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From Learning Gaps to Learning Confidence: Evaluating Parent Expectations of Professional 1ON1 Private Tutoring

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Abstract

This paper presents a descriptive analysis of the skills parents expect from professional home tutors when their children face specific learning difficulties. The data were collected from parents in Dattawadi, Swargate, Koregaon, Baner, and Wagholi in Pune, India, and the analysis rests on a single cross-tabulation of four student issues against fifteen tutor-skill descriptors, covering 219 parents who answered both questions. The four issues are absence of a regular study rhythm (n = 120), being stuck on doubts or concepts (n = 93), not knowing how to study (n = 82), and difficulty keeping a child engaged for one hour among working parents (n = 39). Because these subgroup sizes sum to more than 219, parents could report more than one issue. In every group the highest percentages attach to three skills: dedicated and professional tutor (62–71%), qualified and capable (63–74%), and effective and engaging (58–62%). Specialised labels such as proficient and adept (23–33%) or seasoned instructor (27–31%) receive substantially lower percentages. Rankings shift modestly by issue, but the prominence of the three core skills is stable. The analysis is descriptive; no causal inference or test of differences between issues is possible from the summary percentages alone.

Keywords: parent expectations; professional home tutoring; tutor skills; student learning issues; study habits; concept clarity; engagement; Pune, India

1. Introduction

Parents who seek professional home tutoring usually do so because a child faces one or more concrete difficulties. Some children lack a regular study rhythm. Others become stuck on particular concepts or doubts and cannot progress without repeated explanation, and still others have not developed effective study strategies and so cannot work independently. A smaller group of working parents report difficulty keeping a child productively engaged for a full one-hour session. In each case the parent forms an expectation about the kind of tutor who can address the difficulty.

This paper examines those expectations directly, using data collected from parents in Dattawadi, Swargate, Koregaon, Baner, and Wagholi in Pune, India. It draws on a summary cross-tabulation that records, for each of the four student issues, the percentage of parents who indicated that they expect a given tutor skill. The sample comprises the 219 parents who answered both the issue question and the skill question. Individual-level records, demographic covariates, and later outcome measures were not available for this analysis. The paper is therefore limited to describing the percentages, ranking the skills within and across issues, and interpreting the pattern in light of the literature on tutoring and service quality.

Two established frameworks provide interpretive language without being formally tested. Expectation-confirmation theory (Oliver, 1980) treats satisfaction as the outcome of a comparison between prior expectations and perceived performance; the percentages examined here describe the prior expectations parents hold when they identify a particular student issue. Service-quality research, particularly the SERVQUAL tradition (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988), identifies assurance, responsiveness, and empathy among the dimensions on which service users judge providers. Several of the skill descriptors can be read against these dimensions. Neither framework is estimated as a statistical model; both simply orient the reading of the observed shares.

A recent systematic review of 31 studies of private tutoring published between 2015 and 2024 identified teaching quality, teacher–student relationships, personalised services, facilities, cost, and parental involvement as factors influencing satisfaction (Shi, Tan, & Anthonysamy, 2025). The review also noted research gaps in rural areas and in longitudinal effects. It is concerned with satisfaction drivers in general; the percentage of parents who expect specific tutor skills, conditional on the concrete student issue they report, is a narrower question. The cross-tabulation examined here offers a descriptive account of that question for parents in Pune.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Background

Private tutoring research has documented a recurring set of attributes associated with satisfactory service. Teaching quality and the quality of the teacher–student relationship appear repeatedly among them (Shi et al., 2025), and the same review lists personalised services and parental involvement as influences on satisfaction. Whether parents prioritise particular tutor attributes differently when they report different student difficulties is less clear, and this is the question the present table can address descriptively.

2.1 Private tutoring as shadow education

Private supplementary tutoring has been studied extensively under the label shadow education, a metaphor introduced by Bray (1999) to capture the fact that tutoring mimics the mainstream school: its content follows the school curriculum, and it expands as formal schooling expands. Dang and Rogers (2008) reviewed its causes and consequences, concluding that tutoring may deepen human capital, widen inequalities, or waste resources depending on the setting. Demand is commonly attributed to examination competition, perceived shortcomings in school instruction, and parental concern for children's futures, which makes the parent the principal purchaser of the service and therefore the party whose expectations matter most to providers.

