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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# INFLUENCE OF PRIVATE TUITION ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS INGUCHA SOUTH SUB COUNTY, KISII COUNTY, KENYA

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### ABSTRACT

Over the last two decades, private tutoring has emerged as an important issue in determining the level of academic achievement, as its demand has been growing all over the world. Going for private tuition over the holidays is common practice despite the government's policy that forbids it. However, the extent of the outcome of private tutoring is not yet clear and distinct. The study examined the influence of private tuition on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Gucha South Sub County, Kisii County, Kenya. The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of private tuition on students' academic performance. The study was guided by the following objectives: To investigate the cost implication of private tuition on performance in public secondary schools in Gucha south sub county in Kisii County; To find out factors influencing participation in private tuition in public secondary schools in Gucha south sub county in Kisii County. Descriptive survey design was employed in the study and stratified random sampling was used to arrive at schools, the student, teachers and Parents' Associations chairperson's respondents. School principals were asked to respond to interviews while data was collected from teachers, parents and students using questionnaires. The study targeted a population of 47 public secondary schools in Gucha South Sub County. There are a total of 370 teachers. There are 1860 students in form three and 2770 in form four. Fourteen schools and 14 PA chairpersons were sampled while 110 teachers and 558 students in form three and 831 students in form four were sampled. The validity of the instruments was established through scrutiny by experts from the department of educational administration, Planning and economics who were the thesis supervisors. A pilot study was conducted in 12 schools in the neighbouring Gucha Sub County using split half technique to establish the reliability of the instruments. The coefficient of reliability that resulted was 0.82. Data was collected using interview schedule for the principals and questionnaire for teachers, students and PA chairpersons. Quantitative Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, means, tables and graphs. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 23.0 computer programme. The study found out that despite government ban on private tuition, parents still spend a substantial amount of their weekly income on private tuition. The study recommends stringent and sequential policy to guide parents on private tuition involvement. The study would help the stakeholders in the sector to craft appropriate and relevant policies that affect the learning process.

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## INTRODUCTION

Students' seeking out of class tutorials has always been a popular practice since the time concept of formal education was hatched among Greeks. In Ancient Greek, it was considered a way of eliciting philosophical thoughts, while in Elizabethan England well-to-do families sought the services of tutors to take their children through lessons in Renaissance refinements. It is still considered fashionable, although the aims are not as noble as was the initial design.

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It had long deviated from the intention of helping learners to develop independent thinking skills, or eliciting curiosity. Two decades into the practice, and its demand continues growing worldwide makes it interesting to probe further into the practice. But there is a mixed feeling as far as its effectiveness is concerned (Lee 2013). The increased preference for private tutoring lessons is seen at all levels of the school system. Private tutoring spending is rivaling the expenses incurred on the formal educational spendings. According to Tansel and Bircan (2006), the expenditure on private tutoring is up to 1.44% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as compared to the expenditure on formal

system is about 2% of the Gross Domestic Product. The demand for private tuition creates various business opportunities. From a study conducted in Malaysia by Kenayathulla and Ubbudari (2017), lucrative business is created for homemakers, teachers and business owners. On parents' socioeconomic status, Kenayathulla and Ubbudari (2017) argue that parents who have steady employment and stable income always enroll learners in private tuition classes since they can afford to pay for the teachers and buy materials as compared to parents from lower socioeconomic status. They further add that parents with higher income enroll their children in single tutoring lessons while poorer parents enroll their students for group lessons where payment is a little bit lower. This, in their opinion, increased the social equalities between parents of higher socioeconomic status and those of lower socioeconomic status. There is a distinct gap socioeconomically in this sub county but what is not sure is whether it takes place in such places like the tuition centres or not. According to Moloji (2001) and Mogari, Coetzee and Maritz (2009) the over enrolment in private tuition centres is attributed to the syllabus load. The time required to master certain skills especially in situations where they have to be transferred from unfamiliar experiences is rather varied from an individual's own perspective. In Kenya, Moloji (2001) carried out a study to find out whether it would be beneficial if time spent in Mathematics during school time would be increased. He found out that syllabus Coverage has a positive correlation with performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination.

