TEACHER ENGAGEMENT IN NATIONAL PARTISAN POLITICS: A BANGLADESH CASE STUDY

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By
Mohammad Omar Shiddike
Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

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Mohammad Omar Shiddike, candidate for the degree of Master of Human Resource Development, has presented a thesis titled, *Teacher Engagement in National Partisan Politics: A Bangladesh Case Study*, in an oral examination held on November 30, 2016. The following committee members have found the thesis acceptable in form and content, and that the candidate demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the subject material.

**External Examiner:** Dr. Larry Steeves, Faculty of Education (Educational Administration)

**Supervisor:** Dr. Abu Bockarie, Faculty of Education (Adult Education and Human Resource Development)

**Committee Member:** Dr. Ken Montgomery, Faculty of Education (Curriculum & Instruction)

**Committee Member:** *Dr. Cindy Hanson, Faculty of Education (Adult Education and Human Resource Development)*

**Chair of Defense:** Dr. Donald Sharpe, Department of Psychology

*Via Skype*
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways teacher engagement in national partisan politics in two Bangladeshi higher educational institutions influenced the teaching of four university teachers, the learning of students, as well as the two educational institutions for which they worked. The study also examined the teachers' perceptions of the benefits and challenges arising from their engagement in partisan politics.

Two bodies of literature were reviewed for the study. They related to the perspectives on teaching in adult and higher education as well as perspectives on teacher engagement in partisan politics, including the implications for teaching and learning in higher education in Bangladesh. The literature review provided a framework for the presentation and discussion of the findings of the study.

The study was a qualitative exploration of the individual experiences and collective opinions of four teachers about their engagement in national partisan politics. A case study methodology was adopted for this study with the goal of capturing the individuality of each case, and ensuring that in-depth information on the cases was presented. One-on-one in-depth interviews were conducted directly with the four participants, who were employed as teachers in two higher education institutions, and who freely discussed their engagement in partisan politics in Bangladesh.

The study found that teacher engagement in partisan politics took time away from their professional duties and responsibilities and that had serious implications for their teaching and student learning. In addition, while teacher engagement in partisan politics resulted in personal and professional rewards for the teachers, it also undermined their
status and respect among students. Further, teacher engagement in partisan politics undermined the reputation of universities as institutions of higher learning in the country. The study concludes with some recommendations arising from the study and suggestions for further research.
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I would like to acknowledge my special thanks to my four participants who agreed to interviews for sharing their work and engagement experience with me. Without them, this study would not have been possible, and for that, I am extremely grateful.

I would like to thank one of my best friends, Kelly Christopherson, for always listening to my opinions and arguments and sharing with me his experience and depth of knowledge. Thanks Kelly for your consistent and valuable support and for helping me to finish this thesis. Although there are many other people who have not specifically been mentioned, they are also appreciated for encouraging me and praying to God for the successful completion of my thesis work. Thanks to everyone and thanks to God as well.
DEDICATION

It is with tremendous pride that I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my late father-in-law, Mohammad Yunus, who sacrificed his luxurious life for the sake of society. He taught 35 years as a school teacher in a small village. His legacy is one of great honor, including outstanding moral standards, commitment to family and society, admirable work ethic, and a genuine concern for the well-being of others. I have known him since 2009.

After my arrival in Canada in 2011, I would speak with Mr. Yunus over the phone occasionally at which time he would ask me about my studies and my publications, which was a great inspiration for me. He passed away in the year of 2015. We pray to Allah (SWT) for his Jannah, Amin.

I also wish to thank my family for their support, especially my wife, Fatema Yeasmin whose patience and encouragement made this venture worthwhile and, at the same time, I also remember our two sons Zarir Shiddike and Zabir Shiddike for their sacrifice. They really missed me when I was so busy with my study and research. May Allah (SWT) help us and guide us to the path of an ideal life.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971. The Bangladeshi people sacrificed for their country's independence and they hoped to establish a democratic society where individuals would be able to live free from discrimination and persecution. After 45 years of independence, the Bangladeshi people are still struggling to fulfill their needs and necessities, as well as their daily demands (Knox, 2009).

For a society like Bangladesh to develop and evolve, education is viewed as fundamental as it creates a literate and an educated population (Knox, 2009). Knox suggests the people of Bangladesh view teachers as among the key leaders in establishing, developing, and sustaining an educated nation and in helping students to achieve their expectations for a better future. Further, they view effective teaching as one of the key components of a successful education system. Concerning the concept of teaching, Nelson and Hammerman, (1996) indicate that “Teaching as a general practice is based on the assumption that knowledge is constructed, dynamic, and conditional” (p. 8). Nelson and Hammerman indicate that teaching is not a politically neutral activity, but may be driven by the teacher’s ideology of teaching. In addition, teaching is viewed as a moral activity by Bangladeshi citizens (Fenstermacher, 1990), and an intellectually and morally complex work (Ball & Wilson, 1996; Lampert, 1985). Teachers are expected to share their love of learning with students day after day by helping students to find direction along the path toward achieving their learning goals.

Every generation of Bangladeshi students has followed their teachers as role models of that generation (Ball & Wilson, 1996). They learned behaviors, attitudes,
expressions, and ideas about being a productive citizen from their teachers. Further, teachers are expected to help students create and find their moral values, as well as discover their understanding of what is right and wrong, honest and dishonest, what should or should not be, how to lead and practice life, and what type of environment is needed for the growth of future generations (Lumpkin, 2008). Further, Lumpkin indicates that teachers help students explore the questions of society and the socio-cultural demands of life.

The people of Bangladesh believe that from the beginning of their formal schooling through to higher education, students are expected to depend on their teachers in the learning process, listen to their teachers, and they are influenced by their teachers. In Bangladesh, the view appears widespread that students are unsure about what they want in life and they are open to new ideas and concepts from the teachers for the most part (Lumkin, 2008). In other words, when students enter formal elementary education through to higher education, parents and teachers are generally seen as their primary source for learning. Accordingly, the people of Bangladesh expect teachers to teach students what they need for their intellectual, moral and spiritual growth. Teachers are expected to focus on their professional activities, including helping their students learn, the teaching activities, effective classroom management practices, as well as reflective practices that are the center of the learning environment (Gurney, 2007). Further, Day (1999a) argues that "Teaching is more than a craft", suggesting that it is an "educational science and a pedagogical art" (p. 22). Day (1999b) also suggests a model for reflective professionalism that includes "learning, participation, collaboration, co-operation, and activism" (p. 228), which, he notes, are ideals that effective teachers should keep as
touchstones for their practice. In Bangladesh, however, many of the teachers, especially university teachers, are deeply engaged in national partisan politics and they spend their time researching the political agenda, or supporting the agenda, of their preferred political party (Masum, 2008).

**The Research Problem**

In Bangladesh, most of the teachers who work in formal education institutions, especially universities, engage in national partisan politics (Masum, 2008). They participate in political meetings and forums. They openly express their political views and show their active support for particular parties. Four major political parties exist in Bangladesh, and they are the Bangladesh Awami League (BAL), Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Bangladesh Jatio Party (BJP), and Jamayati Islam Bangladesh (JIB) (Alam, Rabby, Boon, Khan, & Hoque, 2011). Teachers are proud to show their support for particular political parties in the country. The problem that was explored in this study was the way the act of teacher engagement in national partisan politics influenced their classroom professional practice.

In addition, a core problem that university teachers in Bangladesh face relates to their continuous use of traditional teaching methods, like a heavy reliance on lectures, as well as the use of dated teaching resources (Rabbani & Chowdhury, 2014). This problem is partly due to teacher’s limited engagement in academic research as well as the limited time they devote on their professional activities (Monem & Baniamin, 2010). Monem and Baniamin indicate that most university teachers in the country do not utilize their time and professional abilities to develop teaching materials as well as engage in academic
research because of inadequate opportunities for professional development. As Monem and Baniamin put it, these teachers often privilege the party leader's patronage, and they appear to be driven by personal motives and choices in their work as teachers, rather than by the ethos of their profession. By conducting this research, I hope to explore the potential implications of teacher participation in partisan politics and activism in the classroom, and the ways such participation and activism might influence their classroom professional practice.

The Purpose of the Study

Bangladesh is a small country. Its land area 51,703 sq. mi (133,911 sq. km) and population 166,280,712 (2014 est.), which indicates the country is densely populated. In addition, after 45 years of freedom, the government reports the literacy rate is below 57% (Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics, 2013). Further, the government is interested in increasing the rate of literacy and highlighting the importance of education publicly through the mass media to create awareness among parents and influence students to go to school. While the government's intention appears to be very good, the authorities do not appear willing to address the issue of teacher engagement in partisan politics. Rather, the government and opposition parties encourage teachers to engage in partisan politics (Nazrul, 2016).

As a result of the encouragement provided by the political parties, Bangladeshi teachers, especially those who work in higher education institutions, engage in partisan politics. These teachers express their political views in their classrooms, share their political ideology with students, and encourage their students to develop the ideology to
which they subscribe. Scholars like Nazrul (2016) and Pratt and Associates (1998) acknowledge that teaching is widely perceived to be apolitical.

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways teacher engagement in national partisan politics in two Bangladeshi higher educational institutions influenced the teaching of four university teachers, the learning of students, as well as the two educational institutions for which they worked. The study also examined the teachers’ perceptions of the benefits and challenges arising from their engagement in national partisan politics.

**Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was achieved by addressing the following research questions:

1. In what ways does teacher engagement in partisan politics influence classroom professional practices?
2. How does teacher engagement in partisan politics influence students learning?
3. What do teachers see as the benefits and challenges to them from their engagement in partisan politics?
4. How does teacher engagement in partisan politics influence the institutions for which they work?

While the key focus of the study is exploring teacher engagement in partisan politics in Bangladesh, some discussion of their perspectives on teaching in higher education was viewed as critical as that discussion would help to place their views about their engagement in partisan politics in a broader institutional context. The thinking was
that understanding the participants’ perspectives on teaching, including, for example, what they saw as the key purpose and goals of teaching, their teaching philosophy as well as their teaching values and beliefs, would help us to better understand their views on their engagement in partisan politics. In short, the assumption was made in the study that some relationship was likely to exist between the way the participants described their teaching perspectives and their engagement in partisan politics in the country.

As used in this study, partisan political engagement means being involved with, and actively supporting, a political party of one's choice. Norris (2000) states that the three components of the canonic definition of political engagement relate to political information, political participation, and political trust. Thus, partisan political engagement can take many different forms including being a member of a political party, following the ideology of the party and its leader, contributing money to support the party, working or volunteering on party campaigns, attending party meetings and events as well as supporting the party's agenda. Further, partisan political engagement is intended to influence political action through frequent discussion of partisan politics with others, including in the case of this study, students; trying to convince others to join one's party, as well as displaying party badges or stickers. Partisan political engagement may also include actions teachers might take to influence the behavior of those empowered to make decisions in the party or in the government, as well as actions aimed at influencing decision-makers inside or outside the government by the application of political pressures. Partisan political engagement also includes the actions that teachers might take to influence government and non-government decision-makers through the mobilization of the public opinion. Thus, teachers engaged in partisan politics would be involved in
different forms of political action in support of their respective political parties (Alam et al., 2011; Monem & Baniamin, 2010).

Pratt and Associates (1998) have discussed five perspectives on teaching in adult and higher education. The first is the transmission perspective, which involves the effective delivery of content. Then, there is the apprenticeship perspective, which sees teaching as helping students’ model ways of being. The third perspective is developmental, which helps students cultivate ways of thinking, including developing critical thinking skills. There is also the nurturing perspective, which focuses on facilitating self-efficacy in students in the learning process. Finally, there is the social reform perspective, which focuses seeking a better society through teaching and education in general. In addition, Cranton (2001) presents four forms or kinds of good teaching. The first form is the ‘organized teacher’ who displays this quality in relationship to both content and process. There is also the caring teacher, who focuses on establishing a warm a friendly atmosphere in the classroom. The third kind of teacher is that of a practical teacher who works from real-world experiences and objects. Cranton states that the fourth kind of teacher is the creative teacher, who sees teaching as an opportunity to change things, to bring about improvements and to work with visions of the future.

Hare (1993) has also discussed some qualities and virtues of good teachers. He argues that teachers need not be confined to the public school domain, but that a teacher is anyone at any level of the education system who seeks to help others to learn or learn how to learn. Hare then offers an overview of what he sees as eight qualities of good teachers. These qualities are humility, courage, impartiality, open-mindedness, empathy,
enthusiasm, judgment, and imagination. Hare says little about subject-matter competency because he takes it for granted that sound and relevant knowledge is a presupposition of good teaching. In addition, he makes clear that his list of good teacher qualities should not be viewed as complete or perfect as there may be several qualities

**Researcher Position**

My personal and work experience as a university teacher in Bangladesh generated my interest in the study about the engagement by university teachers in partisan politics in the country. I was born and raised in Bangladesh. I witnessed most of my 62 colleagues engage in partisan politics. They participated in political meetings and shared their views and partisan political ideologies with their students in the classroom. My impression was that partly because of their engagement in partisan politics, the teachers could not complete their course syllabi in time for the national final exams. Because parents consider their children’s education an investment for their old age, those of them who could afford the funds resorted to private tuition for their children to help them prepare for the exams. Luckily for me, although my parents could not afford private tuition, I was able to successfully complete my studies in 2004 with graduate degree in Business Administration. I picked up a job as a university teacher following graduation and worked for about seven years in that position.

Throughout my several years of teaching in Bangladesh, I focused almost exclusively on my performance and responsibilities as a teacher, and partly because of that, I received positive feedback from students, parents, and several of my colleagues. At the same time, I witnessed, to my utter dismay, several of my colleagues openly engaged
in partisan politics. They acquired and disseminated relevant political information about
their parties to students, participated in partisan activities on campus and leveraged some
benefits from their respective party leaders and elders. I could not help but wonder about
the possible implications of their engagement in partisan politics for their professional
role and responsibilities as teachers.

In 2012, I acquired admission as a graduate student in the Human Resource
Development (HRD) at the University of Regina. My role as a graduate student has
provided me an opportunity to explore the issue of teacher engagement in partisan
politics in Bangladesh through research. As a graduate student, I have often wondered if
the development of a code of ethics for teachers in Bangladesh would help address the
issue of their engagement in partisan politics. I see the development of such a code as the
protection of students from any academic harm that might be inflicted on them by
teachers who might be engaged in partisan politics. In addition, a code of ethics might
provide a moral framework to guide teaching and it might demonstrate a commitment to
ethically responsible practice.

As an HRD student, I am well aware the field has been traditionally defined in the
context of developing work-based knowledge, expertise, production, and satisfaction for
individual, the work team, the organization or the work process. However, I agree with
scholars like McLean (2001) who have called for broadening the scope of HRD practice
from organizations to the broader community or society, an approach that in the past was
labelled development and economic planning in especially developing countries, like
Bangladesh. It is in this context that I see the work of teachers as a key component of
human resource development. For a country, like Bangladesh, with limited natural
resources, human resources become a primary resource and the teacher’s role in developing them becomes critical. Accordingly, I believe the engagement by teachers in partisan politics is likely to seriously undermine the successful and efficient performance of this very important role.

As already noted, I share the views of authors who argue that teachers play a critically important role and responsibility in developing a nation’s human resources (Galbraith, 2004; McLean, 2001; Pratt and Associates, 1998). Partly because of their role and responsibilities in the education system of any country, teachers constitute a key block in the social and economic development of a nation, such as Bangladesh. I strongly believe that teachers have a right to support a political party of their choice; however, Alam et al. (2011) argue that engagement in partisan politics by teachers is likely to have serious adverse implications for their professional role and responsibilities as well as the nation’s education system.

Pratt and Associates (1998) contend that teaching is widely perceived as a "set of generic skills or techniques to be mastered" (p. 16). They contend this view presupposes a split between content, which reflects the teacher's expertise, and the process of transmitting that content, a process that appears as a "politically neutral, skilled performance" (p. 16). This was the view of teaching to which my colleagues and I subscribed as university teachers when I was in Bangladesh, and it is likely to be the view they subscribe to today. However, because of my studies as a graduate student at the University of Regina, I have come to realize that this perspective on teaching might be flawed because it presupposes that teaching is politically neutral. I believe that one’s beliefs about teaching, including one’s role and responsibilities as a teacher, is likely to
guide one’s perspectives on the process. In short, I agree with scholars who view teaching as political (Pratt and Associates, 1998; Galbraith, 2004; Cranton, 2001, Hare, 1993).

The people of Bangladesh consider teaching an honorable and noble profession, a view to which I continue to subscribe. As Lumpkin (2008) put it, teachers are the makers of a nation, given the crucial role they play in the intellectual, moral, spiritual, and physical development of their students. In addition, Bangladeshi nationals expect teachers to serve as role models for their students. Further, alongside the performance of their professional role and responsibilities, teachers are expected to perform parental roles for their students. The expectation is that teachers will prepare their students for a better tomorrow. Thus, because of their professional duties and responsibilities not only to their students but to society at large, I believe teachers carry a special status, respect and honor in Bangladesh, and maybe throughout the world.

I see seeking knowledge development as one of the prime duties of a student. In addition, I believe that students are influenced by the engagement of their teachers in partisan politics. They may feel that if they support the party their teacher supports, the teacher will like them. Thus, by supporting a political party, students may believe they will be appointed to leadership roles for their parties at their institutions, which will likely grant them access to power, and with that money, honor, and other rewards. This is probably another reason why students engage in partisan politics instead of focusing on their studies. Sometimes, teachers and students support different political parties, which might lead to potential friction between them. In addition, student supporting different parties form political groups on campus, and these groups fight each other to show which party has greater influence and power on campus. As Alam, Rabby, Boon, Khan and
Hoque (2011) put it, one result of such fighting is that students are killed, institutions are closed, and student studies are put in jeopardy. I do agree with Masum (2008) that teacher engagement in national partisan politics is likely to have serious implications for the performance of their professional duties and responsibilities as well as student learning.