In India, Bhorkar and Bray (2018) traced the expansion of private tutoring and argued that for many families it has become a main rather than merely supplementary strand of education. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER Centre, 2023) offers recent rural evidence in the same direction: the proportion of children in Standards I–VIII taking paid private tuition rose from 26.4% in 2018 to 30.5% in 2022, while basic reading levels fell, with the share of Standard III children able to read at Standard II level declining from 27.3% to 20.5%. These are rural figures that cannot be transferred to urban Pune and do not isolate home tutoring, but they indicate a setting in which parents have reason to look beyond school for help with learning gaps.

Much of the Indian and Asian literature concerns examination coaching and group classes. In the sources reviewed for this paper, research on what parents expect of tutors who teach an individual child at home is thinner.

2.2 Evidence on the effectiveness of tutoring

Evidence that tutoring can raise attainment is substantial but varies with how it is delivered. Bloom (1984) reported that one-to-one tutoring combined with mastery learning produced achievement about two standard deviations above conventional classroom instruction, a figure that later reviews regarded as optimistic; VanLehn (2011) estimated the effect of human tutoring at roughly 0.79 standard deviations. A more recent meta-analysis of randomised experiments from pre-kindergarten to Grade 12 reported a pooled effect of about 0.37 standard deviations, with larger effects for tutoring delivered by teachers and paraprofessionals than by nonprofessionals or parents (Nickow, Oreopoulos, & Quan, 2020). In India, Banerjee, Cole, Duflo, and Linden (2007) found that a remedial programme in Mumbai and Vadodara, in which locally hired young women worked with children who were falling behind, raised test scores, with the largest gains among the weakest children.

Taken together, these studies suggest that tutoring helps most clearly when it is targeted at identifiable learning gaps, which parallels the way parents in the present data begin from a specific student issue before naming the skills they expect.

2.3 Tutor knowledge, relationships, and engagement

Research on teacher quality offers indirect guidance on the attributes parents name. Darling-Hammond (2000) found that measures of teacher preparation and certification were among the strongest correlates of achievement across US states. Hill, Rowan, and Ball (2005) found that teachers' mathematical knowledge for teaching predicted student gains, extending Shulman's (1986) argument that effective teaching depends not only on subject knowledge but on pedagogical content knowledge, that is, an understanding of how particular content can be made learnable. These strands bear on the contrast between "qualified and capable" and the more specific labels in the present table. General capability is easy for a parent to name, whereas pedagogical content knowledge is a technical idea that parents may be less likely to describe in those terms, although the data cannot show this.

Engagement has its own literature. Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) conceptualised school engagement as having behavioural, emotional, and cognitive components, and Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, and Oort (2011), in a meta-analysis, found that positive affective teacher–student relationships were associated with higher engagement and achievement, with the association stronger for engagement. A tutor who is "effective and engaging" in parents' terms may therefore combine relational warmth with organised instruction; this is an interpretation, since the descriptor was not defined for respondents.

2.4 Study habits, concept difficulties, and parental involvement

The four student issues in the data correspond to well-studied problems. Regular study and effective strategies are central to self-regulated learning, in which learners plan, monitor, and reflect on their work (Zimmerman, 2002). Dunlosky, Rawson, Marsh, Nathan, and Willingham (2013) reviewed ten learning techniques and rated practice testing and distributed practice as having high utility, while commonly used techniques such as rereading and highlighting were rated low. Children who lack a study rhythm or do not know how to study may therefore benefit from a tutor who can teach routines and strategies as well as content. This is consistent with the comparatively high share for "well-versed in techniques" (60%) in the study-strategy group, though the table cannot show that parents reason in this way.

The engagement issue is specific to working-parent households. Parental involvement is generally associated with better achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001), but Fan and Chen also found that parental aspirations and expectations showed the strongest relationship with achievement, whereas direct home supervision showed a comparatively weak one. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) proposed that involvement depends on how

parents construe their role, their sense of efficacy, and the invitations they perceive from teachers and children. Hiring a tutor can be understood as involvement through delegation: parents who judge that they cannot supply a particular kind of help themselves seek it elsewhere. Working parents who cannot supervise a session directly may therefore lean on a tutor's competence and conduct, an interpretation that would fit the high share for "qualified and capable" (74%) in that group but that these data cannot confirm.

