

Teachers and Students Perception on Effect of Extra Tuition on Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Machakos County, Kenya

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Abstract

The practice of extra tuition is a phenomenon which has prevailed in Kenyan secondary schools despite the repeated ban by the government. The purpose of the study was to establish the perceived effect of extra tuition by teachers and students on academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. Descriptive survey design was used for the study. The target population was all public secondary schools' teachers and students in Machakos County. Ten (10) schools were randomly sampled and a total of 200 respondents including 40 teachers and 160 students participated. Questionnaires were used for data collection. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. The null hypothesis was tested using the t-test for independence of means at a 0.05 level of significance. Study findings were that extra tuition is widely practiced and that both students and teachers supported extra tuition. Some reasons advanced for the support were that extra tuition helps in early coverage of syllabus, revision, and boosts the performance of individual students. Observed t value indicated that perception scores of teachers and students were $t(198) = -0.767, p=0.444$. This means that there was no significant difference between the perception scores of students and teachers concerning extra tuition on academic performance. The study recommends among others that there is need to reduce syllabus content to manageable levels.

Keywords: Perception, teachers and students, extra tuition, academic performance.

Introduction

Investment in education plays a significant role in human development through empowerment of people to improve their wellbeing and participate actively in nation building. UNESCO (1976) recognizes access to education and possession of basic education as a human right. The 2000 World Education for All (EFA) frameworks in Dakar, Senegal declared improvement in all aspects of education especially in literacy, numeracy and

essential life skills. Education is therefore perceived as a source of wealth and power which are vital for growth and development of any country's economic and political institutions.

The concept of extra tuition is a practice which is said to enrich the academic ability of learners in the hope of sharpening their preparedness for the national examinations (Wanyama and Njeru, 2003). It is said to have been a major common phenomenon since the 1960s in some parts of East Asia particularly in Japan, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan (Hallack and Poisson, 2007). Hallack and Poisson (2007) further observed that, extra tutoring centers in Australia were meant to cater for children as young as three years of age. The Australian national government introduced vouchers to fund private tutoring for students who fell behind national achievement benchmarks in literacy and numeracy, thus subsidizing the role of extra tutors in providing remedial education. According to Bray (2003a), one-third of the pupils in Egypt were said to receive regular private extra tuition. This figure, however, varied from one community to another in the country. As such, it was argued that tutoring in the country had reached the extent of being regarded as a universally accepted phenomenon.

Extra tuition may have positive outcome in improving students learning, providing students with constructive activities and enabling them to complete syllabus in time (Yiu, 1996). It is also viewed as a forum of employment to those offering extra tuition services and helps students understand mainstream lessons (Ireson and Rushforth, 2005). In addition, extra tuition enables learners to access extra 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 extra tuition phenomena started after 1985 with the introduction of the 8-4-4 system of education where the two year advanced level syllabus was phased out and compressed with the current four years of ordinary level. With the introduction of the 8-4-4 system of education, the subject matter that used to be completed in six years secondary schooling was now to be covered in four years. According to Wamaihu (1989), teachers in government schools were overwhelmed by the huge content of work to be completed in a shorter time. 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.

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 because of the syllabus content being too wide and students being unable to read, understand and internalize the content of 10 compulsory subjects. Similarly, the KCSE results for 2010, released by the KNEC in February 2011, showed that only 27% of the candidates scored a mean grade of C+ and above, which is the minimum requirement for admission for both private and public universities in Kenya. The demand for higher grades in the National Examinations influenced secondary schools to start extra tuition during the holiday. Some head teachers sought the consent and support of parents during the school annual general meetings (AGM) to offer holiday tuition.

For some time the trend was left to spread country wide without government control. A study conducted by (Kariuki, 2011) found out that with the completion of the syllabus in the month of March of the examination year, followed by programmed, guided and supervised holiday revision, candidates were capable of scoring higher mean grades. The report of the Task Force on students discipline and unrests in secondary schools (Nzomo, Kariuki & Guanti, 2001) found out that most households were unable to afford to pay school fees and high

costs of learning and teaching materials for their children because of poverty. Therefore extra expenses on extra tuition made it difficult for households to educate their children. The report recommended that the Ministry of Education (MOE) withdraw extra tuition for all primary and secondary school students. This was attributed to the high cost of education worsened by the burden of cost sharing which had a negative impact on access, equity and quality of education in Kenya.

The Ministry of Education in Kenya banned extra tuition in 1988 and repeated the same in 2008 in a circular, MOE/GEN/G1/11/4, signed by then permanent secretary in that ministry. The Basic Education Act (2013), section 37(1) states that no pupil shall be subjected to holiday tuition. Any person who contravenes the law is liable to a fine not exceeding Ksh100,000 or one-year imprisonment or both. Conducting private tuition in private premises is also a crime, according to the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) code of conduct and ethics.

The practice of extra tuition in Kenya has been the cause of disharmony between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST), teachers and students. For example, teachers and students are of the opinion that remedial teaching is necessary to complete syllabus due to the overloaded curriculum and also to bring on board slow learners in order to help them compete with fast learners for the limited university spaces. A survey carried out in Kisumu County, Kenya by Mboi and Nyambedha (2013) indicated that 97.2 % of the pupils like extra tuition because it helps them improve grades or standards, assists them to pass examinations, helps them to get more knowledge and to complete the syllabus and revise for examinations. The researchers pointed out that teachers in Kenya consider provision of extra tuition as an intervention strategy to address the weaknesses portrayed by candidates before they take the national examinations. The current scenario and study findings in relation to extra tuition indicate a conflict of interest among education stakeholders, particularly the MOE, teachers and students, which needs to be addressed. This study sought to establish perceived effect of extra tuition by teachers and students on academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. Establish prevalence of extra tuition in public secondary schools in Machakos County.
- ii. Determine teachers' and students' views on the effect of extra tuition on academic performance.
- iii. Find out whether the perceived effect of extra tuition on academic performance by teachers differs from that of students.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

- i. How prevalent is extra tuition in public secondary schools in Machakos County?
- ii. What are the teachers' and students' views on the effect of extra tuition on academic performance?
- iii. Does the perception of students on the effect of extra tuition on academic performance differ from that of teachers?

Hypothesis

Students' perception of extra tuition on academic performance does not significantly differ from that of teachers.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design to investigate on the perceived effect of extra tuition on academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos County. Data was collected using a questionnaire. The target population was teachers and Form three students in public secondary schools in Machakos County. Simple random sampling was used in selecting 10 schools to participate in the study. The schools were stratified into two categories: day and boarding schools. For each category, simple random technique was used to obtain five (5) day schools and five (5) boarding schools. A total of forty (40) teachers and one hundred and sixty (160) students participated in the study.

Table 1: Sample Size

Category of Subjects	Number per school	Number of schools	Total
Teachers	4	10	40
Students	16	10	160
Total	25	40	200

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and organize data and to describe the characteristics of the sample using the mean and standard deviation. The SPSS programme was used to run the analysis. The null hypothesis was tested using the t-test for independence of means at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Based on the research objectives, the researchers sought to find out if extra tuition is offered to students outside the normal learning hours, work covered and in which subjects. The study further sought to find out if students would like extra tuition to continue being offered and reasons for continued extra tuition.

Time when Extra Tuition is offered

Regarding the time when extra tuition is offered, the students were asked to indicate 'yes' or 'no' if extra tuition is offered outside normal timetable. From the findings of the study, 144 (90%) of the students reported that they were given extra tuition outside the normal learning hours, while only 16 (10%) of the students said they were given extra tuition within the normal learning hours. A questionnaire administered to the school principals, 10(100%), indicated that extra tuition is offered in their schools, an indication that it is common practice in public secondary schools in Machakos County.

Students were also asked to indicate the work covered during extra tuition in the study. Responses regarding work covered during extra tuition were presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Work covered during extra tuition

Type of work	Frequency	Percent (%)
Revision of work already done	41	25.6
Evaluation/tests	1	0.6

Syllabus coverage	102	63.7
Undecided	16	10.1
Total	160	100

Table 2 indicates that 102 (63.7%) of the students said they cover syllabus content during extra tuition, while 41(25.6%) of the students said they revise work already done. This is an indication that time available for syllabus coverage is inadequate and therefore need for more time. This finding is in agreement with that of Mboi & Nyambedha (2013) who reported that 97.2% of the pupils like extra tuition because it helps them to complete the syllabus and revise for examinations. Responses to one of the students questionnaire items showed that, 91(56.8%) of the students said that extra tuition is conducted in all subjects which helps in early coverage of the syllabus. It is evident from the findings that extra tuition helps in syllabus coverage and revision of work done.

