

Private Tutoring : Appalling or Appealing

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1. Introduction

This paper discusses private tutoring and how it has expanded into various educational scenarios as well as taken hold as part of mainstream schooling in countless countries. In many areas of the world tutoring is simply described as ‘private tuition’. The terms ‘tutoring’ and ‘private tuition’ will be used interchangeably within this paper as many European nationalities use the term ‘private tuition’ while Western and Asian countries commonly refer to it as ‘tutoring’. Specific countries such as Japan have distinct words in their language such as ‘juku’ to describe the place, action, or business of tutoring.

These days in numerous countries the salaries and employment conditions of tutors may outpace those of teachers in the public education sector. While fully accepted in many countries of an additional way of boosting up a student learning and retention capacity in others it is still considered as ‘shadow education’ (Bray 2011). The growth of tutoring continues to expand all over the globe almost to the point of becoming a parallel educational tract to mainstream schooling. Easy access to the Internet has done nothing but exasperate the opportunity for anyone to become a tutor. While the most desirable method is that of one on one or face to face, the potential is there to instruct large bodies of learners. Similarly, the amount of money being generated and the fact that many parents seem willing to pay whatever is asked has accommodated individuals as well as huge corporations to become

involved in the tutoring market. Globally, this amounts to millions of students with huge corporations being able to rake in billions of dollars. Organizations range from freelance tutors to huge chains, with classes resembling first-year lecture halls (Dierkes, 2013). The global market for Private Tutoring Services is forecast to reach US\$227 billion by 2022, driven by the need to keep pace with classroom teaching, improve overall competency and enhance knowledge and skill level (GIA Inc, 2016). The accessibility to online learning such as Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) often given by Ivy league schools or other schools with proven high academic achievement have bolstered the desire to be either tutored or to share in the financial rewards by becoming a tutor. The industry is largely unregulated and there are all kinds of providers: freelancers, cram schools, large chains, online services, bespoke agencies and more (Fogarty, 2018). Private tutoring is said to be a usual business in countries like Japan, Malaysia, Mauritius, Brazil, Cambodia, Egypt, Guinea, Hong Kong, Korea, Malta, Morocco, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania (Kinyaduka, 2014). The difference in the quality given by the tutors is difficult to measure.

2. Private Tutoring

Tutoring is a very old practice and is actually nothing new. It was common in Ancient Greece and Rome and is recorded in ancient texts even before then. Over the centuries it has gone up and down in popularity, but it has never gone away (Topping, n. d.). While most tutors make an average wage, a lot depends on the number of students and overall how successful that individual may be with their tutoring skills. An elite few though have advanced to become ‘super tutors’. For some individuals becoming a tutor has led to almost rock star status. In Singapore an elite few have made the advancement. Physics tutor Phang Yu Hon, a 49-year-

old who collected \$1.1 million in fees last year, said parents are willing to fork out for tutors known to deliver results (Yang, 2016).

Private tutoring is a phenomenon that has escaped the attention of researchers, educational planners, and decision-makers. Very little is known about its scope, scale, and effects on pupil's achievement and equality of opportunities. Because of its size in several countries, and due to its nature, that of a private service oriented at improving academic performance private tutoring has important implications for the educational system as a whole that cannot be ignored by education policies (Bray, 2011). Tutoring has the bonus in that it has the ability to attract most any kind of student. Low achievers go for tutoring to improve their performance whereas high achievers go for tutoring for maintaining competitive edge (Bray, 2001 ; 2005).

3. Does it Work ?

Despite the widespread nature of private tutoring, to date, there is little quantitative research on the impact of private tutoring on students' academic performance (Hof, 2014). Depending on the style of tutoring and the subject matter though there has been some positive results. In fact for certain subjects the use of a tutor may enhance learner benefits significantly. There is no doubt that tutoring in reading can be effective (Cohen, Kulik & Kulik, 1982 ; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998 ; Wasik & Slavin, 1993). Not everyone can be a tutor though. "I am sure many individuals have remembrances of when a parent or guardian tried to assist them with their homework. Parents who try to tutor their own child at home sometimes become frustrated and bad-tempered" (Topping, n. d.).

At the university level, tutors are a common way for advanced students to earn a little extra money by assisting their peers. Studies from France, Australia

and the UK highlight the strong link between tutor support and improved student learning, and the importance of tutors to retention of students in tertiary education, particularly in the first year of their studies (Bevan-Smith, Keogh, & D'Arcy, 2013 ; Goodlad, 1998). Reviews of research on tutoring consistently find that more structured methods in which tutors receive training tend to yield better outcomes (Cohen, Kulik & Kulik, 1982 ; Sharpley & Sharpley, 1981 ; Topping & Ehly, 1998). Some fields such as engineering or the sciences require a specific knowledge level that is not easily replicated. Trained tutors yield statistically significant gains in learning for students compared to untrained tutors.

