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# Causes and impacts of private tuition in mauritius- a stakeholder analysis

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**Abstract**

Payment-based private supplementary tutoring is a growing phenomenon in Mauritius especially among students who prepare for competitive qualifying examinations such as the Primary school achievement certificate (PSAC), National Certificate of Education (NCE), Cambridge School certificate (SC) and Cambridge Higher School Certificate (HSC). Private tuition in Mauritius is one of the major educational challenges as it goes against the conception of providing free education at all levels ranging from primary to university levels. The aim of this paper is to examine the phenomenon of private tuition in relation to its causes and impacts. Thus, a mixed methodology was used with two distinct phases. Phase one with a quantitative stance, captured the perceptions of 600 students through an amended version of TIMSS students' questionnaire consisting of standardised set of items. The second phase with a qualitative stance consisted of a stakeholder analysis using open group discussions. Analysis of the data collected during the two phases revealed that there are two school of thoughts, where one justifies private tuition evidencing that generally tuition educators show higher level of professionalism in terms of class management, pedagogy, evaluation, feedback, monitoring, moral support, pastoral care and subject content knowledge compared to school educators. They believe that private tuition is significantly correlated with academic success. In addition to teacher factor, this paper explores how school and school leadership, the actual education system and parents are actually drivers of private tuition in Mauritius. However, the second school of thought believed that private tuition is shadowing the school system and is gangrening the Mauritian society.

Keywords: Private tuition, TIMSS students' questionnaire, stakeholder analysis.

## *I. Introduction*

Private tuition lies deep in our local history and is arguably the most intriguing phenomenon of the Mauritian education system. However, analysis of the existing literature revealed that despite the multiple implications of private tuition ranging from pedagogical, psychological, social, economic, political, historical and even cultural, private tuition is an area that has only received limited research attention in the Mauritian context. In fact, the reasons for the dependence of the Mauritian students on private tuition remain largely unexplored.

Actually, there are two schools of thought where one justifies its role in improving students' academic performance whereas the other explained that private tuition has turned into a shadow system posing a challenge to the regular formal system of education. Bray (2013) stated that in an ideal world, private tuition is meant to

favour individual attention, solve learning difficulties of those lagging behind and urge those aiming at excellence. However, when private tutoring starts to replace mainstream education, then problems crop up.

The present study, which focuses on the secondary level, explore the phenomenon of private tuition in Mauritius through a stakeholder analysis.

*II. Literature review*

To situate the issue of private tuition in Mauritius, this section provides (i) a brief description of the evolution of the education system in Mauritius, (ii) a brief of the actual educational reform: Nine Year Continuous Basic Education reform (NYCBE), (iii) a critical review of the Mauritian education system and (iv) a review of private tuition in Mauritius

*A. Brief of the Mauritian education system*

Before Independence of Mauritius in 1968, the Mauritian Educational landscape was largely dominated by private Educational Institutions/schools where secondary education was dispensed in only four government colleges. There were 135 secondary schools in all catering for 39 491 students. The construction of state secondary schools started with the support of the World Bank in 1970. Thereafter the education system evolved from being a mostly private enterprise to a national education system with the objective of increasing access to education.

This cause culminated in landmark developments in education in three watershed years, namely (i) 1977 when education became free at the secondary level, (ii) 2005 with amendment of the Education Act to make education compulsory until the age of 16 and (iii) 2019 with free education at tertiary level. The decision to provide free secondary education caused enrolment at secondary level to rise considerably leading to an increase in the number of secondary schools to 175 in 2016 including 63 state secondary schools.

The Mauritian education system has witnessed many reforms. Actually, with the new millennium and in the wake of the Jomtien Education for All world conference in 1990, the Ministry of Education produced a 'Master Plan' on Education in 1991, which was used to guide reforms in Mauritius at that time. In year 2008, the Ministry develop the Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008-2020 that guided the "Education Reforms in Action" launched in 2008. Then, 2017 marks another important event in the history of the Education sector in Mauritius with the implementation of the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education (NYCBE). The reform adopts a systemic and holistic approach to the transformation of the education system.

*B: A Brief of the actual Educational reform: NYCBE*

One of the bases for the new educational reform (NYCBE) in Mauritius is to align our system to international standard, especially the UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goal Four (SDG4) that ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2015). The ultimate aim is to ensure that the education system in place allows more students to exit with a better performance at the end of the period of compulsory education and reach a success rate comparable to that of higher achieving countries around the world.

The provision of NYCBE will entail a phasing out of the prevocational stream in the education sector. Previously, learners

were tracked to mainstream (general) and prevocational stream based on their performance at the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) at the end of 6 years of primary schooling. The NYCBE also takes care of the learning pace and learning disposition of those who do not develop the desired competencies at the end of 6 years of primary schooling. The new education policy provides for an extended four-year cycle- instead of the three-year cycle- for those who do not meet the requirement and who need more time to develop required competencies.

The educational reform also consists of replacing the actual CPE (Certificate of Primary Education) examination by an end-of-primary cycle assessment, that is, the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC). Students are then admitted in grade 7 in secondary schools where they will have a National Examination at the end of the Grade 9 level, called the National Certificate in Education (NCE). It is an examination at the end of the 'nine year basic schooling' replacing the 'National Grade 9 Assessment' of the previous educational system.

Based on the performance of students in the NCE, students have three choices: (1) remain in the secondary school where they are already enrolled until they complete their secondary schooling; (2) pursue their studies in General Education in Academies (specialised secondary schools) or (3) follow vocational programs in specialised Vocational Schools. This opens more choices to students and thus better prepares them for the job market.

*C: Critical review of the Mauritian education system*

There is 'rat race' competitions at different levels of the Mauritian education system. It exerts psychological pressure on students and parents, and is perverting the core mission of the school, which is the provision of holistic development to every child. Jinot (2017) and Bissoondoyal (2008; 2009) concurs that it is a cutthroat competition that is plaguing the system.

Although ranking of pupils at CPE examination was abolished in 2002, the CPE was still serving the dual purpose of certification and selection for admission in secondary schools up to 2017. Actually, before the implementation of the new NYCBE reform, the primary school environment was very competitive, where students strive to get the best National Star colleges, as seats available in such colleges were very limited. This created a very rude competition amongst relatively low aged students (approximately 11 years old) where only the best performed students are admitted to such schools, creating the problem of elitism (Mariaye, 2005).

