



The perceived reasons for participation in private tutoring in the Sultanate of Oman

 **Abdo Mohamed Al-Mekhlafi**^{1,2,*}

^{1,2,*} *Sultan Qaboos University, Oman.*

¹ *Email: Sep1962@squ.edu.om*

² *Email: farwzia@squ.edu.om*

 **Sheikha Ali Al-Buraiki**²

² *Email: mosman@squ.edu.om*

² *Sohar University, Oman.*

 **Fawziya Aziz Al-Seyabi**³

³ *Email: saburaiki@su.edu.om*

 **Mohamed Eltaher Osman**⁴



(+ Corresponding author)

ABSTRACT

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Private tutoring (PT) is becoming increasingly widespread around the globe, and the Sultanate of Oman is no exception. Even though the Omani educational system witnesses continuous development, PT is gaining popularity. The present research paper aims to explore the reasons that drive the need for private tutoring lessons as perceived by the students, parents, and teachers. Three distinct questionnaires were developed based on a review of pertinent literature to collect data for this descriptive analytical study. Participants in the study included 261 students, 214 parents, and 87 teachers, and the findings revealed that students seek PT primarily to ensure that they score high marks in grade 12, the last year of high school, to secure college admission, raise their overall academic achievement, and get ready for exams. As for the parents, they emphasized how PT assists their children in understanding difficult content and doing well in school, while the teachers mentioned that the reasons behind resorting to PT include helping students fill in existing learning gaps, teaching them effective techniques to answer exam questions, and explaining subjects and activities that students find challenging in school. Due to the increasing demand for PT in Oman, the study recommends developing educational policies to regulate and institutionalize it.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the literature by examining the reasons for seeking private tutoring in Oman from the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers. It identifies key motivating factors and provides evidence-based insights to inform policies that reduce reliance on private tutoring while supporting its effective regulation and institutionalization.

1. INTRODUCTION

Private tutoring (PT) has become widespread among students across diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Despite the availability of public education, many parents enrol their children in supplementary lessons to complement the teaching they receive in schools (Al-Mekhlafi, Al-Seyabi, Al-Buraiki, & Osman, 2025; Kim, Goodman, & West, 2025). Research studies indicate that this phenomenon has grown noticeably in recent decades in all regions of the world (Al-Mekhlafi et al., 2025; Dang & Rogers, 2008; Zhang & Bray, 2020). According to Bray, Zhan, Lykins, Wang, and Kwo (2014), the main purposes of PT are to consolidate classroom learning, support students in homework

tasks, and train them for exams. The author further explains that the phenomenon of PT is driven by students' and parents' profound belief in the role of education as a driver for social and economic mobility and reproduction.

On the national side, Oman is one of the countries that have witnessed the growth of PT; however, very little research has been conducted to examine the factors that influence demand for it. In the Omani context, a recent study conducted by Al-Mekhlafi et al. (2025) explored the effectiveness of PT on students' performance, motivation, and attitudes from the perspectives of students, teachers, and parents. The study findings highlighted that while PT was generally perceived as effective in improving comprehension, exam strategies, and university entry chances, notable differences emerged across groups. For example, parents rated its impact on achievement more positively than students, whereas students showed a more favorable view of its role in elevating their learning motivation. Despite this contribution, research investigating the underlying factors that drive the demand for PT remains scarce. The present study builds on the earlier project by shifting the focus from effectiveness to examining the key factors that influence students' and parents' engagement with PT in Oman.

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following question:

What are the main factors that drive the need for private tutoring in the Sultanate of Oman from the perspectives of (a) students, (b) parents, and (c) teachers?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Private tutoring (PT) is commonly referred to as shadow education because it generally coexists with mainstream schooling, mimics the features of formal school education in its content and instruction, and changes and grows according to the regular school systems (Bray et al., 2014). Literature indicates that PT has now become a global educational phenomenon and one which is growing noticeably worldwide (Zhang & Bray, 2020). It can be found in many parts of the world regardless of the economic, cultural, or geographic diversity of the countries. According to Bray et al. (2014), PT can be seen as an outcome of globalisation in education in the sense that it manifests the importance of education in the work industry, the roles of high-stakes exams in sorting students, and the positions of most governments worldwide towards allowing this type of education to function with minimal monitoring and regulation.