4. Why Does it Occur ?

Basically, there are two core reasons why tutoring may occur. One reason is the high degree of worth that is put on an education ; getting into a better school may lead to a better education which in turn could lead to a better job, more higher paying and in the end a supposedly more stable life. This is almost a universally accepted truism in every country. There is factual proof in this belief.

A Business Insider analysis of US Census data finds that in every US state, earnings for college graduates exceed the earnings for those with less than a bachelor's degree. Even in North Dakota, the state with the least difference in earnings, college grads still earn 38% more on average (Akhtar & Kiersz, 2019).

Reports such as these are continuously coming forth and merely add to the pressure on parents to see that their offspring succeed. Parents are ready to invest large sums in private tuition in order to give their children the best preparations for exams

and facilitate access to higher level of studies and to the best schools (Kinyaduka, 2014). Even in the United States where student debt has taken on unbelievable portions of any new graduates' income the desire to be college educated has not ceased. Education cost is the basic problem in the development of education (Tang & Zhan, 2010). While relatively easy to enter an average university in the United States many other countries have a more competitive system to maneuver through. In China, which is now producing more college graduates than anywhere else the adversity can affect the parents as well as the college attending student.

For many families more than half of their annual income goes towards tuition fees and living costs for children away at college. The pressure on these students is, by Western standards, almost unthinkable : parents who have toiled for years often after migrating to new towns and cities to earn higher salaries, forgoing time off work or trips home, expect their only child to support them in their old age (Levicky, 2017).

After the struggle the parents (and child) have been through to get into a better school the student cannot even consider dropping out and in turn bringing even further heartache upon their family. Thus, hiring a tutor of even a dubious educational background can be seen as advantageous to poor families throughout the world who are looking for any way to assist their child.

Another reason that parents choose to actively pursue tutors is from the believe that the school (most often public) is not good enough to help their child. This idea that the school system is broken or tainted in some fashion leads many a parent to seek alternative sources for learning. A global shortage of teachers has pressured many countries into hiring educators with little or no

training, undermining the educational progress of numerous school-age children around the world (United Nations, 2014).

Additionally, there are many other reasons that a tutor may be sought out to enhance basic educational needs. The author Kinyaduka (2014) sums up the numerous reasons by stating that ;

The reasons include students wanting to get higher grades, funding from government, qualification to join higher level of education, also, poor performance of the mainstream teachers, as a way to prepare for exams, as complimentary to formal education, in addition to that, low salaries of teachers, corruption, shortage of teachers/qualified teachers in some subjects like Science and Mathematics and irresponsibility.

Not all of the reason's students attend tutoring sessions are negative. In fact, there are some attendees that actually favor the freedom and concentrated lessons that tutors can provide. In India, which has a tutoring system similar to other countries students in general have positive feeling toward private tuition.

Students going to private tuition think that private tutoring is very good and very helpful because students are prepared and taught according to the examination pattern ; they know the trends and what could be asked in the examination, and how they should answer. The private tuition institutions have the (so-called) right method of preparing students for examinations and, therefore, they suitably put in the efforts needed for a particular subject. They help the students by providing the required materials, conducting frequent tests, giving feedback and suggesting suitable ways of study to optimize

performance in different subjects. Above all, students receive individual attention, which is rare in general, particularly in government schools. Since they pay for private tuition both parents and students lay responsibility with and expect accountability from private tutors/centers for performance in examinations. Although the ideal role of the school is not mere preparation for examinations, there is a need to diagnose the gap between the examination system and curricular load, teaching conditions and pedagogical aspects in schools (Sujatha, 2014).

Consequently, there is a tendency to look down on tutoring or consider that a student must be scholastically disadvantaged in the fact that they are attending after school sessions. In reality though, this extra time spent productively can have exponential academic rewards. This all depends on the tutor's abilities. Tutors have more time than school teachers to observe carefully for errors. But they might not be so good at actually recognizing them (Topping, n. d.).

5. Developing Countries and Tutoring

While private tuition is being conducted globally it is not being distributed evenly across the scale. In Cambodia, the advent of private tutoring has blurred the areas of public and private tuition education. Overall many teachers in Cambodia live in poverty and suffer very poor working condition which have had a major impact on the failure to embed education reforms and the continued poor quality of the Cambodian education sector in general (Friend-Pereira, 2015). In many instances the government has actually incoherently encouraged tutoring as many public-school teachers have utilized tutoring to help offset their lack of wages at public schools. In this fashion, the Cambodian government can pay teachers low

salaries and continue to do so since they understand that many teachers have some side teaching arrangements with students. Sadly, though in some instances this has extended into the very heart of teaching the public-school students.

