

Private Tuitions in Higher Education: Attitude and Perception Among Undergraduate Students in Nadia District, West Bengal

Shubhasish Sikder^{1*}, Suwendu Ray², Debjani Guha³

ABSTRACT

Private tuition is a support of extra academic instruction given to a learner by a private teacher outside the regular formal institutional hours and done in exchange for a fee. A large number of learners presently depends on private tuition in higher education. The present study aimed to assess the level of attitude and perception towards private tuition in higher education. Descriptive survey method was employed to accomplish the purpose of the study. The study consisted of 155 undergraduate students, by employing a random sampling technique from different general degree colleges of Nadia district, West Bengal, India. A survey method was administered to collect data from the sample. Two standardised attitude and perception scales towards private tuition, with Cronbach's alpha values 0.82 and 0.86, respectively, were used to collect data from selected samples. The findings revealed that private tuition plays a significant role in the academic experiences of undergraduate students, being perceived primarily as supplementary academic support by 89.03% of respondents. Notably, attitude towards private tuition significantly differs by gender, with female undergraduates showing a higher attitude score than males. Undergraduate students largely take private tuition for its benefits in understanding difficult subjects, enhancing their self-confidence towards education, and providing academic support. The study directed for improved formal academic support system and as well as contributed to comprehensive understanding about attitude and perception of undergraduate students regarding private tuition.

Keywords: *Attitude, Perception, Private Tuition, Undergraduate students*

Private tuition has established tailored home-based instruction, making private tutoring an enduring process (Mondal & Barman, 2019). In many cases, students did not attend formal schools; instead, private teachers were appointed to provide education. For example, Maharshi Vashistha imparted education in *dharma*, ethics and scriptural knowledge to King Dasharath and his sons (Venkatsananda, 1984). During the Brahmanical system of education, learners were allowed to receive education in the Gurukuls under the direct supervision of a teacher. Later, in the Buddhist period, education was imparted through

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various Buddhist monasteries known as *Viharas*, which played the important role in spreading knowledge and learning (Bharucha, 2016). After the Bengal Renaissance, a large number of schools and Universities were established, which gradually transformed the structure of the education system (Tamboli and Tamboli, 2017). Formal education systems have been improved along with private tuition, fostering learner engagement (Tiwari, 2015; Islam and Hoque, 2019). Such support helps students identify their academic weaknesses and improve their performance. The increasing level of competition and examination pressure in modern education has further accelerated the demand for private tuition (Banerjee & Chatterjee, 2025). Many parents believe that private tutoring supplements classroom teaching and helps students better understand their subjects. Another important advantage of private tuition is that it offers opportunities for personalised learning. When a teacher works with a small group of students, it becomes easier to understand each student's strengths and weaknesses and provide instruction accordingly.

In a developing country like India, private tutoring has become an influential factor in the field of education (Bhokar and Bray, 2018; Prasad and Kumari, 2020; Khan and Mishra, 2021). Therefore, the present study aimed to examine students' attitude and perception towards private tuition.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of attitude towards private tuitions among undergraduate students in Nadia district, West Bengal in respect to their Gender, Locale and Academic stream.
2. To find out the perception of undergraduate students of Nadia district towards private tuitions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