**Problem Statement:** Private tuition has continued to elicit mixed reactions among students, teachers and parents. The official statement from the ministry of education categorically outlaws any form of extra time private tuition to students. Some parents and teachers have gone to great lengths to sneak in tuition or private tuition albeit with different names but same concept. This therefore motivated the researcher to carry out a study on the influence of private tuition plays on students' performance. Central to this study is the major question of how private tuition classes impacts on students' performance as well as the cost implication to both parents and teachers.

### Specific Objectives

- To investigate the cost implication of private tuition on performance in public secondary schools in Gucha south sub county in Kisii County.
- To find out factors influencing participation in private tuition in public secondary schools in Gucha south sub county in Kisii County.

**Theoretical Framework:** In this study, Education Production Theory (EPT) was employed. This theory postulates that education outcomes are a function of inputs to the education process that are provided basically by the families of the learners, the learners themselves, the community and the school. If the school inputs were subjected to variations, the outputs are likely to be affected. The Education Production Theory views schools to be enterprises in which raw materials i.e.

Students and other inputs like teachers, time, textbooks, libraries, laboratories, physical facilities and financial allocations are brought together to produce certain outputs. It is usually a function mapping qualities of measured inputs to a school and learner characteristics to some measure of school output. The cost of education, at all levels, is costly while investment in education claims a substantial share of national resources in most countries. Away from the expenses that go directly to education, there are also private and social indirect costs that are incurred any time one invests on education. For any education system to be considered efficient, knowledge of effectiveness and quality of variables that are used in educational process should be assessed. The theory is suitable for this study as it looks at the inputs such as cost incurred in private tuition and the resultant output which is academic achievement.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

**Cost of Private Tuition on Education:** The demand for private tuition creates various business opportunities. From a study conducted in Malaysia by Kenayathulla and Ubbudari (2017) on private tutoring participation among form three students, lucrative business is created for homemakers, teachers and business owners. In Malaysia, private tutoring has proved to be so lucrative that we find full time teachers who have dedicated their time and resources for private tuition. It is also an avenue for income to those offering out of formal class tutoring which helps students understand the lesson better. Majority of parents ranked provision of private tuition and extracurricular activities top three for spending priority for their children. According to Kenayathulla and Ubbudari (2017) on private tutoring in Malaysia, a very big percentage of families' weekly expenditure is allocated to private tuition and that this has led to mere tuition centres being established hence the teachers advertise their services through pamphlets from door to door, and even online. Since the ban on paid private tuition took effect in the country and in Gucha South to be specific, it is not clear whether the parents still spend their income to enroll their children for tutoring classes. This study therefore sought to establish, albeit comparatively, the weekly expenditure on private tutoring and other activities from a study done by Kang, (2007) on the effect of private educational expenditures on academic performance in Singapore, it was found out that expenditure on education of a learner is determined by external and random factors. Private tutoring expenditures therefore are influenced by external factors, which correlate positively with the learners' personal, family and academic characteristics. But in cases where there is no empirical data on private tutoring, a casual estimation requires another element which greatly influences the parents' decision in setting aside huge sums of money to cater for their children's education though should not be dependent on the student's educational achievement even if the expenditure on education is controlled. According to Hallack & Poisson (2007) in a report to the UNESCO, private tuition classes raised eyebrows in Kenya the moment it started consuming a good percentage of a parent's budget and unprofessional behavior of some teachers by creating high demand for private

tuition because they taught only a part of the formal curriculum, while dedicating private tutoring hours for the more important contents of the curriculum. According to Tanner et al (2009) from their study on private tuition in England, individual tutors take three factors into consideration before setting up tuition classes: they look into the demand for tuition classes and available rates; the level of learning of the interested students; the cost of travelling to the venues. They further add that some of the tutors considered lowering their charges for combined and varied sessions, family and their friends. The charges are also pegged on the qualification of individual tutors. According to study done by Ireson (2005), there is preference by the tutors to visit students in their homes. But in contrast, many cut cost by having students go to their designated centres, in order to save on time and the cost of travel. The tutors rarely charge per hour but would rather lump the cost for a whole session.

