

Title (Heading)

: Is attending tutorial classes a new trend?

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Chapter 1

Introduction

To most students, exams are detestable because they suffer greatly whenever an exam comes. Undeniably, examinations play such an important role in education of Hong Kong that they make students usually bury themselves among their books and notes during examinations. One way that students used to deal with exam is attending tutorial school.

In recent years, tutorial schools have become popular among secondary school students. More and more students have been attending tutorial classes; even some of them have already gotten satisfactory results in their schools. One can easily find his/her friends and classmates joining tutorial class. We can also easily detect the great numbers of advertisements of the large-scale tutorial schools in the streets, televisions and magazines.

In fact, is there a great trend in attending tutorial classes for secondary school students? Are these tutorial classes really beneficial to the students who have joined them? It will be interesting to study all these issues about the recent trend of attending tutorial classes.

The objectives of this project are as follows:

- 1) to find out the reasons that make students go to tutorial schools
- 2) to see the effectiveness of attending tutorial classes
- 3) to distinguish whether this phenomenon is related to the mode of nowadays education system

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1 Choice of method

Quantitative method was adopted for this project. A questionnaire was designed and issued to secondary students (From 1 to 7) through the internet and 66 samples were collected since it was convenient to set up questionnaires on net.

2.2 Classification of the studying target

In Hong Kong, the most popular kinds of tutorial course can be classified as private tutorial school, individual tutorial teachers and tutorial class held by school. For the last type, it is usually free of charge and for the purpose of helping those students with poor academic result or putting more focus on students who get good academic result.

For this project, I intend to focus more on the first two kinds of tutorial courses since the third kind is usually arranged by the school and the purpose of which is not for making money. Also, whether joining its tutorial class is not decided by students.

2.3 Target group

For this project, all secondary school students will be my target groups because the condition of receiving tutoring among them is more common than that among primary school students, according to a **research¹**, conducted in 2005 by Professor Bray from Hong Kong University, had shown that nearly 50% of primary and lower secondary students receive tutoring while at upper secondary the proportion students receiving tutoring is about 70%.

The results of Form 4 to Form 7 students can especially be used in the part to investigate whether this phenomenon is related to the mode of nowadays education system.

¹ 'Private Supplementary Tutoring: Comparative Perspectives on Patterns and Implications',2005

2.4 Questions asked

The questions asked were mainly related to the following areas:

- 1) The general information about the respondents, for example, which Form the respondents belong to, whether they have received tutoring, etc.
- 2) The reasons of attending tutorial classes, for example, the pressure from parents, following friends' decision, and the self-orientated necessity, etc.
- 3) Some information about attending tutorial schools, for example, which types of tutorial class the respondents joined, how much they pay for receive tutoring per month, etc.
- 4) The factors concerned when choosing the tutorial school, for example, the popularity, following friends' choice, the academic background of tutorial teachers, etc.
- 5) To what extend going to tutorial classes is effective, for example, it really helps them to get the knowledge, or it helps them to get good result only, etc.
- 6) The factors that stop students from attending tutorial classes.
- 7) The possible problems created by this phenomenon, for example, becoming not attentive in classes, time consuming, unfairness between poor and rich students, etc.

2.5 Problems faced and solutions

A few limitations about Internet questionnaires were predicted and observed; fortunately, most of them can be solved.

Firstly, although writing the questionnaires in English would be more convenient for me to record down the findings, some respondents might find it difficult to understand the direct meanings of the questions and thus provided the false answers.

Secondly, respondents, without seeing them directly, could do the questionnaires repeatedly and thus manipulated the results.

Thirdly, respondents might lose temper if the questionnaires were time-consuming and troublesome to finish. As a result, they did the questionnaires playfully, without filling in the correct answers.

Lastly, only a few options provided might not be enough to cover all the possibilities of the answers.

In response to the above limitations, some improvements have been made as the followings.

