

# Parents' Perspectives on Paid Private Tutoring in the United Arab Emirates

## Study Report

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## Acronyms

ADEK	Department of Education and Knowledge
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
DEC	Dubai Education Council
DED	Department of Economic Development
DSA	Dubai School Agency
DSIB	Dubai Schools Inspections Bureau
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IB	International Baccalaureate
ICSE	Indian Certificate of Secondary Education
IG	International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE)
KG	Kindergarten
KHDA	Knowledge and Human Development Authority
MOE	Ministry of Education
RCEP	Regional Center for Educational Planning
SAT	Scholastic Assessment Test
SES	Socio-economic status
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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## Executive Summary

The main purpose of this study carried out by the Regional Center for Educational Planning (RCEP), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MOE), was to generate information to enable the regulation of private tutoring practices and to support learning in schools and positively impact the education system in the UAE. The study sampled public and private schools with grades 5, 9, 10, and 12 that followed the MOE, IB, IG, or SAT curricula across all emirates. A total of 3929 parents from 85 selected schools participated in the study.

Overall, 27% of students took private lessons in the UAE. However, Emiratis took private lessons more often than non-Emiratis (32% and 21%, respectively) and males took private lessons more often than females. Emiratis also spent more money on private tutoring than non-Emiratis. Emiratis' demand for private tutoring is consistent across grades, with a small but significant decrease in grade 9. For non-Emiratis, the demand for private tutoring is significantly higher in grade 12 than in other grades, which suggests that as students move to higher grades non-Emirati parents perceive a more pressing need for private tutoring.

Mathematics was the subject in which most students (83%) took out of-school lessons, followed by science (58%), English (50%), and Arabic (44%). On average, students took private lessons in two subjects, for two hours a week per subject. The majority of students took private lessons regularly throughout the semester instead of just before exams. Although most parents perceived some level of academic improvement after their children received private tutoring, data suggest that, on average, "excellent" and "good" performers benefitted more from private tutoring than "medium" and "low" performers.

Most children were tutored by teachers. Most teachers (48%) did not work in their students' schools. However, 25% of students were taught by their own teacher or a teacher who works in their school. Although 45% of parents did not know the educational level of the last tutor they had hired, 36% hired tutors with at least a bachelor degree. About 15% had a master degree and 3% a doctorate. Seventy-eight percent of parents affirmed they would not hire a college undergraduate.

According to 86% of parents, "skills and experience" is an important criterion to select tutors. Although half of the parents stated that the sex of the tutor was not an important criterion, a large percentage preferred to have their children taught by a tutor of the same sex. Additional criteria for hiring a tutor were "reputation as a private tutor" (38%), followed by "being able to go to a child's home" (29%), "age" (13%), and "being a child's school teacher" (10%).

Most parents (68%) found tutors through recommendations from other parents. Less common strategies were hiring a tutor from the child's school (12%) and hiring a tutor based on a

principal's recommendation (2%). Parents seem to assume that recommendation from other parents, school principal, or hiring a known teacher from their child's school are trustworthy endorsements of tutors' skills and experience. About 18% of parents relied on internet search or advertisement to find a tutor.

The overall majority of parents reported that tutoring lessons took place in their homes (59%). Only 11% of Emiratis chose the tutor's home as a location for private tutoring compared to 29% of non-Emiratis. Very similar percentages of Emiratis and non-Emiratis chose licensed tutoring centers (around 10%) and schools (6%) as venues for private tutoring. In addition, Emirati and non-Emirati parents preferred one-to-one interactions over other types of private lessons (62% and 45%, respectively). However, 37% of non-Emirati parents selected small groups and 14% selected large group lessons, compared to 24% and 11% of Emirati parents, respectively. The percentage of students who took online tutoring was very modest among Emiratis and non-Emiratis (2% and 4%, respectively).

Regarding the regulation of private tutoring, only 5% of parents believed that private tutoring should not be regulated at all. The remaining participants believed that one or more aspects should be controlled by the MOE. The most common factors to be regulated, according to parents, were "quality of private tutoring" (64%) and "hourly rate" (60%). However, half of the respondents were also in favor of regulating tutors' qualifications (52%) and child safety conditions (51%). Aspects of private tutoring (skills-focused) and venue were also common responses (43% and 40%, respectively). A substantive, but smaller percentage of parents (29%) believed that school staff should not be allowed to tutor their own students.

Given the findings presented in this report and parents' opinions about private tutoring regulations, the Ministry of Education should lead a process to develop several measures and policies to govern private tutoring in the coming years. More specifically, the Ministry of Education could implement the following:

***1) Provide Cost-Free Private Tutoring in Public Schools***

Public school teachers who hold a teacher's license from the MOE would be allowed to carry out private tutoring sessions in their schools after regular school hours. They would receive a bonus according to the number of private tutoring hours they provide each month.

***2) Require Tutors to Obtain a Professional License***

Teachers interested in providing out-of-school private tutoring would have to obtain a license to become tutors. The licensing process would ensure tutors possess basic skills such as in-depth knowledge of the subject, advanced knowledge of key tutoring strategies and

techniques. A platform created by the Ministry of Education would list all licensed teachers who provide tutoring.

### ***3) Establish an Open-Communications System between the Ministry of Education and Parents to Guarantee their Rights***

A special platform created by the Ministry of Education would provide information about parents' rights and responsibilities and an assessment page for parents to evaluate tutors' performance. A hotline for complaints can be developed so parents can denounce non-compliance with MOE's regulations.

### ***4) Regulate Costs***

The Ministry of Education should standardize private tutoring fees according to tutor's credentials, type of tutoring (individual or groups), materials provided, etc. and cap the maximum amount tutors can charge based on relevant criteria. Cases of non-compliance would be denounced through the e-page or the hotline.

### ***5) Regulate Private Tutoring Centers***

The licensing process would take into account several educational and commercial regulations, such as the number of students the establishment is allowed to provide lessons to, guidelines for child safety, hours of operation, services provided, fees (based on government stipulations), the types of private tutoring offered (one-to-one or groups), advertisement practices, and the assurance that tutors are licensed by the MOE. After Centers obtained a license they would have to report on those operational aspects periodically.

### ***6) Implement a Tutorial Voucher System***

The MOE would provide vouchers to students who fall below national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy. The voucher would have to be used in one of the certified tutoring centers. The government would monitor children's academic progress and parents' satisfaction.

## Section 1: Introduction, Context, and Objectives

### 1.1 Introduction

Private tutoring has been a common feature of the educational landscape in many Western and non-western countries for a long time. However, the extent of private tutoring seems to have grown dramatically worldwide in the last ten years.<sup>1</sup> In the MENA region, private tutoring has proven to be a profitable business, with Dubai vying for the title of ‘most profitable’ according to a private tutoring company.<sup>2</sup> Despite the rise in private tutoring in the UAE and elsewhere, that practice has not been without controversy. Supporters of private tutoring argue that it generates additional income for tutors and functions as a remedial intervention to aid low-achieving students while boosting high achievers’ performance.<sup>3</sup> For example, researchers found that among 9,983 high-school students who were taking the Higher Education Entrance Examinations (HEEE) in Turkey, there was a positive small effect of private tutoring on academic performance in mathematics and Turkish language, but not in natural sciences.<sup>4</sup> A small study with 50 students in Pakistan found a significant positive effect of private tutoring on the academic achievement of students in mathematics at the secondary school.<sup>5</sup> In addition, Huang (2013) found that receiving private tutoring in mathematics or science after school was associated with an increase in average student performance in TIMSS without widening the dispersion of scores. He concluded that in science, low performing students benefited more from tutoring than did high-performing students. In mathematics, the reverse was true.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the benefits outlined by proponents of private tutoring, critics believe that private tutoring exacerbates social and economic inequalities by giving an unfair advantage to students who can afford private tutoring. Additional criticisms are that private tutoring puts a financial strain on low-income families and it disturbs the overall teaching and learning environment in schools.<sup>7</sup> Critics of private tutoring in Arab countries have argued that the negative impact of private tutoring may go as far as promoting a negative association between student absenteeism and TIMSS achievement in mathematics. In some states, such as Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, a study found that there is no significant relationship between absenteeism and achievement due to the prevalence of private tutoring. Parents hire their children’s teachers to ensure they have high grades. In turn, teachers might neglect their school teaching and pressure parents to hire them as tutors so they can boost their income.<sup>8</sup>

Although proponents and critics of private tutoring provide valid arguments for and against that practice, a caution concerning their arguments is the utilization of data from studies without rigorous methodologies, with small sample sizes, or that are unable to separate the effects of

free and paid private tutoring—a clear weakness present in all analyses conducted with TIMSS data, for example.