I believe that students have a right to an education to enhance their intellectual, moral, spiritual and physical development; however, that right is likely to be undermined by teacher and student engagement in partisan politics. As well, I do believe that student engagement in partisan politics is likely to create divisions among them based on party loyalty. Further, I agree with scholars who argue that the development of a society, like Bangladesh, depends on an educated population. I see education is a key strategy in the development of a nation; however, as Monem and Baniamin (2010) indicate, teacher and student engagement in partisan politics appear to be a key factor in the erosion of the quality of education in Bangladesh.

Significance of the Research

The study was significant in that it contributed to the understanding of the implications of teacher engagement in national partisan politics in higher education institutions in Bangladesh. Such understanding is most important for the two Bangladeshi universities at which the study was conducted, as there is very limited research available that examines the ways teacher engagement in national politics influences their classroom professional practices in higher education institutions in the country. It was anticipated that the study would be a useful contribution to the body of research on the implications
of teacher engagement in national partisan politics in university settings. In addition, the findings of the study and the recommendations offered should directly benefit the administrations at both universities in their attempt to fully understand the implications of teacher engagement in national partisan politics for their respective institutions. The study should also be of interest to teachers engaged in national partisan politics at the two universities, as they might find the insights useful in adapting their instructional strategies to enhance learning by their students. Further, the study participants and other university teachers in Bangladesh might use the insights gained from the study to raise critical questions about themselves, the structure of the university system as well as other factors that might be influencing the educational system in the country. In addition, students at the two universities might benefit from the findings of the study in their continuous attempt to maximize their learning at the institutions. The study might also be of value to university administrators, instructors, and students in universities elsewhere. For example, universities may use the participants' insights from the study to identify some underlying issues associated with teacher engagement in national partisan politics to inform their practice and policy. Teachers might use the findings of the study to enhance their instructional practices and students could use the findings of the study to develop strategies that might enhance students’ learning ability.

Limitations and Delimitations of this Study

The most significant limitation of the study was the lack of generalizability of the findings. While the findings represent the views of the research participants, the generalizability of the results should be assessed in terms of reader or user generalizability (Merriam, 1988). In other words, the utility of the findings of the study
should be best determined by those who wish to apply the findings to their own situations. In addition, the study focused on understanding the experiences and perceptions of only university teachers who were engaged in national partisan politics in Bangladesh. Thus, the views of other university stakeholder groups, such as administrators, students, parents, and policy makers were not incorporated into the study. Further, the study was based on the experiences and perceptions of four teachers at two universities in Bangladesh, who volunteered to participate in the research. Therefore, the study sample was not representative of university teachers engaged in national partisan politics across the country. Further, data for the study were collected through one-on-one in-depth interviews only; there was no extensive review and use of the participants' employment documents and records partly because of issues of confidentiality. The research design depended solely on qualitative data gathering methods; there was no quantitative survey to add to the data collected through interviews. Finally, the researcher's personal experience, and background as a Bangladeshi national, his work as a teacher, as well as his familiarity with the issues relating to teacher engagement in national partisan politics likely influenced the interpretation of the research data.

The findings of this study were delimited by the researcher's decision to recruit two participants only (one male and one female) from each of two universities in Bangladesh. The decision was driven largely by budget constraints for fieldwork.

**Structure of the Thesis**

The remaining chapters of this thesis have been organized as follows. The literature review for the study is presented in Chapter 2. It also discusses the structure of
the Bangladeshi education system, as well as implications of teacher engagement in partisan politics for the education system, student learning, teachers' professional classroom practices as well as the country's development. Chapter 3 discusses the research design for the study. It describes the rational for the research design adopted for the study, the research approach, data sources, data collection techniques, sampling techniques as well as data analysis and interpretation procedures. The chapter also discusses the research ethics process as well as issues relating to the credibility, trustworthiness, and transferability of the findings of the study. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. The process is guided by the research purpose as well as the research questions. Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the study as well as the recommendations arising from the study. The chapter concludes with some suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter presents the literature reviewed for the study. It discusses selected literature on the perspectives on teaching and teacher, as well as perspectives on engagement, including teacher engagement in partisan politics, and the implications of teacher engagement in partisan politics for the students, education quality, and the nations’ growth and development. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the structure of the Bangladesh education system.

Perspectives on Teaching

While the key focus of the study is exploring teacher engagement in partisan politics in Bangladesh, some discussion of their perspectives on teaching in higher education was viewed as critical as that discussion would help to place their views about their engagement in partisan politics in a broader institutional context. The thinking was that understanding the participants’ perspectives on teaching, including, for example, what they saw as the key purpose and goals of teaching, their teaching philosophy as well as their teaching values and beliefs, would help us to better understand their views on their engagement in partisan politics. In short, the assumption was made in the study that some relationship was likely to exist between the way the participants described their teaching perspectives and their engagement in partisan politics in the country.

Galbraith (2004) suggests the adult and higher education literature has discussed some desirable qualities, skills and competencies of effective teachers. In addition to
being technically proficient in the subject-matter, teachers are expected to possess personality characteristics as well as interpersonal skills and positive behaviours. Further, Cranton (2001) presents four forms or kinds of good teaching. The first form is the ‘organized teacher’ who displays this quality in relationship to both content and process. This kind of teacher is grounded in the behavioural psychological beliefs and practices. There is also a caring teacher, who focuses on establishing a warm and friendly atmosphere in the classroom by providing support, encouraging good relationships among students, and making sure the needs and feelings of each student are considered. The origins of this form of teacher comes from the humanistic thought and practice. A third kind of teacher is that of a practical teacher who works from real-world experiences and objects, and is very pragmatic toward the resolution of real-life problems. The practical teacher’s belief and practices come from instrumentalist philosophy, which today is popularly known and grounded in experiential learning movement. Cranton (2002) states that the fourth kind of teacher is the creative teacher, who sees teaching as an opportunity to change things, to bring about improvements and to work with visions of the future. The creative teacher is enthusiastic, intense, and inspirational and brings these qualities to the classroom to excite and encourage learners to tackle new and difficult tasks. The creative teacher’s beliefs and practices are focused on cognitive development and critical thinking. It is obvious that there are many ways to be a good teacher, which are grounded in various perspectives, schools of thought in education and psychology.

Further, Hare (1993) has also discussed some qualities and virtues of good teachers. He argues that teachers need not be confined to the public school domain, but that a teacher is anyone at any level of the education system who seeks to help others to
learn or learn how to learn. Hare then offers an overview of what he sees as eight qualities of good teachers. These qualities are humility, courage, impartiality, open-mindedness, empathy, enthusiasm, judgment, and imagination. Hare says little about subject-matter competency because he takes it for granted that sound and relevant knowledge is a presupposition of good teaching. In addition, he makes clear that his list of good teacher qualities should not be viewed as complete or perfect as there may be several qualities.

Hare makes clear that he does not see the influence of these eight qualities and virtues as confined to the teacher's obvious or direct teaching activities. Rather, these qualities are, in his judgment, crucial because they are critical to the education enterprise itself. Thus, “we need teachers who can help to foster these qualities through the very way they interact with their students” (p. 24). Hare (1993) notes the qualities “are both desirable in themselves, as revealing aspects of the teacher as an educated individual and admirable person, and also effective in creating the conditions and context which help promote the goals of teaching and education” (p. 161). He cautions that although we should be preoccupied with techniques, skills, rules, routines and measurable results in teaching, we should not lose sight of that richer conception of teaching and education reflected in the qualities and virtues he identifies. We must be less concerned with their allegiance to particular methods and more concerned about our grasp of the principles which lie behind those methods.

Pratt and Associates (1998) argue that teaching is often presented as a "set of generic skills or techniques to be mastered" (p. 16), which implies that the teaching process is “politically neutral” and involves skilled performance” on the part of the
However, the authors argue this perspective on teaching is flawed because it presupposes that teaching is politically neutral, which is not the case. They note that one’s beliefs about teaching, including one’s role and responsibilities as a teacher, is likely to guide one’s perspectives on the process. The authors discuss five teaching perspectives in adult and higher education, which are transmission, apprenticeship, developmental, nurturing and social reform.

The transmission perspective sees the teacher as an effective and efficient deliverer of content. The apprenticeship perspective sees the teachers as the living embodiment of the content and teaching as the "process of enculturating learners into specific communities [of practice]" (p.43). The developmental perspective reflects the traditional liberal arts orientation with its emphasis on in-depth understanding of subject matter and the fostering of critical thinking skills. With the nurturing perspective, the learner’s well-being as a person, as much as a learner, is seen as important in the teaching process. Finally, with the social reform perspective, the focus of teaching is the betterment of society.

Pratt and Associates (1998) note that definitions of teaching include guiding, facilitating, telling, showing, planning, helping, and directing; effective transmission of information; socialising learners into a community of practice as well as arrangement of conditions that foster learning. In addition, there are scholars who contend that teaching includes sharing knowledge challenging the way students perceive and the activities required to inspire them. Teaching involves facilitating learning to develop students’ understanding and ways of interpreting the world (Samuelowic & Bain, 1992). Teaching itself has traditionally had a number of different meanings. In studies with university
teachers, Samuelowicz and Bain (1992, 2001) identify several meanings of teaching: imparting information, transmitting knowledge, facilitating learning, changing students’ conceptions, supporting student learning, negotiating meaning, and encouraging knowledge creation. Teaching is not a simple profession to describe.

The first three meanings of the definition of teaching offered by Samuelowicz and Bain (1992, 2001) suggest the teacher is seen as central to the learning process. Teachers make decisions about when and how they facilitate their students’ teaching and learning. The other conceptions suggest teaching is seen as changing the ways students perceive knowledge and use that knowledge. In other words, teaching involves the facilitating of learning to develop students and the ways they interpret the world (Samuelowicz & Bain, 1992).

Ball and Forzani (2009) see “teaching as a method that contributes to student success. Teaching is a way to engage students in the classroom as active participants” (p. 501). Teaching is like no other profession, since it is a lifelong activity. The action of teaching is never ending, as “teaching is a universal human activity” (Ball & Forzani, 2009, p.500). Teaching is a commitment to the students. It is revealed in the way a teacher teaches (actions), a teacher trying to accomplish (intentions), and statements of why those actions and intentions are reasonable, important, or justifiable (beliefs) for the learners. Commitment is pivotal for understanding the perspectives on teaching (Pratt and Associates, 1998).

Some scholars argue that teachers are one of the core components of educational institutions (Lumpkin, 2008). They help students to be successful in their studies (Westwood, 1996), and their behaviour in classrooms is positively related to student
achievement (Creemers, 1994). Lumpkin (2008) indicates that teachers teach students to learn the difference between rights or wrong, what is correct or incorrect, as well as what students should do or not do. Teachers can help students learn the importance of distinguishing between rights from wrong by personally valuing what is right and acting based on knowing and valuing. As Stroll and Beller (1998) emphasized:

Moral reasoning does not promise behavioral change, but it does promise individual soul searching and reflection on personal beliefs, values, and principles. Without this process, cognitive moral growth will not increase, behavior change will never occur; and the potential for consistent moral action becomes little more than a hit or miss propositions. (p. 24)

Stoll and Beller appear be suggesting that students’ intellectual development should go hand in hand with their moral and spiritual development. In addition, Hansen (2001) indicates teachers’ moral character and good behaviour are important because they are role models for their students. A person of wisdom differentiates right from wrong, is honest, trustworthy, fair, respectful, and responsible; he or she admits and learns from mistakes, and commits to living according to these principles (Lumpkin, 2008). Lickona (1991) suggests that character is a universal phenomenon descriptive of people who possess the courage and conviction to live by moral virtues. Character encompasses ethical decision making and good and bad influences, which can guide a person’s behaviour. Lumpkin and Lickona indicate the people of Bangladesh do expect teachers to demonstrate these moral and ethical qualities and characteristics in the performance of their professional duties and responsibilities.

Bangladeshi society expects a teacher to be a good role model. This universal quality makes teachers different from other professionals, such as doctors, police officers, and bankers, as all teachers are expected to have such qualities (Hoque, Alam &
Abdullah, 2011). Teachers should be well qualified and knowledgeable about effective teaching methods and they should have sufficient knowledge about the subject matter to teach confidently. Only then will students benefit from the teaching. Teachers need to utilize time to prepare themselves as good readers and researchers. Because a teacher has a responsibility to offer inclusive knowledge and guide students accordingly, he or she must prepare a lesson that meets the needs of the student. Lasley and Siedentop (2006) state that it is “the prepared teacher who make a difference in the classroom” (p. 14). Further, Lasley and Siedentop indicate that classroom presentation materials and identification of students needs are the main elements of an effective teaching process. According to the authors, class preparation involves the use of additional knowledgeable that may not be available in course books, but requires additional research, study, and specific knowledge.

For a class to be effective, the teacher must prepare an engaging lesson plan, and facilitate the learning process. To accomplish this, the teacher needs to prepare prior to going to the classroom. This preparation will enable the teacher to assist students with their studies. In Bangladesh however, lesson preparation is believed to involve not only issues of subject matter, but also the incorporation of moral and ethical issues into the planning. As Campbell (2008) put it:

The moral dimensions of teaching and the ethical nature of the teachers’ professional responsibilities often seem to be taken for granted in both the academy and the practitioner communities, overshadowed by cognitive theories connected to teaching and learning, effective approaches to measurement and assessment, classroom management strategies, and other aspects that, while naturally important, are rarely viewed from a moral or ethical perspective. (p. 358)
In Bangladesh, the moral or ethical perspective of university teachers and their teaching ideology effects students’ motivation in the classroom and study. According to Lumpkin (2008), Bangladeshi students learn moral characteristics from their teachers:

A teacher’s integrity, or lack thereof, is observed by students. Students evaluate the character of their teachers based on how they are treated and taught. Students know when their teachers are committed to their psychomotor, cognitive, and affective learning, and they can tell when their teachers genuinely care about them and are trustworthy, honest, and respectful. (p. 47)

Teachers should be aware of these moral characteristics each time they prepare to teach their students. As Sherman (2004) states, “Teacher educators should be creating opportunities to situate moral dispositions as central aspects of teacher preparation and assessment. Moreover, they cannot point to the standards movement as a reason for not doing so” (p. 115). That is why I believe that moral issues that penetrate human life are of great importance as part of the irreplaceable intellectual development of youth.

Scholars have also discussed some perspectives on effective teacher and teaching. The meaning of ‘effective teacher’ varies based on the perspectives of students, parents, and educational researchers. In research literature, synonyms for the effective teacher include the following: good, ideal, best, competent, expert, dutiful, careful, respected, analytical, reflective, satisfying, and diversity of responses (Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001). An effective teacher is one who plans their class lesson well, prepares the learning materials, arranges the learning environment, conducts proper lesson instructions, ask questions, and use scientific instructional themes and materials (Cranton, 2001). The effective teacher touches the lives of students. They can help at all levels of student learning, personally valuing what is right, and acting based on knowing and valuing.
Anderson indicates effective teaching is the result of three components: ability, personality and knowledge (Anderson, 2009). In addition, Putnam (1896) identifies three components of teacher efficiency: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and authentic personality. Holt (1964) indicates that learning is enhanced by the teachers’ knowledge, enthusiasm and responsibility towards creating a warm class climate that enhances “the students’ desire to learn and to accept the challenges of thinking and enquiring into all that is offered by the teacher” (p. 10).

Further, Clark (1993) states, “Obviously, the definition [of an effective teacher] involves someone who can increase student knowledge, but it goes beyond this in defining an effective teacher” (p. 10). Clark points out that “One area that was avoided by most authors was the idea of using student achievement as a measure of effectiveness” (p. 12). Clark also suggests the problem is determining how best to measure student achievement. Swank, Taylor, Brady, and Frieberg (1989) state that teacher effectiveness is based on teacher actions. For them, effective teaching meant increasing academic questions and decreasing lecture and ineffective practices, such as negative feedback and low-level questions. Millon (1987) states that the meaning of ‘effectiveness’ relates to the lesson design and the methods of delivery. Wenglinsky (2000) believed that the classroom practices are important to learning. In his research, Wenglinsky found that what happens in the classroom is critical and how a teacher teaches is important. Classroom practices that promote higher order thinking and active participation are most successful.

Good and Brophy (1994) describe effective teachers as teachers who: 1) make maximum use of instructional time, 2) present material in a way to meet students’ needs,
3) monitor programs and progress, 4) plan opportunities for students to apply learning, 5) reteach when needed, and 6) maintain high, but realistic goals. According to Gibbs (2002), “Teachers need to be able to survive the demands, threats and challenges within the diverse circumstances of teaching” (p. 12). Gidds also states that an effective teacher needs the capacity to be persistent, flexible and innovative on new teaching approaches and be prepared in the case of failure. Stronge, Tucker and Hindman (2004) indicate the effective teacher has a psychological influence on the students, having a strong influence on their achievement. According to Killen (2006), the effective teacher is the one who has a clear idea about teaching objectives and goals of teaching. A teacher can provide the students’ query with the answer, which can be effective only if the main objective is simply to compare and analyse different results. Gurney (2007) suggests that to be an effective teacher there should be an interaction among different factors, including teacher knowledge, enthusiasm, and inspiration for learning. Another factor is effective teachers encourage students with activities in learning, as well as having engaging feedback.

Finally, to create a positive learning environment in the classroom and a strong relationship with the students, effective teachers need to improve themselves in respect to knowledge and research. Therefore, effective teachers are expected to know how to manage the classroom and the students in terms of discipline, interaction between teacher and students as well as between students and students, how to give instructions, and how to access and evaluate assignments, papers, and classroom activities. They require time for classroom preparation, focus on the students’ needs, concentrate on academic research, pay attention to managing and monitoring student learning, and exhibit a strong
commitment to the students, which requires a strong engagement in professional activities.