Firstly, the questionnaire was written in Chinese, which is the most familiar language to the respondents so that they could understand clearly of what the questions were asking. The results also show that all respondents could follow my instructions as none of them answer the questions that they didn't need, for example, respondents who receive tutoring don't need to answer Q15.

Secondly, I choose to produce the questionnaire in a website (www.my3q.com) where detection of the source of the received questionnaire form was possible so that if people did the questionnaire repeatedly, I would know.

Thirdly, the questionnaire after amendment was only including 15 questions, while all questions are to the point. So that the respondents could fill in the questionnaires within a minute and at the same time I could get enough data I need.

Lastly, I have included more options in the questionnaire, and if respondents still have other comments that are not included, they could choose the option “other”. I believe the proportion of choosing other will be small that not enough to influence the results.

Chapter 3

Literature review

There was mainly one previous research, which I could find and had been used to compare with the results of my findings.

The research, “Private Supplementary Tutoring: Comparative Perspectives on Patterns and Implications”, was conducted by Professor Bray in Hong Kong University last year to investigate the Government's current policies on tutoring, the impact of tutoring on mainstream schooling and the society, such as the household expenditure, social equalities and mental development of children, etc.

He investigated about 700 primary and secondary school students and found that nearly 50% of primary and lower secondary students receive tutoring; and at upper secondary the proportion is about 70%. Using this ratio, there are 500,000 primary and secondary students receiving tutoring. Professor Bray also found that the condition of joining tutorial class in Hong Kong is more serious than those of our neighboring countries, such as Japan and Korea. The reasons behind discovered were due to schools in Hong Kong usually focus on students' academic results, and Hong Kong labor market as well as getting a place in University are very competitive, causing students to join tutorial class.

However, Professor Bray pointed out the tutorial classes will cause adversely impacts on mainstream schooling, for example students receiving tutoring became less attentive in class, and influence students' mental development. He also pointed out that the Government was not doing enough to prevent the existence of unqualified tutors.

However, the survey had mainly focused on the reasons and impacts of attending tutorial classes, but less on the effectiveness of receiving tutoring and discussion of whether receiving tutoring is related to the mode of nowadays education system. Therefore, in this project, besides looking at the former 2 areas and comparing them with Professor Bray's results, I had also investigated about latter 2 areas to provide some new information about the existing situation.

Chapter 4

Findings and Analysis

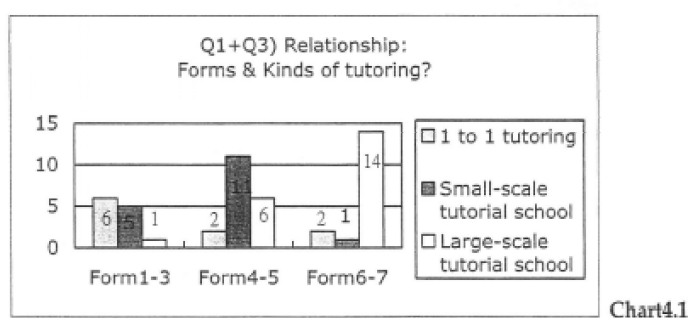
4.1 General information of the questionnaire

I posted the questionnaires in the Internet on 7/8/2006 and collected them on 24/8/2006. The respondents added up to a total of 66.

4.2 Details of the results

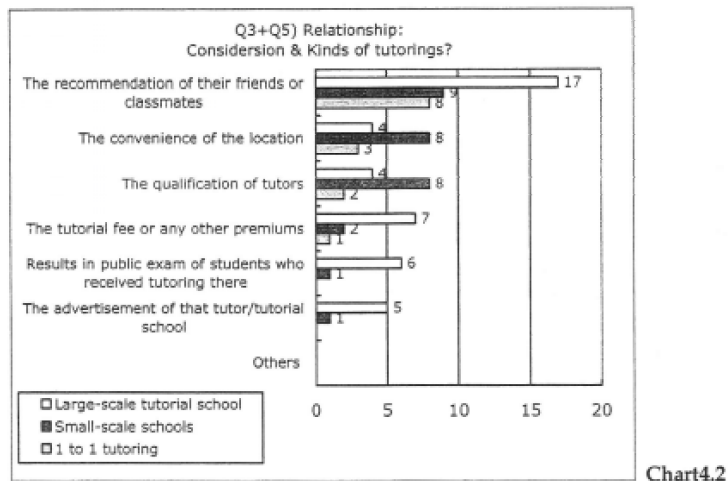
Analysis on the 3 kinds of tutoring

Popularity of the 3 kinds of tutoring among different forms:



From the above data, 10 of the respondents who received tutoring have received 1 to 1 tutoring, 17 of them have attended small-scale tutorial school and 21 of them have attended large-scale tutorial school. It shows that large-scale tutorial school has the biggest proportion of pupils to choose attending among the 3 choices. Moreover, the chart shows the relationship between the kinds of tutoring and the forms of respondents: **The lower forms tend to attend 1 to 1 tutoring, while the higher forms trend to attend small-scale tutorial school and large-scale tutorial school.**

Reasons for choosing different kinds of tutoring:



According to Chart 4.2, the main reason that respondents of all three kinds of tutoring will consider when choosing a tutor/tutorial class is **“The recommendation of their friends or classmates”**, where 34 respondents had chosen this item.

As a contrast to Chart 4.8 which shows that not much respondents will be influenced by friends or classmates to receive tutoring, Chart 4.2 shows that 69% (34/48) of respondents will consider the recommendation of their friends or classmates when choosing a tutor/ tutorial school. It shows that the influence of peers will be more likely to appear only after respondents had made a decision to receive tutoring.

On the other hand, besides the item “Others”, which none of the respondents had chosen the items that chosen by the least respondents of different kinds of tutoring are also different.

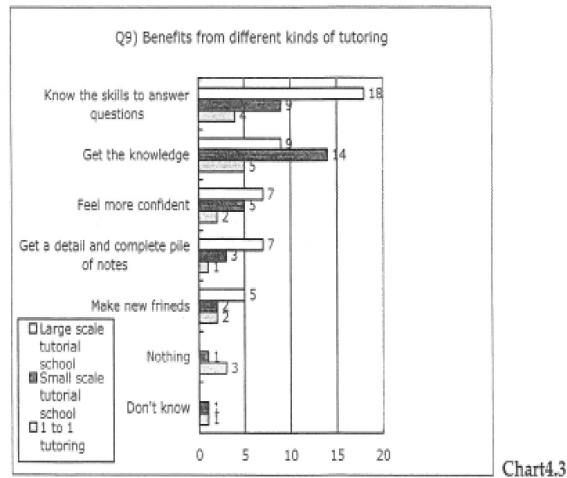
For respondents receiving 1 to 1 tutoring and small scale tutoring, most likely they won't consider the item “results in public exam of students who received tutoring there” and “the advertisement of that tutor/tutorial school”.

It is probably because of the insufficient of information and students usually are hard to know the results in public exam of students who received tutoring in 1 to 1 tutoring and small scale tutorial schools, and because there are not much advertisements that made by them. Therefore, respondents that consider these two factors important will not choose these two forms of tutoring.

For respondents receiving large scale tutoring, most likely they won't consider the items “the convenience of location” and “The qualification of tutors”. It may due to the reasons that large scale tutorial schools cannot be found everywhere and respondents usually have to bear a transportation cost when going to them. Furthermore, the large scale tutorial schools will not advertise themselves about qualification of their tutors. Therefore, respondents consider these factors important will not choose this form of tutoring.

