

## **The Role of Digital Humanities in Digital Publication in Bangladesh: An Evaluation**

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### **Abstract**

The use of digital technologies in the humanities, known as digital humanities (DH), is rapidly growing in Bangladesh. This study examines the role of digital humanities in digital publishing in Bangladesh. It focuses on four main areas: Adoption of Digital Publication Practices (ADPP), Institutional Support for Digital Publication (ISDP), Access to Digital Technology (ADT), and Digital Literacy in Publication (DLP). The research employs a quantitative method to collect data from 106 academics, researchers, and students from different institutions. The collected data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with Smart PLS 4. The findings demonstrate that skills and media literacy, access to technology and the digital divide, institutional support and resource availability, and digital publication practices all play a pivotal role in research and digital publishing. The study also finds that universities with DH centres, clear digital publication policies, and active leadership are further advanced in their digital transformation. Based on the study, the researcher recommends that universities implement digital literacy training programs for both students and teachers. Second, institutions should invest in digital infrastructure and provide low-cost devices and better internet to reduce the digital divide. Third, clear policies should be introduced to encourage digital publishing, such as by offering research grants or rewards. Finally, a culture of innovation should be promoted by sharing success stories and creating teamwork platforms. By addressing these areas, Bangladesh can enhance its digital humanities and digital publishing practices, ultimately contributing to the modernisation, inclusivity, and relevance of the humanities.

*Keywords:* digital humanities, digital publication, digital literacy, technology access, digital divide

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## Introduction

The digital humanities is a growing field that integrates traditional humanities scholarship with digital technologies. Globally, it is receiving considerable attention in academic and cultural fields. In Bangladesh, digital humanities are also becoming important for the management, preservation, and sharing of cultural and scholarly resources. It uses digital tools to study literature, history, linguistics, and cultural studies. These tools create new ways to connect technology with the humanities (Rahman et al., 2023). Alongside this, digital publications have transformed the way knowledge is shared. They have made academic and cultural materials more accessible and easier to distribute.

In Bangladesh, digital publications and online databases are growing at a slow but steady pace. Many universities have started publishing online journals. Some journals are recognised internationally and are listed under Q1, Q2, and Q3 rankings. Universities such as the University of Dhaka, Khulna University, North South University, BRAC University, the University of Liberal Arts, and other institutions publish online journals covering a range of subjects. In addition to universities, publishers such as Bangla Academy and other research institutions contribute by publishing digital journals and databases. However, many journals continue to struggle to secure international indexing and achieve a global readership.

Digital databases in Bangladesh mainly focus on preserving old manuscripts, research articles, and cultural archives. Some universities have established digital repositories that store and make available theses, dissertations, and research papers online. Institutions such as the Bangladesh National Museum and the Liberation War Museum are also establishing digital archives to preserve historical records.

The digital humanities play a crucial role in advancing digital publishing in Bangladesh. By using digital tools, researchers can now easily publish, share, and analyze data. Projects in Bangladesh have started digitizing rare documents, folk literature, and oral histories. Khalid and Chowdhury (2020) demonstrated that social media and online platforms are now utilised to represent intangible cultural heritage, including folk songs and traditional arts. This has helped preserve cultural identity while reaching a global audience. At the same time, digital humanities are helping academic institutions integrate technology into education and research. Rahman et al. (2023) noted that some universities are offering courses and workshops to train students and researchers in digital methods. However, challenges remain, including insufficient funding, limited technical expertise, and a shortage of specialised digital humanities centres.

## Methodology

### Research Design

To achieve the objective, the study employed a quantitative research design and administered a survey to academics, researchers, and students from various institutions to critically evaluate the role of the digital humanities in digital publications in Bangladesh.

### Population and Sample

A total of 106 respondents participated in the survey, representing teachers and students, as well as staff members from the humanities disciplines of two public and two private universities

in Bangladesh. The study also included government ICT policymakers, digital content creators, librarians, and publishers.

The list of stakeholders is as follows:

- **University Librarians** – Professionals managing digital resources in academic libraries.
- **Faculty Members in Humanities Departments** – Academics adopting or promoting digital tools in their teaching and research.
- **Government ICT Policy Makers** – Officials involved in shaping policies related to digital transformation in education and culture.
- **Digital Content Creators and Publishers** – Individuals or organizations engaged in producing digital academic or cultural content.
- **Students in Humanities and Social Sciences** – End-users of digital tools and platforms for learning and research.

