

SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF PRIVATE TUITION ON STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to focus on social and psychological impacts of private tuition on students and their families. The paper is based on primary data collected through a survey conducted with the help of a questionnaire to collect data from 360 respondents in District Hyderabad. The basic arguments of the paper are that students' engagement in private tuition has social, psychological and economic impacts on individual students and their family. It is found that attending private tuition results in less time available to students for spending with their family members. This extensive engagement in private tuition is being experienced in a mixed way that may or may not lead to depression among students. Besides that private tuition is also considered as an unnecessary economic burden on student's families. But still respondents consider that private tuition is positively effecting social relations within family and relatives.

INTRODUCTION

The decline in the quality of education in mainstream schools (especially in public sector schools) and a growing craze for achieving high grades in academic examinations for securing admission in universities and other professional institutions are resulting in a rapid rise in a culture of private tuition in Pakistan. In last few decades, Pakistan has witnessed a rapid mushrooming of the private tuition academies and a whole business industry flourishing around private tutoring. This growth is certainly emerged to respond the growing demand of private supplementary tuition for instruction regarding curriculum but held outside the main educational institutions after class times by a large number of Pakistani students.

The rapid growth of private tuition industry has affected all aspects of life in Pakistan. The main stakeholders in this regard are individual students, their families, mainstream public or private educational institutions, state and the broader society. Private tuition has affected the quality of education, performance of public sector teachers and the reputation of mainstream public educational institutions. In this wake it also affects the broader society in terms of creating private tuition as status symbol and widening existing socio-economic inequalities in society.

The phenomenon is not without impacts on individual students and their families. These two are the basic stakeholders. It is very important to explore the social, psychological and economic impacts of growing private tuition and students' overwhelming engagement in it on individual students and their families. But the lack of available data on different aspects of private tuition in Pakistan is a barrier for comprehensive study of the phenomenon and policy measures to make it beneficial for society by reducing its negative impacts. Accordingly this paper focuses on this existing knowledge gap in the context of Pakistani society and intends to provide the original research findings based on empirical data collected by the researchers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Private tuition is defined as paid supplementary instructions regarding academic subjects outside the mainstream educational institution (Aslam 2011; ESP 2006). It is a common practice throughout Pakistan. The students belonging to all socioeconomic classes (low, middle, and higher income groups) and all educational levels (from primary schools to the university classes) join private tuitions in Pakistan (Afzal and Khan 2006).

There are various forms of giving and receiving private tuitions in Pakistan. Afzal and Khan (2006:17) recounted various forms in which private tuition is available in the country. In the most traditional way, the tutor goes to the student's home for delivering lessons to individual pupil or small groups. In similar way, students may also go to tutors home for gaining lesson (Afzal and Khan 2006:17). With the passage of time, the arrangements

have changed. There are a large number of private tuition centers/academies mushrooming rapidly all around the country. These private tuition centers are run in a systematic and formal way to offer a large variety of courses for students' to be selected and joined according to pupils needs (Afzal and Khan 2006). Private tuition in English is also very common in Pakistan as our society associate worth to those who are proficient in this language. Besides this language proficiency is also necessary for gaining admission in high repute institutions with English as medium of instruction (Afzal and Khan 2006).

The reasons behind student's opting for tuition in large number are varied. Large number of students in each class and the declining quality of education in government institutions, absence of students from school, extra help required to resolve their learning difficulties, growing craze for achieving higher grades, and easy and short ways of examination preparation through provision of notes, and guess papers by tuition centers are some of the common reasons for student's to join private tuitions (Chuadhry and Javed 2012; Urooj 2012; Sajid 1984; Zafar 1992).

Afzal and Khan (2006) also identified similar reasons that forced students to join private tuition in Pakistan as to gain help for removing the difficulties they face in particular subject (e.g. Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, etc.) and maximizing their learning acquisition. Some take up private tuition for gaining individual attention and special support in their studies, for finding better practical facilities for science subjects than regular public sector institutions, for finding notes and model papers, or to ensure higher grades in board examinations (Afzal and Khan 2006).