To understand the nature of PT in different contexts, Bray (2014) defined PT based on three criteria: supplementation, privateness, and academicness. Supplementation means providing lessons that complement formal school subjects to achieve better academic performance. In other words, tutoring lessons for subjects not taught in schools are excluded from this definition. The second criterion is privateness, which indicates its profit-making purpose for individuals and institutions. Thus, unpaid tutoring or voluntary support provided by family members or other people is excluded from this definition. The third criterion is academicness for the subjects of tutoring. This criterion distinguishes between academic and non-academic subjects. Hence, PT tends to focus on academic subjects such as mathematics, science, languages, and other subjects that feature in public examinations. The focus excludes lessons for non-academic subjects, such as music, arts, and sport. It should be noted that the present study follows this definition of PT.

Several previous studies have discussed the factors that influence the demand for PT based on a production function model (Bray et al., 2014; Zhang, 2013; Zhang, Ma, & Wang, 2020). This model consists of educational outputs and inputs. Educational outputs mean that the demand for PT can be measured through the number of students enrolling in PT lessons, the amount of time spent on tutoring, and the amount of money invested in PT. On the other hand, educational inputs include society, the community, schools, classrooms, and students. Some studies substitute societies with education systems, and other studies discuss families as a distinct factor (Bray et al., 2014). These educational inputs constitute the factors that may impact the demand for PT.

Considering the societal variable, existing studies have discussed the educational and cultural factors determining the demand for PT. For example, Stevenson and Baker (1992) argue that in societies where education is linked tightly

with the labour market, there would be competition for quality education, which drives a need for PT. Šťastný and Chvál (2023) examined the correlation between the quality of education systems and the need to seek private tutoring, as perceived at the individual and classroom levels in Czech schools. The researchers employed regression analyses of 1,280 students in the senior grade of lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic. Interestingly, the findings of the study illustrated that the correlation between students' perceptions of school instruction quality and their participation in private tutoring is not consistent across all subjects but varies. Šťastný and Chvál (2023) found that when students perceived mathematics and local-language instruction as high quality, their need for private tutoring declined. However, this correlation did not apply to English, where "the perceived quality of school instruction in English language does not affect English tutoring" (p. 1). In this case, affluent families continued to provide their children with supplementary lessons irrespective of how they rated the quality of school instruction. In addition, high-stakes formal examinations, which are used as prerequisites for admission to higher education institutions, are more likely to increase the demand for PT, particularly in countries where a university degree is important for improving career opportunities (Al-Mekhlafi et al., 2025; Sobhy, 2012). However, Baker, Akiba, LeTendre, and Wiseman (2001) analysed the results from 41 countries in the 1994–95 TIMSS exams and found that high-stakes exams have no significant impact on the demand for PT in these countries. Demand for PT can also be driven by cultural context (Bray et al., 2014). For example, the principles of diligence and meritocracy stressed by Confucian beliefs might help explain the prevalence of PT in many East Asian countries, such as South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong (Bray et al., 2014).

Considering school and classroom factors, a study by Bray and Ventura (2022) in Dubai reveals distinct differences in supplementary tutoring provided within schools, depending on the views of the principals. While some school principals discourage extra tutoring and consider school instruction sufficient, others accept it as part of reality, and still others encourage it. Some studies also discuss teachers' positions towards PT and investigate whether teachers provide PT or not. In countries where teachers provide PT, such as India and Egypt, research reveals that the main incentive behind doing so is to improve financial status (Azam, 2015; Sobhy, 2012). Teachers' influence on students' engagement in PT lessons has also been investigated in terms of whether teachers advise their students or their parents to look for PT (Kobakhidze, 2014). Similar to the principals' views, the findings in this regard are mixed (Bray et al., 2014). Šťastný, Chvál, and Walterová (2021) investigated the determinants for providing private tutoring by Czech school teachers. 494 Czech teachers who taught academic school subjects responded to an online questionnaire. It was found that male teachers working as part-timers with little professional experience, higher financial household burdens, and lower satisfaction with teachers' salaries were more likely to offer private tutoring lessons. Despite the low salaries of Czech teachers, the provision of private tutoring is mainly driven by reasons "such as professional development or a sense of fulfilment" (p. 1) rather than supplementing teachers' salaries.

The international literature on PT has also discussed the relationship between the quality of instruction provided by schools and students' participation in PT. It might be obvious that poor and deficient instruction may drive students and their parents to seek PT to supplement deficiencies in the education provided by regular schools. Yet, the literature cites some challenges in measuring this type of relationship because of the difficulty in defining the concept of instructional quality and the methodological difficulties in measuring this relationship (Šťastný & Chvál, 2023). To overcome these difficulties, some studies used the results from standardized tests, such as Kim (2005) study in the Korean context, which found that lower school quality in Korea significantly increases the demand for private tutoring. The relationship between education quality and PT is also measured using students' and parents' questionnaires and interviews, in which students or their parents provide their subjective views about the reasons for participation in PT. For example, Kabadaya (2020) investigated the spread of PT among the lower primary level in public schools in Egypt by examining the views of teachers and parents via semi-structured interviews. The results of the study revealed interesting data on how the phenomenon of PT occurs at this early age. Findings revealed that

the defect in the public school system in Egypt is a core reason for the prevalence of PT in the early stages of schooling.

