



One to one tuition

Background

The summary below presents the research evidence on one to one tuition in the Arab World context.

The Teaching & Learning Toolkit focuses on impact on outcomes for learners; it presents an estimate of the average impact of one to one tuition on learning progress, based on the synthesis of a large number of quantitative studies from around the world.

This page offers a summary and analysis of individual studies on one to one tuition in the Arab world. In contrast to the Toolkit it includes studies which do not estimate impact, but instead investigate the implementation of interventions and how they are perceived by school leaders, teachers and students using a range of research methods. This information is valuable for school leaders and teachers interested in finding out more about particular examples of one to one tuition interventions that have been delivered in the Arab world.



Summary of the research in the Arab World

One to one tuition has become an “almost normal” phenomenon in the Arab world (Rhazal, Ajana, Khouna & El Hajjami, 2018). Parents consider this approach as an alternative for the serious defect in the public schooling system (Kabadaya, 2019). Teachers consider this phenomenon as an opportunity to fulfil their financial needs as they are severely underpaid (Ille, 2015; Kabadaya, 2019). Students believe that tutoring is an intervention to improve their knowledge about the topic and improve their academic grades (Ille, 2015).

One to one tuition, or what is known in the MENA region as private tutoring, poses controversy in research and a challenge for the quality of education. In some contexts, particularly, Egypt, it is argued that teachers deliberately reduce the quality of their teaching in class in order to force students to pay them for private one to one tuition or in small groups (Ille, 2015). While this is a clear sign of teachers’ dissatisfaction with their income, it raises a concern about the deterioration of the quality of public education generally delivered especially in primary schools (Ille, 2015).

In Morocco, students in private schools use private tutoring more than the ones in public schools with an average of 6 hours per week (Rhazal et al., 2018). A random sample of 297 students in urban areas from both private and public schools considered that private tutoring is a necessity because they needed better understanding and assimilation of the topics, help with their homework, and because it promoted their academic success. In Saudi Arabia, a tutoring program was suggested as a method to improve high school girls’ academic performance on standardized tests when presented as an after-school program (Beati, 2015). In the United Arab Emirates students needed private tutoring mostly for Mathematics, science, English, and Arabic. On average, students took private lessons in two subjects, for two hours a week per subject. The majority of students took private tutoring regularly throughout the semester instead of just before exams. Although most of their parents perceived some level of academic improvement after their children received private tutoring, data suggest that on average high achievers benefitted more for private tutoring than low and average achievers (Rocha & Hamed, 2018).



On another hand, private tutoring was found out to be needed mostly in years with high-stake government exams and was found to be associated with the family's socio-economic status. In Egypt for instance, poorer families with low educated mother are less likely to receive family help and more likely to receive private lessons despite the high cost of these programs (Assaad & