

## **EFFECTS OF BAN ON PRIVATE TUITION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN RONGAI DISTRICT.**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined the impact of Free Primary Education (FPE) on teaching and learning in public primary schools. It adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. Purposive sampling was utilized to obtain a sample of 8 teachers in charge of Academic Affairs in 4 private schools. The interview schedule was the main data collection instrument. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. The study found out that the ban on privately offered holiday tuition did not negatively affect academic performance in the private primary schools. It was further established that schools have found new strategies to make up for the ban on tuition and had in- built tuition into extra hours within the week and on Saturdays. However all the respondents agreed that the schools had complied with the directive on holiday tuition given by the Ministry of Education. The study further found out that majority of the teachers did not support the ban due to slow coverage of the syllabus. The paper recommends that the Ministry of Education to revise the blanket ban on holiday tuition and allow guided and streamlined avenues when tuition can be offered in schools.

### **Introduction**

African countries have since independence viewed acquisition of formal education by its citizens as a priority in terms of their development objectives. The Kenyan government has been of the view that education is the key to promoting economic, social and individual development. According to Sifuna, (1990), education in Kenya was regarded as a critical factor in the alleviation of individual ignorance, fear, and servility and in helping the country to move from a traditional to a more modern social and economic condition. Education has also been believed to contribute to political development by creating an informed and participant citizenry and to social development by equipping people for new roles associated with expanding range of occupation. Stress has also been laid on the potential of education to foster the knowledge and skills necessary for productive activity.

The consequent to high value attached to education in Kenya has been a high demand for it. Most Kenyans desire the highest level of education they can achieve. This has been attested by Eshiwani, (1993: 10) when he notes:

A significant change was however, realized in the expansion of schools and in the enrolment of throughout the period following independence. This expansion can be explained in terms of powerful and pervasive public demand for education. ....perhaps the outstanding fact about education in Kenya has been that everyone has wanted it more than any other single thing.

This demand can be attributed to the fact that many view education as an opportunity to get employment and by the perception of school as a promoter of self-esteem. It is therefore clear that education is highly valued in Kenya; with many of the students pursuing strategies such as private tuition (after-school and weekend tutoring) and remaining in a grade more than one year in order to pass the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exam.

Private tutoring in primary schools has in the recent past been a valuable tool used by teachers to prepare students for KCPE examinations. The justification for coaching pupils is based on the argument that the primary school curriculum cannot be implemented in full within the recommended time Abagi & Odipo (1997). Another major reason why this is the case is the economic rewards that come with doing well on examinations. In Kenya, students must take tests in primary school that determine which category of schools (whether national, county or district) that a student is allocated to for secondary school. For example, students who do well on these tests will presumably be allocated to national schools. And students who are in national schools, the best public secondary schools in Kenya, have a better chance of doing well on the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). In short, doing well on tests sets students off on a trajectory for future success, since test scores highly determine the educational institutions that students may enter. Bray *et al* (1999) adds that while there have not been many studies that directly measure the effects of private tuition on students, there are studies that have been completed which suggest that tutoring has positive effects on achievement. Hallak and Poisson, (2007) add that factors justifying private tutoring from the supply side include inadequate classroom teaching, an overloaded educational curriculum and poor selection and evaluation mechanisms.

Despite the aforementioned positive effects, private tuition has been known to elicit negative effects as well. Ngugi (2006) while studying the effects of private supplementary tutoring on students' academic performance in Kenya found out that though private supplementary tuition helps much in improving the academic performance of students, it could also counter productive as students and teachers become fatigued. Critics also blame private tuition for burdening students with extra load thus hindering their overall development (Makworo, 2009). Uwezo (2010) claims that ceaseless learning and holiday tuition as children go up the academic

ladder deprive them of the crucial play time valuable for their development. In response to these claims, the Ministry of Education has over time issued circulars and directives to prohibit the practice. Mboi *et al* (2013) contends that the Kenyan Government has continuously indicated that extra tuition is illegal and there have been circulars sent to schools with the warning against extra tuition. Mburugu (2011) avers that in spite of repeatedly banning of private tuition, the Ministry of Education has not succeeded in enforcing the bans. She adds that although the Ministry of Education has allowed remedial teaching in schools, it has not given directives on how remedial classes should be carried out. Teachers can therefore conduct private tuition and claim that they are offering remedial lessons or that they are giving a free service to their students, making it difficult to distinguish private tuition from remedial teaching.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The recent ban on Holiday tuition in both private and public primary and secondary schools in Kenya by the Ministry of Education was in response to these concerns. The Minister declared tuition a violation of children's constitutional right as provided for under the Bill of Rights; Article 5 of the Kenyan Constitution. The Minister cited section 37(1) of the Basic Education Act that outlaws the practice and also prescribes a fine of Sh100, 000 or a jail term not exceeding five years. He hence issued a directive stopping any kind of institutionalized and paid for remedial teachings countrywide adding that anyone found disregarding this order will be dealt with according to the law. The problem is that there is minimal or no research available to know exactly the impact of the ban on tuition on the student's academic performance, or the strategies that have been adopted by private schools to counteract the ban. Indeed, there are claims that both public and private schools have devised new ways of conducting tuition and teachers that have shifted the practice to Saturdays and weekdays during the term (Ngugi, 2013). However, there exists a gap in knowledge on the effect of the ban in terms of what strategies schools have devised to make up for the loss in academic time, what impact the ban has had on academic performance of pupils and why the ban has not been successful. It is for this reason that a careful investigation into the effect of the ban on private tuition on academic performance is necessary.

