# A Story of Anticipatory Hope:

# Rohingya Refugee Teachers' Motivation to Teach in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

by

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# Abstract

Since the Myanmar military's 2017 campaign of ethnic cleansing, close to one million Muslim minority Rohingya from Rakhine State have resided in the refugee camps of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. As of late 2024, over 6,000 learning facilities and nearly 10,000 teachers from refugee and host-community populations serve almost 400,000 Rohingya children and adolescents. Education's purpose in Cox's Bazar is multifaceted due to the liminality of Rohingya displacement. It contributes to the protection of children's rights and it creates a tentative sense of belonging via the Myanmar Curriculum and Burmese language, which are taught in anticipation of their desired but unlikely repatriation to Myanmar.

Amid global teacher shortages, United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations in settings like Cox's Bazar attribute the conditions in which conflict- and crisis-affected teachers work to a 'teacher motivation crisis'. In parallel, a 'global learning crisis' sees teachers deficit theorized by these same actors, who highlight teachers' weak academic foundations, dated teaching methods, and need for urgent and intensive teacher professional development. In both instances, teachers' propensity to be 'alternatively qualified' and 'transformative intellectuals' is overlooked, rendering teachers as passive system inputs rather than agents of change.

To better understand this reality and its effects on Rohingya education, this study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design to explore the experiences and factors associated with Rohingya refugee teachers' *motivation to teach*. A plethora of studies from high-income and stable contexts define teacher motivation and measure the influence of intrinsic and

extrinsic factors. However, a dearth of evidence from refugee-hosting settings means our understanding of refugee teachers' motivation to teach is based on anecdote more than empirical fact. My study in Cox's Bazar finds that intrinsic factors like a sense of self-efficacy and agency and extrinsic factors like professional development and compensation are powerful motivators for refugee and host-community teachers alike. But the 'anticipatory hope' of repatriation, education's perceived role in achieving this aim, and the empowering effect of teaching on Rohingya women's identities in particular, underscore Rohingya refugee participants' stronger motivation to teach than their Bangladeshi host-community peers, despite their untenable work and living conditions.

As suggested by the 'impossible fiction' of refugee teachers' work and the 'parameters of hope' that refugee education can represent, there are practical limits to what education in refugee settings can achieve. Building on this reality, in this study I present the concept of 'anticipatory hope' to affirm teaching's fulfillment of purposive, normative, and instrumental functions such as the right to quality education, a vocation, and a livelihood. But for Rohingya refugees it also emphasizes the transformative function of teaching as an inherently human and political act: teaching helps reshape Rohingya identities and a tentative sense of belonging *in* Bangladesh and *to* Myanmar while laying groundwork for their repatriation, even if it never comes.

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CH

# Dedication

In memory of Terri Allen Woods (1956 - 2018) and John Noble (1932 - 2019)

*Love always wins*

To refugee teachers in Cox's Bazar and around the world.

You are denied so much yet hope for and deserve so much more.

*This dissertation is for you.*

# Chapter 1 - Introduction

*It is far more difficult to experience exile when we make no effort to adopt its space… accept it as an opportunity with which we have been presented. It is this critical ability to plunge into a new daily reality, without preconceptions, that brings the man or woman in exile to a more historical understanding of their own situation*

Paulo Freire (1992, p. 25)
A Pedagogy of Hope

The escalation of conflict and climate-related emergencies makes the plight of forcibly displaced populations more voluminous and visible each year (Chouliaraki, 2013; Fassin, 2011; UNHCR, 2024). However, when new crises dominate global headlines a troubling paradox emerges: our collective attention is drawn to immediate and high-profile events while no-less urgent but now protracted crises fall by the wayside. For example, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the civil war in Sudan, and the conflict in Israel and Gaza have pushed Bangladesh's Rohingya refugee crisis into further obscurity.

By mid-2024, the estimated global forcibly displaced population stood at 120 million, of which 31.6 million are refugees seeking asylum in countries other than their own (UNHCR, 2024b). Approximately 14.8 million of this population are school-aged but only 51 percent are able to attend school (ibid). In Bangladesh, since the Myanmar military's 2017 campaign of ethnic cleansing Muslim minority Rohingya from Rakhine State have resided in the refugee camps of Cox's Bazar, where nearly one million people remain stateless with resettlement or repatriation possibilities undecided and far out of reach (Begum, 2024; Ware and Laoutides, 2024).

As of November 2024, over 6,000 learning facilities and more than 10,000 teachers from host-community and refugee populations serve approximately 303,000 Rohingya children and adolescents, representing 75 percent of the 399,000 Rohingya children and adolescents in the camps (Cox's Bazar Education Sector, 2025). Education in Cox's Bazar contributes to the

protection of children's rights and it creates a tentative sense of belonging via the Myanmar national curriculum and Burmese language, which are taught in anticipation of future repatriation to Myanmar (Prodip, 2023). As one of this study's participants shared:

> Because we hope that one day we will go back to our motherland, if we learn here continuously then we can join [schools in Myanmar]. If we learn grade five here, then we can go there and adjust at grade six… so it is very good that we are continuously supporting and learning [now] … for our children's [future].
>
> Mohammed Ullah (Rohingya male, Camp B)

Moreover, Bangladesh is not a signatory to the United Nations Convention (1951) and Protocol (1967) on the Rights of the Refugee. As such, in a context of strict segregation from the host-community, Rohingya children and teachers are excluded from national schools, thereby determining the need for a costly parallel education system and country-of-origin curriculum.

Broadly, this research is situated within the setting described above and the broader politics of refugee education that accompany it. It focuses on the work, well-being, and motivation of thousands of refugee teachers like Muhammed Ullah who provide learning and protection for forcibly displaced children, adolescents, and youth in Cox's Bazar and around the world.

## 1.1 Problem statement and research questions

The work of teaching is at once celebrated and in a state of crisis, and teachers are caught at the confluence of this paradox (Henderson, 2025). Reflecting this reality, challenges pertaining to teacher recruitment and retention are slowly—albeit belatedly—commanding the notice of governments, researchers, and policy makers alike. For example, at the 2022 United Nations Transforming Education Summit (TES) 'teaching and learning' and 'teachers' were the two most commonly referred to priorities in attending governments' statements of commitment (Crawford et al., 2022). As recent literature and discussions at TES emphasize, the scarcity of professional

support, including adequate compensation and continuous professional development, compounds the challenges teachers already face as poorly cared for professionals, thus affecting their *motivation to teach* and stay in the profession (Falk et al., 2023; Mendenhall et al., 2024; Soares and Cunha, 2024). In South Asia alone, where my study is situated, a projected eight million teachers are needed to address teacher shortages and keep pace with current rates of teacher attrition (UNESCO, 2022; 2024).

Quality teachers in low-income and fragile settings are recognized as the most important school-level factor determining a child's learning and development (Schwille et al., 2007; Rawal et al., 2013). But even in contexts with inadequate compensation and professional development support, teachers are held accountable when education outcomes do not meet expectations (Ali, 2018; Ariko and Othuin, 2012; Hardman, et al. 2011; Zakharia, 2024). This reality plays out in Cox's Bazar where the camp-based education system is tightly managed by UN agencies and Bangladeshi implementing partners, yet the literature and key informants attribute children's arrested educational development to teachers' weak motivation to teach, poor academic foundations, and corresponding retention issues (Prodip, 2023; Rahman and Husain, 2022). In instances like these, humanitarian actors become "the savior or bringer of new truths" as donor-driven, outside-in, and top-down teacher interventions attempt to resolve the sector's failures (Samuels, 2018, p. xix). In Cox's Bazar, echoing Zakharia's (2024) research on knowledge-power asymmetries in education in emergencies, a dynamic where "deficit perspectives are reinscribed through program design that is often produced and constrained by Northern knowledge systems and experiences" is especially pronounced (p120). Such effects were exacerbated by the closure of Rohingya-led community schools and the centralization of Rohingya learning centers by the Bangladesh Government, leaving multiple teachers who had initiated and led their own education

programs dispossessed of their agency within the 'racialized' hierarchy of the Bangladesh- and UN-led parallel system (Olney et al., 2019; Shah, 2023).

In addition to the deficit theorizing that refugee teachers contend with, our full understanding of teacher well-being dynamics and teachers' *motivation to teach* are constrained by the fact that a majority of the studies on teacher motivation come from high-income and stable settings (e.g. Fernet et. al. 2008; Lauerman, 2017; Watt and Richardson, 2002). Moreover, only a handful of qualitative or quantitative studies focus on the relationship between refugee teachers' lived experiences and the factors influencing their well-being at work, with fragmented articulations of how well-being extends to teachers' motivation to teach (see Brandt and Lopes Cardozo, 2023; Falk, Shepard, and Mendenhall, 2022; Kirk and Winthrop, 2007; 2013; Wolf et al., 2016). Further still, while a number of recent studies draw attention to the politics of refugee education in Cox's Bazar (Akther, 2024; Nilsen et al., 2023; Prodip and Garnett, 2019; Østby et al, 2024; Rahman and Hussain, 2022; Shohel, 2023), Rohingya teachers in the UN-led system have been largely overlooked. For this reason, research that situates Rohingya teachers' *motivation to teach* within the Cox's Bazar humanitarian regime and the global tensions of refugee teachers' work is overdue and needed. More broadly, to progress our understanding of refugee teacher motivation *vis a vis* the more established teacher well-being and management literature, research that documents teachers' experiences and measures the factors associated with their motivation to teach is an important and timely contribution to the education in emergencies' field. To this end, the following research questions address a gap in the current literature and informs policies that improve the support available to refugee teachers in Cox's Bazar and further afield.

How are the social and political conditions in which Rohingya refugee teachers work associated with their motivation to teach in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh?

> Sub-question 1: In what ways are teachers' experiences of respect, support, and safety at the community-level related to their motivation to teach?
>
> Sub-question 2: How is teachers' sense of work satisfaction at the learning center-level associated with their motivation to teach?
>
> Sub-question 3: At the individual level, how are teachers' experiences of self-efficacy and agency associated with their motivation to teach?

## 1.2 Significance of this study

This research contributes towards four discrete but interconnected bodies of literature. Firstly, it adds a substantive conceptualization of teacher motivation to the growing evidence base on teacher well-being in crisis contexts. Secondly, it extends the scope of current teacher motivation studies to include teachers in conflict-affected settings and contexts of forced displacement. Thirdly, due to the unique contextual dynamics that inform education system decision making—especially curriculum and language decisions—I contribute evidence towards the politics of refugee education. And finally, my research contributes an overdue evidence base on Rohingya teachers' lived experiences and corresponding *motivation to teach*. Taken together, my findings add to policy-level debates on the roles of refugee teachers and how the systems and conditions in which they work help or hinder their motivation to teach.

While Ring and West (2015) highlight refugee teacher retention issues and establish a framework for the study of refugee teachers' *motivation to teach* and multiple studies since have focused on teacher well-being—for which motivation is a corollary factor—no studies have specifically investigated and measured how or why teachers' experiences shape their commitment to the profession. Moreover, this is the first study with a sizable sample (n = 494) focused on teachers in the Cox' Bazar refugee education system. To the extent that this research is novel, it

also complements an increasingly rich volume of scholarship on refugee teachers' work in comparative education and education in emergencies fields.

Key informants from my pilot study in 2022 perceived Rohingya teachers to be under-skilled and unmotivated, negatively affecting the learning and development of Rohingya children. However, mirroring Tao's (2016) observation that there is "often incongruence between what teachers say and what broader discourse says about them" (p. 1), very little is known about how Rohingya teachers see themselves or how they define the purpose of their work. Moreover, although we have an emerging understanding of how conflict or protracted refugee crises affect teachers' well-being (Brandt and Lopes-Cardoso, 2023; Falk et al., 2023; Marchais et al., 2024; Mendenhall et al., 2024), we have a weaker grasp of a context's effects on refugee teachers' motivation to join the profession and persist in their work. Adding some urgency to this issue, as Tao (2016) also writes, to date the literature on teacher motivation has been decontextualized by a "bounty of superficial empirical observations" (p. 22).

My mixed-methods research in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, in which contextualized refugee teacher narratives are elevated to play a prominent role in my findings, draws from and is situated within three interconnected global tensions in the literature on refugee teachers' work. These tensions map the conditions that influence and complicate refugee teachers' motivation to join and persist in the profession and relate to: a) how refugee teachers' are positioned as community and nation builders in exile, but with limited agency, capacity, or freedom to fulfill this expectation; b) how curriculum decisions and the extent to which the politics of refugee education align with refugees' futures; and c) how the de-professionalization of teachers' work contributes to recruitment challenges, high attrition rates, and teacher shortages in crisis-affected settings.

I embed my research within these global tensions enroute to addressing the question of refugee teacher motivation in Cox's Bazar. In doing so, I bridge an important gap in the literature. The contextual factors that influence teachers' motivation to join and persist in the profession have been poorly defined and measured and are under-analyzed in comparative education and education in emergencies studies. In response, by adapting Bronfenbrenner's (1979) socio-ecological model of human development, my study integrates three levels of analysis: experiences within the community, such as the respect teachers receive or the sense of protection they gain because they are teachers; experiences at the learning center-level, e.g. being able to teach in one's own language or access to professional development; and experiences at the individual-level, such as the sense of self-efficacy teachers experience or the agency they are able to exercise within the classroom and wider education system.

Through a mixed-methods approach (n = 494), I find that participants' sense of *self-efficacy*, the *work satisfaction* they gain from teaching, and the *support* they receive from community members are most closely and significantly associated with their *motivation to teach*. In addition, concerning work conditions such as a poor sense of *safety*, low-levels of *agency*, and inadequate salaries—all of which should have an inverse effect on teachers' *motivation to teach*—seem to be mitigated by what I describe as the 'anticipatory hope' of teachers' shared agenda for repatriation to Myanmar and education's perceived role in achieving this goal. My findings also reveal how the work of teaching and the sense of educational attainment that the newly implemented Myanmar Curriculum brings add legitimacy to Rohingya aspirations. It helps qualify their claim to Myanmar citizenship and their right of return, despite the implausibility of this option due to Myanmar's escalating civil war and political unrest (Olney et al., 2019; Wade and Laoutides, 2024).

## 1.3 Overview of the dissertation

This chapter provides a high-level introduction to the study, outlining its purpose and significance. **Chapter 2** introduces the context of Cox's Bazar and situates this research within current global tensions in refugee education. In **Chapter 3** I present my literature review, highlighting a dearth of research on teacher motivation in refugee-hosting contexts and the limited coverage of Rohingya teachers working in Cox's Bazar. In **Chapter 4** I detail my study's methodological approach and discuss the regulatory constraints that shaped my data collection process. **Chapter 5** is then an introduction to my sample and my motivation to teach outcome factor, where I provide summary statistics and comparative analysis of Rohingya refugee and Bangladeshi host-community participants' overall motivation to teach.

**Chapter 6** is the first of three socio-ecological level of analysis chapters, where I introduce the association that the community-level factors of *respect*, *support*, and *safety* have with participants' *motivation to teach*. In particular, I show how a poor sense of *safety* among Rohingya participants undermines the positive influence of community *support* for teachers. In **Chapter 7** I focus on *work satisfaction* at the learning-center level, especially the difference that the Myanmar Curriculum has had on teachers' professional identities, tempered by the workload stress and the unmet educational aspirations that a lack of professional development entails.

In **Chapter 8**, focusing on individual-level factors, participants speak of a strong sense of *self-efficacy* but bemoan the comparative lack of *agency* that they have in their work. Finally, in **Chapter 9** I provide a closing discussion on how the finding of 'anticipatory hope' progresses our understanding of refugee teachers' *motivation to teach*. I then present a concluding evaluation of the socio-ecological factors that are most correlated with refugee teacher motivation and deliver key policy-level recommendations for refugee teachers in Cox's bazar and further afield.

# Chapter 2 - Background and research context

Hosting close to one million forcibly displaced Rohingya from Myanmar, the 36 camps of Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh constitute the world's largest refugee complex. As more recent displacement crises in Gaza and Sudan have shifted attention away from the Rohingya's plight, it is important to re-introduce the conflict that caused their flight and, in doing so, situate the political dynamics that shape the Rohingya's access to education and their hopes for the future. In this chapter I also position the experience of Rohingya refugee teachers within three global tensions of refugee teachers' work: Refugee teachers as nation builders in waiting; curriculum and the politics of refugee inclusion; and the de-professionalization of teachers' work. These tensions underpin my literature review on teacher motivation in the following chapter and inform my conceptual framework for refugee teachers' *motivation to teach* in Chapter 4.

## 2.1 The Rohingya refugee crisis in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Historically, refugee crises have been thought of as a transitory period of crisis and disorder (Harrell-Bond and Voutira, 1992). Yet over the past 30 years they have become less temporary and more permanent (Milner, 2014). This protractedness "stems from political impasse" and is the inevitable result of political inaction or diplomatic stagnation between host-countries, countries of origin, donor countries, and inter-governmental agencies (UNHCR, 2004, cited in Milner, 2014. p. 155). With few exceptions, refugee populations face restricted onward movement, few to no employment possibilities, exclusion from national education systems, and confinement to camps or informal settlements, thereby condemning refugees to a state of liminality as chronically displaced populations (Harrell-Bond and Voutira, 1992; Milner, 2014).

In the absence of territorial homes and state protection, refugees find belonging through improvised identities and "memories of and claims to places they can or will no longer corporeally inhabit" (Mallki, 1992, p24, cited in Chatty, 2014). When refugee populations like the Rohingya live in contexts of extended confinement and uncertainty, whether in the highly surveilled and tightly controlled camps of Cox's Bazar or in Kuala Lumpur's informal and clandestine urban dwellings, their identities affirm their collective trauma and shared hopes for the future as an "adaptive response to the exigencies of the present" (Harrell-Bond and Voutira, 1992. p.9). In such ways, refugee cultures become a reconfiguration of their pre-displacement identities and a projection of their aspirations for protection, freedom of movement, and a place to call home. After seven years and with few resolutions in sight, the Rohingya in Bangladesh are an appropriate example of this phenomenon.

Archeological, ethno-linguistic, and trade route records provide compelling evidence of the Muslim Rohingya population's indigeneity to Maungdaw district in Myanmar's Rakhine State for at least 1,000 years (Chowdhury, 2020; Galache, 2020; Ibrahim, 2016; Uddin, 2020). However, comprising just two million people and less than two percent of Myanmar's total population, the Rohingya have long been miss-identified as Bangladeshi migrant laborers who arrived during the British colonial occupation of Myanmar, or Burma as it was then known (Bjornberg, 2016; Galache, 2020; Uddin, 2020). Through the post-independence 1982 Citizenship Act, the Burmese dictator Ne Win revoked the Rohingya's citizenship (Cheeseman, 2017; COISS,2021; Zarni and Cowly, 2014). Since then, as Myanmar's xenophobic junta established a quasi-theocratic Buddhist state, and as the Arakan majority population strove for a 'pure' Rakhine ethno-state, military campaigns like 'Operation Clean and Beautiful Nation' (1991) are paradigmatic of the agendas that rendered the Rohingya stateless (Zarni and Cowly, 2014).

In 1982 Ne Win revoked Rohingya citizenship. After years of diminished rights and the proliferation of online hate-speech from Buddhist nationalist and state operatives in the early 2010s, in August 2017 the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) staged a coordinated attack against Myanmar police posts. This reignited inter-communal conflict between Arakan and Rohingya populations, stoking a new campaign of ethnic cleansing by Myanmar's Tatmawdaw military force (Hossain et al., 2020; IISS, 2023; Uddin, 2019). Between August 24th and September 25th, Medecins Sans Frontieres (2017) estimates that 6,900 Rohingya were killed. As many as 25,000 more Rohingya are thought to have perished by gunfire, in torched homes, mosques, and villages, and as a result of sexual violence in subsequent months (Habib et al., 2018).

Bangladesh has hosted 'Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals' (the paradoxical term for stateless Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh) since 1962, where intermittent surges of Rohingya across the border have occurred every time tensions have flared (Shohel, 2023; Uddin, 2020). Bangladesh is a long-established safe haven for Rohingya fleeing inter-communal conflict and state sanctioned violence, with UNHCR and a small handful of Bangladeshi NGOs providing a bulk of the population's protection and care (Phiri, 2008; Milton et al. 2017). Between August and December 2017, however, 889,753 Rohingya arrived with very little warning (UNHCR, 2018).

Representative of the scale and depravity of the violence, the volume of Rohingya seeking protection in 2017 was unprecedented, leaving the Government of Bangladesh, host communities, and the UNHCR inadequately prepared to shelter and feed such large numbers, let alone provide educational and psychosocial support (Prodip and Garnett, 2019). On top of the social and economic marginalization already experienced in Myanmar, the residual trauma suffered by Rohingya women and children and the depletion of the educated workforce in the violence resulted in complex psychosocial and education needs and woeful professional skills shortages (Prodip and

Garnett, 2019; Shohel, 2023; Uddin, 2020). Without a sufficient number of doctors, nurses, or teachers within the population, the Rohingya were wholly dependent on humanitarian aid and host-community personnel for their initial survival.

While Bangladesh ratified the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child—in which article 28 guarantees all children the right to education—it is not a signatory to the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees or the 1967 Additional Protocol, which assure refugee children's inclusion in national education systems. For 30 years, the Bangladesh Government has refused to include Rohingya children in national schools and in 2018 they prohibited the use of any country's formal curricula within camp learning centers, including Bangladesh's, which had previously been permitted for the pre-2017 refugee population.

Viewing education as a pull-factor that increases flows of Rohingya across the border and prolongs their settlement, Bangladesh's denial of formal curricula to Rohingya refugees was a way of expediting Rohingya repatriation (HRW, 2021; Nilsen et al., 2023; Shin, 2022; Shohel, 2023). Moreover, due to exclusionary education policies in Myanmar and schools being the frequent target of armed attacks, Rohingya children had fragmented access to formal education (Al-Haddad et al., 2023; GCPEA, 2022). In addition to profound levels of psychosocial distress (O'Conner and Saeger, 2021), this history of exclusion impeded children's preparedness for classroom learning in Bangladesh and caused negative downstream effects on the number of Rohingya sufficiently qualified to teach (Olney et al., 2019).

In the early years of the 2017 crisis an ad hoc arrangement between the UNHCR and Government institutions created an insecure, under-resourced, and unpredictable educational environment (Magee et al., 2020). Humanitarian agencies seeking to establish a cohesive program of basic education in the camps were slowed by inter-agency tensions, languid bureaucracy, and

the government anxieties (Homonchuk et al., 2023). During this time, fledgling Rohingya organizations rallied to build a network of community learning centers, employing the Myanmar Curriculum and Quranic teaching to create some semblance of formal education in the camps (Nilsen et al., 2023; Prodip and Garnett, 2019). Fearing the political role that such centers might play, however, in 2021 the Bangladesh Government ordered their closure, much to the dismay of Rohingya leaders who had labored in untenable conditions to establish them (HRW, 2021; Øtsby et al., 2023; Sin, 2022).

As the inter-governmental organization coordinating a majority of the Government-permitted education services in the camps, in late 2017 UNICEF implemented an integrated learning approach for over 300,000 children that was aligned with the INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, inclusive of psychosocial support and socio-emotional learning, and connected to child protection referral services (INEE, 2010; Coombes, 2019). Until 2020, the resulting Learning Competency Framework and Approach (LCFA) was implemented alongside an INEE Teachers in Crisis Contexts (TiCC) Training Pack-inspired teacher competency framework and initial training program for Rohingya refugee and Bangladeshi host-community teachers (Save the Children, 2017).

The LCFA focused on basic numeracy and literacy and the facilitation of psychosocial support and social and emotional learning activities (UNICEF, 2020; UNHCR, 2021). However, in comparison to the Myanmar Curriculum-oriented and Rohingya-led community schools, over time the LCFA was perceived by Rohingya families as insufficiently comprehensive, age-inappropriate, and ultimately inadequate for the Rohingya community's aspirations (Magee et al., 2019; REACH Initiative, 2021). This resulted in diminished parent confidence in the value of

education, high rates of student absenteeism, and reportedly high rates of teacher attrition within the LCFA system (REACH Initiative, 2021).

Prior to COVID-19 and the 2021 military coup which deposed Myanmar's democratically elected government—adding further complexity to the situation—there was genuine hope among Rohingya and within the Bangladesh Government for a UNHCR-mediated solution to the crisis (Islam and Haque, 2024). Responding to community sentiments about the LCFA and to prepare Rohingya for repatriation to Myanmar, the Bangladesh Government retracted its policy on formal curricula within the camps and allowed the Myanmar Curriculum to be piloted for 10,000 grade 6-9 students (UNICEF, 2022). In late 2022, after 82 weeks of learning center closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bangladesh Government greenlit UNICEF's fast-track scaling of the Myanmar Curriculum to reach all primary-level grades. International humanitarian agencies and Bangladeshi implementing partners were then tasked with delivering teacher professional development to over 7,000 Rohingya refugee teachers via eight implementing partner organizations and 172 master trainers.

In 2022 and 2023, troubling developments in post-coup Myanmar further eroded Rohingya hopes for a durable solution. In Rakhine State, mere kilometers from the Rohingya camps, the rebel Arakan Army repelled Tatmawdaw advances, took control of much of the territory, and escalated brazen attacks on Rohingya villages causing Myanmar's Tatmawdaw soldiers to defect and more Rohingya to flee to Bangladesh (ICG, 2024). Between 2023 and 2024, in a perverse *riposte*, the Tatmawdaw forcibly conscripted Rohingya youth to replenish their depleted ranks, which included cross-border kidnappings and *refoulement* to Myanmar (Fortify Rights, 2024; ICG, 2024). It is during this period of high alert and growing despair that my fieldwork for this study took place in the Cox's Bazar camps.

## 2.2 Global tensions in refugee teachers' work

Access to education can mend the despair of forcibly displaced children's indefinite identities and uncertain futures; but for teachers, the work of teaching can compound the myriad complexities they face while also adding a sense of vocation and direction to their lives (Adelman, 2019; Dryden-Peterson, 2017; Falk et al. 2023; Reddick and Chopra, 2021). Reflecting this duality in refugee teachers' work, my study is situated amid a worsening security situation and the hope-filled implementation of the Myanmar Curriculum. Thus, to make further sense of refugee teachers' experiences and to better situate Rohingya teachers' work within the global context, in this section I introduce and analyze three global tensions relating to refugee teachers' identities, the curriculum and language dilemmas teachers face, and the professional status challenges they contend with.

### 2.2.1 Refugee teachers as nation builders in waiting

The consequences of forced displacement mean that refugee teachers' motivation to contribute towards nation building is personal, political, and intertwined, all the while constrained by the consequences of conflict, their experiences, and the limited resources at hand (Waters and LeBlanc, 2015). Illustrating this reality, Adelman's (2019) research in Lebanon shows how Dalia, a 26-year-old Syrian primary teacher, leaves her own trauma and aspirations at the classroom door in order to create a safe space where children can just "learn, have fun, and play" (Adelman, 2019, p. 95). Similarly in Kampala, Uganda, Dryden-Peterson's (2022) research shows how Jaques, a refugee teacher from the Democratic Republic of Congo, suspends his own struggles to ensure that children in his class can first cope with the precarity of refugee life in Kampala and then prepare for the eventualities that their futures may hold. In this respect, refugee teachers first teach for the world that is and then for the future they want to create (ibid).

Cultural norms, such as harmful gender practices, different beliefs about child development, or the status of teachers' work travel with and shape refugee teachers' experiences of teaching (Bradley et al., 2024). This might relate to female teachers juggling the trauma of displacement with the demands of teaching while also maintaining their domestic responsibilities at home (Kirk, 2008). However, for some, displacement and the disruption of norms also creates prospects not previously available to them. In Ethiopia, for example, a poor supply of qualified teachers provided rare opportunities for forcibly displaced Eritrean women to enter the workforce (Kirk, 2008). As Kirk reflects, "Women who had never considered the possibility of becoming teachers before leaving Eritrea were now starting to think about the possibility of completing professional training" (p. 167). This example shows that for many refugees, teaching offers cautious personal transformation and newfound aspirations, albeit held in check by the uncertainty of their circumstances and residual cultural barriers (Dryden-Peterson, 2017).

Despite these opportunities, refugee teachers are chronically under-compensated and receive little professional development support (Bengtsson et al., 2020; Falk et al., 2022; Mendenhall et al., 2015). Multiple studies still show, however, that refugee teachers still gain a tentative sense of reward, anticipation, and motivation via the social utility value of their work (Falk et al., 2022; Kirk, 2008; Kirk and Winthrop, 2013). For example, as an internally displaced female teacher in Afghanistan describes, "although I teach without pay, I still get respect for it" (Kirk, 2008, p. 885). At the same time, a teacher in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya conveys a despairing yet anticipatory element to refugee teachers' experiences: "I do not yet know the sweetness of being a teacher because I have not been trained" (Mendenhall, 2018, p. 356).

While the literature on refugee teachers' as 'nation builders in waiting' is limited, a number of qualitative studies from low-resource and fragile contexts reinforce teachers' self-identification

with this role (Mendenhall et al., 2017; Falk et al., 2022). In a qualitative study with 42 Ugandan and South Sudanese teachers, 73 percent of participants aligned the purpose of their work with 'nation building' (Falk et al., 2022). Moreover, the role of nation builder transcends borders as teachers expect students to return to their countries of origin to help progress development and peace (ibid; Sesnan, 2013; Shepler, 2011). Shepler's (2011) post-conflict tracer study in Sierra Leone and Liberia also documents how former refugee teachers identify 'the future of the nation' as a core motivation for teaching, although their agency to enact change is constricted by a lack of national-system recognition for their work. In this regard, Dryden-Peterson and Reddick (2017) frame refugee teachers' limited agency as the "parameters of hope" (p. 4).

### 2.2.2 Curriculum and the politics of refugee education

Complex considerations regarding refugee teachers' inclusion in national education systems and the curriculum used invariably impact the experience of teaching (Henderson, 2023; Mendenhall, 2023; Mendenhall et al. 2015). Where provisions are made in accordance with the United Nations 1951 Convention on the Rights of the Refugee, its 1967 Protocol, the 2018 Global Compact for Refugees, and UNHCR's Education 2030 Strategy, refugee inclusion within the host-country's national education system is the preferred option (Mendenhall and Falk, 2023; Reddick and Dryden-Peterson, 2021; UNHCR, 2022). Yet in the case of non-signatory states like Bangladesh, to deter long-term settlement refugee children and teachers are not permitted to attend or teach at national schools or use the national curriculum (Rahman et al., 2022; Shin, 2022; Shohel, 2022).

In Cox's Bazar, the prospect of repatriation to Myanmar governs educational decision making, meaning many Rohingya prefer to learn the Myanmar Curriculum and Burmese language even though the curriculum promotes the Myanmar military and Burmese is scarcely spoken or

read by Rohingya teachers, let alone caregivers and children (Rahman and Hussain, 2022; Shohel, 2022). This situation reflects what the literature highlights: that inclusion and curriculum factors impose practical, symbolic, and paradoxical barriers to teachers' work (Mendenhall, 2015).

Political and practical curriculum questions also influence the degree to which teachers experience the reward of teaching (Mendenhall et al. 2015). As Mendenhall et al.'s (2015) qualitative study in camp and urban settings in Kenya shows, the efficacy of teachers' instruction is impacted by curriculum factors which in turn determine the work satisfaction that teachers experience. This study also identifies the role of quality curriculum-related professional development in bolstering teachers' status and mitigating high teacher attrition rates.

In terms of how curriculum impacts refugee students' experiences of schooling, Bellino and Dryden-Peterson's (2018) research on refugee inclusion in Kenya highlights disparities in curriculum delivery between Kenyan and parallel refugee schools, which both offer the Kenyan curriculum but are staffed by a different cohort and caliber of teachers. In refugee schools, unmotivated or often absent refugee teachers account for student beliefs that Kenyan schools with Kenyan teachers offer better chances of upward social mobility, thereby creating a vicious cycle for refugee teachers who work without the affirmation, compensation, and status that sustains their motivation to teach (ibid).

Tensions between short-term humanitarian responses and long-term development priorities are also heightened by the politicization of curriculum in refugee hosting contexts (Brun and Shauyb, 2020). Humanitarian interventions favor curricula from countries of origin to better facilitate voluntary repatriation, yet this approach overlooks the likelihood of protracted displacement and undermines education and employment opportunities for refugees in countries of asylum (Bellino and Dryden-Peterson, 2018; Brun and Shauyb, 2020; Cohen, 2019). More

recently, in a move towards UNHCR Education Strategy 2030 inclusion objectives, countries like Lebanon allow for the inclusion of Syrian refugees in public schooling, albeit through the parallel modality of double-shift schools. But as Brun and Shauyb (2018) argue, the Lebanese curriculum has negative side-effects for Syrians: it reinforces nationalistic Lebanese identities and fails to promote possibilities for refugee civic engagement and belonging.

Jordan also allows Syrian refugees to learn the Jordanian curriculum in a double-shift setting. As in Lebanon, Cohen's (2019) qualitative research with 40 Syrian youth illustrates how the Jordanian curriculum is exclusionary, runs "contrary to [refugees'] experiences" and limits possibilities of belonging (p. 4). Findings from content-analysis and qualitative interviews reveal how the national curriculum engenders resistance among Syrian learners and their families as they function in an exclusionary, fluid, and liminal educational space that holds marginal promise for a better future in Jordan.

In contrast, Kirk and Winthrop's (2008) qualitative evaluation of Eritrean refugee teachers' work in Ethiopia highlights the value of teachers' participation in the adaptation of bespoke curricula. While this example does not align with UNHCR's inclusion agenda, Kirk and Winthrop (2008) report how teachers' leadership in the curriculum development process strengthened their identity and enhanced community-level respect for them. Though not a long-term solution, the approach leveraged the "special qualities of the least qualified teachers," thereby rejecting deficit-based formulations of teachers' work and reinforcing the value of teachers' experiences in curriculum development and implementation (p. 718).

### 2.2.3 The de-professionalization of refugee teachers' work

Global and national humanitarian actors can undermine the professional status of teachers through poor compensation, irregular contracts, exclusion from national education systems, inadequate

investments in professional development, and a lack of recognition for teachers' 'alternative qualifications' (Bengtsson et al., 2020; Kirk, 2008). Yet such settings are often the worst-affected by shortages of qualified teachers and thus barriers of entry to the profession are lowered to attract sufficient numbers of personnel (Henderson, 2025; UNESCO, 2024). While this creates a larger teacher cadre and reduces class sizes, it reduces the perceived status of teaching (Pherali et al., 2020; Popova et al., 2019; Tikly and Barrett, 2012).

A resultant tension between the de-professionalization of teachers' work and the quality of professional development support creates a negative feedback loop: teachers feel unsupported and disrespected, which then contributes to poor teacher motivation and retention (Ring and West, 2015; Falk et al. 2022). Like the example of Jacques in Kampala, teachers foremostly teach for the daily realities of refugee life and uncertain futures (Dryden-Peterson, 2022). As the literature supports, approaches to refugee teacher recruitment and development that leverage teachers' experiences and epistemologies about learning through continuous development modalities can sustain a motivated teacher workforce (Khoja-Moolji, 2017; Sayed, 2018; Tabulawa, 2003).

In many low-income and fragile settings, a deficit approach—in which teachers are 'indignant professionals' or 'mediocre intellectuals'—is often the paradigm informing the support that teachers receive (Ali, 2018; Pherali et al., 2020; Tao, 2016). Teachers are seen as having little knowledge to contribute to decision making processes, with professional development commonly experienced as top-down and cascade-based training that teachers are expected to replicate in the classroom (Ali, 2018; Tao, 2016). Noting the impact that such approaches can have on teachers' sense of *self-efficacy* and *motivation to teach*, a reconfiguration of teachers as culturally intelligent with the "agency to enable transformation within the complex realities in which they work" is encouraged (Pherali et al., 2020, p. 22).

# Chapter 3 - Literature review

In 2024, UNESCO's International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 launched the inaugural Global Teachers Report with a thematic focus on teacher shortages. It reinforced well-established concerns on how teachers' work conditions and the diminishing status of the profession give rise to a teacher motivation crisis (INEE, 2022; UNESCO, 2024; UNESCO IIEP, 2020). Likewise, numerous studies in low-income and fragile settings attribute high attrition rates to poor teacher well-being (e.g. Falk et al., 2019; Ring and West, 2015; Soares et al., 2021; Wolf et al., 2015). What is missing, despite the alarm, are motivation-oriented studies from low-income and fragile settings that define and measure the connection between context-specific motivation factors and teachers' motivation to teach. While an emerging body of teacher well-being focused literature offers a platform to build from, there is a relative dearth of scholarly literature on teacher motivation in low-income and fragile settings. In this chapter, in line with the exploratory nature of this study, I survey the research gaps relating first to the Rohingya education in Bangladesh and then to the constructs employed for the measurement and analysis of teacher motivation.

## 3.1 Literature on Rohingya education in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

There are studies that provide a landscape review of the Rohingya context and identify key educational challenges (Hossain, 2023; Prodip, 2023); studies that provide political economy-like analyses of the Rohingya education sector and the barriers that impede children's access to quality education (Rahman et al., 2023; Shohel, 2022); there is evidence on the sustainability of non-formal community-led schools (Olney et al., 2020; Østby et al., 2023); and emerging work on the impact of COVID-19 on child and adolescent dropout rates (Nilsen et al., 2023). In terms of

methods, these studies range from desk-based literature reviews and qualitative studies with small samples to survey-based quantitative studies with larger samples.

The near-total lack of Rohingya teacher voices across this body of work is especially striking. As is the rare use of ethnographic methods more generally, the absence of rigorous mixed-methods approaches, and minimal reference to the functioning of learning centers, the curriculum, or teachers' work conditions. These gaps limit our understanding of current education interventions in Cox's Bazar, with implications for future research and policy-making priorities. But they also signals the complex, highly politicized, and restrictive regulatory environment that has hampered independent research on the Rohingya crisis since 2017.

In terms of general context analysis, Shohel's (2022) desktop literature review identifies the political dynamics of the crisis and how they impact Rohingya children's access to education. While much of the insight is descriptive and leans on publicly available data, Shohel's (2022) analysis of the Bangladesh Government's position on Rohingya education lends clarity to the bureaucratic tensions that limit the sector's potential. Prodip and Roy's (2023) qualitative phone-based survey of the types of education available to Rohingya children and youth provides further insight on the tensions between the Bangladesh Government's restrictive position on education and Rohingya preference for different education options. Prodip and Roy reveal how the Government's treatment of education as a 'temporary form of relief' rather than a 'long-term development priority' eroded the Rohingya's sense of agency and agitated Rohingya demands for the Myanmar Curriculum and more formal schooling.

Hossain's (2023) mapping of education services also relies on secondary sources, but compares community sentiments towards different education offerings. Among caregivers there is a strong preference for the Myanmar Curriculum, but Hossain holds that the top-down and

prescriptive implementation inhibits children's capacity to meaningfully contribute to society. Although teachers feature minimally in this work, Hossain's study does note the 'cold conflict' between host-community and refugee teachers due to host-community teachers' 'superiority' or 'savior complex'. This fact is also highlighted in Prodip and Garnett's (2019) qualitative study on Rohingya education, which includes a combination of international, Bangladeshi, and Rohingya key informants (n = 18) but barely notes the impact that such tensions have on teachers' work. Their mapping of education services highlights strong alignment with the INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies (2010), but they caution that this does not equate to relevant, quality, or long-term learning.

Rahman et al.'s (2022) qualitative study with a mixed sample of NGO representatives, Rohingya caregivers, and just two teachers (n = 24) evaluates the various forms of discrimination that inhibit Rohingya engagement in education. Where other studies celebrate the potential of the Myanmar Curriculum's introduction, Rahman identifies how it exacerbates Rohingya marginalization. Without the curriculum's recognition in Bangladesh or Myanmar, and due to 'poor quality teaching', Rahman argues the curriculum's denies Rohingya children the right to the full scope and benefit of a quality education. An additional insight that informed preparations for my own study is how a 'culture of mistrust' among Rohingya teachers towards 'outsider' researchers complicates data collection and limits the validity of outcomes.

Studies that focus on adolescent access to education present economic pressures and harmful gender norms as persistent challenges. Only one peer reviewed study collected primary data with a small sample (n = 26) of Rohingya youth using a visual ethnography approach (Al-Haddad et al. 2022). This work outlines the consequences of uncertified education and school closures during COVID-19, confirming that adolescent Rohingya are 'entrapped' by political,

cultural, and economic forces that thwart their hopes for quality education. More substantive adolescent-focused empirical work comes from Guglielmi et al. (2021) whose mixed methods study employs Amartya Sen's (1999) capabilities approach and a gender perspective to evaluate how a lack of legally binding policies impacts Rohingya adolescents' access to learning. With a representative sample of 2,493 Rohingya households across 32 of the 36 Rohingya camps, Guglielmi et al. (2021) detail how only 49 percent of adolescents are enrolled in education. Citing the impact of *purdah* and early marriage for girls and informal income earning activities for boys, these conditions contribute towards muted educational aspirations in Cox's Bazar. As Guglielmi et al. (2021) write, "many adolescents have become resigned to their circumstances – discriminated against by displacement policy, poverty and/or norms limiting their educational access" (p. 38).

Rohingya-led community education also receives scholarly focus through Olney et al.'s (2020) and Nilsen et al.'s (2023) qualitative survey-based studies, which employ the same dataset. Olney et al.'s work maps 27 Rohingya education networks, comprising 373 community schoolteachers and 9,848 children, to document the practices of the leaders who established them. Key findings speak to early challenges between the Bangladesh Government, UN agencies, and the Rohingya community, where the absence of consultations with community leaders and unilateral decisions made on behalf of the Rohingya sowed deep mistrust towards formal educational opportunities. As a Rohingya community leader reflected:

> They all post their signboards in front of [child-friendly spaces] but just have kids play with toys. They don't give any systematic grade-level teaching. They have finished a year of teaching but there is no system for upgrading and passing the kids to the next grade levels (p. 41).

Community-based teachers in Olney et al.'s (2019) study teach to prevent a 'lost generation' of youth and to help them maintain their sense of affinity with Myanmar. Similarly, Nilsen et al.

(2023) note how teaching is an important component of "their greater struggle for human rights and citizenship" (p. 10). Nilsen et al.'s study dives deeper into community teachers' pedagogical strategies and makes a unique contribution in that the co-authors are members of the Rohingya refugee community. Disregarding the Government ban on mobile technologies in the camps, Nilsen et al. also discover teachers who improvised teaching approaches using Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

More recent studies assess the impact of COVID-19-related school closures on attendance and learning outcomes. For Østby et al.'s (2023) quantitative study with 1,226 host-community and refugee households, refugee and female identity groups experience the highest dropout rates. As the study seeks to understand the heterogeneous effects of COVID-19 useful insights emerge. For male and female children from both communities, 'age' or 'aging out of education' is given as the main reason for dropping out. However, results for adolescents differed. For adolescent females 'family duties' was the overwhelming reason for school dropout, whereas for adolescent males going to school became 'too expensive'. For females, the second-most common reason for not re-enrolling after COVID-19 was their diminished experiences of safety on the way to school and at school. As the available Rohingya education sector studies reveal, there is important evidence generation on the experiences of Rohingya children, adolescents, and community teachers from prior to the shutdown of community schools, but Rohingya teachers working in the UN-led learning center system seem to have been so far neglected.

## 3.2 Teacher motivation literature

Literature referring to teacher motivation in low-income settings reflects a teacher shortage crisis, which has gained prominence within recent discourse (Bennell and Akyeampong, 2015; Ring and West, 2015; Tao, 2016; UNESCO, 2024). Yet after a decade of concern, teacher motivation

remains an under-researched, sporadically conceptualized, and inadequately addressed area of focus, especially in conflict-affected and refugee-hosting settings. Claims to corresponding teacher attrition and retention challenges are therefore more anecdotal than empirical (Ring and West, 2015; Henderson, 2025).

To date, there are no peer-reviewed studies that define and/or measure the motivation of refugee teachers in contexts of forced displacement, despite the regular reference to teacher motivation crises in such settings (Brandt and Lopes Cardozo, 2022; Falk et al., 2023; Marchais et al., 2024; Ring and West, 2015). Moreover, in past studies teacher motivation is framed as a contributor to teacher well-being, rather than an outcome of improved teacher wellbeing, which is the configuration that my study employs. Responding to this gap in the literature, in this section I explore constructions of teacher motivation and measurement scales from teacher motivation-focused and motivation-adjacent studies in a range of high- and low-income educational contexts, such as those focused on teacher well-being in fragile and emergency settings that include motivation as a corollary or contributing factor to teacher well-being or the product of teachers' work satisfaction.

The concept of teacher motivation is broadly recognized as 'amorphous' (Tao, 2016), 'vague' (Han and Yin, 2016) and 'poorly defined' (Watt and Richardson, 2017). Due to the myriad and contextually variable factors that determine an individual's motivation to act, there is little consensus on how a universal concept of motivation might apply to the work of teaching (Han and Yin, 2016). There is, however, some agreement on the categories of factors that nurture an individual's initiation of an activity and their sustained engagement in it. As Han and Yin (2016) theorize, motivation is a nuanced constellation of social, political, and economic factors that shape individuals' lived experiences and the beliefs upon which they decide to act.

### 3.2.1 Teacher motivation literature from high-income and stable settings

These studies provide insight into the conceptualization and measurement of the teacher motivation constructs as well as the different phenomena in teachers' personal and professional lives that influence their motivation to teach. In this section, I present a selection of studies from high-income settings that influence my own theorization of teacher motivation for refugee-hosting settings.

Responding to a "lack of scale validation" and "poor definitional precision" in motivation-focused studies (Watt and Richardson, 2017. p. 5), the Factors Influencing Teaching (FIT) Choice survey was developed and validated with a sample of 1,651 pre-service teachers in Australia (Watt and Richardson, 2006). Focusing on participants' motivation to join the teaching profession, the FIT Choice model defines teacher motivation across four domains: *socialization influences*, including the allure of the profession; *task demand* and *task return,* which include the perception of high-level expertise and financial and social reward; *self-perception*, which counts for a person's belief in their ability to teach well; and *extrinsic values*, including personal needs for job security and skill transferability; and the *social utility value* of teaching, which speaks to a person's desire to shape the future and enhance social equity. Via the FIT Choice survey, Watt and Richardson (2006) found that perceptions of teaching ability (or projected self-efficacy), the intrinsic value of teaching, and the desire to make a social contribution were the most powerful predictors of a teachers' motivation to join the profession.

Adapting Watt and Richardson's FIT Choice scale, Lauerman's (2017) quantitative study employs similar motivation constructs to determine American pre-service teachers' long-term commitment to the profession (n = 703). As statistically significant underpinnings of motivation, Lauerman identifies how *social utility value* of teaching and *teacher self-efficacy* are core

predictors of teachers' motivation to teach. Lauerman (2017) also finds that participants who teach for intrinsic reasons had a higher level of confidence in their ability to influence education outcomes. Of further interest are Lauerman et al.'s (2017) adapted scales. Their category of *professional commitment* is comprised of three motivation constructs, which are: *intrinsic career value*, or a teachers' interest in teaching and desire for a teaching career; *social utility value,* which they define as the will to contribute to social development; and *personal utility value*, representing a need for career and financial security. Survey items relating to *self-efficacy* are also relevant and employ the subscales of *efficacy for student achievement*, *relationships with students*, and *efficacy of teaching*.

While studies employing Watt and Richardson's (2006) FIT Choice scale offer useful frameworks, their samples are made up of pre-service teachers from somewhat homogenous settings and they do not measure how teachers' experiences of teaching or their work conditions influence their ongoing motivation to teach. Fernet, Senécal, and Guay's (2008) quantitative study on elementary and high school teachers (n = 609) in Quebec affords better insight on how work conditions shape teachers' motivation to carry out specific teaching tasks. Responding to claims that "more than any other professionals, elementary and high school teachers suffer from a lack of work motivation" (Jesus and Lens, 2005), Fernet et al. devised the Work Tasks Motivation Scale (WTMS). They drew on Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory (SDT) of motivation, which holds that human motivation is driven by of three psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—to devise 30 factors reflecting five types of motivation among core classroom teaching tasks.

The WTMS also defines *intrinsic motivation factors* as the pleasure or the satisfaction derived from an individual's engagement in an activity, and e*xtrinsic motivation factors* as the

more instrumental factors that influence an individual's actions because they offer an external reward such as income, status, or security. Of particular relevance are items specific to teacher *job burnout* and *emotional exhaustion*, as well as teachers' perceived *self-efficacy,* which is determined by their *classroom efficacy* or how well they can teach, and their *organizational efficacy,* or how they influence colleagues and leaders within the school. Fernet et al.'s findings also show that *teacher self-efficacy* is the most significant and positive predictor of teachers' motivation to fulfill core tasks ($R^2 = 0.49$, $p < 0.01$) whereas *emotional exhaustion* and *job burnout* have a statistically significant but negative influence on teacher motivation ($R^2 = -0.30$, $p < 0.01$).

Osman and Warner's (2020) quantitative study on teacher motivation in Texas (n = 1,388) is also quite narrow in its scope but yields further conceptualizations of teacher motivation. Focused on how motivation influences teachers' transfer of new learning into practice, Osman and Warner's (2020) Expectancy Value Theory (EVT) scale is shaped by two *self-efficac*y aligned factors: an individual's beliefs about their own *competence* and their beliefs about the *purpose* of the activity. Their scale is then organized by four core motivation categories: *expectancy for success,* or an individual's belief that they can accomplish a task; *attainment value,* or the alignment of a task with the individual's identity and beliefs; *intrinsic value,* or the enjoyment an individual gets from a task; and *utility value,* or the usefulness of a task for one's own benefit and for the benefit of one's community. Osman and Warner (2020) also found that teachers' perceived *self-efficacy* were the most powerful predictors of teachers' willingness to integrate new practices into their classrooms ($p < 0.05$).

For research with a more expansive socio-ecological focus, motivation-adjacent literature needs to be included in this exploratory review. For example, Dinham and Scott's (2000) quantitative research on teachers' *work satisfaction* in Australia, England, and New Zealand (n =

2,000) critiques the binary intrinsic and extrinsic constructions of work satisfaction and includes a third domain to account for the broader societal, cultural, and political environments in which teaching takes place. This domain reflects influences such as public perceptions of teaching and societal values related to education. Findings show that intrinsic factors have the most consistent association with teachers' overall work satisfaction, whereas extrinsic factors such as salary, workload, and bureaucratic constraints are more commonly related to indicators of dissatisfaction. The newer contextual domain is then found to have a unique but variable influence on teachers' satisfaction: in settings where societal regard for teaching is high, teachers report strong levels of satisfaction, whereas in contexts where respect for teachers is low the inverse is true.

Another motivation-adjacent example is Mansfield et al.'s (2016) exploratory research on teacher resilience, for which Australian pre-service teachers are the focus. Employing a narrative methodology to surface resilience factors, the Building Resilience in Teacher Education (BRiTE) framework evaluates how teachers' personal and contextual resources shape their resilience. This study expands the conceptual scope of factors influencing teacher resilience beyond the school, including teachers' *family support*, *social networks*, and teachers' perceived *recognition* and *status in society* as resources that influence their resilience.

### 3.2.2 Teacher motivation literature from low-income and fragile settings

There are a number of guidance documents that provide policy makers and practitioners with conceptual frameworks and advice for the improvement of teacher motivation in low-income settings (e.g. UNESCO, 2010; UNESCO-IIEP, 2017). Yet this work draws from motivation studies in high-income and stable settings and cites little evidence from contexts for which the guidance is intended, raising concerns about the extent to which framings of teacher motivation translate to the contexts in question.

A widely-cited publication is Bennell and Akyeampong's (2007) large-scale mixed-methods study on teacher motivation in Africa and South Asia, which included a total sample of 2,700 teachers from Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda (among others) and Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. While there are seven overarching research questions, the two that relate most to my own work are: 1) What do teachers and other stakeholders identify as the major factors in teachers' motivation and job satisfaction? And 2) What evidence is there about the effects of teachers' motivation on their retention, behavior, and performance? Unlike studies from high-income settings, this study is consists of the extrinsic factors that affect teacher motivation (i.e. recruitment, salary, and classroom conditions) with intrinsic factors such as teachers' identity, reasons for teaching, teacher competence, or beliefs about education virtually absent.

Bennell and Akyeampong do incorporate teachers' voices in their work, but only in the form of agreement rates with motivation-oriented survey items or the percentage of teachers who associate with a stated experience. There is very little statistical or qualitative nuance in the findings as Bennell and Akyeampong do not test for relationships between the determinants of teacher motivation and teachers' actual motivation to teach. Thus, while they find that one-third of participants are poorly motivated, without inferential statistical analysis the significance of associations between the extrinsic motivation factors that dominate the study and participants' motivation to teach are only implied.

This is also true for the mixed-methods Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEMEO) study on teacher motivation in the Philippines. With a sample of 1,140 teachers, the authors' quantitative analysis of survey findings does not push beyond the percentages of respondents who agree or disagree with survey items. Moreover, teachers' voices barely furnish the findings (SEMEO, 2020). This study finds that intrinsic factors are more

strongly associated with teacher motivation than extrinsic factors. Specifically, the objective of helping students succeed, the gratification garnered from the status of teaching, and the 'divine providence' of becoming teachers; i.e. that teaching is a part of God's plan. Teachers also cite how they shape the future of the nation, which has a comparatively stronger influence on teachers' long-term commitment to teaching than their short-term reason to join the profession. The power of external community-level support and an enabling social environment for teachers is also compelling: teachers acknowledge how families and community members provide a vital layer of encouragement to persist in their work.

While Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) and SEMEO's (2020) studies draw from broad motivation theories like Maslow's (1945) hierarchy of needs and Deci and Ryan's (1985) social determination theory, there are very few references to theory in their findings. In one of the few scholarly studies to center teacher motivation in low-income settings, Sharon Tao's (2016) research in Tanzania leans more heavily on theoretical framings of motivation and the extent to which they map onto fragile settings.

Grounding Tao's (2016) work are observations similar to my own: motivation studies in low-income settings enumerate the deprivations that teachers contend with but rarely measure correlations with teachers' *motivation to teach*. Moreover, such studies address teacher motivation challenges in isolation or through 'carrot or the stick' externalities, such as salaries and paid leave (Tao, 2016). Thus, when evidence for more nuanced intrinsic factors is unavailable or not taken into account, extrinsic motivation factors gain more pertinence but with limited practical effect.

With a sample of 41 teachers in Tanzania, seven salient 'functionings' are found to have the most influence on participants' motivation to teach (Tao, 2016). Tao's findings are categorized as *personal functionings,* or what teachers need to live the lives they envision, and *occupational*

*functionings*, or the workplace factors that shape teacher morale the most. Extrinsic motivators matter more at the personal level, such as being able to live in a satisfactory home and being able to take care of family. Where intrinsic factors like experiences of respect and the satisfaction of helping students learn are more valuable at the occupational level. Tao also associates teacher morale and motivation with the achievement of teacher well-being, as highlighted in recent studies in conflict- and displacement-affected settings (e.g. Falk et al., 2022; Marchais et al., 2024; Wolf et al., 2016).