It is also important to understand the prevalence and complexities of private tutoring in different contexts, while exploring the reasons for the growing demand for private tutoring and the overall state of education in each country. Private tutoring is not an inherently negative practice. If well-regulated, private tutoring has the potential to improve students' achievement and decrease educational inequalities. However, without specific goals and enforceable regulations, private tutoring can undermine education systems by supporting harmful practices and intensifying social disparities. What is clear to most stakeholders is that private tutoring deserves the attention of policy makers so it can have a positive influence on the education system.

The present study was carried out by the Regional Center for Educational Planning (RCEP) in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MOE). RCEP is an Emirati organization established as a Category II UNESCO center under the agreement between the Government of the United Arab Emirates and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2003. RCEP was founded to build national and regional capacity in education planning and policy, leadership and educational management, dissemination of knowledge, and research. The Center builds national and regional capacity for modern educational planning by working with senior officials and technical staff of ministries of education, local level education offices, and other relevant ministries.

As part of RCEP's mandate to implement policy research and dissemination of knowledge, this study ascertains the extent and characteristics of private tutoring in grades 5, 9, 10, and 12 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The main purpose of the study was to generate information that can be used to regulate private tutoring practices in the UAE, support learning in schools, and impact the education system positively. This report is organized as follows. Section 1 presents the structure of the education system in the UAE, previous studies on private tutoring in the country, and aspects of private tutoring regulation worldwide. Section 2 presents the methodology used in this study (sampling, instruments, procedures, and limitations); Section 3 presents the study findings; and Section 4 introduces policy options for regulating private tutoring.

## 1.2 The Education System in the UAE<sup>9</sup>

The *UAE Vision 2021* is the road map for government actions, policies, initiatives in the coming years. It aims to make the UAE one of the best countries in the world by the Golden Jubilee of

the Union. To translate that vision into reality, the country has established six national priorities: 1) Cohesive society and preserved identity; 2) Safe public and fair judiciary; 3) Competitive knowledge economy; 4) First-rate education system; 5) World-class healthcare; and 6) Sustainable environment and infrastructure.

To achieve a first-rate education system, the UAE 2021 initiative focuses on children and youth in schools and universities. It provides them with quality education and advanced skills grounded in smart systems and devices that can be applied to teaching methods, projects and research. The goal is to prepare a generation of Emiratis who can lead in science, technology and in a knowledge economy. Although much has been achieved, there is a deep awareness that much remains to be done.

### *Stages*

The public and private education systems in the UAE are structured according to the following stages:

a) Kindergarten (KG) (4-5 year olds) prepares children to successfully complete the primary level (Cycle 1). Participation in that stage is not compulsory and includes two levels (KG1 and KG2);

b) Basic level (primary and intermediate levels) comprise elementary level/Cycle 1 (grades 1-4) and intermediate level/Cycle 2 (grades 6-9). Students who are interested in vocational education can switch to a technical secondary school in grade 9;

d) Secondary level/Cycle 3, which might include the general or advanced curriculum for Grades 10 and 11. Assignment of students to those two curricula depend on students' performance in Grade 9. Students in the advanced track receive more in-depth instruction in math and science than those in the general track. After Cycle 3, students are granted a high school certificate, which indicates they have passed 12 years of compulsory education. Students who attended the technical secondary school are awarded the technical secondary diploma upon completing this level.

e) Higher education is available for students who completed the secondary level successfully. Students may enroll in a college program immediately after high school, in the UAE or abroad, without attending a foundation year.

### *Governance*

At the federal level, the MOE handles all stages of education in the UAE including schools, colleges, universities and post-graduation programs. It supervises both public and private

schools, but it does not direct the private schools and curriculum (with the exception of Arabic, social studies and Islamic Studies).

Different departments handle education matters at the local level. In Abu Dhabi, the Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) was established to develop education and educational institutions in that emirate. The department is responsible for supervising, regulating and spearheading the education development initiatives in public and private schools in Abu Dhabi.

In Dubai, the Dubai Education Council (DEC) and Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) handle education matters. DEC is responsible for international accreditation and comprehensive quality assurance programs. KHDA inspects private schools in the emirate and is responsible for the growth and quality of private education in Dubai from early learning and schools through higher, technical and vocational education and training.

Schools in Umm Al Quwain, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Ajman and Fujairah operate under MOE through local branches or educational zones. However, the UAE President announced plans to unify education in all government schools in September 2017. Schools that follow the MOE curriculum will soon follow a new common education system called 'Emirati School Model', which aims at improving standards and producing better educational results.

### *Curriculum Diversity*

There are 17 different kinds of curricula<sup>10</sup> to meet the expatriates' community needs in the UAE. Private school curricula range from Indian CBSE, Indian Certificate of Secondary Education ICSE, to the British General Certificate of Secondary Education GCSE, American SAT, German, French, Iranian, Pakistani, Philippine, Russian, as well as International Baccalaureate (IB). All government schools and some private schools follow the MOE curriculum.

### **1.3 Private Tutoring Studies in the UAE**

Few studies on private tutoring have been conducted in the UAE to date. The most recent, carried out by KHDA in 2012, revealed the extent of private tutoring in Dubai's private schools, school management's response towards private tutoring, students' account of the impact of private tutoring on their academic performance, the role of private tutoring centers, and parental perspectives on private tutoring. The KHDA study collected information from 585 students in grades 9 and 12 in 14 different schools across different inspection ratings to account for school quality. The study findings revealed that overall, 49% of all students surveyed had received some form of private tutoring. Students who followed the Indian curriculum reported higher extent of private tutoring (70%) than their counterparts who followed the US, UK, or MOE curricula (38%). The most common types of private tutoring were

one-to-one (22%) or small groups (2-10 people) outside of school. Also, private tutoring was more common among students in grade 12 (63%) than in grade 9 (37%). The most common reasons for taking private tutoring were to improve exam scores (48%) or learn the subject better (33%). Most students (86%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that private tutoring improved their examination grades. Finally, the KHDA’s study revealed that most private tutoring happened in either a tutor’s home (43%) or a student’s home (25%). Mathematics (52%) and Science (34%) were the subjects that were being tutored the most. Most families (71%) spent less than AED 1000 per child per month on private tutoring. The average among all students was AED1,250 per child. Emirati students spent on average AED2,625 per month.

A survey conducted by the Dubai School of Government in 2011<sup>11</sup> found that 66% of students hired tutors for one or more subjects in their last year of high school (12<sup>th</sup> grade). The study surveyed 180 students (82 males and 98 females) enrolled in the foundation year at UAE University. Participating students had attended 12<sup>th</sup> grade in schools across all emirates. Students were asked about their educational and family background, private tutoring practices, and perceptions about private tutoring. Eighty-seven percent of survey respondents went to public schools, 2.3% went to Arabic private schools (teaching the MOE curriculum), 4.5% attended English private schools, and 6.2% attended the Institute of Applied Technology. Males were significantly more likely to take private tutoring and parents with higher levels of education were more likely to hire private tutors for their children. However, only 18% of the students took individual sessions with a tutor. The majority chose to study in groups of 2-5 students or more. 83% of tutors were men (the majority Egyptians). 53% of male tutors who provided lessons to boys were also their classroom teachers. That was the case for only 7% of the female tutors.

A report published by ADEC with findings of the 2015 Parents’ Survey also provided information about private tutoring. The survey was completed by more than 57,000 parents of public and private school students in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Data revealed that 18.1% of the students received private lessons in Arabic language, 17.9% indicated that their children receive private lessons in the English language, 19.7% indicated that their children receive private lessons in mathematics, and 16.2% of parents indicated that their children receive private lessons in science. More male students received private lessons in all four subjects than females.<sup>12</sup>

Results from the National Family Status Observatory, conducted by the Abu Dhabi Department for Economic Development (DED) indicated that about 30.1% of the citizen households have children who receive private tutoring, and the average household expenditure on the private tutoring during the three months prior to March 2016 survey reached around AED 6,837.<sup>13</sup>

Albeit limited in scope, the studies mentioned above have revealed some important characteristics of private tutoring in the country and have shed light on the challenges the MOE might face in regulating private tutoring practices. The present study expands the scope of previous studies by including a representative sample of public and private schools with grades 5, 9, 10, and 12, that adopt the MOE, IG, IB, or SAT curricula across all emirates. The study also reveals parents' perspectives and actual private tutoring practices.