Effectiveness of the 3 kinds of tutoring:

Major benefits

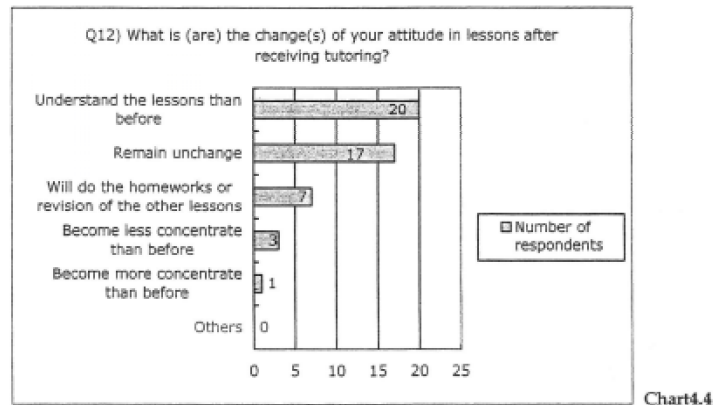


Receiving tutoring in large scale school, most respondents can know the skills to answer questions, while receiving 1 to 1 tutoring and small scale tutorial school, most respondents get the knowledge.

Generally speaking, 63% (31/48) of respondents can know well in answering questions after receiving tutoring, and at the same time 57% (28/48) of respondents can get the knowledge from receiving tutoring of all 3 kinds of tutoring. It shows that many tutors can teach their students the knowledge as well as the skills in answering questions.

Only 4 respondents feel that they can get nothing helps from receiving tutoring and 2 respondents don't know what receiving tutoring helps them. It also shows that a few respondents will still receive tutoring even though they think it is helpless or they don't recognize what it helps. It should be due to the reason that among them, 5 of their tutorial fees are less than \$200 per month and all of them are receiving tutoring for less than 5 hours per week. Receiving tutoring is not a financial burden to their family and doesn't influence their daily activities, so they continue.

Other benefits



The above chart shows the advantages of receiving tutoring to students' performance in lesson. As shown in Chart 4.4, most respondents believe that the main changes of their attitude are “understand the lessons than before” and “remain unchanged”, which made up of 41.6% (20/48) and 35.4% (17/48) of the tutoring-portion.

On the other hand, only 1 respondent say that he/she “becomes more concentrate than before” and 3 respondents say they “become less concentrate than before”.

This result indicating that a higher portion of students are able to understand their lessons than before also echoes with Chart 4.9 which states that 57% (28/48) of respondents can also get the knowledge from receiving tutoring. But this is also one of the possible reasons affecting a few students' concentration in classes.

Shortages

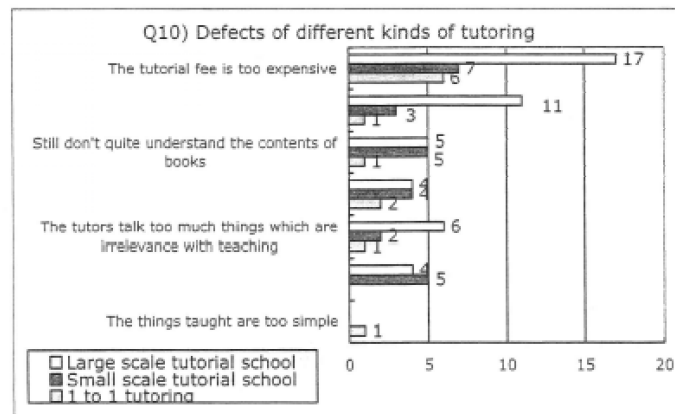


Chart4.5

Respondents of all 3 kinds of tutoring most likely are unsatisfied with the expensive tutorial fee. The respondents receiving large scale tutoring are most likely to have the chance of raising questions, and this phenomenon is not commonly found among the other 2 kinds of tutoring. Small scale tutoring is the one that have the most of its students (29%) feeling no defects, while none of respondents receiving 1 to 1 tutoring think that there are no defects.

On the other hand, 1 respondent thinks that the things taught are too simple. However, he/she also thinks that he/she still don't quite understand the contents of the books. The tutor may be teaching those things that the respondent already understood instead of going though those parts the respondent found difficult. Another possible reason is that the tutor is not able to answer the questions of the respondent. This reason is more possible because the respondent is receiving 1 to 1 tutoring, which is supposed to be easier to ask questions.

