

Exploring the Adoption of E-PR in Bangladesh: Evidence from Multiple Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Public Relations (PR) refers to the strategic communication efforts undertaken by organizations, individuals, or entities to build and maintain a positive image and establish strong relationships with various stakeholders, including the public, customers, employees, investors, media, government authorities, and more. In contrast, E-PR is a unique way of promoting organisations, individuals, or entities by enhancing visibility in a virtual environment. The study's primary purpose was to explore how Public Relations Practitioners (PRPs) adopt E-PR practice in their respective organisations in Bangladesh to achieve institutional goals. The study utilises mixed methods, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative data has been collected through interviews with PRPs from diverse sectors through purposive sampling techniques to gain insights into their perceptions of EPR. Qualitative data was collected by reviewing secondary sources like books, articles, reports, etc. 82 professionals participated in a Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey. The multiple regression model was employed to analyse the data for this study. The study found that respondents have an average level of knowledge, attitude, and practice in utilizing EPR opportunities in their daily PR activities. However, they are eager to embrace the benefits of EPR.

1. Introduction

Public Relations (PR) is the management function that evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or organization with the public interest, and executes a programme of actions to earn public understanding and acceptance (Hailu, 2018, Sultana et al, 2019). It aims to disseminate diverse news and information, manage the perception of a brand, and mitigate adverse consequences (Hayes, 2023). Basically, PR is a crucial communication approach that influences individuals (Gezihagne, 2018). Electronic Public Relations (commonly known as EPR) refers to the practice of managing an organisation's public image and reputation in the digital realm. It involves using various online communication channels and tools to interact with the public, key stakeholders, and the media (Ezeah, 2005). Principally,

EPR is the deliberate utilisation of digital platforms and technology to effectively handle an organisation's reputation, construct a favourable public image, interact with stakeholders, and distribute information (Kent & Taylor, 2002). EPR leverages the interactive nature of the digital environment (Li & Bernoff, 2011) to enable two-way communication, allowing organisations to respond promptly to inquiries and effectively manage their online reputation. This approach emphasises the seamless integration of digital channels to enhance an organisation's overall PR efforts (Judd et al., 1991). In the Web 2.0 era, "Public Relations" has transformed into "PR 2.0" and brought a new era of Public Relations (Petrovici, 2014).

Globalisation and the swift advancement of media and technology have given rise to an unforeseen situation that defies accurate prediction. The internet has emerged as a predominant platform for individuals to convene in the virtual realm for communication, allowing the populace to express their opinions and perspectives. This electronic platform has shown to be a highly effective means of promptly identifying and addressing problems and concerns as they emerge (Mahmud et al., 2025). When clients encounter difficulties, they may opt to visit the organisation's website to register a formal grievance or seek out online forums and discussion groups to engage with individuals who share comparable concerns and grievances. This advanced technology has brought the world closer and hastened two-way communication processes (Shamsan & Otieno, 2015). According to the studies conducted by Obayi and Onwude (2018) as well as Igben and Ilaya (2021), the emergence of the digital era has enabled a type of communication that enables individuals to generate, distribute, and interchange information and ideas inside virtual communities and networks. But, within this framework, EPR serves as a crucial tool for disseminating information in the virtual sphere, facilitating broader connectivity (Ketelaars & Seevenans, 2021). This approach is also cost-effective as it eliminates the necessity of allocating substantial funds (Amodu et al., 2019).

However, according to Permatasari et al. (2021), technology significantly impacts the operations and interactions of PR throughout society. Numerous organisations are transitioning towards digital PR, significantly relying on digital channels. Consequently, this shift necessitates that PRPs acquire a new set of skills. Furthermore, it was underscored that in contemporary times, both traditional and digital PR operate in tandem and remain indispensable for organisations (Permatasari et al., 2021). Besides, contemporary technological advancements enable PRPs to reach the public and specific target audiences without being constrained by geographical location, temporal limitations, or physical boundaries. These technologies facilitate immediate and interactive communication, fostering the exchange of ideas in real time. The success or failure of PRPs can be influenced by the utilisation of interactive technology such as blogs, web pages, emails, and social networks (Tankosic et al., 2016). According to Ifigeneia and Dimitrios (2017), the advent of new technology, such as the World Wide Web, brought a notable surge of novel opportunities and prospects. Internet technologies are subject to constant advancement and change due to their status as cutting-edge technology. Web 2.0 technology could complement current PR

