Learning in the Shadows:
Socialization into Elite Status through Private Tutoring Education in Urban Bangladesh

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Abstract

Private tutoring—or as it is synonymously known, shadow education—is a ubiquitous and well-known phenomenon, both globally and in Bangladesh. Millions of students engage in private tutoring, with UNESCO (2018) finding 92% of students in Bangladesh were taking private tutoring lessons in 2017, the highest among their sample of Asia-Pacific countries (p. 72). This mixed-methods study is an investigation of why students of elite status, who already enjoy significant privileges in their education, further engage in private tutoring. In this dissertation, I asked what role private tutoring centers play within the education and socialization of students into elite groups in urban Bangladesh. Employing a social reproduction framework as well as a critical realist approach, I used class observations, interviews, a questionnaire, and social media data to examine how students of higher socio-economic backgrounds were being shaped into eliteness at a tutoring center in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

I found through engaging at a well-resourced and reputed tutoring center, students were able to maintain and extend their different forms of capital—cultural, economic, affective and social—which in turn led to the cultivation of their eliteness. Within this tutoring space, practices of care and a personal approach to teaching led to students and staff building deep and trusting connections with each other. These rich relationships enhanced students' learning through affective means, taught them how to navigate hierarchical interactions and feel at ease in diverse contexts, as well as influenced students' embodied cultural capital through their teachers' own dispositions and attitudes.

I also found many students were completely opting out of English Medium schools to instead rely on private tutoring for all of their educational needs, particularly for their last two to three years of high school. This was due to an overall fall in the value of English Medium schooling, leading to what I contend is a watershed moment for the sector—where private tutoring is no longer viewed as just a supplement to schooling, but instead a de-facto requirement, and even a positive alternative.

For a secondary education environment in Bangladesh that is already heavily dominated by private and non-state actors, this moment portends a future where the role of non-state actors will deepen even further in the commodification and delivery of education. However, I argue what these findings ultimately mean is the neoliberal order in Bangladesh is one that is malleable and multifaceted; in its ability to hold rationalizing and market oriented forces in

productive tension with the relational richness and affective care demonstrated within these tutoring spaces.

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Chapter 1: Establishing the Phenomenon

Introduction

Shiyam,[1] a bright and chatty 17-year-old, started his interview about his educational journey, saying his parents wanted him at a young age to attend a "really good" English medium school (where the medium of instruction is English) in Dhaka, Bangladesh. So he took the admission test at one prestigious English medium school which he did not pass. He tried again at another similarly reputed school called Greenwood and succeeded, staying there from kindergarten all the way to grade eight. Shiyam then described how he had started engaging in both private tutoring and schooling from grade six onwards, leading him to having a hectic schedule and struggling to balance both.

> I would wake up at 6 am in the morning and go to school, and then I used to come back at 11 pm at night. Do you understand how long that is? It's *huge* [emphasis added]. After I came home, when would I study? Because after you return home, you need time to study. You need time to understand the content. There was no time to study.

Shiyam's experience of trying to balance both his classes at school and at tutoring from an early age is a practice common to many students in Bangladesh. Ninety-two percent of Bangladeshi students reported they received private tutoring in 2017, which UNESCO (2018) found to be the highest among its Asia-Pacific neighbors (p. 72). Many scholars of private tutoring understand private tutoring primarily as ways for students and their parents to ensure success in examinations or for the purposes of remedial lessons in English or other courses (Mahmud & Kenayathulla, 2018; Zhang, 2013). However, how can it be explained why students, such as Shiyam, who were already enrolled in a prestigious private school and thus presumedly receiving excellent lessons, were engaging in private tutoring? How can this phenomenon be understood for those like Shiyam who start seeking tutoring lessons four years before the urgency of their first high stakes exams in grade 10?

In the following sections of this chapter, I first establish the phenomenon of private tutoring education worldwide and in Bangladesh. I then discuss this study's research aims,

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[1] To maintain confidentiality, the names of all participants, schools, and tutoring centers used in this study have been changed to pseudonyms.

paradigms, and questions. I next preview the conceptual framework of the study through a diagrammatic description of how I conceptualized the cultural, social, and economic capitals at play in my site, as well as the relationships between different actors that inform the reproduction of elite status. I then provide definitions of important terms, followed by a discussion on the significance of the study. Finally, I outline how the remaining chapters of this dissertation are organized.

Situating the Phenomenon

In recent decades, private tutoring has evolved into a massive global reality; approximately a third of 15 year-olds from 64 countries from the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) were found to be engaged in private tutoring (Byun et al., 2018, p. 71). Private tutoring has also been established as a phenomenon of inquiry in East Asia, including in Japan, known for its *jukus* (Entrich, 2015; Lee, 2013; Matsuoka, 2015, 2018; Stevenson & Baker, 1992), South Korea for its *hagwons* (Choi & Park, 2016; Kim & Lee, 2010; Kim & Park, 2010), Taiwan for its *bǔxíbāns* (Liu, 2012; Roesgaard, 2006; Zhan, 2014), and mainland China (Zhang, 2014; Zhang & Bray, 2015, 2016). Across East and South Asia, private tutoring is prevalent across primary and secondary schooling as well as multiple grade levels. In South Korea for example, official statistics indicated, in 2019, 60% of elementary school students and 50% of high school students were engaging in private tutoring (KOSIS, 2019, line 27). A nationwide survey from India determined 48% of primary school students and 36% of secondary school students were engaging in private tutoring (Government of India, 2015, p. A-23).

More recently, Bray (2021) noted how within the African continent, SACMEQ data show not only increasing use of private tutoring across East African countries like Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, which already had high rates of private tutoring, but also substantially higher rates across Southern Africa. For example, Eswatini and Mozambique saw their sixth-grade enrollments in private tutoring accelerate from 1% and 10% in 2007, to 11% and 21% in 2013 respectively (p. 17).

In the case of Bangladesh in 2008, 40% of primary school students and 68% of secondary students were found to be engaged in private tutoring, a figure which increased to over 80% for students in grade 10 (Nath, 2011). Hamid et al. (2009) contended private tutoring

is such a common phenomenon within the Bangladeshi education system that it is “widely implemented at all stages of pre-tertiary education” (p. 284). In India, the states of Tripura and West Bengal (the states closest to Bangladesh geographically) showed the highest participation rates in private tutoring at 81% and 78% respectively (Government of India, 2015, p. 19). Within the literature, private tutoring is often synonymously referred to as shadow education, which I elaborate on below under key terms.

Research Aims, Paradigms, and Questions

Much existing research on private tutoring in Bangladesh focuses on the contours of tutoring itself, on its scale and nature, economic costs, determinants of supply and demand, and policy responses (Kim & Park, 2010; Sieverding et al., 2019; Zhang, 2019). These types of studies rely on a quantitative analysis of either international large-scale assessments, such as data from PISA, or more localized micro-analyses (Byun et al., 2018; Mahmud & Bray, 2017). Less attention has been paid to the practices of those of elite status, particularly why and how they are engaged in private tutoring when they are already accessing a well-resourced private school (Hartmann, 2008; Sieverding et al., 2019). Neither in the private tutoring nor elite schooling literature have tutoring centers themselves been analyzed as a mechanism that upper classes employ to strengthen their existing privileges in the education system—to learn the hidden curriculum needed to be successful in universities abroad, to gain membership into elite circles at home, and to acquire the necessary contacts and credentials to maintain their social and economic status.

Thus, this study was an investigation into why students, who already enjoy significant privileges in their education system, such as being enrolled in and successfully navigating private schools, engage in private tutoring. Through a critical investigation of a private tutoring center as a social site of the reproduction of elite status, this dissertation aimed to broaden the critical discourse on the educational mechanisms through which those of the upper class are socialized. This is in contrast to other studies on private tutoring in Bangladesh which narrowly focus on the socioeconomic determinants of tutoring (Pallegedara & Mottaleb, 2018) or that of English in particular (Hamid et al., 2009; Mahmud, 2016; Mahmud & Kenayathulla, 2018).

The overarching research question of this study was: What role do tutoring centers play

within the education and socialization of students into elite groups in urban Bangladesh? To answer this larger question, three sub-questions guided the work:

1. How do relationships between students, tutors and administrators influence their learning and socialization?
2. How do tutors shape the socialization of students into elite ways of being?
3. What is the educational value of private tutoring for students?

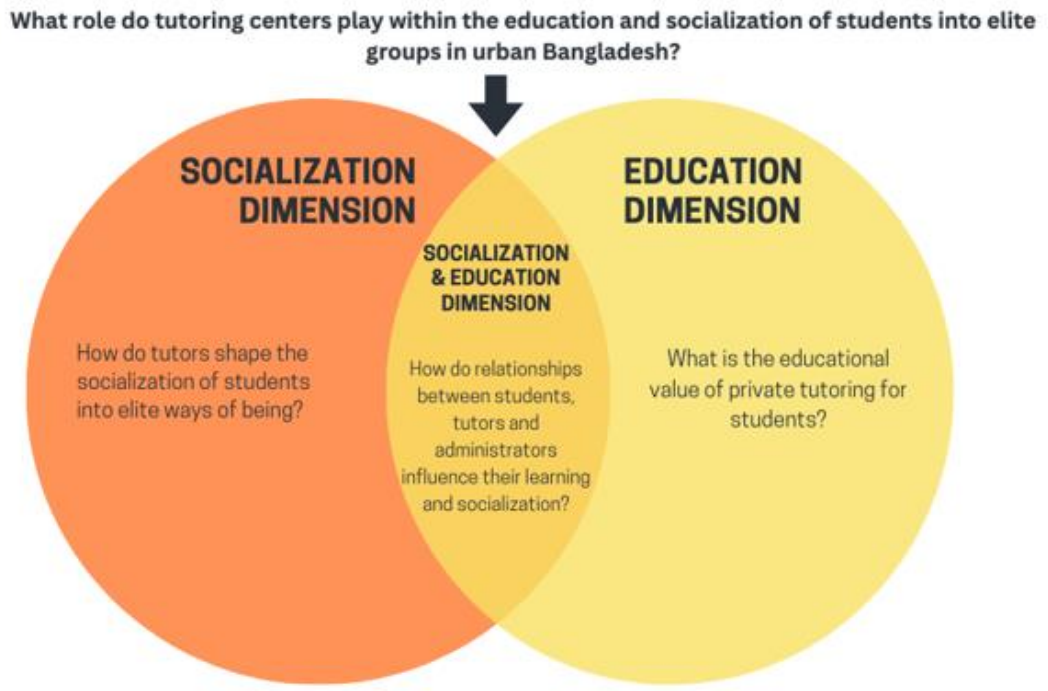
Through these research questions, I aimed to sharpen the abstraction of shadow education in urban Bangladesh by focusing on the learning and socialization practices and experiences of students, their tutors, and administrators within an elite tutoring educational space that is often overlooked in the wider elite schooling literature.

The sub-questions for this study are organized into two “dimensions” or facets of this study—a socialization dimension, and an education dimension; this is represented in Figure 1. The first sub-question exists in the overlap between the two dimensions, in that it looks at how relationships formed between the different actors at the tutoring center impacts both the students’ learning and socialization into eliteness. The second sub-question addresses the socialization dimension of the study, in terms of speaking to how students are being shaped into eliteness at the tutoring center. The third question examines the education dimension of this

study, in addressing the teaching, learning and pedagogical aspects of the tutoring center, through examining what value students receive from engaging in private tutoring at the site.

Figure 1

Venn Diagram of the Organization of the Dimensions and Research Questions



To situate this critical analysis of the use of private tutoring, I engaged with the globalization of education and neoliberalism as a political project. To do this, I employed a case study approach with ethnographic elements. I focused on an urban tutoring center called Greater Heights (GH) which is located in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. The methods I used were observing tutoring classes, interviewing students, tutors and administrators, reviewing the tutoring center's public social media channels, and administering a student questionnaire. I employed a critical realist approach to connect the practices of actors in this social setting and the social, economic, and political structures within which those actions occur. A critical realist paradigm means an understanding of ontology (i.e., the nature of reality) that is real and independent of a socially constructed epistemology (i.e., our knowledge of reality). In other

words, this is to say human knowledge is only able to capture a slice of a deeper and vaster reality. This means our social world consists of layers of structures and generative mechanisms, which Shipway (2010) argued allows educational researchers to discern and focus on underlying structures and mechanisms, as well as individuals and institutions in varying positions within those social structures. For the purposes of this inquiry, critical realism can therefore reveal how the wider structures and mechanisms of society filter into and embed themselves within the dynamics of private tutoring. Thus, throughout this dissertation, I use and discuss descriptive statistics to illuminate patterns and trends from my student survey data, which I then examine in greater depth using my qualitative data. The categorical or standardized nature of a quantitative measure such as a survey is useful in critical realist research to help uncover hidden patterns and connections, as well as for its ability to produce description that is reliable (Mukumbang, 2023).

Within a postcolonial neoliberal environment, such as in Bangladesh, relevant structures may be the preferences of the urban labour market towards English speakers, or the move to a competitive neoliberal state that sets in motion the enhanced role of new actors in education, or commercial logics within the provision of education (Mahmud & Bray, 2017; Robertson & Dale, 2015). For example, in the case of Shiyam, his own uncle is a well-known teacher at GH and it was because of his advice that Shiyam joined GH for private tutoring in the sixth grade.

> English medium er piche shobai douraite thake. Oijei thake na j family er moddhe ekta English medium ei pore. So Rashid mama is like that one. Mane Rashid mama jeta bole mane, bhul hok thik hok oitai right. Mane eitai korte hobe. Baba Maa r kotha hocche Rashid bhul hoile bhul but eitai thik.
>
> (Everyone is constantly running after English Medium. You know how there is always someone in the family who studies under English Medium? So Rashid Uncle is like that person. Whatever Rashid Uncle says, whether that's right or wrong, it's correct; that is what should be done. According to Mom and Dad if Rashid is wrong he's wrong, but that is the right thing to do.)

We can see here how Shiyam's parents place a lot of importance on his uncle's guidance because of the uncle's connection with English Medium schooling, which holds significant cultural capital in Bangladeshi society, and is associated with a sense of being elite. Thus, the

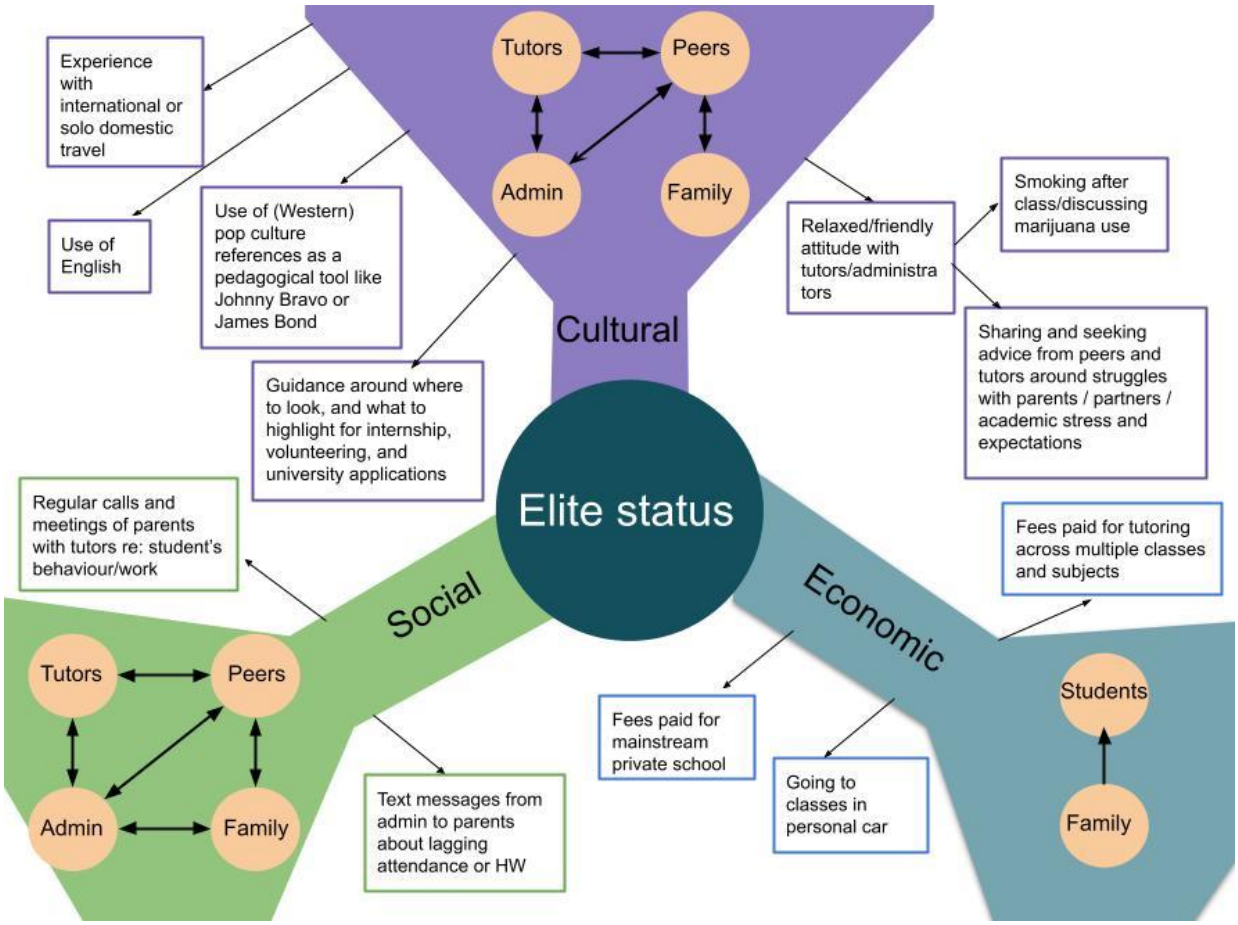
connection English Medium schooling has with eliteness is an important structure that influences engagement with private tutoring at a center like GH. In the next section, I review the conceptual framework that I am using as the foundation of my study to answer my research questions.

Conceptual Framework

Related to Shiyam's excerpt above, I theorized a private tutoring center like GH produces different forms of capitals that cultivate and nurture eliteness in their students. This form of social reproduction connects to Bourdieu's (1977) view of the gains in capital acquired from additional streams of education, such as private tutoring in this instance, in the successful regeneration of elites. Bourdieu's theory concentrates on the unequal distribution of economic, social, and cultural resources across classes, and their transmission from parents to children (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The diagram in Figure 2 provides a visual description of the cultural, social, economic capitals I hypothesized were at play in the site under dissertation, as the relationships between different actors that inform the reproduction of elite status at the GH tutoring center.

Figure 2

Diagrammatic Representation of the Study's Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework is provided to offer a sense of, as Miles and Huberman (1994) said, "the main things to be studied—the key factors, concepts, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them" (p. 18). Each "funnel" in the diagram represents a different kind of capital: cultural, social, and economic. Economic capital are resources and labor that can be converted into money; social capital constitutes social connections which can be translated into economic capital; cultural capital comprises of knowledge, attitudes, and mannerisms that can be translated into economic and social capitals in certain circumstances. The circles within the funnels represent actors who have some role to play; for example in the case of economic capital for this inquiry, the only actor involved is the family, or parents and guardians who provide the necessary economic resources to pay for tutoring classes on top of their child's mainstream private school. They also provide other indicators and privileges of

wealth, such as a personal car that can take the child to school. The arrows by the circles represent if, and how, the actors influence each other. I assumed there was overlap between those who act both as tutors and administrators of the tutoring center, and they are typically from the same social class from my understanding of this tutoring context; however, it was still helpful to separate them out as separate actors for the sake of the interactions under study.

Under social capital, I provided two examples from the tutoring space, which consist of regularly engaging with the parents of tutoring students and keeping them involved with their child's progress. Within this elite social space, I presumed all the actors influence each other through their social connections, as students are recommended to the tutoring center through peers or family members. Even after the students graduate away from the center, they still maintain connections with the tutors and administrators through social media, and visit the tutoring center when they come back from studying away or abroad.

Under cultural capital, I provided examples of knowledge, skills, attitudes, linguistic competences and aesthetic choices that would inform the reproduction of elite status. For example, the use of English as a medium of instruction and communication is an established marker of the elite in Bangladesh (Imam, 2005). There is also the relaxed attitudes of the students towards the tutor in comparison to mainstream schoolteachers, which allows students to, for example, smoke with their tutors or discuss awkward or taboo-like topics such as romantic problems or marijuana use, which I observed during my in-person and online pilot fieldwork. This is similar to the feelings of ease, or "ability to maneuver" as a crucial trait of elite status both Khan (2011) and Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a) found in their ethnographies of elite boarding schools.

The lines of influence under cultural capital are similar to that of the social capital funnel with one difference: I presumed administrators of the tutoring center and family members do not influence each other's cultural capital beyond that of social connections. Similar to that of the social funnel, the arrows of influence between the actors under this funnel are also double sided, demonstrating my hypothesis that each actor informs the cultural capital of the other, in terms of knowledges, dispositions, and preferences within a close knit, exclusive space such as private tutoring. Next, I go over some key terms that are important for this research, the significance of this study, and preview what the rest of the dissertation looks like.

Key Terms

This dissertation follows much existing literature (e.g., Bray, 1999; Byun et al., 2018; Kobakhidze, 2014; Pallegedara & Mottaleb, 2018; Zhang, 2014) to define private tutoring as encompassing private lessons in subjects already covered in school, on a fee-paying basis. The term private "supplementary" tutoring follows this line of reasoning in considering tutoring classes to be supplementing the academic lessons already covered in school. It does not cover for example tutoring in music or the arts, which are not tested on a large-scale basis, or explicitly employed as a form of gatekeeping in the transition from one grade level to another. This reasoning is also why most literature on private tutoring focuses on primary and secondary levels of education, stages that capture the most enrolments within a mainstream education system and also when gate-keeping examinations usually come into play. This definition further excludes remedial lessons that take place during the regular school day in classrooms, as these may be part of the school's own remedial instruction program, or fall within the teacher's own school duties (Bray, 2021).

Due to its dependent relationship with, and mimicry of elements of regular schooling, private tutoring is synonymously referred to as shadow education (Bray, 1999, 2021; Stevenson & Baker, 1992). For example, when the curricula in the mainstream school system changes, so does the curricula in the tutoring classes. If a new subject or component is introduced in the mainstream system to be examined, the same subject or component is offered in private tutoring lessons. As a metaphor, the use of a shadow is quite apt in that it implies the features of shadow education are much less distinct, understood or regulated compared to those within the mainstream education domain. Within the literature on shadow education and in this study, regular public and private schools in the formal education system are referred to as "mainstream schools" in order to differentiate them from private tutoring centers, which are not counted as being in the mainstream system and thus, are in the "shadows" (Bray, 1999, 2021).

It is also important to clarify the terminology used to describe private tutoring differs in different countries. In some societies, people refer to this phenomenon as private tuition rather than private tutoring. Entrepreneurs who create spaces for tutoring often call them learning centers, academies, or institutes. As I noted earlier, tutoring centers which supplement the school system are well-known in Japan as *juku*, and "grinds" in Ireland (Dawson, 2010; Smyth,

2009). In South Asian societies such as India and Bangladesh, private tutoring is referred to as coaching and tutoring centers as coaching centers.

To summarize, this study was concerned with the fee charging supplementary academic lessons delivered outside the mainstream education system. This instruction may be provided by companies of various sizes, or by individual actors such as mainstream teachers outside of their official roles, university students, retirees, and so forth, all forms of which fall under shadow education. The focus of this inquiry was on studying what occurs within one tutoring company, or what I refer to as a tutoring center, that brings together different actors towards their goal in the provision of shadow education as a consistent educational activity. The teachers and administrators at the GH tutoring center are not primarily affiliated with mainstream schools, i.e., they are not schoolteachers during the day, and turn to tutoring in the evenings (though this is a common occurrence within Dhaka). Their full-time job is to teach at this tutoring center, and as such, they set their own class schedules across the different grade levels they teach, making sure their classes do not clash with another GH teacher's classes. This means classes are held throughout the day at GH, not just in the evenings, with the tutoring center staying open between 10 am to 8 pm every day, except Friday (which is the day of the weekly congregational prayers in Islam, and a holiday for all workplaces and schools in Bangladesh).

Such private tutoring centers and providers are identified as being part of the non-state sector, or operating as non-state actors, with Bray (2021) noting such centers, "retain (these) identities even when in forms of public-private partnership" (p. 8).[2] This definitional delineation will be relevant when I expand on the literature and role of non-state actors in the Bangladeshi education system, in the next chapter.

Significance of Study

I was specifically interested in examining the logics of engaging in private tutoring for elite students, who are already enrolled in prestigious private schools, to create a tableau of their experiences and relationships built through engaging in tutoring. In the Bangladeshi

[2]University students and other informal providers of tutoring would also be within the non-state sector. Teachers who provide private tutoring, and are also working in private schools as their main employment are clearly non-state actors. However there is ambiguity around classifying teachers whose main employment is in public schools, and who also tutor privately.

context, which is understandably dominated by research on those who are marginalized, studying the ways of being of students in elite educational settings (such as the tutoring spaces that cater to these students), and the practices of their tutors is crucial to uncover the social dynamics of inequality across the system.

To understand the dynamics of a stratified system "studying up" is essential, as an important piece of the complex puzzle of inequality and power (Nader, 1974 as cited in Howard & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2010). Studying up refers to investigating how institutions explicitly work for the relatively privileged, as well as how privileged groups deliberately and actively work on their own behalf to create and maintain distinction (Weis, 2010). Within recent research that studies up, elite private, public, or boarding schools have begun to come into focus (Demerath, 2009; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a; Khan, 2011; Proweller, 1998). However, a critical inquiry of tutoring centers, or the use of tutoring as an elite educational space where "abundance, opportunity, and success are defining characteristics," has not been conducted (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a, p. 1); hence, its ability to stay in the shadows. Therefore, this study aimed to scrutinize the movement towards private tutoring, who participates in it, for what purpose, and how it contributes to the entrenched stratification of education systems in Bangladesh.

Another critique of the literature on elite formation and their social function is that it is primarily drawn from a "Global North" experience, as well as dominated by Western political scientists and sociologists such as Mills (2000), Putnam (1976), and Bourdieu (1996). Although the theorization of elites was influenced by Bourdieu's (1996) pioneering expansion of the concept of capital (social, cultural, symbolic) and habitus, and how these are fundamental to social relationships, these ideas have not been interpreted in a comparative Bangladeshi perspective. These are gaps that this study sought to fill.

For this inquiry, tutoring centers and classes are elite educational spaces, where I studied the relationship between educational tutoring experiences and the socialization of elite status. My purpose in focusing on elite spaces is to move beyond a type of "methodological individualism" where eliteness is situated within individuals, and instead focus on the dynamics of elite education around the organization of specific institutions and space, such as for the purposes of tutoring (Howard & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2010, p. 6). This definition of elite spaces relies on the Weberian notion of status signals; that to label these spaces as elite is to

indicate they are “deemed to have high status among social groups that have the power to make such judgments” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009b, p. 6). Considering the multitude of students engaging in private tutoring in Bangladesh as established above, this research sought to shed light on the role of shadow education as a means of socialization, and the reproduction of students’ elite status.

The connection between engaging in private forms of schooling, specifically private tutoring, and those of higher socio-economic backgrounds is well established in the literature; with research ranging from Turkey (Tansel & Bircan, 2006) to Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Jokić, 2013; Silova, et al., 2006), to Sri Lanka (Pallegedara, 2012) showing students from upper social classes enjoying greater and better quality tutoring alongside their mainstream schooling. Household survey-based analyses in Bangladesh have also typically found higher income families are likelier to spend and spend more on private schooling and tutoring (Joshi, 2019). Richards et al. (2008) showed how in Bangladesh even though wealthier households engage in greater private tutoring, there is some reliance on tutoring even among the poorest quintile of families, with 19% of lower income households seeking tutoring, compared to 57% of wealthier households (p. 19). In fact, using information collected from more than 13,500 households, Pallegedara and Mottaleb (2018) found the proportion of households in the bottom income quartile that had any tuition expenditure jumped from 10% in 2000, to over 40% in 2010; the corresponding figures for the wealthiest quartile increased from 60% in 2000 to 75% in 2010 (p. 46). This literature demonstrates how more economically established classes in Bangladesh “benefit disproportionately from their ability to pay for private learning, gaining credentials and exam passes that ease them into good professional jobs” (Hossain et al., 2017, p. 28). Therefore, the distinction is not between those who can afford private tutoring services and those who cannot, but instead those who are able to access more personalized and higher quality tutoring, due their social and cultural capital.

My study is unique in that it is the first of its kind to investigate the experiences of teaching and learning within a tutoring center in Dhaka, while also addressing how this is occurring within the English medium track of private schooling—a relatively understudied channel of schooling within Bangladeshi education research. The Bangladeshi tutoring literature has focused on the patterns and determinants of shadow education from the perspective of

those operating in the Bangla medium track (Alam & Zhu, 2022b; Hamid et al., 2009; Mahmud & Bray, 2017). Examining the use of private tutoring from within English medium schooling is important due to the diverse motivations and mechanisms at work for those invested in the English medium track, who may be aspiring towards eliteness through opting into a stream where English is the dominant mode of operation and instruction.

Overview of Chapters

This dissertation is comprised of eight chapters. In this first chapter, I established this study's research aims, paradigms, guiding questions, and conceptual framework, defined key terms, as well as discussed the significance of this study. In Chapter 2, I take a deeper dive into the literature and concepts I drew upon to help me frame this study, such as situating shadow education as a global phenomenon, and as a local one in the context of the Bangladeshi education system. I undertook this review to shed light on the use of shadow education as a mechanism of social reproduction and socialization into elite status.

In Chapter 3, I detail the methodological considerations and approaches to data collection and analysis of this study, including providing snapshots of the teachers[3] and students I interviewed, and analysis of the survey I administered to students. Chapter 4 addresses my first research sub-question and digs deeper into the relationships built between students and their tutors at the GH tutoring center. This chapter addresses the overlap in the Venn diagram in Figure 1 of the two dimensions of this study (i.e., the relational aspects of the tutoring center that affects students' learning as well as their socialization into eliteness). It also then sets the basis for the rest of the dissertation's findings. I discuss the personal approach and touch teachers and staff at GH took towards their students, by acting as a type of friend, mental health and guidance counselors to their students. These affective aspects of students' learning, as well as the supportive environment cultivated at the GH tutoring center, allows students to learn how to negotiate relationships with a sense of ease, which I argue is an essential aspect of being elite.

Chapter 5 takes an in-depth look into how the GH tutoring center influences students'

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[3] I refer to the tutors at GH from this point forward as teachers, and distinguish them from those who teach at mainstream schools as "schoolteachers."

socialization into elite ways of being, as well as some moments of their resistance to being shaped as eliteness. I discuss how teachers build students' resilience and confidence in themselves, which enhances their affective capital, in addition to helping to build students' cultural capital. Through these means, I argue the GH tutoring center is shaping students of diverse class backgrounds into elite ways of being. I devote Chapter 6 to the education dimension of this study, by examining the teaching, learning and pedagogical aspects of the tutoring center. I discuss how teachers approached their instruction and their pedagogical strategies in the face of challenges like the pandemic. I also discuss what students gained from their tutoring center that they did not get from their mainstream English Medium (EM) schools, such as better quality of instruction, and better value for their money. I argue these factors working together contribute to the falling value of EM schooling for students and their families, leading to an exodus of students away from mainstream schooling toward relying on private tutoring.

In Chapter 7, I examine the implications of students moving away from schooling to rely on private tutoring, including how GH is positioning itself as more aligned to the operations and functions of a mainstream school. I discuss how this type of positioning points to the complete substitution of private schooling by private tutoring at higher grade levels in urban Bangladesh. I also reflect on some implications for policy and equity, and provide some policy recommendations. I conclude in Chapter 8 by summarizing the contributions of this study in terms of understanding how the neoliberal fabric in Bangladesh holds both market-oriented and affective creases, and how different types of capital cultivated through the relationships at the tutoring center leads to the reproduction of students' elite status. I then go over the limitations of this study, offer some final reflections, and discuss future avenues for inquiry that have emerged as a result of this work.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

One weekend, soon after my best friend Sara and I had begun the second half of sixth grade, she mentioned that another friend of ours, Neamah, was going to start organizing coaching classes at her own home, down the street from Sara's. "What is coaching?" I wondered aloud. It was all Neamah's idea, Sara explained. She was going to ask the best Math teacher in our private school, Mr. Wijetunga, to come to her home to provide private lessons to a select few of us, a few evenings a week. Neamah had three older siblings, all of whom were either already enrolled, or on their way to enrolling in the most prestigious medical and business schools in Bangladesh. They had all been tutored by Mr. Wijetunga, so Neamah was already familiar with his tutoring practices and had an existing relationship with him.

Intrigued by this arrangement, I tagged along with Sara to a semi 'orientation' session at Neamah's house. Curiously, I looked around at the group gathered, including the other two girls Neamah had invited. All of us had done well enough on the final exams last term that we were part of the top 10 in roll call that ongoing semester.[4] In fact Neamah and I had been battling for the coveted first spot every semester, ever since Neamah had started third grade with us. In the most recently concluded finals, I had missed first place by 5 points, the second-place position still smarting whenever I thought of it.

Neamah recounted the discussion she had already had with Mr. Wijetunga. He was willing to start tutoring us at his usual hourly rate, and she proposed we meet him three times a week. "It's high time we started these lessons," Neamah concluded. "Seefat from section B has also been trying to get on Mr. Wijetunga's radar, but Mr. Wijetunga spoke to my dad, and has agreed to start with us first."

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I laid out how the issue of shadow education is an issue of significance for study, particularly in the context of Bangladesh. The purpose of this chapter is to situate this inquiry historically, theoretically, and conceptually within the larger scholarly

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[4] Everyone in my grade was listed on the roll call, or attendance list, of our class not alphabetically, but by their performance in the final exams of the previous semester. Consequently, it was very easy to tell how well each of us had done when the next semester started, without anyone disclosing their grades.

discussions that this study engages with. In this chapter, I first present an overview of the Bangladeshi education system, to provide some necessary historicity to the education sector and policies in Bangladesh, as it relates to situating private tutoring within complex global phenomena, including increased privatization and neoliberalization of education worldwide.

I next discuss how shadow education can be seen as a consequence of the neoliberal governmentality and globalization at work within Bangladesh's education sector, while weaving in literature on non-state actors that is relevant within the context of the country's colonial past and postcolonial present. I then briefly discuss how the use of shadow education can be seen as a technology of the self, specifically that of responsibilization. Next, I move into a review of the literature on elite schooling and status, and how I am characterizing private tutoring as a form of elite education that allows students to inhabit their elite status and ways of being. I then provide an overview of the literature on shadow education itself, and the different purposes for which scholars categorize its consumption. I move onto further discuss my theoretical framework of social reproduction theory, but extend this understanding to focus on the idea of elite status groups. I finally conclude with a summary of what the next chapter on my research methods holds.

The Education System in Bangladesh

Throughout its history, Bangladesh has gone through various types of education systems. From British colonial rule (1858-1947) to the Pakistani regime after the partition of India (1947-1971), and finally over the course of an independent Bangladesh (1971-present), education has evolved in fundamental aspects, such as language and governance (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014). During British rule, education was mainly reserved for the upper and wealthy classes. The language of instruction and pedagogy was primarily English, as many schools were run by religious missionaries. English as the primary medium of communication was the case across the government, judiciary, and media. The British adopted the British education system across undivided India as a political tool to prolong their domination, with English medium schools used to construct a privileged, but subordinated, working class of locals (Chowdhury & Kabir 2014; Imam, 2005). The few Bangladeshis who were fortunate to receive an education were elites—either from wealthy families, or those with ties to the British colonial government (Rahman, 2001). Only some were educated at British universities.

Since independence from Pakistan in 1971, Bangladesh has operated three separate branches of education that students are free to choose from if they can afford it: a) Bangla medium, b) the Islamic Madrassa, and c) English medium (Imam, 2005). The Bangla medium track is offered by both the state and the private sector, and charges relatively low tuition fees. Within Bangla medium schools, all courses are offered in the local language Bangla, with the exception of English language classes and Islamic courses in Arabic. Crucially, everyone has the right to attend these public schools and they are very accessible; the largest majority of students in Bangladesh attend Bangla medium schools (Imam, 2005).

In the Madrassa schools, the main focus is to provide an Islamic education, alongside regular classes in science, language and Math (Imam, 2005). Some courses are provided in Bangla, Arabic and English. These institutions are both state supported and private, with the private ones financed through local and international religious endowments. Madrassas tend to be poorer resourced than secular public schools, with low levels of teacher training and knowledge and other facilities (Imam, 2005).

The English medium branch is where provision is offered primarily through private institutions, and all courses are taught in English except Bangla language and Islamic courses. Rahman (2001) noted how even though anyone can technically enroll in English medium schools, they are effectively reserved for the upper class because they are expensive, and tend to be located in urban enclaves of the country. Within English medium schools, most students prepare for and take the British originating Ordinary Level exams (O-Levels) in their ninth or tenth grades, and then the Advanced Level (A-Level) exams in their 11th or 12th grades, administered by the local British Council in Dhaka. Imam (2005) argued how even after independence, “the national elite continues to invest privately, as it always has, in English language and culture,” with the English-educated elites in Bangladesh constituting an “important strand in political, social and economic leadership” (pp. 473–474). Chowdhury and Kabir (2014) similarly commented on how even though it has been almost 80 years since the British left, “in current day Bangladesh, the use, teach and learning of English language and education still mark a conspicuous continuity with the colonial period” (p. 2). This investment in English by those of the upper classes continues to contribute to their higher social and cultural capital.

It is important to note here, not all English medium schools are considered equally

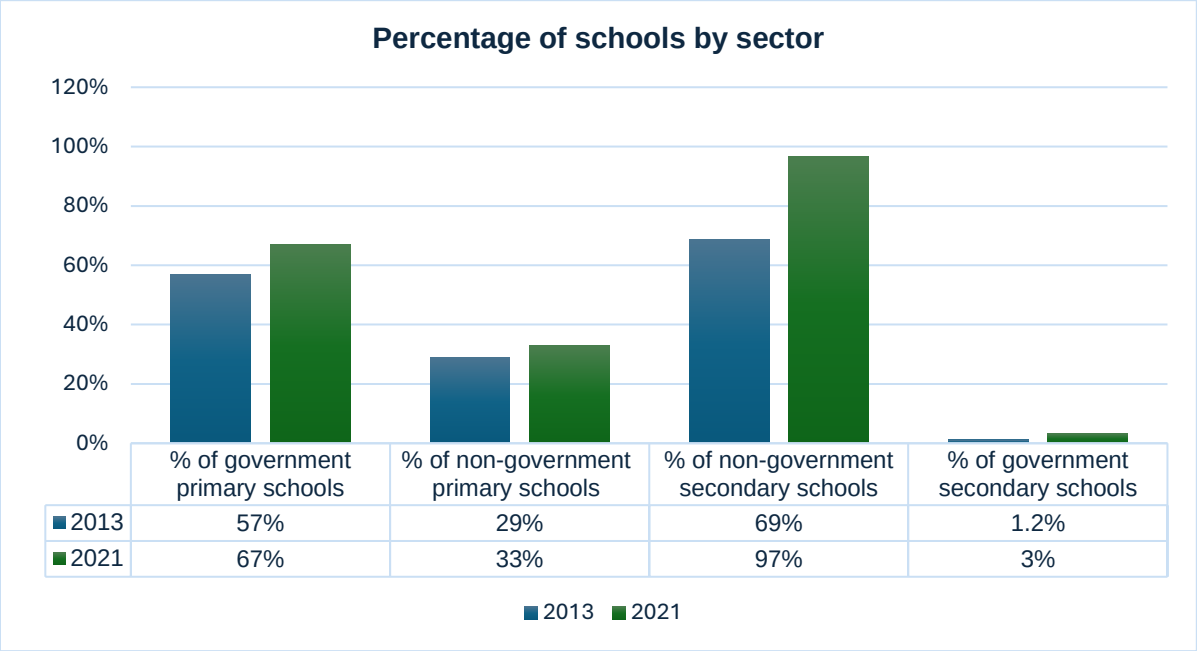
prestigious. Around an elite core of older and more established English medium schools (such as the ones Shiyam attempted to enroll in in the first chapter) numerous other private schools have popped up all over Bangladesh offering O and A level qualifications (Imam, 2005; Rahman, 2010). Due to the popularity of English medium instruction, these schools attempt to capture the market among non-elite families for English language education. Even as these students learn to read and write English fairly well, they do not speak as well as their peers at elite schools, an indicator of elite differentiation (Imam, 2005; Rahman, 2010). The state does not have a uniform law or policy to regulate or supervise these schools, as a result many English medium schools are also of questionable quality. All schools are required to register with the government, but many do not even do so; the national Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics agency listed 137 registered English medium schools across the country in 2021, but Salman (2023b) contended there are at least 500 English medium institutions, consisting of both primary and secondary schools, that continue to operate without any government monitoring. This means there is a tiered system of schooling in Bangladesh, comprised from the top down of: elite private English medium schools, less elite private English medium schools, public Bangla medium schools, and madrassas (Imam, 2005).

Within the 21st century, there has been rapid expansion of both primary and secondary schools, as well as a concurrent stream of privatization in the Bangladeshi education system. Between 1980 and 2008, the number of private schools rose by nearly eight times more than public schools in the same period (Mujeri, 2010). Kabir (2010) argued this follows a neoliberal trend of commodification of individuals and an increased role of market forces in education, whereby tuition fees are raised and market- oriented subjects are the central focus.

In fact, the secondary education sub-sector in Bangladesh is dominated by non-state actors. As we can see in Figure 3, in 2021 97% of all secondary schools were owned and managed by non-state organizations (Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS), 2021, p. 81). This figure was 33% at the primary level, so about a third of all primary level schools are owned and managed through private actors in 2021 (BANBEIS, 2021, p. 71).

Figure 3

Percentage of Schools, Government or Private, in Primary and Secondary Sub-Sectors in Bangladesh



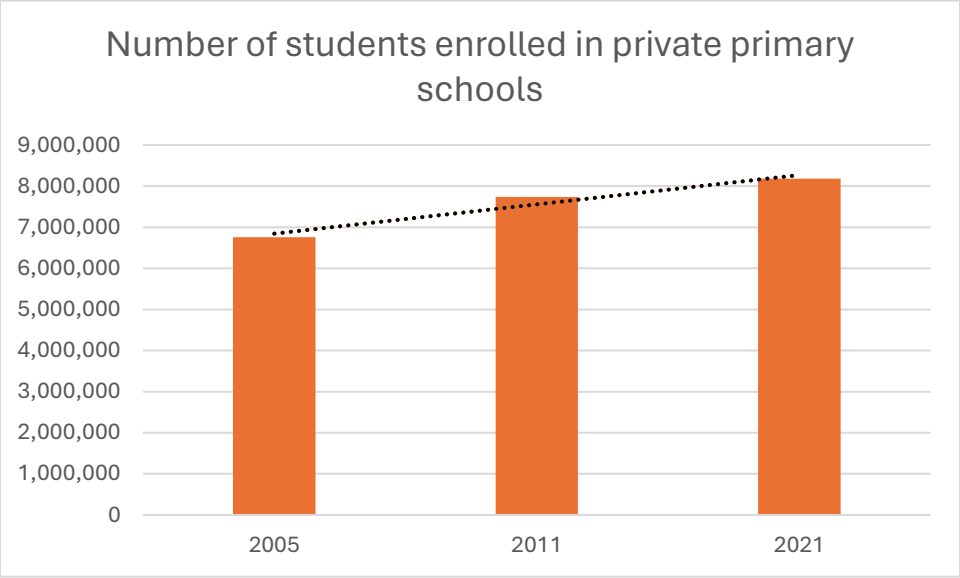
	% of government primary schools	% of non-government primary schools	% of non-government secondary schools	% of government secondary schools
2013	57%	29%	69%	1.2%
2021	67%	33%	97%	3%

Note. Sourced from BANBEIS (2013, 2021).

Enrollment in private primary schools has increased by nearly 1.5 million students in the last 15 years (Figure 4; World Bank, 2016; UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2024). From Table 1, we can see that this accounted for about 35% of students at the primary level who were enrolled in private schools in 2021 (BANBEIS, 2021, p. 71).

Figure 4

Number of Students Enrolled in Primary Schools by Year



Note. Sourced from World Bank (2016), BANBEIS (2021).

The enrollment of students in private secondary schools has remained relatively stable over the last decade (Table 1; UIS, 2024). We can also see from Table 1 how private education continues to dominate in the secondary sub-sector with 94% of students enrolled in privately owned and managed schools (BANBEIS, 2021, p. 27).

Table 1

Percentage of Students Enrolled in Private Primary and Secondary Schools in Bangladesh

	Percentage of students enrolled in private primary schools	**Percentage of students enrolled in private secondary schools**
2013	24%	95%
2021	35%	94%

Note. Sourced from BANBEIS (2021), World Bank (2016), UIS (2024).

It is important to note here that this rapid expansion in the number of schools and enrollments, particularly at the primary level is also being driven by an emphasis for greater equity, with Bangladesh having recently achieved near universal net primary enrollment and gender parity in education access (USAID, 2021). Most state education programs in the past two decades have focused on children in rural areas. The work of BRAC, which has the largest enrollment of any non-governmental organization (NGO), in addition to other NGOs and community schools in rural areas, contributes to the non-state sector operating and providing almost a third of primary education in Bangladesh (BANBEIS, 2021).

These data point to two movements in the education system in Bangladesh—a significant expansion in schooling, mainly at the primary level being driven by a focus on equity, as well as deepening inequality, mainly at the secondary level which hosts a greater proportion of private institutions. This inequality is demonstrated by an ongoing shift to the private sector by those who can afford it, away from an under-resourced public sector. Increased stratification of the secondary level parallels the general increase in income inequality in Bangladesh. The share of income held by the highest 10% increased from 21% in 1984 to 27% in 2010, compared to the share of income held by the lowest 10% declining from 4.13% to 3.99% (Mazid, 2019, para. 2). Those of the highest income brackets made up 32% of students enrolled in secondary education, compared to those of the lowest income who made up merely 10% (Karim, 2015, p. 76).

Situating Private Tutoring

Pallegedara and Mottaleb (2018) found over the years, households across the rural-urban divide in Bangladesh spent more on private tutoring, with 47.7% of urban households and 27.5% of rural households paying for tutoring in 2000, which increased to 66.7% and 53.9% respectively in 2010 (p. 45). In addition, the average expenditure on private tutoring increased by over 60% in real terms in that 10-year period. Bangladeshi scholars underscore private tutoring has become so deeply entrenched within the education sector that it, “already constitute(s) a partial privatization of the system” (Hossain et al., 2017, p. 28). Some scholars have attributed this entrenchment in private tutoring emerging from the low quality of public schooling (Brehm et al., 2012; Dang, 2007). The overall government spending on education is low in Bangladesh, with the government spending 11% of its total budget on education in 2016,

and only 9% in 2019. In terms of GDP, government expenditure on education has been stable over the last decade, at 2.4% of GDP in 2000 and 2.5% of GDP in 2017. These figures do not meet the recommended spending benchmarks of 4 to 6% of GDP, or 15 to 20% of its public budget, and are also low compared to others in the region with similar levels of income (Joshi, 2019). For example, India has spent roughly 3.8% of its GDP on education each year for the last decade. Nepal spent 3.2% of its GDP in 2002, and 5.5% in 2017 on education, as well as an average of 17% of its total budgetary expenditure on education between 2015 and 2018 (World Bank, 2016, p. 6; World Bank, n.d.; World Bank DataBank, 2023).

Thus, as the Bangladeshi education sector has successively been expanding, such expansion has predominantly been ‘linear’ and quantitative, rather than ‘vertical’ or qualitative (Rahman 2010, p. 75). With enrollment of children increasing but the allocation of resources remaining stagnant, Hamid and Baldauf (2008) pointed to the poor infrastructure and facilities in public schooling from such low public investment contributing to the poor quality of teaching and learning. When interviewed, the proprietor of a tutoring center also put the onus on the mainstream system saying, “coaching centers would not be necessary if mainstream education could provide quality education” (Al Hasnat, 2017, para. 15). Whether the quality of public education in Bangladesh is actually falling or not, there is a general consensus that the private school system delivers better quality schooling than the public system (Cameron, 2011 as cited in World Bank, 2016). Newspaper articles routinely decry the state of public schooling in the country, and how “privately run schools are operating better just like private hospitals. People who can afford private treatment never think of going to state-run hospitals, it is the same when it comes to education” (Billah, 2017, para. 2). Better qualified teachers, better facilities, and better examination results achieved by students from private schools contribute to this perception (Mujeri, 2010).

Against this background, it is perhaps not a surprise that private tutoring has taken off in Bangladesh. There is a vibrant public conversation about the growth of shadow education in Bangladesh, with articles published in mainstream newspapers every few years about the complexities of the issue (Al Hasnat, 2017; Hassan 2022; Mohabat, 2019; New Age, 2021). Local educator Professor Chowdhury noted, “the growth of coaching centers indicates the failure of our national education system. Now more than ever, it is about results rather than

actual learning" (Al Hasnat, 2017, para. 3), which reflects a neoliberal governmentality (a concept I discuss below), and the use of private tutoring towards succeeding in examinations.

Schoolteachers are characterized as being an active part of the growth of private tutoring. While well-endowed private schools in Dhaka start their teachers off with monthly salaries of ৳8,000 to ৳10,000 ($94 to $117), many others start with ৳1,500 (approximately $18) or even less (Al Hasnat, 2017, para. 8). Teachers in the public sector have seen their position and status decline with the recent expansion in private schools. Across sectors, teacher salaries have not kept up with the costs of living, so many gravitate towards supplementary income sources, such as private tutoring (Hossain et al., 2017). However, to clarify this study dealt with examining a tutoring center whose teachers were not associated with mainstream schooling (i.e., they are not schoolteachers, and they teach at GH full-time).

The Policy Response

The institutional response to shadow education has been quite austere, but lacks any real teeth. Since 2011, the Ministry of Education has been trying to pass the Education Act of 2016 which intended to implement major reforms to better regulate the entire education system. The new Act aims to bring in significant changes to the education sector, such as establishment of pre-primary education in all government primary schools, removal of admission exams to enter first grade, and penalties for using corporal punishment in schools. According to Salman (2023a), one of the sticking components of the draft Act that caused it to go back and forth between the Cabinet and the Ministry was the operation of tutoring centers and private tutoring. In 2016, the draft act actually had language legalizing private tutoring under "support education" (Abdullah, 2023, para. 12). However this move was "met with strong disapproval from the cabinet because it was seen to be giving legitimacy to coaching centers and private tutoring" (Salman, 2023a, para. 18). In light of this controversary, the Ministry revised the draft Act to completely ban private tutoring centers, as well as to levy harsh punishment for anyone found to be associated with tutoring, including jail time or exorbitant fines (Abdullah, 2021; Chandan, 2016). However from anecdotal evidence, it is clear that this stipulation is not being followed. Al Hasnat (2017) reported a teacher who was teaching mathematics in Dhaka after the ban, to about 300 students, in cohorts of 50 per day (para. 11). Every student paid about ৳1,500 (14 USD) per month, totaling revenues of about ৳450,000 (approximately 4100 USD) per month,

which is higher than the wages of a local public school teacher. Hassan (2022) reports how he remembers “private coaching were banned decades ago, (with the) reasoning with the help of notebooks and coaching centers, one can pass exams without acquiring any real knowledge. So what! The ban remains in place, but the coaching business…(is) booming” (paras. 4-5). During my last visit to Dhaka in December 2023 (and every other visit before) I saw no attempts to conceal what several tutoring centers were doing, and regularly saw ads for many tutoring classes during my daily walks (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

An Advertisement for Private Tutoring in Dhaka

Note. Photo taken by author.

In characterizing private tutoring as a form of corruption, Biswal (1999) interpreted how a national policy of tolerating tutoring might be “the least-cost solution to a difficult problem” (p. 224). Given accountability and effective monitoring takes extensive resources, a strategy to outwardly mandate a ban but not do anything else, as the government of Bangladesh is doing, is arguably a cost-effective strategy for the state that portends with the technology of responsibilization I discuss below. I now move onto a discussion of neoliberalism, its

employment as a political project as it relates to this study, in order to further expand on the governing structures in Bangladesh and within its education system.

Neoliberalism and Its Uses

The discourses, rationalities, and practices of neoliberalism have influenced national and international government agendas for education training, standards, and funding structures for the past few decades, particularly in a developing country context such as in Bangladesh as we will see below. Even as neoliberalism has become the “ubiquitous political commonsense condition of recent years” (Ward & England, 2007, p. 2), it is sometimes difficult to pinpoint exactly what the term means. I use Ferguson’s (2010) narrative on the various “uses of neoliberalism,” to clarify which “uses” this study drew on, and how it engaged with those (p. 170).

