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Proposed Alternatives to Decrease Private Tutoring in Egyptian Pre-University Education

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ABSTRACT

Private tutoring continues to exist in Egypt, even though it has been officially banned by the 2016 ministerial decree No. 53 and the 2018 ministerial decree No. 714. The current research reviews the relevant literature, provides a background on private tutoring, analyzes the current policy for dealing with private tutoring in Egypt, and it proposes three policy alternatives for decreasing private tutoring in Egyptian pre-university education. These alternatives are turning most educational curricula into educational games, lengthening the school day, and returning extra-curricular activities to Egyptian schools. These policy options are evaluated based on the criteria of equity and fairness, effectiveness, political feasibility, administrative ease, and cost. Based on this policy analysis, a recommendation is made for Egypt.

I. Introduction

Private tutoring sometimes also called ‘*shadow education*’ or ‘*private tuition*’, refers to an income-generating teaching business of different academic subjects outside school, shadowing and mimicking the mainstream academic activities offered by formal schools (Bray, 2003; Bray and Lykins, 2012). Thus, the private tutoring business could not stand alone without the mainstream school system; it is an echo, supplementary, or shadow for it. These extra lessons are given to students in exchange for a fee after the regular school day, to enhance academic subjects. Mainly, private tutoring takes place to “review school subjects, do homework or prepare for tests and exams. These lessons take place in the form of one-to-one tutoring, in small groups or large classes and even online” (Bray 2013). On the contrary, private tutoring is different from remedial classes in schools or family academic support to students (Bray 2003). Extra classes are attended by students to gain the required knowledge that they lack during their school day.

Ille and Pacey (2019) have cited that among many reasons for private tutoring in both developing and developed countries are: high revenues and the competitive nature of the school system. Sieverding, Krafft, and Elbadawy (2019) stated that one of the most important drivers of private tutoring in Egypt is high-stakes exams in the education system which has promoted the growth of the tutoring market.

Many studies have cited Egypt as one of the largest, far more spread markets of the private tutoring business beyond most people could imagine (Bray 2007; Ille and Peacey 2019; Chui 2016, 195). Ille and Peacey (2019) claimed that the Egyptian education “system is plagued by a decline in full-time professional teachers, an underfunded public education system, large class sizes, poor facilities and a dense curriculum which has contributed to the decline of teaching quality” (2019).

All of the above-mentioned formed a convenient environment for different forms of pressures, some that arise from students’ and/or parents’ choices to have after-school private tutoring. Various forms of these are due to the pressure that low-income teachers exert on students to pay for after-school classes, which adds an increased financial burden on families and households (Ille and Peacey 2019).

Considering the research context, the current research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relevant literature on private tutoring?
2. What is the background of private tutoring in Egypt?
3. What is the current Egyptian policy for dealing with widespread private tutoring?
4. What are the proposed alternatives for decreasing private tutoring in Egypt?
5. According to what standards will the proposed alternatives be compared?
6. After comparing the alternatives, what is the most appropriate alternative recommended?

II. Methodology

The purpose of this research is to conduct a policy analysis to examine three proposed alternatives put by the researcher to decrease private tutoring at the pre-university education level in Egypt. Research has proven, so far, that private tutoring has increased despite the private tutoring ban act of 2016, using Bardach and Patashnik *Policy Analysis Eightfold Path Framework* (2016). The research demonstrates that private tutoring increased since the time the ban policy had been implemented in 2016, as many private centers opened and more garage-like places were detected.

After providing a literature review and background for private tutoring in Egypt, the current research will examine how private tutoring impacts families, students, tutors, and schooling in Egypt. This research will finally present three policy options to decrease private tutoring in Egypt: turning most educational curricula into offline, customized, and personalized educational games; lengthening the school day instead of two and three shifts per school day; returning extra-curricular activities to schools. According to Bardach and Patashnik (2016), these proposed alternatives will be evaluated based on their suggested criteria of ‘equity and fairness’, ‘effectiveness’, ‘political feasibility’, ‘administrative ease’, and ‘cost’. Based on this policy analysis, a policy option will be recommended for decreasing private tutoring in Egypt.