techniques and assist PROs in using better PR. The authors additionally asserted that prospective PRPs, who presently possess a strong understanding of Web 2.0, continue to have challenges in comprehending the various applications of these technologies in the PR field (Ifigeneia & Dimitrios, 2017). According to Kent and Li (2020), while examining the impact of the digital era on PR in the current century, it becomes exceedingly difficult to address the function of the internet without considering the influence of social media. If we consider the internet the stage upon which 21st-century PR is set, then social media and its platforms are the major players. According to Grunig (2009), the practice of PR may not fully benefit from the digital revolution if it is approached from an interpretive perspective rather than a strategic management paradigm (p.8). With all these circumstances, this study intended to unravel how various institutions in Bangladesh practice EPR in their domain to connect with people.

This study intends to bridge the gap between traditional and electronic public relations techniques in Bangladesh by addressing these objectives and establishing a bridge between the two. It is anticipated that the findings would provide significant insights into the present state of EPR adoption, highlighting both potential and obstacles alongside one another. In the end, the purpose of the study is to make a contribution to the development of digital communication strategies that are more effective, align with the goals of the business, and boost overall public relations efforts.

2. Research Questions

RQ1: To what extent are PRPs in Bangladesh acquainted with the principles and practices of EPR?

RQ2: What are the prevailing attitudes and perceptions regarding EPR practice?

RQ3: Based on the identified areas for development, how can recommendations be made to strengthen EPR practices in Bangladeshi institutions?

3. Literature Review

PR has a long history that spans several centuries. The primary objective of PR is to build and sustain a positive public perception of an organisation, individual, or brand (Mehmood, 2023). Principally, communication is the fundamental aspect of PR practice (Sahoo & Mohapatra, 2019). The advancement of a nation is contingent upon the development and effectiveness of its communication infrastructure (Whatmough, 2018). Now, the world is shifting towards digital, with a convergence of communication technologies (Mahmud et al, 2025, Ndinojuo et al., 2016). Digital media has dramatically changed how PRPs communicate, creating an ongoing communication channel between an organisation and its stakeholders (Whatmough, 2018). PR can only work in isolation in this contemporary era with the influence of the Internet and technological advancements (Alyaqoub, 2020). The use of the Internet and internet-enabled communication platforms has profoundly affected internal and external communication within organisations and between organisations and their

various stakeholders. Social media and websites are two essential components of online PR for organisations worldwide (Sahoo & Mohapatra, 2019). According to Sahoo and Mohapatra (2019), it enables bi-directional communication between an organisation and its public, leading to heightened engagement. According to Kent and Li (2020), while examining the impact of the digital era on PR in the current century, it becomes very challenging to address the role of the Internet without incorporating a discussion on social media. Suppose one was to conceptualise the Internet as the platform on which PR unfolds in the 21st century. In that case, it becomes evident that social media and its associated platforms assume a prominent role. According to different studies conducted by Kent and Li (2020) and Sengar (2021), the potential benefits of social media in contemporary society are vast and limitless. Nevertheless, while considering the rapidity of information transmission, it is crucial to analyse its advantages within the realm of PR comprehensively. One such advantage is enhancing communication between an organisation and its audience through real-time messaging, resulting in more robust and influential interactions. According to Ewuola (2019), various social media platforms, including instant messaging, social bookmarking, photo-sharing, wikis, and Facebook, have substantially influenced the communication practices of PRPs. These platforms have facilitated seamless interactions between individuals and media organisations. Furthermore, the utilisation of social media platforms has significantly bolstered the attainment of PR goals through its influence on the dissemination of PR knowledge, cultivation of interpersonal connections, dissemination of cutting-edge advancements in PR tools and methodologies, and facilitation of attitude formation within the realm of public relations practice. PRPs can now engage with their target audience remotely through social media platforms. This is in contrast to the past when the primary means of communication were limited to telephone, fax, and telegram, which were costly and unreliable. The advent of instant messaging has revolutionised the field, enabling PRPs to have real-time interactions and receive prompt responses to their inquiries, eliminating delays in communication. In addition to its capacity to engage with a vast audience simultaneously, social media has also influenced the acquisition of knowledge by PRPs. It has fostered positive relationships with individuals, served as a platform for accessing information regarding the latest advancements in PR tools and techniques, and has played a role in shaping the attitudes of those engaged in the field of PR (Ewuola, 2019). According to Roth and Avidar (2022), an additional advantage of this platform is its ability to effectively engage a broader audience, ensuring that information is easily accessible to individuals with internet connectivity. Furthermore, the emergence of social media has given rise to a novel marketing domain known as "relationship marketing," which enhances the perceived amicability and accessibility of firms (Najib, 2020). Ahmed and Islam (2018) argue that platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn have become central tools for institutions in the country to engage with their audiences, manage their online image, and disseminate information. The immediacy and interactivity of these platforms enable institutions to foster dialogues with stakeholders and respond swiftly to emerging issues.