Taking root from neoclassical economics, such as those advocated by Adam Smith, one use of neoliberalism is from a macroeconomic perspective which pushes for a free-market system through free trade, tariff elimination, privatization, and currency deregulation and other similar commitments (Adhikary, 2012; Ward & England, 2007). A second and related use of neoliberalism is the translation of such neoclassical ideas into public facing policies and practices. In this adaptation from a doctrine to policy, neoliberalism becomes ‘‘more complex, diverse, contested and open to interpretation than is often recognized’’ (Campbell & Pederson 2001, p. 3 as cited in Ward & England, 2007). As a set of policies, some basic tenets can be identified: neoliberalism advocates for the free market as a better social model than a bureaucratic state system, because the markets are considered more cost effective and efficient in the provision of services. By way of people with entrepreneurial freedom acting as individual actors and investors in this free market, social welfare and well-being are generated through the availability of maximum choices for everyone. The role of the state is limited to cultivating the environment necessary for the market to run freely on its own logic, ensuring the security of private property and of the market, and to fostering new markets for services (Adhikary, 2012; DeJaeghere, 2017; Torres, 2009).

It is also important to note that several scholars advocated for conceptualizing neoliberalism within a spectrum of interpretations (Blomgren, 1997; Dean, 2010; DeJaeghere, 2017; Ferguson, 2010; Muehlebach, 2012), with Saad-Filho and Johnston (2005), for example,

contending, ‘‘neoliberalism straddles a wide range of social, political, and economic phenomena at different levels of complexity’’ (p. 1). The significance of this approach lies in its rejection of neoliberalism as a singular ideology, and a focus instead on how neoliberalism as a hegemonic project aligns with local political cultural discourse, with the potential to create critical spaces and alternative imaginings (Rankin & Shakya, 2007). Moving away from a totalizing view of neoliberalism was also important for the findings of this study, which incorporate a more nuanced and relational model of the neoliberal order.

A third use of neoliberalism is the Foucauldian sense of governmentality that links to specific mechanisms and rationalities of governing, both “through diverse institutions as well as through individual behaviors and ways of thinking” (DeJaeghere, 2017, p. 9). This third use of neoliberalism, that exercises power through international and national policies, non-state institutional mechanisms of governing, and most importantly through daily practices, was of significance for this study, in terms of examining the rationalities and practices of private tutoring by students, tutors and administrators of elite status (Dean, 2010; DeJaeghere, 2017). In the next section, I demonstrate that not only were neoliberal philosophies and policies put into place in the context of Bangladesh’s postcolonial trajectory, but that new forms of governing through diverse non-state institutions and individuals have also been created. This approach to governmentality is effective because it not only includes “technologies of power” such as those wielded by the state and the market to shape the conduct of people towards coveted behaviors, but it also includes “technologies of the self,” or techniques that can be used to shape the freedoms and choices of individuals (Foucault, 1988, p. 18; Rose, 1999). In this way, this study grappled with identifying the practices of, and effects from, these technologies of self that reproduce eliteness through exclusive educational opportunities such as private tutoring.

Before I move into explaining further the growth of, and the Bangladeshi translation of, the second and third uses of neoliberalism (i.e., as policies and as governmentality of both the state and self), I first briefly explain what the uses of neoliberalism mean for education. This discussion connects to the wider context of expansion in the use of private tutoring as an educational activity towards the reproduction of eliteness and thus greater inequality.

Adhikary (2012) described how in many countries, education was primarily state governed and publicly funded, with the state positioned as the main authority in determining the

content, funding, process, institutions, structure, and legislation around education. Many national education sectors are still organized this way. A neoliberal approach instead, places all activities related to education into the marketplace, so education is treated as a “complementary process to the formation and smooth functioning of the market” (Adhikary, 2012, p. 191). State funding for education is replaced by private arrangements, where students and parents become consumers of the education service. Furthermore, when educational institutions become for-profit private institutions, the educational process becomes enveloped by a corporate management structure, which puts more emphasis on the mechanisms of efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and accountability. Klees (2008a) emphasized three relevant manifestations of a neoliberal approach to education—namely, “the increased use of some form of user fees, the privatization of more educational activities, and the direct connection of management of financing of education to measurable output” (p. 312). The first two directly create a market for education as a tradable service, an outcome private tutoring thrives under, and the third links to the investment in private tutoring as a measurable service in its overt link to test outcomes. As such, scholars have noted how the substantial growth of shadow education in the 21st century has taken place under the intense neoliberalization of education (Holloway & Kirby, 2020).

Neoliberal Globalization of Education

The private sector has always played a significant role in the education systems of the world. As I mentioned earlier, faith-based organizations such as missionary schools which were private, have been active since the colonial period in introducing Bangladeshis to English medium education. Such private non-state institutions did not usually operate to gain revenue, and are distinct from the neoliberal privatization of schooling for profit. The participation in, and role of private actors towards the generation of profit in the governance of education has sharply intensified in the past few decades (Ball, 2009; Robertson et al. 2012; Ron-Balsera & Marphatia, 2012). By governance, this study referred to “the combinations and coordination of activities, actors/agents, and scales, through which education is constructed and delivered in national societies” (Robertson & Dale, 2017, p. 862). Scholars such as Robertson and Verger (2012), Ginsburg (2012), and Ron-Balsera and Marphatia (2012) turned to a shift in the global political economy to explain this surge in private participation towards profit within systems of education. Concretely, they suggested neoliberal globalization is captured in pressures to downsize the

state, and open public sectors like education to greater competition from, and involvement with the domestic and international private sector. This has led to the multi-faceted engagement of private actors in education policy at different levels and scales; for example, “through advice, consultation, evaluation, philanthropy, partnerships, representation, programme delivery and other outsourcing” (Ball, 2009, p. 96).

What is relevant within this critical political economy lens on Bangladesh’s neoliberal approach is the role international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank had, and continue to have, in setting interlocking policy conditionalities. Such conditions forced the state to enhance the role of the private sector in its provision and delivery of public services such as education (Adhikary, 2012; Alexander, 2001). Robertson and Dale (2017) argued this type of push for conditionalities couched within neoliberal policies has led to a “thickening” of neoliberal globalization since the 1980s, and to the advance of neoliberalism as a global political project (p. 860). This thickening of global policymaking activity has been accompanied by the alignment of national education spaces, policies and outcomes with globally oriented agendas such as standardized testing, economic competitiveness, and the creation of knowledge-based service economies. I provide some concrete examples from Bangladesh’s trajectory below.

Neoliberal Globalization of Education in Bangladesh

Tentacles of the neoliberal political project have been felt throughout all facets of Bangladesh’s economy and governing structures, and particularly through a heavy reliance on the market and focus on privatization, as well as an outcomes and assessment-oriented education system. As I provided some context earlier, Bangladesh has had a long and complex history with colonization, which Alam (2015) characterized as the nation undergoing “double colonialism” (p. 8)—first under the British empire until 1947, and again by Pakistan from 1947 to 1971, when Bangladesh was known as the province of East Pakistan. After the war for independence from Pakistan in 1971, Bangladesh's economy was devastated. According to *Time* (1972) magazine:

> In the aftermath of the Pakistani army's rampage last March, a special team of inspectors from the World Bank observed that some cities looked "like the morning after a nuclear attack."...Transportation and communications systems are totally disrupted.

> Roads are damaged, bridges out and inland waterways blocked. The rape of the country continued right up until the Pakistani army surrendered a month ago. In the last days of the war, West Pakistani-owned businesses—which included nearly every commercial enterprise in the country—remitted virtually all their funds to the West. Pakistan International Airlines left exactly 117 rupees ($16) in its account at the port city of Chittagong. The army also destroyed banknotes and coins, so that many areas now suffer from a severe shortage of ready cash.

Widespread flooding and famine in 1974 resulted in further depletion of the newly independent nation's natural, human, and economic resources (Sen, 2013). Already highly dependent on food aid from the United States, Bangladesh was one of the first to sign up for the IMF's formal Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in the 1980s (Kabir, 2010).

Under the SAP, Bangladesh was allowed to renegotiate its debt repayment schedules to the IMF, but it was also forced to meet a range of conditions in order to "get their house in order." Alexander (2002) argued during this period, key international agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF disguised their goals in advancing free market ideas as the basis for development by focusing on poverty alleviation. For example, the SAP policy conditions emphasized using market forces to guide allocation decisions, and in the case of education, relying on decentralization, privatization, user fees, and community financing. Considering the heavy reliance of Bangladesh on SAP policies, it is worth noting here the difference between the SAP process and a World Bank program targeted towards education. The World Bank approach to education was to focus on education as a means of human capital development. The emphasis on human capital investment was by nature neoliberal, because it promoted the rule of the international market while serving the market in two ways. First, it created a labour force for the market and second, it created the consumers of the education service, which was an important consideration for this study (Adhikary, 2012).

Unlike the World Bank, the IMF does not make project investments or reform education policies; it only engages in structural (and sectoral) adjustment lending. Alexander (2002) noted how adjustment policies have had a more powerful influence on the education sector than investments in education projects, concluding SAPs frequently "sabotaged educational progress while weakening the state" (p. 288). This trajectory seems to follow what Klein (2007) called the

implementation of “disaster capitalism” or a coordinated shift away from the public sector after certain catastrophic events, which lead to disasters, (such as a war for independence) being seen as exciting market opportunities (p. 20). She noted how this sort of “shock doctrine” does not need to rely on any specific violent type of shock, but can be felt after major upheavals, “which forced countries to be privatized or die” (Klein, 2007, p. 22).

Unsurprisingly then, what followed the SAP process was three decades of restructuring of the Bangladeshi economy, centered around neoliberal principles where “the state has taken the backseat” (Muhammed, 2015, para. 8). This approach is reflected in the education system as well. Within the secondary and tertiary levels, neoliberal reforms have included the increasing privatization and marketization of educational institutions (Alam, 2012; Kabir, 2010). While the Bangladeshi system does not offer sophisticated options in their education such as vouchers, charter schools, or magnet programs, the national secondary education curriculum for example, is embedded with neoliberal values. In 1995, the secondary education curriculum was revamped by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) over concerns of high unemployment of high school graduates, and a disconnect between the needs of the global market and its curricular content,

> There is now an open market economy in our country. The basic principle of this economy is that to survive in the race, we need qualifications/skills and this competition is spreading within and across borders. So we need to redesign our curriculum so it is equivalent to international standards so that students can obtain the necessary competitive skills. (NCTB, 1996, p. 5 as cited in Alam, 2012)

This quote shows how state institutions and actors in Bangladesh embraced neoliberal governance in its education planning. Alam (2012) noted how this rhetoric within a reorganization of the secondary level curriculum reveals the state’s desire to equip its citizens to be nationally and internationally competitive by, for example, emphasizing learning English to be able to gain a job, rather than to help citizens negotiate their place in the world. The focus on English is important to note here as a marker of elite status, a point I expand on below, in terms of the educational investments that elites make in Bangladeshi socio-cultural life. Alam (2005) highlighted how the Ministry of Education had initially not been concerned with English instruction in primary public schools, but only started to promote it in recent years, with a focus

on “promoting employment abroad and encouraging transfer of technology” (The Daily Observer, 2002 as cited in Imam, 2005, p. 477). Chowdhury and Kabir (2014) also confirmed that while there was no coherent policy in place towards the use of English within various levels of Bangladeshi education, since 2010 it has been adopted much more purposefully by the government across the entire system.

To wrap up this section, I want to note Rahman (2007) cautioned us in attributing neoliberal globalization as the sole force for the changes in policy that have allowed for a deeper integration of the private sector in the provision of education. However, Rahman (2007) also argued how as an “ideological package,” neoliberal globalization has had a definitive contribution to the restructuring of the Bangladeshi education system to respond to the global demand of creating a workforce that is capable of meeting the needs of the international market, especially in lower cost service sectors (p. 58).

Neoliberal Globalization as Governmentality

Neoliberalism as governmentality refers to the ways in which relations among and between people and things are assembled, adapted, imagined, and translated, to influence coordination at a distance (Ward & England, 2007). As mentioned earlier under the uses of neoliberalization, neoliberal governmentality includes both mechanisms of institutions, as well as individual ways of thinking. This is relevant to analyze for this study because the existence of the globalizing influence of neoliberalism does not mean that it necessarily translates to new norms of governing, or the construction of autonomous, responsibilized ‘‘neo-liberal subjects’’ (Rose, 1996 as cited in Ward & England, 2007, p. 13; Ferguson, 2010). However in the context of Bangladesh, Alam (2015) provided a relevant analysis of an overall shift of rationalities and mechanisms of governing through non-state institutions and actors.

Alam’s (2015) approach to neoliberal governmentality is that of power “beyond the state,” allowing for social practices and hierarchies to be unbounded from that of a nation-state, with “the locus of governmentality … assigned to individual agencies that operate at multiple levels—some global, some regional, some local, and some subnational” (p. 174). This type of approach that moves away from a singular domain of social power is relevant for this study, because so much of education provision and governance is undertaken by non-state actors in Bangladesh. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the secondary education sub-sector in

Bangladesh is dominated by non-state actors with 97% of all secondary schools owned and managed by non-state (BANBEIS, 2021, p. 81).

To clarify, neoliberal governmentality in this case is not about governing less, but that governing power has been reallocated to non-state entities. Alam (2015) connected this type of "technologies of power" by non-state entities to the new functions undertaken by non-government organizations (NGOs) in Bangladesh, specifically monitoring and managing the "global poor" (p. 177). After the late 1980s and 1990s, when the World Bank itself concluded, "in many countries, adjustment lending had a negative impact on primary education" (Alexander, 2001, p. 287), these international agencies shifted gears. Their new strategy was to give governments more leverage to steer their own development process, so the World Bank and IMF jointly launched programs such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) to monitor poverty eradication programs in postcolonial societies such as Bangladesh. Alam (2015) argued such programs, further actualized by massive microcredit institutions such as Grameen Bank and BRAC to measure the "numbers" of the "poor," are yet another subversive rationality in that such production of knowledge, marketed as an attempt to "know (and serve) the poor," is fundamentally a mechanism of neoliberal governmentality (p. 180).

Neoliberal governmentality then, where crucial social, civic, and economic functions are governed through NGOs, the private sector, and individuals, brings citizens within the rationalities of neoliberal globalization. This necessitates a social order where education is more closely aligned with the economy, transforming education into a competitive services sector, and introducing policies that encourage a more competitive entrepreneurial identity (Robertson & Dale, 2015). This process deepens the logic of neoliberalism for societies and citizens to integrate into the global capitalist economy, through relationships as producers and consumers. This process also relates to the operations and activities of a space where education as a key public good, is replaced as a private good purchased by students as consumers, and sold by tutors and administrators as producers and financiers, as can be well characterized to be the case for private tutoring. In fact, Mahmud (2021), in his examination of the financial burdens of tutoring, noted how "private tutoring is more client-oriented than formal schooling" in Bangladesh (p. 41).

This approach to neoliberal governmentality is well articulated by Mazawai et al. (2013)

who discussed how states can end up actively promoting an ideological and legal environment that encourages private education provision and entrepreneurship, in terms of securing their own economic and social welfare, which then drives students and communities to turn to tutoring.

> Thus, states can roll back their commitment to public services, so that quality education is no longer regarded as a 'public good' to which all citizens are entitled, but rather as a service that can be individually bought and sold on the market, and for which value consumers are exclusively responsible. (Mazawi et al., 2013, p. 208)

Bray and Lykins (2012) agreed that, in Bangladesh, this type of enhanced marketization within the education sector has taken firm hold, in conjunction with a change in what is seen as within the purview of the state. Bangladesh has always had a capitalist system, but had previously regarded education to be the responsibility of the state. Now, however, "economic and political reforms have permitted and encouraged the delivery of education through private channels alongside public ones. Thus the expansion of shadow education reflects wider changes in the role of the state" (Bray & Lykins, 2012, p. 68).

I contend what this neoliberal governmentality ultimately looks like in Bangladesh is not a complete abandonment of equity, as discussed earlier in the expansion of mass schooling. However, this governmentality is being re-communicated to be that once institutions are set up to be available and accessible, capitalism is considered as an effective means of governing behavior, especially at higher levels of education—ensuring choice and creating economic security, where the stimulus to engage and participate is rationalized to lie with the responsible citizens themselves.

Technologies of Self and Responsibilization

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, neoliberal governmentality also includes 'technologies of the self' which refers to the techniques individuals use to identify, represent, understand, and govern themselves in order to acquire a particular quality of life (Rose, 1999, p. 43). Within such technologies of the self, responsibilization is a relevant technology that can be used to frame the engagement in, and expansion of, shadow education. Responsibilization, or the "moralization of individual responsibility for economic insecurities and social risks," (DeJaeghere, 2017, p. 23) relates to neoliberal governmentality in terms of the state outsourcing

its responsibilities for the well-being and security of its people. Within neoliberal policies that encourage a more competitive entrepreneurial identity, our social order is reconfigured to produce highly individualized, responsibilized citizens who behave as “entrepreneurial actors across all dimensions of their lives" (Brown, 2003 as cited in Davies & Bansel, 2007, p. 252). As we see in the quote from Mazawi et al. (2013) in the preceding section, scholars view private tutoring as an extension of the logic of responsibilization, by positioning students and their families as being self-reliant, entrepreneurial and proactive in their efforts to take schooling into their own hands and investing in private tutoring.

In their study of private tutoring in Egypt, where 50% of students in a large-scale household survey were tutored by their schoolteachers, Ille and Peacey (2019, p. 107) pointed to structural factors such as a heavy curriculum, overcrowded classrooms, and low teacher incentives to be, “(transferring) responsibility for education from state to parents thus putting at a disadvantage the already underprivileged poor who send their children to a public school” (p. 105). In this respect, by not providing teachers adequate salaries or sufficient resources for schools, states position private tutoring as a way to redistribute insecurity and risk from public institutions and providers to private actors and organizations (Mazawi et al., 2013; Sobhy, 2012).

Employing responsibilization as a technology of the self helps conceptualize the ways of thinking of actors examined in this study. For example, neoliberal governance within a global context of increased privatization and dynamics of competition, casts families (students and guardians) as those responsible for enabling and realizing their children’s futures. Robertson and Verger (2012) discussed how families who are enrolled in the neoliberal project “spend considerable sums of household income on purchasing private tutoring” (p. 25). This type of responsibilization is also what surrounds the decision making students and their families have to make when their mainstream private school stops providing classes at the A levels stage (during the 11th and 12th grades), leading to even greater movement towards and reliance on private tutoring, a theme I expand on in Chapter 6. The tutors and administrators of tutoring centers are also shaped in such a way that they desire to be morally worthy, responsibilized individuals and “… successful entrepreneurs … willingly taking over responsibility for areas of care that were previously the responsibility of government” (Davies & Bansel, 2007, p. 251). Thus, we can see

how the entrenchment of shadow education has roots in the neoliberalization of education policies and governance, and reflects both the marketisation of schooling and the responsibilization of individuals for educational attainment (Millar, 2018). Under this marketized logic, where parents are held accountable for children's educational outcomes, the families who use shadow education to support access to, and performance within such an education system, are remade as self-actualizing neoliberal subjects (Holloway & Kirby, 2020; Raco 2009).

To wrap up, this approach of neoliberal globalization within education is an important development because first, it affects the entrenchment of neoliberalism both as a set of policies and practices, which are advocated for by global agendas and international financial actors such as the World Bank and the IMF. Second, this development also encourages new forms of educational governing by non-state institutions, such as by microfinance institutions or private tutoring centers. This type of neoliberal political project has had crippling consequences on the capacity and quality of education systems, and has led to increased social polarization and stratification in post-colonial societies such as in Bangladesh. Robertson and Verger (2012) also emphasized how the effect of (all uses of) neoliberalism has been to redistribute social, cultural, and economic resources away from working and the middle classes, and instead upward towards elites (p. 25).

Elite Schooling, Spaces, and Status

The study of what it means to be an elite and the education of elites are major themes in sociology and comparative education literature. In the early 20th century, theorists focused on 'elites' and who held power within societies. Mosca (1960) and Michels (1962; as cited in Khan, 2012b) argued structurally, it was reasonable for a small group of organized elites to govern the masses. Pareto (1935; as cited in Maxwell, 2015) offered an idea of power where "the governing elite" were in positions of power because they enjoyed skills and talents not possessed by others. Based on this premise, Pareto developed his theory of "the circulation of elites" where elite status was refreshed by new talent joining their ranks, and not necessarily inherited or transmitted through social institutions. Mills (2000) argued the "ruling class" in post-war America came from three sectors—industry, politics, and the military (p. 13). With their shared social and educational histories, those who came from this trinity of power formed an upper class. Mills, in his postwar elite scholarship, pointed to elite schools as being a crucial

vehicle to impact the social traditions of the upper classes, as well as govern the admission of new wealth (Khan, 2012).

These types of elite formation studies have seen a resurgence after the divergence of incomes in the 1970s, and widening of inequality through the 1980s and 1990s, albeit through a moral lens and as the “mark of a social problem” (Khan, 2012b, p. 364). Within education, there has also been surge of interest in elite schooling, the national and global configuration of elite education systems, as well as examining the internal logic of the lives of elite groups (Demerath, 2009; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a; Howard, 2008; Khan, 2011; Weis et al., 2014). Cookson and Persell (2010) found despite the passage of two decades since they last examined 16 elite boarding schools, those schools have continued to reproduce an elite class. These elite schools used “philosophies, programs, and lifestyles" (Cookson & Persell, 1985, p. 4) to influence their students to identify with, and develop themselves as members of the elite. An example of the socialization process the authors picked up on was the legitimization of privilege through the acceptance of the status quo (i.e., that those students had worked hard to be at that elite school and the cost of that hard work was to accept the hierarchical world as it was). Another socio-cultural mechanism the authors found was the continued value of exclusivity, cultivated by those in decision making roles at the schools (Crookson & Persell, 2010). These elite spaces cultivated status-group bonds among their students by emphasizing loyalty to each other and the institution, and leveraging unique cultural practices as a way of forging those bonds. These sociological processes show us how institutions such as elite schools are able to maintain their role in the reproduction of the upper class, through the justification and maintenance of the exclusivity of status enclaves, identities, and practices.

The durability of spaces that reproduce elite status is a theme Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a) also noted in his ethnography of an elite school. He found despite significant demographic changes in the US in the past 30 years, discursive practices of the elite continued to limit how non-elite students can claim legitimacy in that space. The most successful students at his elite boarding school were the ones who were able to move between various social spaces and groups with ease. Similarly, Khan (2011) argued how the feeling of ease was a crucial emotion among the students in his elite boarding school of choice, specifically the ease with which students are able to learn to negotiate and reproduce hierarchies of status, while

making them invisible at the same time. These studies point to how elite schools continue to serve a fundamental role in the reproduction of eliteness, and how an “ability to move” between different spaces is a crucial marker of elite status (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a, p. 125).

Each of these contributions advances our understanding of the relationship between privilege and inequality. However Koh and Kenway (2012) criticized this literature in its tendency to be based in Western contexts, and thus narrow in its consideration of elite schools from other parts of the world. This is true for studies based in Asia, and particularly from the Indian subcontinent. Within South Asia, while there has been emerging work on elite schooling, these have been primarily centered in India (Ørberg, 2018; Rizvi, 2014; Sriprakash et al., 2016). These studies show us the importance of having geographic diversity within this literature because of ways elite institutions in India, for example, are positioning themselves differently in a postcolonial, globalizing dimension of elite schooling. Rizvi (2014) illustrated the role of an Indian elite college in the formation of class, not just nationally but also in transnational terms. Such aspirations of upwardly mobile middle classes to a type of transnational capitalist class shows how social class stratifications in a nation-state framework is not sufficient when studying the role of elite institutions in the Global South. This is relevant in the case of Bangladesh, whose elites also aspire to be part of such a transnational capitalist class through, for example, their pursuit of admissions into universities outside of Bangladesh, as well as their leverage of their global connections within the Bangladeshi diaspora community. Markers of such aspirations can be seen through enrollment in English medium mainstream schools, which are primarily private institutions, and which a majority of the elite tutoring students are from (Imam, 2005; Rahman, 2001). In contrast to Bengali medium institutions, these English medium schools center the use of English as a medium of instruction and typically use international curricula such as the British Ordinary or Advanced levels (O/A-levels) or International Baccalaureate (Bittencourt, 2021). Many parents regard these type of international credentials to be a marker of social status and elite differentiation (Rizvi, 2014).

Markers of Eliteness in Bangladeshi Education

I discuss further two pertinent markers of eliteness for Bangladeshi society relevant for this study. The first being investment into the use of English language within schools. Imam (2005) provided a discussion of how Bangladeshi elites invest heavily in English language and

culture, with Bengali medium education signifying, “not only lower cultural status but global incompetence” (p. 474). He noted how English medium private schooling carries the greatest prestige within Bangladeshi society. Rahman (2007) confirmed this societal stratification by referring to how expensive urban English-medium schools are, and thus how inaccessible they are to non-wealthy families concluding, “the wealthier class (begin) to separate themselves through educational institutions as early as primary education;” with English medium schools bringing those of elite backgrounds together, and students of those English medium schools “gather(ing) different kinds of social, economic and cultural capital” (p. 191). In fact, the dominance of English among the elites has been posited as a threat to the lingual and cultural identity of Bangladeshis by some scholars (Chowdhury and Kabir, 2014; Imam, 2005).

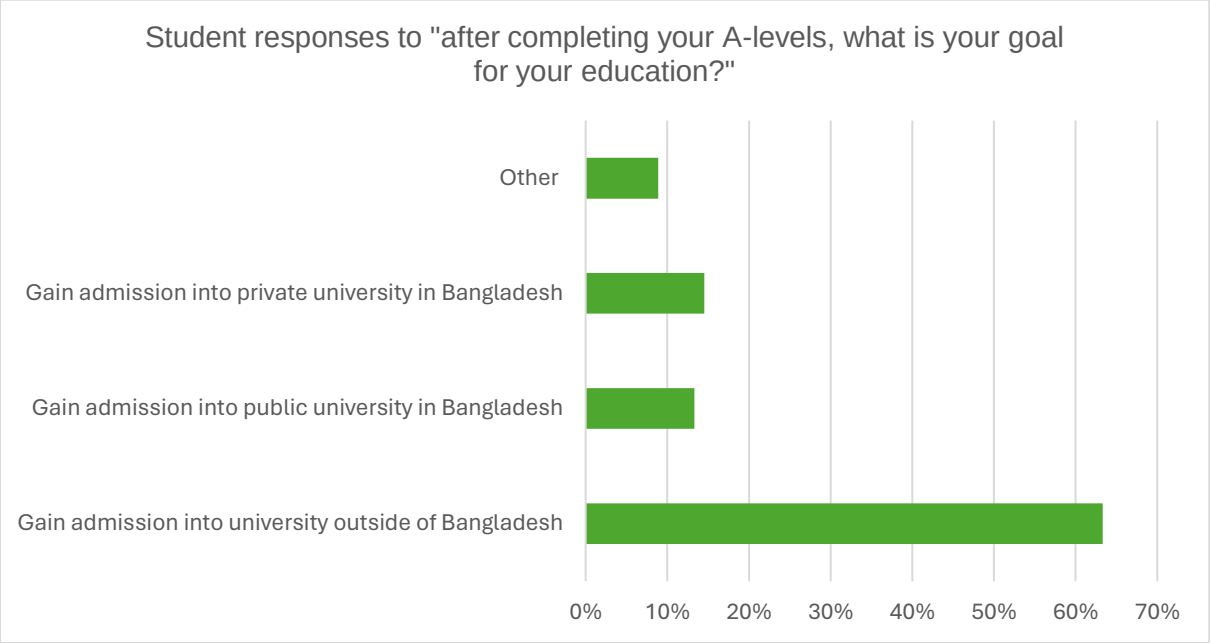
I contend part of the cultural capital involved in English medium schooling in urban Bangladesh is not just the immersion into the English language, but also Anglo-American culture, which holds tremendous global cachet. Students at elite English medium schools also gain fluency in say, the notable figures, celebrities, politics, entertainment, and issues of Anglo-American society and culture through activities such as Model United Nations, and through their socialization in tutoring spaces such as GH, which I discuss in Chapter 5. Thus, the use of English as a medium of instruction, communication, and transmission of ideas outside of a mandated school environment is a relevant cultural practice for the making of elite status, stemming from its neoliberal link to modernization and global competences.

Connected to the use of English is the aspiration to study, and then ultimately to work and live abroad, which is another relevant marker of elite status for Bangladeshis. Imam (2005) noted how many English-medium students “see themselves as only temporarily in Bangladesh, with their ultimate destination an English speaking country” (p. 478). Similar to the tiers of schooling in Bangladeshi education mentioned earlier, there are also tiers associated with the choices for tertiary education for those aspiring to eliteness, comprised from the top down of: 1) universities outside of Bangladesh, particularly English speaking countries like the US, UK, Australia, and Canada. These choices are several times more expensive than any university in Bangladesh; 2) select public universities in Bangladesh which are of good quality and offer a limited number of seats in comparison to the demand for admission and so are exclusive; and 3) private universities which are greater in number and charge much higher fees than public

universities, and are being accessed by a growing middle class. Even if these students who study abroad are not able to or wish to settle abroad and then return to Bangladesh, they augment their existing cultural capital as globally connected and educated English-speaking elites and tend to monopolize national privileges and benefits (Imam, 2005). We can see an example of this desire to study abroad from my own questionnaire administered to the students at the GH tutoring center. The responses to the question, "after completing your A-levels, what is your goal for your education?" are provided in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Bar Chart of the Students' Aspirations After High School



Note. N = 248[5]

This bar chart takes a closer look into GH students' aspirations after high school. I provide more details about my student survey in the next chapter. However, out of a total of 248 responses, 157 students, or 63% said they were looking to enroll in a university outside of

[5] This total of 248 responses from my survey is different from the total of 263 I mention in Chapter 3 due to 15 students not completing the last third of my student survey, which contained this question of where they wanted to apply to after completing their A level exams.

Bangladesh. This is in comparison to 13% who said they wanted to enroll in a public university in Bangladesh and 15% in a private university in Bangladesh. Thus, even as this study employed Bourdieu's (2011) notion of cultural capital, it expanded on it towards a transnational conceptualization of “global cultural capital” to better encapsulate students desire for higher education outside of Bangladesh in connection to extending their existing cultural capital and elite status (Kim, 2011, p. 111). I discuss this theoretical framing further in the next section.

I wrap up this section on the reproduction of elite status through schooling with another point of conceptualization of my study. While I employed the GH tutoring center as a central point of analysis, my aim was to highlight the relationship between educational experiences and the making of elite status, in order to broaden the conceptualization of elite education beyond school walls. For this inquiry, tutoring centers and classes are characterized as elite educational spaces in order to study the relationship between tutoring experiences and the socialization of elite status. My aim was to go beyond a type of methodological individualism, and instead focus on the dynamics of elite education, organized around a specific institution and space. This understanding was helpful in my goal to provide a more nuanced analysis of the central role of education in the production of social class in general, and elite status in particular, within well-resourced tutoring spaces in urban Bangladesh.

Purposes of Engaging in Shadow Education

Having established private tutoring centers as elite education spaces, in the following section, I summarize two primary functions scholars used to illustrate why students and their families seek shadow education, and then describe a third—as a mechanism of social reproduction, which is also a salient theoretical framing for this study. As I discuss in my findings chapters, it is important to note not all students who engage in tutoring at the GH tutoring center are of elite backgrounds. In fact, I found a more diverse group of students than I had expected attending GH; however, these students are also ultimately being shaped into eliteness. Thus many students come to GH for the instrumental and remedial reasons discussed below, but they end up staying for the purposes of social mobility.

As a Remedial Strategy

Some students participate in private tutoring to order to boost their academic performance. In other words, the types of students engaging in private tutoring are those whose

academic performance is weak and those who need remedial support. Using cross-national data from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Baker et al. (2001) found, in 75% of the countries sampled, a majority of students were accessing shadow education because they were doing poorly in mathematics (p. 11). Building on Baker and his colleagues' work, Byun et al. (2018) showed, using 2012 PISA data, even two decades later, a greater use of shadow education in most countries is for remedial purposes, or "sub-par academic performance" (p. 25). Other regional studies such as Lee (1996) and Mischo and Haag (2002) reported poor academic performance, and an aim to fill in gaps in understanding were the primary reasons students in Hong Kong and Germany respectively used private tutoring.

Using 2006 PISA data, Safarzyńska (2013) also found students were accessing private tutoring primarily as a remedial strategy, with the numbers of students taking private classes decreasing as their grades improved. However, it is also true students' perceptions of their academic performance, and the resulting need for tutoring are likely in comparison with the highest achievers in their class, instead of the average for their grades or some other objective standard. Students may also perceive they are performing at a lower level in schools that have a competitive academic climate, or a parent body with high educational expectations (Bray, 2009; Matsuoka, 2015). This may be the case for students of elite backgrounds within their mainstream private schools, which Rahman (2007) described as higher achieving with more motivated teachers, and the overall quality of education being quite high.

On the other hand, neo-institutional theorists argue the spread of shadow education is the result of the institutionalization of schooling, meaning successful institutionalization of mass education has also led to a high degree of participation in shadow education (Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Byun et al., 2018; Mori & Baker, 2010). If the central message of schooling is that everyone must participate and at least advance to a minimal level, private tutoring would understandably be used as a remedial strategy by students not performing as well as their peers, or more crucially, well enough to advance to the next stage of schooling. For families of elite backgrounds, students would be expected to clear specific milestones in their schooling in spite of poor academic performance. This reasoning was relevant for two of my student interviewees, Shiyam, who I mentioned in Chapter 1 and Rifat, who both self-identified as bad

students academically and relied on private tutoring from early on—grades six and seven respectively—to gain better grades.

As an Instrumental Strategy for Exam Prep

Many scholars characterize the demand for private tutoring to be driven by the expectation that shadow education will raise their students' competitive edge in high stake examinations (Bray, 2017). The subjects that are the most demanded in private tutoring classes, such as English, and mathematics, are those that are usually tested as part of a formidable gatekeeping-oriented examination structure (Brehm et al., 2012; Ghosh & Bray, 2018; Silova et al., 2006; Tansel & Bircan, 2006; Zhang, 2013). These exams are defined by the crucial role they play in a student's educational trajectory, where passing or not can determine societal mobility through enhanced employment chances and pay levels (Breen et al., 1995; Psacharopoulos & Papakonstantinou, 2005). Families are assumed to invest in private tutoring in order to maximize their children's chances of succeeding in these exams, and gaining admission to exclusive colleges or universities (Baker et al., 2001; Bray, 2009; Buchmann et al., 2010; Entrich, 2018; Lee et al., 2009). After their analysis of different types of state examinations in India, Ghosh and Bray (2018) identified the "competition emanating from credentialism was the main driver of the decision to receive tutoring" (p. 33), as no matter how different the exams were in their curricula load, students viewed them as being high stakes.

The concept of credentialism explored by Dore (1976) highlighted the extent to which examinations and certificates, rather than broader processes of education dominate school systems. It is a value system that regards credentials as an absolute standard in judging one's ability (Lee at al., 2009). Although Dore (1976) did not specifically analyze shadow education, this phenomenon is embodied in the fabric of his theoretical framework, as so much of tutoring is tailored to passing examinations and gaining certificates, rather than to the deeper processes of education. Even as Dore (1976) primarily focused on England and Japan in his seminal work, Lewin et al. (2019) argued Dore's thesis is now playing out on a global scale; more countries are buying into large-scale international assessments and league tables ranking national and international universities. These instruments help inform the choices of those who, for example, want to pay for tutoring to boost their chances of getting into a highly ranked university. Credentialism continues to be potent, because the achievement of prized educational

credentials does not hold significance just in the labor market, but also in social, political, and cultural spaces shaped by historical and national contexts (Brown, 2001).

In terms of the student population I engaged with at the GH tutoring center, almost half, or 45%, of the students in my student-administered survey marked examination preparation as one of the primary reasons they were at GH. My student interviewees provided an assortment of reasons as to why they were engaging in tutoring, as would be the case with any group. However, reflecting the quantitative data, the overarching reason they gave was instrumental — to order to pass and perform well on their exams. This was compounded by other reasons such as dropping out of school entirely before their O level exams (so before ninth grade), as was the case for two of my students, or after their O level exams were over, after which their mainstream school did not offer classes at the A levels stage anymore (a structure I discuss in Chapter 6), leading to these students relying entirely on private tutoring for their classes and education.

As a Means of Social Reproduction

A significant number of studies within the shadow education literature found more private tutoring is demanded by students from higher socio-economic groups in order to gain, or maintain, their privileges in the existing education system (Bray & Lykins, 2012; Safarzyńska, 2013; Smyth, 2009). In their multivariate probit analysis of the drivers of private tutoring in Egypt, Sierverding et al. (2019) recognized:

> Young people from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, who are more likely to take tutoring in the first place, may have higher quality schools and teachers. Such students might have less need for tutoring due to school quality but be more likely to take tutoring for other reasons …. (p. 579)

Further, the authors were able to say the patterns of spending and tutoring split by socio-economic backgrounds, “support the argument that tutoring is a means through which already privileged families reinforce their advantages in the education system” (p. 573).

Similar patterns across diverse country settings point to participation in after school tutoring varying by socioeconomic class. Research conducted in settings as different as Brazil (Ventura & Gomes, 2013), Egypt (Sieverding et al., 2019), France (Oller & Glasman, 2013), Turkey (Tansel & Bircan, 2006), Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Jokić, 2013; Safarzyńska, 2013; Silova et al., 2006), England (Ireson & Rushforth, 2005), Greece (Psacharopoulos &

Papakonstantinou, 2005), Hong Kong (Bray & Kwok, 2003), Malaysia (Jelani & Tan, 2012), and Sri Lanka (Pallegedara, 2012) have shown students from more prosperous social classes tend to enjoy more and better quality tutoring alongside their mainstream education. Both Kim and Park (2010) and Smyth (2009) interpreted greater investment in tutoring by upper classes as a reflection of stakeholders' (teachers, parents, and students) educational expectations towards attaining higher education, with both studies showing such expectations tend to vary with the school's socio-economic status (SES). Scholars also characterized the pursuit of shadow education by higher SES households as a manifestation of parental anxiety, to ensure their children are a step ahead in the competition for social mobility, with Dierkes (2013) even calling private tutoring in Japan an "insecurity industry" (p. 6). In their seminal paper, Stevenson and Baker (1992) asked whether private tutoring was, "an avenue for the transmission of social advantages from parents to their children in the contest for educational credentials" (p. 1643).

Similarly, Southgate (2013) looked into the intersection between family capital (economic, social, and cultural capital) and the use of shadow education across 17 countries using PISA data from 2003. She found households with high levels of cultural capital were most likely to engage in shadow education, "supporting the notion that family choice of supplementary education (was) a social reproduction mechanism in education" (p. 245). Thus, families with high levels of cultural capital in nearly all the 17 sampled countries greatly increased the likelihood of participating in shadow education, after taking into account gender, socioeconomic status, educational expectations, and family structure. As can be surmised from my opening vignette to this chapter, most of my peers were also looking into private tutoring to ensure our academic standing in the grade.

Social Reproduction Theory as Theoretical Framing

The reinforcement or reproduction of elite status through the use of private tutoring by already privileged families is the theoretical framework this study employed, as visualized in Figure 2 in Chapter 1. This social reproduction theory stems from Bourdieu's (2011)

conceptualization of the different forms of capital—cultural, economic, and social—as well as the addition of affective capital, which are understood as:

1. Economic capital: resources and labor that can be immediately converted into money and institutionalized as property rights.
2. Social capital: constitutes of social “connections” which can be translated into economic capital and then further institutionalized into a form of nobility.
3. Affective capital: refers to the emotions, feelings and gut-reactions that have become indispensable to contemporary work ethic and are essential for the creation of profit.
4. Cultural capital: comprises knowledge, skills, attitudes, style, and mannerisms that can be translated into economic capital in certain circumstances, and institutionalized as a type of educational qualification. Bourdieu’s theorization of cultural capital treats attitudes, preferences, and behavior as forms of embodied cultural capital (Yaish & Katz-Gerro, 2008).

I expand further on the use of the more multifaceted affective and cultural capitals as it relates to this study below.

Affective Capital

In the literature relating to affective capitalism, affect is a holistic concept that refers to feelings, emotions, communication, cognition, relationships, or even participation in general, or anything that creates hidden or indirect value (Nikusen, 2016). Affective capitalism describes an economic system in which the production of emotions, feelings, and gut-reactions is vital for the creation of profit. This kind of capitalism taps into and mobilises the emotional resources of workers because it recognizes that these ‘inner’ sentiments are not action per se, but they are the inner energy that propels us towards an act which can be economically exploited (Illouz, 2007).

Some scholars tend to use affect and emotions interchangeably and connected with the meaning-making process (Ahmed, 2004); others discuss affect as emergent, becoming, and unattainable (Thrift, 2008). Such broadness sometimes makes it difficult to assess what is meant by affective capitalism. To clarify, I define affect as an emotional dimension that encompasses feelings, emotions, communication, cognition, particularly cultivated through the relationships built at GH, and that primes students to be more open towards other forms of

capital production, such as cultural and social, at GH.

Over the past few decades, it has been argued that capitalist societies have experienced transformation from industrial capitalism to post-industrialism and affective capitalism (Virtanen, 2004). Boltanski and Chiapello (2007) argued the contemporary 'capitalist spirit' deals with the strong tie between individual self-fulfillment and corporate productivity (p. 18). In other words, the purpose of work is no longer just to satisfy the necessities of life, but rather it is where the self is now constructed. Therefore personal, cognitive, and emotional competencies and capacities, such as the ability to communicate, and be creative, have become essential to the contemporary work ethos (Saari & Harni, 2016).

In this regard, under contemporary capitalism, the organizations of human life itself is a source of value in capitalist production. This means preconditions of human thought and action such as mental resilience, flexibility, and creativity, have become enveloped under this stage of capitalism, and essential to economic production (Virtanen, 2004). This connects to the human affects which are cultivated at GH in terms nurturing students' confidence, resilience, and emotional self-regulation through the multi-layered relationship students have with their tutors. These faculties are an index of essential skills and competences needed especially in white collar work that upper and upper-middle class students from GH would aspire to.

Global Cultural Capital

Cultural capital comprises dispositions, attitudes, and skills that enable one to signal or maintain a certain type of social status or position. It is accumulated through families, schools, and peers, transmitted from one generation to the next, and was identified by Bourdieu (2011) to be "the best hidden and socially most determinant educational investment" (p. 80). The studies noted above provide credence to Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital's inequitable influence on education, in the successful reproduction of elites. Since the 1970s, education systems have been described as places of social reproduction and class struggle, and as serving to maintain and perpetuate class differentiation. As an informal, lesser regulated but still widespread stream of education, private tutoring qualifies as a social site for this kind of clash. Farag (2006) clearly frames private tutoring as "a form of class struggle taking place on the educational terrain" (p. 115). Although all groups have their own version of cultural capital, the forms most valued socially and economically are those inhabited by wealthier classes. From a social reproduction

perspective, private tutoring could be seen as a way for the upper classes to translate economic capital into additional cultural capital (Lynch & Moran, 2006).

In order to go beyond a nation-state framework and incorporate a more transnational conceptualization, I draw on Kim's (2011) development of a "global cultural capital" (p. 113). Global cultural capital refers to the knowledge, tastes, attitudes, and lifestyle which also circulate and exchange worldwide, and are seen as the exclusive resources that denote one's class and status. So even as "the production and consumption of global cultural capital is stratified … it is also diverse as it responds to various contexts" (Kim, 2011, p. 113). This means, in relation to Bangladeshi elites', higher education choices for example, studying outside of Bangladesh in an English-speaking country is seen as desirable and prestigious, but not as much say, studying in Pakistan does.

I saw an illustration of global cultural capital through how Shiyam characterized his strong desire to study abroad, which he said had been cultivated by his parents from a young age.

> Chotobela theke e na, amar baba shobshomoi bolto j amar chele bideshe pora lekha korbe. Amar baba r ekta iccha. Amar chele English medium ei porbe bole, amake English medium ei bhorti korlo. Amar baba bollo tomake bideshe porte hobe, tumi oibhabe shob kichu ready koro. Ami bideshe jabo dekhe 7 ta subject kintu O-levels ei dilam. Mane bidesh ei gele 7 ta theke 8 ta subject lage.... So, ami 7 ta subject e nilam. Ami A-levels ei 3 ta subject e nilam. Mane ami ekdom bidesh er preparation jebhabe newa lage, ami ekdom chotobela theke oibhabe e niye aschi...Toh ami chotobela theke e bidesh jabo, bidesh jabo. Baba o bolto bidesh, bidesh.
>
> (Actually from childhood, my father would always say "my son will study abroad." Because my father's wish was that his son would study in an English medium school, he got me admitted into an English medium school. My father said, "you have to study abroad, so with that in mind get ready." Because I am going to go abroad, I took 7 subjects in my O levels. Because if you want to go abroad, you need 7 to 8 subjects (for O levels), so I took 7 subjects. I took 3 subjects for my A levels. Meaning whatever preparation I needed to take to go abroad, I have been doing that since childhood. So

> since childhood, it's been "I want to go abroad, go abroad." My father also says "abroad, abroad.")

As we can see from the extract above, Shiyam's father has two clear expectations for his son, to study in an English medium school, and then to study abroad, both of which I noted are clear markers of elite status. As Kim (2011) also found in his study of Korean elites studying in the US, Shiyam's parents' expectations and involvement in his education from an early age greatly influenced his own educational aspirations and decisions, such as how many subjects to take for his O/A level examinations.

Shiyam also made explicit that his father does not just want his son to study abroad, but also to settle abroad and not return to Bangladesh for his future.

> Shei amake eibhabe bole, "Bangladesh e kichhu nai. Tumi bidesh e jao. Life will be much easier. Ami chai tumi bidesh ei thako. So bidesh e jao. Bidesh e giye pora lekha koro, bhalo kore poro. Bhalo university te porle, worldwide tomar ekta chance thakbe, jei na - tumi ekta kothao na kothao toh ekta bhalo job paba e."
>
> ([My father] says it like this, "there is nothing in Bangladesh, go abroad, life will be much easier. I want you to live outside of Bangladesh. So go abroad, study abroad and study well. If you study at a good university, you will have a good chance worldwide, that somewhere or the other you will find a good job.")

Shiyam's father made the link here to pursuing English medium schooling, and then studying abroad at a "good university" in order to gain a "good job" in order to enhance their own class position. Because of how costly higher education is outside of Bangladesh, students with less economic, as well as social and cultural capitals are not able to easily pursue higher degrees abroad. Parents with greater resources like Shiyam's father support his aspirations to study abroad, and even are the persuading catalyst to do so, as we can see. As Kim (2011) noted, these parents are also bestowing their cultural capital to their children through "imbuing vision and aspiration, and investing resources (in) English" (pp. 122–123). Thus, global cultural capital helps to explain students' desire for higher education outside of their home countries, in connection to extending their existing cultural capital and elite.

Going Beyond Social Reproduction

Even as social reproduction theory offers a compelling theoretical framework for the stratifying power of private tutoring, this study aimed to go beyond the idea of a linear process through which economic and social resources are transferred. While the transfer of resources from one generation to another is certainly a crucial function of elite schooling, how students learn to internalize the privileges of an elite tutoring space, regardless of their social class origins, implies a more complex process, one that a critical realist approach can assist in offering an explanation for. Recognizing not all students who attend the tutoring center come from wealthy families as mentioned earlier, social reproduction theory cannot fully address how all students who attend an elite tutoring space are socialized into becoming elite. Namely, enrolling students from upper-class families is not enough; all students in the tutoring center are learning how to be part of an elite group, particularly any students who do not come from upper-class backgrounds.

It is important to distinguish between socio-economic status (SES) or class and elite status. The former, SES, is more directly related to economic and social resources such as income and educational attainment, while the latter refers to the hierarchical standing of “status groups” (Weber, 2002, p. 33). Status groups are defined only partly by the resources they have. As Gaztambide-Fernández (2009) described, “status hierarchies are not simply reproduced through the transference of economic resources, but also of the symbolic materials and subjective dispositions that are required to demonstrate membership in particular status groups” (p. 11). In other words, simply having access to economic and social resources does not give a person elite status. It is rather having the ability to demonstrate certain behaviors, dispositions, knowledge, and aesthetic choices that symbolically limit who can gain membership into those status groups. Thus, one can be excluded even if they have some resources and relevant dispositions, but not the same connections or opportunities to access membership. Therefore, this study drew on a Weberian conceptualization of status groups to understand elite status and socialization into eliteness.

Conclusion

The fact that in most nations shadow education is not monitored, or even noticed, speaks to its social reproductive nature (Southgate, 2013). Many families continue to pursue it, even in nations that have tried to ban it, such as Bangladesh. This trend has strongly continued

during the COVID-19 crisis and is not likely to slow down in a world increasingly relying on personalized and virtual forms of learning, even apart from the impact of a global pandemic (Lane, 2020). Engaging in shadow education, then, is not only about raising test scores or passing college entrance examinations; it is also about entrenching ways of being in students who had already been separated into well-resourced private schools. Gaining access to and participating in private tutoring is a strategy wealthier families are using, as evidenced from the literature above, to secure their elite status.

In this chapter, I discussed the dominant historical, theoretical, and conceptual frames I used for my study. I began with a brief overview of the Bangladeshi education system, how tutoring is situated within that system, and the institutional response to the use of tutoring. I then reviewed the uses of neoliberalism and how shadow education can be situated within the global movement of neoliberal governmentality and globalization, in terms of the policies and practices in place within Bangladesh's education sector. I summarized the relevant elite schooling literature, how I conceptualized private tutoring as a component of elite education in order to examine students' socialization within these spaces, and addressed two prominent markers of eliteness within urban Bangladeshi education. I then drew on the broader literature of shadow education, and why students and their families may be engaging in it, and included some data from my student survey in this and the preceding section on elite status in Bangladesh to highlight the results that align with this literature. I then ended by discussing the social reproduction theoretical framework, and expanded on the concepts of affective capital, global cultural capital, and status group membership that inform this study.

In the next chapter, I go into greater detail on the methodological components of the case study approach I employed in my study, which included class observations, semi-structured interviews, a social media review, and a student questionnaire. I share more results from my survey, describe my data analysis and coding processes, as well as share some thoughts on my positionality in approaching this work.

Chapter 3: Methodology

It was a hot afternoon, and my friend (who was also my next-door neighbor) and I were stuck in dense traffic on our way home from high school. "You're also enrolling in Mamun Sir's Accounting classes? I asked her dubiously. "Why? You're getting full marks in all the school mock exams. We just talked about how straightforward the syllabus seems for both of us."

"Right, I know," she said rather sheepishly. "But I want to go anyway, Saad and all our other friends are going and I don't want to miss out." I was not convinced by this, but decided to ask my father what he thought about my joining Accounting lessons. At this point I was already going to tutoring for my other A-Level (12th grade) subjects—Math and Economics, which I had prioritized, as I found Accounting rather easy.

"Do it," my father said once we discussed the details of how much the lessons cost, how many times a week, where they were located (an important consideration considering the insane traffic in Dhaka). "Do it. but only if you want to. Don't worry about the fees, I don't want you to feel like you couldn't achieve your highest potential because I wouldn't pay. It's up to you."

I ended up going to only two months of classes, carpooling with Sumaiya, until the time and effort of attending several tutoring classes in the evenings, along with school in the day left me emotionally exhausted. I decided to stop attending accounting classes in the crucial six-month period before exams started, and relied on studying on my own, much to Sumaiya's chagrin (and some self-doubt). I ended up getting a distinction for the highest marks in the world that year, in the subject.

Introduction

This study provides an examination of why students of elite status, who already enjoy significant privileges in the education system such as going to private schools, engage in private tutoring. The purpose of this dissertation was to examine how those of elite status learn and are socialized within private tutoring spaces, within the context of urban Bangladesh.

In this chapter, I first present the research approach of this study, including the critical realist and case study approaches. I then detail the research design and the data collection methods undertaken for this study. I next go into the data analysis procedures, aspects of my

positionality that came into play, as well as any limitations to the study. I conclude with a preview of the findings chapters of this dissertation that follow this chapter.