To address the problem of the increase of private tutoring despite the ban in 2016, three policy options or alternatives were identified. The researcher formulated the policy options based on an in-depth literature review of studies, legislations, recommendations, policies, and best practices in the field. The Egyptian Knowledge Bank (EKB) and Google Scholar were the main search engines to gather relevant information about the research topic and formulate the policy alternatives, in addition to other Egyptian formal websites.

According to Eugene Bardach’s (2016) *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, the proposed policy alternatives had to be analyzed, evaluated, and compared based on certain criteria to prove their applicability in the Egyptian education context. The most recommended criteria accordingly were political feasibility, equity and fairness, administrative ease, effectiveness, and cost. The political feasibility of the policy alternative means that it could be politically applicable. Equity and fairness of the policy alternative mean that it addresses all stakeholders equally and fairly. Effectiveness addresses the efficiency, success, and usefulness of the proposed alternative to affected people. As for the administrative ease of a proposed policy alternative, it refers to the degree of simplicity or complexity during application and implementation. Accordingly, when analyzing and examining a new policy alternative, it is necessary to consider the “inflexible administrative systems and bureaucratic interests of the state” (Bardach 2016, 35). Lastly, the financial cost of each policy alternative means that it will be scrutinized according to its estimated value.

III. Background of Private Tutoring in Egypt

i. The Move from Socialism to Capitalism

Egypt has moved from socialism to capitalism, turning from a highly centralized economy towards a market-driven one. The country as a whole has undergone radical shifts in the last five decades including the education system. One of the radical shifts that have been made is the widespread of private tutoring across the country shadowing the main education system. This shadow education system resembles the experiences of some other countries in the developing world. However, Egypt has some outstanding characteristics that distinguish its dynamics of change. First is the dramatic paradigm shift of the past few decades from socialism to capitalism, which has given massive space for the privatization and marketization of many assets owned by the state, one of which is schools and education services which had undergone major change by being privatized (Ismael and El-Sa’id 1990).

Private for-profit schools are dominant in Egypt for the elite and middle-class families, leaving common for-free schools for poor households. Second is the paradigm shift from education as a basic right to education for those who pay more. This means that education became a business,

where the teachers provide the education to those who pay for it. Third, is the emergence of an Egyptian culture that values education and learning as a means of employment and social mobility, which has increased competition among Egyptian families, and that provided fertile land for the astounding growth of private tutoring. Fourth is the stratification of Egyptian society according to socioeconomic levels, which has been echoed in the differentiation of school education between the rich and the poor, and the private and the public (Joya 2020; Ismael and El-Sa'id 1990).