In order to supplement their income, teachers are “forced” to find alternate sources of income such as engaging in private tutoring or charging students informal fees (for example, fees for the monthly photocopying of examination papers and the daily parking of bicycles at school, as well as, in some cases, fees for overlooking student absences, obtaining examination answers, or forcing students to buy lunches from the teacher) (Brehm & Silov, 2014).

The situation in Cambodia is very complex, colonialism of the past by the French, Cambodian Buddhist traditions and the genocide during the Pol Pot regime have progressed to annihilate any sense of a educational system that functions effectively. Since the end time of the Khmer Rouge as the country attempted to put all facets of ordinary life back together a percentage of any funds generated was needed for the school system. Unfortunately, due to chronic underfunding the education network of Cambodia has not been able to sustain a manageable level. Although much blame is inadvertently placed on teachers an example of teacher’s salaries in the region confirms the great disparity of wages.

	Cambodia	Laos	Vietnam	Thailand	Malaysia	Indonesia	Philippines
Primary Teacher	\$57	\$39 – 45	\$117	\$417	\$507	\$216	\$348
GDP per capita	\$897	\$1,320	\$1,407	\$4,972	\$9,977	\$3,495	\$2,370
Difference –/+	0%	+47%	+56.9%	+454%	+1,012%	+289%	+164%

(Friend-Pereira, 2014)

The above chart compares salaries for the year 2013. Due to internal pressure in Cambodia, an external outcry from the United Nations and more regional organizations such as UNESCO salaries have slowly risen since then. Teacher salaries have increased recently, but not quickly enough to close the gap with other professionals. From 2007 to 2011, the average monthly nominal wage increased by about 144,000 riels. This works out to about \$35 a month, while salaries do differ depending on the level of education a person may be involved with, it is soulfully inadequate at any stage. It is quite understandable why tutoring has become a necessity for your average Cambodian teacher as well as student.

6. EU and Tutoring

In the EU (European Union), the usage of tutoring services has had a profound effect on society. The author Bray (2011), states a few of these as ;

1. Private supplementary tutoring is an EU-wide issue. It has grown considerably in most Member States.
2. The growing scale and intensity of private tutoring in the EU has profound economic, social and educational implications. It has strong implications for equity, for the work of mainstream schools, and for the lives of children and families. It also sends signals about the nature of mainstream schooling.
3. Private supplementary tutoring has not taken hold to the same extent in all EU Member States. Southern Europe has particularly high rates of tutoring. Tutoring is also widespread in Central and Eastern EU Member States. While in Western Europe the scale of tutoring greatly increased during the last decade, the Nordic Member States appear to be the least

affected by the phenomenon so far. These countries have good mainstream provisions that appears largely to satisfy the expectations of families.

4. Although tutoring often exists because the mainstream system is weak, other forces are also pertinent. Some countries have well-developed systems, but experience strong demand for tutoring fuelled by competition and examination-based learning.
5. In Eastern European Member States, the decline in the purchasing power of teachers' salaries was a major force driving the expansion of private tutoring during the 1990s.
6. In Western European countries, social competition, school performance rankings, examination-based learning and the pressures transmitted to families and children have been a stronger force driving the expansion of shadow education. Also, financial cuts have reduced the extent to which educational institutions have felt able to provide individual learning support within school.
7. Most of the pressure for tutoring comes from high achievers. Private tutoring is much less about pupils who are in real need of help that they cannot find at school, and much more about maintaining the competitive advantages of the already successful and privileged.
8. In some Member States, tutoring tends to be greatest among pupils already in fee paying private secondary schools.
9. If left to market forces, tutoring maintains and exacerbates inequalities. Families with higher income can afford both greater quantities and better qualities of tutoring.
10. In some Member States, private tutoring dominates children's lives and restricts their leisure times in ways that are psychologically and

educationally undesirable. And it can be perceived in some settings as a form of corruption that undermines social trust.