Critical Realist Approach

This study was informed by a critical realist paradigm, which posits the view that the social world, including education, is made up of layers of structure and generative mechanisms (Fletcher, 2017; Robertson & Dale, 2015; Wynn & Williams, 2012). Critical realism emerged in the 1970s and 1980s through the work of Bhaskar (1975, 1998) and extended by others (Collier, 1994; Lawson, 1997; Sayer, 1992). One of the most important tenets of critical realism is that ontology (i.e., what is real, the nature of reality) is not reducible to epistemology (i.e., our knowledge of reality). In this respect, modern critical realism is positioned as an alternative to the positivist and constructivist paradigms, and draws elements of both for its ontology and epistemology to provide a new approach to develop knowledge (Wynn & Williams, 2012; Mukumbang, 2023). Positivism is critiqued for its “epistemic fallacy,” that is the limitation of reality to what can be empirically known, through scientific experiments for example (Bhaskar et al., 2018 as cited in Khazem, 2018, p. 126). The same critique applies to constructivism, which views reality as entirely constructed through and within human knowledge or discourse. In its positioning as an in-between to constructivist and positivist perspectives, critical realism pushes back against reducing reality to human knowledge, “whether that knowledge acts as lens or container for reality” (Fletcher, 2017, p. 182).

Critical realism functions as a general philosophical framework and is compatible with a range of methods (Fjellman, 2023). For example, Hastings (2023) and DeJaeghere (2024) provide a detailed discussion on how to empirically bridge this philosophy with quantitative and mixed methods respectively. Critical realism proposes the world is real, structured, and complex, and argues for an interconnected and structured ontology, which is real and independent of epistemology, or knowledge. It contends our reality consists of the domains of the real, the actual and the empirical, where the ‘real’ structures and mechanisms generates the ‘actual’ (events) and is distinct from the empirical experiences of humans (Khazem, 2018). Critical realism thus distinguishes itself from positivism and constructivism in recognizing that the world is "an open system with a constellation of structures, mechanisms, and contexts" (Mukumbang, 2023, p. 95), which allows for the building of theories and models with greater

explanatory power (Parra, 2018).

Critical realists therefore argue our inquiries into structures, properties and practices are not equal to our experiences of them. I resonate with this reasoning that just because we cannot observe something does not mean to say that it does not exist, and that human knowledge is able to capture only a small part of a deeper and vaster reality. For this inquiry, critical realism is able to reveal the embedded reality of larger neoliberal structures and mechanisms informing the role of education within Bangladeshi society—this includes preferences towards English speakers in the white collar job market, or the connections and expectations in place to allow Bangladeshi youth to extend their elite status by entering into a transnational upper class, through say by studying abroad.

This study was also informed by the critical aspect of critical realism. Epistemologically, this means knowledge is socially produced, changeable, and fallible; furthermore, because knowledge is socially produced, the world is then known, interpreted, and experienced differently by different people (Khazem, 2018). Using this type of critical framework allowed me to develop a more nuanced picture of how power operates within elite educational spaces, such as the tutoring spaces in my study, in order to pay attention to cultural practices and ways of being without losing sight of the powerful structures and circumstances that condition those practices.

What a critical realist approach meant for this study as well is that different students are being shaped into eliteness in different ways. Following my conceptual framework in Figure 2, for students who are not as upper class, different “guises of capital” will influence them in different ways than say, those who are already of upper class (Bourdieu, 2011, p. 79). I discuss what this looks like concretely in my discussion chapter, once the main findings of this study have been laid out.

Critical realism also argues for taking on the dualism of structure and agency, and doing justice to both by giving a distinctive role to each without conflating them. As Davies (2008) indicated, critical realism offers a nuanced perspective in which humans are not just passive products of social structures, or entirely their creators, but instead are “placed in an iterative and naturally reflexive feedback relationship to them” (p. 26). This means as agents, students, tutors, and administrators have a role to play by either reproducing pre-existing structures or

transforming them based on their actions. This is important because education can be used to secure a degree of personal and social transformation (Bourn, 2015). However, Ackroyd and Karlsson (2014) cautioned us to take into consideration how even within social reproduction, moving away from existing patterns is difficult to bring about because of the generative mechanisms already at work. Agents have limited capacity to do more than reproduce how they participate in the institutions they attend.

A relevant example here is of a student I interviewed named Rifat, who expressed to me during our interview how he was not interested in going to college after he finished his A level exams. Instead, he aspired to become an entrepreneur, wanting to invest the money his parents were saving for college into setting up his own business. He knew this was going to be a difficult decision to get his parents on board with, even though he thought through it carefully and was adamant to take that step. Here, Rifat was expressing his agency in not going along with the conventional elite expectation of attending college outside of Bangladesh, which his parents wanted for him. Ultimately, Rifat had to negotiate these tensions by agreeing to attend a private university in Bangladesh, a development he shared with me when I was carrying out member checks more recently, showing how difficult it is to move away from socially generative and reproductive mechanisms especially as a young person.

It is also important to note some groups have much more influence and power over outcomes than others, due to structures, practices, and generative mechanisms existing in hierarchical combinations. So the capacity to radically transform social formations and their institutions—such as education through private tutoring—will be dependent on their weight in the social system (Robertson & Dale, 2015). This is all to say that while I was drawn to such a critical paradigm because of its emancipatory ways of thinking as a basis for social change, I was also cognizant that in practice, it is difficult for researchers or individual actors to actively resist or transform the hegemonic neoliberal and capitalist structures we live in.

Case Study Approach

This study employs a case study design for its inquiry. According to Yin (2009), a case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in- depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18). Often supported by multiple methods, Yin (2009) noted case studies are

utilized to make sense of complex social phenomena, and to examine “holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life-events” (p. 2). Through focusing on a particular institution or case, Baxter and Jack (2008) suggested case study research allows researchers to answer the how and why questions, while considering how a phenomenon is shaped by the context within which it is situated. Thus, this study used a case study approach with ethnographic elements to undertake a critical realist analysis of the use of shadow education, combined with an interrogation of neoliberalism in its effects on structures, practices, and ideas around education governance in Bangladesh.

Because critical realist-informed research seeks to explain how and why specific, complex events occur in a particular context, a critical realist paradigm also paired well for such an ethnographic case study (Mackie, 2023). Rees and Gatenby (2014) discussed how effective ethnographic research, "requires both an ontology that asserts that there is a social world independent of our knowledge of it and an epistemology that argues that it is knowable” (p. 183). Ethnographic methods within a case study also helps to build upon existing conceptualizations and draw out information significant to the phenomenon, context, mechanisms, and outcomes, as well as the evidence to connect these elements (Mukumbang, 2023). As Mukumbang (2023) highlighted, ethnographic methods helps researchers to mine for "rich, detailed insights" (p. 103).

Research Site

Gaining Entry

As someone who engaged in private tutoring, as evidenced by the opening vignettes to this and the last chapter, I was interested in examining the impact of tutoring on educational systems in Bangladesh. I knew I wanted to take an ethnographic approach into understanding what goes on inside a tutoring center, as there is a notable lack of studies within the shadow education literature about which actually occur inside a tutoring center, and its practices. A deciding factor towards choosing the subject of private tutoring as my dissertation topic, away from the other issues I had been considering at the time was the fact that one of my neighbors Tahmid, from when I lived in Dhaka, was the co-founder and lead tutor at a well-known tutoring center in the city. Our previous connection speaks to the social connections needed in Bangladesh to advance time sensitive projects such as this study, and also to how other

researchers have faced challenges of access, “insofar as tutorial centers may not welcome them” (Bray, 2017, p. 485). He and I had always been on friendly terms, and as I progressed through college, I heard from my parents and others in the community how successful his tutoring center was becoming, eventually becoming known for the good teachers it had. This reputation included Tahmid himself who was gaining some local notoriety for how popular his classes were. I had the opportunity to take a tour of the tutoring center, called “GH” in December 2019 when I was visiting my family, and also re-visited in December 2023 during another trip to Bangladesh.

The Tutoring Center

GH tutoring center is located in one of the most affluent neighborhoods in Dhaka, Dhanmondi. Dhanmondi used to be known as the area where the wealthiest lived, and though that moniker has now moved to other parts of the city, and more upper-middle class folks live in the neighborhood, Dhanmondi still holds a reputation for having “old money” (Concord, 2022). One of the most notable figures in Bangladeshi history, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of Bangladesh also lived in Dhanmondi and was assassinated in his home in 1975. His family home has since become a museum in his memory. Five of the most elite English medium schools in Dhaka are also located in Dhanmondi, including three schools that come up during my excerpts with my interviewees—Greenwood, Sunnydale, and St. James schools.

The GH tutoring center is its own stand-alone institution, and was started by Tahmid, two of his friends from university, and an acquaintance of theirs who is a well-known retired schoolteacher. They are all actively involved with running the center in managerial roles, and as senior teachers. Except for the retired schoolteacher, none of founders have expertise in teaching per se in terms of graduate degrees or training, but just years of experience, starting from when they would tutor students for extra money during their college years. Running and teaching at the tutoring center is largely the founders’ full-time jobs and primary source of income, with some of them sporadically teaching a course here or there at a university or English medium school but not on a regular or full-time basis.

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GH celebrated its 10-year anniversary, just before the COVID-19 pandemic, for which it held several celebratory events for its students and staff. It has rapidly expanded its subject offerings in the last decade, being able to lease and fully occupy a five-story building in Dhanmondi. Each floor in the tutoring center building is its own 'department'—science and math, business, humanities, and the arts.

As you walk up the stairs at GH, you see that at the end of each staircase on the wall there is a large poster hung that catches your eye as you walk up and past it (Figure 7). The posters extol that fact GH celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2020, and how it wanted to express its "heartfelt gratitude" for that milestone. Messaging such as this serves to create a sense of purpose and community within the students and staff who spend considerable time in that building.

Figure 7

Poster Hung at the Top of First Set of Stairs at GH

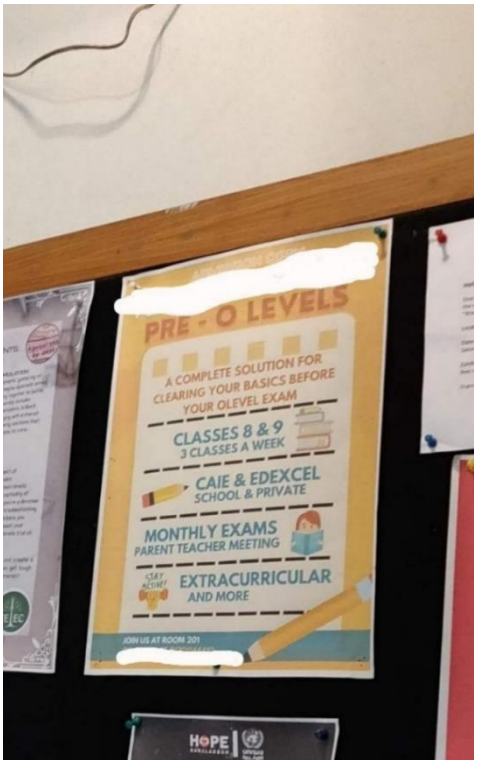
Note. Photo taken by author.

As I mentioned, each level of the building is dedicated to a separate department, which caters to a cluster of subjects. For example, there is the floor which houses the business department, so classes for accounting, business, and economics are taken there. Then there is another floor which houses the science department and classes for chemistry, physics, and

biology, and so forth. There are a few rooms and offices on one floor dedicated to “GH Juniors” or the classes being taught for grades five, six, and seven. GH also caters to grades eight and nine by categorizing those as “Pre-O levels” for any students wanting a refresher on the syllabi for those grades before starting the O level syllabi with the senior teachers. A flyer on a bulletin board in GH advertising the pre-O-level classes is presented in Figure 8 for illustrative purposes.[6] Junior teachers and other TAs would teach these pre-O-levels classes.

Figure 8

Poster at Advertising Pre-O-Level Classes



Note. Photo taken by author.

Each of GH’s floors are similarly designed—as students step into each department, there is a long corridor they have to walk through to get to the main areas where the classrooms

[6] Some parts of the pictures presented are blurred or greyed out in order to protect the anonymity of the tutoring center.

and offices are. These long corridors have either the pictures of notable figures such as Albert Einstein, Rabindranath Tagore and William Shakespeare as seen in Figure 9, or the pictures of the tutors themselves, along with the year they started teaching in order to showcase the longevity of their tenure (and hence quality of their instruction; see Figure 10). For example, in Figure 10, the middle upper panel says the teacher's name who has been teaching, "A level chemistry since 2006" and the middle lower panel says teaching, "O level chemistry since 2013." These pictures are lit with recessed lights at the top of the walls, which provoke a certain reflective mood as you walk in.

Figure 9

Notable Figures Students Walk Past in GH Hallway

Note. Photo taken by author.

Figure 10

Pictures of GH Teachers, the Subjects they Teach, and Since When the Students Walk Past

Note. Photo taken by author.

Field Relations

I originally conceptualized this study to be a traditional ethnography, with the intention of being present and fully immersed at the GH tutoring site during data collection, hanging out in its hallways, observing classes, and building relationships with students. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which enveloped the world three months after my first in-person trip to the tutoring center, I was forced to recalibrate my approach to this study. I pivoted instead to doing a case study which "borrow(ed) ethnographic techniques" (Wolcott, 2008, p. 44). These techniques meant incorporating online observations of the GH's tutoring classrooms, semi-structured interviews with students and teachers over Zoom, a Qualtrics administered questionnaire for students, and an analysis of the tutoring center's social media platforms.

After Tahmid confirmed I could still work with GH as a site for my research, he sent me the numbers of the other senior teachers at GH, to ask for their individual permission to observe their classes. I contacted three other teachers, Fuad, Adnan, and Ishrak over WhatsApp—the first two are Tahmid's friends from college and the other a co-founder of GH. Ishrak was one of

the youngest teachers at GH, also joining relatively recently in 2016, compared to the others who had been there since the early days of GH's founding. I reached out to these teachers because I wanted to have some diversity of subjects I could observe; these teachers (including Tahmid) were teaching business studies, physics, law, and accounting. All three of these teachers responded positively to my WhatsApp messages and subsequently either sent me their class Zoom links or their class Facebook pages that contained details of their schedules so I could begin observing their classes. This included permission to attend classes across three grade levels—O level (grades 9 or 10), AS level (grade 11), and A level (grade 12). I particularly got on well with Ishrak, who was closer in age to me, and who we later discovered had attended the same school as I had in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. So, even though we had not known each other then, we had some mutual friends and schoolteachers.

Data Collection

I received approval to conduct this study from the University of Minnesota's research institutional review (IRB) in September 2021. I then started collecting data over the next six months, beginning in September and concluding at the end of February 2022. I used four primary methods to collect data for this study—observations of tutoring classes, semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, and an administrator, a questionnaire, and a social media review. Observations and interviews were conducted online and used because these methods would provide a rich description of the socialization and educational practices, behaviors and experiences of participants within the tutoring center (Mack et al., 2005; Seidman, 2013). I also reviewed the social media channels of the tutoring center, such as Facebook and Instagram, which were used extensively by the center in order to promote their activities, services, and courses, as well as communicate with prospective and current students. Analysis of GH's social media was done so that I could examine how the tutoring center positions and frames itself, as well as how its students and staff communicate with each other. During the pandemic, social media was a pivotal means of messaging and communication for the tutoring center and its students and staff. The questionnaire, only for students, was primarily used to establish the demographic background of the larger group of participants who are engaging in tutoring within the site.

Observations

The tutoring center was able to pivot quite rapidly to conducting all its classes and services online, starting in April 2020. Its students, perhaps the best socially positioned to also make this kind of rapid pivot, had been able to attend classes undeterred, as well as own or acquire the requisite resources needed such as a personal laptop, privacy, and space in their homes, and a reliable internet connection.

I conducted observations of GH's tutoring classes at the beginning of my data collection phase. I primarily focused on this method for the first two months in order to orient myself to the tutoring space and its rhythms, and for the tutors and students to become comfortable with my presence—which I figured would be helpful when it came to asking participants to sit down with me for an interview. Understanding the social world of this tutoring center meant I looked into how the classes were organized, and documented practices of note for tutors, students, and peers to illuminate the cultural practices through which students were being socialized into their elite status. For example, as I was waited for the tutor to join a Zoom class during one observation, one student remarked how the tutor was not going to be present that day because they had seen from the tutor's Instagram he had gone parasailing the day before; they then wished they could have done the same. I noted this discussion of the "nomadic lifestyle" this tutor emulated through his lifestyle, as a disposition his students were eager to have.

After I connected with the tutors whose classes I wanted to observe, I created a spreadsheet of which classes were held when, for which cohort (O-, AS-, or A-levels) and the requisite Zoom link. This spreadsheet was crucial for me to keep track of all the classes across the different subjects and grade levels, especially as there was a 13 hour (or 14 hours, with daylight savings time) difference between my time and Bangladesh time. While teaching classes online for my graduate assistantship during the day, I tried to make sure I was observing at least one to two classes a night in order to advance my data collection. Because I was waking up at 2 am or 4 am to observe classes, or staying awake until 2 or 3 am, there were several moments during this phase of data collection that I actually felt jet-lagged, as my mind was out of sync with the rhythm of the time zone my body was in.

Usually during these Zoom classes, I did my best to be a silent observer and not disturb the class in any way. However, I soon learned different tutors expected different things from

someone like me who was a non-student attendee. The physics teacher liked knowing I was there, which I signaled by greeting “Assalamu Alaikum” (peace be upon you) when he would start speaking to the class. Even in a class of about 20-30 students, he would recognize my voice right away (in the melee of many students joining the Zoom or speaking at once) and ask me how things were going. The business teacher also appreciated my greeting him, but would not engage me any further, instead preferring to check in with his students. Ishrak would also chat with me in the beginning of class and often bring me into the class conversation if the students were discussing something controversial, or if he needed another “adult” opinion in the mix. I learned these nuances during the first few weeks of observations and made sure to follow the classroom culture that had been created so everyone would feel comfortable with my presence. I also used the opportunity of conducting observations as my first method to take note of certain turns of phrases, expressions or incidents with students and tutors to follow up on further during my interviews with them.

Following Bartlett and Vavrus’ (2017) guidance, I strove to write down as much descriptive information as possible during the class, including my subjective interpretations. I took particular note, for example, of the physical backgrounds of students, how they were presenting themselves, the interactions between students, and with the tutor. I had a document template with the name of the class, grade level, and date always prepared, so I could open it even when I had just woken up and be ready to observe and take notes.

After the observation was completed, I would log in a spreadsheet which class I just attended, as I wanted to make sure I was spending my time equitably across subjects and grade levels (i.e., O and A level classes). I then spent 5-10 minutes fleshing out my initial notes while the details were still fresh. Having an observation template ready as well as spending a few minutes after class editing it were helpful practices that helped me save time and worry about anything I may have missed, as I was likely to go to bed right after. Each class at GH, regardless of whether it was an O, AS, or A levels class would be for about an hour and half. Across the eight weeks when I solely conducted observations, I observed approximately 103 classes, or 154 hours of tutoring classes.

Interviews

Rees and Gatenby (2014) noted how taking an ethnographic critical realist approach means setting out from the premise subjects' own accounts are the starting point, but not the end of the research process. I used a semi-structured approach to the interviews with my participants, which allowed me to "attend to the processual nature of conversation and the social dimensions of knowledge production" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 55). I had a broad list of topics and questions of interest prepared, which I used to help guide the beginning of the conversation, but I did not force myself to stick to it. Instead, depending on the emergent structure of the conversation which allowed for flexibility in terms of what we discussed. For example, if a student shared they dropped out of their mainstream school, I would tailor my questions accordingly by asking why they dropped out, whether they missed anything about their schooling, and so forth.

I first started with interviewing tutors of the classes I observed, as I had already built a solid rapport with them and they had become more familiar with my study. Our interviews usually ranged from between an hour to an hour a half. I did not conduct any follow up interviews with any participants, instead opting to ask any lingering questions I had after through Facebook chat. All interviews were conducted virtually through Zoom, which the participants were already using for their tutoring classes, and so were very familiar with.

In selecting students to interview, I used a combination of snowball and purposive sampling. Using my observation data across the classes as a guide, I made an initial list of potential students to recruit. I largely made this determination based on their demeanor during classes. For example, if they seemed engaged and extroverted during class, I identified them to contact as I wanted students who would be able to speak their mind, and would feel comfortable doing so. I also looked at other factors such as gender diversity, and if they were attending multiple classes that I was also observing so we would have several points of contact or topics to speak to regarding the tutoring center. I further consulted with tutors at the end of my interviews with them that I was thinking about asking these specific students for an interview, their opinion on that choice, and whether there was anyone else they think would be suitable, considering they knew their students much better than I. After my initial ask, a few students declined to be interviewed. I tended to ask older students, who were doing their AS or A levels

for interviews, as they would have had more time spent at GH and more experience with tutoring in general, and thus have more to share and reflect on. This, plus the fact that the two O level students I had in mind declined to be interviewed meant all of my 9 student interviewees were preparing for their A level exams.

In general, during my interviews with students, I would ask them about a range of topics including, for example, what their aspirations were for their future, whether they wanted to stay in Bangladesh or apply abroad, what they perceived they were getting out of their mainstream EM school versus tutoring classes at GH (if they were doing both), who they felt connected to at GH and why, and so on. An emergent conversation was less the case during my interviews with the teachers and administrator, which proceeded more accordingly to the list of questions I already prepared, as their life situations and histories were more uniform than students, with the teachers being much older and having an established career and path. In general, I asked the teachers about how they ended up teaching at or founding GH, their relationships with students, their pedagogical strategies, their opinion on the difference between GH, and other tutoring centers, and so on. The protocols and list of guiding questions I prepared for my student, teacher, and administrator interviews are provided in Appendices A and B.

In total, I interviewed 14 participants, which comprised of 9 students, 4 tutors, and 1 administrator. I included a table of the defining characteristics of my student interviewees in Table 2 below. In terms of my teacher interviewees, I interviewed four teachers who were all senior teachers at GH and teach the O and A level batches. Out of the 10 senior teachers who all teach different subjects at GH, there were no female teachers at the senior level. There are two female teachers who lead GH Juniors—the section of the tutoring center that offers classes for grades 5–8. I have included a table of the defining characteristics of my teacher interviewees in Table 3.

Table 2

Select Characteristics of Students Interviewed

Student Name	Sex	Currently going to their EM school?	How long had they been at their EM school?	When did they join GH?	Occupation of Parents	Aspires to study abroad?
Nahiyan Haider	Male	No: Registered for exams through their school but not doing classes there	Had been in St. James school from playgroup[7] to Grade 12	From Grade 10 onwards to his O and A levels	Father: Doctor Mother: Doctor (but not practicing since 2006)	Yes
Abrar Mustafa	Male	No: Registered for exams through their school but not doing classes there	Transitioned to Eng Med from Bang Med in grade 6?	From Grade 11 onwards to his A levels	Father: Army Officer; Mother: Doctor	No
Ramisa Hossain	Female	No: Dropped out of school after finishing Grade 9	Had been in St. James from playgroup to Grade 9.	From Grade 10 onwards to her O and A levels	Father: Businessman; Mother: Entrepreneur (owns her own catering business)	Yes
Shiyam Akhtar	Male	Yes: Was at Greenwood until grade 8; dropped out and gave his O level exams as a private candidate at GH (grades 9 and 10), and then re-enrolled at Greenwood for grades 11 and 12		From Grade 6 onwards (starting with GH Juniors) to his A levels.	Father: Businessman; Mother: Homemaker	Yes
Pritom Saha	Male	No: Registered for exams through their school but not doing classes there	Was at Shining Beacon school from playgroup to class 10	From Grade 9 onwards to his A levels.	Father: Works in a pharmaceutical company Mother: homemaker	Yes

[7] "Playgroup" in the Bangladeshi context refers to kindergarten, generally for children between 3 to 5 years of age.

Table 2 cont.

Student Name	Sex	Currently going to their EM school?	How long had they been at their EM school?	When did they join GH?	Occupation of Parents	Aspires to study abroad?
Tanvir Hasan	Male	No: Registered for exams through their school but not doing classes there	Has been at Compass Academy from playgroup to grade 10	From Grade 9 onwards to his A levels.	Father: Entrepreneur (owns his own textile business) Mother: Homemaker	No
Mir Ashiq (Ashiq)	Male	No: Dropped out of school midway through Grade 10	Was at Pinnacle school for two years of kindergarten; Grades 1-5 at Greenwood; Yale International school in Narayanganj from grades 6 to 10 and half.	From grade 11 onwards (so primarily for his A levels). He started engaging in tutoring classes from non GH tutors since grade 6.	Father: Businessman; Mother: Homemaker	Yes
Rifat Ahmed	Male	No, dropped out of school after finishing Grade 8	Was in St. James from playgroup to Class 8.	From Grade 7 onwards (starting with GH Juniors) to his A levels.	Father - Businessman; Mother - Homemaker	No
Maliha Islam	Female	No, dropped out of school after finishing Grade 6.	Has been in various EM schools from playgroup to grade 6 and relied on private tutoring from grade 7 onwards for her education.	From grade 11 onwards to her A levels.	Father - Businessman; Mother - Homemaker	Yes

***** *All the participants listed in this table were between 17-19 years of age at the time of our interviews.*

Table 3

Select Characteristics of Teachers Interviewed

Teacher name	Sex	Occupation	How long have they been at GH tutoring center?	Other salient details
Tahmid Chowdhury	Male	Teacher, co-founder and managing director of GH	Since its founding in 2010	Has a YouTube channel that he dedicates to his vlogs (video blogs) of traveling around Bangladesh and the world; also owns two restaurants in Dhaka city
Mohammed Fuad (Fuad)	Male	Teacher, co-founder, and head of taxation and legal department at GH	Since its founding in 2010	Is in charge of the study abroad department at GH, which was defunct at the time of data collection
Adnan Rahman	Male	Teacher, co-founder and head of HR at GH	Since its founding in 2010	Teaching part-time at a mainstream EM school (during interview)
Ishrak Arif	Male	Teacher	Joined as a student in 2010 and as a full-time teacher in 2016	One of the youngest teachers on staff teaching the O and A level batches; Teaching part-time at a mainstream EM school (post-interview)

In regard to administrators, I was only able to interview one administrator who had been at GH almost since the beginning of its inception. This was primarily due to time constraints and as the sole researcher for this project, I wanted to focus on completing several interviews with students and teachers first, which did not leave much time to schedule time with other administrators. Because of his long-standing relationship with GH however, the administrator I did interview, Mahbub bhaiya, was involved in the lives of many of the students I interviewed and was relatively active in the classroom in comparison to the administrators in other departments according to the teachers I spoke to in those departments. From this administrator, I asked about what their relationships were like with the students and teachers, what their day-to-day looked like at the tutoring center, what their role entails, their own ambitions, and generally about the culture of GH itself.

As this dissertation drew from and weaved together the experiences of my student interviewees, I included brief snapshots of them below. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, to preserve participants' anonymity, all names used for my participants, their mainstream schools, and tutoring centers are pseudonyms, and direct references to students' lives and any identifying details were either excluded or purposefully made vague.

Nahiyan

Nahiyan had been at his mainstream EM school, St. James, from playgroup to Grade 12. At the time of our interview, he was preparing for A/AS levels and he was still registered with the school to sit for those exams through them, though he did all his classes and exam preparation at GH (I go more into what this means in Chapter 7). He had a good relationship with his school from being there for all of his education and wanted to maintain his connection with them for good recommendation letters. He identified his family as being financially well-off enough to be comfortably pay the fees for his school as well as for all his tutoring lessons. He also self-identified as religious, noting he was, "not very ultra-modern" and actually wanted to get married early and start a family so he wanted to finish university as soon as he could and possibly enroll into a PhD program to secure his path in life. Nahiyan was involved in competing in a mental math competition through the Abacus Learning of Higher Arithmetic (ALOHA). Starting at nine years of age, he had been competing for ALOHA internationally, which he credited to allowing him and his family to travel to 11 countries with him. He wanted to

apply to college in the US or Hong Kong, to graduate school in the UK, and move to and live “the good life” in Dubai.

Abrar

Abrar‘s father was in the army, which meant he moved and changed schools many times. He transitioned to English medium from Bangla medium schooling, was still registered at an English medium school for his A level exams but was not doing any classes there. He expressed disappointment in GH’s facilities and the facilities offered by English medium schools in general, that did not offer adequate spaces to play around or do sports in. Abrar said he did not feel like he "belonged" at GH, and it was not a friendly place. He also mentioned how he did not see a lot of students come from his neighborhood to GH—most students lived and came from the Dhanmondi area, which is a more exclusive area than where he lived. However, he highlighted the teaching at GH was top-notch; he really liked his teachers and appreciated how well he was treated by them and the students in his classes. His career goals were to go into the military or police force. He did not have a driver to drive him places and used the bus to go to and from GH. As an only child and with his mother working outside of Dhaka city and his father being posted overseas, he seemed to be a lonely teenager.

Ramisa

Ramisa had also been at the St. James EM school from playgroup, all the way to Grade nine. After she was promoted to grade 10, she dropped out of her school to do coaching full time at GH. She did tutoring for a majority of her subjects during her O level exams at GH. As she dropped out of school, she also registered for her exams through GH. She was working as a teaching assistant (TA) for the GH Chemistry teacher for the O level batches at the time of this interview. Ramisa was introduced to GH through her sister, who was seven years older, and went to GH herself. She said GH was very famous even during her sister’s time, so she was very familiar with the institution. Ramisa confirmed she had lots of friends from St. James who joined GH, from her own cohort at school and older peers as well. She felt closest to the Math teacher at GH, Simon Sir, so much so that she was not taking his classes anymore for A levels because she said he was too lenient with her and did not hold her accountable as well as he did the other students. She had a lot of family in the UK and was eager to study law there. She said the current attorney general of Bangladesh was her father’s uncle, so her

family had elite connections, especially in the legal field. After our interview, she asked me about strategies to help manage test anxiety which she was struggling with.

Shiyam

Shiyam had been weaving in and out of his EM school. He was at Greenwood school from kindergarten to grade eight. Shiyam's maternal uncle is a well-known Chemistry teacher at GH and so he started tutoring lessons at GH early, from grade six onwards, under his uncle's tutelage and later on taking classes under GH Juniors, which offers tutoring lessons for Grades 5 to 7. Shiyam was not keen on continuing going to school as he found doing both schooling and tutoring classes exhausting, he was struggling with his grades, and preferred doing tutoring at GH; so he dropped out of school at the onset of grade nine, and enrolled at GH for all his classes as well as registering for his O levels through GH. He was effectively at GH for his grades 9 and 10. However, his parents very much wanted him to re-enroll back into school for his A levels, so Shiyam went back to Greenwood for his 11th and 12th grades. Shiyam was eager to study and immigrate abroad, either in Canada or Germany and shared how his family had high expectations for him to go abroad, preparing him for a young age to do so.

Pritom

Pritom was at his EM school, Shining Beacon from playgroup to grade 10. Although he had registered for his A level exams from there, he was not going to school anymore because they did not offer classes for A levels anymore. He had done tutoring for all his subjects in both O levels (eight subjects) and A levels (three subjects) also primarily at GH. Pritom started with GH right after passing his grade eight finals. Even though he did not go to school anymore for classes, he still had close ties to his school, where he had been for all of his schooling, and he hoped he would get good letters of recommendation from the teachers there who had known him for a long time. Because of his longstanding relationship with the school, they agreed to reduce the tuition fees for his younger sister who attended the same school, when his family went through some recent financial constraints. Pritom wanted to study, train, and work in the US as a cyber security specialist, which was his passion. His parents were supportive of his plan to study and live abroad. In fact, in thinking of the financial costs of doing so, Pritom thought it would be a better economic decision to go abroad for his graduate studies and

complete his bachelor's degree in Bangladesh (which would comparatively cost much less). However his parents were trying to figure out how to pay for his undergraduate degree if he got accepted anywhere else.

Tanvir

Tanvir was a quiet and serious student. He answered my questions frankly and did not seem to hold back his opinion on anything. He had done extensive coaching at GH, for both O and A levels. He was very laudatory of GH, mentioning how it was at a level above other coaching centers in terms of teaching quality and the familial like environment they had cultivated. He appreciated GH so much so that he preferred spending about 1-1.5 hours in traffic to go to GH, versus going to other coaching centers in his neighborhood; he had also recommended his own cousins to go there. He was registered to give his exams with his mainstream school, Compass Academy School, where he had been enrolled since kindergarten; though like several of the other students I interviewed, his school did not offer classes for A-levels anymore. He wanted to take his exams through his school to maintain the close relationships he made there and out of loyalty to the school, though he admitted their teaching quality was not that good. His family had their own textile business. He planned to complete his undergraduate degree in Bangladesh so he could start getting involved in the family business, but was eyeing doing an MBA in the US, UK, Canada, or Singapore.

Ashiq

Ashiq bounced around three schools from kindergarten until grade 10, after which he opted out of his mainstream EM school and decided to register for his O and A level exams as a private candidate. Ashiq stated the reason he left school was so he had more freedom to choose which combination of subjects he could take for his O levels, and that he was not "learning anything useful in school anyway" because he was learning whatever he needed through his private tutoring lessons. Ashiq lived in Narayanganj, a city just outside of Dhaka, and had started engaging in private tutoring since grade six, mostly through local at-home tutors, or by going to the tutor's own places of residence. Ashiq was passionate about studying Law; a close uncle of his was a well-known lawyer in Narayanganj and encouraged him in this regard. He heard about GH's law teacher being very good and decided to join GH for tutoring

in A levels law. Ashiq was very clear he had no desire to practice law in Bangladesh, and desired instead to study and practice law in the UK or Canada.

Rifat

Rifat was another St. James student, doing his schooling there from playgroup to grade eight. He joined GH when he was still in grade seven for GH juniors. When he dropped out of school at the beginning of grade nine, he joined GH to do tutoring for all his subjects there and registered for his O and A level exams through them as well. He did not like being at school because he said he was not a good student and enjoyed GH's environment more, where he felt less pressure and stressed regarding his academic performance. He came across as a polite and serious student, speaking softly and choosing his words carefully. He was quite determined about the path he wanted to take for his future, which was to not go to college, and definitely not to go abroad, but to instead "invest" the money his parents would have used towards his education on starting his own business, and then eventually go into local politics. These ambitions were a bit unconventional for upper class Bangladeshi society and Rifat asked me both at the end of our interview and in my survey what I thought of his plans, whether it made sense, and any advice on how to convince his parents, who wanted him to study abroad, or at the very least go to university.

Maliha

Maliha dropped out of school at the end of grade six, primarily due to her family's financial struggles and for some time studied at home, before relying completely on private tutoring from grade seven onwards. She was a very serious student, having drawn up for herself a strict daily studying schedule at the time of our interview even though exams were still months away. Maliha would study so intensely she would sometimes forget to eat, and was increasingly experiencing insomnia and nosebleeds, which worried her teachers and family. Even so, Maliha expressed doubts about whether she was smart enough. She had a special relationship with Ishrak at GH, whom she credited for "completely turning (her) life around" as he introduced studying law to her which she had become very passionate about. She badly wanted to study to become a lawyer, possibly abroad, and become independent; she was trying to manage her imposter syndrome which often got in the way of her ambitions for herself. Her parents were coming around to supporting her college applications to study abroad but

warned she would need to secure a scholarship otherwise they would not be able to support her.

Questionnaire

To supplement the qualitative data gathered from a smaller group of students in this study, I administered a questionnaire to all the students whose classes I observed at GH. The main purpose of the questionnaire was to gain background and demographic information from the students engaging in tutoring within my site of study, in order to better understand their societal socio-cultural location, uncover patterns which I could use my qualitative data to explore in greater depth, as well as corroborate my larger findings (DeJaeghere, 2024; Johnson et al., 2007).

After a few weeks of observing classes, I asked the tutors if I could introduce the questionnaire to their students by talking briefly about the questions it asked and why I was collecting this data. I emphasized it would only take about 7-8 minutes as I had taken it myself as a test, and I could share the link to the survey either in their Zoom class chat, their class Facebook pages or class Facebook Messenger chats. All the tutors agreed to this, with the physics teacher even incentivizing his students to take the survey by telling his batches (unprompted) how he hoped they would not let Nisma *Apu* (referring to me as their older sister) down.

The questionnaire was administered online through Qualtrics, which was accessible to my participants who were practiced in the use of online tools during the time of the pandemic. This online modality allowed me to reach a larger sample size of the participants in the field (i.e. beyond the few students I sampled for interviews), as each tutoring class averaged about 30-40 students each, depending on the subject and grade level. Through the survey, I was seeking responses from a total of approximately 400 students from across the tutoring classes I was observing. I had initially hoped to also use the questionnaire responses to identify and recruit students for my interviews. However, I did not end up using the survey to do so as I administered the survey concurrently to when I was conducting observations, and did not have time to analyze the survey data in time for the interview phase. I instead relied more on the teachers' recommendations and my own classroom observations to make those decisions of

which students to approach for interviews, but the questionnaire did indeed provide useful information on the students engaging in tutoring at GH as I discuss below.

The questionnaire contained closed questions in three broad categories: 1) demographic information such as their age, whether and where they lived in or outside of Dhaka, the education and occupation of their parents, and so on, 2) information about their tutoring practices such as how many subjects they were doing tutoring for, and how many at GH and, 3) their life goals post their A level exams (i.e., if they wanted to study abroad and why or why not and what career path they wanted to pursue). Findings from the survey are presented throughout this dissertation, and the full survey questions are provided in Appendix C.

I received a total of 376 student responses to the questionnaire. However, this 376 figure included about 80 responses from students who only completed half the survey or less before abandoning it. I have not included those responses as they do not give us the full picture of the student's profile. After cleaning the survey further, such as removing duplicated responses, as well as some joke responses from students (considering they are teenagers after all), 263 responses remained, for which some descriptive information is provided below in Table 4, such as the average age of the students taking the survey.

Table 4

Select Demographic Information on the Students Engaged in Tutoring at GH

Locative and descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) **Students** (N=263)	
Age	16.9 (0.08)
Percent of students studying for O-levels in survey	45%
Percent of students in survey studying for A-levels in survey	55%
Percent of students not going to school	71%
Data indicating socio-economic (SES) status on a sum-score scale of 0-5	
Percent of students scoring between 0-2	38%
Percent of students scoring between 3-5	62%

Criteria that make up the composite sum-score SES measure	
Percent of students' families who employ more than one maid in the home	43%
Percent of students' families who own more than one personal car	68%
Percent of students' families who employs a driver at all (1 or more)	50%
Percent of students' families who own the house they live in	68%
Percent of students' families who own more than one real estate asset in Bangladesh	73%
Aspirations to go abroad or outside of Bangladesh	
Percent of students who Indicated close family had immigrated abroad	57%
Percent of students aiming to apply to and attend universities abroad	63%

The students taking the survey almost evenly split between those preparing for their O level exams (in the 9-10 grade levels), and those preparing for their A level exams (in the 11-12 grade levels). A striking statistic is how many students were not going to their mainstream EM school anymore—71% of students from the survey. This aligns with the experience of the students I interviewed, where seven out of my nine student interviewees were not engaged with their school anymore and relied on private tutoring for all their classes (Table 2 above demonstrates this). I discuss this phenomenon of opting out of school in further detail in Chapters 6 and 7. I have also added data on the percentages of these students having close relatives who have immigrated abroad (57%), as well as their own aspirations in applying abroad (63%). The former helps to facilitate the desire of students to study abroad, if they already have some established support abroad, and ultimately take steps to immigrate themselves as well. The bar chart in Figure 6 in Chapter 2 illustrated the latter figure, with the relatively high number of students who wanted to study outside of Bangladesh.

I asked five questions in the survey which, from my own personal experience and cultural perception, are indicative of higher levels of socio-economic status (SES) in the Bangladeshi context; I presented descriptive statistics on this measure in Table 4. These are whether the student's family: 1) employs more than one maid or household help in the home,

2) owns more than one personal car, 3) employs a driver at all (one or more), 4) owns the house or home they live in, and 5) owns more than one real estate asset in Bangladesh.

Socio-economic status encompasses not just income but also factors like education level, financial security, as well as subjective perceptions of social status and class (American Psychological Association, 2017). My intention in asking these five questions in particular was to also incorporate a nuanced understanding of wealth, which is an important dimension of intergenerational reproduction (Hällsten & Thaning, 2022). Within the range of families that were comfortably upper-middle class and engaging with a tutoring center like GH, a factor such as whether they employed a full-time driver differentiates between those who say, had a good income and occupational prestige, but did not prioritize having a full-time driver; and those who had the wealth to be able to spend on employing a driver, which signals a particular type of privileged lifestyle. This reasoning is similar to whether students' families own more than one real estate in Bangladesh, as owning one property is a measure of financial security for those who can afford it, but owning more than one property is a sign of even higher social status and wealth. The same goes for employing more than maid or household help in the home, as employing one maid, either full- or part-time, is viewed as a norm in upper-middle class families but not everyone has the wealth to be able to employ more than one person in the home. Further, many prestigious jobs in Bangladesh that require high levels of education, social and cultural capitals to attain, such as the vice president of a major commercial bank, also come with the perks of being given a car and driver to drive to and from work and to run any errands. So asking whether their household has more than one personal car is also my attempt to incorporate the types of jobs the parents of these students could have that come with those privileges, which definitively signal higher SES.

As students provided binary answers (yes or no) to these questions, I constructed a composite sum-score which basically aggregated these items together (Avvisati, 2020; Diemer et al., 2013). Thus, a score of 5 means a students answered "yes" to all five questions I listed above, and 0 means they answered "no" to those five questions. I have provided a sliding scale in Figure 11 for illustrative purposes to demonstrate the way I classify whether someone is of higher SES, which is if they had a score between 3 and 5, and of relatively lower SES (but still middle class in this context) if they had a score between 0 and 2. According to this measure,

38% of students had a score between 0 and 2 and 62% of students had a score between 3 and 5. The breakdown in the scores by percentage is shown in Figure 12 below.

Figure 11

Illustration of the Sliding Scale of Sum-Score SES Measure

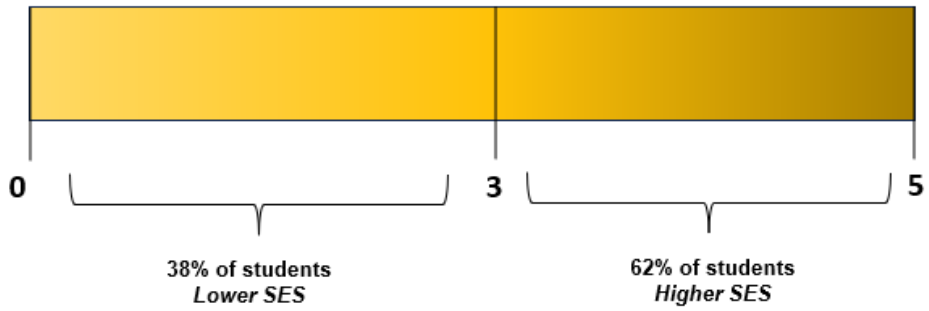
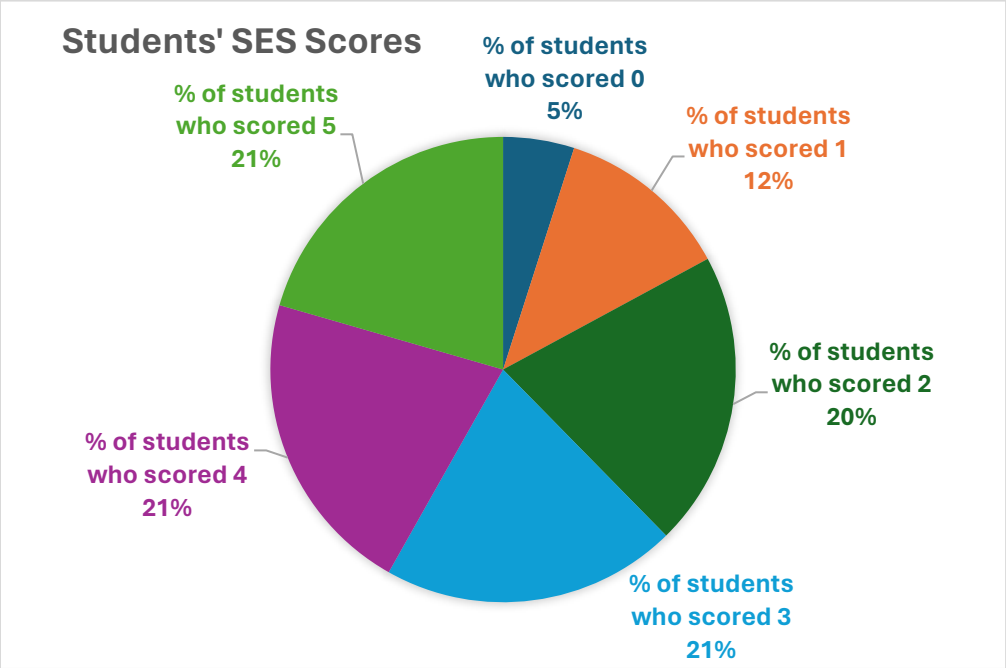


Figure 12

Percentages of Students' Scores Across the Sum-Score SES Measure



As we can see from Table 4 and Figure 11, the students who went to GH are largely high SES, and there was diversity in the class backgrounds of the students who attended, a point I address in Chapter 6. The way I attempted to provide some data on the students' socio-economic statuses is by no means perfect or very sophisticated; however, the purpose of this composite score, and my survey in general, was to provide an indication of the backgrounds of the students engaging with the GH tutoring center.

Social Media Review

In our contemporary digitally connected world, prolific activity and significant user-generated content provides an important source of data, especially during global events like the COVID-19 lockdowns (Snelson, 2016). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as "… a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content"

(p. 61). I primarily focused on GH's Facebook and Instagram platforms which it used extensively for both advertising and functional purposes.

GH regularly posts on both Facebook and Instagram to promote itself, the courses they offer classes, and registration deadlines for their classes and O and A level exams. Using social media to communicate these messages is important for GH as they go through regular turnovers in their cohorts as O and A level exams are held twice a year (sometimes thrice a year for certain subjects) so there is always a new cohort to advertise for. My review of the tutoring center's social media involved investigating not only how these platforms are used for promotional use, but also going beyond such advertisements and marketing. For example, GH's staff heavily leveraged their Facebook and Instagram platforms and chat groups to connect with their students, organize classes, provide grades and feedback, remind to pay tutoring fees, gauge interest for different community oriented activities like watching movies together on Discord, and even conduct polls on whether class should be cancelled; much more than say, relying on email. This makes sense as every student of upper to upper-middle status had a smartphone, as well as reliable Wi-Fi or 4G internet, and so was easily reachable across these mediums. This channel of cultivating relationships became doubly essential in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, when in-person interactions were severely limited.

Thus, GH used its social media channels to maintain and develop networks, and "allows participation in various micro-communities" (Bosch, 2009, p. 186), which includes the ways in which individuals today are meeting, communicating, and building community within educational spaces. So not only is social media an essential platform where young people came together, it also morphed into a social space for users to connect and maintain their relationships (Marlowe et al., 2017).

Not all the tutors used social media to communicate with their students, finding it difficult and messy to monitor what their teenage students were saying and sharing, while other tutors preferred to keep in regular contact through their class Facebook chat groups. Because the pandemic had shut down the tutoring center and physical spaces, these chat groups ended up substituting for students that sense of running into the hallways, discussing with each other events in their lives as it related to classes or exams, such as the announcement of another lockdown or lifting of restrictions. Of course, students probably had their own personal chat

groups with their tutoring friends, but their class chat groups were extensively used to replicate the sense of 20 to 30 of them being confined in the same academic space together, exchanging their PDF notes, filling each other in on the lecture someone might have missed, and where to get all the Zoom or class note links the need—the light academic and social chatter that goes on within an educational space. There were also some dramatic instances when a tutor would scold or reiterate how disappointed he was in them for missing so many online classes or not turning in their homework—all of which are essential elements of a classroom environment and which social media was used for.

Social media allowed the participants of my study (students, teachers, and administrators) to assert their socialization and membership into their tutoring cohorts and spaces through say, sharing memes, inside jokes, or teasing each other. A pertinent example was from the tutor who did use a chat group for his students, I was able to see how differently students would interact with their tutors versus the administrator for their class, a finding I discuss in Chapter 4 (Figures 15-16). Through these social media channels, I gained access to a more diverse range of students and views, which I may not have otherwise obtained through my interviews or survey (Andreotta et al., 2019).

For this study, social media data included visual, sonic, and textual data shared by students, tutors, or administrators. I first compiled a collection of data by downloading pictures and videos from GH's public facing pages, or screenshots of conversations from their class group chats. As the amount of social media data quickly became overwhelming, I limited my collection to those that were shared by the tutoring center's account, including when it reshared a teacher or student's post, and only those related to the activities of the tutoring center, i.e. class activities, pedagogical approaches, announcement of grades, and so on. I further narrowed what I downloaded or saved by identifying those items which I found relevant from my conceptual framework, or from the memoing I was doing as a result of my classroom observations (Andreotta et al., 2019). From this collection I extracted a smaller and more manageable subset of data and performed thematic analysis on this subset as I describe in the next section. For example, in one physics class, the tutor explained he was going to hold a mock exam in the next class so he could check if there were any gaps in his students' understanding. He emphasized the students needed to have two personal electronic devices

for the exam at all times, not just the personal laptop they were using to Zoom into the class. I noted this down as an example of the economic capital at play in the classroom, and saved the post from the class Facebook page the tutor later shared to remind the students of this requirement (see Figure 19). Another relevant example is when the tutoring center shared a video of a student meeting and singing with a local pop star who visited GH. I saved that video and coded that interaction in terms of how the student's social capital was being enhanced through a meeting the tutoring center was able to facilitate. I analyze this interaction further in Chapter 5.

In total, I saved approximately 357 social media pictures and videos—this included snippets of conversations, memes, advertisements, class schedules, notice of class closures, and promotion of any extracurricular activities like non-academic events for students or staff team building exercises. I uploaded a subset of the ones I judged most relevant to the concepts under study from my conceptual framework into NVivo—approximately 100 items, and then analyzed and coded them as detailed below.

Data Analysis

My analytical processes were informed by my critical realist ontological and epistemological assumptions as mentioned earlier in this chapter. As I started data collection doing class observations, I began memo writing right away and continued that process into the analysis stage. As a practice, memoing helps researchers clarify their thoughts, reactions, or feelings after a certain observation, as well as consider their biases and reflect on past or current experiences (Birks et al., 2008). The process of writing memos that were not field notes, transcription, or coding helped me reflect and start to develop analytic insight, as well as develop my ideas and understanding of my topic, site, and study. Although Maxwell (2013) advised to use memos more as a tool for thinking rather than communicating, some of my memos helped me hone the analytical narratives I was thinking of for specific chapters and after some revision, served as an initial draft of writing that I incorporated into my findings chapters. Writing memos also informed my process of coding and analysis at later stages in terms of seeing similar themes show up across my participants' narratives, or challenging assumptions I had made prior to data collection. For example, multiple participants expressed what they thought set GH apart as a tutoring center, which led me to reflect through memoing

on the affective learning occurring at the site, as well as the diversity in the class backgrounds of the students who were enrolled; concepts I had not considered a priori.

For my interviews, I anticipated one of the advantages of using Zoom for this purpose was its automatic transcription capability, which would allow for a transcription of the interview in real time. I knew the transcribed output would not be perfect of course, but thought it would provide a head start in terms of time spent on what can be a tedious task. However, as my participants spoke in a mix of Bangla, English, and Bang-lish, Zoom was unable to automatically transcribe a majority of my 14 interviews. Ultimately, I had to transcribe these manually, which ended taking much longer than I planned. Although this was the most time-consuming part of my whole analytical and writing process, working on the transcriptions allowed me fully to immerse myself in the interview data and develop my intuitive meaning-making of emerging themes.

Once I completed fieldwork, my memos, class observation notes, select social media data and transcribed interview transcripts were imported into NVivo. These were then initially inductively coded through a close "open coding" of the data of the texts to create substantive categories, stemming from my memos and working understandings at that point such as the close and layered relationships I saw evidence of between students and staff at GH, which helped to build their affective capital and also informed how they were inhabiting eliteness (Corbin & Strauss, 2007; Khan, 2011; Maxwell, 2013).

This type of categorical analysis included creating theoretical categories, which placed the coded data into a more general framework to understand the relationship between the various codes, and map out the connections of those relationships. Some theory-based codes I already had from my conceptual framework (Figure 2) were, for example, the parent codes, 'structure:___,' 'agency:___,' and 'elite characteristics:__.' Any existing theoretical codes were then re-coded in order to identify some possible structures at play. I undertook a similar process with the parent codes 'schooling: positive/negative' and 'tutoring: positive/negative' to house the theoretical codes illustrating the various facets of engaging in mainstream schooling, private tutoring, or both for students, teachers, and administrators. These codes were treated as initial topic categories, as well as a means to jumpstart my coding process, and were re-coded, added to, or eliminated as the analysis warranted. Thus my coding

process consisted of working with both topic-based codes and prior theory-based codes (Mukumbang, 2023)

The value of creating such categories was to organize substantive points, as well as any ideas that did not fit into existing organizational categories. This axial coding helped me connect relationships between statements and events from the multiple actors in my study (Mukumbang, 2023). Maxwell (2013), who also comes from a critical realist paradigm, characterized this process as "connecting strategies," which does not just focus on fragmenting data into categories devoid of context, but "look(s) for relationships that *connect* statements and events within a context into a coherent whole" (p. 113, emphasis in original). For example, I linked how the dense relationships between students and teachers at GH helped build their affective capital, and also positively influenced their classroom environment, helping to foster a dynamic atmosphere where students like Abrar felt engaged and eager to learn new concepts in collaboration with his peers and law teacher whom Abrar rated as the "best teacher" he ever had; I explore this connection further in Chapters 5 and 6. Thus, this approach helped me to focus on the relationships and larger context at play among the different parts of my observation notes, interview transcripts, social media data, and questionnaire responses, rather than only sorting the data into categories.