At the family level, several studies have discussed the need for PT in relation to family income, family size, and parents' educational level (Karakus, Tlessov, Hajar, & Courtney, 2024; Kim & Lee, 2010; Liu, 2012; Zheng & Yu, 2024). These studies show that wealthy families can afford more and better-quality tutoring than less wealthy families. However, not all families that can afford tutoring for their children invest in it, as some families regard sports and other activities as being as important as academic performance. In addition, wealthy families are more likely to send their children to private schools, where learning environments are more relaxing and of high quality, without the need for supplementary tutoring (Bray et al., 2014). Some studies have also linked the demand for PT to family size and found that students in large families are less likely to receive supplementary tutoring than students living in small families Liu (2012). Bray et al. (2014) explain this trend as a reflection of socioeconomic status, meaning that families with higher incomes are more likely to have fewer children and thus concentrate more on providing all sources of support to their children, including educational support. In addition, empirical research shows that students living in rural areas have less access to private lessons than students living in urban areas due to the availability of PT in highly populated places, and rural areas might have less competition among students in education (Zhang, 2013).

At the student level, several studies have associated students' participation in PT with their academic performance (Dang & Rogers, 2008; Hof, 2014; Kabadaya, 2020; Ömeroğulları, Guill, & Köller, 2020). Bray et al. (2014) suggest that students enrol in private supplementary lessons for either remedial or enrichment purposes. Yet, a review of the research literature reveals mixed results among studies that examined the effects of PT on students' academic achievement (Dang & Rogers, 2008; Hof, 2014; Kabadaya, 2020; Ömeroğulları et al., 2020). Another variable connected with students is gender. Similar to findings on student academic achievement, research findings on gender differences in participation in PT seem to be mixed. For example, in India, where boys tend to seek jobs that require high educational qualifications, their enrolment in PT lessons is higher than that of girls (Azam, 2015). On the other hand, a study in South Korea by Kim and Lee (2010) found that tutoring expenditure for boys is less than that for girls. Similarly, Özdere (2021), in a Turkish context, found that female students spend more time on tutoring than male students. Yet, Elbadawy, Assaad, Ahlburg, and Levison (2007) found no gender differences in participation in PT in Egypt.

Moreover, studies show that students differ in their motives for taking or not taking private lessons. While some students are self-motivated to join PT lessons, others are pushed by their peers or families, and yet others refrain from taking PT lessons (Bray et al., 2014; Sobhy, 2012). In addition, students' stage of education might also explain the pattern of demand for PT in some countries. For example, in Egypt and Turkey, students in higher grade levels, specifically in their last grade of school or in diploma-granting years, engage in more supplementary lessons compared to students in earlier stages of education (Elbadawy et al., 2007; Özdere, 2021). Sieverding, Krafft, and Elbadawy (2019) explored the driving forces behind seeking private tutoring at different educational levels in Egypt to better understand the persistent and widespread nature of the PT business despite governmental efforts to curb it. Data were collected via a national survey and qualitative methods. The findings indicate that there has been an increasing prevalence of PT among secondary school students. Also, the major reason for seeking PT in basic education was teachers' pressure to do so. The Egyptian educational system senses "an urgent need to test mechanisms for ensuring accountability in schools" (p. 562). In another educational context, Al-Thani (2022) explored the determinants of participation in private tutoring classes among students in secondary schools in Qatar. The researcher employed probit regression analysis of over 5,000 survey responses collected in 2012, 2015, and 2018. The findings revealed that the significant determinants for seeking private tutoring are related to students' nationalities, grade level, academic performance, and peer influence.

In a similar way, Abu-Shawish (2023) used Ajzen (1991) theory of planned behavior to analyze the variables affecting students' use of private tutoring sessions in Qatar. The researcher used a questionnaire to collect research data from students in both preparatory and secondary schools in Qatar. The findings indicated that higher-grade students were more likely to engage in private tutoring than lower-grade students. The results also indicated that the demand for private tutoring is strongly associated with the quality of teaching, parents' educational level, employment status, and involvement in children's education. The researcher recommended institutionalizing the establishment of regulated tutoring centers alongside other forms of supplemental after-school education to cater for students' individual needs.