The prevalence of teacher identity and well-being focused work in recent motivation-adjacent scholarship can be traced to Kirk and Winthrop's (2007) study on teacher development in Ethiopia, their later research synthesis on teacher identities in fragile and conflict-affected settings (2013), as well as Wolf et al.'s (2015) research on 'cumulative risk' in the Democratic Republic of Congo. With a sample of 103 teachers, Kirk and Winthrop's (2007) qualitative study frames how teachers' identities positively and/or negatively affect teachers' *motivation to teach*. With terms like 'spontaneous' and 'tentative' teachers, Kirk and Winthrop (2007) acknowledge how pathways into teaching are a matter of necessity or happenstance, and thus teachers experience few of the preparatory or systemic supports that their counterparts elsewhere enjoy. Refraining from deficit theorizing 'spontaneous' or 'tentative' teachers, the more agentic term 'alternatively qualified teachers' recognizes teachers' "intuitive understanding of how to protect and support children in difficult times" (p. 720).

Bringing together findings from fieldwork in Ethiopia and Afghanistan, Kirk and Winthrop's (2013) evidence synthesis acknowledges how teacher motivation is dependent on "factors within and related to a school and education system that support, encourage and stimulate teachers—and that sustain them" (p. 131). Moreover, they recognize how extrinsic factors like

compensation and certification are important but not the sole element of teacher motivation. Thus, acknowledging that motivation factors in Afghanistan and Ethiopia track those in high-income and stable settings, they emphasize how additional benefits like contributing to community development or possibilities for personal and professional growth have a stronger association with crisis-affected individuals' motivation to teach.

Wolf et al.'s (2015) teacher well-being research in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) examines the 'cumulative risk' that teachers experience in their work. With a sample of 229 teachers, their quantitative study's scale is useful in its consideration of community-level factors that contribute to exhaustion and burnout. Of particular value are the categories of *objective* and *subjective work conditions* and question items relating to teachers' social isolation, household hardship, and relationships with children's parents. Wolf et al. find that *subjective work conditions* such as perceptions of curriculum difficulty, adequacy of professional development, and safety at school have a higher bearing on teachers' exhaustion and burnout than *objective work conditions* like classroom size, hours of teaching per week, or salary. Overall, however, the concept of 'cumulative risk' is responsive to common experiences of violence and material deprivation and their effect on teachers' motivation to persist in the profession.

Marchais et al.'s (2024) mixed-methods research in DRC and Niger (n = 942) also focuses on teachers' vulnerability to violence and evaluates how post-traumatic stress affects their job satisfaction and motivation. They find that exposure to violence diminishes teachers' well-being, yet Marchais et al. note the competencies and coping strategies that teachers hone as a result of their experiences, thereby pulling teachers away from the deficit paradigms that characterize teachers' work in such settings. This study also pushes towards the sophistication and nuance of

insight lacking in other motivation-adjacent studies: it enumerates the prevalence and incidence of violence and its relationship to teachers' experiences of post-traumatic stress.

For additional factors that influence experiences of teacher well-being, Falk, Shephard, and Mendenhall's (2023) study on teacher-student relationships incorporates teacher motivation as a corollary finding. With a sample of 42 teachers in Uganda and South Sudan, semi-structured interviews show that teacher-student relationships "influence teacher well-being in complex, complementary, and contradictory ways" (p. 5). Their framing of teachers' 'expected' and 'expanded' roles (Falk, 2023) shows how teachers fulfil the roles of 'educator', 'caretaker', and 'mentor'. Via 'expected' roles, teachers experience self-efficacy and the relational reward of influencing children's learning and well-being. But due to complex safety and sustenance needs, the 'expanded' nature of teachers' work compromises teachers' capacity to fulfil core functions of teaching, and finding on teachers' poor professional well-being is associated with a decrease in teacher motivation.

Motivation-adjacent studies on teachers' work in low-income and fragile settings also speak of teachers' perseverance; variably framed as 'a duty' in Lebanon (Karkouti, 2021), 'making do' in Nigeria (Murugaiah, 2023) and 'not wanting to stop' in Iraq (Paradies, 2023). Read together, there is an element of diminished agency that influences teachers' commitment to the profession, often because teaching is the only formal employment opportunity in crisis-affected settings. This reality sits in tension, however, with teachers' intrinsic agendas for teaching; in their aspirations to protect and provide for their students; and in their vision for community or national development.

As Karkouti's (2021) qualitative phenomenological study with Syrian refugee teachers (n = 10) reveals, a sense of 'duty' is a motivation factor enabled by the consistency of professional

development and support services available to them. In Nigeria, Murugaiah (2023) also uses a qualitative phenomenological approach (n = 14) to reveal how teachers' beliefs about the purpose of education and their experiences of teaching shape their *motivation to teach*. Deplorable teaching conditions contrast with 'the nobility of teaching' and the efficacy of teachers' work, thus prompting the refrain 'we make do'. Likewise, Paradies' (2023) descriptive mixed-methods research with primary and secondary teachers (n = 35) in Iraq highlights a profound reluctance to abdicate their responsibilities, sharing how, amid heightened risk factors or stressors, teaching provides life purpose or vocation. Alongside teachers' sense of self-efficacy, this contributes to their resilience and motivation to teach. Strengthening my assumption that teacher motivation scales require a critical revision for crisis-affected contexts, a contradiction is apparent in studies like Paradies' (2023). After years of conflict, 30 percent of participants report that they feel unsafe at home and school; that they feel sad and hopeless; and that their morale is low, which—based on scales from high-income settings—should invariably affect their *motivation to teach*. However, over 80 percent of participants in Paradies' sample reported that they 'do not want to stop teaching.'

Ring and West's (2015) review of refugee teacher retention issues begins to address the partial compatibility of high-income setting motivation instruments with low-income and fragile realities via their framework for refugee teacher retention. While it is not a validated scale, seven domains to structure future refugee teacher-focused research are presented. Of most relevance to Cox's Bazar and the Rohingya teacher cadre, Ring and West (2015) outline factors relating to *teaching environment*, *teacher professional development*, *teachers' status* and teachers' s*ocial recognition* as the most influential determinants of retention. Like Tao (2016) proclaims, Ring and West (2015) recognize that teacher motivation is formed at the intersection of intrinsic and

extrinsic factors; theorizing, for example, how teacher attrition rates in refugee-hosting settings are attributable to interactions between unacceptable monetary incentives, arduous workloads, and low status in society (Ring and West, 2015).

### 3.3 Conceptual framework: Refugee teachers' motivation to teach

For all of the conceptual ambiguity between teacher motivation studies, one constant is that teachers' motivation is shaped by the socio-political conditions in which they teach, the availability of resources, and how this affects the relationships, experiences, and aspirations of individuals who teach (Han and Yin, 2016). This logic informs the premise of the conceptual framework that I present in figure 1 below.

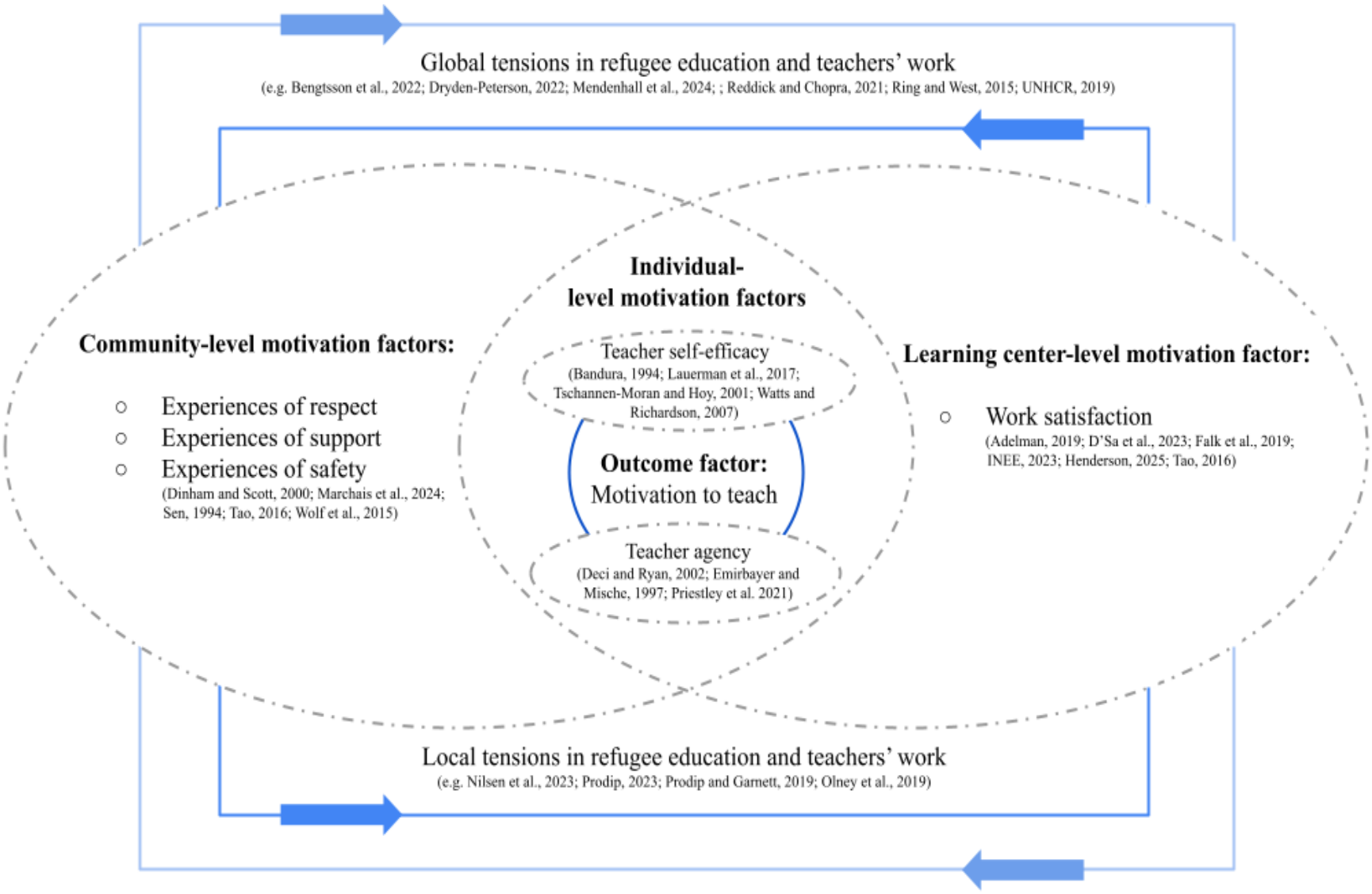
In the outer square, the analytical lens of global tensions in refugee teachers' work draws from key issues relating to teachers' inclusion in or exclusion from host-country education systems (Mendenhall and Falk, 2023), inadequate contracting and poor compensation (Bengtsson et al., 2022; Mendenhall et al., 2024), a lack of equivalency recognition of teachers' prior qualifications across borders (Ring and West, 2015), and the curriculum and language decisions that shape refugee teachers' work (Dryden-Peterson, 2022; Reddick and Chopra, 2021). Global tensions also include the influence of advocacy and policy developments, such as UNHCR's (2019) campaign for refugee inclusion in national systems. In the inner square, local tensions in refugee teachers' work, the Bangladesh Government's prohibition on refugee inclusion within the national system and its moratorium on third-country resettlement provide a backdrop to my analysis (Bhattacharya et al., 2021). Tensions also include the closure of Rohingya community schools, the centralization of education programming, and introduction of the Myanmar Curriculum (Nilsen et al., 2023; Prodip, 2023; Olney et al., 2019). The bi-directional arrows represent the interactions between

global and local tensions that shape refugee teachers' experience of teaching and their motivation to continue.

The circular elements of the Venn Diagram organize the socio-ecological motivation factors. In the left-hand circle I list the community-level constructs that are associated with teacher motivation. Drawing from Sen's (1994) 'capabilities approach' and Wolf et al.'s (2016) concept of 'cumulative risk', I include teachers' experiences of *safety*, *support*, and *respect* in Cox's Bazar. In the right-hand circle, drawing from work on teachers' *work satisfaction* (Adelman, 2019; Falk et al. 2019; Soares et al. 2021) and Tao's (2016) concept of 'occupational functioning,' I include learning center-level factors relating to curriculum, language of instruction, relationships with colleagues and children, and professional development opportunities.

In the central circle of the Venn, mirroring Deci and Ryan's (2002) self-determination theory of motivation and Lauerman et al.'s (2017) personal and social utility values, I consider how teachers' sense of *self-efficacy* and *agency* have a bearing on teachers' *motivation*. In this sense, motivation comes from a human need to feel competent and capable and to have choices and a sense of control over one's life (Deci and Ryan, 2002). Specifically, *self-efficacy* is how teachers recognize and believe they can experience outcomes from their professional efforts (Bandura, 1994; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2001) and agency relates to teachers' decision-making autonomy and ability to take a desired course of action (Bandura, 1994; Emirbayer and Mische, 1997; Priestley et al. 2015). At the center of my conceptual framework is the outcome factor: *motivation to teach*, which is the product of each socio-ecological level's unique, interrelated, and intersectional association with a participants' work conditions and identities.

**Figure 2**
*Conceptual framework for teacher motivation in the refugee hosting setting of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh*



# Chapter 4 - Research design and methodology

Based on insights from my preparatory pilot study[1] and literature review, it was important that my conceptual framework aligned with the multi-layered realities of becoming a teacher, being a teacher, and continuing to teach while navigating the complex challenges that refugee-hosting settings present. In this regard, the research questions that this study seeks to address are:

Research question: How are the social and political conditions in which Rohingya refugee teachers work associated with their *motivation to teach* in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh?

> Sub-question 1: In what ways are teachers' experiences of respect, support, and safety at the community-level related to their motivation to teach?
>
> Sub-question 2: How is teachers' sense of work satisfaction at the learning center-level associated with their motivation to teach?
>
> Sub-question 3: At the individual level, how are teachers' experiences of self-efficacy and agency associated with their motivation to teach?

In tandem with the considerable restrictions placed on my fieldwork by the Bangladesh Government and UNICEF's Cox's Bazar Field Office[2] (which I discuss in my limitations section below), I first introduce my research sites, where I describe the specific camps in which my research took place. I next introduce the constructs selected for my survey instrument, my instrument validation process with a local teacher advisory group, and the co-design and training process that I provided for enumerators. I then explain how I recruited participants for the survey

[1] This included two pilot visits to Cox's Bazar in July and November 2022 to determine the thematic focus of my study. During the July visit I met with key informants from international and local NGOs (n = 15) and held informal meetings with Rohingya and host-community teachers (n = 24), some of whom were later recruited into my Local Advisory Group. During my November visit, with support from UNICEF and implementing partners I administered a short survey to 555 teachers in order to understand teachers' experiences teaching in Cox's Bazar.

[2] Via the endorsement of UNICEF's Regional Office for South Asia, UNICEF Bangladesh hosted my research, sponsored my application for a Bangladesh Government research visa, facilitated my access to the Cox's Bazar refugee camps, and provided required transport and security support.

and focus group discussions and how I facilitated these sessions with the support of Rohingya and Bangla translators. Finally, I discuss key reliability and validity considerations and the trustworthiness of my results, how my own positionality influences my research process and outcomes, and the limitations of my study's methods and findings.

## 4.1 Research sites

The quantitative and qualitative components of this mixed-methods study take place in in the Kutupalong area of Ukhia, Cox's Bazar (see Annex E), which represents the most established and concentrated area of refugee settlements hosting 709,800 or 72 percent of the 975,350 Rohingya refugees in the region (ISCG, 2024). Occupying what was once the Kutupalong forest reserve, in which elephants and other wildlife still roams, the four selected camps in which this research takes place comprise 156,032 people or 21 percent of the UNHCR registered population living in Kutupalong (ibid). To maintain the anonymity of the camps and my study participants, I herein refer to these sites as Camp A, Camp B, Camp C, and Camp D. They were selected with my guidance and my host organization's appraisal and approval—thereby representing a sampling process of convenience *and* compliance. Eight-foot barbwire fences delineate each camp's border, with manned surveillance towers placed at topographic vantage points or wherever camp boundaries meet. Bangladeshi security forces also patrol the gated entrances to each camp and carefully manage who comes in and out. My four camps include a densely populated and less densely populated camp; a camp where Rohingya female teachers are well represented and one where they are poorly represented; and two camps with minimal safety concerns and two with significant security risks.

Camp A is on the northeastern periphery of the 'mega-complex' and easy to reach, nestled right alongside the original Kutupalong Refugee Camp, which was established in 1990, and backs

onto Bangladeshi host-community lands with bucolic rice fields, villages, and main thoroughfares nearby. Camp A control[3] is contested between ARSA and RSO armed groups and it also has the largest proportional representation of Rohingya female teachers. Due to its proximity to numerous Bangladeshi NGO field offices and personnel, and the fact it is managed by the Bangladeshi branch of a respected international organization, Camp A is perceived to be one of the safer and more gender-inclusive Kutupalong camps.

Camp B is in the very center of the Kutupalong 'mega-complex', surrounded on all sides by other camps and difficult to reach via a warren of makeshift roads that lead to an obscure main entrance. Learning centers are managed by a Bangladeshi organization with a large international presence and respected education sector programming. Camp B is controlled by the ARSA armed group and narcotics and human trafficking activities are common. Camp B's vulnerability to security challenges and climate-related emergencies (e.g. fires and flooding) is likely due to its isolation from main roadways, NGO field offices, and Bangladeshi security apparatus.

Camp C is on the southeastern periphery of the complex and also easy to reach due to the main thoroughfares nearby. It is controlled by the RSO armed group and is the closest in proximity to civil conflict near the Myanmar border. Camp C learning centers are managed by a smaller Bangladeshi organization with limited experience in education programming but a strong history in child protection and community development.

Camp D is the most densely populated camp and part of a newer three camp expansion site, which is still part of the Kutupalong system but geographically separated from the 'mega

[3] 'Control' refers to the dominant Rohingya insurgent group within each camp. The Bangladesh Government's RRRC ostensibly manages the camps, whereas these groups vie for influence over Rohingya political and social affairs. ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army) and RSO (Rohingya Salvation Army) are in conflict with each other due to differing repatriation objectives for the Rohingya population and for control of specific camps' illicit economic activities and revenue streams (IISS, 2023).

complex'. About one kilometer of rice fields and villages that were once surrounded by verdant sub-tropical forest stand between Camp D (and two other camps) and the main concentration of Kutupalong camps. Rohingya control of Camp D is contested between ARSA and RSO and it is managed by the same large Bangladeshi NGO that oversees Camp B programming.

While my survey dataset includes information on participants' camp locations and the implementing partners that manage their work, I made an ethical decision to exclude these variables as controls in my quantitative analysis. The education response in Cox's Bazar operates within a fragile, resource-constrained, and politically sensitive humanitarian ecosystem. As noted by Homonchuk (2023), inter-agency power dynamics and competition can lead to tensions that affect collaboration and program delivery. Given that this dataset could be interpreted—or misused—as a proxy tool for performance benchmarking, and based on indications that some partners viewed it this way, I am committed to protecting my research partners and the teachers who participated in my study from inter-organizational friction and harm.

**Table 4.1**
*The identity disaggregated teacher populations and notable features of my four research sites*

| Camp | Camp Population | Learning centers | Teachers | Rohingya Female | Rohingya Male | Bangla. Female | Bangla. Male |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 39,917 | 322 | 450 | 112 | 192 | 130 | 16 |
| B | 32,077 | 183 | 356 | 18 | 167 | 150 | 21 |
| C | 31,351 | 165 | 219 | 75 | 95 | 40 | 9 |
| D | 52,687 | 463 | 791 | 158 | 304 | 272 | 57 |
| Total | 156,032 | 1,133 | 1,816 | 363 | 758 | 592 | 103 |
| Percentage of total sample site workforce | | | | 21% | 40% | 33% | 6% |

**Source:** Cox's Bazar Education Sector, 2024; International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2023

## 4.2 An explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design

Motivation-adjacent studies on teacher well-being in crisis contexts have been predominantly quantitative (e.g. Wolf et al. 2015; 2016) or they have drawn from qualitative data (e.g. Falk et al. 2022) with mixed-methods studies only recently emerging (see D'Sa et al., 2023; Marchais et al., 2024; Mendenhall et al., 2024). Also, where a majority of teacher motivation studies conceptualize, measure, and validate motivation constructs and scales, they are predominantly psychometric, quantitative, and bereft of teachers' voices or contributions to the analysis (e.g. Deci and Ryan, 2008; Lauerman et al., 2017; Watts and Richardson, 2007).

In Cox's Bazar, where local and international organizations cite poor teacher well-being and motivation as a barrier to quality education (Rahman, 2022; Saha et al., 2024), a lack of scholarly or independent evaluation evidence tracking teacher turnover rates means that claims of high teacher attrition across the whole workforce are anecdotal and activities to mitigate attrition are informed by prevailing biases about teachers' identities and work ethic.[4]

Reflecting Tao's (2016) observation that policy discourse about teachers' work is often incongruent with what teachers say about themselves, it is important to capture system-level insights *and* the lived realities that teachers face, the rationale for the decisions they make, and how their identities might predict motivation patterns across the larger teacher workforce. In this way, an explanatory sequential approach—whereby participants interpret and analyze quantitative findings and make meaning in relation to their own experiences (Creswell, 2014)—allows for the inclusion of teachers' professional and pedagogical voices (Bengtsson, 2023). It pushes against

[4] The International Rescue Committee's Education Research in Crisis Contexts (ERICC) report on the implementation of the Myanmar Curriculum (Saha et al., 2024) cites an approximately 26 percent annual turnover rate among host-community teachers, although no source is provided for this data and no estimates are provided for Rohingya refugee teachers. The Rohingya Refugee Response database does not report data on teacher turnover.

the passive input-oriented positioning of refugee teachers in recent policy discourse (ibid) and presents opportunities for teachers' deeper and more meaningful participation as partners in the research process. In effect, this approach creates 'openings' for the portrayal of refugee teachers as capable with critical voices and political agency. Further still, being able to compare quantitative and qualitative evidence from Cox's Bazar with methodologically diverse studies from refugee-hosting contexts elsewhere allows for a more situated analysis and strengthens my ability to contribute towards global understandings of refugee teachers' *motivation to teach.*

To address aforementioned gaps in the field and inform more responsive policies and programming, my mixed-methods approach also integrates macro- and micro-level data, creating a dialectical interplay between community-, learning center-, and individual-level findings on the experiences and factors that predict teachers' *motivation to teach* (Maxwell, Chmiel, and Rogers, 2015). With the validity and reliability that the comparison of quantitative and qualitative data affords (Brannan and O'Connell, 2015), my approach also shapes a more scholarly understanding of how existing teacher motivation constructs and scales can be adjusted by and for refugee-hosting settings.

Through closed-ended quantitative approaches and open-ended qualitative approaches, I minimize the limitations of each method on its own and achieve a more layered account of the relationship between participants' lived experiences and *motivation to teach* at each level of analysis (Creswell, 2014; Schoonenboom and Burke-Johnson, 2017). As I illustrate in Chapter 5, significant dissonance emerged across my quantitative and qualitative datasets. Due to the nature of the survey items and my interrogation of *what* motivates teachers to teach, my quantitative data likely inflates participants' actual *motivation to teach* and obscures the complexity of their experiences. My qualitative FGD data, however, is more critical and multifaceted. It exposes *how*

and *why* teachers are *motivated teach* and details the experiences that harm their long-term commitment to the profession. Thus, through a mixed-methods approach, I have created a more sophisticated and representative dataset from which I base my analysis and findings. Below, I outline the structure of my study as carried out across three complementary phases of work.

### 4.2.1 Phase 1 - Project establishment

Phase 1 took place over three visits between mid 2022 and early 2023. Because a lack of scholarly studies on teachers' work in Cox's Bazar provided a limited empirical platform to work from, I invested significant time on project establishment to ensure that the direction I took addressed gaps in the literature and aligned with current developments in the field. During this phase I was able to co-define research objectives and establish buy-in with local-level leaders and teachers, which included building a coalition of supporters to assist in the implementation of my study.

On multiple occasions I met with key informants (n = 15) working for international agencies and local implementing partner organizations. These meetings provided valuable background information not available in extant literature. I also met with Rohingya and Bangladeshi teachers for informal discussions (n = 24) and administered a short scoping survey to 416 Rohingya refugee and 139 Bangladeshi host-community teachers (N = 555), which further shaped the direction and focus of my larger study.

My pilot discussions with key informants and teachers focused on five questions[5] to shape a more comprehensive understanding of the context, how implementing partners and teachers understood the work of teaching in Cox's Bazar, and the research focus that would be most

[5] My five questions were: 1. Why do you think teachers choose to teach Rohingya children? 2. What conditions do teachers need in their lives to be good teachers? 3. What knowledge, skills, or personal qualities does a good teacher need? 4. What work conditions cause teachers to feel stressed or unable to cope? 5. What makes teachers want to learn?

valuable.[6] Key informants regularly spoke of Rohingya teachers' weak academic foundations and how difficult it was for implementing partners to engage teachers in training activities with 'any meaningful effect'. Many attributed this to the fact that there was 'no struggle' for teachers to get their jobs; that teaching is only an 'opportunity for income'; and that they 'do not respect their roles', meaning they do not have a strong '*motivation to teach*'. Conversely, teachers from Rohingya and Bangladeshi communities spoke of their enjoyment working with children; being able to improve children's lives through teaching; and the importance of the structure and routine that teaching brings to their experience of displacement. Moreover, teachers spoke of their strong desire to be respected as professionals, but believed they need better training and mentoring to achieve this. Teachers also spoke of Burmese language issues and the mismatch between children's prior education and what they taught as core stress factors.

Themes and tensions that emerged from these conversations informed the content and design of a nine-question pilot survey which asked participants to rank statements about teaching that resonated with their own experiences. This survey provided further validation of key informant and teacher reflections and allowed me to understand key issues at scale. For example, 50 percent of respondents selected 'Rohingya futures' as their main reason for teaching; 30 percent selected 'Love of children'; and only two percent selected 'For the money.' A majority of participants also selected 'skills to teach well' as the most important factor in their well-being, and 50 percent selected 'access to quality training' as the most important intervention to improve their well-being.

[6] Although unconventional, I include pilot study findings in this methods section as they are central to my research design and the methodological decisions I made over the course of my larger study.

My pilot study revealed a disconnect between implementing partner and teacher perspectives about teachers' work and their *motivation to teach*. I also learned that my aspirations for a longer and more engaged ethnographic approach with Rohingya teachers were infeasible due to Bangladesh Government restrictions and UNICEF's risk mitigation requirements. Nevertheless, I was able to secure Bangladesh Government authorization to conduct research in the camps and confirm UNICEF's support for the full study.

From my pilot study participants, I next recruited a Local Advisory Group (LAG) consisting of six Rohingya teachers, one Bangladeshi teacher, two implementing partner representatives, and one representative from UNICEF (n = 10).[7] To reduce any bias or duplication in my methods or findings, LAG members lived in a camp and/or worked with an implementing partner organization that would not be included in my larger study. I designed my survey instrument by adapting existing scales, constructs, and concepts from the literature and insights from pilot interviews. The LAG teachers then completed a draft survey and provided critical feedback via group-based cognitive interviewing. I was then proceeded with the construct and content validation of my survey instrument. With implementing partner representatives I also confirmed the recruitment process for enumerators, translators, and participants.

### 4.2.2 Phase 2 - Teacher survey

Phase two took place over two visits in mid to late 2023. In order of the activities carried out, in this section I describe the enumerator recruitment and training, sample recruitment, the enumeration of my survey, and the design of my survey.

[7] LAG teachers were selected based on their proximity to the implementing partner training facility, where LAG meetings took place, their English proficiency, my assessment of their ability to critically engage in the survey validation process, and for a range of ages and years of teaching experience. No Rohingya female teachers were available for the group but the Bangladeshi host-community teacher was female.

## Enumerator recruitment

With support from five implementing partner organizations, I first recruited 12 enumerators. My recruitment criteria required a high level of competence in English, Chittagonian, and Rohingya languages and familiarity with Samsung tablets and the ONA digital data collection platform.[8] Because internet connections are not permitted in the camps, a degree of know-how with secure offline data collection processes was also important. Moreover, due to strict camp access regulations, collaborating with enumerators who already had authorization to work in the camps was required and advantageous. Many enumerators were already known to Rohingya and Bangladeshi teachers, meaning there was an established familiarity in place, which local advisory group members recommended as essential due to Rohingya participants' history of mistrust and occasional animosity towards new and unfamiliar NGO personnel (Rahman et al., 2022).

## Enumerator training

I facilitated an IRB approved and context adapted CITI[9] research ethics workshop for the 12 selected enumerators. As many had previously completed ethics training with their own implementing partner organizations, we co-designed ethics criteria specific to my study and an approach for sample recruitment, survey administration, and process monitoring. Because some implementing partners had a larger allotment of learning centers within their camps, and therefore more teachers, some enumerators were assigned slightly larger recruitment targets than others.

[8] ONA is an online data collection and analysis platform used by UNICEF and implementing partners for census data collection and monitoring and evaluation activities in Cox's Bazar. ONA can be used offline on Android tablets with data uploads taking place once a secure connection is reestablished. I chose to use ONA as the infrastructure was already in place and enumerators were accustomed to using its offline function. ONA was reviewed by Teachers College IRB and TCIT offices and found to meet institutional data security standards.

[9] Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative is an organization that provides research ethics and compliance training for researchers, faculty, and students involved in human subjects research.

Because some camps have better representation of specific teacher identity groups than others (e.g. female teachers in Camp A), some enumerators were required to recruit a higher sample of specific identities.

To administer the survey, enumerators advised that group-based facilitation would work best, especially as English language capabilities were variable and the timeframe in which teachers could be available and enumerators could work in the camps was so limited. Using a group-based approach also allowed for the collective sense-making of survey items and for enumerators to reach a larger sample in a shorter space of time.

It was also confirmed that survey enumeration across the four camps would take place over a six-week period with no more than seven participants in each hour-long survey enumeration session. Having seven participants per session meant that enumerators could easily transport tablets to learning centers deep within the camp complex and adequately support participants with technology or comprehension needs in a tight timeframe. On average, each of the 12 enumerators were responsible for recruiting 42 teachers and enumerating an average of one session per week in order to meet their target. Keeping to one session per enumerator per week was also necessary so that Samsung tablets could be allocated and distributed to enumerators within each camp and so that there was sufficient time for sample recruitment and contingencies, if needed.

## Sample recruitment

While this study is focused on the motivation of Rohingya refugee teachers, Bangladeshi host-community teachers are also included in my sample. My focus on Rohingya teachers represents the recent implementation of the Myanmar Curriculum and the Cox's Bazar Education Sector's need to continue recruiting Burmese-speaking Rohingya teachers in order to teach each grade level of the curriculum. Including Bangladeshi host-community teachers acknowledged their core

contribution to Rohingya education since 2017 through the LCFA[10] model and provides comparative analytical value to my findings, allowing me to elicit underlying motivation factors unique to Rohingya refugee or Bangladeshi host-community participants. Moreover, as a majority of refugee-hosting settings globally depend on host-community teachers as much as refugee teachers, including them allows for the better extrapolation of my findings for global relevance.

Based on feasibility consultations with implementing partners and enumerators, we agreed to recruit a sample of 500 teachers using a non-random purposive sampling approach (Creswell, 2014). This represents 27 percent of all teachers working in my selected camps (n = 1,816) and five percent of the total refugee teacher workforce in Cox's Bazar (N = 9,732). Non-random purposive sampling is commonly used in contexts where randomization and full representation are not possible due to logistical or political constraints (Etikan et al. 2016). Moreover, it is an appropriate strategy when expert information on a phenomenon of interest is sought (Etikan et al., 2016**;** Creswell, 2014; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). To ensure that my sample was an approximation of the composition of the actual teacher workforce in Cox's Bazar, we aimed for a proportional distribution of teacher identity groups (Rohingya female, Rohingya male, Bangladeshi female, Bangladeshi male). In this way I wanted to elicit insights that were an approximation of the broader teaching population's experiences in the camps (see Table 1).

For sample recruitment, in each camp enumerators set dates and locations where the administration of surveys would take place. At teachers' bi-weekly teacher learning circle meetings, an implementing partner technical officer played a pre-recorded participant information audio clip in either the Rohingya or Bangla language, depending on the audience identity, that

[10] The prior Learning Competency Framework Approach, which was taught predominantly in English and largely depended on host-community teachers.

explained the purpose of the survey and invited teachers to participate. The audio clip was based on an IRB approved participant information sheet and recorded by a Bangla and Rohingya translator working for Artolution and validated by a Rohingya-fluent professor at the University of Chittagong.[11] Interested teachers were then provided with the time and location of survey sessions that they could choose to attend.

Although the sample recruitment process was co-designed with enumerators and emphasized the voluntary nature of participation, I had limited control over which teachers were informed about the survey and invited to volunteer. Recruitment may have favored teachers with existing ties to enumerators, who worked in close proximity to camp entrances, had higher levels of interest, or more positive perceptions of their work. In this regard, the final sample is not an accurate representation of the whole workforce and my findings should be interpreted with this in mind. Nonetheless, the size and diversity of the sample (n = 494) and my mixed-methods approach mitigates some concerns and ensures that a robust cross-section of sentiments were captured.

### Enumeration of the survey

Due to the oversight and resource requirements for my camp access authorization,[12] I co-facilitated only one or two survey sessions per camp over a 10-day period. In these initial sessions I modelled for enumerators how the survey should be administered and reinforced for participants the security and anonymity of their data and insisted on the independence of their responses.

[11] A New York-based NGO that delivers art education programming in refugee settings around the world, founded and directed by Teachers College alumna Dr. Max Frieder.

[12] As a condition of my research authorization, each time I travelled to the camp I required official transport and a security chaperone, meaning my attendance at as many as 70 survey enumeration sessions was unreasonable. This is described further in my limitations section below.

In empty learning center classrooms or vacant implementing partner meeting rooms, participants sat apart to ensure the independence of their responses using the ONA platform on Samsung tablets. At the beginning of the session, via a Bluetooth speaker the enumerator played a pre-recorded participant consent statement in the Rohingya language, as recorded by the Artolution translator. Participants were then given an opportunity to raise concerns or ask any questions relating to the survey, its purpose, and the security of their data. The first questions in the offline survey form then allowed participants to provide their consent and opt in as participants in the follow-up focus group discussions.

Survey sessions were identity segregated, meaning Rohingya and Bangladeshi teachers never took the survey at the same time. This was so that the enumerator only administered the survey in English and Rohingya or English and Bangla, but never all three languages in the same session. Enumerators first facilitated each survey item in English and then translated that statement into Rohingya for Rohingya participants or Bangla for Bangladeshi participants. They would next articulate each of the response options on the Likert scale.[13] Based on my initial engagement in the process, the enumerators were professional and effective, ensuring that participants understood the questions and moved through the survey at the same pace. At the end of the survey, the enumerator checked that participants had saved and locked their completed survey on the tablet, ready to be securely uploaded to ONA. As the enumeration process continued after my initial observations, via the ONA platform's online dashboard I tracked all completed surveys and monitored the composition of the sample as it evolved.

[13] 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree

### The survey instrument - Variable definitions

The survey instrument (see Annex A) is informed by existing validated motivation scales, literature on teacher motivation, and the constructs that emerged during my preparatory key informant meetings and local advisory group discussions. As control variables, my survey first captured the *identity* of the teacher, their *sex,* their *age,* and their years of *teaching experience.*

### Motivation to teach outcome factor items (RQ)

My outcome *motivation to teach* factor is made up of six mixed extrinsic and intrinsic motivation constructs and 12 items that key informants, local advisory group teachers, and the literature identify as core reasons to teach in Cox's Bazar. I selected these items by triangulating qualitative and quantitative themes from my phase 1 pilot study and adapting constructs used in teacher motivation studies from high-income and stable contexts (e.g. Fernet et al., 2013; Lauerman, et al., 2017; Ring and West, 2015). The first construct I selected is the *compensation* that teachers receive for their work. Next is teachers' *love of children* and desire to support their learning and protection. Then, a broader agenda for education is captured by *Rohingya future* and the fact that, for many, teaching in a refugee setting is a proxy to their *own education*. The *status of teaching* and a *lack of opportunities* for educated Rohingya also form part of this factor, as does their *professional commitment to* teaching, where participants are also asked to rate the likelihood that they will continue teaching in Cox's Bazar and want a future career in teaching.

### Community-level predictor factors (SQ1)

Community-level motivation is defined by 18 items representing the factors of *safety, respect,* and *support,* and the extent to which study participants experience these factors in their work and lives because they are teachers. *Respect* relates to the degree to which teachers experience respect from

community members, implementing NGOs, and immediate family members. *Support* relates to the level of practical support that teachers receive from community members, NGOs, and immediate family members. And *safety* relates to teachers' freedom from violence and discrimination by political groups and Bangladesh authorities.

### Learning center-level predictor factors (SQ2)

At the learning center level, motivation factors are defined by 11 items representing the latent construct of *work satisfaction* and the extent to which study participants experience work satisfaction because they are teachers. It is made up of participants' responses to the language in which they teach, the professional development they receive, their experience implementing the Myanmar Curriculum, the nature of their relationships with colleagues and children.

### Individual-level predictor factors (SQ3)

At the individual level, motivation factors are defined by 16 *teacher agency* and *self-efficacy* items and the extent to which participants experience self-efficacy and agency in their work because they are teachers. *Self-efficacy* relates to teachers' personal beliefs about their influence on children's sense of belonging, children's learning achievement, and children's protection from harm. *Teacher agency* relates to teachers' personal decision-making authority and their ability to determine what curriculum content they teach, how they arrange their classroom space, the pedagogical strategies they use, and the methods they employ to assess student learning.

**Table 4.2.2**
*The survey instrument - Control, predictor, and outcome variables*

**Control variables:** Teacher identity

| Variables (4) | Metrics |
|---|---|
| Identity | *Binary*<br>0 = Bangladeshi<br>1 = Rohingya |
| Sex | *Binary*<br>0 = Male<br>1 = Female |
| Age | *Ordinal*<br>1 = 16 - 20<br>2 = 21 - 25<br>3 = 26 - 30<br>4 = 31 - 35<br>5 = 36 - 40<br>6 = 41 - 45<br>7 = 46 - 50<br>8 = 51 - 55<br>9 = Over 55 |
| Teaching experience | *Ordinal*<br>1 = Less than 1 year<br>2 = Between 1 and 2 years<br>3 = Between 2 and 3 years<br>4 = Between 4 and 5 years<br>5 = Between 4 and 5 years<br>6 = More than 5 years |

**Predictor variables:** Community-level motivation factors

| Informed by | Factors (3) | Statement items (18) | Metrics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Phase 1 pilot findings and literature informed scales.<br><br>Wolf et al. (2016) cumulative risk scale.<br><br>Ring and West (2015) teacher motivation categories. | ● Safety (6 items) | ○ Risk from community (x2)<br>○ Risk from authorities (x2)<br>○ Risk from political groups (x2) | *Ordinal*<br>1 = Strongly disagree<br>2 = Disagree<br>3 = Agree<br>4 = Strongly agree |
| | ● Support (6 items) | ○ From family (x2)<br>○ From community (x2)<br>○ From NGO staff (x2) | |
| | ● Respect (6 items) | ○ From family (x2)<br>○ From community (x2)<br>○ From NGO staff (x2) | |

**Predictor variable:** Learning center-level motivation factor

| Informed by | Factor (1) | Statement items (11) | Metrics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Phase 1 pilot findings and literature informed scales. | ● Work satisfaction (12 items) | ○ Language (x2)<br>○ Myanmar Curriculum (x3)<br>○ Relationships (x2)<br>○ Leadership (x2)<br>○ Access to professional development (x2) | *Ordinal*<br>1 = Strongly disagree<br>2 = Disagree<br>3 = Agree<br>4 = Strongly agree |

**Predictor variables:** Individual-level motivation factors

| Informed by | Factors (2) | Statement items (16) | Metrics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Deci and Ryan's (2002) Self-determination Theory<br><br>Lauerman (2013) teacher responsibility scale.<br><br>Osman and Warner (2020) Expectancy Value Theory. | ● Teacher agency (8 items) | ○ Curriculum (x2)<br>○ Pedagogy (x2)<br>○ Assessment (x2)<br>○ Environment (x2) | *Ordinal*<br>1 = Strongly disagree<br>2 = Disagree<br>3 = Agree<br>4 = Strongly agree |
| | ● Teacher self-efficacy (8 items) | ○ Children's belonging (x2)<br>○ Children's protection (x2)<br>○ Children's hope (x2)<br>○ Children's achievement (x2) | |

**Outcome variable:** Motivation to teach factor

| Informed by | Factor (1) | Statement items (14) | Metrics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Phase 1 pilot findings and literature informed scales<br><br>Watt and Richardson (2002) FIT choice scale<br><br>Lauerman (2013) teacher responsibility scale | ● Motivation to teach. (14 items) | ○ Compensation (x2)<br>○ Love of children (x2)<br>○ Rohingya future (x2)<br>○ Own education (x2)<br>○ Status of teaching (x2)<br>○ Lack of opportunities (x2) | *Ordinal*<br>1 = Strongly disagree<br>2 = Disagree<br>3 = Agree<br>4 = Strongly agree |
| | | ○ Prof. commitment (x2) | *Ordinal*<br>1 = Highly unlikely<br>2 = Unlikely<br>3 = Likely<br>4 = Highly likely |

## Quantitative data analysis and interpretation

Once all surveys were submitted (n = 499), I first deleted observations with missing values (n = 5), which left a final sample size of 494. I then assigned numeric values to Likert scale responses (e.g. strongly disagree = 1, strongly agree = 4). Items requiring reverse coding were identified based on whether higher Likert values represented negative sentiments, which would have been inconsistent with the overall scale direction. I reverse coded survey items where strongly agree (4) represented negative sentiments to ensure that all high values (3 and 4) represent participants' positive experiences and all low values (1 and 2) represent negative experiences. To prevent errors, all reverse-coded items were pre-identified during the survey design and enumeration phase with a capitalized DO NOT in the survey item, they were piloted and validated with my LAG, clearly flagged in the dataset, and double-checked during data cleaning and coding to ensure alignment with my intended measurement direction.

I also created dummy-coded binary variables such as *sex* (0 = male, 1 = female) and *identity* (0 = Bangladeshi, 1 = Rohingya) and I created numeric codes for ordinal variables such as *age* and *experience*. I then uploaded my dataset to Stata and created index variables for my outcome factor *motivation to teach* and each of the six predictor factors that define my community-, learning center-, and individual-levels of analysis. To create indices, I averaged item responses for each observation within each factor, ensuring consistency across scales. Because my survey asked what identity or what sex a participant was, I also created new disaggregated binary variables for each of the identity groups in my sample: *Rohingya female, Rohingya male, Bangladeshi female, Bangladeshi male.*[14]

[14] For example, 0 = All other identities, 1 = Rohingya female

To ensure a robust level of validity and reliability for my indices, I then ran confirmatory factor analysis to create the following factors: *motivation to teach, respect, support, safety, work satisfaction, self-efficacy,* and *agency.* I used standardized factor loadings to improve comparability between the factor's items. I then ran goodness of fit tests—including Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and Coefficient of Determination (CD)—to measure the global fit of items to the factor. To assess reliability, I also calculated Cronbach's alpha for the outcome factor and each predictor factor. Although $\alpha > 70$ is the standard accepted level of reliability, I used a threshold of $\alpha > 0.60$ for some bespoke factors (such as *respect* and *agency*) in line with conventions for exploratory research when factors have fewer items (< 6) and short scales (e.g. 1 - 4).

Next, I computed summary statistics for the demographic control variables of *identity, sex, age, and experience* and the continuous outcome and predictor factors. I calculated mean response values and the standard deviation for each survey item within the factor and tested for the statistical significance of the relationship between participants' demographic markers on their *motivation to teach* or experiences of a motivation factor. For tests with the ordinal control variables of *age* and *experience* and a continuous outcome factor I conducted one-way ANOVA tests with a post-hoc Bonferroni correction. For the binary control variables of *identity* and *sex* I then conducted two-tailed t-tests. Statistical significance was determined by p-values of $p < 0.05$ for acceptable significance, $p < 0.01$ for a strong level of significance, and $p < 0.001$ for a high level of significance. For each of my regression models, which I describe in the next section, I also used $R^2$ to compare which factors within each socio-ecological level of analysis and which factors overall had the strongest correlations with participants' motivation to teach.

I next conducted Pearson correlation tests and created matrixes showing bivariate associations between control variables, predictor variables, and the *motivation to teach* outcome. By conducting Pearson correlations, I was able to compare results with multivariate regressions to see which variables maintained strong associations with the *motivation to teach* outcome and which variables were weakened due to overlapping or interrelated factors when all variables were regressed together.

I then administered ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analyses to assess the relationship between demographic control variables and predictor factors and the *motivation to teach* outcome factor. OLS regression was chosen because the outcome *motivation to teach* factor becomes a continuous variable when the means for all contributing ordinal variables are brought together, allowing for the estimation of linear relationships. I also conducted variance inflation factor (VIF) tests to diagnose multicollinearity between my variables and ensure my regression produced highly reliable coefficients.

In my regression analysis I first estimated a baseline model (Model 1) which included demographic control variables (*identity, sex, age,* and *experience*) and the outcome factor *motivation to teach*. In Model 2, I then disaggregated identity into four subgroups (*Rohingya female, Rohingya male, Bangladeshi female, Bangladeshi male*) to examine how motivation differed across these categories. In subsequent models, I introduced predictor factors from each socio-ecological level of analysis (*individual, learning center, and community*) to assess and compare their relative contributions to participants' motivation to teach. I evaluated the strength and direction of each predictor factor using unstandardized coefficients (*B*) and their statistical significance (p-values), with larger negative or positive coefficient values indicating stronger effects. To determine the overall explanatory power of my *motivation to teach* model, I conducted

a combined OLS regression with standardized coefficients ($\beta$) to compare the relationship of each factor with the *motivation to teach* outcome.

For the outcome factor and each of the predictor factors at each socio-ecological level of analysis, I next produced box-plot graphs to compare mean and median response values and the range of variance for each factor. I then did the same to compare each identity group's response values for each factor. These box plots visualize the comparative difference in the whole sample's experiences of each motivation factor as well as the relative experiences different identity groups have with that factor. While I have used box plots to furnish my statistical analysis and compare outcomes between groups, they were not used as FGD prompt tools.

For my focus group discussions, I prepared easy to interpret visual prompts. I needed to show the percentage of teachers from each identity group who had a low level of motivation to teach (or low levels of experience of a particular motivation factor) and those with high levels of motivation to each (or high levels of experience of a particular motivation factor). To do this, I created new binary variables for the outcome factor and each of my predictor factors. Mean response values for each observation between 1 - 3 represented a low to moderate experience of motivation (= 0), and mean response values for each observation between 3 - 4 represented a high level of experience (= 1). In this way, for each factor I showed the overall percentage of participants who report low or high levels of motivation or a motivation factor, and disaggregated statistics showing the percentage of each identity group who experience high or low motivation or experiences. I then crafted stacked bar graphs showing the above statistics, which I printed out in color and used alongside each of my focus group discussion questions to gain FGD participants' interpretations of the results (see Annex C).

### 4.2.3 Phase 3 - Teacher focus group discussions (FGDs)

Following the administration of my phase 2 survey, a non-random purposive sample (n = 24) volunteered for FGDs. Altogether, five gender- and identity-segregated groups were formed, representing all four camps, and loosely mirroring the demographic composition of the teacher workforce (see table 1). With translation support, I personally facilitated two 90-minute long FGDs for each of the five groups over a three-week period, amounting to 10 sessions and 30 hours of focus group discussions in total.

In the first FGD, I invited teachers to interpret quantitative survey findings (see Annex C) and provide experiential insights on the relationship between community- and learning center-level motivation factors and their *motivation to teach*. In the second FGD, we addressed quantitative findings relating to the individual-level motivation constructs of teacher agency and self-efficacy and the extent to which teachers' experience these constructs in their work.

While about half of the Rohingya male focus group participants had a confident level of English, I was required to use a different Rohingya translator for each group in each camp because Rohingya are not permitted to travel between camps. However, for the Rohingya female group I was unable to locate a Rohingya female English translator, meaning this group's discussions were translated by a Rohingya and English-speaking Bangladeshi female translator already known to the group; this was also an important cultural safety consideration and recommended by my local advisory group. For the Bangladeshi female focus group, I used a Bangla translator who also had prior authorization to work in Camp A.

Translators provided real-time translation for participants who did not speak English. On occasion, when a discussion or debate between participants occurred, the translator was required to paraphrase, resulting in potential and subtle changes in the discussion's meaning. When this

occurred, I sense checked discussion points with English speakers to validate the translator's interpretation. To be culturally responsive, for the Rohingya female group I allowed for internal discussions among participants before expecting a formal response to my questions. This approach added a layer of synthesized narrative to the process, as one Rohingya female group member would paraphrase the group's prior discussion in Rohingya and the translator would then provide a real-time interpretation of their contribution. In my analysis chapters that follow, in order to maintain transparency and judiciousness in the presentation and reading of my results I demarcate when a participant's contribution is documented via a translator's interpretation.

Each of the ten FGDs consisted of four or five participants. This allowed for a diversity of opinions within the group and gave all participants the opportunity to contribute. Using a scaffolded facilitation approach—meaning I first defined the variables and provided guidance on how to interpret survey result visualizations—participants then shared their perspectives on how the findings related to their personal experiences.

FGDs do not just produce a collection of individual interview statements but they are sites of social interaction and collective meaning making (Barbour, 2007). In this way, it is on the researcher to attend to what is said by individuals; how agreement or contestation shapes the dialogue; who has power or how power is shared within the group; and what dynamics might determine the groups' willingness to share (ibid; Krueger, 2014; Morgan, 1997). Because my FGDs were segregated and my variables and findings are shaped more by participants' identities and associated interpretations in relation to their personal lived experiences, my analysis centers individual statements more than whole-group dynamics, but I still work towards the creation of collective and identity-bound insights within and across my analysis chapters. I detail contextual factors and internal dynamics where noteworthy, but I tend to organize participant statements

thematically, highlighting examples of shared or discordant perspectives within, between, and across participant identity groups, thereby creating a dialectical quality to my FGD analysis.

Often, FGD participants would introduce new themes or perspectives that were prompted by my quantitative findings, but not represented in the survey items, thus making the integration of quantitative and qualitative insights less aligned in some cases. Examples include participants' focus on teacher identity cards in relation to *safety* in Chapter 5, the idea of stress thresholds in relation to *work satisfaction* in Chapter 6, and *teacher agency* outside the classroom in Chapter 7.

### Qualitative data analysis and interpretation

Within three hours of each FGD I wrote ethnographic fieldnotes (Emmerson et al. 1995; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). In narrative and reflexive form, they recorded environmental details and occurrences symbolic of patterns, power dynamics, and themes within the group. Per my positionality statement below, I also include critical reflections of my influence on teachers' behavior and contributions to the discussion. Where relevant, in my analysis I supplement teacher narratives with field note observations to provide context to their perspectives or my own insights as they arose.

I next completed transcriptions of focus group recordings. To ensure accuracy, I listened to each focus group recording and revised transcriptions where needed. Validating transcriptions with translators was difficult to achieve due to their competing work pressures and internet and mobile technology restrictions in the camps. Next, I uploaded field notes and transcripts to NVivo for open and closed coding and the identification of patterns and themes through deductive and inductive analytical approaches (Creswell, 2015; Saldaña, 2015).

To develop my codebook (see Annex D), I first defined etic or deductive codes based on my literature review, conceptual framework, motivation constructs, and survey question items. This included key terms from the three tensions of refugee teachers' work—refugee teachers as nation builders in waiting, curriculum and the politics of refugee education, and the de-professionalization of teachers' work—and key words, phrases, or themes that emerged from closer reading and analysis. Codes representing the constructs employed in my survey also allowed for parallel analysis between quantitative and qualitative datasets.

My emic and inductive coding was then based on an eclectic method (Saldaña, 2015). I first open coded using elemental (e.g. emergent concepts from participant contributions) and affective methods (e.g. larger themes representing experiences, actions, decisions, and feelings). I chose this approach due to the sensitive personal perspectives that my focus groups elicited (ibid). I then reviewed my open codes to assess which categories, themes, and sub-themes could be confirmed. Next, I reread and recoded the transcripts and memos where necessary to assure their fit for purpose. Once I confirmed my codebook, I conducted a third and final coding of my transcripts. This process allowed me to run queries in NVivo using combinations of codes across the different socio-ecological levels of my study. In doing this, I was able to read across and within the full dataset to capture the insights and anomalies that emerged alongside my research questions and constructs (Creswell, 2014; Saldaña, 2015).

### Integrated data analysis and interpretation

Quantitative and qualitative data are not complementary by way of sample sizes, the scale of analysis, or the phenomena they represent, but by the way data are brought together to create inference at the intersection of methods and findings (Hesse-Biber and Johnson, 2013; Maxwell,

Chmiel, and Rogers, 2015). I therefore employed an embedded integration approach by bringing together data from qualitative and quantitative phases within each of my three research questions and corresponding levels of analysis (Maxwell, Chmiel, and Rogers, 2015). This way, participants' narrative interpretation of my quantitative findings created a 'dialectical quality' to my analysis, especially as points of confirmation or dissonance arose (ibid). Participant narratives often presented themes not captured by survey items, but were prompted by the survey findings, in which case integration was more difficult and in such cases my analysis privileges qualitative insights over quantitative results. This reflects how my survey items, while informed by a triangulation of sources, did not capture the full breadth of refugee teachers' lived experiences in Cox's Bazar. This also confirms the importance of closer and longer engagement with teachers in the development of survey scales and the value of a mixed-methods approach: FGDs revealed additional layers of thematic nuance that my pilot study and LAG validation sessions did not uncover.

My data integration plan involved a three-stage process. For each of my three research questions I conducted an independent analysis of my respective qualitative and quantitative findings. I then brought both sets of findings together to compare and contrast focus group participants' interpretations for each socio-ecological level. Finally, I wove together conclusions for each research question to present a nuanced analysis of where alignment or dissonance arose and the factors that predict and explain participants' motivation to teach in Cox's Bazar.

## 4.3 Validity and reliability

In mixed-methods research, validity relates more to the credibility and contextual veracity of data and findings than objective truth (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). In this sense,

validity is achieved by the how the concepts and terms used, the instruments designed, the methods employed, and the conclusions arrived at are consistent with participants' own experiences and understanding of the context (Cave and Sloan, 2014; Johnson and Christensen, 2014). By extension, this strengthens the trustworthiness of my approach. The internal reliability of my survey scales and the relevance of my focus group questions to participants' own realities influence the extent to which my design can be replicated across similar settings to elicit comparable insights (Bolton, 2001; Urdan, 2016). Because my sample is non-random and purposive, however, there are limitations on the generalizability of my findings (Collins, 2015).

By partnering with international and Bangladeshi organizations and establishing a multi-stakeholder LAG, I created opportunities for horizontal dialogue about the intent and purpose of my research, the contextual validity of my protocols and instruments, ethical considerations, and the interpretation of findings (Hale, 2008). This also created a sense of co-ownership, accountability, and responsibility for advisors and participants as the intended outcomes of my study are reflective of and applicable to their own work and lives (ibid).

My sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach also allowed for the comparison of findings. As each of my findings are sourced from multiple data points, this extracts a greater level of meaning, insight, and confidence (Creswell, 2014; Creswell and Clark, 2018; Cha, 2022).