Ultimately, as I coded data and engaged in reflexive praxis, I developed an intuitive sense of the themes and lessons contained in my interviews, a process in which "inquirers generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meaning" (Crotty, 1998). Overall, the data analysis process was quite iterative for me, as I moved from categorizing codes to connecting strategies to writing up the thematic categories that were materializing, and back again. For example, I used the conceptual framework in Figure 2 to guide my categorical identification of the students, tutors, and administrators social and cultural capitals, and then moved back and forth to connect student and tutor narratives to material economic realities, and observations of behaviors to socialization practices.

As is common in research that draws on ethnographic methods, I had a large amount of data from my observations, interviews, questionnaire, and social media review. The programming aspect of the NVivo software was instrumental for me in storing, retrieving,

coding, linking, organizing, and sorting through all of my data (though this did also result in slowing down the overall processing power of my very old laptop).

Language Throughout the Dissertation

Throughout this dissertation, I use both angelized Bangla (or Bengali) and English, especially for some of the excerpts from my participants. During interviews, I allowed my participants to express themselves in whichever language they preferred and felt comfortable in, which usually ended up being a combination of Bangla and English or "Bang-lish." When writing this dissertation, I translated all my interview transcripts from Bangla into English. Following Bittencourt's (2020) study, I decided to keep some quotations in their original language and provided my own translation in brackets underneath. As Bittencourt (2020) explained, translating is not a straightforward or objective process, and providing quotations in their original form, accompanied with my own translation provides a sense of my own meaning making for any bilingual readers. This practice also helps to promote transparency as to what my interviewees said, as well as preserve a sense of their own meaning from when we spoke.

I have not done this for all quotations, and made the assessment on when to include the angelized Bangla depending on formatting and space constraints. If a quote comprised of mostly English with a few Bengali phrases or words, I italicized the small, translated part of that quote, which is in brackets, so the reader does not have to read a large block of text twice when the original quote was largely in English. Even when the participant is speaking English, the translation of the English portion may be slightly different, and edited to clarify what they meant from the context of the conversation. This is because Bengali English speakers have a different way of expressing themselves in English, than say an American or British English speaker.

Validity, Trustworthiness, and Reflexivity

Within qualitative research, some scholars moved away from the concept of validity, seeing it as too closely linked to positivist ways of thinking (e.g., Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These scholars argued any concept of validity that refers to a "real world" is incompatible with a constructivist paradigm, and proposed relying on other concepts for qualitative work, such as trustworthiness and authenticity (Maxwell, 2013). In contrast, this study uses a critical realist understanding of validity which embraces the idea of a reality

outside of the individual constructions of people and societies. Validity is conceptualized as, “the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation or interpretation” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 122). This definition does not mean that an “objective truth” exists, or needs to exist for the inquiry to be useful or believable. Instead, the idea of validity helps think through and determine how to distinguish accounts that are credible from those that are not.

Maxwell (2013) lists two primary threats, or “plausible alternatives … (to) interpretations and explanations” to validity, which are subjectivity (also called bias), and an influence of the researcher on her participants and site (p. 123). In terms of minimizing bias, I undertook member checking. When I was writing up the dissertation, I reached out to students I interviewed and who were still available online to ensure I conveyed what they meant accurately. I had the opportunity to meet with my four teacher interviewees in person about a year and half after my data collection to solicit feedback on my analysis, and to ensure my findings were aligned with their experiences. My practice of memo writing as well as employing quotes using the real words of my participants also helps to maintain the validity of this study within my epistemological assumption of layered realties (Creswell, 2013). These efforts have the added benefit of enhancing trustworthiness as well, and have helped me maintain my relationship with the tutoring center. Another way I strove to maintain trustworthiness was my practice of writing notes after each interview was completed so I had a record of my thoughts and reflections right after the interview, as well as what stood out to me most about my participants and what they said (Wedajo, 2022). Further, in employing several varied methods to collect data, as I have described in this chapter, I undertook methodological triangulation, which allows “multiple perceptions to clarify meaning” (Stake, 2000, pp. 443–444), thus continuing to test for the validity of my conclusions, versus attempting to verify conclusions.

In terms of Maxwell’s (2013) concern about the influence of the researcher on her participants and site, according to critical realism, it is not really possible for a researcher to detach from her participants, or to completely eliminate a researcher’s beliefs or lens in the research process (Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014). I aimed instead to be cognizant that such an effect was occurring and used it productively, which I refer to as reflexivity. When conducting research in the Global South, Ahsan (2009) emphasized how reflexivity is not only useful, but methodologically necessary. Reflexivity allows researchers to be honest about, and navigate

through their assumptions, biases, feelings, and experiences during the research process. Practicing reflexivity also involves “detachment, internal dialogue, and constant scrutiny of the process through which the researcher constructs and questions his / her interpretations of field experiences” (Ahsan, 2009, p. 398). During the research process, I would write memos about how my personal self was affected during and after my interactions with my participants, as well as whether I was going to make any changes to how I was approaching data collection and analysis. Saldaña (2013) asserted memo writing is a vital component of reflexive analysis, ensuring the researcher continually contends with her own perspective and positionality, alongside that of her participants.

Insider-Outsider Positionality

My lived experience as someone who attended private schools all through K-12, coupled with extensive tutoring in middle and high school, and someone who aspired to, and was expected to study in the Global North, shapes my positionality and motivation in this inquiry. As can be surmised from my opening vignettes to this and the last chapter, I identify with this class of upper-class elites pursuing private tutoring; I was quite a bright student throughout my schooling, and did not really require tutoring for remedial or instrumental reasons. This identification is as someone from a higher socioeconomic background, who was also very aware of their existing privileges in Bangladesh, where the challenges of poverty were clearly apparent. My grandfathers had lifelong careers in public service and owned their own homes. My parents were trained as medical doctors, and though they worked long hours and never spent on anything that was not a necessity (such as frequent trips abroad like their doctor friends), we did not have to worry about paying the bills or crushing debt. My siblings both immigrated to the United States, finished undergraduate and graduate schooling there (one of them with a doctorate), and now also own their own homes.

I also identify with a class of Bangladeshi elites who were able to leave their country of origin in pursuit of income and social mobility. My parents moved to the Middle East in the 1980s in search of well-paying jobs being offered to many high skilled professionals from South Asia, ultimately living and working there for the majority of their adult lives. I was born in Saudi Arabia, and considered it my home until we moved back to Bangladesh when I was 14, having spent all of my childhood and adolescence in the same house and neighborhood in Riyadh, the

Saudi capital. The opening vignette to Chapter 2 was taken from my nascent experiences with tutoring in Riyadh, until I pursued more frequent and extensive tutoring once we moved to Dhaka, for my own O and A level exams. The group of students I pursued tutoring within Riyadh were all of Bangladeshi origin, as my English medium school at that time exclusively catered to the large group of expatriates from the Bangladeshi community.

My friends in Bangladesh were, and continue to be, drawn from a group of elites, whose privileges included having a full-time driver take them to school and work, live-in or hired help for them (and now nannies for their children), and now occupy sought-after positions in international development, finance, technology, media, industry, and politics, both in Bangladesh and abroad. As Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a) revealed, it is generally easier to understand ourselves through the experiences of others, and the more I examined how current upper class high school students make sense of their experiences at private tutoring centers, the more I understood my own past—another catalyst for this study. My own experiences allowed me to relate to my participants, such as when they shared they were struggling with their workload or family pressures, and build a relationship with them.

Growing up in Saudi Arabia, then Bangladesh, and then living many years in countries other than my country of origin, I always felt as if my identity were fractured, other times multidimensional, which perhaps makes it difficult to have one unified sense of self in my study. At the same time, my education and acculturation within Western academic and social environments reveal a certain linguistic, cultural power gap from my participants. As a reflexive thinker, I kept thinking about how that may have an impact on my position and relationship with my participants while I was engaging with them.

No other interaction made me as aware of my own identity and status than when I was talking to my student interviewee Abrar. Abrar was already determined he wanted to join the armed forces in Bangladesh after finishing his A levels. While he was eagerly explaining how he was already working on his application to the BMA (Bangladesh Military Academy), I interrupted to ask him what it stood for,

> **Abrar**: Right now, at BMA the things have changed a lot. It's totally uncertain future, even after you get in there; you have to be there for three years, until you get the

training. Some people get kicked out even after 1000 days! Things have changed so much …

Nisma: What is BMA, (an) academy?

Abrar: Yeah, it's the Bangladesh Military Academy.

Nisma: Oh okay, okay sorry, I don't know all the…

Abrar: Aren't you from...which country are you from?

Nisma: I am from Bangladesh but I don't know all the different military things...

Abrar: When did you leave Bangladesh?

I then gave Abrar my spiel on being born in the Middle East, leaving for college to the US and being here more or less ever since, after which Abrar replied, "so, you have an American citizenship right?" to which I again rather sheepishly said "no."

I felt quite embarrassed when Abrar questioned whether I was actually Bangladeshi or not. Our conversation about citizenship and identity did result in me feeling othered and not Bangladeshi enough, which is evident in how I responded to him because I qualified my answer by saying I was born in Saudi, not Bangladesh. It was also a flashback to my high school days in Bangladesh when my peers also thought I was too foreign because of my childhood in Saudi Arabia. I felt self-conscious again during this conversation when he sounded surprised that I did not have American citizenship, even after a decade of living here. It felt as if he was pointing to an inadequacy within myself—why did I not have American citizenship? What have I been doing all this time? However, later in our conversation when we were discussing the political and social situation in Bangladesh, Abrar seemed to validate my life choices when he wistfully remarked, "ma'am, you are lucky you left this country a long time back," to which I also had mixed feelings.

My privileged cultural position also came into play with the students I interviewed when they would ask me advice on how they could apply, study, and live abroad. At the end of our interviews, a majority of my student interviewees asked me for any tips they could use towards their applications, and some continued to follow up with me over Facebook regarding where they were applying and what offers they had received. I recognized I was being positioned by the tutors as someone the students could aspire to be someday, studying and working outside of Bangladesh, and as someone to possibly connect with because their tutor had implicitly

vouched for me and my presence in their classes. So, I offered to do a brief presentation on my own experiences applying to US colleges for the students, which all the tutors I was observing happily accepted. One tutor mentioned that would be very helpful for their students as they saw me as "the *bideshi apu* who was there to help them" (the foreign older sister who was there to help them). This remark again brought to light how I was being held to a deferential, but othered position at the same time.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the overall research design, approach, and methodology for this study. I did so by first going into the critical realist and case study approaches that undergird this study, followed by details about the site of research—the GH tutoring center in Dhaka—and how I was able to gain access. I then detailed the data collection methods I used in my study, which comprised of class observations, interviews with students, teachers and an administrator, a questionnaire for students, and a review of the tutoring center's social media platforms. I then described my data analysis processes, followed by a discussion on the validity, trustworthiness, and reflexivity of this study. I ended this chapter with a reflection on how my insider-outsider positionality came to the forefront over the course of this research process.

The next few chapters of this dissertation detail the findings of this study, with the next Chapter 4 addressing the first research question (how do relationships between students, tutors and administrators influence their learning and socialization?).This chapter focuses on relational elements of the tutoring center, which connects both the socialization and educational dimensions of private tutoring addressed in this study (see Figure 1).

Chapter 4: A Personal Touch

I sprung off the rickshaw, trying not to trip over my long scarf. Finally, I reached the tutoring center that I had been in communication with over the past few months—where I wanted to conduct my ethnographic research on private tutoring. Located in a posh neighborhood in Dhaka, the tutoring center occupied all four stories of the building in front of me, serving students from 8th grade all the way to 12th grade. The tutor with whom I had been in contact prior to my arrival met me at the gate, ready to give me a tour. I noticed as we passed the security guard at the gate, a large sign admonished "NO ID, NO ENTRY." I thought back to my time as a tutoring student and couldn't remember a time when I needed any identity cards to get into a class. But then again, the tutors I went to didn't occupy an entire building with different teachers for different classes as this center had organized itself.

As we entered the building and walked upstairs, my guide explained how each floor was dedicated to different subjects—the mathematics department, the science department, business, and so on. Students brushed past me, both up and down the stairs, chasing each other as they scrambled to either get to a class, or rush home and face the chokehold of Dhaka traffic.

I was there to meet any tutors who were available, and get a sense of the center, to start building relationships in preparation for my fieldwork, which, at that time, I was naively planning to start in the fall of 2020. The one tutor I knew beforehand, Tahmid Bhaiya, was doing his reputed "flashback" class meaning an intense two-hour review of all the concepts and topics just before the students' big exam, which was about six weeks away at that point.

I sat in a corner and quietly took some notes during the class. I was a bit relieved when the class ended because I was eager to go the bathroom. Thinking the class was indeed over, I stepped into the hallway looking around to ask someone where the bathrooms were. I thought I could just ask Tahmid bhaiya, whom I assumed would be walking out of the class as well. It was then I realized that not only he was still in the classroom by his desk, but that a small group of students had congregated around him, asking questions. I waited patiently. After 10 minutes, I looked back in to check, and saw that the crowd of students had grown even bigger. Tahmid was discussing with a student on how to deal with their parents with whom they were

increasingly butting heads, saying "ami buchhi (I understand) … I get it, sometimes Moms can be very strict which you don't like …"

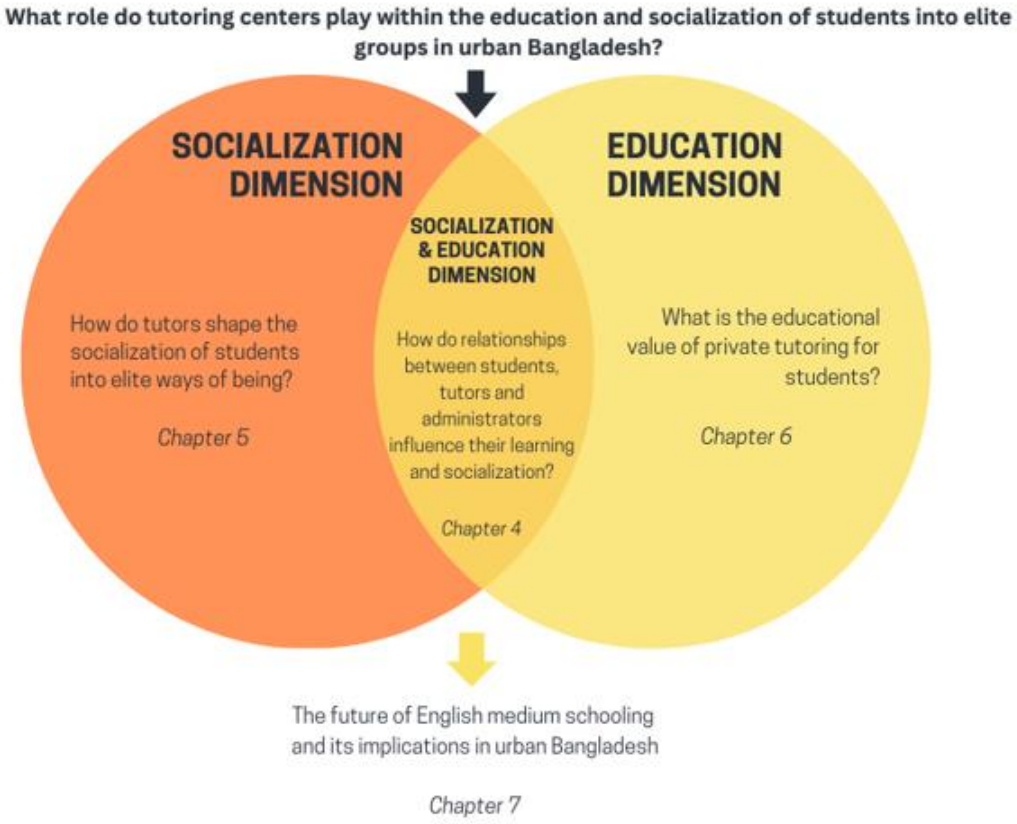
It was after 15 more minutes that he emerged into the hallway, using me as an excuse to his students that he needed to go.

Introduction

My overall research question for this study was—what role do tutoring centers play in the education and socialization of students into elite groups? I approach this broad question through the next several chapters of this dissertation, with each chapter addressing a different sub-research question and dimension or facet of my study, as visualized in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13

Venn Diagram of the Organization of the Dimensions and Research Questions by Chapter



As can be surmised from the combinative approach and research question addressed in this chapter, what connects these two dimensions is the formation of relationships that occur at the tutoring center. Specifically, the research question this chapter considers is—how do relationships between students and their tutors influence their learning and socialization into elite status?

In this chapter, I first elaborate on the personal approach and touch teachers[8] and staff at GH took towards their students, weaving in quotes from my participants and examples from

[8] I refer to the tutors at GH from this point forward as teachers and distinguish them from those who teach at mainstream schools at “schoolteachers”.

my own observations and social media. I then delve into how teachers at GH acted as "pseudo" counselors to their students, providing a ready ear to listen to their students' troubles and fears, while also acting as guidance counselors or mentors to help guide them, as well as provide advice. I then conclude these sections by detailing how students were able to become close "buddies" with the administrative staff at GH.

Put together, these affective aspects of students' learning connect to the production of their affective capital, in terms of improved learning outcomes and emotional competencies that can then be utilized towards the creation of profit (see conceptual framework in Figure 2). Further, the supportive environment and dense relationships students formed with the staff at GH allowed students to learn how to negotiate relationships with those above and below them within the hierarchy they sat in, and to develop a "particular interactional dynamic (which is) essential to privilege" (Khan, 2011, p. 64). I expand on this analysis at the end of this chapter.

Personal Approach of GH Staff

Students prefer to engage in tutoring at GH primarily because of the personal approach and touch the teachers and staff provide. Within the education space at GH, teachers and staff very intentionally try to connect and build a trusting relationship with their students, which includes getting to know what else is going on in their life, especially outside of their education and tutoring classes. Mahbub bhaiya[9], an administrator at GH specifically described how, "amra kintu poranor baire, amra tader k niye analysis kori; jigash kori, golpo kori, adda dei. Kono problem thakle oigula sort out kori" (Outside of teaching them, we do a lot of analysis with them; we ask them, we chat with them, we hang out with them. If they have any problems, we sort those out). As Mahbub bhaiya said, an important part of their relationship building with the students is to understand what is going on with the students, and what else may be troubling them in their lives that the staff at GH could help problem solve.

I observed this type of connection making across the courses I attended at GH, and heard examples pertaining to this from several students and teachers I interviewed, particularly

[9] "Bhaiya" means "elder brother" in Bangla, and is used when referring to someone older than you in the same generation. I add on this term when referring to the male teachers or staff at GH as a show of respect, as is the norm.

when it came to knowing students' names and things going on in their lives, as Mahbub bhaiya spoke about. Fuad bhaiya, who taught business studies and who consistently had about 60 students attending his classes still made sure to connect and relate with his students.

> Ami jeirokom kind of teacher, I know my student's name. Tomar shunte weird lagbe like kei student der naam jane na? But janena manush. Class ei eksho, dersho baccha ache, shobar naam teacher janena. Amar kache maney, eita khub weird lage jei bhai, tomar kache porche, ar tumi naam o jaano na? Tai I know my students name, and despite of the age gap that I have with my students, I often come to know them very personally. Otar karon hocche, I want them to be very open and free with me. That way, we can build a trust relationship between student-teacher.
>
> (The kind of teacher I am, I know my students' names. It might sound weird to you, like who doesn't know their students' names? But teachers don't know. When there are 100 / 150 students in a class, the teacher doesn't know everyone's names. This feels weird to me man, that they are studying with you, and you don't know their names?
>
> That's why I know my students' names, and despite the age gap that I have with my students, I often come to know them very personally. For that reason, I want them to be very open and free with me. That way, we can build a trusting relationship between student-teacher.)

Fuad bhaiya was intentional about knowing all his students, juxtaposing this practice with those of other tutors who may have hundreds of students, but do not put in the effort to do so. He also highlighted how part of his personal approach was to build a trusting relationship with his students, where they feel like they can trust him and be open with him about their problems.

Being intentional about connecting with students was a praxis of the other teachers I observed as well at GH. The vignette from the beginning of this chapter demonstrated how Tahmid bhaiya took time after class, which was a common practice for him, to chat with students about whatever was on their mind. Similarly, whenever I attended Adnan bhaiya's Zoom classes, who was the Physics teacher, he would always greet me warmly, check in how I was doing, and ask how my data collection was progressing, which made me feel quite comfortable to be there. During a particularly busy time in my own academic semester, I had not been able to coordinate to observe many of his classes at a stretch, some of which were

scheduled in the graveyard shift of 2-4 am my time. When I did show up to his class, he greeted me right away and asked if I had gotten “lost” in finding my way to his class. I observed him take several minutes out of class to ask about how student’s families were doing, including one student’s mother who had been chronically ill, and to reassure them if they needed to take a break from classes, that would be okay. When I asked Adnan bhaiya explicitly about his praxis of getting to intimately know his students, more than just how they were performing academically, he responded this was part of his personal approach in doing so.

> I have a problem if I don't know my students. I personally have a problem with that. Because Tahmid, let’s say, deals with a *huge* [emphasis added] number of students; nowadays Fuad does as well. My number of students, the amount of number of students that I deal with, it still gives me the luxury, Alhamdulillah, to actually know each and every single student. You can actually give me one name and [say], “tell me something specific about that student,” and I will be able to tell you most likely. That is something that I always try to ensure, that I know about the student.

Students at GH valued that their teachers’ took the time to learn about who was taking their classes. Pritom, a student, highlighted how teachers knowing details about their students was something different about GH, confirming what Fuad bhaiya mentioned about how this may not be the case in other tutoring centers,

> **Pritom**: *Onek* coaching center ei toh teacher ra student k chinei na. Naam e jane na. GH ei at least onek teacher ri onek bhalo, shobai kei chine.
>
> (At *so many* [emphasis added] coaching centers, teachers don’t even know their students. Don’t even know their names. At least at GH most teachers are really good, they know everyone.)
>
> **Nisma**: Yeah. Eita shunechi. (Yeah. I’ve heard this.)
>
> **Pritom**: And basically I heard jei ora board meeting kore. They discuss about students, mane oita onek help kore. Mane ami jei teacher er kache porina, shei o onek kichu jaane amar bapare. Majhe moddhe toh dekha hoi onno teacher der shathe; like, Business er Fuad sir. Unar shathe dekha hoi. He knows a little bit about (me), but eirokomi r ki. Everyone knows about the students.
>
> (And basically, I heard that the teachers [at GH] do board meetings. They discuss about

students, and that's very helpful. Meaning even the teachers I'm not taking classes with, they also know a lot of things about me. Sometimes I do come across other teachers; like Fuad Sir the Business teacher. I get to meet him. He knows a little bit about (me), but that's the way it is. Everyone knows about the students.)

Pritom here talks how GH teachers' try to know a little bit about each student taking classes at their tutoring center, part of GH's personal approach that he appreciated. Ramisa, another student, also confirmed this personal touch of GH teachers knowing students' names, bringing up her first memory of meeting Tahmid bhaiya in person,

Ramisa: Yeah so like I did meet Tahmid sir like...this was one thing about Tahmid sir, he knew me throughout O-levels online, but like he had held this parent teacher meeting once, after which he was like, "if anyone's parents and anybody wants to come meet me (in person), you guys can come meet me at my class(room)." So I did, and he recognized me at the first glance, even though I was wearing a mask, and he had never seen me offline.

Nisma: Hm!

Ramisa: That was very nice, that he recognized me. This is good, like, for me it was like you know, okay now he knows all the students and mostly about all of us…it was kind of that impression. And Muntasir sir too like, they all recognized me (at) first glance. This was like really like – okay, they all know their students!

Tahmid bhaiya, recognizing her right away, left a lasting impression on Ramisa, that the teachers at GH care about their students. Even though her classes at GH were all online, Tahmid and Muntasir (the economics teacher) bhaiyas taking the effort to know their students made Ramisa feel more included and valued in her class environments.

As Fuad bhaiya mentioned, these type of trusting relationships and personal touches allow students to express themselves with their teachers at GH and be more open with them that they might have otherwise. This leads to another facet of the dense relationship teachers were able to build at GH with their students—the ability to act as "pseudo-counselors" for their

students; or someone the students can share personal issues with, and seek support for any and all problems, outside of their education.

Teachers Acting as "Pseudo-Counselors"

Teachers at GH highlighted how there were not sufficient appropriate counseling centers or trained mental health counselors students have access to, or who they would be comfortable going to. As mental health is still very much a taboo like topic in Bangladeshi society, even in elite circles, students turn to their teachers for support instead, particularly the ones they really trust. As Fuad bhaiya explained,

> Toh ami nijeikei mone kori doctor r moto. Ami jodi student der kei guide korte chai, taile student amar shathe honest thakte hobe, tar real problem gula bolte hobe. O bolte parbe, "bhaiya, I'm very sorry, apnar mone hocche apni amake poriyechen but ami kichu bujhini." Shei eita khub upfront bolbe, jei tar moner bhitore kono geet thakbe na, jei "ei lokta abar ki mone kore boshe, Ammu kei phone na diye boshe."
>
> Arekta jinish jeta ami mone kori - teenage der counseling korar jaiga na. Ami jodio nijeke counselor boli na, counselor hoyar onek rokomer ability thakte hobe; but ei gap ta ache, jei teenage ra jokhon variety of changes diye jai, life ei, tara proper guidance ba counseling pai na.
>
> (So I think of myself as a doctor. If I want to guide students, then students have to be honest with me, they have to share their real problems with me. They should be able to say, "bhaiya, I'm very sorry, you think you have taught me, but I actually did not understand anything" They should be able to be very upfront, so that there are no knots in their mind, no thinking, "what will this guy think of me, I hope he doesn't call my mom about this."
>
> Another thing is - there is no place for teenagers to get counseling. I don't call myself a counselor. To be a counselor, you need many different types of ability; but this gap exists – that when teenagers go through a variety of life changes, they don't get the

proper guidance or don't get counseling. As a result of which, they often deviate, and we judge them for deviating, but we don't find any solution to this problem.)

Nisma: Mane, support nai. (Meaning, there is no support.)

Fuad: Haan …. So ei, personal touch ta ami mone kori jei important ei jonno jei student ra trust korte pare.

[(Yes…so I think this personal touch is important so that students can trust us.])

Fuad bhaiya recognized here building a personal relationship, in which students trust him is important because: a) pedagogically, students will feel comfortable to let him know when they have not understood the study material and b) so he can provide some kind of counseling or support to his students to the best of his ability, as there are not many options for students to receive this type of guidance.

Ishrak, one of the relatively younger teachers and new hires at GH, who taught Law, also recognized students were desiring this type of emotional support or pseudo-counseling, in addition to their educational needs,

Thing is, there are lots of things that distinguishes GH from the, you know, the thousands or millions of teachers and coaching centers that they teach in, and one of the first is the way we, at GH, we talk to students about not just their education, (but) about their personal life right? … so my physical class timings are from 3 to 4.30 pm, so one hour 30 minutes. But I come home at 8.30 pm, why? After 4.30 I have students coming in, or staying after the class—they talk about their issues. Not just studies, [they even come] with personal issues, you know, how they can resolve these issues, family issues, financial issues, everything, and that's how we talk to them.

As Ishrak described, so many of Ishrak's students stayed behind to chat with him about their personal problems that Ishrak ended up spending several extra hours at GH, after his classes were over. He further shared with me how the issues students confided in him were quite serious, which reinforced his sense of responsibility towards his students.

… the reason why I like teaching, especially at GH is because the students made us a part of their personal life as well. Okay? So, first of all that made me special, and not only that, that imposed a huge liability on me right.

> So, I had students who came up to me and told me, “bhaiya, I'm going to run away tonight,” and I was like, why? “Well because [my] dad is abusive, mom’s working, paying the bills, she can't afford it,” and then the list goes on. And then I have to talk the student out of it, “don't do it, not worth it,” you know, running out of it because, “right now, if you run out of it, run out of your house, you won't be able to afford anything. And you'll end up doing things that you are going to regret. It's going to curve a path in your life which you can't uncurve … So you know, the way students rely on me, or you know other teachers in GH, this is something, with confidence I can say they don't do it in other institutes. They don't. They don't.

Ishrak was essentially playing the role of a mental health counselor or therapist here, calming the student down from making any impulsive decisions, and encouraging them instead to think of alternative ways to deal with their difficulties.

Maliha, who credited Ishrak for “changing her life around” shared how Ishrak similarly helped her get through a few mental health challenges of her own.

> **Maliha**: You know, ami chinta korlam ami GH ei, Ishrak sir er shathe shob share korechi. Everything, ami ki kore, like depression ei achi, depression ei chilam. Depression kon year theke, even date o bolsi, like ei year depression start hoyeche. Oi shomoi amar legit … amar lagchilo like … September ei, i felt like jei “I can’t do this. I’m done with this.” Oi jei hoi na; people go through problems.
>
> Ami butesilam na, ki kore cover korbo, A levels is really tough. Challenges ache. You need to do good. Na toh, ami bairer university apply korte parbo na [which is] my main goal. Tarpor (Sir) bujhacche jei “na, ok tumi toh bhalo korcho. Tumi parba” confidence dicche. Sir tried to like…half hour er moto Sir er shathe chat korlam. In half an hour he was there, group ei messages ashtese jei, “Sir, eita lagbe, oita lagbe.” Sir oi shomoi was like …
>
> (You know, I’ve thought about this that at GH, I have shared everything with Ishrak sir. Everything, what am I doing, like I’m depressed, I used to be depressed. I’ve even shared the date, like from which year did my depression start. At that time I was legit …

> I was feeling like, in September I felt like, “I can’t do this. I’m done with this.” You know it happens; people go through problems.
> I couldn’t figure it out, how will I keep up [with academics]. A level is really tough. There are challenges. You need to perform well. Otherwise I won’t be able to apply to a university abroad, which is my main goal. Then Sir was making me understand, “no, you are doing well. You can do it,” giving me confidence. Sir tried to like … for half an hour I chatted with Sir. In the half an hour he was there, there were messages coming in the group chat like, “Sir I need this, I need that.” At that time, Sir was like …)
> **Nisma**: Focused.
> **Maliha**: … focused, ei student der somehow bachate hobe. And he did! His words literally helped me. So … yes if anyone [asks me], advice dite students der kei, if someone asks me jei, “eita Sir der kei ask korbo? That I am facing this problem?” I would say, “just go! Tomar life pura 360 degree change hoi jabe.”
> (focused [on me] … I have to save this student somehow. And he did! His words literally helped me. So…yes if anyone [asks me], to give advice to students, if someone asks me that, “should I ask this to Sir? That I am facing this problem?” ?” I would say, “just go! Your life will be changed 360 degrees.

Maliha felt comfortable enough with Ishrak to share with him details of her mental health challenges, and also to seek help from him when she became anxious about her academic work suffering as a result of these challenges. She took note of how when Ishrak was counseling her, he remained focused on her despite receiving messages from other students. As we can see, students at GH have a variety of issues that any growing adolescents may have, such as abusive parents, or mental health challenges. Students like Maliha would encourage her friends going through any such problems to confide in Ishrak, and help process their emotions, in the same way one would encourage young people to seek help with a therapist or other mental health professional.

Other students also confirmed to me that they would confide in their teachers at GH about not just any problems with classes, but also about their personal life and issues. Shiyam said he felt very comfortable in this regard and had in fact stayed half hour longer after Fuad

bhaiya's class the night we did our interview, in order to discuss with him about an issue he was having at his mainstream EM school.

> For example, ami school ei jei problem ta face korchi eita kintu ekta boro ekta problem. Eita Fuad sir k bola ta o kintu ekta risky jinish, because Fuad Sir nije o ekta teacher. Shei o ektu mind korte pare j accha amar school emon, omon … But still I told him. I really, really trust them as my teachers. Ami khubi trust kori tader kei, jei nah! At least obosshoi, ekta mane, ekta solution dibe! Solution na diye kokhono tara chilo na. Amar result niye bolen, ba j kono jinish potro niye bolen, they always helped me.
> (For example, the problem I am facing in my school right now is a big problem. Sharing this problem with Fuad sir is a risky thing because Fuad sir is himself a teacher. He could also become offended that I was saying this and that about my school … But still I told him. I really, really trust them as my teachers. I trust them a lot! At least for sure, they will provide me with a solution! They have never been without a solution. Whether it is about my results, or about any other thing, they always helped me).

Here, Shiyam also illustrated the type of "pseudo-counseling" many students sought from their teachers at GH—the ability to share what is going on in their lives and not be judged about it, but instead seek a way to problem-solve or seek a resolution to that problem.

Issues of Sexual Misconduct

Related to personal challenges, both of my female student interviewees brought up issues of sexual misconduct, and how they felt comfortable enough sharing these incidents with the teachers they trusted at GH in order to process or address them. In the case of Maliha, it was to confide in Ishrak a previous case of sexual assault she faced, when the topic they were discussing in class was the tort or civil liability related to sexual crimes. She did not disclose many details with me (and I did not press her to), but she shared discussing what happened to her with Ishrak as if she was "asking for a friend" made her feel more empowered in terms of how the law and people around her could help her if anything similar happened to her in the future.

In the case of Ramisa, she shared she knew of a friend who faced some instances of sexual harassment while going to their tutoring classes and that Simon sir, the Mathematics

teacher at GH, whom Ramisa was close to, addressed it right away which gave Ramisa a lot of confidence that he would do the same for her.

> **Ramisa**: Specifically in this sense—I would say Simon sir (will help). Tahmid Sir will also listen … I would point out one case, for example … do you know Springdale school kids can get out of hand, and like other school kids can like literally … boys who get out of hand and start like eve teasing, at coaching? I, for a fact know that if I even complain to Simon Sir about any time anybody, he will not let that person go. Because there are cases like, with my friend, she used to study with me [in school] but she left in [grade] nine. As I was saying, she did Simon sir a year before me. So, in her batch there was this girl, she was really pretty and some boys whistled at her. And she went and complained to Simon sir. And Simon Sir came, and he did like...he went to town on that boy.
>
> **Nisma**: Hmm.
>
> **Ramisa:** We have the trust in Simon sir, that if anything goes wrong, I can talk to him, I can speak to them, he will solve it for me.

In fact, Ramisa's comfort with the teachers at GH, particularly with Simon sir was a convincing reason for her parents to feel good about sending her to GH considering there were some instance of sexual harassment that she already faced.

> (My parents) think of GH as a very good place where I learn, the teachers are very friendly, they answer all the queries of my parents, very cooperative. They believe in Simon sir *a lot* [emphasis added] … my parents also knew that if something went wrong … my sister specifically, about the (eve-teasing) situation I just told you, my sister just said, "if you had just told Simon sir, he would have taken care of it right then and there." Simon sir would not let me face trouble; he would solve it for me. My sister assured my parents that since Simon sir is there [at GH], there is not going to be any problem. It's like that.

Ramisa's older sister had gone to GH as well, and studied under Simon sir, which was why she was similarly confident he would believe and help Ramisa at any time. In fact, it had been her sister's positive experience and relationships at GH that led Ramisa to turn to GH for tutoring lessons—an example of the production of social capital at GH. Her sister's prior experience,

and Ramisa's current close relationship with Simon sir helped alleviate their parents' worries about any personal issues Ramisa may face such as boys harassing her.

Sexual harassment is pervasive across Bangladesh—in schools, public spaces, online platforms, and workplaces. In a national cross-sectional survey, the non-governmental organization Plan International found 74% of female students in Bangladesh have faced violence and sexual harassment at their schools (Shuaib et al., 2021, p. 6). Such rampant harassment led parents to restrict their daughters' movements, such as 48% of mothers not allowing them to attend their school's sports programs and 54% of fathers not allowing them to attend private tutoring lessons, as perhaps Ramisa's parents were inclined to do. The study found the three main strategies students turned to deal with such harassment was to inform their teachers (32% of respondents), inform their parents (53%), or to stay silent (56%; p. 7). Considering there are only a handful of environments female students could go to and feel safe disclosing such incidents, being able to share these type of issues with the men teachers at GH demonstrates the trusting relationships these teachers cultivated with their students. Matters of sexual misconduct, which also occurred to me personally, were not something I would have been able to share with my tutors when I was a teenager.

Teachers Acting as Mentors

In addition to helping students process their personal and family challenges, teachers at GH took the time to help students understand their life paths, academic choices, and what they wanted from their journeys by sharing their experiences from their own lives. Pritom brought this up in terms of why he liked going to GH, that hearing from Simon Sir, the Math teacher, and from Tahmid bhaiya "inspires him up."

> I want to add on about GH is that Tahmid sir shares his experience. Not all the time, we have to do classes and all, but sometimes. Simon sir o O-levels er story bolto majhe moddhe. " Ami B paisilam, ami eibhabe porsi and ami Pure maths nisilam before exam registration er shomoy." Eirokom bhabe onek story bolto majhe moddhe. Sir eibhabe one hour par korto. Life lesson in needed sometime from teachers and they are very interesting; inspires you up.
>
> (I want to add on about GH that Tahmid sir shares his experiences. Not all the time, we have to do classes and all, but sometimes. Simon sir as well, (he) used to talk about his

> O levels stories, from time to time; “I got a B, I studied in this way, and I took Pure Maths (just) before the exam registration.” In this way he used to tell us a lot of stories from time to time. Sir used to spend up to an hour in this way (telling stories). Life lesson is needed sometimes from teachers, and they are very interesting; inspires you up.)

Pritom appreciated learning that not everything has been easy for the teachers they look up to in their own lives, and how they were able to navigate the common challenges everyone goes through.

Shiyam conveyed a similar feeling of appreciation when his teachers would share their life stories with his class, understanding that teaching goes beyond grades and metrics, and encompasses the guidance of young minds. When speaking to the instruction at GH, Shiyam shared,

> Tahmid sir, Fuad sir, *they are really good*. Mane, teacher hishabe tara shudu ... teacher ra kintu shotti kotha bolte shudhu pora likha e bujhay na. Tara kintu shudhu poralekhar jonno ei teacher na. Tara kintu life ei onek kichu e amader kei shikai. Ebong Tahmid sir, Fuad sir jebhabe amader k shikhiyeche, mane its beyond imagination! Ami onno teacher der shathe class korechi toh, so eita bujha e jai; mane class korle compare kora jai kon teacher ta kemon, eita actually bujha jai. So, they are really good for me. (Tahmid sir, Fuad sir, *they are really good* [emphasis added]. Meaning, in terms of being teachers, they don’t just …. If truth be told, teachers don’t just make us understand our studies. They are not just teachers for academic purposes. They also teach us a lot of things about life. And the way Tahmid Sir, Fuad Sir, teach us, its beyond imagination! I’ve done classes with other teachers as well, so it’s possible to understand this; I mean if you do the classes you can compare what each teacher is like. You can actually understand this. So they [Fuad and Tahmid Sir)]are really good for me.)

Here, Shiyam explicitly compares the classes he took with other teachers, both in tutoring spaces and in his EM school, and he found the learning environment at GH to be above par in terms of the teaching that goes beyond the classroom. Shiyam made the larger point here that

his GH teachers were doing more than just instructing them about their academics—they were teaching them life lessons as well.

On the other side of the equation, Adnan bhaiya similarly discussed how he found value in sharing, with particularly his new students, his own experiences; that he was a student not very long ago, and even continuing his own education so he could keep relating to what students go through in order to be helpful to them. He also made sure to not let his students lose sight of the hierarchical relationship between them and himself to allow for proper distance.

> I give them the feeling maybe within the first week … the feeling that I'm very close to you. I have sat down at the same desk where you're sitting, not very long ago … And that's the reason why I tell them that I completed my studies in 2014 or 2015, and that is one of the major reasons why I personally think that the teacher should always study … Even if it is, you know, a short course and online course, whatever; because then you can actually relate, because as a student you face problems that the teachers never going to understand … At the same time I do make them understand there is a hierarchy, and who you are supposed to follow in the classroom; whose instruction has to be followed.

During a class observation, Adnan bhaiya embodied how he wanted to support students as a mentor by starting off saying how he recognized some students might be struggling in their choice of the science track. If students were struggling, Adnan bhaiya said, they could count on him as someone to talk to. In this class was a relatively new batch of students who had recently started their A levels classes with him. As students entered the Zoom classroom, and turned on their cameras, Adnan bhaiya, as was his countenance, spent some time checking in with them,

> "Shob kichu thik thak ache? [Is everything going well?] Are you being able to cope up with the A level things?"
>
> "Yes, sir; Yes, sir" two students responded, while a few others smiled and nodded.
>
> "Alhamdulillah. You do know that everyone, if anyone has any sort of issues, you can let me know; porashona related or anything …. Ami ekta example dicchi—for instance, "ami medicine porbo because Abbu / Ammu bolse amake portei hobe, na porle amar life shesh. Oi karone biology start korechi, bhaloi lagche but bujte parchi na." Eirokom

> type er situations hoi. Shei ketre, for advice, you know who to turn to. Confusion thakle, doubts thakle; please do knock me anytime."
>
> (Thank God. You do know that everyone, if anyone has any sort of issues, you can let me know; related to academics or anything …. I'll give you an example—for instance, "I will study medicine because Dad / Mom said I have to, and if I don't my life is over. That's why I've started studying biology, I like it, but I'm not understanding anything." These type of situations happen. In that case, for advice, you know who to turn to. if you have any confusion, any doubts; please do knock me anytime.)

As Adnan bhaiya taught physics, this example illustrates how he was not just aware of the real pressure students face to go into the "science track," which was when students choose only science subjects for their A level exams, due to their families' hopes of going to the medical or STEM fields. The British system, particularly over the course of the A levels, makes students choose quite early on which track they will eventually major, or work in. As students usually choose an average of 3 or 4 subjects in their A levels, they usually either pick the science track of all three science subjects—chemistry, physics, and biology, and/or math—or if they choose the commerce track, the path would be to take economics, accounting, business studies, and/or math, or some permutation of these subjects. A student could choose to take 5 or 6 subjects by combining both science and commerce focused subjects but that was seen as quite an arduous task to finish over the last two years of high school. As a structure, going into the science track is viewed as prestigious, because it opens up the possibilities of working in further respected fields such as medicine or engineering. Abrar shared with me his frustration that Bangladeshi society viewed the science track in this way saying, "there's a myth in this country that students [who] are in science [are] considered superior than the students of commerce." Students who are pressured by their families to go into this "superior" track may not have anyone else to talk to about this and commiserate, and Adnan bhaiya offered himself as someone who could be counted as one such support person to help guide their choices and values.

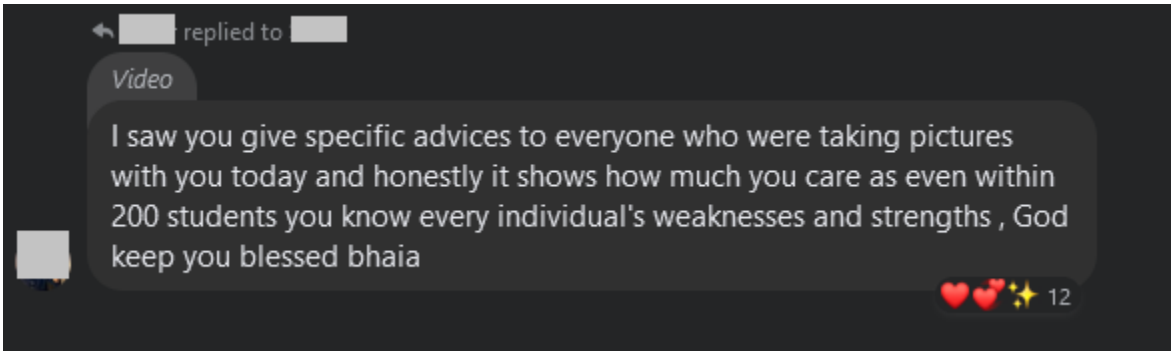
Lastly, Tahmid bhaiya also confirmed how he values guiding his students towards a successful and productive life, rather than solely focusing on grades.

Tahmid: Ami personally amar student k jeta kori, because you've seen my class, ami kintu hardly grade niye kotha boli.
(Personally, what I do with my students is … because you've seen my class, I hardly talk about grades.)
Nisma: Hmm.
Tahmid: Ami hardly grade niye kotha boli. And you see my chatroom as well, right? What I try to teach them is like ekta basic standard way of moving forward to your life, right? Because shobai toh same na because amader toh borolok theke shuru kore middle class people ra o ashe, right?
(I hardly talk about grades. And you see my chatroom as well, right? What I try to teach them is like a basic standard way of moving forward in your life, right? Because not everyone is the same, because all types of people, from higher class people to middle class people also come [to GH], right?)
Nisma: Yeah.
Tahmid: But everyone dreams big right? Now there is no problem in dream big. If you want to make it happen, you need to have a proper ekta guidance and so. Amra GH theke guidance ta provide korar cheshta kori.
(But everyone dreams big right? Now, there is no problem in dreaming big. If you want to make it happen, you need to have a proper type of guidance and so on. We try to provide that guidance here at GH.)

As Tahmid bhaiya described here, a diverse set of students came to GH, from elite to more middle-class backgrounds (a point I discuss further in Chapter 5). His focus was to make sure all these students were guided into realizing their dreams, no matter what those dreams were. In this regard, Tahmid bhaiya saw his role as a type of life coach, not fixating on grades so much as a measure of success, as one might expect him to do as a private tutor, but more so on holistically guiding students through life. As I mentioned in my opening vignette to this chapter how I had observed students crowding around Tahmid bhaiya to ask his advice about a range of topics after class was over, another student mentioned in their group chat a similar sentiment the day after their own classes had officially ended at GH (see Figure 14).

Figure 14

Screenshot from a Class Group Chat of a Student's Appreciation



This student not only appreciates the time Tahmid bhaiya was able to give to each student, but also how he was able to tailor his advice, (mostly likely related to guidance about their lives as it was the last day they were all together before their exams), by knowing each student very well, including their background, ongoing issues, and so forth.

Lastly, I observed how teachers at GH were reflective of the additional challenges female students faced within the patriarchal norms of Bangladeshi society and provided guidance about this, either directly or indirectly through their academic content. For example, in one business studies class, when they were discussing labor laws and regulations, Fuad bhaiya showed the O levels class a screenshot of a job posting from a well-known recruiting site called BDJobs. The job description was for a manager position and seemed innocuous until we all saw the line that he had highlighted at the bottom stating, "only males are allowed to apply." Even though all the students were muted, I could see from their expressions their surprise at the blatant discrimination on display. Fuad bhaiya went on to say he was sorry to be showing this advert to them, but unfortunately the work culture in Bangladesh, like many other countries, does discriminate against women. When I asked him later about why he highlighted that ad specifically, he said that it was a teacher's job to open their students' eyes to all kinds of issues they may face, especially if they are in a decision making role in the future. At that point students should not only be able to recognize such problems, but take steps to redress it.

Ishrak's mentorship towards his female students also incorporated recognition of the patriarchal culture they were ensconced in, in terms of how to legally address issues like sexual harassment, as we saw through what Maliha shared in the section above, and also

personally counseling them on how to mitigate such issues. During our interview, he spoke about his female students facing problems from their families in not being able to pursue their dreams after A levels, and in particular not being able to gain the funds or permissions to study abroad.

> And the only advice that I gave them was, “use your education as an escape route, once you're done with your A levels. Do really good on your A levels. And if you can apply to abroad, universities, where you think that you're getting around like 60 to 70% scholarship, apply for the university because no parents will stop their child from going to a university abroad if they get that amount of scholarship - no parent right?
> Most of them are female students right …. so, that's what a lot of them did and they're living in Canada or they're living in the UK, and they never came back. Because they know if they come back, they're gonna be in that same situation where they don't want to be …

Ishrak counseled his female students to use scholarship offers as an “escape route” to study abroad. This allowed those students to circumvent their parents not giving them permission to leave, or any other problems they may be facing, which then also allowed them to achieve independence and security in their lives.

Affective Learning and Capital

Again, as illustrated by my opening vignette, part of the pedagogy of the teachers at GH was they did not rush away after their class is over, and usher in the next batch of students. They stay and talk to students about anything the students have on their minds. In this regard, teachers at GH have excellent bedside manners. This type of care and relationship building was evident in what I observed at the end of Tahmid bhaiya’s class, when he, along with a dozen other students stayed well past the allotted class hour, each student wanting to discuss various issues. While there was some discussion of academics, the majority of the conversation was regarding non-academic concerns such as how to deal with over-bearing parents during exam time, and so forth.

Having this type of enhanced “bedside manner” is a sentiment echoed across social services in Bangladesh—particularly as criticism against the public sector—and offered as a reason why people prefer to engage with the private sector if they can afford it. As Billah (2017)

opined, “people who can afford private treatment never think of going to state-run hospitals, it is the same when it comes to education” (Billah, 2017, para. 2). So even amongst the many tutoring centers in Dhaka city that may have offered quality educational services, students preferred a place like GH where they were able to build dense relationships with their teachers, and receive a type of emotional sustenance they may not be getting elsewhere.

This type of emotional support relates to the affective dimension of learning which influences a student’s learning outcomes, as well as other aspects of their well-being. Affective dimensions of learning are the feelings and emotional aspects of learning which include particular emotions and tendencies associated with learning; this includes positive thinking , critical thinking, perseverance, motivation, and self-esteem for example (Lynch, n.d; McLeod, 1989). Emotions have been shown to be related to a range of cognitive processes such as attention, long-term memorizing, problem solving, and decision making. Additionally, positive emotions have been found to be fundamental in learning processes, playing an important role to improve creativity and flexibility in problem solving, and may also increase intrinsic motivation (Chaffar & Frasson, 2012). When these feelings, skills, and emotions are folded into capitalism and considered valuable for economic production, affective capital comes into play.

For example, Shiyam attributed an improvement in his academic results to being at the GH tutoring center. Shiyam had an on and off relationship with being enrolled in mainstream schooling as we saw in Table 3. At the end of grade eight, he decided to leave his school, Greenwood, entirely because he was “doing really bad results that time … *really* bad” [emphasis added]. He joined GH to do tutoring full-time for grades 9 and 10, and performed well in his O levels.

> **Shiyam:** Yeah, I left Greenwood. Then I gave my O-levels … Fuad sir der under ei, porikkha diye, I got very good grades. Ar grades bhalo korar khushite amar baba bollo jehitu O-levels bhalo korso baba, A-levels o bhalo korte hobe, ekhon jao abar Greenwood ei bhorti hou.
>
> (Yeah, I left Greenwood. Then I gave my O levels … under Fuad sir I took the exams and I got very good grades. And in the afterglow of my good grades, my father said because I did well in my O levels, I also have to do well in my A levels so I have to go get admitted again in Greenwood.)

Nisma: Okay. Then your parents were so happy jei oora bollo Greenwood ei abar dhuke jao even though Greenwood theke oita hoyni, right?
(Okay. Then your parents were so happy (with your results) that they said go re-enroll in Greenwood, even though your results were not through Greenwood, right?)
Shiyam: Yes.

Even though Shiyam did not attribute his O levels success to his school as he studied exclusively at GH during that period, his parents wanted him to still re-enroll at Greenwood for his A levels—a decision that makes more sense when we think about how important the elite connection to English medium schooling is to families like Shiyam, as we saw in Chapter 1. Thus ,we can see here how Shiyam, who had stronger affective connections to the teachers at GH, performed better academically once he only did tutoring at GH, something he wanted to continue doing in his A levels but was overridden by his parents to also join school.

Tanvir was also a student who felt like he gained much more support emotionally and academically from GH than his school. In speaking to his experience at GH,

Tanvir: Tension and worryness onekta kome asche GH e dhukar por. Emon ekta feeling esheche like, that there is someone jei dhorbe, jodi ami fall kori. No problem.
(After I entered GH, my tension and worry diminished a lot. I got this kind of a feeling that like, that there is someone who will catch me if I fall. No problem.
Nisma: Meaning, a feeling of support.
Tanvir: Yes, *complete support* [emphasis added]. Frankly I would say for the academic part my GH experience was far better than school…The teachers are not the best but also the worst…I would say Fuad sir was heads and shoulders above my business teacher at school … GH played a big role in shaping me up for O levels. I would say in comparison to my last two years and ongoing at GH, I have learnt way more than [at] my school.