#### **Factors that Influence Participation in Private Tuition:**

According to Das and Das (2013) the decision to enroll children in private tuition classes is determined by several factors. One of the reasons is the ability of the learners. It can also be due to teachers' negligence. But then, students still need extra lessons. Because of their ability in class, teachers still find their services in private tuition classes being in high demand. In Korea and Vietnam, learners who participate in private tuition may differ from those who don't attend private tuition classes in one way or the other. For example, parents who enroll their children in private tuition classes may still come in handy in other areas. They may help their children with homework. In addition students who attend private tuition classes feel more motivated as compared to their counterparts who abstain. This means better academic achievement on the part of the learner (Guruun & Millimet, 2008). They add that learners who attend low quality schools are more obliged to join private tuition classes so as to increase their chances of performing better hence joining the university. They are therefore more motivated to incur extra cost at private tuition centres. From a study by Atta et al (2014) in Pakistan, it emerged that majority of parents enroll their children in tuition centres because the parents are illiterate, or they have limited time due to work pressure. Worse still they come home late from work leaving very little time for the necessary attention their children needs. They are also very much busy in improving the family income. The parents' major interest is to ensure their children are more geared towards higher academic achievement. They add that Private tuition is a sure way of increasing performance levels, boosting confidence, motivating the learners and developing study skills applicable in subjects taught at school. Private tuition is not only helpful to children but also to adults as it can help them improve their performance and ability. According to Moloi (2001) and Mogari, Coetzee and Maritz (2009:37) the size and intense of the available syllabi to be covered can be good reason for parents to secure services of tutors in private tuition centres. The time it takes to learn certain skills is rather long. More so, it becomes difficult if the skills are to be applied in certain life situations. Moloi (2001) therefore, sought to find out if there was a necessity in adding more time to the stipulated time for certain subjects like Mathematics. Effective and timely completion of syllabus is important for optimal performance in the national Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination (Amadalo, Shikuku and Wasike 2012). Onyango (2012), Shikuku (2009),

and Dzama (2006) in their respective studies found out that things like attitude and language are not directly related to poor performance in mathematics. But rather, this can be attributed to late or not completing the syllabus of the mathematics.

**Research Design:** The study adopted the descriptive survey design. This can be attributed to Best and Khan (2006), descriptive research refers to the activity of data collection in order to test hypotheses or to establish answers to questions concerning the current status of the subjects in study. It is designed to depict the participants in an accurate way (Mugenda & Mugenda 2009). Descriptive survey allows the researcher to have a brief interview or discussion with an individual about a specific topic. This is because during the study data was collected on more than one variable and at a given time so as to obtain a collection of quantitative data in related to two or more variables. The data was then examined to isolate the patterns of association (Brynan, 2004). A descriptive survey allowed the researcher to put information together, make a summary, and interpret for the purpose of clarification. The information obtained was analyzed using means, averages, frequencies and percentages.

**Target Population:** The study targeted 47 public secondary schools in Gucha South Sub County. Targeted also were 47 heads of institutions and 47 parents' association chairpersons. There are a total of 370 teachers in these institutions of which 102 are females 268 are males. There are 1860 students in form three and 2770 in form four.

**Sample and Sampling Technique:** Sampling is described as an objectively designed method of identification of subjects to be included in observation and analysis. Stratified random sampling refers to selecting a number of suspects or a sample from the whole population in such a way that all the characteristics of each of the units of the sample have an equal chance of being considered (Borg & Gall, 2007). Stratified simple random sampling was therefore used to arrive at the right sample for schools, teachers and the students to participate in the study. From Best and Khan (2006), 30% population sampled is considered statistically significant. The samples were stratified according to gender, location of the study and category of school e.g. day, boarding, mixed, and county and sub county. Therefore, from a target of 47 schools, 14 schools and 14 PA chairpersons were sampled to participate in the study which represents approximately 30%, 110 teachers sampled from a target of 370, 558 form three students and 831 form four students representing 1860 and 2770 respectively.