#### 1.4 Regulation of Private Tutoring

##### *Why regulate?*

The extent and context of private tutoring should inform and guide regulations on private tutoring. Characteristics such as subjects and diversity of tutoring providers, impact of private tutoring on quality of schools, and attitudes towards private tutoring and its providers should determine the need for regulation and how far governments can go to control private tutoring practices.<sup>14</sup> According to Bray (2014), some of the reasons for private tutoring regulation might include the following:<sup>15</sup>

- 1) *Decrease inequalities in access to and quality of private tutoring.* Although in many countries only affluent families can afford private tutoring, in some countries that practice is common across all socio-economic levels. In either scenario, it is fair to assume that students with high socio-economic status (SES) have access to better quality education and tutors than their counterparts with low SES.
- 2) *Avoid backlash on regular schooling.* Private tutoring has an impact on regular schooling by affecting teachers' behaviors. Teachers may reduce coverage of regular lessons to increase demand for paid classes or they may simply put more efforts into private classes because they generate more revenue than the standard teacher salary. An additional concern is that students who take too many private lessons are constantly overwhelmed and have little time for socialization and relaxation. They may also become bored or too tired to be actively engaged in the regular classroom.
- 3) *Avoid harmful practices.* Some teachers might coerce their students to take private lessons in exchange for more attention and better grades. That practice has long-term detrimental implications as it shapes the values of children and youth during formative periods of their lives.
- 4) *Decrease consumers' vulnerability.* Regulations might protect against physical and psychological child abuse that may take place during one-to-one tutoring. Tutors may make students feel inadequate so they can generate a demand for private tutoring. They may also criticize the school the child attends, or implement a tutoring syllabus or methodologies that are dissonant with schooling. Parents may need regulation to assist them to better select tutors and sign contracts for their services. Parents are not always well-equipped to assess the quality of tutoring their children is receiving as it is not easy to establish a direct

link between tutor's input and student's outcome. Tutoring companies (and many individual tutors) are experts in marketing and sales techniques and parents' need to be informed about how to protect themselves against misleading advertising.

- 5) *Decrease service providers' vulnerability.* Regulations may ensure contracts between tutoring providers and their employees abide by local labor laws. Many tutoring companies employ tutors with little awareness about labor laws, pay them very low wages on an informal basis.

### *What and Who Should Be Regulated?*

Governments can decide what actors (companies and/or individuals) should be regulated and what kind of regulations can be applied based on the extent and characteristics of private tutoring in their countries. The experience of educational systems well-accustomed to the high prevalence of private tutoring, might guide regulatory approaches in countries with similar characteristics that are attempting to better control private tutoring and its consequences.

Some of the aspects of private tutoring that must be assessed before a government decides who/what and how regulations should be implemented include: a) income group (what income bracket hires private tutors the most? does the government want to expand access to students in different socio-economic groups?); b) gender (which gender is lagging behind in academic performance? Should private tutoring target one gender versus the other?); c) nationality (are some nationalities in need of private tutoring more than others? What are the cultural beliefs behind hiring private tutors?); d) location (do parents in certain locations have more difficulty in hiring a private tutor for their children?); e) intensity (at what grade levels, frequency, subjects, is tutoring more common? Does that indicate pedagogical deficiencies in those grades and subjects?); f) quality (is tutoring improving students' academic abilities?); g) costs (is tutoring an economical burden on families? To what extent is the government able to support tutoring for needy families?); and g) economic implications (is the government willing to impose fees on private tutors?)<sup>16</sup>.

For countries that are considering banning private tutoring completely, it is important to consider the experiences of other countries that have attempted to do so. In Korea, Cambodia, Egypt, Turkey, and Uganda, for example, the government attempted to implement policies to ban private tutoring, but those policies were not effective.<sup>17</sup> Their failure might suggest that policies should focus on addressing the deeper causes for hiring private tutors in addition to assessing the main characteristics of private tutoring in their countries. Cultural aspects, social motivations, and the current status and demands of the education system may be driving forces behind the demand for private tutoring. Some specific examples of those driving forces might include: a) implementation of high-stake tests that impact students' future. Parents will hire private tutors, especially if they lack confidence in the quality of education in public or

private schools; b) parents perception that teachers are being poorly prepared and the curriculum is seen as particularly demanding; c) the education system imposes many academic barriers for students to transition from one educational cycle to the next, and parents have an understanding their children will succeed only if additional academic support is given, they will have a very strong motivation to hire private tutors.<sup>18</sup>

After an analysis of the current status of private tutoring in the country and a deeper understanding of the motivations to hire private tutors, governments may consider different kinds of regulations that might be applied to their context. Tables 1 and 2 provide examples of regulations for specific actors in the tutoring industry.

Table 1: Examples of **tutoring centers** regulations in selected countries and country scores in international assessments

Countries	Regulations
Macao, Hong Kong, India (Bihar)	1. Define licensing threshold, i.e., what enterprises can be licensed as tutoring centers (e.g. provides lessons to 7 or more people at a time or 21 or more people in any one day).
Hong Kong	2. Registration and operation standards must be shared with parents and students. Institution provides a leaflet with the following information: registration number, name, address, telephone number, course information, information on tutors, refund policies, course details (name, content, fees, mode of delivery, duration, date, time and venue) facilities (classrooms, lecture room, language laboratory and computer room)
	3. Tutors must possess the minimum qualifications to be a teacher.
	4. Define maximum class size.
	5. Define hours of operation
	6. Does not define fees (use market mechanisms to regulate the costs).
	7. Centers are not required to follow specific curriculum, textbooks, and modes of teaching.
	8. Enterprises are required to follow regulations on advertising, taxation, insurance, and employment contracts.
	9. Advertisement must not make use of exaggerated wording (e.g. “strongest in exam techniques”) or misleading wording (e.g. “the famous tutor in English chosen by most students”)

<b>China (Chongqing)</b>	<p>10. Company total assets must exceed US\$300,000.</p> <p>11. The prices charged need to be approved by “authorities”.</p> <p>12. Tutorial centers must have board of directors comprising at least three people. Two-thirds of members must have over five years of teaching experience.</p> <p>13. The head of the center may not be responsible for more than one institution.</p> <p>14. Civil servants are not allowed to operate tutorial centers.</p> <p>15. Government determines minimum number of employees each enterprise should have (e.g. the enterprise shall employ at least three full-time tutors).</p> <p>16. Enterprises do not recruit in-service teachers or other staff from public primary, secondary or vocational schools to provide tutoring on working days.</p> <p>17. Minimum requirements for buildings and facilities.</p>
<b>Malaysia</b>	<p>18. Curriculum must strictly follow the official curriculum prescribed by the MOE.</p> <p>19. Must have at least three board members. The Chairperson must be a Malaysian.</p> <p>20. Appropriate infrastructure. Center may not be located in areas of heavy traffic congestion.</p> <p>21. Tutors must have a teaching permit. Managers must have at least three years of experience.</p> <p>22. Tuition centers may not enroll any students below seven years of age</p>
<b>Bangladesh</b>	<p>23. Government establishes fees for students in different parts of the country.</p>
<b>Korea</b>	<p>24. Government sets a ceiling on fees charged by tutoring centers.</p> <p>25. Restricted hours of operation (to deter pressures on young people)</p>
<b>Thailand</b>	<p>26. Government sets a fee ceiling of 20% above the actual cost of delivering the service.</p>
<b>Australia</b>	<p>27. Code of conduct developed by the Australian Tutoring Association specifies: objectives, obligations, qualifications, pre- and post-tests, other assessments and reporting, advertising, standards, curriculum and programming, plagiarism, business operation, contract, refunds, complaints procedures, and overall administration.<sup>19</sup></p>

Source: Mark Bray (2009). *Confronting the shadow education system: What government policies for private tutoring?*

The next category of regulations concerns teachers and students. Table 2 demonstrates different regulatory practices across countries. It is important to note that in many high-performing countries teachers are not allowed to provide private tutoring or they can do so under strict guidelines. In Singapore, for example, teachers can provide tutoring only if principals grant them permission and for no more than six hours a week.<sup>20</sup>

Table 2: Examples of regulations specific to teachers/students in regular schools by country.