## 4.4 Researcher positionality

As part of a wider movement to decolonize the field of education in emergencies, Global North-centered researchers working in the Global South are being scrutinized. As an English-speaking male of European descent from Aotearoa New Zealand who works for international agencies, studies at a prestigious university in the USA, and conducts research in low-income settings of

forced displacement and statelessness, I have significant power, financial advantage, and freedom of movement. My own identity is therefore at the heart of this scrutiny. To account for this, wherever possible I demonstrated critical awareness of the debates and associated power dynamics in our field and took action to mitigate potential harm and reduce power asymmetries that my identity and academic associations might represent or create.

Humanitarian aid activities are viewed as a complicit extension of colonialism, operating within the structures of white privilege and corresponding epistemological hierarchies (De Sousa Santos, 2014; Escobar, 2012; Khoja-Moolji, 2017; Marchais et al., 2019; Menashy and Zakharia, 2022; Mignolo, 2013; Quijano, 2007; Sriprakash et al., 2020; Takayama et al., 2017). Thus, while setting my gaze on a research topic in the Global South, the racial and economic inequities that research processes are embedded in disproportionately benefit researchers like myself: I travel on quick-stop assignments, collect generous grants and fees, and fulfill roles that require minimal engagement with, understanding of, or long-term investment in local cultural norms or social realities (Menashy and Zakharia, 2022). I am deeply aware of the questionable ethics of these norms, especially when they make for parochial scholarship, policies, and practices (Hale, 2008).

As much as I aspired to work from a 'subaltern epistemological position' in Cox's Bazar (Khoja-Moolji, 2017), strict bureaucratic limitations and my aforementioned privilege put me in a disingenuous position. I thus needed to enact my role in a way that did not assert 'white arrogance' and assumed power (Menashy and Zakaria, 2022). At the same time, I had to leverage personal networks and the influence associated with my prior work and academic institution to access decision makers at the local level; thus, without the status that my identity affords, this research would have been less possible or achieved on a much smaller scale. One of the core complexities

I traversed was how to assert my own needs and achieve acceptable research standards without imposing norms or political risk on the partners and participants I worked with.

I had to be careful not to undermine my ethical duty to use research for good. Therefore, while I cannot dissociate my research from the above privileges, I used my relative advantages to support partners and participants through acts of reciprocity. For UNICEF's Cox's Bazar Field Office, I provided pro-bono technical support by co-designing and delivering workshops for new Afghan refugee teacher educators at the Asian University for Women in Chattogram, who lead professional development activities for Rohingya female teachers in the camps. For my Bangladeshi security chaperones and implementing partner focal points, I provided mentoring on program monitoring practices and I supported their career planning via university admissions and scholarship application coaching. For two Rohingya teachers in my local advisory group, I also provided intensive guidance for their applications to the newly permitted Parami University and Bard College online degree programs. One teacher was successful in their application and received a full scholarship and living stipend. But due to camp access and internet restrictions, I was unable to provide a satisfactory level of reciprocal support for my Rohingya research participants. I did however provide long-distance support to teachers' whose family members have been victims of cross-border trafficking by leveraging my international network and child protection contacts. As one example, with colleagues from a past assignment I was able to locate and arrange for the protective care of a Rohingya teacher's fourteen-year-old brother who had been trafficked to Malaysia and abandoned.

While opportunities to provide direct reciprocal support were limited, I also hope this study inspires UNICEF and the implementing partners to redouble their efforts for Rohingya teachers' work conditions and future opportunities.

## 4.5 Data collection and the limitations of my findings

The political sensitivity of the Rohingya crisis meant I had to build significant familiarity and trust with high-level actors and local implementing partner organizations in order to facilitate my planned research activities. To achieve this, I made six trips to Bangladesh over two years, accruing a total of seven months in the Cox's Bazar camps to carry out this study.

To obtain research approval, UNICEF and the Bangladesh Government's Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission (RRRC) placed considerable restrictions on my fieldwork. My research authorization required that I include Bangladeshi host-community teachers in my sample and that I was accompanied by an emergency-radio equipped security chaperone and a representative from each camp's implementing partner focal point at all times. I was also required to be transported to and from the Kutupalong camps, 90 minutes from Cox's Bazar city where international agency offices are based, with a hostile environment trained driver in an officially marked United Nations vehicle. The burden of financial and reputational cost for myself and for my host institution was therefore significant and needed to be carefully managed for the duration of my study.

For the duration of my field work I was anxious about the level of academic independence I could realistically achieve. I often had to re-negotiate the parameters of my approach and manage UNICEF's influence over the thematic focus of my investigation. I was also cognizant of the relationship between local implementing partners and UNICEF, bringing into focus the independence and willingness of their support of my research. Because research of this scale with teachers had not been previously conducted in Cox's Bazar, I was committed to the completion of this project. But I had to regularly assess my institutional relationships to protect my own

independence, my access to research sites, and the safety of participants. More than once I contemplated the merits of continuing.

As UNICEF's operations in Bangladesh are contingent on their own good standing with the Bangladesh Government, I had to ensure that the nomenclature I used in meetings with officials, in visa applications, research permission applications, and in research instruments did not contravene Government norms. As one example among many, to keep favor I had to refer to Rohingya participants as 'Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals' and 'Volunteer Facilitators' rather than Rohingya, refugees, or teachers. This example is emblematic of my near-daily tussle with the minutiae of bureaucracy, the balancing acts of humanitarianism, and my own research aspirations.

In terms of my data collection, given the power differentials between implementing partners, enumerators, and participants, a degree of social desirability bias in the survey results is likely (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2015). Participants may have provided responses that they want the end users to read rather than an accurate assessment of their situation. As my LAG cautioned, in a context of profound resource and job scarcity and where dignity is in short supply, participants are unlikely to respond to survey statements or focus group questions in ways that reinforce their perceived inadequacies or vulnerabilities.

An additional limitation is the language in which surveys were administered and focus group discussions facilitated. I do not speak Rohingya, Chittagonian, Bangla, or Burmese; the Rohingya language has no written script; and many Rohingya teachers are not sufficiently competent in written Burmese or English. While many enumerators and participants speak satisfactory English, my survey had to be written in very simple grade four to five level English to

ensure comprehension, which then increased the risk of conflation between motivation constructs and survey statements.

My FGDs were also facilitated in English with Rohingya and Chittagonian translation. Some participants with lower levels of English insisted on using English[15] rather than Rohingya to convey complex experiences, and those with more limited English struggled to engage alongside their more dominant English-speaking peers. Due to these language challenges and the tight 90-minute time frames in which focus group discussions took place, it was difficult to achieve the nuance or critical analysis that may have been possible had I been able to facilitate the discussion in the Rohingya language or over a longer period of time.

With these limitations in mind and the fact that my non-random purposive sample is not representative, the findings presented herein are indicative of participants' experiences and corresponding motivation to teach, but they are not generalizable to the wider refugee teacher workforce in Cox's Bazar or elsewhere.

[15] Due to funding reductions for the Rohingya refugee response, fewer international humanitarian staff now work in the camps compared to the early years of the crisis. In this case, Rohingya teachers who worked hard to learn English no longer have opportunities to use their English. Our FGDs were a prime but somewhat inconvenient time for participants to practice their English and make a positive impression in the hope of securing additional employment as a research assistant.

# Chapter 5 - Introduction to the findings: Rohingya teachers' motivation to teach

To address the Rohingya community's educational grievances and as an act of preparedness for an unknown yet hoped for future, the social and personal utility value of teaching (Watts and Richardson, 2007; Lauerman et al., 2017) is a significant contributor to Rohingya participants' quality of life in the camps and overall *motivation to teach*.

This purposive aspect of teaching exists in tension with work conditions that, when held against the factors that influence poor teacher well-being and low motivation in high-income and stable settings, should impair teachers' willingness to teach and contribute towards high rates of attrition (Ring and West, 2016, Tao, 2016). While a lack of alternative employment opportunities for Rohingya in the Cox's Bazar camps might mitigate some attrition, my finding of participants' high overall *motivation to teach*[16] reinforces the necessity of understanding context-level dynamics to determine what motivates refugee teachers to teach (Dinham and Scott, 2000; Goodson, 1992).

As Tao (2016) reflects, teacher motivation is an "amorphous concept" (p. 50). And as I discovered through this study, motivation factors have murky boundaries with variable effects on different population groups. Han and Yin (2016) also theorize that the factors that shape an individual's motivation are influenced by a somewhat messy constellation of social, political, and economic conditions of people's lived experiences and their subsequent decision making. With

[16] Figure C1 in Annex C the data shows just over 80 percent of *Rohingya female* teachers and just over 70 percent of *Rohingya male* teachers reporting a high-level of *motivation to teach.* As shown in the unstandardized OLS regression for the *motivation to teach* outcome factor (see table 5.7b below), being a Rohingya teacher ($B = 0.18$, $p < 0.001$) is positively and significantly associated with *motivation to teach*. However, in the combined standardized OLS regression output, where all predictor factors are included in the model, only females ($\beta = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$) within the Rohingya cohort are positively and significantly associated with a higher *motivation to teach* (see table 5.7d).

such multidimensional factors at play, there is little scholarly consensus on the operationalization of motivation constructs for the work of teaching across diverse settings (ibid).

As I employed a socio-ecological framework in my analysis of refugee teacher motivation in Cox's Bazar, I risked being cast adrift in a plethora of interacting and interdependent concepts relating to teacher well-being and motivation. For this reason, I needed to tether my analysis and narrative to a central heuristic. Therefore, reflecting the high, complex, and at times contradictory levels of *motivation to teach* expressed by Rohingya refugee teachers in the quantitative and qualitative elements of this study—and as conditioned by the present political liminality in which they teach—I believe an 'anticipatory hope' for what education represents underpins and binds the findings I present over the next three chapters.

As an overarching finding and guiding concept, 'anticipatory hope' reflects the protracted stasis that Rohingya possibilities for repatriation are situated within and the fragile expectation that the Rohingya can again hope for a durable solution and be prepared for it, if that day ever comes. In which case, the personal and social utility value of their present teaching efforts might reap a future task reward (Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007; Lauerman, 2017; Watt and Richardson, 2007).

In this chapter I first introduce the composition of my survey and focus group samples, including participants' age range and years of teaching experience. I was able to recruit a sample of almost 500 teachers that included a similar distribution of identity groups to the overall composition of the workforce across my four chosen camps. Thus, while my findings are not generalizable to the wider Rohingya teacher workforce, they are indicative of the inter-identity dynamics of teaching in Cox's Bazar and can be used to broadly inform interventions for improved teacher professional development, safety, and well-being.

Next, I present my *motivation to teach* outcome factor and report findings from confirmatory factor analysis to assess the construct validity and fit of my model. With the strong global fit that this analysis confirms, I next introduce descriptive statistics to show how respective identity groups within my sample (n = 494) responded to the *motivation to teach* survey items. I then present summary statistics for the socio-ecological motivation factors of *respect, support* and *safety* at the community level, *work satisfaction* at the learning center level, and *self-efficacy* and *agency* at the individual level. While participant identities have a very modest bearing on the *motivation to teach* outcome factor, my results show that the socio-ecological motivation factors are significantly more powerful predictors of a teachers' overall *motivation to teach*. To substantiate this fact and evaluate which factors are most influential, I first present correlation matrixes illustrating bivariate associations between demographic control variables, predictor factors, and the *motivation to teach* outcome. I then document findings from a combined standardized Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis, from which teachers' sense of *self-efficacy, work satisfaction,* and *support* are found to have the strongest relationship to participants' *motivation to teach.* Finally, to foreground participant narratives in my subsequent chapters and furnish my quantitative findings on Rohingya teachers' *motivation to teach*, I introduce qualitative insights highlighting how Rohingya participants describe the nature of their *motivation to teach* in their own words.

## 5.1 The survey sample

With a target sample of 500, I recruited 499 participants by the end of the six-week survey enumeration period. However, through data cleaning I found that two participants had taken (or

uploaded) the survey twice and three participants had missing data in their responses. With these entries dropped from the dataset, my final sample is n = 494.

**Table 5.1a**
*Survey sample disaggregated by participant camp and identity*

| Camp | Total teacher population | Total sample from each camp | Rohingya female sample | Rohingya male sample | Bangladesh female sample | Bangladesh male sample |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 450 | 145 | 12 | 66 | 62 | 5 |
| B | 356 | 150 | 6 | 85 | 40 | 19 |
| C | 219 | 63 | 4 | 35 | 22 | 2 |
| D | 791 | 136 | 19 | 74 | 39 | 4 |
| Total | 1,816 | 494 | 41 | 260 | 163 | 30 |
| Percentage of survey sample | | 100% | 9% | 53% | 32% | 6% |

In the second column of table 3 above I have listed the total teacher workforce for each camp in which this study takes place (ISCG, 2024). In the third column, I present the total sample population for each camp, following which I show that in Camp A 145 teachers participated in the survey, in Camp B 150 teachers participated, in Camp C 63 teachers completed the survey, and in Camp D 136 teachers completed the survey. Along the bottom row I show the percentage of my sample that each identity group represents. Forty-one participants or nine percent of my sample are categorized as Rohingya females, 260 participants or 53 percent of my sample are Rohingya male, 163 participants or 32 percent of my sample are Bangladeshi females, and just 30 participants or six percent of my sample are Bangladeshi males. In table 4 below, I show how my sample compares to the distribution of each identity group within the teacher workforce of my research sites and the wider teacher workforce in Cox's Bazar.

**Table 5.1b**
*Participant identity disaggregated sample compared to the total teacher workforce*

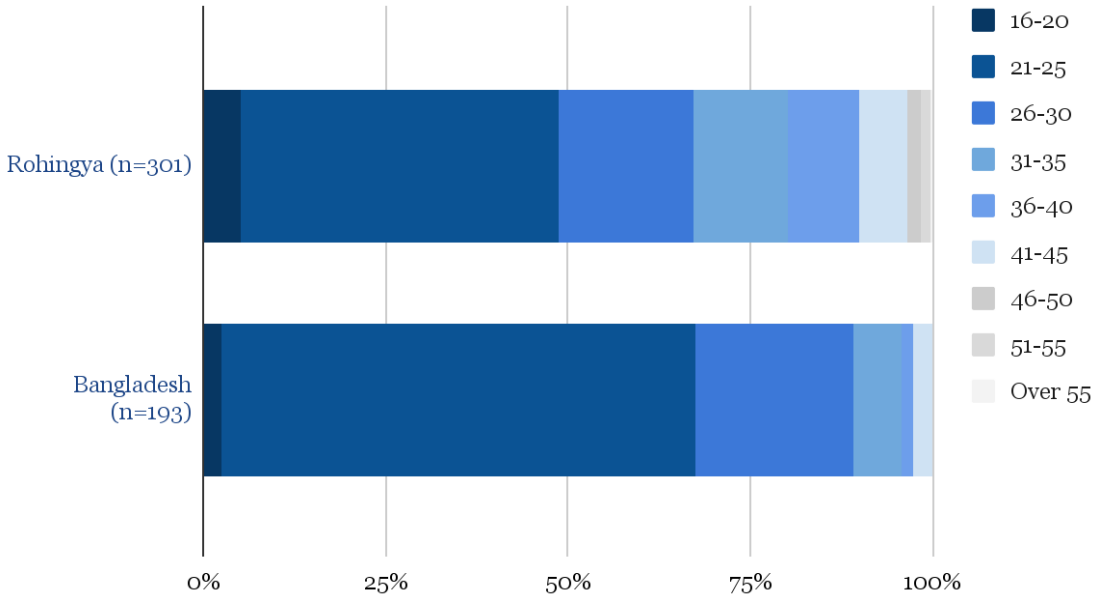
| Participant identity | Rohingya Female | Rohingya Male | Bangladesh Female | Bangladesh Male |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage of survey sample (n = 494) | 9 | 53 | 32 | 6 |
| Percentage of research site workforce (n = 1816) | 21 | 40 | 33 | 6 |
| Percentage of total teacher workforce in Cox's Bazar (N = 9,881) | 19 | 42 | 27 | 9 |

While nine percent of my sample are Rohingya female, this is a smaller proportion than the 21 percent of teachers in my research sites who are Rohingya female and 19 percent of all teachers in Cox's Bazar. By the end of the six-week recruitment and enumeration period, it eventuated that fewer Rohingya female teachers than expected volunteered to participate. Fifty three percent of my sample are Rohingya males, which is a larger proportion than the 40 percent of all teachers in my research sites who are Rohingya males and 42 percent of all teachers in Cox's Bazar who are Rohingya males. The proportion of my sample who are Bangladeshi females (32 percent) is almost the same as the proportion who work across my four research sites and slightly more than the proportion for all Cox's Bazar camps. Six percent of my sample and six percent of all teachers in my research sites are Bangladeshi males, which is slightly lower than the nine percent of all teachers in Cox's Bazar who are Bangladeshi male.

In figure 5.1a below I show that the largest age group of Rohingya refugee teachers in my sample are in the 21-25 age bracket (44 percent). Rohingya teachers aged between 26-30 then make up 18 percent of my sample, and teachers aged 31-35 make up just under 13 percent.

Rohingya teachers under the age of 20 and over the age of 35 each represent less than 10 percent of my sample respectively. Within the Bangladeshi host-community cohort, 65 percent of the teachers in my sample are aged between 21-25, followed by the 26-30 age group who represent 21 percent of my sample. Only two percent of my Bangladeshi teacher sample are under the age of 20, and teachers over the age of 30 represent the remaining 10 percent of my sample. As age and experience records for the entire teacher workforce were unavailable, the close proportional alignment of my sample's composition with the total teacher workforce suggests that my sample represents a close approximation of teachers' age ranges across the wider Cox's Bazar workforce.

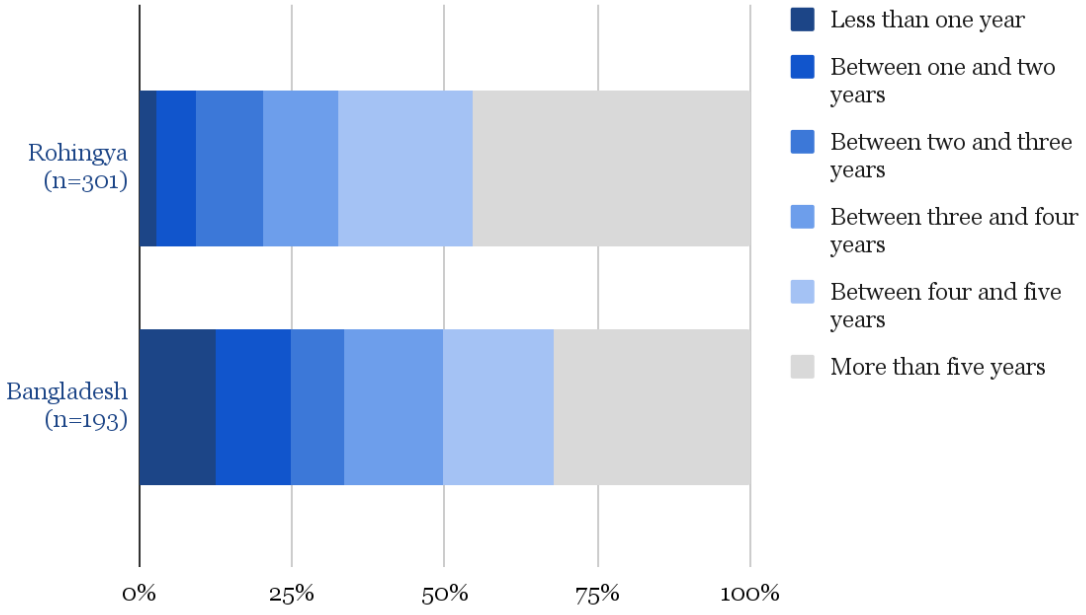
**Figure 5.1a**
*Survey sample disaggregated by age and identity*




Comparing the proportion of teachers in my sample who are aged under 30 (72 percent) with the fact that 61 percent of my sample have over four years of teaching experience (see figure 5.1b below) suggests that a significant number started teaching in their late teens or early 20s, soon after the 2018 establishment of learning centers. For Bangladeshi teachers, with a larger proportion

in the 21-25 age group (65 percent) but only 50 percent of participants with more than four years of teaching experience, likely explains the estimated 26 percent annual attrition rate for the host-community teacher population (Saha et al., 2024). As my later findings reveal, Bangladeshi teacher attrition continues despite reduced teaching loads, greater comparative leadership opportunities and professional recognition, and better pay. FGD insights and the literature (Rahman et al., 2022; Shohel, 2020) suggest that Bangladeshi teachers' work condition challenges, cultural distance with the Rohingya community, and the less defined or fatigued social utility value of their work might have a greater bearing on their *work satisfaction* and *motivation to teach*, especially when compared to the Rohingya cohort's underlying commitment to their own children and their long-term agenda for education in the camps.

**Figure 5.1b**
*Survey sample disaggregated by teaching experience and identity*



## 5.2 The focus group discussion sample

At their bi-weekly teacher learning circle sessions, enumerators invited teachers who completed the phase 2 survey to volunteer for two follow up phase 3 focus group discussions. Participants were informed that each discussion would take no more than 90 minutes, and that they would have the support of translators should they choose to attend. Based on expressions of interest, enumerators proceeded to select a purposive non-random sample of teachers that represented a diversity of ages, teaching experience, and English language abilities.[17]

**Table 5.2a**
Focus group discussion sample disaggregated by identity

| Camp | Rohingya Male sample | Rohingya Female sample | Bangladesh Male sample | Bangladesh Female sample | Total sample population |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | - | 5 | - | 4 | 9 |
| B | 5 | - | - | - | 5 |
| C | 5 | - | - | - | 5 |
| D | 5 | - | - | - | 5 |
| Total | 15 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 24 |

All FGDs with female participants occurred in Camp A because this camp has the highest proportion of female teachers and the implementing partners managing education in the camp have a strong track record of recruiting and retaining female teachers there. The nine participants from Camp A consisted of five Rohingya and four Bangladeshi female teachers who participated in identity-segregated sessions. For the remainder of the FGDs, I selected five Rohingya male

[17] All FGD participants were given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. Due to many Rohingya participants having common first and/or second names, I have selected a different first and second name for each participant's pseudonym to ensure no association can be drawn between the participant's pseudonym and an actual participant's identity.

participants per camp in Camps B, C, and D. I was unsuccessful, however, in recruiting a sufficient number of Bangladeshi males, who only made-up six percent of my total sample.

## 5.3 The outcome factor: Motivation to teach

As a foundation to my core research question on the experiences and factors that are most associated with Rohingya teachers' *motivation to teach*, in this section I introduce quantitative findings for the outcome factor. Subsequent sections then analyze results for each socio-ecological level to examine how the inclusion of community-, learning-center-, and individual-level motivation factors further shape participants' *motivation to teach*. First, however, I provide a detailed analysis of the extent to which participants' identities have a bearing on the *motivation to teach* outcome, as derived from twelve survey items for this factor (see table 5.3a below). My analysis is organized into three parts. First, I present details on my confirmatory factor analysis, demonstrating the coherence of my *motivation to teach* scale. Next, I outline descriptive statistics for the *motivation to teach* factor and participants' identities. And finally, I introduce bivariate Pearson correlation matrixes and findings from multivariate Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions to assess the relationship between participants' demographic markers and the socio-ecological motivation factors on their *motivation to teach.*

Overall, quantitative findings for the *motivation to teach* outcome factor show that the *Rohingya* identity is more significantly associated with motivation to teach than the *Bangladeshi* identity. While being *male* has a stronger and more significant relationship on participants' *motivation to teach* in some demographic factors, when all factors are brought together and participants' identity variables are disaggregated, *Rohingya female* teachers are in fact the most *motivated to teach*. My findings also show that while a lack of alternative employment

opportunities might compel participants to join the profession, these reasons do not sustain their *motivation to teach* and persist in the profession. This is evidenced via the finding that demographic factors only account for three percent ($R^2$ = 0.03) of the variation in participants' baseline *motivation to teach*, but when socio-ecological factors such as feelings of *support*, experiences of *work satisfaction*, and having a sense of *self-efficacy* are added to the model, they explain 67 percent ($R^2$ = 0.67) of the variation in the sample (N = 494). This finding is consistent across all bivariate and multivariate statistical tests, reinforcing the core insight that the motivation factors are a more powerful overall predictor of teachers' *motivation to teach* than their *identity, gender, age,* or teaching *experience*.

**Table 5.3a**
*Descriptive statistics and factor loadings for survey items representing participants' **motivation to teach***

| Item | Mean | SD | Standardized factor loading |
|---|---|---|---|
| *I will continue to teach because I need the money* | 2.81 | 0.88 | 0.17 |
| *Because there are no other job opportunities, I will continue teaching* | 2.99 | 0.77 | 0.28 |
| *I will continue teaching because I love working with Rohingya children* | 3.49 | 0.52 | 0.12 |
| *I will continue teaching because I see the positive difference I make* | 3.30 | 0.48 | 0.11 |
| *I will continue to teach because I am helping create a better future* | 3.47 | 0.51 | 0.09 |
| *I will continue teaching to help Rohingya rebuild their lives* | 3.48 | 0.51 | 0.11 |
| *I will continue teaching because it supports my own development* | 3.38 | 0.53 | 0.09 |
| *I will continue teaching because teaching skills will help me in the future* | 3.46 | 0.51 | 0.12 |
| *I will continue teaching because I enjoy the respect I get* | 3.51 | 0.51 | 0.10 |
| *I will continue teaching because I benefit from the status* | 3.35 | 0.50 | 0.11 |
| *I am personally committed to teaching in Cox's Bazar* | 3.42 | 0.59 | 0.18 |
| *I want a future career in teaching* | 3.42 | 0.59 | 0.08 |
| Mean<br>SD | | | 3.24<br>0.37 |

**Notes:** Coefficient of determination (CD) = 0.92; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.000; Comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) = 1.00; Reliability (alpha) = 0.82.

The confirmatory factor analysis in table 5.3a above assessed the construct validity of the *motivation to teach* outcome factor for the context of Cox's Bazar. Goodness-of-fit statistics (RMSEA = 0.000, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.00) indicate an excellent model fit, suggesting that the selected survey items align well with the theorized construct of *motivation to teach* in the Cox's Bazar context. This factor also presents positive internal reliability ($a$ = 0.82) and a promising

coefficient of determination, in which 92 percent of the variation in the *motivation to teach* factor is explained by the items in this model.

However, these results also reflect limitations with the composition of the model. The short scale (1 - 4) and a high ceiling effect—whereby a majority of responses are clustered at the upper end of the scale—means the *motivation to teach* factor has inadequate variation within and across the items to fully explain participants' motivation to teach. Moreover, in a context of extreme job scarcity, employment precarity and financial vulnerability, it is likely that participants felt compelled to respond at the upper end of the scale, thereby reflecting some social desirability bias in the results. Based on findings from individual items and later qualitative insights, which reveal powerful political and developmental dimensions to Rohingya teachers' motivation, I still believe the *motivation to teach* outcome factor represents a valid global model that reflects the unique and complex nature of motivation in a refugee-hosting context.

Within the model a nuanced dynamic emerges. Extrinsic motivation factors relating to income ($M = 2.81$, $\lambda = 0.17$) and a lack of alternative employment ($M = 2.99$, $\lambda = 0.28$) have the two lowest mean scores in this group of items, but the highest standard deviations, and third highest (though still low) factor loadings. Rather than offering wholesale confirmation that a lack of alternative opportunities compel participants to join the profession, the lower mean scores reflect the fact that a large proportion of participants only mildly agree or disagree with this statement.

Items such as participants' own sense of development ($M = 3.46$, $\lambda = 0.09$), their love of working with Rohingya children ($M = 3.49$, $\lambda = 0.17$), and their rebuilding of Rohingya lives ($M = 3.48$, $\lambda = 0.11$) have much higher mean scores, but very low loadings on the overall outcome factor due to a lack of variance in participant responses. Thus, while intrinsic motivation factors are deeply valued by teachers and feature prominently in their motivation, in such a precarious

setting they may not be the primary drivers of teachers' *motivation to teach*; or at least their initial reason to teach. In this way, employment scarcity motivates participants' reason to join the profession but likely constrains the significance of participants' intrinsic aspirations in the early stages of their roles. This finding aligns with some Rohingya participants' claims in FGDs that the work of teaching is not entirely a choice, and that their status as 'tentative' or 'spontaneous' teachers is a necessary obligation, reinforcing and further shaping current understandings of teachers' *motivation to teach* in refugee-hosting settings (Dryden-Peterson, 2022; Kirk and Winthrop, 2008; Mendenhall et al., 2018). Nevertheless, as my regression analysis and qualitative findings later show, Rohingya participants downplay income and employment factors and elevate the importance of intrinsic motivation factors such as *self-efficacy* and *work satisfaction* in the configuration of their *motivation to teach*. At once, this insight raises important methodological questions, affirming the value of a mixed methods approach to the study of teacher motivation, and confirming the multifaceted, messy, and interdependent nature of the motivation factors that drive refugee teachers' commitment to their work.

**Table 5.3b**
*Descriptive statistics for participants' teaching experience, demographics, and* ***motivation to teach***

| Variable | Category | n= | Mean | SD | Significance Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Experience** | 0-1 year | 33 | 3.14 | 0.34 | - | One-way ANOVA |
| | 1-2 years | 43 | 3.27 | 0.37 | - | |
| | 2-3 years | 51 | 3.28 | 0.34 | - | |
| | 3-4 years | 68 | 3.32 | 0.37 | - | |
| | 4-5 years | 101 | 3.22 | 0.31 | - | |
| | 5+ years | 198 | 3.30 | 0.38 | - | |
| **Age** | 16-20 | 21 | 3.31 | 0.32 | - | One-way ANOVA |
| | 21-25 | 257 | 3.28 | 0.36 | - | |
| | 26-30 | 98 | 3.28 | 0.38 | - | |
| | 31-35 | 50 | 3.28 | 0.35 | - | |
| | 36-40 | 33 | 3.31 | 0.42 | - | |
| | Over 40 | 35 | 3.11 | 0.32 | - | |
| **Identity** | Rohingya | 302 | 3.32 | 0.35 | 0.000*** | Two tailed t-test |
| | Bangladesh | 192 | 3.20 | 0.35 | - | |
| **Sex** | Female | 204 | 3.25 | 0.37 | - | |
| | Male | 290 | 3.29 | 0.35 | - | |

**Note:** *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01. ***p < 0.001

In table 5.3b above I outline the demographic composition of participants in my sample and the extent to which demographic markers have a bearing on their *motivation to teach*. Descriptive statistics show that teachers with 3 to 4 years of experience ($M$ = 3.32, $SD$ = 0.37) and teachers with more than five years of experience ($M$ = 3.30, $SD$ = 0.38) reported marginally higher levels of motivation than participants with under three years of *experience* and teachers with 4 to 5 years of experience. However, one-way ANOVA tests for each category show no statistically significant relationship between years of teaching experience and participants' *motivation to teach*. Teachers in the 16 - 20 ($M$ = 3.31, $SD$ = 0.32) and 36 - 40 ($M$ = 3.31, $SD$ = 0.42) age brackets reported higher levels of *motivation to teach* than teachers over the age of 40 ($M$ = 3.11, $SD$ = 0.32), though this is also not at a level of statistical significance. The data above does however suggest that

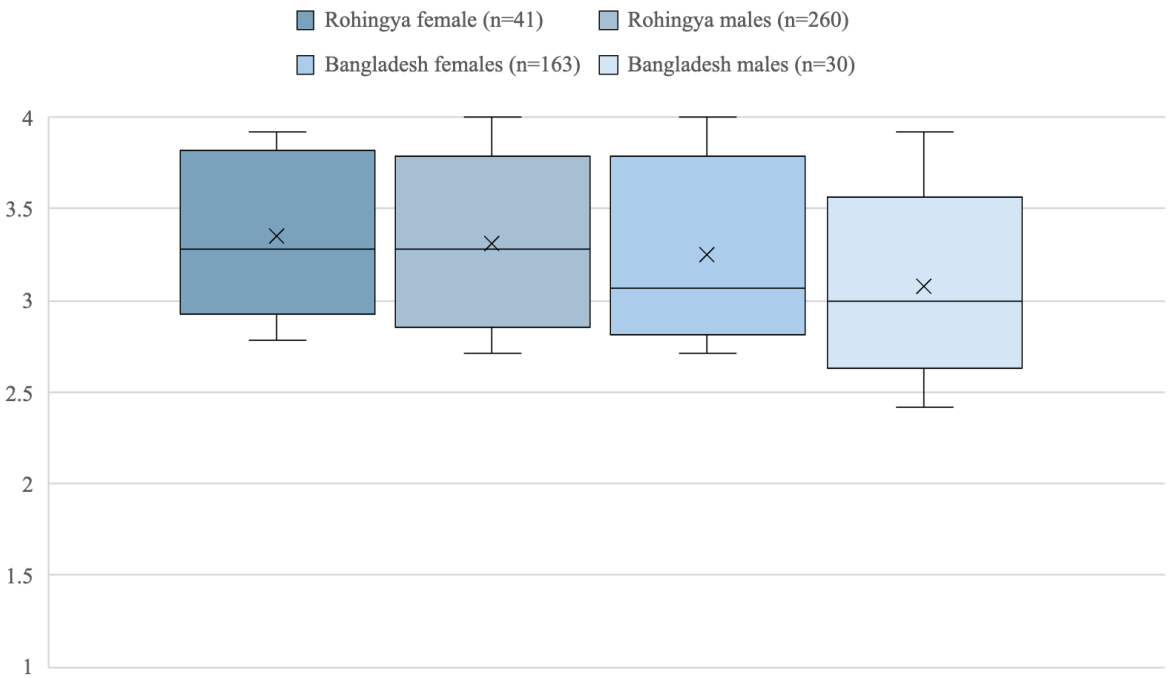
teachers' youthfulness and time spent in the classroom are still important determinants of their motivation.

Via the *identity* variable, t-test results show that Rohingya participants ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 0.35$ $p < 0.001$) are positively and significantly more *motivated to teach* than Bangladeshi participants ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.35$),[18] signaling the importance of teaching within one's own culture and community and the scarcity of alternative employment opportunities for Rohingya. In terms of *sex*, based on demographic predictors alone male participants report marginally higher but statistically insignificant *motivation to teach* ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.35$) compared with female participants ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.35$). It is worth noting the interplay between the *sex* statistic and the *identity* statistic, however, as 75 percent of female participants are Bangladeshi who have a lower reported *motivation to teach* and nearly 90 percent of males are more motivated Rohingya participants. As such, differences in *sex* results represent the relationship of *identity* more than *sex* with participants' *motivation to teach*. These statistics therefore suggest that when only *identity* related predictor factors are included, young Rohingya male teachers with more than three years of teaching represent a stronger statistical relationship with the *motivation to teach* factor than other identity groups, but further statistical exploration is required to disentangle the overlapping relationship between these factors and teachers' *motivation to teach.*

[18] $t = -3.42$, $df = 492$, $p = 0.0007$, Cohen's $d = 0.30$

As a visualization of the identity disaggregated *motivation to teach* results, figure 5.3 below shows that *Rohingya females* ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.35$) reported the highest *motivation to teach* by a small margin. *Rohingya males* ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.35$), with a much larger sample, reported a higher level of *motivated to teach* compared with *Bangladeshi females* ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.37$) and *Bangladeshi males* ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.30$).[19] In the analyses that follow for the community-, learning center-, and individual-level factors, I begin to unpack how and why Rohingya refugee teachers are more *motivated to teach* in the context of Cox's Bazar than Bangladeshi host-community teachers.

**Figure 5.3**
*Box plot of survey participants 'motivation to teach' disaggregated by identity*




[19] A one-way ANOVA showed significant differences in motivation across groups, $F(3, 490) = 4.71$, $p = 0.003$. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests indicated that Bangladeshi males had significantly lower motivation than Rohingya females ($p = 0.025$) and Rohingya males ($p = 0.010$). However the difference between Rohingya females and Rohingya males was not statistically significant. Neither was the difference between Bangladeshi females and all other groups.

## 5.4 Community-level motivation factors: Respect, support, and safety

This section addresses sub-question one, focused on the community-level factors that are associated with participants' *motivation to teach*, beginning with the *respect* factor and followed by *support* and *safety.*

**Table 5.4a**
*Descriptive statistics and factor loadings for items representing the community-level motivation factor of* ***respect***

| Item | Mean | SD | Standardized factor loading |
|---|---|---|---|
| *My family is proud of me because I am a teacher* | 3.44 | 0.65 | 0.26 |
| *I feel NGO staff treat me like a professional* | 2.70 | 0.64 | 0.60 |
| *Teachers are respected by the community* | 3.44 | 0.57 | 0.23 |
| *Because I am a teacher, my family DO NOT respect me (reverse scale)* | 3.45 | 0.65 | 0.31 |
| *Teachers have a positive status in the community* | 3.39 | 0.54 | 0.19 |
| Mean<br>SD | | | 3.23<br>0.40 |

**Notes:** Coefficient of determination (CD) = 0.94; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.000; Comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) = 1.00; Reliability (alpha) = 0.60.

My goodness-of-fit statistics for items contributing to the *respect* factor indicate an excellent global fit, with an RMSEA score of 0.000 and CFI and TLI results of 1.00, showing that the data in my model fits the covariance in the construct of *respect* for the context. The coefficient of determination (*CD* = 0.96) also indicates that the *respect* model explains 96 percent of the variation in participant responses.

Participants reported that NGOs ($M$ = 2.70, $\lambda$ = 0.60) demonstrate lower levels of *respect* for teachers compared to family ($M$ = 3.45, $\lambda$ = 0.31) and community members ($M$ = 3.44, $\lambda$ =

0.26). However, the NGO-related item has the strongest factor loading on the respect construct, followed by family respect ($M$ = 3.45, $\lambda$ = 0.31). The alignment of the NGO item is quite high with the overall respect construct, indicating that participants seek (but do not necessarily get) professional legitimacy from NGOs as part of a meaningful element of *respect* in their lives. The respect factor is effectively unidimensional in its construction, but it refers to different actors in teachers' lives which, as reflected in modest factor loadings, effectively flattens the factor by spreading the variance across different sources of perceived respect. Along with the scale's brevity (5 items) and use of a 4-point Likert scale which limits response variability, this also weakens the internal consistency of the model ($\alpha = 0.60$). However, the *respect* model still demonstrates strong validity and contextual relevance and as such retaining all items allows for a more holistic measurement of *respect* across different social actors.

**Table 5.4b**
*Descriptive statistics for participants' teaching experience, demographics, and their experiences of* ***respect***

| Variable | Category | n= | Mean | SD | Significance Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Experience** | 0-1 year | 33 | 3.16 | 0.36 | - | One-way |
| | 1-2 years | 43 | 3.14 | 0.39 | - | ANOVA |
| | 2-3 years | 51 | 3.24 | 0.38 | - | |
| | 3-4 years | 68 | 3.23 | 0.43 | - | |
| | 4-5 years | 101 | 3.19 | 0.38 | - | |
| | 5+ years | 198 | 3.28 | 0.41 | - | |
| **Age** | 16-20 | 21 | 3.13 | 0.34 | - | One-way |
| | 21-25 | 257 | 3.24 | 0.41 | - | ANOVA |
| | 26-30 | 98 | 3.24 | 0.43 | - | |
| | 31-35 | 50 | 3.23 | 0.40 | - | |
| | 36-40 | 33 | 3.22 | 0.37 | - | |
| | Over 40 | 35 | 3.18 | 0.35 | - | |
| **Identity** | Rohingya | 302 | 3.27 | 0.40 | 0.001** | Two tailed |
| | Bangladeshi | 192 | 3.17 | 0.40 | - | t-test |
| **Sex** | Female | 204 | 3.19 | 0.40 | 0.05* | |
| | Male | 290 | 3.26 | 0.40 | - | |

The extent to which participants reported experiences of *respect* because they are teachers is consistent across the *teaching experience* and *age* categories, with no significant variations identified in the one-way ANOVA tests (see table 5.4b). However, statistically significant differences emerged between refugee and host-community identity groups and between male and female participants. As indicated by a two tailed t-test, Rohingya refugee participants ($M$ = 3.27, $SD$ = 0.40, $p < 0.001$) experience higher and statistically more significant levels of respect than their Bangladeshi peers ($M$ = 3.17, $SD$ = 0.40).[20] The female cohort ($M$ = 3.25, $SD$ = 0.40, $p < 0.05$),[21] of which a majority are from the Bangladeshi host community, report experiencing

[20] Identity: $t$ = -2.69, $df$ = 492, p = 0.0074, Cohen's $d$ = 0.25.
[21] Sex: $t$ = 2.05, $df$ = 492, p = 0.0410, Cohen's $d$ = 0.19.

marginally and significantly less *respect* because they are teachers than their male colleagues (*M* = 3.26, *SD* = 0.40). These findings are consistent with the fact that Bangladeshi participants work in a community other than their own and likely receive animosity from their own community as 'compassion fatigue' towards the Rohingya crisis sets in (Kamruzzaman et al., 2024; Khan, 2024; Uddin, 2020). There could also be some ambiguity in the item. For Bangladeshi participants, 'community' could refer to their home community or the Rohingya community. Marginally lower results for female participants from Rohingya and Bangladeshi cohorts also reflect the roles female teachers' play in identifying and re-enrolling out-of-school adolescent girls. As FGDs and the literature reveal, this exposes them to cultural tensions and occasional violence within the Rohingya community (Guglielmi et al., 2021).

**Table 5.4c**
*Descriptive statistics and factor loadings for items representing the community-level motivation factor of* ***support***

| Item | Mean | SD | Standardized factor loading |
|---|---|---|---|
| *My family supports my decision to be a teacher* | 3.45 | 0.68 | 0.29 |
| *My family provides me with help so that I can focus on teaching* | 3.26 | 0.71 | 0.37 |
| *Because I am a teacher, I feel LESS supported by my community (reverse scale)* | 3.28 | 0.61 | 0.30 |
| *Because I am a teacher, I get my own education from NGO trainings* | 3.36 | 0.64 | 0.26 |
| *Because I am a teacher, I receive more support than others from NGOs* | 3.13 | 0.66 | 0.26 |
| Mean<br>SD | | | 3.23<br>0.40 |

**Notes:** Coefficient of determination (CD) = 0.93; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.000; Comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) = 1.00; Reliability (alpha) = 0.67.

My goodness-of-fit statistics for the *support* factor also indicate an excellent model fit, with an RMSEA score of 0.000 and CFI and TLI results of 1.00 confirming that the model fits the data representing the *support* motivation factor in Cox's Bazar. The coefficient of determination (*CD* = 0.93) explains 93 percent of the variation in participant responses to *support* items. Within the *support* model, the item relating to family help ($M = 3.45$, $\lambda = 0.37$) is the most meaningful, with families' provision of practical help having the greatest (though still modest) factor loading of all items on the *support* construct, indicating that families are a key dimension of participants' experiences of *support*. This is followed by the item focused on *support* from the community ($M = 3.28$, $\lambda = 0.30$) and families' support for the decision to be a teacher ($M = 3.45$, $\lambda = 0.29$). Given the small number of items, multi-dimensionality of the *support* items, and short scales, my reliability measure of $\alpha = 0.67$ represents an acceptable level of internal consistency.

**Table 5.4d**
*Descriptive statistics for participants' teaching experience, demographics, and their experiences of* ***support***

| Variable | Category | n= | Mean | SD | Significance Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Experience** | 0-1 year | 33 | 3.09 | 0.39 | - | One-way |
| | 1-2 years | 43 | 3.31 | 0.42 | - | ANOVA |
| | 2-3 years | 51 | 3.22 | 0.37 | - | |
| | 3-4 years | 68 | 3.29 | 0.41 | - | |
| | 4-5 years | 101 | 3.20 | 0.37 | - | |
| | 5+ years | 198 | 3.31 | 0.43 | - | |
| **Age** | 16-20 | 21 | 3.27 | 0.43 | - | One-way |
| | 21-25 | 257 | 3.27 | 0.40 | - | ANOVA |
| | 26-30 | 98 | 3.28 | 0.41 | - | |
| | 31-35 | 50 | 3.29 | 0.41 | - | |
| | 36-40 | 33 | 3.25 | 0.52 | - | |
| | Over 40 | 35 | 3.08 | 0.33 | - | |
| | | | | | - | |
| **Identity** | Rohingya | 302 | 3.29 | 0.42 | - | Two tailed t-test |
| | Bangladeshi | 192 | 3.22 | 0.39 | - | |
| **Sex** | Female | 204 | 3.24 | 0.40 | - | |
| | Male | 290 | 3.27 | 0.41 | - | |

The extent to which participants experience *support* because they are teachers is also consistent across the *experience, age, identity,* and *sex* categories, with no significant difference within the demographic categories after one-way ANOVA and two tailed t-tests were conducted. In line with findings for other factors, Rohingya participants ($M$ = 3.29, $SD$ = 0.42) reported marginally higher levels of *support* than their Bangladeshi peers ($M$ = 3.22, $SD$ = 0.39) and younger teachers generally report higher levels of support on average than their older colleagues, although these differences are not statistically significant. These findings complement qualitative FGD insights showing that Rohingya teachers require and appreciate practical and material assistance from family members and neighbors who coordinate ration collections while they teach. As participants later shared, this sets teachers apart from other community members and their Bangladeshi counterparts, which factors into their comparatively strong *motivation to teach*.

**Table 5.4e**
*Descriptive statistics and factor loadings for items representing the community-level motivation factor of* ***safety***

| Item | Mean | SD | Standardized factor loading |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Because I am a teacher, I am more protected by Bangladeshi authorities* | 3.31 | 0.64 | 0.27 |
| *People in my community treat me badly because I am a teacher (reverse scale)* | 3.28 | 0.84 | 0.39 |
| *Because I am a teacher, I am valued by Rohingya political groups* | 2.94 | 0.76 | 0.30 |
| *Because I am a teacher, I feel more protected by my community* | 3.28 | 0.70 | 0.29 |
| *Because I am a teacher, I experience difficulties with Rohingya armed groups (reverse scale)* | 2.95 | 0.76 | 0.35 |
| Mean<br>SD | | | 3.16<br>0.44 |

**Notes:** Coefficient of determination (CD) = 0.93; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.000; Comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) = 1.00; Reliability (alpha) = 0.63.

My goodness-of-fit statistics for the *safety* factor also indicate an excellent model fit, with an RMSEA score of 0.000 and CFI and TLI results of 1.00, signaling that the model captures experiences of the *safety* motivation construct in the camp context. The *safety* model also explains 96 percent of the variation in participant responses ($CD = 0.96$). The moderate reliability score ($\alpha = 0.63$) reflects the short scale and uni-dimensional effect of bringing items with different conceptual bases within the same scale, but it is considered borderline acceptable. Participants generally reported that community members do not treat them badly because they are teachers ($M = 3.28$, $\lambda = 0.39$), which has the highest standardized loading of all *safety* factor items. Also, the comparatively low mean values for the Rohingya armed group ($M = 2.95$, $\lambda = 0.19$) and Rohingya political group ($M = 2.94$, $\lambda = 0.30$) items speak to the safety challenges that many Rohingya teachers described in FGDs. Although, these items have moderate standardized factor loadings, suggesting that participant responses are less aligned with the *safety* factor overall. This also suggests that experiences of *safety* or protection from community members do not equate to feelings of overall *safety*, especially if threats by political and armed groups are unmitigated by the community's protection and support for teachers.

**Table 5.4f**
*Descriptive statistics for participants' teaching experience, demographics, and their experiences of* ***safety***

| Variable | Category | n= | Mean | SD | Significance Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Experience** | 0-1 year | 33 | 3.09 | 0.37 | - | One-way |
| | 1-2 years | 43 | 3.16 | 0.48 | - | ANOVA |
| | 2-3 years | 51 | 3.07 | 0.39 | - | |
| | 3-4 years | 68 | 3.16 | 0.46 | - | |
| | 4-5 years | 101 | 3.06 | 0.40 | - | |
| | 5+ years | 198 | 3.24 | 0.46 | *0.05 | |
| **Age** | 16-20 | 21 | 3.16 | 0.47 | - | One-way |
| | 21-25 | 257 | 3.15 | 0.43 | - | ANOVA |
| | 26-30 | 98 | 3.22 | 0.44 | - | |
| | 31-35 | 50 | 3.19 | 0.46 | - | |
| | 36-40 | 33 | 3.09 | 0.51 | - | |
| | Over 40 | 35 | 3.16 | 0.36 | - | |
| | | | | | - | |
| **Identity** | Rohingya | 302 | 3.27 | 0.40 | - | Two tailed t-test |
| | Bangladeshi | 192 | 3.17 | 0.40 | - | |
| **Sex** | Female | 204 | 3.25 | 0.40 | - | |
| | Male | 290 | 3.26 | 0.40 | - | |

Participants' experiences of *safety* in their roles as teachers are consistent across the *experience, age, identity,* and *sex* categories, however a one-way ANOVA test with a Bonferroni post hoc test shows that participants with more than five years of experience reported modestly higher levels of perceived *safety* than teachers with four to five years of experience.[22] Otherwise, there are no pairwise differences between experience levels or age categories of participants. In line with findings for other factors, Rohingya participants ($M$ = 3.27, $SD$ = 0.40) also reported marginally higher levels of *safety* than their Bangladeshi peers ($M$ = 3.17, SD = 0.40), but male ($M$ = 3.26, $SD$ = 0.40) and female ($M$ = 3.25, $SD$ = 0.40) participants virtually report the same, although not at a level of statistical significance. As later described in my analysis of FGD findings, teacher

[22] Experience: F (5, 488) = 3.05, p = 0.010, $\eta^2$ = 0.03; Bonferroni post-hoc: 6 vs. 5, p = 0.010

*safety* is of core concern for Rohingya male participants and a serious impediment to their *work satisfaction* and *motivation to teach,* however these insights are somewhat muted in my quantitative findings.

## 5.5 Learning center-level motivation factor: Work satisfaction

This section addresses sub-question two, which is focused on the extent to which experiences of *work satisfaction* at the learning center level are associated with participants' *motivation to teach.*

**Table 5.5a**
*Descriptive statistics and standardized factor loadings for items representing the **work satisfaction** motivation factor*

| Item | Mean | SD | Standardized factor loading |
|---|---|---|---|
| *I am able to teach in my own language* | 3.38 | 0.69 | 0.18 |
| *Teaching in other languages is a difficult part of my work (reverse scale)* | 2.32 | 0.78 | 0.18 |
| *Teaching the Myanmar Curriculum is a positive experience* | 3.36 | 0.68 | 0.19 |
| *Teaching the Myanmar Curriculum causes me stress (reverse scale)* | 2.12 | 0.85 | 0.19 |
| *Teaching the Myanmar Curriculum makes me feel more professional* | 3.30 | 0.59 | 0.15 |
| *I experience personal growth when I work with other teachers* | 3.34 | 0.51 | 0.12 |
| *Working with other teachers is a positive part of my work* | 3.32 | 0.51 | 0.14 |
| *My work is valued by master trainers* | 3.34 | 0.49 | 0.13 |
| *Master trainers care about my professional development* | 3.35 | 0.51 | 0.15 |
| *Teacher training is a benefit I enjoy as part my work* | 3.34 | 0.49 | 0.31 |
| *Teacher training DOES NOT improve my confidence as a teacher (reverse scale)* | 3.35 | 0.51 | 0.20 |
| Mean | | | 3.20 |
| SD | | | 0.32 |

**Notes:** Coefficient of determination (CD) = 0.97; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.000; Comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) = 1.00; Reliability (alpha) = 0.82.

The *work satisfaction* factor relates to the languages participants teach in, the professional development they receive, their experiences implementing the Myanmar Curriculum, and the nature of their relationships with colleagues. The specificity and nuance of my survey items were limited by our shared language limitations and constraints around the conceptual nuance that I could employ in my scale. Following advice of my LAG, I kept the items broad and simple to

reduce the cognitive burden on enumerators and participants, which broadened the scope of item interpretation and reduced the sensitivity of my measures.

To account for the multiple concepts within the work satisfaction construct, I conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to examine the overall fit of *work satisfaction* items to the factor model. While items in this factor represent weak to moderate individual loadings, a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of 0.000 and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) values of 1.000 show that the global model is a strong fit with the covariance in the data. The model also achieves a positive internal reliability score of $\alpha = 0.82$. Additionally, the model accounts for 97 percent ($CD = 0.97$) of the variation in the observed variables and confirms the appropriate fit of my *work satisfaction* factor overall.

The two survey items with the strongest loading on *work satisfaction* relate to teacher professional development ($M = 3.34$, $\lambda = 0.31$), with the influence that professional development has on participants' confidence ($M = 3.35$, $\lambda = 0.20$) also having a high mean score but a weaker factor loading. This is a useful insight, especially as implementing partners recently initiated bi-weekly Teacher Learning Circles (TLC) alongside the implementation of the Myanmar Curriculum, which is a new experience for many participants.

Two survey items with the next strongest loading on the *work satisfaction* factor relate to the professionalism participants experience when teaching the Myanmar Curriculum ($M = 3.36$, $\lambda = 0.19$) and how teaching the curriculum is also a source of stress ($M = 2.12$, $\lambda = 0.19$). The two items relating to the language participants teach in ($M = 3.38$, $\lambda = 0.18$) and the difficulty experienced teaching in a language other than their own ($M = 2.32$, $\lambda = 0.18$) are also noteworthy and illustrative of the duality experienced within single constructs: i.e. language is a positive and stressful element of participants' teaching experiences. While these results indicate the central role

that professional development, curriculum, and language play in teachers' *work satisfaction,* low factor loadings suggest that future scales should separate out sub-factors of professional development, curriculum, and language items.

**Table 5.5b**
*Descriptive statistics for participants' teaching experience, demographics, and their* ***work satisfaction***

| Variable | Category | n= | Mean | SD | Significance Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Experience** | 0-1 year | 33 | 3.03 | 0.34 | - | One-way ANOVA |
| | 1-2 years | 43 | 3.16 | 0.40 | - | |
| | 2-3 years | 51 | 3.22 | 0.40 | - | |
| | 3-4 years | 68 | 3.24 | 0.38 | - | |
| | 4-5 years | 101 | 3.21 | 0.41 | - | |
| | 5+ years | 198 | 3.22 | 0.41 | - | |
| **Age** | 16-20 | 21 | 3.13 | 0.34 | - | One-way ANOVA |
| | 21-25 | 257 | 3.21 | 0.32 | - | |
| | 26-30 | 98 | 3.20 | 0.33 | - | |
| | 31-35 | 50 | 3.26 | 0.31 | - | |
| | 36-40 | 33 | 3.21 | 0.32 | - | |
| | Over 40 | 35 | 3.13 | 0.28 | - | |
| **Identity** | Rohingya | 302 | 3.26 | 0.38 | 0.001*** | Two tailed t-test |
| | Bangladeshi | 192 | 3.04 | 0.39 | - | |
| **Sex** | Female | 204 | 3.14 | 0.33 | 0.001*** | |
| | Male | 290 | 3.22 | 0.30 | - | |

Table 5.5b above shows that participants' *work satisfaction* is consistent across the experience and age categories, with one-way ANOVA tests showing no statistically significant difference in *work satisfaction* between *age* groups or *experience* categories. Rohingya participants ($M$ = 3.26, $SD$ = 0.38) reported significantly higher levels of *work satisfaction* than their Bangladeshi peers ($M$ = 3.04, $SD$ = 0.39),[23] which might also relate to qualitative insights on the symbolic value of the Myanmar Curriculum and the contribution of teachers' work to Rohingya participants' self-

[23] Identity: $t$ = -5.20, $df$ = 492, p = 0.0001, Cohen's $d$ = 0.48

actualization and political agenda. A two tailed t-test also shows a statistically significant but negative difference between male and female participants' *work satisfaction* ($p < 0.001$),[24] with female participants reporting lower levels of *work satisfaction* than male participants. Despite the statistical significance, this difference is still very low, and because 75 percent of the female category are Bangladeshi, it is likely more aligned with identity-based findings than specific gender dynamics, reflecting a recent reduction in teaching responsibilities for host-community Bangladeshi teachers and an increase in administrative tasks on behalf of implementing partner NGOs.