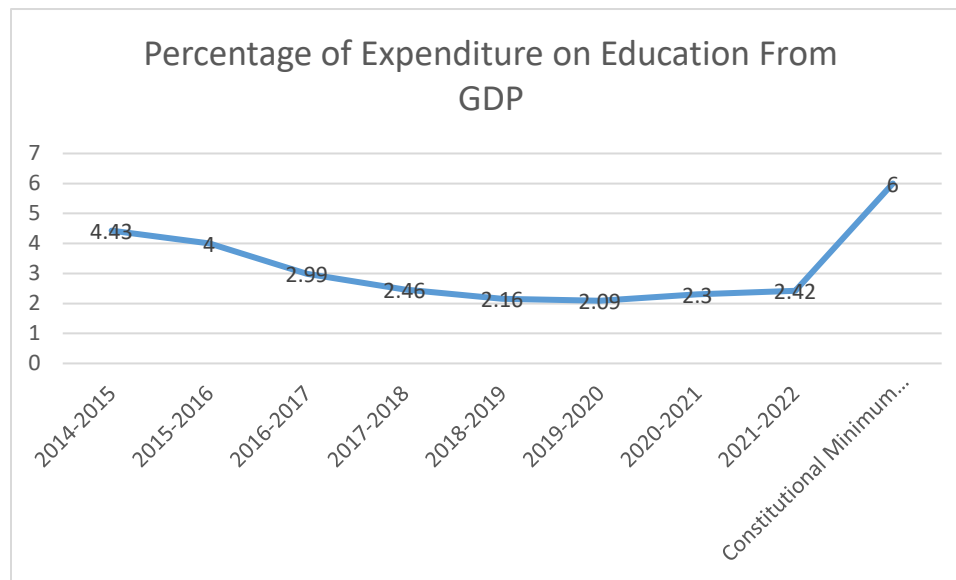
ii. The Shift System

It has been noted that a 42% of schools in this public education system, sometimes operate in two or more shifts during the school day; due to the insufficient numbers of schools that do not meet the increasing numbers of students per year. This created a “morning shift” and an “afternoon shift,” where the school day is divided to allow the attendance of various groups of students during the day. The school day is rather short that ranging from five to six hours (Zibani 2002; Elbadawy 2015). As for the density of classrooms, it has been confirmed that some classes in various government schools reach 80 students per class and that there are schools where students sit on the floor (Egypt Today 2009, 83). Some public Egyptian schools implemented the shift system to face the rapidly expanded enrolment in pre-university education compensating for the lack of enough teachers, classrooms, and buildings. (CAPMAS, Statistical Yearbook 2022).

iii. Decrease in Government Spending on Education

As shown in figure 1, the Egyptian government’s spending on education has decreased, as evidenced by the budget for the fiscal year of 2022.

Figure 1



Source: Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, 2022. The financial statement for the budget for the fiscal year 2021/2022, and the economic development plan for the year 2021/2022. Less than the constitutional minimum: Education expenditure ratios of GDP (%).

Although there is a steady increase every year in allocations (in the billion pounds), it does not rise to the level of the steady increase in GDP (it reaches 7.1 trillion Egyptian pounds, according to the economic development plan 2021-2022). That percentage amounted to about

4.4% in 2014/2015, then decreased until it reached 2.9% in the year of floating the exchange rate of the Egyptian pound (2016/2017), which has reduced its value by almost 50% against the dollar (Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, 2022).

The constitution (Egypt's constitution of 2014) stipulates the right of all Egyptians to an education that meets the conditions of quality, which qualifies them for an equal opportunity in the labor market. Hence, the resources of the education budget should be used to cover the current and investment needs of formal government education.

iv. Egypt's Unemployment Rate

Attributed to the inflow of new graduates into the Egyptian labor market by the end of the academic year at the end of September 2020, Egypt's unemployment rate reached 7.5 percent in the third quarter of 2021, rising from 7.3 percent in the same period one and a quarter years ago. It was the highest unemployment rate since the second quarter of 2020 as the number of unemployed persons increased by 150 thousand to 2.2 million in the third quarter. The unemployment rate went up in urban areas (11.4 percent versus 10.9 percent in Q3 2020) but dropped in rural areas (4.4 percent versus 4.5 percent), as shown in the following figure 2.

Figure 2



Source: The Unemployment Rate in Egypt, CAPMAS.

As shown in figure 3, Egypt recorded a Government Budget deficit equal to 7.20 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product in 2019. The government Budget in Egypt averaged -9.43 percent of GDP from 2002 until 2019, reaching an all-time high of -6.80 percent of GDP in 2008 and a record low of -12.50 percent of GDP in 2015 (CAPMAS 2021).

Figure 3
Egypt's GDP



Source: Ministry of Finance, Egypt.

Thus, limited employment opportunities in Egypt, leave space for private tutoring as it is a freelance profession, which makes up for households dealing with social and financial challenges (Rizk and Owusu-Afriyie, 2014).

IV. The Impacts of Private Tutoring

i. The Impacts on Egyptian Households

Due to their decreased salaries since the 1980s, Egyptian teachers supplemented their income through after-school private classes. Moreover, there is no obligation to have a degree in teaching, qualifications, or educational background for outside school teachers. All that matters is the quality of instruction and teaching competencies, time spent with tutees, and the effect on academic performance. Private tutors are different from school teachers regarding their various educational backgrounds. That is to say, secondary school students, university students, school teachers, teacher trainees, and other individuals from various academic backgrounds and occupations could provide private tutoring classes (CAPMAS, 2022).

Egyptian parents on the other hand, willing to secure the future of their children, sought to enhance the academic performance of their children by giving them, private classes. Egypt has 24.4 million pre-university students (excluding Al-Azhar Education) in 2020/2021 (CAPMAS 2022), with average annual household expenses of 11-20% (CAPMAS 2019-2020). Accordingly, the educational sector faces challenges for itself and families, as the statistics indicate that Egyptian families spend about \$2.5bn on education in the year 2004/2005 without adding other expenses such as clothing, transportation, nutrition, and pocket money (Rizk and Owusu-Afriyie 2014).