**Perspectives on Engagement, including Teacher Political Engagement and its Implications**

The verb ‘to engage” has a variety of meanings, ranging from straightforward and transactional (to hire someone to do a job), to exciting and mysterious (to fascinate and charm), (Robinson et al., 2004). According to Macey and Schneider, (2008), engagement has been used to refer to a psychological state (e.g., involvement, commitment, attachment, mood), performance construct (e.g., either effort or observable behaviour, including pro-social and organisational citizenship behaviour), disposition (e.g. positive affect), or some combination of the above (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Robinson et al. (2004) state, “...engagement contains many of the elements of both commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) but it is by no means a perfect match with either concept. In addition, neither commitment nor OCB reflect sufficiently two aspects of engagement-its two-way nature, and the extent to which engaged employees are expected to have an element of business awareness” (p. 2). Saks (2006) argues that organizational commitment also differs from engagement in that it refers to a person’s attitude and attachment towards their organization. At the same time, it could be argued that engagement is not merely an attitude; it is the degree to which an individual is attentive to their work and absorbed in the performance of their role. In addition, while organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB) involves voluntary behaviours that can help co-workers and the organization, the focus of engagement is one’s formal role performance rather than purely extra-role and voluntary behaviour.
Wellins and Concelman (2004) call employee engagement “the illusive force that motivates employees to higher levels of performance” (p. 1). Engagement is considered relatively stable, with some fluctuations over time, reflecting both trait-like and state-like components (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). Engagement reflects motivational forces (e.g., intrinsic reasons for behaviour), but is conceptually distinct from these forces and from the ensuing behaviours (Schanfeli & Salanova, 2011). Perrin’s Global Workforce study (2003) mentions “employee’s willingness and ability to help their company succeed, largely by providing discretionary effort on a sustainable basis” (p. 3). Engagement has been shown to be related to self-efficacy; that is, beliefs in the capabilities to accomplish tasks in particular domains.

With regard to the perspectives on teacher engagement, some scholars have argued that in educational institution settings, teachers’ self-efficacy has been shown to be a potential motivational force associated with commitment to teaching and to quitting intention (Klassen & Chiu, 2011). The work of teaching involves a level of demand for social engagement which is devoted to establishing strong relationships— that is rarely found in other professions (Pianta et al., 2012; Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011). However, employees in other organizations also engage socially with their colleagues but they may not directly involved in the society. In fact, the teaching profession uniquely emphasises energy spent on the establishment of long-term, meaningful connections with the learners (students) of the educational institutions. In addition, teacher and student relationships may play a primary role in fostering student engagement and positive students outcomes (Davis, 2003; Klassen, Perry, & Frenzel, 2012; Pianta et al., 2012; Wang, 2009). However, measuring teachers’ work engagement without capturing social
engagement with students ignores one of the most important aspects of teacher engagement.

Further, teacher engagement involves teachers’ working with all their energy and experience to help students and the institution succeed. Teacher engagement is influenced by many factors, such as favorable workplace culture and academic research environment, strong organizational communication and managerial styles, trust and respect, leadership, and institutional reputation. As noted in Chapter 1, partisan political engagement by Bangladeshi teachers refers to their active involvement with, and support of, a political party of their choice. Political engagement becomes the art of engaging teachers in authentic and recognized connections to their party’s strategy, goals and objectives. Norris (2000) states that the three components of the canonic definition of political engagement relate to political information, political participation, and political trust.

According to Norris (2000) political information refers to the major types of sources that teachers use to keep up with their partisan political world. In today’s high media environment, it is very likely that teachers engaged in partisan politics will develop a very rich partisan political information repertoire that involve the use of traditional and digital ways of searching for partisan political information. The ability to have a rich partisan political and information repertoire can lead to higher partisan knowledge, efficacy, and participation. As Norris indicates, the fact that these teachers are likely to have a rich information repertoire will likely lead to higher political participation repertoires. Political participation refers to all the voluntary activities by teachers intended to directly or indirectly influence the political choices of their respective parties.
As already indicated, teachers with a rich information repertoire are likely to be actively engaged in partisan politics. Political trust and trustworthiness are relational concepts. Trust and trustworthiness relate to the willingness of the teachers and the political parties to act in the interest of each other. Norris relates that the expectation is both the teachers and the parties will care for each other and they will not betray the trust of each other.

According to Ahmmed (2013), partisan political engagement may take many different forms including being a member of a political party, following the ideology of the party and its leader, contributing money to support the party, working or volunteering on party campaigns, attending party meetings and events as well as supporting the party’s agenda. Further, partisan political engagement is intended to influence political action through frequent discussion of partisan politics with others, including in the case of this study, students; trying to convince others to join one’s party, as well as displaying party badges or stickers. Ahmmed also indicates partisan political engagement may include actions teachers might take to influence the behaviour of those empowered to make decisions inside or outside the government, as well as actions aimed at influencing decision-makers inside or outside the government by the application of political pressures. Political engagement may also include the actions that teachers might take to influence government and non-government decision-makers through the mobilization of the public opinion. Thus, Ahmmed concludes that teachers who are engaged in partisan politics would be involved in different forms of political action in support of their respective political parties.
Teacher Engagement in National Partisan Politics: Perspective on Bangladesh

Teacher engagement in national partisan politics is a common phenomenon in Bangladesh (Masum, 2008). Most of the teachers engage in partisan politics and most of the educational institutions, including universities, are affected by political party influences. While this is commonplace in other countries such as Canada, Masum indicates that since 1971, the common scenario in Bangladesh has been that government institutions are viewed as political extensions of political parties and they are supported from party funds, and not from public funds. In addition, by using political power, the government interferes with institutional functions, such as employee recruitment and academic decision-making, which makes these institutions extensions of the political party office. This practice applies to institutions established by the government as well as private individuals. In Bangladesh, the political party leaders, including ruling party leaders and government authorities, support the establishment and functioning of party agencies on campuses of educational institutions. They support the recruitment of teachers and other members of staff from political party supporters (Ahmmed, 2013).

Education at the university level is guided by the 1973 Public University Ordinance (PUO) (Alam, Haque, & Siddiqui, 2007). The Public University Ordinance dictates the selection procedures for the four statutory bodies of the university, which are, senate, syndicate, academic and finance councils. The structure is the governance framework for all universities in Bangladesh. This ordinance is sometimes seen as the root cause of much of the politicization of the public university campuses (Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2004). Since 1973, this ordinance has led to the use of recruitment and promotion of university administration personnel and teachers, as well as the allocation
of other benefits to them as a partisan political tool. In addition, Alam et al. indicate that the rules of the ordinance appear to have increased the politicization of the university administration.

In addition, political favouritism has affected the quality of education in public universities because faculty recruitment appears to be driven primarily by partisan political loyalty rather than academic qualification. These rules and regulations have affected the teaching, motivation and proper guidance of the students. It is therefore likely that the ordinance has affected effective teaching, student motivation, student attention in the classroom as well as the overall academic environment (Alam, Haque & Siddiqui, 2007). As Chowdhury (1997) indicates, teachers influence students to become involved in national partisan politics, and leading political parties have often used their student fronts to achieve political objectives. Power struggles among conflicting political parties degrade the academic environment of public universities (Chowdhury, 1997). Khaleduzzaman (2014) adds that partly because of partisan politics, Bangladeshi higher education is threatened, and the target of higher education output is not being achieved. He notes that the practical situation is that universities appear to be failing to do their duties in terms of providing quality education to Bangladeshi students.

Partly because of the situation in Bangladesh, Ahmed (2013) suggest that universities should be free from partisan political activities but not necessarily from normal political activities. As he put it, “The University should be free from partisan political interference. Student politics must be constructive and students’ welfare oriented. On the other hand, teachers should avoid the servile of political parties” (p. 8).
The Bangladeshi people believe that teachers are the main resource for building the future generation (Ahmmed, 2013). Teachers are a core part of the education process. Although they are a fundamental part of the education system, there appears to be a weakness in their recruitment and placement in higher educational institutions. Khan (2010) found that in Bangladesh, higher education authorities regardless of the political regime, prefer to recruit ‘voters’ as teachers, instead of recruiting 'qualified teachers', which adversely affects the quality of teaching and higher education. Panday (2009a) investigated the recruitment of teachers in Rajshahi University. He found that “one candidate having four first classes (Secondary School Certificate examination- first class, Higher Secondary Certificate examination- first class, under graduate examination- first class and Graduate examination- first class) did not get selection even though five candidates having three first classes (any one level of examination-second class) managed to get selected” (as cited in Rabbani & Chowdhury, 2014, p. 85). It appears that competent qualified teachers are not recruited in higher education institutions partly because of they do not have the partisan political connection. I believe this issue makes the quality of education and the quality of students’ educational attainment in Bangladesh questionable. As Ahmmed (2013) put it:

Poor quality of teaching staff who fail to satisfy the students’ needs in both quantity and quality. Most of them lack specialized research and training on higher education. Moreover, due to the recruitment based on political consideration a good number of teachers have no scientific and update knowledge that assist them to change their teaching methods. (p. 4)

As a graduate student and Bangladeshi national, it seems to me that many of the issues affecting the quality of teaching and education in general in Bangladesh stems from the passage by the government of the Public University Ordinance in 1973. As mentioned
elsewhere in this thesis, the Public University Ordinance dictates the selection procedures for the four statutory bodies of the university, which are, senate, syndicate, academic and finance councils. However, the election to these bodies appear to be driven largely by political partisan loyalty, rather than qualification, which undermines the impartial, successful and efficient functioning of these bodies. The ordinance appears to be a major contributor to teacher engagement partisan politics on higher education campuses (Alam et al., 2007).

In addition, after successfully completing their studies, meritorious graduates often participate in the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examination for first class cadre base services. I believe this practice is unfortunate because quite a few of those meritorious students who have had outstanding results may be interested in joining the teaching profession (Nazrul, 2016). In addition, Nazrul relates that factors like low teacher remuneration and benefits, a devalued profession compared to other government office positions, unethical influences from outsiders, interrupted teaching professionalism by the political leaders, as well as mobility and a lack of proper evaluation in the professional field appear to be discouraging these meritorious graduates from seeking employment as teachers, lecturers or professors in education institutions in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, political leaders count on and try to use teachers as their political workers. Local leaders, central leaders, and government authorities use teachers to support their party’s views inside, as well as outside, the higher educational institutions, as that practice affects the teaching profession. Although the Bangladeshi government has been struggling to implement the findings of various education commissions and different reform projects since 1971, it appears as if little has been accomplished to date
(Alam, Haque, & Siddiqui (2007). As Alam et al. put it, despite the formation of ten education reform commissions, most of the commissions’ reports on teacher and education quality in Bangladesh are virtually the same. Initiatives to improve the quality of teachers and education in general have not been implemented because of the lack of clear direction and unity among educators and the political leaders.

Largely because of the lack of clear direction and unity among educators and the political leaders in Bangladesh, hundreds of thousands of children are denied access to quality education due to the lack of effective teaching, research and innovation, and a shortage of qualified and dedicated teachers with quality education, the Bangladeshi society is affected. The weak infrastructure means future creative engineers, medical doctors, scientist, professors and quality teachers are leaving the country to seek education in foreign universities. It is no doubt that the quality of teaching and the quality of educational output depends on the quality of teachers, as well as the quality of education. Alam et al. indicate that education is used to solve these problems, meet challenges, improve the lives of citizens and develop a strong economy. Some scholars have suggested that the government and all political party leaders should take the initiative to ensure that teachers would be free to focus on teaching and offered enough support to focus on their professional practice (Ahmmed, 2013, Alam, et al., 2007). For example, they indicate that teacher recruitment must be based on outstanding academic results, academic research, as well as quality teaching, and their classroom professional practices rather than on their partisan political engagement or political support. Moreover, Ahmmed maintains the Bangladeshi government needs to make sure that the Bangladeshi people have an equal opportunity to achieve higher education. He indicates
the educational system should be developed based on Bangladesh and world standards to ensure that Bangladeshi children acquire the knowledge and skills to be active global citizens.

**Implications of Teacher Engagement in National Partisan Politics for Students**

In Bangladesh, the perception is that students follow their teachers as most of the students have limited ability to identify what is good or bad. When public schools were established in the United States in the 18th and 19th centuries, one of their stated missions was to teach moral virtues (Mondale & Patton, 2001; Mulkey 1997). According to Lickona (1991), schools and teachers should educate students about character especially through teaching respect and responsibility. Teachers interact with students and it is vital for them to be role models of character in making professional judgements because students’ progress or regress morally based on the way teachers model their own behaviour (Hansen, 2001). The moral character of teachers plays a constructive role in shaping student morals. Inevitably, teachers’ moral behaviour is transmitted to their students. Such behaviour provides students with a potential opportunity to play a moral and exemplary role in the development of country (Campbell, 2008).

The people of Bangladesh believe that the activities of teachers influence their students. Teachers are expected to introduce and establish new paths for their students, and students are required to walk the path in following their teachers if they wish to succeed (Hansen, 2001). That is why teachers’ activities, attitudes, and behaviours in the classroom are significant. Ajzen (2005) states the attitudes of teachers influence their behavior in classrooms, even though on occasion, teachers do not practice the attitudes
they espouse (Argyris & Schon, 1978). Some teachers might have positive attitudes towards their teaching but they may not demonstrate these attitudes in their behaviours, which undermines their ability to effectively teach their classes. The behaviours of a teacher in classrooms determine how students will learn. Teachers’ knowledge of diverse learning needs influences their feelings and overall behaviours towards students (Ryan, 2009). If something happens, either positive or negative, it is reflected on their face, which affects the perceptions of the students. This will ultimately affect their work and classroom practice as well as students. Martinez and Martinez (1999) mention that positive teacher behaviours produce positive student outcomes as well as classroom lectures and student learning.

Teacher professional development should focus on improving teaching techniques and strategies, broadening subject knowledge, researching contemporary issues and gathering the latest information for creating responsibility and commitment to prepare their classroom lecture materials for students based on current trends and issues relating to education in the world. Teaching is a heavy and sensitive responsibility requiring teachers to instil in themselves the quality of dedication and being resourceful (Alam & Hoque, 2010; Alam et al., 2010). For this, teachers are required to engage in professional development activities, which will have a positive impact on their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, teaching practice, and student achievement (Hoque, Alam, & Abdullah, 2011).

Unfortunately however, by following their teachers as role models, Bangladeshi students are also involved in national partisan politics (Alam, Haque & Siddiqui, 2007). Students become conduits for partisan political views, not necessarily developed from
individual will. As a result, teacher and student engagement in partisan politics often creates political unrests on campuses that can affect both students and teachers. For the students, the impacts include disrupted studies, and examination performance. In addition, the different partisan political ideology and affiliation with the educational institutions result in frequent academic session jams (Hopper, 1998). Students have been unable to finish their academic sessions on time (Alam, Haque, & Siddiqui, 2007).

Further, government and opposition parties often use students to increase their power by inviting newly enrolled students to join party supporters on campuses. Sometimes students struggle and fight with each other to show their political strength and allegiance, which lead to student injuries and, in some cases, death on campuses. The result of this turmoil is the fostering of hostile academic environments on institutional campuses (Chowdhury, 1997).

**Implications of Teacher Engagement in National Partisan Politics for Education Quality**

In Bangladesh, only a handful of studies have been conducted that explore the influence of teacher engagement in national partisan politics on the overall education system. In general, studies have focused much more on issues that affect the quality of the Bangladesh education. For example, Andaleeb (2003) explored teacher quality, teaching method and content, peer quality, facilities and resources, the effectiveness of the administrations, campus politics, gender and year of graduation on the education system. He concluded that all these factors affect the quality of Bangladesh education. He argued that the quality of Bangladesh education depends on knowledgeable teachers and their engagement in the educational institutions as well as their professional development.
Teacher professional development should focus on improving teaching techniques and strategies, broadening subject knowledge, researching contemporary issues and gathering the latest information for creating responsibility and commitment to prepare their classroom lecture materials for students based on current trends and issues in education around the world. In addition, some studies have concluded that teaching is a heavy and sensitive responsibility requiring teachers to instill in themselves the quality of dedication and being resourceful (Alam & Hoque, 2010; Alam et al., 2010). For this to happen however, teachers should engage in professional development activities that will have a positive impact on their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, teaching practice, and student achievement (Hoque, Alam, & Abdullah 2011).

In addition, the report of an international workshop on the Development of Measurements for Higher Education Quality Assurance in Bangladesh (2007) concluded that to ensure educational quality, the focus of higher education should be on specific areas with specific parameters. The workshop report concluded the specific areas and parameters should include the purpose and objective, faculty, instruction, student service, library, laboratories, infrastructure and research culture (as cited by Rabbani & Chowdhury, 2014). Masum’s (2008) study indicated that public universities are dependent on limited government funding and they are unable to generate additional resources by raising tuition fees due to political constraints. In addition, they are unable to arrange the expansion of student facilities in libraries and research laboratories because of the availability of limited resources.

A few studies have explored the issue of teacher engagement in national partisan politics in Bangladesh. The Ministry of Education (MoE) in Bangladesh, which is the
apex policy-making body for education in the country, regulates and coordinates different plans and programs for higher education with the assistance of University Grand Commission (UGC), and the public university ordinance 1973 Act. This ordinance resulted in the transfer of accountability and quality assurance of public universities being mostly practiced to the Senate (the highest policy making body), Syndicate (the executive body headed by the Vice Chancellor), the Vice Chancellor, faculty Deans and other committees such as the Academic Council and Finance Committee. However final approval of all appointments to these bodies lies with the political party in power. These administrative arrangements appear to have increased the politicization of the university administrative structure, as well as teacher recruitment and promotion processes (Alam, Haque & Siddiqui, 2007). Alam, et al. also argue that:

According to the 1973 rules, political favoritism affects the quality of education in public universities because faculty selection was based on serving political goals and not qualification of the teachers. This resulted in grade inflation of graduates and continued political unrest among the teachers who encourage students to become involved in national politics through student politics. (p. 16)

In addition, Alam et al. (2007) contend that teacher engagement in national partisan politics affects their accountability to students and their institutions. If teachers are engaged in partisan politics, the priorities of their work with political parties are likely to hamper their professional responsibility as teachers or their academic research work.