We can see here how Tanvir felt completely at ease at GH, that he would be supported no matter what. Similar to Shiyam, he attributed GH for his academic success in his O levels. He relied on GH for his A levels education as his school did not offer any A level cases, scoring A's in all three subjects he studied for at GH. When I followed up with him more recently after my

last trip to Bangladesh, he enthusiastically said, “I will happily contribute 110% of that (A level) success to GH.”

Tanvir has now been admitted to Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP), one of the leading public universities in Bangladesh, and a very competitive school to get into. He said during the round of admissions that he applied to, the competition was so intense that out of 13,000 students who took the entrance exam, only 600 were finally selected, after multiple rounds of testing. This meant there were approximately 25 students competing for each available seat. Although there were other criteria Tanvir performed well on to be admitted, he shared the university’s rubric allotted 30% of his overall admissions score to his O and A level grades, an outcome GH helped with.

During the first year of his university, Tanvir was also part of a team of four students who won a prestigious university-wide competition called EconProdigy that challenges students to use their analytical skills “to devise innovative solutions to economic challenges” (Cablgram, 2024). For their creative policy proposal, he ended up being awarded a collective prize of 120,000 taka (~ 1100 USD) and a two night stay at a posh hotel. When I congratulated Tanvir on this success, he responded,

> The competition I won recently … hats off to Muntasir sir from GH. His teaching helped our team a lot, like the way he taught us the economic concepts regarding policy making and all. But after all it was a team effort [and] 3 of the members from our team were his students during A-levels.

As Tanvir said, winning the competition was a team effort and there were several efforts involved in their success. However, the fact he and three of his other team members were under Muntasir bhaiya’s (the economics teacher) tutelage at GH and Tanvir attributed Muntasir bhaiya’s teaching style in how he learned and used economic concepts demonstrates a tangible link between GH’s personal approach, learning outcomes, and economic success. Thus, as GH cultivated care, relationship building, and emotional support with and for their students, their students’ abilities to produce economic profit also increased, by scoring good results, getting into prestigious universities, as well as the white collar work they could then aspire to, which would require such credentials and affective competences.

Relatedly, in Chapter 5, I detail how teachers at GH also tried to develop their students' perseverance, their ability to recover from setbacks, and the motivation to want more for themselves as higher SES students who may not yet have faced many challenges in their lives—other aspects of affective capital building. I also examine in greater depth the quality of teaching and learning at GH versus schools in Chapter 6.

Becoming "Buddies" with Staff

As we see from the previous sections, students learn to traverse a range of relationships at GH with and through their teachers and this was no different with the administrative staff. I was able to interview only one administrator, Mahbub Bhaiya, and he had been at GH for almost a decade at the time of our conversation; so he had interacted with a majority of my student interviewees in his capacity as one of the senior administrators for the Business department which included the business studies, economics, and accounting subjects. From my observations of the routine of their online classes, students were interacting with Mahbub bhaiya almost on a daily basis, as he was the one sending out class time reminders and Zoom links in the group chats, opening and managing the Zoom waiting room, taking attendance, reminding students to pay tuition fees, etc. The relationship students had with Mahbub bhaiya was akin to that of an older sibling, or even peer. Ramisa explained to me her rapport with Mahbub bhaiya and how he looked out for her,

> **Ramisa:** Mahbub bhaiya wakes me up for classes! He is like (*motioning picking up a call with her hands*), "where the hell are you, it's your class (time)!" (*laughing*). When I was giving exams during O-levels, I overslept because it was like during Ramadan. So I prayed till four [am] ... I would pray, study a little bit, it would be like 6 / 7 am (that I would sleep). And exam was at 9 [am]. I was 13 minutes late for my O-levels examination! They called me, woke me up. They called me, they called my mom, then my mom's like, "she's sleeping." Then they called me again; they called me till I picked up, like woke up. And then the current O-levels TA - Fahad bhaiya, he gave me an hour extra for my paper.
>
> **Nisma:** Hmm! Wow.
>
> **Ramisa:** After the exam they were like, "why were you this late?" I was like "I was praying! Now tell me, should I abandon Allah for an exam?" Fahad bhaiya's argument

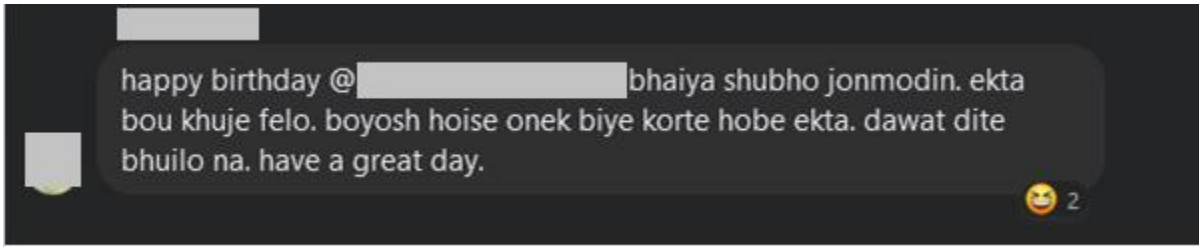
was like “yeah, you could have for one day.” Mahbub bhaiya was supporting me, "no, if you abandon Allah, you’ll see Allah has then abandoned your marks." It's like buddy type of conversation.

Ramisa and Mahbub bhaiya had a close enough relationship that he took it upon himself to make sure she was present for her practice or mock examination at GH, not with just one call, but multiple calls to her and her parents, until he was sure she woke up. She characterized her banter with Mahbub bhaiya and Fahad, the teaching assistant for her class, as the kind of conversation you would have with a “buddy.” As students learned to traverse a range of relationships with the staff and teachers at GH, those who were more casual, such as with Mahbub bhaiya, taught students how to interact with him more loosely, almost like they were friends or buddies.

I observed this type of casual yet intimate relationship between Mahbub bhaiya and other students in their group chats and classes. In fact, the extent of this casualness took me by surprise in some instances. Shiyam and other students, for example, would often tease Mahbub bhaiya about his marital status, asking him constantly when he would be getting married. Mahbub bhaiya, despite being of a similar age to the senior teachers like Fuad and Adnan bhaiyas who were married with young children, was not married. This type of teasing surprised me considering the age gap between the students and Mahbub bhaiya, which I gauged to be about 17-18 years considering these students were in the 10^{th}-12^{th} grades. Figures 15 and 16 below provide a few example screenshots from different moments in time from the O levels Facebook Messenger group chats of this type of banter. These group chats were primarily organized for the O levels cohort to discuss things related to class, to share Zoom links, reminders to complete homework, and so forth.

Figure 15

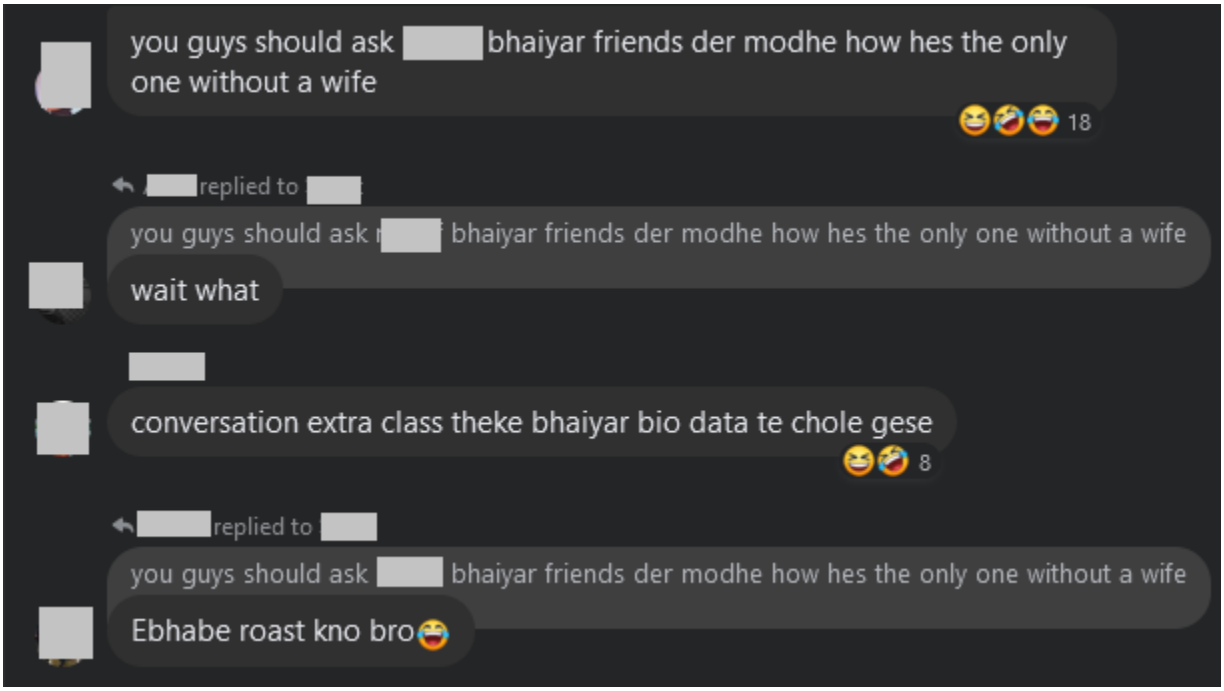
Screenshot 1 from O Levels Chat Group



In Figure 15, whilst wishing him happy birthday, a student brought up his marital status and said, “happy birthday @Mahbub bhaiya. Happy birthday. Find a wife. You have grown quite old and now you have to get married. Don’t forget to invite us. Have a great day.”

Figure 16

Screenshot 2 from O Levels Chat Group



The screenshot in Figure 16 translates to the first person saying, “you guys should ask, how is it that Mahbub bhaiya within his friends is the only one without a wife.” After student one responds, “Wait, what” as if surprised by the first comment, the second student says, “(this) conversation went from (about) extra class to bhaiya’s biodata[10].” The last student responded to the first comment with a laughing emoji, “why are you roasting (him) like this bro.”

That students were casually bringing up and somewhat roasting Mahbub bhaiya like this in their group chats (that Mahbub bhaiya is also a part of) about his marital status was not something I would have expected, given the age gap between him and the students. Those

[10] A biodata is colloquially referred to the type of CV or resume that one uses to introduce oneself to a family or matchmaker for the purpose of being fixed up for an arranged marriage.

who work in education services, even if they are not teachers, are afforded a lot of respect in Bangladeshi society. In spite of Mahbub bhaiya's age difference, which should have automatically offered him the kind of respect and distance the students give to their teachers at GH, his status as an administrator and his managerial role as someone who is not the ultimate authority at GH (as the teachers were) marked him as different. He was not as "above" students in the hierarchy created at GH which afforded students this type of casual intimacy and transgression of certain boundaries that would not be crossed with senior teachers such as Fuad or Tahmid bhaiya.

My observation of these playful remarks towards Mahbub bhaiya led me to asking Shiyam directly about it, whom I had also noticed would join in doing so on social media.

> **Nisma**: Oikhane kano shobai Mahbub bhai k eibhabe pochai? I feel like I see that all the time.
>
> (Why does everyone tease Mahbub bhaiya like this (about his wedding)? I feel like I see that all the time.)
>
> **Shiyam**: Fuad sir eita start korse. Eita holo Fuad sir er kaaj. Fuad sir Mahbub bhai kei aage eirokom Facebook ei pochaito, "Mahbub tor biye hobe kobe? Mahbub er biye ..." Ei shei. Tai amra o ektu moja kori. Toh ajke ami Mahbub bhai kei bolse, "Mahbub bhai, Mahbub bhai er kobe biye hobe?" Mahbub bhai amake bolse ki, "ami ja dekhtesi amar aage tor biye hoye jabe" *(laughing)*. We are really ... we are really good. Mane, Shojol bhai, Mahbub bhai, Mahbub bhai. Then Rashid Mama r jei admin gula tader shathe o ekta bhalo bonding ache.
>
> (Fuad Sir started this. This is Fuad Sir's work. Fuad sir would tease Mahbub bhai like this on Facebook saying, "Mahbub, when will you get married? Mahbub's wedding …" this and that. That's why we also have fun. So today I was asking Mahbub bhaiya, "Mahbub bhai, when will Mahbub bhaiya get married?" Mahbub bhaiya said to me, "at this point it's looking like you will get married before me" *(laughing).*)

It is revealing that Shiyam said the reason he and his student peers poked fun at Mahbub bhaiya's marital status was because Fuad bhaiya started it. It would not be out of the ordinary for Fuad bhaiya to do so on such a personal matter, considering he and Mahbub bhaiya are similar in age and have been friends for at least the decade that Mahbub bhaiya worked at GH.

What is notable here is students have picked up on Fuad bhaiya's joke, and continued to make the same vein of comments without any pushback from any of their teachers or other staff, in effect gaining permission to do so. As an A levels student, Shiyam was a few years older than the students in figures 15 and 16 above, and had been studying at GH for some time (since grade 6, see Table 2), so he was familiar with the context of the joke. Teasing Mahbub bhaiya on this personal matter had become normalized for successive waves of students, such as those younger than Shiyam in the O-level groups. I did not observe students discuss any of the other teachers' personal lives in this way. The closest they would come was to talk about how unique and different Tahmid bhaiya's lifestyle was in comparison to the other teachers at GH, as someone who was a vlogger and liked traveling to exotic locations, but the students would discuss this more so in a way as if that was something to aspire to or commend him for. The students did not actually ask questions about it, or question his choices.

Navigating Relationships Into a Sense of Ease

As I mentioned earlier, I would characterize the relationships I saw students have with an administrator like Mahbub bhai versus with their teachers akin to the difference between a sibling and a parental figure. Some GH teachers were also more formal in their interactions with their students as students shared with me, such as Muntasir bhaiya, while other teachers allowed for greater intimacy like Ishrak and Tahmid bhaiya. Taken together, students were learning multiple ways of interacting with those they held in a higher position to them. At GH, students were learning to traverse a variety of interactions, and thus learning how to negotiate dense and subtly hierarchical relations. A hierarchy very much existed in GH, and we saw that in how students formed close relationships with both teachers and administrators at GH, but treated them somewhat differently. Administrators held a different position and role to the teachers, one which placed them below the teachers; as in the case of Tahmid, Fuad, and Adnan bhaiyas for example who, as co-founders of the tutoring center, were Mahbub bhaiya's boss.

Thus, as students were learning to traverse a range of relationships with the staff and teachers at GH, and were learning to make these distinctions when needed, those who were more casual, such as with Mahbub bhaiya, taught students how to interact with them more loosely, while also behaving in a way as if those distinctions do not exist (in their "buddy"-like

interactions). Therefore, what students were gaining from GH in their interactions with their teachers and administrators as advisors, coaches, mentors, and buddies, was not just related to what they were learning in terms of the quality of instruction at GH (though that is an important issue I return to in Chapter 6), it is also how they were learning it. Students at GH were learning how to embody the many different ways they could talk to their teachers and administrators, and how to do so comfortably and within certain boundaries which is “a crucial mode of elite existence” (Khan, 2011, p. 70). The implications for the layered relationships between students, teachers, and administrators helped students embody the ease that they could continue to leverage to find a place in elite circles or spaces, outside of GH.

Conclusion

The findings in this chapter relate to investigating how relationships between students, teachers, and administrators influenced their learning and socialization. At GH, the teachers and administrators fostered deep relationships with their students, developed through their own personal touch, and had the ability to relate to the students, counsel their students through life’s stresses, provide guidance through those issues, and mentor on how they themselves overcame life’s troubles. This means teachers ended up playing a myriad of roles for their students—instructor, counselor, friend, sounding board, life coach, big brother, mentor—and which stems from the numerous, and sometimes contradictory ways students and staff interact at GH. The types of support students receive at GH relate to the affective dimension of learning, which highlights the importance of the emotional dimensions of learning and human capital. Referring back to this study’s social reproduction framing, these affective aspects of learning contributed to the students’ cultivation of their own affective capital, in which their emotional competencies were leveraged towards better learning outcomes that lead to better opportunities for their futures, and ultimately the production of profit.

Even as the quality of instruction is important, the teaching at GH went beyond the classroom, so much so that it was “not what you learn; it is how you learn it” (Khan, 2011, p. 70). The density of the relationships between students, teachers, and administrators at GH allowed for a type of familiarity and distance these roles encompass. In learning how to produce these relationships and navigate with those in various positions of power in deep yet reverent ways, students at GH were able to develop an interactional dynamic which is essential

to operating in elite circles. Lastly, these dense bonds form the base of trusting relationships between students and teachers, which opens students to cultivate other forms of capital and allows teachers to shape their students into elite ways of being. This includes building their confidence and resilience, and exposing them to diverse music and tastes, which I go into in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Shaping Students Into Elite Ways of Being

I grabbed my steaming cup of coffee and logged into the Zoom classroom. It was 9.30 pm for me, and 10.30 am for the students in Bangladesh, whose class I was logging into. It was one of Tahmid bhaiya's O-level classes. There were about 34 students already waiting, silently, for the teacher to join. At 9:43 PM, Tahmid bhaiya's teaching assistant Syed entered the room and announced, "Good morning, turn your cameras on, I want to see everyone." Several students complied and adjusted their cameras. Syed was sitting at Tahmid bhaiya's desk at his home, which I recognized from the red, yellow, and green striped curtains behind him. Syed was also Tahmid bhaiya's cousin, and Tahmid bhaiya had been putting him increasingly in charge of teaching the more junior batches.

Syed spent a few minutes chatting with the class, asking, "aren't you guys getting a holiday (for Puja) from your school?" Earlier, some students had requested a holiday from Tahmid bhaiya for Durga Puja – one of the biggest religious festivals for Bengali Hindus. No one responded to Syed, though a few smiled in response. Then he asked if students were even going to school. Schools had just opened post the delta variant wave in Bangladesh. One student piped up, "barely jae" (I barely go). Another said she had gone to school for one class last week, and missed two classes this week because of a conflict with her tutoring classes. Another student chimed in, "I don't go to any classes (there)." At this point there were 47 students in the room.

Then, Tahmid bhaiya reappeared and declared, "important announcement guys!" He said in an hour, someone would come to present to the class about an American student exchange program where students get the opportunity to spend their 11th grade in the US. One of his former students had been in the program, and he was also going to be present to chat about his experience. Although none of the students unmuted themselves, I noticed a few perk up, look into the camera, and show interest. "Why is no one showing any excitement?" said Tahmid, sounding despondent. Three students unmuted themselves, and said they were indeed excited.

Syed took over the laptop again, settling in to do some classwork. "I will give the solution to the last question set, and start a new math problem; sound good?" Students nodded. He proceeded to solve an accounting question, labelling the items the question had

provided, such as the opening inventory of raw materials, and explaining how to deal with other items provided to create a manufacturing account. For example, stock and purchases of raw materials should be listed at the beginning, then factory wages, etc. One of the items in the questions was "royalties."

"Do you guys know what royalties mean?" Syed asked.

"Yes, sir," responded a student.

"Can you explain it to me?"

"Bangla tei bolle hobe?" (Can I say it in Bangla?) said the student, a little hesitantly.

"Sure!" said Syed.

"Suppose ami ekta writer. Amar boi ekta company publish kore. Jotogula book sell hobe, toto commission ami pabo …" (Suppose I am a writer. My book is being published by a company. The more books I sell, the more commission I will get …)

Syed interjected, saying approvingly "Yes! Commission!"

Syed went on teaching for half an hour more, until the guests from the exchange program entered the Zoom room to give their presentation. The program was called the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange & Study abroad (YES), and its coordinator introduced himself as Rakin. After he started sharing his screen, he launched into his spiel,

"I will just do the presentation in English" he said. "Asif, one of your peers from GH, who is also here with us, did the YES program in the 2019-2020 academic year." He explained that YES was a cultural exchange program funded by the US state department where Bangladeshi students live with an American host family and study at an American high school for a year. Rakin went on to say,

Usually in the case of Bangladesh, what happens is that our schools, there aren't that many sporting fields or that many extracurricular activities. But if you all apply, and some of you get to go into this program, you can definitely experience some of the extracurricular activities in an American high school. It could be basketball, volleyball, or it could be fun classes like photography, theatre, and other classes like that. So these are some of the things you can definitely look forward to if you apply, and get a chance to attend an American high school.

I observed the students in the room during the presentation, and the ones with their video on look quite engaged; one student seemed to be taking notes. After Rakin went on for five more minutes, he asked Asif, the YES alum from GH, to talk about his experience. After 10 more minutes and some Q and As later, Rakin ended their presentation by saying, "We hope that you all apply!"

Introduction

One of the primary aims of this dissertation was to investigate how tutoring spaces are shaping their students into elite ways of being. As we saw from Chapter 4, the relationship between teachers and students at GH was multi-layered and complex, and thus, as we will see in this chapter, this relationship was the one that had greatest impact in the learning and socialization of students towards eliteness. As I noted in my visual representation in Figure 13, this chapter falls under the socialization dimension of my study and the research question I examine in this chapter is: How do tutors shape the socialization of students into elite ways of being?

In the first part of this chapter, I focus on the social spaces curated at GH, both physical and virtual, and how those lend to being shaped into eliteness. I do this through describing GH's physical spaces such as its rooftop where students are provided an opportunity to relax and socialize, a unique attribute for a tutoring center in Dhaka. I also describe how GH's virtual spaces expected students to have the economic capital to own multiple devices to attend their classes and exams.

In the second part of this chapter, I go into detail of how the teachers at GH demonstrated a certain elite way of being, thinking, and aspiring, through cultivation of, exposure to, discourse around, and possession of 1) digital skills, 2) global media such as music, podcasts, and entertainment, 3) being a worldly traveler, and 4) pets respectively. I discuss how these influences from teachers augment students' embodied global cultural capital by encouraging an omnivorousness in the tastes of students, who become open to consuming discourse and media from around the world; this type of omnivorousness is a key part of being elite (Khan, 2011, p. 16).

In the third part of this chapter, I explore how teachers at GH nurtured students' confidence, as well as their resilience and perseverance to be able to weather any challenges

that came their way, instilling in students a sense of their own self-worth as well as how they were in control of shaping their own lives. These attributes are part of the arsenal of students' affective capital. Teachers also helped to leverage their personal and social connections to encourage students' talents, outside of academics and the traditional prescribed roles of Bangladeshi society, helping to enhance students' social capital as well. Lastly, I provide some instances of resistance from students who felt different or like outsiders and offered some pushback into being shaped into dispositions that demonstrate elite ways of being.

As I mentioned in Chapter 2, I characterize the GH tutoring center, its classes and spaces as elite educational spaces, in order to study the relationship between tutoring experiences and the socialization of student into elite status. This relates to a larger point I make in this chapter that not all the students who come to GH are already elite—there is diversity in the class backgrounds of GH students. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, coming from a higher SES background does not automatically equate into knowing what dispositions are considered elite. However, at GH, they were being shaped into eliteness. For example, as we saw in the vignette above, a student felt the need to ask his teacher if he could answer a question in Bangla. His question is indicative of a classroom culture and space at GH where that was not the norm—instructors and students communicate a majority of the time in English and expected to do so, which as we saw from Chapter 2, is a marker of being elite in Bangladesh. Further, when the YES program coordinator entered the room, he introduced himself and did some small talk in Bangla, but quickly switched to English once he started sharing his screen. He then clearly stated he would do his presentation in English, again demonstrating which language was valued in that space, and for that professional opportunity.

I also want to note here that not all the teachers at GH equally epitomized the different facets I highlight here, and played different 'roles' in cultivating elite status in their students. For example, Fuad and Adnan bhaiyas were generally more focused on the qualities needed to succeed academically, getting into universities abroad, and what it then takes to succeed in those institutions. In contrast, Tahmid bhaiya was not typically as homed in on grades, but on what it could look like to succeed beyond the strictures and expectations of Bangladeshi society. In the Bangladeshi context, members of the upper class have traditionally been expected to stay in their prescribed lanes of being a doctor, lawyer, engineer, or in the military.

As we will see throughout this chapter, Tahmid bhaiya has an array of social connections and was eager to cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit in his students and expose them to the wider world, while helping them to augment both their cultural and social capitals.

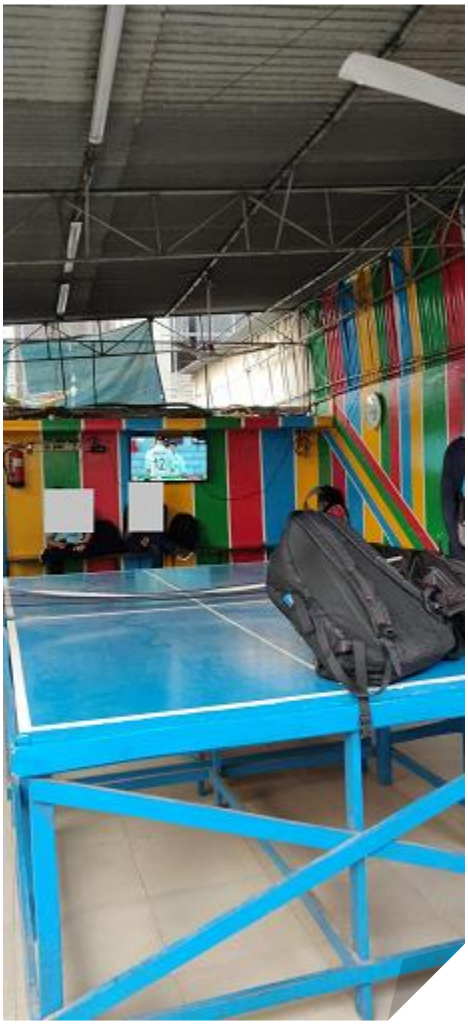
Social Spaces

Physical Spaces

As I described in Chapter 3, the GH tutoring center took up an entire building of five stories (including the ground floor). If you kept climbing the floors, you would get to the topmost level, which was the roof. The roof held a place of significance within the GH building. It was crafted by GH's management team into what was essentially a hangout space for students. There was a small cafeteria in a corner (colloquially referred to as a canteen), where you could buy food like samosas, sandwiches, burgers, and drinks like tea, coffee, and milkshakes. There was a bright blue table tennis table in the middle of the space, and chairs scattered around the edges to sit on. The walls are festively painted in alternating stripes of yellow, green, red, and blue. Since my initial visit to GH four years ago, an LCD TV has been added to one corner, for students to watch sport tournaments like cricket championships. Figure 17 shows a picture of the rooftop, with the TV in the center of the photo, and the blue table tennis in the foreground.

Figure 17

A Snapshot of the Tutoring Center's Rooftop with Mounted TV and Tennis Table



Note. Photo taken by author.

GH students often came to the roof, before, between, or after classes, to hang out with their friends, eat snacks, or play table tennis. It was a not a very manufactured space, but had just enough organized elements like the chairs, food, and table tennis to make the space intentional and inviting to students who needed a break, or had some time to kill between and after classes. I saw this rooftop space GH has created as a way to ease the socialization of students with each other and build their peer-to-peer social network and capital; a spot within the tutoring center where students can meet and fraternize with other students and their friends and get to know each other in a more laid-back setting than their classes. As Rifat described,

GH er chaad ei onek kichu korar ache. Table tennis ache. Table tennis khela jai. TV ache; Bangladesh er match thakle TV dekha jai. Ar canteen ta onek boro [emphasis added]. Canteen er khawagulo onek moja. Kono free time thakle, canteen ei boshe time spend kora jai. Chaad ei ekta mojar environment. (There are lots of things to do at the roof at GH. There is table tennis. You can play table tennis. There is a TV. If there is a Bangladesh cricket match, you can watch it on the TV. And the canteen is *very big* [emphasis added]. The food there is also yummy. If you have free time, you can sit and spend your time at the canteen. The environment at the roof is quite fun).

Nisma: Haan ami dekhcilam like onek chele meyera hangout korchilo. And then shobai chill.

(Yes, I saw, like lots of boys and girls hanging out there. And chilling there.)

Rifat: Like class er toh gap thake. 30-minute gap pawa jai so shobai chaad ei time spend kore.

(Like, there is usually a gap between classes. We get a 30-minute gap, so everyone spends time at the roof).

Students very much appreciated and enjoyed this rooftop area, with several students like Rifat bringing it up as a space they could relax and hang out. As GH was housed in a narrow building, the roof offered the only area where students could gather, walk around, and do other things than just be crammed into chairs or benches in a classroom. Pritom described how this type of a social space curated by GH was unique, in that other tutoring centers did not allow them to do that.

GH ei gele ekta wholesome experience ache. And other institutions ei hoiki boshar jaiga thake na. Or like friends ra jei boshe meetup korbo, ba eirokom type er, thake na. Jeta GH er chad ei kora jai. Onekjon boshe kheli, kotha boli, khai, adda dei so oigula korajai GH ei. Onek institutions ei oita allow korena. Baire guard thake. Bole, "chole jao class shesh,"

(There is a wholesome environment at GH. And it’s not like other institutions where like, there is no place to sit. Like to be able to meet up with friends, or something like that, there’s no time to do it. Which can be done at GH’s rooftop. A lot of us sit and play, talk,

> eat, hangout, which can be done at GH. A lot of institutions don't allow that. (They have) a guard outside who says, "go home, class is over.")

Pritom noted how other tutoring centers had guards who made them go home right after class. In contrast, GH gave them the space and freedom to socialize and hang out, in effect, more freedom and cultivation of "ease" there—the ease to hang out and socialize and so forth. This was an important consideration for students like Pritom who did not go to his private school for classes anymore, and thus only engaged with a tutoring center like GH for his day-to-day classes and routine. As I expand on in Chapter 6, students are increasingly opting out of mainstream English Medium (EM) schools and relying on tutoring centers for their classes and education, especially for their A-levels or the last two years of high school. This rooftop was also where Dameer, a popular young musical artist Tahmid bhaiya invited to meet his students spent some time after his mini performance in Tahmid bhaiya's class, to take pictures and chat with the students, which was another example of the cool and social space the rooftop embodied.

One student, Nahiyan, noted the ambience and décor of the GH building and space, such as its lighting, as reasons for why he personally liked going to GH over other tutoring centers. He specifically mentioned the rooftop as well, which he called the terrace below.

> I consider GH my second home—it really is. Like one thing at GH is, if I'm being a bit informal, the more cool students come to GH. At other coaching centers you might see more nerds. When you go to GH's terrace, you feel like you're at a restaurant. It's like that actually (*laughing*).
>
> And yeah it's like a very friendly place, and you get all sorts of people …. so yeah that's pretty much what adds value to GH, other then of course the ambiance and stuff …. you know pictures of the teachers on the corridors, and lighting at night, it's well lit.

Nahiyan explicitly said here how the cool students are the ones choosing GH, versus more studious ones aka the "nerds" at other tutoring centers. He even painted the environment at the rooftop akin to a restaurant, where people were chatting and hanging out, a place where students were learning from each other ways of being. This points to the cultivation of both social and cultural capital at GH, where you could socialize with other students who demonstrate more elite preferences, habits, and attitudes; and where you could also become

“cool,” in terms of cultivating more social networks and behaviors rather than just academic accolades.

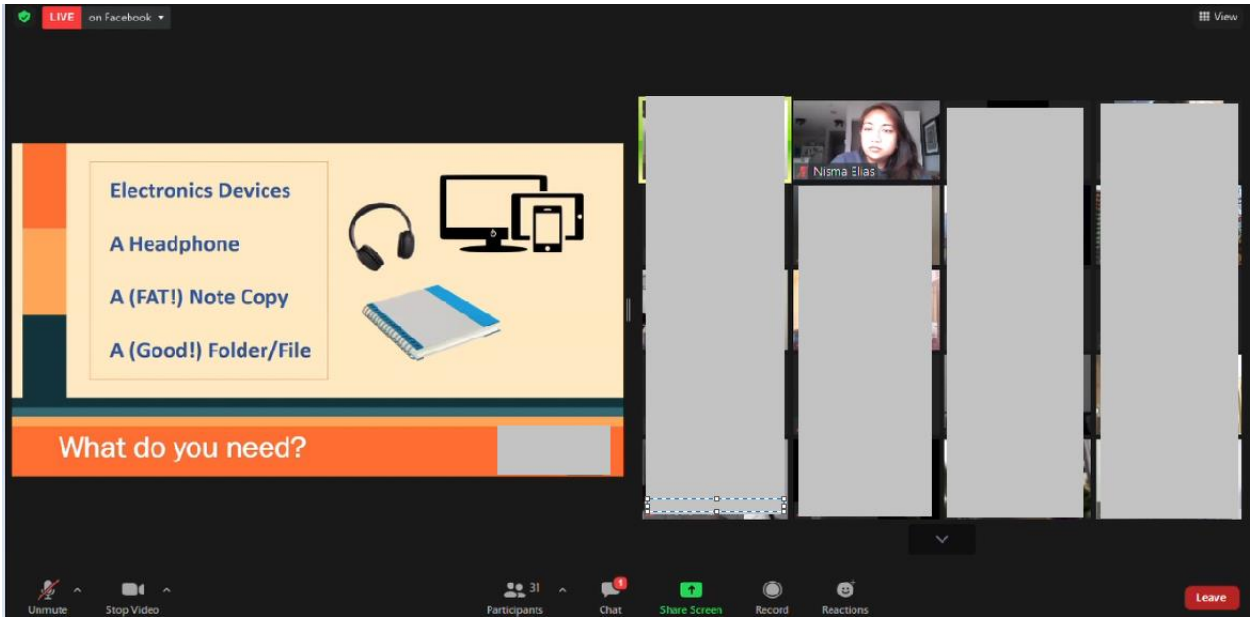
Virtual Spaces

As I have noted previously, all my data collection was during the coronavirus pandemic, though I did have the opportunity to visit the tutoring center before and after my main period of fieldwork. As can be expected, the environment of their online classes was different from how it would be in their in-person classes. One of these main differences was the emphasis on technology, and the expectation that the students attending GH’s online classes would have the requisite technology and environment at home to be present and fully immersed in those classes. Whereas before, for in-person classes, GH could guarantee and control the attention of students by putting them into a particular classroom, providing them the study materials they needed, and even taking away their smartphones (as a few students said some GH teachers would do in the pre-pandemic ‘old days’). The atmosphere and expectation for online classes was in a way the opposite as students were now at home, in their bedrooms and living rooms. Students were expected to have at least one dedicated laptop they would use to log into classes, engage in the group chats, and submit their homework on through Google Classroom, and many times were expected to have a “back-up” device like a smartphone to use for mobile internet in case of weak Wi-Fi or power cut during the summer.

Adnan bhaiya most clearly demonstrated what he expected from students, during his orientation for his O levels batch. During the orientation class, he first discussed how he combined the use of Facebook groups, Zoom rooms, and Google Classroom to create the best virtual classroom he could. He then went through the list of things students needed to gain the most from his class, a screenshot of which is provided in Figure 18.

Figure 18

Screenshot from the Physics Orientation Class for O-Level Students



> Adnan bhaiya instructed,
>
> You need electronic devices—it could be a PC, it could be a laptop, it could be a tablet or it could be a phone. Preferably a PC or laptop *which has* a headphone [emphasis added]. If you're not using a headphone, I don't think you're getting the message perfectly okay? Please use headphones.

He then moved on to the next slide in his deck which included his attendance and exam policies, warning his students not to sneakily leave class after the first five minutes and that they will regret if they did so as it was his policy to send SMS messages to the parents every month with their child's class attendance record. He was interrupted by someone sending him a private chat message asking what would happen if a student only had a "button phone" (i.e., a non-smart phone):

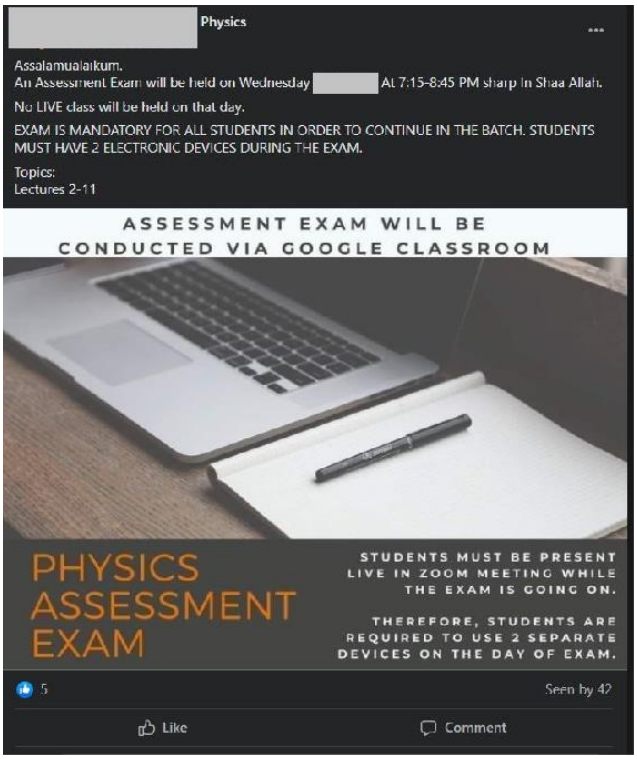
> I am sincerely hoping you do have a PC or a laptop, either an Android device or an iOS device or a Microsoft device … because if you're not using one then it will not be possible for you to do online classes sadly … okay?

Adnan bhaiya then then said not to worry if students did not have a personal device yet, as he was happy to call their parents and convince them to buy a device for their child.

Here Adnan bhaiya clearly laid out how he expected his students (and their family) to have the economic capital to own or buy their own personal electronic device, specifically a laptop which typically is more expensive than many smartphones. It is true that during the pandemic, all students did need some sort of electronic device to attend online classes. However, Adnan bhaiya here emphasized the superiority of a laptop over a phone. In fact, over the course of the next few months, I noticed he would require the use of two electronic devices during his mock examinations. He posted the graphic in Figure 19 in his Facebook page for the Physics O level cohort for what was expected during their exams.

Figure 19

Screenshot from Physics Facebook Group Page, Reminding of an Upcoming Exam



Two devices were required because the student would use one laptop to log into Google Classroom, and the other one to log into a Zoom room to be present in the “class” and ostensibly show they were not cheating in any way. The image Adnan bhaiya used in Figure 19 was also of an apple MacBook, one of the most expensive options for a laptop, providing another indication of the economic and cultural capital at play in his tutoring class.

Tahmid bhaiya also conveyed very clearly during one of his first classes with a new batch of O-level students, the expectation to have modern devices in order to attend class. During this class session, he seemed to be in a bit of a crabby mood, and picked on students who did not have their cameras on, or had it pointed to say, the ceiling so that you couldn't see whether they were paying attention.

"Mahbub!" he called out to Mahbub bhaiya, who was helping him manage the class.

"Put Rahul and Amina back into the waiting room until they turned their cameras on".

Mahbub bhaiya dutifully obeyed, and those two students were temporarily banished.

"Sit straight!", "Look at me!" "Fix your camera!" "Fix your camera!" he barked at various different students, who promptly complied with whatever he was asking them to do.

"Quick!" "Fix your camera, I will give you all five minutes to fix your cameras."

Then he told Mahbub to call up a student Farhad who did not have his video on, and was not responding to Tahmid bhaiya's entreaties to turn it on. After a few minutes, Mahbub bhaiya reported back, saying he spoke to the student through his parent's number, and Farhad said he was using an old computer, which did not have a webcam, and his own phone was not charged so he could not log into the Zoom class with his phone.

"Tell his dad to buy him a webcam and then come to class." Tahmid bhaiya sounding irritated. "What is all this? Why is his phone not charged? What was he doing all night with his phone?" Mahbub bhaiya said he would convey this to Fahad's parents, and after a few more minutes of this type of classroom management, the room settled down and Tahmid bhaiya started solving some classwork. Thus, during the pandemic, when the virtual classroom at GH was organized through Facebook, Zoom, and Google Classroom, all students were expected to have the economic capital to own or buy a modern personal laptop, headphones, and a smartphone to be able to participate fully in class. Further, it was expected that it would not be a stressor or a problem for their parents to comply with buying them these items.

Demonstrating Cultural Capital

Bourdieu's (2011) theorization of cultural capital treats attitudes, preferences, and behavior as forms of embodied cultural capital, which are also those skills, abilities, and knowledge valued by privileged groups in Bangladeshi society. This allows for an understanding of global cultural capital for Bangladeshi elites that operates within a global and

stratified field, as we see in the sections below.

I observed this embodiment of the tutors' preferences through the cultivation of digital skills, as well as the exposure to and discourse around media, travel, and owning pets. As I shared earlier, one particular teacher, Tahmid bhaiya, most explicitly embodied examples of these means. Tahmid was best known in the community for being a kind of maverick, especially in the upper-class Bangladeshi context as he opened his first business through the tutoring center, was a content creator, travel vlogger, and owned two different restaurants in posh neighborhoods in Dhaka. His own father had a long storied career in the Bangladesh army, and expected his son to follow in his footsteps, so in comparison, Tahmid bhaiya struck out on his own in many ways, and wore this distinction on his sleeve—literally as well through the visible tattoos he has on his forearms.

Cultivation of Digital Skills

During their classes, an important mechanism through which GH gave its students a leg up in their competencies to navigate the world was through the use of technology. Ishrak brought this up while providing examples of how ahead the curve GH was in terms in using digital tools, that allowed them to seamlessly transition to online classes during the pandemic,

> … conducting classes using OBS. That's how we started, you know. OBS is like a professional app, that's mostly used by YouTubers. You set up your logos, and stuff, timelines. And then you do classes, live sessions. And then from there, we moved on to Zoom. And you know how you can do things using Zoom. Then Google classroom.
>
> **Nisma**: Online tools.
>
> **Ishrak**: Exactly. These online tools. And (GH) made it easy for all the teachers, accessible to all the teachers. And not only that, the way we've educated the students, like the way students of GH can use Google classroom, I doubt whether students of other places can use that. Not even students of specific schools can use Google classroom the way students of GH can use Google classroom. So we not only educated ourselves, we also educated the students—how you can do online payment, how you can do online registrations, these are something that you only require when you are going abroad, right?

> (Say) you mail something and then you make a mistake and the universities, they have this amazing team who are very liberal who doesn't mind, when you're making amateur mistakes. And they reply back, they are like, “you know, these are the mistakes you made.” So we did that with the students; we taught them how to register online, we taught them how to pay things online, and you know how to use the classes.

As we can see here, Ishrak made a direct connection to the type of cultural capital students were able to build through being at GH through GH’s use of digital tools, such as digital ways to pay their tuition fees, register for specific classes, and submit their homework. He linked this knowledge to the type of capital that is only built by students who study outside of Bangladesh. GH students now have an advantage over their counterparts at other schools and tutoring centers who are not taught these type of digital skills, similar to the cultural capital of those who study abroad, who learn these skills through making mistakes and being corrected, as Ishrak said by “liberal” higher education staff.

These modes of operating online, such as making payments, signing up for classes, figuring out how to join online classes, or submitting homework can arguably be considered part of the “hidden curriculum” in education, especially in a post-pandemic world. The hidden curriculum refers to the “implicit academic, social, and cultural messages, unwritten rules, unspoken expectations, and unofficial norms, behaviors and values” of an educational environment (Boston University, 2019). These unspoken norms and expectations, which are not openly communicated or established, can make it difficult for students who are not accustomed to that environment, such as Bangladeshi students studying abroad, to adjust to the “right” way to think, speak, look, and behave in school. These GH students, at the very least, have acquired the skills of how to study online, which they could add as part of their repertoire to succeed, should they decide to apply and study abroad.

Another example of digital skills building I observed was during one of Tahmid bhaiya’s classes. There were about 65 students in the Zoom room, and Tahmid bhaiya was pulling up his slides to start a new topic. He started asking his students about an idea he had about incorporating QR codes into their lecture notes and videos, something I had seen him advertise on his Instagram a few days prior.

> Did you guys see my latest idea—putting QR codes directly into your question papers or in your notes? When you are trying to solve something, or when you need tips, you can just pull out your mobile phone and that will take you directly to the video on it, or to the solution paper. For whenever you need it, you know during your self-study or whatever…

One student piped up, “Yes sir, I saw on your Instagram." A few other students nodded in agreement. One student said, “21st century, sir”, followed by another student exclaimed, “new technology!” Looking pleased, Tahmid bhaiya nodded and resumed working on his presentation slides.

In this instance, we see Tahmid bhaiya seeking approval from his students about a new tool he wants to introduce into his pedagogy—that of using QR codes to link his materials like his recorded lectures, question papers and solution papers together. This is an example of him leveraging another digital tool as part of his own repertoire, and his students having to learn another digital skill, as they would have to figure how to use the QR code, either through a separate app or through their built-in camera app. As a tool, the use of QR codes have been on the rise since the pandemic, as a type of touchless method to open menus or other information. The students’ comments show how Tahmid bhaiya held the disposition or cultural capital to able to position himself as the "cool" teacher, who incorporated these kinds of newer tools in their pedagogy, and indicative of a comment Nahiyan made that I will to in the next Chapter 6—that he prefers younger, more innovative teachers, who “know the most modern practices that students will find interesting, as well as easy to follow.”

Media

Music

Teachers held the greatest power over the type of environment they created within their virtual tutoring spaces. This was particularly the case with online Zoom classes, where the students typically were much quieter, entered the Zoom room with their mics offs, many times with their cameras off as well, and preferred to keep it that way. It was up to the teacher to foster a dynamic environment or not. In fact, Tahmid bhaiya very often expressed his frustration at how quiet and dull his students were during his online classes, bemoaning more than once, “tomra ato chup kano?!” (Why are you all so quiet?!), and that he wished they would

converse to him more often, chat about what was going on in their lives, or even greet him without him having to prompt them to. One way Tahmid bhaiya tried to create a more vibrant environment and overcome students' sluggishness was by playing music.

During their online classes, both Tahmid bhaiya and Ishrak would first keep the students in the Zoom waiting room for a few minutes. Then, they would open the Zoom rooms, either by themselves or had one of their administrators do it, and allowed the students (and myself) to enter. However, these teachers would not start teaching right away or necessarily even be there themselves. But they would usually be playing music, which is what any new student joining the room would first "walk" into.

Tahmid bhaiya would play quite an eclectic range of music. During the start of one class, after taking attendance and going through some administrative items such as who needed to be added to their class Facebook page, Tahmid bhaiya said he would start teaching in 10 minutes to give other students more time to join. "Let's listen to some *old* music!" he then said [emphasis added]. He proceeded to play "Unchained Melody" by the Righteous Brothers from 1965. "Do you guys hear the music?" he yelled, 20 seconds into the start of the song, confirming whether or not we were able to hear what he wanted us to. Although the song sounded familiar to me, I did not know it, and had to look it up using the Shazam song finder app it so I could put it into my notes. This choice of song was an interesting pick as it was an old Western song, and definitely outside the lifespan of the students in the class, which would make it even more outside their purview (as it was to me).

After this, the song "Stand by Me" by American singer-songwriter Ben E. King from 1961 started playing. Two minutes into this song Tahmid bhaiya abruptly stopped it, and switched to the song "cold/mess" by Prateek Kuhad from 2018, and turned off his own camera while it played. Kuhad is an indie folk musician from India, who often sings in English but also in Hindi. He achieved mainstream success in the US after his song "cold/mess*"* was featured on former US president Barack Obama's "Favorite Music of 2019" list. Another song by Kuhad, this time in Hindi, then played. Not everyone in Bangladesh speaks Hindi, but with the dominance of north Indian TV shows, movies (namely Bollywood), culture, and media on our

own TVs and social media, many are familiar with Hindi. After the song was over, Tahmid bhaiya turned on his camera, looking ready to start the class.

> One student unmuted himself and piped up, “Sir, who was that Hindi singer?”
>
> “Prateek Kuhad! You guys haven’t listened to him before? Oh my God, seriously? I’ll send you the link,” Tahmid bhaiya exclaimed effusively. “He’s an amazing singer.”
>
> “Yeah, he is” agreed the student. “Thank you Sir.”

This was an overt example of how Tahmid bhaiya was introducing and influencing his students into a wider range of musical tastes and artists, especially for a group of middle to upper-class Bangladeshi teenagers. Even among those who consume Indian media, Kuhad is not as well-known as say, a singer from Bollywood, as he chiefly sings in English. Students learned to associate how Tahmid bhaiya lived his life, as someone who traveled widely (as I discuss below), and frequently highlighted going to music concerts and festivals on his social media, as someone who was knowledgeable about the world and had good taste in music. He embodied his cultural tastes by playing and sharing the type of music he found “amazing” and worthy of listening to, such as with the student who expressed interest in the song Tahmid bhaiya was playing in their class. I observed two other online classes where Tahmid bhaiya chose Kuhad’s discography to play as the preamble for his class, a preferred choice for him.

At the beginning of another class, Tahmid bhaiya played some newer Bengali alternative pop songs, by a singer called the Farooque Bhai Project who is Bangladeshi-Canadian and has a sizable social media following. Tahmid bhaiya had previously posted several stories on his Instagram with this artist’s music as the background. At this point in this class, since he was playing the song through his own computer speakers, Tahmid bhaiya yelled over the music that he would start the class in five minutes, to turn their cameras on if they had not yet, and then to “sit properly” and “enjoy the music.” I observed several students comply and turn their cameras on, and also one student seemingly jamming to, and indeed enjoying the music. Another time, Tahmid bhaiya played some Nepali music as he waited for students to join the Zoom session. The artist Bipul Chettri, more well-known to a younger crowd, is an indie folk singer from Nepal, who is also known for being able to combine traditional and contemporary elements in his music. I noticed Tahmid bhaiya started playing Chettri’s music after a trip to Nepal, which I discuss below, again sharing his musical taste and

knowledge.

Pritom mentioned how he appreciated Tahmid bhaiya's decision to play music at the beginning of his classes, while students were still settling down, as part of his pedagogy to create a unique learning experience. Referring to Tahmid bhaiya's in-person classes,

> After coming to class, he used to give us 30 minutes or 25 minutes time. Settle down, talk to your friends, listen to good music, which was like, a very good experience. Other classes don't do this. And yeah, his teaching was like, I can't say anything more; it's very good.

Pritom enjoyed how well Tahmid bhaiya taught, a part of which can be attributed to the amiable learning environment Tahmid bhaiya created through music.

Another teacher, Ishrak, would also play music at the beginning of his classes. When I first started observing his classes, I was struck by this likeness between him and Tahmid bhaiya in using music to create a certain atmosphere in the class. Ishrak would open the Zoom room and let all the students in, and the music would already be playing; but he, like Tahmid bhaiya would not be really 'present' (i.e., his mic and camera would be off, and the screen would be sharing his own laptop screen). In four notable observations where music was already playing in the Zoom room as I and other students joined, he had chosen the songs, "still feel" by Half Alive, "Stolen Dance" by Milky Chance, "The Woods" by Hollow Coves, and lastly "Nightdriver" by Eida. Eida is a niche techno pop band from Bangladesh who sing in English, and whose music had been recently featured on a Netflix show.

Unlike Tahmid bhaiya, Ishrak would not let the music keep playing, or curate what was playing like a DJ set. Instead, he preferred to just play the one song he choose that day, and then "appear," (i.e., turn on his mic and camera), and begin class after the song concluded. His preference was to play from Western rock and indie pop songs. And though he did not spend any time that I saw discussing his choice of songs or the artists, he did spend some time during the end of one class talking enthusiastically to a student who had brought up the case of a guitarist in a metal band destroying a Bible. This was an incident I personally had not heard of, but it seemed natural to me (and thus his students) that Ishrak would be a good person to chat with about this as someone who clearly liked listening to English metal songs and played guitar himself (as he had shared with the class before).

By becoming familiar with an eclectic range of contemporary and older music, both Bangladeshi and non-Bangladeshi, Bengali and non-Bengali, through the osmosis of just attending classes like those of Ishrak and Tahmid bhaiya, their students were learning how to cultivate a sense of how to carry themselves; to be able to feel comfortable in any type of social situation in the future, and even carry on a superficial conversation about those artists or genres they heard in class if that somehow came up. This connects to what Khan (2011) talked about as a "lesson of privilege" that students in elite settings learn—being at ease, no matter the context. By exposing them to a range of musical tastes and artists, students can learn and "display a kind of omnivorousness … [and] radical egalitarianism in their tastes," that too in various contexts, helping to extend their global cultural capital (p. 16). In fact, through attending both Tahmid bhaiya and Ishrak's classes, and taking notes on what music they played, a lot of which was unfamiliar to me, I appreciated expanding my own repertoire of music knowledge.

