

Pattern of private tutorship in Bangladesh: Factors affecting income distribution of students of Pabna University of Science and Technology

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ABSTRACT

Private tutoring has become a popular option for many university students in Bangladesh, especially in urban areas. Students at Pabna University of Science and Technology (PUST) are no exception, with many turning to private tutoring as a way to earn extra money, support themselves financially, and meet the expectations of their families. This study explores the real picture of private tutorship among students at PUST. Through a combination of online and offline questionnaire surveys, using purposive sampling, the paper identifies the factors that affect the income distribution of both male and female students. These factors include gender, Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) background, and place of residence, dependency, patriarchy, and social perception. The study finds a significant variation in income distribution between the males and their counterparts at PUST. The study revealed several factors, such as higher secondary background, mobility, residence level, dependency, and solvency of family, that caused the variation in income from tutorship. However, few respondents think that tutorship has had a negative impact on their academic performance, while some do not know whether it has influenced their grades positively or negatively. The research contributes to the knowledge regarding the scenario of private tutorship among the public university students in Bangladesh, who mostly come from rural regions. This paper would be beneficial to different stakeholders, such as the government, university authorities, students, guardians, and academics who are related to the education system of Bangladesh.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a process through which knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits are acquired. In Bangladesh, a developing country of lower middle income in Southeast Asia, the government is obligated to provide basic needs such as education, health, clothing, shelter, and food to its population of around 160 million. This large population for a small country is a burden, and the limited resources make it difficult to provide adequate

services. Furthermore, corruption, nepotism, and patron-client relationships further complicate the situation, resulting in a decrease in the quality of public service delivery (Hosen et al., 2022).

Due to the failure of public and private educational institutions to provide quality education to students at all levels, private tutoring has arisen in Bangladesh. Coaching businesses, in which teachers from various educational institutions teach students in private batches, have been found to be just as inefficient and unproductive as traditional educational institutions. This has caused concern among the guardians of students, prompting them to seek a solution (Alam & Zhu, 2022). Parents in urban areas are increasingly hiring private tutors to give their children extra educational support. University students are often chosen to fill these roles, as they are able to provide tuition for a reasonable price.

The demand for private tutors is high, and the university students themselves are often keen to take up the job to supplement their income. Private tutorship is becoming increasingly popular in urban cities, as it requires less time and provides university students with a steady income at the end of each month. This is in contrast to the various part-time jobs available, which often take up more time and may not provide the same level of financial reward. As such, students are increasingly turning to private tutorship as a viable option for earning an income (Mahmud, 2019). The demand for university students as private tutors is high among guardians, as they are generally seen as more reliable than those from private universities. Furthermore, private tutorship is attractive to students as it requires less time and provides a steady income. As a result, private tutoring is becoming increasingly popular, particularly in urban areas (Mahmud & Bray, 2017).

Pabna University of Science and Technology (PUST), established in 2008, is one of the fastest-growing public universities in Bangladesh, scaling up with huge potential. A large number of students from this university are directly involved in private tutoring. As a link to that, this research tries to explore the phenomenon of private tutorship in public universities. The paper is divided broadly into three main chapters. The first section discusses the objectives and methodology of the study. The second part contains a theoretical framework where necessary theories are explained for interpreting the data. The final chapter portrays the analysis of the data and the findings from it.

The study was conducted in order to pursue the answers to several questions. The pivotal objectives of the study are:

- (i) To find out if private tutorship has any impact on the academic performance of the students.
- (ii) To identify if gender variation creates any differences among the students through private tutorship.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Previous studies

Many studies have examined the prevalence of private tutoring in Bangladesh. Mahmud and Bray (2017) attempted to explore into the various school-related factors that influence the demand for private English tutoring at the secondary level. It particularly examines the differences between urban and rural areas, finding that while private tutoring is more popular in cities, there are still many similarities between the two. English is a compulsory subject in secondary school, and it is also used to help students learn other topics. While private tutoring can be beneficial for some students, it can also have negative implications. Therefore, the spread of tutoring services in both urban and rural areas should not be seen as a positive development.