Further, Alam et al. (2007) indicate that teacher engagement in partisan politics might contribute to the lengthening of session jams, hamper effective classroom teaching, such as the lack of appropriate and resourceful strategic lesson plans, inadequate student attention, affection, motivation, vision, as well as misguided students in terms of their future goal and ambition as well as poor quality education. Khaleduzzaman (2014)
indicates that teachers should remember that they are the makers of a nation, and so they should refrain from active engagement in partisan politics.

In addition, teacher engagement in partisan politics also affects several elements that hamper effective classroom teaching including the lack of appropriate lesson plans, inadequate attention on students’ needs, affection, motivation, vision, as well as misguided students in terms of their future goals and ambitions. Further, Khaleduzzaman (2014) contends that teacher and student engagement in national partisan politics in Bangladesh are inter-connected, and they affect each other. It seems teacher engagement in partisan politics interferes in their teaching performance and their professional duties and responsibilities. According to Khaleduzzaman, “Bangladesh urgently needs a united strong political commitment; otherwise there is no hope of achieving an appropriate higher education atmosphere” (p. 15).

To help make Bangladesh become an educated and prosperous nation, the government should avoid meddling in the affairs of educational institutions through partisan politics, especially higher education institutions (Ahmmed, 2013). Currently in Bangladesh when a political party is elected to power, the higher education curriculum is impacted, as the newly elected government is likely to enact changes to the curriculum (Ahmmed; Alam et.al., 2011). These authors indicate the practice is truly unfortunate for the Bangladeshi students and the overall higher education environment, as it suggests there is probably no strong commitment by the government to the curriculum and higher education in general. Ahmmed decries such partisan political interference in the affairs of higher education institutions. As he puts it, “The University should be free from political interference. Teachers should avoid the servile of political parties. In order to create safe
and sound atmosphere and ensure the standard of education it is burning question to reform of teacher politics” (p. 8). In addition, Alam et al. (2011) indicated, “student involvement in party politics has created a political atmosphere in higher education institutes in most countries and that has an impact on the educational atmosphere” (p. 6045). This view was further discussed by Ahmmed (2013) who concluded, “Party politics by both teachers and students have created a great problem in the higher education sectors. Both teaching and learning is greatly interrupted by the teacher and student’s politics” (p. 7). Teachers’ teaching and students’ attention in the classroom appear to be affected by their engagement in partisan politics, and that undermines the higher education environments.

Implications of Teacher Engagement in National Partisan Politics for Country’s Growth and Development

It is the responsibility of the Bangladeshi people to develop their country. The teaching profession is probably one of the most important professions for improving the Bangladesh nation. The teacher is an architect of the nation. A teacher is one of the founders of a nation’s prosperity, development, and growth. The University Grand Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh (2006) stated that:

The development of a modern society depends to a large extent on the nature and standard of teaching profession in higher education. Thus, the role of higher education is to prepare competent, knowledgeable and far-sighted people for assuming various higher responsibilities. The growing importance of knowledge in the modern world can hardly be overemphasized, especially in the era of globalization and in a global environment, which is fiercely competitive. Particularly, higher education has enormous potential to promote prosperity in the developing nations. (p. 109)

It is obvious from the quote that education is considered a core component of growth and development in Bangladesh and teachers are expected to play a vital role in improving
the productive capabilities of the people. The county’s growth and development depends on an educated nation. Thus, teachers need to engage in teaching. Unfortunately, the present Bangladeshi scenario appears different. Most of the teachers engage in partisan politics and quite often, they spend considerable time on the dissemination of partisan political information, political participation, as well as building political trust with party leaders (Masum, 2008; Monem & Baniamin, 2010). Several authors, including Masum (2008) as well as Monem and Baniamin (2010) argue that teachers should act in a professionally responsible manner, and be engaged in professional and academic research instead of partisan politics. This engagement in partisan politics by teachers affects their teaching in the classroom as well as the country’s growth and development.

In addition to partisan politics, other factors appear to be having some impact on the higher education system in Bangladesh. According to Alam, Haque, and Siddique (2007):

In Bangladesh higher education costs and lower quality university education, students were leaving for Indian educational institutions, or those who could manage financial assistance (due to merit) or private funding would leave to study in the Western capitalist countries, e.g. USA, Canada, UK and Australia. It is reported that on average in a year, about 50-60,000 Bangladeshi students study in different colleges, universities and institutes in India. Similarly, a significant number of the professors of public universities (mainly belonging to the disciplines of engineering, natural sciences, economics, and business) did not return to the country from the Western countries after completing their study leave. These bright and promising teachers were demanding both better teaching-learning environments on the campus on the one hand, and better material and non-material incentives on the other; unfortunately, the state/society could not ensure both of these conditions. Hence, the brains drain of pupils and teachers belonging to the better education sub-sector. (p. 17)

In Bangladesh, parents worry about their children’s education as they feel the atmosphere of educational institutions may not be conducive to proper learning (Alam et al., 2011).
Teachers engage in partisan politics and influence students to engage in such politics. As stated earlier in this thesis, partisan politics among students often leads to them fighting with each other to demonstrate their loyalty to the leaders of their respective parties as well as establish their potential leadership identity for the party for the future. These fights often result in the deaths of many students on university campuses every year, institutions are closed ahead of schedule, and studies are hampered (Chowdhury, 1997). In addition, academic session jams emerge that increase the completion period for undergraduate studies from four years to five or six years and graduate studies from one to two or three years (Rabbani & Chowdhury, 2014). A session jam usually occurs due to long-lasting closures of the universities caused by political unrest or violence. In addition, Rabbani and Chowdhury indicate the session jams affect students’ lives in many other ways such as the age at which they might not qualify for government job.

**The Structure of the Education System of Bangladesh**

The structure of the education system of Bangladesh is outlined in the Figure on the next page:
Education in Bangladesh has three major stages—primary education, secondary education, and higher education. Primary education is a 5-year cycle while secondary education is a 7-year cycle with three sub-stages: 3 years of junior secondary, 2 years of secondary and 2 years of higher secondary. The entry age for primary education is 6 years. The junior, secondary and higher education stages are designed for age groups 11-13, 14-15 and 16-17 years respectively. Higher secondary is followed by graduate level education in general, technical, engineering, agriculture, and business studies. Students may take 2 years to obtain a Master’s degree, and in the medical streams, they may take 5-6 years to obtain a Master’s degree (Banbeis, 2004).
In the general education stream, higher secondary is followed by college/university level education through the Pass/Honors Graduate Courses (4 years). The Master’s degree is of one-year duration for holders of Bachelor degree (Honors) and two-year duration for holders of (Pass) Bachelor degree. Higher education in the technical area also starts after higher secondary level. Engineering, agriculture, business, medical and information and communication technology are the major technical and technological education areas. In each of the courses of study, except for medical education, a 5-year course of study is required for the first degree (Banbeis, 2004).

**Different Streams in Education**

Primary level education is provided under two major institutional arrangements or streams, which are general and madrasha. Secondary education has three major streams, which are general, technical-vocational and madrasha. Higher education, likewise, has three streams, which are general (inclusive of pure and applied science, arts, business and social science), madrasha and technology education. Technology education includes agriculture, engineering, medical, textile, leather technology and ICT. Madrashas (Arabic for educational institution) education includes ebtedayee, dakhil, alim, fazil and kamil. The functioning of Madrashas is similar to the three major stages of education, and they have similar core courses as in the general stream (primary, secondary and higher secondary or post-secondary). However, the Madrasas emphases is on religious studies (Banbeis, 2004).
Chapter 2 Summary

This chapter has discussed the literature reviewed for the study. It reviewed selected literature on the perspectives on teaching, perspectives on engagement, including teacher engagement in partisan politics, as well the implications of teacher engagement in partisan politics for the students, education quality, and the nations’ growth and development. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the structure of the Bangladesh education system.

The next chapter presents the research design.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways teacher engagement in national partisan politics in two Bangladeshi higher education institutions influenced the teaching of four university teachers, the learning of students, as well as the two educational institutions for which they worked. The study also examined the teachers’ perceptions of the benefits and challenges arising from their engagement in partisan politics. This chapter describes the rationale for the research design adopted for this study, the research approach, data sources, data collection and sampling techniques, as well as data analysis and interpretation procedures. The chapter also discusses the research ethics process as well as issues relating to the credibility, trustworthiness and transferability of the findings of the study.

Qualitative Research Approach

A qualitative research approach was used in this case study. A qualitative study usually follows some of the procedures of the traditional research approach. The research problem is presented, questions are posed, and data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted to answer the research questions (Creswell, 1998). However, a qualitative approach also contains the following features that make it different from a quantitative approach. First, the research topics are usually “emotion laden, close to the people and practical” (Creswell, p. 18). Secondly, the research questions are generally open-ended so that the participants’ perspectives are fully explored. There are no “best” questions. Instead, as the research process proceeds, the research questions may change to reflect an increased understanding of the problem or the issue. Thirdly, a qualitative study typically
collects data from multiple sources and the basic four types of information are interviews, observations, documents, and audio-visual materials. Fourth, the data to be presented are partly based on the participants’ views and partly on the researcher’s own interpretation of those views. The research data can hardly escape the researcher’s personal stamp. Fifth, the whole process of conducting the research and the participants’ ideas are finally shaped in a narrative story to be presented (Creswell, 1998). According to Ragin (1992), qualitative research relies on many factors and a few cases while quantitative research counts on a few variables and many cases.

Creswell (1998) lists eight reasons why some researchers conduct a qualitative study: (1) the nature of the research question is to describe what is going on; (2) the research variables are not easy to identify and theories need to be developed to explain the behavior of participants or their population of study; (3) a detailed view of the research topic is to be presented, (4) individuals must be studied in their “natural setting”, otherwise the findings will be contrived out of context; (5) the researcher favors writing in a literary style; (6) the researcher is willing and able to spend extensive time in the field and to collect data from different resources; (7) a qualitative approach is accepted by the potential audiences; and (8) instead of acting as an “expert” who passes judgment on the participants, the researcher sees him/herself as an active learner who can tell the story from the participants’ point of view. These reasons guided the research process for this study.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1998) and Creswell (2007), the emphasis in qualitative research is on conducting the studies in natural settings by using verbal descriptions for the most part. Such studies can be written in the forms of stories and case
studies rather than in statistical reports. Rossman and Rallis (2003) also suggest that all qualitative research aims to have an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants. Thus, the objectives and nature of the research questions for this study determined that a qualitative research approach would be more appropriate. Instead of identifying the relationship between variables, the study explored the way teacher engagement in partisan politics at two Bangladeshi higher education institutions influenced their teaching, learning by their students as well as the two institutions for which they worked. The qualitative approach produced a descriptive account of teacher engagement in partisan politics from the perspectives of the four teachers who worked at two higher education institutions in the country.

Case Study Methodology

A case study research design was considered the most suitable for this study because of its ability to deal with a full range of evidence, such as documentation, artifacts, interviews and observation. As I have already stated, I used a qualitative research approach to explore teacher engagement in partisan politics, and how such engagement influenced their professional classroom practices.

As a research methodology, a case study is seen as a “qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information including observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports, and provide a case description and case-based themes” (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). The case may be a relatively bounded object or a process; it may be theoretical, empirical
or both (Regin & Backer, 1992). At a minimum, a case is a phenomenon specific to time and space. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic in nature as they allow the researcher to investigate an identified case or phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Merriam further argues that particularistic is vital for what it reveals about the event or what it might represent. She also notes that the descriptive aspect of case studies denotes the fact that the product is a complete, literal description of the event investigated. For instance, one of the merits of using a case study approach lies in its capacity to focus on several issues concurrently, recognizing and revealing relationships among the cases if any, presenting the findings in prose, and quoting participants verbatim.

For this study, a qualitative case study design was the most appropriate design to adequately answer the research questions and achieve the purpose of the study. This is because a case study researcher is interested in an in-depth understanding of the holistic nature of a problem by using one or two cases for illustrations (Creswell, 2007). Thus, this case study was a qualitative exploration of the individual and collective opinions of four teachers about their engagement in national partisan politics. A case study methodology was adopted for this study with the goal of capturing the individuality of each case, and ensuring that in-depth information on the cases was presented.

**Recruitment of the Study Sample**

Four university teachers from two institutions were recruited to participate in this study. Upon arrival in Bangladesh for data collection in December 2014, I met with the Registrars at both institutions to discuss my study as well as seek the assistance of their offices in participant recruitment. I discussed with each of them the purpose and focus of my study as well as the criteria for participating recruitment. The three main criteria for
participant recruitment were that they had a Masters or Ph.D. degree, a minimum of five years teaching experience at their respective institutions, and they were currently engaged in partisan politics.

Following the discussions about the study and criteria for participant recruitment, the Registrars at both institutions promised to compile a list of possible participants for me. A week later, the Registrars invited me to pick up the lists of the potential participants for the study. I went to their office to obtain the lists. At that time, I asked them how I could be sure that all the teachers whose names appeared on the lists were currently engaged in partisan politics in the country. They explained they had randomly selected participants’ names from the previous and current list of members of Syndicate. As the highest administrative organization within the university structure, the Syndicate is responsible for recruitment and promotion of teachers and other administrative staff as well as financial matters. They reminded me that elections to the Syndicate were based on members’ engagement and support of one of the national political parties.

The list comprised approximately 40 participants from the two institutions, 23 participants from one and 17 from the other. I then contacted all 40 participants by e-mail to formally invite them to participate in interviews for the study, and only 18 of them responded to my e-mail. However, 9 (5 males and 4 females) of the 18 participants who responded to my invitation eventually declined to participate in interviews for the study for several reasons, most commonly, time constraints. I assigned each of the remaining nine participants (5 men and 4 women) a number following which I randomly selected 4 of those numbers (2 each representing males and females) and formally invited the participants whose numbers were selected to participate in the study.
Data Collection Methods

The primary data collection method for this study was in-depth, one-on-one interviews that involved the use of the open-ended questions. Kvale (1996) suggests the qualitative interview “is literally an interview, an exchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest” where the researcher attempts to “understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold meaning the peoples’ experiences (pp. 1–2). In qualitative research interviews, the researcher records more than participants’ words. He or she records their experience and actions, all of which are narrative expressions (Boje, 2002). In addition, the interview process was based on the theoretical assumption that interviews are products of “situated understandings grounded in specific interactional episodes” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 353), and reflect the mood, voices and feelings of individual participants (Marcus & Fischer, 1986). The interview practice adopted in this study was aimed at empowering participants to produce their own narrative accounts, which, in turn, were viewed as adequate representations of a more ‘realistic’ picture of their perspectives on their engagement in national partisan politics in the Bangladeshi context.

The guiding questions for the interviews (see Appendix D) were developed from the review of the literature and the researcher’s personal experience as a university teacher in Bangladesh. The interviews were tape-recorded. The interview questions were guided by the research questions and purpose of the study. The guiding questions for the interviews were provided to the participants in advance of the interview date to enable them to go through all the possible questions in advance and organize their responses. During the week prior to the interviews, I was available to answer participants’ questions
about the research. The reason for that was to make sure that the meaning of the interview questions was fully and clearly communicated to the participants since they might have experienced some difficulty with aspects of the questions.

The interview time and location were jointly agreed upon by the participants and me. The participants needed a place where they felt comfortable to talk and without any distraction. In the end, all the participants were interviewed on their campuses, with only the participant and I present so that they did not have to worry about any outside interference or about the possibility of their opinions being heard by others.

The interviews began with an explanation of the purpose of the research, the research approach and method, and the nature of the participants’ involvement in the study. Before the interviews started, the participants were assured about their confidentiality and, as required in the University of Regina REB guidelines, they were invited to sign a consent form (Appendix B). It should be noted that the participants from one of the institutions were from the Departments of Finance and Education, while those from the other institution were from the Department of Political Science. In an attempt to protect the confidentiality of the participants, the participants were assured that no names would be included in the thesis; rather a pseudonym will be used to identify each of them.

While the information contained in the guidelines for the interviews was provided to each participant before the interviews, the material was used only to keep the interviews on track. I did not strictly follow the order and format of the questions. Each interview seemed to take the form of a conversation between the participants and me about their engagement in national politics. Each interview lasted for about an hour. To
maintain the confidentiality of all the participants, I removed participant names from all the transcripts.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures**

Researchers have identified a variety of techniques to help make sense of qualitative data, such as those collected in this study (Mark & Yardley, 2004; Dey, 1993; Creswell, 2007). In general, these authors indicate these techniques emphasize how to categorize or classify qualitative data as well as the way to establish connections within and between the categories or classifications generated to provide some meaningful understanding and interpretation of data. Such tasks, in essence, constitute the central theme in qualitative data analysis, and they constituted the approach taken in the analysis and interpretation of the data collected for this study.

The analysis of data for this study was viewed as an on-going activity thereby making it both formative and summative (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). In other words, some data analysis was done during field work although the bulk of the work was deferred until the end of data collection. The importance of the analysis-in-the-field strategy stemmed from the opportunity it provided me to direct the data collection process in a more productive manner. In other words, it paved the way for some preliminary search for patterns, common themes or ideas arising or emerging from the data (Burgess, 1988). In addition to the opportunity to direct the data collection process, the analysis-in-the-field strategy allowed for the taking of some preliminary measures designed to ensure the credibility of the research findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lather, 1986). Almost immediately after each interview, crucial portions of the interview data were highlighted or summarized and forwarded to individual participants along with a request for another
meeting. The idea was to grant the participants some opportunity to verify that my representation of the interview data (as presented in summary form) were actually those offered by them. All 4 participants were able to participants in the data review process.

