

## Private supplementary Tutoring: motivations and effects: a review study

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### ABSTRACT

For long, mixed reaction on the importance of supplementary tutorials in Kenyan schools, both primary and secondary, have been expressed by the various stakeholders. While some have argued for them, others have been fully opposed to it and viewed it as an attempt by teachers to exploit parents with the argument that the government pays them to do the same job. This has however been countered by assertions by teachers on the benefits of the same in improving the performance of the students. Prior research has analyzed the causes and consequences of supplementary tutorials to the extent that the cabinet secretary for Education in the republic of Kenya banned schools from conducting tutorials since year 2015. This study reviews the issues pertaining to Private supplementary tutorials. The result is a set of recommendations regarding Private supplementary tuition.

**Keywords:** private supplementary tutorials; stakeholders; education; tutorials.

### Introduction

Developing countries policymakers recognize that education is a key determinant of individual productivity and economy-wide growth (Dang, 2008). But their sector's diagnosis and policy attention have focused on public schools ignoring other key sectors of education. Much less attention has been paid to the private school sector, and policy discussion rarely mentions what is emerging as a third important education sector: the private tutoring industry. In many countries, private tutoring has arisen as a parallel education sector that provides supplementary instructions to students enrolled in the public school system and private school system. Substantial private tutoring industries can be found in countries as economically and geographically diverse as Cambodia, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Japan, Kenya, Morocco, Romania, Singapore, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

Education is widely viewed by developing-country's policymakers to be a key determinant of economy-wide growth. There are three considered education sectors, namely; public government schools, private-school sector and what is now emerging as a third important education sector, the private supplementary tutoring. This third sector is rarely mentioned by education policy makers. Private Supplementary Tutoring (PST), is defined as fee-based tutoring, that provides supplementary instruction to students in academic subjects they study in the mainstream education system (Bray, 2013).

In the current research PST refers to tuition offered in academic subjects, provided by the tutors for financial gain, and it is additional to the provision by mainstream schooling excluding co-curricular subjects such as games and extra lessons given by teachers or family member. PST is a "Shadow education", First it only exists because the mainstream education system exists. (Kwok, (2003). Secondly, it imitates the mainstream in that when the mainstream changes in size and orientation, so does the shadow (Bray, 2006).

Thirdly, in almost all societies much more public attention focuses on the mainstream than on its shadow. Fourthly, the features of the shadow system are much less distinct than those of the mainstream (Dang, 2013). Despite this statistics world over, private supplementary tutoring has been a neglected topic for analysis but is increasingly recognized to be of major importance (Dang, 2008). This justifies the need of this research.

## **Factors influencing need for PST**

It is evident that private supplementary tuition is a widespread global phenomenon; it is on an increasing trend both in magnitude and intensity. Four key drivers have been identified as influencing the need for PST: i.e. economic factors, social & cultural factors, educational and geographical factors (Bray, 2005, 2009, 2010).

For some parents and students, the drive to use private supplementary tuition is the anticipated economic benefits associated with good academic grades. To them using PST services is a form of investment that will guarantee them better careers and more rewarding jobs in the future. Indeed globally for one to be competitive in the job market one must be armed with quality academic credentials in the given field of specialization. Lucrative careers such as medicine, engineering architecture, law and pharmacy which has a comparatively higher salary admits the top cream of the education system from lower levels. Thus it would not be surprising for parents to invest in PST for them to realise their goals, hence the future job, career and in turn higher monetary returns prospects drives the need for private supplementary tuition in most countries worldwide (Bray (2005); Kim (2006)). When parents and children are heavily investing in private supplementary tuition with anticipations of greater monetary returns in future through salaried and self-employment are consciously or unconsciously embracing the notion of human capital theory.

## **Teacher remuneration and private tutoring**

Teacher remuneration has been considered a key contributing factor in the widespread use of private supplementary tuition among students especially within the school premises. Because of poor remuneration of mainstream teachers, teachers encourage their students to attend "remedial" (PST) classes outside the normal formal school hours in order to earn some extra income. To achieve this they employ different tactics such as teaching the main examinable content during remedial classes or even teaching at a slower pace during the normal class hours so as not to cover the stipulated syllabus thus forcing the school management boards and parents to see the need to organize and pay for extra classes.

This factor drives the need for PST indiscriminately among all students both from rich and poor family background, high and low achievers in class. This factor drives the need for private supplementary tuition in countries such as Kenya, Cambodia, Romania, Mauritius and Nigeria (Bray (2007); Bray and Bunly (2005); Bray and Kwok (2003); Buchmann (1999); Dawson (2009); Foondun (2002)). Bray (2010) argues that as much as teachers in some countries may stress that PST is not compulsory, parents are aware that if they do not pay, their children will be handicapped not only by failing to secure the curricular knowledge but also probably by incurring the disapproval of the teachers.

Moreover, since the teachers control the end-of-year examinations and determine who proceeds from one class/form/grade to the next, parents are aware that if they do not pay for private supplementary tuition then their children are likely to repeat classes/forms/grades. For many parents, the arithmetic becomes simple: it is less expensive to pay for private supplementary tuition classes than to pay the costs of repeating a year.

Educational factors drive the need for PST more than social and economic factors combined because both the poor and the rich have placed very high premiums on education. The researcher contend that for the poor education would be perceived as the only panacea out of their current squalid condition and the medium through which they are likely to move up the social ladder; children from such family work very hard and encourage their parents to sacrifice and invest in their education even if it means using PST, for it is through quality academic credential that they will be able to emancipate their poor families from their current state.

For the rich and elite families they already know the benefits of maintaining their current prestigious positions in society and therefore investing heavily on their children's education is worthwhile. According to Tansel and Bicarn (2008) children from educated parents are more likely to use PST services and the mother's education plays a more important role in demanding for PST for her children than the father's education. Bray and Kwok (2004) contend that the children whose parents' educational level were at university or above are twice more likely to use PST than those whose parents had primary education or less.

## **Public Education and its role in the growth of private tutoring**

In countries where the public education system fails to satisfy the needs of the students as is often the case in most developing countries. (Dang, 2008; Kim, 2004). In more developed societies where students have more choices between the public and private school systems, where it works as a middle-ground solution between public and private school, as South Korea, Japan, USA, Australia (Kim,2005). PST Can also exist as a form of corruption This can happen in some developing countries with weak monitoring system in place, where the teachers can barely survive on their salaries, and they have to resort to requiring their students to go to for extra classes to supplement their income (Biswal, 1999).

Education system that is examination oriented. This is especially where examinations is used to determine who continues with education from one level to the next and who does not (Bray 2003). Where there is ranking of schools according to performance, this causes competitiveness of individual schools which can be associated with the growth of private tutoring (Bray 2003). Blackmail in coverage of the syllabus (Another factor concerns coverage of the syllabus where teachers might have an incentive to describe the curriculum as too full and deliberately slow down their pace to deliver (Bray, 2007). Peer pressure from parents and pupils. Unfortunately, they embrace the PST with little understanding of its implications which in most cases are negative.

Other factors that influence the demand of PST are family background (family factors such as parent's gender, education level, occupation and the number of siblings at home). School level factors such as teachers/student ratio, facilities, examination driven system of education and economic factors which include household income (Dang, 2008).

## **PST in Africa and other developing economies**

In Egypt, private tutoring was estimated in 1994 to consume 20 per cent of total household expenditures per child in urban primary schools and 15 per cent in rural primary schools (Fergany, 1994). In most cases, the greatest components in these figures are the fees paid to tutors and their agencies. In most settings, charges increase at higher levels of the education system. This can create social inequality between urban and rural areas as reflected by the 20% expenditure in urban primary school and rural 15% in rural primary schools.

In general, the subjects given most attention in private tutoring are the ones most needed for educational and therefore socio-economic advancement. Commonly this means languages, mathematics and science. A study in Sri Lanka by de Silva (1994) showed that the duration of tutoring received by science specialists in Year 13 was almost three times that received by arts specialists and nearly twice that received by commerce specialists.

Parents and teachers have for long argued that private tuition enables learners to access additional attention, ensures improved learning styles, improved performance, personalized relationship, and involvement of parents as they keep track of the performance of their children (Makworo, 2012). In Kenya, the phenomena of private tuition started after 1985 when the 8-4-4 system of education was introduced to replace the then 7-4-2-3 system (Wanyama & Njeru, 2004). With the introduction of the 8-4-4 system of education in Kenya, the subject matter that used to be completed in six years secondary schooling was to be covered in four years. The situation compelled parents to send their children to private schools to be taught privately during the holidays and weekends in addition to the government term schedules (Wamaihu, 1989). The Kenya Certificate of Secondary

Education (KCSE) results of 1989 released by the Kenya National Examination Council KNEC) in February 1990 showed that 58% of the candidates who sat for the examinations scored below average. This was an indication that the candidates were inadequately prepared for the national examinations (Wanyama & Njeru, 2004). As a result, many parents hired private tutors for their children outside school hours.

## **Effects of private Tutoring**

Can enable remedial teaching to be undertaken according to individual needs (De Silva, 1994). Supplementary tutoring may also help relatively strong students to get more out of their mainstream classes. May affect the dynamics of teaching and learning in mainstream classrooms. For example, mainstream teachers may not need to work so hard, teachers may be confronted by confronted by greater disparities within their classrooms. Some students do not pay adequate attention to lessons in the mainstream system either because they have already

covered the topics with the private tutor, or because they are unimpressed by the teaching styles in the mainstream system.

Supplementary tutoring also leads to fatigue. Most obviously affected are the pupils who go straight from mainstream school to supplementary class; but also affected are the tutors, especially when they are also mainstream teachers. It also exacerbates social inequalities and imposes heavy costs on households, possibly without necessarily improving pupil's outcomes. PST denies children time for play, leisure and relaxation, as they are given quantity education, drilled just to pass examination hence condemned to premature stress and burnout.

## Conclusion

There are strong arguments for Private Supplementary tutoring especially in cases where the government has failed in its core mandate of streamlining the education sector. However, Private supplementary tuition is still considered to have a negative impact on public schooling by disrupting mainstream schooling. Private tuition also has a negative social and economic implication since it gives a heavy financial burden to parents, and worsens the social inequality. It strains both the teachers and pupils causing fatigue and pupils lose interest in what happens in mainstream schooling. To reduce the excessive prevalence of private tutoring, the government should enforce the ban. Lasting solutions to this however need to be made. Dependence on National examination to gauge students' performance has acted for long as the bit that attracts parents to prefer private tutoring to ensure better performance for their children.

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