Although considerable research has previously examined the factors determining students' participation in private tutoring lessons, a significant gap remains in exploring the perceptions of the students, parents and teachers collectively. Based on the literature review, most studies focus on individual research participants rather than comparing the views of the three most influential groups in making education decisions in any community: students, parents and teachers. Additionally, little is known about PT participation in the Sultanate of Oman as most research has been widely conducted in East Asia, Europe, and some Middle Eastern contexts. Moreover, existing literature has emphasized the structural and economic determinants such as family income, school equality and exam pressure; however, other motivational factors including peer pressure, parental aspirations and teachers' recommendations remain underexplored. Thus, the present study seeks to identify the factors that determine students' participation in private tutoring in Oman from the perspectives of the students, parents and teachers.

3. THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Oman occupies the extreme south-eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula. It is the third-largest country in the peninsula, with a total land area of 309,500 square kilometres. It shares borders with the Republic of Yemen to the south-west, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the west, and the United Arab Emirates to the north and west. Its 3,165-kilometre coastline extends northwards from the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean in the far south-west to the Sea of Oman in the north, where it overlooks the Strait of Hormuz. The country's location has always played a significant role in determining its politics, decisions and approach to a wide range of issues and developments. Oman's population was estimated at around 4.5 million in 2020 (National Centre for Statistics and Information, 2021).

Since 1970, the public education (government-funded) sector in Oman has flourished, with a rise in school enrolments from 900 in 1970 to over 773,631 in 2023/2024 (National Centre for Statistics and Information, 2021). The education system has experienced many reforms in recent years, including features such as a student-centred approach to teaching and learning; the introduction of information technology (IT) and life skills; an emphasis on real-life applications in the curriculum; continuous assessment; a decrease in class size; and the addition of learning resources such as computer labs in schools. The Ministry of Education (MOE), the body responsible for education in Oman, has also raised teacher qualification standards and introduced a school-based management system to give schools and their employees a greater role in self-management and improvement (The Ministry of Education in Oman & the World Bank, 2012).

In Oman, public education is free for all students. Children typically commence formal school at age 6. Public-school education consists of Basic Education and Post Basic Education. Basic education is organized into Cycle One (grades 1-4) and Cycle Two (grades 5-10). This system has replaced the general education system (elementary, preparatory, and grade 10) since 1998/99. Basic education is designed to provide a unified curriculum and textbooks for students to improve learning outcomes. Post-Basic Education provides education in grades 11 and 12. The curriculum is organized on a 'core plus electives' model, and students are given a choice of elective subjects to study. The two-year post-basic experience is structured to prepare students either for higher education or for entry into the labor market. Exams at the end of grade 12 (diploma certificate) play a key role in determining which institution students can join and what specialization they study (The Ministry of Education in Oman & the World Bank, 2012).

The Ministry of Education is responsible for overseeing school education at all levels. Its responsibilities include developing education policies, curricula, and schoolbooks; developing assessment methods for student achievement; directing and supervising work progress in schools; and offering technical and administrative support to enhance teaching and learning in schools.

In addition to the public school system, private schools exist to provide several types of education in Oman, including monolingual, bilingual, and international schools which offer educational curricula accredited by international education systems. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the technical and administrative supervision of private schools, including approving the education curricula and assessment mechanisms adopted by these schools. Figure 1 shows Oman's education system structure from early childhood education to higher education (The Ministry of Education in Oman & the World Bank, 2012).

