

A Qualitative Study on How Lower Socio-Economic Status Influences Perceptions and Performance in Online Classes

By

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A thesis submitted to the BRAC Institute of Educational Development in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Approval

The thesis/project titled “**A Qualitative Study on How Lower Socio-Economic Status Influences Perceptions and Performance in Online Classes**” submitted by

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Ethics Statement

This research was conducted with the utmost adherence to ethical principles to ensure the rights, dignity, and confidentiality of all participants were safeguarded. The study followed the guidelines outlined by institutional ethical review boards and relevant international standards for ethical research involving human subjects.

Informed Consent: Prior to participation, all participants were provided with a detailed explanation of the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, including written consent from parents or guardians for student participants under the age of 18. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any repercussions.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: To protect participants' identities, all personal data were anonymized. Pseudonyms were used in place of actual names in any documentation, analysis, or reporting of findings. Data were securely stored and accessible only to the principal investigator and authorized personnel.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Efforts were made to ensure that participants felt no coercion or obligation to take part. This was particularly emphasized for students and parents, to prevent any perceived pressure from school authorities.

Sensitivity to Vulnerable Groups: Given the study's focus on lower socio-economic status (SES) households, special care was taken to approach participants with sensitivity and respect. Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in comfortable settings, with consideration given to participants' time constraints and personal circumstances.

Minimization of Harm: The research design prioritized minimizing potential discomfort or harm to participants. Questions were framed in a non-invasive manner, and participants were

encouraged to share only what they felt comfortable discussing. Support resources were provided if any participant expressed distress during the study.

Transparency and Feedback: Participants were informed of how their data would be used and assured that findings would be presented in a way that contributes to positive societal change. Participants who expressed interest were offered a summary of the study's results upon its completion.

Compliance with Legal and Institutional Guidelines: The study complied with all relevant legal and institutional requirements. Ethical approval was obtained from [Institution Name or Ethics Review Board], ensuring that the study met all necessary standards for research integrity and participant welfare.

By adhering to these ethical principles, the research aimed to maintain the highest standards of respect, fairness, and accountability, ensuring that the findings contribute meaningfully to the understanding and improvement of educational equity.

Abstract

The rapid shift to online learning, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, has magnified socio-economic disparities in education. This qualitative study investigates the influence of parental socio-economic status (SES) on student performance, engagement, and experiences in online classrooms, focusing on a diverse lower SES population at the selected school at Rayer Bazar in Dhanmondi. Using in-depth interviews with parents and teachers and focus group discussions with students, the research identifies critical factors, including access to technology, parental involvement, and home learning environments, that shape online learning outcomes.

Findings reveal that students from lower SES backgrounds face significant barriers, such as limited access to devices and internet connectivity, disruptive home environments, and

reduced parental support. Despite these challenges, resilience and resourcefulness were observed, with families employing adaptive strategies to mitigate limitations. The study underscores the urgent need for policy interventions and educational reforms to address these disparities and promote equity in digital education.

The results contribute to a deeper understanding of the digital divide and its implications for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, offering actionable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers. Recommendations include providing subsidized devices, parental training programs, and flexible learning models to enhance online learning accessibility and effectiveness.

Keywords: Socio-economic status (SES), online learning, digital divide, parental involvement, qualitative research, educational equity, resilience, adaptive strategies.

Dedication

This Thesis is dedicated to my students of Grade 7 from the year 2022, whose experiences and resilience inspired me to delve deeper into the impact of socio-economic status on education and conduct this research. Their determination and creativity have been a constant source of motivation throughout this journey.

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List of Acronyms

SES	Socio-Economic Status
LMS	Learning Management System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities
FGD	Focus Group Discussion

Glossary

Socio-Economic Status (SES)	A composite measure that typically includes economic, social, and work status, determined by income, education, and occupation.
Digital Divide	The gap between individuals or communities that have access to modern information and communication technology and those that do not.
Parental Involvement	The participation of parents in their children's education, including helping with homework, attending parent-teacher meetings, and creating a supportive learning environment.
Online Learning	A mode of education where teaching is conducted over the internet, allowing students to access educational material remotely.
Hybrid Learning	A teaching method that combines in-person instruction with online learning, leveraging the advantages of both.
Resilience	The ability to recover quickly from difficulties and adapt to challenging circumstances, especially in the context of education.
Educational Equity	The principle of providing fair opportunities for all students to succeed, regardless of their socio-economic background.
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	A research method involving a small group discussion to explore participants' views, experiences, and attitudes on a specific topic.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Technology has revolutionized the education sector, introducing innovative tools and methods that have transformed traditional learning environments. Online classrooms, once a supplemental tool for flexibility and outreach, are now pivotal in shaping modern education systems (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). This transformation reflects broader trends in digital integration, where schools and universities worldwide have embraced blended learning approaches to meet the diverse needs of learners. Blended learning combines face-to-face instruction with online resources, enabling students to benefit from the flexibility of digital education while maintaining interpersonal interactions in physical classrooms (Horn & Staker, 2015).

The role of online education gained unprecedented prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced an abrupt shift from traditional in-person teaching to fully virtual platforms. This global crisis acted as a stress test for educational systems, revealing both the potential and limitations of online learning. Schools, universities, and policymakers scrambled to adopt digital platforms, ensuring that millions of students could continue their education despite physical closures (Dhawan, 2020). However, the transition was far from seamless. It highlighted glaring disparities in infrastructure, digital access, and support systems, particularly among students from lower socio-economic status (SES) households (Garcia & Weiss, 2020).

Socio-economic status has long been recognized as a critical determinant of educational outcomes. Students from higher SES backgrounds benefit from better access to educational

resources, parental support, and enrichment opportunities, which contribute to their academic success (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). These advantages become even more pronounced in online learning environments, where access to technology—such as computers, tablets, and high-speed internet—is essential for effective participation (Harris et al., 2020). In contrast, students from lower SES households often face significant barriers. Many lack the devices, internet connectivity, and quiet spaces necessary for online study, forcing them to engage with educational content under suboptimal conditions (Andrew et al., 2020).

Bangladesh, a country with significant socio-economic challenges, exemplifies the deep-rooted educational disparities exacerbated by the shift to online learning. According to BRAC (2021), less than 30% of students from lower SES backgrounds could consistently access online education during the pandemic, compared to over 80% of their higher SES counterparts. Factors such as inadequate infrastructure, limited access to devices, and low digital literacy among parents have severely hindered the educational progress of disadvantaged students (Kabir & Khan, 2022; Rahman et al., 2021). These challenges are compounded by broader socio-economic issues, including poverty, overcrowded living conditions, and limited parental education, which create additional barriers to effective online learning (Sarker et al., 2021).

The challenges of online learning for lower SES students extend beyond access to technology. Digital literacy is another critical factor influencing the effectiveness of online education. While students from higher SES families often receive substantial support from tech-savvy parents, their counterparts from disadvantaged backgrounds may lack similar guidance (Di Pietro et al., 2020). Parents in lower-income households frequently face additional barriers, such as long working hours, limited education, or unfamiliarity with digital tools, which hinder their ability to support their children's education (Hecht & McCarthy, 2021). As a result, these students often experience feelings of frustration,

isolation, and disengagement, which negatively impact their engagement and performance (Dumford & Miller, 2018).

Perceptions of online learning also play a significant role in shaping educational experiences. Students with positive perceptions of online learning, such as viewing it as convenient, flexible, and engaging, are more likely to perform well academically (Sun & Rueda, 2012). However, research indicates that students from lower SES backgrounds often view online learning as burdensome and isolating. The lack of interaction with peers and teachers, combined with technological challenges, diminishes their sense of belonging and engagement (Hecht & McCarthy, 2021). These perceptions contribute to a widening achievement gap between students from different socio-economic groups.

Despite the return to in-person education in many regions, online learning continues to play a vital role in education. Schools and universities have embraced hybrid models that combine the strengths of both in-person and online instruction (Means et al., 2020). However, the systemic inequalities exposed during the pandemic remain a pressing concern. Without targeted interventions, students from lower SES backgrounds are likely to face continued disadvantages in accessing and benefiting from online education (Kuhfeld et al., 2020).

This study aims to explore the intersection of socio-economic status and online learning, focusing on how lower SES influences students' perceptions and engagement and performance in virtual classrooms. Through qualitative analysis, it seeks to uncover the lived experiences of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, shedding light on the barriers they face and the strategies they employ to navigate these challenges. By understanding these dynamics, the research hopes to inform policies and practices that promote equity in online education, ensuring that all students can thrive in a digital learning environment.

1.2 Research Topic

Topic: The Perception of Online Classes Among Lower SES Parents and Students and Its Influence on Engagement and Performance

Title: A Qualitative Study on How Lower Socio-Economic Status Influences Perceptions and Performance in Online Classes

1.3 Statement of the Problem

With the rapid shift to online learning, particularly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, disparities in educational outcomes have become increasingly apparent. One significant factor contributing to these disparities is the socio-economic status (SES) of students' parents (Goudeau et al., 2021). Children from higher SES backgrounds often have access to better resources, including high-speed internet, up-to-date technology, and quiet, dedicated spaces for studying. Their parents may also have more time and educational background to support their children's learning (Goudeau et al., 2021). Conversely, students from lower SES backgrounds may struggle with unreliable internet connections, outdated or insufficient technology, and crowded or noisy environments that are not conducive to learning (Anderson & Perrin, 2018). Additionally, their parents might be less able to assist with schoolwork due to work commitments or lower levels of education.

The digital divide has significantly exacerbated these issues, as highlighted by van Deursen and van Dijk (2014), who noted that disparities in access to technology and digital literacy disproportionately affect students from low-income households. During the pandemic, these gaps widened further, with students from disadvantaged backgrounds experiencing greater learning loss due to insufficient access to instructional time and technological tools (Kuhfeld et al., 2020). Furthermore, Di Pietro et al. (2020) emphasized that marginalized communities

faced unique challenges, including limited access to reliable internet, inadequate parental support, and greater disruptions in their education.