The analysis of the interviews, the principal method of data collection, started with the formal transcription of the recorded cassette tapes. The approach I adopted for data analyses consisted of: i) coding procedures that would place the narratives of each participant into the areas highlighted in the interviews; ii) employing a conditional matrix to allow a discursive presentation of data that would convey descriptively the substantive content of the study; iii) subjecting the theoretical concepts the participants generated to the literature reviewed and analyzing the relevance in terms of the current discussion about teacher engagement in politics; iv) interpreting what was heard, recorded, analyzed and read; and v) as Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest, meeting any obligation as a researcher to ‘tell their stories’ and to give voices to the teachers’ narratives of their engagement in national partisan politics.

Utilizing thematic analysis approach, I isolated the relevant portions of the data in the interview transcripts for each of the four participants, using as guidelines the research purpose and research questions for the study. My objective was to search for patterns, common themes or ideas that fitted into the experiences of the participants. The isolated bits of data (and the emerging themes and patterns) were then assigned to their respective categories based, largely, on my judgement. For instance, bits of data pertaining to the implications of teacher engagement in partisan politics on their professional practice, student learning, or the benefits and challenges of such engagement were assigned accordingly. Yet while data units were assigned to their respective categories, they were,
at the same time, closely examined to determine the connections that existed among them. The sorting and assigning of data units into their respective categories was accompanied by the linking of the units with participants’ narratives to determine how many of them mentioned each data portion. It was only when all four of them (and two in some cases) mentioned something that it was viewed as an issue, and thus worthy of mention in the presentation and analysis of the findings of the study.

In addition to the preliminary transcript review during fieldwork, I did undertake a complete transcript review process. The idea behind the transcript review process was to get the participants to check their transcript to confirm accuracy and to make any desired additions or deletions. Accordingly, I emailed them their transcripts, asking each of them to confirm whether the transcripts accurately covered the issues that we had discussed during the interviews, and to add any additional material they considered relevant. Two of them offered only minor suggestions for revision. I also reminded them that copies of my thesis draft would be e-mailed to them if they wish to examine and confirm my presentation and interpretation of the interview data they had provided and all of them indicated that I did not have to do that.

**Credibility, Trustworthiness, and Transferability**

Guba and Lincoln (1989) relate that credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are some of the key criteria used in evaluating qualitative research. According to the authors, credibility focuses on the degree to which the findings make sense given the data presented. The credibility of the findings of this study was supported by the holistic presentation of the data and by using verbatim quotations from the participants to re-enforce arguments presented.
Merriam (2009) defines reliability (trustworthiness) as the extent to which research findings can be replicated. That is if the same study were repeated, would the same results be obtained? The findings of this study could be replicated to some extent given that the instrument was carefully designed with a focus on the questions being investigated and well implemented. However, considering that human behaviour changes constantly as dictated by their environment and life experiences, their worldview might change accordingly. Therefore, replication might not produce the same results.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that transferability in qualitative research involves providing a detailed portrait of the research setting and participants’ experiences. Transferability was achieved in this study by providing a detailed description of the research settings based on document and record review. For instance, an overview of the Bangladeshi education system as well as individual experiences and circumstances of the participants were provided. As Lincoln and Guba suggest, confirmability brings into play the researcher’s review of the research method as a technique to reveal the quality of the work done.

**Chapter 3 Summary**

This chapter has discussed the research design for the study. It described the rationale for the research design adopted for the study, the research approach, data sources, data collection techniques, sampling techniques, as well as data analysis and interpretation procedures. The chapter also mentioned the UofR ethics process well as issues relating to the credibility, trustworthiness and transferability of the findings of the study.

The next chapter presents the findings of the research study.
CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study. I interviewed four experienced teachers who worked full time at two Bangladeshi higher educational institutions for the study. The participants included one male and one female from each university. All the participants were engaged in teaching and also in partisan politics in Bangladesh.

One-on-one audio-taped interviews were conducted at the participants’ convenience from December 2014 to January 2015. As indicated in Chapter 3, a list of guiding questions had previously been forwarded to the participants for review and those questions were used to guide the interviews. The interview data were organized into the thematic categories based on the research purpose and questions. The categories related to the ways teacher engagement in national partisan politics influenced their professional classroom practice, learning by the students, the two educational institutions for which they worked, as well as, the teachers’ perceptions of the benefits and challenges arising from their engagement in partisan politics.

In addition to participant engagement in partisan politics, the findings of the study explored the participants’ perspectives on teaching. While the key focus of the study is exploring teacher engagement in partisan politics in Bangladesh, some discussion of their perspectives on teaching in higher education was viewed as critical as that discussion would help to place their views about their engagement in partisan politics in a broader institutional context. The thinking was that understanding the participants’ perspectives on teaching, including, for example, what they saw as the key purpose and goals of teaching, their teaching philosophy as well as their teaching values and beliefs, would
help us to better understand their views on their engagement in partisan politics. In short, the assumption was made in the study that some relationship was likely to exist between the way the participants described their teaching perspectives and their engagement in partisan politics in the country.

The findings of the study start with a brief descriptive review of each participant’s professional experiences.

**Professor Dr. Mohid**

Dr. Mohid is a professor at a university of Bangladesh. He is 39 years old. At the time of data collection for the study, Professor Mohid worked full time at his institution and he acknowledged that he was actively engaged in partisan politics in the country. However, while he acknowledged his engagement in partisan politics, Dr. Mohid cautioned that teachers should focus primarily on their professional duties and responsibilities as teachers, and not on partisan politics. Further, he appeared to acknowledge that teachers have the right to support a political party of their choice, as long as that support is not at the expense of their professional duties and responsibilities. As he explained:

*As citizens I believe I can support a party but this does not mean that I ignore my duty and responsibility. I strongly believe teaching is my prime duty; so as a teacher my duty and responsibility is to teach sincerely and carefully.*

Professor Mohid appears to acknowledge that while teachers have the right to participate in the political system as citizens, they should be very cautious about their engagement in partisan politics. Instead, their focus should be on the effective performance of their role and responsibilities as teachers. Obviously, he thought teachers can engage in partisan
politics outside their work hours or during their spare time if they wish to do so; however, they should not allow that to interfere with their professional work and his students.

At the beginning of our interview session, I asked Professor Mohid about his perspective on teaching. What does it mean, “To teach”? He explained: “Teaching is a noble profession where art and science of a teacher is applied. The phrase “to teach” means to make something understandable to others i.e. participants in the classroom.” Thus, Dr. Mohid believes that teaching involves helping students to acquire knowledge and assist them in their learning.

In addition, Professor Mohid indicated that teaching involves disseminating “knowledge to the students and enhance my knowledge base. My primary duty as a teacher is to teach the assigned topic to the students.” Teachers must dedicate time to preparing classroom teaching materials, developing, and enhancing their own knowledge. As he explained, “the classroom environment, physical facilities in the classroom and quality, that is, level of understanding of the participants, guide my teaching.” Dr. Mohid’s teaching perspective appears to align with what Pratt and Associates (1998) characterized as the transmission of learning perspective on teaching. The transmission perspective views teaching as the effective delivery of subject-matter to students, and learning as the quantitative increase in knowledge by students.

Professor Mohid described the philosophy that guided his teaching perspective this way: “Know myself and students; include being prepared for class, completing all relevant tasks on time, helping the students, and being friendly with the students.” Professor Mohid indicated that teachers should take their time to implement the activities
needed to support learning in the classroom. They must prepare themselves to teach and assist students in their development and learning. It appears that Dr. Mohid sees himself as a combination of what Cranton (2001) describes as the organized and caring teacher. He appears to believe that teachers should be technically proficient in matters of subject-matter as well as in the teaching process. In addition, they should demonstrate interpersonal skills in their relation with their students.

Professor Mohid described the values and beliefs that guided his teaching. He put it in this way, “As my sacred duty, that is, worship or ebadhah and I do everything for making happy the Almighty, that is, I want satisfaction from Him through teaching.” Professor Mohid appears to be spiritually committed to his profession and his students.

Professor Mohid explained the reasons why he thought teachers were engaged in partisan politics in the country. As he put it, “Teachers are engaged in national politics in Bangladesh mainly because of the 1973 rules and also for their personal benefit.” As brought out in Chapter 2, the “1973 rule” refers to the Public Universities Ordinance, which is seen as the root cause of much of the politicization of the public university campuses (Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2004). Dr. Mohid seemed to see the ordinance as the root cause for teacher engagement in partisan politics. He appears to suggest a transactional relationship existed between teachers engaged in partisan politics and their parties, as both parties (that is teachers and the political parties) expected some reward or benefit arising from the relationship.

I then asked Professor Mohid how teacher engagement in partisan politics affected their classroom practices. According to him, “Those who are engaged in
national politics, most of the time, most of the teachers are not learning, not to be updated about curriculum, not taking class regularly and not teaching in the class properly.” Professor Mohid’s appears to suggest that teachers engaged in national partisan politics dedicate more time to party activities than they do to their professional duties and responsibilities. He implies that teachers should devote more time to their professional work as teachers.

Professor Mohid then explained how teacher engagement in national partisan politics affected teacher effectiveness in the classroom. As he put it: “It depends on how the teacher accepts their teaching profession. But this is true; definitely it affects effectiveness in classroom teaching. For most teachers it hugely affects the effectiveness of their teaching”. Professor Mohid thought that teacher engagement in partisan politics was likely to take time, attention, and energy away from their other activities, including their teaching. Conversely, it could be argued that he thought that when teachers spend most of their time on teaching and academic research, they were more likely to be focusing much more on their professional duties and responsibilities instead of partisan politics.

I asked Professor Mohid whether teacher engagement in national partisan politics influenced student learning and attention. He shared a story with me.

When a teacher supports one partisan political party and a student also supports the same partisan party, the teacher is satisfied with him and the student likes the teacher, so both are happy at this point. As a result, their love and affection is positive. On the other hand, when a teacher supports one partisan party and a student does not support that same party, but the student supports another party, the teacher doesn’t like the student and the student doesn’t like the teacher. The student loses the teacher’s affection attention. This happens when teachers and students like different partisan party politics.
Professor Mohid’s narrative appears to reflect the current scenario of Bangladesh. He sees the prospects of tensions and frictions arising between teachers and students when they support different political parties. Such tensions and frictions would likely have serious implications for the students in particular, given the unequal power relationships that exist between them. However, Dr. Mohid acknowledges that support by teachers and students of the same political parties might yield some potential benefits for the students, including the provision by teachers of academic and other forms of support.

I asked Professor Mohid about the other ways he thought teacher engagement in national partisan politics influenced students’ learning. He told me that engagement in national partisan politics led to “Lack of sincerity, seriousness, punctuality, up to date knowledge and cordiality.” It seems like Dr. Mohid thought teacher engagement in national partisan politics affected teachers’ professionalism and their responsibility to students, which undermines learning environment for the students.

Professor Mohid discussed the ways teacher engagement in national partisan politics affected the institutions for which they worked. As he put it:

*Definitely. Suppose students lose in-depth and informative lectures from their teachers. Because in-depth and informative lectures require research, more engagement in study and require more time. But unfortunately, most of the teachers utilize their time and effort to successfully support a political party and not for their academic development work; less research and publications; less focus on their academic responsibility, etc.*

Professor Mohid’s opinion appears similar to that of other scholars. In Bangladesh, partisan political engagement by teachers, students, and authorities in the public universities results in frequent academic session delays (Hopper, 1998) because of the
closure of these institutions. The delays are likely to adversely affect all aspects of the work of higher education institutions as well as the country’s entire education system.

I asked Professor Mohid if there were advantages enjoyed by Bangladeshi teachers who were engaged in national partisan politics and he stated, “They [Teachers] get their undue promotions without research works and required publications, different positions of the university and also the financial benefits.” It appears as if teachers see their engagement in partisan politics as a form of transactional relationship with their parties. They expect some form of reward from the parties, including in appointments and promotions to positions for which they may not be qualified. As Masum (2008) points out, partisan political loyalty often trumps qualifications and credentials in recruitment and promotion in higher education institutions in the country. Professor Mohid appears to share Masum’s views on the subject.

I enquired about his own engagement in national partisan politics, and Professor Mohid explained, “Yes, I am involved in a political party but for me, this is the secondary work or engagement. My first priority is my professional development and political party engagement is a minor part of my life.” Professor Mohid acknowledged his engagement in national partisan politics, but he prioritizes his professional work and development over his partisan activities. Based on my experience, he appears to be the exception, as most of the teachers who are engaged in partisan politics appear to prioritize their partisan activities over their professional role and responsibilities.

Lastly, Professor Mohid offered one suggestion to Bangladeshi teachers who were engaged in national partisan politics. “I feel, including myself, we need to focus on our
job responsibilities rather than engagement in national political parties or politics.” In other words, Dr. Mohid cautions teachers to prioritize their professional work over their engagement in national partisan politics, which, he implies, is not usually the case for most of them.

**Professor Dr. Mabina**

Professor Dr. Mabina is a very renowned teacher in the Department of Education. She has taught for almost seventeen years. She participates in public discussions about Bangladeshi education and the role of education in the nation’s economic development on a regular basis. She is a member of the University Syndicate to which she was elected under a political party banner.

At the beginning of our interview, I asked Professor Mabina how she would define teaching. What does it mean, “To teach”? She responded in this way, “To me, teaching means to help someone to learn something, it may be any skill, any work, or to show the way things can be done or how knowledge about anything can be acquired.” Like her colleague, Dr. Mobid. Dr. Mabina appeared to subscribe to what Pratt and Associates (1998) characterized as the transmission perspective on teaching. It appears she sees teaching as the effective delivery of subject-matter to students, and learning as the quantitative increase in knowledge by students. She implies that content credibility is critical to teaching.

According to Professor Mabina, “Teaching goals and objectives are similar in teaching any specific subjects. There is written curriculum and the goals and objectives of teaching are narrated there.” I then asked Professor Mabina to explain her personal
and professional goals as a teacher. “I want, as a teacher, to be successful in my personal life and at the same time I want my students to be successful as well in their future life.”

Professor Mabina explained she is “always trying to understand the mood of the group of students and adjust to their requirements and feelings.” I also asked Professor Mabina about her teaching philosophy and she explained, “My teaching philosophy is to help and guide my students and show them the right path in their future life.” She also indicated to me that her personal teaching goals included transforming the students and helping them to grow both intellectually and emotionally. This view relates to what Pratt and Associates characterize as teaching as nurturing, where the teacher seeks to facilitate the learner’s personal agency or self-efficacy. It appears her goal is to help students to become more confident and self-sufficient learners.

Professor Mabina also shared her teaching values and beliefs. She explained:

I try to stick to the principle that I ensure what I want my students to learn, they should learn it easily and clearly. There should not be any kind of misunderstanding and confusion about the concepts I teach them.

According to Professor Mabina, the teaching perspectives of most Bangladeshi teachers are similar and significant as they see student learning as a means of acquiring new knowledge, skills and abilities as outlined in the course syllabi. She explained the issue in this way:

In Bangladesh, there is no freedom of incorporating any new knowledge or skill, the syllabus is fixed and prepared by a panel of experts. The primary goals and objectives of learning for the students are to pass the exam and achieve good marks or grade. I am not saying that all students learning goals and objectives are the same. But most of the students’ views are like this, because of the institutional environment, country’s situation, and the present scenario of job market competition in Bangladesh.
Dr. Mabina seems to suggest that teaching in most Bangladeshi universities is grounded in the transmission of information perspective, given the emphasis on completing course syllabi in time for the national student exams. Cranton’s (2001) organized teacher quality or characteristic might also be at work in these universities, as teachers appear to be focusing on both content and process issues in their teaching. Their work appears to be grounded in the behavioural psychological beliefs and practices relating to teaching.

Professor Mabina thought teachers engaged in national partisan politics in Bangladesh for their personal benefits. As she put it, “I am not sure about their philosophy but what I perceive that they benefit in many ways. Such as, to promote the higher position in the institution, to get other facilities or other organizational top position which involve more financial benefit, to access extra power etc.” Professor Mabina’s perspective is similar to that of Professor Mohid. She sees a transactional relationship between teachers engaged in partisan politics and their parties, as both parties expect some reward or benefit arising from the relationship.

I asked Professor Mabina if teacher engagement in national partisan politics affected their classroom practice. She responded:

_Sometimes teachers’ do not prepare their lectures properly and then spend the class gossiping or talking about their own achievements in the national politics. Again, the national political activities also impact their mind and soul, which is connected to their teaching attitude. As a result, most politically engaged teachers are unable to effectively continue class. They cannot maintain time schedule and they cannot complete the syllabus in time._

Dr. Makina’s suggests that by their engagement in partisan politics, teachers are likely to encourage their students to engage in partisan politics given that they see their teachers as role models. While it may be true that students who belong to the same political parties as
their teachers might curry some favors from those teachers, which some might find unethical to the profession, the literature suggests that on balance, students' engagement in partisan politics is likely to have far worse consequences than benefits for them, including time lost in their studies due to school closure arising from campus unrests (Alam et al., 2007; Masum, 2008)

I asked Professor Mabina if teacher engagement in national partisan politics affected their effectiveness in the classroom, and she said, “Definitely! These teachers give priority to [partisan] politics rather than teaching as their professional development.” Dr. Mabina thought that if teachers prioritized their engagement in national partisan politics over their professional engagement, which is necessary for their professional development, it is likely to affect their classroom teaching because they may not have adequate time to devote to preparation for classes.

Professor Mabina thought teacher engagement in partisan politics affected student learning, affection, and attention. As she put it, “I think so. The students might lose their interests in learning. Some of them might become interested in student politics to get extra favor from those teachers in examinations.” In other words, student engagement in partisan politics takes precious time away from their studies (Masum, 2008).

According to Professor Mabina, teachers’ active engagement in national partisan politics affects students' learning in the classroom.