In the 'Inspiring every child's policy document on Nine Years of Continuous Basic Education reform, the actual Minister of Education, Honorable (Mrs.) Leela Devi Dookhun-Luchoomun stated that the previous education system has resulted in a percentage of our children not being adequately literate or numerate despite completing six years of primary schooling. Thus, the new educational reform (NYCBE) includes the elimination of CPE, considered as the instrument that breeds the current unhealthy competition at an early age, by the Primary school Achievement Certificate (PSAC).

Ironically, this step is only postponing the 'rat race' competition three years later that is after the 9 year continuous education, at the end of Grade 9. With the implementation of the National certificate in Education (NCE) as from 2020, students will be competing for a seat in the elite upper secondary institutions, known as academies. In fact, 12 national

colleges are already in the process of being converted into academies. These academies would only have classes from Grade 10 to 13.

Moreover, to eliminate competition at an early age (primary school level); the transition from Grade 6 (end of primary schooling) to Grade 7 (beginning lower secondary schooling) was supposed to be smooth with automatic promotion. However, the criteria considered to secure a seat in a secondary school (except the academies) was students' performance in PSAC in addition to parents' choice and proximity of location. In fact, Callikan (2017) stated that the plainer truth for many rectors and professionals is that competition at a national level will all too predictably operate for access to the best local or regional secondary institution**,** breeding another layer of substitute "star" colleges to the national ones (The Mauritius times, 2017).

Thus, even with staggered modular examinations or lower grade markings, neither the pervasive private tuition industry, nor potential residential address trafficking, nor heated and fractious challenges of college assignations, nor all the ills associated with early competitive pressures will have subsided. Actually, this is the new reality of our actual education system.

Furthermore, the evil is not limited to the junction between grades 6/7 and grades 9/10 only. It is also established at the end of secondary education, where the Government awards students with the best academic performance in the Cambridge Higher School Certificate examinations at the national level by giving them full scholarships for tertiary education in the best-ranked international universities. This award of laureates is inherited from the British colonisers. Ironically, though the government has also introduced a second award to socially disadvantaged students who perform very well at national level by giving them scholarships for their tertiary education (Ministry of Education, 2018), it is limited to a meagre amount of money to have access to local universities. Moreover, since 2019, tertiary education has been made free in Mauritius.

Thus, competition to obtain the best regional schools post primary schooling, competition to ensure a seat in academies post grade 9 level or competition for scholarships post Grade 13 (HSC) level are feeding the industry of private tuition in Mauritius, despite several educational reforms.

*D: A review of private tuition*

According to Bray and Kwok (2003), 'private tuition' may be viewed as the practice of providing additional teaching and learning support to students in the form of a paid service outside mainstream schooling. It mainly concerns academic subjects, such as languages, mathematics, sciences, accounting and so forth.

The terminology used for the payment-based extra tutoring varied. Some countries prefer 'private tuition' while others 'private tutoring'. In Mauritius, the former term is much more common. Analysis of the literature revealed that it is also referred as 'private supplementary tutoring' (PST), 'extra school instruction' (ESI), 'after-school classes', 'afternoon tutoring', and 'shadow education amongst others. Bray (2003) uses the metaphor 'shadow education' to suggest that the phenomenon of private tuition 'mimics' or replaces the mainstream education. In some cases, students prefer attending private tuition than school and thus shadowing the school system. Others might resort to terms such as 'second system', 'parallel education sector', 'tutoring market' and 'private tutoring industry'.

*Private tuition in the world*

The phenomenon of private tuition is global and exist in different countries. However, the type and implication of private tuition differ from country to country. Baker (2012) observes that what started as a rather local phenomenon exploded worldwide'. According to Forbes Magazine (2012), the global market for private coaching will surpass $ 102.8 billion by 2018. Only the Scandinavian countries seem to have been spared as the parents trust the mainstream education (Bray, 2013). Dang and Rogers (2008) highlighted that private tuition can be found in countries economically and geographically diverse such as Cambodia, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Japan, Kenya, Morocco, Romania, Singapore, United States and the United Kingdom.' Moreover, mass tutoring is the norm in countries like Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore, Kenya and Mauritius. Such a practice is carried out on a large scale where even tutoring centres are made more accessible.

*Private tuition in Mauritius*

Educational experts from international organisations such as UNESCO and the World Bank specified that payment-based extra lessons in school subjects outside school hours has become a major component of the education systems in numerous countries (Baker, Akiba, Letendre & Wiseman, 2001; and Dang & Rogers, 2008). Private tuition has therefore been interpreted as a kind of educational phenomenon that functions in parallel to mainstream education. Moreover, Dindyal & Besoondyal, (2007) highlighted that there is a noticeable prevalence of private tuition in some countries, including Mauritius. This is further evidenced by findings of international research studies such as SACMEQ where it was revealed that the highest incidence of paid extra lessons was concentrated in Kenya and Mauritus (Paviot, Heinsohn, & Korkman, 2008). Moreover, Foondun (2002) pointed out that private tuition has reached epidemic proportions in Mauritius.

Whether it is a seat in the best regional college after PSAC or a seat in academies after NCE or a scholarship or a seat in the best universities after 'A' level, Mauritians believe that the key to their dreams and academic achievements is private tuition. Actually, as stated in the introduction, there are two schools of thought in Mauritius. One justifies its importance in improving students' academic performance whereas the other consider private tuition as a plaque in the Mauritian education system.

On one side, some aspects of private tutoring is considered positive, where it provides additional incomes for tutors and create constructive out-of-school activities for young people, in addition to its importance in boosting academic performance of students. It is noted that children who receive such tutoring are likely to perform better in school and thus stay in the education system for longer durations (Bray, 2010). Mahadeo (2008) even stated that private tuition has become unavoidable since schools do not provide the student with the learning skills to excel in the examinations.

However, on the other side, private tuition is considered damaging. The Association for the Department of Education in Africa stated that it is one of the major flaws of the Mauritian education system (Lam Hung, 2008) as it shadows the formal system of education (Bissoondoyal, 2009). According to Bray (2009, 2010 & 2013), private tuition is believed to distort parts of the mainstream system, place an economic burden on households, and create excessive pressure for children and adolescents. Private tutoring has obvious

implications for social inequalities where high-income families can afford greater quantities and better qualities of tutoring than middle- income and low-income families. At the same time, the latter may find themselves forced to invest in tutoring simply to keep up with their peers. In addition, it may have implications for in-school processes. Among the most problematic aspects are cases in which private tutoring becomes a substitute for the mainstream. Especially near the time of major external examinations, schools in some countries may be perceived by pupils to be less able to cater for their specific needs (Bray, 2010), including Mauritius.