According to the findings of another study (Joshi, 2019), the rise of private schooling and tutoring in South Asia can be attributed to a combination of factors, including the inability of the government to provide an education of sufficient quality and the use of education to provide children and young people with an advantage in the highly competitive social and employment environment. To buck this tendency, public education need to be revitalised, and the general people's perception of it must shift in a positive direction. This calls for more than merely alterations to the educational system; rather, it calls for a mix of educational and labour market policies that encourage economic growth that is inclusive.

Alam and Zhu (2022) argued that private tutoring, from primary to higher secondary level, has become a large-scale industry in present times. The growth of private tutoring is an expected consequence of the ongoing privatization and marketization of education. To control private tutoring, the government has implemented certain regulatory measures that can be described as "laissez-faire". Unfortunately, these measures are largely ineffective, as policy makers adopted a "top-down" approach when formulating the policies.

Mahmud and Kenayathulla (2017) conduct research into the various types of private English tutoring, with a focus on the frequency with which students in metropolitan Dhaka obtain tutoring. Their research shows that there are significant gaps in the availability of English language tutoring for male and female students. It additionally defines the numerous private tutoring types that offer supplemental tuition. In addition, they investigate how the students evaluate the efficacy of the various approaches to English tutoring.

Nath (2008) investigates the incidence of private supplemental tutoring among students in primary schools, the inequalities in access to such tutoring, its cost, and its effect on academic progress. His research demonstrates that the proportion of students in elementary schools receiving private tutoring is increasing at a pace of two percentage points year, reaching 31% in 2005. Males and urban pupils were more likely than their counterparts to have access to supplemental tutoring. In addition, families with higher levels of education and income were more likely to enrol their children in tutoring. The cost of private tutoring varied widely, with tutees paying 46% of their overall private education expenditures on private tutoring. Students that receive additional tutoring appear to learn more than those who do not receive this support. Clearly, private tutoring for students in primary schools has become a common practise.

Mahmud (2019) investigated the pros and cons of private extra tutoring for secondary school pupils. It focused on the distinctions between urban and rural settings and the impact of tutoring attitudes on students' educational outlooks. Their data finds mixed outcomes for private tutoring, with a focus on the inequalities between urban and rural settings. Positives include enhanced learning, test preparation, strengthened relationships, and lesson practise. Negatives include an emphasis on exams and interference with mainstream school learning.

Pallegedara and Mottaleb (2018) have explored the decision to employ private tutoring services in Bangladesh as well as the associated expenditures in a study that they have conducted. The available evidence suggests that the proportion of households engaging in the practise of private tutoring has been on the rise over time, with urban families being more likely than rural households to do so. This has the potential to contribute to a widening of existing socioeconomic disparities.

There have been very few studies conducted so far examining the patterns of private tutoring in urban and rural areas of Bangladesh. These findings of the research cited above show that the majority of them focus primarily on exploring the broad overview and patterns of private tutoring in the context of Bangladeshi society. However, none of them has focused particularly on the factors that affect the income distribution of students who directly engaged in private tutoring in Bangladesh. As a result, in order to address this gap in the existing literature, the primary focus of this study will be an investigation into the factors that influence the income distribution of a subset of students attending Pabna University of Science and Technology in Bangladesh.

2.2 Relevant theories

In this section, a number of theoretical viewpoints have been discussed; these have been taken into account for the purpose of analysing the results of this research as well as these theories in a variety of different ways as they relate to the culture of private tutoring in Bangladesh.

Patriarchy Theory. Even in modern times, patriarchy is seen as the fundamental structure of exclusion and subjugation. This dominance system is comprised of institutions that discourage women from participating in political, religious, and cultural spheres. Nonetheless, stereotypes may differ across social classes and cultures, but institutions and procedures make gender roles and preconceptions more universal and natural. On the other hand, women and their activities are associated with negative connotations through myths and symbols that are not necessarily overtly expressed in patriarchy. In different cultural contexts, these symbols may have divergent meanings, yet in each society they attach negative connotations to the feminine (Feldman, 2001).