In addition to infrastructural barriers, psychological and social challenges also play a role. Research by Sun et al. (2022) underscores that low-SES students often encounter feelings of isolation and reduced motivation in online settings, which are compounded by the lack of a supportive learning environment at home. These challenges highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions to address both the technological and socio-emotional aspects of online learning disparities.

The difference in SES can result in significant gaps in students' online class performance, with students from lower SES backgrounds falling behind their classmates (Maldonado & De Witte, 2020). Understanding how parental SES influences student performance in online classes is crucial for developing strategies to mitigate these disparities and ensure equitable educational opportunities for all students. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach, including providing access to necessary resources, fostering supportive educational environments, and implementing policies that promote equity in education (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020; Andrew et al., 2020). This thesis aims to explore these dynamics and provide insights into how educational institutions can better support students from lower socio-economic backgrounds in an online learning environment.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do parents from lower socio-economic status backgrounds perceive the effectiveness and accessibility of online classes for their children?
2. What challenges do students from lower socio-economic status backgrounds face in online learning environments?
3. How do the socio-economic conditions of parents influence their ability to support their children's online learning?
4. How do teachers perceive the impact of lower socio-economic status on students' engagement and performance in online classes?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate how parental socio-economic status (SES) influences students' performance, engagement, and perceptions in online learning environments. The swift transition to online education, hastened by the COVID-19 pandemic, has magnified existing educational disparities and emphasized the necessity of understanding how socio-economic factors impact learning outcomes in virtual settings. While extensive research has established a strong link between parental SES and students' engagement and performance in traditional classrooms (Coleman et al., 1966; Sirin, 2005), fewer studies have examined these relationships in the context of online learning. This study seeks to bridge that gap by examining the unique challenges and opportunities presented by virtual education for students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Educational research has consistently highlighted the advantages enjoyed by students from higher SES families, including greater access to resources such as books, private tutoring, and technology, as well as more supportive home learning environments (Bradley & Corwyn,

2002; Davis-Kean, 2005). These factors significantly contribute to academic success by fostering cognitive development, enhancing study habits, and providing emotional support. In contrast, students from lower SES backgrounds often face structural barriers, such as financial constraints, limited access to educational tools, and less parental involvement due to work commitments or lack of familiarity with academic content (Reardon, 2011).

The shift to online learning has introduced additional layers of complexity to these disparities. Access to technology, reliable internet connectivity, and a quiet, conducive space for studying have become essential for success in virtual classrooms. However, these resources are unevenly distributed, with students from low-SES families being disproportionately affected. For instance, van Deursen and van Dijk (2014) emphasized the "digital divide," where unequal access to digital tools and internet connectivity exacerbates educational inequalities. Zhou et al. (2020) corroborated this, finding that students from low-SES households often struggled with inconsistent internet access, outdated or shared devices, and insufficient parental guidance during online classes.

Furthermore, research by Kuhfeld et al. (2020) revealed that students from economically disadvantaged families experienced greater learning loss during the pandemic compared to their higher SES peers, primarily due to interruptions in instructional time and limited access to remote learning resources. Other studies, such as by Di Pietro et al. (2020), have shown that these challenges disproportionately affect marginalized communities, deepening existing educational gaps.

In Bangladesh, where approximately 20.5% of the population lives below the poverty line (World Bank, 2020), the digital divide represents a critical barrier to educational equity. Students from low-income families often lack the devices, internet connectivity, and quiet spaces necessary for effective participation in online classes (Andrew et al., 2020; Hasan et

al., 2021). These issues are exacerbated by limited parental involvement, as many parents in lower SES households work long hours or lack the digital literacy to support their children's online learning (Hecht & McCarthy, 2021).

This study aims to shed light on these disparities and propose solutions to bridge the gap. By analyzing the experiences of students, parents, and teachers, the research will highlight the systemic and individual factors that contribute to the educational challenges faced by lower SES communities in Bangladesh.

This study aims to explore the perceptions and experiences of students and parents from low-SES households to better understand the following:

1. How parental income, education level, and occupational status affect students' access to online learning resources and tools?
2. The influence of SES on students' engagement and participation in virtual classrooms.
3. The coping mechanisms and strategies employed by low-SES families to navigate challenges associated with online learning.
4. Potential policy recommendations to address these disparities and promote equity in online education.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform educational stakeholders about the profound effects of socio-economic disparities on online education outcomes. Understanding these impacts is crucial for several reasons.

Firstly, the shift to online education has underscored the unequal access to educational resources, particularly affecting students from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Goudeau et al., 2021). By examining the influence of parental SES on student performance in online

classrooms, this research will shed light on the extent and nature of these disparities. The findings will inform strategies to promote educational equity, such as providing subsidized or free access to digital devices and reliable internet for low-SES students, developing targeted academic support programs like tutoring and mentoring, and creating training programs for parents to better support their children's online learning. Research by Kim and Moore (2022) has shown that such interventions significantly improve engagement and performance in online learning for disadvantaged students. By implementing these strategies, educational institutions can ensure that all students have better opportunities for success in the digital age, regardless of their socio-economic background.

Secondly, understanding the role of parental SES in online learning performance can help teachers tailor their teaching strategies to better support all students. By recognizing the specific challenges faced by students from different socio-economic backgrounds, such as limited access to technology and less academic support at home, teachers can adopt more inclusive and effective teaching practices that address these barriers (Engzell et al., 2021). Insights from Andrade and Alden's (2020) study on differentiated instruction indicate that adapting pedagogical methods to address socio-economic disparities can significantly enhance student outcomes. Additionally, the insights from this research can enhance teachers' awareness of how students' experiences, attitudes, and perceptions are shaped by their socio-economic contexts, leading to more empathetic and supportive educational environments.

Thirdly, Understanding the impact of socio-economic status on online education is critical for addressing educational inequities in Bangladesh. The findings of this study can inform the development of targeted interventions to support lower SES students and ensure equitable access to online learning resources. For instance, policymakers can use the insights to design initiatives such as subsidized devices, community-based learning hubs, and parental training programs to enhance digital literacy and engagement (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020).

Teachers can benefit from understanding the specific challenges faced by lower SES students and adopting more inclusive teaching practices. For example, differentiated instruction tailored to the needs of diverse learners can help bridge the achievement gap and foster a more equitable learning environment (Engzell et al., 2021). Furthermore, the study's emphasis on resilience and resourcefulness among lower SES families can guide the development of community-driven solutions to enhance educational outcomes.

Finally, this study seeks to inform educators, policymakers, and stakeholders about the potential disparities and challenges faced by students from different socio-economic backgrounds. The findings aim to contribute to the development of targeted interventions and support systems to enhance equity and effectiveness in online education (Johnson & Smith, 2020). Beyond identifying challenges, the study will explore how differences in SES influence students' overall online learning experience, their attitudes towards education, and their perceptions of their own abilities. Addressing these issues is crucial for ensuring that the shift to online education does not widen the achievement gap but rather provides an opportunity for more inclusive and equitable learning experiences (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). These insights could inform the design of programs that bolster student resilience, adaptability, and engagement in the face of socio-economic challenges, thereby fostering a more supportive and effective learning environment (Andrew et al., 2020; Albright et al., 2023).

In summary, this study is significant because it addresses critical gaps in our understanding of how socio-economic factors influence students' experiences, attitudes, and perceptions in online learning environments. By examining these influences, the findings could inform policies and practices aimed at promoting equitable and effective online education for all students. For instance, educators can develop more inclusive teaching strategies that consider the diverse challenges faced by students from various socio-economic backgrounds (Engzell

et al., 2021). Policymakers can design targeted interventions to support students' resilience and adaptability, ensuring that all learners have equal opportunities to succeed (Johnson & Smith, 2020). Additionally, these insights can guide future research focused on creating more empathetic and supportive educational environments, ultimately leading to improved student engagement and academic outcomes in the digital age (Andrew et al., 2020; Reimers & Schleicher, 2020).

Chapter 2

Background Discussion, Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Background

The global shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic revolutionized education systems worldwide. In Bangladesh, this transformation highlighted significant challenges and opportunities, especially for students from lower socio-economic status (SES) households. While the pandemic disrupted traditional classroom learning, it also accelerated the adoption of digital education, compelling schools and policymakers to explore hybrid learning models to bridge the gaps caused by school closures (Rahman et al., 2021). These models, which integrate face-to-face teaching with online learning tools, have become a cornerstone of post-pandemic education in Bangladesh, especially during extended school breaks caused by natural disasters or other crises (Mohiuddin & Reza, 2022).

Bangladesh has a large and diverse education system that includes public, private, and non-governmental organization (NGO)-run schools. However, socio-economic disparities are deeply entrenched, particularly in public schools serving lower SES communities. For these schools, the shift to online learning during the pandemic exposed systemic inequities, including inadequate infrastructure, lack of digital access, and limited teacher training in online pedagogy (Mamun et al., 2020). Students from lower SES families faced the brunt of these challenges, often struggling to access the devices, internet connectivity, and parental support necessary for effective participation in online classes (Sarker et al., 2021).

The government's initiatives, such as broadcasting lessons through national television and launching mobile apps, provided some relief but fell short of ensuring equitable access to

education. According to a survey by BRAC (2021), less than 30% of students from lower SES backgrounds in Bangladesh could consistently access online education during the pandemic, compared to over 80% of students from higher SES households. This disparity highlights the digital divide, which continues to hinder the implementation of hybrid learning in low-income communities.

Despite these challenges, the pandemic also demonstrated the resilience of the Bangladeshi education system and its ability to adapt. Many lower SES schools, though initially ill-equipped, began incorporating digital tools into their teaching practices. Post-pandemic, hybrid learning has emerged as a viable solution to address interruptions in education caused by events like floods or political unrest, which are common in Bangladesh. Schools now use online platforms to maintain continuity during extended breaks, ensuring that students do not fall behind academically (Kabir & Khan, 2022).

However, the implementation of hybrid learning in lower SES schools remains fraught with challenges. Many families cannot afford the necessary technology, and teachers often lack the training required to effectively blend traditional and digital teaching methods. These issues are compounded by broader socio-economic factors, such as poverty, parental illiteracy, and overcrowded living conditions, which make it difficult for students to engage in online learning at home (Hasan et al., 2021).