### 5.6 Individual-level motivation factors: Self-efficacy and agency

The final socio-ecological level of analysis addresses sub-question three, focusing on the individual-level factors that that are most associated with participants' *motivation to teach*, specifically their experiences of *self-efficacy* and *teacher agency.*

[24] Sex: $t = 3.69$, $df = 492$, $p = 0.0003$, Cohen's $d = 0.34$

**Table 5.6a**
*Descriptive statistics and factor loadings for items representing the individual-level motivation factor of* ***self-efficacy***

| Item | Mean | SD | Standardized factor loading |
|---|---|---|---|
| *I believe I have a positive relationship with my students* | 3.47 | 0.64 | 0.22 |
| *I believe I can help my students to feel like they belong in my classroom* | 3.42 | 0.52 | 0.17 |
| *As a teacher, I believe I am able to protect my students from harm* | 3.42 | 0.54 | 0.19 |
| *As a teacher, I can help my students' feel a sense of safety* | 3.38 | 0.54 | 0.18 |
| *As a teacher, I believe I have an influence on student learning success* | 2.90 | 0.88 | 0.29 |
| *As a teacher, I CANNOT help students to have hope for the future (reverse scale)* | 3.38 | 0.57 | 0.29 |
| *As a teacher, I believe I am responsible for helping students feel hopeful* | 3.38 | 0.57 | 0.18 |
| Mean | | | 3.26 |
| SD | | | 0.36 |

**Notes:** Coefficient of determination (CD) = 0.98; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.000; Comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) = 1.00; Reliability (alpha) = 0.73.

The goodness-of-fit statistics for the *self-efficacy* factor indicates that the model captures the relationship of the survey response items with the *self-efficacy* construct. An RMSEA score of 0.000 and CFI and TLI results of 1.00, confirm that each of the items are a good fit for the *self-efficacy* motivation factor in the context of Cox's Bazar. These results also represent a high ceiling effect (high mean scores, low variation), due in part to possible participant response bias and employment precarity, thereby limiting the sensitivity of the factor analysis. *Self-efficacy* also has acceptable internal consistency ($a$ = 0.73) and the coefficient of determination (CD) indicates that 98 percent of the variation in the *self-efficacy* factor is explained by the model, although this is

also a reflection of the limitations of the survey given the social conditions participants experience and in which it was enumerated, likely leading to a clustering of high response values.

Participants reported especially high levels of *self-efficacy* for their relationships with children ($M$ = 3.47, $\lambda$ = 0.22), their ability to create a sense of belonging for children ($M$ = 3.47, $\lambda$ = 0.17), and their ability to protect children from harm ($M$ = 3.42, $\lambda$ = 0.18), but with low individual factor loadings. Two *self-efficacy* items with the most meaningful loadings on the factor relate to participants' influence on children's learning success ($M$ = 2.90, $\lambda$ = 0.29) and helping children have hope for the future ($M$ = 3.38, $\lambda$ = 0.29). It is of interest, however, that FGD participants were least confident discussing children's learning outcomes even though they saw learning as the core element of their work. Moreover, participants project the hopeful role that teaching plays in their own lives onto their work with children, underscoring the purposeful and political role that education plays in Cox's Bazar.

Despite the model's overall positive fit, lower individual factor loadings reflect the uni-dimensionality of the scale and possible ambiguity in the terms, flattening the relationships between individual items and the construct of *self-efficacy*. This could also be a product of the oversimplification of terms due to diverse language capabilities within the sample. Nonetheless, based on the literature and LAG insights I decided to keep all items in this scale as they provide a nuanced and reliable representation of teacher *self-efficacy* for the context, mirroring the issues that my pilot study, advisory group and participants identified as the most motivating in their work.

**Table 5.6b**
*Descriptive statistics for participants' teaching experience, demographics, and their experiences of **self-efficacy***

| Variable | Category | n= | Mean | SD | Significance Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Experience** | 0-1 year | 33 | 3.15 | 0.29 | - | One-way |
| | 1-2 years | 43 | 3.21 | 0.37 | - | ANOVA |
| | 2-3 years | 51 | 3.31 | 0.37 | - | |
| | 3-4 years | 68 | 3.29 | 0.37 | - | |
| | 4-5 years | 101 | 3.26 | 0.37 | - | |
| | 5+ years | 198 | 3.25 | 0.36 | - | |
| **Age** | 16-20 | 21 | 3.29 | 0.34 | - | One-way |
| | 21-25 | 257 | 3.26 | 0.41 | - | ANOVA |
| | 26-30 | 98 | 3.28 | 0.43 | - | |
| | 31-35 | 50 | 3.30 | 0.40 | - | |
| | 36-40 | 33 | 3.23 | 0.37 | - | |
| | Over 40 | 35 | 3.12 | 0.30 | | |
| **Identity** | Rohingya | 302 | 3.31 | 0.40 | 0.001** | Two tailed t-test |
| | Bangladeshi | 192 | 3.17 | 0.40 | - | |
| **Sex** | Female | 204 | 3.20 | 0.36 | 0.01** | |
| | Male | 290 | 3.29 | 0.36 | - | |

Participants' sense of *self-efficacy* in their roles as teachers are very similar across the *experience* and *age* categories, with one-way ANOVA tests revealing no statistically significant difference. Although not statistically significant, more experienced participants (e.g. 5+ years, $M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.36$) reported slightly higher *self-efficacy* than newer teachers (0-1 years, $M = 3.15$, SD = 0.29). Similarly, the 26-30 age group ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.43$) reported slightly higher levels of *self-efficacy* than the 21-25 group ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.41$). In line with findings for community- and learning center-level factors, t-tests reveal that Rohingya participants ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$) again report significantly higher levels of *self-efficacy* than their Bangladeshi peers ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.40$).[25] This makes sense in the context of the Myanmar Curriculum rollout, as Rohingya

[25] Identity: $t = -4.23$, $df = 492$, $p < 0.0001$, Cohen's $d = 0.39$.

participants possess a fuller range of responsibilities face-to-face with children within the classroom, whereas Bangladeshi participants' have heavier administrative tasks outside of the classroom, thereby diminishing the sense of *self-efficacy* that they experience with children. A two tailed t-test also shows a statistically significant but negative difference between male ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.36$) and female ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.36$, $p < 0.01$) participants' sense of *self-efficacy*, with male participants reporting marginally higher levels compared to their female colleagues.[26] It is important to reiterate that because 75 percent of the female category are Bangladeshi women and 90 percent of the male category are Rohingya men, this result is more reflective of the *identity* variable's influence.

[26] Sex: $t = 2.76$, $df = 492$, $p = 0.0060$, Cohen's $d = 0.25$

**Table 5.6c**

*Descriptive statistics and factor loadings for items representing the individual-level motivation factor of* ***teacher agency***

| Item | Mean | SD | Standardized factor loading |
|---|---|---|---|
| *I can decide what curriculum content I teach each day* | 2.78 | 0.88 | 0.25 |
| *I have different strategies I can use to assess student learning* | 3.01 | 0.73 | 0.27 |
| *I can choose which teaching strategies work best for my students* | 3.33 | 0.54 | 0.17 |
| *I am NOT able to make changes to the curriculum to meet my students' needs (reverse scale)* | 2.46 | 0.72 | 0.22 |
| *I can organize my classroom environment in different ways* | 3.19 | 0.68 | 0.22 |
| *I can NOT change how my classroom space is organized (reverse scale)* | 3.02 | 0.78 | 0.28 |
| *I can NOT choose how I assess my students' learning (reverse scale)* | 3.30 | 0.53 | 0.21 |
| Mean | | | 3.04 |
| SD | | | 0.40 |

**Notes:** Coefficient of determination (CD) = 0.97; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.000; Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) = 1.00; Reliability (alpha) = 0.67.

My goodness-of-fit statistics for the *teacher agency* factor demonstrate a strong fit between the survey items and latent construct, with an RMSEA score of 0.000 and CFI and TLI results of 1.00, suggesting that the items are an appropriate fit for the *teacher agency* construct in the context of Cox's Bazar. With an alpha of $a = 0.67$, the internal reliability is also acceptable considering the short scales, contextually variable determinants of agency, and the effective uni-dimensionality of the factor. The coefficient of determination (CD) also indicates that the *teacher agency* model explains 97 percent of the variation in participant responses, but as seen by the high means and

low variation in response values, the ceiling effect and desirability bias likely influence this outcome.

In terms of mean response values, higher levels of *teacher agency* are reported in participants' decisions about how to teach, or the strategies they use to teach ($M = 3.33$, $\lambda = 0.17$) and how they assess children's learning ($M = 3.30$, $\lambda = 0.17$), albeit with weak individual loadings on the factor. The most meaningful items, though with still modest loadings, relate to participants' organization of their own classroom spaces ($M = 3.02$, $\lambda = 0.28$) and their choice of assessment strategies ($M = 3.01$, $\lambda = 0.29$). The positive overall fit reflects a promising alignment to the *teacher agency* factor, but low factor loadings likely reflect inconsistent responses to classroom- and pedagogical-level questions, which is a recurring theme across this study's quantitative and qualitative phases. The diverse language capabilities of participants could also contribute some ambiguity to the meaning of some items. Moreover, as is common in humanitarian settings, structural constraints on *teacher agency* mean that teachers exercise their autonomy via pedagogical methods but face significant governance and resourcing restrictions in curriculum choices and classroom environment decisions (Dryden-Peterson, 2022; Kirk & Winthrop, 2008).

**Table 5.5d**
*Descriptive statistics for participants' teaching experience, demographics, and their experiences of* ***teacher agency***

| Variable | Category | n= | Mean | SD | Significance Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Experience** | 0-1 year | 33 | 2.97 | 0.35 | - | One-way |
| | 1-2 years | 43 | 3.05 | 0.39 | - | ANOVA |
| | 2-3 years | 51 | 3.09 | 0.42 | - | |
| | 3-4 years | 68 | 3.10 | 0.45 | - | |
| | 4-5 years | 101 | 3.00 | 0.40 | - | |
| | 5+ years | 198 | 3.04 | 0.40 | - | |
| **Age** | 16-20 | 21 | 3.05 | 0.37 | - | One-way |
| | 21-25 | 257 | 3.04 | 0.39 | - | ANOVA |
| | 26-30 | 98 | 3.04 | 0.40 | - | |
| | 31-35 | 50 | 3.06 | 0.48 | - | |
| | 36-40 | 33 | 3.10 | 0.41 | - | |
| | Over 40 | 35 | 2.90 | 0.38 | | |
| **Identity** | Rohingya | 302 | 3.10 | 0.40 | 0.001** | Two tailed t-test |
| | Bangladeshi | 192 | 2.94 | 0.38 | - | |
| **Sex** | Female | 204 | 3.00 | 0.39 | - | |
| | Male | 290 | 3.06 | 0.41 | - | |

Participant reporting for *teacher agency* is also steady across the *experience* and *age* categories, with one-way ANOVA tests showing no statistically significant differences in experiences of *teacher agency* between *age* groups or *experience* categories. However, compared to *self-efficacy* and *work satisfaction,* the mean response values are considerably lower, indicating that even when participants provide consistently high responses for other factors, they generally report lower levels of *teacher agency*. A t-test reveals that Rohingya participants ($M$ = 3.10, $SD$ = 0.40, $p < 0.001$) reported a positively and significantly higher level of *teacher agency* than their Bangladeshi host-community peers ($M$ = 2.94, S$D$ = 0.38).[27] As explored in subsequent chapters, however, this result contrasts with Rohingya participants' perceptions of their Bangladeshi colleagues, who they

[27] Identity: $t$ = -4.1705, $df$ = 492, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d$ = 0.39

feel have more leadership and decision-making authority due to their proximity to and preferential treatment by local implementing partner NGOs. At the same time, *teacher agency* items are also set at the classroom level, where Rohingya participants play a more sustained role and Bangladeshi participants experience increasingly less influence.

## 5.7 The relationship between socio-ecological motivation factors and participants' motivation to teach

The bearing of different survey items with the construction of predictive motivation factors do not determine which socio-ecological levels have the strongest association with participants' *motivation to teach* in Cox's Bazar. To better compare the statistical relationships of these factors with participants' *motivation to teach*, in Table 5.7a below I first provide a bivariate Pearson's correlation matrix to illustrate the strength of relationships between each predictor variable and the *sex, identity, age,* and *experience* control variables with the *motivation* to teach outcome factor and each other.

In table 5.7b, I then present unstandardized isolated regressions (*B*) for each motivation factor alongside demographic control variables (*identity, sex, age, and experience*) to examine the unique contributions of each factor to the *motivation to teach* outcome when all other variables are held constant. The combined standardized coefficients ($\beta$) then illustrate the relative strength of each factor's relationship with *motivation to teach* when all other factors are held constant, revealing which factors are the most and least powerful in explaining participants' *motivation to teach*.

I extend this analysis in Table 5.7c by disaggregating *identity* and *sex* into participants' four identity categories: *Rohingya female, Rohingya male, Bangladeshi female, and Bangladeshi male* and repeat the Pearson correlations and OLS regressions. In doing this, I am able to develop

a more nuanced view of each predictor variables' relationship with teachers' identities and the *motivation to teach* outcome. I can then compare how, when the factors are regressed together, there are overlapping influences that may weaken or strengthen the associations, thereby presenting a clearer view of which factors have the strongest overall explanatory power and which identities are most associated with teachers' *motivation to teach.*

**Table 5.7a**

*Model 1: Bivariate correlation matrix for the **motivation to teach** outcome factor, six **predictor factors**, and **demographic control variables** (N=494)*

| | **Motivation** | **Respect** | **Support** | **Safety** | **Work Satisfaction** | **Self-efficacy** | **Teacher agency** | **Sex** | **Identity** | **Age** | **Experience** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* |
| Motivation | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Respect | 0.51*** | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | |
| Support | 0.68*** | 0.56*** | 1.00 | | | | | | | | |
| Safety | 0.55*** | 0.44*** | 0.64*** | 1.00 | | | | | | | |
| Work satisfaction | 0.71*** | 0.61** | 0.65*** | 0.52*** | 1.00 | | | | | | |
| Self-efficacy | 0.71*** | 0.38*** | 0.52*** | 0.40*** | 0.66*** | 1.00 | | | | | |
| Teacher agency | 0.63*** | 0.56*** | 0.53*** | 0.41*** | 0.68*** | 0.59** | 1.00 | | | | |
| Sex (female) | -0.04 | -0.09* | -0.03 | -0.02 | -0.16*** | -0.12** | -0.07 | 1.00 | | | |
| Identity (Rohingya) | 0.15*** | 0.12** | 0.07 | 0.03 | 0.22*** | 0.18*** | 0.18*** | - | 1.00 | | |
| Age | -0.08 | -0.09* | -0.09 | -0.06 | -0.02 | -0.07 | -0.05 | -0.20*** | 0.22*** | 1.00 | |
| Experience | 0.06 | 0.08* | 0.08* | 0.09* | 0.07 | 0.03 | -0.01 | -0.13** | 0.20*** | 0.17*** | 1.00 |

**Notes:** *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01. ***p < 0.00. Results for identity-related associations are omitted due to redundancy.

Table 5.7a reveals positive and statistically significant associations between the *motivation to teach* outcome variable and the six predictor factors: *Respect* ($r = 0.51$, $p < 0.001$), *support* ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$), safety ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.001$), *work satisfaction* ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.001$), *self-efficacy* ($r = 0.71$, $< 0.001$), and *teacher agency* ($r = 0.63$, $< 0.001$). This is the first indication that the predictor factors are highly interrelated and likely contribute to teachers' *motivation to teach* in Cox's Bazar. In contrast, the control variables—*sex (female)*, *identity (Rohingya)*, *age*, and *experience*—show much weaker and mostly non-significant correlations with the *motivation to teach* factor (e.g., *sex (female)*: $r = –0.04$; *age*: $r = –0.08$). This further suggests that demographic factors have less explanatory power for *motivation to teach*. Notably, however, *identity* shows a small but significant and positive correlation with *motivation to teach* ($r = 0.15$, $p < 0.001$), reaffirming that overall Rohingya teachers are likely to be more *motivated to teach* than Bangladeshi teachers.

**Table 5.7b**

*Model 1: Isolated unstandardized and combined standardized coefficients from multivariate OLS regressions of* ***motivation to teach*** *on* ***selected demographic variables*** and *six* ***predictor factors*** *(N=494)*

| | **Control variables** | | **Community-level factors** | | **Learning center-level factors** | | **Individual-level factors** | **Combined** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Factor** | *B* | | *B* | | *B* | | *B* | *β* |
| **Respect** | | 0.44*** | | | | | | 0.01 |
| | | (0.03) | | | | | | (0.03) |
| **Support** | | | 0.58*** | | | | | 0.20*** |
| | | | (0.29) | | | | | (0.03) |
| **Safety** | | | | 0.45*** | | | | 0.09** |
| | | | | (0.03) | | | | (0.03) |
| **Work satisfaction** | | | | | 0.81*** | | | 0.21*** |
| | | | | | (0.03) | | | (0.05) |
| **Self-efficacy** | | | | | | 0.70*** | | 0.34*** |
| | | | | | | (0.03) | | (0.04) |
| **Teacher agency** | | | | | | | 0.55*** | 0.10** |
| | | | | | | | (0.03) | (0.03) |
| Identity (Rohingya) | 0.018*** | 0.15*** | 0.12*** | 0.17*** | 0.06 | 0.06* | 0.05 | 0.05 |
| | (0.04) | (0.04) | (0.03) | (0.04) | (0.03) | (0.03) | (0.03) | (0.03) |
| Sex (Female) | 0.07 | 0.08* | 0.07* | 0.08* | 0.08** | 0.07* | 0.03 | 0.06** |
| | (0.04) | (0.04) | (0.03) | (0.04) | (0.03) | (0.03) | (0.04) | (0.03) |
| Age | -0.03** | -0.23* | -0.00 | -0.02* | -0.01 | -0.01 | -0.01 | -0.00 |
| | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.08) | (0.01) | (0.01) |
| Experience | 0.01 | 0.00 | -0.00 | -0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.01* | 0.00 |
| | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.01) | (0.07) | (0.01) | (0.00) |
| Constant | 3.17*** | 1.75*** | 1.28*** | 1.78*** | 0.63*** | 0.89*** | 1.51*** | - |
| | (0.07) | (0.13) | (0.10) | (0.11) | (0.12) | (0.11) | (0.07) | |
| $R^2$ | 0.03 | 0.28 | 0.47 | 0.33 | 0.51 | 0.50 | 0.40 | 0.67 |

(Standard errors in parentheses)
**Note:** *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01. ***p < 0.001.

The first column in the OLS regression measures the comparative association of participants' demographic markers with their *motivation to teach*. In model 1, when all control variables are regressed together there is a strong predictive value of Rohingya *identity* ($B = 0.18$, $p < 0.001$), underscoring the power of cultural affinity and personal and community connections with the Rohingya agenda for education on participants' *motivation to teach*. In this model, the female teacher *identity* ($B = 0.07$) also has a positive but statistically insignificant association with the *motivation to teach* outcome. There is, however, a significant but negative relationship between participants' *age* ($B = -0.03$, $p < 0.01$) and their *motivation to teach*: as the age category rises, there is a marginal but significant decrease in teacher motivation. While the coefficients for *sex* ($B = 0.07$) and *experience* ($B = 0.01$) are positive, they are also marginal and do not have a significantly meaningful relationship with teacher motivation. It is also noteworthy that in model 1 the demographic control variables account for only three percent ($R^2 = 0.03$) of the variance in the model.

When all motivation factors are included and regressed together, 67 percent ($R^2 = 0.67$) of the variation in participants' *motivation to teach* is now explained by the socio-ecological factors, confirming their central influence in shaping refugee teachers' *motivation to teach.* Among the isolated regressions of motivation factors, *work satisfaction* ($B = 0.81$, $p < 0.001$) and *self-efficacy* ($B = 0.70$, $p < 0.001$) have the most positive relationship with participants' motivation *to teach*. This indicates how the purpose and enjoyment of teaching and participants' perceptions of self-competence—especially in terms of making a difference on those they teach—play a critical role sustaining their m*otivation to teach*. On its own, the *teacher agency* ($B = 0.55$, $p < 0.001$) regression also demonstrates the importance of having a sense of voice and self-determination in one's work. At the community level, *support* ($B = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$) *safety* ($B = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$),

and *respect* ($B$ = 0.44, $p < 0.001$) also present strong and significant effects, reinforcing the enabling value of material assistance, protection, and social recognition teachers' work and lives. When all factors are brought together in the combined standardized regression, however, *self-efficacy* ($\beta$ = 0.34, $p < 0.001$) now has the strongest overall relationship with participants' *motivation to teach*, followed by *work satisfaction* ($\beta$ = 0.21, $p < 0.001$) and *support* ($\beta$ = 0.21, $p < 0.001$). *Teacher agency* ($\beta$ = 0.10, $p < 0.01$) and *safety* ($\beta$ = 0.09, $p < 0.001$) lose some of their effect, and *respect* ($\beta$ = 0.01) no longer has a statistically significant bearing on participants' motivation *to teach*.

In the combined regression model, the Rohingya *identity* ($\beta$ = 0.05) no longer has a statistically significant association with participants' *motivation to teach,* however, being a female teacher ($\beta$ = 0.09, $p < 0.01$) now has a modest but significant relationship with *motivation to teach* when all other factors are held constant.

**Table 5.7c**

*Model 2: Bivariate correlation matrix for the **motivation to teach** outcome factor, six **predictor factors**, and **disaggregated identity** variables (N=494)*

| | **Motivation** | **Respect** | **Support** | **Safety** | **Work Satisfaction** | **Self-efficacy** | **Teacher agency** | **Roh. fem.** | **Roh. male** | **Bang. fem** | **Bang. male** | **Age** | **Exp.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* | *(r)* |
| Motivation | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Respect | 0.51*** | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Support | 0.68*** | 0.56*** | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Safety | 0.55*** | 0.44*** | 0.64*** | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | |
| Work satisfaction | 0.71*** | 0.61*** | 0.65*** | 0.52*** | 1.00 | | | | | | | | |
| Self-efficacy | 0.70*** | 0.38** | 0.52*** | 0.40*** | 0.66*** | 1.00 | | | | | | | |
| Teacher agency | 0.63*** | 0.56*** | 0.53*** | 0.41*** | 0.68*** | 0.59*** | 1.00 | | | | | | |
| Rohingya female | 0.05 | -0.01 | 0.01 | 0.12 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.04 | 1.00 | | | | | |
| Rohingya male | 0.10** | 0.11** | 0.07 | 0.03 | 0.21*** | 0.15*** | 0.14** | - | 1.00 | | | | |
| Bangladesh female | -0.08 | -0.08* | -0.04 | -0.03 | -0.17*** | -0.15*** | -0.10* | - | - | 1.00 | | | |
| Bangladesh male | -0.12** | -0.05 | -0.07 | -0.02 | -0.10* | -0.05 | -0.13** | - | - | - | 1.00 | | |
| Age | -0.08 | -0.02 | -0.09 | -0.06 | -0.02 | -0.07 | -0.05 | 0.02 | 0.21*** | 0.22*** | -0.02 | 1.00 | |
| Experience | 0.06 | 0.09* | 0.08* | 0.09* | 0.07 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.09* | 0.15*** | 0.19*** | -0.04 | 0.17*** | 1.00 |

**Notes:** *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01. ***p < 0.001. Results for identity-related associations are omitted due to redundancy.

Disaggregating *identity* and *sex* in the correlation matrix (Table 5.7c) revealed important variance that was obscured in the aggregated model (Table 5.7a). While all six predictor variables remained significantly and positively correlated with the outcome factor in both models, disaggregated analysis highlights that Rohingya male teachers exhibit a distinct pattern of positive associations with motivation and several predictor variables, including *respect*, *support*, and *work satisfaction*. In contrast, Bangladeshi male teachers show a significant but negative correlation with *motivation to teach*, a pattern not apparent in the earlier model. These findings suggest that subgroup-specific dynamics—such as perceived professional legitimacy, access to support, or social standing—may shape how teachers experience and respond to their work in Cox's Bazar. The pattern highlighted in this correlation matrix still underscores the overall strength of motivation factors over teachers' demographic characteristics in shaping teacher motivation in Cox's Bazar.

It is important to reiterate here, however, that the correlation matrix shows the strength and direction of bivariate relationships but it does not account for the concurrent influence of multiple variables on the association of a certain variable with the outcome factor. In this way, while the correlation matrixes provides unique insight, the OLS regression in table 5.7d provides a more complete and accurate picture of which factors have the strongest association with teachers' *motivation to teach* when the interrelatedness of other variables and factors are accounted for.

**Table 5.7d**

*Model 2: Isolated unstandardized and combined standardized coefficients from multivariate OLS regressions of* ***motivation to teach*** *on* ***disaggregated identity variables*** *and* ***six predictor*** *factors (N=494)*

| | **Control variables** | | **Community-level factors** | | **Learning center-level factor** | **Individual-level factors** | | **Combined** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Factor** | *B* | | *B* | | *B* | *B* | | *β* |
| **Respect** | | 0.45*** | | | | | | 0.01 |
| | | (0.03) | | | | | | (0.03) |
| **Support** | | | 0.58*** | | | | | 0.20*** |
| | | | (0.29) | | | | | (0.03) |
| **Safety** | | | | 0.45*** | | | | 0.09** |
| | | | | (0.03) | | | | (0.03) |
| **Work satisfaction** | | | | | 0.81*** | | | 0.20*** |
| | | | | | (0.03) | | | (0.05) |
| **Self-efficacy** | | | | | | 0.70*** | | 0.34*** |
| | | | | | | (0.03) | | (0.04) |
| **Teacher agency** | | | | | | | 0.55*** | 0.10*** |
| | | | | | | | (0.03) | (0.03) |
| Rohingya female | 0.24** | 0.22** | 0.17** | 0.23*** | 0.14* | 0.15** | 0.08 | 0.11* |
| | (0.08) | (0.08) | (0.06) | (0.07) | (0.06) | (0.05) | (0.06) | (0.05) |
| Rohingya male | 0.22*** | 0.17** | 0.14** | 0.20*** | 0.06 | 0.12** | 0.06 | 0.06 |
| | (0.06) | (0.06) | (0.05) | (0.06) | (0.04) | (0.05) | (0.07) | (0.04) |
| Bangladesh female | 0.13 | 0.11* | 0.08* | 0.12* | 0.09* | 0.13** | 0.04 | 0.09* |
| | (0.07) | (0.06) | (0.05) | (0.06) | (0.05) | (0.05) | (0.07) | (0.04) |
| Bangladesh male | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Age | -0.03** | -0.02* | -0.01 | -0.01 | -0.01 | -0.01 | -0.03 | -0.00 |
| | (0.01) | (0.010) | (0.01) | (0.10) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.00) |
| Experience | 0.01 | 0.00 | -0.00 | -0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.01* | 0.00 |
| | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.00) | (0.01) | (0.00) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.00) |
| Constant | 3.17*** | 1.72*** | 1.26*** | 1.73*** | 0.62*** | 0.84*** | 1.50*** | - |
| | (0.07) | (0.13) | (0.11) | (0.11) | (0.12) | (0.12) | (0.11) | |
| $R^2$ | 0.03 | 0.27 | 0.46 | 0.33 | 0.51 | 0.51 | 0.40 | 0.67 |

(Standard errors in parentheses)
**Note:** *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01. ***p < 0.00

In model 2 (table 5.7d), I repeated the OLS regression from table 5.7b but use the disaggregated identities of *Rohingya female, Rohingya male, Bangladeshi female,* and *Bangladeshi male* in place of *identity* and *sex.* When only demographic control variables are regressed*, Rohingya female* (*B* = 0.26, $p < 0.01$) and *Rohingya male* (*B* = 0.23, $p < 0.001$) identities have a more significant association with the *motivation to teach* factor *Bangladeshi female* (*B = 0.13*) and *Bangladeshi male* teachers, with the *Rohingya female* identity having the most meaningful relationship with the *motivation to teach* outcome factor overall. With participants' disaggregated demographic markers as the independent variables, only three percent ($R^2 = 0.03$) of the variation in the *motivation to teach* outcome factor is influenced by the demographic factors captured in this model.

The main difference observed in model 2 when the disaggregated identity variables were included are slight variations in coefficient values for the motivation factors, but with no effect on statistical significance. *Self-efficacy* ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.001$) is still the factor with most explanatory power on the *motivation to teach* outcome, closely followed by *work satisfaction* ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$) and *support* ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$). However, *Rohingya females* ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.05$) now emerge as the identity group with a marginal but most significant association with the *motivation to teach* outcome*,* compared to *Bangladeshi females* ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < 0.05$) and *Rohingya males* ($\beta = 0.06$, insignificant).

In summary, from my analysis of the quantitative survey findings a clear story emerges. Across the correlation matrixes (tables 5.7a and 5.7c) and the OLS regression models (tables 5.7b and 5.7d), *motivation to teach* is most strongly associated with the factors of *self-efficacy*, *work satisfaction* and *support*, which show the highest bivariate correlations ($r = 0.68$ to $0.71$) and retain significant and robust effects in my combined multivariate regressions (e.g., $\beta = 0.34$ for *self-efficacy* and $\beta = 0.21$ for work satisfaction). In contrast, demographic control variables—including

*sex, age, experience*, and the disaggregated identity groups—show relatively weak or inconsistent correlations with *motivation to teach*.

It is worthwhile noting that while the *sex* and *Rohingya female* variable showed only a marginal and insignificant positive relationship with *motivation to teach* in bivariate tests and the isolated control variable regressions, in the combined standardized regression *Rohingya females* emerge as the identity group most likely to be *motivated to teach* when all other factors are accounted for, suggesting that *Rohingya female* teachers' motivation is highly interrelated with or dependent on their experiences *self-efficacy* and *work satisfaction* and feelings of *support* because of their work.

It is also noteworthy and no coincidence that the three lowest-ranking factors of *teacher agency* ($\beta$ = 0.10)*, safety* ($\beta$ = 0.09)*,* and *respect* ($\beta$ = 0.01) commanded the most attention during the qualitative FGD phase of my study. Of the 30 hours of FGDs facilitated across four camps, these factors consumed approximately 75 percent of our time together. Participants' exposure to violence and a lack of *safety* in the camps, their frustrations with the top-down and external governance of their education system and their lack of *agency*, and the lack of *respect* they feel from implementing partners and Bangladeshi authorities were the key issues they raised.

## 5.8 What participants say about their motivation to teach

Broadly, my quantitative data highlights factors that positively are positively associated with Rohingya participants' *motivation to teach,* whereas my qualitative data tends to center on the risks and struggles that participants navigate in their work. In FGDs, multiple and complex barriers to higher levels of motivation were revealed and need to be understood in the context of forced displacement and via gendered Rohingya histories. For example, the unique influence of the

Rohingya community's agenda for repatriation to Myanmar—and education's perceived role in this objective—alongside teaching's often liberatory effect for women in conflict- and displacement-affected settings need to be considered (Bradley et al., 2022; Kirk and Winthrop, 2013). To provide a narrative foregrounding of participant responses to focus group questions aligned with the *motivation to teach* outcome factor, in this section I present selected Rohingya reflections on why they chose to teach and whether they want to continue teaching in Cox's Bazar.

For Rohingya females ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < 0.01$), of whom over 80 percent are highly *motivated to teach* (see Annex C1), there is a reluctance to identify teaching as work. Following an internal discussion among FGD participants, the Camp A translator shared that, "You know, they are not considering teaching so much as a profession, but it is similar…" When I asked for further information, the translator clarified that "They feel that by being teachers, they are not doing jobs. They are doing a community duty … like community welfare to improve the lives of their students." The translator made a point of Jusna Homaira's contribution (Rohingya female, Camp A), and shared that "maybe it is because she enjoys teaching so much, she enjoys improving her community, so she thinks that [to teach], it is now her life [not a job]." When I suggested that participants' salaries and training might define them as professionals, Somaya Akter (Camp A) responded by sharing that:

> I am not so concerned about the salary, or you know, to provide for my family …. That is not the point. The point is our community is lagging and they are not getting the rights they deserve; they are not getting everything they want from their life… It's not a job, because salary might come and go, but my commitment to my community is to make improvement, to make development.

Another factor is the transformative effect that the work of teaching represents in female participants' lives (Bradley et al., 2022; Kirk and Winthrop, 2013). Back in Myanmar, and for a

majority of adult females in the camps, *purdah*[28] is the norm and access to education beyond basic primary level is rare (Guglielmi et al., 2021; Hossain, 2024). In this way, alongside the personal and social utility value of teaching that Somaya Akter refers to, the status, spatial mobility, and self-reliance that teaching represents is a key motivator among Rohingya women who teach. As the translator summarized following a group discussion:

> Basically, women were not getting opportunities to be teachers or even be educated in Myanmar. When they get the same opportunity [in Bangladesh] to be a teacher or be educated, that is why they are more motivated here.

Rohingya men ($\beta$ = 0.09, non-significant) have the second highest mean score ($M$ = 3.31, $SD$ = 0.35) for the *motivation to teach* factor, with almost 80 percent reporting a high level of motivation (see Annex C1). This level of motivation is in part explained by political norms in Myanmar that hindered Rohingya opportunities in mainstream schooling and their relative exclusion from higher education and formal employment, meaning their present access to teacher professional development and their children's access to quasi-formal schooling in Cox's Bazar represent a unique albeit constrained opportunity.[29] As I illustrate in the following chapters, many Rohingya men also attribute the violence exercised against them in Myanmar—and the liminality of their current displacement—to the Rohingya community's lack of education. As Anowar Monsur (Rohingya male, Camp C) explained, "Currently our peoples are uneducated, that is why they cannot … that is why we cannot change our situation. But when our generations are educated, they may change our future, our conditions, our situations." Moreover, for many Rohingya, access

[28] *Purdah* is a cultural and religious practice within the Rohingya community that requires girls to remain largely confined to their homes after reaching puberty, limiting their movement and opportunities for education (Guglielmi et al., 2021).

[29] While the formal Myanmar national curriculum has now been permitted for use in the camps by Bangladesh and Myanmar's governments, neither government has agreed to recognize Rohingya children's completion of the curriculum or graduation from schooling (Hossain, 2023).

to quality education is an existential issue. As Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) shared "If we are not educated people, how do we survive a situation like this?"

In line with survey findings, Mohammed Alam (Rohingya male, Camp C) explains how he is motivated by the Rohingya's newfound access to formal education and that "As an educated person, I just wish for our community to get [an education] … our generation will regret it in the future if they do not get [educated]." This points towards the pervasive sense of duty that Rohingya female and male teachers professed. As Mohammed Alam continued, "I know things … many people have information about the world missing in their lives, and I know I can do work to provide that information." On similar terms, and aligned with Olney et al.'s (2019) findings and survey items on education's role in Rohingya futures ($M$ = 3.48), Muhi Sadek (Rohingya male, Camp C) connects his motivation to teach with a "sense of responsibility to educate the next generation … because many people do not have the skills to do this, I feel I must."

Other reasons to continue teaching relate to the Rohingya retaining their rights and the community *respect* and *support* that they associate with their roles as teachers. In line with the comparatively low response value for the *motivation to teach* survey item on compensation ($M$ = 2.81, $SD$ = 0.88) multiple participants downplay its importance. When I raise this point in Camp C, reminding participants that they receive just ৳130,000 or USD130 per month for their work, Ahmad Soliman (Rohingya male) comments that, "For us salary is not the main reason [to teach] … we got just ৳60,000-taka salary before … so we don't have that much interest in the salary to do the job." Prior to the 2023 implementation of the Myanmar Curriculum and corresponding pay rise, participants like Ahmad worked with the LCFA curriculum or in Rohingya-led community schools and were more motivated by the opportunity to shape repatriation processes than secure an income (Olney et al., 2019).

Due to its origins in Myanmar's military junta-run education system and erasure of Rohingya identities, I was surprised when teachers spoke so effusively about what the Myanmar Curriculum symbolizes ($M$ = 3.36, $SD$ = 0.68), noting how it has provided a significant boost to Rohingya teacher motivation. Even though its implementation comes with significant workload stressors ($M$ = 2.40, $SD$ = 0.66). While many participant statements in the following chapters affirm this, two key reasons dominate our discussions. The curriculum provides Rohingya with access to formal learning (albeit no formal accreditation), it has a reparative effect, and it plays a preparatory role in the community's repatriation hopes. As Mohammed Alam (Rohingya male, Camp C) comments: "Through the Myanmar Curriculum, it is like we get to study ourselves, we catch up on what we missed out in Myanmar. [It is] for those who were denied access to Myanmar education [before]...." On the topic of repatriation, Anowar Monsur (Rohingya male, Camp C) confirms that "For us, it is a question of what is Myanmar? What is the Myanmar nation? What is this place we came from and wish to go back to … so we are hungry to learn more from the Myanmar Curriculum."

## 5.9 The interrelatedness of my three analysis chapters

In each of the following chapters I revisit evidence from the literature and visualize quantitative findings using box-plot graphs and this chapter's OLS regression findings. I then integrate qualitative findings from FGDs into my analysis.

In Chapter 6, at the community level I find that participants' experiences of poor sense of *safety* erodes positive associations of community *support* with Rohingya teachers' *motivation to teach.* And while *support* holds strong explanatory power in my quantitative findings, participants struggled to identify examples of feeling supported in their teaching, more readily referring to examples of *support* from neighbors and family members in the community because they are

teachers. At the same time, while participants discussed being well respected, their status also put their sense of safety at risk as they became targets of Rohingya armed group and Bangladeshi security force harassment.

In Chapter 7, at the learning center level I find that the Myanmar curriculum has a multifaceted if not bewildering effect on teachers' *work satisfaction* and *motivation to teach*. Reinforcing the interrelatedness of the socio-ecological motivation factors, participants discussed how teaching the formal curriculum bolsters their sense of status as teachers and represents 'quality education' for their children. Alongside the curriculum, participants note how teaching the Burmese language uplifts their sense of belonging to Myanmar, fulfilling a key element of their repatriation agenda. At the same time, participants identify Myanmar curriculum and Burmese language issues as the central causes of workload stress.

In Chapter 8, at the individual level I analyze how low system-level *agency* threatens the positive relationship between teachers' *self-efficacy* and their *motivation to teach.* Gendered differences in how female and male teachers understand the effect of *self-efficacy* and *agency* on their *motivation to teach* are also revealed. For Rohingya females, *self-efficacy* exists through daily acts of teaching; especially via belonging and protection that their work nurtures for children. For Rohingya males, *self-efficacy* is suspended until the political objectives of their teaching are in sight. For Rohingya females, *teacher agency* is not always a positive factor, especially if a sense of stability, support, and predictability are sacrificed. For Rohingya males, learning centers are managed by Bangladeshi implementing partners via a process in which teachers experience little agency. Thus, a lack of self-determination within the education system limits how much Rohingya teachers can feel efficacious in and motivated by their work. Finally, in Chapter 9 I bring each level of analysis together to evaluate how and why Rohingya teachers are *motivated to teach* in

the context of Cox's Bazar and how a concept of 'anticipatory hope' can guide a more sophisticated and situated understanding of teacher motivation in refugee settings.

## 5.10 A story of 'anticipatory hope'

Dissonance emerges across my quantitative and qualitative findings in the following chapters. Tensions between the enablers (quantitative findings) and barriers (qualitative findings) for Rohingya teachers and their political agenda for education become apparent; in this arrangement, the multidimensional nature of teacher motivation in a refugee-hosting setting is reflected (Ring and West, 2015). Based on the metrics of teacher well-being and motivation studies in high-income settings (e.g. Fernet et al., 2013; Lauerman et al., 2017; Watt and Richardson, 2007), Rohingya participants should have much lower levels of motivation and higher rates of attrition resulting from their work conditions. Still, with almost 80 percent of Rohingya participants reporting a high level of *motivation to teach* ($B = 0.18$, $p < 0.001$) and due to the explanatory power of the *self-efficacy* motivation factor ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$), I hold that Rohingya teachers' perseverance in untenable conditions is explained by their deep belief in teaching's purpose in a context of forced displacement and the anticipatory hope that their work represents.

As a form of reparation and preparedness for an uncertain yet aspired for future, the Rohingya community's core agenda for education underpins participants' *motivation to teach*. A lack of alternative employment opportunities may be an early reason to teach, but participants connect teaching with longer-term and intrinsic personal and political motivations. Like teachers in Iraq (Paradies, 2023), Lebanon (Karkouti, 2021), and Nigeria (Murugaiah, 2023), teaching in Cox's Bazar is a responsibility as much as an act of free choice; Rohingya decisions to teach co-exist with their duty to teach, thereby interrupting the assertiveness of their *motivation to teach* and challenging existing teacher motivation constructs in comparative education research.

# Chapter 6 - Community-level experiences: A low sense of safety erodes the power of support in teachers' lives

Adding to the precarity of their refuge in Cox's Bazar, Rohingya teachers contend with the implications of emergent teacher identities and the proliferation of risk that Rohingya armed gangs and Bangladesh security forces present. In this *mêlée,* and in parallel with Marchais et al.'s (2024) observations in the DRC, Rohingya participants experience their work as protective via the *respect* and *support* that they receive from family and community members and a concurrent *safety* risk due to the heightened visibility, status, and influence of their roles. In other words, Rohingya armed gangs see teachers as an asset to leverage for their own political gain *and* as a threat to their legitimacy in the camps, while Bangladesh security forces exercise their authority over teachers and the Rohingya community via an ad hoc campaign of harassment, intimidation, and fear.

In this chapter, I explore sub-question 1 to examine how teachers' experiences of respect, support, and safety at the community-level related to their motivation to teach and how this association is differentiated, if at all, by teachers' gender and refugee- or host-community identity. A combined standardized OLS regression revealed a strong and statistically significant relationship between the community-level motivation factors of *support* ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$) and *safety* ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < 0.01$) and teachers' *motivation to teach* in Cox's Bazar, but a marginally positive and statistically non-significant relationship between *respect* ($\beta = 0.01$) and *motivation to* (see table 5.7b). While quantitative findings confirm that participants who experience higher levels of *support* and *safety* at the community-level associate with a higher *motivation to teach*, insights from 30 hours of FGDs demonstrate how these findings are at once accurate and more complex than the numbers convey. To reiterate, participants responded favorably to survey items, reflecting

overall positive community-level experiences, whereas FGDs extract the complexities of participants' life and work challenges and associated grievances.

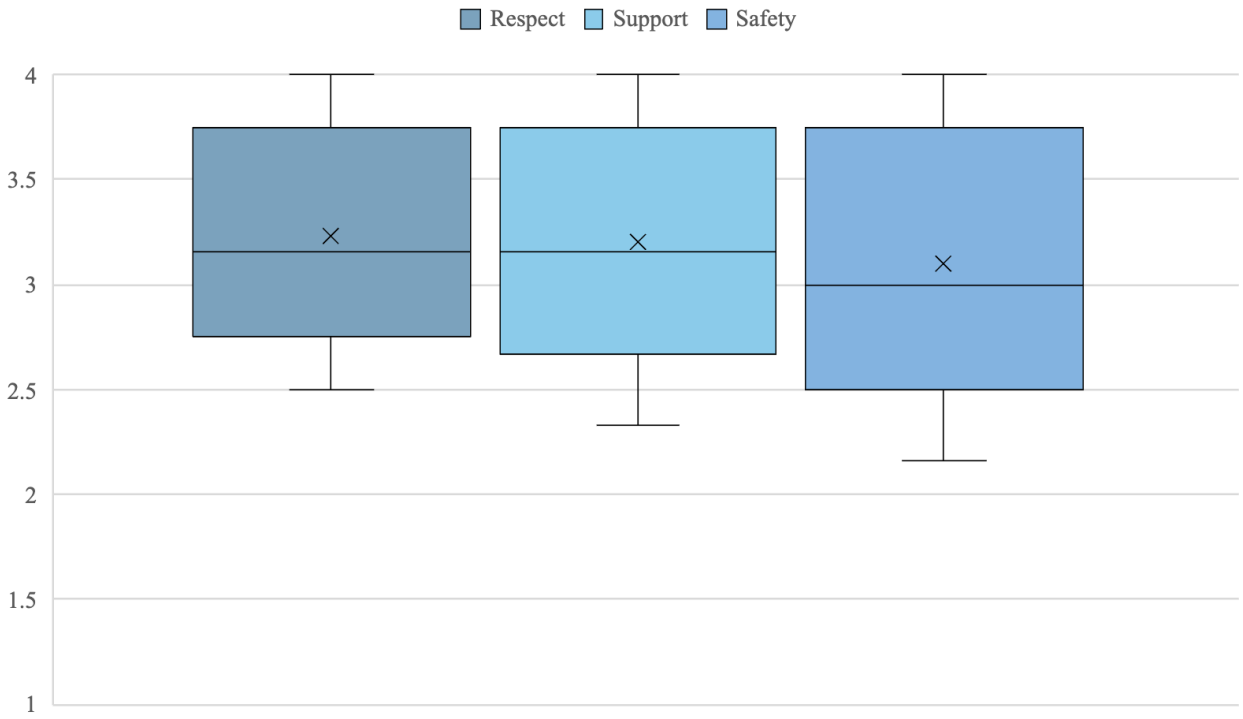
Socio-cultural dynamics shape teachers' experiences of *respect, support,* and *safety*. As qualitative narratives reveal, Rohingya male teachers work within their own community and culture and likely have a greater sense of solidarity among colleagues. In contrast, quantitative findings show that Rohingya female participants report marginally lower levels of *respect, support,* and *safety* at the community level. As my qualitative data reveals and as the literature supports (Guglielmi et al., 2021), this reflects female teachers' minority status within the workforce and exposure to a spectrum of harmful beliefs about Rohingya women in the workplace.

As findings in the previous chapter highlight (see table 5.7a), lower perceived levels of *respect, support,* and *safety* among Bangladeshi participants could also speak to emerging Bangladeshi-community fatigue towards the Rohingya's plight (Kamruzzaman et al., 2024; Khan, 2024; Uddin, 2020) and the reality that teaching in a community other than one's own is a well-documented risk factor (Maber, 2019; Wolf et al., 2015). According to FGD participants, Rohingya community members believe that Rohingya teachers hold significant influence in the education of future generations and their repatriation to Myanmar, thereby securing some stature and eliciting the community's support. For Bangladeshi host-community teachers, the literature reveals how a growing intolerance of a protracted crisis and the diminished solidarity that many residents feel towards the Rohingya's cause extends to the lower levels of respect and support offered to Bangladeshi teachers (Kamruzzaman et al., 2024; Khan, 2024; Uddin, 2020).

Figure 6 below shows how participants (N = 494) experience each of the three community-level motivation factors when teaching in Cox's Bazar. As my combined OLS regression analysis revealed (see table 5.7a), *support* ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$) and *safety* ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < 0.01$) have a

statistically significant relationship on participants' motivation to teach, whereas *respect* ($\beta = 0.01$) has a very small and statistically insignificant relationship. Participants' experiences of *respect* and *support* because they are teachers are closely related, with mean values of 3.23 and 3.19 respectively. However, with a mean value of 3.09, and the most variation in participant responses, reported experiences of *safety* are comparatively lower than for *respect* and *support*.

**Figure 6**
*Box plot of the mean, median, and range of participant responses to community-level motivation factors*



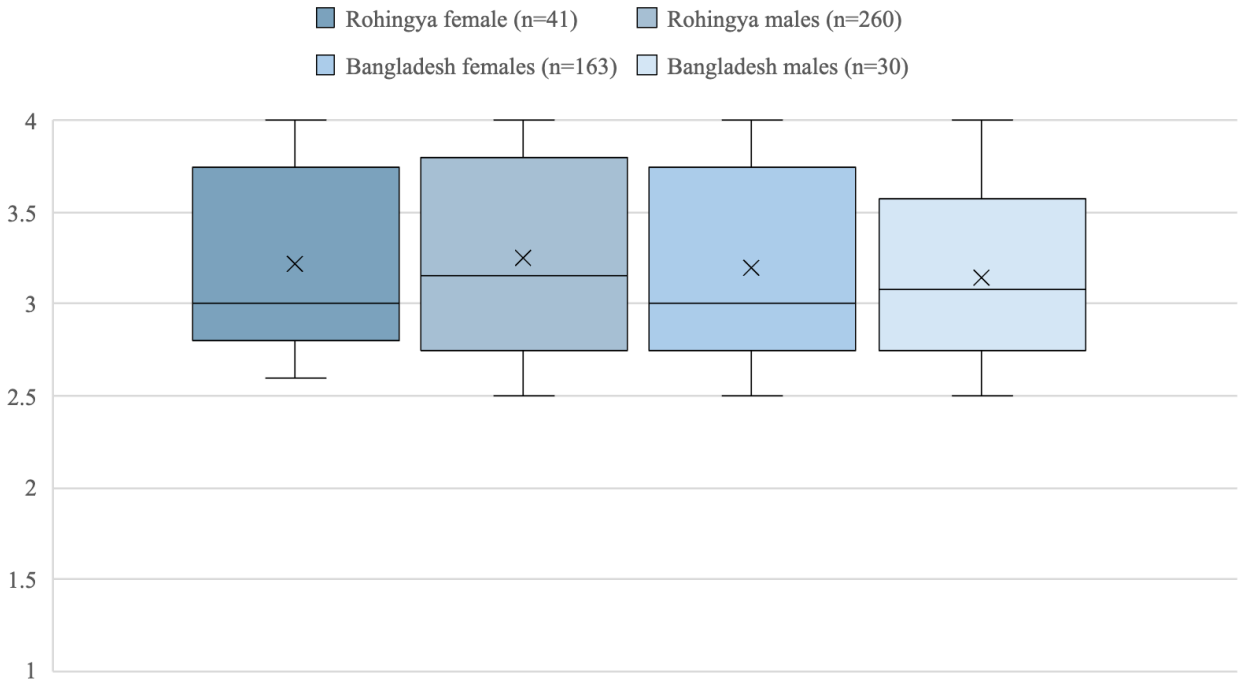

## 6.1 How experiences of *respect* are associated with participants' motivation to teach

Results from a t-test detailed how the *Rohingya* identity is positively and significantly associated with participants' experiences of the *respect* factor ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$).[30] To further

[30] t = -2.69, *df* = 492, p = 0.003, Cohen's *d* = 0.25

disaggregate and visualize the variation within and between identity groups (which are statistically insignificant),[31] the box plot in figure 6 below shows that *Rohingya males* report the highest level of *respect* ($M$ = 3.25) and *Rohingya female* participants report lower experiences of *respect* because they are teachers ($M$ = 3.22). Bangladeshi female participants experience marginally less respect ($M$ = 3.20), whereas Bangladeshi males report the lowest experiences of respect overall ($M$ = 3.14).

**Figure 6.1**
*Box plot of participant identity-disaggregated findings for the **respect** factor*




In FGDs, I first defined community-level motivation factors for participants and showed visual prompts for *respect, support,* and *safety* survey results. I reminded participants how *respect* is different from *support*, with respect being more related to a teachers' social status and how people

[31] A one-way ANOVA showed no significant difference in *respect* scores across identity groups, F (3, 490) = 2.31, p = 0.075. p = 0.900. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons revealed no significant pairwise differences.

behave towards them, whereas *support* is about the practical assistance that a person or community offers teachers because they teach. On this point, Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) expressed that "According to my opinion, I get respect more than safety or support." Similarly, in Camp C, the translator shared how Muhi Sadek (Rohingya male) believed "It is easy to get respect, but for support people have to make effort. So for him, getting respect is easy." In discord with combined standardized regression analysis results showing that *respect* has the lowest bearing on participants' *motivation to teach* (see table 5.7a), over 50 percent of the whole sample (N = 494) report experiencing high levels of *respect* (see Annex C). Moreover, FGD narratives of *respect* for teachers are more abundant and positive than examples of practical support, even though *support* receives a modestly higher mean response value ($M$ = 3.26) and, of the community-level factors, has the most meaningful relationship to participants' *motivation to teach* ($\beta$ = 0.19, p < 0.001).[32]

### 6.1.1 The community's respect for education creates respect for teachers

When one's identity is associated with dispossession and resource deprivation, subjective and intrinsic assets like the respect received for the work one does can have significant power over one's willingness to continue that work (Dornyei and Ushioda, 2011; Sinclair, 2008). For Rohingya participants, there is a general view that the community's respect for education extends to their respect for teachers; i.e. in parallel with Bellino and Dryden-Peterson's (2019) findings in Kenya, if the community does not value the quality of education that their children receive then teachers do not receive a corresponding level of respect. Reflecting the frustration that Rohingya parents and teachers experienced with the informal LCFA, participants believe that the formal Myanmar Curriculum generates a belated level of respect for teachers (see also Shohel, 2023a).

[32] Based on findings from a standardized combined OLS regression, see table 5.7a.

As Ziabur Rajman (Rohingya male, Camp D) shared, “before, some people don’t understand the beauty of education … we [now] highlight and teach them education and later they know and understand.” Similarly, Khadija Begum (Rohingya female, Camp A) stated that “Rohingya now know the value of education. Now they respect teachers for doing this for their children.”

Further reflecting this change and the work that Rohingya teachers undertake to build their own capabilities, Tosmin Ara (Bangladeshi female, Camp A) shared that since the introduction of the Myanmar Curriculum, which includes a full range of academic subjects, “[Rohingya teachers] can learn, they can know many things … they feel respect, the community now respects them.” Relating to the difference between the LCFA era and the recent implementation of the Myanmar Curriculum, a translator interpreted on behalf of Jamil Anwar (Rohingya male, Camp D) that “Teachers’ work … it is [now] a kind of light, that is why people mostly respect the teachers now.”

To understand the positive response value that survey items on community *respect* received ($M$ = 3.44, $SD$ = 0.57), I asked participants why the Myanmar Curriculum is attributable to an increase in respect for teachers and responses resonate with Dryden-Peterson and Horst’s (2023) concept of ‘building durable futures’—such as repatriation or third country resettlement pathways and further education or employment—for which teachers now see themselves as agents of opportunity. Somaya Akter (Rohingya female, Camp A) theorized via the translator that this relates to parents’ preparations for their repatriation to Myanmar: “if they are going back, how can they contribute to their country? … For that reason the community members are now giving a lot more respect to the teachers who teach the Myanmar Curriculum.”

The Myanmar Curriculum also evokes nostalgia and hope, which Olney et al. (2019) described as the Rohingya’s ‘affinity for Myanmar’. In this way, and echoing Malki’s (1992) observation that displaced populations strive to make “memories of and claims to places they can

or will no longer corporeally inhabit" (p. 24), Anowar Monsur (Rohingya male, Camp D) considered how the curriculum affects the reconnection of Rohingya with memories of Myanmar and the Burmese language, for which they hold strong yet conflicted feelings of connection and belonging: "The curriculum is concerned about my Myanmar country. So, every one of the people likes this curriculum, it is also our country language … Everyone respects it more than before. I mean from the LCFA."