Dependency Theory. The concept of dependency theory emerged in the late 1960s as a response to modernization theory. Because certain nations' economies are dependent on the growth and development of others' is what this theory calls "dependency" (Dos Santos, 1996). Many proponents of the dependency thesis hypothesised that wealthier nations benefited at the expense of poorer ones as resources poured in from the global periphery to the global core (Namkoong, 1999).

Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow argued that people have a set of needs that motivate them, which can be divided into basic needs (such as physiological and safety needs) and growth needs (such as self-actualization). He proposed that when one need is fulfilled, people seek to fulfill the next one, forming a hierarchy of needs.

People are motivated to meet their basic needs when they are unmet, and the drive to satisfy these needs increases the longer they remain unmet. To progress to higher-level growth needs, one must first satisfy their

lower-level needs. Once these needs are adequately addressed, it is possible to reach the highest level of personal growth, referred to as self-actualization. However, if lower-level needs are not met, it can impede progress towards self-actualization (Harris, 2022).

Social Capital. To put it simply, social capital consists of a society's interconnected social networks, which make possible the society's many interactions and hence its ability to function. Economic growth and long-term sustainability require strong social bonds, which are fostered through the process of constructing social capital. In addition, social capital serves as the adhesive that holds the network together so that its members can realise their shared objectives (Pretty & Ward, 2001). In reality, it represents the triad of resource, relation and return (Toyon, 2022).

Cultural Norms. Cultural norms govern societal conduct. These norms are learned over time and reinforced by social institutions. Social norms and values influence community health, environmental, and philanthropic activities. Culture shapes people's worldview and gender roles in society (Cislaghi & Heise, 2018).

It is important to recognize the collective nature of social norms, as they are shaped by the people and groups within a specific culture. In order to understand the meaning of a certain social norm, it is essential to identify the people and groups that have the most influence on it. Norms provide specific rules of conduct that help to maintain the stability and harmony of a culture. They guide individuals on how to live and act in particular situations, helping to create a sense of security and belonging while also promoting moral and appropriate behavior (Kandori, 1992; Liu et al., 2022).

3. METHOD

This descriptive research (Toyon, 2023, 2021) study is based on interviews performed with a sample population of 100 private tutoring students. In order to collect data from PUST's second- and third-year students in a variety of disciplines, the study employed purposive sampling strategy based on selection criteria. The survey also assessed the academic background of the students up to the HSC level and their current location of residence, including dorms, messes, and homes. The study utilised both online and offline survey questionnaires to collect data, giving for a full grasp of the respondents' experiences and viewpoints.

The researcher decided to conduct a survey with a sample size of one hundred, with an equal number of male and female respondents included. This was done to ensure that the survey was representative of both sexes and to acquire a comprehensive understanding of whether or not there is a statistically significant difference in the earnings of males and females working in this particular industry. With these goals in mind, data was collected from one hundred students at PUST, 50 male and 50 female, all of whom are actively participating in private tutoring.

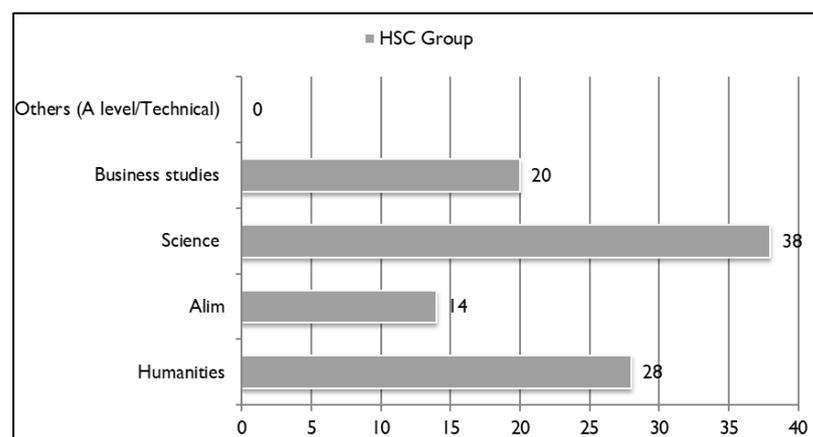


Figure 1: HSC background of the respondents

4. RESULTS

4.1 Educational background of tutor

Students who are to be hired as private tutors are selected in large part based on their academic backgrounds. From the data collected from the respondents, it was found that 38% of the respondents were from science background, of which 26 were female and 12 were male. Moreover, the percentage of students coming from humanities, business, or alim background is 28% (18 males and 10 females), 20% (12 males and