Entertainment

Another example of both Ishrak and Tahmid bhaiya embodying ways of being was through the watching and sub-cultural knowledge of global TV shows and movies, which I am lumping together here as entertainment. Tahmid bhaiya once spent part of class time trying to organize watching movies with his students on Discord. Discord is a popular instant messaging and social platform. It is essentially a chat room where people can come together to watch or play something together, like movies or games. Near the end of a class, as Tahmid bhaiya was wrapping up, he referred to a conversation he previously had with his students about watching movies on Discord together.

"I am going to have that Discord session when we can watch movies. I've already uploaded three movies," Tahmid bhaiya said. "You guys have discord right?" A few students responded, "yes sir, yes sir." Tahmid bhaiya continued, "I have three nice movies which I am going to show you; one is a Disney movie—about Walt Disney. Another one is about McDonald. And the third one … pore bolbo (I'll tell you later)." A student chimed in to ask if someone he knew who was studying at GH, but not in Tahmid bhaiya's class, could join and Tahmid bhaiya responded nonchalantly, "yeah, yeah everyone's invited."

I noticed a few students nodded and responded when he asked if they have Discord, which was illuminating in that now the others who don't have Discord or know what it is, will

want to join this online community and build their digital cultural capital. I myself have never been on Discord, but I know that is where those younger than me, especially teenagers like my nephews, spend a lot of time. If the students in the class are anything like me, they would be incentivized to look into Discord and spend time on it so they could participate in the movie session with their peers and Tahmid bhaiya. As Tahmid bhaiya leveraged the GH and Discord space to build community and introduce new media by watching movies, it also reinforced Tahmid bhaiya's cool teacher reputation that several students shared with me; "such a chill dude," said Nahiyan of Tahmid bhaiya admiringly when he came up during our interview, after which we moved on to other topics.

Ishrak would not organize watch parties with his students, but leveraged the sub-cultural knowledge of popular Western TV shows and movies to explain concepts or cases in his law class. I personally thought this was a good way to simplify complicated legal concepts, by using well-liked and established characters such as those from *Boston Legal* (an American TV legal drama from the 2000s). I then reflected first, that these shows were now dated (i.e., more appropriate for someone like me in their 30s), and second, that perhaps this would not be the case if a student had no idea what these shows were. However, from the reaction of students who I noticed would smile or nod when Ishrak brought up these cultural references, it seemed to be the case that they did know what he was talking about, though it is also true they would probably not feel comfortable saying they did not in front of the whole class. In fact, when I asked Ishrak to explain to me how he approached his teaching style, he brought up his intentional use of these shows.

> **Ishrak**: How do I do it? I do not talk to students about the syllabus initially. I do talk to them about the papers—there are two papers, paper one and paper two. Paper one talks about history, and the different kinds of codes and why there's different kinds of legislation and stuff like that. Paper two is something that attracts students a lot. And the first one is contract law, tort law, criminal law. That's the chronology right, that's how EdExcel (examining board) expects teachers to teach our paper two. I don't do that. I do the opposite. I start from the bottom. I start with criminal law. That's something students find interesting all the time.

> **Nisma** : Yes, that's true. There is so much TV especially around criminal law.
> **Ishrak** : Exactly. Exactly. What I do is I try to use references from series or TV, you know, like things like *How To Get Away with Murder, Suits* … and then movies, like Keanu Reeves' famous movie like *Devil's Advocate*. I talk about these kinds of things right? And that's how I lure them (into) thinking Law is interesting…

So it was part of Ishrak's pedagogy to use the cultural context of these largely American TV shows and movies to convince his students to take law as an A-levels subject (a subject not typically seen as mandatory as say, Mathematics) and how it may be useful to them one day. This approach required students to become familiarized with these western shows, or at the very least look into them to understand the references Ishrak would continue to make over their year-long course together.

Podcasts

One night after I had observed a class from 1 am to 3 am, due to the time difference with Bangladesh, I wrapped up my notes and got ready to go to bed. It was almost 4 am, but I still opened the Instagram app to check my social media (as one does just before bed). I noticed on Tahmid bhaiya's Instagram stories that he was sharing how he was screensharing from his laptop at that moment an episode from a podcast. He was in his Zoom classroom with his camera off, and showing his social media followers that he was playing a podcast episode and screensharing that with his Zoom class so his students could hear it too. The episode was called *The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz*. It was only a seven second clip, but it made me curious enough to haul myself out of bed, to try to observe his class. When I joined Tahmid bhaiya's AS (11th grade) Zoom class, I saw Tahmid bhaiya was indeed letting the episode play out, while he waited for students to join the class.

The episode was talking about the book of the same name which is essentially about "the four agreements" you make with yourself, regarding what we tell ourselves about who we are, how to behave, and what is possible and impossible. The book itself had been on the New York Times bestseller list for over a decade, and gained acclaim after being endorsed by Oprah Winfrey on her show in the 2000s (Amber-Allen Publishing, 2018). In the podcast, the author talked about how what you believe affects how you live your life, but also that evaluating how you live your life gives you greater insight into what you believe. At the point at which I

joined the classroom, the narrator was talking about how if the human mind can be thought of as a computer, then gossip was akin to a computer virus. The way a virus gummies up the processing of a computer, listening to gossip can also negatively affect one's judgement.

After this section had played, Tahmid bhaiya stopped the podcast, greeted the students in the room, and told them to turn their cameras on. After some students greeted him back, Tahmid bhaiya said, "toh ki bujhla?" (So, what did you understand?). When no one responded, Tahmid bhaiya said, "you guys should read this book. You can also listen to it on Spotify." As he pulled up the homework exercise he was going to work on during the class, he reiterated "it's a really good book," and then moved on to teaching. This is another overt example of cultural capital building as Tahmid bhaiya was encouraging them to read this kind of a self-help book, or to listen to the audio version as a podcast.

As the podcast episode was about 15 minutes long, the section Tahmid bhaiya chose to deliberately play to his students was an interesting, and perhaps revealing choice. The section Tahmid bhaiya played talked about one of the four agreements, which is to avoid gossip of others, and to speak with integrity to only say what you mean. Both students and other teachers brought up how Tahmid bhaiya, in particular, was often maligned for his lifestyle choices, due to his unconventional lifestyle as I mentioned in the chapter's introduction. Those students and teachers also quickly brought up how he was often misunderstood in this regard. Shiyam mentioned, "Haan, Tahmid sir kei niye onek kotha bole manush." (Yes, everyone talks a lot about Tahmid Sir)," before moving onto how wonderful Tahmid Sir had been to him as a teacher and mentor. Regardless, being a maverick in a conservative society comes with its own drawbacks, which include being gossiped about by those around you. Although he did not dwell on that part of the discussion in the podcast for too long in class, Tahmid bhaiya tried to impart a message using this well-known self-help book by checking at the end to see what his students took away from the audio clip, in addition to encouraging them to read the book.

During another of my observations of Tahmid bhaiya's classes, he was playing the pop music of the Bangladeshi Canadian artist Farooque Bhai Project, as his preamble to the class. He played this music for about 10 minutes, and then started teaching. Another five minutes into

the class, as Tahmid bhaiya was waiting for the class to respond to a question he posed, he suddenly called on a specific student:

> “Rimon! You’re the one with the podcast right? I was listening to it,”
>
> The student, looking slightly embarrassed replied, “Yes sir.”
>
> “Nice. You should have shared (the link) in the class group chat. Very interesting. Good job.”
>
> “Thank you sir” said Rimon, half-smiling.
>
> “You guys should follow his podcast. He has a channel on Spotify,” Tahmid bhaiya said.
>
> And then he switched back to the problem he was solving.

This exchange shows how Tahmid bhaiya not only shared his choices in what podcasts he was drawn to, but he also encouraged his students in their creative side interests as well, such as promoting this student’s podcast, by saying he personally enjoyed listening to it, and to also share it with the wider class. Tahmid bhaiya regularly shared, through his Instagram stories, any new ventures his students were undertaking, and encouraged his followers to support that student’s new business by subscribing to their channel, or buying their product. I saw this through his promotion of the bakery and catering businesses his various students were involved in, which was a popular side hustle for Bangladeshi teens.

Travel

Travel was another means through which Tahmid bhaiya often shared his attitudes, preferences, and way of being. At various points of the pandemic, Tahmid bhaiya traveled to Cox’s Bazaar, which is a seaside town by the Bay of Bengal, and a noted tourist destination in Bangladesh. He lived there for several months at a time, all while teaching on Zoom, and cultivating water-based hobbies, such as deep-sea fishing, kayaking, sailing, and snorkeling. He documented his explorations on his YouTube vlog which were quite popular amongst an audience bound in Dhaka city, especially during the pandemic. In fact, the hashtag he would always accompany with these posts was #shiftyourhome, implying picking up and leaving congested Dhaka was a no-brainer, a choice that would also be much easier for someone of elite status to do.

In another Instagram post, he wrote, “took a huge risk of shifting my online work right here in Cox’s Bazaar. But it’s worth taking such risks in life.” When teaching from Cox, Tahmid

bhaiya's background would be walls of the cafe he would often work from, which had a bohemian décor. He would frequently post about how he was teaching in spots close to the sea, maintaining social distance and also an enviable work life balance. In one Instagram story he started discussing how he was going to try parasailing, an activity he had never done before, "Ajke parasailing korbo na (today I will not parasail), but I would like to explore how it works. But do you see the beauty?!" he exclaimed, waving his hands in front of the camera, and indicating around to the beach he was on. "I got a break (from teaching) for an hour; I can cycle and travel and still maintain social distance with people." Here, Tahmid bhaiya demonstrated his privilege of being able to live near the beach, work, and then go out and do fun activities like parasailing.

Tahmid bhaiya's students followed him on his social media and they also followed his adventures in Cox, perhaps even vicariously through him as teenagers who were confined to their apartments for months during the various waves of COVID-19. As I briefly mentioned in Chapter 3, an example of this was highlighted when one student remarked how Tahmid bhaiya was probably not going to be show up to the Zoom class that day because they had seen from his Instagram that he had gone parasailing the day before. The student then added how they wished they were also enjoying their life in Cox as he was. The other students in the class agreed, and discussed planning a trip after lockdown to the spot Tahmid bhaiya was at. Tahmid bhaiya emulated the lifestyle of a "digital nomad," those who are able to travel freely while working, and rely on the internet and other digital tools to work remotely at their jobs (Schlagwein, 2018). I saw the students' discussion of the nomadic lifestyle Tahmid bhaiya emulated as a disposition his students were eager to have, and one that is afforded to those of elite status because of the privileges of someone who can have a job and life that does not tie you down to one particular place. Tahmid bhaiya also traveled to Nepal for a few weeks during my data collection period, and was asked several questions by his students once he returned about what his trip was like, what did he enjoy doing, and so forth. It was after this trip that Tahmid bhaiya started playing more Nepali music at the beginning of his classes, introducing another international disposition to his students and extending their global cultural capital.

Pets

During the course of the pandemic, Tahmid bhaiya undertook the journey of becoming a “cat dad” and documented the process for his students in his classes and on his social media. At the beginning of an early morning class (in Bangladesh time), once students had settled in, and attendance had been taken, Tahmid bhaiya suddenly exclaimed, “guys! do you want to see the new cat I’m adopting?” Although students were usually reticent to unmute themselves, two immediately did and emphatically said yes. One student asked if he could share a picture of the kitten in their Facebook Messenger class group chat, ostensibly for those who weren’t in class or for them to comment on afterwards. Tahmid bhaiya sent a few pictures and a short clip of the kitten stretching and playing, which got a few dozen likes from the students in the group.

> “It’s a Bengal brit” Tahmid bhaiya said smiling. “It’s a small Bengal tiger … isn’t he beautiful? We’re bringing this cat next month.”
>
> A female student asked, “what will you name him, Sir?”
>
> “Pablo.”
>
> Another student exclaimed, “like (Pablo) Escobar!” to which Tahmid bhaiya just smiled in acknowledgement.

Although owning pets by itself does not demonstrate class privilege, the way lower- and middle-class people in Bangladesh adopt and care for pets is different; often picking them up from the street versus from a breeder, that too by importing them from outside of Bangladesh. In this instance, when Tahmid bhaiya talked about his new kitten Pablo, he demonstrated an elite way of being in that he was not only buying Pablo from a breeder, but also flaunted that he has picked an expensive variety—the Bengal breed with leopard like spots and “big eyes." Further, he named the cat after a person who was made famous (for those from Bangladesh) by the Netflix show *Narcos* about Pablo Escobar, which ran from 2015-2018. Thus, it is a name that those with Netflix accounts, or the global cultural capital to know about the show would recognize, like the student in this class. I now move on from this discussion of how cultural capital is being embodied at GH, to the nurturing of social skills and capital at the tutoring center.

Nurturing Students’ Confidence and Talents

Even as GH's overt business model as a tutoring center is to provide academic support and exam preparation services to their students, teachers at GH also underscored not every student had to be the best at academics. Instead, they emphasized each student was special in their own way, and to work on cultivating any other talents or interests they may have outside of academics. This is an interesting cultural shift because as I mentioned earlier, conventionally the upper classes in Bangladesh tend to gravitate towards, and expect their children to as well, professional white-collar jobs such as doctors, engineers, lawyers, accountants, or professors. However, the teachers at GH advised their students to aim for more than just those professions, as well as to "dream big." Tahmid bhaiya expressed very clearly he was trying to instill in his students a sense of confidence to succeed in whatever they put their minds to, and to have the "grooming" skills required to make that happen.

> **Tahmid**: Nowadays kids, they don't believe in themselves. Oder moddhe moddhe, ami jani na, ora nijeke value e dekha shikhe na baper ta amon! They are like, haan, choltese, dui bela khaitesi, friend ra ase, Abbu, Ammu, iPhone kine dise, ami khushi. Ami j ki hobo, ki korte chai...
>
> (Nowadays kids, they don't believe in themselves. Within themselves, I don't know, they don't learn to see the value of themselves, that is the situation! They are like, "yea it's going okay, I'm eating twice a day, I have friends, my dad and mom bought me an iPhone, I'm happy." But they haven't thought about who do I want to be, what do I want to do …)
>
> **Nisma**: Hmm.
>
> **Tahmid**: Amra … we try to groom them like, you know, you need to be fit for any type of, like presentation koro—kotha bolo, eishob jinish koro. Ei bepar gulay we try to give them this. So the learning … the learning is very simple. Whoever you are, whatever you are, you don't have to be the best because class ei toh first ekjon e hoy. Shobai jodi bole ami e first hobo, not possible. Okay. But then again, if there are 30 kids in the class, if your role number is 30—you're bad in education, but you need to find there is something that you're good at …
>
> (We … we try to groom them like, you know, you need to be fit for any type of, like, to do a presentation—to speak, do these kinds of things. These are the matters we try to

give them. So the learning … the learning is very simple. Whoever you are, whatever you are, you don't have to be the best because there is only one who can be first in class. If everyone says I will be first, that is not possible. Okay. But then again, if there are 30 kids in the class, if your role number is 30—you're bad in education, but you need to find there is something that you're good at …)

Nisma: Hmm, hmm.

Tahmid: … because ami eigula niye onek push kori. And you need to, you need to do something and you need to believe in that, that you're good in that. So the learnings very simple, that you are someone, someone valuable. So you need to prepare yourself and build your life on that.

(… because with these kinds of things, I push a lot. And you need to, you need to do something and you need to believe in that, that you're good at that. So the learnings very simple, that you are someone, someone valuable. So you need to prepare yourself and build your life on that.)

As we can see in the excerpt above, Tahmid bhaiya wanted to guide his students to not just focus on doing well in academics, especially those students whose role number was 30 which, as I described in Chapter 2, meant you have performed the worst in your class. He wanted to nurture them to believe in and see value in themselves, which he did not see them doing otherwise. He made the link to higher SES students who had it easy in their lives, had the economic resources to own iPhones, and were more or less complacent or spoiled, and saw his role as pushing them to work harder towards their own dreams. Tahmid bhaiya's emphasis on grooming (i.e., so the students are presentable, and have the skills to do well in say, corporate environments, pitch ideas, and speak articulately), further links the actions of teachers in a tutoring center like GH to the cultivation of students' cultural capital and a sense of ease to be able to navigate and succeed in these worlds.

Creating Connections

Tahmid bhaiya also practiced what he preached in terms of pushing his students to find the thing they were good at, outside of academics. Pritom described how Tahmid bhaiya

connected a student in their class to a culinary contact of his, to encourage the student's dreams of being a chef.

> **Pritom**: And amader class er moddhe onek different type er talents thake. Tahmid sir tries to connect us with his colleagues. Emon ekjon was like really interested in cooking. Learning cooking. So Tahmid sir had a friend who started a cooking class or something in Gulshan. Tahmid sir contacted him and the student, and like told him that you can go over there, and just like that, he can help you find connection.
>
> (And in our class, there are many different types of talents. Tahmid sir tries to connect us with his colleagues. For example one person was like really interested in cooking. Learning how to cook. So Tahmid sir had a friend who started a cooking class or something in Gulshan. Tahmid sir contacted him and the student, and like told him that you can go over there, and just like that he can help you find connection.
>
> **Nisma**: Accha. within his circle ar ki. (Okay. Within his circle, basically.)
>
> **Pritom**: Yeah. Within his circle. His circle is really huge. Its enormous.

In Pritom's account here, he named how Tahmid bhaiya used his ample social connections to help the students in his class develop the talents that they were interested in exploring. Thus, Tahmid bhaiya used his extensive social network to connect his students as needed, which helped him extend his own elite and social status, as well as activate the student's social capital and network.

In another relevant example I observed through the tutoring center's social media, Tahmid bhaiya advertised on the tutoring center's channel one day that he had a very big surprise for his "kids" aka his students. The surprise revealed the day after was that he had invited a well-known young musical artist to visit his students at GH. The artist was Dameer, and he is a Gen Z Bangladeshi singer-songwriter who was based in Canada at the time of this study and was becoming popular for his indie pop ballads which he sings mostly in English. Tahmid bhaiya livestreamed most of Dameer's visit, and it was clear the classroom he was visiting was packed with young students (most of them girls) who were excited to meet him. Dameer sat at the front of the classroom with his acoustic guitar, and serenaded the class a few of his popular songs, with most of the class singing along with him. After he finished, he launched into a little spiel about his journey as an artist in the Bangladeshi music industry, and

whether there was anyone else in the crowd who was inspiring to be one. “Any of you play guitar here?” There were a few murmurs from the students, and Tahmid bhaiya pointed to two students who did. Dameer went on,

> Before I go, I think I have a responsibility to talk to you guys; I’m not much older than you guys right? But the things I’ve seen, in the music industry—it’s a complicated industry. We need music like we need art. Now if you guys want to be in the music or in the art industry in any shape or form in the future, you guys need to know it’s an uphill battle.
>
> There’s still a lot to be developed in Bangladesh. If you have any friends doing music, support them. If they have Instagram or Facebook, share them, like them, support them.
>
> Please support each other. If your friends are making music, support them; music is cool, fashion is cool, drawing is cool, all of this is cool. Allow people to express themselves. Allow people to be who they want to be. Diversity is better for everyone in the long term. Homogeneity is not good.
>
> Your parents might be giving you a tough time, they’re going through their own thing. They’ve been through so much more than what we have been through; we have no idea. What they’ve seen in this country, and what we’ve seen, there’s no comparison. Send love to your parents, respect them, work hard, study hard, express yourself. Study hard because there is no greater power than intelligence.

His message all in all was very wholesome and covered the bases of encouraging students who wanted to pursue their dreams in music or art, but also to keeping up with their grades as well.

After his performance and talk, and after many selfies and group pictures with students at GH’s rooftop, Tahmid bhaiya introduced him to one particular female student, who seemed to be an aspiring singer-songwriter, and talented artist in her own right. They sat in Tahmid bhaiya’s office and she sang one of her own songs while Dameer played his guitar, showcasing her musicality. Dameer himself posted a video of them jamming together and

tagging the student as well, so, ostensibly, she could gain some exposure in the music industry.

We see here an overt example of how Tahmid bhaiya helped his students build their social and cultural capital through leveraging his own; he not only invited and introduced a popular musical artist to his students for a meet-and-greet (who can now say they met Dameer, or can reach out to him in the future saying they were students of Tahmid bhaiya), but also then explicitly connected Dameer to a musical student of his who then also performed for them. All of this was shared on the tutoring centers, Dameer's, and Tahmid bhaiya's social media handles so the female student gained quite a bit of exposure.

Lastly, another pertinent connection Tahmid bhaiya made for his students was exposing them to the YES exchange program, as we saw in the opening vignette to this chapter. As Rakin mentioned in his pitch, the YES program is a cultural exchange program funded by the US state department that allows Bangladeshi teenage students the opportunity to live with an American host family and study at an American high school for a full academic year. Although there are no specific criteria preventing Bangla medium (BM) students from applying, EM students are mostly likely to take advantage of these type of opportunities. One of the main eligibility criteria is to be able to demonstrate sufficiency in speaking and studying in English, and if there are only a limited number of spots available every year, EM students have a significant advantage in proving this proficiency.

One of Rakin's comments about why the students at GH should apply to the exchange program was regarding the ability to play and experience sports. His pitch was not just about athletics, but also about the availability of extracurricular activities (ECAs) in general. Rakin explicitly positioned the American school experience as a better experience than the one GH students were currently having because of the variety and range of extracurricular activities students could engage in through the exchange program. Opportunities such as these, along with the cultural and social cache that comes with being able to say you did a year of schooling in the US helps build students' global cultural capital and sense of being elite in Bangladesh. Even if students decide not to apply abroad after finishing their A levels, being an alum of a competitive US funded program is something they can leverage on their resume, and use to open doors to even more social circles and other opportunities within Bangladesh. During his

presentation, Rakin promoted how popular the program was, because the thousands of application they receive, but also how exclusive it was, in that it is “not for everyone, but for leaders.”

Thinking Outside the Box

In response to my question of what he hopes his students take away from GH, Fuad bhaiya spoke at length about his desire for his students to “want more for themselves.”

Nisma: Bhaiya, one of my last questions is: for your students, what do you hope for? Like what is your aspiration for them? What do you hope their life is (like), after they leave GH?

Fuad: Nijer jonno jano choto choto shopno dekha bondo kore dai. Maney, boro kichu jibone tara achieve koruk. Ebong tader step one ta hocche—they should have confidence in themselves.

(To stop seeing small, small dreams for themselves. I mean, to achieve big things in their lives. And step one for them in that regard is—they should have confidence in themselves.)

Ami dekhi ekta bacchar mind kintu onek broad. Maney khub chonchol ekta mind thake; this is how things go. But tar chinta ekta khoper modhey, ato young boyoshei. Box er moddhe jodi shei chinta kore, taholei er bhobishot ta onek ondhokar. Ami mone kore, at least. Toh they should be more open about their dreams and goals. And they should be aiming for things, jeigula you know, things which will take them to greater places. A level ei teen ta A niye ekhon shei North South tei portei chai. Amar toh like kichu bolar nai. Mane, North South kharap university nah. But tumi North South ei porbei, with 3 As in your A levels, jekhane ekta C/D baccha o porchei. Maney, difference ki?

(I see a kid’s mind is quite broad. Meaning, they have very active minds; this is how things go. But their thoughts are in a shell, even at such a young age. If they are thinking like within a box, then their future is quite dark. At least, that’s what I think. So they should be more open about their dreams and goals. And they should be aiming for things, such as, you know, things which will take them to greater places. After getting 3 As in their A levels, now they want to study at North South [University]. I have like, nothing to say to that. I mean, North South is not a bad university. But you want to study

at North South with 3 As in your A-levels, where a kid with Cs / Ds is also studying. I mean, what's the difference?

Nisma: Meaning, you want them to want more for themselves.

Fuad: I want them to want more for themselves. Unara onek shohoj shortcut, thikache, jinish gulatei beshi bishash korei. Ami jeta money kori.

(I want them to want more for themselves. They believe in easy shortcuts too much, okay. That is what I think).

We can see here Fuad Bhaiya did not want his students' thinking to stay within a box, or be bounded in any way, but instead be unconstrainted and to envision dreams that could "take them to greater places." We can also see Fuad bhaiya made the distinction that he does not think one of these "great places" students should be aiming for was North South University (NSU). NSU is one of the leading private universities in Bangladesh. Fuad bhaiya's disdain for NSU is ironic here, considering he himself went to NSU for his higher education. As he mentioned, the reason for this opinion is that it is seen as relatively easy to get into to NSU, so much so that students with C or D grades can even get in. Similar to what Bittencourt (2021) found with his participants at an elite private school in Ecuador, remaining in Bangladesh was seen "as an undesirable choice reserved primarily for students who were low-achieving and uncommitted to their schooling" (p. 138). Fuad bhaiya does not see the point of spending effort to gain stellar grades if one ends up going to NSU with those grades. He "want[ed] them to want more for themselves" and not to take shortcuts in their work (echoing here Tahmid bhaiya's point he made earlier about complacent students)—with the implication being to not only work hard, but to also put that hard work towards gaining admission to universities more illustrious than even the locally prominent NSU, outside of Bangladesh. This is a goal that is a mark of and shapes students into eliteness, as I covered in Chapter 2, with members of the upper class being able to consider both domestic and international universities during their college admissions, while students of fewer resources choosing among local universities (Young, 2017).

I observed Fuad bhaiya's preference towards universities outside of Bangladesh and his nurturing of students' talents through Shiyam, who was close to Fuad bhaiya and regularly asked him advice on a variety of matters. Shiyam shared with me how Fuad bhaiya was very

encouraging of him to apply abroad, even helping him brainstorm how to set his application apart after his O levels.

> Ami jokhon O-levels a pori, Farim sir gave me an idea jei, "Shiyam what you can do is, you are a really good singer. So tumi ekta kaj korte paro. tumi YouTube ei account khulte paro, and Facebook ei page khulte paro. Page khule tumi gaan upload korte paro. It will help you with your extra-curricular activities."
>
> (When I was studying for my O-levels, Fuad sir gave me an idea that, “Shiyam, what you can do is, you are a really good singer. So what you can do is, you can open a YouTube account and you can open a page on Facebook. After you open the page you can upload your songs. It will help you with your extra-curricular activities (for college applications).

Shiyam followed Fuad bhaiya’s advice by buying a good quality mic and headphones (the kind podcasters use) and would regularly post himself singing to well-known Bangla and Hindi songs on his YouTube channel and Facebook page. Thus, one concrete way Fuad bhaiya encouraged Shiyam to think outside the box and bolster his college applications was to nurture Shiyam’s penchant for singing.

Another part of this nurturing of students’ confidence at GH was a steady stream of messaging targeted towards students that underscored the importance of their own efforts in shaping their futures, similar to what Demerath (2009) found in his ethnography at a high achieving suburban school. One of the biggest classrooms at GH had the following message stamped on the left upper corner of the wall next to the whiteboard—“success doesn't come to you, you go to it” (see Figure 20).

Figure 20

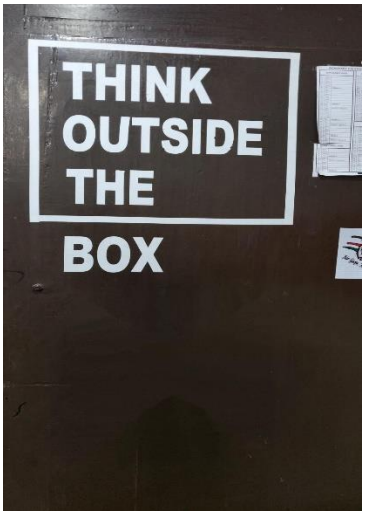
Picture of the Corner of a GH Classroom with a Stenciled Message on the Wall

As can be seen in Figure 20, perpendicular to this message are shelves that hold the trophies and medals won by teams organized from GH who participated in various sporting competitions. This message of success not coming to a person, but a person needing to go out and get it was in the corner of the eye of every student if they were looking to the front of the class (as it was stenciled next to the whiteboard). It is part of the self-confidence and self-efficacy messaging GH was trying to instill in its students.[11] Another message of “thinking outside the box” was ever present in the minds of the students of GH as it was literally stenciled on the walls of the tutoring center, as seen in Figure 21. This message was painted on one of the main gates that provided entry into the tutoring center, and echoes Fuad bhaiya’s desire as he explained above, of not wanting his students thinking to be constrained within a box.

Figure 21

Picture of a Stenciled Message on the Gate of the GH Building

[11] I was not able to show an expanded view of the bookcase with more trophies in the middle and bottom shelves as students’ faces would have been seen in the photo.



Building Students' Perseverance

Included in the nurturing of students is fostering their ability to recover from any setbacks that may happen to them. Teachers at GH recognized a crucial life skill their students needed to acquire was how to be resilient and persevere. Fuad Bhaiya discussed how perseverance was a trait he admired in people, and tenacious characters like Will Smith's character in the 2006 movie *The Pursuit of Happyness* really inspired him.

Fuad: There are some characters like that, which inspire me a lot. Because what I think is, everyone has setbacks in life. But that mentality, of accepting setbacks and then rebounding from that, I like that quality a lot. So whenever I hear stories where people have had setbacks, but they have overcome from that setback, they have rebounded, I find those stories very interesting.

Nisma: I feel like that is an interesting quality, that not everyone has, how to be able to come back from big struggles and setbacks. Do you feel like you are trying also maybe, to embody that to your students? Or teach them somehow?

Fuad: I always try to do that. For me … I mean, an achievement for a teacher is grades, students' grades. For me an achievement is for a student who think they will get a D, but scores higher than that. Meaning they didn't realize their own potential. I think this is a very important role, my role as a teacher is to uplift a student. And by uplift, I mean whatever their current status is, they think are a C grade or D grade student – when we

> reverse that we show them, you can also do it. I want to keep doing this. And I have done it.

As Fuad bhaiya said here, he found the underdog genre of stories very inspiring and he aimed to support his students to have their own kinds of comeback stories. By preserving through the challenge of bad grades, or a student's own negative assessment of their abilities, Fuad bhaiya strove to uplift his students, and encourage them to keep trying and keep improving themselves. For him, it was not just about the pursuit of better grades, but toward helping students navigate the hard work of overcoming obstacles. Students of elite status have more space to take risks in their lives and choices, and so it is crucial that they also learn how to persevere and overcome challenges from supportive mentors like Fuad bhaiya.

Shiyam shared with me an example of Fuad bhaiya's embodiment of working with his students on their perseverance. He was having a serious conflict at his mainstream school which had demoralized him, and he did not want to attend school anymore, despite only having a few months to go until he graduated. He said Fuad bhaiya convinced him not to leave by saying, "tumi ato kichu korla. Ato shokal bela ghum theke uthe ajairai boshe class korla, ei ato kichu korla … ekhon tumi last ei eshe bolteso jei na, I give up. Taile toh, you lose. Toh dorkar nai. ("You did so many things. You woke up so early, and sat in class for no reason, you did all these things … now at the last moment you are saying, I give up. If so, you lose. Don't do that."); and then encouraged him further to keep going.

What the teachers were encouraging here is related to the concept of grit, which studies have found links to measures of success such as, "increased deliberate practice, sustained retention in difficult jobs, and task persistence" (Jachimowicz et al., 2018). Although popularized by Duckworth (2016), how grit was exemplified at GH is not the individualized approach put forth by Duckworth, but through the relational perspective I discussed in Chapter 4; having the teachers and staff there to provide socio-emotional support and make sense of how to recover from any setbacks students face. The ability to persevere is also connected to the affective dimensions of learning and building of students' affective capital. Developing emotional characteristics such as motivation, perseverance, positive forward thinking, and self-esteem are crucial for learning and critical thinking. By focusing on these dimensions of emotional intelligence, Tahmid and Fuad bhaiya were helping their students be better set up

for success in the labor force or otherwise, and recovery from failure, as members of elite groups should be.

Put together, these occurrences of nurturing students' individual talents, encouraging them to think outside of the box, and building their resiliency and so forth helps to instill in students the importance of their lives and choices, and inherent worthiness—an important facet of eliteness—as well as the development of their self-confidence to be successful in whatever professions they choose (Demerath, 2009; Khan, 2011). These are crucial formative aspects in an environment where a new generation of elite students are trying to go beyond what their parents would ascribe for them in terms of the occupations they choose (Young, 2017). In pursuing vocations that are not just doctors or lawyers anymore, students are opting out of catering to prescribed roles, as following such prearranged paths is contrary to eliteness. Instead, they are thinking out of the box by pursuing music or cooking or art. Being of elite status means being flexible, versatile, and an omnivore, to "think of the world as a space of possibility" within which students can fully realize their interests, which the exposure to a range of dispositions and tastes, as we saw earlier in this chapter, also aids with (Khan, 2011, p. 67).

Strains of Resistance

Nahiyan, who came from a higher SES background, fit in particularly well into GH, feeling so comfortable there that he considered it his "second home," as he said in the section above on physical spaces at GH. In contrast, Abrar was a student who did not feel this comfortable at all. His educational upbringing was also different in the sense that he came from a from a Bangla medium background, and not the English medium background the majority of his peers at GH were from. He transitioned from a Bangla medium (BM) school to an English medium (EM) school in sixth grade, so just three years before the high-stakes O-level exams. This was a formative transition for him, as up until that point he had been studying the national curriculum, which is under the purview of the state, not an international curriculum managed and exported from England as the O and A levels are. This also included transitioning from learning in Bangla, as the dominant mode of instruction, to everything in English.

Abrar's overall perspective was that GH was not a welcoming place, and tthe people there were self-centered.

> You know, most of the people in GH aren't friendly at all. They are super selfish. There are some people who are good, but most of the people out there really are off the list. I wouldn't recommend them. I think there, they might be very good human as a human being, but they are not … you know, they are not friendly at all.

Even as Abrar qualified that the people he met at GH may be good human beings, he did not feel any warmth or friendliness from them. I was not able to hide some of my surprise when Abrar said this, and explained that the students I had spoken to so far had said they really liked the atmosphere at GH, finding it to be quite "wholesome" and "very friendly" as Pritom and Nahiyan had said in their excerpts above respectively. To which Abrar responded, "I don't know … maybe, like some people doesn't know the place doesn't belong to some people I guess." He stopped there, so I decided to not press any further and moved onto asking some of my other questions.

What Abrar expressed is that he did not feel like he belonged at GH, compared to the other students who felt like they did. Later on during the interview, he said he saw a lot of "showing off" within the student body at GH, and that made him uncomfortable. They showed off the things they own like shoes, or the fact that they have a driver to pick them up—symbols of social status and economic capital. He said he had not seen this in his other tutoring spaces, and it even made him wonder whether something was wrong with him that it bothered him; whether he was "different."

> Literally one thing is I've met … maybe I have enemy with those people, I don't really like those people who try to show off. Like, why? GH ei ashar por, ei show off jinish ta ami students der kach theke shob theke beshi dekhi. Ki bolbo like, ekjon ache je nijer shoe niye show off kore. Ar ekjon ache o koto notes lekhe oita niye show off kore. Ek jon, ki bolbo, oke car niye gate er shamne theke pick up kore, oita niye show off kore… Like, why? Why don't you live your life and leave other people to be confident with their own? I literally don't work with those people. Eita ami recently face korchi coaching ei, eita age kokhonoi hoto na. Ami tokhon chinta kori, whether it's because I'm new here,

> or whether they're different from me? I don't know, but something is not right. I don't know. Something is not right, but I don't know what is the thing.
>
> (Literally one thing is I've met … maybe I have enemy with those people, I don't really like those people who try to show off. Like, why? After I've come to GH, I am seeing this showing off thing much more in students. What should I say – one person is showing off their shoes, another is showing off how much notes they wrote. Another, what should I say, shows off that his car comes to the front of the gate to pick him up …
>
> Like, why? Why don't you live your life and leave other people to be confident with their own? I literally don't work with those people. I am facing this recently in tutoring, I haven't faced this before. Then I wonder, whether it's because I'm new here, or whether they're different from me? I don't know, but something is not right. I don't know. Something is not right, but I don't know what that thing is.)

Abrar's feeling of "something (that) is not right" may be his resistance to the displays of, or construction into eliteness that was occurring around him, as well as the impact of class privilege. GH was the type of space where these types of pretentious behaviors from Abrar's perspective were showing up, and distinct from what he experienced before. Abrar's BM background played a role in his feeling different and out of place. He went on to say that he noticed none of the students who attended GH with him were from his neighborhood; most of them lived in Dhanmondi, which is a more affluent area as discussed in Chapter 3.

Abrar's reservations were not around GH's teachers or classes, which he lauded. In fact, he specifically mentioned how much he appreciated the personal touch of teachers like Ishrak, and the close relationship he built with him, echoing themes from Chapters 4 and 5.

> Over the years, I feel like (Ishrak Sir) is one of the best teachers I've ever found yet … he makes me feel this personal connection with everyone, with everybody in the class … the entire Law batch is on good terms with each other. Every student is on good terms with each other. There is no conflict, there is no … what should I say? Like everyone is in a community-hood. Everyone is so chilled with everyone (else).

As Abrar mentioned, he felt a connection with his teacher and with the other students in his Law class, a warm and equitable environment Ishrak was able to construct and foster for everyone. However, Abrar did not necessarily feel this way towards the students outside of his

class bubble, or towards GH in general.

An additional discourse of resistance came from Rifat. He was the only one of my student interviewees who did not express any aspiration to study abroad at some point in his life, or even to go to college. When I asked him about what he wanted to do after finishing his A levels, he hesitantly shared (perhaps thinking I would judge him) the following,

> Amar kache mone hoi jei university gele amar khali time waste hobe, ar money waste hobe. Karon university tei amar jei time waste hobe … ekta degree er jonno toh labh nai. Karon amar parents bolche (amake) abroad pathabe. So oitar jonno at least 80-90,000 USD lagbe. So oitar half jodi ami ekhane chai amar parents er kache r ekta business dei, oita aro bhalo hobe na? Karon 4 bochor ei amar university course shesh hoi Bangladesh ei eshe job khujte khujte aro 5 bochor. So ei 5 bochor purai waste hoye jabe. But 5 bochor theke, ami jodi akhon start kori ekta business, ami head start pabo peers der kach theke. Amar boyosh ei jara thakbe, tara university shesh kore job khujte thakbe. By that time I will start earning.
>
> (It seems to me that it would be a waste of my time to go to university. Because my time will be wasted at university … there is no point in a degree. Because my parents said they want to send me abroad. So for that you need at least 80-90,000 USD. If I took half of that from my parents and put it into a business, wouldn't that be better? Because after four years, once I've finished university, I will have to come back to Bangladesh anyway, and by the time I find a job it will have been five years. So these five years will be a waste. Those who will be my age then will be finishing university and looking for work. By that time, I will start earning.)

Rifat was the student who opted out of his mainstream EM earlier than most students, after grade seven, because he struggled with academics and found the environment at GH better suited to his needs. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, he asserted his agency by desiring not to go to college, and definitely not abroad (as most parents aspiring to eliteness want for their children), but to instead put the money his family would have used for tuition towards his own start-up. This is an unconventional choice that resists the expectations of elite Bangladeshi society.

Rifat went on to say he eventually wanted to go into local politics, once his start-up hopefully took off. This was more surprising to me in a way, as even though going into business and beginning a start-up was off the beaten path, it is not uncommon in Bangladesh. And though we learn about the mechanisms of our own independence movements from the British and Pakistan, active civic participation is not taught in EM schools. Indeed, discussing how to get involved in your community does not go beyond say, volunteering and your personal responsibility from a religious perspective. I had not heard of desiring to go into politics as an eventual career path among any other students, or even within my own personal circles growing up. The political culture in Bangladesh is generally viewed as full of special interests and corruption, and those already involved in political circles are there because they are scions of political families or are trying to get their own interests fulfilled within the system.

When I followed up with Rifat about whether he had received support from any of his teachers in regard to his aspirations, Rifat responded, “Not with GH teachers. But with schoolteachers I did and they encouraged me a lot … (at GH), they didn’t take me seriously.” So we can see how Rifat’s aims of going into politics was not taken as earnestly as say Shiyam’s was, who was counseled in his dreams of going abroad, and encouraged by Fuad bhaiya not to give up, as we saw in earlier in this chapter—a dream more in line with the ultimate fulfilment of eliteness that occurs with studying, living or working in the Western world. However, Rifat’s dreams aligned with staying in Bangladesh, opting out of higher education, starting his own business, and eventually going into politics—a much less prestigious and acceptable path, something those of lower classes would be more likely to do. Rifat did not feel supported in his chosen path at GH, an environment that cultivates a sense of being elite, but did find some support from his schoolteachers. This may also explain why he sought out advice from me during our interview, about whether what he was thinking about his future made sense, and how to break the news to his parents. He also left a similar comment for me in my student questionnaire, writing politely, “I want to know your thoughts about me not doing university … Answers are not expected due to your busy schedule but if you find time they are really appreciated. Thank You.”

GH Shaping Students into Eliteness

As students who come to learn to navigate the virtual and physical world through being at GH by acquiring digital skills and omnivorousness in their musical tastes, a key point to be made here is that not all students who attend GH are of elite or higher SES backgrounds. However, through the mechanisms described in this chapter, these students are being shaped into eliteness and learning to embody global cultural capital. In fact, there is diversity of backgrounds who come to GH for their educational needs, a fact Tahmid bhaiya and Nahiyan touched on. Recounting Tahmid bhaiya's comment on this,

> **Tahmid**: … you've seen my class, ami kintu hardly grade niye kotha boli. And you see my chatroom as well, right? What I try to teach them is like ekta basic standard way of moving forward to your life, right? Because shobai toh same na because amader toh borolok theke shuru kore middle class people ra o ashe, right?
>
> (… you've seen my class; I hardly talk about grades. And you see my chatroom as well, right? What I try to teach them is like a basic standard way of moving forward to your life, right? Because not everyone is the same, right? Because we have everyone, starting from higher class people to middle class people who also come, right?)
>
> **Nisma**: Yeah.
>
> **Tahmid**: But everyone dreams big right? Now there is no problem in dream big. If you want to make it happen, you need to have a proper ekta guidance and so. Amra GH theke guidance ta provide korar cheshta kori.
>
> (But everyone dreams big right? Now, there is no problem in dream big. If you want to make it happen, you need to have a proper kind of guidance and so. We try to provide that guidance from GH).

I discussed this excerpt previously in Chapter 4 in how Tahmid bhaiya was able to provide mentorship and life guidance to his students as he cultivated a trusting relationship with them. He recognized there is a diversity of backgrounds in his classroom, from elite to more middle-class backgrounds, and believed everyone deserved to dream big, so his role was to guide them towards a good future. This is another example of his students, regardless of their class background becoming familiar with elite tastes, attitudes, and ease under Tahmid bhaiya's tutelage.

Nahiyan mentioned this diversity at GH when reflecting on what GH's value add was as a tutoring center, in comparison to the others he patronized in the past.

> Yeah, (GH) is like a very friendly place, and you get all sorts of people. And it's the biggest coaching center I think, it has the most departments and subjects and famous teachers. So, many students come from as far as Narayangonj, and where not, so you meet all sorts of people. It's like a very diverse coaching center; and the teachers are proficient – like you have records of world's highest (scores) from teachers like Tahmid sir, and Muntasir sir consistently.

For Nahiyan, GH is different from the other tutoring spaces he has been in, where he can get to meet "all sorts of people." So while GH was not an exclusive space, and attracted a variety of students through its reputation of good quality teaching, good facilities (for a tutoring center), and excellent academic records, it was still a "cool" place (as Nahiyan also described in the first part of this chapter) that shapes you into being elite—a status Abrar and Rifat bumped up against.

This echoes what Khan (2011) noted within the elite schooling literature as a significant shift from the class-based model of the old elite, "where ascriptive differences excluded much of the population" (p. 34). Instead, now there is value placed on the individual distinction, abilities, and attributes of students, as we saw in terms of how teachers at GH nurtured their students, and encouraged them to follow their dreams. If we follow this new elite ideal of a school as a "microcosm of the world," then GH shaping its diverse students into eliteness, and teaching them how to navigate it with ease using their omnivorousness, fits into a world where cultural differences are the more dominant marks of class distinction (p. 13).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I first described GH's social spaces, both physical and virtual, where students were able to socialize and meet local popstars, such as at the rooftop space, as well as acquire digital skills they could leverage to enhance their social and cultural capital. I then examined how teachers at GH exhibited certain ways of being, thinking, and aspiring, through the: 1) embodiment of acquiring digital skills and being a world traveler, 2) consumption of media such as music, podcasts and TV shows, and 3) possession of pets; these facets together socialized students into elite tastes and habits, as well as informed their own

understanding of what to own or what a range of cultural references mean, thus enhancing their global cultural capital. I then discussed how teachers helped students nurture or build their confidence by encouraging them think outside the box in pursuit of special talents, hobbies, and skills, as well as help build those social connections which allows them to feel worthy, in control of their life choices and consider careers outside of traditional expectations. Connected to the relational element from Chapter 4, teachers also focused on building students' resiliency to help them recover from setbacks they may face in their life, all of which helps to build their students' affective capital. All of these connections, experiences, and exposures enables students to cultivate a sense of being flexible, versatile, and at ease in operating in a diverse world—the embodied, corporal ease of eliteness.

I also discussed a few examples I saw of resistance from students to being shaped into elite status. I wrapped up this chapter by discussing how GH as a tutoring center attracted diverse classes of students, but effectively shaped them into eliteness through the mechanisms explored in this chapter. In the next chapter, I investigate how GH succeeds as an educational institution, offering quality teaching and learning, and providing students scholastically what they might not be receiving in their mainstream EM schools.

Chapter 6: What's the Big Deal with Tutoring?

The COVID delta wave had begun to abate. It had severely impacted Bangladesh, which one report estimates led to the highest number of daily new cases (7,626) and the highest number of deaths in a single day (112) in April 2021.[12] *Throughout those tough months, GH had remained closed and just progressed with doing fully online classes. However, as the wave began to subside, a few tutors had slowly begun to hold hybrid classes—in-person and socially distanced once or twice a week, and the rest of their classes online. Students always had the option to be fully online, but Tahmid bhaiya quite often requested as many students as felt comfortable to join in-person, because he wanted to be able to interact with them outside the confines of a Zoom screen.*

As I was going through the tutoring center's social media posts during this time, I saw they had re-posted a student's video commenting on how great Tahmid bhaiya's class that day had been. He had started teaching a new chapter called "Suspense and Errors." In order to introduce the topic, his presentation slides started off by imitating what happens when a computer sometimes gets a virus. The screen flashes, and suddenly multiple error dialog boxes pop up, one after the other, all chaotically overwhelming the screen. This "jump scare" was then followed by the sound of a flatline, such as when someone's heart stops beating which also ends its electrical activity. The screen then changed to a dark blue color, and in large letters the following flashed,

> SUSPENSE AND ERRORS. An error has occurred. To continue: Press Enter to return to Windows, or press CRTL ATL DEL to restart your computer. If you do this, you will lose any unsaved information in all open applications. Press any key to continue.

The text was mimicking what appears on a Microsoft Disk Operating System or MS-DOS desktop when the computer needs to shut down irrevocably. The student captioned his recording of this part of the lecture in large black font at the top: "Cool as hell. This is why GH

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[12] Moona et al. (2021).

Accounting is on another level." At the bottom, he explained what was going on with, "when Tahmid bhaiya starts explaining the scariest chapter with a jump scare."

Introduction

Tahmid bhaiya, whose teaching style was admired by the student in this Instagram post, was known for his use of contemporary images and characters in his lectures and notes. I observed him use well-loved animated characters such as Rick and Morty or Johnny Bravo several times in his lectures to stand in for example, for greedy creditors or struggling debtors. Through the observation above, it was also interesting to capture what students thought about the way he taught. The student's caption shows how students do appreciate the creative efforts Tahmid bhaiya went through to make their learning materials engaging and approachable, while recognizing other teachers (both at school and other tutors) did not necessarily do this. Tahmid bhaiya's approach is an example of the type of pedagogy students came to expect at GH, and is one of the observable behaviors students were drawn to in doing lessons at GH for their education.

Drawing on a critical realist framework, the research question I address in this chapter is: What is the educational value of private tutoring for students? More specifically, this chapter examines what it is students were getting educationally from being at the GH tutoring center, versus their mainstream private schools, and even in some cases versus other tutoring centers. Thus, in speaking to the teaching, learning and pedagogical aspects of the tutoring center, this chapter addresses the education dimension of my study (see Figure 13)

I also spend time in this chapter expanding further on a connected trend I observed over the course of my research—that students were increasingly relying on private tutoring lessons for their education, and opting out of their mainstream EM schooling. This means students were leaving EM schools completely, and just doing tutoring full time[13], particularly at the A levels stage. From my survey that had responses from 263 students, 70% of students indicated they did not go to school full-time anymore—this figure includes a mix of doing

[13] When I say tutoring "full-time" I mean doing tutoring for all their chosen A level subjects, versus "part-time" tutoring for one or two A level subjects, but not relying on tutoring for all say, all three of their A level subjects.

tutoring full time, or part time tutoring and part time schooling in a type of hybrid arrangement. Eight out of my nine student interviewees had either left their mainstream school completely, or were just registered for their A level exams through the school but not doing any classes there (see Table 2). Only one of my interviewees was going to school and tutoring full-time (i.e., doing classes in both). This trend has also become a topic of discourse in Bangladeshi society, with an opinion columnist arguing in the leading English daily that students are leaving school because everyone else is.

> But the fact is that today … more and more parents now want their kids to leave school and become homeschooled (which) shows just how significant this problem is. So the next time you're thinking of joining a coaching center (and leaving school) merely because your friends are, ask yourself whether you really need it. (Khan, 2020, para. 7).

The explanatory mechanism I discern is the reason behind this pattern of opting out of school and into tutoring full time (and thus generally why students were engaging in private tutoring, the main research question of this chapter), is the falling value of English Medium schools for many Bangladeshis. This is not to say there still is not social and cultural value associated with EM schooling itself or with being in an EM school; as I've discussed before this is very much the case for upper class Bangladeshis in terms of say, the link to using English as the dominant mode of instruction and studying under a British curriculum, especially during the elementary and middle grades of school. However as students advance through the education system, they find less value (both academic and financial) in continuing to stay with their EM school, in light of a private tutoring center like GH being able to provide good quality instruction, less expensive alternatives to successfully giving the O and A levels, as well as the opportunity to form meaningful relationships with tutors and administrators, which enhances a student's experience in their tutoring classes.

Not all tutoring centers are able to do this, as there is also considerable diversity in the quality of the many tutoring centers available in Dhaka city. GH is able to do so, and I will explore how it does this over the next few sections – primarily through offering good quality instruction that incorporates metacognitive skills, and through classes that incorporate creative and relatable pedagogy, in comparison to both EM schools and other tutoring centers. Tanvir shared how he intentionally made the choice to attend GH above other tutoring centers,

> The distance between GH and my home on a regular Monday or Tuesday is around 1 to 1.5 hours. So I have to stay in the road for two hours just (to go) to GH. And there are coaching centers within a distance of 15 minutes to my home. But I didn't go to those because I wanted the best of the best…those coaching centers I would say the environment is not the best … I would say (they are) the worst.

For Tanvir, the sacrifice of sitting in Dhaka traffic for at least two hours a day is worth it because of what he gets out of GH, versus going to the tutoring centers which are a walk away from his home, and have a poorer environment.

I then explain the context of how EM schooling is quite expensive, and so relative to private tutoring, offers less financial value for parents who otherwise have to use their economic capital for both schooling and tutoring lessons. Next, I describe two institutional structures that were assisting in the movement of students from private schooling to tutoring—that of the institutional sanctioning of tutoring by EM schools themselves, as well the ability of EM students to be able to register as "private candidates" and sit for their O and A level exams, without the need to register through an EM school.

I then briefly discuss the value students noted they did receive from their schools in higher grades—the opportunity to participate in extracurricular sports or activities, a facet of education that crammed tutoring centers are not able to easily replicate. This is in addition to the loyalty to their schools students continue to feel, especially as institutions that they have attended since kindergarten. I conclude this chapter by tying together these threads and setting up my expanded discussion on the trend of students opting out of schools for tutoring centers and how GH as a tutoring center is well placed and looking to capitalize on this exodus of students by establishing their own version of a "school-not-school."

Quality of Instruction

The main characteristics students and teachers brought up to demonstrate the superior quality of instruction or teaching at GH were: the ample time spent by teachers on addressing academic content, explicit direction in teaching that content, metacognitive guidance in, for example, how to take notes and prepare well for exams, the use of creative pedagogical approaches in order to make the material relatable for students, and making materials more

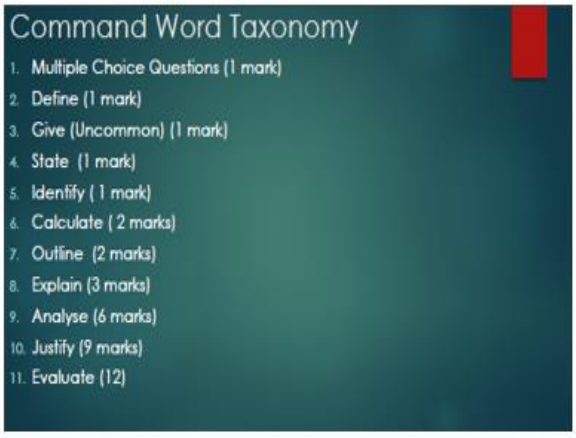
accessible online for later study. Abrar was eager to share what he appreciated about the teaching at GH.

