

### Current Issue of Private Supplementary Tutoring among Final-Year Secondary Students in Vietnam

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#### Abstract:

The study surveyed 34,632 9th- and 12th-grade students, along with 25 provincial education officials and 25 school-level administrators in Vietnam. The primary objective of this study was to elucidate the current situation of private supplementary tutoring in Vietnam, thereby scrutinizing the array of factors that influence the engagement of final-year students in supplementary learning endeavors. The factors under investigation encompassed various dimensions, including in-school and out-of-school supplementary learning, as well as influences categorized by regional disparities, gender, family economic conditions, institutional attributes, and participation in transitional examinations. The study used structured surveys and interviews, which were analyzed with SPSS. The findings of the study reveal that all educational institutions provide avenues for supplementary educational endeavors, with the total participation rate of final-year students amounting to 100% within the institutional premises. Moreover, 38.5% of lower secondary students and 56.8% of upper secondary students actively participate in supplementary learning activities beyond the institutional confines. Determinants influencing the participation of final-year students in supplementary education encompass economic circumstances, academic motivation, the pressure of transitional examinations, and regional factors. These findings contribute to a comprehensive dataset, providing solutions for Vietnam's supplementary education landscape.

**Keywords:** private supplementary tutoring, general education, learning outcomes, final year, student, Vietnam.

### 越南中学生最后一年的私人补习现状

#### 摘要:

该研究调查了越南34,632名9年级和12年级学生,以及25名省级教育官员和25名校级管理人员。本研究的主

要目的是阐明越南私人补习的现状，从而仔细研究影响最后一年学生参与补习的一系列因素。调查因素涵盖校内、校外补充学习、地区差异、性别、家庭经济条件、制度属性、参加过渡性考试等多个维度的影响。该研究采用结构化调查和访谈，并使用统计软件进行分析。研究结果显示，所有教育机构均提供补充教育活动的途径，机构内应届生的总参与率达100%。此外，38.5%的初中生和56.8%的高中生积极参与校外的补充学习活动。影响最后一年学生参加补充教育的决定因素包括经济状况、学业动机、过渡性考试压力和地区因素。这些发现有助于建立一个全面的数据集，为越南的补充教育格局提供解决方案。

**关键词：**私人补习、普通教育、学习成果、最后一年、学生、越南。

## 1. Introduction

Private supplementary tutoring in Vietnam is a phenomenon characterized by its enduring presence and diverse manifestations. Despite varying perspectives on this practice, it has demonstrated resilience across different periods in the country's educational history. However, its nature remains dynamic, with fluctuations in response to evolving educational paradigms. To comprehensively understand the demand for private supplementary tutoring and its broader implications, a scientific perspective is essential.

In recent years, private supplementary tutoring has transcended its traditional role to become pervasive, exerting a significant burden on families. The Ministry of Education and Training has attempted to address this issue through regulatory measures such as Circular 17/TT-BGDĐT and Decision 2499 - QD-BGDĐT. Despite these efforts, the problem remains persistent and increasingly severe. The consequences are not limited to academic realms; the well-being of students is compromised, and families bearing the financial weight of private tutoring face economic strain (Nguyen et al., 2022).

Conversely, it is important to recognize the potential benefits of private supplementary tutoring. Beyond academic enhancement, it can contribute to knowledge consolidation among students and offer parents a sense of assurance about their children's educational progress (Oanh et al., 2019). However, existing research in this domain is inadequate, particularly in the context of globalization and digital transformation in education (Trang, 2019).

Given these considerations, this study addresses the gaps in the understanding of private supplementary tutoring. The primary objective of this study is to assess the contemporary use of private supplementary tutoring among final-year secondary students in Vietnam. The study also seeks to delve into factors that drive students' engagement in private tutoring and analyze potential variations based on regional, gender, family, and other demographic characteristics. By undertaking this research, we aim to foster a more nuanced understanding of private supplementary tutoring and its implications within the broader educational landscape.

### 1.1. Research Objective

This research aims to clarify the following issues:

- What is the current situation of private supplementary tutoring among final-year secondary

students in Vietnam?

- What factors influence private supplementary tutoring among final-year secondary students in Vietnam?

- Are there any differences in these factors based on regional, gender, family, or other characteristics?

## 2. Overview of Domestic Research on Private Supplementary Tutoring

Private supplementary tutoring in Vietnam has emerged as a socially relevant issue, drawing significant attention from society as a whole. Since the early years of the 21st century, several studies have investigated the prevailing landscape of private supplementary tutoring in the country. Prominent contributions in this domain include research conducted by Van Trang (2003), Su (2000), and Van Dan (2000). Despite subsequent efforts to tackle the matter, private supplementary tutoring continues to attract attention and concern from the government, as indicated by various policy decisions such as Decision 2499 - QD-BGDĐT and Circular 17/2012/TT-BGDĐT, which specifically address private supplementary tutoring.