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Regulations</i>
<i>Bhutan, Japan, Korea, parts of India, parts of China, Maldives, Mongolia, Taiwan</i>	Teachers are prohibited to provide private tutoring to: a) their own students; b) other students in their schools; and/or c) students from other schools.
<i>Cambodia, China, Georgia</i>	Teachers should not provide private tutoring. However, practices are discouraged by codes of ethics rather than by regulations.
<i>Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam.</i>	Teachers may provide private tutoring if permission is granted at the school level or by other educational authorities under certain conditions.
<i>Hong Kong, Macao, Philippines, Thailand, Nepal, Uzbekistan</i>	There are no policies on the matter. Teachers and their clients make the decision.
<i>Australia (Tutorial Voucher Initiative/Even Start), USA, England*</i>	Government provides funding/vouchers for parents to secure tutoring for their children.
<i>Singapore*</i>	Government provides grants to community groups to stimulate demand from low achievers. Principals might grant teachers permission to tutor for no more than six hours a week.

Source: Bray, M. & Kwo, O. (2014). Regulating private tutoring for public good: Policy options for supplementary education in Asia. Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre.

\* Bray, Mark. (2009). Confronting the shadow education system: What government policies for private tutoring? Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning.

The final category of regulations concerns students and other self-employed persons providing tutoring, including online tutoring. This category is considered by governments the most difficult to regulate and most authorities choose to ignore it. However, governments might choose to exert some control by increasing consumer awareness and/or taxing and controlling self-employed tutors. Internet tutoring provided by corporations have incentives for self-regulation which are intrinsic to any kind of business. They may have their own codes of conduct and monitoring system.<sup>21</sup>

### *How to regulate?*

Implementing regulations can be a daunting task that demands a great deal of coordination and partnership between the relevant authorities (Ministry of Education and other government offices) and other education stakeholders (schools, parents, tutoring centers, etc.). Governments must be aware that it is not possible for them to regulate all aspects of private tutoring (such as university students and internet tutoring). When regulation is not possible, governments can provide information about tutoring, so consumers can make informed

choices. They may create a checklist for parents, so they can address their children’s real academic needs for private tutoring and their safety.<sup>22</sup>

If a country decides to regulate certain aspects of private tutoring, it needs to create formal structures and departments to oversee regulations implementation (e.g., South Korea and Pakistan) or simply allow the tutoring industry to regulate itself.<sup>23</sup> The former option might require specific resources from the government to carry out specific tasks, such as administrative personnel and legal officers to conduct fact-finding visits (Box 1). The latter will count on entrepreneurs’ pro-active measures to self-regulate through professional associations. Those initiatives might count with the government support through consultations and negotiations.

#### Box 1: Role of regulatory offices in charge of private tutoring

In Hong Kong, the government takes on several responsibilities by creating competent offices to carry out the following regulatory activities:

1. “Registration of enterprises and tutors. They post on a website a list of registered and unregistered centers (that have been prosecuted and do not follow the government requirements);
2. Inspection of premises;
3. Advising companies, parents, and the public;
4. Maintaining websites and other channels for information;
5. Maintaining records;
6. Responding to complaints; and
7. Following up on infringements.”

*Source: Bray, M. & Kwo, O. (2014). Regulating private tutoring for public good: Policy options for supplementary education in Asia. Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre (p.52).*

If countries encourage self-regulatory practices, professional associations in charge of private tutoring must negotiate with government bodies to establish mechanisms for operating according to the labor and education laws in effect. In countries such as Japan, Korea, Australia, Germany, Greece, the United Kingdom and the United States, members of professional organizations are expected to follow the code of conduct for private tutors and may be subject to sanctions if violations are found.<sup>24</sup>

### 1.3 Study Objectives and Questions

The main purpose of this study, carried out by RCEP and the MOE, is to ascertain the extent and characteristics of paid private tutoring in grades 5, 9, 10, and 12 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Results will be used to create country-level regulations to discourage informal tutoring practices, to create tutoring support systems for students who are struggling academically, decrease inequalities and raise overall students’ performance.

Although the literature has identified different forms of private tutoring in the UAE and abroad,<sup>25</sup> this study will focus specifically on ***private (paid) supplementary tutoring of students in academic subjects taught in mainstream schools after school hours***. Some of the research questions addressed by the study include:

1. What is the extent of paid private tutoring in the UAE?
2. What types of tutoring lessons are the most common in the UAE (one-on-one, small/large groups)?
3. Who tutors students (their school teachers or others)?
4. How frequently do students take private lessons in math, science, Arabic, and English?
5. How much do parents pay for private lessons per hour on average?
6. What are some of the characteristics parents look for in a tutor (gender, educational level, etc.)?
7. What are parents' reasons for hiring private tutors?
8. What are parents' perceptions about the usefulness of paid tutoring to improve their children's academic performance?

## **Section 2: Methodology (Sampling, Instruments, Procedures, and Limitations)**

### **2.1 Sample Selection and Characteristics**

RCEP worked in close collaboration with the MOE Data Center to select a stratified random sample to allow for the generalization of the findings to the target populations. The study targeted students in grades 5 (end of cycle 1), 9 (end of cycle 2), 10, and 12 (secondary level) in MOE and private schools that followed the MOE, IB, IG, or SAT curricula in those grades. Those groups were selected due to the government's interest in those specific populations. Strata considered in the sample selection included: 1) emirates (Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Sharjah, Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah, and Umm Al Quwain); 2) sex of school (male, female, co-ed); 3) school type (public or private); and 4) Curriculum type (MOE, IB, IG, or SAT). A total of 5280 students' parents from 58 schools were selected for the study. A total of 3929 parents (1959 Emiratis and 1970 non-Emiratis) completed the survey.

Students' characteristics, according to parents' responses by nationality (Emirati, non-Emirati) are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Student Characteristics by Nationality

Child Characteristics		Emirati (n=1959)	Non-Emirati (n=1970)
<b>Nationality</b>		50%	50%
<b>Sex</b>	Male	41%	46%
	Female	59%	54%
<b>Grade</b>	5	36%	33%
	9	26%	26%
	10	21%	22%
	12	17%	19%
<b>Type of School</b>	Public	70%	17%
	Private	30%	83%
<b>School location</b>	Abu Dhabi	30%	36%
	Dubai	30%	40%
	Sharjah	13%	19%
	Ajman	5%	2%
	Ras Al Khaimah	7%	1%
	Fujairah	13%	1%
	Omm Al Quwain	2%	1%
<b>Curriculum studied</b>	MOE curriculum	73%	40%
	SATS	22%	22%
	IG	2%	30%
	IB	2%	4%
	I don't know	1%	4%

Family characteristics by nationality (Emirati, non-Emirati) is presented in table 6.

Table 6: Family Characteristics by Nationality

Family Characteristics		Emirati (n=1959)	Non-Emirati (n=1970)
Relationship to child	Father	39%	55%
	Mother	54%	42%
	Guardian	7%	3%
Monthly average income	less than 10K	4%	22%
	10K-20K	36%	46%
	21K-30K	25%	12%
	31K-40	10%	6%
	Above 40K	18%	10%
	Undefined	7%	4%
Educational Level	Secondary or below	52%	24%
	College grad (less than BA)	12%	16%
	Bachelor degree	28%	40%
	Degree above BA	8%	21%
Respondent's work sector	Government / Military	31%	9%
	Homemaker	28%	14%
	Education & Academia	10%	14%
	Business Owner	3%	9%
	Engineering	2%	9%
	Construction trades, services	2%	7%
	Retired	9%	1%
	Unemployed	3%	5%
	OTHERS	12%	32%

## 2.2 Instrument Development

The first step in developing the Parents' Perspectives on Private Tutoring questionnaire was to conduct a literature review to understand the relevant domains related to private tutoring and the methodological challenges to assess prevalence and characteristics of that practice. The second step involved the development of questionnaire items to answer the research questions and ensure they were content-relevant. After the items were drafted, they were shared with the directors of relevant sectors in the UAE MOE and an external expert who has conducted extensive research on paid private tutoring in other countries.

After receiving their feedback, RCEP finalized the questionnaire in Arabic and English and pre-tested it with 50 persons. The questionnaire was available in two formats—paper-and-pencil or

online. The online survey was available through a link provided by the MOE to principals. The paper-and-pencil version was distributed according to the process described in section 2.3.

