

Tuition industry: A special case untouched by the pandemic?

Sharings of people working in the industry show a tale of two stories.



Christina (left), 19, took up a part-time job at the Achievers Dream tuition centre after she finished her A-level. CREDIT: CHRISTINA/ PHOTO: CELEST THAM

Christina Yun, 19, is overwhelmed by her workload as a part-time admin executive at Achievers Dream, a chemistry tuition specialist as a part-time admin as she waits for university offers.

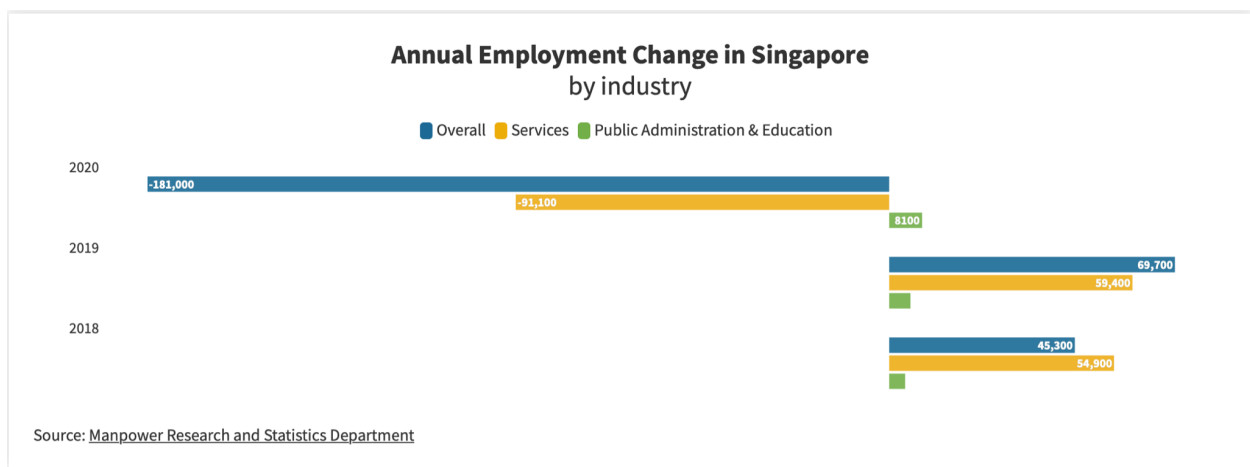
“I joined in February [this year], there are two more rounds of hiring after mine. Before that, the admins have to work overtime or return to work during holidays.” shared Christina.

During the pandemic, her workload has increased substantially. She has many more duties, such as mailing out the learning materials to students and calling students to

check on their progress. However, for Achievers Dream, the pandemic is not the only reason that has given rise to this phenomenon.

“More students are joining our centre and some slots have exceeded the maximum capacity of students. We have started to create more classes and expand our headquarters since April, thus more manpower, be it teacher or admin, are all needed despite the pandemic hit,” said Christina.

According to the annual [data](#) from the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), the public administration and education sector had maintained a positive employment change in 2020.



Although it is not a significant growth, administration and education sector did stand out as overall employment had shown a decline in 2020, a year when pandemic has affected many industries. On the whole, it tends to be a recession-proof sector, although it is not certain if this applies to the tuition sub-sector too without a clearer breakdown of the data.

Unlike Achievers Dream, some tuition centres are struggling to sustain.

“As we deal with a vulnerable age group, most parents would see tuition and enrichment classes as nice-to-have and put them on hold,” said Ms May Choong, the manager of EduFirst Learning Centre.

Additionally, the difficulties for young children to pay attention during online classes have also given rise to declining enrollment. In short, fewer tuition teachers are needed.

Mrs D’s English Enrichment, which is way smaller in size with only two teachers and around 70 students, has a different situation.

“Probably students know us well, they could understand when we were adjusting to the new normal,” said Ms Nicole de Silva, the director of Mrs D’s English Enrichment.

When asked about the challenges presented by the pandemic, she said with online delivery, her tutors have to be more thoroughly prepared. Otherwise, they have been coping well even without additional manpower.

For the case of Concept Maths, a primary school tuition centre, they do not require more teachers, except manpower for the increased administrative tasks.

“Since online tuition is inevitable and has gradually become a trend, people are getting more receptive thanks to its convenience and flexibility. Online tuition will grow in time,” said Mr Loh Tian How, the director of Concept Math.

Ms Nicole de Silva is also optimistic. “As long as we are putting students and their needs first, we will fare well.”