In the following years, the issue has remained a pressing concern, prompting in-depth research endeavors aimed at unraveling the underlying causes. The government and educational management authorities have demonstrated a vested interest in comprehending the fundamental factors associated with this issue. Trang (2019) and Oanh et al. (2018) provided insights into the causal factors underlying private supplementary tutoring. However, they employed limited sample sizes and may not fully capture the intricacies of the issue.

Embedded within studies exploring the current state of private supplementary tutoring, a predominant focus has been placed on examining the factors influencing private supplementary tutoring among both teachers and students. These investigations have yielded effective recommendations for policymakers.

In summary, while research on private supplementary tutoring is not lacking, it has been conducted in stages, consistently providing timely information to educational management authorities. This study serves as a basis for implementing effective interventions to address the complexities associated with private supplementary tutoring.

### 3. Research Methodology

To ensure the accuracy of the research findings, the research team employed a range of methodologies. These included both theoretical and practical research approaches.

The theoretical research involved a comprehensive review of the relevant literature and previous research findings. This literature review served as a foundation for the current study, allowing the research team to build upon existing knowledge and gain additional insights into the phenomenon of private supplementary tutoring.

Practical research was conducted using two primary methods: a questionnaire and interviews:

- The questionnaire encompassed various aspects related to students' learning experiences, including personal information, motivation to learn, family economic circumstances, parents' educational background, school-related factors, examinations, and student assessments. The purpose of the questionnaire was to capture the current status of private supplementary tutoring in Vietnam and identify the factors that influence its prevalence among students in the transition grades.

- In addition, interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including educational management officials, teachers, students, and parents. These interviews provided a deeper understanding of the motivations, objectives, and needs associated with private supplementary tutoring from the perspectives of both learners and instructors.

By employing a combination of theoretical research, a comprehensive questionnaire, and insightful interviews, the research team sought to ensure a robust and comprehensive investigation into the phenomenon of private supplementary tutoring in Vietnam.

#### 3.1. Research Participants

The survey was conducted using a two-stage stratified sampling method with the participation of all 63 provinces and cities in Vietnam, divided into six economic regions: Northern Midlands and Mountains, Red River Delta, North Central and Central Coast, Central Highlands, Southeast, and Mekong River Delta. The survey was conducted in May 2023, and the responses were collected from 15,221 9th-grade and 19,412 12th-grade students across all 63 provinces and cities in Vietnam. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with 25 educational management officials at the provincial level and 25 educational management officials at the district level.

#### 3.2. Measurement Scale and Data Processing

Upon completion of data collection, the research team employed the SPSS 22 software to analyze the gathered data. In assessing the current state of private supplementary tutoring in the Vietnamese education system, the study adopted a Likert scale featuring three or four levels.

### 3.3. Theoretical Framework

#### 3.3.1. Perspectives on Private Supplementary Tutoring

Different researchers hold varying perspectives on private supplementary tutoring. Bray and Kwok (2003) defined private supplementary tutoring as "tutoring in academic subjects which is provided by the tutors for financial gain and which is additional to the provision by mainstream schooling". This definition clearly distinguishes between private supplementary tutoring provided by the state and private entities. Although private supplementary tutoring is beneficial, it does not differentiate between different forms of tutoring, particularly the teacher-student ratio (Ireson, 2004).

According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), private supplementary tutoring is generally understood as out-of-school education that aligns with the mainstream curriculum. As changes occur in the teaching program of mainstream education, the teaching program of out-of-school education also adapts accordingly. Additionally, as mainstream education expands, so does out-of-school education. The term "out-of-school education" refers to supplementary instruction in core subjects, conducted outside regular school hours, with a focus on fee-based activities, excluding sports, music, social skills, and other areas (Bray & Lykins, 2012).

According to Nguyen et al. (2022), the concept of private supplementary tutoring can be understood in different ways:

- Private supplementary tutoring provides students with in-depth knowledge beyond what is covered in the regular school curriculum;

- Private supplementary tutoring serves to compensate for any deficiencies in knowledge that students may acquire from their school education.

Thus, it can be observed that the common aspect in these perspectives is that private supplementary tutoring involves learning outside the school environment, with guidance from instructors and a fee-based arrangement.

#### 3.3.2. Definition of Private Supplementary Tutoring

According to Van Trang (2003), private supplementary tutoring involves learning activities undertaken by students outside regular school hours under teachers' guidance.

Circular No. 17/2012/TT-BGDĐT issued by the Minister of Education and Training on May 16, 2012, provides the following definitions:

- Private supplementary tutoring, as outlined in this regulation, refers to additional instructional activities for which students are required to pay. These activities align with the general education curriculum but are conducted outside the educational plan mandated by the Ministry of Education and Training. Private supplementary tutoring within the school context refers to tutoring organized by public educational institutions, encompassing general education institutions, vocational training centers, centers for continuing education, community learning

centers, foreign language centers, and computer centers, collectively referred to as schools.

- Private supplementary tutoring outside the school context refers to tutoring that is not organized by the educational institutions specified in this clause.