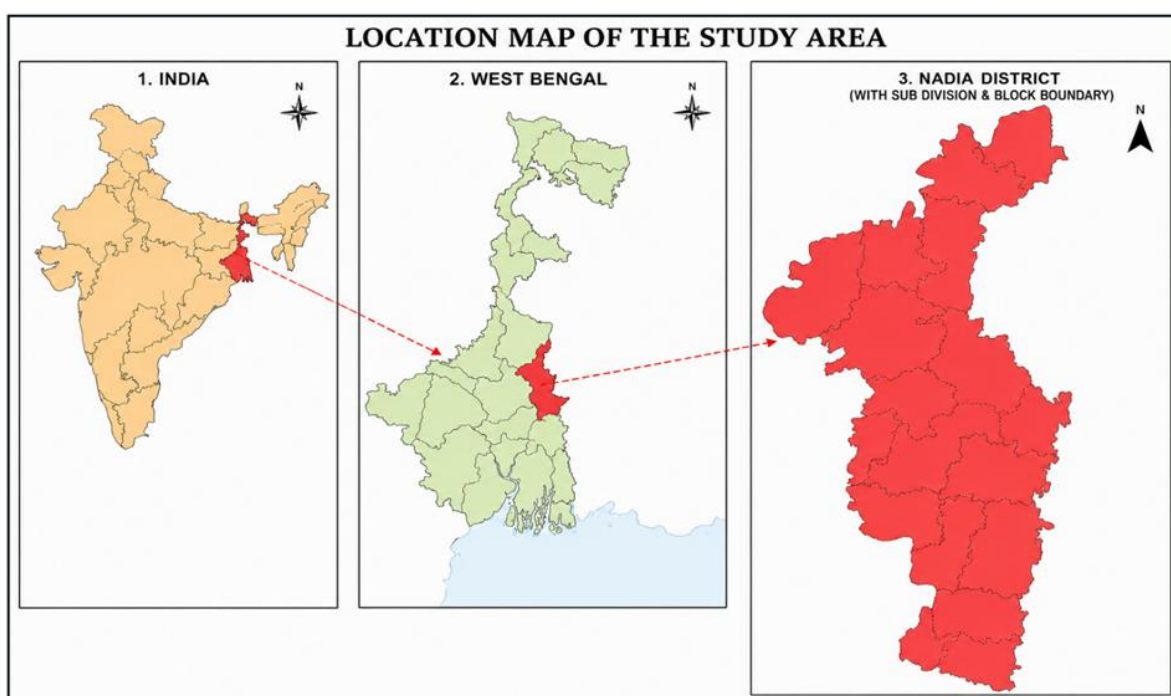
Design and Method

According to Deckert and Wilson (2023), descriptive research can also include collecting information through review of records, surveys, interviews, or guided observation. Descriptive survey method was used for data collection.

Study area

The present study selected Nadia district in West Bengal as the study area. Nadia is an educationally significant district with diverse higher education institutions and varied rural, urban, and semi-urban areas. The district represents students from diverse socio-economic, educational, and family backgrounds. Such diversity provides Nadia a suitable setting for assessing attitude and perception of undergraduate students towards private tuition in higher education.

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Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The population of the study was total undergraduate students of Nadia District. Random sampling technique was utilised to select the samples from the population. The present study comprised 155 undergraduate students studying in different general degree colleges of Nadia district, West Bengal.

Tools Used

The researcher used attitude and perception scales towards private tuition which was previously standardised with Cronbach's alpha value 0.82 and 0.86 respectively. A standardised sets of 20 statements in attitude scale with five possible answers based on five-point Likert scale, viz. strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree, that receiving scores '5', '4', '3', '2', and '1' respectively for positive statements; and '1', '2', '3', '4', and '5' respectively for negative statements. A standardised sets of 10 statements related to perception towards private tuition with two possible responds- 'Yes', 'No', was calculated for each item percentage.

Data collection

The researcher used survey method to collect data regarding undergraduate students' attitude and perception towards private tuition. Each participant selected their own responses for each item of the scales. They were assured that their identities and data would remain confidential and that the collected data would be used solely for research purposes.

Statistical analysis

The researcher analysed and interpreted the data with the help of statistical techniques, *i.e.* descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. In descriptive statistics, the researcher used 'Mean (μ)', 'standard deviation (σ)', 'Percentage (%)' to analysed the data. In inferential statistics, the researcher used '*t*-Test'.

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RESULTS

Descriptive statistics of the data

The researcher selected sample of 155 undergraduate students from different general degree colleges of Nadia district. The demographic variables for the study were- Gender (Male and Female), Locality (Urban and Rural) and Academic stream (Arts and Science). The demographic data of the participants showed in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic data of the participants

Variables	Frequency(n=155)	Percentage(%)
Gender		
Male	77	49.68%
Female	78	50.32%
Locality		
Rural	76	49.03%
Urban	79	50.97%
Stream		
Arts	76	49.03%
Science	79	50.97%

Comparison between categorical variables regarding attitude towards private tuition

An independent sample *t* test was used to compare independent variables with two categories. Table 2 provides a summary of the results obtained. The independent sample *t* test yielded the following results: $p = 0.029$, $t = 2.202$, and $df = 153$ for the male and female categories. It suggests that male and female student have distinct attitude towards private tuition.

The results of independent sample *t* test between the urban and rural groups are $p = 0.283$, $t = 1.073$ and $df = 153$, indicating no significant difference exists in attitude towards private tuitions between urban and rural undergraduate students.

Similarly, the independent sample *t* test between the arts and science groups are $p = 0.423$, $t = 0.802$ and $df = 153$, indicating no significant difference exists in attitude towards private tuitions between arts and science stream undergraduates.