2.5 Expectation-confirmation and service-quality perspectives

Expectation-confirmation theory provides a useful lens. Oliver (1980) modelled satisfaction as a function of the discrepancy between expected and perceived performance. When parents report a student issue and the skills they expect a tutor to have, the resulting percentages indicate which attributes they name as expectations for the tutoring arrangement. High and stable percentages for "dedicated and professional," "qualified and capable," and "effective and engaging" suggest that these attributes may act as baseline expectations rather than issue-specific requirements. Lower percentages for the more technical labels suggest that those labels are named less often; whether they matter less to the confirmation process cannot be determined from these data.

The SERVQUAL dimensions of assurance, responsiveness, and empathy can be mapped onto several descriptors in the table. Assurance encompasses the knowledge and courtesy of personnel and their ability to inspire trust and confidence; responsiveness concerns willingness to help; and empathy concerns the caring, individualised attention the provider gives its customers. The elevated shares for qualified, dedicated, and engaging tutors are consistent with parents placing weight on these dimensions, although the mapping is the authors' interpretation rather than a tested relationship. The lower shares for "pedagogically sound methods," "proficient and adept," and "seasoned instructor" suggest that parents name these more technical labels less often when stating what they expect.

Both frameworks have extensions and critiques that bear on this reading. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985) described service quality as the gap between expected and perceived service and identified further gaps in the provider's own processes; the 1988 scale condensed these ideas into five dimensions, namely tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. A descriptor such as "dedicated" may correspond to reliability as well as to responsiveness.

Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1993) further proposed that customers hold expectations at more than one level, a desired level and an adequate level separated by a zone of tolerance, and that expectations are shaped by personal needs, past experience, word of mouth, and explicit and implicit service promises. The percentages in the present table do not reveal whether the named skills represent desired or merely adequate levels, nor whether they arise from experience, peer networks, or provider marketing. They show which attributes are most commonly named once a concrete student issue is in mind.

2.6 Issue-specific variation

Contextual factors may still produce modest shifts. Parents who report that a child does not know how to study may place relatively greater weight on teaching techniques, and parents concerned with engagement during sessions may emphasise qualification and the ability to hold attention. The table allows these possible shifts to be examined in the percentages. Because the data are conditional shares rather than individual responses, any differences observed remain descriptive.

2.7 Summary of the literature

In summary, the literature indicates that private tutoring is widespread and, on rural survey evidence, growing in India; that tutoring can improve attainment, particularly when targeted at identifiable learning gaps; that teacher knowledge, relationships, and organisation matter for learning and engagement; and and that parents' expectations centre on tutor competence, conduct, and engagement. It offers little on how parents'

expectations of specific tutor skills vary with the concrete difficulty a child faces. The present cross-tabulation addresses that narrower question descriptively, and the studies above supply interpretive context rather than formal hypotheses.

3. Research Gap, Objectives, and Questions

The gap addressed here is practical. The literature already links certain tutor attributes to parent satisfaction (Shi et al., 2025), but the percentage of parents who expect particular skills, conditional on the specific student issue they report, is not reported in the sources reviewed for this paper. The available cross-tabulation supplies this information for 219 parents in Pune. The objectives are therefore framed around what the table can answer.

Objectives:

1. To examine the share of parents who expect each listed tutor skill given different student issues.

2. To identify the tutor skills that receive the highest and lowest expectation shares across issues.

3. To compare expectation patterns across the four student issues.

Research questions:

RQ1. Which tutor skills are expected by the largest share of parents for each student issue?

RQ2. Do the relative rankings of skills differ across the four issues?

4. Hypotheses Development

No formal statistical hypotheses are advanced or tested, because the data consist of summary percentages without standard errors. Directional expectations drawn from the literature serve only as interpretive guides:

• Professional conduct, subject qualification, and engagement are expected to show the highest shares across all issues.

• More specialised or technical descriptors are expected to show lower shares.

• The precise ordering of skills may shift modestly according to the nature of the reported student issue.