To fight this challenge, a ministerial decree No. 53 of 2016 was issued to ban private tutoring in Egypt, but private tutoring seems to have proliferated a lot. After the *Private-Tutoring Ban Act* was implemented in 2016, more private centers and classes were detected than that before implementing the policy. In 2020, it was estimated that Egyptian households spent \$8.5bn a year on private tutoring (CAPMAS 2020). Furthermore, a study prepared by the Egyptian Cabinet Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC 2020) revealed that between 61-77% of school

students in different academic years receive private lessons. It also shows that the percentage of those who take private lessons increases or decreases according to the level of family income, while the percentage decreases to about 61% in low-income families, it increases to 77% in high-income ones, and the total percentage is close to (69%) of students and that the demand for private lessons no longer reflects the low academic performance level of students, but it supposedly ensures a better academic performance level and more training and education (CAPMAS 2020).

ii. The Impacts on the School System

Public schools in Egypt face challenges in the provision of adequate education due to reductions in school hours and the acute shortage of teachers and schools needed to suffice for a growing number of students each academic year (Ewiss et al. 2019 63-64). In addition, many factors contribute to the flourishing of private lessons given by trained qualified school teachers. The short school day, in addition to the low income often decreases the motivation of school teachers to teach well and increases the incentive to give private lessons (Ewiss et al. 2019; Ille and Pacey 2019).

V. Current Policies Addressing Private Tutoring in Egypt

The Egyptian government inaugurated strict policy guidelines in 2016, aimed at confronting the increase in private tutoring and reducing the burden of education for pre-university students by criminalizing private tutoring centers that shadow mainstream education. These government policies aimed at the following:

i. Criminalizing Private Tutoring Activity

Egypt issued laws to criminalize private tutoring, such as ministerial decree no.714 of 2018 and ministerial decree no.53 of 2016. Although there has been a draft of a law to be drafted and all official media and newspapers announced it to criminalize private tutoring activity with the following prominent features that could have been put into action, as follows: 1) Anyone who gives a private lesson in an educational center or facility or a place open to the public shall be punished with a fine of no less than five thousand Egyptian pounds and not exceeding fifty thousand Egyptian pounds; 2) in case of repeating the same crime, he shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of no less than one year and not exceeding three years; 3) Anyone who participates in committing that crime shall be punished with a fine of no less than 5,000 Egyptian Pounds and not more than 50,000 Egyptian Pounds and imprisonment for a period of not less than one year and not more than 3 years; and 4) In all cases, all the items used in the crime shall be confiscated. Nevertheless, this law has not been issued until the present day (Egyptian Education News 2016; Mamdouh 2021; Khairy 2021; Elwatan News 2021).

ii. The Closure of Private Facilities

The judicial police at the Ministry of Education monitor any centers or facilities for delivering private lessons and close them in cooperation with the concerned governorates. Moreover, the Ministry of Education besieged private tutoring centers, facilities, apartments, garage-like places, theatres, wedding halls, and their employees through a set of procedures to close private tutoring centers, as follows:

First: The penalty of depriving the teacher from teaching or transferring him/her to another governorate. If the teacher is caught while giving private lessons, he/she will be directly investigated and he/she will face charges.

Second: Create a tax file for the private tutor and a lawsuit will be initiated against the private tutor if he/she evaded paying taxes on his income-generating activity.

Third: Cutting off electricity provided to private tutoring centers and facilities. The governorate and local authorities cooperate with the judicial affairs of the Ministry of Education, whereby private tutoring centers are reported to the governorate. The governorate will cut off water and electricity for the violating private lessons centers, and it will be closed.

Fourth: Punishing the teacher if he/she is conducting his private tutoring activities during school education time. The Judicial Police will have to prove the case.