Effectiveness in terms of the actual academic result

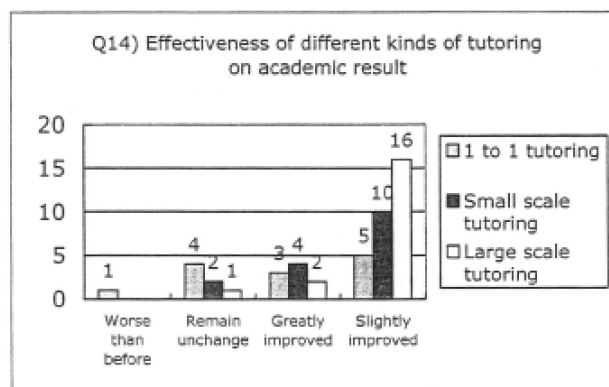


Chart4.6

In general, respondents' academic result is slightly improved after receiving tuition, especially for those who attend large scale tutoring.

Analysis on nowadays education systems

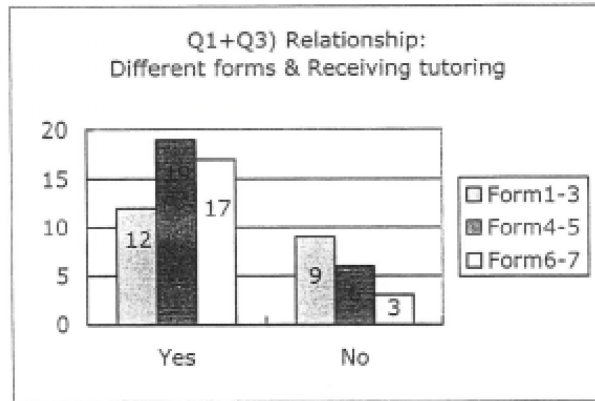


Chart4.7

The above chart shows that the number of respondents attending tutorial class is 2.7 times of those not attending tutorial class.

For Form 1-3, 12 of them are attending tutorial course while 9 of them are not. The percentage for Form 1-3 respondents to attending tutorial classes over the total Form 1-3 respondents is about 57%.

For Form 4-5, 19 of them are attending tutorial course while 6 of them are not. The percentage for Form 4-5 respondents to attending tutorial classes over the total Form 4-5 respondents is about 76%.

For Form 6-7, 17 of them are attending tutorial course while 3 of them are not. The percentage for Form 6-7 respondents to attending tutorial classes over the total Form 6-7 respondents is about 85%. From the above data, the comparison of percentages of difference groups shows that the group Form 6-7 is having the biggest proportion of students attending tutorial school and group Form 4-5 also have more percentage of students receiving tutoring than Form 1-3. **The higher the forms, the more the students receive tutoring.** The result is the same as the one of Professor Bray's research.

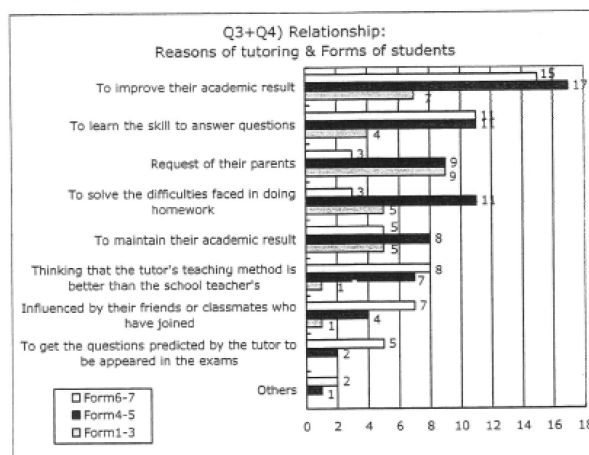


Chart4.8

The chart reflects some problems of the nowadays education system.

1) Pressure of attending public exams

Students themselves view their academic result important and especially for Form 4-7, who have to attend the public exams. Therefore, 32 and 13 of them have attended tutorial schools for the reason “To improve their academic result” and “To maintain their academic result”.