Diverse perspectives exist regarding private supplementary tutoring. In this study, the research team defines private supplementary tutoring as the acquisition of academic knowledge outside regular school hours, comprising learning activities undertaken by students and facilitated by teachers during those non-regular school hours.

## 4. Research Findings

### 4.1. Current Situation of Private Supplementary Tutoring

#### 4.1.1. Supplementary Tutoring within Schools

Supplementary tutoring within schools is an educational practice in which schools organize and provide additional classes for their students, with teachers from within the school serving as instructors. This form of supplementary tutoring is known by various names, including enrichment classes, support classes, and remedial classes. The scheduling of these classes typically occurs in the afternoon or morning, depending on the regular school hours, while ensuring no overlap with the students' regular school hours. The subjects covered in these classes are diverse, but schools primarily offer supplementary tutoring in core subjects such as mathematics, literature, foreign languages, physics, chemistry, biology, history, and geography. Notably, for final-year classes, there is often an increased emphasis on specialized exam subjects such as mathematics, literature, and foreign languages.

Survey data obtained from students indicate that 100% of schools organize supplementary tutoring programs for their students, and all final-year students participate in such tutoring within the school.

The provision of additional teaching or supplementary tutoring can have positive implications when its aim is to benefit learners and foster student progress. However, in recent years, this issue has become a contentious topic, leading to the intervention of the Ministry of Education and Training, which has issued legal documents on supplementary tutoring within schools (Circular No. 17 issued in 2012). Among these documents, Decision No. 2499/QĐ-BGDĐT, issued in 2019, stands out as one of the most rigorous measures aimed at minimizing the prevalence of supplementary tutoring within schools and assuaging public concerns. However, the effectiveness of this decision remains limited as other forms of "additional teaching" and "supplementary tutoring" persist, such as private tutoring, "math enthusiast" groups, and "literature enthusiast" groups. To this day, this form of supplementary tutoring, despite being labeled differently, continues to present legal challenges,

leaving educational management authorities seemingly "powerless" in its presence.

Therefore, an investigation into the factors contributing to the prevalence of diverse forms of supplementary tutoring within schools is warranted. It is plausible to consider whether the content covered in the prescribed curriculum fails to adequately meet the students' needs. To shed light on this phenomenon, the research team conducted a comprehensive analysis from multiple perspectives:

- From the standpoint of schools and teachers, both parties aspire to augment their income. The reality is that teachers' salaries remain significantly low, as documented by Tham et al. (2022), Tham and Han (2022). They reveal that teachers' remuneration is insufficient to sustain a modest standard of living, let alone to provide for their own children, care for elderly parents, or meet other family expenses.

- From the perspective of students, there exists a genuine desire for additional reinforcement of their knowledge, especially to bolster their confidence in preparation for imminent graduation examinations. This sentiment was unanimously expressed by all the students interviewed.

- From the viewpoint of parents, they harbor a sense of reassurance when their children engage in supplementary tutoring. This sentiment was affirmed by all interviewed parents of the students.

Thus, driven by the aspirations of multiple stakeholders, the prevalence of supplementary tutoring within schools has become a daily occurrence, with particular intensity observed among students facing graduation exams. Consequently, to curb illicit practices of unauthorized supplementary tutoring, the Ministry of Education and Training should undertake a comprehensive examination and devise regulatory frameworks of supplementary teaching and learning. By doing so, illicit and evasive activities that provoke public dissatisfaction can be effectively addressed.

#### 4.1.2. Out-of-School Supplementary Tutoring

Out-of-school supplementary tutoring refers to tutoring conducted at different educational institutions (referred to as education centers, language centers, educational facilities, etc.) that may be licensed, by teachers organizing classes at their homes or specific locations, or through private tutoring arrangements. The timing of these supplementary tutoring sessions outside schools is usually in the evenings or on designated non-school days according to legal regulations, as long as they do not overlap with the students' regular school hours.

This form of supplementary tutoring does not involve school intervention but is primarily based on voluntary participation by students and their parents. Most students and parents seek teachers they trust to provide educational support. The proportion of final-year students participating in these forms of out-of-school supplementary tutoring is not as high as that of

those participating in school-based supplementary tutoring.

Subjects, in which students engage in out-of-school supplementary tutoring, primarily include mathematics, literature, and foreign languages, which are three main subjects for the graduation exams. In addition, many students participate in supplementary tutoring for other subjects such as talent development or soft skills training. The purpose of this supplementary tutoring is to enhance skills and knowledge with the aim of achieving success in desired schools (such as high-quality schools, schools with high academic standards, specialized schools, or schools with admission criteria beyond the students' current abilities).

The findings derived from the student survey reveal that approximately 38.5% of lower secondary school students and approximately 56.8% of upper secondary school students engage in out-of-school private supplementary tutoring. Compared to other countries in the world, the rate of private tutoring participation of Vietnamese students is lower than that of some countries such as Korea (74.8%) (The Korea Statistical Office, 2018), Egypt (81%) (Sobhy, 2012), Cambodia (73%) (Marshall & Fukao, 2019) and higher in some countries such as the US (40%) (Ho et al., 2019).