Many individuals worldwide utilize the Internet and various technological devices, rendering users a crucial demographic for corporations and organizations to target. The use of technology in the realm of PR remains relatively nascent, resulting in this use being still random and unstructured (Alyaqoub, 2020). Technology enables individuals to access information instantly, irrespective of location or time (Igben & Ilaya, 2021). However, the PR sector has significantly transformed due to digitalization and artificial intelligence (AI), surpassing previous expectations. To stay ahead in the digital age and AI, PRPs must adopt new tools, strategies, and methodologies (Mehmood, 2023). On the other hand, PR is distinctive in the marketing communications mix due to its unpaid nature, in contrast to other promotional methods that necessitate direct financial investments to reach target audiences. The process of disseminating information through press releases to news media organizations, with the expectation that they will subsequently share these stories with their audiences, is a common practice. However, it is essential to acknowledge the inherent limits of this approach, as the power over the transmission of information ultimately lies with external entities (Elrod & Fortenberry, 2020). However, the constant influx of information has profoundly impacted individuals' perspectives of PR, leading to enhanced relationships and knowledge acquisition. PRPs, who consistently pursue innovative and imaginative methods to utilize technology, are spearheading the transition from conventional to digital and social media engagement. The influence of technology on PR and its interaction with the public is significant (Khanrah & Sahu, 2023). Moreover, PR has significantly shifted from the traditional era to the digital age. PR 1.0 refers to the period characterized by classic PR practices. During the contemporary period, printed media has become a pivotal element in the distribution of information. Furthermore, PR 2.0 signifies the era in which online media emerged. In the contemporary period, PR communication predominantly forms horizontal communication, characterized by interconnectivity and a many-to-many communication model. In the contemporary period, PR functions as an intermediary. The present age was characterized by the shift from printed media, namely news, to digital platforms. PR 3.0 denotes a period characterized by the emergence of social media platforms. Social media is the predominant media consumption, garnering the highest user engagement, popularity, and public trust. Various forms of journalism have surfaced in the contemporary era, including citizen journalism, corporate journalism, and employee journalism. PRPs are responsible for monitoring many sources of information, including traditional offline and online news media and social media platforms. PR 4.0 refers to the contemporary period characterized by the prominent utilization of artificial intelligence and big data. PR does not compete solely with PR within organizations or across countries. In contemporary times, the PR field faces competition from automated systems that can generate press releases, manage the timing of content uploads, and even offer insights on the strategic actions that organizations should undertake in response to relevant phenomena or issues (Arief, 2019). Moreover, Özgen et al. (2023) argued that the knowledge gap is seen in the field of PR, as in every field. Especially with the digitalization process, people's access to information can increase the knowledge gap. They also opined that adoption of technologies will decrease knowledge largely.

However, the literature review highlights the global relevance of E-PR and its increasing significance in Bangladesh.

3.1 Gap of the Study

Several articles have been examined regarding Electronic or Digital Public Relations and its various perspectives. The investigation has pinpointed several studies emphasizing the prevalence of EPR practices on an international scale. However, in the context of Bangladesh, only a limited number of articles have shed light on PR practices within university settings, the role of PR in maintaining an institution's image, perceptions regarding PR, and similar topics. Notably, there has been no focus yet on how various institutions in Bangladesh employ Electronic or Digital Public Relations to accomplish organizational goals. This identified gap in the current literature underscores the need for focused attention.