There are some reasons for parents' preference to arrange private tuitions for their children. Afzal and Khan 2006 in their research study found that some of the parents' consider private tuition as a trend or status symbol where children learn from the rich and do not feel inferior. For some others, it is an extra care for child in some area difficulty or for heavy load of home work (Afzal and Khan 2006).

A variety of people are engaged in this business industry of providing private tuitions to students in various countries. It is a

common practice in several regions that the teachers of mainstream educational institutions provide private tuition to students (Bray 2006; Bray and Silova 2006). In Pakistan mostly private tuition is being provided by retired teachers, serving teachers of public and private educational institutions, college and university students and some persons who have no direct relation with the education sector (Afzal and Khan 2006). Mark Bray and Iveta Silova (2006:29) identified that a variety of tuition providers ranging from university or school students who became tutors to earn pocket money to the retirees who serve as tutors to benefit society and earn some money, along with a middle stratum between them as full time or part time tutors with or without educational trainings as teachers.

This whole changing scenario of rapid mushrooming of private tuition industry in the country is also affecting social, psychological and economic aspect of life in Pakistan. It results in positive as well as negative effects on the social and psychological lives of Pakistani people; especially students and their families (Afzal and Khan 2006). Some of the negative effects of private tuition on individual students and their families are the economic burden on family income and the social necessity or compulsion to meet the fashion or trend of joining private tuition even when it is not necessary for some students. It is observed that joining private tuition center has become a status symbol or fashion, thus emerging as a social necessity for students and their parents in order to save their children from feeling inferior (Urooj 2012; Chuadhry and Javed 2012; Afzal and Khan 2006). It is observed that a substantial portion of family/household income is being spent on the cost of acquiring private tutoring in different countries (Silova 2009; Sujatha 2006). Afzal and Khan (2006) argue that it causes a considerable financial burden on parents. Bray, Mazawi, and Sultana (2013:2) identify that this economic burden imposed by private tuition plays role in maintaining social inequalities as financially strong families may spend much to acquire good quality of tutoring for their children.

Similarly, private tuition also has some negative effect on educational system in the country. The involvement of mainstream

teachers in private tuition industry is not without concerns. It leads to several mal practices (Afzal and Khan 2006; Bray 2006). Teachers complete the curriculum partially in mainstream schools while asking students to attend the private tuitions for its completion (Bray 2006). It may also effect on school and university grades of students while teachers avoid their primary duties of teaching in mainstream schools (Heung-ju 2006). The main motive behind becoming a private tutor is to earn some “extra” money (Afzal and Khan 2006; ESP 2006:96). Consequent to the mal practices by teachers, the trend of giving quality education becomes a commercial business and in service teachers became the violators of government services rules (Afzal and Khan 2006).