> I say GH teaching is like the best. No cap, it's just one of the best. I like the way (Fuad Sir) teaches, the way he explains, the way he writes, the way he gives the lecture. (He) just summarize his lectures, and he just summarizes that entire chapter into one or two lines, and it's so easy to understand that way. But we have to, at the end of the day we have to write notes. Like he also helped us with that you know, he gets his handout, and he also makes us write in the class, the question patterns and all that.

As Abrar mentioned, and as I also observed in his classes, Fuad bhaiya not only provided summaries of all his notes and lectures at the end of chapters, but he also spent considerable time showing his students how to be a better learner. For example, he did this by teaching them how to take structured notes that would help them in their exam review, or how to write organized answers for essay questions. Fuad bhaiya would expand on the smallest detail, such as when you are beginning to answer in a paragraph format, what type of sentence should you start with first, and how should you end it. The screenshot below in Figure 22 provides an example from one of his O level exam guides that lists the “command words” that start a question, how much time to spend on the question depending on the points assigned, and how to structure one’s answer if the question starts with “Justify,” which is number 10 on the first screenshot’s list.

Figure 22

Screenshot from an O-Level Business Class of the Teacher’s Study Guide



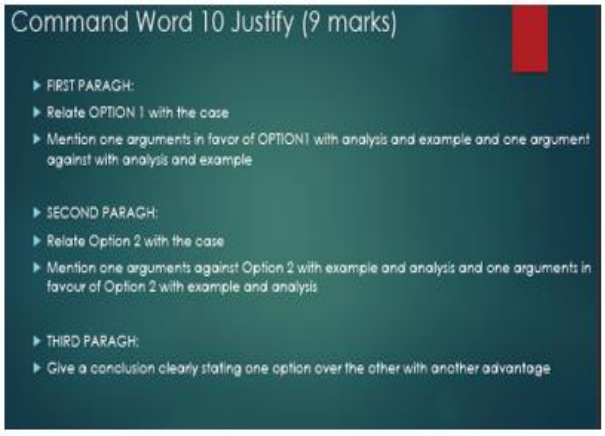


Figure 22 shows an example of what Abrar was referring when he said Fuad made them write out the question, to understand its pattern, and how to tackle it. These screenshots are from the O-level classes, whose students are generally younger and who appreciated this type of guiding rubric to help them understand how to strategically answer questions to gain the most points. Tanvir also shared how he felt his way of studying completely changed once he joined GH.

> A part of my life changed when I entered GH … I met Fuad Sir—excellent teacher. Tahmid sir, too. The study part was way over than excellent of course. But the environment was also like, it gives a boost. That we have to complete this topic today, and then we used to go home. And we have the urge, like Sir said to study this, to study in this way, so this will work out.

After joining Fuad bhaiya's classes, Tanvir felt more motivated to study. He also felt reassured by Fuad bhaiya's technique of going into minutiae regarding how to organize his study plan, and when to study which topic. This, again, was part of Fuad bhaiya's overall approach in teaching metacognitive skills.

Creative and Relatable Pedagogy

As we saw in the observation at the beginning of this chapter, students enjoyed how teachers approached their teaching at GH—the way teachers personalized the content, and took the time to make it interesting and engaging for them. Figure 23 below shows a screenshot from one of Tahmid bhaiya's O-level classes, to show a visual example of the dynamic and simplified way in which he approached his teaching style. In this class, he was trying to explain what the break-even point of a business was (i.e., the point at which total cost and total revenue are equal). He did so by beginning with a blank page on his iPad, and adding the graphic of a little green food cart at the top. He started with a story that you (the students) were trying to get a street food cart business off the ground, and you were going to start with selling a combo meal pack of a burger, fries, and coke. How do we then calculate what our break-even point would be? The students eagerly chimed in as he asked them to help him break down and price the components of this business, such as the raw materials of the burgers—meat (£1), buns (£1), cheese (£1), vegetable (£2), the chef's wages (£5 per burger), rent (£1500 per month), and so on. He then consolidated each component into fixed or variable

costs, the price point the burger would be sold at, the profit per burger, and eventually the break-even point for this fictional food cart vendor. It was an unstructured but effective way to do this, as he did not start with the conventional approach of having prepared slides, or even the break-even formula up. Instead he started with a blank page that he dragged in cartoon characters and other clip art into, used different colors to assemble and highlight various components, and slowly built his lecture with the help of the students, who learned step-by-step as he did so.

Figure 23

Screenshot from an O-Levels Class in Which the Teacher Used Characters and Colours in an Unstructured But Engaging Way

In another example, Abrar was eager to share how much he enjoyed his law classes with Ishrak, whom he considered the best teacher he ever had.

> I have to mention Ishrak sir. He's the best teacher I've had in this time. Even in five years I guess he's one of the best teacher … He teaches really good. He's very funny at the same time, uses a lot of examples. He makes me feel this personal connection with everyone, with everybody in the class …. He treats everyone really equal. You

> know it's really good quality - *he involves the entire class!* [emphasis added]. (He) involves the entire class, and in his teaching he asks questions to different people, all these things.

Echoing Chapter 4, Ishrak succeeded in being able to connect with his students and in creating an engaging learning environment by involving the entire class, instead of just lecturing at them. In my observations of his classes, I did indeed see Ishrak frequently use the Socratic method of teaching with his students, often pitting one group of students against another in explaining the merits or cons of a legal argument into what would turn into a lively discussion and debate.

As I discussed in Chapter 5, Ishrak leveraged his students' familiarity and knowledge of popular shows like *Suits* and movies like the *Devil's Advocate*, through which they had a superficial understanding of Western legal systems, and tries to parlay that into getting them more interested in the academic content. Since the A levels law syllabus covers the main principles of the structure and operation of the English legal system, I observed how he also tried to make the course content more relevant for his students by starting with a Bangladeshi case or Bangladeshi examples, and then using that as a jumping off point. For example, he spent some time in one class discussing Momtaz, who is a well-known Bangladeshi folk singer, and often referred to as the "Music Queen" (BBC Asian Network, 2013). He brought her up to discuss her political career, as she had transitioned to being a Member of Parliament (MP) in 2014. The mention of her had set off a lively discussion among the students regarding some recent scandals she went through. When I asked Ishrak the purpose of this particular example, he shared:

> So [one of] the question that I asked them what are the threshold or the criteria that is required by a person in order to become a Member of Parliament? And that's when students start to think … most of the time they start thinking from Bangladesh's perspective … In Bangladesh, most of the MPs are not even educated! They have so called "PhD degrees." For example, Momtaz has a PhD degree, I have no idea how she (got it) **…** So that's when the students lose it. Like what are the criteria that is required to a person to become an MP? And the answer is you don't need any formal

> qualification. You don't need any formal qualification to become an MP, even in Bangladesh.
>
> So what do you need to do (in the UK), you need to be above 18, you can't have criminal records, you need to be solvent, you can't be bankrupt, you can't be an alien. And that's when they say, “can't be an alien?” Exactly. What does that mean? You can't be a non-British National, you have to be a British citizen you know, to become an MP. That's how I do it, I make these topics interesting or I will set questions in such a way that they are going to answer my questions with their questions, and that's going to lead me to answer it with the content of the syllabus.

Similar to what Bittencourt (2021) found in Ecuador in how schoolteachers made the International Baccalaureate diploma programme (DP) curriculum more relevant to their students, through

> actively (placing) the DP course content into conversation with their own lived experiences and understandings. Through this approach, students were able to find personal relevancy in a curriculum that often prioritized events, experiences and understanding that were distant from their immediate surroundings. (p. 177)

As students born and raised in Bangladesh, who do not have a say in the content of syllabi exported from an English context and system, what students enjoyed about Ishrak’s pedagogy was how he was able to transform a colonial curriculum into more generationally relatable and culturally familiar tones.

Nahiyan, another student, attributed the creativity and innovation of teachers at GH to the fact they were younger, which meant they were more open to changing their style, than his schoolteachers tended to.

> Now the thing about schoolteachers is that they’ve been here for pretty long—for 20 years, 30 years they’ve been teaching at St. James. So what has been my experience, I’ll be honest with you, you know, teaching styles change, there are changes to the syllabus so according to students’ need, you often need younger teachers. And from that perspective, for instance, in certain classes I would feel bored. Maybe the teacher would try his best to deliver their lesson, but I would not, you know, find it interesting or easy to grasp. Versus in coaching … Muntasir sir, Tahmid sir, I learned something new

> from them, that for instance maybe I overlooked in school, because of the teacher's style or I couldn't grasp that easily. Tahmid sir's teaching style was top notch—his presentations and everything. Muntasir sir's notes were amazing.
>
> So that's the thing with coaching. The thing is the teachers (in coaching) are often younger and they know the most modern practices that students will find interesting, as well as easy to follow. So that holds true for pretty much all of my coaching teachers.

Here Nahiyan said his schoolteachers at St. James literally tended to be on older side and also had long tenures at the school, which he connected to them not updating their teaching style or approach. This does not mean Nahiyan did not connect with his various schoolteachers on other characteristics as we will see in a section below. However, students like him find teachers like Tahmid and Muntasir bhaiyas more relatable and approachable, and thus become more engaged in their classes.

This predisposition of GH staff to be on the forefront of innovative and creative pedagogy served them quite well at the onset of COVID-19. When schools shut down during the pandemic, a strong component of GH's pedagogical draw for students was how quickly they were able to pivot to online teaching and learning. Mahbub bhaiya, who was well poised to comment on the use of instructional tools at GH, as he had been working there as an administrator for a decade, noted how GH was ahead of the curve in terms of harnessing technology to teach its students. When I asked Mahbub bhaiya about how it seemed their transition to online teaching and learning to be quite smooth, he confirmed that was due to their pre-existing Facebook and Messenger class groups.

> Haan. Amader smoothness thakar karon holo amader ei online platform ta age theke e chilo … Facebook ei video upload kora, group create kora, Messenger ei group create kora—eigula kintu amader before COVID eigula chilo. So amader khali eikhane add hoyeche Zoom ta. Zoom ar Google classroom ta add hoyeche. Baki shob kichu kintu amader agei chilo. So amader oirokom khub ekta problem hoinai.
>
> (Yes. The reason for our smoothness was that we already had these online platforms … uploading videos to Facebook, creating groups, creating groups in Messenger—we already had these before COVID. So we only added Zoom here. Zoom and Google

> Classroom. Everything else we already had. So we didn't really have much of a problem.)

In fact Ishrak said GH was one of the first educational institutions to record their classes and lectures and post those online.

> … the whole concept of having recorded lectures and slides and handouts. This is something first initially GH came up with, not even schools. Schools don't even have recorded lectures anymore, they don't. They take the lectures, like the way you used to take in class - one lecture that's it. You miss the lecture; you miss the class.

Ishrak made the comparison here with mainstream schools, which he said do not record their classes, but require their students to attend their online classes, and if they miss the class, they miss the content completely. This is in contrast to GH, whose teachers record their classes as a norm and make them accessible online until exam days. Having these materials to review at a later date makes the content accessible to students, as well as attractive over learning at school, which do not go through this extra digital effort. Ramisa confirmed the ease that came with knowing GH recorded and uploaded all their materials to peruse at a later date, and how accessible that made learning for her.

> You could see the recording, which was the biggest help honestly … any problems I had, I could go through the recordings. It was so easy, and it's not bothering the teachers too. I could easily make notes. It's easier making notes (during) the recording than trying to take notes *right away* [emphasis added]. So it was pretty convenient, honestly. I loved it.

It is worth noting here that the instructional quality at GH was further enhanced by the dense relationships the teachers built with their students, as I discussed in Chapter 4. Maliha spoke to this when she shared how Ishrak trusted his students to give them his phone number, in case they needed to ask him any pressing questions.

> Can you imagine, texting Sir at 3 in the morning with a question? Which place allows that? Could you have done that in school? Never. You don't even have their numbers then …
>
> I call him up, "Sir". (*pretending to make an imaginary call with her hand*)
>
> Sir is eating at that point, (and) Sir is like, "Yes?"

> “Sir, in this section here, what is it trying to say? Is it trying to say this and this?” You ask stupid questions, and still Sir patiently explains it to you. Who does that?! So I’ve gotten this (support), hopefully I will continue to get it.

Maliha shared with me that she suffered from a lot of imposter syndrome, but she finally started feeling more confident about her ability to get good grades and do well in exams. As she gained that personal confidence, Ishrak’s personal approach helped her better engage with the content, and feel more supported.

Comparison with Schoolteachers

Some students explicitly compared their experience with their schoolteachers to highlight the teaching proficiency of their tutors. Shiyam, who engaged with both school and tutoring full-time (and was one of my only student interviewees to do so), was well-placed to make this comparison.

> Toh jeta hoi jei teacher ra oirokom ekta efficient na. A-levels ei ami personally mone kori teacher ta efficient na, especially Business ei! Business er teacher ra ekdom e efficient na. Compare ta ami easily korte parchi, because ami Fuad Sir er kache o pori. Ar Fuad sir er poranor style ta toh ami age theke e jani. 2018 theke ami Fuad sir er kache pori...So Fuad sir er kach theke ami je shob jinish potro ami peye eshechi. Amar Greenwood School ei 2 ta teacher. Ekta teacher Sunday Monday porai, ar ekta teacher Tuesday Wednesday porai. Toh Greenwood er ei 2 ta teacher er sathe jodi ami compare kori Fuad Sir kei, mane akash patal tofat.
>
> (So what happens is (school) teachers are not that efficient. In A-levels I personally feel like teachers are not efficient, especially in Business studies! The Business (school) teachers are not efficient at all. I can easily compare because I am going to Fuad sir’s classes as well. And I’ve known Fuad Sir’s teaching style for some time, as I’ve been his student since 2018 … So I have received all my study materials from Fuad Sir. At Greenwood School, I have two teachers. One teacher teaches Sunday and Monday, another teaches Tuesday and Wednesday. So when I compare these two schoolteachers with Fuad Sir, I mean, it’s like night and day.)
>
> **Nisma:** Oh, really.

Shiyam: Ekdom. Ami first ei Mustakin sir k niye ashi …. Mustakin sir jeirokom 40 min er class hoi. Amader abar Zoom free toh, so 40 min por Zoom bondho hoye jai. Toh Mustakin sir class ei dhuklo, shei 15 theke 20 min, 30 min shei khali informal golpo e kore jai; "ei Shiyam eita ki obostha. Eita ki, oita ki." Mane shei amar information ta dicche 10%, ar baki 90% shei hocche tar informal jinish potro diye e chole jai maximum time. Ar Greenwood jehutu online, tarpor collage, so oirokom ekta attendance o thake na. So dekha jacche ami thaki, ar amar 2-3 ta friend thake. Eichara Greenwood er oirokom kono class er friend o nai. Mane, class korena ar ki.
(Absolutely. I'll first talk about Mustakin Sir … Mustakin Sir holds 40 minutes classes. As our Zoom is the free version, after 40 minutes, the Zoom room closes. So Mustakin Sir enters the class, then he spends 15-20 minutes, 30 minutes just informally chatting; "hey Shiyam, how's it going? What's this and that." I mean, he gives us information 10% of the time, and he spends a majority of the time, the rest of the 90% of class with his informal conversation. And since Greenwood is online, as well as it being high school, there aren't many people in attendance. So, 2-3 of my friends and I end up attending class. Other than that, there aren't many friends in my classes at Greenwood. Meaning, they don't come to classes.)

Here Shiyam stated there was an "akash patal" difference between the teaching styles of his schoolteachers and Fuad bhaiya, which is a striking Bengali idiomatic expression, meaning the difference was so big that it was like the contrast between the sky and the earth. He also noted here most of his friends did not attend school lessons anymore; they were probably engaged in tutoring full time.

Shiyam continued his comparison to the pedagogy of his teachers at GH, by giving an example of how he felt disengaged in another schoolteacher's classes because all the schoolteacher did was read aloud from a PDF.

Shiyam: There is another teacher, Jafor sir. What Jafor sir does is…like how you gave me a PDF file? He gives us a PDF like that. He types it up himself, and after he types it up, he gives it to us as a PDF. For 40 minutes, we just read the PDF. He doesn't even explain anything! He doesn't even do anything! He just gives us the PDF and he just scrolls up.)

Nisma: And you read it.

Shiyam: Yeah. You read it, you go, you do anything. It doesn't matter.

Shiyam's schoolteacher did not provide any further explanation, analysis, or discussion of the content they were studying, and Shiyam implied the teacher did not even care if the students stayed in the class. In contrast, Tahmid bhaiya's approach from earlier, of incorporating animated characters and visual storytelling to engage his students, was much more dynamic and effective in teaching adolescents like Shiyam.

There are existing structures at play for this type of night and day difference to be created between tutoring teachers and schoolteachers. Adnan bhaiya, who previously taught in elite EM schools on and off, emphasized this is due to the way the Bangladeshi school system is organized, which does not align with the demands of an international curriculum like the O- and A-levels.

> You see when a student is in class 1,2, 3, 4, 5 these kind of grades, the schools are really good! Because the schools are continuously working on different methods, they're changing their curriculum. They are bringing in good, fresh teachers; good ideas great ideas, the classrooms are becoming interactive; it's much more joyous, playful you know, the whole drill okay? It's a much more you know, as we call as a whole classroom, something like that.
>
> But as you go up near to the you know the terminal examinations, as in O-levels and A-levels, you are fixed within a very, you know, constricted domain. As in your specification, your syllabus … And what the schools fail to understand is that, you cannot put an O-levels or A-levels candidate within the same structure or framework of the school itself and ensure that the syllabus is completed, the question papers are solved, mock examinations are tested with, and then the solutions are given with the exact same model that they're carrying out for, you know, grade levels one to grade level seven or eight.
>
> **Nisma**: Yeah.
>
> **Adnan**: When I'm taking a physics class for O-levels, it's a one-and-a-half-hour class … Out of that for maybe 15, 20 minutes I'll dilly dally, I'll talk with them, etc., but a solid chunk is going to be one hour, one hour 10 minutes. A class in school is 40 minutes.

> I've taught in schools, I've taught in schools, it's impossible! When are you supposed to connect with the students?
>
> **Nisma**: Right, right.
>
> **Adnan**: What are you supposed to talk to them (about)? When are you supposed to give them the introduction? No! You just get bluntly, to the point, today we are studying this and that, these are the formulas, get this math done.

While EM schools do a good job catering to student's need in the lower grades, Adnan bhaiya provided greater context as to why students may be dissatisfied with their schools at the O- and A-levels stage. Schoolteachers have to work within a strict timetable in schools, around only a 40-minute window of class time in a very structured day. It is very difficult, or as Adnan Bhaiya said "impossible" in his experience, at the higher grades of school to make a connection with students, complete the syllabus, practice mock exams, and ensure everyone has a good understanding of the course content within the confines of such a stringent schedule.

Ishrak also asserted students relied more on their tutors than their schoolteachers due to the personal approach they took with their students, again which I explored in chapter four. The larger social structure that constrains schoolteachers from providing a similar type of personal touch is that they are on a tight schedule and need to get to their next class or meeting, and they are not given the time or flexibility to say, stay behind after classes are over and chat, as tutors who set their own schedules and class times are able to.[14]

> … students feel they rely more on coaching center teachers than their schoolteachers. Why? Because like I said, coaching center teachers, we don't just teach them, we guide them. We talk to them about things. In a school, if the period is of one hour, (they're) just going to teach them … the teacher is also forced to do that because they are not

[14] Tutors are still paid the same regardless of how many extra hours they spend with students, and generally this is more than what EM schoolteachers are paid (as confirmed to me by Ishrak who had started teaching at an elite EM school a few mornings a week). Tutors are paid based on how many students they have in a cohort, with each student paying about 3500 taka (~32 USD) per O level subject per month, and 4000 taka (~37 USD) per A level subject per month at GH. There are probably other profit sharing mechanisms between the tutors at GH that I was not privy to.

> given the time or flexibility to do otherwise. But in GH, my period is one hour and 30 minutes. After that I'm free, I'm going to talk to them.

Hence, schoolteachers were not given the flexibility to organize their classes as they would like and are rushed to finish the syllabus no matter what, which leads to the poorer bedside manner I mentioned in Chapter 4. This then moves students to seek fulfilling relationships with their tutors, as well as better quality of instruction at tutoring centers like GH—which is able to provide both.

English Medium Schooling is Expensive

Another relevant contextual condition for students and their families to opt into tutoring over schooling is that doing so helps to relieve some financial pressure, as mainstream English Medium schooling costs significant economic capital. A review of the elite schooling literature in Bangladesh in Chapter 2 referenced this financial reality. For families of middle-class backgrounds, engaging in both EM schooling and tutoring is not possible, and even for higher SES families it does not seem logical to keep paying for school if students feel like they are receiving better quality instruction (and thus a better educational “deal”) at a tutoring center like GH.[15]

When I asked Ishrak, one of the youngest members of the GH teaching team, why more students were opting into tutoring full-time, rather than continuing to go to their schools, he responded with how relatively expensive EM schools were.

> They do that because parents save a lot. School fees, monthly fees, admission fees. Like my (tutoring) admission fee is 500 taka. School admission fee is 50,000 or 60,000 taka. So there’s that issue. Parents, they save a lot and I'll be honest, being an English medium student in Bangladesh is expensive. Whatever anyone else says, I say it is expensive. The (school)teachers … are not that good I’ll be honest …

[15] This connects to why non-elite Bangladeshis and those of lower SES would choose to engage in Bangla medium schooling, due to the expensive reality of EM schooling in Bangladesh compared to studying under the national curriculum in the BM track.

> We are there, we are helping these kids when their schools are not being able to help them, or they don't have the means, or they're not acquiring the means of helping them, but they're like ripping them off. That's what schools are doing.

Ishrak strongly characterized schools charging high tuition fees and not being able to sufficiently support them academically as a "rip-off." As discussed in the previous section, many students also did not think the instruction they were getting from schools was up to par. Taking that into consideration, in addition to how much more the same fees cost for school than for a tutoring center (GH's admission fee of 500 taka (~5 USD) versus a school's admission fee of 50,000 taka (~455 USD), which is 10 times more), many students feel they are getting better "value for their money" (in terms of financial, but also pedagogical and academic value), just by doing tutoring full-time, rather than also engaging in school.

Shiyam shared a similar feeling of dissatisfaction with his decision to keep going to school (which we learned in Chapter 4 was a decision made by his parents), as he did not think he was getting much out of those classes, and that he would have been happier only doing tutoring classes at GH.

> Ami bolbo Greenwood er teachers ra are really not up to the mark, for me at least … Mane ami personally mone kori A-levels Greenwood ei kora was not a good decision for me … because ami na actually *unnecessarily* Greenwood ei portesi. Like ekdomi, totally unnecessarily! Greenwood theke ami bhalo result o pailam na. Ekta ache na jei, Greenwood ei pore ami A, A, A pabo; oirokom kichu pelam na. Greenwood ei j amar jei taka diye bhorti holam, jei taka gulo ekhon dicchi, oita *totally* unnecessary [emphasis added].
>
> (I will say, Greenwood's teachers are really not up to the mark, for me at least … I mean, I personally think doing A-levels at Greenwood was not a good decision for me … Because I am *unnecessarily* studying at Greenwood. Like totally, totally unnecessarily! I didn't even get good results from Greenwood. It would have been one thing if I got A, A, A after studying at Greenwood; I didn't get anything like that. The money I paid to get admitted into Greenwood, the money I am still paying, that has been *totally* unnecessary [emphasis added].)

Shiyam was very emphatic here about how he feels like the money he is paying to his school is going to waste; especially considering the lack of instructional support he is receiving, and the poorer quality of teaching. Compared to GH, his family's money had not been well used.

Tahmid bhaiya also criticized how expensive EM schools have become, having gone through English medium schooling himself.

Tahmid: School is not fulfilling their service properly, because ora...Greenwood ei akhon current beton koto jano? 26,000 taka A-levels ei. Can you believe it?
(Schools are not fulfilling their service properly, because they...do you know how much the current (monthly) tuition at Greenwood is now? For A-levels, its 26,000 taka. Can you believe it?)

Nisma: Wow, what!

Tahmid: Per month

Nisma: Oh my goodness.

Tahmid: Amra koto kom disilam. Amra 6000 (taka) ditam.
(We paid so little. We used to pay 6000 taka.)

Nisma: Haan, onek kom diyechilam! Like 6000-7000 taka hoito.
(Yes, we paid much less! Like maybe, 6000-7000 taka.)

Tahmid: Right. So can you imagine the beton they are paying? Ar ei beton ta kintu May te exam hole July porjonto pay korte hoi. That's the rule. Naile transcript deina.
(Right. So can you imagine the tuition (the students) are paying? And this tuition they have to pay till July, even if their exam is in May. That's the rule. Otherwise they don't give you your transcript.)

Nisma: Koto bollen? How much?
(How much did you say tuition was? How much?)

Tahmid: 26,000 taka per month.

Nisma: 26,000 taka! Oh my.

Tahmid: Yeah. But you have to pay till July. Even if you graduated in May. So what happens at the end is, students don't do classes, they all do coaching right? From the parent's perspective, this irks them. That a chunk of money is going away (to schools).

As Tahmid bhaiya shared anecdotally here, the tuition at the elite high school he (and I) attended now costs 26,000 taka per month (~240 USD), three to four times more than it used to when we attended the school. As I noted in my earlier footnote, the equivalent monthly tuition for GH's O level classes is 3500 taka (~32 USD) per subject, and 4000 taka (~37 USD) for A level classes per subject. At the A levels stage, a student takes three subjects on average. Thus, enrolling in tutoring for all three subjects at GH would cost 12,000 taka (~110 USD) per month, which is less than half the cost of enrolling at Greenwood. If students are not able to pay these fees to the school for the whole academic year, from September to July, then according to Tahmid bhaiya the school holds the student's transcript hostage.

It would most likely cost more to attend school in sum because as Tahmid bhaiya said above, students tend to do intensive tutoring just before exams for instrumental reasons (such as to take more practice mock exams). This means families would ultimately be paying for the tuition at a school like Greenwood, plus the fees at a tutoring center like GH, so at least about 30,000 taka (~273 USD) per month, if the student is conservatively doing tutoring for only one subject. This is two and half times more costly than if the student just enrolled in private tutoring full-time, and did not engage with an EM school at all. Therefore students and families feel like they are getting better "value for their money" by simply going to tutoring full-time, where they can receive good instruction and preparation for exams, and do not have to pay for EM schooling on top of that.

In fact, Pritom was a student who had to make the choice between tutoring and schooling. He left his EM school, where he had been since kindergarten, because his family could not afford the expenses of doing both.

> **Nisma**: So, you said your school is Shining Beacon, right? You are still going there like full time or …?
>
> **Pritom**: No, no. Till class 10 I was there, but I am just doing my (exam) registration there now. Like I've told the school that it's a financial burden for me cause my dad had a pay cut and lost his job. Now he is doing work in another company … so the school said this is not a problem. And at school there are really no teachers to teach the classes for grades 11 and 12 …

Pritom made the choice to rely on tutoring full time as his family could not afford sending him to his school for A level classes. Pritom went onto describe how there weren't enough trained A level teachers, and thus any classes at his school anyway, a point I expand on in the next section. As I will discuss below, many EM schools are increasingly moving in the direction of not providing adequate teaching resources at the A levels stage anymore, leading to what is basically an even stronger push for students to rely on private tutoring.

Institutional Structures Enabling Opting Out of School

Institutional Sanctioning of Tutoring

As it may have become clear from the other parts of this chapter, many EM schools do not offer A level classes anymore. Not offering adequate A-level instructional resources at all for a full-fledged EM school that purported to offer both O- and A-levels was a phenomenon I was not familiar with from my time of schooling in Dhaka. I was not able to find statistical data for how many schools were doing this, as the national education statistics published by the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) captures very limited data on EM schooling. Therefore, I only have the accounts shared by my participants. Regarding not offering A-level resources anymore, Pritom said, "this is the problem with a maximum of the schools." Five out of my nine student interviewees were in situations where they may have chosen to complete their A-levels in their respective schools if that had been a choice available to them (on the other hand, for example, Ashiq, Rifat, and Maliha dropped out of their schools intentionally before their O-levels and preferred to register for their exams through GH or another tutoring center, and Shiyam was still going to his school for A-levels). Nahiyan explained how the arrangement of still being registered for exams through his school, but not having any A level classes, worked.

> **Nahiyan**: So the experienced faculty for A levels are in the Uttara branch, so at the Dhanmondi branch essentially we just register for A levels, and take the mocks, but no classes (are held) whatsoever, we rely entirely on coaching for the classes. We don't have any classes; we just have mocks in school, and we register for A levels from school.
>
> **Nisma**: Okay, so at the Dhanmondi branch, you just do mocks, and you don't … I mean, you don't study over there?

Nahiyan: No classes, because teachers—their resources are in Uttara and it's not possible for us to commute every day, so they've kept this option for us, that you guys do your classes through coaching, but take the mock exams with us and register for A levels through us. So they don't charge any monthly tuition fees—(they) just take the mock exam fees and registration fee.

Nisma: Oh wow, okay! Basically, the school is like we know you guys are going to coaching, that's fine with us.

Nahiyan: Yeah, they're completely fine with it. Like in the Uttara campus, classes are held because they have the resources, and they have half day exams, final exams, class tests, everything like normal—that used to happen for our other classes, before A levels. Right now, we have the freedom to entirely depend on coaching for the lessons and from school we do mock and registration. That's it.

Instead of investing in full-time staff who are qualified to teach A-levels at its Dhanmondi branch, which is its older and more established branch, the school offered the arrangement to stay on and register with the school for exams and practice tests, but to rely on tutoring for everything else. This situation is similar to what Pritom's school was doing as well, which he shared in an excerpt earlier as to how he would have liked to stay at his school if he had had the requisite economic capital. His school also did not put in the resources or investment to keep or hire experienced A-level teachers, which meant effectively there were really no teachers or students to take classes at the A-level stage. Any student who wanted to register for exams through the school could do so, and then rely on tutoring for their actual classes, as Pritom was doing.

This means these schools have outsourced a sizable portion of their responsibility of educating its students to the shadow education sector, while still guaranteeing some income from the fees students pay to register for exams through them. Therefore, under this type of hybrid model, schools are sanctioning tutoring at the institutional level as students are essentially driven to seek tutoring full-time for their education as their schools do not provide A levels teachers or classes. As part of this arrangement, students are given the option to remain registered with the school for their A level exams, and the schools provide transcripts and recommendation letters if the student wants to apply abroad. However this is not as valuable

an addition considering tutoring centers are also able to provide services such as official transcripts, showing a student completed their A-levels if the student registered through them for their exams, as well as recommendation letters. Students like Nahiyan, Pritom, and Tanvir who had been with their schools for all their schooling years would rather receive these recommendation letters and report cards from their schools for the purposes of studying abroad, considering their longer and deeper relationships with their schools, versus a tutoring center.

Granted, Nahiyan's school did give him the option of going to their Uttara branch, which provides the teaching staff and resources a school should. However Uttara is in the northern part of Dhaka and on average takes about 1.5 hours to drive to and from Dhanmondi, which is in the southern part of the city, and where Nahiyan (and presumedly many of the students going to the Dhanmondi branch of the school) lived. Due to the immense amount of traffic in Dhaka, spending 1.5 hours commuting to and from Uttara every day for school was not really a choice, especially when there were multiple tutoring options to avail of in the Dhanmondi area itself, such as GH.

By compartmentalizing and then privatizing aspects of education, this phenomenon harkens to the entanglement of commercial logics and technologies of the self within the provision of education, with families now forced to have to coordinate across multiple actors and institutions a public service that should be holistically delivered and provided (Robertson & Dale, 2017). As I discussed in Chapter 2, this trend aligns with the deepening of neoliberal logic and responsibilization for Bangladeshi citizens and society. Even though EM schools are in the private sector, this phenomenon not only strengthens the integration of the private sector within the education landscape of Bangladesh, but also the integration of a private tutoring sector that is still in in the shadows and faces even less scrutiny and regulation than other mainstream avenues of schooling (Adhikary, 2012; Alexander 2001).

When discussing how his school does not provide proper A-level resources, Pritom explained this as his school not being able to hire any experienced A levels teachers. Adnan bhaiya made a similar point when discussing why schools are failing their students, but in terms of schools not being able to attract the best teachers anymore.

> The fact of the matter is that we are successful as coaching centers, simply because of the fact that schools fail at catering (to) what the students need, OK? And that's the exact truth. And at the higher levels, obviously …
>
> When I teach in a school, I am *half* of what I can be [emphasis added]. If not, less. And I've worked in a couple of schools. And then there are other rules and regulations. For example in school, they're going to tell you that you have to have a lesson plan. Okay, fine, lesson plans are good. You go out of the lesson plan, and then you'll have to go and answer to the, you know, (person) in charge, "why did you go out of the lesson plan?" I'll tell them, "Because (students) didn't understand and it's my duty to make them understand."
>
> "But you're not going to be able to complete the syllabus." And I'm like, "that's my problem, let me deal with it." And then they'll show you cause (fire you). See these are the kind of things that basically, does not get the good, the best teachers, into schools anymore.

As pointed out earlier, the constraints affecting schoolteachers are that they are expected to deliver a lot of curricular content in narrow windows of class time. They are not given much flexibility in how they organize their classes and deliver that content, which Adnan bhaiya noted is especially important to be given at the higher A levels stage, and for an international curriculum like the A levels. He felt this so keenly that he personally felt less than half of what he could be as a teacher when he taught in schools, versus when he taught in his tutoring classes. So, if schools are not able to attract good teachers anymore because teachers are not given the flexibility and space to organize their lessons, this can contribute to why schools are not able to maintain a full teaching staff at the A-levels stage.

The Rise of Private Candidates

One other institutional structure enabling the movement of students from schooling to tutoring full-time which is worthwhile to mention is the ability of students to be able to register and sit for the O- and A-level exams, without the need to register through an EM school. In order to sit for the UK based O- or A-level exams, which are either under the Pearson Edexcel or Cambridge governing bodies, students can just register as individuals without the need to be associated with any educational institution, leading them to be called "private candidates." In

addition, any education institution can register with the British Council in Dhaka as a “partner school” which essentially allows students to register for O- and A-level exams through them. As a tutoring center, GH aligned with a mainstream EM school in the Dhanmondi area called Arthouse which itself is a partner school. This allows GH students to essentially register through Arthouse for their O- and A-level exams and take classes at GH. The benefits to students to registering for their exams through an institution, versus being a private candidate, are not many but include things like a guarantee that the exam venue they will be assigned to will be physically located closer to their registered institution, which makes it easier to travel to on exam days (assuming they picked an institution close to their home). For GH, the benefit of partnering with a mainstream EM school in this way is that it allows them to take advantage of the professional development and trainings on subject-specific changes to the curriculum the Edexcel or Cambridge examining boards periodically provide in Bangladesh. Teachers from GH regularly posted on the tutoring center’s social media showing they were attending these training sessions, inculcating a sense of confidence that they were knowledgeable and up to date on any changes they needed to be aware of in their subject domains. This partnership of GH with Arthouse also informs how GH itself is blurring the boundaries of what it means to be a school, a point I address further in the next chapter.

In their study of the relationship between mainstream schooling and private tutoring in Maharashtra, India, Bhorkar and Bray (2018) found if it were not for a number of official requirements that tied students to their schools, such as students needing to be registered in schools in order to be able to take their examinations, “many students would abandon the regular schools altogether in favor of the coaching classes” (p. 154). As there are no similar requirements for students to sit for the O- or A-level exams in Bangladesh, and students can register as individuals for these exams, this policy structure assists them in also “abandoning” their EM schools. In fact, the British council in Bangladesh has a dedicated page on its website acknowledging students are opting out of schools stating, “we are aware that there are some cases where students leave schools and then study at private tuition center before making exam entries as private candidates,” before going on to caution these students to re-think that decision. One of the reasons given is in the case of global crisis like a pandemic occurring

again, their school can academically and logistically support them, versus being completely on their own (British Council Bangladesh, n.d.).

Enduring Value of Schools

The preceding sections may paint the perspective that students did not put as much value into their schools or their schoolteachers. However, students who had been going to school regularly, particularly the ones who had been at one school for all of their education, found social and cultural value from their schools. I detail two ways they did so in the next section—through involvement in extracurricular activities as well as through the meaningful relationships they built with their school community.

Extra-Curricular Activities

When I asked my student interviewees about what they missed, if anything, from not being at school full-time anymore, most of them responded they missed the existence of spaces to engage in extracurricular activities, and more specifically sports. Pritom, Abrar, Tanvir, Maliha, and Ramisa all mentioned sports, and the joy from participating in team competitions. Pritom responded to my question with:

> School theke kichu oi tournaments khelte partam. Sports ta petam. Ami jodi full time coaching ei chole jetam, tokhon toh ami khelar chance ta pabo na. School ei thakle toh sports time thake, ba sports class thake. Games class thake. Volleyball, basketball, table tennis, carrom, chess. Ami indoor games bhalo pari. … Indoor games ei I play really good table tanis, carram, chess. And my sports teachers was onno level er; uni army theke training kora.
>
> (I could play in some tournaments from school. I could participate in sports. If I had joined coaching full time before, then I would not have gotten a chance to play. If you're in school, then you get time to do sports, or there is a sports class. There is a games class. Volleyball, basketball, table tennis, carrom, chess. I am good at indoor games … In terms of indoor games, I play table tennis, carrom, chess really well. And my sports teachers was on another level; he was trained in the Army.)

Pritom went on to speak admiringly of his sports teacher and how much he enjoyed his classes with him. In Pritom's account, the presence of his school's extra-curricular games class was a

draw for him and he was cognizant it was an opportunity he would not have received through his tutoring center.

Most tutoring centers in Dhaka do not offer spacious campuses or facilities and are just comprised of building with multiple stories. This lack of space to run around in was a characteristic that disappointed Abrar very much about GH's own facilities. After Abrar shared his school did not offer any proper A-level classes anymore, but the was registered to give his exams through them and still went there some days of the week to hang out, I asked why he did so.

> Well … because you know they're going to give me an award, like when I graduate from the college. And also regularly, they host football tournaments, they host, you know like sports tournaments. And you know I'm a big fan of football, so I never try to miss any opportunity to play. So if I'm out of school, I will lose both of these opportunities. Also they have a huge campus, like super big.

Abrar opted into continuing with his school at the A-levels stage, even though he was doing all his classes through tutoring at that time, because the athletic facilities were important for him. By staying connected with his school, he could continue to play football (something he was not able to do in GH's spaces) and enjoy its big campus—a boon in the middle of crowded Dhaka. As we can also see here, Abrar was also looking forward to an award from his school he would get upon graduating, so this was another participatory aspect of his school he valued.

Close-Knit School Community

One other important facet some students still valued about their school was the meaningful relationships they built with their teachers. Nahiyan shared how he felt at home in his close-knit community at school and how close he was to his schoolteachers.

> So St. James is very homely and like I said, very wholesome. Very tight knit student body, and you know everyone on campus pretty much…And the teachers are really good actually for certain subjects. Like our chemistry teacher was really good. Mamun sir (at GH) is out of this world, but to be honest, our chemistry teacher at school was really good too. And then he left right before 10th grade, which was very sad, because he got married.

> With schoolteachers, with them I have … lots of memories, since I've spent so much time with them So, for instance, Anna Miss my English teacher at school—I'm really close to her.

Nahiyan shared, of all the teachers he had (in school and tutoring), he had the strongest relationship with the English teacher he mentioned above, and would not hesitate to go to her if he needed help with anything personal. He also had a balanced perspective that he had some really good schoolteachers during his O-levels. The fact students spent so much time at their schools and with the same teachers for so many years obviously endeared them to the staff and faculty there. Pritom, Tanvir, Rifat, and Ramisa (in addition to Nahiyan) had all been in their respective schools for the entirety of their schooling, and said they had fond memories of their times in school, and missed certain teachers. This was connected to one of the reasons why some of these students continued to register through their school for their A levels, even if they were not taking any classes there—in order to leverage those existing relationships towards college applications; so the teachers and staff who knew them well could write glowing letters of recommendation, for example.

In fact Pritom said if it had not been for his family's financial problems, as I discussed earlier, he would have continued with classes at his school for the ones that still had teachers who could teach A-levels.

> **Pritom**: At school, there are really no teachers for grades 11 and 12. There are no experienced teachers, and now there are no students.
>
> **Nisma**: Hmm. So in your case though, if (your father's) paycut situation hadn't happened, then you would have stayed in school….
>
> **Pritom**: Yes, I would have continued in school, yes. I would have stayed in school. It would have been stressful (to do both school and tutoring), but I would have stayed because I've studied in one school from kindergarten to class 10, of course I have some … you know …
>
> **Nisma**: Loyalty.
>
> **Pritom**: Yes, loyalty to them. So, I would have stayed. There are some teachers. For example for Maths, there is a teacher, Furqan Sir. He is very qualified**.**

> For (A levels) physics, chemistry there were some problems at our school because most of the teachers were inexperienced … they were more like giving out notes and just reading the book. They wouldn't explain to us. I would be getting my studying (for those) done at the coaching center.

As Pritom had a close connection with his school community, his strategy for his A-levels (if he could afford to keep going), would have been to engage with the few good teachers who still existed at the A-levels stage for certain subjects like Maths, and relied on tutoring for all of his other educational needs. I heard a similar perspective from my other interviewees who had been at school for a long time such as Ramisa and Nahiyan (who mentioned this above), that many of their teachers until their O-levels were quite good, echoing Adnan bhaiya's perspective earlier that schools do a good job during the lower grades of school. However, when it came to the A-levels stage, their schools did not keep or invest in good teachers who could keep teaching them for their last two years of high school. So students opted out of schools and relied on tutoring to pass their A-levels. This culminates in the point I made earlier of how EM schools are essentially sanctioning or pushing their students to rely completely on private tutoring.

Conclusion

In conclusion, EM students at the A-levels stage of their education preferred to engage with private tutoring rather than schooling in order to meet all their educational needs, due to the overall falling value of English Medium schooling. This overall fall in value comprised of lower financial, pedagogical, and academic value from schooling versus tutoring, both of which are ultimately different forms of private schooling, with tutoring being able to provide more effective and efficient education. Institutional structures such as schools not providing A-level resources and the students being able to sit for their O/A-level exams as private candidates also assisted in detangling students from their EM schools.

As we saw over the course of this chapter, a tutoring center like GH provided quality instruction in terms of the extensive time spent by tutors on addressing academic content, meta cognitive guidance in how to study for exams, creative and relatable pedagogical approaches to engage students, and readily accessible online materials for later study. Considering students and families felt they were getting greater overall value from engaging in tutoring

centers, services that used to be solely in the purview of mainstream schools, it is not a surprise students have moved away from private schools and relied more on tutoring centers, especially for their last two to three years of high school education.

Even as schoolteachers were not able to cope with the demands of an international curriculum like the O- and A-levels in comparison to GH's teachers, there continues to be social and cultural value associated with EM schools. This is especially true for students who have been at their respective schools for all of their schooling and have cultivated a close-knit community there. Students also missed playing sports, an opportunity not readily available in tutoring spaces. The opportunity to receive materials for their college applications, like a good recommendation letter is another reason why students who can afford it, and want to maintain the relationships they have cultivated in their schools, stay in EM schooling.

Lastly, as schools institutionally sanctioned private tutoring through their hybrid models of registering with the school for exams, but not offering any education by way of classes or teachers, this strengthened the phenomenon of how tutoring is a dominant alternative altogether for schooling, or with a minimal role of schools for students in the EM schooling track. Due to these events at play, many students have left EM schools completely, particularly during the A-levels stage, and were just doing tutoring full-time; preferably at places like GH, which positioned themselves as the "one stop solution" for all your O- and A-level needs under one roof. In the next chapter, I discuss further what this trend implies for the future of EM schooling in Bangladesh, with so many students opting out of mainstream schools at the O- and A-level stages, which have a responsibility to provide a holistic type of education for young teenagers.

Chapter 7: Considering the Future of English Medium Schooling and its Implications

> The worldwide expansion of mass education has been documented and debated as one of the foremost issues in comparative and international education research in the 20th century, but the expansion and institutionalization of supplementary education promises to usurp mass education as the most important (and still among the least understood) education phenomena of the 21st century. (Wiseman, 2013, p. xi)

Introduction

In the quote above, Wiseman (2013) presciently noted how the significance of private tutoring is akin to the study of mass education within the comparative education literature. He highlighted, in particular, how the expansion of private tutoring is still one of the least understood education phenomenon of our time. This study aimed to shrink that gap in our understanding through examining in this chapter what the institutionalization of private tutoring in the urban Bangladeshi context looks like, as well as its policy and equity implications for the local education landscape.

In this chapter, I expand on what the general movement of students away from EM schools towards private tutoring could imply for the future of EM schooling. I discuss how GH looks to capitalize on this movement of students towards private tutoring by blurring the lines of what it means to be a high school in urban Bangladesh, and positioning itself as a "school-not-school." I detail what this blurring looks like in terms of the enhanced surveillance and identification now required of students at GH, features of education mainstream schools in Bangladesh regularly use to police their students.

As a "school-not-school," GH aimed to position itself as the educational home for students who are engaged in tutoring full-time. In doing so, GH becomes an alternative for those students of elite status who have opted out of and/or are unhappy with their EM schools for the various reasons mentioned in Chapter 6. However, one area GH falls short in, compared to EM schools, is the provision of non-academic activities such as extracurriculars, which continue to be valued by students. I then spend some time contending that the type of blurriness of GH's "school-not-school" is symptomatic of is enabling the institutionalization of the role of private tutoring and tutoring centers within the education landscape of Bangladesh. This contributes to further inequality between EM students who hold significant social, cultural,

economic, and affective capitals and those who are not engaged in EM schooling.

Lastly, I expand on further equity concerns and provide some policy recommendations regarding possible regulatory frameworks for both EM schooling and private tutoring so students and families can make the best choices within the existing private education marketplace in Bangladesh.

GH Positioning Itself as a School-Not-School

From the preceding chapters, we saw how at the higher grades of education, tutoring is becoming the dominant alternative for schooling, with a minimal role of schools for students in the EM schooling track. This population of urban students, who are either elite themselves or part of an elite aspirational class, are increasingly moving away from their EM schools to rely completely or partially on tutoring classes for their last two to three years of high school education. This gives credence to what Ishrak said below about tutoring centers being the backbone of the Bangladeshi education system.

> Coaching centers are like the backbone of education system in Bangladesh. We are there, we are helping these kids when their schools are not being able to help them, or (schools) don't have the means, or (schools) are not acquiring the means of helping them … As you know, students feel they rely more on coaching center teachers than their schoolteachers. Why? Because like I said coaching center teachers, we don't just teach them, we guide them.

Here, Ishrak homes in on the personal approach, support, and guidance tutors provide to their students, or the affective dimensions of learning students come to rely on for both their educational and emotional needs. This reliance at the individual level of students is then compounded by the institutional structures I discussed in Chapter 6, namely a) how tutoring is institutionalized by several EM schools through their arrangements of enrolling their students but not providing any actual classes, thus, leaving them to depend on private tutoring classes, and b) abetted by the ability of students to sit for their terminal exams as private candidates without being associated with any school. Recalling the discussion, I had in Chapter 2, these structures further cement the logic of responsibilization, by positioning students and their families as self-reliant and proactive in taking schooling into their own hands and figuring out:

where to go for their A-level classes, which tutoring center provides the best offering of teachers at what prices, and whether to give their exams as private candidates.

These shifts towards the institutionalization of private tutoring within the Bangladeshi system is a movement a tutoring center like GH is looking to leverage in order to expand and fortify its own educational footprint—a vision Tahmid bhaiya, a co-founder and part of GH's management team expanded on.

> Why do we focus on lifestyle (at GH)? Because our target are the private students. In Bangladesh, as you know, from class eight or nine, students start leaving the school. Why? Because "we are paying so much tuition to the school, but even after paying so much, we are not getting (anything)." So they are getting out (of school)).
>
> Now what happens? When they're getting out, they don't get a transcript. They don't have a proper …. routine to wake up in the morning and then to go to school – this culture goes away. So the lifestyle of private (candidates) to me … I was always against that. Because I did classes everyday till class 12. I did my university for four years. I did my classes; so it seems to me that the system of doing classes, it's very important. Now in Bangladesh, the number of private (candidates) are a lot… these students don't have a roof.
>
> So that's why (we) created this brand, and to give them a school vibe. And now … actually, we are considered as a school because … we are giving out transcripts, we are giving recommendations. It's just (that) we don't have a uniform.

Tahmid bhaiya clearly stated here how one of his aims for GH was to provide a "school vibe" for GH's students—particularly targeting private candidates, or those students who have opted out of EM schools and are just doing tutoring full-time. He saw an opportunity to cater to these students by providing them the services they need, such as official transcripts and recommendation letters, which they would have normally gotten from their mainstream school. However Tahmid bhaiya's vision for GH was broader than just providing these types of services, which many other tutoring centers can also provide. He wanted GH to be involved in inculcating in their students into a type of "lifestyle" (i.e., to prevent them from falling into a lackadaisical way of being and operating in the world because they do not have the daily structure of going to school anymore).

Tahmid: We run like a coaching center. But then again, It's exactly what a school (does). We are doing exactly the same thing, but we are providing the service mostly for those students who are private candidates.

Because what do private candidates want? “I don’t want to stay in school; I’ll just do private tutoring.” Fine, you do tutoring, but this tutoring center is…(it’s) kind of a school, but it'll give you the … every facility that a school can give you. For example, we have clubs, we have basketball club, we have football club, right? You’ve left school after class eight; you don’t have a place to play around in anymore. You don’t have any …. meaning, like I say … I call them “bewarish” (bereft).

You know, (when) you have no parents, you know, you are just, you are just someone without any parents, and you are just doing whatever you feel like. But if you come to GH, you falls under certain rules and regulations. You have to maintain these, right?

Nisma: Like within a system.

Tahmid: Yes, within a system. So that is how GH has been designed. We are strict about many things. Even if we don’t have a uniform, we maintain rules within the civil code. You do not wear any type of dresses, which is like vulgar dresses. You cannot do these things. You cannot do that thing … you cannot use mobile phone in classes. Meaning, the rules that normally coaching centers don’t have.

In essence, Tahmid bhaiya wanted GH to be an institution that recreates or mimics the structure of a school, but his own version which had fewer rules (no uniform), and nevertheless still had a code of conduct to follow (no cell phones during class). This type of a “school-not-school” then goes beyond the typical mimicry of the academic functions of school, which private tutoring purports to do (and where the synonym of shadow education comes from). GH itself aimed to be the shadow of a school in its entirety. So going forward, even as elite students opt out of mainstream schools, they have the option of enrolling in an institution like GH which is shaping itself into a school-like institution, even beginning to offer extra-curricular activities such as football and soccer clubs (see below), which are normally outside the purview of conventional tutoring centers.

The “bewarish” term Tahmid bhaiya used above to describe the private candidates is illuminating as well. The term can be divided into two syllables—“bei” meaning without, and

“warish” meaning an heir—together connotating a person without parents or relatives to keep them in line. What Tahmid bhaiya meant here is someone who does not have an educational roof over their head and is unmoored and adrift, akin to students who have a lot of privilege and freedom, but no structure in their lives since they left school. He echoed this sentiment to his students after the class I observed and described in Chapter 4’s vignette. Tahmid bhaiya provided the following advice to those dozen or so students who gathered around him to chat.

> You need to prove yourself (to your parents), which is very important. Even if you belong to a rich family, you’re a rich kid—double up your dad’s money. Guys sometimes, if you are privileged, that is not good for your future—you don’t know who you are … People don’t get chances twice, chances come once, not twice; make the best of it.

Tahmid bhaiya’s advice here aligns with the type of mentoring he provided and wanted GH to be a part of—to guide “rich kids” to not be complacent with the privileges they already have, but to work hard towards “doubl(ing) your dad’s money.” A relevant way to view this mentorship is in terms of Tahmid bhaiya ensuring the existing cultural and economic capital many GH students hold is not going to waste. By working to establish GH to target these kinds of students, Tahmid bhaiya is capitalizing on the opportunity created by the higher SES students who are opting out of mainstream schools, by providing them a place to land and guide their elite status.