4. Methods

4.1 Study Design and Population:

This study has used mixed methods, covering both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative data has been collected reviewing various secondary documents including articles, reports, books and so on. Quantitative data on knowledge, attitudes, and practices has been collected through the surveys and structured questionnaires. The ethical problems of the survey were articulated on the questionnaire's cover page. Consent was obtained from respondents, who remained anonymous. This study is limited to Dhaka City since most of the headquarters are located in Dhaka and PR practice, generally, conducted centering headquarters. Here 82 PR practitioners from 35 public and private institutions in Bangladesh participated in the study.

4.2 Questionnaire:

The KAP models are frequently employed in public health research to examine individuals' health behaviours and elucidate their transformations (Cai et al, 2023). However, it has also been used in other areas, such as lightning (Rahman et al., 2023). Consequently, we have also used this model to define EPR practice in various institutions in Bangladesh. These models encompass three key components: the acquisition of accurate knowledge, the formation of attitudes, and the adoption of actions. Here, we have defined how PRPs practice EPR in different institutions to connect with a large number of people and to achieve institutional goals. It is a beneficial framework for understanding and analyzing various aspects of EPR. However, as a PR practitioner in Bangladesh with nearly a decade of experience, the author developed the questionnaire based on personal expertise and a review of relevant literature. The survey was conducted in English. It consisted of two primary elements: respondent information and KAP sections. There were 28 items in the KAP section. There have been 13 closed-ended questions in the knowledge section. The attitude section contained 8 closed-ended items with a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly

agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly disagree = 1). The attitude section contained 8 closed ended. We calculated Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency in the KAP domain, where knowledge = 0.828, attitude = 0.861, practice = 0.67, and overall KAP = 0.871. Cronbach's alpha >0.857 suggests an adequate level, whereas >0.80 implies an outstanding one.

4.3 Sampling Design:

We have employed a non-probability sampling method to collect samples. Among all non-probability sampling methods, we have used purposive sampling technique to collect data from the respondents 82. Purposive sampling has been chosen for several reasons. Firstly, purposive sampling allows for the deliberate selection of participants who possess relevant expertise and experience in this field. This ensures that the study can capture in-depth insights from individuals directly involved in E-PR activities within these institutions. Secondly, it enables the researcher to target participants who represent a diverse range of institutions in Bangladesh, including universities, corporations, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. Furthermore, it facilitates the identification of participants who can offer rich and meaningful data, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the study findings. By selecting participants based on their knowledge, involvement, and relevance to the research topic, the study can ensure that the collected data are relevant, insightful, and representative of the target population.

4.4 Data collection:

The survey was conducted by the author between January and March 2023 through face-to-face interviews, during which consent was obtained. The collected data underwent a thorough double-check to identify any anomalies.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Sociodemographic characteristics

Table 1 summarizes the study participants' sociodemographic characteristics. Most of the participants were male (76.8%), 41-50 years old (36.6%), married (79.3%), postgraduate students (59.4%), and working experiences 11 to 15 (29.3%).

Table 1: Sociodemographic information and health-seeking behaviors (n=82).

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	63	76.8
	Female	19	23.2
Age	18-30 years old	9	11.0
	31-40 years old	24	29.3
	41-50 years old	30	36.6
	> 50 years old	19	23.2
Marital Status			

	Single	17	20.7
	Married	65	79.3
Education	Graduate	2	2.4
	Post-graduate	49	59.8
	MPhil	30	36.6
	PhD	1	1.2
Working Experiences	Below 5	7	8.5
	6 to 10	18	22.0
	11 to 15	24	29.3
	16 to 20	23	28.0
	Above 20	10	12.2

TABLE 2 : Knowledge towards EPR (Dhaka, Bangladesh. 2023)

Knowledge (K)

No	Items	Correct Response [n (%)]
K1	EPR is very important in the context of communication	43 (52.4)
K2	There are many latest digital EPR tools and platforms available for communication	45 (54.9)
K3	Social media is extensively connected to PR	44 (53.7)
K4	I am aware that it provides two-way communications	43 (42.4)
K5	I understand that leveraging EPR effectively can enable reaching a broader range of stakeholders by utilizing diverse tools	43 (42.4)
K6	EPR has remarkably increased the scope of PR Practice extensively	35 (42.7)
K7	It enables organizations to engage with their audience in real-time	32 (39)
K8	I understand that EPR enables organizations to distribute information to a broad audience without incurring the substantial expenses linked with conventional media outlets.	32 (39)
K9	EPR allows organizations to address and counteract negative information swiftly	35 (42.7)
K10	EPR tools and analytics provide organizations with valuable data on audience behaviour, engagement metrics, and the impact of campaigns	35 (42.7)
K11	EPR transcends geographical boundaries, enabling organizations to reach international audiences	35 (42.7)
K12	EPR facilitates ongoing communication, personalized interactions, and customer engagement, leading to increased loyalty	39 (47.6)