11. Much tutoring is of low pedagogic value. It teaches to the test and is dominated by past examination papers, tips on likely questions, and strategies for answering questions within the time constraints.
12. Urban students are more likely to receive tutoring than their rural counterparts, for reasons of both demand and supply.
13. Increasing volumes of tutoring are provided by companies working on a local, national or international basis. Many of the tutoring companies, especially in Western Europe, employ personnel who have not been trained as tutors.
14. In some Member States, much private tutoring is provided by mainstream teachers in order to earn supplementary incomes. Many of these tutors are already responsible for the same pupils in the mainstream schools. This practice can be seriously problematic as it gives incentives to divert effort from classrooms to private tutoring.
15. The tutoring industry is an expanding source of employment as well as a way for many mainstream teachers to earn supplementary incomes. This appears to be one reason why both governments and trade unions tend to avoid the subject.
16. Much tutoring is carried out informally, beyond the reach of the government tax collector.
17. Some EU governments give tax relief to families that invest in tutoring. Most of those who take advantage of tax relief are relatively wealthy.
18. Some EU Member States have major gaps in their regulations, others have ambiguous regulations, and yet others have clear regulations that are not rigorously implemented. Many policy makers and planners prefer to

avoid difficult decisions by ignoring the phenomenon and leaving it to market forces.

19. More research on the phenomenon is necessary. The existing paucity of data reflects two factors: first, many of the actors deliberately avoid transparency; second, until recently shadow education has been barely on the agendas of either researchers or policy analysts (Bray, 2011).

These areas pointed out are not confined to the EU but also can be experienced in other countries East and West.

Over the years, tutoring at the EU university level has been growing and with it has developed much debate as for its necessity and overall function. There are many merits and demerits to the extended duties of university instructors. In this regard, well planned and implemented university tutorials are a guarantee to reduce the high percentage of students leaving qualifications at the beginning of their career (Murtaugh, Burns & Schuster, 1999; Braxton, 2000; Corominas, 2001). As stated by Gomez, (2012), some of the ramifications and complexities are;

- Professors have to teach many students; given such conditions it is difficult to be a good tutor.
- There are professors who lack training, who do not offer enough guarantees in their tutorial work.
- University professors do not feel they have responsibilities beyond teaching and research functions.
- Many of them are not willing to dedicate an extended time that can be devoted to other issues of greater value in the academic career.
- The university culture encouraged to a minimal relationship between professor and students beyond school hours.

Although at this level of education it is extremely rare for university lecturers to also take out the added burden it does show how high and intense the area of tutoring has become. The author Gomez (2012) tends to coat the idea of tutoring at the tertiary level as some higher power obtained.

We have continuously referred to the benefits of tutoring for university students but cannot forget that tutoring can offer a broader horizon for the professional development of the professor, for his enjoyment and satisfaction. The professor, who guides and orients students, should consider the tutoring action as important. A tutorial work has intangible benefits and satisfactions, which are deeper than other (career advancement, invitation to join a committee, the acceptance of a relevant journal article).

In reality though, this is implausible as well as impossible and in the best interest of both parties involved should not be pursued. Very few instructors at the university level have the time (or energy) to offer tutoring on an extended scale other than occasional guidance for those that seek it out.

7. The United States and Tutoring

Due to goals set forth by the United States of America government the need and necessity of tutors and their services has been questioned over the years. More recently though the U. S. government proclaimed 'No Child Left Behind' in 2001. The NCLB as it is commonly referred to has ignited the interest and desire for the employment of tutors outside the normal classroom environment. While a large percentage of the world values tutors and will pay large sums for their expertise in the United States the view is quite the opposite.

... the real irony of this educational shortage in the making is that the general American public has never recognized the “tutor” as a professional with well-defined expertise. From the consumers’ viewpoint, “almost anyone can tutor.” Thus, the great majority of parents look for the lowest-price tutoring available in their community or alternatively for free, volunteer-based tutoring (Gordon, 2004).

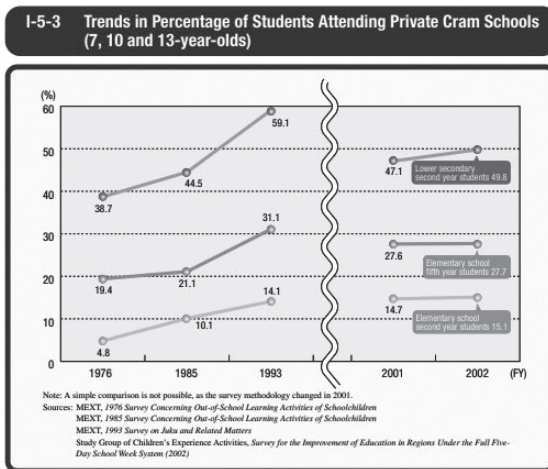
The incongruity of it all is that as test scores and achievement evaluations have fallen funding for public schools has also been dropping. Since the Recession of 2008, states have increasingly cut budgets for higher education; in fact, 47 states spend less per student now than they did before the recession (Mitchell & Leachman, 2015). While school funding has been creeping slowly upwards there can be huge variations state to state and the need for tutoring services may also contrast. There are no set tutoring requirements and the employment of a tutor does actually fall under the saying “you get what you pay for”. In fact though shady and unknowledgeable tutors may abound in the ‘shadow education’ industry.