The results section reports the observed percentages and notes where they align with these guides. Alignment is descriptive only.

5. Conceptual Framework

A simple organising frame treats the four student issues as contexts that may shape parent expectations, and the fifteen skill descriptors as the attributes parents believe will help address each issue. High and relatively stable percentages for a small set of core skills would indicate a shared baseline expectation; variation across issues would indicate context-sensitive differentiation. The frame is not estimated as a path model. It organises the cross-tabulation and links the observed pattern to the expectation-confirmation and service-quality accounts cited above.

6. Research Methodology

The study is a descriptive analysis of one summary cross-tabulation. The unit of analysis is the parent respondent. Data were collected from parents in Dattawadi, Swargate, Koregaon, Baner, and Wagholi in Pune, Maharashtra, India. The reported sample comprises 219 parents who answered both the student-issue question and the tutor-skill expectation question. The sampling method, data-collection period, response rate, and ethical procedures are not reported in this paper.

Four student issues appear, with the following subgroup sizes among parents answering both questions: no regular study rhythm (n = 120), stuck on doubts or concepts (n = 93), does not know how to study (n = 82), and difficulty keeping a child engaged for one hour among working parents (n = 39). These sizes sum to 334, which exceeds the 219 respondents, so the subgroups are not mutually exclusive; parents appear to have been able to report more than one issue. Fifteen tutor-skill descriptors are listed. Each cell records the percentage of parents within an issue subgroup who indicated that they expect the given skill. Because parents could indicate more than one skill, the percentages for a given issue do not sum to 100%.

Analysis is confined to the values shown. Skills are ranked within each issue and compared across issues. Reliability coefficients, tests of differences between issues, and multivariate models cannot be calculated from the summary percentages, and tests of difference between issues would in any case be unsuitable because the subgroups overlap. Approximate confidence intervals for individual percentages can be computed from the reported subgroup sizes, but only under the assumption of simple random sampling, which has not been established; one such interval is reported in the Discussion for illustration. The original percentage matrix is held in the authors' Excel file, and the tables below reproduce its values.

7. Results and Analysis

Table 1 reports the percentages for six tutor-skill descriptors, including the three core skills. Across all four issues the three skills "Dedicated and professional tutor," "Qualified and capable," and "Effective and engaging" reach at least 58% (Figure 1). The highest single cell in the entire matrix is 74% (qualified and capable among parents concerned with engagement). The lowest cell among the six skills in Table 1 is 38% (innovative approach among the same engagement group).

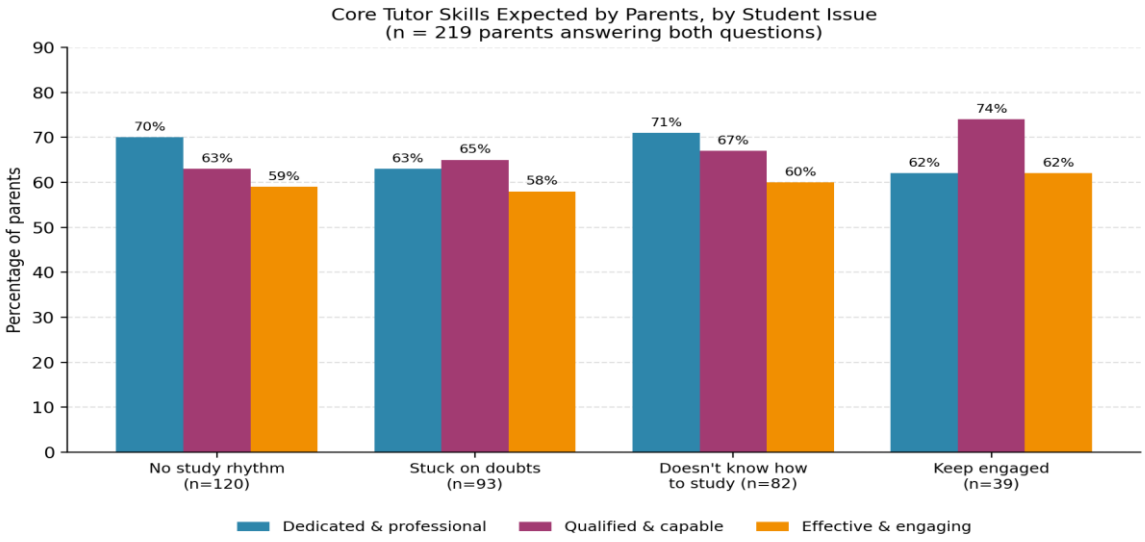


Figure 1. Percentage of parents expecting the three core tutor skills, by student issue (n = 219; subgroup sizes shown in parentheses; subgroups overlap).