5.2 Knowledge Regarding EPR

Table 2 illustrates that over 52% of respondents understood the significance of EPR, the associated tools, and the correlation between technological blessing and PR. In comparison, almost 55% of respondents stated they knew the latest digital EPR tools and platforms available for communication. Almost 54% of respondents indicated that social media is well connected with PR. Furthermore, almost 43% of respondents agreed that they know how to provide two-way communications, using EPR can help reach more stakeholders using various tools, and EPR has remarkably increased the

scope of PR Practice extensively. Only 39% of the respondents opined that they know how PR enables organizations to engage with their audience in real time and how PR helps to disseminate information to a large audience without the high costs associated with traditional media channels. Almost 43% of the respondents stated that they know how EPR allows organizations to address and counteract negative information swiftly; EPR tools and analytics provide organizations with valuable data on audience behaviour, engagement metrics, and the impact of campaigns, and EPR transcends geographical boundaries, enabling organizations to reach international audiences. However, more than 48% of the respondents stated that EPR facilitates ongoing communication, personalized interactions, and customer engagement, leading to increased loyalty.

TABLE 3 : Attitude towards EPR (Dhaka, Bangladesh. 2023)

Attitude (A)						
No	Items	SDA (%)	DA (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
A1	I am enthusiastic about embracing digital platforms for communication	11 (13.4)	23(28)	27 (32.9)	12 (14.6)	9 (11)
A2	There are some challenges, but I want to adopt	9 (11)	19 (23.2)	30 (36.6)	15 (18.3)	9 (11)
A3	E-PR as a strategic tool for achieving organizational objectives and building positive relationships with stakeholders	11 (13.4)	22 (26.6)	33 (40.2)	11 (13.4)	5(6.1)
A4	The online presence of an organization is being strengthened through Digital PR techniques	12 (14.4)	20 (24.4)	34 (41.5)	11 (13.4)	5(6.1)
A5	Digital PR can provide a competitive edge to institutions in Bangladesh	12 (14.6)	22 (26.8)	32 (39)	11 (13.4)	5(6.1)
A6	I am assured of my ability to proficiently implement digital PR campaigns and strategies	13 (15.9)	17 (20.7)	32 (39)	13 (15.9)	7 (8.5)
A7	Engaging in digital PR is essential for maintaining competitiveness within the digital environment	11 (13.4)	20 (24.4)	30 (36.6)	12 (14.6)	9 (11)
A8	Incorporating EPR into an organization is essential	19 (23.2)	17 (20.7)	23 (28)	14 (17.1)	9 (11)

5.3 Attitude Regarding EPR

Table 3 presents data indicating that approximately 33% of respondents exhibited a neutral stance towards adopting digital platforms for communication. In contrast, 36.6% of respondents acknowledged facing challenges despite wanting to adopt these

platforms. Moreover, nearly 41% of respondents remained neutral regarding using E-PR as a strategic tool for achieving organizational objectives and cultivating positive stakeholder relationships. Similarly, almost 42% of respondents expressed neutrality towards the role of Digital PR in enhancing an organization's online presence. Additionally, 39% of respondents exhibited a neutral perspective on whether digital PR can provide a competitive edge and were neutral regarding the efficacy of executing digital PR campaigns and strategies. Less than 37% of respondents maintained a neutral stance on the necessity of incorporating digital PR practices to stay competitive in the present age, and only 28% expressed neutrality towards the integration of EPR within organizations by PR practitioners.