Politically engaged teachers cannot utilize their full time for the students. Politics keeps teachers so busy that they do not have time to handle the student’s needs. Besides, teachers engaged in politics do not get time to study to develop themselves academically.
I agree with Dr. Mabina here. I believe the teaching expects teachers to keep up to date with current trends, issues, and developments in the field. Since the class time is predetermined in the Bangladesh education system, teachers should use their time for teaching and sharing knowledge with students. When teachers engage in national partisan politics, the engagement claims their time, and it takes time away from their professional duties and responsibilities. They could use the time on professional development activities to assist their students. By engaging in partisan politics, teachers devote their energies to political activities instead of their academic work and student success.

Professor Mabina thought that teachers benefited from their engagement in national partisan politics. She explained it in this way, “It often benefits teachers personally. Personal benefits like holding a political leader at a national level in future and sources of earning more money other than the teacher’s salary”. Professor Mabina continued,

*Instead of personal benefits they [Teachers] also have extra opportunities and access to power positions and such as opportunities for higher studies aboard, early promotion, on-campus residence and getting higher administration positions e.g. Dean, Head of the department etc.*

Based partly on my own experience as a teacher in Bangladesh and my reading of the literature, I would agree with Professor Mabina. In Bangladesh higher institutions, teachers basically engage in national partisan politics for their own personal benefit. They receive academic recognition without the required credentials and performance primarily because of their engagement in partisan politics. They appear to devote their time and energy on partisan political activities, rather than on their professional development. Like Professor Mohid, Dr. Mabina’s comments suggests she sees a transactional relationship
between teachers engaged in partisan politics and their parties, as both parties expect some reward or benefit arising from the relationship.

Professor Mabina thought that the practice of teacher engagement in national partisan politics disadvantaged teachers who were not actively engaged in such partisan politics. As she put it, the practice limits some teachers, especially those who are not engaged in national partisan politics as they receive “no academic development and it creates rivalry among teachers and also students, which victimize students.” The involvement of teachers in national partisan politics impacts students’ learning, which also affects the overall education system. Students’ learning is affected as politics affects the advancement and appointment of qualified teachers. Since teachers are being promoted because of political engagement, the learning of students is affected.

Professor Mabina believed that teacher engagement in national partisan politics affected the institutions for which they worked. She explained:

Institutions suffer as a result of non-academic activities. Such as, lack of infrastructural development budget for new student residence, academic building, adding enough classroom, new department facilities, more teachers’ and more official employees etc. Not only that, other teachers also face challenges, when they engage in different partisan political parties, which are different from the ruling national parties. They receive fewer opportunities for studies abroad and promotion and on-campus residence. In addition, most of the parents and students do not like the public educational institutions for their higher study as teachers and students’ partisan politics exist.

Dr. Mabina suggests the work of public universities appears to be undermined as a result of teacher engagement in partisan politics. She implies the ruling party might withhold funds for infrastructure and other projects for campuses where partisan politics are judged to not be aligned with that of the ruling party. In addition, teachers may be denied opportunities for promotion and further studies partly because their partisan politics
might not be aligned with that of the government party. She indicates the result of these developments might be poor education opportunities available to students on some public university campuses, and parents looking for other options students, including studies abroad for children whose parents can afford it (Masum, 2008).

Professor Mabina offered a suggestion to Bangladeshi teachers about their engagement in partisan politics. “I believe we need to be more engaged with our work rather than being engaged in national partisan politics.” Similar to the suggestion offered by Dr. Mohid, Professor Makina appears to indicate that partisan political engagement might undermine the university workplace environment, especially when such activities take time away from the professional work of teachers.

Professor Dr. Mapas

Dr. Mapas is 45 years old and he is a professor at a prominent public university in Bangladesh. He has been actively engaged in teaching for 18 years during which time he has also been actively engaged in national partisan politics in Bangladesh. He believes teachers can be involved in national partisan politics, but they should not demonstrate their political views in the classroom and workplace. He believes a teacher has the right to choose to support any political party, but that support should not affect their work or future opportunities. Teachers should not engage in partisan politics with their students or within the institutional environment. He emphasizes that,

*Teaching is my profession. I have to show my professionalism in my workplace. Not only that, I think I need to engage myself to be strategically engaged in my professional work. After that, when I get free time, I can practice my political view in the society. It is really tough for anybody to engage in teaching and engage in national partisan politics at the same time. I mean teaching and political work; these are not the same work. If anybody wants to engage in both*
Clearly, Professor Mapas believes engagement by teachers in partisan politics might be acceptable, but they need to prioritize their engagement by first focusing on their teaching as well as their professional growth and development. Otherwise, he thinks teaching would be negatively affected by their engagement in partisan politics. Like Professors Mohid and Mabina, Dr. Mapas seems to suggest that teachers have the right to engage in the country’s political system, but such engagement should does not have to be partisan and it certainly should not be at the expense of their professional roles and responsibilities, including teaching, academic research and publications.

I asked Professor Mapas about his perspective on teaching and what it means, “To teach”, and he responded in this way:

*Teaching means to teach someone, to convey the knowledge. Teaching is a very crucial and technical skill, which is really difficult. This is not like as another job. Overall, the word, teaching is only one technique, which helps to prepare all humans to perform their own job effectively. To teach means to educate students, to enlighten followers.*

Similar to the views of the previous two participants, Professor Mapas’s teaching perspective appears to be assisting students to acquire skills, knowledge, and abilities, which is consistent with the transmission teaching perspective (Pratt and Associates, 1998). In addition, he sees his teaching perspective as developmental. As he put it, my perspective on “Teaching is to encourage students and draw their attention and to motivate them for enhancing knowledge, to be prepared for learning.” Professor Mapas seeks to facilitate the intellectual development and personal autonomy of learners by helping to cultivate new ways of knowing.
Professor Mapa emphasized the factors that guided his “There are many elements which guide my teaching including the socio-cultural environment, political environment, university administration, student’s demands etc.” He sees the socio-cultural and political environments as well as the structure of the university administration as critical factors that might affect teaching and cautions teacher to be mindful of the possible implications of these factors. It appears to me that he was probably speaking from a social reform perspective on teaching; the idea of seeking a better social order within the institutions as well as a vision of a better society (Pratt and Associates, 1998).

Professor Mapas spoke about his desire “to create and increase students’ awareness about their necessity and prepare students to do the right work and leave bad deeds.” Dr. Mapas views this view as important as it contributes to his decisions about teaching. He sees students as followers, who need guidance from their teachers as they pursue excellence on their path to academic success. Dr. Mapas discussed the values and beliefs that guide his teaching. As he put it, “I believe every teacher has their own beliefs and it guides their students. At the same time, I believe my values and beliefs also guide my teachings. So I want to teach students according to their learning capabilities.” He appears to acknowledge that differences exist in the learning capabilities of students and teachers should be mindful of such differences in the learning process.

I asked Professor Mapas about teachers’ engagement in national partisan politics in Bangladesh.

As citizens of Bangladeshi, teachers feel that to engage in political activities is a personal right. Teachers, including myself, believe and support any political party, which is not wrong. But the problem is most of the teachers, when engaged in partisan political activities, forget their prime duties and responsibilities. They
want to gain something from the ruling government to show they are an active supporter of the party, which is contradicting with our professionalism.

Dr. Mapas raises an interesting point; being involved in the nation’s political system might not be necessarily wrong. In fact, the literature suggests teaching itself is not a politically neutral activity as one’s ideology is likely to guide one approach to teaching (Cranton, 2001; Pratt and Associates, 1998). However, like the other two participants, Dr. Mapas’s concern appears to be with the integration by teachers of their partisan political views into their classroom teaching as well as the way they encourage their students to become engaged in partisan politics. He indicates that such blatant partisan activities by teachers into their work is likely to contract the ethos of their profession.

Professor Mapas continued to discuss teacher engagement in national partisan politics and its effects on their classroom practices.

*Teaching is a creative profession. It relates with research and active participation, unfortunately most of the teachers when they are actively engaged in national partisan politics, they do not have enough time to engage in academic research, teaching students or taking class as a creative manner. So it affects their academic research, proper lesson plans and effective classroom teaching. It might affect students’ attentiveness in the classroom.*

Professor Mapas appears to say simply that such professional activities become secondary for many teachers who are engaged in partisan politics, which might not bode well for the profession and student learning.

Professor Mapas appears to emphasize a negative relationship between teachers’ professional practices and their engagement in partisan politics, an issue that has been also discussed by Ahmmed (2013). Ahmmed argues that partisan politics by teachers and students has created a toxic atmosphere in public universities and the higher education system across Bangladesh. He indicates that teaching and learning on university
campuses is often interrupted by teacher and student engagement in partisan politics. It is therefore quite understandable that Professor Mapas and the other two participants would emphasize the need for teachers to focus much more on the professional duties and responsibilities.

Professor Mapas thought that “teacher engagement in national politics affect teacher effectiveness in the classroom.” He indicated that part of the problem might lie with the way university teachers were recruited and promoted. As teacher recruitment and promotion is driven largely by partisan politics, rather than qualifications and credentials, it is likely that unqualified applicants would be recruited to teaching positions in universities across the country. He believed the lack of appropriate teaching qualifications and credentials might undermine teacher classroom effectiveness, a point that has been highlighted in the literature (Ahmmed, 2013).

I asked Professor Mapas if teacher engagement in national partisan politics affected student learning, affection, and attention, and he responded in this way:

*I believe if teachers actively focus on partisan politics more than teaching of course student learning will be affected. I think it depends on teachers. I mean how they consider their teaching and their political engagement. Though in Bangladesh, most of the teachers prioritize their political activities rather than teaching. That is why students are affected in their learning, affection, and attention.*

This perspective is supported by Ahmmed (2013), who argues that as teachers become partisan political workers, their teaching is likely to affect student learning, affection, and attention in the classroom. Such practices might affect the ability of teachers to be effective as teachers.
Professor Mapas elaborates that teacher engagement in national politics affect student learning, because there is a:

lack of research, lack of attentiveness, lack of affection, lack of future indication, lack of morality and ethics, lack of punctuality and seriousness, lack of proper knowledge sharing, lack of lecture plan and prepare materials, and lack of continuity, etc. all may be largely because of partisan politics.

These issues are discussed by Ahmmed (2013), Masum (2008), as well as Rabbani and Chowdhury (2014). Like Professor Mapas, they argue that teacher engagement in national partisan politics affects student learning in the classroom. Dr. Mapas appears to indicate that as teachers engage in partisan politics, they are likely to have a divided professional focus and concentration, which might affect their regular professional activates. This, it is very important for teachers to focus on their professional growth and engage in developing their professional knowledge and activities.

I asked Professor Mapas about the effects on the institutions of teacher engagement in national partisan politics, and he said,

Yes, of course. Day-by-day institutions lose their recognition and positions of prestige around the world. Suppose, once upon a time, Dhaka University was compared to Oxford but now-a-days, across the world, among 2500 universities there is no position for Dhaka University, not any Bangladeshi universities.

Professor Mapas suggests that partly because of teacher engagement in partisan politics instead of academic research and professional development, the reputation of their institutions is likely to suffer. According to Besar, Jali, Lyndon, and Selvadurat (2015), teacher engagement in national partisan politics adversely affects an institution and its place in society. The essence of Besar, et al.’s argument is that the university is one of the important social institutions that produces a large segment of a nation’s educated elite.
Thus if Professors are not sincere about their work in guiding students, how could they achieve their goal? Professor Mapas noted that engagement in partisan politics was likely to undermine the institution’s role in preparing the next generation of citizens for their future role in society.

Professor Mapas emphasized the advantages enjoyed by Bangladeshi teachers because of their engagement in national partisan politics.

*Teachers receive change in status such as being promoted from lecturer to assistant professors or associate professor, professor, holding higher administrative positions like Dean, Associate Dean, Chairman or head of the department, Examination or other committee head. Some achieve a PhD degree without sufficient research work and publications, or campus residence facilities, higher salaries studies abroad, and earning more money.*

Professor Mohid and Professor Mabina’s also expressed similar views. They also believe that in Bangladesh teachers engage in partisan politics for personal gain and benefit. Such engagement, according to Professor Mapas, helps them to advance in their position or gain recognition from authorities. However, Professor Mapas spoke about some challenges for Bangladeshi teachers arising from their engagement in partisan politics.

*Overall, the teachers lose their values and are disrespected by students and the society. Again, when teachers engage in ruling government parties they receive many benefits. But other partisan political supporters face challenges. I mean without considering their teaching quality and capability, preference is given to their own political supporter by the ruling government parties since they handle all opportunities and possibilities among that party supporting teacher. So much discrimination exists and finally nobody wants to explore or use their brain for creativity or academic development.*

Like his two colleagues, Dr. Mapas believes that teachers benefit both personally and professionally from their engagement in partisan politics. However, he sees some challenges for them as well, including their perceived loss of social status in society.
Professor Mapas offered a suggestion to enhance Bangladesh higher education.

*In Bangladesh political parties need to consider teachers as teachers and not as their political work force. They do not need to involve teachers in their own political parties. They need to arrange and provide political activities free environment for all educational institutions.*

Dr. Mapas appeared to be of the view that the Bangladesh government and other political parties should rethink the issue of teacher engagement in partisan politics given the potential adverse implications for the education system, including higher education. While teachers are free to participate in the nation’s political system, and may even belong to political parties, they should be mindful of integrating political partisan activities into their teaching. He implies that education institutions, especially classrooms should be free from partisan political discussions and ideology. I could not agree more with him on that issue.

**Professor Dr. Rakhina**

Professor Dr. Rakhina is a very energetic and enthusiastic teacher, who has been teaching for twenty years at a Bangladesh university. She feels that “*teaching is not only a profession; teaching is like caring about our son and daughters, caring about our future.*” She strongly believes that teachers should engage in partisan politics to participate in the country’s growth and development. At the same time, teaching should be their first priority. As she explained,

*It would be very bad if we engaged most of our time in partisan political work and not professional work. We need to keep in mind that at end of the month we received our salary for teaching, not for partisan political work. We support political party, which is for one political party. On the other hand, teaching is for everybody.*
Teaching students is developing the students’ future, caring for the next generation. So effective teaching is very essential for the students. I asked Professor Rakhina about her perspective on teaching and she said:

_ Teaching is a method to convey the basic knowledge to students so that the followers may have sufficient interest to make a progress in that particular field. Teaching is to make the students capable enough to have new inventions and new dimensions._

Teaching helps to enlighten students, to help students’ mind flourish. Teachers cultivate ways of thinking in the students’ minds (Pratt and Associates, 1998). Professor Rakhina views about teaching appear similar to those of Professors Mapas and Mabina. They saw teaching as a profession in which are expected to continuously to focus on their learning and development. In addition, they appeared to consider teaching as a technical and a creative profession. Professor Rakhina added that teaching should be oriented to achieving students’ learning goals and objectives. It appears Dr. Rakhina is what Cranton (2001) refers to as the caring teacher. She seems interested in establishing a warm and friendly atmosphere in the classroom by providing support, encouraging good relationships among students, and making sure the needs and feelings of each student are considered. Similarly, she appears to subscribe to the transmission and nurturing perspectives of teaching (Pratt and Associates, 1998).

Professor Rakhina emphasized a number of interrelated factors that guide her teaching. She said:

_ The main influence is to follow the guidelines which are set up by the institutional higher authority, the administration and how they allow me to work with students and the social condition of my surroundings. The higher authority controls the circumstances to guide teaching in the classroom. In addition, positive circumstances influence positive teaching no doubt. But at the same time, institutions surrounding environments also influence our teaching._
Alam et al. (2010) indicate that successful teaching requires teachers to take into account several contextual issues that impact the teaching process, such as the classroom and institutional environment, as well as the socio-cultural and political environments.

Professor Rakhina appears to indicate that these issues guide her teaching approach. Further, Dr. Rakhina explained that her teaching perspective involves making students become “curious about learning and to apply the learning knowledge in their own life to upgrade students’ learning and their morality.” Similar to the views of the other participants, Professor Rakhina’s approach to teaching appears to draw on the transmission perspective, which involves the transfer of knowledge to the students. She also believed in the development of morality and ethics in students, which indicates that she saw the development of the students’ intellectual, moral, and spiritual characteristics as major components of her teaching. It could be argued that Dr. Rakhina also subscribes to the developmental teaching perspective as she seeks to help students cultivate new ways to explore the subject matter.

Professor Rakhina further described how the values and beliefs inform her teaching perspective.

*Values and beliefs have an important part to guide my teaching. For example, being honest to my duty and responsibility of a teacher, always being the supporter of truth do guide me to make sure to give the proper teaching to my students. Only teachers can make a good generation. Teachers can make it better or worse.*

Similar to the views expressed by the other participants, Professor Rakhina’s teaching values and beliefs reflect what in Bangladesh is widely perceived as effective teaching. According to Masum (2008), the people of Bangladesh generally believe that teaching
should contribute to not only the student’s intellectual development, but to their moral and spiritual development as well. Dr. Rakhina appears to subscribe to that belief.

Professor Rakhina indicated that teachers were engaged in national partisan politics in Bangladesh for a one principal reason. According to her, “In Bangladesh, the situation seems rude. A majority of teachers are involved in partisan politics and political activities directly or indirectly to pursue their own goal and power.” Professor Rakhina’s opinion on this issue appeared similar to that expressed by the other participants. Personal benefits and power appear to be the key drivers of teacher engagement in partisan politics.