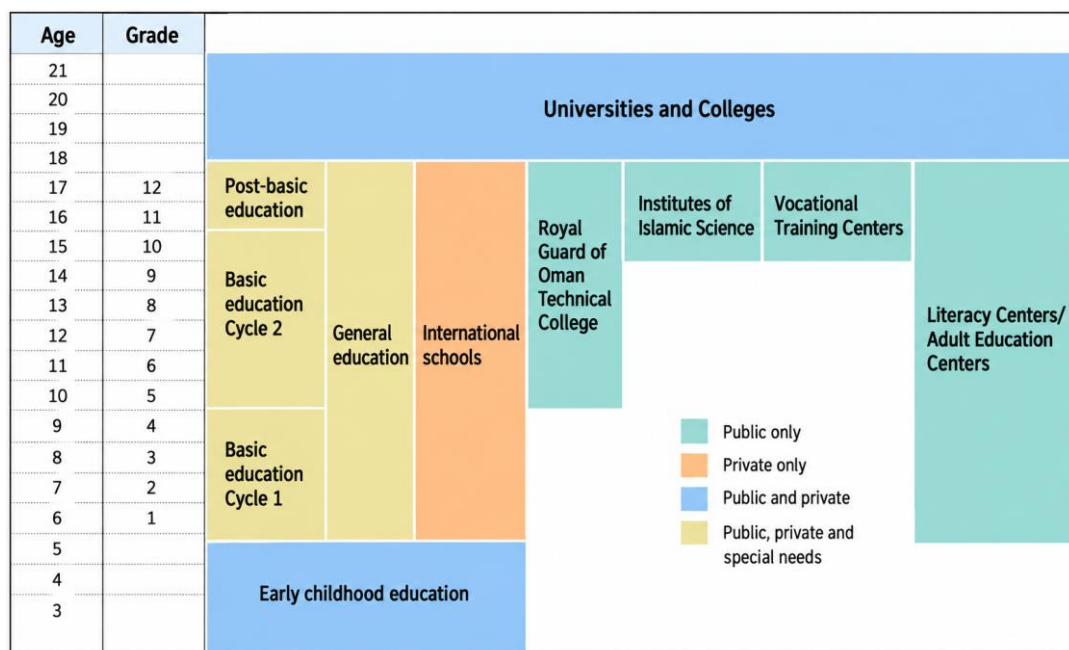


Figure 1. The education system structure from early childhood education to higher education, technical training and vocational education, adult education, and special education.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section provides background information about the research design, data collection instruments, and study participants.

4.1. Design

The present study aims to investigate the perceived reasons for participation in private tutoring sessions in the Sultanate of Oman among school students from the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers. Hence, the study adopted a descriptive-analytical research design. This approach enables researchers to interpret findings and gain a deeper, more insightful understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, offering meaningful explanations of the factors, patterns, and perspectives associated with participation in private tutoring.

4.2. Instruments

As the main objective of the present research paper is to investigate the reasons that drive the need for private tutoring as perceived by the students, parents, and teachers in the Sultanate of Oman, three independent online questionnaires were developed based on a thorough review of pertinent literature. The questionnaires were validated by a panel of reviewers who are experts in the field of education, and their feedback contributed to enhancing the

clarity, accuracy, and relevance of the questionnaire items. To ensure the internal consistency of the questionnaires, Cronbach's alpha was calculated, yielding reliability scores of 0.90 for the students' questionnaire, 0.87 for the parents' questionnaire, and 0.89 for the teachers' questionnaire. Each questionnaire comprises two main sections: demographic information and a 5-point Likert scale. The first section gathers background data from the respondents, such as school type, geographical location, and school level, while the second section asks respondents to express their level of agreement with statements addressing the driving factors for seeking and offering private tutoring.

4.3. Study Participants

The study participants come from different schools located in different governorates in the Sultanate of Oman. They represent different class levels, starting from cycle one (1–4), cycle two (5–10), and post-basic education (11–12). The study included 261 students, 214 parents, and 87 teachers. Among the student participants, 91.5% were female, while 8.5% were male. The majority of the students (96.4%) were enrolled in cycle two, while smaller portions came from cycle 3 (2.4%) and cycle 1 (1.2%). The predominance of cycle two students is partly due to the broader grade span it covers: six grade levels in cycle two, compared with four grades in cycle only two grades in the post-basic stage. Nearly all the students were enrolled in public schools (99.2%). In terms of geographic distribution, the majority of the students were from South Al-Batinah (60.8%), followed by Dhofar (16%), Ad Dakhiliyah (14.4%), Al-Sharqiya South (4.4%), North Al-Batinah (3.6%), and Muscat (0.8%).

Regarding the parent participants, the majority were female (81.7%), and most had children in Cycle Two schools (89.9%), with smaller percentages in Cycle One (4.8%) and post-basic (5.3%). Nearly all of their children attended public schools (96.6%). Regarding their level of education, 45.7% of the parents held a high school diploma. Almost half of the parents (46.8%) reported being unemployed but were actively looking for a job. The average income of most parents (44.9%) was less than 500 Omani rials. As for the teachers, all of them were employed in public schools, with the majority located in Muscat (39.1%). Most of the teachers who took part in the present study were female, comprising 75.6% of the sample.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study explored the perceptions of students, teachers, and parents regarding the factors driving the demand for private tutoring. The following scale was used to interpret the mean scores of students, parents, and teachers, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Interpretation of mean scores.

Mean score	Interpretation
1.00 to 2.33	Low
2.34 to 3.66	Moderate
3.67 to 5.00	High

Table 2 displays the means and standard deviations of the driving factors for seeking and offering private tutoring as perceived by the students.