TABLE 4 : Practices towards EPR (Dhaka, Bangladesh. 2023)

Practice			
No	Items	Yes	No
P1	I do practice the use of social media, websites, blogs, email marketing, and other digital channels	53 (64.6%)	29 (35.4%)
P2	I aim to incorporate EPR into the comprehensive PR and communication strategies of organizations	53 (64.6%)	29 (35.4%)
P3	We should be vigilant about the practice of EPR in course of time.	52 (63.4%)	30 (36.6%)
P4	I want to take training on EPR for better services	54 (65.9%)	28 (34.1%)
P5	I intend to solicit support from relevant authorities to improve the implementation of EPR	55 (67.1%)	27 (32.9%)
P6	I want to solve any challenges to implement EPR	54 (65.9%)	28 (34.1%)
P7	I will take some pragmatic policies to implement EPR to ensure two-way communication	53 (64.6%)	29 (35.4%)
P8	I will take extra precautions to implement EPR diligently, considering its rapid nature in connecting with a larger audience within a short timeframe	53 (64.6%)	29 (35.4%)

5.4 Practice Regarding EPR

Table 4 illustrates that approximately 65% of the respondents agreed with the proposition of actively engaging in utilising various tools associated with EPR and incorporating EPR into their communication practices. Furthermore, a significant portion of the respondents (63.4%) indicated their intention to exercise vigilance in applying EPR. Conversely, approximately 66% of the respondents expressed their inclination to undergo training for the purpose of enhancing their proficiency in EPR practices, and over 67% voiced their intention to seek support from relevant authorities for the implementation of EPR. Moreover, close to 66% of the respondents affirmed their commitment to addressing any challenges that may arise during the implementation of EPR in their professional practice. In contrast, around 65% of the respondents conveyed their commitment to adopting pragmatic policies for the effective implementation of EPR, alongside a dedication to exercise additional caution in order to extend the reach of EPR to a broader audience within a limited timeframe.

Table 5: Association in KAP domain (Dhaka, Bangladesh. 2023)

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	p-value
Knowledge and Attitude	0.062	0.582
Knowledge and Practice	0.964	0.000
Attitude and Practice	0.070	0.531

5.6 Correlation in KAP Domain:

There were found to be positive correlations in the KAP domain (Table 5). But the study has found that correlation between Knowledge and Attitude and Attitude and Practice are insignificant as p- value is greater than the level of significant. In contrast, the correlation between knowledge and practice was found to be significant, with a p-value ($p < 0.000$) lower than the level of significance.

Table 6: Predictors of knowledge, attitude, and practices regarding EPR Practice.

Characteristics	Model I knowledge		Model II attitude		Model III practice	
	B ^a	p-value	B ^a	p-value	B ^a	p-value
Intercept	1.333	.000	1.616	.001	1.347	.000
Age	Reference category: 31-40 years old					
18-30 years old	.061	.609	.640	.173	.065	.586
41-50 years old	.177	.035*	.659	.045*	.189	.025*
> 50 years old	.203	.032*	.867	.020*	.170	.072
Gender	Reference category: Female					
Male	-.063	.441	.968	.003**	-.089	.280
Marital Status	Reference category: Single					
Married	-.027	.734	.149	.634	-.033	.677
Education	Reference category: Post-graduate					
Graduate	-.185	.382	1.392	.097	-.179	.399
MPhil	-.005	.948	.454	.116	-.041	.573
PhD	.402	.187	2.019	.094	.365	.233
Working Experiences	Reference category: 11 to 15 years					
Below 5	.301	.021*	-.061	.903	.332	.011*
6 to 10	.024	.796	-.556	.134	.042	.653
16 to 20	.292	.001***	-.409	.231	.321	.000***
Above 20	.216	.057	-.733	.100	.237	.039*

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

^aB, beta coefficient

5.7 Determinants of Knowledge

Table 6 presents the findings of the multiple regression analysis where, in the case of model I, the common intercept represents the average level of knowledge, which is 1.333. Considering the age level, all the employees with different age levels have more knowledge on average than the reference category 31-40 years. If we consider gender, on average, male employees have less knowledge than female employees. In the case of education, Graduate and MPhil holder employees have less knowledge than

postgraduate employees except for PhD holder employees. Considering the working experiences, all the categories have more knowledge on average than the reference category. Besides, it was found that in terms of age, the knowledge of employees aged 41-50 years and more than 50 years is significant (p-value_{41-50 years}= $-.035$ and p-value_{more than 50}= $-.032$). Besides, the knowledge of employees with experiences below 5 and 16 to 20 is significant (p value_{below 5}= $-.021$ and p value_{16 to 20}= $-.001$).