### **Research Questions**

- i) To establish the effect on the ban on private tuition on academic performance of students in private schools
- ii) To find out whether the ban on holiday tuition has been successfully implemented in the schools
- iii) To find out the strategies that private schools have adopted to conduct tuition
- iv) To find out teachers perception on the necessity of holiday tuition

## **Materials and Methods**

The study adopted a descriptive cross sectional survey research design and was based in Kampi ya Moto division, Rongai District of Kenya. The target population of this study was the teachers and head teachers of private schools in the district. The sampling unit was the school rather than the individual learner or teacher. There are 4 private schools in the division and all were included in the study. Thereafter, teachers in charge of Academics/ Directors of Studies in each school were purposively sampled to be interviewed. These teachers were selected on the basis of their experience as teachers in charge of academic programs in their respective schools. They were therefore conversant with strategies employed by schools to enable students to pass their exams. Data analysis involved descriptive statistical technique.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Effect of Ban Holiday Tuition on Academic Performance**

The first objective of the study was to establish the effect of the 2012 Ministry of Education ban on holiday tuition on academic performance in private schools in Kenya. From the interview discussion with the teachers in charge of Academic affairs, it emerged that majority of the respondents agreed that the ban did not affect the academic performance of the students in the 2013 Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) results. All but one concurred that the performance index of the students improved in their performance. One respondent averred that the ban had helped the students improve in their performance:

*'The students are now relaxed and able to internalize what they have been taught. There is more time for follow up by the teachers and both the students and the teachers do not suffer burnout due to congested holiday. In fact there has been improvement in all subjects'.*

The above view supports the reasons why the Ministry of Education implemented the tuition ban. In defending the move, The Minister of Education said that it's essential to give students an opportunity to relax since the curriculum developed can be covered over a specific period of time, indicating that what's going on is actually gross abuse of the children's rights as defined in the constitution. Dang and Rogers (2002) also agree that a number of criticisms have been raised against private tutoring; most notably that it exacerbates social inequalities, disrupts the (public) education system, and fails to increase either academic performance or human capital for students. According to Buhere, (2013) holiday tuition has created regimented lives that turn learners into learning robots. This does not encourage the independent and critical thinking that lie behind the strong problem solving skills that any educational system aims to implant in the learners. In support, Ngugi (2014) agrees that unfortunately, it is the helpless learners who bear the brunt of extra tuition and are usually denied a chance to explore other non-academic talents and fail to develop other social skills besides being robbed of their time to be children.

Despite the above sentiments, the respondents were of the opinion that though the ban on holiday had not affected Kenya Certificate of Primary Education results, it had a marked impact on performance of continuing students. One respondent summarized thus:

*'Holiday tuition kept our students on toes in their academic work because they spent less time at home. Now with the ban, children stay too long at home. When they get back to school, they have forgotten all they learn and fail their Opener Exams. Teachers have to start all over again to teach them.'*

In support of the above sentiment, Mboi and Nyambedha (2013) in a study on the implications of extra tuition in primary schools on pupils' social life found out that pupils attended extra tuition because: it improved grades or standards to pass examinations and to complete the syllabus and revise. Other reasons included; to enable a pupil move to the next class, for the weak pupils to improve and helped them to understand what they did not understand well in class since there was additional time.

### **Successful implementation of the Ban on Holiday Tuition**

All the respondents (100%) agreed that the ban had been effectively implemented in their schools and that holiday tuition was no longer taking place. Reported one respondent:

*Since the government stopped tuition, we have not had any tuition. There is 100% compliance with the ban because the school would be fined Ksh 100000 for non compliance.*

The above reveals the governments' seriousness in enforcing the ban contrary to earlier efforts when previous bans had been ignored by schools. In tracing the history of ban on holiday tuition in Kenya, Mburugu (2012) notes that the Ministry of Education has repeatedly issued directives through the mass media and circulars banning private tuition for students in private and public schools (MoE&HR, 1999; MoE/GEN/G/11/4/2008). In such statements, she notes, the Ministry of Education has directed that the extension of curriculum delivery into breaks, lunch, after school, during the weekends and school holidays is an unacceptable way of providing education. In spite of repeatedly banning of private tuition, it appears that the Ministry of Education has not succeeded in enforcing the bans.