Moreover, the content and objectives of private supplementary tutoring among students exhibit considerable diversity.

- At the upper secondary level, a subgroup of students is motivated to pursue language certification to gain admission to universities or to prepare for studying abroad. In mathematics and literature, the primary objective is to successfully pass the graduation exams. This sentiment is unanimously expressed by all students.

- At the lower secondary level, students engage in a diverse range of subjects, encompassing both academic subjects prescribed in the school curriculum and skill-based, talent-based, and foreign language subjects. However, disparities exist among schools located in developed regions with pronounced cultural influences. For instance, in Hanoi, the capital and cultural hub of Vietnam, a larger proportion of students participate in talent-based and foreign language subjects. Conversely, in economically disadvantaged areas, student involvement in talent-based and foreign language subjects is comparatively limited. This observation is supported by interviews conducted with education administrators in Thanh Chuong district, Nghe An province, where they emphasized, "The students here face significant financial constraints, which restrict their participation in external activities for supplementary tutoring. Even when supplementary classes are available, students are unable to attend because of financial limitations" (Lower secondary education administrator in Thanh Chuong, Nghe An). Furthermore, some students themselves perceive that the selection of supplementary tutoring locations and their participation are driven not only by knowledge requirements but also the desire to acquire new learning

skills and methodologies. A parent of a Grade 9 student in Ba Dinh, Hanoi, expressed, "I aspire for my child to engage with new educators and prioritize their teaching methods over mere knowledge" (Parent, Grade 9 student in Ba Dinh, Hanoi). The collective perspectives of students, parents, and teachers indicate that the primary factors motivating students to engage in supplementary tutoring are the pressure and competition surrounding graduation exams, the aspiration to gain entry into prestigious classes and schools, and the current format of the graduation exams.

However, in areas where the policy of student streamlining after lower secondary school is rigorously enforced, and the admission quotas for public upper secondary schools are insufficient to accommodate the student population, the prevalence of out-of-school private supplementary tutoring is lower. Conversely, in localities characterized by intense competition for admission to public upper secondary schools, such as major cities, the proportion of students engaging in private supplementary tutoring is higher. For instance, in Thanh Chuong district, Nghe An province, which experiences lower admission quotas for public upper secondary schools than the capacity to accommodate students, most lower secondary school graduates are able to secure admission to public upper secondary schools, resulting in reduced competition for admission, except for specialized, gifted, and high-quality classes. Consequently, the proportion of students participating in out-of-school private supplementary tutoring in this area is significantly lower than that in other regions.

In terms of supplementary tutoring modalities, aside from traditional options such as attending tutoring centers, receiving instruction at teachers' residences, or using external venues, there has recently been a notable surge in the growth of distance and online learning. This trend can be attributed to advancements in information technology and has been further propelled by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Driven by the convenience and increasing demands of learners and educators, a novel educational approach has gained significant popularity, both within and beyond the conventional school environment, known as online learning or e-learning. This mode of instruction is facilitated through online platforms that offer educational resources and services, which can be accessed either free of charge or through a paid subscription model.

The survey findings reveal that a considerable proportion of lower and upper secondary school students are engaged in this form of learning, even in socioeconomically disadvantaged regions such as Nghe An. Online learning encompasses a range of approaches, including the provision of academic subjects to facilitate examination preparation. However, foreign language subjects, particularly English, have emerged as the predominant focus and are widely chosen by students. Online learning options include self-study packages accessible through the Internet and direct teacher support. Students perceive these

modalities as well-suited to their current circumstances, considering time and geographical constraints, as they enable access to qualified educators from both domestic and international backgrounds. For instance, one student stated, "I participated in purchasing an online English learning package, but I am unaware of the teacher's location." Another student stated, "I registered for an online mathematics learning package. Since there are no local classes available, I have to travel over 10 km to the town center to receive instruction" (Lower secondary school students in Thanh Chuong district, Nghe An).

In addition to the advantages it offers to learners, online learning poses challenges from a management standpoint, even when it is acknowledged as a regulated business profession. The use of online learning platforms by both educators and learners as tools for communication, collaboration, and instructional delivery, whether offered free of charge or for a fee, presents difficulties for regulatory bodies in terms of monitoring, controlling, and assessing the content and quality of instruction. This is particularly evident in the case of foreign language programs delivered by local institutions, organizations, and individuals.

The implementation of this new learning modality introduces administrative management complexities when learners and instructors are geographically dispersed, thereby lacking oversight from a single unit or organization of authority.

The issue of supplementary education presents a complex challenge in the context of Vietnamese educational practices. Vu (2013) underscores that parents' inclination toward enrolling their children in supplementary classes is driven by aspirations for academic excellence, notable classroom performance, end-of-year accolades, and successful admission into prestigious institutions. From the student standpoint, supplementary education becomes a legitimate form of "recreational learning", operating independently of family oversight, whereas educators perceive tutoring not only as a method to enhance student accomplishments but also to supplement their own earnings.