Prevalence of Extra Tuition

Students' Support for Continued Extra Tuition

Concerning support for continued extra tuition, students were asked to indicate if they would like extra tuition to continue being offered in schools or not. The findings of their responses are presented in figure 1.

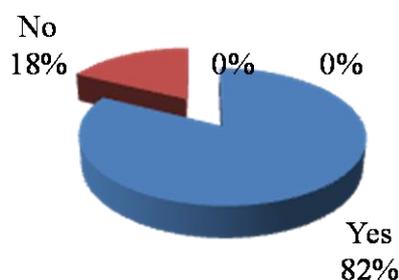


Figure 1: Percentage of Students Support for Extra Tuition

Figure 1 shows that 132 (82.5%) of the students would like extra tuition to continue being offered, while 28(17.5%) of the students were against extra tuition. Another question in the same questionnaire administered to students showed that 90(56.2%) of the students preferred extra tuition because it helps in early coverage of syllabus, while 63 (39.3%) of them preferred extra tuition because it helps in revision. These perceptions were consistent with those of Kenyan teachers who had earlier on argued that extra teaching is necessary to complete syllabus due to overloaded curriculum (KESSEA, 2012). Minority of the students, 28 (17.5%), did not support extra tuition because they felt that they needed time to relax and improve on their talents, it was a source of negative relationships between teachers and students, it increases financial burden to parents and denies them time for individual study.

Teachers' Perception of Extra Tuition

The study sought to find out whether extra tuition is conducted in schools where teachers teach, the classes involved, approaches of extra tutoring, subjects in which extra tuition is offered, teachers support of the practice and reasons for supporting extra tuition.

Regarding the practice of extra tuition, teachers were required to indicate whether extra tuition is held in their schools or not. Teachers' responses concerning the practice of extra tuition in schools are as presented in figure 2.



Figure 2: Teachers responses regarding the practice of extra tuition

Figure 2 shows that 38 (95.0%) of the teachers reported that extra tuition is conducted in their schools. This finding is in agreement with that of Wanyama and Njeru (2004), who observed that extra tuition and remedial classes in Kenya is one and the same thing and that, it is a widespread practice in the country. This is most likely because students have to compete for the limited slots at higher levels of learning and this can only be achieved through good performance in national examinations.

Classes involved in Extra Tuition

Teacher respondents were asked to indicate the classes involved in extra tuition. Their responses are as presented in figure 3.

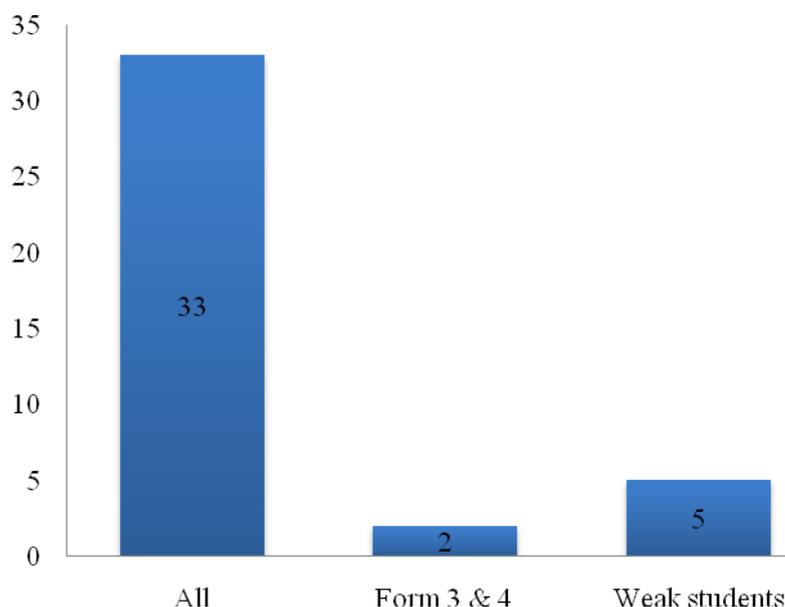


Fig 3: Classes involved in Extra Tuition

Figure 3 indicates that 33(82.5%) of the teachers were of the view that all the students were involved in extra tuition; 2 (5%) teachers indicated that forms 3 and 4 were involved, while only 5(12.5%) teachers indicated that it is weak students who are involved. This finding is in support of the earlier finding where 36(90.0%) of the teachers mentioned that extra tuition is conducted in all subjects in one of their questionnaire items. The findings are also consistent with those of students where 91 (56.8%) of them said that extra tuition is offered in all subjects.