Not only respondents, their parents will also request them to attend tutorial class, but the influence of the parents to respondents of Form 6-7 will decrease.

It shows the failure of the Government to promote “studying is not for mark”, as the traditional thinking that “academic result is very important” is still built in people's heart firmly.

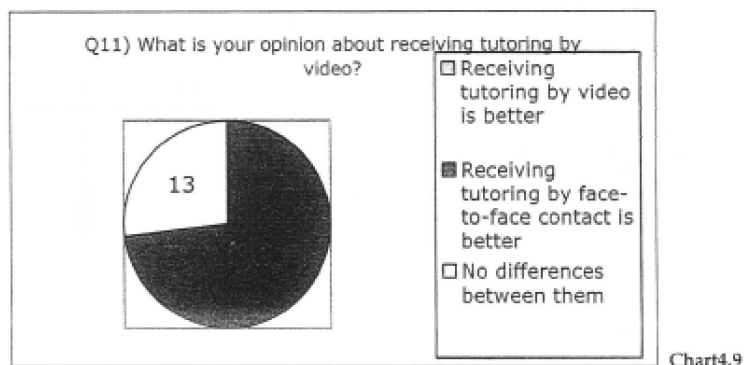
2) Lacking of trust to school teachers

33% (16/48) of students think that the tutors' teaching method better than the school teachers. One possible reason for that might be because the tutors are more likely to be humor and can use more interesting way to present the knowledge to students.

Another chart, Chart 4.13, also shows that only 2% (1/48) of respondents that don't receive tutoring because he/she thinks that the school teachers are good enough. Although this result doesn't show whether respondents think that the school teachers are not good enough to teach them knowledge or not good enough to teach them examination skills, it still can indicate that respondents lack trust towards their school teachers.

3) Spoon-fed Education

More than half of the respondents (26/48) receiving tutoring in order to look for skills to answer questions, especially for Form 4-5 and Form 6-7, which have 58% (11/19) and 64% +(11/17) of them attend tutorial school for this reason. It shows that the format of examination is not changing and people can get the trick to perform better in it.



By face-to-face contact, students can ask questions more easily and the tutors can have more interaction between themselves and their students. On the other hand, receiving tutoring by video can also be viewed as a kind of “spoon-fed education”. Chart 4.9 shows that 73% (35/48) of respondents think that receiving tutoring by face-to-face contact is better. Back to Chart 4.5, 31% (15/48) of respondents think that there is too little time for students to raise questions when receiving tutoring.

Both Chart 4.9 and Chart 4.5 suggest that general respondents desire two-ways teaching than single-way teaching actually.

Other Education Problems

1) Unbalance between studying and extra curricular activities:

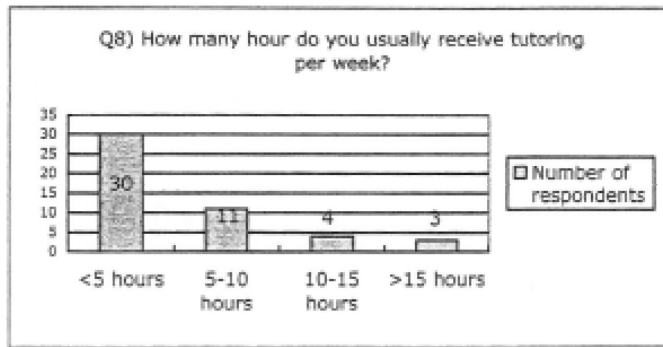


Chart4.10

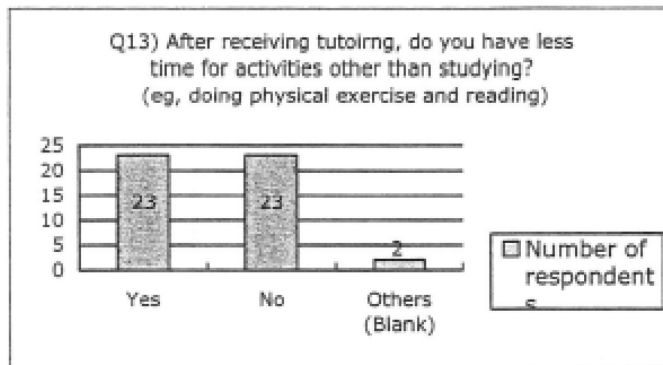


Chart4.11

Chart 4.10 shows that more than half (62.5%) of the respondents usually receive tutoring less than 5 hours per week. It indicates that attending tutorial class consumes not much time too many respondents.