I asked Professor Rakhina if teacher engagement in national partisan politics affected her classroom practices, and she responded in this way:

*Partisan political views change one’s motives, goals, morality....so it’s more than obvious it will affect the student when a teacher is involved with partisan politics. Two things happen in this case. Firstly, it drives the students towards patriotism (the goal of politics) encourage them [and] teach them to love the country. Secondly, it makes them partially aggressive, blind with power. The point to be noted is that teachers start to deviate from their own curriculum and activities because of their engagement in national partisan politics.*

Like her colleagues, Professor Rakhina acknowledges the major problem with teacher engagement in partisan politics, which is that it takes time away from their professional duties and responsibilities. However, she sees some merit in teacher engagement in partisan politics. She suggests that such partisan political engagement might help foster patriotism among students and perhaps encourage them to seek leadership positions in their parties and the country in the future. Dr. Rakhina indicated that teacher engagement in partisan politics might influence their curriculum and classroom practice, an issue emphasized by all the participants.
On the issue of the way teacher engagement in partisan politics influenced their classroom effectiveness, Professor Rakhina indicated:

*I found it has affected our classroom effectiveness. The class time allotment is fixed. There can be lack of timing because of partisan political discussion or share the ideology with the students in the classroom. Teacher moves away from their main goal that is teaching and the main purpose of their classes lag behind.*

Similar to the views expressed by her colleagues, Dr. Makhina appears to indicate that teachers should focus on teaching the course syllabus. As class duration and the number of classes for a course are prefixed, teachers are expected to finish the prescribed syllabus within the timeframe. Professor Rakhina pointed to the difficulty teachers experienced in introducing new material outside the prescribed syllabi for their classes partly due to the time they spent on partisan political activities. Like the other participants, Dr. Rakhina thought that partisan political engagement by teachers made it difficult for them to complete the course syllabi in time for the final examination. Ahmed (2013) makes a similar point, indicating that as teachers engage in partisan politics, they appear to lose their accountability to the profession, students, and society partly due to their failure to meet the students’ learning needs.

Professor Rakhina thought that teacher engagement in national partisan politics affected student learning, affection, and attention.

*Student learning relies on the teachers. In this case, how the teacher teaches depends on that. But no doubt in Bangladesh, teacher engagement in national partisan politics affects student learning, affection and attention. In addition, by the engagement of teachers in national partisan politics also affected the relationships between teachers and students. It also causes students to lose their learning interest in Bangladeshi higher educational institutions and to go outside country for their higher education degree."

Professor Rakhina appears to emphasize that student learning, affection, and attention in the classroom is impacted by the relationship between the teacher and the student. As
Hughes and Chen (2011) indicate, “Supportive and positive relationships between teachers and students ultimately promote a sense of school belonging and encourage students to participate cooperatively in classroom activities” (p. 278). Partly because of teacher engagement in partisan politics, students might feel they were not being supported by their teachers. This seeming lack of support by teachers might encourage students who parents could afford it to seek further studies abroad. These students may decide to not return home following their studies, which might contribute to the brain drain in the country.

I asked Professor Rakhina how teacher engagement in national politics affected the institutions. She indicated that,

*Students and teachers constitute the institutions. So the effect can make the institution not only scholar’s home but also the shelter to give a nation some valuable humans. When teachers are engaged in partisan politics the harmony of balance of peace and rules in the institution get hampered.*

As stated elsewhere in this thesis, teacher engagement in partisan politics encourages students to engage in partisan politics. In addition, student engagement in partisan politics often leads to the establishment of political party branches by them on university campuses. The existence of such party branches often leads to open and violent conflicts and fights among students because of party loyalty. Such conflicts and fights often lead to campus-wide strikes, which result in injuries and in some cases, student deaths (Masum, 2008; Monem & Baniamin, 2010). Dr. Rakhina implies that partisan political activities by both teachers and students are likely to damage or undermine the reputation of universities as institutions of higher learning in the country.
I asked Professor Rakhina if there were any advantages for teachers engaged in national partisan politics.

*It’s practical but rude that in Bangladesh majority of politically active teachers have just a tag of teacher. Politically they have power, and money under the faithful cover of teaching. When a teacher is involved in partisan politics it becomes easier for him to jump into the next promotion without facing any obstacle even if he does not have the required qualification, experience and capability.*

Professor Rakhina appears to agree with her colleagues that teachers are likely to get some personal benefits, such as promotions, largely because of their partisan loyalty.

I asked Professor Rakhina if there were any challenges arising from the engagement of Bangladeshi teachers in national partisan politics. She indicated:

*Teaching is an honorable position in our society. But now-a-days teachers have lost their positions by engaging in national partisan politics. Suppose when I was student I respected most of my teachers but now I don’t believe students respect us like I did when I was a student.*

Like Dr. Mapas, Dr. Rakhina indicates that teacher engagement in partisan politics is likely to cost them their honour and prestige, especially when they prioritize their partisan activities over their professional roles and responsibilities. The people of Bangladesh consider teaching an honourable profession; however, that view of the profession is likely to be diminished by their partisan political engagement since it might interfere with student learning (Alam et al., 2007).

Finally, Professor Rakhina offered a suggestion about teacher engagement in national partisan politics.

*My understanding is we can belong to a political ideology but we need to avoid showing our support and direct engagement with any partisan political party.*
This issue was emphasized by all four participants in this study. Teacher should refrain from participating in blatant partisan political activities on campuses, including in their classrooms.

Chapter 4 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of this study. The interview data were organized into thematic categories. The categories related to the ways teacher engagement in national partisan politics influenced their teaching, learning by the students, the two educational institutions for which they worked as well as the teachers’ perceptions of the benefits and challenges arising from their engagement in national partisan politics. In addition, the findings discussed the participants’ perspectives on teaching.

The next and final chapter discusses the findings of the study, the recommendations arising from the study, and suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways teacher engagement in national partisan politics in two Bangladeshi higher educational institutions influenced the teaching of four university teachers, the learning of students, as well as the two educational institutions for which they worked. The study also examined the teachers' perceptions of the benefits and challenges arising from their engagement in national partisan politics.

The purpose of this study was achieved by addressing the following research questions:

1. In what ways does teacher engagement in partisan politics influence classroom professional practices?
2. How does teacher engagement in partisan politics influence student learning?
3. What do teachers see as the benefits and challenges to them from their engagement in partisan politics?
4. How does teacher engagement in partisan politics influence the institutions for which they work?

Four teachers who taught in two Bangladeshi universities participated in interviews for this study. Each shared their perspectives on teaching as well as teacher engagement in partisan politics. Based on the research and interview questions, five broad themes emerged from the data. These five themes relate to the ways teacher engagement in national partisan politics influenced their classroom practices, how teacher engagement in
national partisan politics influenced students learning, the benefits and challenges to teachers of their engagement in national partisan politics, and how teacher engagement in partisan politics influenced the institutions for which they worked.

While the key focus of the study is exploring teacher engagement in partisan politics in Bangladesh, some discussion of their perspectives on teaching in higher education was viewed as critical as that discussion would help to place their views about their engagement in partisan politics in a broader institutional context. The thinking was that understanding the participants’ perspectives on teaching, including, for example, what they saw as the key purpose and goals of teaching, their teaching philosophy as well as their teaching values and beliefs, would help us to better understand their views on their engagement in partisan politics. In short, the assumption was made in the study that some relationship was likely to exist between the way the participants described their teaching perspectives and their engagement in partisan politics in the country. Thus, the participants also discussed their perspectives on teaching in higher education.

This chapter discusses the findings of the study. It concludes with some recommendations arising from the study and offers suggestions for further research.

**Discussion of the Research Findings**

As stated in the preceding paragraph five broad themes emerged from the data collected for this study. These themes are discussed in the section that follows.
Findings #1: Participants’ Perspectives on Teaching

The findings of the study revealed the participants shared identical perspectives on teaching in a university environment. Based on the work of Pratt and Associates (1998), all of them appear to subscribe to the transmission perspectives on teaching. They all seem to view teaching as the transmission or effective delivery of content to students. This view expressed by Dr. Mapas was typical of those expressed by his colleagues “To teach means to educate students; to enlighten followers [i.e., students]”. There was also a sense the participants saw teaching as the quantitative increase in student knowledge and understanding of material in the course syllabi. The participants’ perspective on teaching closely aligns with what Cranton’s (2001) describes as the ‘organized teacher’. They appear to see themselves as content experts, whose primary responsibility was to deliver content material to their students in an effective and efficient way. Based on their perspective on teaching, it could be argued that they were probably teacher-centered as they viewed their students as blank slates and their role was to feed them with the required information.

While all the participants shared the transmission teaching perspective for the most part, a couple of them appeared to subscribe to the nurturing and developmental perspectives as well. Rakhina saw teaching as “like caring for our sons and daughters, caring about their future”. Further, she argued that teaching should “make students capable enough to have new inventions and new dimensions” in the learning process. In addition, Dr. Mohid thought teaching was also like “being friendly with our students” in the learning process. The views of both participants appear to also reflect those of the caring teacher (Cranton, 2001) given their desire to establish a warm and friendly relation with the students. In
addition, the participants’ perspective appear to reflect some of Hare’s (1993) qualities and virtues of good teachers. Hare indicates good teachers display qualities like, humility, courage, impartiality, open-mindedness, empathy, enthusiasm, judgement, and imagination.

In addition, the findings revealed that some spiritual overtone appeared to undergird the teaching of all four participants based on the values and beliefs that informed their work. Professor Rakhina spoke of her desire to help students upgrade their learning and “morality”. Dr. Mohid saw as “his sacred duty...worship of ebadhad and do everything for making happy the Almighty...through teaching”. Professor Mohid appears to be spiritually committed to his profession and his students. He sees himself as accountable to the Almighty God for his teaching. Like other Bangladeshi nationals, I do share Dr. Mohid’s view about the spiritual overtone that undergirds teaching, as I see the profession as having some prophetic value, giving its focus on the student’s intellectual, spiritual and moral development. Dr. Mabina spoke about her desire to “show them [her students] the right path in their future”. Dr. Mapas spoke about the need to prepare students “to do the right work and leave bad deeds”. All these views imply the participants saw teaching as political as in addition to their teaching perspectives, their values, spiritual, and moral beliefs seemed to frame their work. Further, they all appeared to see teaching as an honourable, noble and creative profession, a view that is consistent with that of authors like Lumpkin (2008) and Fenstermacher, 1990).
Findings #2: How Teacher Engagement in Partisan Politics Influences Classroom Professional Practices

The findings revealed the participants thought teacher engagement in partisan politics took time away from adequate preparation for their professional duties and responsibilities, including research, publication, and teaching. There was considerable unanimity among them on this issue. They all thought that teacher engagement in partisan politics left them with inadequate time to focus on their professional development activities, including preparation for classes as well as scholarly research and publications, and that seriously undermined their ability to function effectively and efficiently as teachers. Professor Mapas lamented the fact that teachers engaged in national partisan politics were unable to “complete the syllabus in time”, thereby putting students in jeopardy for the end of year public exams. Professor Mabina thought teachers who were engaged in partisan politics did not have adequate time to engage “in academic as well as professional development activities”, two issues central to their effective and efficient performance as teachers. The views expressed by these participants are consistent with what has been reported in the literature (Alam et al., 2007; Rabbani & Chowdhury, 2014). These authors argue that teacher engagement in partisan politics in Bangladesh continues to influence the quality and effectiveness of classroom teachers because they devote a considerable amount of their time on partisan activities.

However, while the participants thought teacher engagement in partisan politics adversely influenced their professional practices in the classroom, they were also of the view that, as citizens, teachers had the right to participate in the country’s political system, including partisan politics. In other words, they thought teacher engagement in
partisan politics was acceptable as long as they did not bring that activity to the workplace, but they engaged in those activities in their spare time. Professor Mohid thought as a citizen, he had the right to “support a party” as long as his professional duties and responsibilities were given priority. Similarly, Dr. Mapas saw engagement in partisan politics as his “personal right” as a Bangladeshi national. Interestingly, Dr. Mapas even saw some merit in teacher engagement in partisan politics as it helped create political awareness among the students and “encourage them to develop leadership skills for society wellbeing in the future”. I do agree with Dr. Mapas that teaching appears to be a creative profession. As he suggests, teachers should focus much more on professional development activities that are likely to enhance their practice such as the intellectual, moral, spiritual and physical development of their students. Nevertheless, the concern though appeared to have been that they thought teachers spent far too much time on partisan political activities than on their professional roles and responsibilities as teachers. I could not agree more with the participants. As citizens, I believe teachers have a duty to participate in the country’s political system including partisan political activities, but not at the expense of their professional roles and responsibilities, which, the participants agreed, appeared to be the case.

Findings #3: How Teacher Engagement in Partisan Politics Influences Student Learning

All the participants thought teacher engagement in partisan politics undermined the learning environment for their students. They all thought teacher engagement in partisan politics adversely influenced “student learning, affection and attention” in the classroom. Based on my experience as a Bangladeshi national and much of the literature,
I would agree with all participants here. Teacher and student engagement in partisan politics, which is an increasing trend in Bangladesh, encourages students to focus less on their studies. As students see their teachers as role models, the participants thought one way teacher engagement in partisan politics affected student learning was that it encouraged them to also become engaged in partisan politics, which took time away from their studies. In addition to the adverse influence on student learning, the participants indicated that student engagement in partisan politics often led to the establishment of political party branches by them on university campuses. The existence of such party branches often led to open and violent conflicts and fights among students because of party loyalty. Such conflicts and fights also led to campus-wide strikes, which often resulted in injuries and in some cases, student deaths. This issue has been widely reported in the literature (Masum, 2008; Monem & Baniamin, 2010).

Although the participants did not think of a way teacher engagement in partisan politics promoted learning by their students, it appeared as if students whose partisan political activities were identical to those of their teachers received some favours from teachers in the learning process. As Dr. Mohid indicated, students whose party affiliations were different from those of their teachers hardly got along with their teachers in the classroom and that did not bode well for learning by those students. However, in those instances where students and teachers shared the same party affiliation, the students appeared to benefit from the affection of those teachers, and that affection served as incentives and encouragement in the learning process. The participants thought that by encouraging and even supporting students’ partisan activities on campus however, it was
likely the teachers undermined the learning culture of their institutions, a point that been emphasized by Ahmed (2013).

**Finding #4: The Benefits and Challenges to Teachers Resulting from Their Engagement in Partisan Politics**

The findings of the study revealed the participants thought teachers who were engaged in partisan politics benefitted from such engagement, probably due to the transactional relationship that existed between them and their political parties, especially the parties in power. All of them agreed that teachers received personal benefits, like financial rewards and promotions, primarily because of their engagement in partisan politics. Mohid thought that teachers engaged in partisan politics acquired “different positions and power…and undue financial benefits”. Similarly, Dr. Mabina noted, “besides personal benefits, they also got extra appointments and power positions”. Dr. Rakhina indicated that it was easier for a teacher engaged in partisan politics “to jump into the next position even if he does not have the experience and capacity”. They all thought that in many cases, those teachers did not merit such rewards and promotions. This issue of benefits to Bangladeshi teachers who are engaged in partisan politics even though they do not appear to deserve them has been widely reported in the literature. Panday (2009a), Manan (2010), and Monem (2007) have concluded that in Bangladesh, partisan political loyalty, not professional merit, determines who gets ahead. Similarly, Nazrul (2016) indicates that in Bangladesh, teachers engaged in partisan politics “achieve academic positions without their academic excellence” (p. 1) and that such practice affects the educational quality in the institutions. The findings of this study indicate the participants thought that was the case in the country.
However, although all the participants acknowledged the perceived benefits to teachers stemming from their engagement in partisan politics, a couple of them also spoke about some challenges of teacher engagement in partisan politics. They thought teachers who were engaged in partisan politics appeared to lose their honour and respect in a society that values and respects the work that teachers do. Dr. Mapas pointed to teachers losing “their values and are disrespected by students and the society”. Similarly, Dr. Rakhina thought Bangladeshi teachers “have lost their position...I don’t believe students respect us like I did when I was a student”. This issue is very important as much of the literature appear to emphasize the perceived benefits of engagement to teachers, and there is hardly any discussion of the perceived challenges to teachers of their engagement in partisan politics. While I do agree that teacher engagement in partisan politics might help teachers to achieve tangible wealth and positional power, I also view their engagement as a factor in losing their honor, respect and social acceptance. As a Bangladeshi national and former university teacher in the country, I believe the honor and respect teachers enjoy from the students and society is a source of infinite benefit compared to the limited tangible benefit they receive from their engagement in partisan politics.

Finding #5: Influence of Teacher Engagement in Partisan Politics on Educational Institutions

The findings revealed the research participants believed that teacher engagement in partisan politics undermined the reputation of universities as institutions of higher learning in the country. The participants thought the reputation of especially higher education institutions depended in part on the quality of the academic work of teachers
and students, but that quality was comprised by teacher engagement in partisan politics. Dr. Mohid indicated, “teachers utilize their time and effort to successfully support a political party and not for the academic development work and academic responsibility.”

I believe teachers’ need time to prepare and develop their classroom teaching strategy, lecture plans and materials, and participate in professional development activities. Inadequate time for preparation due partly to their engagement in partisan politics might create obstacles, such as the use of classroom teaching materials that may not be related to the curriculum, teaching materials that do not reflect modern concepts or are not up-to-date, and graduate students who may not be well prepared to successfully perform in the workplace. These issues are likely to undermine the quality, credibility, and reputation of the institutions.

Dr. Mapas indicated the “institutions lose their recognition and positions of identify over the entire world”, partly because of teacher engagement in partisan politics. In addition, Dr. Mabina expressed the view that the “institution suffers as a result of non-academic activities”, which, to her, included the engagement by teachers and students in partisan political activities. The participants thought Bangladeshi higher educational institutions were negatively affected by teacher and student engagement in partisan politics, because a university’s reputation depended in part on student academic performance as well as the teaching, research, and publication work by faculty. In the absence of a conducive academic environment for these activities partly because of teacher and student engagement of partisan politics, the institution’s reputation for knowledge creation and dissemination would likely suffer. These issues have been

The participants offered one main suggestion, and that was teachers and students should refrain from engaging in partisan political activities on campus. They acknowledged that, as citizens, teachers and students had the right to participate in the nation’s political system. However, they thought teachers and students were much better off focussing much more on their academic activities, than on partisan politics. I do agree with the participants’ suggestions and several other authors who argue that teachers should refrain from partisan political activities in the workplace, and instead focus much more on the successful performance of their professional roles and responsibilities (Masum, 2008; Monem & Baniamin, 2010).