The shift to hybrid learning in Bangladesh has also illuminated the gender disparities that exist within lower SES households. In many cases, cultural norms and gender expectations prioritize boys' education over girls', leading to a disproportionate impact on girls' participation in online learning during school closures (Akter et al., 2021). While both boys and girls face challenges such as lack of access to devices and the internet, girls are more likely to be pulled out of school to assist with household responsibilities, especially in rural

and low-income areas. This results in fewer girls being able to engage with online learning platforms compared to their male counterparts.

Addressing these gender disparities requires targeted interventions that not only focus on improving access to technology but also consider socio-cultural factors. Gender-sensitive policies, such as subsidized access to digital tools for girls and community programs aimed at promoting digital literacy among young women, are essential for ensuring equitable participation in online education (Akter et al., 2021). By acknowledging and addressing the gendered challenges in accessing hybrid learning, stakeholders can create more inclusive educational opportunities for all students.

Discussion:

The Digital Divide in Bangladesh

The transition to hybrid learning has intensified the digital divide in Bangladesh, particularly for lower SES schools. A World Bank (2022) report notes that only 41% of households in Bangladesh have access to the internet, with rural areas lagging significantly behind urban centers. For lower SES families, the affordability of smartphones, laptops, and internet data packages is a major barrier. This disparity in access undermines the equity goals of hybrid learning, as students from affluent households are better positioned to benefit from digital education compared to their peers from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The digital divide is further exacerbated by gender disparities. In many lower SES households, cultural norms prioritize boys' education over girls', resulting in fewer girls participating in online learning during school closures (Akter et al., 2021). Addressing these disparities requires targeted interventions, including subsidies for technology and internet access, gender-sensitive policies, and community outreach programs to promote digital literacy.

Teacher Preparedness and Training

Effective implementation of hybrid learning depends on teachers' ability to adapt to new technologies and teaching methodologies. In Bangladesh, however, a significant proportion of teachers in lower SES schools lack the necessary training to deliver online or blended lessons effectively (Mohiuddin & Reza, 2022). During the pandemic, many teachers struggled to navigate digital platforms, resulting in poor-quality instruction and limited student engagement (Rahman et al., 2021).

Post-pandemic, government and NGO-led training programs have attempted to address this gap by equipping teachers with digital skills and knowledge of hybrid teaching strategies. For instance, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with international organizations, has launched capacity-building initiatives to train teachers in using Learning Management Systems (LMS) and other online tools (Kabir & Khan, 2022). While these efforts are commendable, they must be scaled up to reach all lower SES schools, particularly in rural and remote areas.

Parental Involvement and Home Learning Environment

Parental involvement is a critical factor in the success of hybrid learning. However, in lower SES households in Bangladesh, parents often lack the education or digital literacy to support their children's online learning (Sarker et al., 2021). Many parents also face competing demands, such as long working hours or financial pressures, leaving them with little time to supervise their children's studies.

Additionally, overcrowded and noisy living conditions in lower SES homes make it difficult for students to concentrate on online lessons. Without dedicated study spaces, many students struggle to stay engaged, leading to lower performance (Hasan et al., 2021). Addressing these

challenges requires community-based support systems, such as study hubs or shared learning spaces, where students can access a conducive learning environment.

2.2 Literature Review

The Role of Socio-Economic Status (SES) in Engagement & Performance

Socio-economic status (SES) is a well-established determinant of educational outcomes, shaping students' access to learning resources, home support systems, and opportunities for academic growth (Smith & Johnson, 2022). SES encompasses various factors, such as family income, parental education levels, and occupational status, which collectively influence a child's ability to engage with educational opportunities. In the context of Bangladesh, SES disparities are particularly pronounced and deeply rooted in systemic inequalities, which are exacerbated in online and hybrid learning models.

Access to Resources and Technology

Access to digital tools and internet connectivity is fundamental for participation in online learning environments. However, significant disparities exist between high- and low-SES students. Families from higher SES groups can afford modern devices, stable internet, and supplementary resources like tutoring or educational software, which significantly enhance learning outcomes (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Davis-Kean, 2005). Conversely, lower SES families often struggle to meet even the basic technological requirements for online education.

In Bangladesh, a study conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that only 37% of students nationwide had access to a personal device suitable for online learning, with rural areas showing significantly lower figures (Rahman et al., 2021). Furthermore, the "digital

divide" described by Van Deursen and Van Dijk (2014) persists not only in access but also in usage. Lower SES students often lack digital literacy, which limits their ability to effectively utilize available resources.

These disparities create a feedback loop of inequality. Students without access to essential technology fall behind in learning outcomes, leading to gaps in engagement and performance that are difficult to bridge. For example, Engzell, Frey, and Verhagen (2021) observed that during the pandemic, lower SES students globally experienced disproportionate learning losses, a phenomenon mirrored in Bangladesh. Limited access to online platforms and educational content has left many Bangladeshi students unable to keep pace with their more privileged peers.

Parental Involvement and Supportive Home Environments

Parental involvement is a critical factor influencing student performance, especially in the online learning paradigm. Higher SES families often have the means to provide structured learning environments, including designated study spaces, supervision during online classes, and access to additional academic support (Davis-Kean, 2005). Parents in these households are typically better educated and more equipped to assist with schoolwork or navigate digital platforms.

In contrast, Bangladeshi families from lower SES backgrounds face considerable barriers to creating conducive home learning environments. Many parents in these households lack formal education or familiarity with digital technologies, making it challenging for them to provide the same level of support as their higher SES counterparts (Kabir & Khan, 2022). Furthermore, economic constraints often necessitate that parents work long hours, leaving little time to supervise or engage in their children's education.

Research by Goudeau et al. (2021) underscores how the shift to online learning has amplified these disparities. Lower SES students not only lack material resources but also face emotional and motivational challenges due to the absence of parental support. In Bangladesh, these issues are further compounded by socio-cultural factors, such as large family sizes and crowded living conditions, which make it difficult for students to concentrate on their studies. Hasan et al. (2021) found that students from families where parents had at least a secondary education were significantly more likely to perform well in online classes compared to their peers from less-educated households.

Challenges Faced by Low-SES Students

The challenges faced by low-SES students in Bangladesh are multifaceted and deeply entrenched. Zhou et al. (2020) identify key barriers such as inadequate internet access, lack of digital devices, and limited familiarity with online learning platforms. These challenges are particularly acute in rural and underserved areas, where infrastructure deficits further exacerbate inequalities.

For many Bangladeshi students, the transition to online and hybrid learning has been hindered by systemic issues. Rural areas, which house a significant portion of the country's lower SES population, often lack basic amenities like electricity, let alone high-speed internet. This digital divide leaves rural students disproportionately disadvantaged. Rahman et al. (2021) report that only 12% of rural students had access to stable internet during the pandemic, compared to 58% in urban areas.

Additionally, socio-economic pressures compel many students from low-income families to take on domestic responsibilities or part-time work, leaving little time for academic pursuits. BRAC (2021) highlights that a significant percentage of Bangladeshi students from lower

SES backgrounds had to contribute to household incomes during school closures, further widening the education gap.

The psychological impact of these challenges cannot be overstated. Lower SES students often face heightened stress and anxiety due to financial instability and academic pressures. These factors contribute to disengagement from learning, leading to poorer academic outcomes (Engzell, Frey, & Verhagen, 2021).

Addressing Socio-Economic Disparities in Online Education

Addressing the socio-economic disparities that hinder equitable access to online and hybrid education requires comprehensive, multi-pronged interventions. In Bangladesh, several initiatives have been proposed, though their implementation and reach remain limited.

Investing in Digital Infrastructure

One of the most pressing needs is expanding access to digital devices and reliable internet connectivity. Programs aimed at providing affordable or free devices to low-income students, coupled with subsidized internet packages, can bridge the digital divide. Government initiatives such as distributing tablets to rural students and expanding broadband infrastructure have shown promise but require significant scaling to meet national demand (Mohiuddin & Reza, 2022).

Enhancing Parental Engagement

Parental involvement programs can empower low-SES families to play a more active role in their children's education. These programs can include digital literacy training, workshops on supporting online learning, and community-based initiatives to foster a culture of academic engagement. In Bangladesh, schools can collaborate with local NGOs to implement such

programs, targeting areas with high concentrations of low-income families (Kabir & Khan, 2022).

Providing Academic Support

Targeted academic support, such as tutoring and mentorship programs, can help low-SES students overcome learning barriers. Di Pietro et al. (2020) advocate for interventions tailored to the needs of disadvantaged students, such as after-school programs and supplementary instructional resources. In Bangladesh, community learning centers and mobile education units have been proposed as viable solutions to address the needs of students in remote or underserved areas.

Gender Lenses

The intersection of gender and socio-economic status further complicates access to online education in Bangladesh. Cultural norms and traditional gender roles often prioritize male children when resources are limited. Boys are more likely to be provided with devices for online classes and taken seriously regarding their educational needs. Conversely, girls are frequently treated as secondary priorities, with limited access to technological resources.

In many households, girls are discouraged from spending time on devices, as parents often mistrust their ability to use them effectively for educational purposes. Instead, they are expected to focus on domestic responsibilities, such as household chores, which are viewed as more appropriate for their role in the family (Rahman et al., 2023). This disparity not only hinders girls' participation in online education but also perpetuates long-standing gender inequities in academic and professional opportunities.

Research highlights that in families with limited resources, boys are significantly more likely to own personal devices or have uninterrupted access to shared devices compared to their sisters (Haque & Alam, 2022). Furthermore, the mistrust surrounding girls' use of technology

is reinforced by socio-cultural narratives that view education for girls as less valuable than for boys. As a result, girls face additional barriers, both structural and societal, in accessing and engaging with online education.

Efforts to address these gendered disparities must include targeted awareness campaigns to challenge societal norms, as well as specific programs that ensure equitable access to technology for girls. Community-driven initiatives can play a pivotal role in shifting perceptions and promoting the value of girls' education within families and communities (Khan et al., 2023).