Although, the Egyptian education authorities are exerting their utmost effort to combat and prevent private tutoring activities, notifying the Egyptian Tax Authority of the activity of private lessons, and opening a tax file, is contradicting with private tutoring being banned and criminalized. This matter may cause confusion as opening a tax file renders the activity of private tutoring to become legitimate through registering and licensing it. This may require that there be cooperation and coordination between the Ministry of Education and the Egyptian Tax Authority (Egyptian Education News 2016; Mamdouh 2021; Khairy 2021; Elwatan News 2021).

iii. Encouraging the Student's Self-Learning

For students, at all levels and in all grades of pre-university education, to continue the learning process in the critical period of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Egyptian Ministry of Education has made available the use of various sources of self-learning. These include 1. Our school channel (1); 2. Our school channel (2); 3. The Egyptian Knowledge Bank; 4. The Zakir (*Study*) platform; 5. The learning management platform for secondary schools; 6. The live broadcast platform; 7. The Egypt lessons platform; and 8. Other digital means (MoETE, Egyptian Education Platform, 2021-2022; MoETE, the Educational Platform, 2021-2022).

VI. Policy Alternatives

For the sake of addressing the problem and improving the status quo of private tutoring in Egypt in pre-university education, the research proposes and analyzes three different policy alternatives to evaluate the possibility of its implementation against Bardach's (2016) criteria. The three alternative policy suggestions are:

- Option A: Turning most of the educational curricula into online/offline, customized, and personalized educational games.
- Option B: Lengthening the school day instead of two and three shifts per school day.
- Option C: Returning extra-curricular activities to schools.

i. Option A: Turning into Online/Offline, Customized, and Personalized Educational Games

One strategy that could work to decrease private tutoring would be to turn into online/offline, customized, and personalized educational games (serious games). Educational games would provide pre-university students with the opportunities to educate themselves, the empowerment of studying on their own, and the advantages of self-evaluation and self-motivation, without the fear of scrutiny, failure, or pressure (Elabnody et al. 2017; Majuri et al. 2018). Currently, students are given tablets from the Egyptian Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MoETE 2022) at their schools (UNICEF Education 2021). However, these tablets may

pose somewhat of a challenge. Under the current policy, a student may receive a tablet, but he/she will not be able to use it outside the walls of his/her school (Amer 2020; MoETE 2022), and thus the current policy does not serve in decreasing private tutoring.

According to a reported best way to combat private tutoring in Singapore, *Digi-Eskwela* is a supplemental education to classroom learning that introduces and integrates e-learning to children living in rural areas using a digital device (educational tablet). It focuses on turning educational learning into educational games using gamification and mobile technology. Through using tablets loaded with games with educational content, the engagement, eagerness, and motivation of poor children to learn and achieve academic success will increase. Instead of the curriculum being preloaded in physical textbooks and subjects or modules, the tablet will serve as a platform for educational materials. The main aim of this project Tiwala Kids and Communities and The Patatas (a social enterprise in Singapore) is to increase the access of poor children to learning technologies. *Project Digi-Eskwela* also depends on ‘*edutainment*’, which is interweaving fun and happiness with the experience of learning through digital technologies. This allows students to spend less on textbooks when education is provided via tablet or computer. Implementing the project *Digi-Eskwela* in Tiwala depends on partnership with public schools using the educational tablet platform to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of poor children, showing more than 50% improvement in numeracy and literacy skills. Positive feedback on how the children have improved their listening, reading, vocabulary, and speed in mathematical problems had been given by *Tiwala* teachers¹.

The project would allow schools and families to benefit from the information available on digital devices and save extra money that would be otherwise spent on purchasing textbooks. Excessive training is needed so that teachers could ensure their preparedness to teach lessons using digital devices. In that respect, Egyptian policymakers could promote projects like the *Digi-Eskwela* project which ensures equality in using available learning resources for the poor, disadvantaged, deprived, disabled or ethnic minorities living within the society whether in rural areas or on the outskirts of different cities.

This policy alternative would help in easing some of the administrative burdens of the educational system. Currently, this project has already been successfully implemented and this policy has succeeded. Turning into online/offline, customized, and personalized educational games require a small administrative change. If this policy is implemented and educational games were designed, I estimate that it would cost Egypt about \$1,400,000. This estimate was made according to the average time needed for designing the basic game (3-6 months), using the average rate of \$100,000 a month (SPD Load, 2022).

ii. Option B: Lengthening the School Day

Many schools in developing countries have four-hour school days with two shifts per day. The four-hour shift jeopardizes the school education quality, putting a great financial burden on governments to consider elongating the school day to ensure quality education. Boris Johnson, former UK prime minister, has said that lengthening the school day is “*the right thing to do*” and the government of the UK is considering how to benefit from extra hours in additional tuition and activities (Elgot, Jul 2021).