**Recommendations Arising from the Study**

Based on the findings of this study, the literature reviewed, as well as my own university teaching and research experiences as a Bangladeshi national in the country, the following broad recommendations are being offered concerning teachers’ engagement in national partisan politics in Bangladesh.

The first recommendation relates to amendment or reform of the 1973 Public Universities Ordinance (PUO) Act. Professor Mohid saw the PUO as probably the most significant factor for teacher and student engagement in partisan politics in higher education institutions in the country. Although the other participants did not directly mention the PUO during the interviews, the issue came up during the transcript review process meeting, and they all agreed the ordinance was the root cause of teacher
engagement in partisan politics in the country. They thought the ordinance allowed Bangladeshi political parties, especially the political parties in power, to use teachers and students as their political party agents on university campuses. Several scholars like Middlehurst and Woodfield (2004) and Alam et al. (2007) contend the PUO is seen as the root cause of much of the politicization of the public university campuses in the country. I share the views of these scholars as well as the participants in this study that the Bangladeshi government should consider reforming the 1973 PUO to make clear that partisan political activities were no longer allowed on university campuses, including in elections to university administrative bodies. That said, the reform should also acknowledge that as Bangladeshi citizens, teachers and students have the right and may be even a responsibility to actively participate in the nation’s political system, including in partisan politics as they see fit; however, they should not be engaged in partisan politics on campuses and such activities should certainly not be at the expenses of their professional roles and responsibilities.

The second recommendation is that teachers should focus primarily on their professional development and academic work, rather than partisan politics. The participants noted that largely because of personal and financial reasons, most university teachers in Bangladeshi privileged political engagement activities over their professional development activities the findings of the study indicate that teachers should utilize their time and effort on their professional responsibilities and duties. As some scholars (Khaleduzzaman, 2014; Hare, 1993) indicate, teachers should strive to foster their students’ humanity by focussing on their professional work. I could not agree more; by focussing much more on their professional responsibilities, teachers will be able to
enhance and foster the intellectual, moral, spiritual, and physical development of their students.

The third recommendation is that recruitment and promotion to academic and staff positions at the university should be based primarily on their professionalism, academic experience, and qualifications rather than their partisan political loyalty as appears to currently be the case in the country. The participants agreed that basing faculty and staff recruitment and promotion primarily on partisan political loyalty was likely to lead to conflicts among faculty and staff that in turn might lead to a hostile work environment.

In addition, as makers “of a prosperous and educated nation” (Khaleduzzaman, 2014, p. 15), teachers should focus on helping to prepare students for their future roles and responsibilities in society. The participants appeared to see the role of teachers, especially university teachers, as critical to the development of an educated and prosperous nation. Accordingly, they cautioned teachers to focus on their professional responsibilities instead of partisan politics to help contribute to the development of the next generation of Bangladeshi citizens. In addition, like their teachers, students have the right to participate in the country’s political systems, including partisan politics, if they wish to do so. However, given the potential adverse consequences for students of their engagement in partisan politics as brought out in this study, they would be much better off not to engage in partisan politics during the studies, especially when they are on campus. The proposed reforms of the 1973 PUO should emphasize this point.
The fourth recommendation relates to the establishment of accountability for teachers based on professional ethics and spiritual values. I believe that in some countries, teachers are guided by a Code of Ethics, which, to my knowledge, does not exist for Bangladeshi teachers. It is likely that teachers might benefit from a code of ethics that would clearly spell out the circumstances in which they might engage or not engage in partisan politics. In other words, such a code might help to foster a focus on teacher professional responsibility, accountability and spiritual values, and hopefully specify circumstances under which their participation in politics might be acceptable.

Finally, it is my view that the government of Bangladesh should focus on improving the nation’s education system to provide quality education to citizens. Government and opposition leaders should focus on providing professional training and development opportunities for teachers, supporting higher education institutions, and encouraging teachers and students in higher education institutions to not engage in partisan political activities. Further, I believe Bangladeshi authorities should encourage and recognize research work and publications by academics, provide opportunities for promotion based on merit rather than partisan affiliation, and encourage higher education institutions to develop and implement strategies that create a favorable learning and teaching atmosphere in those institutions. The focus of these measures should be on helping students learn. In my view, for Bangladesh to compete globally, the country must support teachers’ capacity to develop students as future leaders. The country’s leaders may wish to give serious consideration to supporting teachers across the country, especially those who work in higher education institutions. Without such support, it is
likely that student learning would be undermined and Bangladeshi society would be adversely affected.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

This study focused on the ways teacher engagement in partisan politics might influence their teaching, learning by their students, the institutions for which they work, as well as the benefits and challenges of such engagement. Such a study could yield valuable and insightful information by following the teachers in higher education institutions over a number of years during their teaching career. In addition, it would be very helpful to compare the views of teachers with many years of service to the profession to those who are starting a teaching career in higher education institutions.

In addition, a broader sampling and more comprehensive study involving all key stakeholder groups, such as party officials, university administration, students, and parents of students could provide a much better understanding of the broader implications of teacher engagement in partisan politics. Furthermore, it would be much more beneficial to study not only teachers but also other professionals like doctors, lawyers, nurses, etc. who might be engaged in national partisan politics. Such a study would provide a more balanced view of the experiences of a broader range of professionals relative to their engagement in partisan politics in the country. In addition, a comparative study of the experiences of teachers who are engaged in partisan politics and those who are not engaged in partisan politics could provide further insightful and valuable information. Replicating the study on a countrywide basis to include secondary and primary school teachers could provide rich and important information on the experiences
of teachers across the various education sectors who are engaged in partisan politics. Finally, a study that explores the engagement of workers in other sectors of the Bangladeshi economy in partisan politics, and how such engagement might influence national economic and social development might be helpful.

**Concluding Comments**

This study has concluded that teacher engagement in partisan politics in Bangladesh influenced the professional practices of university teachers in several ways. The participants also discussed the way teacher engagement in partisan politics influenced student learning in the two universities that included the study participants. They suggested there are benefits and challenges of teacher engagement in partisan politics. The participants agreed the 1973 Ordinance appeared to have created the opportunity for university teachers to become engaged in partisan politics. However, they suggested teachers should focus much more on their professional duties and responsibilities than partisan politics.

Bangladesh is a small and economically deprived country with a limited land mass and dense population. As a HRD student, I see the work of teachers as a key component of human resource development. For a country like Bangladesh, with limited natural resources, human resources become a primary resource and the teacher’s role in developing them becomes critical. I believe the 21st century is probably a good time for the Bangladeshi government to continuously reflect on what it and its citizens can do to develop a productive workforce in the country. Given the critical role higher education institutions, and educators in particular, play in the country’s development, the
government of Bangladesh may wish to pay serious attention to the fate of higher education institutions in the country. In addition, the government should seriously consider addressing teachers’ demand for increased supports to enhance their teaching capabilities, capacity, and professional development in contrast to encouraging teachers to engage in national partisan politics.

The Bangladeshi people believe the teacher performs a preeminent role when it comes to the education of students. Thus, the Bangladeshi government should encourage teachers to engage only in teaching, research work, and publications as well as community service. Furthermore, teachers should utilize their knowledge and expertise to be develop their professionalism and classroom practices for the students’ success. For that, the government of Bangladesh should refrain from encouraging teachers to engage in national partisan politics. At the same time, the Bangladeshi government can consider ways to make the professional attractive through a review of the salary structure and incentives for teachers to attract quality and competent teachers.

The participants in this study appear to have expressed similar views. All four participants agreed they have the capability and capacity to develop the nation’s future leaders. Many scholars (Ahmmed, 2013; Alam et al., 2011; Khaleduzzaman, 2014; Masum, 2008; Monem & Baniamin, 2010; Rabbani & Chowdhury, 2014) wonder why they should be encouraged to become partisan political workers, as is the case in Bangladesh. They believe that engagement in partisan politics may not be an honorable activity for Bangladeshi teachers, especially those who work in the universities; rather they should focus on students’ intellectual, moral, physical, and spiritual development.
Based on the participants’ suggestions in this study, it is clear that this does not appear to be the case in Bangladesh.


http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00002390.htm


APPENDIX “A”

Research Ethics Board Approval
Research Ethics Board
Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Mohammad Omar Shiddike
301 Greer Court
Regina, SK S4N 1T7

SUPERVISOR
Dr. Abu Beeke

FUNDER(S)

TITLE
Teacher Engagement in National Politics: A Bangladesh Case Study

APPROVAL OF
Application for Behavioural Research Ethics Review
Appendix A - Consent Form
Appendix B - Letter of Initial Contact
Appendix C - Guiding Questions for Interviews

APPROVED ON
December 9, 2014

RENEWAL DATE
December 9, 2015

Full Board Meeting  
Delegated Review  

CERTIFICATION
The University of Regina Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named research project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this research project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol, consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS
In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month of the current expiry date each year the study remains open, and upon study completion.

Please refer to the following website for further instructions: http://www.uregina.ca/research/REB/main.shtml

Dr. Larena Hoeber, Chair
University of Regina
Research Ethics Board

Please send all correspondence to:
Office for Research, Innovation and Partnership
University of Regina
Research and Innovation Centre 109
Regina, SK S4S 0A2
Telephone: (306) 585-4775   Fax: (306) 585-4693   research.ethics@uregina.ca
APPENDIX “B”

Consent Form
Project Title:

Teacher Engagement in National Partisan Politics: A Bangladesh Case Study.

Researcher:

Mohammad Omar Shiddike
E-mail: shiddikm@uregina.ca

Research Supervisor:

Dr. Abu Bockarie
Associate Professor
Faculty of Education
University of Regina
Phone: 306 585 5601
E-mail: Abu.Bockarie@uregina.ca

Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the research:

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways teacher engagement in national partisan politics in two Bangladeshi higher educational institutions influenced the teaching of four university teachers, the learning of students, as well as the two educational institutions for which they worked. The study also examined the teachers’ perceptions of the benefits and challenges arising from their engagement in national partisan politics.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was achieved by addressing the following research questions:

1. In what ways does teacher engagement in partisan politics influence classroom professional practices?

2. How does teacher engagement in partisan politics influence student learning?
3. What do teachers see as the benefits and challenges to them from their engagement in partisan politics?

4. How does teacher engagement in partisan politics influence the institutions for which they work?

**Procedures:**

- You are invited to participate in a one-to-one in-depth interview, which will last for about an hour;
- You will be required to speak about your perspectives on your engagement in national partisan politics and how it influences their classroom practice;
- The interview will be tape-recorded with your permission, using a digital audio recorder and the interviews will be transcribed.
- The interview will take place at any location of your choice.
- You are encouraged to ask the interviewer any questions about the study, specifically, the procedures and goals of the interview as well as the study, and your role as an interviewee.

**Potential Risks:**

- There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in an interview for this research.

**Potential Benefits:**

- There are no personal benefits as a result of your participating in an interview for this study.
- However, you will be contributing to a study of Bangladeshi teacher’s engagement in national partisan politics and the influences of some engagement on students, institutions.

**Compensation:**

- Participation in this study is perceived as a voluntary use of time. Accordingly, you will not be compensated for participating in the study

**Confidentiality:**

- Your confidentiality will be assured. Your name or any other personal descriptors of you will not be used in the preparation of the thesis. Your identity will not be revealed, and no comments will be attributed to you personally, as interview data will be coded using pseudonyms.
- Quotations from you may be used in the preparation of the thesis as well as in presentation and publications. However, your real name will not be
associated with the quotes. To repeat, pseudonyms will be used in the preparation of the thesis, presentations, and publications.

- Indirectly identifying information (e.g. a male or female) may be used in the thesis, presentations or publications arising from the study.

**Storage of Data:**

- During the data collection and analysis phase of the study, the data will be stored on the researcher password protected laptop computer.
- After the study is complete, and the thesis is prepared, the data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher home, 301 Greer Court, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.
- The data will be stored for five years; after that period, the data will be destroyed.

**Right to Withdraw:**

- Your participation is voluntary and you can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort
- Your right to withdraw your data from the study will apply until about 15 days after the interview. You can withdraw by simply contacting the researcher by phone or e-mail. (Please see phone number and e-mail address above)
- If you choose to withdraw from the study within 15 days of your interview, your interview data will be destroyed, and will not be incorporated into the research report, presentations or publication
- Please note that your right to withdraw data from the study will apply until about 15 days after your interview. After this date, it is possible that some form of research dissemination will have already occurred and it may not be possible to withdraw your data.

**Follow up:**

- To obtain results of the study, please e-mail or call the researcher.

**Questions or Concerns:**

- If you have questions or concerns about this study, please contact the researcher or his supervisor.
- This project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Regina, Research Ethics Board on (insert date). Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the committee at 306 585 4775 or by e-mail to: research.ethics@uregina.ca
Consent:

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the description provided; you have had an opportunity to ask questions and your questions have been answered. You consent to participate in the research project. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to you for your records.

Name of the participant ______________________________________________________

Signature of the participant ______________________________________________________

Date __________________________

Researcher Signature ______________________________________________________

Date __________________________
APPENDIX “C”

Invitation to Participate
Invitation to Participate

December 10, 2014

Re: Teacher Engagement in National Partisan Politics: A Bangladesh Case Study.

Hello:

My name is Mohammad Omar Shiddike, a student in the Faculty of Education, University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. I am a Bangladeshi national, and I am currently in Bangladesh for data collection for my Master’s thesis. The title of my thesis is: Teacher Engagement in National Partisan Politics: A Bangladesh Case Study.

The purpose of this study is to examine teacher engagement in national partisan politics in Bangladesh and the implications of such engagement for their classroom professional practices. Specifically, the study will explore the ways teacher engagement in national partisan politics in two Bangladeshi higher educational institutions influences their teaching, learning by students, as well as the two educational institutions for which they work. The study will also examine the teachers’ perceptions of the benefits and challenges arising from their engagement in national partisan politics.

The proposed study is significant in that it contributes to the understanding of the implications of teacher engagement in national partisan politics in higher education institutions in Bangladesh. Such understanding is most important for the two Bangladeshi universities at which the study will be conducted, as there is very limited research available that examines the ways teacher engagement in national partisan politics influences their classroom professional practices in higher education institutions in the country. It is anticipated that the study will be a useful contribution to the body of research on the implications of teacher engagement in national partisan politics in university settings. In addition, the findings of the study and the recommendations offered should directly benefit the university administrations at both institutions in their attempt to fully understand the implications of teacher engagement in national partisan politics for their respective institutions. The study should also be of interest to teachers engaged in national partisan politics across the two universities, as they may find the insights useful in adapting their instructional strategies to enhance learning by their students.

Further, the study participants and other teachers in higher education institutions in Bangladesh may use the insights gained from the study to raise critical questions about themselves, the structure of the university system as well as other factors that may be influencing educational system in the country. In addition, university students at the two study institutions may benefit from the findings of the study in their continuous attempt to maximize their learning at the institutions. The study may also be of value to university administrators, instructors and students in universities elsewhere. For example,
universities may use the participants' insights from the study to identify some underlying issues associated with teacher engagement in national partisan politics to inform their practice and policy. Teachers may use the findings of the study to enhance their instructional practices and students may use the findings of the study to develop strategies that might enhance their ability to learn.

This project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Regina Research Ethics Board on (insert Date). Any questions regarding your rights as a participant you can call or e-mail to the committee at +1 (306) 585 4775 or research.ethics@uregina.ca.

I write to invite you to participate in a tape-recorded interview for this study. Shortly, I will contact you by telephone or e-mail to confirm your willingness to participate in an interview. You have my personal assurance the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. All data will be coded through the use of pseudonyms. Any personal descriptors of you will be removed prior to the preparation of the research report. The data will remain in my database, and any records on computer disk will be kept in a secure folder requiring a password for access.

If you agree to participate in the interview, you will be required to complete a consent form before the interview. I estimate the interviews will require approximately one (1) hour of your time. I will also e-mail your interview transcripts at a later date for review to ensure accuracy. I estimate the transcript review process will last for about 30 minutes.

This is a voluntary contribution of your time and thoughts and you may withdraw your participation from the study at any time without consequences. If you have questions about this study, please feel free to contact me by e-mail at shiddikm@uregina.ca

I hope you very much for agreeing to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Mohammad Omar Shiddike
APPENDIX “D”

Guiding Questions for Interviews
Guiding Questions for Interviews

1. How do you define teaching? What does it mean, “to teach”?
2. How do you decide what you teach to your students?
3. What are your goals and objectives in teaching? What do you see as your primary duty as a teacher?
4. Describe the circumstances that guide your teaching.
5. How would you describe your teaching philosophy?
6. How would you describe the values and beliefs that guide your teaching?
7. How do you describe learning? How do you decide what your students learn?
8. What do you see as the primary goals and objectives of learning by your students?
9. How will you define the curriculum? What factors guide the development of the curriculum that you teach?
10. Why do you think teachers are engaged in national partisan politics in Bangladesh?
11. How does teacher engagement in national partisan politics affect their classroom practice?
12. Does engagement in national partisan politics affect teacher effectiveness in the classroom?
13. Does teacher engagement in national partisan politics affect student learning affection and attention?
14. In what ways does teacher engagement in national partisan politics affect students learning?
15. What are the benefits of teacher engagement in national partisan politics?
16. What are the challenges of teacher engagement in national partisan politics?
17. What do you believe is the effect on the institutions of teacher engagement in national politics?
18. What are the advantages facing Bangladeshi teachers relative to their engagement in national partisan politics?
19. What are the challenges facing Bangladeshi teachers relative to their engagement in national partisan politics?

Thank you