The questionnaire included an introduction that clarified the objectives of the study and encouraged parents to be MOE's partners in making educational decisions by providing information about current practices, parental preferences, and reasons for hiring private tutors. Parents were informed that their responses would be kept confidential and used for this study only. The questionnaire comprised the following parts:

- 1. Background Information** contained 13 items that covered family and child' characteristics and a question about whether students had taken paid private tutoring during the 2017-2018 scholastic year.
- 2. Private tutoring subjects** contained 26 items that addressed practices of private tutoring in four core subjects (math, Arabic, English and science). For each subject, the following information was collected: a) number of private tutoring hours per week; b) cost per hour and the maximum amount parents are willing to pay; c) who tutored the child; and d) the child's academic performance before and after private tutoring.
- 3. Parents' perceptions and preferences** included a scale on reasons for taking private lessons (11 items) described below, private tutors' characteristics (5 items) and aspects of private tutoring to be regulated (1 item).

In addition, the research team developed a scale, originally comprised of 11 items, to assess parents' reasons for paying for private tutoring. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to examine the underlying (or latent) relationships between the variables. The analysis confirmed the existence of three main distinct factors, namely, *academic demands*, *concern over education quality*, and *compliance with external influences*, that explain why parents' hire private tutors. The overall alpha reliability for the scale was .63. The variables under each factor are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Variables Comprising the *Reasons for Hiring Private Tutors* Factors

<b>Parents' Reasons for Hiring Private Tutors</b>
<b><i>Academic Demands</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) I hire private tutors because the school curriculum is very demanding.</li> <li>2) I hire private tutors because there are too many exams during the semester.</li> <li>3) I hire private tutors to help my child with homework.</li> </ol>
<b><i>Concern over Education Quality</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The quality of my child's school is good, but if I pay for private tutoring she will have an academic advantage.</li> <li>2) I pay for private tutoring because I believe the quality of education in my child's school is poor.</li> <li>3) My child takes private tutoring because the quality of the teacher(s) is poor.</li> </ol>
<b><i>Compliance with External Influences</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) I pay for private tutoring because most parents I know do that and I do NOT want my child to be left out.</li> <li>2) At least one of the teachers in my child's school suggested s/he should take paid lessons outside normal school hours</li> <li>3) The principal in my child's school encouraged me to hire private tutors.</li> </ol>

### 2.3 Data Collection

Data was collected in close collaboration with MOE (Operational and Inspection Sectors), ADEK and KHDA, from March 5 -20,2018. In preparation for the data collection process, RCEP carried out several workshops for principals who were in charge of managing sampled schools. During the workshops they were informed about background and objectives of the study, their role in conducting the study, and the steps to distribute and collect questionnaires from parents.

Each school received one box with 30 questionnaires, instruction for principals, and letter for parents. Boxes were labeled with school name, grade and class to be selected. Principals were instructed to distribute the envelopes to students in the designated classes. If a class had less than 30 students, the principal was asked to distribute the survey to the available students in the designated class and then distribute the remaining surveys to students in the following class randomly.

Upon distribution of questionnaires, principals were asked to explain the purpose of the study to students and to ask them to give the questionnaire to their parents (or guardian) and return the completed questionnaire in the sealed envelope within two days. Principals were also asked to contact the parents, explain the study objectives, the importance of their participation, and ask them to answer the questions completely and accurately within two days. Parents were ensured the survey was anonymous.

## 2.4 Limitations

Although there are several types of private tutoring, the current study was limited only to paid private supplementary tutoring of students in academic subjects taught after school hours. In addition, the data collected is limited to grades 5, 9, 10, and 12 and only five out of the 17 existing school curricula were selected for this study. Therefore, the findings can only be generalized to the grades and curricula mentioned above.

## Section 3: Findings

### 3.1 Prevalence and Reasons for Private Tutoring

Parents were asked if their children had taken paid private lessons during the 2017-2018 academic year. Overall, 27% of respondents indicated their children had taken private lessons. However, Emiratis had taken private lessons more often than non-Emiratis. A total of 32% of Emiratis were taking private lessons compared to 21% of non-Emiratis. This difference was significant.<sup>26</sup>

Three factors were identified as parents' main reasons for taking private lessons. For Emiratis and non-Emiratis, high academic demands (curriculum difficulty, too many exams, and homework) was the main reason for taking private lessons, followed by concern over education quality (school and teacher quality) and compliance with external influences (pressure from other parents, teacher, and/or principals). Approximately 74% of Emirati and non-Emirati parents agreed that they would stop paying for private tutoring if their child's school provided free additional lessons after school hours free of charge.

Parents who asserted their children had not taken private lessons, were provided a list of potential reasons for not doing so. The most common reasons selected for not taking private lessons among Emiratis and Non-Emiratis were "my child is doing well in school and does not need private tutoring" (61%), followed by "we help and support our child with homework" (42%), "I can't afford it" (22%), and "I cannot find a good private tutor" (10%).

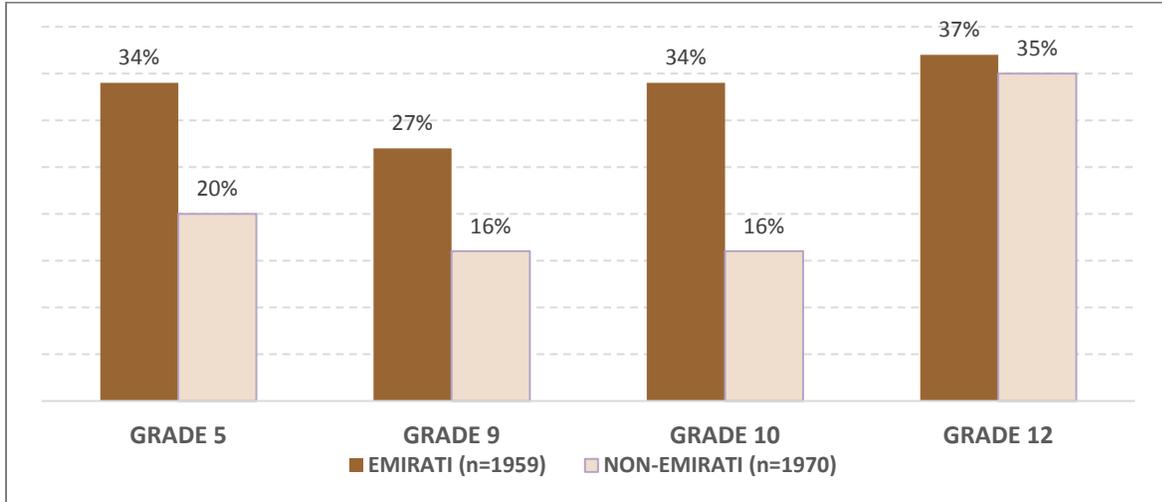
### 3.2 Variations in Private Tutoring

#### *By Grade*

Emiratis took private classes more often than non-Emiratis in all grades (Figure 1). For Emiratis, the demand for private tutoring was similar across grades, but with a significant decrease in Grade 9.<sup>27,28</sup> For non-Emiratis, the demand for private tutoring was higher in 5<sup>th</sup> grade than in Grades 9 and 10, but not significantly different. However, in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, the demand grew significantly in comparison to early grades<sup>29</sup>. As the bar chart demonstrates, the difference

between Emiratis and non-Emiratis with regards to demand for private tutoring becomes very small in grade 12. The high demand for private tutoring in grade 12 might stem from the fact that students are pressured to earn high grades to be admitted to good universities.

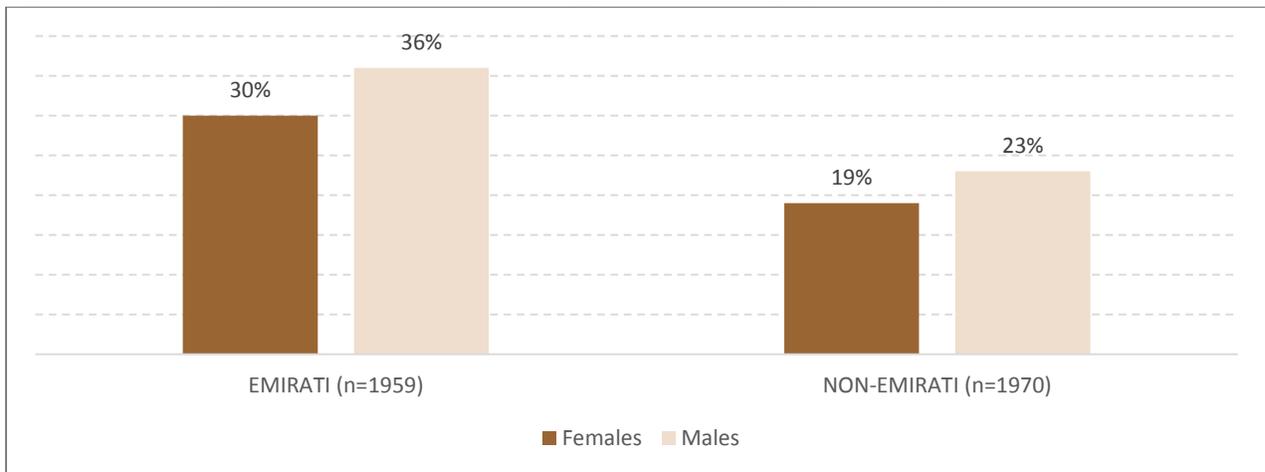
Figure 1: Percentage of students taking private classes by nationality and grade in 2017-2018.