2.3 Conceptual framework

This conceptual framework investigates the influence of parental socio-economic status (SES) on student performance in online classrooms. It employs the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) to explore how parental income and education levels impact students' online class attendance and academic outcomes.

Parental SES Factors

Parental SES is multifaceted, with income and education level playing pivotal roles in shaping a child's educational opportunities. **Income**, as a determinant of the financial resources available, directly affects access to essential educational tools, such as technology and a stable internet connection, crucial for online learning (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Sun & Rueda, 2012). Higher-income families are better positioned to provide an environment conducive to learning, ensuring students face fewer interruptions or technological barriers (van Lancker & Parolin, 2020).

Educational level, reflecting parental academic attainment, correlates with the emphasis placed on the value of education. Parents with higher educational qualifications often display greater involvement in their children's academic activities, which has been linked to

improved educational outcomes (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Davis-Kean, 2005). They are also more likely to perceive and promote the benefits of online education, reinforcing positive attitudes toward technology use in their children (Andrade & Alden, 2020).

Mediating Factors

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) provides a lens through which to analyze mediating variables impacting student performance in online classes:

1. **Perceived Usefulness (PU):** This pertains to the belief that technology can enhance the learning experience. Students and parents who view online tools as beneficial are more likely to engage actively in online education (Doucet et al., 2020). It is defined as the degree to which students and parents believe that online learning tools enhance the learning experience. This is operationalized through interview and focus group questions assessing participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of digital platforms in improving understanding and engagement.
2. **Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU):** Technology's ease of use is critical, particularly for younger learners and less tech-savvy parents, as it minimizes resistance to online platforms (Means, Bakia, & Murphy, 2020). It refers to the simplicity and intuitiveness of using online platforms. This is evaluated by analyzing barriers to usage, such as technical difficulties or lack of digital literacy, identified during qualitative data collection.
3. **Access to Technology:** Availability of necessary tools such as computers and stable internet remains a significant determinant of online learning participation (Anderson & Perrin, 2018; Mamun, Hossain, & Uddin, 2020). Operationalized through data on the availability of devices (e.g., computers, tablets, smartphones) and internet

connectivity. The study considers both quantitative measures (e.g., number of devices) and qualitative feedback on the adequacy of these resources.

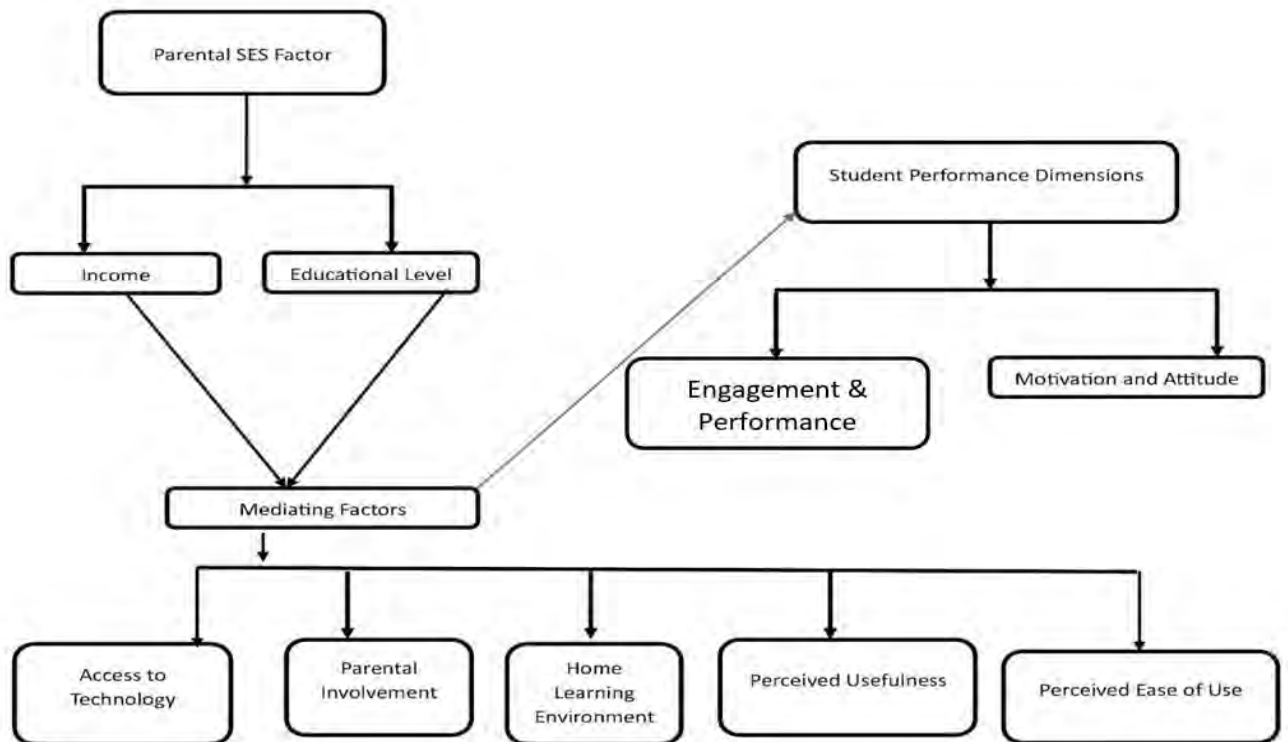
4. **Home Learning Environment:** A supportive home setting, including quiet study spaces and parental support, has been shown to foster better engagement and learning outcomes (Reardon, 2011). Encompasses the physical and emotional support structures available to students at home. Operationalization includes observations and reports on the availability of quiet study spaces, parental support during online classes, and the overall conduciveness of the home setting to learning.
5. **Parental Involvement:** High levels of parental engagement, encompassing monitoring and direct support, are crucial in sustaining students' focus and motivation during online classes (Epstein, 2001). It is measured by the frequency and type of parental engagement, such as helping with assignments, supervising online sessions, or communicating with teachers. Data is derived from parent interviews and teacher observations.

Student Performance Dimensions

The study evaluates student performance across three dimensions:

1. **Attendance:** Regular participation in online classes is a direct indicator of engagement. Lower SES households often face barriers to consistent attendance, such as technological inadequacies and competing household responsibilities (Andrew et al., 2020; Hecht & McCarthy, 2021).
2. **Engagement and Performance:** Insights into student learning are gathered qualitatively through interviews and focus groups involving students, parents, and teachers, emphasizing the disparities in achievement among SES groups (Sirin, 2005; Goudeau et al., 2021).

3. **Motivation and Attitude:** Attitudinal measures assess students' enthusiasm and resilience in online settings, highlighting the impact of SES on fostering a positive learning disposition (Sun, Wu, & Lee, 2022).



Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative research design to delve deeply into how parental socioeconomic status (SES) shapes student performance in online classrooms. A qualitative approach was chosen because it prioritizes understanding the lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by individuals within their socio-cultural and economic contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Unlike quantitative methods that focus on numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative research emphasizes context, detail, and complexity. By engaging directly with participants, the study aims to uncover nuanced insights that might be overlooked in standardized surveys or experimental setups.

The non-numeric nature of qualitative data—comprising interviews, focus groups, and observational notes—allows for an interpretive and flexible framework to explore how students navigate online education amid resource constraints (Rossman & Rallis, 2017). This approach is particularly suitable for addressing sensitive issues like SES disparities, as it fosters a collaborative environment where participants feel encouraged to share their authentic experiences. Through methods such as thematic coding and narrative analysis, the research will explore the multifaceted ways in which SES influences academic outcomes, attendance, and motivation in online settings.

By situating the findings within broader theoretical frameworks, including the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), this approach ensures that the research not only identifies challenges but also generates actionable insights to improve online learning accessibility and equity.

3.2 Research Site

The research will be conducted at RAYER BAZAR, located in Dhanmondi, Dhaka. RAYER BAZAR serves students in grades 6-9, offering a unique socio-economic microcosm that mirrors the struggles and opportunities experienced by lower SES families in urban Bangladesh. The school's location in a densely populated area with significant economic disparity provides a critical backdrop for studying how SES mediates access to and success in online education.

Urban environments like Rayer Bazar present a mix of advantages and challenges, from higher availability of infrastructure to stark inequalities in access to technology. These dynamics make RAYER BAZAR an ideal research site for exploring how socio-economic constraints manifest in educational outcomes. For instance, while some families may possess rudimentary digital tools, others may lack even the most basic resources, such as reliable internet or parental support for online learning. The diversity within the chosen school of RAYER BAZAR's student body ensures that the study captures a broad spectrum of SES-related influences, allowing for a richer analysis of trends and patterns.

The selection of grades 6-9 as the focus is deliberate. These formative years represent a critical period in a student's academic journey, where foundational skills are solidified, and the transition to higher educational demands begins. By honing in on this age group, the study aims to shed light on how socio-economic factors impact students' ability to adapt to and thrive in an increasingly digital learning landscape.

3.3 Research Participants

The study will employ a purposive sampling method to select participants capable of providing rich, relevant, and diverse data. The participants will include:

- **Students:** Six students from grades 6–9, representing lower SES backgrounds.
- **Parents:** Three parents actively engaged in their children’s education.
- **Educators:** Two teachers with substantial experience in online teaching and familiarity with the selected students’ engagement in online learning.

To ensure a comprehensive exploration of SES-related dynamics, participants will represent varying socio-economic backgrounds. This study categorizes families into three distinct SES stages, determined by educational attainment, income levels, and access to resources:

1. **Educated and Low-Income Families:** Families where at least one parent has completed higher secondary education or above but experiences financial constraints.
2. **Partially Educated and Low-Income Families:** Families where parents have some level of primary or secondary education but did not complete their schooling.
3. **Uneducated and Low-Income Families:** Families where neither parent has formal education.

This classification highlights the nuances of SES, emphasizing how varying levels of parental education influence access to resources, parental engagement, and student experiences in online learning.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

The study adopts a purposive sampling approach to ensure participants are chosen based on specific characteristics aligned with the research objectives, such as socio-economic background, experience with online education, and role in the educational ecosystem.