8. Japan and Tutoring

When it comes to the percentage of students attending outside of normal school hour educational services (tutoring), Japan may be a leader among all countries. In Japan it has become an accepted way of life for students and the parents that pay the fees. In Japan, there are so many businesses that cater to tutoring that there is even a special word for it in Japanese, ‘juku’ (cram school). According to Deguchi (2018) “There are nearly 50,000 juku schools in Japan –surpassing the combined number of elementary, junior high and high schools at 35,000”.

In Japan though as the overall population has declined so has the student

population and consequently the number of juku attendees has been steadily on the decline. While the 1970's to 1990's saw a steady rise and boom times for schools, currently that situation has generally fallen in the opposite direction. MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology), the official branch of government when it comes to education in Japan has followed closely the trend showing how cram schools and regular forms of school are intertwined in the country. While the graph below shows juku attendance up to 2003, the 15 years since that time have been a black cloud hanging over the industry.



Looking at the three year levels, the highest percentage attending cram school are second year lower secondary school students.

(MEXT, 2003)

Due to the downturn, cram schools in turn have had to alter their business strategies to cope. One way is to cater to those children of non-Japanese parents. Cram schools are offering special classes for non-Japanese children to pass high school and university entrance examinations in hopes of not only providing support for struggling students but also to court new customers amid the dwindling birthrate

(Hirayama, 2018). The cram schools are providing an important service and filling a much needed niche for many foreign families with school aged children. In many instances basic Japanese language skills hinder development in other areas of education. Preparing foreign students for entrance exams is more difficult than for their Japanese counterparts as their Japanese skills need to be improved (Hirayama, 2018). Lower numbers of students enable cram schools to offer more personalized service while at the same time charging higher fees. In some instances, a few schools are actually becoming more profitable due to the decline in the student population. It has been discovered that large scale juku's can offer one on one service while raising the overall tutoring rate. Financers that back the schools have taken notice.

Goldman Sachs initiated coverage of Riso Kyoiku in December with a buy rating, saying the company is “benefiting from the demand shift from group to individual tutoring.” Despite a decline in the number of students, the market for preparatory schools providing individual tutoring expanded from ¥374 billion in revenue to an estimated ¥442 billion in 2018, the brokerage said, citing Yano Research Institute Ltd. (Lee & Maki, 2019).

Despite Japan's low birthrate, currently at 1.43 births per woman according to the latest Japanese government data, the country's cram school business is thriving (Nagano, 2014). While Japan has always been known for class conformity and group think the latest trend in juku is more individual service assisting a single or smaller group of learners to excel while at the same time juku businesses can still collect the same if not larger amount in school fees. It is becoming a more successful business strategy for both the tutelage and the tutor.

9. Conclusion

Tutoring can be defined as people who are not professional teachers helping and supporting the learning of others in an interactive, purposeful and systematic way (Topping, n. d.). For students to attend some sort of tutor or out of school instructor has seemed to have become the accepted norm the world over. The two main reasons for this are usually the anticipated extra advantage the learner will receive and the idea that tutors can add to an inferior education that a child may be receiving from their local public school. Private schools in general may offer a higher level of education and more flexible curriculum but in many situations they may be directing their learners toward higher education and thusly the pressure to succeed is equal or more so than a public school. In some countries a change in government policies may expand the need for private tuition.

During the 1990s, the shift towards a market economy in China and Vietnam permitted and encouraged the emergence of supplementary tutoring in settings where previously it did not exist. And in Eastern Europe, the partial collapse of public education systems during the 1990s following the fall of communism has led to families investing in tutoring on an unprecedented scale (Bray, 2001).

Unfortunately, in developing countries due to the low salaries of teachers, a student's daytime teacher may actually be their night time tutor trying to earn some extra money to make ends meet. While some countries such as Japan and South Korea have integrated tutoring into their countries educational systems there are many others that are struggling to find and establish a balance between the regular school system and the niche that tutoring may or may not be able to provide. In

the meantime, private tutoring is surely to grow and expand as it has already done with more online and interactive programs via the Internet. The added advantage that private tutoring has is its ability to adapt more quickly to learner desires. As the large corporations are profit driven it is a huge part of their survival plan. Private individual tutors have a narrower margin and ability for change in their learner's needs. Tutoring can meet the needs of learners that a regular school system in most instances cannot provide.

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