Participants also believed the Myanmar Curriculum cultivates a more respectable professional identity. Jusna Homaira (Rohingya female, Camp A) previously felt ambivalent about her Bangladesh-imposed and convoluted job title: 'Forcibly Displaced Myanmar National Volunteer Facilitator.' But with the Myanmar Curriculum this feeling has changed. Although her official title remains the same, "Now, with the Myanmar Curriculum, it feels more professional, like [I am now] an [actual] teacher." This is due to the formal nature of the curriculum and emerging opportunities for learning assessments, which will give Rohingya parents a better gauge of their children's learning progress and, in theory, teachers a better grasp of their influence. As the translator shared on behalf of Hamida Sharmi (Rohingya female, Camp A): "When they invite the parents for parent meetings, the parents now give [teachers] priority, they make time … they ask many questions about the progress of their children. This is how they feel parents are respecting them more." Although items about the Myanmar Curriculum were not part of the *respect* scale, participants kept coming back to connections between the curriculum and their experiences of *respect*. In this way, the interaction of this dynamic and the issues that *respect* can also engender might explain the *respect* factor's statistically weak relationship with participants' motivation *to teach.*

### 6.1.2 Respect is powerful but problematic for Rohingya teachers

Within the complex cultural and political ecology of the Cox's Bazar camps, there is an inverse reality to *respect* for Rohingya participants which became a recurring theme in future discussions about *safety*, *self-efficacy,* and *teacher agency* as well. This might also explain why the *respect* factor ($\beta$ = 0.01) has a marginal and statistically non-significant relationship with participants' *motivation to teach* (see table 5.7a). Focus group participants' problematizing of respect owes to the lack of respect that Rohingya participants feel implementing NGO partners have for them ($M$ = 2.70, $SD$ = 0.64), in parallel with different community members' perceptions of teachers' comparative financial security, strong sense of status, and positive influence on parents and children. As one of the many paradoxes in refugee teachers' lives, such assets are inverted and become risk factors in contexts of conflict and deprivation (Marchais et al., 2024; Wolf et al., 2015). For example, while Somaya Akter (Rohingya female, Camp A) proclaimed that "People see me as empowered!" Mohammed Ullah (Rohingya male, Camp B) alluded to the complexities of her sentiment:

> We are the educated person, we always motivate the people not to do wrong things, that is why those who work on the other side, just laborers and shop keepers, they do not dress like we do, but we are educated persons, we always have a mind to motivate the people and go the right way, and that is sometimes contrary to what people want.

When I probed about the implications of 'motivating people in a contrary way', Mohammed Alam (Rohingya male, Camp C)—who resides illegally outside of the camps in Balu Khali due to fears for his safety—described how "I feel respected and get respect from my community, but I do not want to stay in our community because so many security issues and horrible situations." Similarly, Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) stated that:

> We get more respect than other people in our community, but we do not feel more safety or support due to the armed forces here and the crimes … we cannot even prepare our lessons at night because of gun fights … but we do get respect from the community.

On hearing this statement, Nayun Abdul (Rohingya male, Camp D) reasserted that "it is only those who are armed forces that do not respect us."

### 6.1.3 The gendered dynamics of self-respect

When I presented visualizations about gender-based differences in participants' experiences of respect to *Rohingya male* participants (see Annex C1), showing that just over 40 percent of *Rohingya females* experience high but statistically insignificant level of respect compared to just over 50 percent of *Rohingya males* (statistically insignificant),[33] there was visible discomfort in a number of focus groups. Moreover, as t-test results in the previous chapter (table 5.4b) illustrate, women from Rohingya and Bangladeshi communities ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 0.40$) reported significantly lower levels of *respect* compared to their male peers from both communities ($M = 3.26$, $p < 0.05$).[34] In one FGD session, I recorded in my field notes how "The mood took a turn. The teacher directly in front of me grimaced and stared at the ground, avoiding all eye contact until I changed the topic." As I analyze below, a number of Rohingya men were unsure about Rohingya women's reported levels of respect.

Given international implementing partners' broad concerns about the Rohingya community's attitudes towards women and girls (Guglielmi et al., 2021; Plan International, 2018), which relate to the discriminatory positioning of females within the community's social hierarchy, I am unsure if male participants' aversion to my questions is due to their personal beliefs;

[33] A one-way ANOVA showed no significant difference between Rohingya identity groups and *respect:* $F(1, 299) = 0.90$, $p = .344$, $p = 0.869$.
[34] $t = 2.05$, $df = 492$, $p = 0.0410$, Cohen's $d = 0.19$.

frustration at being associated with gender-discriminatory practices; or a sense of gender fatigue in that Rohingya females are the overwhelming focus of donor interests and implementing partners' recruitment efforts. Either way, the question seemed to affect male participants' sense of dignity and calm.

While Rohingya female teachers are a minority demographic, representing just 21 percent of the teacher workforce, according to grey literature, key informants, and focus group participants they are the most desired cohort of teachers due to their influence on girls' attendance, learning, and well-being (Guglielmi et al., 2021; UNICEF, 2020; Unterhalter, 2023). As Sheikh Muhammed (Rohingya male, Camp B) explained: "Because our community has few educated females, that is why [female teachers] get respect, because she is one of the few." Rohingya male participants also articulated how this respect is representative of female teachers' broader role at home and in the community. According to both male and female focus group participants, teaching is an extension of women's gendered disposition as mothers and nurturers, which their work as teachers is perceived to reinforce in positive ways. Notions of gendered respect are also linked to female teachers' proximity to family shelters, which Rohingya female teachers benefit from due to their home-based teaching for adolescent girls and their community-based mobilizing for out-of-school girls (Fortify Rights, 2021). As Sheikh Muhammed (Rohingya male, Camp B) suggested, "Because she can easily go into the house for home visits, she is more respected than males." Moreover, as international organizations set targets for local implementing partners to recruit, train, and retain more Rohingya female teachers, a number of participants reaffirm that "because she is a female teacher, she gets more respect than the male teachers" (Sahidul Barua, Rohingya male, Camp B).

There are also tensions surrounding the extent to which female teachers are respected by community members. Positively, paradoxically, and in parallel with research on female teachers in Afghanistan and Ethiopia (Kirk and Winthrop, 2008), female Rohingya teachers uphold Rohingya culture and progress opportunities for Rohingya girls and at the same time threaten long-held social norms, such as *purdah*, early and forced child marriage, and domestic or non-formal child labor. But as the translator shared on behalf of Saiful Elahi (Rohingya male, Camp B) "... the parents are now saying "if you provide a safe and secure place and maintain our culture norms, like wearing the burkas, you can teach our girls" … this is probably a reason why female teachers are more [respected]." Other participants also recognized that female teachers have a promising influence on girls' participation in education. As Setara Arefin (Rohingya female, Camp A) shared through the translator: "If the facilitator is female, then the female attendance is good and female learners are more motivated … [the teachers] find this a reason for feeling more respected." Expanding on this concept, Khadija Begum (Rohingya female, Camp A) stated that "whenever they go for home visits, if they find only mothers there … they go inside the house and talk to them like a family member … [families] like it when the female teachers visit rather than the male teachers."

But these views are juxtaposed with narratives reinforcing female teachers' experiences of discrimination rather than respect (e.g., see Bradley et al., 2022). As Jusna Homaira (Rohingya female, Camp A) theorized "... because we are trying to get girls to come to school … some people do not respect us, some people might be angry with us." When I ask for an example, Khadija Begum (Rohingya female, Camp A) shared how situations like this are common when teachers influence reluctant parents to send girls back to school; a task delegated to female teachers rather

than males. As the translator shared, community-level aggression towards female teachers is common:

> She went to do a home visit, she asked the reason why the [female student] did not come [to the learning center]. The parents had engaged the girl in income earning activities. When she tried to talk about this, the father was very loud and angry with her, he said she will not go [to the learning center]. This is more of the violence that she experiences.

Rohingya men are less forthcoming about how Rohingya women are also discriminated against, sticking to a few anecdotal opinions about positive attention they receive. At the end of one focus group, as we were about to move to the next topic, Sheikh Muhammed (Rohingya male, Camp B) came forward with a rarely shared but widely suspected sentiment. Countering his colleague's more positive assessments, he surmised that: "female teachers [actually] get less respect … most people do not like them and they do not want them to get a long education."

### 6.1.4 How self-respect shapes perceptions of community respect

Another dynamic emerges between Rohingya male and female teachers and how a sense of self-respect affords awareness of the community's respect for their work. Although survey findings for the *respect* factor ($M$ = 3.23, $SD$ = 0.40) and FGD participants identify how the community's new respect for education extends to their respect for teachers, my qualitative findings show that participants' poor self-respect for their work as a teacher voids the sense of respect that they perceive from others. And while an independent t-test shows that Rohingya participants report higher and statistically more significant levels of *respect* compared to their host-community colleagues ($M$ = 3.27, $SD$ = 0.40, $p < 0.01$),[35] in FGDs they speak of a lack of respect because they are teachers. Similarly, in contrast with survey findings showing that female participants

[35] $t$ = -2.69, $df$ = 492, p = 0.0074, Cohen's $d$ = 0.25.

experience significantly less respect than males ($M$ = 3.19, $SD$ = 0.40, $p < 0.05$), in focus groups they share how being a teacher makes them feel more respected in the community. This dichotomy reflects the transformative role that teaching can play in women's lives, especially in settings of forced displacement where the marginalization of women from the workforce is common (see Bradley et al., 2022; Jabbar and Zaza, 2016; Kirk 2007; Kirk and Winthrop, 2008).

FGD narratives also show how participants' sense of self-respect (or lack thereof) is related to the fulfillment of their own aspirations. In a restrictive and culturally complex setting like Cox's Bazar there are incongruous experiences of self-respect across gender lines. For a majority of the *Rohingya female* participants, the work of teaching is their first experience of employment or at least the highest professional status that they have heretofore enjoyed (Sanchez-Bean, 2021). As Somaya Akter (Rohingya female, Camp A) reflected, "In Myanmar, when [young women] were being educated, they never thought they could do anything after being educated … but now they feel that if I study to a certain level, I can be a teacher …" Hamida Sharmi (Rohingya female, Camp A) echoed this point, stating that "we had no opportunities in Myanmar, but we can achieve things in Bangladesh. Here we have opportunities."

Rohingya men, by comparison, lament a life of lost opportunities due to the profound educational and employment exclusion that they experienced in Myanmar, alongside their present and tenuous status in Bangladesh (see Habib et al., 2023; Kipgen, 2014; Shohel, 2023). As our discussions progressed, contrary to the *motivation to teach* survey finding that Rohingya men desire a future career in teaching ($M$ = 3.50, $SD$ = 0.56), some exposed the low overall value that they place on the teaching profession. They see teaching as a temporary yet important duty more than a long-term career choice. In some contexts, teaching is a second or third choice career, for

many Rohingya men, however, teaching is their only choice and maybe a reluctant one at that. As Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) reflects:

> I want to become a doctor, but it is really difficult and complex to be a doctor in Myanmar. After passing matriculation, we cannot attend a university … [then] we flee from Myanmar to Bangladesh. Now I teach, but my hope is not fulfilled, I cannot be successful.

This sentiment is reiterated in Camp C, as Muhi Sadek (Rohingya male) shared how "I had big dreams for myself … but I have ended up as a teacher in Bangladesh with no other options." In this same group, Sultan Aziz explained through the translator how "he also wanted to do something big, but at the end of the day he ended up as a teacher because he did not have enough support." As an additional example, the translator reiterated the low status of teaching in the minds of some *Rohingya male* participants, sharing on behalf of Sultan Aziz that "… if there are more high-level jobs like medicine and engineering, he prefers those to being in a low-level job as a teacher." When I asked Rohingya women (Camp A) if they recognized this dynamic among their male colleagues, they agreed that Rohingya men often discount the respect that community members have for them because they lack respect for themselves and the work of teaching.

## 6.2 How experiences of support are associated with participants' motivation to teach

Rohingya participants refer to workload challenges and recurring emergencies within the camps as the main catalysts for practical or material *support* from family or community members. Overall, participants reported experiencing a comparable level of *support* ($M$ = 3.26, $SD$ = 0.41) as they did for *respect* ($M$ = 3.26, $SD$ = 0.40). But as a predictor of participants' motivation to teach, a combined standardized OLS regression analysis of all motivation factors, controlling for participants' *identity*, *sex*, *age*, and *experience*, shows that receiving *support* ($\beta$ = 0.21, $p < 0.001$) from family and community members has a statistically more meaningful relationship with

participants' *motivation to teach* than the other community-level factors of *respect* ($\beta$ = 0.01, non-significant) and *safety* ($\beta$ = 0.09, p < 0.01) (see table 5.7a).

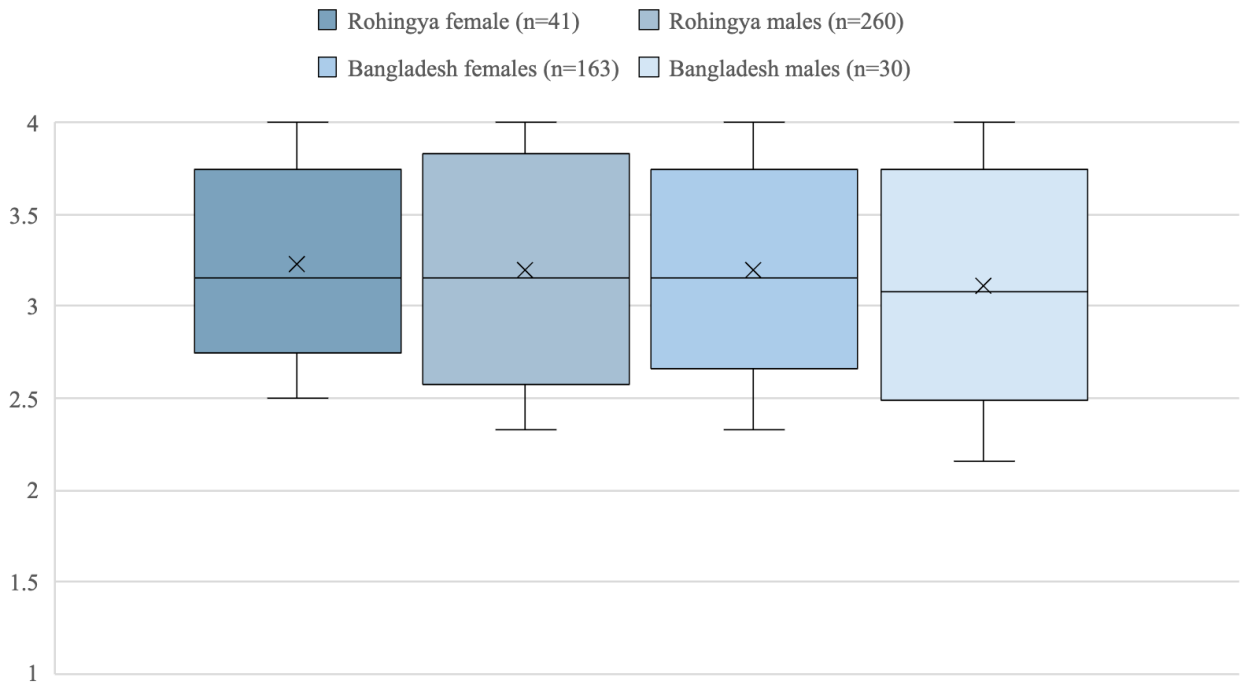
In FGDs, Rohingya participants reported how time and workload pressures impact their ability to prepare teaching materials and inhibit their fulfillment of family responsibilities, for which neighbors and other community members regularly extend practical and material assistance, thus influencing participants' perceptions of being well supported in their work as teachers. At the same time, Rohingya participants are more ambiguous regarding the level of support they receive from implementing partner NGOs and the association of this with their *motivation to teach*.

Participant responses to *support* items are also clustered around the mean ($M$ = 3.26, $SD$ = 0.41) and represent a small but statistically insignificant difference in reported experiences of *support* among the identity groups in my sample.[36] This is illustrated in figure 7 below, which shows mean *support* scores for Rohingya females and males and Bangladeshi females and males of between 3.11 and 3.23.

Intergroup variation in response values for the *support* factor, although minimal and statistically insignificant, likely represents the reality that Bangladeshi teachers are only permitted in the camps between 8.30am to 3.30pm, experience very few interactions with Rohingya families, and possibly suffer some disharmony from within their own communities regarding their work with Rohingya refugees, resulting in lower levels of perceived support (Uddin, 2020). As the literature and FGD narratives show, compared to host-community teachers, Rohingya teachers are seen to be educating Rohingya children and fostering the community's political aspirations, thereby perceiving and receiving a greater level of support for the work they do (Olney, 2019).

[36] A one-way ANOVA showed no significant difference in *support* scores across identity groups, F (3, 490) = 1.43, p = .235. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons revealed no significant pairwise differences.

**Figure 6.2**
*Box plot of participant identity-disaggregated findings for the **support** factor*




### 6.2.1 Perceptions of support from NGOs are complex and contested

In refugee hosting settings like Cox's Bazar, a deficit theory—where teachers are perceived as 'indignant professionals' or 'mediocre intellectuals'—is the paradigm often informing management of and support for refugee teachers (Ali, 2018; Pherali et al., 2020; Prodip et al., 2021; Tao, 2016). Thus, friction between the quality of support offered to refugee teachers and the de-professionalization of teachers' work creates a fragile ecosystem where a lack of *respect* and *support* for refugee teachers feels like the norm (Ring and West, 2015; Falk et al. 2022).

When I probe focus group participants for examples of professional development support like teacher training and lesson planning, they are hesitant to discuss the support provided by implementing partners in particular. Some Rohingya male participants even describe a relationship of compliance with implementing partners rather than support. As Sahidul Barua (Rohingya male,

Camp B) shares: "They tell us just like that, you must follow the sector instructions … whatever you want to do, it does not matter." Although Rohingya male participants responded positively to the two NGO support focused survey items and value teaching's role as a stand-in for their missing higher education, their comments reflect a constrained sense of agency and a degree of discontent. In response to *support*-oriented questions, Sheikh Muhammed (Rohingya male, Camp B) shared his view that:

> [Implementing partners] do not come here [to the learning center] to teach the students. I come to teach the students … How can we improve the education level? I know because I am the teacher … I have everything, I have the instructions for how to teach, but the [implementing partner] does not know how to teach children in the camp.

While sentiments like these were not widely shared, very few Rohingya male or female participants were forthcoming with more concrete examples of NGO support that might reflect my more positive quantitative findings. In this regard, the operational and structural hierarchies (Shah, 2023) that determine Rohingya teachers' experiences of Bangladeshi implementing partner NGO support might color Rohingya participants' interpretations of the support they receive and explain their reluctance to share.

### 6.2.2 Family and community support: It is practical and important

Participants describe why they respond more positively and openly to questions relating to support from their families ($M$ = 3.45, $SD$ = 0.71) and community members ($M$ = 3.28, $SD$ = 0.61) than from implementing partner NGOs ($M$ = 3.13, $SD$ = 0.65).[37] Contributions relating to practical support from family and community members directly connect with participants' daily work as teachers (e.g. preparing teaching materials) and indirectly connect as community members carry

[37] These means and standard deviations are from survey items on these themes.

out domestic responsibilities on teachers' behalf (e.g. collecting rations). Conversely, FGD narratives suggest that implementing partner NGO *support* is understood by participants via what is missing, such as continuous subject-based professional development and a meaningful voice in planning decisions, rather than the support they currently receive. As Muhi Sadek (Rohingya male, Camp C) shared, "While we teach at the LC, we require some materials [for teaching] and we can take those materials from the neighbors, from the neighbors' homes." In Camp B, a translator supports Saiful Elahi (Rohingya male) to describe how neighbors also collect his World Food Program rations: "So, the teachers are in the [learning center]. They are teaching. They cannot go to the collection point. So their neighbors help them at that time and bring their rations." Sahidul Barua (Rohingya male, Camp B) shares a similar example, but in relation to the LPG[38] collection system:

> When I am teaching, LPG tokens are distributed, I must go to take the card… So the community people bring the card for me because I cannot go due to teaching. They also bring the gas cylinder from the office; they volunteer this for my family.

Similarly, as Rohingya men teach between six and eight lessons from 8:30am to 4:00pm each day, FGD participants also reported that neighbors often bring food to teachers if they cannot return to their shelters for lunch.

During Bangladesh's monsoon and cyclone seasons, participants' temporary bamboo and tarpaulin shelters are also vulnerable to landslides and wind destruction. During the dry season, whole sections of the camps have gone up in flames (Ahmed et al., 2021). Participants discussed the burden of this reality, sharing how during times of heightened disaster risk teachers feel more supported by their community than peers who are not teachers and do not receive similar levels of

[38] Liquified petroleum gas, the gas distributed to Rohingya families for cooking.

assistance, such as support to rebuild their shelters or collect food and gas rations. Anowar Monsur (Rohingya male, Camp C) summarizes his experience of community support as follows:

> I want to say one thing. Suppose I am reconstructing my shelter, I am repairing my shelter. And as a teacher, then my … our community peoples help me voluntarily, for rebuilding my shelter or looking after my children while I teach.

In Camp D, as I closed the conversation on support and prepared to ask questions about the *safety* factor, participants critiqued the limited number of *support* items in the survey, in that the notion of community support was too broad and should be separated out to represent different actors and identities within the community. For example, with grave sincerity Nayun Abdul (Camp D) stated that:

> If I say we are supported [by the community] I might be wrong. Because we are not supported by the armed [gang] members in the community … According to me, we must separate this question from the community and the armed [gangs].

Given the prominent role that armed gangs and Bangladesh security forces now play in Rohingya teachers' lives, Nayun Abdul's comment was an unexpected segue to the troubling realities of teachers' work and well-being in Cox's Bazar.

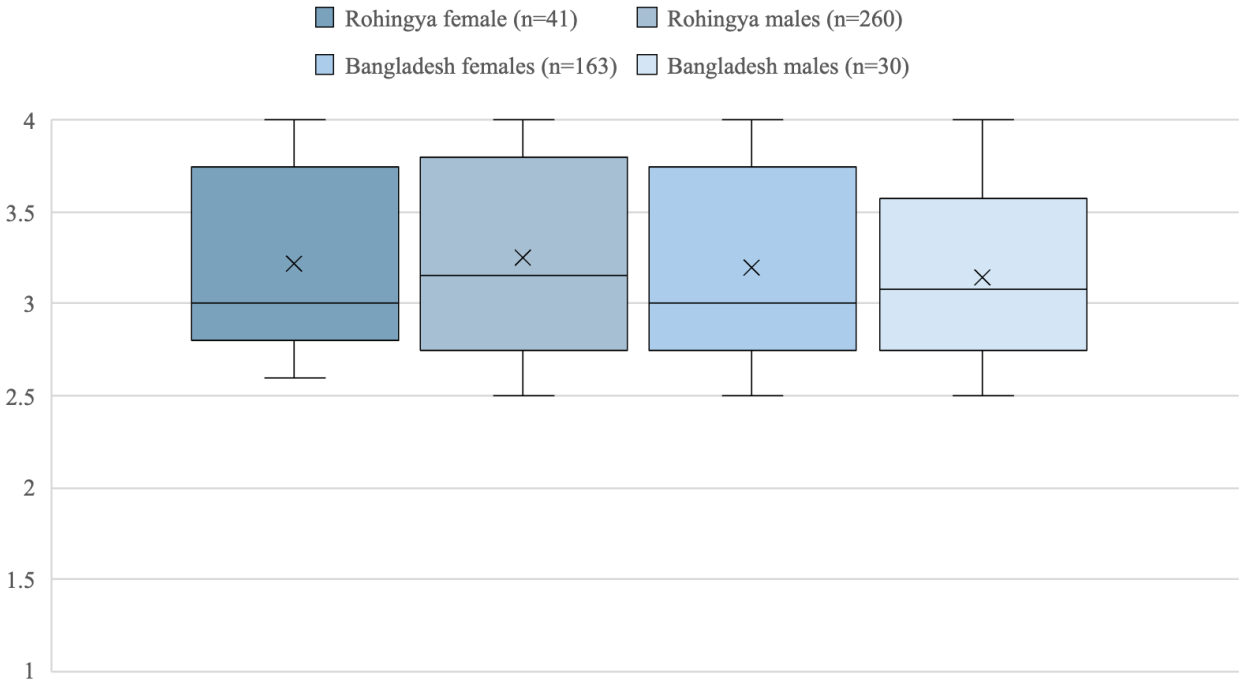
## 6.3 How experiences of safety are associated with participants' motivation to teach

In FGDs focused on participants' experiences of *respect* and *support*, their contributions reflected the generally positive influence that teaching has on their status in the community. When I introduced the visual prompt for the factor of *safety,* which shows that half of Rohingya participants experience a low sense of safety (see Annex C4), focus group discussions with *Rohingya males* in Camps B and D took a more dour tone.

Disaggregated identity results for the *safety* factor show that Rohingya females reported the second lowest experiences of *safety* of all identity groups ($M$ = 3.18, $SD$ = 0.54). By

comparison Rohingya males report a higher level of safety ($M$ = 3.25, $SD$ = 0.45), as do Bangladeshi females ($M$ = 3.20, $SD$ = 0.41). Bangladeshi males report the lowest experiences of safety ($M$ = 3.14, $SD$ = 0.40). However, while there is no statistically significant difference between identity groups' experiences of *safety*,[39] as an OLS regression analysis in Chapter 5 revealed the *Rohingya female* ($B$ = 0.23, p < 0.001) identity has a more positive and statistically significant relationship on the factors of *safety* and *motivation to teach* than the other identity groups (see table 5.7b).

**Figure 6.3**
*Box plot of participant identity-disaggregated findings for the **safety** factor*




A sense of *safety* ($M$ = 3.16, $SD$ = 0.44) has the lowest mean response value of all factors, but it is the fourth most significant predictor of participants' motivation to teach ($\beta$ = 0.09, p < 0.01),

[39] A one-way ANOVA showed no significant difference in safety scores across identity groups, F (3, 490) = 0.27, $p$ = .849. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons revealed no significant pairwise differences.

reflecting the relative lack of *safety* that participants feel in the camps. As focus group narratives below reveal, a lack of safety compromises teachers' 'personal functionings', meaning they are unable to live and work in ways that they envision for themselves (Sen, 1994; Tao, 2016). Two key factors also explain a small but statistically significant difference in reporting between Rohingya ($M$ = 3.17, $SD$ = 0.46) and Bangladeshi ($M$ = 3.14, $SD$ = 0.40) cohorts.[40] Firstly, in FGDs, Bangladeshi participants extended the definition of *safety* to include cultural safety, sharing how differences between Rohingya and Bangladeshi communities make them feel unsafe and culturally isolated while working. This, of course, is a lesser issue for Rohingya participants ($M$ = 3.17, $SD$ = 0.46) who teach in their own culture and community. Meanwhile, Rohingya male participants ($M$ = 3.17, $SD$ = 0.45) are more exposed than their Bangladeshi or Rohingya female peers to sporadic armed gang violence and Bangladeshi authority harassment, but Rohingya females ($M$ = 3.18) likely cope with more pervasive and insidious gender-based violence and discrimination each day.[41]

Safety is also the construct that participants are most hesitant to talk about, possibly due to UN security chaperones waiting nearby during FGDs and the overall political sensitivity of the Rohingya crisis. In my own view, as the Bangladesh government and implementing partners look to comply with international norms and project competence in the creation of conditions for large scale education programs (in order to secure long-term funding), they are likely averse to the exposure of safety issues that might compromise perceptions of stability and the quality of

[40] A two tailed t-test revealed no significant difference in experiences of *safety* between Rohingya and Bangladeshi teachers ($t$ = -0.93, $df$ = 492, p = 0.40, Cohen's d = -0.08). However, an isolated OLS regression shows that the Rohingya identity ($B = 0.17$, $p < 0.001$) has a statistically more significant association with *safety* when controlling for other demographic variables.

[41] A one-way ANOVA showed no significant difference in SAFETY scores across groups, F (3, 490) = 0.27, $p$ = 0.849.

Rohingya education. The Rohingya crisis has been a source of long-term economic activity in Cox's Bazar, which is Bangladesh's poorest region with the lowest educational outcomes in the country. Thus, paradoxically, the crisis offers a rare development opportunity for the region (Shohel, 2022). This reality is described further in the example below.

### 6.3.1 The off-limits topic of security in Cox's Bazar

Survey items relating to political groups (M = 2.94, *SD* = 0.76) and armed group violence (*M* = 2.95, *SD* = 0.76) received the lowest reported mean values of the *safety* factor. To convey more about this reality, in my field notes I recorded a worrying interaction between an implementing partner NGO focal point, experienced teacher Mohammed Ullah (Rohingya male, Camp B), and myself following a focus group discussion on teacher safety:

> As we walk towards the camp perimeter checkpoint, I ask Mohammed whether Bangladeshi security forces are giving Rohingya armed gangs too much freedom. As Mohammed begins to respond, the IP focal point interrupts and talks with him in Chittagonian … Mohammed turns to me and says "We are not allowed to talk about security concerns." The focal point laughs, saying to me in English "yes, very sensitive, much too sensitive to talk about."

Via the influx of humanitarian aid, the Rohingya crisis has brought significant economic activity to the Cox's Bazar region, especially as numerous development projects for Bangladeshi communities are funded to reduce perceptions of disparity between host- and refugee-communities and to promote social cohesion (Uddin, 2020; Olney et al., 2019a). Concurrently, literature and the narratives of Rohingya participants imply that Bangladeshi security forces do little to quell armed gang violence with the hope of expediting the Rohingya repatriation to Myanmar. In which case they are content to make life for Rohingya in Cox's Bazar as uncomfortable as possible (Begum, 2020; Rahman and Kabir, 2023).

Participants' reluctance to speak about security issues exposed another dynamic: Due to their own experiences, perceived lack of agency within the camps, and fearing a loss of employment, they expressed doubt that my research could alter their circumstances. Although I insisted that this is beyond the scope and possible outcomes of my study, they still refrained from engaging with polemic issues, which tracks with the experiences of prior researchers in the camps (e.g. Rahman et al., 2022). For example, in Camp C, following a prolonged silence the translator shared that "They don't want to talk, or they don't want to engage, because they feel that we have no power to influence security agencies or implementing partners." On a separate occasion in Camp B, after a similar pause, the older Aktan Johir (Rohingya male) spoke in Rohingya with an aggrieved tone to three younger participants, saying "if you don't speak up with some honesty, then I will!"

Following Aktan Johir's comment, Camp B participants slowly opened up, especially as I inquired about the escalating civil war in Myanmar rather than the violence and security concerns inside the camps. The conflict between Myanmar's military junta and the separatist Arakan Army in Rakhine State, often within earshot of our FGDs, has quashed many Rohingya's hopes for a safe and voluntary return home (International Crisis Group, 2023). In terms of how participants understood this escalation of violence, their safety in the camps, and its effect on their repatriation aspirations, Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) shared that: "[The 'rebel' Arakan Army] are trying to separate the country, to make the Rakhine state their own country, separating from Myanmar. If they succeed, we will lose our country forever, because we will never be successful fighting the [Arakan Army]." The context of this comment depicts the precarity of the Rohingya plight: Our discussions oscillated between the satisfaction of their newfound status as teachers, the hope and structure that the Myanmar Curriculum provides, and the despair and disorder that

Myanmar's civil war just across the border and the armed gang violence within the camps represent.

### 6.3.2 Armed violence raises anxieties and increases fatigue

One afternoon on the way back to Cox's Bazar, following a focus group in which numerous incidents of violence were shared, my UN security chaperone reminded me that "between 8am and 4pm the UN and NGOs run the camps, but during 4pm and 8am the armed gangs are in control." This reality affects Rohingya teachers' limited leisure time and further stifles their freedom of movement, thereby impacting teachers' sense of safety and well-being. As Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) comments:

> Earlier, we could go out from our home after dinner or after we finish school, but now when we finish school we go straight home and we cannot go out from our home again. It is a very sensitive situation.

It was already difficult to elicit discussion on *safety* survey items relating to Rohingya political groups and armed gangs, but recent incidents of armed violence in Camps B and D further compounded participants' ability to teach and contribute to my research. During an FGD in Camp B, after I made multiple careful probes for further comments, a demonstrably fatigued Mohammed Ullah (Rohingya male) interjected to say:

> Actually today, sir, we have nothing coming from our brain, because of last night. I could not sleep the whole of last night … armed groups have been shooting at each other … one of my students' shelters was destroyed by them.

After the focus group, Camp B participants were supposed to return to their respective learning centers to continue teaching. When I asked whether they felt prepared to teach that day, Sahidul Barua (Rohingya male) replied: "How can I plan lessons at home when gunshots are fired near me? I cannot concentrate; I am so worried." Regarding threats towards teachers by the Rohingya

Solidarity Organization (RSO), the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), and criminal gangs, I asked one group of Rohingya male participants (Camp B) whether armed groups target teachers and demand support because of their status and influence in the community, to which Mohammed Ullah responds "I can't say it is exactly like that, but we often feel like that." Yet Sheikh Muhammed (Camp B) believed that "[armed groups] feel like we are the leaders, and that harms them, so they want to attack us." Then Sahidul Barua (Camp B) agreed, highlighting the inverse and negative effect of teachers' status in this context, stating that "they want us to do their orders, to make the community support them."

Noting that a majority of contributions on security issues are from Rohingya male participants, I later asked female Rohingya participants in Camp A whether armed gang violence and trafficking activities also threatened their sense of safety. Following an internal discussion in the Rohingya language, the translator responded that:

> Sometimes they feel these challenges and they unintentionally get involved in the violence, like exploitation or trafficking or something like that. They see it, but sometimes they just cannot do anything about those things, but overall they feel safe and this violence is not much of an issue for them.

In my field notes I recorded how I framed questions of safety in relation to armed gang violence and security force harassment, but I reflected (and regretted) that I did not provide the opportunity for female participants to define other forms of violence that shape their experiences of safety. The type of violence that determined Rohingya male experiences, while dangerous, is sporadic and temporarily acute. Whereas the more entrenched and insidious forms of structural violence that female teachers contend with may have a more profound and lasting effect.

### 6.3.3 Rohingya teachers are caught between peacekeepers and troublemakers

Few Rohingya participants (n = 302) reported poor treatment by Bangladeshi security forces and most agreed with survey items stating that as teachers, they feel more protected by them *(M* = 3.31). Yet focus group discussions illustrate a more nuanced reality. Expanding on the problematization of respect discussed earlier in the chapter, I queried a group of Rohingya male participants (Camp D) whether their improved social standing and sense of respect as teachers makes the situation more or less dangerous. With brief contemplation, Mannan Rahamot responded that it is "now more dangerous." This comment relates to teachers' being caught between 'peacekeeping' Bangladesh security forces and 'troublemaking' armed political groups, such as the RSO and ARSA, and a proliferation of criminal gangs engaged in human and narcotics trafficking (ICG, 2023).

In terms of their harassment from Bangladesh security forces, Rohingya male participants in Camp D bring my attention to a recent incident involving a teacher who is accused of killing an unnamed Rohingya male. As Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) described:

> He is a teacher, and he doesn't know when or who he has murdered… but [Bangladesh security forces] are [accusing] him with murder … they came into his learning center and charged him… he does not stay at his home anymore.

Participants explained how they are also implicated in this case, yet all they can do is defend their colleague's innocence. When I asked about the accused's whereabouts and well-being, Nayun Abdul (Rohingya male, Camp D) shared that "Right now he is still teaching at his learning center, but he is in fear … he does not know when they are coming [back]. He is always in fear…[wondering] where are the police?" I asked participants what effect incidents like this have on their sense of safety, to which Jamil Anwar (Rohingya male, Camp D) responded "Next time

that could be me." Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) agreed, sharing that "We have no power to [influence] security. I am also just like him."

In conflict-affected settings, armed insurgents and criminal organizations ensnare teachers as state functionaries or agents of international actors, entangling them in the complexities of divisive political allegiances and the ensuing violence or inadequacy of security force responses (see Brandt, 2021; Marchais et al., 2024; GCPEA, 2024). This is the case in Camps B and D—the two research sites that are more prone to armed group violence—as Mohammed Ullah (Camp B) shared, "today I cannot visit our learning center… because they, the security forces are working, they are all around our block. If I go there, they might arrest me. It is true. They will ask, "Who are you?"" In effect, Mohammed Ullah will be absent from his classroom due to tensions between security forces and armed groups. To determine whether this is an isolated or common incident, I asked the Camp B cohort to provide further detail. Saiful Elahi (Rohingya male) shared that it is common, sharing through the translator that:

> When they are teaching, at different times, the security forces are looking for armed groups and criminals, but they will just enter learning centers …They will say "show us the register, open the register, and show us your name, show that you are a teacher. Sometimes like that.

Supporting this statement, Sheikh Muhammed (Camp B, Rohingya male) agreed. Mimicking a security officer's aggression with his arms, he states that: "They see such a document, [but] they will still interview him, with hands on the collar of his shirt." I asked if this happens in front of the children, to which he responded "yes, in front of the children, and the host-community teachers." In response, Sahidul Barua contributed that "Without identifying, without clearness, they are attacking [teachers]."

Similar stories emerged in Camp D, where human trafficking and drug smuggling are more common than in Camp B. Here, participants felt that teachers are an easy target for security force

interrogations while those culpable are left to their own devices. As Nayun Abdul (Rohingya male, Camp B) shared "There are criminal activities like … drug smuggling, something like that, but the police here do not harass [the criminals] enough." He continued, "We are teachers, we are working… I mean for example, at an NGO, so we don't want to do anything, we don't want to do any illegal thing." According to participants, anxiety surrounding Bangladesh security forces arises from teachers' lack of formal identification and the suspicion that, due to their higher education levels, they coordinate complex and illicit activities. As Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) sought to clarify, "The Bangladesh authorities love us. But we are afraid of them when we are not familiar to them." This sentiment is shared by Jamil Anwar (Rohingya male, Camp D) who agreed via the translator, that "The Bangladesh authority values the teacher [but] only when they know we are teachers." For this reason, in each of the safety-related discussions Rohingya participants advocated for UN agencies and implementing partners to issue teacher identity cards.

### 6.3.4 The perceived protection of teacher identity cards

Beyond the scope of my survey items and findings, participants in Camps B, C, and D informed me that workers in health and child protection have identity cards but teachers do not. I interpreted this as a desire for professional identity and formal employment status, but as discussions progressed to include teachers' vulnerability to armed group violence and security force harassment—by way of their influence and visibility in the community—I understood that identity cards were a matter of desperation: They would provide teachers with a sense of protection.

My realization of teachers' struggles first occurred before a focus group in Camp D. Due to security concerns within the camp, the implementing partner's training center, where I facilitated FGDs, was moved outside of the camp perimeter to Balu Khali township. As I recorded in my field notes:

> We arrive at the training center to find the Rohingya teachers have not turned up… they arrive 30 minutes late, and we find out that they had been detained at a security checkpoint. When they arrive they are drenched in sweat as they have rushed through Balu Khali township on the edge of the camp to get to us.

Upon their arrival, Nayun Abdul (Rohingya male) approached me apologetically:

> We were blocked at the check post and they told us that, they told us so many times, for us to have ID cards … they said "how do we know you are not bad man?" And then they searched our bodies, finally they let us come to the meeting.

Participants later explained that they are provided with permission letters by implementing partners, allowing them to exit the barbed wire periphery of the camp, but a lack of formal identification means they have no way of confirming their status as teachers. As Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) shared:

> If we have a job card, like the host community, when Bangladesh police see us they can recognize us as teachers. But now we don't have anything, any documents, like a job card, to show we are teachers. That is why we fear them.

According to Camp D participants, a similar situation arises each month when they leave the camp to collect their ৳13,000 (USD$130) salary from the implementing partner office, when their vulnerability is twofold. Firstly, they have to move through checkpoints without identification, which exposes them to harassment and possible detention. Secondly, and ironically, Bangladesh security forces know they are teachers collecting their salaries and expect *baksheesh* (bribes or gifts) when they return, en route to learning centers.

In addition to teachers' movement through camp checkpoints, participants requested identity cards for daily duties within camp perimeters. They want to fulfill their teaching duties beyond the learning center without being mistaken for militants or criminals. As Anowar Monsur (Rohingya male) in Camp C explained, "We need job cards, because if we do home visits we do not know when authorities are patrolling… we do not know about it, we fear it." This is especially

common when flare ups between armed groups occur and teachers are easy targets for security force harassment. Highlighting this, Sahidul Barua (Rohingya male, Camp B) outlined his experience from a week earlier:

> Some security forces came to my learning center classroom. They are searching for someone, but cannot find anyone. They ask me "who are you?" At that time I say I am a teacher. They say "if you are a teacher, show us your ID." I have to say that our organization does not provide ID cards. At the time, they repeat "if you are a teacher, you must have an ID card. If you do not have one next time, we will arrest you." They asked me many questions, like I am a criminal. If I have an ID card this will not happen I think…. They don't believe, they don't believe, because you have not any ID card to identify you, that you are a teacher.

I raised the issue of security force harassment and identity cards with all FGDs and I only heard one reservation. Echoing the rationale of the UN agency representatives and implementing partners I had spoken to earlier, Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) conceded that: "ID cards cannot be a total solution. Because some teachers and adult students are in the armed gangs. That is why the police and the government never stop their investigation of teachers." There was no discussion, however, on actions led by UN agencies or implementing partners to identify and these teachers and address the issue directly. I also broached the issue of teacher identity cards with my security chaperones to gauge their perspective. In sum, identity cards are not issued due to interconnected financial, political, and security risks.

With a workforce of nearly 7,000 Rohingya teachers and a reportedly high but heretofore ill-defined attrition rate, the financial and administrative burden of issuing, decommissioning, and reissuing identity cards is an oft-cited barrier in my conversations. The political risk relates to the Bangladesh government forbidding the Rohingya access to formal employment, which goes against the delicate conditions of their refuge in Bangladesh; as one security chaperone stated, identity cards "give off a formally employed vibe." The security risk is then suggested by another

chaperone, who referred to recent events in Gaza to justify his position. Citing speculative examples of Hamas members being captured by Israeli Defense Forces with UNRWA teacher identification cards, he reminded me how some Rohingya teachers are also engaged with ARSA and RSO activities, just as Mannan Rahamot had claimed earlier in the day.

## 6.4 Conclusion

The implementation of the Myanmar Curriculum has a corresponding effect on the level of *respect* that teachers perceive. With formal subjects and soon-to-be regular assessment of student learning outcomes, participants now felt more professional and respected by the community for their work. I fear, however, that without formal recognition of children's learning by Bangladesh or Myanmar authorities, or formal certification of teachers' professional development efforts, the novelty of the curriculum and the respect that teachers harvest from it will only constitute a temporary level of motivation. As recruitment, training, and workload frustrations begin to mount (see Chapter 7), this situation requires early and innovative interventions to uphold Rohingya teachers' current *motivation to teach*.

For international organizations and implementing partners, findings on the role of *respect* on participants' motivation to teach offer valuable policy guidance. As much as *respect* is the only motivation factor in this study with a marginal and statistically insignificant bearing on participants' motivation to teach. Findings illustrate how a more culture- and gender-responsive approach to supporting teachers' sense of respect is required. As the largest demographic group of teachers in the camps, Rohingya male teachers need affirmation that their roles are as important and impactful as those of female teachers. With sensitivity and care not to undermine the urgent role of female teachers in attracting and retaining out-of-school girls within the education system,

implementing partners need to explore ways to identify and reward the vital and nuanced contributions that Rohingya male teachers make to children's learning, protection, and belonging, too.

The *support* factor is the most highly experienced of the three community-level motivation constructs, with just over 55 percent of participants reporting high levels of support (see Annex C3). Of the community-level factors, it also has the most significant association with participants' *motivation to teach* ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$). But few participants offered concrete examples. This mirrors the literature where support is often defined by institutional *support* in the form of training and psychosocial interventions, but rarely relates to structural or practical acts of support for teachers (Barnes et al., 2023; Lodi, 2022). Acts of *support* often equate with the *respect* that families and the community have for teachers. For participants who provided stories of practical *support*, however, there is deep satisfaction in the retelling of their experiences. Teachers' work in Cox's Bazar is increasingly valued by the community and as such their domestic responsibilities are taken care of by neighbors; something that does not happen for other refugee workers in the community.

Alongside an increase in Rohingya teachers' workloads, as documented in Afghanistan and Ethiopia, Rohingya women experience the double burden of teaching and providing domestic care with little additional support (Kirk, 2009; Kirk and Winthrop, 2008). For Rohingya men, the recurrence of monsoons, cyclones, and fires means teaching is disrupted or the repair of family shelters is neglected if they do not have community support. Even if teacher workloads can be reduced, formal and gender-responsive community-level support systems need to be introduced to mitigate the compounding demands that teachers experience. This *support* might also contribute

to a greater sense of *respect* for teachers as a complementary determinant of their motivation to teach.

*Safety* ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < 0.01$) is the construct for which participants reported the lowest levels of experience, with over fifty percent of Rohingya participants reporting low to moderate levels of safety because they are teachers (see Annex C4). However, Rohingya women attributed a sense of safety to their comparative spatial and social mobility and their improved visibility within the camps. Moreover, contrary to teachers' low sense of status in other global settings due to poor pay and abject work conditions (see Dryden-Peterson, 2022; Mendenhall et al. 2019; Kirk and Winthrop, 2013), Rohingya teachers experience a comparatively positive status and financial security within the wider population. This situation gives way, however, to the 'problem of respect', making teachers more vulnerable to armed gang intimidation and security force harassment.

This chapter highlighted how an inadequate sense of *safety* has the potential to erode the positive association between positive community-level *support* and teachers' *motivation to teach*. At a community-level of analysis, scarce employment opportunities in other sectors might shape a temporary commitment to teaching, but this cannot be taken for granted or misattributed as participants' *motivation to teach*. Nor should policies that bolster teachers' *support* and *safety* be neglected because teacher motivation levels are perceived to be high. Thus, to reinforce teacher motivation at the community level, whole-of-system interventions need to protect teachers from violence and ensure that community-level support structures relieve teachers of the burden of teaching while they contend with domestic duties, the consequences of climate vulnerability, and the uncertainty of forced displacement.

# Chapter 7 - Learning center-level experiences: The curriculum has a multifaceted effect on work satisfaction in a refugee-hosting setting

In multiple studies, work or job satisfaction is employed as a key factor in motivation scales (see Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007; Lauerman, 2017; Watts and Richardson, 2002) or as a proxy construct for teacher professional well-being (see Collie et al. 2015; Dreer, 2024; Falk et al. 2019; Hascher and Waber, 2021). Reflecting the parameters of the learning center-level of analysis in the socio-ecological composition of this study, the *work satisfaction* motivation factor represents the dynamics of participants' daily teaching experiences, including their joy of teaching, their workload stress, and how these experiences affect their morale and *motivation to teach.* Thus, to address my second sub-question and understand the relationship between *work satisfaction* and Rohingya refugee teachers' *motivation to teach*, the learning center-level of analysis draws on core elements of participants' work and well-being within the realm of the curriculum they teach and language they teach in; their pedagogical knowledge and professional development opportunities; and the stressors associated with their professional relationships.

Teachers' *work satisfaction* at the learning center-level needs to be examined and understood within the full and multifaceted context of teachers' lives and aspirations for their work (Goodson, 1992). In this sense, for teachers whose identities are entangled with and shaped by their refugee status, their work is a response to the daily realities of displacement and preparation for their uncertain futures (Dryden-Peterson, 2022). This means that the requirement for bespoke or adapted curriculum to address immediate learning and psychosocial needs—as the LCFA was designed to deliver—exists in tension with demands for formal curricula that can bolster pathways for national system inclusion, repatriation, third country resettlement, and employment (Akther, 2024; Nilsen et al. 2023). In this chapter, I contend that Rohingya refugee teachers' *work*

*satisfaction* straddles language and curriculum tensions, which are embodied in the dissonance between participants' everyday realities and their hopes for the future, broadly symbolizing the politics of refugee education in Bangladesh and further afield.

As Rohingya teachers transitioned from the LCFA to the long-advocated Myanmar Curriculum, they grappled with the evolving political complexities of what their futures might hold and the limited availability of professional development and leadership support to steer their practice. This reality belies the perceived status of their profession and contributes to the 'impossible fiction' of refugee teachers' work as it connects with their personal and political aspirations (Adelman, 2019; Mendenhall, 2018; Mendenhall et. al 2019).

Like the literature shows, teachers' status influences their identity and corresponding morale, which is determined by commensurate support, resourcing, and an appropriately staffed workforce (Tao, 2016). Typically, when these factors are missing the many other challenges that refugee teachers face as oft-neglected professionals in humanitarian contexts are compounded (Ozmantar et. al, 2023; Tao, 2016). But in Cox's Bazar, while overcrowded classrooms, complex learner needs, and a lack of contracts should undermine Rohingya teachers' *work satisfaction* and morale, such conditions do not necessarily cause poor *motivation to teach*.

To the extent that the qualitative data in this chapter highlights significant frustrations with the work of teaching, Rohingya participants (n = 302) remain committed to their work, with over 80 percent reporting a high-level of *work satisfaction* (see Annex C5). As various scholars identify, however, policy makers and practitioners in humanitarian settings tend to believe—through policy documents and technical guidance or through the design and implementation of interventions—that untrained or unqualified teachers lack commitment and are incapable of contributing to their own knowledge production or improved pedagogical practice (Ali, 2018; Henderson, 2023; Pherali

et al., 2020; Prodip et al., 2021; Tao, 2016). In other words, teachers are the passive recipients of programs rather than partners in their creation and implementation.

My pilot study discussions with key informants also implied that these sentiments are prevalent among implementing partners in Cox's Bazar, especially as the Myanmar Curriculum was introduced and the demand for Burmese language-literate and subject-competent teachers increased. Practical realities like these can influence the deficit theorizing of the refugee teacher cadre, forming what Tao (2016) problematizes as 'the singular story of teachers' work'. Such perceptions overlook the propensity for committed and 'alternatively qualified' teachers to have a powerful influence in the classroom and on the community (Kirk and Winthrop, 2007). As the literature highlights and as I observed through a limited number of classroom visits, many Rohingya teachers in Cox's Bazar embody this fact in their practice, especially as their agenda for Rohingya education drives their *motivation to teach*. Olney et al. (2019) also captured Rohingya community schoolteachers' agency, resistance, and innovation during COVID19 as they circumvented government bans on mobile technologies to deliver improvised online learning via WhatsApp and YouTube. This reality is also represented in the classroom, as my observation notes on Abu Dhar Azzam's teaching illustrates (Rohingya male, Camp C):

> In a small tin and tarpaulin classroom about 500 feet from the Camp C checkpoint, homemade literacy and socio-emotional learning posters cover the walls and 37 male students of multiple ages occupy tight rows of blue benches. Younger students between eight- and ten-years old sit in the front few rows, with ages increasing towards the back of the classroom where students who look 16 or 17 sit.
>
> Abu Dhar Azzam is teaching math. The teaching guide is in Burmese, as is the script on the blackboard. He uses the Rohingya language to explain mathematical concepts, but switches to English when he directs and praises student contributions. He scaffolds student contributions by asking younger or less capable students to provide answers to lower order questions and builds on their responses by inviting higher order answers from older or more competent students, all the while affirming students' contributions to everyone's learning. The class is orderly, students are engaged, and they are genuinely entertained by Abu Dhar Azzam's approach.

According to implementing partner key informants and security chaperones, examples of pedagogical skill and translanguaging—a dynamic and flexible use of multiple languages in the classroom (see Capstick, 2020)—as seen in Abu Dhar Azzam's classroom, are an anomaly rather than the norm. While the limitations imposed on my mobility within the camps made observations like this rare, discussions with teachers from each camp conveyed a strong desire to teach like Abu Dhar Azzam. This dynamic can be framed as the personal utility value of teaching and sense of accomplishment that teaching can bring (Watt and Richardson, 2007) and the social utility value of teaching, or the belief that the work of teaching is of societal importance and can foster social change (Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007).

In this chapter, I first revisit quantitative findings at the learning center-level, showing how survey participants (N = 494) generally experience a positive sense of work satisfaction. Next, I present my qualitative focus group findings which I organize into four thematic sections highlighting how participants interpret *work satisfaction* survey results and relate them to their own teaching experiences. The following section then highlights the issues and opportunities that the Burmese language of instruction holds for Rohingya participants. I then introduce how teacher professional development is experienced as a surrogate higher education, with a particular focus on the positive influence of teacher learning circles. Finally, I focus on participants' own conceptualizations of *work satisfaction* in Cox's Bazar and how different aspects of their work help or hinder the satisfaction they experience. Namely, I focus on the contract, salary, and pathway frustrations that exist between teacher identity groups and the ways in which teaching can act as both protective *and* stress factors in participants' lives.

## 7.1 How the work satisfaction factor is associated with participants' motivation to teach

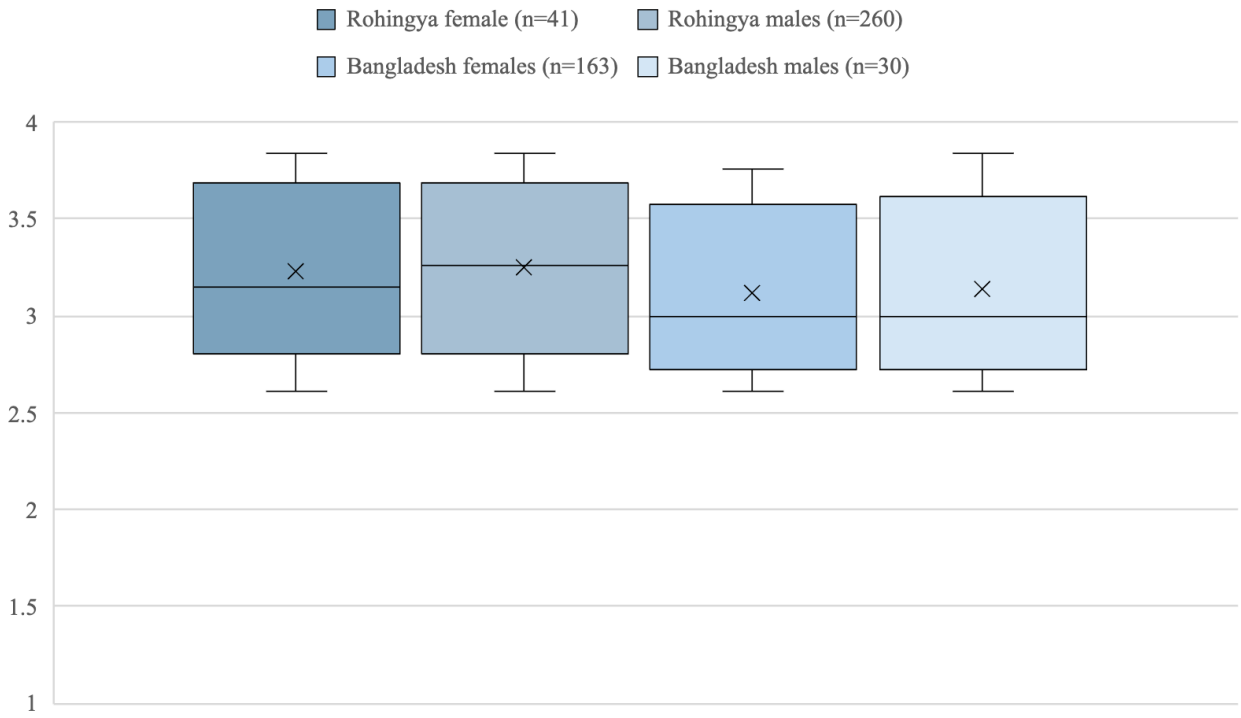
Collectively, the eleven items representing the *work satisfaction* factor define the extent to which participants' learning center-level experiences contribute towards their *motivation to teach*. A t-test in Chapter 5 shows that Rohingya participants are significantly more likely to report experiences of *work satisfaction* ($M$ = 3.30, SD = 0.40) compared to Bangladeshi participants ($M$ = 3.04, SD = 0.40).[42] This result is further disaggregated in figure 7 below, which shows that despite enjoying better pay, contracts, and much lighter workloads, Bangladeshi females ($M$ = 3.06, $SD$ = 0.33) and Bangladeshi males ($M$ = 2.99, $SD$ = 0.32) report lower but statistically insignificant levels of *work satisfaction* than their Rohingya female ($M$ = 3.22, $SD$ = 0.29) and Rohingya male ($M$ = 3.31, $SD$ = 0.30) colleagues.[43] In a unstandardized OLS regression, the Rohingya female identity ($\beta$ = 0.15, p < 0.01) was found to have a stronger relationship on *work satisfaction* and *motivation to teach* than Rohingya males ($\beta$ = 0.12, p < 0.01) and Bangladeshi females ($\beta$ = 0.13, p < 0.01).[44]

[42] $t$ = -5.19, $df$ = 492, p = 0.00, Cohen's $d$ = 0.47 (see table 5.5b)

[43] A one-way ANOVA showed a significant difference in work satisfaction scores across identity groups, F(3, 490) = 8.81, p < 0.001. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons revealed significant differences between Rohingya males and Bangladesh females (p = 0.000) and between *Bangladesh females* and *Bangladeshi males* (p = 0.010).