¹ See also for further detail <https://tiwala.org/projects/digi-eskwela/>

Supporters of the shift system argue that evidence from developed countries shows that increasing instructional time has minimal effect on achievement scores and so the reform is unnecessary. When implemented in developing countries, lengthening the school day is somehow expensive. Thus moving from the shift system or short school day to full-day in primary education could increase the costs by between 25 and 60 percent. The need for more buildings, facilities, and classrooms will be necessary. It will necessary to train and hire new teachers to cover for the shortages in the number of teachers who teach both shifts. Moreover, teachers' salaries would increase with the increase in working hours (Gabrieli and Goldstein 2008; Orkin 2013; Dominguez and Ruffini 2018).

There is also evidence from Ethiopia, a low-income country, on the effect of extending the school day. In 2005, the Ethiopian federal government commanded districts to terminate the shift system, but districts gradually reformed the system and did not end the shift system abruptly. Two-and-a-half hours were added to the school day to increase from four hours to six-and-a-half hours, a major change of 60 percent. Orkin (2013) found that extending the school day affects academic achievement positively, as it improves it on average. Results showed that, apart from reading, lengthening the school for eight-year-old children improved their scores in writing and mathematics.

In 2009, the full-day reform had a great impact on schools that implemented the 'reform', as the children's skills in numeration increased 2.17 times more than children in those same schools in 2002, before the implementation of the full-day reform. They also improved from not being able to write to be able to write with difficulty or write easily by 3.51 times. They also improved their reading skills by 1.12 times (Orkin 2013, 4). This alternative helps in: a) improving the educational outcomes of poor, underprivileged children and b) providing a low-cost, efficient education for children (Briggs and Simons 2014, 3).

The school day that has been lengthened as much as a-one-and-a-half hours improved to a great extent. Massachusetts in the U.S. has been a leader in Expanded Learning Time (ELT) for more than a decade. This initiative was created by the state legislature in 2005, with immense funding being allocated to it, in support of underprivileged schools that lengthened the school year (Gabrieli and Goldstein, 2008). Within this context, 19 schools and more than 10,000 students are currently supported by this initiative. The added hours support core subject instruction, teacher professional development, and student engagement activities (National Center on Time & Learning (NCTL), 2016). Schools are given more "comprehensive educational experiences as well as more informal play time and social development opportunities that too many schools today are not able to provide simply because they don't have enough time to do so," (National Center on Time and Learning (NCTL), 2016).

Another example from the US experience is that of Kuss Middle School in Fall River. Kuss Middle School in Fall River, Massachusetts, was labeled in 2004 as a "chronically underperforming" school of level 4, which reflects a low status that required attention and remedial intervention. By 2013, however, Kuss, in addition to other low-ranking schools that suffer from high poverty, had leveled up to number one. The credit for such a clear improvement in student achievement at Kuss has been attributed to the added hours to the short school day or extended learning time (ELT) and the dedication of many school officials, educators, parents, and community leaders.

By 2013, the project of extending the school day got popular with a joint program between NCTL, the U.S. Department of Education and the Ford Foundation called the “Time Collaborative.” This three-year initiative involved 40 schools in the states of Colorado, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Tennessee. Increasing numbers of school districts across the U.S. are also extending the school day, although not part of the initiative. Currently, the number of schools that have extended their learning hours increased to around 1,500 schools across the U.S. since 2009 (National Center on Time and Learning (NCTL) and Massachusetts 2020; 2016).

Furthermore, KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) is another program in the US that is used to enhance the education system. KIPP runs a national network of elementary, middle, and high schools in the US set up in educationally underserved communities². Their mission is to equip children with the knowledge, skills, character, and habits needed to succeed in college and the workplace. For the sake of achieving these shared core principles, KIPP schools have a longer-than-normal school day; KIPP Infinity Middle School in Harlem, New York City is a high-performing middle school that has a long school day of 9 hours, in addition to a one-hour after school activities, which are obligatory for some.