Table 1. Percentage of parents expecting selected tutor skills, by student issue

Student Issue (n)	Dedicated & professional	Qualified & capable	Effective & engaging	Experienced educator	Well-versed in techniques	Innovative approach
No regular study rhythm (120)	70	63	59	52	52	45
Stuck on doubts/concepts (93)	63	65	58	53	49	42
Doesn't know how to study (82)	71	67	60	58	60	56
Keep child engaged 1 hr (39)	62	74	62	51	54	38

Note. Values are percentages of parents within each issue subgroup (subgroup size in parentheses). Values for a given issue do not sum to 100% because parents could indicate more than one skill. Subgroups overlap: the four subgroup sizes sum to 334 across 219 respondents.

Table 2 reports the remaining nine skill descriptors. Percentages in this set are generally lower than those for the three core skills, ranging from 23% to 51% across all cells. "Proficient and adept" ranges from 23% to 33%, and "seasoned instructor" from 27% to 31%. "Pedagogically sound methods" reaches 38% in the engagement subgroup and otherwise remains at or below 35%.

Table 2. Percentage of parents expecting remaining tutor skills, by student issue

Student Issue	Skilled & insightful	Exceptional abilities	Mastery of curriculum	Thorough subject understanding	Expert in field	Pedagogically sound	Proficient & adept	Highly competent	Seasoned instructor
No regular study rhythm	41	41	42	38	31	29	26	28	28
Stuck on doubts/concepts	47	48	40	38	32	28	26	32	27
Doesn't know how to study	45	51	44	44	35	35	33	33	28
Keep child engaged 1 hr	38	51	38	41	33	38	23	38	31

Note. Values are percentages of parents within each issue subgroup (subgroup sizes as in Table 1). Values for a given issue do not sum to 100% because parents could indicate more than one skill.

Ranking within each issue reveals modest differentiation (Figure 2). For the largest subgroup (no regular study rhythm) the top skill is dedicated and professional (70%), followed by qualified and capable (63%). For parents reporting conceptual doubts the order reverses: qualified and capable leads at 65%, with dedicated and professional at 63%. For parents who report that the child does not know how to study, dedicated and professional again leads (71%), and well-versed in techniques reaches 60%, its highest value in the matrix. For the smallest subgroup (engagement among working parents), qualified and capable reaches 74%, the highest percentage recorded.

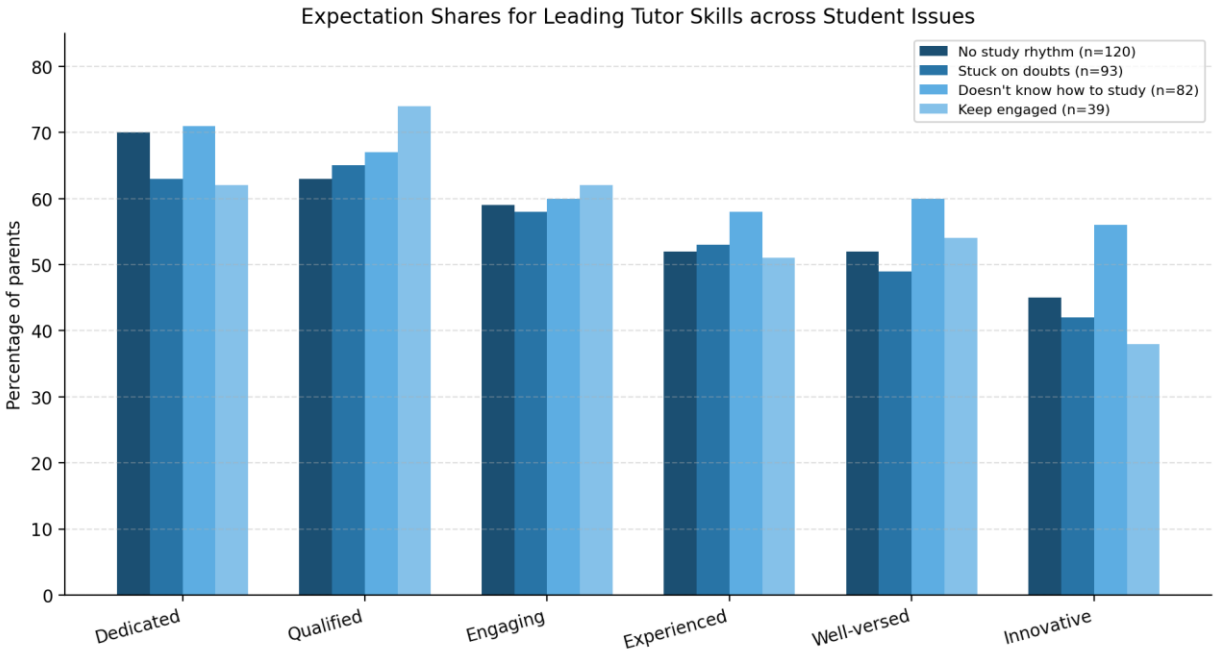


Figure 2. Percentage of parents expecting the six skills in Table 1, by student issue.

The gap between the top tier and the lower tier is large and consistent. In every issue the three leading skills reach at least 58%, whereas the five lowest-ranked descriptors (expert in field, pedagogically sound methods, proficient and adept, highly competent, and seasoned instructor) are at or below 35% in 18 of their 20 cells. The compression of these descriptors at the lower end suggests that parents name specialised technical labels less often as primary expectations.

The top tier is also stable across subgroups of different sizes. Even in the smallest group (n = 39) the three core skills remain at 62% or above, so the elevation is not confined to the larger subgroups. At the same time, expectations are highest overall in the "does not know how to study" group, where six skills reach 56% or more (Table 1). Parents who identify a deficit in study strategy appear to hold somewhat broader expectations of the tutor.

In the two largest subgroups (study rhythm, n = 120; conceptual doubts, n = 93), the same three skills occupy the top three positions, with the first two swapped, and the middle ranks differ only slightly. The engagement subgroup differs most visibly, with the highest share for qualification (74%) and the lowest share among the Table 1 skills for innovative approach (38%). These differences are descriptive; the summary percentages do not permit a test of whether the ordering differs reliably across issues. The observed patterns align with the three directional expectations set out in Section 4: the three core skills show the highest shares in all four issues, the more specialised descriptors show lower shares, and the ordering shifts modestly by issue.

8. Discussion

The dominant pattern is the prominence of three core attributes: dedicated and professional conduct, subject qualification and capability, and effectiveness and engagement. These three skills occupy the top three positions in every issue group (sharing third place with well-versed in techniques in the study-strategy group), with shares of at least 58% overall and at least 62% in the smallest subgroup. The pattern is in line with the finding of Shi et al. (2025) that teaching quality and teacher–student relationships are recurring drivers of satisfaction, and it can be read against the assurance and responsiveness dimensions of service-quality frameworks.

Modest differentiation by issue is visible and can be interpreted cautiously. Parents who report that the child does not know how to study show the highest overall expectation levels and a relatively high share for well-versed in techniques (60%). This is consistent with the idea that a deficit in study strategy leads parents to look for tutors who can supply structured methods. Parents concerned with engagement among working-parent households give the highest value in the table to "qualified and capable" (74%) and a comparatively low value to "innovative approach" (38%). One reading is that working parents, who may be unable to supervise sessions directly, treat a tutor's underlying competence as a proxy for reliable engagement; the data cannot confirm this. Parents reporting conceptual doubts rank qualification slightly ahead of dedication (65% versus 63%), which is compatible with the view that unresolved conceptual difficulties call first for subject mastery, although a two-point difference should not be over-interpreted.