The participation was voluntary. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling to ensure the inclusion of individuals directly involved in or affected by DH adoption. The sample consisted of 59 (%) females and 41 (%) males (N = 106). Of the total participants, 65 % were undergraduate and graduate students in the humanities; 25.5% were humanities teachers; and 9.5% were staff members, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

### **Research Instruments**

Based on the frameworks proposed by Aziz and Naima (2021), Khalid and Chowdhury (2020), and Rahman, Ahmad, and Zakaria (2023) (Appendix 1), the study critically analysed the interrelationships among the identified factors. A questionnaire was prepared using a Likert scale, where Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The questionnaire focused on key variables, including assessing Institutional Support for Digital Publication (ISDP), Access to Digital Technology (ADT) for Digital Publication, and Digital Literacy in Publication (DLP). These variables were measured to assess their impact on the implementation of Digital publishing in Bangladesh. Data were collected in person and via Google Forms.

### **Ethical Issue**

To conduct this study, the researchers placed the highest priority on ethical considerations, including participants' honesty, security, and privacy. All respondents participated in this study voluntarily and were informed that they could withdraw at any time. They were also informed that the confidentiality of all personal data would be strictly maintained, that it would be used solely for research purposes, and that no identifiable information would be shared or published.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted using Smart PLS 4 for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM was chosen to analyse the relationships between the dependent variable (Adoption of Digital Publication Practices (ADPP)) and the three independent variables: Institutional Support for Digital Publication (ISDP), Access to Digital Technology (ADT) for Digital Publication, and Digital Literacy in Publication (DLP). This method enabled the examination of the direct and indirect impact of these variables on the implementation of DH in Bangladesh.

## Findings

**Table 1**

*Factor Loadings With Communality and Redundancy, Convergent Validity, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*

Construct	Item	Factor Loading	Communality	Redundancy (P-value)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
ADPP					0.8085
	ADPP1	0.8678	0.6718	0.0438	
	ADPP2	0.8448	0.6668	0.0728	
	ADPP3	0.8518	0.7118	0.0308	
	ADPP4	0.7898	0.7088	0.0498	
	ADPP5	0.8118	0.6428	0.0408	
ADT					0.8185
	ADT1	0.8398	0.593274	0.021	
	ADT2	0.7988	0.714215	0.016018	
	ADT3	0.9138	0.58191	0.02325	
	ADT4	0.8568	0.649179	0.016078	
	ADT5	0.7798	0.67537	0.016165	
ISDP					0.7985
	ISDP1	0.7648	0.666885	0.016181	
	ISDP2	0.8678	0.605262	0.016318	
	ISDP3	0.8618	0.549959	0.015937	
	ISDP4	0.9068	0.650554	0.02221	
	ISDP5	0.8208	0.667645	0.018978	
DLP					0.7695
	DLP1	0.8018	0.69993	0.02194	
	DLP5	0.8388	0.614218	0.024269	
	DLP3	0.7978	0.714313	0.01934	
	DLP4	0.7998	0.590363	0.02421	
	DLP5	0.7498	0.647278	0.019385	

- Note.* ✓ Communality values above 0.5 indicate inclusion in factor analysis. All values exceed 0.5.  
 ✓ Factor loadings > 0.7 indicate sufficient variance extraction. All factor loading scores are > 0.7.  
 ✓ P-values < 0.05 indicate statistical significance. All p-values are < 0.05.  
 ✓ AVE scores > 0.5 ensure adequate convergence. All AVE scores exceed 0.5.

**Table 2**

*Reliability and Convergent Validity*

Item	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Composite Reliability rho(A)	Composite Reliability rho(C)	VIF
ADPP	0.833	0.829	0.9	1.992
ADT	0.795	0.846	0.916	1.542
ISDP	0.821	0.917	0.833	1.172
DLP	0.87	0.936	0.851	1.292
Optimum Values	> .7	> .7	> .7	<5

Table 2 shows that all variables meet the criteria: Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , Composite Reliability  $\rho(A)$ , and  $\rho(C)$  are all  $> 0.7$ , and VIF is less than 5. VIF values below 5 indicate no significant multicollinearity.