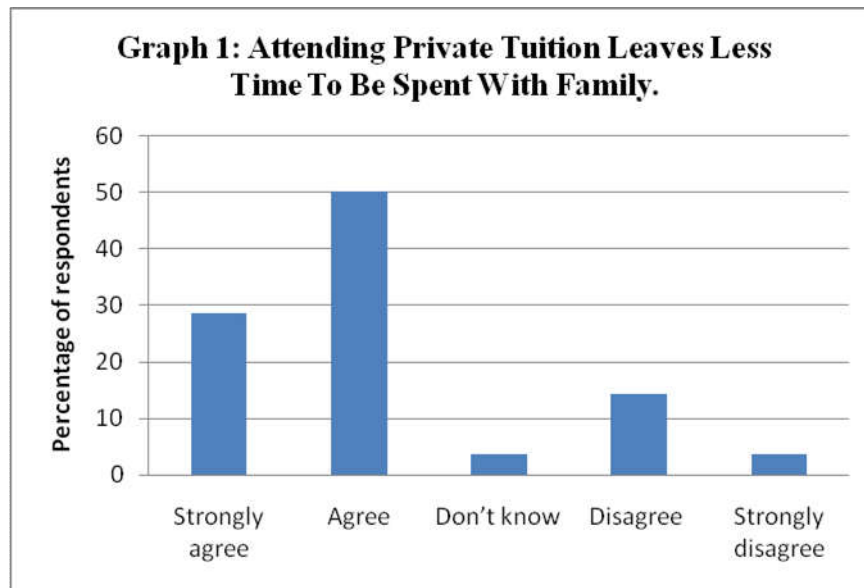
RESEARCH METHOD

The research aims to explore social, psychological and economic impact of growing private tuition culture in Pakistan on individual students and their families. The research is based on primary data collected through survey conducted with the help of a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The data was collected from 360 respondents including students, parents, teachers, and common public. It includes 54.7% men and 45.2% women. The data was statistically analyzed to be presented in the forms of graphs to serve the aim of this paper.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

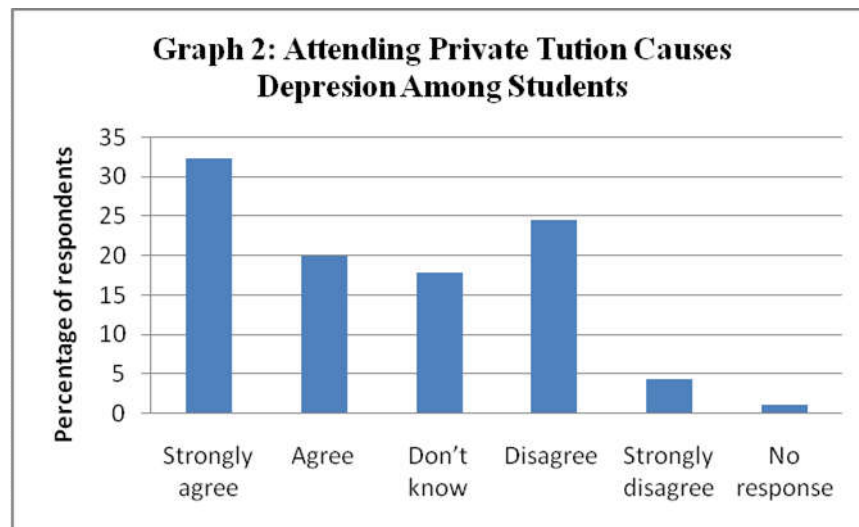
The data analysis shows that private tuition has social and psychological impact on individuals, their families and the broader society in Pakistan. Firstly, the paper discusses with the supporting data regarding the time available to students to be spent with family, the possibility of suffering from depression and having inclination for suicide among individual students due to their extensive engagement in private tuitions. Secondly, the impact on family was analyzed in terms of economic burden on family and the effect on student’s relation with family and relatives.

Social and Psychological Impacts of Private Tuition on Individual Students: Individual student is one who comes in contact with a private tutor and tuition centers, directly. It is found that the private tuition center have social and psychological impacts on students. It is observed that majority of the respondents (i.e. 78.5%) consider that the engagement in private tuition leaves less time to students to be spent with his or her family (see Graph 1). More than 17% disagree with this idea. Only 3.25% are unaware about any such impact on student's social life within his or her family.