This attests to the persistent nature of the issue of supplementary tutoring, irrespective of the educational phase or policy framework. A comprehensive resolution to this issue remains elusive.

#### 4.2. Factors Influencing Students' Participation in Supplementary Tutoring

The findings from the aforementioned survey on both in-school and out-of-school supplementary tutoring reveal that the prevalence of supplementary tutoring varies across different regions within the country and is influenced by a range of factors. This study provides a comprehensive overview of the factors that impact engagement in supplementary tutoring among final-year students in Vietnam.

##### 4.2.1. Regional Factors

The results of the statistical analysis indicate that students in Grades 9 and 12 from favorable regions demonstrate a higher rate of participation in private supplementary tutoring than students from other regions. The term "favorable" in this context refers to regions characterized by favorable socioeconomic conditions or a strong educational culture within the community. Specifically, among the six economic regions, the Red River Delta region, which boasts favorable socioeconomic conditions, and the Central Coastal region, known for its higher academic standards relative to other regions, exhibit a greater proportion of students engaging in private supplementary tutoring for mathematics than other regions.

However, the relationship between participation in private supplementary tutoring and regional factors varies between the two grade levels. For Grade 9 students, the correlation is moderate, with approximately 17.4% for literature and 23.1% for mathematics. On the other hand, Grade 12 students demonstrate a weaker correlation, with only 8.5% (< 10%, signifying a weak correlation) for mathematics and approximately 13% (an average level) for literature. Further details regarding this correlation can be found in Table 2.

Table 1. Correlation between students' participation in supplementary tutoring and regional factors

Subject	Grade	Private supplementary tutoring	Region						Pearson Chi-Square	Cramer's V
			Northern Midlands and Mountains	Red River Delta	North Central Coast and Central Coast	Highlands	Southeast	Mekong Delta		
Literature	9	No	65.1%	51.4%	57.4%	73.0%	62.2%	76.0%	0.000	0.174
		Yes	34.9%	48.6%	42.6%	27.0%	37.8%	24.0%		
	12	No	60.2%	76.2%	69.8%	63.6%	75.9%	72.1%	0.000	0.129
		Yes	39.8%	23.8%	30.2%	36.4%	24.1%	27.9%		
Math	9	No	59.7%	36.2%	37.8%	59.0%	31.3%	58.3%	0.000	0.231
		Yes	40.3%	63.8%	62.2%	41.0%	68.7%	41.7%		
	12	No	38.9%	34.9%	34.0%	32.2%	24.5%	33.2%	0.000	0.085
		Yes	61.1%	65.1%	66.0%	67.8%	75.5%	66.8%		

Table 2. Private supplementary tutoring and gender for Grade 9 and 12 students

Subject	Grade	Private supplementary tutoring	Gender		Pearson Chi-Square	Cramer's V
			Female	Male		
Literature	9	No	61.7%	61.9%	0.880	0.001
		Yes	38.3%	38.1%		
	12	No	67.2%	74.5%	0.000	0.080
		Yes	32.8%	25.5%		
Math	9	No	44.7%	47.1%	0.002	0.024
		Yes	55.3%	52.9%		
	12	No	32.0%	35.9%	0.000	0.042
		Yes	68.0%	64.1%		

The findings reveal that regional factors significantly influence students' participation in private supplementary tutoring in mathematics and literature, particularly for Grade 9 students.

#### 4.2.2. Gender

Regarding the gender factor, the survey results indicate that among the surveyed Grade 9 students, the participation rates in private supplementary tutoring for Literature were similar for male and female students. However, in mathematics, a considerably higher number of students participated in supplementary tutoring than those who did not, with female students exhibiting a higher participation rate of approximately 10%. Mathematics and literature are pivotal subjects in the Grade 9 graduation exams. The survey results suggest that female students display a greater inclination toward enhancing their performance in mathematics than their male counterparts.

The findings regarding Grade 12 students reveal that, among the overall participants in the survey, approximately 30% of students opt for private supplementary tutoring in Literature, with female students displaying an 8% higher participation rate. In mathematics, the proportion of students engaging in supplementary tutoring reached 67%, with female students exhibiting an 11% higher participation rate. The participation rates in both subjects for Grade 12 students declined compared with Grade 9, particularly in literature. This decline can be attributed to the reduced number of students pursuing academic paths related to literature, leading to a significant decrease in the demand for supplementary tutoring in the subject. Furthermore, despite the decrease in overall participation rates for Grade 12 students compared with Grade 9, female students continue to have higher participation in supplementary tutoring than their male counterparts. Grade 12 marks the final year of secondary education and holds great importance in the transition and career decision-making process. The higher involvement of female students in supplementary tutoring indicates their dedication to learning and greater concern for their future. These findings highlight the effectiveness of current educational policies in promoting gender equity.

When examining the relationship between private supplementary tutoring and gender, the results indicate the following:

- For mathematics, there is a certain correlation

between gender and participation in supplementary tutoring for both Grade 9 and Grade 12 students, with female students engaging in supplementary tutoring more than male students. However, this correlation is weak, with an effect size of less than 5%.