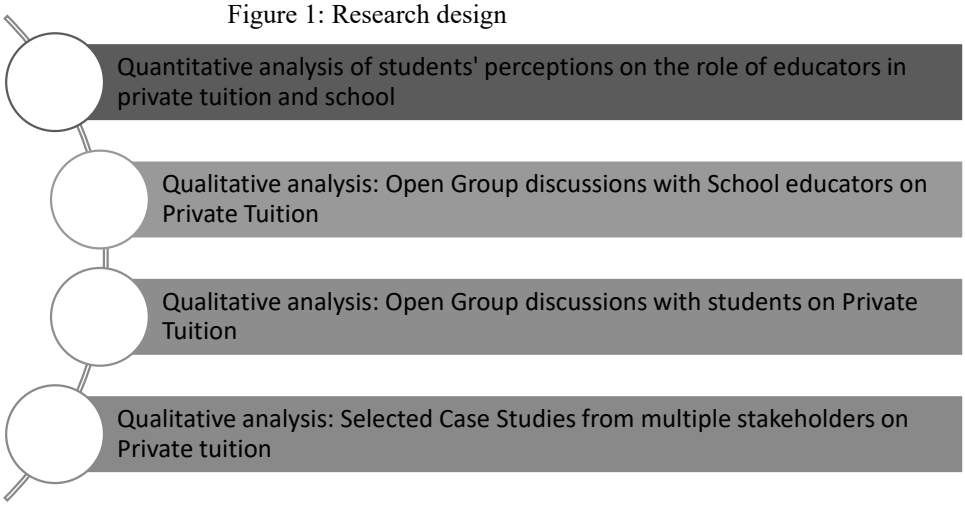
Despite divergence on the impacts of private tuition on the society, many researchers have stated that it is a major factor affecting students' academic achievement. For instance, in a policy research report based on SACMEQ I for Mauritius, Kulpoo (1998) stated that tuition was found to be one of the stronger influences on pupil achievement. This is in line with other researchers' findings, such as, Jheng (2015), Bray, Kwo and Jokić (2015), Liu and Bray (2017), Seo (2018) among others.

Thus, this paper explores the perceptions of different stakeholders, through a stakeholder analysis, to understand why private tuition is increasingly gaining ground as a shadow system in Mauritius

## III. Methodology

A mixed method research approach for data collection and analysis was used to provide a broader perspective of the study and a deeper understanding of the role of private tuition in the Mauritian context. As shown in Figure 1, which summarises the research design, the study consisted of two main phases. Phase I (PI) has a quantitative stance where the perceptions of students, as the main stakeholder, were captured to understand why the Mauritian students feel the need of extra tutoring, in relation to the role of educators in school and private tuition. Phase II (PII) consisting of three steps, had a qualitative stance which gave a broader understanding of the role of private tuition.

Figure 1: Research design



*Phase 1*

The two directly involved stakeholders in private tuition are the students and educators. Student, at the receiving end, is the main stakeholder and thus their perceptions are crucial to understand the role of educator as a main driver of private tuition in Mauritius. Thus, Phase I captured the perceptions of students on the role of educators in both school and private tuition so that their respective role in the two settings may be eventually compared. The views of 600 students, representative of student population in Mauritius, were captured via the amended version of TIMSS student's questionnaire and analysed using the SPSS version 21. Figure 2 shows the stepwise procedure of Phase I.

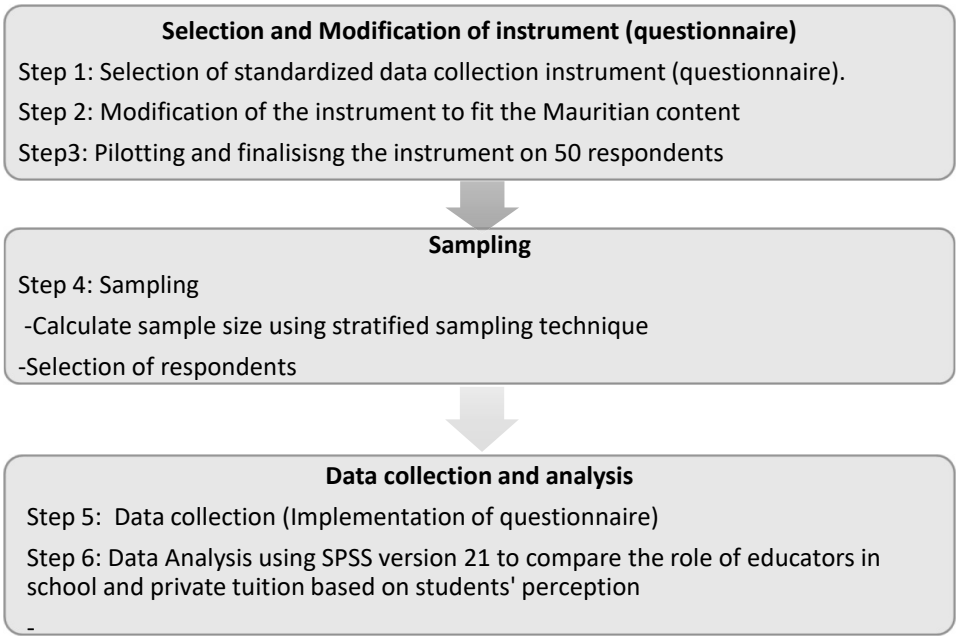



Figure 2: Stepwise procedure of Phase I.

*Step 1: Selection of data gathering instrument (Survey Questionnaire)*

International surveys assessing learning have been used in many countries during the last 20 years. The three most common surveys to capture perceptions of

stakeholders are TIMSS, PISA and PIRLS. The 'TIMSS student questionnaire' was selected based on the following considerations:

1. The TIMSS survey consist of a section with well-elaborated items to capture students' perceptions on the role of educators.

2. Literature review reveals that 'TIMSS student questionnaire' has been commonly used in many important researches.

3. The questionnaire is pitched to the level of students at secondary level of schooling.

4. Ease of implementing the questionnaire

5. Items' wording are simple and thus easily understandable by the respondents

6. Questionnaire use if free for research purposes.

(Reference: http://www.oecd.org/pisa/home and http://timss.bc.edu/index.html)

*Step 2: Modification of data gathering instrument (Questionnaire)*

The standardised 'TIMSS questionnaire' does not include items to capture students' perception on private tuition. Consequently, the items capturing students' perception on teacher factor at school level were replicated to capture perception on private tuition.

*Step 3: Piloting of the data-capturing instrument to ensure reliability and validity*

To ensure reliability, the questionnaire was piloted with 50 randomly selected students. The data were entered in SPSS and reliability of the items was analysed using the reliability coefficient Cronbach's a.

To ensure validity of the questionnaire, a panel of experts including the Quality assurance Officers of the Ministry of Education, Rectors and Deputy Rectors was convened to examine the items in the questionnaire.

Based on the data collected through the piloting process and subsequent analysis of reliability and validity, the following modifications were brought to the 'TIMSS student questionnaire':

- Wordings and question order were altered to contextualise the instrument in the Mauritian context.
- Instead of the 5-points rating of the Likert scale, 4-points rating was used, as many students opted for the neutral option during the piloting and thus their perception on the item was not captured. Thus, the neutral option was removed.
- Negative wording questions were changed to facilitate data analysis.

*Step 4: Sampling*

Simple random sampling - double-checked using 'Qualtrics Online sample size calculator' - were used to calculate the sample size. Thus, 600 respondents were identified out of a population of 14,191 students.

A stratified sampling was used to identify the participants/ respondents. It includes a proportionate allocation using a sampling fraction in each of the strata that is proportional to that of the total population. As shown in figure 3, the stratified sampling has been done in terms of gender, performance and zonal location to have wider perspectives.

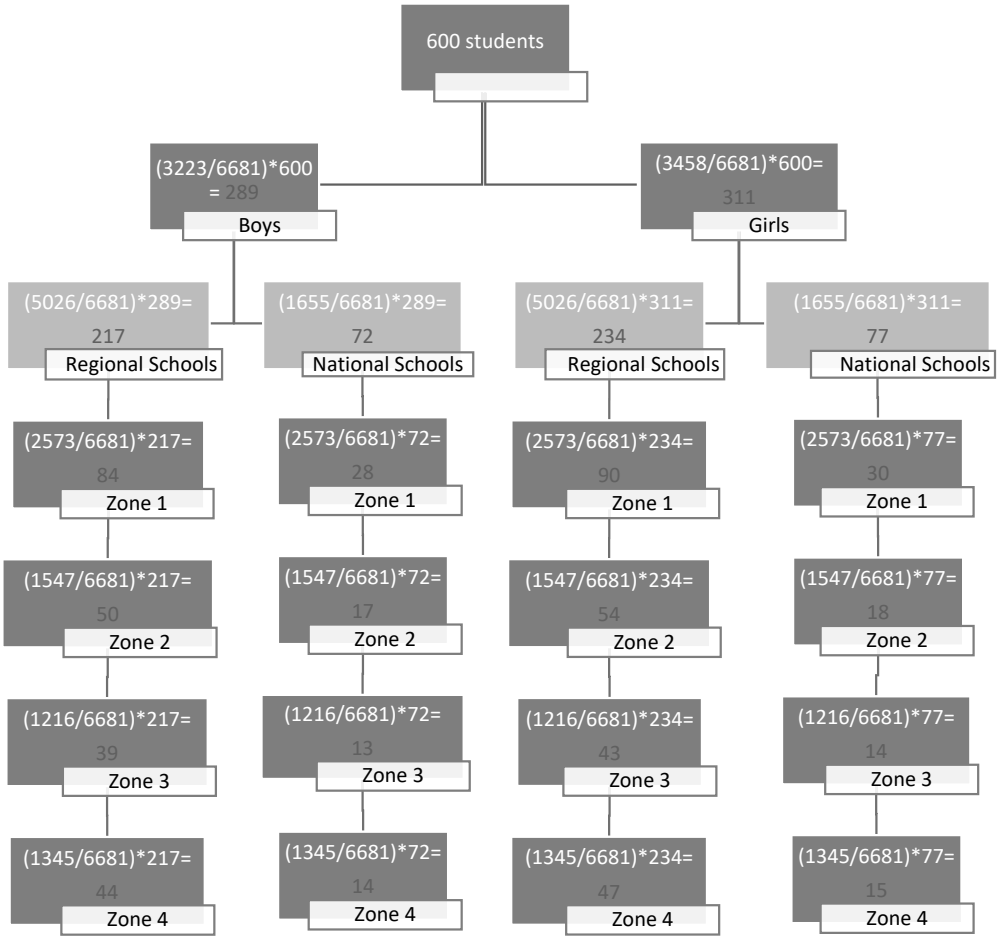



Fig 3: Sampling

Once the number of students in each zone was identified, random selection of school and respondents were carried out to produce the sample of 600 students.

*Step 5: Data collection*

The letter of introduction was distributed to the 600 randomly selected students and the respective consent forms were collected before implementation of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was then distributed. Assistance to fill the questionnaire was limited to description of words where students have comprehension difficulties.

*Step 6: Data Analysis*

The data collected were captured into SPSS and cleaned before analysis to compare the role of educators in school and private tuition based on students' perception

*Phase II*

Phase II is a stakeholder analysis where the open group discussions with students, educators, parents, rector, quality assurance officer and lecturer from the Mauritius Institute of Education were used to understand the impacts of private tuition in Mauritius. The first step of phase II captured the views of twenty school educators randomly selected from national and regional schools to form part of the first open group discussion. Two colleagues recorded the respondent's comments and the contents validated before use.

Despite phase I of the study captured the student's voice, the second group discussion (step 2) provided deeper understanding of the impacts of private tuition. Sixteen students comprising eight boys and eight girls from different schools were randomly selected from the 600 sampled students to form part of the open group discussion.

Though students and educators are the main stakeholders, it was imperative to capture the views of other stakeholders indirectly involved in private tuition to have a broader view and understanding of the impacts of private tuition in Mauritius. Thus, the third open group discussion (step 3) included respondents such as (i) a student from the French education system ('Lycée') in the last year of secondary schooling, (ii) a Grade 13 student in State School not taking private tuition, (iii) an ex-laureate holding a prestigious job, (iv) a rector of a State Secondary School, (v) a former educator and now quality assurance officer and (vi) a lecturer in a tertiary education institution.

The data collected during phase II were scrutinised and the key ideas were selected for presentation. It should be noted that this step was carefully done in the presence of two experts in qualitative research.

## IV. Results and Discussions

This section describes the findings of this study based on the research design summarised in Figure 1.