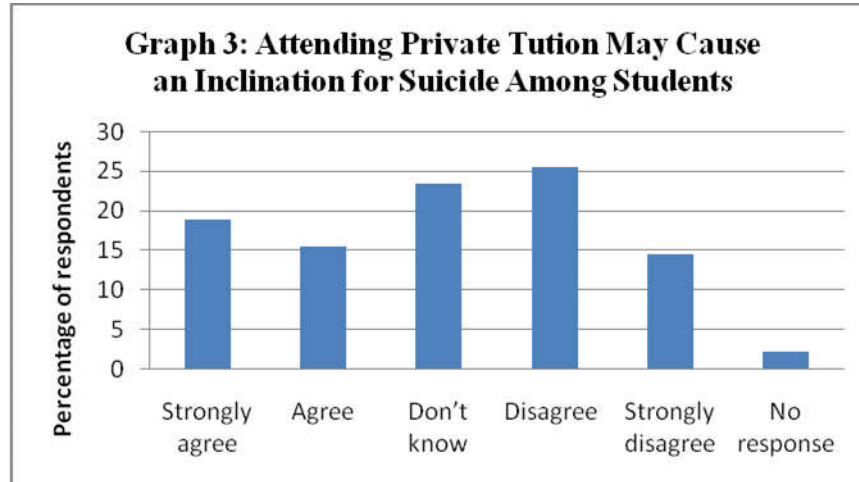


Besides effecting the time available to student's to be spent in building social relations within family, attending private tuition also leaves some psychological impact on individual students. The assumption was that engagement in private tuition may cause mental/psychological disorders like depression in students. The data analysis confirms this assumption that attending private tuition may cause depression among students. More than half (i.e. almost 52%) of the respondents are found agree with the idea that tuition center creates depression among students studying there

(see Graph 2). While 28.8% respondents still disagree to this idea. A sufficient number of respondents (i.e. 17.7%) showed unawareness about whether private tuition is source of creating depression among students or not. A marginal number (i.e. 1%) did not respond to this question.



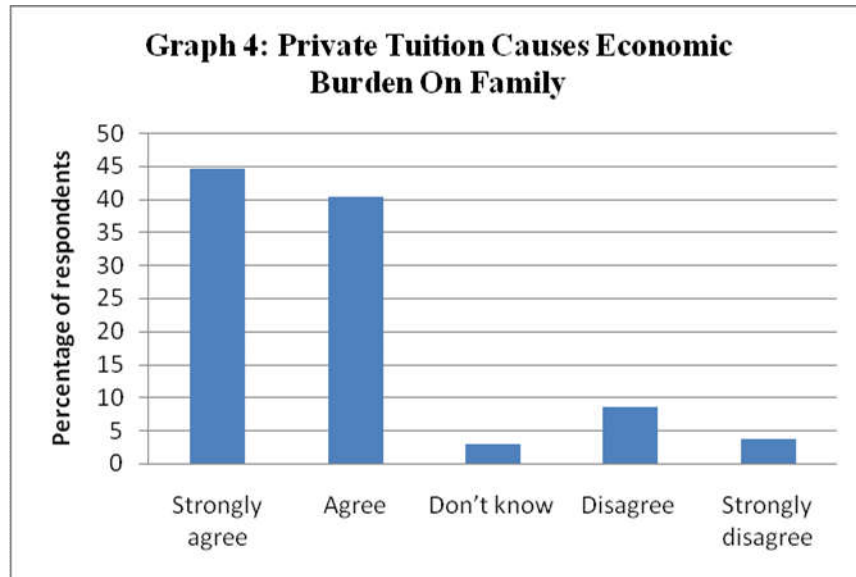
It is also necessary to understand the consequences of this depression in students. It was assumed that it may stimulate students to commit suicide. But the hypothesis was rejected as the data analysis shows that almost 40% of the respondents disagreed that it may cause any inclination for suicide among students (see Graph 3). While another 34% of the respondents still agree that it may raise an inclination for suicide among students. Still 23% of the respondents showed their unawareness along with another 2% of respondents who did not respond to this question.