- For literature, only Grade 12 students exhibited a weak correlation between gender and participation in supplementary tutoring, with an effect size of less than 10%.

The results indicate that the patterns of supplementary tutoring among Grade 12 students, both male and female, became increasingly discernible during the survey period.

#### 4.2.3. Academic Motivation

This research investigates academic motivation through the examination of four specific aspects: 1) the belief that supplementary tutoring enhances students' comprehension of subject content; 2) students' strong affinity for the subject in which they receive supplementary tutoring; 3) students' unwavering commitment to their learning goals; 4) the school's efforts to support students in gaining admission to reputable institutions upon completing lower or upper secondary education.

The survey results reveal the relationship between students' participation in private supplementary tutoring and their academic motivation as follows:

1. For both mathematics and literature, students in Grades 9 and 12 are more inclined to engage in supplementary tutoring when they perceive it to enhance their understanding of the subjects. The correlation between supplementary tutoring and academic motivation in this regard is significant, ranging from 49% to 56%.

2. Students in Grades 9 and 12 are more likely to participate in supplementary tutoring for both mathematics and literature when they have a liking for these subjects. However, the correlation between supplementary tutoring and academic motivation in this aspect is only moderate or lower, ranging from 4% to 18%.

3. Grade 9 and 12 students show a greater tendency to engage in supplementary tutoring for both mathematics and literature when they strive to achieve their learning goals. Nevertheless, the correlation between supplementary tutoring and academic motivation in this regard is weak or very weak, ranging from 1.8% to 9.4%. Notably, Grade 9 Mathematics

exhibits a moderate level of correlation (13.2%).

4. For both mathematics and literature in Grades 9 and 12, students in the supplementary tutoring group demonstrate higher levels of effort to gain admission to esteemed schools upon graduation.

In general, considering these four dimensions, students with stronger academic motivation are more likely to participate in private supplementary tutoring, particularly in mathematics for Grades 9 and 12. Given the abstract nature of mathematics, which involves intricate concepts, formulas, rules, and complex computational techniques, supplementary tutoring offers additional opportunities for students to practice, reinforce, and develop their skills and competencies in the subject.

Chau (2018) also illustrates that a considerable number of students regard academic interest as a significant determinant of their learning motivation. The enthusiasm for learning aids students in surmounting difficulties and barriers to achieve their self-established objectives. Specifically, 60.1% of learners affirm that academic interest exerts a noteworthy influence on their learning motivation, 23% indicate a moderate effect, and 16.9% attribute a minor impact to their learning motivation.

Therefore, the evaluation results highlight that academic motivation affects students' participation in private supplementary tutoring.

### **4.3. Family Factors and Students' Participation in Private Supplementary Tutoring**

Family factors considered include parents' educational level, economic conditions, number of siblings, birth order, family support and involvement, parental expectations, and students' self-confidence in their academic abilities.

The analysis of the correlation results reveals the following:

- For literature, in Grade 9, there is a positive association between parents' educational level and the likelihood of students engaging in supplementary tutoring. Students from families with higher socioeconomic status also showed a higher propensity to participate in supplementary tutoring. Additionally, when families have multiple children, the level of involvement in tutoring differs between the eldest child and younger siblings, with the eldest child being more inclined to participate. However, in Grade 12, the factors that influence participation in tutoring are parents' educational background and the number of siblings.

- Regarding mathematics, similar patterns are observed. In Grade 9, a positive correlation is found between parents' educational levels and students' participation in supplementary tutoring. Students from families with better economic conditions also demonstrate a higher inclination to engage in supplementary tutoring. Similarly to literature, the involvement in tutoring varies among siblings in

families with multiple children, with the eldest child being more actively involved. However, the correlation between participation in tutoring and having many siblings is weak, measuring below 10%.

Furthermore, students in the same economic conditions tend to achieve better academic results when participating in supplementary tutoring. In some cases, there is no significant difference, specifically in the participation of Grade 12 students from near-poor and poor backgrounds in supplementary tutoring in literature, Grade 9 students in supplementary tutoring in both mathematics and literature, and affluent Grade 12 students in supplementary tutoring in literature.

- The correlation between students' participation in tutoring and attention and support from their families is examined. The frequent attention from families is indicated by the question "Do your parents or guardians help you with your homework?" The survey results demonstrate that, in both Grade 9 and Grade 12, students who receive regular attention and support from their families (specifically from parents or guardians) tend to participate in private supplementary tutoring more than their counterparts.

- The correlation between parental expectations and students' self-confidence in their academic abilities and participation in tutoring is also explored. Parental expectations are reflected in their desires for their children to graduate from a certain level of education (e.g., lower secondary school, upper secondary school, college, university, or higher levels) and their frequent discussions about their children's future. The survey results indicate that the higher parents' expectations for their children, the more investment is made in their participation in supplementary tutoring. This finding holds true for both Grade 9 and 12 students.