However, Chart 4.11 shows that nearly half of the respondents will have less time for activities other than studying. Are most of the respondents, saying that they have less time for activities other than studying, receiving tutoring more than 10 hours per week? Are most of the respondents, saying that they don't have less time for activities other than studying, receiving tutoring less than 10 hours per week?

The table declared 3S below shows that the answers for both questions above are: "No".

Table4.1 (Combining Chart 4.10 and Chart 4.11):

	<5 hours	5-10 hours	10-15 hours	>15 hours
Yes	15 (54%)	6 (55%)	1 (25%)	1 (33%)
No	13 (46%)	5 (45%)	3 (75%)	2 (67%)

After combining the two charts, I found that more than 50% of the respondents said they have less time for extra curricular activities, even though they receive tutoring less than or equal to 10 hours per week. At the same time, more than 65% of the respondents said they don't have less time for extra curricular activities, even they receive tutoring more than or equal to 10 hours per week.

These suggest that how much time spending on receiving tutoring might not have direct relationship with affecting the time for having extra curricular activities.

The contradicting result for more than 50% of respondents receiving tutoring less than 10 hours per week but having less time for extra curricular activities may due to the reason that although receive tutoring only a few hours per week, traveling to attend tutorial class takes time, or revision and homework are assigned by the tutors, or they choose to sacrifice the time for having extra curricular activities first when they have to receive tutoring.

While the contradicting result for more than 60% of respondents receiving tutoring more than 10 hours per week but not having less time for extra curricular activities may due to the reason that these data are collected by a few number of respondents, that might not be able to reflect the general condition.

In short, the result shows that it is quite unbalanced between studying and extra curricular activities for respondents. Some students may put too much time on studying and they may sacrifice their time for extra curricular activities (e.g. nearly 50% of the respondents have less time for activities other than studying after receiving tutoring). They may not have an all-round and well-balanced development.

2) Heavy financial burden to family and Unfairness between the rich and poor:

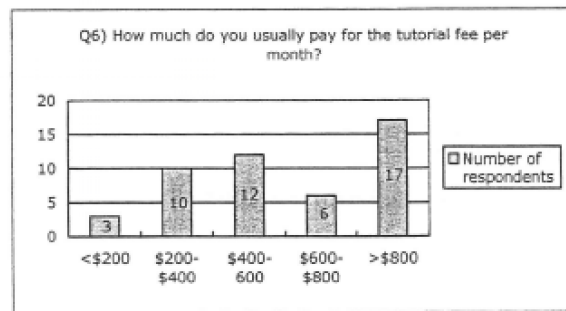


Chart4.12

From Chart 4.11, most respondents usually pay more than \$800 for the tutorial fee per month. It is the same as the results of the Census & Statistics Department found in 04/05². According to the Census & Statistics Department, the average monthly expenditure on tuition is \$1069, \$879 and \$828 of students of lower secondary, upper secondary and preparatory course respectively.

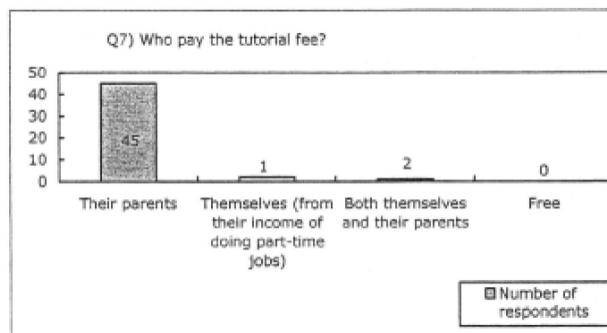


Chart4.13

Chart4.13 shows that the tutorial fee of the respondents is mostly bore by their parents, which would become a financial burden of their family. None of them receive tutoring freely.