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations of the reasons for seeking private tutoring services as perceived by the students. The findings indicate that the main reason was “to get high grades in grade 12 to ensure admission into a university” ($M = 4.31, SD = 0.88$). This reason denotes that students are strongly and instrumentally motivated to enhance their academic achievement and to secure better higher education opportunities. Among the other highly rated reasons were “to get high grades in school” ($M = 4.27, SD = 0.91$) and “to strengthen academic performance at school” ($M = 4.22, SD = 0.94$), suggesting that students' main concerns behind attending private tutoring lessons relate to overall academic success. Other prominent reasons included “to support me during

examinations" ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 1.01$) and "to ensure employment in the future" ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.11$), reflecting a pragmatic orientation toward long-term academic and career success.

Table 2. Students' Perceptions of the Reasons for Seeking Private Tutoring.

No.	Item	M	SD
1	To get high grades in grade 12 to ensure admission into a university	4.31	0.88
2	To get high grades in school	4.27	0.91
3	To strengthen academic performance at school	4.22	0.94
4	To support the student during examinations	4.16	1.01
5	To ensure employment in the future	4.06	1.11
6	To get training to answer exam questions	4.05	1.02
7	Because the students need remedial support for their learning deficiencies	4.04	1.03
8	To enhance what the student is learning at school	3.91	0.98
9	Because the mainstream class duration is not enough to get all of the important content	3.68	1.20
10	To increase the time spent on learning	3.61	1.14
11	To compensate for their educational loss at schools	3.61	1.14
12	To compete with peers at school	3.57	1.18
13	To help with completing homework and other schoolwork	3.54	1.21
14	To explain the content and tasks that students find difficult in schools	3.54	1.21
15	To help keep up with work in school	3.50	1.07
16	Because the class size at school is large and the students cannot follow the lesson	3.44	1.28
17	Because attending private tutoring lessons becomes part of our culture	3.25	1.28
18	Because the student does not get enough support at school	3.23	1.25
19	Because the student does not get support at home	3.06	1.26
20	Because schools provide poor-quality learning	3.05	1.24
21	Because the student wants to have fun	2.84	1.34
22	Because the student would feel guilty if he/she did not attend private tutoring	2.67	1.32
23	Because friends/classmates are doing so	2.53	1.36
24	Because the students want to be admired by friends and society	2.47	1.36
25	Because the school teacher asks students to seek private lessons	2.45	1.31
Average		3.48	1.16

However, the lowest-rated reasons underlying the need for private tutoring, as perceived by the students, are linked with externally driven motives such as "because my teacher told me so" ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 1.31$), "because I want to be admired by friends and society" ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 1.36$), and "because my friends are doing so" ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 1.36$). An important trend is highlighted by these findings, suggesting that students' need to seek private tutoring is guided by their goals for academic self-improvement rather than social pressure or conformity.

Table 3 includes the means and standard deviations of the driving factors for seeking and offering private tutoring as perceived by the parents.

Table 3 displays the means and standard deviations for the reasons for students' participation in private tutoring sessions from the perspectives of the parents. Based on the results, the most influential motive was "to explain the difficult information and tasks their children find in school" ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.00$), highlighting the parents' concerns about helping their children handle challenging study materials and school subjects. The second highest-rated reasons were "to support them during examinations" ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.07$) and "to get high grades in school" ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 1.09$), mirroring parents' strong emphasis on their children's preparation for examinations to obtain high grades leading to academic success. Additionally, parents reported "to train them to answer exam questions" ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.07$) and "to provide remedial support for their learning deficiencies" ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.10$) as significant driving factors, suggesting the efforts made by parents to provide supplementary lessons that can address students' specific academic needs and subsequently enhance academic performance. On the other hand, the parents perceived "because their friends are doing so" ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.28$), "because my child's teacher or principal advised me to do so" ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 1.17$), and "because we want our child to be admired by friends and society" ($M = 2.17$, $SD = 1.13$) as the

least influential factors driving the need for private tutoring. In other words, social pressure does not play a major role in parents' decision-making.

Table 3. Parents' Perceptions of the Reasons for Seeking Private Tutoring.