Moreover, Grade 9 students who exhibit confidence prior to the lower secondary school graduation exam show a greater inclination to participate in supplementary tutoring in mathematics than those lacking confidence. However, this pattern does not hold true for Grade 12 students. Additionally, students who have confidence in their admission to a reputable upper secondary school (for Grade 9 students) or university (for Grade 12 students) tend to engage more in supplementary tutoring in mathematics than those without such beliefs.

Furthermore, the provision of supplementary tutoring contributes to anxiety reduction and increased self-assurance among students. This finding is substantiated by inquiries into students' anxiety levels regarding the graduation exams. Students with heightened anxiety exhibit greater involvement in supplementary tutoring. Consequently, participation in tutoring partially alleviates concerns, instills a greater sense of reassurance, and fosters enhanced self-confidence.

Thus, families play a crucial role in their children's engagement in supplementary tutoring. Families with more favorable economic circumstances and parents



with higher levels of education tend to allocate more resources for their children's private supplementary tutoring. This tendency reflects the expectations and aspirations of parents for their children's future. Nonetheless, there is no scientific evidence substantiating that extensive participation in tutoring yields heightened success in individuals' later lives. Rather, it simply signifies that students may have the opportunity to study in an educational environment desired by either their parents or themselves.

#### ***4.4. School Factors and Students' Participation in Private Supplementary Tutoring***

The factors in the school context are analyzed in relation to students' participation in supplementary tutoring, including (1) factors related to the learning environment and (2) those related to the teaching activities of teachers. The specific analysis of each factor is presented below.

##### ***4.4.1. Learning Environment***

The study investigates the positive and safe learning environment from various perspectives: 1) School-related activities aimed at fostering students' confidence and problem-solving abilities in both academic and personal domains; 2) The significance of active engagement in school activities; 3) Students' perceptions of safety within the school environment; 4) The availability of support and guidance from teachers when needed; 5) Teachers' desire for students to experience happiness during their time at school; 6) Teachers' attentiveness to students' voices and opinions; 7) Equitable treatment of students by most teachers; 8) Teachers' encouragement for students to strive for improvement.

The results of the survey demonstrate that most participating students acknowledge their enrollment in a positive and secure learning environment, as indicated by mean scores above 3 on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." Notably, students receiving private supplementary tutoring exhibit a higher level of agreement regarding the positive and safe characteristics of their learning environment. These findings challenge the notion that "attending school alone is sufficient, rendering supplementary tutoring unnecessary when the learning environment is positive and safe." In practice, students still opt for supplementary tutoring based on their personal and familial requirements. This implies that supplementary tutoring fulfills a crucial necessity, despite the existence of other factors such as (1) examinations and assessments for academic advancement or university admission; (2) familial and societal pressures concerning academic performance; (3) striving for academic excellence and rankings. Identifying and managing these factors is essential for understanding students' choices and needs regarding private supplementary tutoring.

##### ***4.4.2. Teacher Activities in the Classroom***

The teaching activities conducted by teachers in each mathematics or literature class are perceived by students at varying levels. In Grade 9, students who engage in supplementary tutoring perceive that their teachers employ a greater number of activities during each class unlike students who do not participate in tutoring. These teachers actively deliver instruction in the classroom and generate student interest. However, despite the active teaching approach, students still tend to participate in supplementary tutoring, primarily in Grade 9, due to their individual and familial needs. Conversely, in Grade 12, students have more post-graduation options. Therefore, their inclination to participate in tutoring will be lower if they are content with the learning environment and teaching methodologies provided by their teachers.

##### ***4.4.3. Examination and Assessment***

Examination and assessment can be regarded as highly challenging factors that affect the psychological well-being of both students and their parents. Within the Vietnamese cultural context, the commonly held belief that "children are a reflection of their parents" underscores the necessity for children to achieve notable academic outcomes in order for their parents to experience satisfaction and gain recognition from their social circles. Moreover, the intense competition in the quality of education among different regions and the pursuit of academic excellence by students necessitate immense efforts, regardless of the associated costs, to attain commendable academic achievements. In this context, private supplementary tutoring emerged as a preferred option.

Within the current educational landscape in Vietnam, students participate in international, national, and provincial academic competitions annually. Relying solely on regular classroom instruction makes it difficult to achieve the desired outcomes. Furthermore, to sustain their leading positions in national examinations such as the high school graduation exam, students actively engage in supplementary tutoring beyond regular school hours, which persists as a ubiquitous practice occurring at any given time and location. As stated by an official from the Department of Education and Training in Nghe An province, "given the longstanding tradition of academic competitions in the province, the demand for enhancing students' knowledge through supplementary tutoring remains an enduring reality to maintain high rankings in national exams and international, as well as national academic competitions."