### By Sex

Males took private lessons more often than females. However, the differences in demand for private tutoring between males and females were significantly different for Emiratis only.<sup>30</sup> These findings reflect the fact that males tend to perform markedly lower than females in national and international assessments and parents might try to remediate their poor performance by seeking additional help through private tutoring.

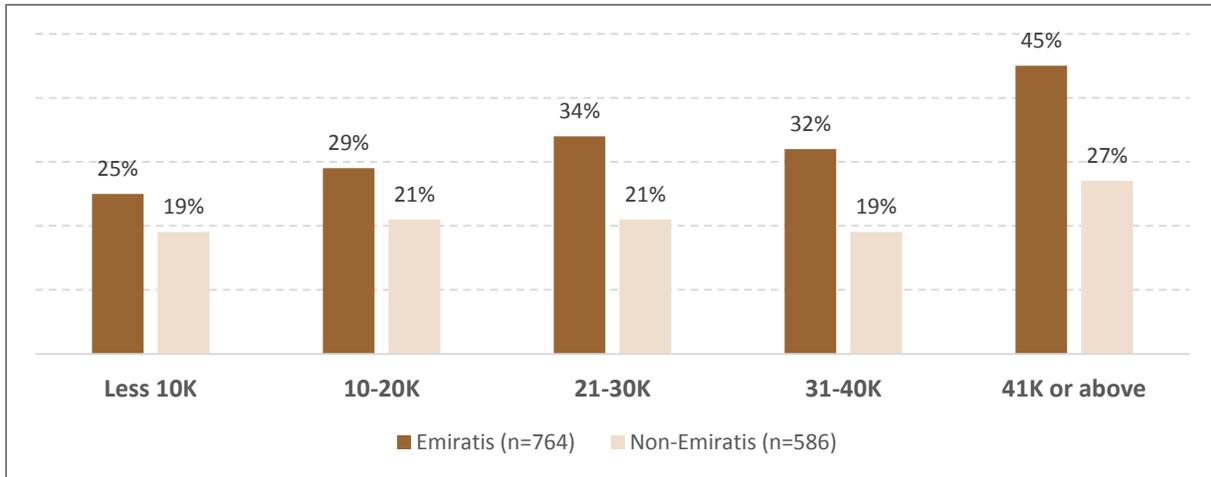
Figure 2: Percentage of males and females taking private tutoring by nationality in 2017-2018.



### By Family Monthly Income

There is no clear association between income and demand for private tutoring among non-Emiratis, except among those who earned 41,000 AED or above. For Emirati families there was a significant correlation between family income and taking private lessons, such that the higher the income bracket, the higher the demand for private tutoring. Among Emirati families who earned 41 K and above (10% of the sample), the percentage of children taking private tutoring reached 45%.

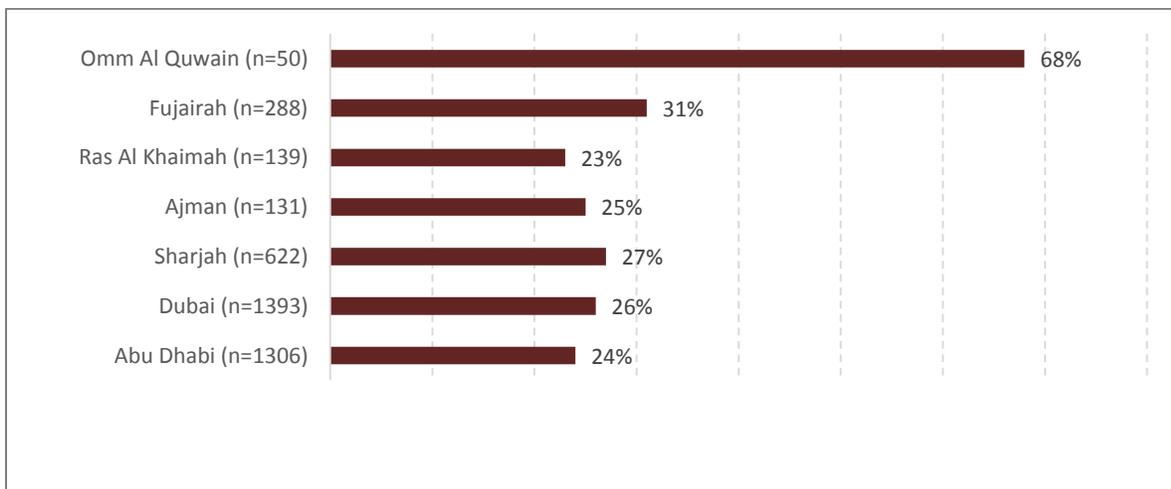
Figure 3: Percentages of Emiratis and non-Emiratis who took private tutoring by income level



### By Location

Similar percentages of students took private lessons during the 2017-2018 academic year in five emirates (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, and Ras Al Khaimah). In Omm AL Quwain, the percentage was significantly higher than in other Emirates. However, it is important to note that the sample of parents who answered that question (n=50) in Omm Al Quwain is much smaller than in other emirates.

Figure 4: Percentage of students who took private lessons by emirate.



### 3.3 Private Tutoring Subjects, Frequency, and Cost

As presented in Table 8, Mathematics was the subject in which most students took out-of-school lessons (83%), followed by science (58%), English (50%), and Arabic (44%). On average, students took private lessons in two subjects, for two hours a week per subject. However, a substantial percentage of students (27%) took private tutoring in all four subjects.

The majority of students took private lessons regularly throughout the semester instead of just before exams. That is particularly true for those who took Arabic and English. The percentage of students who only took lessons before the exam was larger among those who sought assistance in math and science. The average cost of English and math lessons per hour was higher than the cost of Arabic and Science. However, there was large variation in the amount parents reported paying per hour. Further, the average amount currently paid for private tutoring was not very different from the maximum amount parents are willing to pay. Emirati parents were willing to pay 170 AED/hour, on average, while non-Emirati parents are willing to pay 150 AED/hour.

Table 8: Subjects, Frequency, and Cost of Private tutoring

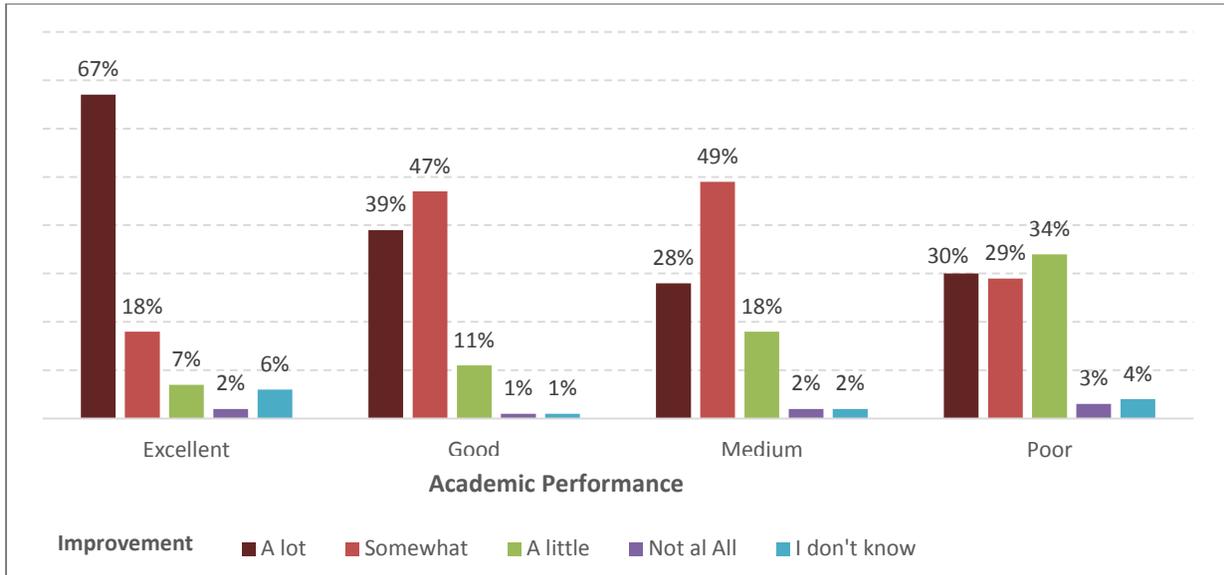
Subjects	% of students who took private lessons in selected subjects	% who took private lessons regularly (1-3 hrs./week)	Average Number of hours per week M (SD)	% who took private lessons only before exams (1-3 hrs./week)	Average amount paid per hour in AEDs (Range)
<b>Mathematics (n=824)</b>	83%	78%	2.1 (.8)	22%	153 (20-800)
<b>Arabic (n=436)</b>	44%	82%	1.9 (.8)	18%	149 (20-700)
<b>Science (n=576)</b>	58%	79%	2.0 (.8)	21%	140 (20-700)
<b>English (n=497)</b>	50%	87%	2.0 (.8)	13%	160 (20-900)