No.	Item	M	SD
1	To explain the content and tasks that students find difficult in schools	4.11	1.00
2	To support the student during examinations	4.07	1.06
3	To get high grades in school	4.01	1.08
4	To strengthen academic performance at school	4.01	1.08
5	To get training to answer exam questions	3.96	1.07
6	Because the students need remedial support for their learning deficiencies	3.96	1.10
7	To ensure employment in the future	3.89	1.20
8	To compensate for their educational loss at schools	3.84	1.03
9	To get high grades in grade 12 to ensure admission into a university	3.74	0.69
10	To enhance what the student is learning at school	3.72	1.10
11	Because the mainstream class duration is not enough to get all of the important content	3.60	1.11
12	Because the class size at school is large and the students cannot follow the lesson	3.50	1.14
13	Because the student does not get enough support at school	3.50	1.14
14	To help keep up with work in school	3.43	1.09
15	To increase the time spent on learning	3.29	1.21
16	To help with completing homework and other schoolwork	3.29	1.22
17	To compete with peers at school	3.23	1.22
18	Because schools provide poor-quality learning	3.01	1.18
19	Because attending private tutoring lessons has become part of our culture	2.98	1.33
20	Because the student does not get support at home	2.94	1.28
21	Because the student wants to have fun	2.94	1.28
22	Because the student would feel guilty if he/she has not attended private tutoring	2.80	1.36
23	Because friends/Classmates are doing so	2.50	1.28
24	Because the school teacher asks students to seek private lessons	2.39	1.17
25	Because the students want to be admired by friends and society	2.17	1.13
Average		3.40	1.14

Table 4. Teachers' Perceptions of the Reasons for Seeking Private Tutoring.

#	Item	M	SD
1	Because the students need remedial support for their learning deficiencies	3.93	0.92
2	To get training to answer exam questions	3.79	0.99
3	To explain the content and tasks that students find difficult in schools	3.78	1.05
4	To get high grades in grade 12 to ensure admission into a university	3.77	1.16
5	To compensate for their educational loss at schools	3.66	1.00
6	To get high grades in school	3.63	1.01
7	To strengthen academic performance at school	3.63	1.01
8	To support the student during examinations	3.59	1.15
9	To enhance what the student is learning at school	3.55	1.00
10	To compete with peers at school	3.48	1.05
11	Because the mainstream class duration is not enough to get all of the important content	3.35	1.12
12	To ensure employment in the future	3.34	1.17
13	To increase the time spent on learning	3.10	1.13
14	Because attending private tutoring lessons becomes part of our culture	3.07	1.16
15	To help with completing homework and other schoolwork	2.96	1.23
16	Because the student does not get support at home	2.90	1.09
17	Because private tutoring provides an extra income for teachers	2.89	1.14
18	For teachers to spend their free time	2.68	1.12
19	Because schools provide poor-quality learning	2.35	1.11
Average		3.34	1.08

Table 4 displays the means and standard deviations of the driving factors for offering private tutoring as perceived by the teachers. Table 4 illustrates the reasons for students seeking private tutoring as perceived by the

teachers. The most critical factor rated by the teachers was “to provide remedial support for their learning deficiencies” ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.92$), underscoring their perceptions of the benefits offered by private tutoring in addressing students’ specific needs and academic weaknesses. This was followed by “to train students to answer exam questions” ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 0.99$) and “to explain the difficult information and tasks that they find difficult at school” ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.05$). These two reasons denote that teachers recognize private tutoring as playing an essential role in assisting students with additional practice for exam preparation. Also, teachers believe that the item “to ensure that students get high grades in their last year at school for university admission” ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.16$) is a critical reason that portrays a cultural awareness of the overall significance of education in ensuring admission to a reputable university.

6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the present study highlight several key factors driving the demand for private tutoring among students, teachers, and parents, with notable convergences and divergences in their perceptions. Across the three groups, ensuring admission into university, preparing for examinations, and addressing learning deficiencies emerged as primary factors for seeking or supporting private tutoring. Academic-related motives consistently emerged as the dominant driver for seeking private tutoring. Students’ top-rated factors, such as “to get high grades in Grade 12 to ensure admission into a university” ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.88$), “to get high grades in school” ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.91$), and “to strengthen academic performance at school” ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.94$), reflect a strong achievement-oriented mindset closely tied to high-stakes examination systems and university entrance competition. Similarly, parents prioritized motives that support academic improvement, including “to explain the difficult information and tasks their children find in school” ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.00$) and “to support them during examinations” ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.07$). Teachers echoed this pattern by identifying “to provide remedial support for learning deficiencies” ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.92$) and “to train students to answer exam questions” ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 0.99$) as the leading reasons. Hence, these findings suggest a shared understanding that private tutoring functions primarily as an academic reinforcement mechanism.