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that most of the students were involved in extra tuition. This finding seems to be consistent with that of Bray (2003b) who reported, in a survey conducted in Hong Kong in 1996, that 25.6 % of lower secondary students, 34.4 % of middle secondary students and 45% of upper secondary students were recipients of extra tuition. This is an indication that extra tuition is a common practice, not only in Kenya but globally.

Teachers support for Extra Tuition.

Teachers' were asked to indicate their support for the practice of extra tuition by stating either 'yes' or 'no'. Their responses concerning support for the practice of extra tuition are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Teachers Support for extra tuition

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	34	85
No	6	15
Total	40	100

Table 3 shows that 34 (85.0%) of the teachers support the practice of extra tuition. Reasons advanced by teachers for support of extra tuition included the need to cover the syllabus 23(57.5%) and also to identify needs of individual learners, 14 (35.0%), among others. These findings were consistent with a study conducted in Hong Kong by Yiu (1996) which indicates that teachers were positive about extra tuition for it helped them to identify needs of individual learners and where the average child in the tutored group scored at the 66th percentile of the students in the untutored or control group.

Testing whether students perception of extra tuition on academic performance differs from that of teachers

An inferential analysis was conducted to address the study hypothesis. This objective sought to find out whether the perceived effect of extra tuition on academic performance by students differs from that of teachers. A descriptive analysis of the perception index between teachers and students perception is shown on Table 4.

Table 4: Mean Perception Index between Teachers and Students

Respondent Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teachers	40	2.130682	.5714649
Students	160	2.228977	.7582368

Table 4 clearly shows that the mean perception of teachers was 2.13 with a standard deviation of .57 while that of students was 2.22 with standard deviation of .76, implying that both the students and teachers had a favorable perception towards extra tuition as the mean ranges were between the agree and strongly agree continuum as per the interpretation scale.

In order to determine whether the mean differences in perception index as observed in Table 4 were statistically different, a t- test for independence of means was run to test the hypothesis which had been formulated thus: “Students’ perception of extra tuition on academic performance does not significantly differ from that of teachers”. This hypothesis was tested at a .05 level of significance as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: t-test for Equality of Perception Means between Teachers and Students

	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Equal variance assumed	-0.767	198	0.444	-0.0982955
Equal variances not assumed	-0.907	77.215	0.367	-0.0982955

From Table 5, it can be observed that there was no statistically significant difference between the perception scores of teachers and students about extra tuition on academic performance ($t(198) = -0.767, p = 0.444$). This implies that the perceptions of teachers and those of the students were statistically independent and hence the null hypothesis which stated that: Students’ perception of extra tuition on academic performance does not significantly differ from that of teachers was accepted ($p > .05$). This finding implies that both students and teachers had a positive view in regard to extra tuition.

Conclusion

Regarding the perception of teachers and students on effects of extra tuition on academic performance, it was concluded that most teachers (85%) and students (82%) supported the practice of extra tuition. It was also found that extra tuition helps students to cover syllabus and revise for examinations. The study revealed that there was no significance difference between the perception scores of teachers and students concerning extra tuition on academic performance. The null hypothesis that students' perception of extra tuition on academic performance does not significantly differ from that of teachers was therefore accepted.

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that extra tuition is a common practice in secondary schools in Machakos County. The researchers also concluded that almost all classes are involved and work covered during tuition time is mainly syllabus coverage and revision of work already done. In addition, the study concludes that extra tuition helps teachers to address the needs of individual learners, and that the provision of extra tuition is an intervention strategy to cover syllabus and address the weaknesses portrayed by candidates before they take the national examinations. It can finally be concluded that the current government policy on extra tuition ban does not seem to be in force in public secondary schools in Machakos County.

Recommendations

Given that the practice of extra tuition is widespread, the study recommends that, instead of banning extra tuition, there is need to streamline the practice in Kenyan schools so as to make it more effective. The researchers also recommend that there is need for the government to recruit more teachers in order to increase teacher student ratio. This will help teachers to address the needs of individual learners on time and thus reduce the need for extra tuition. At the same time the syllabus content needs to be reduced to allow students develop their talents and have time for leisure given that some students did not support extra tuition.

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