The research found that positive and high performance in reading and math is due to the increase of an hour in instructional time dedicated to core subjects. Moreover, the underperformance in math and reading is due to an hour increase in non-core subjects. Research results show that the greatest beneficiaries of initiatives that expand time in KIPP schools are the low-income, underprivileged children who comprise the majority of students. KIPP runs extensive summer schools to control the loss of summer learning³.

iii. Option C: Returning Extra-Curricular Activities to Schools

Peguero (2011) categorized the student’s involvement according to two forms of school-based extracurricular activities: 1) academic (i.e., band, orchestra, chorus, or choir; school play or music; student government; achievement-related honor society; or school yearbook, newspaper, or literary magazine) and 2) interscholastic sports (i.e., basketball, football, swimming, running, or other team or individual sport).

As described by Eccles et al. (2003) extracurricular activities in the current research indicate the following activities: (1) pro-social activities— attending prayers in religious places and/or volunteer and community service type activities, (2) performance activities—school band, drama, school broadcast, (3) team sports—one or more school teams, (4) school involvement— student government, and, (5) academic clubs— debate, foreign language, math, or chess clubs, science fair, or tutoring in academic subjects.

Egyptian schools could encourage good academic performance, student participation, commitment, attendance, and the attitudes and habits that lead to better grades and great success by investing in extracurricular activities called by Douglas Reeves (2008) ‘the extracurricular advantage’. These results are great for deprived, unprivileged, and poor children concerning underperformance in academic programs. Nevertheless, extracurricular activities would require immense fees that could form a great barrier for poor students depriving them of participation.

Research indicates that student participation in extra-curricular activities improves many aspects: decreased absences, school attendance, high degrees, high academic performance, and

² See also for further details www.kipp.org

³ See also for further details www.kipp.org

better job expectancy and future success (The National Center for Educational Statistics, 1995; Eccles 2003; Meadows 2019, 29).

In reference to the German experience, for instance, help with homework and remedial lessons is included in extra-curricular activities to support academically weak children. Conceptual relationships with the academic curriculum studied at school were often missed in extracurricular activities, although of great importance. Poor, deprived primary students when compared to their wealthier peers showed considerably lower participation rates. There was no difference at the secondary level. Results suggest that the intensity and longevity of extra-curriculum participation at least three days per week influence to a great extent school grades. The quality of the activities affects the extracurricular participation of students in all-day schools; where high-quality teacher activity has the greatest effect. Extra-curricular enrichment programs give students the chance to be involved in different activities, such as arts, engineering, computers, sports, and martial arts (Fischer, N. and Klieme, E. 2013).

iv. Comparison of Policy Alternatives

The current section aims to evaluate and compare the three policy alternatives proposed in the previous section. The comparison will be based on the following criteria: equity and fairness, effectiveness, political feasibility, administrative ease, and cost. A summary of the results of this analysis will be provided in the table below, followed by a more detailed analysis.

Table 1

Decreasing Private Tutoring in Pre-University Education in Egypt: Options Assessment

Options Criteria	Option A Online/Offline, customized and personalized educational games	Option B Lengthen the school day	Option C Returning extra- curricular activities back to schools
Equity and Fairness	Medium	Medium	High
Effectiveness	High	Medium	High
Political Feasibility	High	High	Medium
Administrative Ease	High	Medium	Low
Cost	Low	Medium	High

Source: Prepared by the author.

- Option A: Turning most of the educational curricula into online/offline, customized, and personalized educational games (serious games).
- Option B: Lengthening the school day from five or six hours to seven or eight hours per school day.
- Option C: Returning extra-curricular activities to schools.

The policy alternatives of turning most educational curricula into online/offline, customized and personalized educational games (Option A) or lengthening the school day from five or six hours to seven or eight hours per school day (Option B) are significantly more equitable and fairer than returning extra-curricular activities to schools. That is because returning extra-curricular activities to schools (Option C) would require considerable financial costs. As it is important to have policies of low-cost in the current recession. The only drawback of Option C is

the cost. The cost of Option A would be considered small since designing educational games would be centrally done in the Ministry of Education and some low upfront funding would be required to recruit programmers and curriculum subject specialists and then the educational games would be distributed all over the country. This option is efficient and politically feasible as it benefits from the already existing systems without the need for creating new integrated management information systems. Option A would cost less than Option B and even be minimal. Option B would cost the country a considerable amount of money and initiate the acceptance of the participation of the private sector to construct new schools to allow lengthening the school day to decrease the absence and the long free time available for teachers to give private lessons.