[44] The Bangladesh male (n = 30) group was used as a baseline in the regression and omitted from the output.

**Figure 7**
*Box plot of participant identity-disaggregated findings for the **work satisfaction** factor*




Drawing on the challenging participant insights in the FGDs that follow, I argue that relatively high levels of Rohingya teachers' *work satisfaction* mask the underlying tensions revealed in my qualitative findings. These tensions are driven by acute workload challenges, the stress of teaching in the Burmese language, and the inequitable distribution of labor between teacher identity groups. Nonetheless, to explain why Rohingya participants continue to articulate a high-level of motivation despite profound work condition challenges, Olney et al.'s (2019) finding that Rohingya are driven to teach by a "struggle for human rights and citizenship" (p. 33) and my own concept of 'anticipatory hope' provide useful heuristics for the insights that follow.

My integrated findings suggest that Rohingya teachers are more motivated by the intrinsic drivers of personal utility value (Watt and Richardson, 2009; Lauerman et al., 2017) than extrinsic drivers like compensation and career opportunities, which are beyond the structural realities of

Rohingya teachers' work arrangements in the camps. Rohingya narratives attach a deep sense of hope to the Myanmar Curriculum ($M$ = 3.36, $SD$ = 0.68) and professional development opportunities ($M$ = 3.34, $SD$ = 0.58), which mitigate otherwise frustrating aspects of their work, such as a lack of contracts or career pathways.

FGDs also convey a prevailing belief that the violence exercised against the Rohingya in Myanmar and the precarity of their fate in Bangladesh is due to a history of poor educational access and attainment. Participants imply that the goal of repatriation and their claim to citizenship remains tenuous so long as they are, in their own words, "an uneducated population" (Mannan Rahamot, Rohingya male, Camp C). In this light, participants' efforts to teach the Myanmar Curriculum and employ Burmese as a language of instruction contribute towards their broader political agenda for repatriation, from which they derive a strong sense of *work satisfaction* and *motivation to teach*.

### 7.1.1 The Myanmar Curriculum represents hope for collective advancement

Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp C) infers how his motivation is shaped by a Rohingya belief that "an uneducated person is like the earth without the sun." In this regard, Rohingya participants' statistically significant positivity about the Myanmar Curriculum ($M$ = 3.36, $SD$ = 0.68)[45] creates further tension between their arduous work conditions and underlying commitment for a better education, upon which they believe the restitution of their rights in part rests (Akther, 2024; Prodip, 2023). In other words, with a compelling effect size of ($D$ = 0.86), the peculiar influence of the Myanmar Curriculum on Rohingya participants' motivation to teach can be

[45] A one-tailed t-test shows that Rohingya teachers are significantly more likely to report positively on the influence of the Myanmar Curriculum on their work satisfaction than Bangladeshi teachers; $t$ = -9.36, $df$ = 492, p = 0.000, Cohen's $d$ = 0.86

viewed as an "adaptive response to the exigencies of the present" (Harrell-Bond and Voutira, 1992, p. 9).

When refugees live in contexts of extended confinement, they form nuanced cultures that represent an affirmation of shared trauma and their hopes for the future (Harrell-Bond and Voutira, 1992). In this respect, curriculum decisions can embody a displaced population's political agenda and their practical realities (Mendenhall et al., 2015). For teachers of refugee students, curriculum decisions can also transcend borders as teachers expect students to apply their learning and skills to the pursuit of development and peace at home, assuming they one day return (Falk et al., 2022). Moreover, the perceived quality of education available to displaced children is shaped by curriculum and language factors, which in turn influence the feedback that teachers receive from the community and determine the sense of self-efficacy and satisfaction that teachers' experience in their work (Mendenhall et al., 2015).

In contexts not besieged by conflict or forced displacement, conditions like those in which Rohingya teachers work are incompatible with teachers' satisfaction, well-being, or *motivation to teach* (see Falk et al., 2019; Wolf et al., 2015). Yet in Cox's Bazar, Rohingya participants' fraught histories and their collective desire for repatriation interact with the perceived power of education to create a uniquely Rohingya configuration of *work satisfaction* (Akther, 2024; Prodip, 2023).

I asked participants about their experiences implementing the Myanmar Curriculum and responses varied between the possibilities that the curriculum symbolizes and the practical difference it makes to teachers' work. As the translator explained on behalf of Saiful Elahi (Rohingya male, Camp B), "When he started teaching the Myanmar Curriculum, there was a lot of relief, a sense of lightness, because he [hoped] that maybe he can also get a qualification to teach." Or, as Nayun Abdul (Rohingya male, Camp D) compared his current work to the non-

formal LCFA era, he stated "The [Myanmar] curriculum, it has structure, it is good for us". Bangladeshi participants also noted this difference and agreed that the curriculum has increased Rohingya teachers' motivation, as Tosmin Ara (Bangladesh female, Camp A) shared via the translator "She says it is their curriculum, their [country's] language, their development. This is work satisfaction for them. So all Rohingya teachers are thinking, yes, this is good for us." When I asked whether the Myanmar Curriculum represents a positive change for Bangladeshi teachers, the translator shared how Yasminda Hussain (Bangladeshi female, Camp A) believes "the Myanmar Curriculum is not for [Bangladeshi teachers]. It is only good for the Rohingya teachers, because now they are taking many subjects … that means they are studying more, everything they are doing more." The perception that recent curriculum changes at the learning center-level serves Rohingya refugee teachers more than Bangladeshi host-community teachers explains the significantly lower levels of *work satisfaction* expressed by Bangladeshi participants ($M$ = 3.11, $SD$ = 0.33) compared to Rohingya participants ($M$ = 3.26, $SD$ = 0.30).[46]

### 7.1.2 The Myanmar Curriculum evokes a sense of belonging away from home

Participants struggled to describe specific acts of teaching and the sense of pedagogical satisfaction that Myanmar Curriculum entails. This is likely a case of inexperience in the classroom, inadequate professional development, and participants' desire to protect their 'liminal professional identities' (Adelman, 2019; Ozmanter et. al, 2023). Instead, participants were more comfortable relating survey findings to their experience of the curriculum change, which affirms their identities as forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals and evokes feelings of home. In this regard, the Myanmar Curriculum creates a curious sense of belonging in the Cox's Bazar camps. As Mannan Rahamot

[46] A one-tail t-test shows Rohingya teachers report higher and more significant levels of *work satisfaction than* Bangladeshi teachers; $t$ = -5.19, $df$ = 492, p = 0.000, Cohen's $d$ = 0.48

(Rohingya male, Camp D) shared, “The Myanmar Curriculum, it makes us feel like we are in Myanmar.” This view is confirmed in a variety of ways by other Rohingya participants. Muhi Sadek (Rohingya, Camp D) also affirms teachers’ aspirations and their contested identities as a forcibly displaced population vis a vis the curriculum: it reminds them how “we belong in Myanmar … but we also belong to the Rohingya community [in Cox’s Bazar]” (Rohingya male, Camp D).

Narrative insights suggest that the experience of teaching the Myanmar Curriculum, while challenging, creates a sense of preparedness for Rohingya participants. The ideal purpose of this preparation is repatriation to Myanmar, yet preparedness for a desired but ‘unknowable future’ also colors participants' sense of satisfaction (Dryden-Peterson, 2017). As Hamida Sharmi (Rohingya female, Camp A) shared via the translator, “[parents] are giving their priorities to education now that it is a formal curriculum, [their children] can know their own country’s culture, what is going on inside Myanmar, and what they should know about Myanmar" (Rohingya Female, Camp A). Again, the objective of repatriation and the hope that their children’s completion of the curriculum might help facilitate this process is both powerful and problematic, especially as participants made no mention of the Myanmar Government’s refusal to accredit Rohingya children’s completion of it. Comments like this reveal a belief that the Rohingya’s chances of future citizenship in Myanmar are contingent upon, or at least bolstered by, the hope that a future Myanmar government offers recognition of their achievement. In this way, as Mohammed Ullah (Rohingya male, Camp B) reflected, the Myanmar Curriculum is a motivating factor as it means “our children can get a better education in Bangladesh before we can return [to Myanmar]." This view connects with the tension of Rohingya refugee teachers as nation builders (Waters and Le Blanc, 2015): Ostensibly, teachers prepare children for their return and contribution to the nation,

but the Rohingya claim to that nation is increasingly precarious due to the worsening civil war in Rakhine state, just across the border.

## 7.2 Language of instruction issues and opportunities

Within the global context of refugee education and language of instruction debates, the Rohingya are uniquely placed (Islam and Islam, 2023; Rahman et. al, 2021; Prodip, 2023). Evidence endorsing the use of mother-tongue languages in refugee settings supports its strong contribution to children's social development and academic achievement, connection with home identities, and psychosocial well-being (Benson, 2016; Milligan et. al, 2020). At the same time, mother-tongue education needs to accommodate host-country or international languages, which more readily align with economic opportunity, a sense of belonging in a host-country context, or preparedness for possible resettlement elsewhere (Reddick and Chopra, 2021; Reddick and Dryden-Peterson, 2021). In the case of the Rohingya, however, their language does not have a uniform script and while Rohingya has been transliterated into Roman, Arabic and the more recently developed Hanafi Rohingya scripts, a lack of script standardization and low literacy levels means these scripts are not yet formalized for educational settings (Kingston and Hanson, 2022).

Decisions about the use of host-community languages such as Bangla and Chittagonian are also laden with difficulty. While Chittagonian and Bangla have immediate practical advantage, bureaucratic barriers converge with Rohingya aspirations for repatriation to make Chittagonian and Bangla unworkable options (Islam and Islam, 2023; Rahman et. al, 2021; Prodip, 2023). Chittagonian, a Bangladeshi Hill Tracts dialect, is intelligible to Rohingya and allows for oral communication between Chittagonian implementing partners and Rohingya teachers, however, the Chittagonian script is Bangla which the Rohingya are unable to read. Moreover, to discourage

long-term settlement in Cox's Bazar the Bangladesh Government prohibits the use of the Bangla script in Rohingya camps and learning centers (Wahab, 2022).

Concerning teaching and learning in English, there is "prestige and perceived value" in this option as preparation for third-country resettlement (Trudell, 2007. p.533). But with no resettlement pathways in sight, English became a futile option. In addition, with their collective commitment to repatriation and the restitution of their rights, the Rohingya opt to teach and learn in Myanmar's national Burmese language; even though Burmese is not widely spoken by the Rohingya population (especially children and adolescents) and is unintelligible to Bangladeshi host-community teachers and implementing partners (Rahman and Hussain, 2022; Shohel, 2022).

Rohingya responses to survey statements relating to the language of instruction are low when compared with other survey items. A low response value ($M = 2.32$, SD = 0.78) relating to the stress that participants experience teaching in a language other than their own symbolizes the challenge of teaching in Burmese. A sense of next-step-stasis in terms of the Rohingya's future also entangles teachers in a language of instruction dilemma, no matter which way the issue is cut. In this regard, Rohingya education reflects what the literature highlights: curriculum and language factors pose (im)practical, symbolic, and often paradoxical tensions on teachers' work and motivation to teach (Mendenhall, 2015). This is especially relevant in a context like Cox's Bazar where refugee inclusion in the national education system is denied, repatriation is unlikely, and the chances of formal third-country resettlement are threadbare to non-existent (Akther, 2024; Rahman et. al, 2023).

### 7.2.1 The Burmese language represents hope and despair

I wanted to understand how teaching in the language of the Bamar ethnic majority and Myanmar military, who committed acts of genocide and continue to kill Rohingya in Rakhine State's civil war, affects their psychological well-being and motivation to teach (Bakali and Wasty, 2023; Kingston and Hanson, 2022). While this predicament appears problematic to an outside researcher like myself, Rohingya participants are reluctant to dwell on this fact. In one focus group, Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) corrected my assumptions and garnered agreement from his colleagues, by stating "Sir, teaching Burmese gives us hope!"

Rohingya and Bangladeshi participants also believe that language issues are a source of stress for each cohort. Rohingya participants ($M$ = 2.95, $SD$ = 0.83) report less dissatisfaction with language issues than their Bangladeshi peers ($M$ = 2.70, $SD$ = 0.71),[47] regarding which, Anowar Monsur (Rohingya male, Camp C) explained that "because our language is different to them, our curriculum is different to them, that's why [Bangladeshi teachers] have more tension than us." However, Mohammed Alam (Rohingya male, Camp C) disputed the finding, suggesting Bangladeshi teachers should be more satisfied:

> ... because they can speak our language to us … 90 percent of the Bangladesh teachers can speak [Chittagonian] to us and we understand… so if they want to be a teacher they can learn, and share with our community, and I think that is why they [should be] more satisfied (Rohingya teacher, male. Camp B).

Rohingya participants also report how their dissatisfaction is linked to aspirations for quality education and the pernicious effect of the Burmese language on their work. As Sahidul Barua (Rohingya male, Camp B) claimed, "We have care, we have commitment, but because we

[47] A one-way ANOVA showed no significant difference in *work satisfaction and language* scores across identity groups, F (1, 492) = 0.18, p = .669. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons revealed no significant pairwise differences.

do not speak the language [of instruction] it is a major stress". Mohammed Ullah (Rohingya male, Camp B) supported this statement, clarifying that "the Burmese language is stressful, not because it is the Burmese language, it is because we want to [teach] well and we cannot." Similarly, the translator in Camp B (Rohingya male) summarized how participants "are stressed out… because of the language, because they feel so much difficulty explaining things to the children, that's the main thing."

Rohingya participants agreed on two challenges that they face when teaching in Burmese: one issue is their lack of general exposure to the Burmese language and the other is the transition from the LCFA's English language of instruction to the Myanmar Curriculum's Burmese. As the translator explained on Ahmad Soliman's (Rohingya male, Camp B) behalf, "he cannot remember what Burmese sounds like, he has not heard it for so long." Participants also observed that after nearly seven years in Cox's Bazar, few primary school-age children have lived near a Burmese speaking community. In Camp D, the translator added her own view of the language dilemma, reminding me that "most of the Rohingya community is illiterate, but now their children are learning to speak and read in two additional languages" (Camp B). This fact further compounds language of instruction challenges for teachers as children rarely receive language or literacy learning support at home, meaning the burden of achievement is placed squarely on teachers' shoulders.

### 7.2.1 The entanglement of teachers' aspirations with language of instruction issues

Rohingya participants noted how, despite their expressed motivation to teach Burmese, the transition from English to Burmese has been disorienting as teachers' goals shifted from getting jobs with international NGOs to their repatriation to Myanmar. As Sheikh Muhammed (Rohingya male, Camp B) reflected, "Because we are from Myanmar, we had to start using the Myanmar

Curriculum and language, but over the last five years we have been working hard at English because that language is better for getting NGO jobs." Participants extended this dilemma to students' experiences, too. As Sahidul Barua (Rohingya male, Camp B) explained: "Many students have worked very hard to learn English, it is like we are now starting [all over] again with Burmese."

As observed in Abu Dhar Azzam's classroom and as the literature asserts (Reddick, 2022; Reddick and Dryden-Peterson, 2021), Sahidul Barua (Rohingya male, Camp B) shared how translanguaging strategies relieve stress and improve children's engagement. He stated that "sometimes [in one class] we go between our mother tongue, English, and Burmese." With an air of resistance, Sheikh Muhammed (Rohingya male, Camp B) admits that "Even though we are [supposed to be] teaching the Myanmar Curriculum in Burmese, really we teach it in Rohingya so the children can understand." I also asked Rohingya participants in Camp C about their use of Burmese, and Muhi Sadek admitted that "We have to explain first in Burmese language, then in the Rohingya language to make sure they understand… and then we have to translate words for children when they do not understand." I next asked participants how they cope with their own Burmese comprehension struggles, given their lack of recent exposure to the language and script, to which Anowar Monsur (Rohingya male, Camp C) reflected on his professional development and peer learning activities, sharing that "There are some words which are difficult, but we can manage and understand the difficult words … through our teacher learning circles we can discuss and solve [these issues] together."

## 7.3 Teacher professional development and Rohingya teachers' motivation to teach

In Mendenhall's (2018) study on refugee teachers in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya, a participant stated that "I do not yet know the sweetness of being a teacher because I have not been trained" (p. 356). Equally, in Cox's Bazar, otherwise motivated participants' reluctance to discuss specific acts of teaching or the professional identity of being a teacher conveyed their lack of access to formal and continuous teacher professional development and emergent pedagogical content knowledge (see also Nilsen et al., 2023). Participants are more forthcoming about how their social context affects education and teachers' material needs, reflecting their awareness of system-level barriers and, like refugee teachers in other contexts, a strong desire for political agency (Ozmantar and Mkwananzi, 2023; Perumal, 2013). While refugee teachers' acts of teaching are often described by global actors and local implementing partners in deficit-oriented terms (see Ali, 2018; Pherali et al., 2020; Prodip et al., 2021; Tao, 2016), refugee teachers' 'alternative qualifications' or ability to connect their work with personal histories, the broader politics of their work, and a future-focused agenda is overlooked (Kirk, 2008).

In discussions on the significance between Rohingya participants' access to professional development and their *work satisfaction* and *motivation to teach* ($\beta$ = 0.20, p< 0.001),[48] they expressed discontent and understood professional development as a cascade-style model, which they say they received too little of. Like Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) declared "we only receive five days [of training] at the beginning, it does not make a difference." However, the contemporary bi-weekly teacher learning circle approach, which a majority of teachers participate in and agree they benefit from, is not understood by Rohingya participants to be teacher

[48] From the combined standardized OLS regression in table 5.7a

professional development in the formal sense. Thus, multiple participants requested an increase in subject-based teacher training, certification for the training they receive, and improved access to education or teaching-focused higher education opportunities as ways to improve their performance and increase their commitment to teaching.

### 7.3.1 Teaching is a surrogate higher education

Until better and more training is made available, participants alluded to teaching as a surrogate higher education, which is also reflected in survey item results relating to the *work satisfaction* item focused on teacher professional development ($M$ = 3.42, $SD$ = 0.58) and the *motivation to teach* item focused on teaching as their own education ($M$ = 3.46, $SD$ = 0.51). As Mohammed Ullah (Rohingya male, Camp B) pointed out, "The fact there is no higher education in the camps, [teaching] is like our own higher education." Similarly, on behalf of Jusna Homaira (Rohingya female, Camp A) the translator stated that "this is also their own development, that is the other part of their motivation." Thus, in Cox's Bazar, where higher education is largely prohibited and employment opportunities are scarce, teaching and teacher professional development represents the personal utility value of teaching (Watts and Richardson, 2007), and acts as a stand-in higher-education that contributes towards Rohingya participants' motivation to teach.

While Rohingya participants (n = 302) responded positively to teacher professional development items ($M$ = 3.34, $\lambda$ = 0.31), which also had the highest loading on the *work satisfaction factor* (see table 5.5a), it was difficult to decipher if current experiences or desired professional development opportunities determined this result. Bangladeshi FGD participants believed that current training opportunities benefit Rohingya teachers' motivation the most, but Rohingya participants felt that these opportunities do not address subject-specific skills, assessment strategies, or their classroom management needs. As Bibi Zotia (Bangladesh female,

Camp A) shared via the translator, "[Rohingya teachers] are saying ok, this is good … For their development, now they get many trainings, this helps their personal development." Hasina Rajuma (Bangladeshi female, Camp A) also agrees that Rohingya teachers "are getting many more skills because of this, so they are more satisfied." Conversely, on the same topic Sahidul Barua (Rohingya male, Camp B) feels that many teachers are stressed by a lack of professional development support. He states how there are "many different learning needs in the class, and our lack of skills to address them, that is very frustrating" (Rohingya male, Camp B).

Rohingya participants' desire for professional development aligns with their agenda to be subject experts as a way of reducing workload stress, hence their desire for subject-specific training. Moreover, with the introduction of the formal Myanmar Curriculum, Rohingya teachers' motivation is hindered by the lack of official recognition that their training provides. In a pilot study discussion, an implementing partner representative recommended that after Burmese language support, the second non-negotiable priority needs to be the certification and recognition of teachers as professionals. This sentiment is also echoed by Sheikh Mohammed (Rohingya male, Camp B) who expressed how it "causes me stress to work so hard, but I have no status or certification [as a teacher]."

### 7.3.2 Teacher learning circles are highly valued

When teachers are navigating new curriculum, learning new knowledge through self-study, and making their own pedagogy and content decisions, teacher learning circles allow teachers to come together on a regular basis to recognize shared challenges, share promising practices, and co-devise solutions (Burns and Lawrie, 2016; Frisoli, 2014; Mendenhall et. al, 2019). Most of all, teacher learning circles provide teachers with a sense of 'relatedness' (ibid). According to Bennell and Akyeampong (2007), this key motivation factor supports "the impulse to develop meaningful

connections" with peers and colleagues (ibid. p. 5). Reflecting participants' positive responses to teacher professional development survey items ($M$ = 3.42, $SD$ = 0.58), the translator shared on behalf of Aktan Johir (Rohingya male, Camp B), that teacher learning circles are:

> Very important, because there are almost 10 or 12 people in a TLC discussion. Different people have different challenges and there are two rules: [you present] your challenge and your solutions. They can get the opportunity to share their challenges and solve situations together

Noting an uneasiness when I invited participants to discuss their struggles with professional practice and development, I asked if they also found the teacher learning circle format uncomfortable. In Camp B, Sahidul Barua (Rohingya male) interrupted me to share how "It is not a shame. It is a chance to share our challenges." Following an internal discussion among participants, the translator then clarified that "They learn from others, because they cannot solve problems on their own, like how to best teach our children. [Teacher learning circles are] very important for them" (Camp B). I asked the same question to Rohingya female participants (Camp A) and received an equally positive reply. Like their Rohingya male peers, and reflecting their positive responses to the survey item on the motivational benefits of working with other teachers ($M$ = 3.56, $SD$ = 0.50) the translator explained that:

> There are few opportunities for them to, you know, come into contact with the other learning centers, operated by other implementing partners… So they cannot actually share with other teachers from other camps, but they can do the TLCs in their own camp … So in one week, if they are getting any challenges during their facilitation, they share with their resource instructor and they, you know, facilitate for them how to overcome the challenge. And they discuss among themselves as well, so that they learn to overcome challenges by themselves also. And obviously, when they are colleagues, working together, there is learning and sharing. This is the most important thing in their opinion.

I also sought examples of how teacher learning circles improve Rohingya female participants' teaching practice, but this was an area that participants had difficulty articulating. They agreed,

however, that teacher learning circles can improve more than their curriculum knowledge, as the translator explained:

> It is not only about the subjects, it is also about the classroom environment, the classroom management, everything, you know? They get so much guidance from these sessions … Attending TLCs makes them more confident in what they are doing as teachers

Due to the motivation-focused orientation of the discussions, participants homed in on the confidence, sense of community, and stress management benefits of teacher learning circles more than pedagogical insights. For Rohingya female teachers, with their anomalous mobility and status within the wider Rohingya community, the case for teacher learning circles is assertive. As the Camp A translator continued:

> Whenever they come together, and the facilitator is also there, they can share freely with the facilitator whatever they are facing and whatever they are trying to solve in their class … So they say the TLC is the most important thing in their life because they find it, you know, as they say, it helps them overcome their challenges. And also, yes, it gives them empowered voices, the feeling that they can do it … They have these struggles, they have these stresses, but having the learning circles means they feel more like a community, more like a team.

When I probed about the scope and utility of topics addressed during teacher learning circles, Rohingya female participants reflected on the openness of our present FGD as a point of comparison to the more operational function of current teacher learning circles, where the focus is largely curriculum delivery and language learning. Via the translator, Somaya Akter (Rohingya female, Camp A) shared that "this is the first time anyone has asked how being a teacher affects their lives, and how their lives affect their teaching… TLCs are only about [administration]." In no small way, this comment symbolizes how Rohingya teachers are positioned within the larger education system.

While education creates day-to-day certainty for refugee teachers and can mend the "disjuncture of their trajectories" (Dryden-Peterson, 2017. p.1), continuous professional

development approaches—like teacher learning circles—need to account for and respond to the precarity of refugee teachers' broader lives. As recent guidance asserts, teachers should not be instrumentalized for the learning, development, and well-being of the children they teach alone, they need to be recognized as an end in and of themselves (see Falk et al., 2016; INEE, 2022).

## 7.4 How teacher workloads shape their motivation to teach

Key themes that Rohingya focus group participants identify as negatively affecting their *work satisfaction* include lesson planning for multiple grade levels and subjects, and the contract, professional pathway, and salary inequities that exist between Bangladeshi and Rohingya teachers. For multiple participants, our discussions are an interrogation of coexisting realities. At once, aspects of teaching are positively *and* negatively associated with their *work satisfaction* and *motivation to teach*. An example is the positive influence of the Myanmar Curriculum on participants' future-oriented and nation building purpose and their professional status within the wider community, representing their long-term and community-level perspectives. In the short term and at the learning center-level, however, despite participants' initial positivity towards the Myanmar Curriculum in survey results ($M$ = 3.36, $SD$ = 0.68) and in *respect* focused discussions, later FGDs present a more negative hue. This is due to the complex workload of planning and teaching multiple subjects to multiple grades for up to eight hours per day, with minimal resourcing and inadequate professional development support.

### 7.4.1 The overwhelm of lesson planning in a conflict-affected setting

The Camp A translator explained on behalf of Hamida Sharmi (Rohingya female) that "If they are teaching for three subjects, then it is like they have to prepare for six subjects… it might be grade six math, grade seven math, grade six Burmese, grade seven Burmese, it is like that." Similarly,

via the Camp B translator, Saiful Elahi (Rohingya male) described how "He has to plan lessons for all subjects, so this is where he feels most stressful. At the same time, he is thinking about family, there are many family issues he has to manage as well … [but] he teaches eight classes, so classes continue all day." In unison with these reflections, based on results from a two-sample t-test Rohingya participants (M = 1.95, SD = 0.91) responded to the *work satisfaction* survey item on the Myanmar Curriculum and workload stress at a significantly lower rate than the Bangladeshi colleagues ($M$ = 2.40, $SD$ = 0.66),[49] highlighting another coexisting reality in the survey item results: For Rohingya participants, teaching the Myanmar Curriculum is a positive and underlying motivation factor ($M$ = 3.57, $SD$ = 0.66) and at the same time a core contributor to teachers' workload stress ($M$ = 1.95, $SD$ = 0.91).

This learning center-level situation is also compounded by community-level armed group violence, which escalates after 4pm when NGOs leave the camps and teachers return to their shelters to plan for the next day's lessons. As Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) illustrated, "I have almost finished four lesson plans, but when [armed groups] start fighting at that time I have to stop, I have to turn off the light and quit." The same is true for Mohammed Ullah (Rohingya male) in Camp C, who used this question to reiterate a point he had made earlier:

> Last night, I was writing lesson plans … I have written two subject lesson plans, and suddenly I can hear gunshot sounds … I do not know where from … then I feel so much stress, how can I write lesson plans with this much stress?

When I asked if lesson planning for multiple subjects and grades is a challenge for both Bangladeshi and Rohingya cohorts of teachers, Sheikh Mohammad (Rohingya male, Camp D) responded that Bangladeshi teachers "do not have to prepare anything. No Burmese. No Math. No

[49] A two-sample t-test for the Myanmar curriculum *work satisfaction item* showed a significant difference in work satisfaction scores between Rohingya and Bangladeshi teachers, $t = 5.92$, $df = 492$, $p < 0.001$. Cohen's $d = 0.86$.

Geography. We do all that." I checked the accuracy of this perception with Bangladeshi participants, who predominantly teach one or two English classes per day, and Hasina Rajuma (Camp A) strongly disagreed, adding that after traveling from the Kutupalong camps back to her home in Balu Khali township at around 5pm she has to "start planning again for what to teach the next day, you have to start preparations already." As these examples illustrate, teachers from both cohorts work hard to prepare for their teaching, but their efforts and ability to fulfill fundamental teaching tasks come up against the stress and risks that their respective situations present.

### 7.4.2 Stress management at the learning center-level

At all three socio-ecological levels of analysis, participants and translators used the English words 'stress' or 'tensions' to capture the experience of teaching amid the precarity of their displacement. While teachers employed these terms in response *work satisfaction* items, when I asked about the effect of their personal stress levels on their *motivation to teach*, they were slow to share; echoing experiences of teacher mental health and well-being researchers in Kenya's Kakuma refugee camp, where a participant stated "why tell the truth and lose my job?" (INEE, 2022, p. 7). Likewise, following an internal group discussion on this question, Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) told me "We just prefer not to share about this." His response fits with advice provided by a key informant during my pilot study in phase 1, where they stated "you need to understand that teachers hold themselves up as professionals. They cannot be seen by their own communities as vulnerable or struggling… there is too much at stake" (Henderson, 2022). Considering these comments and the experiences of other researchers who have documented the stigma or taboo associated with Rohingya perceptions of mental illness (e.g. Riley et. al, 2017; 2020; Trang et. al, 2024), direct questions about teachers' mental health and well-being were ill-advised.

To circumvent the stigmatizing of Rohingya participants' experiences, I pivoted and asked them to define 'stress' and 'tension' from a Rohingya perspective, which elicited a more open and reflective discussion. In Camp A, via the translator, Somaya Akter (Rohingya female, Camp A) shared that "whenever she is stressed, she cannot eat, she cannot do anything." Jusna Homaira (Rohingya female, Camp A) agreed, implying that when she feels like this "her work will not be complete, which causes further stress." However, numerous participants also promote the importance of effective stress management and the consequences of poor socio-emotional regulation. As Sahidul Barua (Rohingya male, Camp B) shares:

> Stress means we feel stressed. Every Rohingya feels stressed because we do not have any identity. We are refugees. We are living in another country. Every single Rohingya feels this. But we have to manage our stress, to manage the learning center, because if we don't manage our stress, the children will not come.

According to FGD participants, the factors that cause the most stress include inadequate teaching environments, workload challenges, and time management issues. Concerning teaching environments, Sheik Muhammed (Rohingya male, Camp B) pointed out the punishingly hot and cramped classroom that we were in, sharing how they "need fans and [separate] teacher rooms … people say we are professionals but we are not treated like it." Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) responded to this question by stating that "I am a science teacher, so if I want to show any kind of practical science, I have so many issues, I can't. We have no practical materials, not even for elementary practical activity" (Rohingya male, Camp D). Similar stressors are expressed in Camp B, where Mohammed Ullah summarized how there is so much "pressure to teach well, but with no resources" (Rohingya male, Camp B). This comment caused Sheikh Muhammed (Rohingya male, Camp B) to philosophize that "Everything in life has limitations. This is [just] teaching".

As illustrated by the volume of participant comments on the issue, while perceived as positive overall ($M$ = 3.36, $SD$ = 0.68), the survey item on the stress of teaching the Myanmar Curriculum shows that Rohingya teachers also suffer ($M$ = *1.95*, $SD$ = 0.91).[50] In Camp A, on behalf of Khadija Begum (Rohingya female), the translator shared that "Since the Myanmar Curriculum, yeah, she says so much more work, more stress." Equally, in Camp C Sultan Aziz's (Rohingya male) translator shared that "He is just so tired of teaching all the subjects" (Rohingya male, Camp C). Nayun Abdul (Rohingya male, Camp D) also stated how "Teaching is just cramming. Always cramming." Via the translator, Nayun Abdul (Rohingya male, Camp D) then reflected how this impacts the quality of learning. He states that "It is very hard for students to even focus on the class with everything going on … they have to rush through the content so fast … how are the children supposed to learn?"

The themes of time constraints, cramming, and its effect on student learning are commonly raised. Camp B's translator shared on behalf of Saiful Elahi (Rohingya male) that "The schedule is very full, there is no time to build relationships with students, it is one class straight into the next one, we don't have time to know the students." Sahidul Barua (Rohingya male) agreed with this sentiment, sharing how stressful it is when they "... focus so much on getting through the lesson, and we get to the end, and the student tells us they did not understand and we need to repeat again."

### 7.4.3 Do Rohingya teachers have higher stress thresholds?

I pointed out to Rohingya participants that, notwithstanding their common expressions of workload stress, just over 65 percent of Rohingya females and over 70 percent of Rohingya males experience

[50] A one-tailed t-test shows that Bangladeshi teachers report lower levels of stress relating to the Myanmar curriculum compared to their Rohingya colleagues; $t$ = 5.92, $df$ = 492, p = 0.000, Cohen's $d$ = 0.55.

high and statistically significant levels of *work satisfaction* (see Annex C5).[51] In response, two themes that resonate with Marchais et al.'s (2024) assets-oriented commentary on teachers' 'coping strategies' emerged. The first is that Rohingya participants believe they have higher thresholds for stress than their host-community colleagues, of whom under 50 percent experience *work satisfaction* (see Annex C5). The second theme is that teaching is a positive distraction from other community-level stressors in their lives. In Camp A, on behalf of Setara Arefin (Rohingya female), the translator shared that:

> [she] feels like they do not experience stress in teaching, because stress is very common in their lives, and they are taking things now more positively. Every day she sleeps in this position [of stress], takes the food in this position, takes threats from armed groups and many other things. It is common in her life and she is ok with this now. She now does not recognize this [stress]… Maybe this is why big numbers of teachers say they do not have stress?

I cross-checked this perspective with the next focus group and asked what effect, if any, the complexity of the Rohingya experience has on teachers' tolerance for stress. Anowar Monsur (Rohingya male, Camp C) agreed with survey data showing Bangladeshi teachers' lower levels of work satisfaction; perceiving them to show more stress in their work than Rohingya teachers. He used the following example to illustrate Rohingya teachers' higher stress thresholds, stating that "[Bangladeshi teachers] do not have such tolerance, [Rohingya teachers] tolerate a lot over the last six years, but [Bangladeshi teachers] did not experience such conditions, such experiences [as Rohingya teachers]. So they have less tolerance level [than us]."

[51] A one-way ANOVA indicated a significant difference in *work satisfaction* across identity groups, $F(3, 490) = 8.81$, $p < 0.001$. Bonferroni post-hoc tests showed that Rohingya males had significantly different work satisfaction levels compared to Bangladeshi females ($p = 0.000$) and Bangladeshi males ($p = 0.010$), while other comparisons were not significant.

### 7.4.4 Teaching is a positive distraction from the stressors of displacement

There are two further elements that determine Rohingya teachers' stress response and *work satisfaction*, which are a departure from the comparatively low response to the stress-related survey item ($M$ = 1.95, $SD$ = 0.91). Like Karkouti's (2021) findings with Syrian refugee teachers in Lebanon, the first element connects with aforementioned beliefs about teaching as a sense of duty rather than participants' need for employment. The second and newer contribution, similar to Paradies' (2023) insights from Iraq, is that the work of teaching is less stressful than other aspects of refugees' lives. In Camp C, initial resistance to my discussion on stress was framed by Mohammed Alam (Rohingya male) as "we are not interested in hard work and stress. We are just interested in the education of children." Similarly, in Camp B, Mohammed Ullah (Rohingya male) admits that while "There may be some stress as a teacher … we are ignoring the stress, because we focus on the education of our children."

Rohingya and Bangladeshi participants in Camps A and C, where there is less gang violence than in Camps B and D, jointly believe that their ability to ignore the stress of teaching relates to their insulation from community-level stressors while they are teaching. In this respect, on behalf of the Bangladeshi female group in Camp A, the translator shared that:

> Teaching means they forget about their stress. If they are stressed with anything, they forget that stress because they work with children … When they work with a child, this is not stressful, because it is enjoyable to work with children.

For Rohingya female participants in particular, a tentative sense of gratitude imbues their work. As Jusna Homaira (Rohingya female, Camp A) shared via the translator:

> When they came here, they were very young. They never had tensions in their heads like their parents did, like they do not have to think about my lost assets [in the conflict] or something else. They came here, they got an education and now they can teach.

Hamida Sharmi (Rohingya female, Camp A) strongly agreed, with the translator stating how "She is also feeling less stressed than her parents, because of the opportunities she gets [in Bangladesh]." Moreover, for the whole group of Rohingya female teachers, the translator relayed that "it is not difficult to spend time teaching, because they are spending time with children, it is community engagement, it makes them feel less stressed." This also relates to their ability to provide for their families in ways that their neighbors and relatives cannot, as the translator conveyed for Somaya Akter (Rohingya female, Camp A):

> Because she has the opportunity to teach, that makes them less stressed because they can earn money, they can provide. If they did not have any job or any work to do, that would make them more stressed… Other people in the camp, they are stressed because they have no income, because they have no education. They [do] human trafficking, because that's the income they can have … She does not have these issues, so she is not as stressed.

### 7.4.5 The freedom and burden of teaching: A gendered paradox

Extending the above rationale for Rohingya female participants' *work satisfaction* ($M$ = 3.21, $SD$ = 0.29), there is a comparative advantage of teaching in Bangladesh. As the translator relayed on behalf of the Rohingya female group, "In Myanmar, they face a different situation. There they cannot work, they are only staying in the house. This is one reason why [they are not stressed in Bangladesh]." Bangladeshi female participants in Camp A also shared this perspective, believing the extent to which Rohingya teachers can access livelihood provisions—such as food rations and gas, unlike Bangladeshi teachers—relieves them of some livelihood stress. As the translator shared:

> In Myanmar [Rohingya female teachers] faced a difficult situation. There, they cannot work, but here they can work. They are not only staying in the house anymore … so this is one reason they can feel less stressed than us… Also, they get all the things they need for their living, so they don't need to feel stress for these things either.

Rohingya male participants acknowledged the 'double burden' of female teachers' work (see Kirk, 2010; Tao, 2017; Unterhalter, 2019), sharing—more than female teachers themselves—that this burden contributes considerable stress to women's work. As Mohammad Ullah (Rohingya male, Camp B) presented, "... when [female teachers] are at the learning center they have constant stress because they worry about their families … they leave their young children and elderly people at home alone, and what if a security incident or a fire happens?" (Rohingya male, Camp C).

Rohingya female teachers did not raise such issues. But as Khadija Begum (Rohingya female, Camp A) relayed via the translator, they have "daily sessions, they have second shifts, and then they have dinner preparations, and then study for the next day's classes … they do not have time for stress." Similarly, the translator shared how, according to Jusna Homaira (Rohingya female, Camp A), these burdens do not exist in tension with teaching. She claimed that "She does not feel so stressed, because she is the one that is managing everything, taking decisions, providing for everyone, and she likes that." In some regards, as I analyze in the next chapter, teachers' work amplifies Rohingya female participants' sense of *self-efficacy* and *agency*; motivation factors that were in short supply before teaching became available to them. In other words, the empowerment element of Rohingya female teachers' work can mitigate some of the stressors that overwhelm their male and Bangladeshi counterparts. This point is captured in Somaya Akter's (Rohingya female, Camp A) theorization of different sources of stress, and how this affects her *motivation to teach*. On Somaya's behalf, the translator shared that:

> The only stress she feels is that she is not in Myanmar, she is here in the refugee camp. Other than that, she is managing the household, she is teaching, she is providing for her family, she is maintaining her in-laws… but she wants to go back to Myanmar. She does not want to stay in the camp forever.

The data on the gendered differences in teachers' stress levels and *work satisfaction* confirms two key insights. Firstly, Rohingya female narratives reflect the transformative and actualizing role

that teaching plays in their lives; a counterweight to the many burdens of women's work. Secondly, wanting greater agency within the education system and a greater degree of protection, Rohingya males are more affected by the workload challenges that shape their work and undermine their aspirations.

## 7.5 Work satisfaction barriers: Teacher tensions, contract inequities, poor pathways, and flat-rate salaries.

Rohingya participants understand the Bangladesh Government's formal employment ban, but the precarity of working without contracts, with few professional pathways, and unfair salary disparities engenders resentment towards their better treated host-community colleagues and erodes their morale, *work satisfaction,* and in reality, their *motivation to teach*. The work of teaching in Cox's Bazar is thus a trial between the tribulations of classroom teaching, work conditions, and the imagined future reward of repatriation to Myanmar. In this way, for Rohingya participants the realization of their rights is dependent on and enabled by teachers' willingness to work within expropriative employment arrangements; or what Shah (2023) calls the 'bordering regimes' and 'racialized lines' of refugee labor in humanitarian settings.

There is camaraderie between Rohingya and Bangladeshi teachers, to the extent that Bangladeshi female participants regularly refer to their Rohingya female colleagues as their sisters. Beneath this cordiality, however, different employment arrangements give rise to what Hossain (2023) calls the 'cold conflict' between host-community and refugee teachers, which challenges Rohingya morale. As Anowar Monsur (Rohingya male, Camp C) describes, "The implementing partner gives the most priority for the [Bangladeshi] teachers … they get freedom, like they can take monthly two days or one day sick leave, but there is no option for us to take sick leave at all." When I presented *work satisfaction* survey data to Rohingya participants in Camp B, showing that

68 percent of Rohingya teachers report a high level of *work satisfaction* compared to only 47 percent of Bangladesh teachers (see Annex C5), Sheikh Mohammed (Rohingya male, Camp C) replied that "They [should be] more satisfied because they have contracts, that helps. They only teach one subject and their pay is better too." I asked Camp C participants how this compared to their own status and satisfaction levels. Sultan Aziz (Rohingya male) responded and the translator shared how "[Rohingya teachers] are just working as a volunteer. Just volunteers on a weekly or monthly basis, not a permanent job… But the [Bangladeshi teacher] teaches just one subject and [Rohingya teachers] are teaching so many subjects."

Salaries are a point of contention among focus group participants, with two views on the influence of salaries on teacher motivation emerging. On the one hand, Rohingya male participants believe that their salary of ৳13,000 / USD130 per month is inconsequential. This view aligns with ideas about teaching as a duty for many Rohingya males more than a job, as Nayun Abdul (Rohingya male) in Camp D explained, "If I don't teach properly, I will still get the salary, but the children will suffer. I am more motivated to make the children not suffer." On the other hand, Rohingya males have the highest burden of labor and some participants feel the flat-rate disbursement of Rohingya salaries disincentivizes teachers' work. As Sheikh Mohammed (Rohingya male, Camp B) expressed, "We are more educated [than females] so we have more responsibilities, but we get not much credit according to our education level, [and] our payment is the same." In parallel, across the three Rohingya male cohorts there is a degree of resignation about teacher salaries. In this respect, the rationalization that teaching is a duty rather than a job is likely influenced by Mohammed Ullah's (Rohingya male, Camp B) acceptance that "The teachers' life is a poor life."

As a point of comparison, Bangladeshi female participants expressed how a 'steppingstone effect' shapes much of their own *work satisfaction* and *motivation to teach* ($B = 0.09$, $p < 0.05$).[52] While Bangladeshi teachers teach less, they manage more administrative and leadership duties on implementing partners' behalf. As such, they are developing—and being recognized for—management skills that would be out of reach if they worked in the Bangladeshi school system. According to Bangladeshi participants, these opportunities accelerate their own career trajectories. Thus, they share how after this period of teaching they will have administration and leadership credentials with a national NGO on their resumés and will look for higher-level work.

Insofar as Bangladeshi participants envision upward professional mobility, Rohingya participants are stuck in their status without pathways or meaningful future opportunities. The concept of upward professional mobility is fraught with the trauma of false hope, which is awkwardly positioned alongside the collective hope that the Myanmar Curriculum represents. As Ahmad Soliman (Rohingya male, Camp C) shared via the translator, for Bangladeshi teachers "Maybe one day they can be a field organizer, program officer, technical officer, they have a road for that, but [Rohingya teachers] don't think there are any [future] options for them." Likewise, the translator shared on behalf of Hamida Sharmi (Rohingya female, Camp A) that "Whenever there is a job opening in the community, related to their work experience, Bangladeshi people will get the opportunity." Reflecting on his own stunted trajectory, Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) stated how "Being a Rohingya teacher, you do not have an option for becoming a higher position [like] a program officer or a technical officer in the future. You are always thinking about that." These facts play out in daily acts that cause despair for Rohingya participants. For example,

[52] See the unstandardized OLS regression in table 5.7a

Nayun Abdul (Rohingya male, Camp D) shared how "When the official gives any instructions [to carry out an important task], they will only call the national host teacher to do it, but never the Rohingya teachers."

I asked Rohingya participants how the preferential treatment of host-community teachers makes them feel about their work. In Camp C, Mohammed Alam (Rohingya Male, Camp C), who is the only university educated teacher in my focus group sample, responded: "It makes me upset when I see them as the boss. They have a degree also but they are now the boss of me. They are the same age as me, that could be me [if I was in Myanmar]." In a similar vein, Setara Arefin (Rohingya female, Camp A) shared via the translator how "She is very stressed because she had a dream to have higher education, but she cannot have this opportunity [in Myanmar or Bangladesh]. When she sees [a Bangladeshi] who is living that dream, it makes her sad." For Mohammed Alam (Rohingya Male, Camp C), this scenario is part of his motivation to teach; in other words, he does not want "Rohingya in the future to be in the same position" that he is in now. Thus, where Bangladeshi teachers are motivated by the career opportunities that their roles might afford, Rohingya teachers are motivated by a need to cope and make connections between teaching and the repatriation possibilities that their work might achieve, should their circumstances change.

## 7.6 Conclusion

At the learning center-level, participants' (n = 494) *work satisfaction* and corresponding *motivation to teach* are the result of curriculum, language of instruction, and professional development opportunities. Together, these factors contribute to protective experiences of work satisfaction *and* they can be stressors in teachers' working lives. For example, an isolated OLS regression analysis in (see table 5.7a) shows a statistically significant ($B = 0.81$, $p < 0.001$) relationship between

participants' *work satisfaction* at the learning center-level and their *motivation to teach*. More specifically, just over 70 percent of Rohingya teachers (n = 302) experience a high level of *work satisfaction* and nearly 80 percent report being highly *motivated to teach* (see Annex C). But there is also a considerable sense of discontent due, but not limited to, participants' inadequate pedagogical content knowledge, their workload and language of instruction issues, and salary and contract inequities.

In stable and high-income contexts, teacher motivation is contingent upon the reciprocity between 'task demand' and 'task return' (Watts and Richardson, 2007). In Cox's Bazar this equation is disrupted; as a context of resource limitations and an absence of alternative employment opportunities, work hardships have a lesser effect on participants' motivation than the broad necessity of their roles. That is to say, alongside the contract and salary concerns that define participants' dissatisfaction, the expected social utility value of the Myanmar Curriculum—in terms of its restitutive value for a minimally educated population—and the Burmese language both embody *and* counteract the stressors that their work otherwise represents.

Yet still, mirroring Kirk and Winthrop's (2008; 2013) concepts of 'spontaneous' and 'tentative' teachers, the following quote by Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) captures the tensions implicit in refugee teachers' *motivation to teach* at the learning center-level: "I just have to do it, it is my choice, but I must keep going." Within this statement, the agency of Mannan's choice to teach is buttressed by a sense of conformity and the moral obligation he is resigned to.

The experiences that affect participants' *work satisfaction* the most relate to the structural and systemic realities of teaching in Cox's Bazar as well as Rohingya participants' pedagogical challenges, which obstruct their educational aspirations and reinforce the 'impossible fiction' of teachers' work in refugee contexts (Adelman, 2019). In this sense, the value Rohingya teachers

place on the Myanmar Curriculum and their acquisition of the Burmese language to help facilitate their repatriation constitutes a motivating objective within the Rohingya teacher cadre. But the practicalities of teaching the full curriculum from grades 1 to 8 with an adequate level of achievement is highly aspirational and impractical given the teacher management, resourcing, and pedagogical realities that Rohingya participants contend with.

I did not expect the Myanmar Curriculum to feature so prominently in this study. In relation to their *work satisfaction,* I expected participants to compare the Myanmar Curriculum with the previous LCFA*,* but I underestimated its symbolic value and the hope it is imbued with, which I find concerning. As intimated earlier, the curriculum's origins are entwined with the perpetrators of the Rohingya's expulsion from Myanmar. The script and language of instruction are also those of their oppressors. And Burmese only holds practical value *if* the Rohingya repatriate to Myanmar.

Rohingya teachers' regular and optimistic reference to the Myanmar Curriculum and Burmese language was therefore unsettling and problematic; especially as they strive for their language, culture, and history to be recognized and their citizenship returned. But for a stateless population without access to a national education systems or the pathways bestowed upon its graduates, this predicament illustrates the lengths people are prepared to go and the trauma they are willing to suspend to create a sense of hope and normalcy in their lives.

While Adelman's (2019) concept of teaching as an 'impossible fiction' is apt for the Cox's Bazar context, Rohingya teachers' *motivation to teach* still exists. For the fear of losing hope, via the Myanmar Curriculum the Rohingya seem to have buried the impossibility of their aspirations. For Rohingya teachers, the 'anticipatory hope' of what might become and how education might help them get there is a powerful incentive to teach.

# Chapter 8 - Individual-level experiences: Low system-level agency threatens the positive influence of teachers' self-efficacy

Many Rohingya teachers' most formative years were shaped by the enduring reality of their displacement and the disempowerment that comes with being subjected to structural forces that are beyond their control—first in Myanmar and now in Bangladesh. Refugee camps may offer protection from the immediate threats of conflict, but they also suspend individuals' sense of self-determination and blur multiple other features of their lives (Malkki, 1995; Agier, 2002). Lacking vocational markers such as formal credentials and professional roles—factors individuals rely on to establish their social value and identity—the work of teaching, though often not a career of first choice, offers forcibly displaced populations a modicum of self-reliance and status (Adelman, 2019; Sesnan et al., 2013). To investigate this dynamic and how it motivates Rohingya participants to teach, in this chapter I employ *self-efficacy* and *teacher agency* as motivation factors and analytical constructs.

In refugee-hosting settings where critical learning resources are limited, teachers are charged with fostering a sense of belonging, learning achievement, and psychosocial and physical protection among displaced and traumatized children. Yet refugee teachers also contend with an array of similar well-being challenges as the children they teach, often limiting their capacity to experience success as teachers and thereby affecting their sense of *self-efficacy* (Henderson, 2025; Mendenhall, et al., 2018). Within the top-down hierarchies that characterize the management of refugee teachers' work, teachers seek *agency* through their teaching to mitigate the effects of their experiences—before their displacement and during it—and find the motivation to continue in the profession (Adelman, 2019; Brandt and Lopes Cardozo, 2023; Mendenhall, Gomez, and Varni, 2019a; West and Ring, 2015; Shepler, 2011).

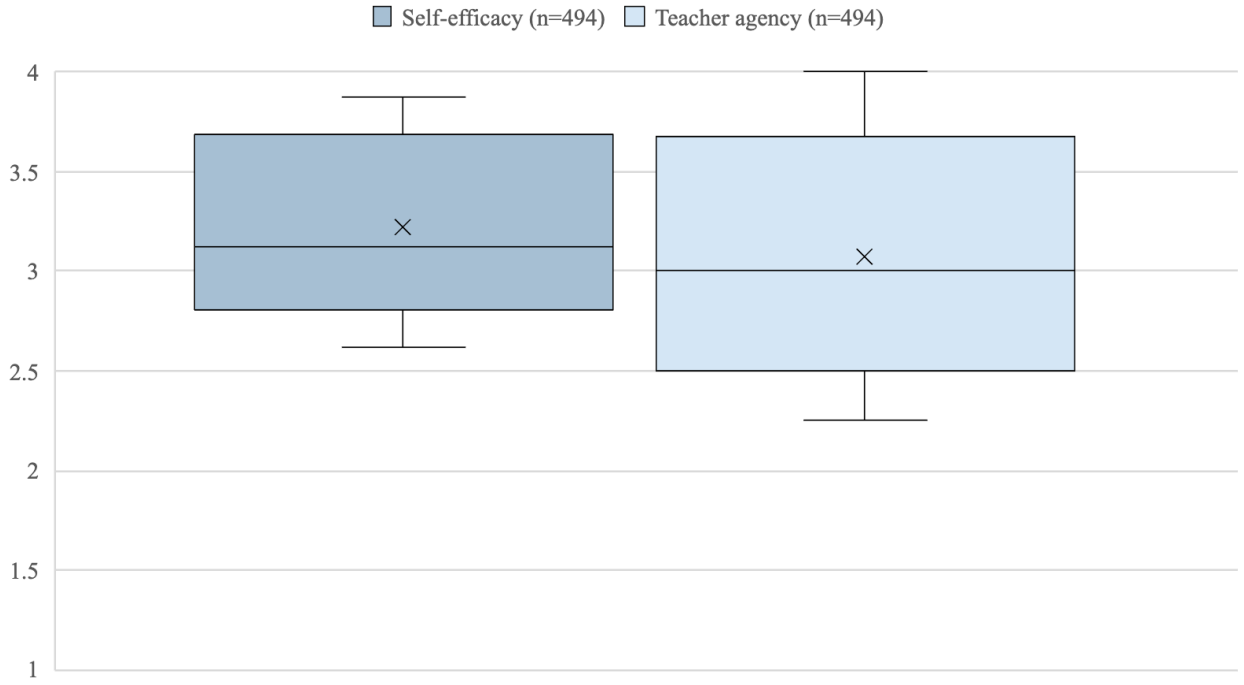
Teacher *self-efficacy* is defined as teachers' belief that what they do has an influence on the children they teach (Bandura, 1999). *Teacher agency* is the complementary notion that teachers have the freedom and authority to make decisions and take actions in their work (Fernet et al., 2008; Mansfield et al., 2016; Priestly et al., 2021). Prior studies show that teacher *self-efficacy* and *agency* work in tandem, while depending on enabling leadership and nurturing support systems for both constructs to be realized (Polatcan et al., 2021). A sense of *agency* compels teachers to take a lead and resolve challenges, thereby enhancing their sense of *self-efficacy*, consolidating their resilience, and reinforcing their *motivation to teach* (Keogh et al. 2012). Agentic teachers are thus seen to have a strong sense of *self-efficacy* via a well-formed understanding of their personal competence that they apply within a context's constraints to achieve the outcomes they envision (Guskey, 1988; Ross, 1994; Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk, 2001).