This indicates a shared concern about getting additional support to get high grades in exams and thus ensuring admission to higher education institutions after grade twelve. The emphasis on exam preparation aligns with the findings from other studies (Bray, 2014; Sobhy, 2012; Zhang & Bray, 2020), emphasizing the critical role of high-stakes examinations in promoting the need for supplementary education. Private tutoring can be seen as an outcome of globalization in education in the sense that it manifests the role of high-stakes exams in sorting students (Bray et al., 2014).

Both parents and teachers emphasized the role of private tutoring lessons in explaining what students find difficult in school. This supports findings from Abu-Shawish (2023) and Sieverding et al. (2019), indicating that parents are motivated by the perceived insufficiencies in regular school instruction and a desire to compensate for educational losses. This might be explained in light of the challenges students face in mainstream education, such as unified classroom instruction, large classroom sizes, and the questionable quality of instruction. In addition, some students need additional educational support and customized instruction tailored to their individual needs (Šťastný & Chvál, 2023).

Parents and students believed that private tutoring could support students’ future employment. This tendency aligns with some previous studies. For instance, in India, enrollment in PT lessons tends to be high since students often pursue jobs that require educational qualifications (Azam, 2015). Students’ focus on securing future employment opportunities also reflected a strong belief in education as a path to socio-economic mobility, consistent with previous literature (Hajar & Karakus, 2022).

Teachers considered “providing an extra income”, “spending free time”, and “schools providing poor-quality learning experiences” as the least significant factors in offering private tutoring lessons. This suggests that teachers do not usually involve themselves in the industry of private tutoring because they do not view financial incentives

and the desire to fill their free time as motivators to offer private tutoring sessions. This finding does not align with some past research findings. For instance, in India and Egypt, teachers tend to provide PT because the main incentive behind doing so is to improve their financial status (Azam, 2015; Sobhy, 2012).

The findings of the study have also shown that both parents and students view social factors such as “the friends are doing so,” “to get admiration from friends and society,” and “because teachers or school principals advise students to do so” as the least significant reasons for seeking private tutoring lessons. These motivating reasons were ranked lower in importance compared with improved academic performance, exam preparation, and ensuring university admission. Interestingly, these findings suggest that the decision to engage in private tutoring is largely driven by educational and academic concerns rather than social influence. In other words, when it comes to educational concerns, parents and students place greater emphasis on academic achievement than on social considerations. This pattern reinforces the notion that private tutoring in this context is primarily an academically driven practice motivated by instrumental and goal-oriented purposes rather than by peer influence or social prestige.

Regarding the role of school principals, Bray and Ventura (2022) reported mixed results on whether principals influence students’ decisions to take extra tutoring. While some school principals discourage extra tutoring and consider the provision of school instruction to be enough, other principals accept it as a part of reality, and still others encourage it. Similarly, the investigation of teachers’ influence on students’ engagement in PT lessons indicated that some teachers advise their students or parents to look for PT (Choudhury, Gill, & Kumar, 2024; Kobakhidze, 2014), while other studies report opposite findings (Bray et al., 2014; Nguyen, Le, & Duong, 2025).

7. IMPLICATIONS

The results of the current research indicate that the fundamental causes driving the demand for private tutoring may need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner by most educational systems, especially by increasing the assistance given to students in schools. In light of the findings of the study, students’ needs include the effective incorporation of exam preparation into the curriculum, more customized scaffolding, and smaller class sizes to optimize students’ classroom interaction. Additionally, it is vital to examine how the excessive dependence on private tutoring lessons impacts students’ autonomous learning and critical thinking over time. Most importantly, for the sake of minimizing the demand for private tutoring, schools may implement some plans to provide students with additional academic support, such as offering remedial lessons and organizing after-school programs. Moreover, educators may go through training programs on differentiated instruction that will address how to meet students’ individual needs and the wide range of learning requirements.

8. CONCLUSION

The present research has provided insights into the reasons for the expanding demand for private tutoring in the Sultanate of Oman as perceived by the students, parents, and teachers. The findings of the study underscore that the primary reasons for students’ participation in private tutoring relate to enhancing students’ academic performance, getting ready for high-stakes exams, and addressing specific learning needs. Even though PT is considered an essential supplement to mainstream education, it raises a red flag concerning the quality and adequacy of the existing educational system.

The students and parents did not perceive PT as a cultural obligation driven by social pressure, but rather as a reaction to academic pressures, particularly university admissions. In Oman, the increasing use of private tutoring could be addressed by emphasizing the fundamental issues, including the need for better classroom instruction and more supportive educational policies, which would help create a fairer and more effective educational system. Future research could investigate how educational policies and practices might evolve to reduce reliance on private tutoring and ensure that all students receive adequate support tailored to their needs within the school system.

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