**Table 3**

*Outer Model – Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion: Correlation Matrix of Constructs and Square Root of AVE [in Bold])*

Construct	ADPP	ADT	ISDP	DLP
ADPP	<b>0.781</b>	-	-	-
ADT	0.684	<b>0.7885</b>	-	-
ISDP	0.346	0.384	<b>0.782</b>	-
DLP	0.527	0.61	0.219	<b>0.753</b>

The Fornell-Larcker criterion checks discriminant validity by ensuring the square root of a construct's average variance extracted (AVE) is greater than its correlation with any other construct. In this study, all constructs meet this criterion, confirming discriminant validity.

**Table 4**

*Cross-Loading Analysis*

Item	ADPP	ADT	ISDP	DLP
ADPP1	0.766	0.585	0.089	0.03
ADPP2	0.765	0.598	0.088	0.13
ADPP3	0.815	0.581	0.128	0.234
ADPP4	0.659	0.491	0.324	0.167
ADPP5	0.623	0.326	0.137	0.189
ADT1	0.599	0.894	0.257	0.256
ADT2	0.469	0.745	0.047	0.351
ADT3	0.525	0.802	0.011	0.452
ADT4	0.406	0.686	0.014	0.306
ADT5	0.365	0.752	0.032	0.195
ISDP1	0.258	0.493	0.623	0.203
ISDP2	0.143	0.579	0.74	0.136
ISDP3	0.079	0.045	0.713	0.319
ISDP4	0.07	0.048	0.881	0.247
ISDP5	0.093	0.062	0.831	0.308
DLP1	0.038	0.051	0.564	0.658
DLP5	0.046	0.033	0.227	0.849
DLP3	0.318	0.456	0.219	0.742
DLP4	0.235	0.413	0.226	0.763
DLP5	0.354	0.328	0.336	0.892

Gefen and Straub (2005) state that discriminant validity is achieved when items correlate weakly with other constructs, except their own. Reflective relationships, known as loadings, should be high within a given construct and low across constructs. Table 3 confirms high within-construct loadings and weak cross-construct correlations, validating the outer model for cross-loading analysis.

**Table 5***Outer Model – Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratio) Threshold: HTMT < 0.9*

Construct	ADPP	ADT	ISDP	DLP
ADPP	-			
ADT	0.5655	-		
ISDP	0.052	0.534	-	
DLP	0.148	0.187	0.479	-

According to Franke and Sarstedt (2019), if the HTMT value is significantly below the critical value of 0.9, it establishes discriminant validity. Here, the value is below 0.9. Thus, the model is valid and established.

**Table 6***Inner Model; Path Coefficients of Tested Model & Hypothesis Testing and Structural Model Evaluation*

Hyp	Relationship	B	Mean	Std. Dev	R2	Q2	f2	t-statistic	sig.
H	ADT→ADPP	0.305	0.425	0.1	0.542	0.0012	0.74	0.855	0.031**
H2	ISDP→ADPP	0.214	0.741	0.05	0.551	0.0352	0.68	0.846	0.0076**
H3	DLP→ADPP	0.232	0.454	0.01	0.545	0.026	0.57	0.835	0.0042**

Note. \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001; n.s = not significant; (two-tailed test). R = Rejected; (A) = Accepted.

Beta coefficients (B) estimate path relationships in the structural model and indicate consistency across items. The cutoff value for B is > 0.20, and all values in Table 6 meet this threshold.

R Square (R2) quantifies the proportion of variance in the endogenous variables explained by the exogenous variables. Values of 0.42, 0.51, 0.535, and 0.537 are considered moderate and align with the benchmarks of Cohen and Chin.

Q-square (Q2) measures predictive relevance; values above zero indicate good model fit.

F-Square (f2) assesses the effect size when an exogenous variable is removed. Values of 0.74, 0.68, 0.57, and 0.369 indicate a large effect according to Cohen's benchmarks.

**Table 7***Goodness-of-Fit Indicators*

Fit indices	Structural model value	Recommended value	References
Gfi	0.987	> .90	Hair et al. (2010)
Agfi	0.92	> .80	Hu and Bentler (1999)
Nfi	0.964	> .90	Hu and Bentler (1999)
Cfi	0.985	> .90	Bentler and Bonett (1980)
Rmsea	0.031	< .08	Hu and Bentler (1999)
Srmr	0.046	< .07	Hu and Bentler' (1999)

Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI): The Value 0.987, which exceeds the suggested value of 0.90, indicates a strong fit between the model and the observed data.

The Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) Value of 0.920 exceeds the suggested value of 0.80, indicating a good fit, given the number of parameters.