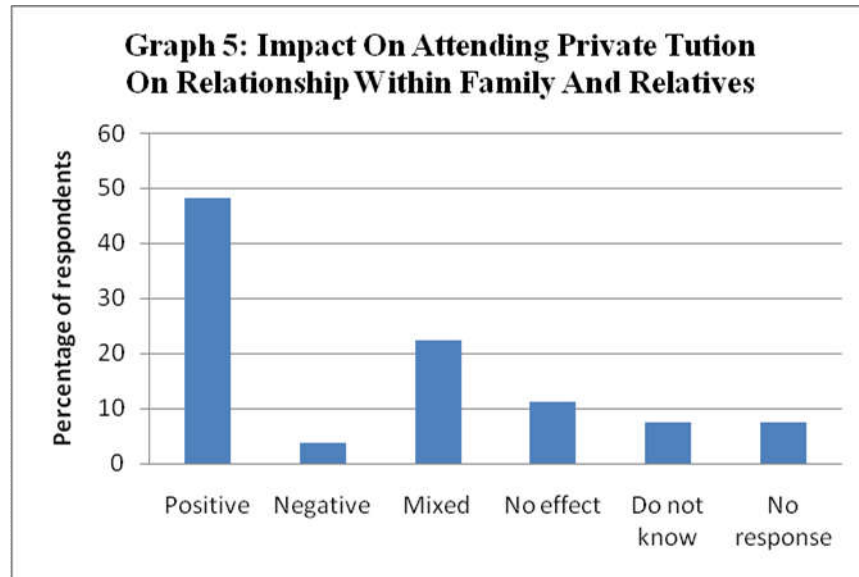
Socio-Economic Impact of Private Tuition on Family:

Besides disturbing individual student's social and psychological conditions by leaving less time for family and causing depression, private tuition also affects students' family in economic and social terms. The sufficiently high money invested in this paid supplementary private tuition negatively effects family budget and is assumed as an unnecessary economic burden on the family income. On the contrary, private tuition is also found altering the social relations within family and relatives in a positive way.

The data collected and analyzed show that an overwhelmingly large section of research participants (i.e. almost 85%, including 44.5% as strongly agree and 40.4% as agree) are found agree that the money invested in private tuition causes an unnecessary economic burden on family resources (see Graph 4). Only 12% of the respondents disagree with this idea. While 3% did not know anything in this regard.



Besides negatively affecting the economic condition of student's family, private tuition also effects students' relationship within family and relatives. It was hypothesized that private tuition may lead to have negative impact on relations within family. The data analysis rejected this assumption. It is found that majority of the respondents (i.e. 48%) agree that attending private tuition centers leaves positive impact on relations within family and relatives (see Graph 5). Another 22% are of the opinion that it created neither completely negative, nor completely positive impact on relationships within family and close relatives rather it has a mixed kind of impact on these relations. Only 3.7% found this impact of private tuition on relations with family and relatives as negative and severing. Another 7% of respondents showed their lack of knowledge in this regard. While 11% thought that tuition has no effect at all on any relationship within family or broader circle of relatives.



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This research focuses on some social, psychological and economic effects of private tuition on individual student and their families. It mainly focuses on effects of private tuition on individual students' social and psychological conditions resulting in less time for social relations within family, and psychologically causing depression among students. Similarly it also focuses on social and economic effects of private tuition on student's family. It explores the economic burden caused by private tuition on family income and the nature of effect on the relationship within family.

The data analysis reveals that majority of respondents experienced that private tuition leaves less time to individual students for maintaining their social relationships within family. A mixed kind of experience was shared by respondents in assigning responsibility of depression among students to private tuition. Although the majority (52%) agree that private tuition causes depression among students but at the same time a highly significant number of respondents (more than 49%) are either found disagree or showed their lack of knowledge about private

tuition's responsibility of causing depression among students. According to the experience of a large number of respondents, private tuition is also not responsible for creating an inclination for or causing suicide among students.

The data analysis also found that private tuition affects the economic and social conditions of the family. It is found that a large majority of the respondents (85%) experienced that private tuition has caused extra economic burden on family income. It is observed that, despite leaving less time to individual students for maintaining family relations and giving an extra economic burden to family economy, a large majority of respondents (48%) experienced a positive effect of attending private tuition on student's social relations within family and relatives. In short, it can be concluded that private tuition is a reality in social, psychological and economic aspects of life in Pakistani society. It leaves both positive and negative effects on social psychological and economic conditions of individual students, their family and the broader society in the country.

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