8 females), and 14% (6 females and 8 males), respectively. It was apparent that the monthly income of the students who had a background in science was noticeably higher than that of the other tutors. This was the case since these students were also tutors. It's not hard to figure out why this is the case: students with backgrounds in science are in particularly high demand on the private tutoring market for courses such as physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology, and so on. Unfortunately, the opportunities are limited for students who come from backgrounds in the humanities and Islamic education; as a result, their monthly earnings are rather low in comparison to those of respondents who come from other backgrounds.

4.2 Earnings from tutoring

The Figure 2 below depicts the income distribution of the sample population that is involved in private tutorship. From the graph, it can be seen that the range of the income of the respondents is from BDT 2500 to BDT 18000, i.e., the respondents earn a minimum income of BDT 2500 per month and a maximum of BDT 18000 per month. The average income of the total respondents per month is BDT 6,550. However, when the analysis was done on the basis of gender, it was found that the average earning of females is BDT 6250 per month, whereas the average income of the male students is BDT 6850 per month.

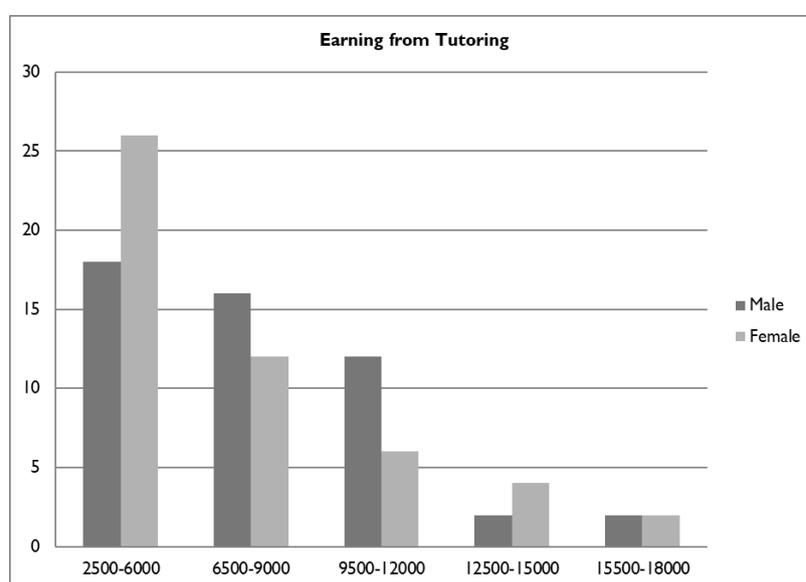


Figure 2: Illustration of earnings from tutoring

The data suggests that male students tend to earn more on average than female tutors. However, further analysis using the standard deviation (SD) reveals that the income of the respondents is widely varied, indicating that the sample population is not homogenous.

The deviation from the mean income of the total sample population is BDT 1600, whereas the deviation from the mean income of the male and female respondents was BDT 2270 and BDT 2420, respectively. Therefore, it can be said that the sample population belongs to a heterogeneous income group.

4.3 Distance traveled for private tutorship

The distance travelled by respondents for private tutoring is displayed in Figure 3. The shortest distance they travel is less than 2 kilometres, while the largest distance they travel is between 5 and 6 kilometres. According to the data obtained from respondents, the average distance they go for private tutoring is 2.6 kilometres; however, female respondents are less mobile, travelling 2.1 kilometres on average for private tutoring. On the other hand, males, who appear to be more mobile than their female counterparts, travel an average of 3.85 kilometres for private tutoring, which is greater than the distance travelled by respondents on average.

There is no basis for drawing the conclusion that the male and female respondents comprise a single, homogeneous group based on the average distance travelled. It was observed that the male and female respondents' total distance travelled for private tutoring differed from the mean distance travelled by 0.89 kilometres and 1.02 kilometres, respectively, when compared to the total distance that was covered on

average. Such variation or dispersion in the data might have been explained by variables such as their socially constructed gender, social perception, dwelling place, familial restraints, and so on.

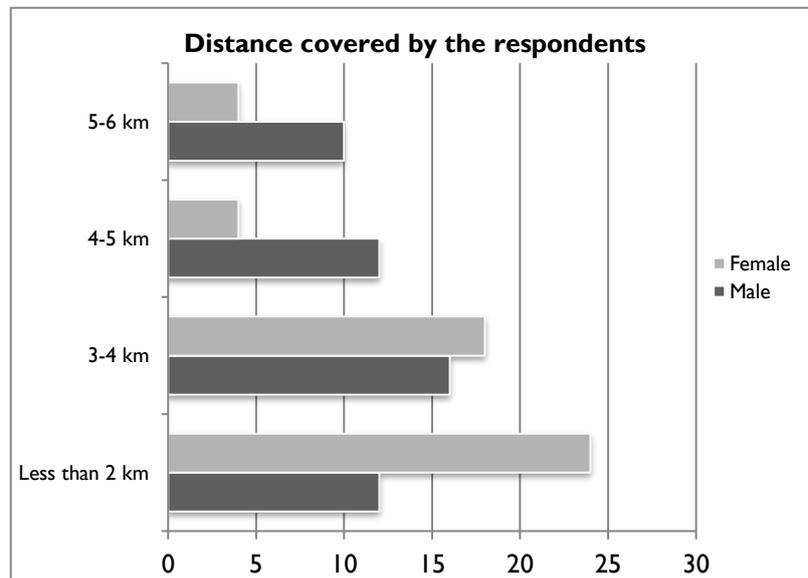


Figure 3: Depicting the distance covered by the respondents

4.4 Perceived academic performance of tutor

There is a general perception that involvement in private tutoring often affects the academic performance of the students. From the study that was conducted, it was found that 42% of the respondents (both males and females) agreed that their involvement in private tutoring adversely affects their academic performance.

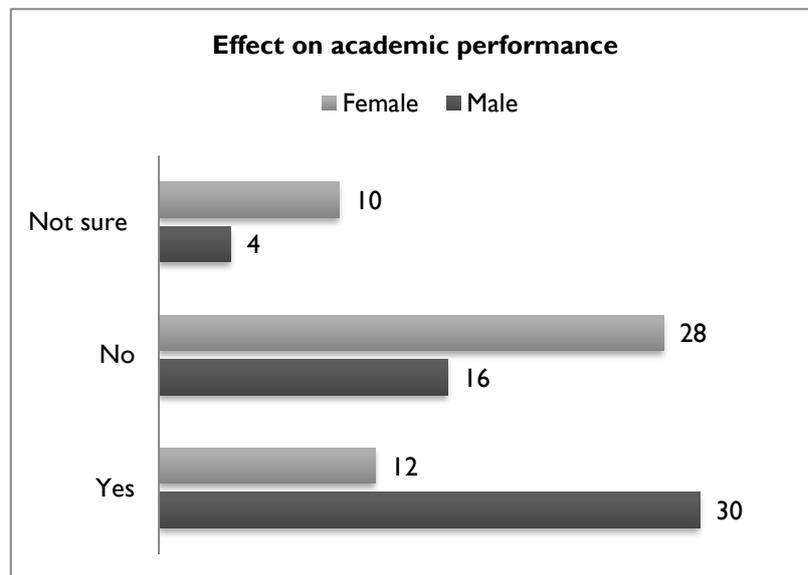


Figure 4: Effect of private tutorship on the academic performance of the respondents

On the other hand, 44% of the respondents denied the fact, and they replied in the negative. However, 14% of the 14 respondents were not sure whether their involvement in the private tutoring had any impact on their academic performance.

4.5 Tutors' place of residence

The respondents' place of residence had a considerable implication on the income distribution of those who participated in private tutoring. It was found that 50% of the respondents (26 males and 24 females) live in residential halls at PUST, from where they receive private tuition. On the other hand, 14% of the respondents (male) live in poverty. In total, 36 of the respondents live in their homes, where they were seen to be involved in private tutorship.

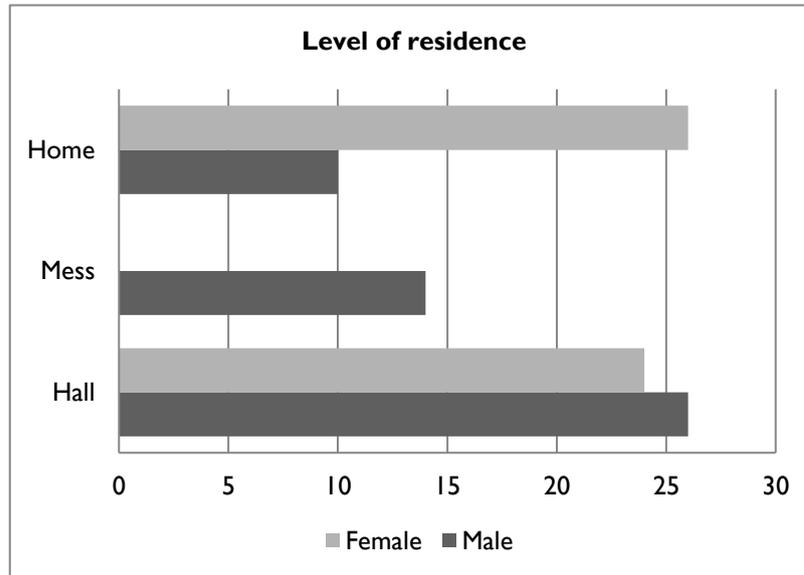


Figure 5: Status of residence of the respondents

Location was found to play a role in the distribution of tutors' incomes, with those who resided in dormitories or hostels being more transient than those who lived at home. Residents of both the hall and mess can increase their income by taking up more private tutoring jobs because to their increased mobility. Those who choose to live at home, however, are at a disadvantage financially as compared to those who choose to live in the halls and the mess because of family and social constraints and impediments (particularly for female responders) to engaging in private tuitions. In addition, those who stay at home with their families are more likely to receive pocket money on a timely basis, but this may not be the case for those who live in the hall or mess. Students living in the halls and the mess were more likely to participate in private tutoring because they needed the money and also because they wanted to help out their family. As a result of these factors, those living in the halls and the mess had noticeably higher incomes than those living in private homes.

4.6 Money for monthly sustenance

The amount of monthly living costs brought from home also played a role in the respondents' participation in private tutoring. It was found from the study that 50% of the respondents (26 females and 24 males) bring money from home on average of BDT 2,530. On the other hand, 50% of the respondents disapproved of the fact that they borrowed money from their families. The important thing that was found here is that females bring more money from their families than their male counterparts; on average, the females bring BDT 2625 per month, whereas the male respondents bring BDT 2100 from their family for sustenance, which ultimately results in less engagement in private tutorship. As a result, they earn less than their male counterparts. However, when the standard deviation tool was used to find out how dispersed the data is, it was found that the average amount of money brought in by the family deviates hugely (BDT 760.50). It is a general philosophy that when there is abundance in the flow of finance from any source, there is no adequate reason to explore other sources for funding. The same rationale can be seen here in our respondents, and hence, the males getting less financial support from their families are forced to explore more sources of earning, where they opt for private tutorship.

From the data, it can be deduced that 52% of the female students and 48% of the male students bring money from their houses. The reason for the female respondents bringing more money from home can be explained by the dependency theory. The females of our society are still seen as fragile and weaker ones from the

patriarchal lens. The high level of concern of the parents of the female respondents tends them to send more money for their sustenance so that they can concentrate on the studies rather than looking for opportunities to get involved in private tutorship. The reasons for male respondents' high involvement in private tutoring are diverse. Male students who generally reside in the hall or mess have a high social capital and bond with their peer groups, for which they need additional money that might not be enough to be sent from their family for sustenance. Moreover, there is a trend among the males of PUST to be involved in love affairs, which require money. From this philosophy, they look for additional avenues of earning, and among all the options, the safest one is private tutorship.

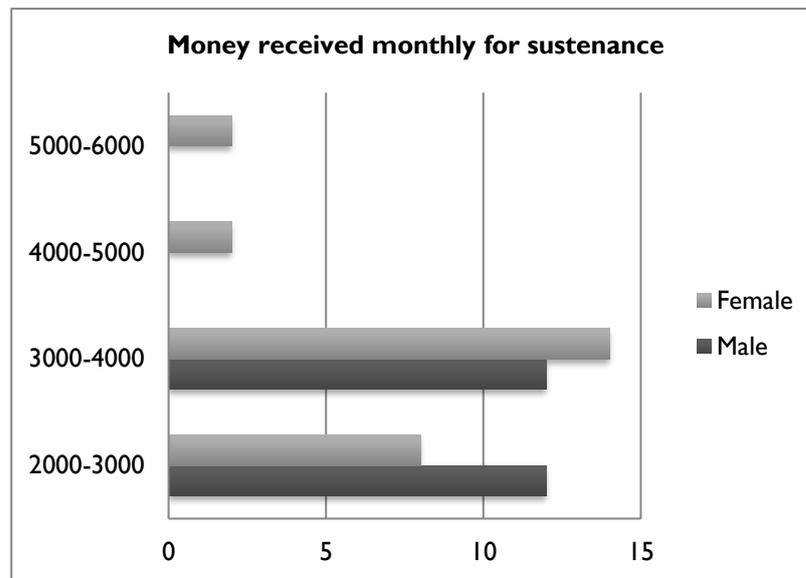


Figure 6: Scenario of money received for monthly sustenance from families

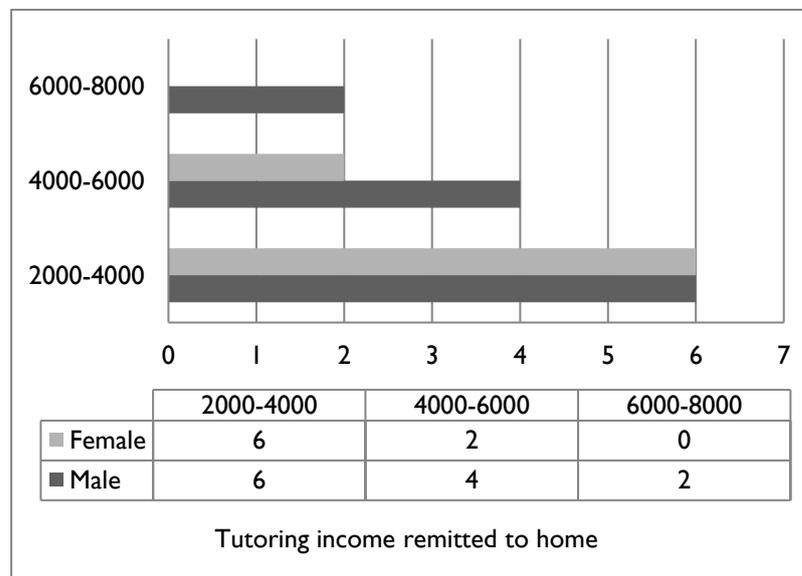


Figure 7: Patterns of money remitted back home by responders

4.7 Monthly average amount sent home by tutors

The necessity to send money home is one of the motivations for engaging in private tutoring. From the survey conducted, we can see that only 20% of the students send money to their homes (eight females and twelve males), while the other 80% do not send any money to their homes per month from their monthly income

from private tutorship. The minimum amount of money that is sent by the respondent to their home varies from BDT 2000 to BDT 4000, while the maximum amount of money that is sent varies from BDT 6000 to BDT 8000. It was found that 20 of the total respondents send BDT 3300 on average to their home per month from the money earned from private tutorship.