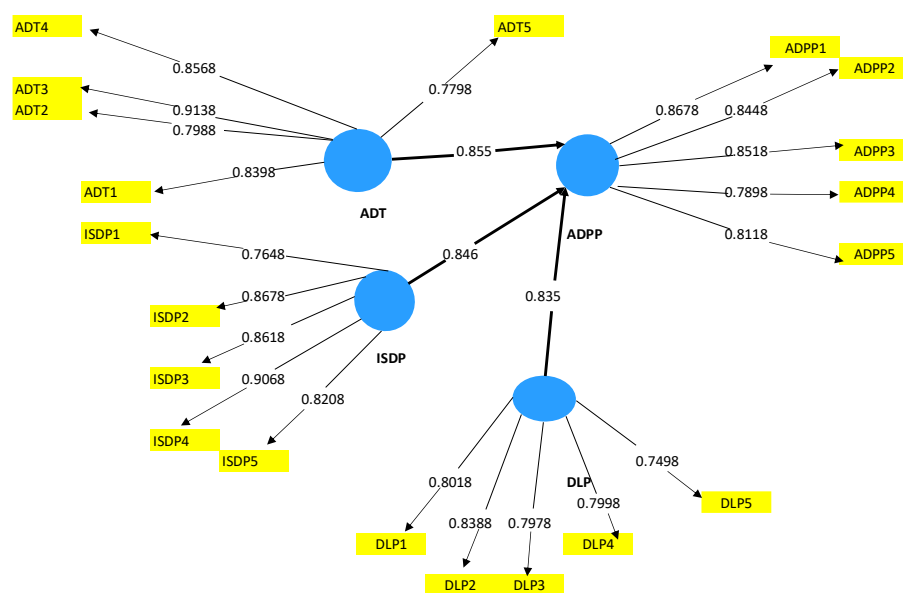
The Normed Fit Index (NFI) of 0.964 exceeds the suggested minimum of 0.90, indicating a high level of fit between the model and the data.

The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is 0.985, which exceeds the recommended value of 0.90, indicating a reasonable fit between the model and the observed data.

The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) Value of 0.031 is below the recommended 0.08, indicating a satisfactory fit between the model and the data.

Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) Value is 0.046, clearly meets the suggested value of 0.07, and indicates a good fit for the structural model.

**Figure 1**  
*Bootstrap Model*



## Discussion

### Digital Literacy and Its Influence on Digital Publishing

Digital literacy refers to the ability to utilise digital tools, databases, and online resources effectively. It plays a key role in the adoption of digital publication practices in Bangladesh. People with strong digital skills can easily access, use, and contribute to digital publications and databases. In Bangladesh, many universities and researchers are learning to work with online journals and databases. According to Aziz and Naima (2021), digital literacy helps users find, understand, and create digital content.

However, digital literacy in Bangladesh remains under development. Many students and faculty members, especially outside major cities, struggle with digital skills. As a result, they encounter difficulties when accessing international journals or utilising digital databases. Enhancing digital literacy is crucial to bolstering the digital publishing landscape. Training, workshops, and digital awareness campaigns are crucial steps in bridging this gap.

## **The Impact of Accessing Technology**

Access to technology, including internet services and digital devices, is another crucial factor. It affects how people engage with digital publications and databases. In Bangladesh, urban areas generally have better internet access, but rural areas continue to face poor connectivity. This digital divide limits the reach of online journals, databases, and digital publications. Rahman et al. (2023) note that without reliable internet and devices, students and researchers are unable to fully utilise digital resources.

Many universities in Bangladesh subscribe to online journals. Some universities offer access to Q1 and Q2-ranked international journals through consortia and library portals. However, without reliable internet and devices, students cannot fully benefit from these resources.

Also, local publishers are trying to digitize their journals, but limited access slows this progress. Public and private initiatives are needed to improve infrastructure and provide affordable internet and devices across all regions.

## **The Role of Institutional Support**

Institutional support is very important for promoting digital publications and database access. Universities, government agencies, and publishers must collaborate to develop digital infrastructures. Begum et al. (2020) explain that strong institutional support enables individuals to adopt digital practices with greater confidence.

Many universities in Bangladesh have begun establishing digital libraries. They provide access to journals, theses, and e-books. Examples include Dhaka University, BUET, and North South University. These universities subscribe to high-ranking journals, such as those published by Elsevier, Springer, and Taylor & Francis, through their library services. However, not all universities have enough funding or resources to subscribe to international databases.