**Data Analysis:** After collecting the data, coding was made to the responses in the instruments. Data was entered into the computer for analysis. Codes were used for different respondents according to their locations. The data was analyzed by using both descriptive and inferential statistics. But from the interviews, it is worth noting that some of the items consisted of a structured multiple-choice format while other items included open-ended questions. Where the items were multiple-choice items, the collected data was entered into the SPSS software and their frequencies calculated accordingly. The open-ended questions were analysed according to the responses received. Frequencies and percentages was used for descriptive statistics. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was the computer programme to be used for the analysis of the data.

**Cost Implication of Private Tuition:** The study found out that, 85.71% (12) paid more on private tuition while 1(7.14%) responded as having spent below KES 500 on students' stationery. Twenty one point four three per cent of the parents spent more on transport to school while the same number responded to having paid more on students' meals. This totaled 3 out of the 14 parent respondents. The findings confirm Bray (2003) who postulated that indeed private tuition consumes a major chunk of both human and financial resources from both parents and respective institutions. It also concurs with Tanner et al (2009) whose findings revealed a substantial amount of money paid by students in England which varied at between around £22 and £24 depending on the subject. Ireson (2005) contradicts this in her findings that private tutors sometimes find it more convenient to travel to the students' homes thereby saving the students and parents extra expenses on items like transport and food. Magawaari and Kenayathulla and Ubbudari (2017) in their findings private tutoring participation among form three students in Malaysia urban and rural schools, agrees with this in that many families do allocate a large portion of their weekly income towards private tuition and that this, more often than not, constitute about 10% of their weekly income. These parents ranked private tuition and extracurricular activities top in their weekly expenditure. The study found out that 14.29% of the parents preferred their children to be tutored by regular teachers while 50% of the parents included in the study showed preference for the college students to tutor their children in extra school hours as compared to 35.71% who said they would accommodate form four school leavers as tutors for their children. The parents also indicated that the college students, although more dedicated, demanded more money because they had to pay for their college fees and other expenses related to college. These findings concur with Manzoor (2013) on the reasons and necessity of private tutoring in English for Bangla Medium primary school students in Bangladesh, who found out in his study that college or university students are contracted during their holidays to conduct extra school tuition to most students and that this practice is widespread. The college students would like to get for themselves pocket money hence the need to charge the parents. Das & Das (2013), in their study on empirical view on private tutoring in school Mathematics in Kamrup District in Kuala Lumpur, postulated that extra class tuition represents a big portion of financial investment in education by parents to their children. This therefore, justify the notion that extra school tuition that is carried out after the formal school hours makes parents to incur extra expenditure on education.

**Factors Influencing Private Tuition:** 35.71% (5) parents were found to be in formal employment while 42.86% (6) indicated that they are self-employed. The rest which indicated that they are involved in peasant farming were 21.43% (3) out of the 14 parents' association chairs who were involved in the study. Out of the 5 parents who were in formal employment, 60% (3) responded as having preference for private tuition. The self-employed parents who were 6 in number had 16.67% (1) as preferring their children to be given private tuition while peasants had (33.33%) of them preferring their children to attend private tuition. Kang (2007) in his report on effects of out of school educational expenditure on academic achievement, is in concurrence with this by suggesting that expenditure on education are exogenous and that expenditure on individual student correlates with factors such as students' personal and family background. He adds that the variable of family socioeconomic status is not necessarily biased towards