*A: Quantitative analysis of students' perception on educators' role in private tuition and school*

The amended version of the TIMSS student's questionnaire categorised the items in relation to key roles of educators such as (i) class management, (ii) pedagogy, (iii) evaluation, feedback and monitoring, (iv) moral support, guidance and pastoral care and (v) subject content specialist. The collected data were analysed and then presented as follows to facilitate identification of disparities in educators' role in private tuition compared to school.

*Class management*

Table 1 shows that most students highlighted that tuition educators show better class management compared to school educators in relation to (i) providing conducive climate for teaching and learning to take place, (ii) class management skills used, (iii) consideration of students' point of views in deriving rules and regulations and (iv) maintaining class discipline.

Table 1: Students' perceptions on teachers' class management

| Item | Total percentage of students highlighting/% | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Never | | Sometimes | | Often | | Always | |
| | Sc | Tu | Sc | Tu | Sc | Tu | Sc | Tu |
| Class climate is conducive for teaching/learning | 28.8 | 15.0 | 22.8 | 23.2 | 21.3 | 27.8 | 27.0 | 47.5 |
| Educator has good class management | 28.3 | 2.0 | 12.3 | 14.5 | 35.8 | 16.7 | 23.5 | 66.8 |
| Educator consider my point of views in class management | 29.3 | 8.7 | 37.2 | 50.3 | 26.0 | 20.0 | 7.5 | 21.0 |
| Educator maintains discipline in class | 18.5 | 0.3 | 15.7 | 7.8 | 45.3 | 29.2 | 20.5 | 62.7 |

Sc: School Tu: Tuition

Pedagogy

Table 2 clearly evidence a significant disparity between the pedagogical role of school and tuition educators. For instance, there is a higher percentage of students highlighting that tuition educators always (i) work in a systematic way, (ii) ensure that students feel at ease to participate during the lesson and (iii) lay emphasis on teacher-student interactions. However, it was noted that tuition educators do not use a variety of teaching techniques and strategies.

Table 2: Students' perceptions on pedagogy used by teachers

| Item | Total percentage of students highlighting/% | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Never | | Sometimes | | Often | | Always | |
| | Sc | Tu | Sc | Tu | Sc | Tu | Sc | Tu |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Educator encourages active participation of students in lesson | 41.0 | 30.7 | 28.0 | 50.5 | 16.2 | 5.7 | 14.8 | 13.2 |
| Educator uses different teaching techniques and strategies | 41.0 | 30.7 | 28.0 | 50.5 | 16.2 | 5.7 | 14.8 | 13.2 |
| Educator work is systematic and well planned | 19.5 | 17.0 | 36.2 | 25.0 | 31.2 | 26.5 | 13.2 | 31.5 |
| Students feel at ease to participate in lesson | 34.7 | 15.2 | 28.3 | 13.7 | 22.2 | 36.3 | 14.8 | 34.8 |
| Educator lay emphasis on teacher-student interaction | 12.8 | 12.3 | 30.7 | 8.7 | 46.2 | 53.8 | 10.3 | 25.2 |

Sc: School Tu: Tuition

*Evaluation, Feedback & monitoring*

Table 3 shows that most students highlighted that, tuition educators are better evaluators, give feedback and monitor students' work and progress compared to school educators. Actually, it is noted that tuition educators always or regularly (i) give H/W, (ii) verify if H/W are completed by students, (iii) correct the given H/W, (iv) give feedback on corrected work (v) provide useful feedback and (vi) evaluate students' progress. However, it is noted with concern that 90.9% students highlighted that class test is never or only rarely done in private tuition.

Table 3: Students' perceptions on teachers' role in evaluation, feedback and monitoring

| **Item** | **Total percentage of students highlighting/%** | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Never** | | **Sometimes** | | **Often** | | **Always** | |
| | **Sc** | **Tu** | **Sc** | **Tu** | **Sc** | **Tu** | **Sc** | **Tu** |
| Feedback by educator is useful | 26.0 | 12.2 | 23.5 | 15.7 | 41.8 | 37.8 | 8.7 | 34.3 |
| Educator gives H/W regularly | 21.7 | 4.5 | 28.5 | 21.7 | 32.8 | 24.8 | 17.0 | 49.0 |
| Educator regularly verifies if students have tackled their H/W | 27.3 | 6.8 | 31.5 | 15.7 | 35.8 | 35.7 | 5.3 | 41.8 |
| Educator gives class/test assessments | 2.7 | 24.7 | 11.7 | 66.2 | 26.2 | 6.8 | 59.5 | 2.3 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Correction of work is done by educator | 2.2 | 6.0 | 22.0 | 13.2 | 39.8 | 19.0 | 36.0 | 61.8 |
| Educator gives feedback on corrected work | 16.3 | 7.0 | 51.0 | 10.7 | 26.2 | 28.5 | 6.5 | 53.8 |
| Educator evaluates progress | 17.3 | 10.0 | 33.2 | 14.8 | 40.2 | 50.0 | 9.3 | 25.2 |

Sc: School Tu: Tuition

*Educator's mastery of subject content*

Table 4 clearly evidence the fact that tuition educators show a higher mastery of their respective subject content compared to school educators.

Table 4: Students' perceptions on teachers' mastery of subject content

| **Item** | **Total percentage of students highlighting/%** | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Never** | | **Sometimes** | | **Often** | | **Always** | |
| | **Sc** | **Tu** | **Sc** | **Tu** | **Sc** | **Tu** | **Sc** | **Tu** |
| **Educator master content** | **26.3** | **0.0** | **19.7** | **5.0** | **35.0** | **19.8** | **19.0** | **75.2** |

Sc: School Tu: Tuition

*Moral support and pastoral care*

Table 5 shows that students' perception on educator's role in providing 'moral support, guidance and pastoral care' varied for school and tuition educators. Eighty three percent of the students stated that tuition educators are more involved in motivating students compared to only 28% for school educators. Same trend is noted for provision of moral support and guiding students in their daily development

Table 5: Students' perceptions on the role of teachers in providing support and pastoral care

| Item | Total percentage of students highlighting/% | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Never | | Sometimes | | Often | | Always | |
| | Sc | Tu | Sc | Tu | Sc | Tu | Sc | Tu |
| Educator motivates students | 37.5 | 0.2 | 34.5 | 16.8 | 24.0 | 39.8 | 4.0 | 43.2 |
| Educator provides moral support | 17.7 | 6.2 | 54.7 | 16.8 | 25.0 | 39.5 | 2.7 | 37.5 |
| Educator guides me in daily development | 10.5 | 15.5 | 47.8 | 20.5 | 37.7 | 54.3 | 4.0 | 9.7 |

Sc: School Tu: Tuition

The tabulated data presented in this section is self-explanatory showing clear disparities in the role of educators in private tuition and school. According to the sampled students, tuition educators show higher level of professionalism in their duties in terms of class management, pedagogy, evaluation, feedback, monitoring, moral support, pastoral care and subject content knowledge. This explain why Mauritian students shirk schools to attend private tuition, especially during the third semester nearing examinations. Actually, the student population are more committed to the 1h30 to 2 hours of private tuition compared to on average 3 to 5hr-contact time per week for one subject in schools. It is therefore obvious that the inefficiency and unprofessionalism of some school educators is the real cause of private tuition shadowing the school system is Mauritius. Bray (2003) also observed that private tuition becomes more prevalent in systems where schoolteacher does not necessarily meet the students' expectations. Though teacher factor remained the key drivers of private tuition in Mauritius, a broader understanding of the impacts of private tuition is obtained in phase II.

*B: Qualitative analysis of the impacts of private tuition in Mauritius.*

Although standardised questionnaire is considered a reliable instrument of collecting data, participants' responses are framed within the desired context set in the questionnaire. Thus, limiting this study to the findings of phase I, which led to the conclusion that teacher factor is the main cause of private tuition, does not do justice to the complexity of the problems of private tuition. Actually, the qualitative stakeholder analysis of phase II gives more leeway to respondents' feelings and perceptions leading to a deeper understanding of the causes and impacts of private tuition in Mauritius.

Analysis of the respondents' perceptions through the open group discussions revealed other causal factors of the increasing dependence of secondary school students on private tuition in Mauritius. Actually, two schools of thought emerged from the analysis to explain this dependence. One legitimates private tuition by justifying its importance in the achievement of secondary school students whereas the second militates against private

tuition on the basis that it is shadowing the school system in Mauritius.

The first school of thought justifies private tuition in Mauritius as follows:

*I. Teacher factor*

Some respondents highlighted that private tuition is shadowing the school, as many educators are not fulfilling the students' needs at school levels.

Students highlighted that private tutors ensure that the syllabus is completed well in advance so that enough time is devoted to revision and consolidation work needed as pre-exams preparation. In contrast, many school educators complete the syllabus during the third (last) trimester and thus limited time is left for revision. Some school educators either do not even complete the syllabus or simply rush through the remaining chapters without ensuring understanding and comprehension.

Along these lines, some students and parents stated that private tuition is essential as it provides room for consistent drilling despite shorter contact time (1h30 to 2 hours tuition time compared to 3 to 5 hrs school contact time for each subject per week). They said that tuitions provide the right platform to tackle maximum past exam papers as preparation for examination. They stated that many school educators are not guided by the sense of service whereas tuition educators help students to construct knowledge, solve problems, develop personality, imbibe values, develop the 21st century skills and become inquisitive.

They also stated that the problem often lies with some educators who are merely teaching without educating. Educators are not willing to change their traditional teaching methods. The chalk-and-talk method has only transitioned to the projector-and talk method. In fact, some decades back, teaching in Mauritius was often limited to instructing students to copy notes given on blackboard whereas nowadays the same old content is being projected. This is a common example of traditional teaching using technology as logistic resources. The MIE lecturer (respondent) stated the following:

*"Despite the fact that educators are aware of innovative teaching techniques and strategies, the constructivist and inquiry approach are not used in school."*

Some educators acknowledged that they give supplementary tuition against payment after school hours. Few even confessed that their roles in private tuition differ from that in school, as follows:

*"(i) more individual attention is given to students in need,*

*(ii) more H/W is given,*

*(iii) educators have more freedom in selecting the strategy to ensure students are motivated*

*(iv) there is higher work consistency in tuition*

*(iv) educators maximise on remedial and consolidation work.*

*(v) lots of past exam papers are done as pre-exams preparations and*

*(vi) educators ensure higher level of monitoring, feedback and evaluation."*

*II. Actual education system*

Despite aiming at the holistic development of every child, the actual Mauritian education system lay much emphasis on competition. The NCE at the end of Grade 9 is a selection

examination where only the best students will be admitted to the academies to pursue their upper secondary schooling. The Cambridge Higher School Certificate, which mark the end of the secondary schooling, has a competitive dimension where students compete for National scholarships for admission in the best universities of the world. Thus, the rat race to obtain the best schools or scholarships is still driving competition and thus feeding private tuition. The parallel obsession with scholarship examination and examination to ensure a seat in the best schools is common in other countries such as Sri Lanka as observed by Wijetunge (1994).

Moreover, implementation of the new educational reform (NYCBE) involves the setting up of 12 academies, which accommodate students from grade 10 only. This resulted in an increasing demand for available seats at grade 7 in state secondary schools after the PSAC which is a selective assessment marking the end of primary schooling. To accommodate the students, most classes have a ratio of 40 students to one educator. Thus, as stated by many respondents, private tuition represents a real alternative to school with a much lower student to educator ratio. The student respondents stated that,

*"Tuition with limited number of students is powerful, where individual attention and monitoring of students' work and progress are made possible."*

The educators (respondents) conquer that with smaller groups in private tuition, teaching is pitched to the level of the students and they feel at ease to communicate and engage in lessons.

Another important aspect emphasised by the respondents is the availability of resources especially appropriate pedagogical resources. Though the Ministry of education invest enormously in resources, there is a significant disparity in terms of availability of such resources in private and state secondary schools. Compared to the limited resources in private secondary schools, some private tutors are investing in extra training and technology such as ICT educational tools to improve their teaching. Thus, students tend to favour private tuition instead of school.

Bray (2003) stated that the type of education system in a country has major influence on the prevalence of private tuition. He further stated that systems that are teacher-based rather than child-based, and /or intolerant of slow learners lead to more prevalent private tuition. Despite the new educational reform 'Nine Years Continuous Basic Education' is aiming at the holistic development of students and emphasising on the use of innovative teaching strategies, the talk and chalk remains predominant at classroom level. Thus, students find a better alternative in private tuition.

*III. School and school leadership*

Most of the respondents stated that school and school leadership have a major, though indirect, effect on the phenomenon of private tuition in Mauritius. Approximately 82 % of parents and 71% of students responded that school is not catering for their needs and thus they turn towards private tuition for extra support. Even the other respondents such as Quality assurance officers and MIE lecturer responded along the same line. Actually, the respondents' perceptions captured through the open group discussions tallied with phase I where students highlighted that private tutors are better at fulfilling their academic needs compared to school educators. The Quality assurance officers also highlighted that school leaders such as Rectors, Deputy

Rectors and Senior Educators have a major role in providing attractive and conducive environment to every child, so that the need of students and parents are met. Then only the shadowing effect of private tuition will be dissipated.