Selection Criteria

1. **Parents:** Three parents will be selected based on socio-economic indicators, such as income level, educational attainment, and access to digital tools. Additionally, parents who actively participate in school activities, including PTMs and school events, will be prioritized. These parents are expected to provide rich insights into how their involvement influences their children's engagement in online learning. Each parent will represent one of the three SES subcategories (educated, partially educated, and uneducated), ensuring a range of perspectives and experiences.
2. **Teachers:** Two teachers (one male and one female) will be chosen based on two criteria:
 1. They teach the grades included in the study.
 2. They have significant experience conducting online classes.

These teachers will offer complementary perspectives, grounded in their direct observations of how socio-economic disparities affect student engagement in online classrooms. Their insights are particularly valuable for identifying systemic challenges and opportunities for improving engagement among lower SES students.
3. **Students:** Six students from grades 6–9 will participate in a focus group discussion (FGD). These students have been carefully selected to represent varying socio-

economic backgrounds and levels of parental education and involvement, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of SES-related impacts on student engagement.

1. Two students will come from families classified as Educated and Low-Income Families. These families have at least one parent who has completed higher secondary education or above. Despite financial constraints, these parents actively engage in their children's education by attending parent-teacher meetings (PTMs), providing consistent support for online learning, and creating an environment that values education. These students are expected to offer insights into how structured parental involvement and educational awareness mitigate some challenges posed by lower income.
2. Two students will represent Partially Educated and Low-Income Families, where parents have completed only primary or secondary schooling. These families may have limited understanding of advanced educational practices and online learning requirements but still show varying levels of involvement in their children's education. These students will shed light on how parental education and limited resources affect engagement, particularly in online settings where digital literacy and consistent support are crucial.
3. Two students will come from Uneducated and Low-Income Families, where neither parent has formal education. Among these, one family exhibits structured involvement, actively participating in school-related activities such as PTMs and supporting the child's learning efforts despite their educational limitations. The other family represents minimal parental involvement due to a lack of awareness, confidence, or resources. These students will provide

perspectives on the compounded challenges of navigating online education with limited support and resources at home.

This selection ensures a diverse and nuanced understanding of how various SES factors, including parental education and involvement, influence student engagement in online classrooms. It allows the research to capture both shared and unique experiences across different socio-economic conditions.

Sample Size

The total sample size is 14 participants, as outlined in the following breakdown:

- **In-depth interviews:** 3 parents and 2 teachers (5 participants total).
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** One FGD with 6 students.

Three parents were deemed sufficient as they represent diverse socio-economic conditions, allowing for detailed exploration of individual family dynamics while achieving data saturation. Including multiple SES stages ensures the capture of varied challenges and coping mechanisms across the spectrum.

Two teachers were chosen to provide perspectives on how socio-economic disparities among students influence engagement and performance in online classrooms. Their small number ensures an in-depth analysis while minimizing redundancy in qualitative insights. Teachers, as experienced observers, can identify patterns and disparities related to SES that complement the parental and student perspectives.

Participants will be identified through direct communication with chosen school's administration. The class teachers will assist in identifying potential participants based on the selection criteria. Once identified, participants will be approached individually, and their consent to participate in the study will be obtained through an informed consent form.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The study will employ two primary qualitative data collection methods: In-Depth interviews & Focus Group Discussions.

3.5.1 Interview:

In-depth interviews will be conducted with selected parents and educators to provide a nuanced understanding of individual experiences and perceptions regarding the impact of SES on online learning. The interviews will be semi-structured, using an interview guide with open-ended questions to allow for flexibility and follow-up on interesting points raised by participants. The interviews with parents and educators will cover personal experiences with online learning, challenges and advantages faced during online education, the influence of socio-economic factors on learning engagement and performance, and attitudes towards the use of technology in education.

Structure of Interviews: The interviews will begin with warm-up questions to establish rapport, followed by thematic segments covering access to resources, challenges, support systems, and perceptions of online learning. Each interview will conclude with reflective and open-ended questions, allowing participants to share additional insights. The semi-structured format ensures that while core questions are addressed, there is room for elaboration based on individual responses.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion:

FGDs will be conducted with students to facilitate interactive discussions that reveal collective views and deeper insights into how SES affects their online learning experiences. These discussions will be semi-structured and guided by a moderator using an interview guide with open-ended questions. Topics covered will include access to technology and resources, the creation of supportive home learning environments, parental involvement in online education, and perceptions of the usefulness and ease of use of online learning.

Structure of FGDs: The FGDs will begin with an introduction to the purpose and rules of the discussion to create a safe and respectful environment. Participants will then engage in guided discussions focusing on predefined themes, such as challenges in online learning and strategies for improvement. Ice-breaker activities will be included to encourage participation, particularly among shy or reserved students. The discussion will end with a summary and an opportunity for participants to add any overlooked insights.

Mitigating Potential Biases: To minimize biases during FGDs, the following strategies will be employed:

1. **Neutral Moderation:** The moderator will adopt a neutral stance, avoiding leading questions or affirmations that might influence participants' responses.
2. **Ensuring Equal Participation:** Efforts will be made to encourage all participants to contribute, preventing dominant individuals from overshadowing quieter voices.
3. **Anonymous Sharing:** Participants will have the option to share sensitive opinions anonymously through written notes, which will be discussed without attribution.

4. **Diverse Group Composition:** The student participants will be selected to reflect a range of SES experiences, ensuring diverse perspectives are represented.
5. **Clarification and Probing:** Follow-up questions will be used to clarify ambiguous responses and delve deeper into shared experiences without imposing interpretations.

This chart displays the methods and procedures used for gathering data, together with the number of participants for each method:

Methods	Numbers (Parents)	Number (Students)	Number (Teachers)	Total Participants
In Depth interview	3	0	2	8
FGDs	0	6	0	6
Total				14

3.6 Role of the Researcher

The researcher will play a central role as the primary data collector, analyst, and interpreter in this qualitative study. To ensure credibility and authenticity, the researcher will adopt a reflexive approach, remaining conscious of personal biases and their potential influence on data collection and interpretation.

Responsibilities

1. Data Collection:

- Conduct semi-structured, in-depth interviews with parents and teachers using an interview guide to facilitate open and flexible dialogue.
- Act as a moderator during FGDs with students, creating a supportive and non-judgmental environment to encourage honest and open discussions.

2. Ethical Considerations:

- Obtain informed consent from all participants before data collection.
- Ensure anonymity and confidentiality by assigning pseudonyms and securely storing all data.
- Practice cultural sensitivity and empathy, particularly given the socio-economic vulnerabilities of the participants.

3. Data Analysis:

- Transcribe and thematically code interview and FGD data to identify recurring patterns and themes.
- Cross-reference data from parents, teachers, and students to ensure triangulation and enhance the validity of findings.

4. Facilitator and Observer:

- While moderating FGDs, the researcher will observe group dynamics and non-verbal cues that may provide additional context to students' verbal responses.

- Maintain a neutral stance during discussions, encouraging all participants to express their views without imposing personal opinions.

5. Maintaining Trustworthiness:

To ensure the study's rigor, the researcher will adhere to qualitative research principles, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Regular peer debriefings and member checking will be conducted to validate the interpretation of findings and reduce potential biases.

6. Reflexivity Practices:

Maintaining a Reflexive Journal: Regular journaling will capture reflections on potential biases and their influence on data interpretation.

Peer Review: Engaging peers to review data interpretations will provide alternative perspectives and validate findings.

Critical Self-Reflection: Continuous self-assessment will ensure that personal assumptions do not overshadow participants' authentic voices.

By assuming these roles, the researcher will contribute to generating an in-depth and balanced understanding of how SES impacts online learning experiences at RAYER BAZAR. By adopting these practices, the researcher aims to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the study's findings.

3.7 Data Analysis

This chapter presents the findings derived from the data collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) and provides an in-depth analysis of how parental socio-economic status (SES) influences student performance in online classrooms. Using thematic analysis, key themes were identified, coded, and interpreted to understand the relationship

between SES and various factors impacting online education. The analysis is structured according to the study's objectives and focuses on attendance, performance, and engagement in online learning.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was utilized as the methodological framework to systematically analyze the qualitative data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). This approach, guided by the six-phase process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), allowed for a thorough and structured examination of the data to uncover key insights.

The first phase, familiarization with the data, involved an in-depth engagement with the collected materials. Audio recordings from interviews and FGDs were meticulously transcribed verbatim, ensuring that every detail of the participants' responses was captured.

The transcriptions were then read and reread multiple times, enabling the researcher to immerse themselves in the data and gain an initial sense of the recurring narratives.

In the second phase, generating initial codes, the data was systematically segmented into smaller, meaningful units. Codes were created to represent specific ideas or observations related to the participants' socioeconomic status (SES) and its influence on their experiences with online learning. These codes acted as building blocks for subsequent analysis, ensuring that all relevant details were accounted for.

The third phase, searching for themes, involved grouping related codes into broader categories. These emerging themes represented recurring patterns or significant aspects of the data that provided insights into the shared experiences of participants. This step required a close examination of how various codes interconnected to form coherent themes.

During the fourth phase, reviewing themes, the identified themes were critically evaluated and refined. This iterative process involved revisiting the original data to ensure that the themes accurately reflected the participants' voices and experiences. Themes that were too

broad or insufficiently supported by the data were either adjusted or discarded, ensuring a robust and reliable analysis.

The fifth phase, defining and naming themes, focused on clearly articulating the essence of each theme. Each theme was carefully defined, highlighting its relevance to the research objectives and its contribution to understanding the impact of SES on online learning.

Descriptive labels were assigned to themes to succinctly convey their core meaning.

Finally, the sixth phase, producing the report, entailed the synthesis of the analysis into a cohesive narrative. The themes were presented in detail, accompanied by vivid descriptions and direct quotes from participants to illustrate key points. This final step ensured that the analysis was both comprehensive and grounded in the lived experiences of the participants, offering valuable insights into the research topic.

Tying Themes to Research Questions

The themes derived from thematic analysis were explicitly linked to the study's research questions:

1. How do parents from lower socio-economic status backgrounds perceive the effectiveness and accessibility of online classes for their children?
 - o Themes Tied: Parental involvement, Access to technology, Home learning environment.
 - o Explanation: These themes provide insight into parents' roles, the barriers they face, and the support systems required for online education.
2. What challenges do students from lower socio-economic status backgrounds face in online learning environments?
 - o Themes Tied: Access to technology, Student engagement, Home learning environment.