Also, local academic journals are now being published online. Some Bangladeshi universities are publishing Q3- and Q4-ranked journals digitally. Examples are the “Dhaka University Journal of Science” and the “Journal of Bangladesh Agricultural University.” These digital publications help local researchers share their work globally. Still, more institutional efforts are needed to promote digital publications, train faculty and students, and build partnerships with global publishers.

## **Interrelationship Between Factors**

Digital literacy, access to technology, and institutional support are deeply connected. Effective digital skills enable students and faculty to utilise available digital journals and databases. At the same time, access to technology ensures that these resources are reachable. Institutional support ensures that quality journals and databases are readily available.

Without strong digital skills, even access to good internet and devices will not be enough. Without access to technology, digital skills cannot be used. Without institutional support, there will be no digital resources available. Therefore, all three factors must work together to foster the growth of digital publication practices in Bangladesh.

For example, universities that offer both digital literacy programs and have good internet connections tend to have better digital adoption rates. Collaboration among the government, universities, and the private sector can strengthen these connections and enhance the digital humanities and publications in the country.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

The findings have important policy and practical implications. First, digital literacy programs should be expanded across all universities and colleges in Bangladesh. This will prepare students and researchers to access and contribute to digital publications and databases. Second, access to technology must be improved. Internet services should be affordable and available in both rural and urban areas. Special funding should be allocated to universities to enable them to subscribe to international journals and databases.

Third, institutional support must be strengthened. Universities should establish digital libraries, encourage local journals to transition to online publication, and collaborate with international publishers. The government should also support universities through national initiatives, such as library consortia.

Finally, digital humanities can play a significant role in promoting digital publications. Digital humanities projects often involve creating online archives, digitizing research, and sharing academic outputs. This aligns with the broader goal of building a strong digital knowledge base in Bangladesh. Promoting digital humanities will not only preserve cultural heritage but also create new opportunities for researchers and students to engage with digital platforms.

## **Recommendations**

### **Enhancing Digital Literacy**

In Bangladesh, improving digital literacy is a key priority for advancing digital publications in the academic and research sectors. Faculty members, researchers, and students must be equipped with the necessary digital skills to effectively engage with online journals, digital archives, and digital humanities platforms. Managers in educational institutions should invest in continuous professional development programs focused on digital literacy. These programs should include hands-on training in publishing software, digital content management, and the interpretation of digital materials. Aziz & Naima (2021) emphasize that developing digital literacy not only builds confidence among stakeholders but also encourages the adoption of digital tools in research and publishing practices. Furthermore, incorporating digital literacy into the academic curriculum can prepare students to engage with emerging technologies from the outset. By offering courses in areas such as digital archiving and computational analysis, institutions can provide students with a solid foundation for navigating the digital humanities landscape effectively (Rahman et al., 2023).

### **Bridging the Technology Access Gap**

One of the significant challenges in Bangladesh is the unequal access to technology, especially between urban and rural areas. This disparity impacts the adoption of digital publishing and the digital humanities in the country. Managers must address these issues by ensuring that all stakeholders have access to the necessary digital devices and internet connectivity. Khalid and Chowdhury (2020) stress that addressing these access gaps is crucial for the widespread

adoption of digital humanities practices. Institutions should partner with technology providers to ensure students and researchers have affordable, reliable access to devices such as laptops and tablets. Additionally, expanding internet connectivity to underserved areas should be a priority. Initiatives like subsidized devices, community internet hubs, and mobile internet services can help bridge this gap. Furthermore, cloud-based solutions can provide a cost-effective alternative for accessing digital tools and resources, enabling institutions to circumvent the financial challenges posed by limited infrastructure (Aziz & Naima, 2021). Cloud platforms facilitate collaboration, remote learning, and access to digital resources, eliminating the need for expensive hardware and thus making them an effective strategy for ensuring inclusivity in the digital humanities.

### **Strengthening Institutional Support**

Institutional support is critical for fostering the successful adoption of digital publishing practices in Bangladesh. Educational leaders should advocate for significant investments in digital infrastructure, including the development of online journals, digital archives, and content management systems. These resources are vital for the growth of digital humanities. Begum et al. (2020) point out that institutions that prioritize digital infrastructure are better positioned to foster innovation and academic success. To further enhance this process, universities could establish dedicated digital humanities centres that serve as hubs for interdisciplinary collaboration, research, and training. These centres could provide faculty members and students with access to resources and expertise in digital publishing. Additionally, policymakers should be encouraged to implement supportive policies, such as research grants, publication incentives, and tenure considerations, for those engaged in digital humanities practices. Khalid and Chowdhury (2020) argue that clear institutional policies foster a supportive environment for digital innovation, thereby motivating faculty members to engage in these practices.