The consistently lower shares for specialised descriptors ("proficient and adept," "seasoned instructor," "pedagogically sound methods") suggest that parents name these labels less often as expectations. One interpretation is that the labels are less salient or less well understood by parents; another is that parents treat them as secondary once professionalism and capability are assured. The summary table cannot distinguish between these interpretations. It does show that dedication, qualification, and engagement are named by many more parents than specialised terminology is, which may be relevant to how tutoring services describe themselves to parents, although the data do not measure the effect of any such communication.

Expectation-confirmation theory offers a further reading. The high shares for dedicated, qualified, and engaging tutors indicate that many parents carry these expectations into a tutoring arrangement. If the theory holds in this setting, failure on these attributes would be more likely to produce disconfirmation than failure on lower-ranked technical labels. The data contain no measures of subsequent satisfaction or confirmation, so this reading is inferential and untested here.

The variation in subgroup size also deserves comment. The engagement issue is reported by only 39 parents, roughly one-third the size of the study-rhythm group, so percentages in that group are more sensitive to small changes in the underlying counts. For illustration, the highest cell (74%, or 29 of 39 parents) has an approximate 95% Wilson confidence interval of 59% to 85%, calculated on the assumption of simple random sampling, which has not been established. The interval is wide, and this cell should be interpreted with corresponding caution. The core trio nonetheless remains at 62% or above in this smaller group, which indicates that the pattern is not confined to the larger subgroups.

The low shares for "mastery of the curriculum" and "thorough understanding of subject matter" (38–44%) are somewhat surprising if one assumes that parents equate tutoring with curriculum coverage. The percentages suggest that parents distinguish between general capability ("qualified and capable") and more specific claims of curriculum mastery: the former is widely expected, the latter less frequently named. This may reflect parents' greater confidence in judging general capability than detailed curriculum expertise, or a preference for tutors who can adapt rather than simply cover prescribed content. The table cannot decide between these readings.

Comparison with the literature on parent satisfaction in tutoring shows broad alignment. Shi et al. (2025) identified teaching quality and teacher–student relationships as recurring drivers of satisfaction, and the high shares for effective and engaging tutors and for dedicated and professional conduct are consistent with those drivers. The present table adds the conditional detail that these attributes are prominent across each of the concrete student issues examined, and that the ordering of the leading skills is similar from one issue to the next. The addition is modest, since the table records expectations rather than satisfaction.

A further observation concerns the middle-ranked skills. "Experienced educator" and "well-versed in techniques" occupy a band between 49% and 60%, high enough to indicate that parents value experience and

technique but generally below the core trio (the exception being a tie at 60% between well-versed in techniques and effective and engaging in the study-strategy group). The pattern suggests an approximate hierarchy in which professionalism, qualification, and engagement form a primary tier; experience, technique, and innovation a secondary tier; and the remaining descriptors, most of which fall below 45%, a lower tier. This hierarchy is descriptive and its boundaries are approximate, but it holds across the four issues even though absolute percentages vary.

9. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the results are consistent with treating a small set of core tutor attributes as expectations shared by parents across different student issues. The stability of the top tier is more notable than the modest shifts in ranking. This is compatible with expectation-confirmation accounts, in which prior expectations shape later evaluation, and with service-quality accounts that emphasise assurance, responsiveness, and empathy. Neither account is tested here.

Practically, tutoring providers may note that emphasis on professionalism, subject capability, and engagement in recruitment, training, and parent communication is aligned with the skills that the largest shares of parents say they expect. Issue-specific messaging remains possible, for example highlighting teaching techniques for parents who report weak study skills or qualification for parents concerned with engagement, but the data suggest that such differentiation is secondary to clear communication of the core attributes. Materials that open with “pedagogically sound methods” or “seasoned instructor” address attributes named by fewer than one-third of parents in six of the eight subgroup–descriptor combinations, whereas the core attributes are named by 58–74% of parents. The lower endorsement of specialised pedagogical labels does not mean those skills are unimportant in practice; it indicates only that they are named less often as explicit expectations. These percentages measure expectations, not the effect of any message on enrolment or satisfaction.

The pattern also bears on tutor selection and matching. Where a parent reports a specific issue, providers can still match on that issue, for example by showing tutors who emphasise structured techniques to a parent who reports that the child does not know how to study, or tutors with strong qualifications to a parent concerned with engagement. Because the core attributes command high shares regardless of the issue selected, matching displays could reasonably lead with them.