5.8 Determinants of Attitude

For the model II attitude, it was found that the average level of attitude is 1.616. Considering the age level, the practice level of employees of all age categories is more than the reference category on average. The practice level of male and married employees is higher than that of female and single employees, which are our reference categories. Employees of all education levels have a more positive attitude than the reference category post-graduate employees. However, employees with different working experiences have a negative attitude compared to the reference category. Besides, here, in terms of age (table 4), the attitude of employees aged 41-50 years and over 50 years is significant (p-value_{41-50 years}= $-.045$ and p-value_{more than 50}= $-.020$). Besides, male employees' attitudes are found to be significant (p-value_{male}= $-.003$).

5.9 Determinants of Practices

For the model III practice, it was found that the average level of attitude is 1.347. Considering the age level, employees of all age categories have a more positive attitude on average than the reference category. Male and married employees have a positive attitude compared to female and single employees on average, which are our reference categories. The level of practice for employees of all education levels is less than the reference category postgraduate employees except PhD holder employees. However, the level of practice among employees with different working experiences is more than the reference category 11-15 years. Besides, here, we found, in terms of age (table 4), the practice of employees aged 41-50 years to be significant (p-value_{41-50 years}= $-.025$). Besides, the employees whose experiences are below 5, 16 to 20 and above 20 are found to be significant (p-value_{below 5}= $-.011$, p-value_{16 to 20}= $-.000$ and p-value_{more than 20}= $-.0039$).

6. Conclusions

According to our knowledge, this is the first study to apply the KAP model to examine EPR practice in various institutions in Bangladesh. Digital Public Relations (E-PR, Digital PR) constitutes a manifestation of internet-based public relations utilising the resources afforded by online media platforms (Alyaqoub, 2020). Applying various organisational tools and techniques accrues benefits through ERP, which facilitates bidirectional communication (Petrovici, 2014). The empirical outcomes of the current study reveal that PRPs, as per our findings, the stakeholders possess a moderate level of knowledge about EPR. A previous study found that most scholars agreed that PR practitioners have to possess digital and technological knowledge to perform their duties effectively (Alyaqoub & Rahman, 2019). Alyaqoub (2020) commented that

technology usage in the PR field is still new; this use is still random and unstructured, leading to gaps in this practice. Özgen et al (2023) suggested that PR lowers the information gap owing to digitalization knowledge and abilities. They also noted that society is quickly embracing and integrating the Internet and digital technologies. With the adaptation to this rapid transformation over time, it is apparent that there will be a substantial decrease in the knowledge gap. They also argued that the tools used by communication disciplines are endless, they need to rapidly add these digital tools to the tools they use. The primary concern in public relations is the ineffective utilization of digital tools to execute strategies. Furthermore, the study found that stakeholders have a positive attitude towards embracing modern technology and are also inclined to practice EPR in their daily activities. However, EPR has yet to flourish on a large scale in Bangladesh, limiting its ability to connect with more people across its boundaries. In light of these findings, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the proficiency of PRPs in EPR and foster its effective utilization for institutional development.

- There is a need for targeted training programs and workshops tailored to the specific needs and challenges faced by PRPs in Bangladesh. These initiatives should focus on enhancing their understanding of EPR tools, strategies, and best practices. Additionally, incorporating practical, hands-on sessions can contribute significantly to skill development and real-world application.
- It is crucial to create a community or network where practitioners can exchange ideas, discuss challenges, and learn from each other's experiences can foster a supportive environment conducive to continuous learning and improvement.
- Institutional leadership should play a proactive role in promoting a culture that values and encourages the integration of EPR in day-to-day PR practices. This may involve allocating resources for the adoption of EPR tools, providing incentives for innovation in digital communication, and recognizing and rewarding successful EPR initiatives within the organization.

7. Limitations and Future Direction

This study has certain limitations that require attention. First, non-probability sampling approaches were utilized here. Consequently, this survey may have some inherent biases. Respondents could consider socially acceptable responses, even with the anonymous survey format. So, it might be for the face-to-face interview. Regarding these, respondents exhibited inadequate knowledge, attitudes, and practices. Second, only respondents from Dhaka city have been picked; they only represent part of Bangladesh.

Future research should adopt probability sampling techniques to improve representativeness and reduce bias. Combining surveys with face-to-face interviews can mitigate socially desirable responses and provide deeper insights. Expanding the study beyond Dhaka to include diverse regions of Bangladesh will enhance generalizability. Additionally, longitudinal studies could track changes over time, offering a more comprehensive understanding of evolving trends.

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