- o Explanation: These themes highlight systemic and individual barriers affecting students' learning experiences.
3. How do these challenges influence their engagement and performance?
 - o Themes Tied: Performance and Engagement, Student motivation and attitude, Attendance.
 - o Explanation: These themes connect challenges to measurable performance outcomes, demonstrating the impact of SES.
 4. How do the socio-economic conditions of parents influence their ability to support their children's online learning?
 - o Themes Tied: Parental involvement, Home learning environment.
 - o Explanation: These themes illustrate the interplay between SES and parental capacity to facilitate learning.
 5. How do teachers perceive the impact of lower socio-economic status on students' engagement and performance in online classes?
 - o Themes Tied: Student engagement, Performance, Parental involvement.
 - o Explanation: These themes reflect teachers' observations of SES-related disparities in learning outcomes and engagement.

Triangulation

To enhance the validity and reliability of findings, data were triangulated by comparing responses across parents, teachers, and students. This approach helped identify commonalities and variations in experiences related to SES and online learning.

3.8 Ethical Issues and Concerns

Ethical considerations were integral throughout this study to ensure adherence to the principles of responsible research and the rights of participants. Below, the ethical issues encountered and the steps taken to address them are discussed.

Consent from Participants

Prior to data collection, informed consent was sought from all participants, including parents, teachers, and students. Detailed information about the study's objectives, methods, and potential implications was provided to ensure participants understood their involvement. Consent forms were signed by adults, and verbal consent was obtained from students under the guidance of their parents or guardians.

Confidentiality

To protect participants' privacy, pseudonyms were used in all transcripts and analysis to ensure anonymity. Data, including audio recordings and transcripts, were securely stored in password-protected digital files, and access was limited to the researcher. No identifiable information was disclosed in the final thesis or related documents.

Dealing with Bias

As a researcher, I acknowledge that my background, beliefs, and prior knowledge of socio-economic disparities in education could influence the interpretation of data. To mitigate potential bias, I maintained a reflexive journal throughout the study to critically reflect on my assumptions. Triangulation of data from parents, students, and teachers further helped validate findings and reduce individual bias in data interpretation.

Respect for Human Rights

Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any repercussions. Additionally, efforts were made to create a comfortable and non-intimidating environment during interviews and FGDs, ensuring that participants felt safe and respected.

3.9 Credibility and Rigor

Researcher's Experience and Training

As the researcher, I possess prior experience in conducting qualitative studies and have completed courses in research methodologies, including interviewing and thematic analysis techniques. My academic background includes coursework on socio-economic issues and their impact on education, providing a strong foundation for understanding the nuances of this topic.

Prior Knowledge of the Topic

Having worked previously in educational settings within lower SES communities, I have firsthand knowledge of the challenges faced by students, parents, and educators in such environments. This prior exposure allowed me to approach the research with sensitivity and insight, while remaining open to new perspectives.

Development of the Study

The research process involved developing a comprehensive research matrix and a detailed outline. A research proposal was submitted and approved before proceeding to data collection. The study design included iterative revisions to the interview guides and FGD protocols to ensure alignment with the research objectives.

Personal and Professional Characteristics

My empathetic nature and ability to build rapport with participants positively influenced the data collection process, enabling candid and detailed responses. However, I recognize that

my proximity to the topic may have shaped my interpretations, which I addressed by engaging in critical self-reflection and seeking feedback from peers and advisors during the analysis phase.

3.10 Limitations of the study

1. **Limited Research Sites:** The study was confined to a single school at Rayer Bazar, Dhanmondi due to time and funding constraints. Exploring additional schools could have provided a broader understanding of SES impacts across diverse contexts.
2. **July Movement:** Significant delays occurred due to the July Movement, a political revolution led by students, which disrupted the study's timeline. This event also influenced and reshaped the views of teachers, parents, and students on online learning.
3. **FGD Participants:** The focus group discussion (FGD) included only female participants, as the school was exclusively for girls, resulting in the absence of male students' perspectives.
4. **Pandemic-Related Constraints:** The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic limited opportunities for in-person interactions, potentially affecting the depth of some discussions.
5. **Potential Biases Due to Sample Size and Site:** The small sample size and focus on a single research site may introduce biases, as the findings might not fully capture the diversity of experiences across different schools or broader SES contexts. This limitation underscores the need for cautious interpretation of the results and further research to validate and expand upon the study's conclusions.

Impact of Limitations

The study's limitations may have influenced the diversity and comprehensiveness of the findings. Being confined to a single school in Rayer Bazar, Dhanmondi, restricted the generalizability of the results to other contexts. The delays caused by the July Movement disrupted the timeline and reshaped participants' perspectives on online learning, which may have influenced their responses. Additionally, the focus group discussions were limited to female students, excluding male perspectives that could have added depth to the findings. The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic also restricted in-person interactions, potentially reducing the richness of some discussions. Finally, the small sample size and single-site focus may have introduced biases, emphasizing the need for cautious interpretation and further research to validate and expand upon these findings. Despite these challenges, the rigorous application of qualitative methods ensured the study's insights remain valuable and reflective of the studied context.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

The findings of this study reveal how parental socio-economic status (SES) shapes students' experiences, engagement, and outcomes in online learning. Insights were drawn from in-depth interviews with parents and teachers, as well as focus group discussions (FGDs) with students, using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes.

The analysis focuses on six core areas: access to technology and internet, parental involvement, home learning environment, student engagement and participation, impact on engagement, participation and resilience and resourcefulness. These themes provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and adaptive strategies observed among students from lower SES households.

By exploring both structural barriers and psychological dimensions, the findings highlight the disparities in online learning opportunities while showcasing the determination and creativity of participants in overcoming these obstacles. The results contribute valuable perspectives for addressing inequalities and improving educational equity in digital learning contexts.

Overview of Themes:

Using thematic analysis, six primary themes emerged from the data:

1. **Access to Technology and Internet**
2. **Parental Involvement**
3. **Home Learning Environment**

4. **Student Engagement**
5. **Student Participation**
6. **Resilience and Resourcefulness**

Comparison of Results Across Participant Groups:

Theme	Students	Parents	Teachers
Access to Technology and Internet	Shared frustration over limited devices and unstable internet, which restricted their ability to complete assignments and attend classes regularly.	Highlighted the financial strain of purchasing devices and maintaining stable internet services. They described challenges in managing device sharing among siblings.	Observed that technological limitations directly affected attendance and engagement, disproportionately impacting lower SES students.
Parental Involvement	Felt isolated and unsupported when parents were unavailable to assist with assignments or online activities.	Struggled to balance responsibilities with work, often making sacrifices to support their children's education.	Noted that students with active parental involvement demonstrated more confidence and consistency in online learning.
Home Learning Environment	Struggled with distractions in overcrowded	Found it difficult to provide quiet, structured spaces for	Identified a lack of conducive home environments as a

Theme	Students	Parents	Teachers
	households, which made focusing on online classes challenging.	learning. Many parents described sacrificing personal comfort to create better environments for their children.	significant barrier to effective learning. Teachers empathized with these challenges and sought ways to support students emotionally.
Student Engagement	Reported feelings of detachment and lack of motivation during online classes, often citing a lack of peer interaction and support.	Observed reduced enthusiasm in their children and frequently needed to encourage participation and focus.	Highlighted that students' engagement was significantly affected by family support and SES-related stressors, emphasizing the importance of nurturing relationships.
Student Participation	Expressed reluctance to actively participate in online classes due to a lack of confidence or fear of judgment from peers and teachers.	Noticed that their children often hesitated to ask questions or engage in class discussions, relying more on one-on-one help at home.	Observed that participation levels were lower among students from lower SES households, often due to inadequate resources and lack of preparation.
Resilience and Resourcefulness	Demonstrated creativity by	Leveraged community resources, mobile apps,	Emphasized the need for systemic support to sustain

Theme	Students	Parents	Teachers
	recording lectures, collaborating with peers, and finding alternative ways to study despite limitations.	and extended family support to compensate for resource gaps.	resilience in both students and families, recognizing the importance of addressing structural barriers.

Analysis by Theme:

4.1.1 Access to Technology and Internet

Access to adequate technology and stable internet was a recurring issue among participants, particularly parents and students from lower SES households.

- **Key Challenges:**

- o Shared devices among siblings caused scheduling conflicts, leading to missed lessons and interruptions.
- o Older devices and reliance on mobile data or neighbors' Wi-Fi created technical disruptions (Parent 1, Parent 3, Student 4).

- **Impact on Learning:**

- o Frequent disconnections during live classes resulted in gaps in understanding, with students often needing to catch up on their own (Student 2).
- o Limited access to devices and slow internet disproportionately affected students' ability to engage in group projects or complete assignments on time.

- **Disparities:**

- o Students expressed frustration over shared resources, while teachers emphasized systemic barriers. Parents highlighted financial strain as the root cause of inadequate technology.

This finding aligns with the concept of the digital divide, where lower SES families face significant barriers to accessing reliable technology and stable internet (Rahman et al., 2021). According to TAM's construct of Perceived Ease of Use (Davis, 1989), the lack of dependable tools hinders effective technology adoption for educational purposes. Moreover, the disparities highlighted by BRAC (2021) underline the systemic inequities in digital access within lower SES households in Bangladesh.

Supporting Quote:

"We have one computer that the whole family shares. It's hard to manage class schedules, and sometimes my eldest has to use my phone, which isn't the same experience." – Parent 1

4.1.2 Parental Involvement

Parental involvement varied significantly based on their educational background and work schedules.

- **Key Findings:**

- o Educated parents were more confident assisting their children with schoolwork and navigating technology (Teacher 1).
- o Parents with limited education expressed helplessness, relying on external resources or older siblings to support children (Parent 2).