Table 2: Group of comparison regarding attitude towards private tuition

Variables	Mean (SD)	df	t	p
Gender				
Male	64.74(2.69)	153	2.202	0.029*
Female	65.78(3.16)			
Locality				
Rural	65.52(2.85)	153	1.073	0.284
Urban	65.01((3.09			
Stream				
Arts	65.46(3.04)	153	0.802	0.423
Science	64.07(2.92)			

*0.05 level of significance

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Item-wise analysis of perception towards private tuition

The researcher used percentage analysis technique for analysing the data of perception scale towards private tuitions. Each item was analysed separately. The results of perception towards private tuitions of undergraduate students are stated below in table 3.

Table 3: Item wise Analysis of perception towards private tuition

Item Code	Items	Yes (%)	No (%)
PTPT1	Private tuition acts like a support system in education.	89.03%	10.97%
PTPT2	Private tuition does not eliminate weaknesses in studies.	40.65%	59.35%
PTPT3	Private tuition increases self-confidence in education.	80%	20%
PTPT4	Private tuition increases the interest in daily studying.	67.74%	32.26%
PTPT5	Private tuition helps in understanding complex subjects easily.	84.52%	15.48%
PTPT6	The fees of private tuition do not impact the family.	46.45%	53.55%
PTPT7	Private tuition reduces study pressure before exams.	68.39%	31.61%
PTPT8	Private tuition can lead to a decrease in self-confidence	49.68%	50.32%
PTPT9	Private tuition leads to improved exam results.	64.52%	35.48%
PTPT10	Help from private tuition is not available in times of need.	30.97%	69.03%

DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

Table 1 presented the demographical details of the 155 undergraduate students of Nadia district. The sample comprised 77 males (49.68%) and 78 females (50.32%). Regarding locality, 76 participant (49.03%) were from rural area and 79 participant (50.97%) were from urban area. An academic stream 76 participants (49.03%) belonged to arts and 79 participants (50.97%) belong to science stream.

Table 2 showed main group of comparison of attitude across gender, locality and stream. Independent sample *t* test was used determine significant difference exists between different groups. Where, gender showed a significant difference in attitude whereas locality and stream did not have any significant difference.

Table 3 showed that, the item-wise analysis suggests that students generally understood private tuition as a source of academic support. Findings indicated that 89.03% of undergraduates viewed private tuition as a support system in education, suggesting that most participants perceived private tuition as supplementary academic assistance. A large proportion of students (84.52%) reported that private tuition assists them understand complex subjects more easily, while 80% perceived that it increases their self-confidence in education. More than half of the students also response that private tuition enhances interest in daily studying (67.74%), reduces study pressure before examination (68.39%) and promotes to improved exam results (64.52%) (Baidya, et al. 2024; Baidya & Ray, 2024). Undergraduates expressed comparatively mixed perception regarding the financial burden and possible reduction in self-confidence associated with private tuition. While 46.45% reported that tuition fees do not affect their families, 53.55% disagreed. Similarly, responses regarding whether private tuition can decrease self-confidence were almost evenly divided (49.68% Yes and 50.32% No).

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The study revealed that private tuition plays a significant role in the academic experiences of undergraduates, being perceived primarily as supplementary academic support by 89.03% of respondents. Notably, attitude towards private tuition significantly differs by gender, with female undergraduates showing a higher attitude score than males.

Undergraduate students largely take private tuition for its benefits in understanding difficult subjects, boosting their self-confidence towards education, and providing academic support. Many undergraduate students also perceived that it motivates them to study and reduce their examination stress, leading to improved academic results. However, perception on the financial implications of private tuition is mixed; over half of undergraduates reported that tuition fees place a burden on their families, and perception of potential impacts on self-confidence were also evenly divided.

Implications of the study

The present study has significant educational implications for students, teachers, and educational institutions. Private tuition as well as formal education system enhances academic progress. As private tuition becomes more recognised as important, teachers might be more inclined to offer individualised support in formal education. Colleges and other institutions are also encouraged to enhance tutorial sessions, mentoring and academic counselling to enhance student support. The expense of private tuition to families shows the need for schools to provide affordable or free support options to ensure equitable access. Besides, the findings of the study can guide policy makers on how to improve classroom teaching and support systems as the relationship between traditional education and tutoring evolves in the future. It also suggests that the relationship between private tutoring and academic achievement, socioeconomic status, and student motivation should be explored, and that wider comparative research in these areas is necessary.

CONCLUSION

Private tuition is viewed positively by students, serving as key academic support. Many students feel it aids comprehension of complex subjects, enhances self-confidence, encourages consistent study, alleviates exam pressure, and enhances results. Gender differences in attitude towards private tuition were noted, while locality and academic stream showed no significant variations. Although beneficial, concerns about financial burdens and potential self-confidence issues emerged, indicating the nuanced role of private tuition in education. The study stated for improved formal academic support systems and suggests further research to explore the broader implications of private tutoring in the field of higher education.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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