However, it was seen that the average income per month of the male respondents was high compared to their male counterparts (on average, males send BDT 3650 and females send BDT 2700). However, the data on the average income does not represent the whole scenario. The data was seen to be highly dispersed, with BDT 1310 deviating from the average amount sent. Moreover, the dispersion rate was seen to be higher in the case of female respondents than that of their counterparts.

5. DISCUSSION

From the major findings, it is evident that there is a significant variation in the income distribution between the male and female students of Pabna University of Science and Technology. In this case, the income deviation of the students is discovered due to the respondents' HSC background. The students from science and business backgrounds have more scope for private tutoring than the students from humanities or Islamic backgrounds. Therefore, this scope of more tutorship yields higher earnings from private tutorship for students with science and business backgrounds.

Another factor, such as mobility, is also another reason for the variation in the income distribution of the male and female respondents. However, some factors like family restrictions, social perception, and dependency shrink the mobility of the female respondents, which results in less scope for private tutorship than for male respondents.

Place of residence also plays a crucial role in the income distribution of the respondents, as the expenditure in the mess is higher than that in residential halls or homes. Students living in halls or mess halls usually live free from the overdominance of their parents, so they can go for more tutoring than female students. Due to the higher living costs in the mess, students living there usually seek out more options for doing private tuition to earn additional income for their survival, which makes their income significantly higher than the others.

A significant factor for which the male respondents are seen to earn more money via private tutorship than the female respondents is the "dependency" factor. The female respondents earn less through their engagement in private tutorship because of their heavy dependency on their families. On the other hand, the dependency of some families on their children receiving money per month compels few respondents, especially the male students, to earn more money through private tutorship than female students.

As students are primarily responsible for their academic studies, many take on part-time tutoring jobs to support themselves financially. This helps to reduce their reliance on their families for financial assistance, allowing them to cover the costs of their own expenses. Additionally, private tutoring can be a great way to supplement their income while also developing their teaching and communication skills (Pallegedara & Mottaleb, 2018).

Most families do not ask their children to contribute financially, as they are able to cover their own expenses, ultimately saving money for their families. Data reveals that the majority of earnings from tutoring are used to cover the high cost of living in urban areas, leaving little to no money to be sent back home. This highlights the difficulty of making ends meet in an urban setting. Furthermore, this can be a source of stress and anxiety for families who are unable to provide for their children in the way they would like (Mahmud & Kenayathulla, 2017).

6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to examine why university students take up private tutoring jobs and what factors play a role in their decision to do so. This study aimed to identify university students' motivations and significant determinants for enrolling in private tutoring. In the survey of 100 second- and third-year PUST students, variables like academic background and present residence (e.g., dorm, home, etc.) were included. The data analysis found that male tutors earned more than their female counterparts. The huge disparity in wage distribution among responders is mostly attributable to the students' HSC backgrounds. Individuals with a foundation in science or business studies are more likely to receive private tutoring, resulting in a higher income than those with a background in the humanities or Islamic studies.

In addition, the "mobility" factor also contributes to such disparities in the income range of the respondents. Throughout the survey, it was noted that female students with a strong academic background took on less

tutoring than their male counterparts. This disparity could have been related to the patriarchal system, as female students are less likely to travel far for tutoring, whereas male students can do so more easily. Individuals residing in dormitories or mess halls, on the other hand, are not subject to parental authority and are therefore able to engage in more tutoring.

Moreover, students living in their own houses are not responsible for their own food and housing expenses. Yet the situation is different in dormitories and mess halls, where expenses are substantially higher. As a result, students living away from home are more likely than others to pursue private tutoring opportunities as a means of supplementing their income, resulting in a much higher earnings. Why men respondents earn more compensation through private tutoring than female respondents is mostly due to the “dependence” factor. Female tutors are typically more dependent on their parents, making them less inclined to seek out private tutoring possibilities. Yet, some of the respondents utilise their earnings to support their families in their villages, indicating that at least a portion of their families depend on their income, which motivates them to earn more than their female counterparts.

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Notes

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