- o Work commitments hindered the ability of many parents to engage consistently with their children's online learning.
- **Impact on Students:**
 - o Children of more involved parents demonstrated better attendance and motivation.
 - o Lack of parental support contributed to feelings of isolation and reduced performance in online settings (Student 1, Student 6).
- **Disparities:**
 - o Students in homes where parents were less educated or too busy to assist faced higher emotional and academic challenges. Teachers noted this gap as a critical factor in student success.

The role of parental SES in shaping involvement and support for children's education is supported by Bradley and Corwyn (2002) and Hasan et al. (2021), who emphasize the positive correlation between parental education and student outcomes. Chapter 2's discussion on digital literacy among parents from lower SES backgrounds further explains their struggles to navigate online platforms effectively (Kabir & Khan, 2022).

Supporting Quote:

"I may not understand all their subjects, but I try to cheer them on and remind them of their goals." – Parent 3

4.1.3 Home Learning Environment

The home environment played a pivotal role in determining students' ability to focus and engage in online learning.

- **Key Findings:**
 - o Crowded households and noisy settings hindered concentration during classes (Student 1, Student 3).
 - o Students who had access to dedicated study spaces showed higher levels of engagement and productivity.
- **Impact on Learning:**
 - o Disruptions led to missed content and diminished learning outcomes.
 - o Lack of structure at home made it difficult for students to replicate the discipline of a classroom setting.
- **Disparities:**
 - o Teachers noted that students from lower SES lacked conducive environments, while parents cited their inability to create structured spaces.

Chapter 2's analysis of supportive home environments (Reardon, 2011) underscores how structured spaces contribute to better engagement. For lower SES families, the absence of such conditions exacerbates the challenges of remote learning, as noted by Hasan et al. (2021).

Supporting Quote:

"At school, there's a clear structure. At home, it's easy to get distracted." – Student 1

4.1.4 Student Engagement and Participation

Students reported lower engagement and reduced participation compared to in-person learning.

- **Key Challenges:**

- o Feeling disconnected from teachers and classmates diminished the interactive aspects of learning (Student 6).
- o Technical and environmental challenges further discouraged participation.

- **Impact on Students:**

- o Hesitation to ask questions during live classes led to unresolved doubts (Student 6, Student 2).
- o Reduced motivation and lack of peer collaboration negatively influenced engagement and performance.

The disengagement experienced by students reflects the findings of Goudeau et al. (2021), who discuss the psychological and motivational barriers faced by lower SES students. The lack of peer interaction aligns with Chapter 2's exploration of the socio-cultural impact on engagement.

Supporting Quote:

"Even if I'm paying attention, it feels like I'm just staring at a screen with no real connection to anyone." – Student 6

4.1.5 Impact on Student Engagement and Participation

The shift to online learning had notable effects on student engagement and participation, which varied based on SES levels.

Student Engagement:

- **Key Findings:**

- o Students experienced challenges in maintaining focus and engagement, especially without hands-on learning opportunities and limited teacher interaction (Teacher 1, Student 5).
- o Subjects requiring practical application, such as science, were particularly affected by the lack of experiential learning experiences.

Student Participation:

- **Key Findings:**

- o Students from lower SES backgrounds faced more significant barriers to active participation due to technological limitations and less conducive learning environments.

These findings suggest that the transition to online learning posed challenges for students in engaging meaningfully with the content and participating fully, particularly for those in lower SES households.

Supporting Quote:

"I worry about gaps in their learning, especially in math and science." – Parent 3

4.1.6 Resilience and Resourcefulness

Despite challenges, participants demonstrated remarkable adaptability and problem-solving skills.

- **Key Findings:**

- o Students developed self-reliance by using online resources and peer collaboration to compensate for gaps in instruction (Student 5).

- o Parents and students alike employed creative solutions, such as using free apps or borrowing Wi-Fi, to overcome barriers (Parent 3).

The resilience observed aligns with Goudeau et al. (2021), who highlight the importance of adaptability in overcoming systemic challenges. Chapter 2's emphasis on targeted interventions underscores the need for systemic support to complement individual resilience.

Supporting Quote:

"My child started recording the audio of their classes on my phone so they can review it later." – Parent 1

4.1.7 Similarities and Differences in Perceptions

An analysis of participant responses reveals both similarities and differences in their perceptions of the challenges and opportunities associated with online learning.

Similarities:

- All groups emphasized the critical role of access to reliable technology and stable internet. Students, parents, and teachers agreed that these factors are foundational for effective online learning (Rahman et al., 2021; Davis, 1989).
- Resilience emerged as a common theme, with students devising individual strategies and parents providing moral support. Teachers highlighted the need for systemic solutions to foster resilience across socio-economic divides.

Differences:

- Students focused on the direct impact of technical and environmental barriers, such as device sharing and noisy home environments, on their engagement and participation.

- Parents emphasized their struggles with digital literacy and balancing work responsibilities with supporting their children's education.
- Teachers expressed concerns about pedagogical challenges, such as the inability to provide hands-on learning and the lack of meaningful student-teacher interactions in online settings.

Implications: Understanding these similarities and differences is crucial for developing targeted interventions that address the specific needs of each group while fostering collaboration between students, parents, and teachers to improve online learning outcomes.

Summary of Findings:

The analysis revealed that socio-economic status significantly impacts access to technology, parental involvement, and home learning environments, all of which influence students' engagement, motivation, and performance. However, the data also highlighted resilience among participants, underscoring their determination to overcome systemic barriers.

4.2 Charts, Figures, Tables and Graphs

Themes	Key Findings	Impact	Supporting Quotes
Access to Technology and Internet	Limited devices, unreliable internet, and shared resources caused disruptions in learning.	Frequent class interruptions led to gaps in understanding and reduced participation.	"We only have one smartphone in the house, and it's my husband's. My kids take turns using it for their classes." - Parent 1
Parental	Higher parental education improved	Engaged parents enhanced student	"I want to help my daughter, but I don't

Themes	Key Findings	Impact	Supporting Quotes
Involvement	engagement; lower education limited support.	motivation; lack of support increased isolation.	understand her subjects. Sometimes I ask the teacher for help, but it's embarrassing." - Parent 2
Home Learning Environment	Crowded and noisy homes hindered focus; dedicated spaces improved productivity.	Learning was disrupted, affecting participation and preparedness.	"My house is small, and there's always noise. I can't focus during online classes because my siblings are running around." - Student 4
Student Engagement	Disconnection from peers and teachers reduced motivation and focus.	Reduced motivation to participate and lack of interaction negatively influenced learning experiences.	"Even if I'm paying attention, it feels like I'm just staring at a screen with no real connection to anyone." - Student 6
Student Participation	Lack of collaboration and unresolved doubts diminished active involvement.	Low participation affected learning progress and collaborative opportunities.	"Even if I'm paying attention, it feels like I'm just staring at a screen with no real connection to anyone." - Student 6
Resilience and	Students and parents	Adaptive strategies	"My child started

Themes	Key Findings	Impact	Supporting Quotes
Resourcefulness	employed creative solutions like using free apps and sharing resources.	mitigated challenges but were insufficient to bridge all gaps.	recording the audio of their classes on my phone so they can review it later." - Parent 1

Disparities in Key Themes Across Groups

Theme	Students	Parents	Teachers
Technology Access	Device sharing caused delays.	Struggled to afford devices.	Attendance affected.
Engagement	Limited motivation and doubts.	Noted external dependency.	Decline in interaction quality.
Home Environment	Noise and lack of study space.	Inability to create quiet areas.	Observed diminished discipline.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

The results of this study illuminate the significant impact of socio-economic status (SES) on students' experiences and performance in online learning. The findings indicate that disparities in access to technology, parental involvement, and home learning environments are critical factors influencing educational outcomes. These observations align with previous research while offering a nuanced understanding of how SES mediates online education challenges.

The data suggest that limited access to digital devices and unstable internet connections hindered lower SES students' ability to participate consistently in online classes. This supports findings by Bradley and Corwyn (2002) that SES significantly affects access to educational resources. Additionally, the study observed that parental education levels influenced their capacity to support children academically, with less educated parents expressing helplessness in navigating online learning platforms. These insights highlight the critical role of parental involvement, echoing Epstein's (2001) framework on family engagement in education.

The findings related to the digital divide reflect insights discussed in Chapter 2, emphasizing the systemic barriers to technology access for lower SES families (Rahman et al., 2021; BRAC, 2021). The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) highlights how Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness are undermined for students and parents facing these challenges. This is further compounded by the limited digital literacy among lower SES parents, as noted by Kabir and Khan (2022), reducing their ability to provide adequate support in online learning.

Although the study did not reveal overwhelming evidence of gender disparities through focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews, some patterns suggest an undercurrent of inequity. In several lower SES households, male students were given priority access to digital devices and online learning opportunities. Female students, on the other hand, often faced restrictions due to ingrained socio-cultural norms. Some participants reported that girls were expected to complete household chores during study hours rather than "wasting time" on devices. Additionally, parents expressed skepticism about girls using devices for academic purposes, citing concerns about misuse.

These findings resonate with studies such as Haque and Alam (2022) and Rahman, Sultana, and Karim (2023), which highlight the systemic neglect of girls in digital education access in Bangladesh. The prioritization of male education reflects broader societal patterns of gender bias, limiting girls' opportunities for academic growth and contributing to long-term disparities in educational and professional outcomes.

Unexpected findings from this study include the profound resourcefulness and resilience demonstrated by lower SES families. Families developed innovative, grassroots-level adaptations such as recording class audio on mobile devices for later review, creating informal peer-learning networks, and utilizing free or low-cost educational apps to bridge knowledge gaps. Resilience strategies also included the strategic sharing of devices and leveraging public internet facilities, showing a community-driven approach to overcoming systemic inequities.

Another unanticipated insight was the role of older siblings in facilitating learning. In some families, older siblings who had greater familiarity with digital tools assumed the role of informal tutors, helping younger students navigate online platforms and complete

assignments. This finding highlights the importance of intergenerational learning dynamics within households.

Additionally, the emotional resilience of students was notable. Despite the pressures of noisy households and shared resources, many students demonstrated an ability to remain motivated and committed to their studies. This resilience was often fueled by aspirational goals, with students expressing a strong desire to improve their socio-economic circumstances through education.

