

China's crackdown on tutoring leaves parents with new problems

Level 1: Elementary / Pre-Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. What do you know about higher education? Choose the best answer to complete each statement.

1. The oldest university in the world is in **Germany / Italy**.
2. The oldest university in the UK is **Cambridge / Oxford**.
3. With 3.5 million students, the biggest university in the world is in **China / India**.
4. With over 4,000 universities, **India / the USA** has the most universities in the world.
5. The most remote university in the world is in **Norway / Russia**.

2 Key Words

a. Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

competition

fees

investment

profit

tutoring

1. _____ are the money that you pay to a professional person or institution for their work.
2. _____ is private teaching.
3. _____ is the money you make from business.
4. _____ is the money you put into a business to make more money.
5. _____ is people trying to get something that other people want.

concern

rural

survey

urban

wages

6. An _____ area is in a city.
7. A _____ area is an area a long way from a city.
8. A _____ is something that you think is important.
9. Your _____ are the money you get for working.
10. A _____ is a set of questions you ask a large number of people.

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3 August, 2021

- 1 In 2018, Ms Hu sent her child to summer school in Shanghai. It was very expensive. The next year, the cost increased. But she and her partner paid the fees. "My son started to learn English at age five. I didn't want him to be behind other students if we didn't pay," she said.
- 2 Hu and her husband are among the many parents who pay for private tutoring – between 65% of families with school-aged children in 2016 and 92% in 2021. The private tutoring industry in China is worth more than \$150 billion.
- 3 On 23 July, the Chinese government introduced new rules. For-profit companies can no longer tutor basic subjects, and foreign investment in these companies is not allowed. This is partly to reduce pressure on parents and students. "Parents want their children to have a happy childhood, but they are afraid they will lose in a competition over scores," said China's leader, Xi Jinping, in March.
- 4 The quality of education varies greatly between urban and rural areas and from province to province. There are not enough university places for the number of students, and even fewer at the top universities, which are mainly on the east coast and in big cities. It is in these areas where private tutoring has grown quickly in the last ten years.
- 5 "Education and health are the two main concerns of Chinese people," said Dr Ye Liu, of King's College London. "Because of the one-child rule, urban families believe education is an investment. They need the private tutoring because it's so competitive."
- 6 The birth rate in China is falling because of the high cost of living, low wages and long hours. For this reason, some people think the aim of the new rules is to reduce the cost of raising children.
- 7 In a recent survey, almost 70% said they didn't think the policy change would reduce pressure on parents. Just 18% thought it would partly or completely reduce this pressure.
- 8 In Shanghai, Hu said the aim of the policy was good and that she would now spend more time with her child doing outdoor activities. But she thinks that other parents will now spend their money on private individual tutors, which will make things even worse.

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First published in *The Guardian*, 03/08/2021

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3 Comprehension check

a. Are these statements true or false according to the article? Write.

1. The summer school in Shanghai was very cheap. _____
2. Ms Hu's son started to learn English when he was five. _____
3. Between 65% and 92% of parents pay for private tutoring. _____
4. The private tutoring industry in China is worth more than 150 million dollars. _____
5. The quality of education is the same in rural areas and in urban areas. _____
6. Most of the best universities are on the east coast. _____
7. Chinese people think education and health are the most important things. _____
8. The birth rate in China is falling. _____
9. Most people think the policy change will reduce pressure on parents. _____
10. One problem is that people will now spend their money on private individual tutors. _____

4 Key language

a. Match the words in the left-hand column with the words in the right-hand column to make phrases from the text.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. foreign | a. activities |
| 2. private | b. children |
| 3. low | c. investment |
| 4. outdoor | d. area |
| 5. school-aged | e. tutoring |
| 6. rural | f. wages |

5 Discussion

a. Answer this question.

- Do you think private tutoring is a good idea? Why? Why not?

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6 In your own words

a. Complete these statements about the text.

1. It was very expensive for Ms Hu to ...
2. She didn't want her son ...
3. In 2016, about 65% of families ...
4. Most of the best universities are ...
5. Chinese people think education and ...
6. Because of low wages and long hours, the birth ...