### **Promoting a Culture of Innovation**

Fostering a culture of innovation is essential for sustaining digital transformation in the humanities. Managers should encourage an experimental approach to integrating digital tools into academic and research work. Aziz and Naima (2021) suggest that institutions can cultivate this culture by celebrating success stories of digital humanities projects within their communities. Recognizing faculty members and students who have successfully utilized digital tools to enhance their research or teaching can inspire others to adopt similar practices. For example, projects using digital storytelling to preserve cultural heritage or data visualizations to study historical trends illustrate the potential of digital humanities (Begum et al., 2020). Additionally, creating platforms for knowledge-sharing, such as webinars, conferences, and online forums, enables stakeholders to exchange ideas and best practices, thereby strengthening the community's digital engagement. These initiatives foster creative exploration and foster a collaborative environment within the institution (Rahman et al., 2023).

### **Implications for Policymakers**

Policymakers play a crucial role in fostering an environment that supports the adoption of digital humanities at the national level. Government investments in digital infrastructure, research development, and digital inclusion initiatives are key to overcoming barriers to technology adoption. Khalid and Chowdhury (2020) emphasise that national policies supporting ICT development and digital humanities projects are crucial for ensuring that digital

tools reach a broader audience. Furthermore, policymakers should promote public-private partnerships to combine resources and expertise from both sectors. These partnerships can help bridge the technological gap by providing affordable devices, internet access, and training for both faculty and students. Aziz and Naima (2021) suggest that such collaborations would also enhance academic institutions' capacity to innovate and adopt digital publishing practices.

### **Conclusion**

The integration of the digital humanities into Bangladesh's academic landscape presents an exciting opportunity to transform research, teaching, and publication practices. However, to realize the full potential of digital publishing, several challenges need to be addressed. These include enhancing digital literacy, bridging the technology access gap, and providing robust institutional support. The administration should focus on improving digital literacy through targeted training programs and by integrating it into the curriculum. By ensuring equitable access to technology, including affordable devices and expanding internet connectivity, institutions can create a more inclusive environment for digital humanities practices. Strengthening institutional support by investing in digital infrastructure, providing training, and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration will further enhance the adoption of digital publishing. Finally, fostering a culture of innovation within universities will inspire stakeholders to explore new possibilities in the digital humanities realm. At the policy level, government initiatives and public-private partnerships will be essential for overcoming systemic barriers and ensuring that digital humanities practices benefit a wide range of stakeholders. In conclusion, a comprehensive and coordinated effort across all levels—academic, institutional, and governmental—is necessary to fully unlock the potential of digital humanities in Bangladesh, fostering innovation, inclusivity, and academic excellence.

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire

Variable	No.	Question	Source Reference
Digital Literacy in Publication (DLP)	1	I am confident using digital tools for academic purposes.	Aziz & Naima (2021)
	2	I understand how to access digital resources for my research.	
	3	I find digital platforms intuitive and easy to use.	
	4	I am aware of the ethical implications of using digital resources.	
	5	I believe improving my digital literacy enhances my productivity in academic work.	
Access to Digital Technology (ADT)	1	I have reliable internet access for my academic work.	Rahman, Ahmad, & Zakaria (2023)
	2	I own the necessary digital devices to engage in digital publishing practices.	
	3	The cost of accessing digital tools is affordable for me.	
	4	My location does not hinder my access to digital technology.	
	5	I find the existing digital infrastructure sufficient for academic and research purposes.	
Institutional Support for Digital Publication (ISDP)	1	My institution encourages the use of digital tools in academic work.	Begum et al. (2020)
	2	I have received adequate training in using digital platforms.	
	3	My institution provides access to digital libraries and repositories.	
	4	Institutional policies support the adoption of digital publishing practices.	
	5	There are sufficient technical support services available in my institution.	
	1	I frequently use digital tools in my academic work.	

Adoption of Digital Publication Practices (ADPP)	2	Digital platforms have improved the quality of my research and teaching.	Khalid and Chowdhury (2020)
	3	I collaborate with others using digital tools.	
	4	I actively explore new digital tools and platforms for my academic work.	
	5	I believe that adopting digital publishing practices is beneficial for my field of study.	