### 3.4 Parents perceptions about academic improvement<sup>31</sup>

Parents rated their children's academic performance (excellent, good, medium, poor) and reported whether it had improved (a lot, somewhat, a little, not at all) after taking private lessons in English, Arabic, science and math. Most parents reported some level of overall academic improvement after their children received private tutoring, independently from their children's pre-private tutoring performance. Sixty-seven percent of children who had "excellent" academic performance had "a lot" of improvement. That contrasts with 39% of "good" students who had "a lot" of improvement. More modest percentages of student with "medium" or "poor" academic performances seemed to have improved their performances "a lot" (28% and 30%, respectively). Further, parents who stated their children had "medium" and "poor" academic performances reported "little" improvement after private

tutoring more often than parents who had children who were “excellent” and “good” performers. These findings suggest that at least from a parental perspective, “excellent” and “good” performers benefitted from private tutoring more than “medium” and “low” performers.

Figure 5: Parental Perception about Change in Overall Academic Performance after Private Tutoring<sup>32</sup>

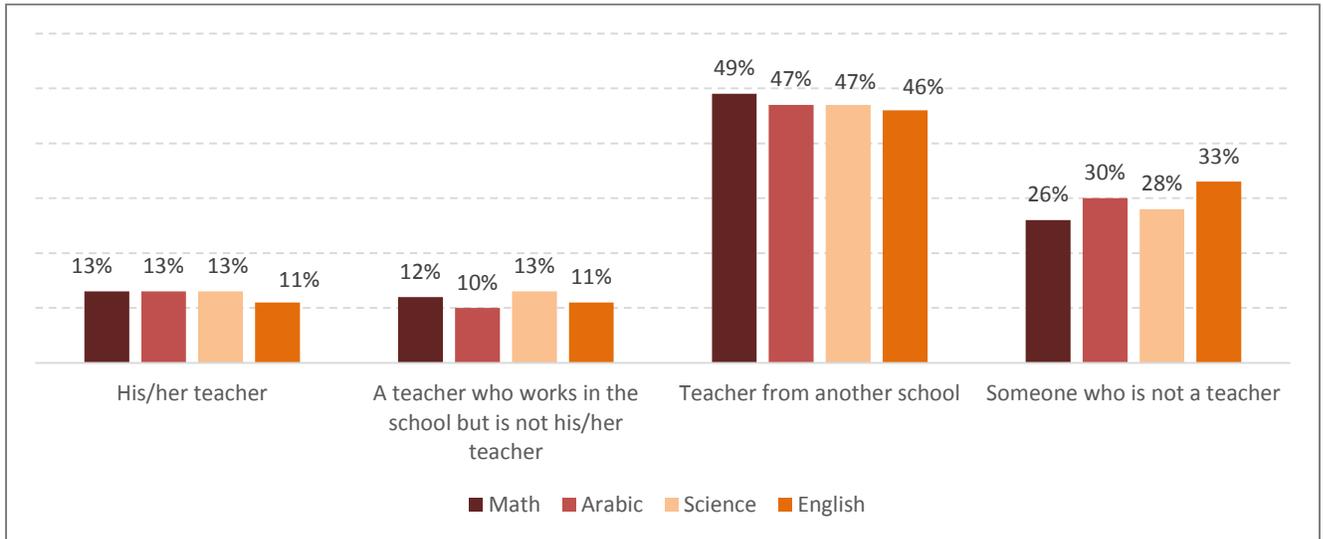


### 3.5 Tutors’ Characteristics

Figure 6 reveals that most children were taught by teachers from other schools and individuals who were not teachers, independently of the subjects they were tutored in. Most of those teachers (46-49%) did not work in their students’ schools. However, a small percentage of students was taught by their own teacher (11-13%) or a teacher who works in the same school (10-13%). A more modest percentage of students takes private lessons with someone who is not a teacher. These findings are similar for Emiratis and non-Emiratis.

Forty-five percent of parents did not know the educational level of the last tutor they had hired. Among those who were aware of the tutors’ academic background, 36% hired tutors with at least a bachelor degree. About 15% had a master degree and 3% a doctorate.

Figure 6: Private Tutoring Providers by Subject



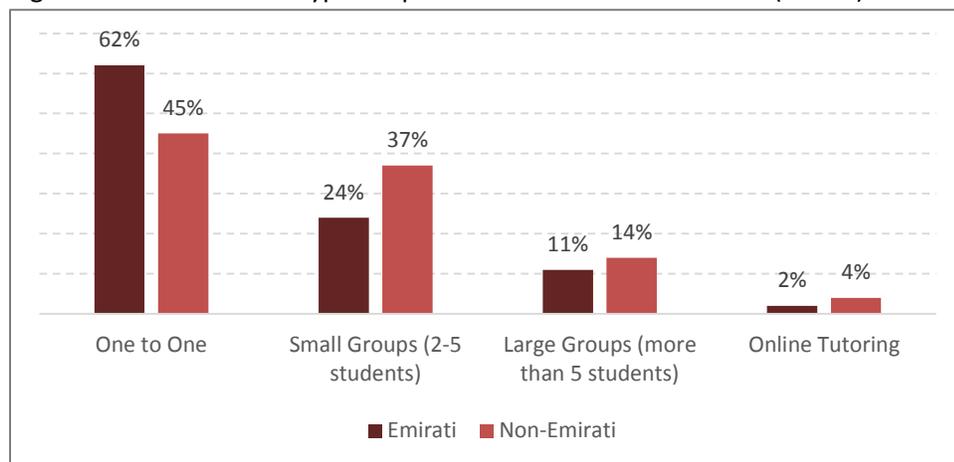
### 3.6 Private Tutoring Location

The overall majority of parents reported that tutoring lessons took place in their homes (59%). However, there were differences between Emiratis and non-Emiratis with regard to tutoring location. Only 11% of Emiratis chose the tutor’s home as a location for private tutoring compared to 29% of non-Emiratis. Very similar percentages of Emiratis and non-Emiratis chose licensed tutoring centers (around 10%) and schools as venues for private tutoring (6%).

### 3.7 Types of Private Tutoring

Emirati and non-Emirati parents chose one-to-one interactions over other types of private lessons (62% and 45%, respectively). However, 37% of non-Emirati parents selected small groups and 14% selected large group lessons, compared to 24% and 11% of Emirati parents, respectively. The percentage of students who took online tutoring was very modest among Emiratis and non-Emiratis (2% and 4%, respectively) despite their convenience and the worldwide growth and improvements in technology and the communication industry.

Figure 7: Most common types of paid lessons outside of schools (n=973)



### 3.8 Parental Preferences (Tutors' Characteristics)

Parents were asked about aspects they consider important when hiring a private tutor for their children (Table 9). The most important aspect for Emiratis and non-Emiratis was tutors' "skills and experience" (86%). Consistently, a large percentage of parents stated they would not hire a college undergraduate (78%), as those tutors will probably be young and have limited experience in teaching.

Although half of the parents stated the sex of the tutor was not important, there was indication that a large percentage of parents preferred to have their children taught by a teacher of the same sex. Fifty-one percent of girls' parents stated they would prefer a female tutor and only 5% would prefer a male tutor. Thirty percent of boys' parents preferred to have a male tutor and 17% preferred to have a female tutor.

