fourth year</b>	-0.474	0.937	-0.003	0.789	0.551	1.110
<b>Fifth year</b>	-0.697	1.608	-0.538	1.354	0.951	1.905
<b>M.S</b>	-0.229	1.492	-0.377	1.256	-0.493	1.768
<b>Religious affiliation <sup>b</sup></b>						
<b>Hinduism</b>	1.808	0.743	0.308	0.625	1.607	0.880
<b>Buddhism</b>	-0.200	2.488	-0.624	2.095	2.879	2.949
<b>Christianity</b>	4.110	3.611	2.092	3.039	7.664	4.278
<b>R-squared</b>	0.226		0.263		0.217	
<b>F-test</b>	3.576*		4.388*		3.405*	

<sup>a</sup> Second year is the reference category.

<sup>b</sup> Islam religious group is the reference category.

\*p < .001.

through vicarious experiences. According to Boateng's (2016) research, merely vicariously experiencing police corruption has a negative impact on students' perceptions of police fairness and effectiveness. The analysis of this study differs from Boateng's work (2016).

The outcomes of this survey further demonstrate the importance of demographic characteristics in interpreting university students' perceptions of the police. It was seen, in particular, that male students' opinions of the police were more negative than those of female students. Despite the fact that this finding conflicts with some earlier studies (Boateng, 2016). It is not unexpected that females have less trust in the police, and this opens the door for future research that will be primarily concerned with how female students perceive the police (Avdija, 2010). Females do, in fact, encounter less aggressive police behavior, but this does not always convert to an increase in their trust in the police. The results showed that male students were more likely to engage in risky activities that would expose them to aggressive police officers and influence their attitudes of the police, both positively and negatively. According to research conducted in Ghana, women who felt that the police handled their cases poorly were afraid to report crimes (Boateng, 2016). According to Boateng (2012), the lack of criminal reporting is explained by the police mentality of blaming female victims. This behavior of police indicates as a contributing factor to the university women in understanding this study's negative perceptions.

Finally, perceptions of the Bangladesh Police among university students were not found to be influenced by fear of crime. A similar conclusion was found by Boateng (2016) in his study which looked at the same among the university students in Ghana. The plausible reason behind this finding may be the comparatively safe and peaceful environment of university campuses which may reduce fears about crime and also the need for police intervention. As Smith (1988) noted that university campuses are often insulated from the criminal issues that affect wider society because of the presence of obvious security measures, low crime rates, and a supportive campus culture (Boateng, 2016). While fear of crime is not a significant factor, there are undoubtedly other factors such as trust, effectiveness, and procedural fairness in shaping university students' perceptions of the police. By understanding these complex dynamics and working to address any negative perceptions, police agencies can build stronger relationships with university communities and contribute to a safer and more secure campus environment.

## 6. Conclusion

The exploration of university students' perceptions of the police and the analysis of factors influencing such perceptions were the two primary research objectives of this study, which attempted to address three hypotheses within them. The results of this study theoretically assist in explaining why and how Bangladeshi students develop their perceptions about the police. The findings of this

study corroborate the demographic model of attitudes toward the Bangladeshi police (Boateng, 2012), male respondents had more negative perceptions than female ones. Additionally, the results of the current investigation contradict prior claims that students have a mixed opinion of the effectiveness of the police, have a moderate level of faith in the police, and are more critical of the police's fairness (Boateng, 2016). The analysis' findings also show that university students have poor levels of trust in police officers, a negative perception of their procedural fairness, and low approval ratings for their effectiveness. Practically, student perceptions of police are affected by experiences of police corruption, leading to distrust. To improve relations, Bangladeshi police should maintain ethical standards, introduce accountability mechanisms, and focus on positive interactions. Professional conduct during student protests is crucial, alongside programs fostering collaboration between police and university students, such as interactive seminars to address student concerns and improve the police image. Training that can promote positive interactions between the police and the students will be quite useful in ensuring a good relationship between the two groups, as mentioned by Boateng (2016).

Limitations of the study include the reliance on non-random data from a single university, which does not accurately reflect the variety of the student opinion at all of the country's universities. Additionally, this study assessed students' perceptions during a certain time period and was not longitudinal in nature. Future research should involve students from multiple universities and consider significant factors such as crime victimization, residential locations, income, prior police interactions, and police harassment. Hence, to accurately infer causal relationships, future research should use a longitudinal strategy to examine perceptions of university students over a number of time periods. Overall, this study contributes to our understanding of how Bangladeshi university students perceive the police and highlights significant factors that influence their attitudes, such as demographic changes and corruption. It will be necessary to solve these concerns via accountability, transparency, and improved communication between the police and students in order to foster mutual confidence and strengthen the credibility of the Bangladesh Police.

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