Without the belief that one's actions as a teacher will produce the outcomes desired, there are few incentives to "persevere in the face of difficulties" (Bandura, 1999, p. 28). In this sense, teachers with low self-efficacy are reported to have much lower motivation, less resilience, and a higher rate of burnout and attrition compared to teachers who perceive their *self-efficacy* to be strong (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007). The constructs of teacher *self-efficacy* and *teacher agency* at the individual level are therefore relevant for this study of refugee teacher motivation, especially for refugee teachers who work without adequate compensation or professional recognition and therefore depend on alternative sources of motivation.

This chapter focuses on the third socio-ecological level of analysis and my third sub-question: At the individual level, how are teachers' experiences of *self-efficacy* and *agency* associated with their motivation to teach? To address this question, I introduce findings from individual-level survey items on participants' experiences of *self-efficacy* and *agency* in Cox's

Bazar. As revealed in a standardized OLS regression (see table 5.7a), there is a statistically significant relationship between *self-efficacy* ($\beta$ = 0.34, p < 0.001) and *teacher agency* ($\beta$ = 0.10, p < 0.001) with participants' *motivation to teach*. As illustrated in figure 8 below, higher levels of *self-efficacy* ($M$ = 3.26, $SD$ = 0.36) than *agency* ($M$ = 3.04, $SD$ = 0.40) also suggest that participants feel more able to perform education tasks with children in the classroom than shape broader educational processes.

**Figure 8**
*Box plot of the **self-efficacy** and **agency** factors that motivate participants to teach at the individual level*




Within the individual-level results there are also significant differences between Rohingya and Bangladeshi experiences of *self-efficacy* and *agency*. A t-test for the factor of *self-efficacy* showed that Rohingya participants ($M$ = 3.31, $SD$ = 0.37) experience positively and significantly more *self-efficacy* in their work compared to Bangladeshi participants ($M$ = 3.17, $SD$ = 0.32).[53]

[53] Self-efficacy: $t$ = -4.22, $df$ = 492, p < 0.001, Cohen's $d$ = 0.39

Similarly, while all participants experience less agency overall, Rohingya participants ($M$ = 3.10, S$D$ = 0.40) also report a higher and statistically more significant level of *teacher agency* in their work compared to their Bangladeshi colleagues ($M$ = 2.94, $SD$ = 0.38).[54]

## 8.1 How a sense of self-efficacy is associated with participants' motivation to teach

Based on inputs from my LAG, self-efficacy survey items focused on participants' influence on children's sense of belonging, protection, achievement, and hope for the future. In figure 8.1 below, I have disaggregated *self-efficacy* findings by participant identity group. Rohingya females ($M$ = 3.29, $SD$ = 0.45) have a slightly higher response value than Rohingya males ($M$ = 3.27, S$D$ = 0.36). By comparison, Bangladeshi females ($M$ = 3.23, $SD$ = $SD$ = 0.33) and Bangladeshi males ($M$ = 3.19, $SD$ = 0.30) report slightly lower levels of confidence and competence in their work.[55]

Rohingya participants likely experience higher levels of self-efficacy for a number of reasons. Namely, they are working within their own community and culture and are more attuned to the differences that their teaching makes for children and their families. Moreover, as previous chapters have highlighted, the underlying political and developmental motivations for teaching are more intrinsic for Rohingya participants than for Bangladeshi participants, who identify more with income and career progression as core motivations for teaching. This further shapes the extent to which participants are aware of and believe in their influence on children's lives, explaining why *self-efficacy* is a more meaningful predictor of *motivation to teach* for Rohingya participants than for Bangladeshi participants. Insights from FGDs support this finding and also show gendered differences in how *self-efficacy* is conceptualized and applied to teachers' work.

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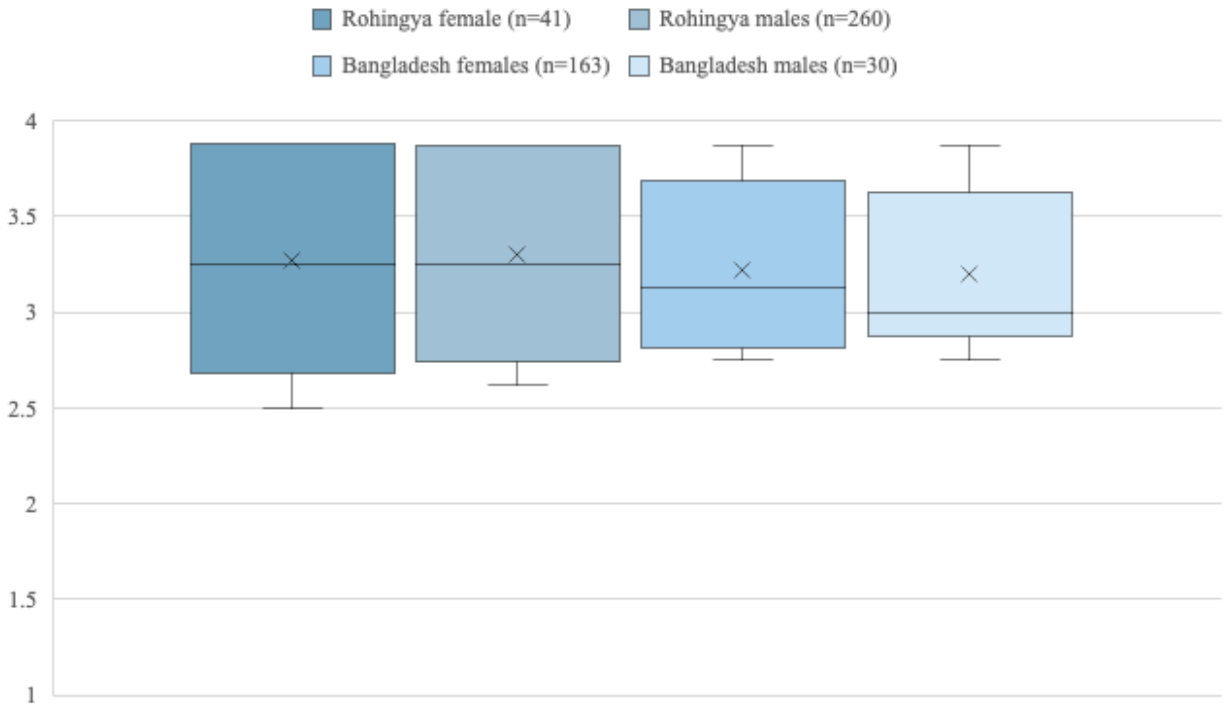
[54] Teacher agency: $t$= -4.17, $df$ = 492, p < 001, Cohen's $d$ = 0.39

[55] A one-way ANOVA showed a significant difference in self-efficacy scores across identity groups, F (3, 490) = 5.13, p = 0.0017. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons revealed a significant difference between Rohingya male and Rohingya female participants (p = 0.002), while all other pairwise comparisons were not statistically significant.

**Figure 8.1**
*Box plot of participant identity-disaggregated findings for the teacher **self-efficacy** factor*




For each of my five FGD cohorts, the topic of *self-efficacy* arrived after nearly three hours of discussion, requiring significant translation, sense-making, and vulnerability on the part of participants. Some fatigue and restlessness had set in and distressing events taking place outside our FGDs played on our minds. This likely shaped our discussions' deficit-oriented tone, especially in Camp B where armed group gunfights simmered nearby and in Camp D where fire alarms and volunteer fire service activities distracted our attention. Nevertheless, participants in both FGDs insisted that we carry on.

Discussions on *self-efficacy* drew out Rohingya participants' sense of suffering and helped clarify how they have benefitted from the work of teaching while in Bangladesh. Their suffering functions like a platform, upon which they reflected on their difficult pasts and considered their contemporary identities as teachers, with tentative feelings of purpose and *self-efficacy* in their

work. As Anowar Monsur (Rohingya male, Camp C) shared: “I lost myself through the genocide, [but] through teaching I have found myself again.” Similarly, echoing Olney et al.'s (2019) findings with community schoolteachers who feared a ‘lost generation’ of Rohingya, Sahidul Barua (Rohingya male, Camp B) rationalized his decision to teach by stating “I have lost everything in my life… my generation will not get an opportunity for a better future… I even lost myself … that is why I decide to teach for my children, for their generation.”

In FGDs a dichotomy emerged between Rohingya participants’ expressions of *self-efficacy* in the present and a projected or expected sense of self-efficacy that might arise if the Rohingya return to Myanmar. In this sense, for example, Rohingya male participants ($M$ = 3.31, $SD$ = 0.36) believe they can create a future sense of belonging for children more than in the present. They feel duty-bound to invest in children now but believe the dividends will eventuate upon their return to Myanmar. This investment is realized as teachers’ long hours in work arrangements that extract so much of their labor with so little recognition or financial return. In this regard, a number of Rohingya male participants presented subdued perspectives on their immediate influence. As Mohammed Ullah (Rohingya male, Camp B) responded to the question of *self-efficacy*:

> Because we hope that one day we will go back to our motherland, if we learn here continuously then we can join [schools in Myanmar]. If we learn grade five here, then we can go there and adjust at grade six… so it is very good that we are continuously supporting and learning [now] … for our children’s [future].

By comparison, Rohingya female participants’ ($M$ = 3.30, $SD$ = 0.45) future-oriented sense of *self-efficacy* was more muted. They spoke of the immediate sense of belonging and protection that their work creates, offering this element as a point of pride and source of motivation. I asked Rohingya female participants in Camp A why they were so assertive when they spoke of their

influence on children's protection and sense of belonging. After a brief internal discussion, the translator shared that:

> The way they are actually teaching in this community, they always feel [they provide] value of protection, the value of self, you know, the safety, security [for children], they know that very much … So that's why they have this confidence in their voices.

Writ large, FGD participants acknowledged how teaching helps them realize collective aspirations for quality education, their rights, and possible futures in Myanmar. Through a lens of hope and repatriation, their sense of *self-efficacy* is derived from the protective and the preparatory role of education on Rohingya children's present lives. Yet through a lens of resignation and despair, *self-efficacy* only goes so far as the provision of quality basic education while they wait for a 'durable solution' (Dryden-Peterson, 2022). Mirroring this predicament and explaining the influence that their protracted displacement has on their feelings of *self-efficacy*, Jusna Homaira (Rohingya female, Camp A) explained how teachers have created learning centers with:

> ... a positive environment, there is a positive mentality about education …[we] don't feel like there is something [we] do not have here … but when it comes to the point that [we] have to go back to Myanmar, [we] believe it, that [we] have to go back one day, but [we] don't want to right now.

Jusna's comments represent a common dilemma among female refugee teachers in particular. Their work and the sense of *self-efficacy* they gain from it contribute newfound feelings of capability and purpose (Bradley et al., 2023; Dryden-Peterson, 2022; Kirk, 2010), yet their aspirations for repatriation become conflicted, as repatriation might mean abandoning the 'additional benefits' or professional identity, sense of vocation, and systems of support available to them in the camp setting (Kirk and Winthrop, 2013).

### 8.1.1 Rohingya participants' perceived influence on child protection

One of the more influential *self-efficacy* themes to emerge relates to teachers' influence on children's protection. Some Rohingya male participants talked about protection in aspirational terms, referring to the outcomes that they are working towards. As Mohammed Ullah (Rohingya male, Camp B) shared, "[someday] we feel we can make an exploitation and abuse free environment for the students." For Rohingya female participants, connections are made between their own fledgling sense of safety in their ability to create a sense of protection for the children they teach. Narratives about child protection also implied a degree of complementarity with children's sense of belonging. Put differently, to influence a sense of protection, feelings of belonging must first be nurtured. Similarly, in discussions about children's sense of belonging participants regularly wove issues of protection into their analysis.

Female and male Rohingya participants emphasized how their extensive training by implementing partners in child protection screening and referrals, alongside the creation of child-friendly classrooms, made children feel well protected. Unlike their frustration with a lack of pedagogical skills training, Rohingya participants endorsed their access to comprehensive child safeguarding, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), disaster risk reduction (DRR), and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) trainings, which shaped their corresponding sense of *self-efficacy* in child protection. As Setara Arefin (Rohingya female, Camp A) shared via the translator, "we are creating an environment that is actually very friendly, this is a space that is comfortable for the learners." Hamida Sharmi (Rohingya female, Camp A) agreed, asserting how teachers "can give the learners protection [especially] during class time."

Female participants from refugee and host-community cohorts also relate the work of teaching to an expanded notion of caregiving, like the translator explained for Bibi Zotia

(Bangladeshi female, Camp A): "Coming to the learning center is like coming to another mother. [Teachers] have their own children, and they know how to consider the safety, and protect the [Rohingya] children." This reality, according to Khadija Begum (Rohingya female, Camp A), also gives parents confidence that teachers will protect their children from the risks they face outside. As the translator shared on the group's behalf:

> [Parents] feel that if their children are in the learning centers they are safe [with us]. If not, there are a lot of risks for them, like, for example, random cars, vehicles out there. They can face any accident and then there is the risk of being lost, of being kidnapped … Yes, there are abduction issues here as well.

Participants also identified a dynamic between their sense of *self-efficacy* inside the classroom, by way of the environment they create, and how this influences protection for children outside of the classroom, too. Firstly, some participants believed children live in fear outside of the learning centers, which is why the learning center must represent a place of protection and joy. As the translator explained for Somaya Akter (Rohingya female, Camp A), "That's why [teachers] try to counter the fear and negativity… they use the space of the learning center for joyful activities." Other participants described children at learning centers as being "out of the violence, abuses, or maybe exploitations" (Jusna Homaira, Rohingya female, Camp A). Or, as Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) shared, "teachers connect protection between the classroom and community services." As he explained, teachers create a "friendly environment, and by engaging the community leaders, the PSEA sections, the MHPSS sections, we can protect [children] from [bad] things and we are selling this aspect of the learning centers [to the community]."

Where participants previously struggled to describe specific acts of teaching and children's corresponding learning outcomes, they are comparatively more articulate about their influence on

child protection. This also speaks of participants' connection to an 'expanded' notion of teaching in the context of Cox's Bazar (Falk, 2023). Participants commented how they influence a sense of protection inside the learning center, but disseminate knowledge and skills to protect children outside, even when their sense of control over outside events is limited. Summarizing a longer group discussion about child safeguarding responsibilities in Camp A, the translator conveyed the female Rohingya group's perspective:

> ... they're saying that [safeguarding is] part of their job that they do each day … At the end of their shift, they have a short session on PSEA, child safeguarding, child trafficking. Every day they are doing that … But she adds that it's not like learners are just safe in the classroom, they are gaining knowledge [for outside].

I also asked the cohort of female Rohingya participants (Camp A) how they might attribute specific child protection outcomes to their work. After another extended group discussion, they shared via the translator that:

> … in their community, it is so common that adolescent learners are getting married before 18, and the [teachers] think they are able to, you know, protect them from early marriage because some of their learners are still connected to the [learning centers] even near the age of 18" (Rohingya female, Camp A).

This point also relates to teachers' stress management and how the joyful environments they create can influence parents' trust and children's attendance at learning centers. I am still curious, however, whether difficult to quantify outcomes like 'protection' contribute to teachers' sense of personal satisfaction and *self-efficacy*. In this regard, for the protection-focused *self-efficacy* survey item, Rohingya female participants ($M$ = 3.53, SD = 0.50), expressed more although statistically insignificant *self-efficacy* due to their direct work with children, whereas Rohingya male participants ($M$ = 3.31, $SD$ = 0.36) spoke more of their potential influence on parents and

community leaders.[56] Via the translator, Somaya Akter (Rohingya female, Camp A) shared that "they are always taking sessions of safeguarding [children] so yeah, they are feeling much more confident." Similarly, her colleague Khadija Begum (Rohingya female, Camp A) explained through the translator how:

> She has self-efficacy, because she can make changes in learners' lives, because she explains the protection factors … She says a lot of trafficking and so many safety issues are happening … so she thinks she [has efficacy] in facilitating the protection factors to the [children].

On the other hand, by way of the translator, Zahangir Nur (Rohingya male, Camp D) feels most efficacious with Rohingya parents when "We discuss at the parent meetings and the community education support group meetings, about the PSEA, about the safeguarding." These findings surface how, for Rohingya participants, child protection-related trainings increase their sense of competence and therefore their self-efficacy. Furthermore, the intersection of child protection issues with broader community and inter-sectoral priorities provides teachers with more visible and meaningful roles, meaning they also receive feedback from parents and community members on the influence they have.

### 8.1.2 Participants' perceived influence on Rohingya children's sense of belonging

Rohingya female participants in Camp A interpreted belonging as something achieved inside learning center classrooms rather than in the camps more broadly and that teachers play a key role in nurturing this reality.[57] As the translator conveyed on their behalf, "All of them agree that the

[56] Ordinal logistic regression (OLR) coefficients for Rohingya female ($B = 0.61$, $p = 0.07$) and Rohingya male ($B = 0.32$, $p = 0.08$) on the protection-focused *self-efficacy* survey item responses were positive but not significant, and a Wald test showed no statistically significant difference between Rohingya female and Rohingya male teachers.

[57] OLR coefficients for Rohingya female ($B = 0.16$, $p = 0.64$) and Rohingya male ($B = 0.34$, $p = 0.07$) on the belonging-focused *self-efficacy* survey item responses were positive but not significant, and a Wald test showed there was no statistically significant difference between Rohingya female and Rohingya male teachers.

children have a lot of belonging in[side] the learning centers." When I asked what belonging at the learning center looks and feels like, participants described a homely, family-like environment where children can feel protected and included. As the translator shared for Somaya Akter (Rohingya female, Camp A), teachers make children feel "comfortable to come here, and that makes them feel safe here, they have a sense of belongingness."

As belonging complements ideas of inclusion, participants spoke of their role mitigating incidents of discrimination and ensuring that all children feel 'belonging' at the learning center. For example, Jusna Homaira (Rohingya female, Camp A) experienced a sense of *self-efficacy* when she intervened in the following incident, as the translator retold:

> One day in the learning center … she hears two boys and one girl telling a disabled learner that "you are a disabled person, why did you come here? This is not your school, this is not for you, it is for us…" At that time, she explained to the learner about the [inclusivity], about belonging for everyone, then they understood and realized that everyone belongs [at the learning center].

Beyond their influence at the learning center, with respect to the prevalence of anti-Rohingya sentiments in Cox's Bazar's local community (Uddin, 2020), I asked Bangladeshi female participants what role, if any, they played to ensure that Rohingya children experience belonging in Bangladesh.[58] After a brief internal discussion, the translator shared how the participants responded positively, stating that some of "the [children] they are teaching now, actually were born here. They have no idea about Myanmar … so they feel this space belongs to them, that they own this place [the camps]." In response, and in line with what recent literature illuminates, I asked if the Bangladeshi community has become less tolerant of the Rohingya

[58] I conducted a one-tailed t-test to assess the difference between Rohingya and Bangladeshi participants on the belonging-focused *self-efficacy* survey item. Bangladeshi teachers reported significantly lower *self-efficacy* in relation to belonging than Rohingya participants $t = -1.76$, $df = 492$, $p = .039$.

presence and whether this affected teachers' work and sense of efficacy (Kamruzzaman et al., 2024; Khan, 2024). To this point, Bangladeshi participants also claimed that Rohingya children are protected from these sentiments within the host-community, stating instead that "it is the [Rohingya] parents who are saying these things to [children], that they have to go back [to Myanmar]. This is not our country" (Tosmin Ara, Bangladeshi female, Camp A). Bangladeshi female participants expressed a responsibility for teachers from both communities to protect Rohingya children from emergent Bangladeshi xenophobia and their own parents' anxiety, reinforcing the reality that they belong and are safe in Bangladesh, which gives all teachers a strong sense of purpose.

Rohingya female participants also reflected on children's sense of belonging outside of the classroom and the role they play. As Khadija Begum (Camp A) stated, "We protect them, and make them … we make them believe that they belong here [in the camps]." Like their Bangladeshi peers, Rohingya female participants reiterated the default sense of separation that the fenced-in camps provide. This also tempered teachers' own influence on belonging and sense of self-efficacy as Rohingya children have little access to the Bangladeshi population other than security forces and their teachers, whom the children view positively, participants said. As the Camp A translator relayed:

> They have almost been here for seven years, but they have never had a situation where someone [from the Bangladeshi community] has said "this is not your country, this is not your place, you must go back there" … and the [children], you know, they are so young, and having education here and their teachers here, they feel that this place is theirs.

Rohingya male participants were less focused on children's immediate belonging and again spoke of a future sense of *self-efficacy*. In FGDs, participants also related their fractured sense of belonging to their halted educations, equating the purpose of their teaching to the continuity

between children's education in Bangladesh and their hopeful futures in Myanmar. In effect, without further education or employment pathways, Rohingya male participants questioned how Rohingya could truly belong in Bangladesh. Where female participants connected their influence on belonging to the classroom and camps, Rohingya male participants claimed *self-efficacy* through the new Myanmar Curriculum, reinforcing ideas of Rohingya belonging in Myanmar more than Bangladesh. In other focus groups, however, participants shared the belief that Kutupalong's learning centers *are* Myanmar, so long as the Myanmar Curriculum is taught and the Burmese language is used. As Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) shared:

> [Even] after one hundred years, if you ask me, if you ask our children who learn the Myanmar Curriculum, he will easily say yes, [Myanmar] is my country, I belong to it, we will answer like that …If you want to ask one of our students, they will easily give you an answer about it, this is the influence that we have on them.

### 8.1.3 Participants' perceived influence on children's learning achievement

Of the three self-efficacy themes, survey items relating to children's learning achievement ($M$ = 2.88, $SD$ = 0.88) have the lowest reported value on participants' sense of *self-efficacy* and an anomalous effect on their *motivation to teach*. Despite the low mean value, participants' influence on children's learning ($\lambda$ = 0.29) also has the strongest (but still modest) factor loading on the *self-efficacy* factor of all survey items

As was the case with learning center-level motivation factors where participants lacked confidence discussing specific acts of teaching, at the individual level Rohingya participants ($M$ = 3.05, $SD$ = 0.85) were less forthcoming about their influence on children's learning achievement. But they did report higher and statistically more significant experiences of *self-efficacy* relating to

children's learning than their Bangladeshi peers ($M$ = 2.65, $SD$ = 0.87).[59] Participants' nascent pedagogical knowledge—a result of their limited access to formal teacher education—and a lack of formalized assessment processes provide scant evidence by which teachers can determine their actual influence on children's learning. For now, however, as Somaya Akter (Rohingya female, Camp A) shared, participants believe they can influence children to attend school and focus on their education. Female participants from both cohorts ($M$ = 2.83, $SD$ = 0.40) were more likely than males to discuss their influence on children's attendance and their ability to cause learning. Whereas Rohingya male teachers ($M$ = 2.87, $SD$ = 0.37)[60] discussed their influence on learning in more abstract or idealized ways; once again they centered on the idea of repatriation and the delivery of required knowledge for a future in Myanmar, even if it holds little relevance in children's present lives.

The hope Rohingya participants' hold for education in Cox's Bazar is clearly an underlying motivation factor, as surfaced in *motivation to teach* items about the Rohingya community's future ($M$ = 3.57, $SD$ = 0.50) and Rohingya participants' desire to teach in the future ($M$ = 3.52, $SD$ = 0.56). As suggested by Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp C) "I think learning is the most important [outcome]. If he can learn anything, he can do anything [in the future]." But to sustain this belief and corresponding motivation, it is equally important to determine whether participants believe they can deliver on their aspirations, as realized by their sense of *self-efficacy*. Much of this dynamic is captured by Hamida Sharmi (Rohingya female, Camp A) who shared via the translator that participants:

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[59] A two-sample t-test showed a significant difference in efficacy achievement scores between *Rohingya and Bangladeshi* teachers*:* $t$ = -5.13, $df$ = 492, p < .001. Cohen's $d$ = 0.47

[60] A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference in efficacy achievement across groups, F (3, 490) = 8.57, p < 0.001. A post-hoc Bonferroni showed that Bangladeshi females differed significantly from Rohingya females (p < 0.01) and Rohingya males (p = 0.000), but with no significant difference between Rohingya females and males.

> ... are thinking about the learners constantly. They are thinking about the improvement of the community … and they think that without education, then [Rohingya] are like blind with their eyes. So, education is the most important thing [for us].

With the translator's help, Hamida Sharmi (Rohingya female, Camp A) also stated that "if she can educate 20 learners, that is an achievement … they can make the change and a long chain of development, for the improvement of the community." Similarly, Bangladeshi female participants ($M$ = 2.83, $SD$ = 0.41) reflected on small wins in a challenging context. Tosmin Ara (Camp A) shared via the translator how:

> Out of the 90 students we teach, maybe 45 are on track, able to keep up with the curriculum each day, and maybe the teachers then feel they have self-efficacy to help these students.

As emphasized *ad nauseam*, Rohingya male participants are effusive about the Myanmar Curriculum's influence on children and their community. But a lack of formative assessment data also means their reflections on learning achievement are anecdotal rather than statements of change attributable to the curriculum's implementation. Nonetheless, they expressed a sense of *self-efficacy* in learning achievement items ($M$ = 3.04, $SD$ = 0.86) via the ready-for-learning behaviors that they instill in the children they teach. Illustrating this and reinforcing the duality of participants' emergent professional identities, for Sultan Aziz (Rohingya male, Camp C) the translator shared that:

> Since they came here, they got the opportunity to, you know, make effective teaching … so while everything was lost, they can prioritize education for now, for their community … they can make a change, make [the community] believe what is good for them, what is bad for them … [as teachers] we have never had that sense [in our lives] before.

Rohingya participants reported a lower level of self-efficacy on children's learning achievement ($M$ = 3.06, $SD$ = 0.86) than protection ($M$ = 3.43, $SD$ = 0.56) or a sense of belonging ($M$ = 3.43, $SD$ = 0.52), but in FGDs they were more enthusiastic than their Bangladeshi peers about their

influence on children's readiness for learning[61] which, considering the profound disruptions to their schooling trajectories over the past seven years, is to be expected.

### 8.2 How teacher agency is associated with participants' motivation to teach

Agency is defined as the authority and autonomy that individuals have in their decision making and the actions they are able to take (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Priestley et al., 2021). Specific to teachers' work, *teacher agency* is the ability to identify and act on complex curricula, pedagogical, or structural challenges and to appropriate the resources, skills, and relationships required to influence outcomes for learners (Edwards, 2015).

Rohingya participants' strong agenda for education while they are in Cox's Bazar is foundational for their enactment of professional agency as it forms the purposive element of their teaching (Priestley et al., 2021). Without this, teaching becomes an act of instrumental compliance rather than transformation and change, undermining teachers' *agency* and sense of *self-efficacy* in their engagement with and implementation of policies and/or pedagogies (Bandura, 1999; Edwards, 2015; Priestley et al. 2021). In this way, *teacher agency* constitutes a 'dialectical interplay' between teachers' aspirations for education and their acts of teaching in a given context (Edwards, 2015. p783). The development and exercise of teacher agency is thus hindered when inadequately supportive policies and practices impede opportunities for teachers' engagement, leadership, and autonomous decision making (Priestley et al., 2021).

Of relevance to teachers' work in Cox's Bazar, Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) note how individuals in fragile settings often enact their agency via efforts to retain some agency in

[61] I conducted an ordinal logit regression to assess the relationship between the efficacy-related predictors of belonging, protection, and learning achievement on the Rohingya and Bangladeshi identities (N = 494). Efficacy in achievement was significantly associated with the Rohingya identity ($B = 0.54$, $p < 0.001$), while efficacy in belonging ($B = 0.010$, $p = 0.965$) and efficacy in protection ($B = 0.356$, $p = 0.090$) were not significantly related to either identity.

expropriative and/or unsupportive work environments. When such conditions define teachers' labor, their agency is configured as acts of resistance, from which a *motivation to teach* is "sharpened through the exercise of agency in battles for what matters most" (Edwards, 2015, p. 783).

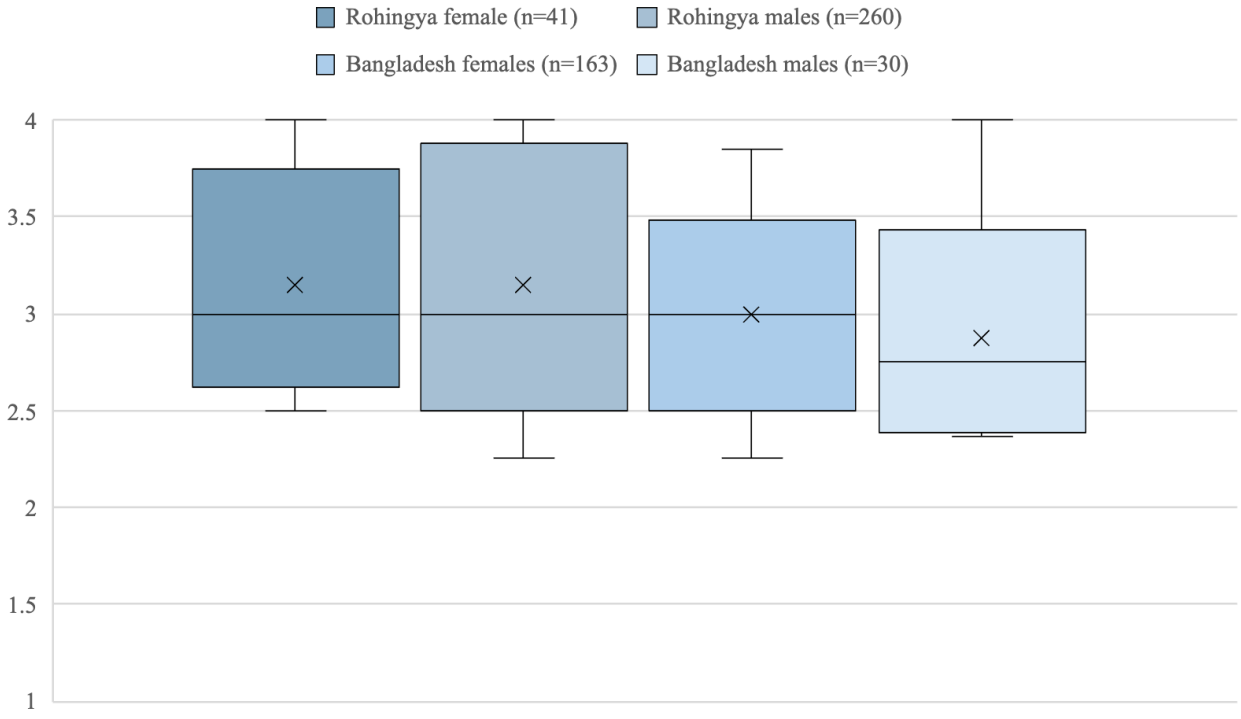
Earlier, I illustrated how self-efficacy ($\beta$ = 0.34, p < 0.001) has a significant and more powerful effect on participants' *motivation to teach* than *teacher agency* ($\beta$ = 0.10, p < 0.001).[62] Reasons included the limits of participants' agency in a highly prescriptive and top-down system. At the macro-level, such rigidity offers the stability and consistency needed in a complex setting—which some Rohingya female teachers acknowledge and appreciate. But education in Cox's Bazar is enmeshed with Rohingya political aspirations. In this way, international and host-community agencies' control of operational decision making within the Rohingya education system undermines the agency and sense of self-determination that the Rohingya desire. At the micro-level, therefore, Rohingya participants' struggle for agency and self-determination challenges the integrity of the system and frustrates an otherwise engaged workforce.

The *teacher agency* factor is made up of eight survey items focused largely on classroom-level decisions and actions, yet in FGDs Rohingya participants more readily related their sense of agency to system-level concerns. As illustrated in figure 15 below, Rohingya females ($M$ = 3.10, $SD$ = 0.41) and Rohingya males ($M$ = 3.09, $SD$ = 0.40) both report very similar experiences of *teacher agency*, which are significantly higher than Bangladeshi females ($M$ = 2.98, S$D$ = 0.38) and Bangladeshi males ($M$ = 2.82, $SD$ = 0.43) who reported the lowest levels of *teacher agency*

[62] As revealed in the OLS regression output in table 5.7a, Chapter 5.

of the four identity groups.[63] An interesting dynamic is at play here: because the survey items related mainly to classroom-level *agency*, Rohingya teachers benefit more than Bangladeshi teachers due to their heavier teaching responsibilities. Yet, in FGDs Rohingya participants despair at their lack of system-level agency, perceiving Bangladeshi teachers to have more agency to shape the system due to their administrative responsibilities and proximity to implementing partner decision makers.

**Figure 8.2**
*Box plot of participant identity-disaggregated findings for the **teacher agency** factor*




[63] A one-way ANOVA showed a significant difference in *teacher agency* scores across identity groups. $F(3, 490) = 6.25$, $p < 0.001$. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons revealed significant differences between *Rohingya males* and Bangladeshi *females* ($p = 0.023$), and *Rohingya females* and *Bangladeshi males* ($p = .023$).

As FGD narratives below reveal, Rohingya results represent a comparative sense of leadership and corresponding *teacher agency* at the community-level, which is juxtaposed by the lack of leadership and agency that they experience within the education system.

Because *teacher agency* is an academic and somewhat abstract term, the first ten minutes of each FGD unpacked the factor's meaning as it relates to refugee teachers' work. Akin to my LAG's expectations, participants understood agency as having freedom or autonomy in their work, which also aligns with Amartya Sen's (1994) concept of 'personal functionings', meaning individuals have the freedom to enact what they envision for their lives (Tao, 2016). This is a significant interpretation when Rohingya participants experience so little freedom or autonomy.

Echoing the interrelatedness of factors revealed in my OLS regressions, FGD participants also equated *teacher agency* with the *respect* they receive from community members and implementing partners, asserting that *respect* affords them the authority to make decisions in children's best interests. As a case in point, taking the initiative to engage families, faith leaders, and other community leaders to re-engage out-of-school children in formal education is a common example of agency that participants shared.

Although multiple Rohingya participants bemoaned their lack of system-level agency, Mohammed Alam (Rohingya male, Camp C) contextualizes the broader decision to teach as emblematic of his individual agency, even though becoming a teacher was determined less by choice and more by job scarcity and a sense of duty. As Mohammed Alam shares:

> We feel we have agency. For this reason, we are working as teachers, or otherwise we could be working in another field, and earning more money … We have ideas, [teaching] is our passion, we have responsibility to develop our generation, our children. It is not guaranteed where we will be, but we will live forever on this earth. That is why we have a responsibility to make the situation better.

Rohingya males reported moderate experiences of agency ($M$ = 3.09), but many express a strong desire to affect change at the system level and feel incapable and disempowered to do so. This highlights a dynamic within the concept: one's capacity to enact agency shifts and changes within and across contexts. As Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) shared:

> It feels like the structure, the system, you cannot change [it]. It is very fixed, so the answer is yes, we have agency, but only in teaching, not in the structure. We can change how we teach, but how does that change the structure?

The concept of *teacher agency* therefore fits abrasively within Rohingya conceptualizations of their work, identity and purpose; it represents the status they earn and authority they hold at the learning-center and community level, but it also amplifies their lack of self-determination within the education system and in their wider lives.

### 8.2.1 Implementing partners' control of Rohingya teachers' work

In Chapter 6, Rohingya participants reported comparatively low levels of *respect* from the NGOs that oversee their work ($M$ = 2.83, $SD$ = 0.88). Similarly, on the topic of *agency*, FGD participants were eager to discuss the impact of implementing partners' management of their learning centers, keeping in mind that Rohingya-led community schools had been shut down by the Bangladesh Government only 18 months prior (Human Rights Watch, 2022; Hossain, 2023). In this still new system for some, Rohingya participants lamented how they are managed with more scrutiny and suspicion than their Bangladeshi peers. Moreover, while implementing partner NGOs are focused on curriculum targets and teachers' compliance, Rohingya teachers believe they pay closer attention to children's holistic learning and development needs, but have little freedom or authority to respond to or resource these needs as they see best.

With perspectives like these, a tension emerges between participants' experiences of *teacher agency* within the classroom and in their inability to enact their agency in the camps. As Sheikh Mohammed (Rohingya male) in Camp B and Muhi Sadek (Rohingya male) in Camp C declared, “We are under so much control, so we cannot do anything properly” or “As a teacher, [maybe] I have power, but I cannot do one thing … I cannot conduct my teaching following my [own] opinion.” These comments signal a sense of despair at multiple levels of the system and mirror Rohingya experiences of forcible displacement in a strictly governed camp setting. Such sentiments, where participants have the ambition to be empowered teachers but simultaneously cope with expropriative labor conditions and racialized hierarchies of control (Shah 2023; Zakharia, 2024), are highlighted by Anowar Monsur (Rohingya male, Camp C) who reflects how teachers “are partners and professionals, but with no power … to have agency, you need to have trust. [But] people need to trust us.”

### 8.2.2 The freedom to make decisions

For Rohingya teachers, having agency equates to a freedom to make decisions—for themselves and the children they teach—and for those decisions to be acted upon and/or funded by implementing partners so that their decisions have power. As evidenced by survey findings, however, participants report marginal freedoms in their ability to make curriculum changes ($M$ = 2.46, $SD$ = 0.72) but slightly more in their organization of classroom spaces ($M$ = 3.02, $SD$ = 0.78). Anowar Monsur’s (Rohingya male, Camp C) analysis below aligns with much of this reality:

> I think, actually, agency is so important for the teacher because when I want to show something practically for the children, but I cannot because of the situation, that is bad, we cannot teach properly, it is like we don’t get freedom [to act] … so that’s my wish, that is the wish I have got, we need freedom, it is so important for our teaching.

As my classroom-focused *teacher agency* survey items show, participants (N = 494) generally feel they have some *teacher agency* (*M* = 3.04, *SD* = 0.40), but for agency to flourish, enabling conditions must first be in place (Priestly et al., 2015). For now, however, Rohingya *teacher agency* is seemingly curtailed by the 'paternalism' of humanitarian system oversight (Sriprakash et al., 2020; Takayama et al., 2017). On this point, Sheikh Muhammed (Rohingya male, Camp B) claimed that "[implementing partners] don't give me any of my own *agency* to make my own decisions, to make improvements." Similarly, as he reflected on the teacher learning circle process, Muhi Sadek (Rohingya male, Camp C) considered how "we have agency to make some decisions, but maybe they are just suggestions, but then we need to check with the IP to see if they can be [actual] decisions." In this sense, for participants, *teacher agency* also speaks to the importance of including teachers' voices in policy and decision-making processes (see Sayed, 2023). But in Cox's Bazar, as the above narratives suggest, Rohingya voices have too little currency to constitute what the literature would determine as *agency*, as my next section considers.

### 8.2.3 Teachers' voices and the power to influence change

In Chapter 6, despite their fatigue from overnight armed group violence, Camp D participants wanted to persevere with the FGD. This reflects the rarity of participants' voices being included in research, policy making, or program design processes (Sayed, 2023). Or, if their voices are included—such as in teacher learning circles—their contributions rarely materialize. Like Anowar Monsur (Rohingya male, Camp C) disclosed, "We raise issues [in the learning circles] but they do not take us seriously … we don't get any satisfaction from their decisions." In this way, our focus group discussions provided space and scope, albeit in a temporary manner and with limited immediate effect, for participants to have an agentic and professional voice (Bengtsson, 2023).

It is vital to affirm here that Bangladeshi implementing partner agencies are deeply committed to their mandate and play a critical role in the implementation, scaling, and management of a threadbare education system in one of the world's most challenging contexts. I have genuine admiration and respect for many of the implementing partners I worked with. As remarkable as they are, however, their work can be defined by and held in tension with the hierarchies of privilege and power that exist between host-community and refugee workforces (Shah, 2023; Sriprakash et al., 2020; Zakharia, 2024). Rohingya narratives provided further substance to this reality, showing how such hierarchies play out in practice, like multiple participants shared: "They don't give me agency to make my own decisions" (Nayun Abdul, Rohingya male, Camp C).

Even when Rohingya participants have a voice in their work, they lack confidence that their voice makes any difference. As Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male Camp D) conveyed, "They cannot hear us, if we share with them, they will never, I am sure they will never [actually] hear us." Rohingya female teachers also note how difficult it is for them to express themselves. As the translator shared on behalf of the Rohingya female Camp A cohort:

> The teachers mention that they have ideas for improvements at the [learning center] level, but there are no processes to enact their agency. They feel they have ways to provide better support for the learners' well-being … and to be able to is really important to them.

Among Rohingya participants, a lack of agency also impedes teachers' sense of leadership and professionalism within the system, especially relating to pedagogical responses to Rohingya children's learning needs. As Nayun Abdul (Rohingya male, Camp C) advocated: "If they give us opportunity to make decisions, it will be better for our generation, I mean for our learner because [the teachers] clearly know what is good for them, what is bad."

### 8.2.4 Teacher agency inside and outside the classroom

Survey items on *teacher agency* are about classroom level decision making, but focus group discussions often deferred to outside-the-classroom examples. Indicative of this, while experiencing higher levels of *agency* than Bangladeshi participants, Rohingya participants report means of just 2.46 and 2.78 for curriculum-based decision-making survey items. In this light, participants discuss classroom *agency* with some hesitation or with a passive and compliant tone. But when Rohingya participants discuss their *agency* outside of the classroom they are more active in their descriptions; especially as participants take action on community-level priorities. For example, in line with their sense of *self-efficacy*, participants believe they enact *teacher agency* when they identify and seek out families with no interest in education and initiate processes to get their children enrolled.

As the survey item shows, some Rohingya participants believed that they have pedagogical *agency* in terms of the teaching strategies they can choose ($M$ = 3.33, $SD$ = 0.54). But FGD narratives reveal that they lack the structural agency to determine what they teach and how the learning center functions. As Anowar Monsur (Rohingya male, Camp C) explained, "We have the authority to take the decision in the classroom, but we do not have the authority to decide what to do for the [learning center]." As a further example of this dynamic, Bibi Zotia (Bangladesh female, Camp A) comments on her Rohingya colleagues' experiences. Via the translator, she shared how:

> At the classroom level, the method for choosing any sort of teaching method, [Rohingya teachers] have full freedom and full authority to make the decision. But in terms of general decision making for all [learning centers], like the start time, when to bring the learners back to the classroom, the class routine, they cannot make those decisions. That is the [implementing partner] decisions only.

Khadija Begum (Rohingya female, Camp A) also explained how "I am teaching math now, but the way I am teaching the students is not working… I can then change my way or change my

methods … some parts of the activity I can change for them." Somaya Akter (Rohingya female, Camp A) agreed that she can decide how she teaches, but lacks freedom on what to teach, as the translator presented: "She says that she does not feel that much empowered to make the decision … because she needs to follow the guidelines provided… so she cannot choose what to teach, she must follow the instructions." At the same time, countering some of the pedagogical agency expressed by her colleagues, Hamida Sharmi (Rohingya female, Camp A) argued that their lack of classroom freedoms means they cannot address all children's needs. As the translator shared on her behalf, "While [teachers] have the teacher guides, they do not have the flexibility to make changes, especially around differentiating for special needs or learners who are experiencing difficulty at home or in the community."

Rohingya male participants also agreed that structural-level decisions on what to teach, and how much, impedes their ability to respond to children's unique learning needs. As Mannan Rahamot (Rohingya male, Camp D) shared:

> The [implementing partner] is making the decision to teach all subjects, all the five subjects, but I think this is just cramming for the students… In one day, maybe we have to teach five subjects in a single shift, that is very difficult to cover … but we cannot reduce how much we teach … we cannot decide what we are going to do.

Mohammed Alam (Rohingya male, Camp D) nodded along to this response, commenting that "This is hard, because all students are not equal, but we have to focus on all of them [at once]."

Outside of the classroom, some Rohingya participants believed they had more authority to act. As Mohammed Ullah (Rohingya male, Camp B) suggests, "Outside the school, I think we have more authority to take action, to make change, this is more in the community, because of the respect we get." Likewise, Setara Arefin (Rohingya female) claimed that "Because I am a respected person in the community, I feel I have agency." In another outside-of-the-classroom

example, Nayun Abdul (Rohingya male, Camp D) shared how he has the agency to intervene in community issues, saying that "If there is … quarreling in the community, I can motivate them, I can suggest that it is not good … I can tell them the bad effect and good effect, then they will realize [their actions]." Nayun Abdul also professed to have the agency to intervene in issues of child labor, from which he also connects to a sense of authority and self-efficacy:

> [Before]… in our community, most people aren't interested in education, because they are interested in their children earning money … so we can explain the situation, the value of education, and they send their children to school … we can change their minds and the situation.

At the same time, Muhi Sadek (Rohingya male, Camp D) shared how teachers have the *agency* to take action on social issues, but sometimes entrenched cultural norms undermine their efforts:

> Our girls at around 11 or 12, they drop out from school, they wear their hijabs, and they stay inside the home… we explain to parents to send their girls to the home-based learning center then, in this way we can change the situation, we make the girls have another opportunity for learning, we can try and motivate them, but we really have no power [to make this happen]

Supporting Muhi Sadek's comments, his male colleagues in Camp D agreed that teachers possess *agency*—and perhaps a gender-constituted level of authority—to motivate families and children. However, they also agreed that their decisions to act often lack real or lasting influence.

While participants expressed their *agency* inside and outside the classroom differently, a point of contention frustrates their ability to fully experience the outcomes of their agency: the structural realities of living in a refugee camp and working in a hierarchical and racialized humanitarian system limits the fulfillment of Rohingya aspirations for their own education, which is tied to their lack of *agency* and self-determination at large.

### 8.2.5 The gendered dynamics of teacher agency: Is a*gency* a motivation factor for all?

A majority of the participant comments on *teacher agency* are from Rohingya males. While Rohingya female participants experience a moderate degree of agency in their work ($M$ = 3.10, $SD$ = 0.41)[64] only 36 percent reported a high level of agency (see Annex C7) and an OLS regression shows that Rohingya females ($B$ = 0.08) also reported restrained and statistically insignificant expectations for the role of *teacher agency* on their *motivation to teach.*

Based on FGDs, Rohingya female participants have a balanced perspective for when *teacher agency* comes into effect as a motivation factor. Compared to Rohingya males ($M$ = 3.09, S$D$ = 0.40), of whom nearly 50 percent experience a high level of agency,[65] Rohingya female participants expressed more affinity for the structure and strong guidance provided by implementing partners, especially as new teachers came to terms with the demands of teaching. For example, Setara Arefin (Rohingya female, Camp A) believed that the value of *teacher agency* depends on the knowledge, skills, and experience of the teacher. Moreover, while Rohingya female teachers appreciate gestures of inclusion and enjoy collaborating with implementing partners on teaching materials and targets, they also like not being entirely isolated in their planning and decision making. In some respects, drawing on Rohingya interpretations of *teacher agency* as freedom and autonomy, they assert how a lack of *teacher agency* can be a good thing when strong structural support and guidance scaffold their sense of security in their work. As Somaya Akter (Rohingya female, Camp A) shared via the translator, “Because everything is planned for them,

[64] A two-sample t-test showed no significant difference in *teacher agency* scores between Rohingya females and males, t = -0.044, df = 299, p = 0.9648.

[65] An OLS regression also shows that for Rohingya males ($B$ = *0.06*), *teacher agency* is a weaker and statistically insignificant predictor of *motivation to teach*.

they feel less stressed about it. They do not have to make many decisions there, and that makes them less stressed" (Rohingya female, Camp A).

Where multiple scholars discuss the double burden of female teachers' work as they manage professional and domestic lives (Febrianto et al., 2020; Kirk and Winthrop, 2013; Tao, 2016; Unterhalter, 2007), I hold that Rohingya women who teach in Cox's Bazar actually manage a 'triple burden' of gendered work: The professional work of lesson planning, teaching, and assessments at the learning center; the domestic work of child- and elder-care responsibilities at home; and their public work: the novelty and relative discord of being a working Rohingya woman in the community. At the same time, as multiple Rohingya females alluded to, these burdens are mitigated by teaching's transformative effect on their lives, the comparative empowerment they experience, and the distraction from stressors outside the classroom that teaching brings. With this confluence of factors at play, it is understandable how the imposed structure, schedules, guidance, and moderated community of practice that teachers experience, and which represents a lack of *agency* for some Rohingya men, is a welcome aspect of teaching for many Rohingya women.

## 8.3 Conclusion

This chapter addressed sub-question three to understand how the individual-level experiences of *teacher self-efficacy* and *teacher agency* affect participants' *motivation to teach*. Based on survey findings for the whole sample (N = 494), there are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) associations between participants who experience a high level of *self-efficacy* ($\beta = 0.27$) and *agency* ($\beta = 0.14$) and their *motivation to teach*. In line with teacher motivation findings from high-income and stable contexts (Fernet et al., 2013; Lauerman et al., 2013; Osman and Warner, 2020; Watt and Richardson, 2007) *self-efficacy* has the strongest explanatory power of all six motivation factors

on participants' *motivation to teach* in Cox's Bazar. While this relationship still holds when results are disaggregated by participant identity, concerning dissonance exists between quantitative and qualitative findings. For Rohingya male teachers' (n = 260) *self-efficacy* is meaningfully associated with their *motivation to teach* ($B = 0.12$, $p < 0.01$), yet in FGDs they express a comparative lack of *teacher agency* borne from the rigid expectations upon their work and the curtailed freedoms of their wider lives. As a result, there are limits to what Rohingya male participants believed they could achieve in the current system.

The literature shows how teachers with *agency* have a well-formed understanding of their personal competence and can apply it within a context's constraints to achieve envisioned outcomes, thereby affirming a sense of *self-efficacy* and strengthening their *motivation to teach* (Ross, 1994; Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk, 2001). But when narrative findings within the Rohingya cohort were compared, males suspended their sense of *self-efficacy*, believing that their efforts will have influence once they repatriate to Myanmar. By contrast, Rohingya female teachers were more focused on daily decisions, actions within their control, and the rewards of their work.

In FGDs, Rohingya female participants generally expressed more satisfaction with their pedagogical agency in the classroom, meaning they can decide how to teach, whereas Rohingya male participants were more frustrated by their inability to determine what they teach and the structures in which they teach. As Rohingya males equated *agency* with freedom, they regretted not progressing in the Myanmar Curriculum as desired or being able to respond to children's learning priorities as needed. This contributes to feelings of frustration, discontent, and low morale.

Two insights deserve further attention: The first relates to Rohingya female teachers questioning the importance of *teacher agency*, especially when the scripted and highly structured nature of their work scaffolds and reduces their workload stress. In this sense, especially in

conflict-affected and fragile settings, we cannot over-idealize teacher agency as a common good or universal predictor of teacher motivation. Although positive quantitative findings to *teacher agency* do not substantiate these assertions, qualitative insights suggest that when teachers are inadequately prepared or supported to teach, too much *teacher agency* can undermine teachers' *work satisfaction* and *motivation to teach*.

The second insight comes from Mohammed Alam (Rohingya male, Camp C) who claimed "we have agency. For this reason, we are working as teachers, or otherwise we could be working in another field, and earning more money." While this sits awkwardly with the scarcity of alternative paid employment in the camps, Mohammed Alam's configuration of agency is emblematic of Rohingya participants' underlying *motivation to teach*: their decision to teach is also an exercise of their limited agency and their collective duty and shared agenda for Rohingya education.

Finally, the fact that Rohingya teachers discuss children's sense of belonging and protection with more confidence than children's learning outcomes is paradigmatic of findings throughout this study. It connects with Rohingya teachers' emergent professional identities and limited pedagogical content knowledge. Making the connection of specific acts of teaching with children's learning outcomes especially difficult. Thus, teachers claim higher levels of *self-efficacy* for the expanded tasks of teachers' work than the expected responsibilities of teaching (Falk, 2023). This also explains participants' expressions of agency outside-the-classroom: Many Rohingya teachers see themselves as leaders with positive influence, even if their classroom capabilities are a work in progress.

# Chapter 9 - Discussion, conclusion, and recommendations.

The fact that almost 80 percent of Rohingya participants' report high levels of *motivation to teach* cannot be accepted at face value. Nor can it be accepted as a convenient bi-product of resource and employment scarcity in the Cox's Bazar camps. Although purportedly high stress thresholds and the underlying political agenda for Rohingya education may explain teachers' resilience, this should not absolve system-level leaders of their duty of care. In fact, the ascription of 'resilience' upon vulnerable populations obscures the systemic sources of risk and relieves system-level leaders of their responsibility to enact change (Barrios 2016; Henderson, 2023, Shah et al., 2020). In this sense, from an ethical and moral standpoint, system-level leaders in Cox's Bazar have a duty to protect Rohingya teachers from the stressors that undermine their *safety*, *work satisfaction*, and *agency*.

Refugee teachers' rights must also be defined and upheld. As stated in the International Labour Organization's (1966) Recommendations on the Status of Teachers, the fulfilment of Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the basic right to education extends to teachers also enjoying this right. Moreover, the ILO's principles state that "teachers should be free from any form of discrimination on grounds of race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, or economic condition" and that "working conditions for teachers should be such as will best promote effective learning and enable teachers to concentrate on their professional tasks" (p. 22). As it stands, by way of piecemeal or non-existent contracts, low pay, and sporadic access to continuous professional learning, refugee teachers' rights are further subjugated when national-system teachers are also denied these rights. (Henderson, 2023; Mendenhall and Falk, 2023).

## 9.1 Discussion: Rohingya refugee teachers' work as a story of anticipatory hope

In this study of Rohingya refugee teachers' motivation, a story of 'anticipatory hope' advances conceptual framings of the 'impossible fiction' (Adelman, 2019) of refugee teachers' work and the 'parameters of hope' (Dryden-Peterson, 2017) that refugee teachers work within. As my integrated findings show, even when teachers are denied their basic rights, work adverse conditions, and risk their own lives in order to teach, they are still *motivated to teach.* Further still, 'anticipatory hope' implies that refugee teachers have the political consciousness, agency, and will to work for and towards a better future, even when that future seems unlikely. Therefore, compared to the instrumental and technocratic tone that teachers' work imbibes in policy notes and sector guidance, 'anticipatory hope' adds dimension to refugee teachers' objectives for education; it conveys a human and deeply political perspective. It also complements concepts of teacher well-being by articulating the drivers of teaching via the under-examined question of refugee teachers' *motivation to teach* in humanitarian settings; replete as they are with paternalistic and constrictive hierarchies of power and control (Shah et al., 2024; Sriprakash et al., 2020; Zakharia, 2024).

This story of 'anticipatory hope' also illustrates teachers' persistence as they navigate the local and global tensions that shape their work. As framed in Chapter 2, refugee teachers self-identify as 'nation builders in waiting' by first developing their own skills as teachers and then developing the children they teach (Waters and LeBlanc, 2015). The literature highlights how 'nation building' transcends borders as refugee teachers expect children to return to their country of origin and contribute towards peace (Mendenhall et al., 2017; Falk et al., 2022; Sesnan, 2013; Shepler, 2011). Via their enthusiasm for the Myanmar Curriculum and the hope it represents, like refugee teachers elsewhere Rohingya teachers imply that 'nation building' and a sense of belonging are core reasons to teach (Falk et al., 2022; Mendenhall, 2018; Dryden-Peterson, 2022).