educational outcome but is highly dependent on what the family feels should be done as a responsibility. From the findings, majority of the parents who preferred private tutoring for their children were those who were in formal employment. This is also in agreement with Atta et al (2014), that the importance of parental involvement is held high. The study also revealed that majority of the teachers and students found Mathematics to be difficult at 31.8% while 43.65% of the students in form three responded that Mathematics posed a major challenge and 36.93% of the students in form four cited Mathematics as difficult. The other subject which was cited as difficult to students was Physics as identified by 27.7% of the teachers, 19.42% of the students in form three and 26.73% of the students in form four. Chemistry was identified by 21.8% of the teachers, 28.88% of the students in form three and 28.55% of the students in form four. Biology proved difficult to students as cited by 17.2% of the teachers, 0.80% of the students in form three and 0.77% of the students in form four. This is in agreement with Das & Das (2013) who argued that the demand for private tutoring can be as a result of a number of factors, key among them being that the students could exhibit weakness in some subjects. This can be the case irrespective of whether the teachers teach well or not.

## FINDINGS

**Cost implication of Private Tuition:** On the cost implication of private tuition on the quality of education, the study found out that private tuition still consumes a bigger percentage of money from the parents. A bigger percentage (50%) of their weekly expenditure is still invested in private tuition despite the government's ban on paid private tuition in public schools. The study also found out that majority of those conducting private tuition to students are college students who are on holidays. The students need money for their fees and college upkeep hence they tend to charge for their services. This makes the family expenses to be skewed towards tuition and not towards items like food and stationary. The cost is also escalated by some teachers who look for ways of supplementing their income, which to them, is not sufficient to meet their financial obligations.

**Factors Influencing Demand for Private Tuition:** Regarding factors influencing the demand for private tuition, the study found out that majority of the parents in formal employment and of a higher socioeconomic status (72%) are more likely to send their children to private tuition centres than those who are in self-employment or are peasant farmers. This is because the parents in formal employment have very little time to spend with their children after school, yet they desire that they perform well in school and get admitted in good colleges. Mathematics poses a major challenge to majority of students (43.65%) which makes them seek more help from private tuition centres. This therefore helped in ensuring more tuition centres were opened so as to offer students extra school hours lessons. Mathematics was closely followed by Chemistry (28.88%) and Physics (26.73%). Majority of the principals who participated in the study (72.72%) strongly agreed that timely syllabus coverage was a very important factor in students' academic achievement. To ensure this was accomplished, students resorted to private tuition centres where the tutors rushed them over the content to be covered before they are handed over to their regular teachers. But most teachers agreed that students need to be taken through extra school teaching while the parents responded that they strongly

disagreed with the involvement of the regular teachers. The parents (63.63%) strongly agreed that it was solely the responsibility of the parents to organize for their children's extra school lessons.

### Conclusion

Based on research findings, it was concluded that private tuition, or extra school lessons still consume a good percentage of parents' money in spite of the fact that the practice was outlawed in the country's formal education system. Majority of parents who were involved in the study agreed that they still give their children extra school lessons and that they spend quite a lot of money on this, the government policy notwithstanding. From the study, it was also concluded that parents' Socioeconomic Status determines whether a student is to participate in private tuition or extra school lessons. Parents of higher Socioeconomic Status, especially those in formal employment, preferred their children to be enrolled in private classes. This is because they do not have enough time to attend to their children hence they seek the services of private tutors. Participation in private tuition classes is also determined by the students' ability in some subject areas. There are subjects that learners fear hence they enroll in private tuition so as to help them improve. Mathematics, as a subject, rated high in subjects that give the students problem and therefore makes them look for private tutors with a hope that they would improve. This was closely followed by Chemistry and then Physics.

### Recommendation

Based on the findings it is recommended that;

- There should be stringent enforcement on the ban on paid private tuition so as not to consume financial resources from the parents. College students who take part in private tuition activities should be discouraged as they are not trained to handle learners and are not conversant with current pedagogical skills.
- All parents should be encouraged to take a lead role in ensuring their children get quality guidance from qualified personnel. The teachers should apply the most current techniques to help the learners acquire skills at an early stage so as to demystify the myth that subjects like Mathematics and Chemistry are difficult hence need to be given more time after school.

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