### **Teachers Perception on the Necessity of holiday Tuition**

The third objective of the study was to find out the teachers opinion on whether holiday tuition was necessary. The following table summarizes their views

	%
YES	83
NO	27

Majority of the respondents felt that it was necessary while the other 27% felt it was unnecessary. Those in support of tuition justified tuition on the basis of improved academic performance:

*'It helps in finishing the syllabus on time and gives the weak learners time with their teachers to improve their performance. Holiday tuition exposes the learners to more revision exercises which is good for their work.'*

From the above it can be realized that teachers value holiday tuition for its potential in enhancing mean scores of the schools. The findings of the study are similar to the findings by Mburugu (2011) who found out that most teacher respondents observed that private tuition provided remedial help to under-achieving students, enabled both teachers and students to make better use of their out-of-school time, complimented the normal classes and improved student learning. While contributing his views, another respondent saw the need for tuition because parents were too busy to guide their children in case of long holidays

*'Children waste time at home... internet and TV distract their minds and they forget what they learnt at school.'*

The above view justifies tuition on the basis of poor family values and upbringing. In concurrence, Kenya Forum (2014) opined that most parents disagreed with the ban as most would prefer to have their children away in school than at home.

### **Strategies that private schools have adopted to conduct private tuition**

The last objective was to find out the strategies that private schools have adopted to conduct private tuition after the ban on holiday tuition. The following table presents the results:

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>%</b>
Evening lessons (7-8 pm)	83
Saturday lessons (8 am-1pm)	83
Morning lessons (6 am-7 am)	100
Early closure of school but retain STD 8 pupils	27
Renaming the program as 'Consultation'	27

The above table depicts the strategies that private schools have adopted since the ban on holiday tuition. 83% of the respondents reported that they conducted evening and Saturday lessons while all the respondents conducted early morning lessons. Indeed, both public and private schools have devised new ways of conducting tuition. The Education ministry had successfully stood its ground against holiday tuition. This made teachers shift this practice to Saturdays and weekdays during the term. One school has adopted early one week closure of the school but retain the STD 8 students for tuition and have renamed the holiday tuition as 'consultations'. This concurs with Ngugi (2014) who reports that schools have resorted to creating additional lessons outside of the regular daily school timetable and teachers are able to squeeze in a

minimum of four extra lessons daily during the school term calendar which has enabled teachers to continue offering extra tuition without any detection. This therefore puts to question the effectiveness of the ban.

### **Type of Work covered during Private Tuition**

The respondents thereafter were asked what type of work was covered during the private tuition and the following table present their views:

<b>Type of work covered in private tuition</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>%</b>
Revision of work already done	Evening remedial	100
Evaluation	Saturday	27
Coverage of the syllabus	Saturday lessons	83

From the above table, it is clear that majority of the schools use extra time created for private tuition for coverage of the syllabus and revision of work already done. This concurs with Ngugi's (2014) observation that creating extra classes is seen as the only way to cover the syllabus because the syllabus is too broad and in many schools, there is maddening pressure to complete the syllabus at various levels. In a study on private supplementary tutoring, process and implication done by Kibere (2005), he categorized private tuition into two: remedial lessons and holiday tuition. In his assessment, remedial teaching is often conducted in the evenings and weekends while holiday tutoring is offered during school holidays.

### **Targeted classes for extra tuition**

Majority of the respondents revealed that STD 7 and 8 was the target of tuition. All felt that these two classes were critical stages of schooling before they sat for the KCPE exams.

*'We go for STD 7 and 8 because they are mature and can take the extra strain. We also need to sharpen them for their KCPE exams otherwise they will fail and bring the school mean grade down.'*

These views were in agreement with Wanyama and Njeru (2004), who observes that the prevalence of private tuition has more to do with the emphasis on examination as a basis for staff recruitment and promotion. According to Nzomo, Kariuki and Guantai (2001) several studies have shown that the Kenyan education system has become examination oriented with very high stakes. It is therefore clear that exam oriented approach in Kenya's education system is to blame for the persistent continuance of the practice of holiday tuition in schools.

### **Conclusion**

The first objective of the study was to establish the effect on the ban on private tuition on academic performance of students in private schools, Analysis of qualitative data indicate that the ban had no significant effect on academic performance of students in private school based on the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education results of 2013. However it was found out that the ban had negative impact on performance of continuing students due to long holiday breaks

which tended to regress students' academic achievements. The second objective was to find out whether the ban on holiday tuition has been successfully implemented in the schools. It was established that the government ban had been fully implemented in the schools due to stiff penalties to be imposed on those who contravened the ban. On the third objective, it was established that private schools had put in place strategies to counter the ban which included renaming the tuition program, creating extra hours within the school day and on Saturdays and early closure of the school to retain STD 8 candidates. Lastly, it was found out that the extra time thus created was used to cover the syllabus and to help weak learners. The target classes for such tuition was mainly STD 7&8 due to their maturity and to enable them to pass the KCPE exams thus confirming that the exam oriented curriculum is to blame for the practice of holiday tuition.

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