Furthermore, formative assessments within schools significantly influence students' participation in private supplementary tutoring. The analysis of the influence of assessment regulations is as follows: 1) Article 8, Section 1 of Circular No. 58/2011/TT-BGDĐT stipulates that the number of scheduled assessments, including optional topic assessments, is determined in the teaching plan; 2) In addition to oral examinations, assessments lasting for 15 min or more must be

scheduled in the teaching plan, ensuring that students are well-informed about the number and timing of their assessments. This makes it challenging for teachers to manipulate or pressure students into attending supplementary tutoring sessions. However, the phenomenon of students continuing to participate in supplementary tutoring persists; 3) Circular No. 26/2020/TT-BGDĐT amends and supplements certain provisions of the Regulation on the Evaluation and Classification of Students in Lower Secondary Education and Upper Secondary Education, which was issued in conjunction with Circular No. 58/2011/TT-BGDĐT on December 12, 2011, by the Minister of Education and Training. The objective of this amendment is to reduce the number of assessments and alleviate the pressure on students; 4) Point 1, Section 3, Article 1 of Circular No. 26/2020/TT-BGDĐT explicitly states: "a) Formative assessments: The number of formative assessments is not limited by the number of points for formative assessments specified in Section 1, Article 8 of this Circular."

Formative assessments conducted through various methods directly showcase students' abilities in front of their peers in the classroom and are considered an individual student's demonstration. Some students believe that while periodic assessments determine their academic performance, they experience less fear compared with direct classroom assessments. During direct assessments, if students are unable to answer correctly, they may face ridicule or mockery from their peers, leading to psychological distress throughout their learning journey. Consequently, choosing supplementary tutoring as a means to reinforce knowledge and enhance confidence remains the primary choice for many Vietnamese students today.

Thao (2023) also indicates that students involved in supplementary education are impacted by various factors, including academic competition, pressure emanating from educational institutions and family, and personal concerns about academic performance vis-à-vis their peers.

This highlights that school-related factors play a substantial role in shaping the choices of final-year students to engage in supplementary tutoring.

## 5. Conclusion

The issue of private supplementary tutoring has been a subject of extensive debate within educational management circles and among educators for an extended period. Despite being subject to regulation through numerous directives from both the Ministry of Education and provincial Departments of Education, the matter remains unresolved.

This research outcome offers a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon of supplementary tutoring among students in contemporary education. While the study included a substantial number of participants, the entire target population might not have been fully represented. The research team demonstrated

meticulousness in conducting a representative study within this specific research domain. Nonetheless, considering the realities emphasized by the research team, the findings can play a crucial role in shaping policy development at various administrative tiers to address the ongoing challenge of supplementary education in the education sector.

In light of the aforementioned observations, the research team asserts that organizing supplementary tutoring outside the traditional school environment requires more stringent regulations. These could encompass measures such as establishing tuition fees for participating students and imposing taxes on teachers engaged in external supplementary tutoring. This approach would serve to safeguard the rights of non-participating students while concurrently curtailing the potential exploitation by educators who might leverage regulatory gaps for their own benefit within the framework of educational management.

### 5.1. Originality

Research on private supplementary tutoring in Vietnam has been the subject of investigation for some time, indicating its significance and relevance. However, it is important to acknowledge that different time periods yield diverse outcomes. The outcomes of this study will generate an extensive dataset that exhibits a high level of representativeness within the education sector, offering valuable insights into the present state of private supplementary tutoring in Vietnam. This dataset serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, educators, school administrators, and teachers interested in understanding the teaching and learning activities of graduating students. In addition, it contributes supplementary evidence concerning the interplay between individual, school, and family factors in relation to private supplementary tutoring among students. Both domestic and international researchers and educators can utilize this dataset to assess the impact of private supplementary tutoring on teaching and learning practices and explore strategies for enhancing the quality of education in mainstream schools. Furthermore, the dataset can facilitate international comparative studies, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of private supplementary tutoring across different countries.

Furthermore, the conclusions from the examination of the current state of private supplementary tutoring and the analysis of influential factors will offer effective recommendations for educational management authorities.

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## Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest pertaining to the research, authorship, or publication of this paper. This study was conducted in an unbiased manner, and the findings presented in this manuscript are solely based on the research outcomes. There are no financial, personal, or professional relationships that could influence the objectivity or integrity of this work.

## Institutional Review Board (IRB) Statement

This research study underwent a comprehensive ethical review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Vietnam National Institute of Educational Sciences to ensure the protection of participants' rights, confidentiality, and adherence to ethical research practices. The IRB determined that this study aligns with established ethical guidelines and principles for research involving human subjects. All necessary permissions were obtained, and informed consent procedures were followed during the data collection process. The study protocol, including its methodology and procedures, was thoroughly reviewed and approved by the IRB before the start of the research.

## Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available upon reasonable request from the corresponding author. Due to considerations related to participant confidentiality and privacy, certain restrictions may apply to the sharing of specific data elements. Requests for the data access will be evaluated by the research team in accordance with ethical and legal guidelines. The aggregated and anonymized dataset, along with relevant documentation, will be made available to qualified researchers for replication, validation, and further research, subject to approval. The data requests should be directed to [trangptt@vnies.edu.vn](mailto:trangptt@vnies.edu.vn).

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