Moreover, absenteeism -especially during the third term, which precede examinations- is very high in most schools in Mauritius. However, the students are still present in private tuition until the eve of examinations. Despite the policy of 80% attendance requirement to sit for the SC and HSC examinations, parents provide medical certificate to cover their wards' absences. This observation back the fact that school is considered less important compared to private tuition in Mauritius. Actually, some respondents highlighted that:

*"School and school leaders are failing in their task of providing quality education to the students."*

*IV. Parental factor*

During the group discussions, it was made clear that parents heavily influence their children's learning behaviour and choice of opting for private tuition. Most of the time, they are the ones who choose private tutors for their wards. It was also noted that despite criticising private tuition as a shadow education impacting on the school system, most parents in Mauritius send their wards for private tuition. Foondun, (1992) mentions that the tacit acceptance of private tutoring can be 'frightening'.

The educational specialist among the respondents such as the Quality Assurance officer, the Rector and the MIE lecturer acknowledged that they have sent their wards to private tuition despite believing that private tuition has negative impacts on the society. They explained that nowadays, students who do not attend tuition are the odd ones, as private tuition forms part of the 'norms' of the Mauritian society.

The other parent respondents categorically support private tuition. They explained that in school, educators are imposed on the students whereas parents select the best educators in a specific field to coach their wards. Their selection is based on (i) the success rate of previous students coached by the educator, (ii) feedback of other parents and students, (iii) ability of educators to provide individual attention, (iv) mastery of content of educators, (v) pedagogical approach of educators, (vi) follow-up done by educators, (vii) personality of educators, (viii) fairness of educators and (ix) amount of work given by educators. This makes all the difference and their performance bear testimony of the marvellous work accomplished by the private tutors. They also stated that it could not be mere coincidence that most of the 10 best candidates ranked in international Cambridge examinations are usually coached by those few excellent private tutors. The parents also highlighted that most parents in Mauritius believe in private tuition and thus bears priority in their monthly budget. Around 80% stated that their children cannot do without private tuition.

A respondent highlighted that the best academically performed students come from families where education is prioritised, corroborating a Rector's view that they mostly come from well-educated backgrounds or from family which lay emphasis on education.

The second school of thought emerged from the stakeholder analysis is against private tuition, where the respondents highlighted the following justification of their stand:

- Some respondents stated that school educators are often the one providing supplementary private tuition after school hours. Though such supplementary tuition is legal and taxable, some unscrupulous supposedly educators do not give their best at school as they tend to save their energy for tuition. This is considered as unfair and unjust, especially to school students who do not take supplementary tuition. Moreover, they are being paid to work and to give their best at school.

- Some respondents stated that students are often brainwashed by the private tutors. Having an upper hand on the students, some private tutors belittle their colleagues in school. Thus, students devalue their school educators leading to classroom indiscipline.

- Both the students from 'Lycee' and the grade 13 students in a State Secondary School explained that private tuition has been given too much importance in Mauritius and excellent academic performance may be achieved without private tuition.

The grade 13 students highlighted that he has willingly chosen to do without private tuition. He stated that despite studying 7 O-Level subjects without tuition, he got the aggregate 6 in SC last year and has embarked in his 'A' level studies once again without private tuition. He feels that both parents and students have been brainwashed and that private tuition exerts more stress on students and eventually on parents.

He stated that his success is the result of effective time management and self-directed learning. He had lot of free time, which was efficiently used for academic and non-academic purposes. He also stated that he had ample time to rest, play, practice sports and read after school while others lose a lot of time in transport to and from tuition. He works on his own and laid emphasis on the syllabi, guidelines from CIE (Cambridge International Examination) exam report and marking scheme. He is engrossed in personal research work by consulting reference books and tapping into online resources. Importantly, he rarely misses any homework set at school. He explained that everything is a question of organization.

- Respondents stated that though private tuition was meant for extra and individual support to cater for the need of students, many private tutors have more than 40 students in each group. Ironically, the ratio of students to educator is lower in school than in private tuition. In such condition, many students may be left behind in tuition.

- Many students follow the mass of students to attend tuition provided by the crowd puller who is often the best educator in a respective field. However, the level in such tuition may be very high with maximum competition to tap the potential of the high flyers only. Thus, the average and low-level students are left behind in such setting and thus do not gain much in tuition.

- Private tuition is replacing school. Many students perceive school as a site for socialisation and private tuition as the sole place where the proper education is provided. This led to indiscipline, absenteeism and many other problems that educators and school leaders have to face on a daily basis.

- Many respondents acknowledge the fact that students are well prepared in private tuition to face competitive examinations. However, education is not limited to academic success and private tuition is far from providing holistic development of students.

- After a whole day at school followed by private tuition, students are biologically, physically, mentally and psychologically tired. Thus, students are often losing their childhood and playtime for the sake of extra tuition.

- Private tuition yields too much pressure on adolescents. In fact, there are cases where competition and pressure has led to depression and major instability amongst the young students.

- Private tuitions do not cater for the development of skills, attitudes and values needed for the holistic development of students. For instance, inquiry approach and development of inquiry process skills takes time, which cannot be achieved in tuition.

- Teaching techniques used in private tuition is often limited to talk and chalk with adapted drilling exercise targeting exam questions. Thus, opportunities for using innovate teaching strategies is scarce.

- Tuition takes a lot of students' time, which may eventually influence the stability of a family. Students do not spend enough time with the family members.

- Private tuition increases the gap between the different social class/status, as parents with low family income cannot provide additional support to their wards due to limited budget.

However, parents with medium and high family income provide their wards with extra support with the best educators and some even provide one-to-one tuition. Thus, students from rich families are better prepared for examinations. In fact, Joynathsing, Mansoor, Nababsing, Pochun and Selwyn (1988) concluded in the same direction in relation to the attitudes towards private tuition based on income bracket and educational level.

*V. Conclusion and recommendations*

This paper provides important ground data to all stakeholders ranging from policy makers to educators. The findings explain the phenomenon of private tuition in the Mauritian context so that necessary measures may be taken to regularise the phenomenon in the wake of providing inclusive and equitable quality education to every child as stipulated in the international commitment to United Nations sustainable development goal 4 and the National curriculum framework.