Lastly, a reliance on social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube for supplemental learning emerged as a significant trend. Students and parents used these platforms to access tutorials, attend live classes, and find subject-specific content, often in regional languages. This unexpected reliance suggests an untapped potential for integrating social media into formal education, especially for marginalized communities.

Globally, similar resilience strategies and adaptations have been observed. In Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, UNESCO (2020) reported the use of community learning hubs and mobile education units to bridge access challenges. In Latin America, studies by the World Bank (2021) revealed that families in Brazil and Colombia formed neighborhood-based peer-learning groups and utilized free digital content platforms provided by NGOs to support online education.

In rural India, research by Chandra et al. (2021) highlighted the role of WhatsApp-based group learning initiatives, where local teachers facilitated discussions and distributed study materials to students without consistent internet access. This demonstrates how mobile technology can be leveraged to overcome digital divides in resource-constrained settings.

However, international studies also shed light on gender disparities that parallel findings from this study. For example, Petrosyan et al. (2022) found that in rural Armenia, male students

were often prioritized in the allocation of limited digital resources, while female students faced expectations to perform domestic tasks during school hours. Similarly, Rahman, Sultana, and Karim (2023) noted that in Bangladesh, patriarchal norms often deprive girls of equitable access to technology and online education. These comparisons highlight a pervasive global trend of gender-based inequities in digital learning access, reinforcing the need to address these biases in educational policy and practice.

The results underscore the importance of addressing disparities in technology access, parental support, and home learning environments to improve the educational experience for lower SES students. While systemic barriers were significant, the resilience strategies demonstrated by families highlight the capacity for innovation and adaptability under challenging circumstances. Gender inequities also emerged as a critical dimension of these disparities, with girls in lower SES households often deprived of equal opportunities to engage in online learning.

Institutional support tailored to these adaptive strategies could transform short-term coping mechanisms into sustainable solutions for educational equity. Addressing gender norms and socio-economic barriers concurrently will be essential to ensuring that all students, regardless of background, can access and benefit from digital education.

5.2 Conclusion

This research set out to explore how socio-economic status (SES) influences student performance and engagement in online classrooms. By incorporating the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers, it has provided a nuanced understanding of the systemic challenges and adaptive strategies shaped by SES disparities in online learning.

The findings revealed that lower SES families face significant barriers, including limited access to technology, inadequate parental support, and the presence of disruptive home

environments. These challenges align with the concept of the digital divide discussed in earlier chapters, echoing the findings of Rahman et al. (2021) and Bradley and Corwyn (2002). Furthermore, the study shed light on gender disparities within lower SES households, where male students were often prioritized for access to devices and educational opportunities, while female students faced expectations to take on household responsibilities instead of dedicating time to their education. This reflects broader socio-cultural norms and gender biases, as highlighted by Haque and Alam (2022) and Rahman, Sultana, and Karim (2023).

Despite these systemic barriers, this research also uncovered remarkable resilience among lower SES families. Innovative strategies, such as informal peer-learning networks, the use of free educational apps, and the involvement of older siblings as informal tutors, demonstrated the adaptability of these households. Additionally, students' emotional resilience and aspirational goals emerged as powerful motivators, even in the face of limited resources. These findings emphasize the potential of lower SES families to overcome challenges when provided with institutional support tailored to their needs.

In a global context, the adaptive strategies observed in this study are mirrored in other low- and middle-income countries, where community-driven solutions and mobile technology have been leveraged to bridge digital divides. However, this study highlights that without addressing underlying socio-economic inequities, including gender biases, such solutions will only provide temporary relief.

The insights gained from this research underscore the importance of collaborative efforts between educators, policymakers, and communities. Addressing systemic barriers requires a multi-pronged approach that includes investing in digital infrastructure, enhancing parental

engagement through targeted programs, and integrating gender-sensitive strategies to ensure equitable access to education for all students.

Ultimately, this study reinforces the urgent need to reimagine online education as an inclusive and equitable platform. By combining institutional support with community resilience, we can move closer to a future where every child, regardless of their socio-economic background or gender, has the opportunity to thrive academically and achieve their full potential.

5.3 Recommendations

Implement programs to supply affordable or free laptops, tablets, and reliable internet services to low-income families to enable equitable access to online learning.

Develop hybrid learning schedules and local learning hubs to accommodate students with technological or environmental constraints at home.

Equip educators with strategies to engage lower SES students effectively and adapt teaching methods for virtual and hybrid classrooms.

Establish parental support workshops and community-based resources to support students and their families in navigating online education.

Use data-driven approaches, including key performance indicators and stakeholder feedback, to regularly assess the impact of interventions and refine strategies for supporting disadvantaged learners.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Consent Letter

Brac IED

Dhaka, Bangladesh

15.10.2024

Subject: Consent for Participation in Research Interviews

Dear Mr./Mrs. _____,

I am Mastura Maliyat, a fellow of TFB and a graduate researcher at BRAC IED. I am conducting a study titled **“A Qualitative Study on How Lower Socio-Economic Status Influences Perceptions and Performance in Online Classes”** as part of my academic research. The study aims to explore the impact of socio-economic factors on online learning experiences to better understand the challenges and opportunities faced by students, parents, and educators in this context.

You have been selected as a potential participant because of your valuable insights and experiences. Your participation in this study will involve an in-depth interview that will last approximately [Duration, e.g., 30–60 minutes]. The interview will be semi-structured and conducted either in person, via phone, or through an online platform, depending on your preference.

Please note the following regarding your participation:

1. **Voluntary Participation:** Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences or penalties.

2. **Confidentiality:** All information shared during the interview will be kept strictly confidential. Your name and identifying details will not appear in the study or any related publications. Instead, pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity.
3. **Recording:** With your consent, the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy in data collection and analysis. These recordings will be securely stored and deleted upon completion of the study.
4. **Risks and Benefits:** There are no anticipated risks to your participation. Your contributions will help inform educational practices and policies aimed at addressing socio-economic disparities in online learning.

If you agree to participate, please sign this consent form. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at Mastura.maliyat@teachforbangladesh.org or +8801679223894.

Consent Declaration

I have read and understood the above information. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Participant's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for your time and valuable contribution to this study.

Sincerely,

Mastura Maliyat

Alumna; Teach for Bangladesh

Source:

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

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Appendix B. Interview & FGD Guide

Interview Guidelines for Parents:

Introduction:

Welcome everyone, I appreciate you taking part in this interview. Your opinions are extremely valuable and will have a big impact on how educational policies and practices are developed. The purpose of this study is to explore how lower socioeconomic status influences attitudes and performance in online learning environments. Your answers will be kept private and utilized exclusively for study. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Background Information:

1. Can you please tell me a little about your family and your child's school grade?

Access to Resources:

2. Does your child have access to a computer or tablet for online classes?
3. How reliable is your internet connection at home?

Experiences with Online Learning:

4. How has your child adapted to online learning compared to traditional classroom learning?

5. What challenges has your child faced while attending online classes? Can you provide some examples?

Support System:

6. How do you support your child with their online learning? Are there any specific things you do to help them?

7. Do you feel you have enough support from the school or teachers to help your child succeed in online learning?

Perceptions and Attitudes:

8. How do you feel about the quality of education your child is receiving through online classes?

9. Do you think your family's socio-economic status affects your child's ability to perform well in online classes? If so, how?

Conclusion:

10. Is there anything else you would like to share about your child's experience with online learning and how your family's financial situation might impact it?

Thank you once again for your participation. Your insights are invaluable to our research.

Interview Guidelines for Teachers:

Introduction:

I appreciate you taking part in this interview. Your opinions are extremely valuable and will have a big impact on how educational policies and practices are developed. The purpose of this study is to explore how lower socioeconomic status influences attitudes and performance

in online learning environments. Your answers will be kept private and utilized exclusively for study. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Background Information:

1. Can you please tell me a little about your family and your child's school grade?

Access to Resources:

2. Does your child have access to a computer or tablet for online classes?
3. How reliable is your internet connection at home?

Experiences with Online Learning:

4. How has your child adapted to online learning compared to traditional classroom learning?
5. What challenges has your child faced while attending online classes? Can you provide some examples?

Support System:

6. How do you support your child with their online learning? Are there any specific things you do to help them? How do you help them with it?
7. Do you feel you have enough support from the school or teachers to help your child succeed in online learning?

Perceptions and Attitudes:

8. How do you feel about the quality of education your child is receiving through online classes?
9. Do you think your family's socio-economic status affects your child's ability to perform well in online classes? If so, how?

Conclusion:

10. Is there anything else you would like to share about your child's experience with online learning and how your family's financial situation might impact it?

Thank you once again for your participation. Your insights are invaluable to our research.

Focus Group Discussions Guidelines for Students:

Introduction: Welcome everyone, and thank you for participating in this focus group discussion. Before we start, let's introduce ourselves briefly. Your insights are incredibly valuable and will contribute significantly to improving educational practices and policies. This discussion aims to understand how lower socio-economic status influences perceptions and performance in online classes.

Discussion Points:**1. Challenges:**

- o What are some of the challenges you have experienced while learning online?
- o Can you share specific examples of these challenges?

2. Impact on Learning:

- o How do these challenges affect your learning experiences and your ability to keep up with your studies?

3. Access to Resources:

- o Do you have access to a computer or tablet for your online classes?
- o How reliable is your internet connection at home?

4. Support:

- o How do your parents or guardians help you with your online classes?

- o Do you receive any additional help from teachers or school staff to keep up with your studies?

5. Engagement and Participation:

- o How do you feel about attending classes online compared to in-person classes?
- o Are there any noticeable differences in your engagement and participation levels?

6. Positive Aspects:

- o Are there any positive aspects or successes you have observed with online learning?
- o Can you provide specific examples of these positive experiences?

7. Recommendations:

- o What strategies or resources do you think would help overcome the challenges you face in online learning?
- o How can parents, teachers, and schools work together to improve the online learning experience?

Conclusion: Thank you all for your valuable insights and contributions. Is there anything else you would like to add before we conclude?

Your participation is greatly appreciated and will help inform strategies to improve online education for all students.