Generally, all three proposed policy options could be feasible since the private tutoring ban is not debatable or prejudiced. The policy alternatives of turning most educational curricula into online/offline, customized and personalized educational games (Option A) or lengthening the school day from five or six hours to seven or eight hours per school day (Option B) are more feasible than returning extra-curricular activities to schools (Option C). Option C, or returning extra-curricular activities to schools, would require certain legislative modifications, while Options A and B would not.

When comparing the three policy alternatives according to the criteria of administrative ease, Options A and B would be implemented more easily than Option C. Under Option A, all students are eligible to receive their educational games on their tablets and they are ready to use them. It is simple and easy to administratively implement and apply Option A both for students and their teachers. Option B, extending the length of the school day, would be easy to apply because the educational system already exists and is not undergoing any change. There are slight complications when implementing Option B than Option A, as it would require more resources, rescheduling, and trained teachers. The goal of Option B is to promote equity and fairness by allowing all students to benefit from lengthening the school day and giving all students chances for understanding and training that would not be provided with a short school day. Option B would ease the administrative burden for families and working parents by allowing parents to resume their work time without disruptions of having to run back to school to bring their children back home and follow them up. A short school day puts a great burden on working parents as they are obliged to leave their work to attend to their children getting home from school with no workplace paid leave, authorization, or flexibility. There are administrative difficulties in the implementation of Option C due to necessary legislative change and the fact that providing extra-curricular activities to students would require detailed coordination of many complex operations involving many people and facilities, and an increase in trained teachers.

As to the criteria of equity and fairness of these three policy options, Option C would greatly level up the academic performance of students in different subject matters equally and fairly. Option C would have the most desired outcome, providing quality education and opportunity to pre-university students at all levels and grades, matching the goals of the state and constitution.

Option A may have potential unfairness, by only improving access to educational games and customized education for those students who are provided with tablets or electronic devices, poor students may not have the privilege of having such devices. If Option A was implemented, it would only benefit those who already have electronic devices or are given tablets by the Egyptian Ministry of Education. Therefore, this policy alternative does not equally impact all poor families and this is a great disadvantage of Option A. One of the most advantages of Option A is increasing

access to online/offline, customized educational games for approximately 24.4 million students in pre-university education in Egypt (CAPMAS 2022). Through the analysis conducted, this policy option does not indicate to include negative trade-offs. On the contrary, it offers rather useful effects and benefits for working parents as it would help decrease the administrative burden on them by aligning their working time with their children's school day.

VII. Recommendations and Conclusion

After carefully researching the policy alternatives that could decrease pre-university private tutoring in Egypt, I recommend the implementation of Option A, which is “turning most of the educational curricula into online/offline, customized and personalized educational games,” and the implementation of Option B, which is “lengthen the school day from five or six hours to seven or eight hours per school day”. Without being expensive for the country, the implementation of both Options A and B is politically feasible. Implementing both Options A and B would allow for providing appropriate schooling for students, thus attaining the prospective decrease of private tutoring. Option B would make little costs for parents to pay, thus easing some of the burdens that parents suffer from in educating their children. Option A would necessitate a slight increase in funding but would provide pre-university students with more enriching digital learning experiences and allows them to spend less time on textbooks and more time on their officially given tablets or computers.

It is expected that Option C would have a great positive impact on the schooling of children that neither Option A, nor, B, would closely achieve. Returning extra-curricular activities to schools would allow students to develop more personality traits, ease their stress, enhance collaboration and competition with their companions, develop their life skills, let them have more fun, and divide the final test scores on their achievement in a blend of subjects and activities. Thus, the implementation of Option C would be a challenging task.

Egypt must seriously focus on the relations connecting private tutoring, reduced school days, low-income teachers, lack of extra-curricular activities, and low-quality education and create policies that treat these social dimensions (Zhang, Ma. and Wang 2020, 40). Egypt must invest in educational games and educational TV channels to ease access to pre-university education, to overcome social challenges such as low socio-economic status, dropout, absence, and far-reaching places that plague low-income households. Investing in educational games for students would lead to saving costs for years to come through the decrease in school attendance or lack of teachers or good quality education, as what happened through the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. This may include the expansion of public funding toward educational games, especially when a more progressive income tax rate is implemented to decrease social inequalities in education and income. Educators, parents, supporters, and experts should in fact join together and support the investment in the educational sector.

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