*Conclusion*

The paper shows that private tuition has both positive and negative impacts in Mauritius, giving rise to two school of thoughts. The first one militates against private tuition, as they believe that it is shadowing the school system and negatively affecting the society by putting extra burden on family with limited revenue and affecting students' mental health. However, the second school of thoughts justifies private tuition on the basis that it caters for the needs of students and parents in ensuring academic success by providing extra support, especially when the different stakeholders are questioning the role of school in Mauritius.

Data collected through the standardised TIMSS questionnaire and open group discussions were analysed to understand why private tuition is shadowing the school system and has gone out of proportion in the Mauritian society. It was found that the common drivers of private tuition in Mauritius are teacher factor, parental factor, school and school leadership and limitations of the actual education system. It was also noted that the main driver remains the teacher factor where the professionalism showed by private tutors in their role as facilitators led to high students' academic achievement. Students (respondents) highlighted the limitations of school educators in terms of class management, pedagogy, evaluation, feedback, monitoring, moral support, pastoral care and subject content knowledge, compared to private tutors.

*Recommendations*

The best way to resolve the phenomenon of private tuition in Mauritius is to regularise it. Drastic changes such as policies banning private tuition may not work in the Mauritian context as parents and students are much dependent on tuition as publicised by the findings of this study. Actually, the approach must be consistent with the needs of parents and children and with the realities of context. Any imposed solution, which ignores these factors, will be doomed to failure (Joynathsing et. al, 1988)

The best way to regularise private tuition in Mauritius is to focus at the levels of policy makers, educational specialists and schools. Relevant policies need to be set by policy makers so that educational specialists produce appropriate action plans for implementation, especially at the level of schools. Based on the findings captured in this study, the focus should be on the provision of quality education in school with the aim of meeting the needs of every student. School should provide highly valued inclusive and equitable quality education to every child with a holistic approach to produce lifelong learners. With provision of quality education at the level of school, the need for extra support and thus private tuition will be reduced and eventually regularised. To reach such target, the Ministry of education need to review the curriculum, the process of teaching and learning at school level and the type of assessment/evaluation.

Despite the new educational reform (NYCBE), under implementation in the country, is aiming at the holistic development of every child, there is too much emphasis on examinations (PSAC, NCE, SC and HSC) leading to competition and thus feeding private tuition. An adapted curriculum that favours the holistic development of students is required where the focus should be on development of skills instead of rote-learning knowledge content. Holistic approach should not be limited to providing compulsory non-academic subjects as in the actual NYCBE. There is a need of the integration of non-academic skills development in the academic subjects. Then only students will be able to face the challenges of the future. The curriculum should make provision for the mixed abilities and learning styles of our students through proper differentiated pedagogy/instruction. Differentiation need to be through content catering for equitability, process (task and activities), product (assessments and evaluation) and learning environment. Then only all students will be taken on-board. Evaluation and assessments should not be limited or overemphasised on written examinations. The curriculum should make provision for differentiated modes of assessing students.

As teacher factor has been identified as the main driver of private tuition in

Mauritius. The educational system need ensure quality teaching and learning at school and especially at classroom levels. School leaders need to be given more autonomy in monitoring teaching and learning in their respective schools. They should be able to identify the challenges and provide pedagogical support to educators as per their need. Figure 4 represents the students' perceptions – captured in this study- on how private tutors shows higher professionalism in terms of their roles in teaching and learning. Thus, as a first step to provide quality education at school level, action plans may be prepared where focus is on providing appropriate support to school educators in the field of class management, pedagogy, evaluation, feedback, monitoring, moral support, pastoral care and subject content knowledge.

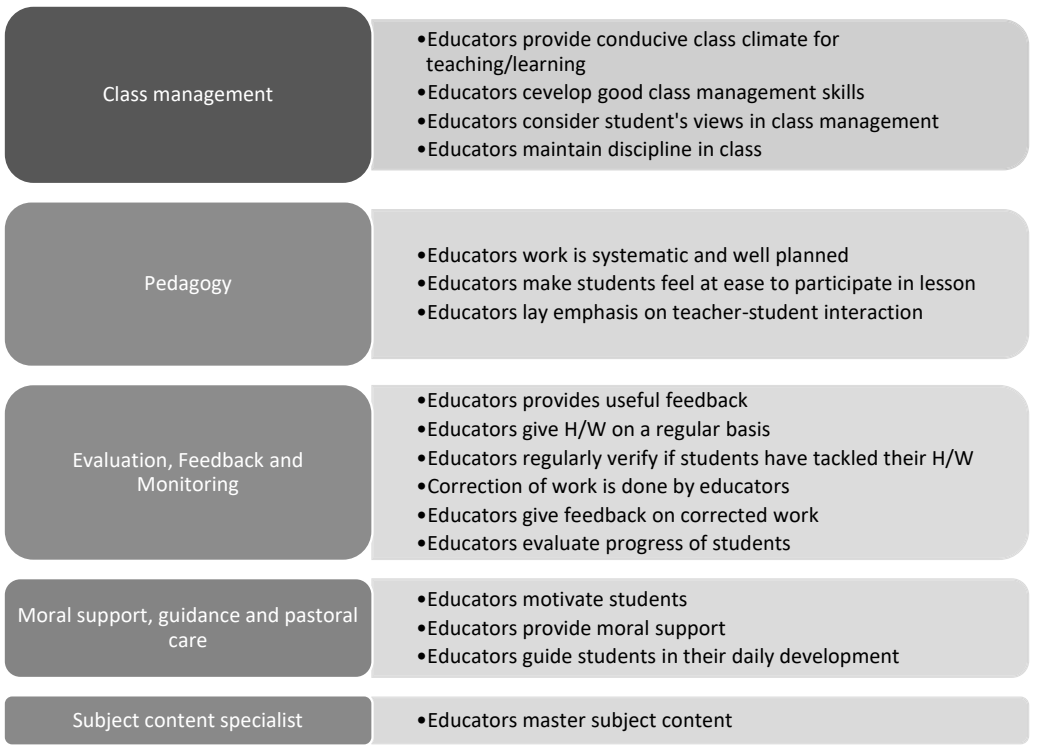



Figure 4: Teacher factor

*VI: Further Research*

Though this study provides some important ground data on the phenomenon of private tuition in Mauritius, extensive research is needed on (i) the impact of private tuition on the Mauritian society, (ii) development of policies and action plans to regularise private tuition and (iii) implementation analysis of the proposed recommendations, policies and action plans.

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