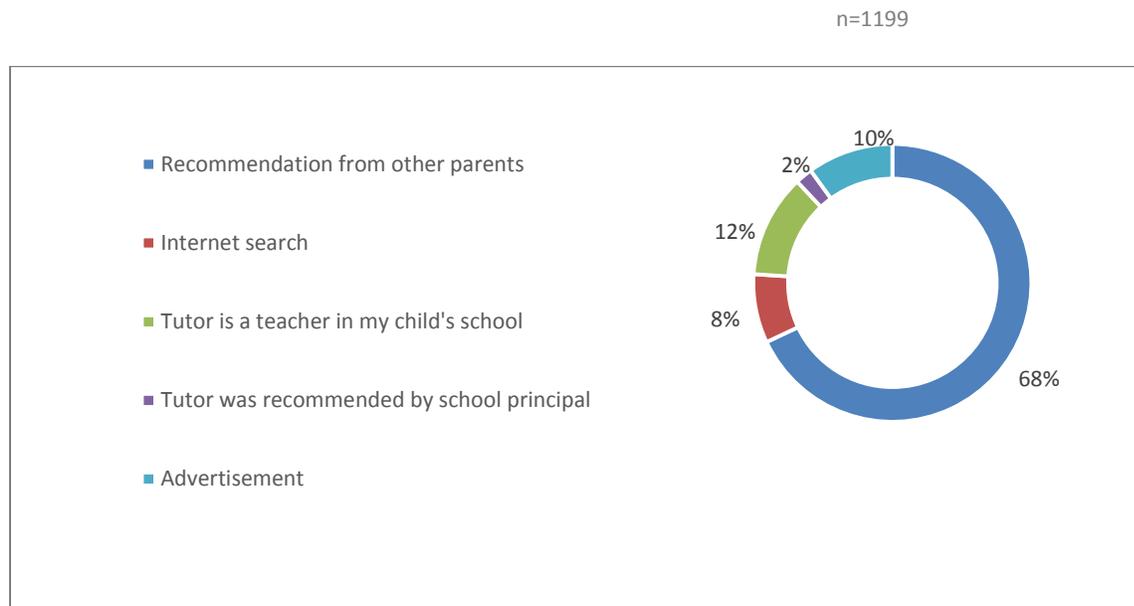
Additional tutors' characteristics mentioned by parents were "reputation as a private tutor" (38%), followed by "being able to go to a child's home" (29%), "age" (13%), and "being a child's school teacher" (10%).

Table 9: Characteristics parents consider when hiring a tutor (n=1487)

Tutors' Characteristics	% of parents who believe these are important characteristics
Age	13%
Sex	52%
Skills and Experience	86%
Reputation as Private Tutor	38%
Being a Child's School Teacher	10%
Being Able to Go to a Child's Home	29%
Would NOT hire a college undergraduate*	78%

### How Parents Find Private Tutors

Most parents (68%) found tutors through recommendations from other parents. Less common strategies were hiring a tutor from the child’s school (12%) and hiring a tutor based on a principal’s recommendation (2%). Those three preferred strategies might be associated with parents’ main criterion for selecting tutors. As presented earlier, 86% of parents selected “skills and experience” as an important criterion to select tutors. Parents may assume that recommendation from other parents, school principal, or hiring a known teacher from their child’s school are trustworthy endorsements of tutors’ skills and experience. About 18% of parents relied on internet search or advertisement to find a tutor.



### 3.9 Regulations

The main goal of this paper was to provide a foundation to develop future private tutoring regulations in the UAE. As per the Ministry of Education’s request, the survey asked participants what aspects of private tutoring should be regulated, if any. Only 5% believed that private tutoring should not be regulated at all. The remaining participants believed that one or more aspects should be controlled by the Ministry of Education (Table 10). The most common factors to be regulated, according to parents, were “quality of private tutoring” (64%) and “hourly rate” (60%). However, half of the respondents were also in favor of regulating tutors’ qualifications (52%) and child safety conditions (51%). Aspects of private tutoring (skills-focused) and venue were also common responses (43% and 40%, respectively). A substantive, but smaller percentage of parents (29%) believed that school staff should not be allowed to tutor their own students.

Table 10: Aspects of Private Tutoring That should be Regulated by the Ministry of Education (n=1264)

Aspects to be Regulated	% Parents
Hourly rate	60%
Quality of private tutoring	64%
Private tutors' qualifications	52%
Child safety conditions	51%
School staff should not be allowed to tutor their own students	29%
Venue where private tutoring should take place	40%
Areas (focus on skills rather than textbook memorization)	43%

#### **Section 4: Policy Options**

Given the characteristics of private tutoring in the UAE and its growing demand, the Ministry of Education should lead a process to develop several measures and policies to govern private tutoring in the coming years. The measures proposed below can be implemented selectively and will focus primarily on ensuring the quality of private tutoring by regulating who is allowed to be a tutor and providing feasible options for parents to determine how to choose their children's tutors, where tutoring can take place, and how much they should pay. More specifically, the Ministry of Education could implement the following:

##### ***1) Provide Cost-Free Private Tutoring in Public Schools***

The MoE might offer in-school tutoring programs after school hours in public schools, distributed geographically in all regions of the country and under the direct supervision of the educational zones. Public school teachers would be allowed to carry out private tutoring sessions and receive a bonus according to the number of private tutoring hours they provide each month. Teachers would also be allowed to tutor in different schools as long as they are accredited and hold a teacher's license from the Ministry of Education. Teachers will receive additional training on student-centered teaching methodologies to address the specific needs of students.

##### ***2) Require Tutors to Obtain a Professional License***

All teachers interested in providing out-of-school private tutoring should have to obtain a license to become tutors. The licensing process would be based on basic requirements for tutoring, such as in-depth knowledge of the subject, advanced knowledge of key tutoring strategies and techniques. The tutoring license process would be managed by the Ministry of Education. An e-page created by the Ministry of Education would list all licensed teachers who provide tutoring. That information would be available to all parents.

### ***3) Establish an Open-Communications System between the Ministry of Education and Parents to Guarantee their Rights***

In addition to providing a list of licensed tutors, the e-page created by the Ministry of Education would provide information about parents' rights and responsibilities related to hiring a tutor or a tutoring center. The e-page would also include an assessment page for parents to evaluate tutors' performance. Parents' evaluations would become accessible to other parents to make informed decisions about who to hire. A hotline for complaints can be developed so parents can denounce non-compliance with MOE's regulations.

### ***4) Regulate Costs***

The Ministry of Education should standardize private tutoring fees according to tutor's credentials, type of tutoring (individual or groups), materials provided, etc. and cap the maximum amount tutors can charge based on selected criteria. Cases of non-compliance would be denounced through the e-page or the hotline.

### ***5) Regulate Private Tutoring Centers***

The Ministry of Education should require Centers to obtain a license to operate. The licensing process would take into account several educational and commercial regulations, such as the number of students the establishment is allowed to provide lessons to, guidelines for child safety, hours of operation, services provided, fees (based on government stipulations), the types of private tutoring offered (one-to-one or groups), advertisement practices, and the assurance that tutors are licensed by the MOE. After Centers obtained a license they would have to report on those operational aspects periodically.

### ***6) Implement a Tutorial Voucher System***

The MOE should provide vouchers for private tutoring in licensed centers to students who fall below national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy. The voucher amount and restrictions would be based on the regulated costs of private tutoring. The government would monitor children's progress to assess parents' satisfaction and children's academic progress.

All measures proposed above will require coordination among MOE departments and other ministries and entities (Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization, Ministry of Economy, Chambers of Commerce and Industry from all emirates). A governing framework can be developed to establish regulations, mechanisms/terms to monitor and evaluate the activities of private tutors, as well as check the quality of the services provided to students. Regulations might strengthen the academic performance of students who are not performing well and hopefully reduce the prevalence of non-regulated private tutoring in students' homes.

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- <sup>26</sup> ( $\chi^2=64.2$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.000$ )
- <sup>27</sup> ( $\chi^2=6.37$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.007$ )
- <sup>28</sup> ( $\chi^2=5.26$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.013$ )
- <sup>29</sup> ( $\chi^2=27.8$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.000$ )

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<sup>30</sup> ( $\chi^2=9.3$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.002$ )

<sup>31</sup> Weighted average percentages of all subjects (Arabic, English, math, and science)

<sup>32</sup> Weighted average percentages of all subjects (Arabic, English, math, and science)