The significance of a private tutoring institution like GH as a comprehensive stand in for EM schools was also raised by Ishrak. Although Ishrak was not a member of the management team at GH, he was a former student at GH (see Table 8), and opined that the type of relaxed school-not-school environment GH strived towards was an important alternative to the rigidity of mainstream schools in the Bangladeshi system,

> When I left school, and I just went to coaching, being casual was a dream. Wearing casual stuff, going to classes, carrying your cell phone, talking to people, it was like a dream. These are things that we see in movies, or in (TV) series. This is something all the students want. They want to go to a place where they feel like they can be themselves. They can explore, they can experiment, and they know and decide what they like and what they don't like.

> That's a very important part of (the) education system. If there's a school in Bangladesh that is going to open and have that kind of system, I feel like the students will learn more because we are allowing the students to be themselves; “tumi jebhabe asho, kono shomossha nai” (“come however you are, there is no problem”). Which is going to allow him, without him knowing, to learn better. And to be more … let's be honest, people who are not in the corporate sector in Bangladesh, they don't know how to dress…I think this sense really needs to be developed.

Ishrak made the argument that any educational institution with more relaxed rules, like being able to explore and dress however you want, actually allow students to learn better. The ability to practice “knowing how to dress” that Ishrak spoke to, is an example of embodied cultural capital and is similar to what Khan (2011) described as, “what appears a natural, simple quality is actually learned through repeated experiences in elite institutions” (p. 84). This harkens to the sense of ease I argued in Chapter 5 students learn to embody by being at GH and is an important characteristic of becoming elite. This type of casual environment also allows students to practice the examples they consume within western media, particularly in the case of American high school culture, which through popular TV shows and movies such as *Gossip Girl* or *Mean Girls*, showcases how students are able to express their uniqueness through their clothes, accessories, or hair. This ties in with Rakin’s pitch in Chapter 5 of how the American high school experience is something elite aspiring Bangladeshi students would like to experience themselves, and opportunities like the YES program marketed to institutions like GH itself can help its students to do so.

Ishrak and Tahmid both used the example of the lack of a uniform to illustrate the system in place at GH, a uniform being one of the few unifying norms within educational spaces that can project the image of equality between students. The majority of EM schools in Bangladesh require a uniform, including the very elite ones such as the International School Dhaka (ISD), which follows the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, and caters to affluent locals and foreigners who can afford its $32,000 yearly tuition for high school (ISD tuition fees, n.d.). Only the American International School Dhaka (AISD) which aims to recreate the American high school experience by offering both the IB and an American high school diploma, and whose primary purpose is to “provide quality education for expatriate children

(and) … a limited number of children from Bangladesh," does not require a uniform (AISD admissions, n.d.). I now discuss two more examples of how GH is setting itself up as a school-not-school (i.e., its own type of an educational institution that will market itself as an attractive and wholescale alternative for "bewarish" students studying for their O- and A-levels who are engaged in tutoring full-time and need an educational home).

Enhanced Surveillance

GH's recreation of a schooling system goes beyond dress codes and classroom conduct. It also extends to the enhanced identification and surveillance that occurs within GH spaces, helping to re-create some of the same structural components as in a mainstream school. For example, during non-pandemic times, GH employs a variation of the punch card system for its students' attendance, but using their fingerprints. Students have to scan their fingers when they enter, so GH's system knows exactly when they have entered the classroom. The tracking system then sends an SMS message to the student's parents' phone numbers on file, to inform them when their child has entered GH's spaces, and are not say, playing hooky somewhere else instead. As Mahbub bhaiya described it,

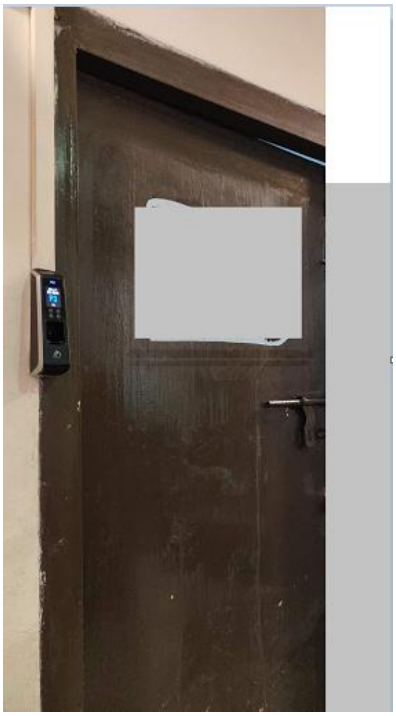
> **Mahbub**: This was our software attendance system, that after you've given your fingerprint, your attendance is marked. Now I'm having to do that manually (for online classes), meaning in the software I am marking the attendance of students myself.
>
> **Nisma**: Okay. So what was that system? Students would provide their fingerprints and then an SMS would be sent?
>
> **Mahbub**: Yes. The fact that the student entered the class after giving their fingerprint, that information would be sent to their parents in an SMS; that today, they were in class within this timeframe.
>
> **Nisma**: Seems like an advanced type of technology!
>
> **Mahbub**: Yes. If students want to miss, or bunk classes—they don't get that opportunity.
>
> **Nisma**: And then when students leave, do they also have to give their fingerprints? Or just the one time?
>
> **Mahbub**: No, it's not needed when they leave, just when entering. Because parents know when classes end. So the parents will be able to tell that my child is in class … for

> example, the student entered at 2 pm, and after entering an SMS was sent that "your child entered the 2 pm class." Then Uncle or Aunty will understand that my child entered the 2 pm class and (they know) the class ends at 3.30 pm … this is how it is.

Mahbub bhaiya explained this fingerprinting system was not needed during the pandemic as everyone was doing classes from their homes. Instead, he would keep all the students in the Zoom waiting room until he had marked them present in their system, and then let them into the online classroom. However, even during this time of the pandemic, text messages were being sent to parents to let them know their child was attending GH's classes (of course with online classes, students could discreetly log off once they were marked present if they wanted to). The small, rectangular black device to the left on the doorframe in Figure 24 is a picture of the fingerprinting scanner installed outside each classroom at GH.

Figure 24

Picture of Black Fingerprinting Scanner on the Doorframe of Each Classroom



Note. Photo taken by author.

This type of enhanced surveillance on the movements of its students is not something I would have necessarily expected from a tutoring center. From my lived experience of being

educated in Dhaka, I would have expected this perhaps from my EM school if I did not show up for a few days, but not from a tutoring center which would not necessarily have had the resources to surveil their students. This harkens back to Tahmid bhaiya's desire to align GH with the more conventional aspects of schools, like keeping tabs on their students' whereabouts and keeping their parents informed. From a student's perspective, Rifat indicated he and his parents appreciated these type of real-time updates.

> Before (the pandemic), Tahmid bhaiya had a fingerprint device. Like when you entered class you had to give your fingerprint, and when you left you had to give your fingerprint. The minute you gave your fingerprint, a message would be sent to your parents' phone, that at this and this time the student entered, and at this time they left. This was a good thing. Fuad bhaiya would also send his test marks through these messages. *(smiling)*

So, these text messages to parents were not only used to surveil the presence or absence of students, but also included information of students' academic performance in class.

Enhanced Identification

GH also bolstered the identification of students and staff, in efforts to exclude anyone who was either not working or learning at GH to be in those spaces. Similar to how an institutionalized organization may work, GH stressed the need for everyone to have their ID card on hand to identify themselves, especially in order to even enter the GH building. This was a directive I noticed starting to get strictly enforced when I visited the tutoring center, prior to the pandemic (see Figure 25).

Figure 25

Picture of a Sign on a GH Building Gate

Note. Photo taken by author.

Since GH opened once COVID-19 cases declined, it reiterated the enforcement of this rule even stating in a post shared on all their social media platforms, “ALL students will be required to carry and SHOW & SCAN VALID GH STUDENT ID CARD when entering GH premises. Anyone who doesn't bring their ID card will be sent back home” [*capitalization added*]. In fact, the ongoing practice of requiring their ID card to be on them at all times, but students failing to do so happened so many times that it had become a meme among students. The image in Figure 26 was posted to a popular page on Facebook called “Dhakaya trolls” (trolls of Dhaka), which has 18,000 followers at the time of this writing, and posts jokes about living and studying in Dhaka by young people. At the top of the meme it says, “things you cannot find in your pocket when you need them the most,” followed by the captions under the four images which say in clockwise order, “phone,” “wallet,” “handkerchief,” and in Bangla “Dukkar shomai GH er ID card (GH’s ID card when you enter). This particular meme was reshared by Shiyam once GH opened for in-person classes.

Figure 26

Screenshot of Meme Page on Facebook

Lastly, Adnan bhaiya, another co-founder of GH, characterized how the enhanced surveillance and identification GH provides was one of its positive attributes—in that it was able to provide structure to parents, as well as balance being able to be a supportive place for their students. In describing what set GH apart from the many tutoring centers just in their neighborhood, Adnan bhaiya shared:

> We were able to connect. We were *really* able to connect to the students [emphasis added] … And because of the fact that the whole thing was so organized. People used to really like it, okay? You go to a school, you know that a school has a uniformity. When you go to a coaching center and you think like, it's (just) a coaching center. We brought in that uniformity—you *have to have* an identity card [emphasis added]. Every single day, you were giving your attendance. Every single month your parents were sent feedback on your performance, okay? So these are the kinds of things that parents like.
>
> At the same time, we used to give that leeway to the students that … you can get away with some of the things. Okay, fine—we'll keep a secret or two. But that doesn't mean you're going to keep on bunking classes, or you're just going to keep on flunking. So there was this particular kind of balance.

As I shared myself, the tracking of students is something I would have expected from a school, not a tutoring center, which is what Adnan bhaiya saw as setting GH apart in that it is not “just” another tutoring center. He highlighted how GH, by being a flexible yet structured institution, that keeps students’ secrets but also tabs on their whereabouts is able to be in the best of both worlds by keeping both students and parents happy. To draw on threads from Chapter 2, the type of flexible structure in GH’s school-not-school is aligned with Foucault’s ideas of the technologies of power. First, through students governing themselves through the technologies of the self in the choosing of how to advance their own education after they leave their EM school, and second through how an institution like GH is mimicking a school’s regulatory efforts to maintain boundaries for its students.

The Provision of ECAs

One important area GH was lacking as a school-not-school was in the provision of extra-curricular activities (ECAs). I discussed this in the last chapter in terms of what students miss about being at school because an institution like GH does not have the requisite space to offer sporting competitions, or dedicated staff to organize these activities. Tahmid bhaiya did mention in a quote earlier in this chapter that GH offers a basketball club and football club. However, from my observations and conversations with students, this was something Tahmid bhaiya himself had led and organized through a few neighborhood tournaments several years ago; the clubs themselves were not active anymore. This inactivity was possibly a symptom of the coronavirus pandemic, but Pritom shared the sports clubs had not been active for the four years he had been a student at GH (which include two non-COVID years). This speaks to challenges of operating an institution that is trying to be more holistic but is still organized around offering academic classes.

Ramisa similarly confirmed she had not seen any organizing around ECAs, but had just heard Tahmid bhaiya talk about the ones he had done in the past. Ramisa, who self-identified as a “sporty person” expressed disappointment that she could not play sports anymore as she was no longer affiliated with her EM school.

> I'm a very sporty person. I really like playing, so I was in my school’s volleyball team, I used to play football too. I used to play handball too, but that was in class 5 and I never did it afterwords … that is my biggest … like the saddest part (is) that I don't get to play

> anymore. Because I loved playing volleyball, football … but I really do want to get better at volleyball, football and handball because I really like to learn and being involved in sports, honestly … Playing was like just fun, it's just fun. There's nothing really to describe it, it's really fun. I really enjoyed it. I was really into sports and everything.

Thus, in the blurring that is occurring in GH's shift towards a type of flexible but structured school, this also means that it would need to look towards satisfying the hunger many students have for physical activities, which mainstream schools are able to fulfill. As I noted in Chapter 6, the ability to play at his school's sporting facilities was one of the reasons Abrar continued to engage with his EM school a few times a week, even though the school did not offer any A-level classes.

Speaking to this hunger for ECAs, a student left a comment in my survey about how she wished tutoring centers like GH would provide more opportunities for activities outside of academics.

> Coaching centers like GH and others who allow registration for Edexcel examinations through them (should) allow and encourage more extra curriculum activities. Because most of us have left the school and are studying here at GH. Most brown families do not encourage you or support you for other activities besides studying, because good grades are all they want from us. But I do think other activities are essential. If teachers, or our institution where we study encourage and support more extra curriculum activities, it would be a great help, specifically to the young learners who are stepping into O levels, as they have a lot of free time and spirit.

This student remarked that as many have opted out of school and now solely rely on GH for their education, GH should take on the responsibility of organizing activities that are not just connected to academics, which their families already focus on. Thus, if GH is serious about being an alternative for students dissatisfied with EM schooling, it needs to also focus on a holistic approach to education, which includes investing in space for sports or other non-academic activities.

Blurring the Boundaries of the Shadow

In its shift towards a school-not-school, GH is blurring the lines of what means to exist as a school in urban Bangladesh. I contend this blurriness is now an increasing characteristic

of the country's secondary sub-sector. So what we used to think of as informal arrangements between a schoolteacher and her students, or between a well-known tutor and a few cohorts of students (which as I recounted in my vignettes have both been my own experiences) is not necessarily the norm anymore. GH has started to invert these informal arrangements and institutionalize private tutoring, to the extent of being able to be a complete stand in or substitute for a mainstream EM school. This then helps provides those students who are opting out of EM schooling with an educational home to land in, where they can keep doing regular classes like they are used to, register for O- and A-level exams through GH's alignment with a partner school, receive essential services like transcripts and recommendations letters, be recognized with proper ID cards, and have their presence and performance monitored and accounted for, just like a regular mainstream school.

Thus, this is what I believe the future of EM schooling will look like in urban Bangladesh, especially for the higher grades of education. Tutoring centers like GH that have built up over its 10 years of operation a solid following of and goodwill with students, and established a reputation as a place where high quality instruction and support is offered, will move to institutionalize themselves within the educational landscape in a bid to rival the position of mainstream private EM schools. In this sense, private tutoring centers will position themselves as more client-oriented, flexible, and accountable alternatives to mainstream schools, particularly for those last few years of schooling before university, considering the trends I discussed earlier of the institutional sanctioning of tutoring and the overall fall in the value of EM schooling. If shocks like the pandemic occur again, it will likely lead to more reliance on tutoring, in terms of how quickly and efficiently GH was able to pivot to provide online teaching and learning during such an unprecedented event within the Bangladeshi education landscape.

In terms of extracurricular activities, mainstream schools still have the upper hand. Schools are not solely centered around academics by the nature of how they are organized, and provide opportunities for activities like sports, and in general for more holistic education, which students value and is important for their wellbeing. A tutoring center like GH, though being able to fulfill the affective characteristics of learning in terms of providing more emotional

and personal support, is still primarily focused around improving one's academic performance and succeeding in examinations.

Private tutoring as a substitute for school has been posited before. Majumdar (2014) noted how the value of mainstream schools in the Indian state of West Bengal was at risk to being reduced to just issuing certificates, with a participant remarking, "if and when tutorials are authorized to issue certificates, schools will certainly close down" (p. 15). Silova and Kazimzade (2006) found, in Azerbaijan, teachers reported empty classes in their secondary schools when an exodus of students left to attend tutoring lessons classes. In Turkey, Altinyelken (2013) found parents faking medical certificates so their children could be absent from school and attend tutoring lessons instead. Bhorkar and Bray (2018) observed in the state of Maharashtra in India, private tutoring seemed to supersede schooling rather than just be a supplemental form of learning in grades 11 and 12. However, within the literature, tutoring as a form of supplantation for school was not posed in the sense that GH staff is envisioning its role to be within Bangladeshi education—as an educational home for those of higher SES who have left EM schools to "fall under certain rules and regulations," but at the same time as a place to practice their cultural embodiment into an elite sense of ease and ways of being.

In light of this, Bray (2017) raised a relevant question of "which sector is the shadow of which," when he noted in many contexts "the shadow sector has ceased to be a shadow and has come to dominate the school sector" (p. 483). I contend a complete domination of the shadow education sector has not occurred in the Bangladeshi system, due to the continuing cultural value of EM schooling that comes with being institutionalized since the British colonial period, especially for the lower grades of schooling. However, I contend it has already reached a watershed moment in terms of how private tutoring education is no longer viewed as just a supplement but rather has absolutely become a requirement and even an alternative as in the case of GH which offers a more personalized pedagogical approach. Bray (2017) made the case that this type of watershed moment is indicative of when the tutoring sector, not schools, attract some of the best teachers which "shifts balances in the effectiveness with which each side can play its roles" (p. 483). I see EM schools not being able to attract the best teachers when Adnan bhaiya poignantly shared in Chapter 6 that he was only half of what he can be as a teacher when he taught in a school. Thus, I contend all of this means private tutoring

education has become a “de facto requirement” for most families in the EM schooling system in Bangladesh, and an alternative for many.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Equity Concerns

We know from this dissertation and the wider literature on shadow education, students of different class backgrounds are engaging in private tutoring. In the case of urban Bangladesh, engaging in EM education is seen by many families as their ticket into elite status, allowing their children to learn and communicate in English as well as any native English speaker, and progressing to having a better chance to study and live outside of Bangladesh, or gain membership into elite social, cultural, or political circles at home. Many families in urban Bangladesh rely extensively on private tutoring, either as a supplement, or as a substitute to their EM schooling depending on the grade level, and this is likely not going to be mitigated soon unless there are significant structural and systemic changes within Bangladeshi education.

A private tutoring institution like GH is shaping even more students into elite status, as a) it attracts a more diverse array of students, and b) it positions itself as the educational home for the many students who have opted out of mainstream schooling. This raises equity concerns regarding the widening gaps between GH students who will possess the social, cultural, economic, and affective capitals needed to succeed at home and abroad, and those who are not able to engage with a tutoring center like GH. Further, if we care about students of all class backgrounds being able to both access and gain an equitable learning experience in our society, then the falling value of EM schooling, as well as the de facto requirement of students needing to do private tutoring should be tackled. This is because a student’s existing social and economic capitals influences the type of tutoring center they end up going to, as we saw in the case of Ramisa and Shiyam, whose older sister and uncle studied and worked at GH respectively. The de facto requirement of engaging in tutoring also impacts the educational experience of students who are opting out of school who may then, as seen in this dissertation, miss out on the non-academic opportunities and holistic experiences that schools provide.

Policy Considerations

In essence, since not all EM students are able to access the teaching quality and supportive culture at a place like GH, we need to think about how mainstream private and public schools can be made better in terms of their quality of instruction and services provided. In seeking to use this study towards a degree of social transformation and emancipation as is common in the critical realist tradition (Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014), the following are a few policy considerations that may help to address the issues highlighted in this chapter and study.

The data from this study pointed to the need to establish a regulatory framework around the functioning of EM schools, including setting a ceiling on tuition and admission fees so lower- and middle-class students and their families are not priced out. Currently there are no targeted regulations towards the quality assurance and monitoring of EM schools in Bangladesh (Salman, 2023b).

It is crucial to reassess the structure of the school day in EM schools, especially at the higher grades, when the curriculum becomes more complex. This assessment includes readjusting the daily schedule so more time is given to covering each subject, with less subjects covered per day. This is so the syllabi can be covered at an appropriate pace for all learners within the normal school week, term, and year, and say, within two hour windows—not the existing and insufficient 40-50 minute windows of class time. Relatedly, classes at mainstream schools should be made more engaging, flexible, and learner centered. As we saw in this study, GH's teachers used more creative and relatable pedagogy, provided rubrics on how to study, and taught their students digital skills they can continue to use in their futures. As Bray (1999) noted, "teachers in the mainstream can learn from the shadow" (p. 83), particularly on finding ways to make school classes more engaging.

Greater efforts should be made by schools to plan, recruit, and train more teachers who are able to teach A-levels. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to expand on whether the reasons behind the shortage of experienced and qualified A-level teachers at mainstream private schools are solely due to being underpaid, desire for flexibility, or something else. However this shortage needs to be addressed so students who stay on with their school for their A-levels are not automatically pushed to turn to private tutoring to meet their educational needs. As we also saw from my student interviewees, those who were still registered with their

school were doing so out of what they termed as “loyalty” or the social ties, network, and capital they accumulated from their many years of attending that school. They were clearly attached to their school so any effort on the part of the school to bolster their teaching workforce and provide classes would, I believe, be appreciated.

National policy should be adjusted to remove the ban on private tutoring; instead realistic efforts to regulate private tutoring should be implemented. The government’s “top-down” approach has made its mandate on private tutoring “unrealistic and largely ineffective” (Alam & Zhu, 2022a, p. 31). An authentic regulatory framework should be put in place instead, one that does not outright ban private tutoring, as Bangladesh has reached the watershed moment where, as I detailed above, “the need for tutoring (cannot) be eliminated” (Bhorkar, 2020, p. 107). Rather, this framework should systemize all tutors who work with say, over a minimum of six students, whether they are schoolteachers or commercial tutoring centers by requiring them to regularly report how many students they have, which curriculum is being taught, the prices they charge for each subject, and the qualification of their teachers. Such information can enable students and families to protect their rights in this educational marketplace, and make better informed choices (Bray et al., 2020). The draft Education Act of 2016 (which has still not been passed) does stipulate all tutoring centers must be registered with the education ministry. However, it has also kept its punitive measures such as canceling this registration if a student or teacher is found to be engaged in tutoring classes during regular school hours (New Age, 2021).

Considering that it is difficult and unlikely government bodies will undertake regular monitoring and supervision of private tutoring institutions, another option could be for the government to encourage self-regulation of the sector through say, professional bodies. Bray and Kwo (2014) highlighted this has worked in Australia for example, where the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) has a published code of ethics that its members are expected to adhere to.

Even as the indicators of schooling have greatly improved in Bangladesh, similar indicators on tutoring education do not exist. The regulatory framework on private tutoring should include the systematic collection of basic facts and data on the contours of private tutoring in Bangladesh. There have been no national efforts to do so. The literature on shadow

education has data collected by non-government agencies and university-based researchers, which is patchy in coverage, disparate in methodological rigor, or are not generalizable (such as this study). Very few governments globally collect regular data on private tutoring, with the Republic of Korea being a key exception (Bray, 2017). Beyond the basic questions of how much tutoring is being received by what categories of students, at what times of the year, modes, prices, and from what types of tutors, further questions should be asked about the curriculum taught, teaching and learning styles, and so on. This type of systematic data could be used to understand the demand and supply of private tutoring at the macro level even better, and leveraged to make more localized policy interventions if needed, instead of an all-encompassing ban. In essence, the shadow education sector should be taken seriously as an avenue of education for Bangladeshi students, and asked the range of questions that are asked to mainstream public and private schools in national education surveys.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I argued boundaries are becoming less distinct within Bangladesh's EM schooling system between tutoring centers and mainstream private schools, and will continue to get blurrier as tutoring centers like GH move towards institutionalizing themselves as school-not-schools. I recommended the government establish regulatory frameworks targeting the operation and supervision of both EM schools and private tutoring centers, as currently there are not very effective monitoring or supervisory regulations addressing either of these streams of education. Such frameworks will be important as these educational lines continue to get blurred, and as higher SES students continue to maintain their mobility and success in the system by moving to and learning elite ways of being in institutions like GH. This is while those who do not hold the same social and economic capitals may suffer if there are not improvements in the quality of instruction at EM schools, or transparent information available about the credentials and prospects various tutoring institutions offer.

In the next chapter, I discuss how the findings from this study leads to an understanding of the neoliberal order in Bangladesh that can hold both rationalizing and affective forces. I then wrap up this dissertation by examining its theoretical contributions, limitations, some personal reflections, and any future avenues for inquiry.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

The goal of this study was to examine why students of elite status, who already enjoyed significant privileges in the education system, engaged in private tutoring. The purpose of this dissertation was to apply a social reproduction framework to the urban Bangladeshi context, to examine how those of elite status learn and are socialized within private tutoring spaces, and to gain an understanding of my own privilege and past educational decisions. I first briefly discuss how the findings from this study lead to an understanding of the neoliberal order in Bangladesh that can hold market-oriented forces, as well as relational and affective practices in its education sector, and then move to a discussion of this study's theoretical contributions.

Impact on Neoliberal Governing

As I discussed in Chapter 2, the governing of social and economic relations in Bangladesh used to emphasize greater community and reciprocity post-independence in 1971. However, this has slowly changed in the last few decades towards increased marketization and a neoliberal governmentality within the education sector, which is reflective of GH as a private tutoring center (Kabir, 2013). As I discussed in Chapter 7, if the private education landscape in Bangladesh does move towards the establishment of the type of school-not-school GH wishes to be, this equates to a deepening of neoliberal logic and governing in Bangladesh in terms of how education is delivered in Bangladeshi society. Here crucial social, civic, and economic functions are governed through the private sector, and citizens are folded even more into the rationalities of the neoliberal order. As has been noted by Bangladeshi scholars, and as we have seen how teachers at GH hold themselves and their pedagogical approaches to be the solution to the problems they highlighted within EM schooling in Chapter 6, private tutoring is much more client-oriented than mainstream schools (Mahmud, 2021).

However, while the shift of GH towards an alternative, flexible school deepens the logic of neoliberalism for students and their relationship with their tutors as consumers and producers, it also allows for the flourishing of authentic, dense, and multilayered relationships the students form with their teachers at GH—an adaptation of one of the many forms of neoliberalism in local contexts (Ferguson, 2015). This case aligns with the conceptualization of the "moral neoliberal order" from Muehlebach's (2012) study of welfare reform in Italy where

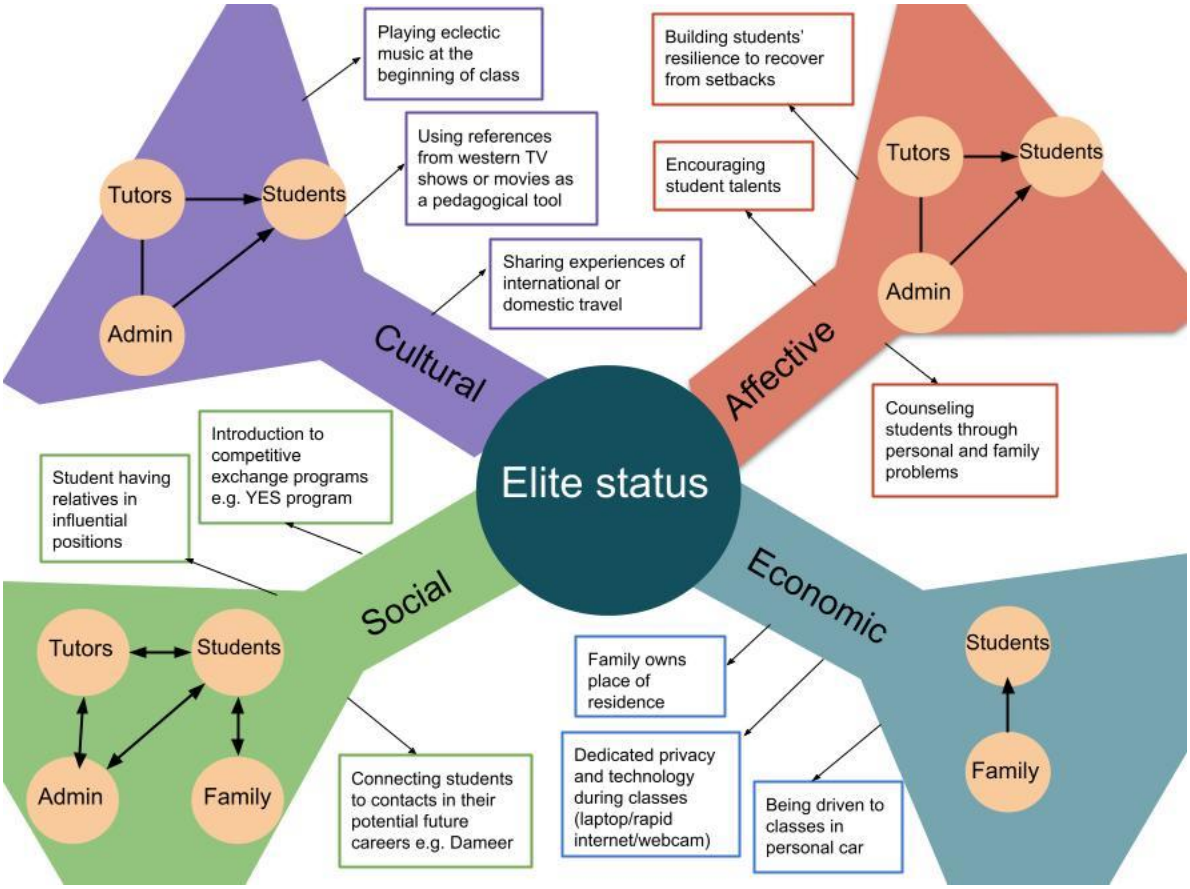
affective practices and forces that may seem oppositional to neoliberalism are actually incorporated into it, and are integral to its functioning (p. 13). I contend the neoliberal order within private education spaces in Bangladesh, such as the tutoring spaces at GH, demonstrate a form of neoliberalism that is certainly governed by instrumentalism and utilitarianism, as we saw from students' given reasons for engaging at GH, and from their rationalizing discourses regarding the value of schooling from Chapter 6. However it is also where a collective form of relating and learning is emerging; one where tutoring spaces like GH market themselves to "rich kids," and thus, beget new forms of difference and inequality. It is also a space full of "relational richness" where students feel safe disclosing to their teachers their problems at home or school, and where teachers take on counseling their students through those issues (Muehlebach, 2012, p. 25). Thus, the form neoliberalism has taken in this context is not one that can be "simply collapsed with or subjected to neoliberal market rationalities, but that instead continues to exist in productive tension with it" (Muehlebach, 2012, p. 24). Ultimately for the purposes of this study, I argue it is more productive to understand neoliberalism as a malleable force that can contain community, relationality, and selflessness, in concurrence with the self-management, responsibilization, and commodification that is occurring within tutoring spaces in urban Bangladesh.

Theoretical Contributions of the Study

The findings of this study were organized into two dimensions—an education and a socialization dimension, with the former examining the teaching and learning and pedagogical aspects of the tutoring center under study in this research and the latter examining how the tutoring center influences the socialization of its students into eliteness (see Figure 13). In terms of the latter dimension, using a social reproduction framework, I found how through engaging at a tutoring center like GH, students were able to maintain and extend their different forms of capital—cultural, economic, affective, and social—which led to the cultivation of their eliteness. Figure 27 below illustrates some examples of these capitals that were found throughout this study, situated within the study's conceptual framework.

Figure 27

Updated Diagrammatic Representation of the Study's Conceptual Framework



One of the main additions to Figure 27 (in contrast to Figure 2) is the affective capital "funnel," which I had not theorized occurring before beginning this research. For example, Chapters 4 and 5 illustrated how tutors helped their students through personal issues as well as build their resilience in dealing with all types of challenges, building their students' confidence and sense of self-worth. I saw teachers hang back much longer after their classes were over, and heard from both students and teachers about how this practice exemplified the type of care and relationship building that was the norm at GH.

This study showed how GH's practices of care and emotional regulation helped build the affective capitals of students. For example, when Maliha shared details of her depressive episodes with Ishrak, he was able to inject her with the confidence and perseverance to keep

going. She felt better equipped to keep moving forward, to tackle her A-level exams, and apply abroad for university. These are abilities which are integral to the checklist of essential competences needed for white collar work, which students of higher SES, such as those at GH, are likely to aspire to reach.

Affective capitalism, an economic system in which the production of “affect” (emotions, feelings, and reactions) is vital for the creation of profit, has been applied to a variety of fields from academic and digital labour (e.g., DeAngelis & Harvie, 2009; Scholz, 2013), to care work within capitalism (McRobbie, 2011), to the credit industry (Deville, 2015), to affect production in reality TV shows (Skeggs & Wood, 2012), and to the rationalizing of Buddhist spirituality (Saari & Harni, 2016). This study contributes to this wide-ranging and multi-disciplinary literature in adding the findings from this study that demonstrated how, within a privileged educational space, traits such as resilience and confidence were nurtured in students, that assisted in positive academic outcomes and future opportunities. This affective educational space was also considered as a safe space by students that allowed them to express their autonomy and reaffirm their identities. Work was not necessarily seen as a constraint of freedom but could be fashioned into a realm where entrepreneurial students’ interests and hobbies such as in music, baking, and cooking were encouraged into careers that resisted the traditional expectations of elite society. This formation of their affective capitals also involved the intersection with an array of social connections GH tutors helped make, such as link of the student singer with a pop artist who was already quite famous. The student later posted this interaction on her social media, possibly leading to an even further extension of her social capital in the music industry.

What connected these two dimensions in this study was this formation and building of relationships within tutoring spaces, in terms of the relationships forged between teachers, administrators, and students that, in turn, informed both students’ learning and socialization into eliteness. Echoed across the narratives of students, teachers, and administrators was that GH was a supportive space where the staff and students build deep connections and trust each other, which first, enhanced students’ learning through affective means. Second, in learning to produce and negotiate hierarchical relationships with GH staff in a myriad of ways, students learned an interactional dynamic integral to their embodied cultural capital and sense of eliteness.

The cultivation of multiple capitals for students intertwined several times over the course of this research. For example, in terms of social and cultural capitals, in their introduction to the YES exchange program, students were introduced to Rakin, the main coordinator of the program, and Asif, a peer who had done the program—two important contacts. If they become accepted into the program, students would then be able to extend their global cultural capital, as those who had the opportunity to study and live abroad, even before university, when their other peers would be aiming to do so. In another intersection of capitals, tutors routinely highlighted to parents how having a personal laptop, fast and reliable internet, privacy, and even a backup electronic device were essential elements to enroll in their classes. Thus, economic capital was essential to gain membership into this tutoring space, or there was a risk of being called out in front of all your peers as Tahmid bhaiya did with Farhad.

Being in this virtual space then allowed students to gain digital skills which enhanced both their affective and cultural capitals in terms of the skills and dispositions they could use to demonstrate their knowledge of operating in our digital world. As Ishrak said, they could gain these skills at GH even without studying abroad, which is seen as a distinctive mark of eliteness for Bangladeshis. One last example of the intersection between economic and cultural capitals cultivating a way of being elite was the acquisition of Pablo, Tahmid bhaiya's cat. He demonstrated in his class how he valued acquiring Pablo from a breeder, that too from abroad, instead of adopting him from a local shelter or picking him up from the street. Students were also able to link the name Tahmid chose for his new kitten to a Netflix show about the famous Colombian drug lord, also demonstrating the types of global cultural references floating in the class environment. Thus, through these and other displays of cultural capital (see Figure 27), students of diverse class backgrounds learned to inhabit elite status —by being flexible, versatile, and an omnivore in their choices and tastes. This helps them embody a sense of ease in just about any social environment they find themselves in, a crucial skill when operating in a diverse world online and beyond Bangladesh (Gaztambide-Fernández 2009; Khan, 2011).

Relatedly, different mechanisms of eliteness affected different students in different ways. For example, for a student like Abrar, who was from a Bangla medium background until recently, resisted the displays of economic and cultural capital at GH, such as students having their drivers drop them off, or showing off the new shoes they were wearing. However, he did

connect to the affective aspects of his classes, appreciating how his teachers taught and made him and his peers feel included in the class environment. This helped extend both his affective and social capitals. For a student like Nahiyan, who was more upper class, his own social and cultural capitals were activated when, for example, he hung out at the rooftop and noted that the "more cool" students came to GH compared to the other tutoring spaces he had been to, and feeling so at ease at GH he considered it his "second home."

The socio-cultural practices towards the making of elite status discussed in this dissertation stems from its neoliberal link to modernization, global competences, and approach to governance, establishing a neoliberal order within educational spaces in Bangladesh. However, as this chapter accentuated earlier, this rationalizing neoliberal order also contains an affective crease, where rich relationships such as those between students, teachers, and administrators at the tutoring center foster and thrive. This was a facet of neoliberalism that I had not considered within this study's original conceptual framework. Thus, this study contributes to the rebuff of neoliberalism as a singular ideology that has been put forward by other scholars (DeJaeghere, 2017; Ferguson, 2010; Muehlebach, 2012; Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005), and advocates for a relational model of neoliberalism to account for all the complex ways the participants in GH's tutoring spaces relate to, and are affective of one another. This interpretation allows for greater alternative imaginings for what the future of private tutoring and education could look like within Bangladesh's market-oriented neoliberal governmentality. This means looking beyond the transactional fee-based model private tutoring is known for, and instead imagining a world where pedagogical change, greater empowerment of female students, and a broadening of what a successful career looks like and is possible within the rigid norms of a postcolonial society.

In speaking to the findings from the education dimension of this study, I found there was an exodus of students moving away from private EM schooling to private tutoring, particularly during the last two to three years of high school. This was due to the overall fall in value of English Medium schooling, which, in turn, comprised of lower financial, pedagogical, and academic value from schooling versus tutoring. Institutional structures such as insufficient A-level classes and teachers at schools, and students being able to sit for their O/A-level exams as private candidates, strengthened the phenomenon of private tutoring becoming a dominant

alternative altogether for schooling, or with a minimal role of schools for students in the EM track. This exodus was a surprise to me, and challenged my initial assumption of most higher SES students engaging in both private schooling and tutoring, all through their A-levels in high school.

This finding is a significant one in that it confirms the institutionalization of private tutoring within the Bangladeshi education landscape, leading to what I call a watershed moment for the sector—where private tutoring is no longer viewed as just a supplement to schooling, but instead a de-facto requirement, and even a positive alternative. Thus, in looking to the future of English medium education in Bangladesh, this study also offered a prognosis of the implications for this sector, as such a moment has both crucial equity and policy implications, which I examined in the last chapter. This moment also signals an environment in Bangladesh where the role of non-state actors will deepen even further in the delivery of education through, for example, an institution such as GH's school-not-school that students will use as an alternative educational home for their last few years of high school. As we saw in Chapter 2, the secondary education sub-sector in Bangladesh is already dominated by private and non-state actors. This could lead to these type of pseudo-school-tutoring centers to expand to offer other holistic facets of education, such as extracurriculars and proper counseling or mental health services—aspects which students already yearn for as we saw in this research—and which also aligns with the relational or affective understanding of neoliberalism put forward by this study.

Finally, this study underscored how social class stratifications within a nation-state framework was not sufficient when studying the role of elite institutions within a postcolonial, globalizing environment such as in Bangladesh. This is particularly the case for the conceptualization of cultural capital—global cultural capital allows us to have a clearer understanding of the formation and education of Bangladeshi elites in transnational terms (Kim, 2011; Munk et al., 2012; Rizvi, 2014). For example, in terms of the desired investment and immersion into Anglo-American culture, of which enrollment in English medium schooling and tutoring is an integral part.

Limitations

Observations of tutoring classes, narratives of students and teachers, survey and social media data were weaved together in this study in a mixed method reflexive analysis to investigate how students were learning and being socialized in an urban Bangladeshi context. It was not the aim of this study to generalize the experiences of students and staff at GH to those from other tutoring centers in Bangladesh, or even in Dhaka. As we saw in this dissertation, there is variability between the quality of and types of tutoring centers in Dhaka itself. This study also does not intend to speak to all forms of socialization into eliteness for young people in the Bangladeshi context. As such, this study focused on those that can be formed within a well-resourced, elite tutoring space such as GH. There are other factors within a student's home, family, and school life that may contribute towards this socialization. Interviews with students' parents would have provided an important layer of insight, and an additional source for triangulation into these factors.

In constructing greater knowledge of this social world, insights gained from this study may resonate with other pockets of elite schooling located within an urban, postcolonial setting, such as in other South Asian contexts. However, like other studies on the socialization of students within elite educational spaces, this dissertation focused on the experiences of students and staff at one specific site. The findings from this case study are meant to be both illuminating and cautionary in highlighting the educational decisions Bangladeshi elites make to maintain their privileges in the system.

As in all research projects, this study is not without its limitations. A key limitation involves the inability to interview a wider variety of students in order to include a more diverse range of backgrounds and experiences. Although it had been my intention to interview O-level students to gain more age diverse perspectives on private tutoring and schooling, I was not able to get the parental consent needed for the two female students I had approached. Similarly, it would have been advantageous to interview more students of lower SES backgrounds, as Abrar was the only student in my sample to feel particularly "different" and othered at GH. As it was not noticeably clear to me during my observation period which students in their tiny Zoom boxes were of a different class background, my purposive sampling approach did not allow for greater class diversity. Further, as I noted in Chapter 3, my

concurrent administration of my survey did not provide me with enough time to analyze its results to inform the recruitment of my student participants.

I would have also liked to interview more female students and teachers, though as I noted earlier, two additional female students declined to be a part of this study, and there are no senior female teachers at GH—only at the GH juniors' level for grades 5 to 8. However interviewing them for a future follow up study could add more of a formative and longitudinal perspective to the learning and socialization at GH, since they teach even younger students who are further away from the high stakes examination period of the O-levels.

Personal Regrets and Reflections

Some of the limitations mentioned in the preceding section were predicated on the circumstances of the coronavirus pandemic. Although collecting data online allowed me to move forward with my doctoral milestones at a time of great uncertainty, it also meant I was not able to conduct a true ethnography. I was not able to hang out in the hallways or the rooftop of the tutoring center, observe after class hangouts between the teachers, students, and administrators, or gain access to parent-teacher and staff meetings. And though I could have tried to conduct interviews with parents, doing so online would have meant relying on young students to enable that linkage and connection, something I was unwilling to burden them with. My decision at each phase of the data collection process, such as when to start administering my questionnaire and when to begin recruiting for interviews, was also influenced by the ebb and flow of the waves of the coronavirus, as I was always unsure if and when GH would go back to being in-person again, which could have had a major impact on the extent of my data collection. Even as I conducted this research with ethnographic methods to the best of my ability, not being able to do an ethnography as I had envisioned myself doing when I started my PhD, remains a personal regret of mine.

All ethnographic research is impacted by the positionality of the researcher. As I recounted in Chapter 3, my insider-outsider positionality came to the forefront over the course of this research. I noticed I found it easier to relate to certain students, as we connected over experiences and events we ascribed shared meaning and value to, because of our elite status; with other students not as much. Even as I continued to wrestle with turning my gaze inward and studying myself as a product of elite schooling throughout doing this research, I felt

validated in choosing this topic and its focus when students let me know they appreciated that I was trying to understand their educational journeys, and choices, and their opinions about those choices. Even for students who hold more social, cultural, and economic capitals than many of their peers, they are not very often asked their own opinions or understandings on such issues, reflecting the Bangladeshi societal norm of not taking what young people say very seriously. I am gratified to be trusted with, and to be able to share some of those experiences. The qualitative and quantitative accounts shared by all my participants matter to me, and I hope also to matter to other policymakers and stakeholders, in our collective efforts to construct a more transparent and equitable educational reality for all.

Future Avenues for Research

In regard to the confines of this study, I hope the relationships I cultivated at GH will allow me to continue working with them in some future research capacity. As I mentioned earlier, this could include a longitudinal form of research as students progress from GH juniors to their A-levels, and even beyond to their tertiary education. Another avenue could be to track the concrete transformation of GH into a school-not-school, and examine any significant changes within its relationships with elite students, the wider community, and the education system.

There are also many aspects of the English medium private schooling and tutoring tracks that need to be interrogated and investigated. As I discussed in the last chapter, there is no systematic data collected on, or holistic framework in place to regulate EM schooling in Bangladesh. EM schools are currently only required to register with the government, which many of them also fail to do (Salman, 2023b). This means there are a multitude of elements within the EM track of schooling that need to be investigated, from quantitative aspects such as how many students are enrolling in them, which the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) collects limited data on, to qualitative aspects such as the quality, role and design of these schools. More qualitative dimensions of private tutoring across different locations, income classes, subjects, grade levels, genders, and the urban-rural divide need to be examined. With private tutoring viewed as a requirement in their schooling for so many students and families, it is time to stop considering private tutoring lessons as “shadow” education, but instead as mainstream education, and it should be treated as such

within the research agenda of individuals and organizations. Considering the established and ongoing role of privatization and commodification within the Bangladeshi education system, such research will help uncover how neoliberalism as an all-encompassing structure blends with the local and political socio-cultural practices, norms and discourse. This has the potential to reveal critical spaces and mechanisms within the education sector that can be emancipatory and transformative for its students.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Students

Hello, my name is Nisma. I am conducting a research study for my PhD. In this study, I want to learn more about how your tutoring experiences at GH, what you feel like you gain from being there, how it contrasts with your school and so forth. If you have any questions about what I am telling you, you can ask me at any time.

If it is okay with you, I will interview you about your experiences at GH. This will take about an hour to an hour and a half.

If you get too tired, uncomfortable, or if this seems too hard just let me know. If you want to stop at any time, just tell me and we will stop. You do not have to be in this study. It is totally up to you. You can say yes now and still change your mind later. All you have to do is tell me. No one will be angry or upset at you if you change your mind.

Your parents/guardians say it is okay for you to be in this study.

[I refer to the participant the signed consent form I have received from them and their parents, and screen share the consent form]

If you have questions for me or for your parents/guardians, you can ask them now or later.

Do you understand what is required of you?

Are you ready to start?

First set of questions: Getting to know the participant and their engagement with GH

1. What school do you attend? Tell me more about it (example: what do you like or not like about it? How long have you studied there?)
2. Tell me more about GH – what do you like or not like about it?
3. What do you like to do when you're not at school or tutoring?
4. Do you have the opportunity to travel (thinking back to pre-COVID times)?
5. Where did you travel to last?
6. What has COVID-19 been like for you?
7. How has it affected your educational decisions?
8. How did you choose what subjects to take in your O/A-levels?
9. Why did you choose GH to be tutored in x/y/z subject(s)?
10. How did you learn about GH?

11. What did you know about GH, prior to enrolling?
12. And so far, how would you describe your experiences at GH?
13. How does this experience contrast to your mainstream school experience?
14. Have you been in tutoring classes before O/A levels?
15. (If yes to the above question, and different from GH) And how would you compare those experiences to those at GH so far?
16. What do you like about learning at GH, compared to other tutoring centers?
17. Did you feel better prepared for your O-level exams after being with GH, rather than no tutoring?
18. In other words, what do you find valuable (value add) about what GH offers?
19. Do you know anyone else enrolled at GH? Who?
20. Did that impact your decision to also come to GH?
21. (If in O-level) Do you think you will continue to enroll at GH for A-levels?
22. Will you also continue to be enrolled in your mainstream school for A-levels? Why or why not?
23. Why are you enrolled in your school and at GH at the same time?
24. Does it concern or worry you at all that your family is having to pay for both your mainstream school, as well as tutoring at GH?
25. Are you involved in any extracurricular activities like sports, drama, debate at GH? Which ones?

Second set of questions: Learning about their perceptions of the tutoring center

26. So you've been with GH for some time now, how is it helping you with your educational aspirations?
27. What advice or recommendations would you give to your younger self, prior to enrolling in tutoring and at GH?
28. If your family or money was not a consideration, would you want to go to university? Where and what would you study?
29. Where are you planning on applying? Do you know anyone at or in that university/area?

30. If your close friend or younger sibling wanted to enroll in GH, would you encourage or discourage them? Why, or why not?
31. Which tutor's classes do you enjoy the most at GH?
32. Are there people at GH (tutor/administrative staff) that you have a friendly relationship with?
33. If you were in serious trouble academically or socially, is there anyone at GH you would reach out to for help?
34. Do you feel free to discuss delicate life related topics with your tutors? Like romantic relationship trouble?
35. Were your parents/family supportive of your decision to enroll at GH?
36. What do your parents/family think about GH and its services?
37. What do your friends think about GH and its services?
38. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your future plans/goals/aspirations?
39. Are you enrolled in any other activities (like internships or volunteering)?
40. Has anyone at GH connected you to any other opportunity or activity?
41. And to conclude, what is the first thing you plan to do after COVID-19 related lockdowns and restrictions are over?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Teachers and Administrators

Thank you for agreeing to take the time to chat with me today. The interview should last no longer than 1.5 hours, including providing time for you to ask any questions you have for me. The purpose of this interview is to understand a little more about your experiences at GH, your motivations for being enrolled/working here, and your aspirations for the future.

[I will refer to the participant the signed and dated consent form I have received from them and screen share the consent form]

I will not use your name, or the name of your classes/tutors/the center, in any publications of my findings. And again, I will not be asking for you to share specific strategies you use to stay competitive in your business or exams, rather your place in the tutoring center, and why you work there. I would like to record the video interview today, if you are willing, and will keep the video and audio recording on a password-protected secure folder in the cloud. No one else will ever watch or listen to the recordings except for me and my supervisor, and if I use any questions from our interview in a written publication, I will ensure that the statement does not identify you and will use a pseudonym, rather than your actual name.

[Next, I go over each section of the consent form, using the screen share]

Do you have any questions? If you are willing to be interviewed, will you please verbally agree for the recording?

Are you ready to start?

Tutor/Administrator Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. Where did you go to school? University?
2. What is your highest level of education?
3. When did you start working at this tutoring center?
4. Why did you start working at this tutoring center?
5. What is the difference between this center, and the others located around this neighborhood?
6. What is the main takeaway you think students take from their time at this tutoring center?

7. Did you know anyone else who worked here, like a friend or colleague?
8. What is your experience with teaching?
9. Do you have formal training in teaching?
10. Do you enjoy working here? What do you enjoy about it?
11. What has been your teaching experience during the COVID-19 pandemic?
12. How do you approach your teaching style?
13. Are there any role models from your school life you look to when you teach? Why those people?
14. Would you consider your colleagues part of your social circle? As friends?
15. Do you think you'll continue to work here for the medium term? Long term?
16. Have you ever recommended members of your family or friends to attend this tutoring center?
17. Do you provide discounts or aid to students? How is that determined?

Appendix C: Survey Questions Administered to Students

This survey is part of a research study being conducted by me, Nisma Elias, a PhD student at the University of Minnesota in the USA. In this survey, I want to learn about your family background, educational journey so far, and any life goals you may have. This survey is part of a larger study I am conducting to learn more about student experiences and practices at coaching centers in Bangladesh. You are being asked to take this survey because you are enrolled in coaching classes at Greater Heights (GH). The survey should take about 7-10 minutes of your time.

If the survey feels too tiring or difficult, you can stop at any time. You do not have to complete this survey. No one will be angry at you if you change your mind. Your teachers say it is okay for you to be in this study. Your answers will remain confidential and will not be shared with anyone at GH. Please let me (Nisma) know if you have any questions about it through my email (elias279@umn.edu) or through my Facebook ID (nisma.elias)

1. Do you agree to take this survey for the purposes of the study conducted by Nisma Elias: Yes/No
2. What is your full name?
3. How old are you?
4. Where do you live currently?
5. Which area outside Dhaka? (e.g. Sylhet, Chittagong, Kushtia)
6. Which area in Dhaka? (e.g. Dhanmondi, Mirpur, Uttara)
7. Who do you live with? [you can select multiple options or Other extended family (please write down who)
8. Are your parents currently married?
9. Do you have any siblings or immediate family who have immigrated abroad?
10. Where have they immigrated to?
11. What does your mother do professionally?
12. What does your father do professionally? - Selected Choice
13. What level of education does your mother have?
14. What level of education does your father have?
15. How many personal cars does your family have?

16. How many drivers does your family employ?
17. How many maids/buas/household help does your family employ?
18. Does your family own the apartment/house/place you live in?
19. How many properties does your family own in Bangladesh, if any? - Selected Choice
20. Do you currently attend school full-time?
21. Which school do you attend? (please provide the full name)
22. Since which grade have you been at this school?
23. How do you get to school?
24. Who drives you to school?
25. What are you currently doing coaching for at Greater Heights (GH)?
26. How many subjects in total are you taking for your O-levels?
27. How many subjects in total are you taking for your AS or A-levels (whichever one is sooner)?
28. How many subjects in total are you currently doing private coaching in?
29. Please list all those subjects.
30. Outside of GH (and GH teachers), how many other teachers are you going to for coaching? [this includes any schoolteachers you are going to for coaching]
31. How many hours a week do you spend in coaching classes? (your best estimate)
32. Are you currently involved in any extracurricular activities (e.g. sports, debate, drama, volunteering)?
33. Pre-COVID, were you involved in any these of extracurricular activities (like sports, debate, drama, volunteering) through Greater Heights?
34. Which types of activities were you involved with, through GH? (e.g. debate, basketball, etc.)
35. What are the main reasons you are doing coaching at Greater Heights?
36. After completing your A-levels, what is your goal for your education?
37. Where are you aiming to go?
38. Why are you aiming to gain admission here? (e.g. due to family expectations, your own goals, prestige of the university, etc.)
39. What is your aspiration(s) for your career? (check all that apply for you)

40. Do you give permission to having parts of your answers from this survey cited anonymously (without using your name) for the study?
41. Is there anything else you would like me to know in relation to any of the questions or answers above? Feel free to say anything else you think is important.
    If you have nothing else to say, you can leave this section blank.