For training and quality assurance, programmes that develop tutors’ capacity to establish study routines, diagnose and clear conceptual doubts, and sustain engagement for a full session address the issues parents report and the skills they most often expect. Monitoring systems that track dedication, qualification, and engagement would likewise align more closely with stated parent expectations than systems that track only curriculum coverage or session length. Advanced training in specialised pedagogical techniques remains valuable for instructional quality even though it may be less visible to parents. The table does not show whether any of these steps improves outcomes.

Finally, the pattern raises a question about how expectations form. Parents may acquire them from prior experience, peer networks, or marketing messages; the table cannot identify the source. It does show that, once formed, these expectations are widely shared across parents who report different student issues, which suggests that they are not highly idiosyncratic. The high shares for “qualified and capable” and “dedicated and professional” may also be read as expressions of perceived competence and reliability, but because no trust measure was collected, this reading remains interpretive.

Shi et al. (2025) also list parental involvement among the factors influencing satisfaction. The present table contains no measure of involvement. It does show that parents who identify a concrete issue are prepared to name the skills they expect, and providers who respond with transparent information about how tutors address those skills may meet some of that demand. This is a suggestion for further study rather than a finding.

10. Limitations and Future Research

Only a single summary cross-tabulation was available for this analysis. Individual-level data, standard errors, confidence intervals, demographic covariates, and measures of subsequent satisfaction or enrolment were not available. Subgroup sizes vary substantially (n = 39 to n = 120), so percentages in the smallest group are less stable, and the subgroups overlap, so differences between issues cannot be treated as independent comparisons. The data were collected from parents in Dattawadi, Swargate, Koregaon, Baner, and Wagholi in Pune, and the percentages are pooled across these localities, so differences among areas cannot be examined. The sampling method is not reported. Generalisation beyond the 219 parents who answered both questions, or to other cities or regions, is therefore not warranted. The design is cross-sectional and self-reported; independent verification of the student issues or of the tutor attributes parents expect is not possible.

The absence of demographic information is particularly limiting. It is not known whether expectation shares differ by parent education, household income, child grade level, or prior experience with tutoring. It is also not known whether the parents who expect high levels of dedication and qualification later report higher satisfaction or longer retention. The table therefore describes stated expectations at one point in time; it does not describe the consequences of those expectations.

Future work with individual-level responses could test whether expectation shares differ by parent background, locality, or child characteristics, and could link stated expectations to later satisfaction or continued enrolment. Comparisons across tutoring providers or across cities would place the present pattern in a wider context. Longitudinal designs that measure expectations at intake and subsequent outcomes would convert the descriptive pattern into a more direct test of the expectation-confirmation sequence.

An additional limitation concerns the wording of the skill descriptors. Several labels (“proficient and adept,” “seasoned instructor,” “pedagogically sound methods”) are relatively abstract, and lower percentages may partly reflect lower familiarity with the terms rather than lower valuation of the underlying attributes. Concrete behavioural descriptions might have produced different shares. The table uses the labels as given; no alternative wording was tested.

11. Conclusion

Among the 219 parents in Pune who answered both questions, the largest shares expect tutors who are dedicated and professional, qualified and capable, and effective and engaging, regardless of the specific student issue reported. Shares for these three skills range from 58% to 74%. More specialised technical descriptors receive substantially lower shares, typically 35% or lower. Modest shifts in ranking appear by issue—qualification leads when conceptual doubts or engagement are reported, whereas dedication leads when study rhythm or study strategy is the concern—but the prominence of the core trio is stable across all four issues. These descriptive results address the three objectives. They do not establish that any tutor attribute causes better learning outcomes, and they do not support formal hypothesis tests. The pattern is consistent with a shared baseline expectation centred on professionalism, capability, and engagement, with only secondary differentiation by the reported student difficulty.

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Appendix

The complete percentage matrix from which Tables 1 and 2 are drawn is held in the authors' original Excel file. All values appearing in Tables 1 and 2 are taken directly from that matrix and are expressed as percentages for readability. No values have been altered or imputed.

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