The distinct difference in the case of the stateless Rohingya, however, is that their belonging is contested. Akin to refugee teachers in other contexts, the Rohingya hope for the restoration of peace to enable their return. But their plight is made more unique by Myanmar's refusal to recognize their heritage, their right to their own land, and their right to call Myanmar home.

The second tension is related to curriculum and the politics of refugee education. In contexts where refugees are included in host-country education systems, the national curriculum is used but issues relate to its relevance to refugee learners' lives, identities, or the quality of teaching (Cohen, 2019; Dryden-Peterson, 2018; Mendenhall, 2017). In Cox's Bazar, in service of the repatriation agenda, teachers teach the Myanmar Curriculum in a language that is not their own and was once a weapon of their dispossession. On paper, neither the curriculum or the language serve the Rohingya's immediate realities: they serve aspirations for repatriation but bear minimal relevance and marginal utility if the Rohingya stay in Bangladesh or are resettled elsewhere. Still, Burmese carries significant symbolic value for the Rohingya's imagined and ideal futures. As my findings show, teaching the Myanmar Curriculum is also an experience of contradictions: at once it is an act of suspended grievance and a ritual of necessity. Moreover, the rationale for its implementation is at odds with and a response to the origins of Rohingya displacement.

The third tension is the de-professionalization of teachers' work. Beyond the deficit theorizing of teachers and their work, Rohingya participants experience this tension in two ways. They identify how the skills they gain through teaching are a powerful motivation factor and they report strong levels of *self-efficacy* in terms of their influence on children's protection and sense of belonging. Yet in FGDs, details about teaching strategies or learning outcomes were difficult to elicit. This reality could reinforce the deficit perspectives I am at pains to avoid; but in actuality it is a consequence of poor investment in teachers' pedagogical development. Rohingya participants

struck me as politically aware and engaged when discussing the systemic or contextual challenges that they face, yet they do not receive the support needed to articulate the pedagogical implications of their work.

Furthermore, when systems frame teachers as 'mediocre intellectuals', resulting didactic and cascade-based approaches to teacher training rarely enable the full scope and sophistication of refugee teachers' work to emerge (Ali, 2018; Pherali et al., 2020; Tao, 2016). Teachers' work in Cox's Bazar is bound by prescribed curriculum texts, rendering teachers as couriers of predetermined knowledge rather than critical and creative knowledge producers with agency and self-determination (Giroux, 1988; Pherali et al., 2020). This dynamic also plays out at a system level where 'de-professionalized' teachers become frustrated by their lack of structural agency and the authority to act on operational concerns. In effect, the system sends a message to teachers that their voices and expertise are undervalued, thus contributing to demoralization and disengagement and threatening their *motivation to teach* (Sayed, 2023; Tao, 2016). For these reasons, a paradigm shift that reconfigures teachers as culturally intelligent with the "agency to enable transformation within the complex realities in which they work" is called for (Pherali et al., 2020, p. 22).

Amid these tensions, 'anticipatory hope' also connects the two motivation factors with the most explanatory power: *teacher self-efficacy* and *work satisfaction*. As many of the Rohingya men in my study implied, their sense of *self-efficacy* is suspended and dependent upon their eventual repatriation. And participants are not necessarily hopeful; each of the once-possible pathways for repatriation are looking decidedly grim as Myanmar's civil war rages on (Wade and Laoutides, 2024). Yet teachers still work in anticipation of a change in circumstance, wherein they hope to find hope once again. Similarly, much of their *work satisfaction* is derived from the

connection between their confounding commitment to the Myanmar Curriculum and Burmese language and the eventual rewards that they hope to reap.

## 9.2 Conclusion: Key findings and opportunities for future research

This study has focused on the experiences and factors most associated with refugee teachers' *motivation to teach.* While teachers' identities and extrinsic items relating to employment and compensation hold some explanatory value in the *motivation to teach* outcome factor, the experiences and factors that most significantly predicted teachers' *motivation to teach* are more nuanced and interrelated; they represent a mix of socio-ecological levels of analysis, contributions from different social actors in teachers' work and lives, and a range of intrinsic assets. At the community-level, my findings showed how a sense of *support* is the most powerful predictor of participants' *motivation to teach*. But profound *safety* concerns—likely exacerbated by teachers' positive status, visibility, and the 'problem of respect'—are also a cause of significant distress. At the learning center level, the experience of *work satisfaction* factor is also a meaningful predictor, with the introduction of the formal Myanmar Curriculum and access to professional development playing key roles in participants' *motivation to teach*. At the individual-level, participants spoke with confidence of their influence on children's protection and sense of belonging, reflecting the positive *self-efficacy* they feel in their roles. But participants also lamented their lack of *teacher agency* at the system level, reflecting the further loss of the fragile sense of self-determination that Rohingya teachers experienced in community-led learning centers (Olney et. al, 2019).

The distinction between my quantitative and qualitative findings also provides methodological insight, emphasizing Creswell and Plano-Clark's (2015) observation that the use of "quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of a

research problem than either approach alone" (p. 8). There was dissonance between my datasets in that participants' survey item responses were surprisingly and overwhelmingly positive—clustered around the upper ceiling of most scales—given the context and dire conditions in which teachers work. While the validity and reliability of my scales are generally strong, and many teachers reported genuine experiences of *work satisfaction* and *self-efficacy*, some results may also be distorted by a social desirability bias emanating from employment precarity and a perceived need to present oneself in a positive light (ibid). In other words, participants were unlikely to respond in ways that threatened their perceived job security and reputation.

Education in emergencies studies on teacher well-being identify factors contributing to teachers' stress and burnout, implying a correlation between poor teacher well-being and high teacher attrition rates. But these studies have treated motivation as a contributor or indicator of teacher well-being rather than asking *how* well-being is a determinant teacher motivation. Instead, in this study I have asked *how* and *why*, when teacher well-being is lacking or altogether absent, many teachers are still *motivated to teach*. Too often, teacher well-being studies diagnose teachers' need for stable employment and livable incomes a one-stop solution when, as this study reveals, refugee teachers' *motivation to teach* is far more complex.

As my literature review outlines, this exploratory study was warranted because research on refugee teacher motivation in low-income and fragile settings is sparse, to say the least. Moreover, extant teacher motivation studies are from high-income and stable contexts and it was unclear how scales validated in these settings would fit the contours of refugee teachers' work in Cox's Bazar. Based on the adjacent teacher well-being literature (e.g. Brandt and Lopes-Cardozo, 2023; Falk et al., 2023; Wolf et. al, 2015) and insights from preparatory interviews with NGO key informants

and Rohingya teachers, I was able to identify teacher motivation concepts and scales that could be contextualized for Cox's Bazar and refugee-hosting contexts more broadly.

The global literature on teacher motivation identifies *self-efficacy* and *work satisfaction* as core attributes of highly motivated teachers, although many studies also stop short of identifying the conditions that allow for *self-efficacy* and *work satisfaction* to flourish (Fernet et al, 2008; Lauerman, 2017; Watts and Richardson, 2007). Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory informed the most relevant studies I drew upon, with drivers like the *personal* and *social utility value* of teaching (Watt and Richardson, 2007; Lauerman, 2017), the *task reward* that comes from teaching (Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007), and the *expectancy value* of teaching as particularly influential concepts. In addition, Dinham and Scott's (2000) *contextual domain* hints towards the political agendas that might underscore many teachers' motivation and resilience in adverse settings.

While further research is needed to understand the universality of these concepts and scales, my initial concerns about the incompatibility of scales validated in high-income settings were perhaps overstated. In Cox's Bazar, the *personal* and *social utility value* of education and the *task return* of teaching align with Rohingya participants' intrinsic and extrinsic *motivation to teach* and like studies from high-income and stable settings, *self-efficacy* and *work satisfaction* also emerged as the most significant determinants of teachers' motivation. While the above constructs and factors were compatible, they still seemed inadequate; as if a more complex and less measurable factor explaining teachers *motivation to teach* was also at play.

This sentiment echoes Dinham and Scott's (2000) call to expand teacher motivation research beyond the intrinsic-extrinsic binary to include a more contextual domain. For refugee-hosting settings in particular, a binary framing constrains the scope by which we understand the

underlying determinants of refugee teacher motivation. My discomfort with these limitations allowed for the concept of 'anticipatory hope' to evolve at the intersection of my quantitative and qualitative findings, especially when such arduous work conditions still fostered high levels of *motivation to teach.* Anticipatory hope therefore speaks of a transformational type of motivation, where discontent and despair inspire teaching in order to transform; to resist the structural violence and marginalization that define one's present realities; to change the future social conditions of one's community; and to reclaim personal and collective dignity. In this regard, it is no coincidence that the most vulnerable identity group in my study—Rohingya teachers and Rohingya female teachers more specifically—are also the most *motivated to teach.* A 'transformative' domain of motivation evokes Freirean ideas of education as *conscientization* (Freire, 1992)—or a critical awakening—and can be framed as a form of motivation rooted in a desire for political agency.

My findings present an important contribution to the education in emergencies and comparative education fields. They build from Wolf et al.'s (2015) research on cumulative risk factors and teacher well-being and echo recent insights from Marchais et al.'s (2024) research on violence, teacher well-being, and resilience in the Democratic Republic of Congo, not to mention Mendenhall et al.'s (2024) findings on teacher well-being and resilience in South Sudan and Uganda. Where these studies draw links between the conditions in which teachers work and the adverse effect of these conditions on teachers' professional well-being, my study has gone a step further to critically evaluate how teacher well-being-related factors are correlated with teachers' *motivation to teach*. By building upon a strong foundation of teacher well-being studies, and responding to systems-level alarm about teacher attrition and skills shortage issues in crisis-affected contexts (UNESCO, 2024; Henderson, 2025), the links I draw between refugee teachers' contextual and system-level experiences and their *motivation to teach* inform opportunities for

future international and comparative education research and education in emergencies policy developments.

## 9.3 Recommendations: How my findings can shape policy and practice

The success of the Myanmar Curriculum rollout, Rohingya children's educational development, and the wider community's future opportunities weigh on the shoulders of those who teach. I believe this study presents a complex and intimate picture of Rohingya teachers' lived experiences and their aspirations for education, which determines much of their *motivation to teach*. With few workable or realistic repatriation solutions in sight, however, international and Bangladeshi agencies depend on teachers for conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities, child protection, health and well-being literacy, and a tentative sense of belonging in exile. Yet the importance of teachers' wider role in the Cox's Bazar camps has been under addressed, meaning further research and advocacy is needed to ensure that Rohingya teachers' contributions are recognized and their needs are met.

I present the recommendations below in relation to refugee education and teachers' work in Cox's Bazar, but due to the relevance of my study I consider them to have value for wider refugee education and education in emergencies fields. Moreover, in their relevance for Cox's Bazar, I am cognizant that some of these recommendations are already in motion; in which case they are restated to emphasize the importance of their implementation.

### 9.3.1 Continue to invest in and normalize Rohingya female teachers' work

When all motivation factors were accounted for, in the combined OLS regression Rohingya women reported a marginally higher and statistically significant level of *motivation to teach* than Rohingya men. In FGDs, female participants were less likely to reflect on the political agenda of

their work as a motivating factor, but their teaching also represented a transformative departure from the cosseted lives prescribed to many of their peers. As Somaya Akter shared:

> Basically, women were not getting opportunities to be teachers or even be educated in Myanmar. When they get the same opportunity [in Bangladesh] to be a teacher or be educated, that is why they are more motivated.

Rohingya female participants do refer to the social justice and educational drivers of their work, as Somaya later shared "The point is our community is lagging and they are not getting the rights they deserve, they are not getting everything they want from their life… it's not a job." But they also speak more passionately of the daily rewards of teaching, like the *self-efficacy* they experience when providing protection for children in the classroom. Despite Rohingya female participants' high *motivation to teach*, harmful cultural norms and a lack of adolescent Rohingya girls completing school and qualifying to teach perpetuates cycles of drop out, early marriage, and teen pregnancy. Humanitarian agencies therefore need to incorporate the promising motivation findings presented in this study to reinforce a progressive narrative for Rohingya women: When Rohingya women are meaningfully supported to teach they experience transformation in their own lives and have a multiplier effect as role models in the lives of the girls and young women they work with.

### 9.3.2 Invest in teacher protection and formal community support systems

When I showed FGD participants that only 40 percent of Rohingya teachers experience a high level of *safety*, participants responded that it should be lower and promptly explained why. Rohingya men are caught between troublemakers and peacekeepers, referring to the armed gangs who control the camps after 4 pm and the Bangladeshi security forces who suspect teachers of being involved in criminal activities. Participants discussed the troubling consequences of their visibility and influence within the community: Just as Marchais et al. (2024) found in the DRC, in Cox's Bazar armed gangs coerce teachers into supporting their causes through threats and acts of

violence, which often take place in an around the open spaces of learning centers. In tandem, Bangladeshi security forces exert influence by interrogating teachers whenever violence flares and by policing their movements within the camps. Because teachers are not issued with identity cards and cannot distinguish themselves from others within the camps and they are also made more vulnerable to security force harassment.

On the other hand, the factor of *support* is a strong contributor to participants' motivation to teach, especially when they feel more supported than others in the community because they are teachers. These findings emphasize the importance of structural and formalized systems of protection to mitigate workload stressors and enhance their sense of well-being; but this needs to go hand in hand with protection concerns, which can be resolved by carefully identifying and removing teachers associated with ARSA or RSO activities, issuing identity cards, orienting Bangladeshi security forces to the realities of teachers' work and their mobility needs, and allowing for a greater NGO and security force presence after 4 pm to quell the armed gang violence.

### 9.3.3 Focus on teacher pedagogical skills and subject knowledge development

Similar to its positive association with teacher well-being in other studies (e.g. Wolf et al., 2015), participants' sense of *work satisfaction* is a powerful predictor of their *motivation to teach*. Likewise, compelling links exist between teachers' access to professional development support, their *work satisfaction*, and their professional well-being (Mendenhall, 2019; Mendenhall et al., 2019b). Notably, in this study the teacher professional development survey item received the highest mean score and strongest loading on the *work satisfaction* factor. At the same time, a much lower score for curriculum stress shows that multiple participants strongly agree that the Myanmar Curriculum causes considerable difficulty in their work. Bringing these positive and negative

findings together identifies a key area for action. Humanitarian settings depend on teachers to facilitate child protection, physical and sexual exploitation and abuse, and psychosocial first aid interventions, and teachers report significant *self-efficacy* in their fulfillment of these roles. Moreover, humanitarian agencies depend on up to date and accurate assessment data as evidence of educational outcomes and a return on donors' investments, requiring the rollout of assessment-focused training for teachers. However, subject-knowledge and pedagogical skills training tends to attract less attention and investment.

Participants' difficulties articulating the pedagogical implications of their work and the curriculum-level stressors they express emphasize the urgent need for pedagogical skills and subject knowledge-focused professional development. Therefore, rather than one-off trainings or teacher learning circles as the extent of an approach, the master trainer system should ensure that professional development is multi-modal and continuous; i.e. that workshops, classroom observations, coaching and mentoring sessions, professional learning plans, and competency evaluations are part of master trainers' repertoires and teachers' professional experiences.

### 9.3.4 Provide contracts, career pathways, and include teachers in decision making

My OLS regression findings showed that Rohingya teachers have a more positive and significant relationship with the *motivation to teach* outcome factor than their Bangladeshi peers. Given the assertiveness of Rohingya teachers' motivation for teaching, and the fact that they serve their own community, a statistically higher level of *motivation to teach* makes sense. Seven years into the crisis and suffering from compassion fatigue the host-community's motivations are decidedly more transactional (Kamruzzaman et al., 2024; Khan, 2024; Uddin, 2020); in this sense host-community teachers are motivated by the employment pathways and higher salaries that are

unavailable to their Rohingya colleagues. This is a point of considerable stress for Rohingya teachers who yearn for formal vocational pathways and recognition. As Mohammed Alam shared, "It makes me upset when I see them as the boss. They have a degree also but they are now the boss of me. They are the same age as me, that could be me [if I was in Myanmar]".

Additionally, the different opportunities available to both communities are becoming a social cohesion issue, or what Hossain (2023) describes as a 'cold conflict'. What emerged in focus group discussions as simmering discontent could become a more pronounced breakdown in relations between refugee and host-community populations. Moreover, with no viable repatriation avenues, it is unrealistic and unjust to expect Rohingya refugee teachers to remain in classroom roles with few leadership opportunities or responsibilities on the horizon. Already, almost 50 percent of the Rohingya workforce reported over five years of teaching experience in the camps. In this regard, as the novelty of the Myanmar Curriculum wanes and before relations with host-community teachers fray, implementing partners need to design and implement Rohingya pathways that extend beyond teaching, mentoring, and master trainer roles to include learning center administration, cluster leadership, and system-level decision making opportunities, too.

## 9.4 What does this mean for research on refugee education and refugee teachers?

I began my dissertation with an epigraph from Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of Hope (1992), in which he states "it is this critical ability to plunge into a new daily reality … that brings the man or woman in exile to a more historical understanding of their own situation" (p. 25). As I have argued, in a context of forced displacement teaching is an act of reclamation, an opportunity to reassert one's humanity in the midst of profound loss. By committing to work that reimagines and affirms one's identity and is oriented towards a shared agenda in exile (Mallki, 1992), teaching is an inherently

human and deeply political act. Thus, for the Rohingya, just like Freire, to teach is to create hope. A similar dynamic applies to teachers in the DRC (Marchais, 2023), Kenya (Mendenhall, 2015), Lebanon (Adelman, 2019), and Uganda (Dryden-Peterson, 2022): In untenable conditions, teaching constitutes an act of possibility and promise, however faint. Moreover, while research on teachers' well-being can render teachers as passive within expropriative systems, understanding teachers' work as an act of 'anticipatory hope' can reconstitute refugee teachers as agentic, capable, and politically engaged.

To reiterate an earlier argument, we cannot neglect teachers' personal and professional needs because they are *motivated to teach*. Like teachers in conflict-affected settings globally, refugee teachers still work within informal and extractive employment arrangements via which their well-being is compounded by vulnerability to state and non-state actor harassment and attack (GCPEA, 2024; Marchais et. al 2024; Shah, 2023). In this way, education in emergencies research and advocacy needs to extend framings of teacher well-being to define and include teachers' fundamental rights. In line with the High-level Panel on the Teaching Profession's (2024) call for a review of the 1966 ILO-UNESCO Recommendations on the Status of Teachers, better accountability within humanitarian systems and a renewed focus on teachers' rights is essential. To nurture refugee teachers' *motivation to teach* and in line with this study's key findings, teachers deserve the right to fair salaries, contracts, and access to continuous professional development (*work satisfaction and support*); a relevant and transferrable curriculum and language of instruction (*work satisfaction*); protection from violence (*safety*); the freedom to act on their decisions (*teacher agency*); and the ability to experience competence, reward, and recognition from their work (*self-efficacy* and *respect*).

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# Appendix A - Survey instrument

### SURVEY: REFUGEE TEACHER MOTIVATION IN COX'S BAZAR, BANGLADESH

Thank you for your participation in this survey. Your responses are confidential and can only be accessed by the researcher, Chris Henderson, once you complete and submit the survey. The honesty of your responses is very valuable, as it will help the researcher understand the factors that influence your motivation to teach and continue teaching in Cox's Bazar. The results of this survey will inform a research publication about teachers' experiences, strengths, and needs in Cox's Bazar.

#### 0. TEACHER LOCATION

| **0A.** Camp number | **0B.** Implementing partner |
|---|---|
| A (1)<br>B (2)<br>C (3)<br>D (4) | AA (1)<br>BB (2)<br>CC (3)<br>DD (4)<br>EE (5) |

#### 1. TEACHER IDENTITY

| **1A.** Your nationality [IDENTITY] | | **1B.** Your sex [SEX] | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ● Bangladesh (0) | ● Rohingya (1) | ● Male (0) | ● Female (1) |

| **1C.** Your age [AGE] | **1D.** Teaching experience [EXPERIENCE] |
|---|---|
| ● 16 - 20 (1)<br>● 21 - 25 (2)<br>● 26 - 30 (3)<br>● 31 - 35 (4)<br>● 36 - 40 (5)<br>● 41 - 45 (6)<br>● 46 - 50 (7)<br>● 51 - 55 (8)<br>● Over 55 (9) | ● Less than 1 year (1)<br>● Between 1 and 2 years (2)<br>● Between 2 and 3 years (3)<br>● Between 3 and 4 years (4)<br>● Between 4 and 5 years (5)<br>● More than 5 years (6) |

#### 2. COMMUNITY-LEVEL MOTIVATION

**Definition:** Community-level motivation refers to your experiences outside of the learning center that affect your work and motivation to continue teaching.

**2A. PERSONAL SAFETY**

**Definition:** These questions are about you feeling more or less safe because you are a teacher and the reasons why.

| **2A1.** [SAFETY_COMMUNITY_RISK1] People in my community treat me badly because I am a teacher | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

| **2A2.** [SAFETY_POLITICAL_RISK2] Because I am a teacher, I experience difficulties with Rohingya political groups | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

| **2A3.** [SAFETY_AUTHORITY_RISK1] Because I am a teacher, I am more protected by Bangladesh authorities | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **2A4.** [SAFETY_COMMUNITY_RISK2] Because I am a teacher, I feel more protected by my community | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **2A5.** [SAFETY_POLITICAL_RISK1] Because I am a teacher, I am valued by Rohingya political groups | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **2A6.** [SAFETY_AUTHORITY_RISK2] I have experiences of bad treatment by Bangladesh authorities | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

**2B. SUPPORT**

**Definition:** These questions are about you feeling more or less supported by your family, community members, and NGOs because you are a teacher.

| **2B1.** [SUPPORT_FAMILY1] My family supports my decision to be a teacher | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **2B2.** [COMMUNITY SUPPORT1] My community provides me with help so I can focus on teaching | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **2B3.** [SUPPORT_FAMILY2] My family DOES NOT provide me with help so that I can focus on teaching | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

| **2B4.** [NGO SUPPORT1] Because I am a teacher, I get my own education from NGO trainings | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **2B5.** [COMMUNITY SUPPORT2] Because I am a teacher, I feel LESS supported by my community | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

| **2B6.** [NGO SUPPORT2] Because I am a teacher, I receive more support than other people from NGOs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

**2C. RESPECT**

**Definition:** These questions are about you feeling more or less respected by your family, community members, and NGOs because you are a teacher.

| **2C1.** [RESPECT_FAMILY1] My family is proud of me because I am a teacher | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **2C2.** [ RESPECT_COMMUNITY1] Teachers are respected by the community | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **2C3.** [ RESPECT_COMMUNITY2] Teachers have a positive status in the community | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **2C4.** [RESPECT_NGO1] I feel NGO staff treat me like a professional | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **2C5.** [RESPECT_FAMILY2] Because I am a teacher, my family DO NOT respect me | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

| **2C6.** [RESPECT_NGO2] Because I am a teacher, I feel NGO staff DO NOT respect me | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

## 3. LEARNING CENTER-LEVEL MOTIVATION

**Definition:** Learning center-level motivation refers to things that you experience inside of the learning center that affect your work and motivation to continue teaching.

### 3A. WORK SATISFACTION

**Definition:** These questions relate to the experiences that affect your work and motivation at learning centers

| **3A1.** [WORKSATISFACTION_LANGUAGE1] I am able to teach in my own language | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **3A2.** [WORKSATISFACTION_LANGUAGE2] Teaching in other languages is a difficult part of my work | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

| **3A3.** [WORKSATISFACTION_MYANMARCURR1] Teaching the Myanmar Curriculum is a positive experience | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |

| **3A4.** [WORKSATISFACTION_MYANMARCURR2] Teaching the Myanmar Curriculum causes me stress | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

| **3A5.** [WORKSATISFACTION_RELATIONSHIPS1] I experience personal growth when I work with other teachers | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **3A6.** [WORKSATISFACTION_RELATIONSHIPS2] Working with other teachers is a positive part of my work | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **3A7.** [WORKSATISFACTION_TPDSKILLS1] Teacher training DOES NOT improve my confidence as a teacher | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

| **3A8.** [WORKSATISFACTION_MYANMARCURR3] Teaching the Myanmar Curriculum makes me feel more professional | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **3A9.** [WORKSATISFACTION_LEADERSHIP1] My work is valued by master trainers | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **3A10.** [WORKSATISFACTION_LEADERSHIP2] Master trainers care about my professional development | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **3A11.** [WORKSATISFACTION_TPDSKILLS1] Teacher training is a benefit I enjoy as part my work | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

## 4. INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL MOTIVATION

**Definition:** Individual-level motivation refers to things that you believe you are able to do and achieve at your learning center and in the community because you are a teacher.

### 4A. TEACHER AGENCY

**Definition:** These questions relate to how much independence you have in your decision making as a teacher

| **4A1.** [AGENCY_CURRICULUM1] I can decide what curriculum content I teach each day | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **4A2.** [AGENCY_PEDAGOGY] I DO NOT have different teaching strategies that I can use | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

| **4A3.** [AGENCY_ASSESSMENT1] I have different strategies I can use to assess student learning | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **4A4.** [AGENCY_ENV1] I can organize my classroom environment in different ways | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **4A5.** [AGENCY_CURRICULUM2] I am NOT able to make changes to the curriculum to meet my students' needs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

| **4A6.** [AGENCY_ASSESSMENT2] I can NOT choose how I assess my students' learning | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

| **4A7.** [AGENCY_PEDAGOGY] I can choose which teaching strategies work best for my students | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **4A8.** [AGENCY_ENV2] I can NOT change how my classroom space is organized | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

**4B. TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY**

**Definition:** These questions are about your personal influence on children's learning, protection, and belonging.

| **4B1.** [EFFICACY_RELATIONSHIP!] I believe I have a positive relationship with my students | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **4B2.** [EFFICACY_HOPE1] As a teacher, I CANNOT help students to have hope for the future | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

| **4B3.** [EFFICACY_BELONGING] I believe I can help my students to feel like they belong in my classroom | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **4B4.** [EFFICACY_PROTECTION1] As a teacher, I believe I am able to protect my students from harm | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **4B5.** [EFFICACY_ACHIEVEMENT2] My students' achievement is NOT a result of my teaching | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

| **4B6.** [EFFICACY_PROTECTION2] As a teacher, I can help my students' feel a sense of safety | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **4B7.** [EFFICACY_HOPE2] As a teacher, I believe I am responsible for helping students feel hopeful about the future | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **4B8.** [EFFICACY_ACHIEVEMENT1] As a teacher, I believe I have an influence on student learning success | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

### 5. MOTIVATION TO TEACH

**Definition:** These questions are about your motivation to continue to work as a teacher and your reasons why.

| **5A1.** [MOTIVATION_COMPENSATION1] I will continue to teach because I need the money | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **5A2.** [MOTIVATION_COMPENSATION2] Because there are no other job opportunities, I will continue teaching | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

| **5A3.** [MOTIVATION_CHILDREN1] I will continue teaching because I love working with Rohingya children | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **5A4.** [MOTIVATION_CHILDREN2] I will continue teaching because I see the positive difference I make | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **5A5.** [MOTIVATION_ROFUTURE1] I will continue to teach because I am help create a better future for Rohingya | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **5A6.** [MOTIVATION_ROFUTURE2] I will continue teaching to help Rohingya rebuild their lives | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **5A7.** [MOTIVATION_OWNEDUCATION1] I will continue teaching because it supports my own development | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **5A8.** [MOTIVATION_OWNEDUCATION2] I will continue teaching because these skills will help me in the future | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **5A9.** [MOTIVATION_STATUS1] I will continue teaching because I enjoy the respect I get | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **5A10.** [MOTIVATION_STATUS2] I will continue teaching because I benefit from the status of being a teacher | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **5A11.** [MOTIVATION_LACKOPPORTUNITY1] I will continue teaching because I DO NOT have skills for other jobs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (4) | Disagree (3) | Agree (2) | Strongly agree (1) |

| **5A12.** [MOTIVATION_PROFCOMMITMENT1] I am personally committed to teaching in Cox's Bazar | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

| **5A13.** [MOTIVATION_PROFCOMMITMENT2] I want a future career in teaching | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |

**END OF SURVEY**

# Appendix B - Focus group discussion protocol

**Focus Group Discussion 1:** Making sense of the data

[Start with informed consent process]

**Introduction:** Thank you for joining us today and thank you for your contributions to the survey on teacher motivation. The purpose of today's focus group is to learn more from you, as teachers and education experts in Cox's Bazar, about what motivates you to work as teachers. During our focus group discussions together, I will be showing you some results from our survey, and you will discuss with me and each other how these results help to improve our understanding of teachers' motivation.

Does anybody have any questions or concerns before we begin?

| Time | Activity | Questions / prompts |
|---|---|---|
| 0.10-0.30 | **Part 1 instructions**<br>**a.** Place descriptive statistical visualizations of survey results (x3) in front of participants, in the middle of the circle, and briefly describe what each visualization shows. For example:<br>● How many teachers report different levels of community support.<br>● How many teachers report being targeted by Bangladeshi authorities.<br>● Number of teachers who experience a low sense of decision-making freedom.<br>**b.** After the description, focus on one visualization and ask the three questions. Participants are able to choose which visualization they want to speak about as this will also reflect which data they find most important. | **1.** Does this finding reflect your own experience? How and why?<br>- Possible prompts: Can you give me an example? Is that example common? How often do examples like that happen?<br>**2.** What surprises you about this finding? How and why?<br>- Do you think this affects people's motivation to teach?<br>- Can you give an example?<br>**3.** Do you agree or disagree with this finding? How and why?<br>- If you disagree, why do you think so many teachers responded this way? |
| 0.20-0.60 | **Part 2 instructions**<br>The focus for this second activity is the community and school factors that influence people's motivation to teach.<br>**a.** On two pieces of large cardboard placed in the middle of the circle, show two high-level finding statements. For | **Green flags:**<br>**1.** Why do you agree with this finding?<br>**2.** Does it relate to you personally?<br>**3.** Can you describe what this finding means to you as a teacher? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | example:<br>● Teachers who report low levels of risk at the community level, also report higher levels of motivation to teach.<br>● Teachers who report that they have higher levels of influence on students at school, report that they are more committed to persisting with teaching.<br>**b.** Give each teacher two green flags and two red flags.<br>**c.** In relation to their own experiences and observations, invite teachers to plant the flags on the cardboard statement.<br>**d.** If they agree with the high-level finding they place a green flag on the cardboard. If they disagree with the finding, they place a red flag on it.<br>**e.** Teachers are then invited to explain why they placed the respective flag on each statement. | **Red flags:**<br>**1.** Why do you disagree with this finding?<br>**2.** Does it relate to you personally?<br>**3.** Can you describe what this finding means to you as a teacher? |

**Focus Group Discussion 2:** Agency, self-efficacy, and critical reflections

[Reintroduce the voluntary and confidential nature of this conversation]

**Introduction:** It is great to see you all again. Thank you once again for being part of this important research, your contributions so far have been extremely interesting and helpful. Last time, you helped us to make sense of the data from the survey. We now understand much more about what motivation means to you as a result. Today, we want to understand how your personal experiences as a teacher in a learning center affect your motivation.

Before we begin, does anybody have any reflections about the previous session or questions or concerns about this session?

| Time | Activity | Questions / prompts |
|---|---|---|
| 0.10-0.25 | **Part 1 instructions: Agency**<br>**a.** On two pieces of large cardboard placed in the middle of the circle, show two high-level finding statements | **Green flags**<br>**1.** Why do you agree with this finding?<br>**2.** Does it relate to you personally? |

relating to teacher agency. For example:

- Teachers who report higher levels of community respect and support also reported that they have more independent decision-making experiences in the classroom.
- Teachers who reported higher levels of stress related to their home living conditions report lower levels of decision-making independence in the classroom.

**b.** Give each teacher two green flags and two red flags.

**c.** In relation to their own experiences and observations, invite teachers to plant the flags on the cardboard statement.

**d.** If they agree with the high-level finding, they place a green flag on the cardboard. If they disagree with the finding, they place a red flag on it.

**e.** Teachers are then invited to explain why they placed the respective flag on each statement.

**3.** Can you describe what this finding means to you as a teacher?

**Red flags:**

**1.** Why do you disagree with this finding?

**2.** Does it relate to you personally?

**3.** Can you describe what this finding means to you as a teacher?

---

0.25 - 0.40 **Part 2 instructions: Self-efficacy**

**a.** On two pieces of large cardboard placed in the middle of the circle, show two high-level finding statements relating to teacher self-efficacy. For example:

- Teachers who report a higher level of influence over their students also reported higher levels of motivation to teach.
- Teachers who reported low levels of personal mobility and political participation also reported lower levels of motivation and persistence.

**b.** Give each teacher two green flags and two red flags.

**c.** In relation to their own experiences and observations, invite teachers to plant the flags on the cardboard statement.

**Green flags:**

**1.** Why do you agree with this finding?

**2.** Does it relate to you personally?

**3.** Can you describe what this finding means to you as a teacher?

**Red flags:**

**1.** Why do you disagree with this finding?

**2.** Does it relate to you personally?

**3.** Can you describe what this finding means to you as a teacher?

---

**d.** If they agree with the high-level finding, they place a green flag on the cardboard. If they disagree with the finding, they place a red flag on it.

**e.** Teachers are then invited to explain why they placed the respective flag on each statement.

# Appendix C - Focus group discussion visual prompts

**Figure C1**
*The percentage of participants who are motivated to teach*

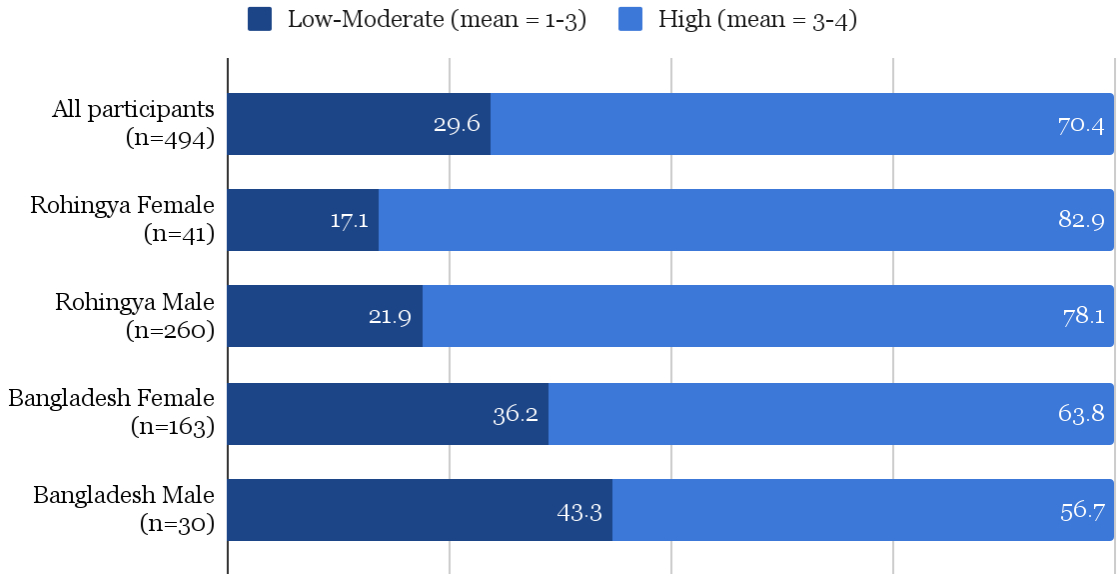



**Figure C2**
*The percentage of participants who experience respect because they are teachers*

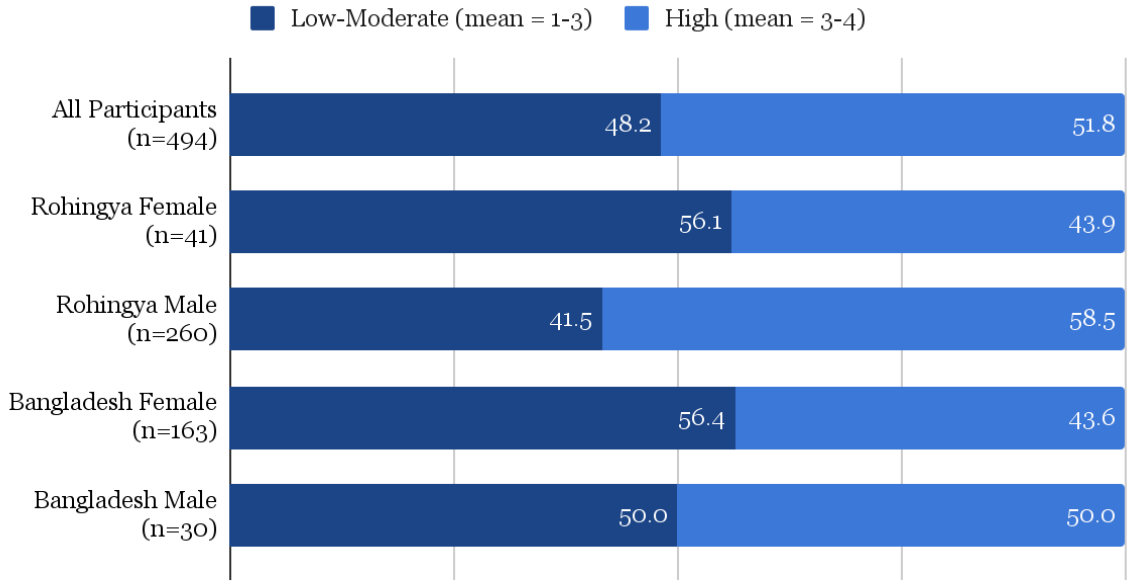


**Figure C3**
*The percentage of participants who experience support because they are teachers*

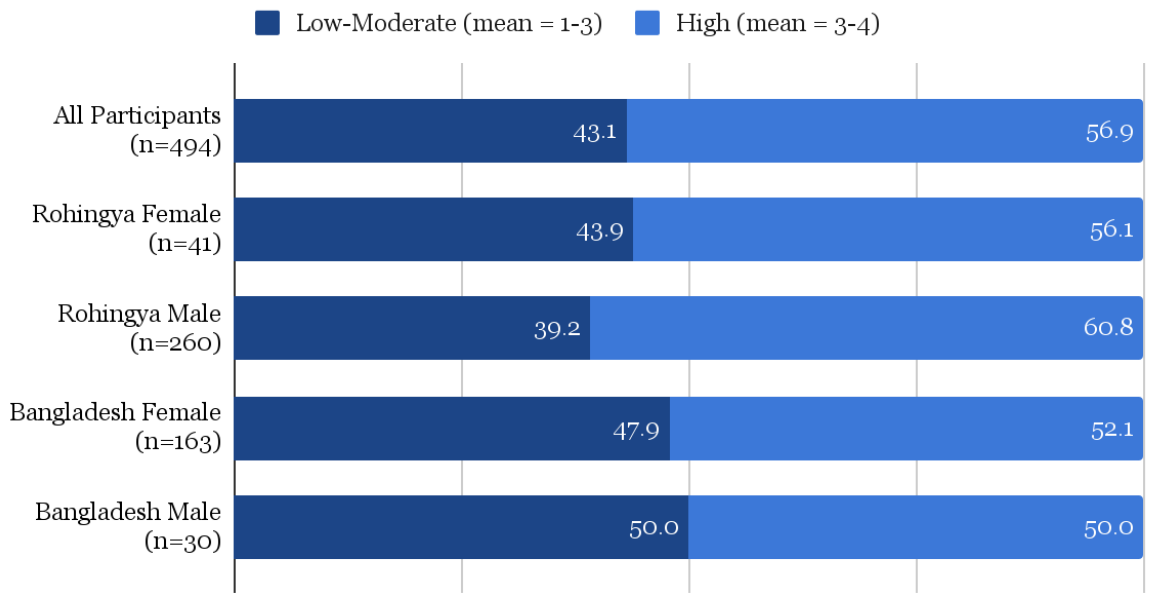



**Figure C4**
*The percentage of participants who experience safety because they are teachers*

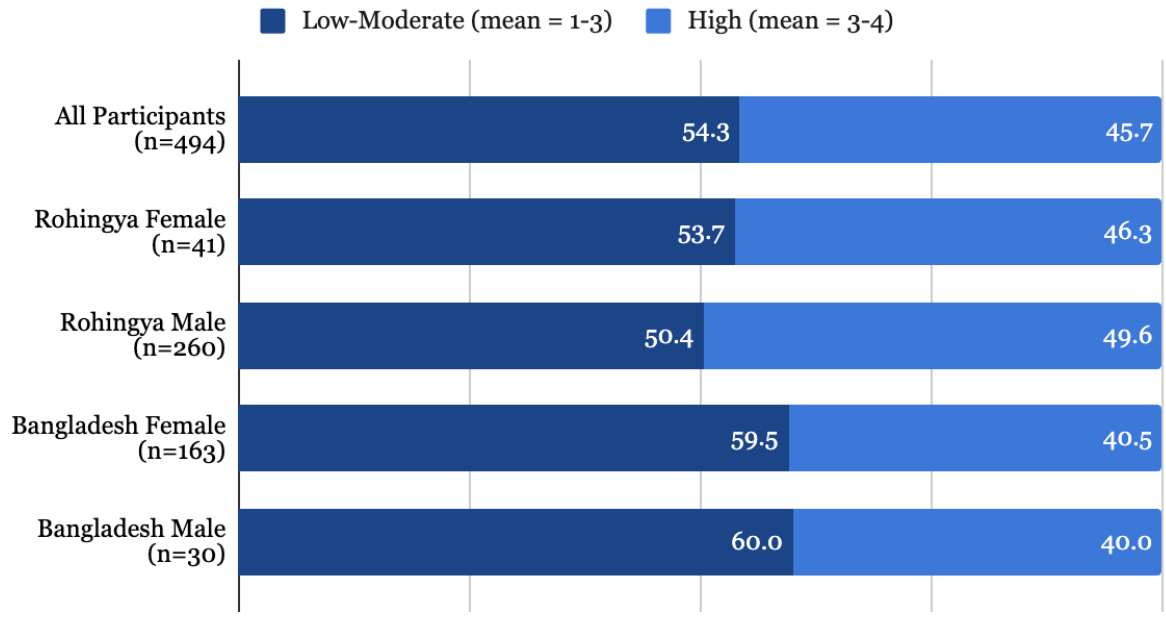


**Figure C5:**
*The percentage of participants who experience work satisfaction because they are teachers*

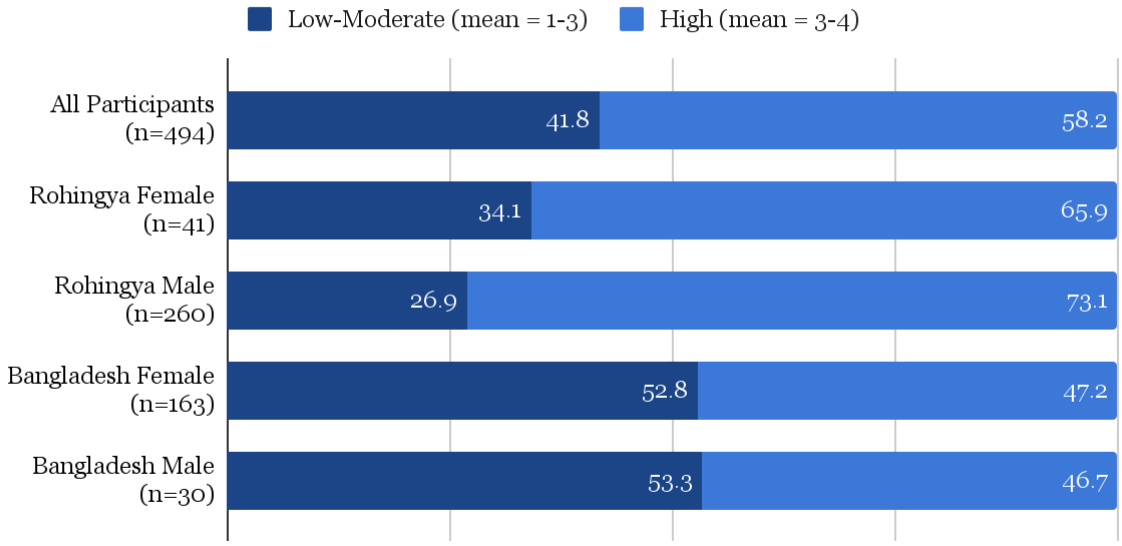



**Figure C6**
*The percentage of participants who experience self-efficacy because they are teachers*

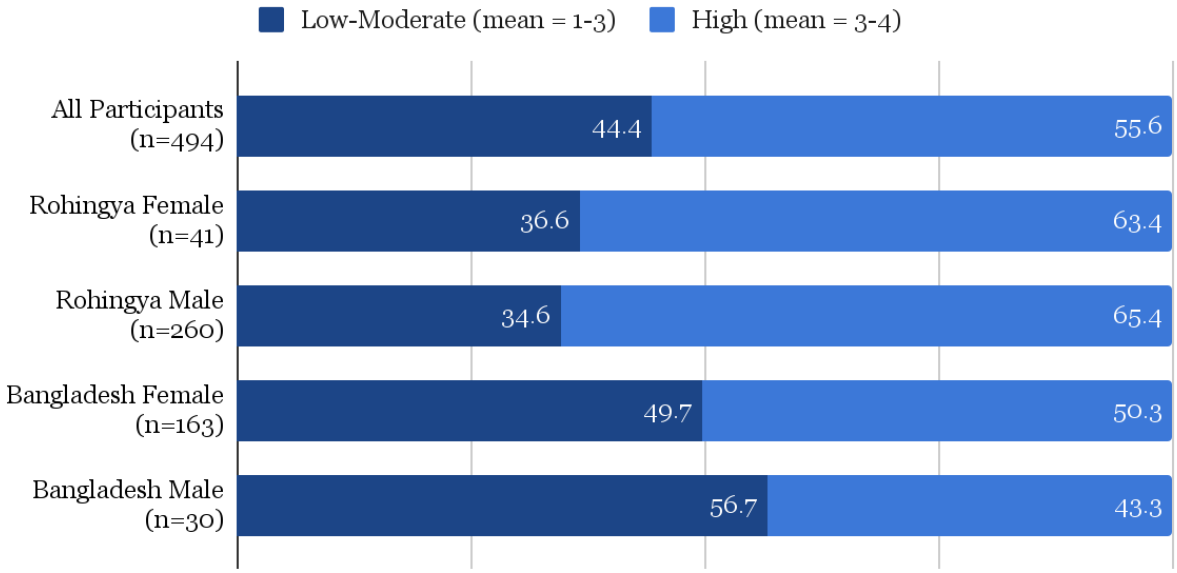
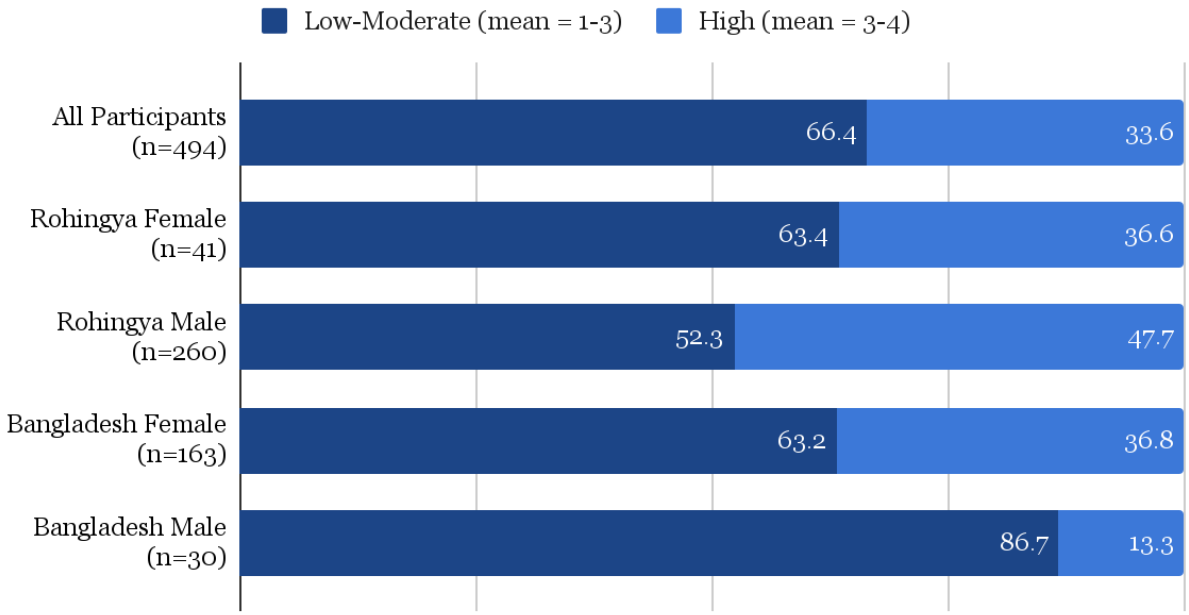


**Figure C7**
*The percentage of participants who experience agency because they are teachers*



# Appendix D - Code book

**Community-level motivation factors**

| Category | Codes | Sub-codes |
|---|---|---|
| Respect | Family | • Host teachers<br>• Domestic duties<br>• Financial support |
| | Students | • Female students<br>• Male students<br>• Honorifics<br>• Comparisons with Myanmar |
| | Parents and caregivers | • Gendered differences<br>• Home visits |
| | Community | • Nation builders<br>• Peace builders<br>• Lack of respect |
| | Colleagues | • Comparative respect |
| | NGOs | • Lack of respect |
| | Self-respect | • Unfulfilled potential<br>• New potential<br>• Education as an asset<br>• Gender |
| | Host-community teachers | • Protection |
| | Status and influence | • Vulnerability<br>• Reciprocity |
| **Support** | Family | • Rations |
| | Community | • Repairs<br>• Victims |
| | Implementing partners | • Honor |
| | Moral support | • Duty |
| | Practical support | • Repairs<br>• Rations |
| **Safety** | Political violence | • Gun fights<br>• Recruitment |
| | Armed group violence | • Gun fights<br>• Recruitment<br>• Threats |
| | Cross-border violence | • Arakan Army<br>• Myanmar Junta |
| | Security force harassment | • Fear<br>• ID Cards<br>• Salary payments<br>• Arrests<br>• Trainings |
| | Teacher status | • Protection |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | • Problematic<br>• Jealousy |
| | Mobility | • Camps<br>• Social opportunity |
| | Visibility | • Gender<br>• Mobility<br>• Identity |
| | Risk | • Protection<br>• Perception and reality<br>• Checkpoints<br>• Gender norms<br>• Home visits<br>• Comparative risk<br>• Motivating others<br>• Associations |

**Learning center-level motivation factors (Work satisfaction)**

| Category | Codes | Sub-codes |
|---|---|---|
| **Teaching** | Being a good teacher | • Self-study<br>• To be respected<br>• Leadership<br>• Professionalism<br>• Inclusivity<br>• Knowledge<br>• Knowing students<br>• Causing learning<br>• Private tutoring<br>• Qualifications<br>• Understanding policies<br>• Attendance<br>• Aspirations<br>• Clusters<br>• Freedom<br>• Stress management<br>• Registration<br>• Time limitations |
| **Language** | Burmese | • Difficulties<br>• National language<br>• Right of return |
| | National identity | • Right of return |
| | Future | • Citizenship |
| | Chittagonian | • Host-community teachers |
| | Rohingya | • Script<br>• Non-formal |
| **Curriculum** | LCFA | • Future employment<br>• Not formal |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | • Parent perspectives |
| | Myanmar Curriculum | • Double shifts<br>• Future belonging<br>• Lesson planning<br>• Flexibility<br>• Continuity<br>• Sense of progress<br>• Limited choice<br>• Religious tensions<br>• Right of return |
| | Subject-based teaching | • Specialization<br>• Teacher guides<br>• Expertise |
| | Workloads | • Primary vs Secondary<br>• Incentives<br>• Inequities<br>• Stress<br>• Respect |
| **Relationships** | Parents | • Home visits<br>• Gender |
| | Children | • Respect<br>• Joy |
| | Community | • Host-community teachers |
| | Teachers | • Leadership |
| **Responsibilities** | Host-community teachers | • Credit<br>• Collaboration |
| | Rohingya teachers | • Thinking skills<br>• Knowledge and expertise<br>• Duty<br>• Planning<br>• Demonstration |
| **Professional development** | Own education | • Master trainers<br>• Subject-based teaching<br>• Frustrations<br>• Peer learning<br>• Teacher learning circles<br>• Transferability<br>• Workload disparities |
| **Teacher management** | Host vs. refugee differences | • Adequacy and inadequacy<br>• Sick leave<br>• Contracts<br>• Pathways |
| **Work conditions** | Stress | • Pressure<br>• Stress thresholds<br>• Assets<br>• Forced displacement |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | • Salary<br>• Rohingya children<br>• Certification<br>• Gendered stress<br>• Resources and materials<br>• Supporting families<br>• Identity-based stress<br>• Status and recognition<br>• Multi-grade learners<br>• Water and sanitation<br>• Domestic agency<br>• Life limitations<br>• Joy of teaching<br>• Teaching as a distraction |

**Individual-level motivation factors**

| Category | Codes | Sub-codes |
|---|---|---|
| **Self-efficacy** | Protection | • Only home<br>• Child marriage<br>• From discrimination<br>• DRR<br>• PSEA and MHPSS<br>• LCs are safety<br>• Fear<br>• Trafficking |
| | Belonging | • From discrimination<br>• Culture<br>• Rohingya identity<br>• Academic foundations<br>• Camps are Myanmar<br>• Displacement difficulties<br>• Children's rights<br>• Disabilities |
| | Learning | • Language issues<br>• PSEA<br>• Attendance<br>• Time management<br>• Training<br>• Mentoring<br>• Learning resources<br>• Accountability<br>• Inclusion<br>• Classroom management<br>• Future rewards |
| | Leadership | • Daily rewards<br>• Internal conflict |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | • Duty vs. Job |
| **Teacher agency** | Curriculum content | • Inclusion<br>• Learning barriers<br>• Targets<br>• Textbooks<br>• Lesson guides |
| | Planning | • Expectations vs. reality<br>• Time management<br>• Madrassas and maktab<br>• Workload<br>• Parents<br>• Implementing partner<br>• Freedom<br>• Knowledge and skills<br>• Trust<br>• Compliance |
| | Social context | • Power<br>• Trafficking<br>• Language<br>• Security<br>• Empowerment<br>• Expected roles<br>• Expanded roles<br>• Other NGOs<br>• Child labor<br>• Camps are Myanmar |

**Motivation to teach**

| Category | Code | Sub-codes |
|---|---|---|
| **Reasons to continue** | Rohingya reasons | • Impact on children<br>• Implementing partners<br>• Long- and short-term goals<br>• Repatriation<br>• Childhood aspirations |
| | Bangladeshi reasons | • Steppingstones<br>• Intrinsic vs. extrinsic factors<br>• Income<br>• Solidarity |
| | General continue | • Promotion possibilities<br>• New opportunities<br>• Context differences<br>• Self-respect |
| **Reasons to quit** | Rohingya reasons | • Identification issues<br>• Domestic pressures<br>• Workload challenges<br>• Lack of respect |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • Salary issues |
| Bangladeshi reasons | • Missed income<br>• Missed opportunity<br>• Lack of training |
| General continue | • Long vs. short term goals<br>• Harassment and discrimination<br>• Family pressure<br>• Community pressure |

# Appendix E - Map of the Cox's Bazar refugee camp complex