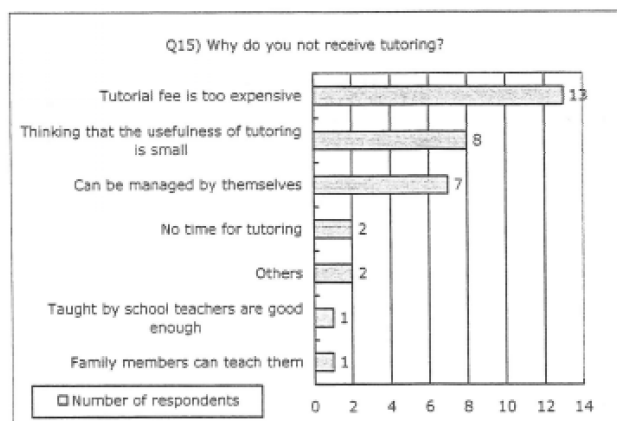


Chart4.14

Besides, only one respondent will pay the tutorial fee by himself/herself, using the money he/she got from his/her part-time job. This may affect his/her studies and health if he/she put too much time on doing part-time job. Fortunately, most respondents don't need to do so.

As mentioned before, receiving tutoring may become a financial burden to the family and most respondents of not receiving tutoring because of the expensive tutorial fees. Even for those who receive tutoring, 63% (30/48) of them said the tutorial fee is expensive. This may create the unfairness between the rich and the poor that only those who can afford can receive tutoring.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Unlike what the impression of the general public, attending tutorial schools are not only teaching skills for students to tackle the examinations. Other than that, it can also provide quite a lot of benefits to students, such as getting the knowledge and having more confidence, as well as providing benefits to school, because students are able to understand the lessons better. It can be viewed as a useful assisting tool for teaching students besides the normal school.

However, the trend that more and more students received tutoring reflects some problems about the existing education system as well as creating some new problems.

The existing education system is emphasizing too much on the academic results and making students have a wrong attitude that the most important thing is to get high score. Besides, the spoon-feeding way of teaching used makes students not encourage to have critical thinking. Yet, it is fortunate to find that general respondents desire 2-ways interaction actually.

To change people's traditional thinking of getting high score is the most important is still a long way to go. It is hoped that the government can promote to the society that the importance to learn the knowledge is as same important as, if not more than, getting the marks, and also getting high score is not the only way to reach success.

On the other hand, changing the traditional teaching method may be one of the solutions. Students' interest in learning will be aroused and students can develop critical thinking instead of just receiving what have been told, by using 2-ways interaction. Teachers can also try to have a more interesting way to teach, for example, using real life examples to explain the difficult theories in books

Reflection

After completing this study, I have a better understanding of the reasons for and impact on teenagers who attend tutorial classes. Unlike many people's suspicion of the benefits of tutorial classes, the survey results indicated how the positive impact of tutorial classes attracted students.

However, there may be a need to collect more data to further reveal the relationships between the traditional teaching methods in schools and the trend of attending tutorial classes.

(Word count: 3797)

Chapter 6

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Marks awarded and Comments:

Title:	Is attending tutorial classes a new trend?
Stage III:	
Marks	6
Comments:	<p>The candidate is able to explain how s/he discerns the research direction with the knowledge basis from the literature review. Furthermore, analytical skills are demonstrated by the manipulation and integration of data to enrich the findings from the survey.</p> <p>Though the candidate is able to put forward suggestions with reference to the findings, s/he does not justify well the conclusion by employing and analyzing the data. There is a sweeping argument of relating the trend of attending tutorial classes to the spoon-feeding education system.</p> <p>Also, one of the enquiry questions, "Is there a trend in attending tutorial classes for secondary school students", is not addressed in the study.</p>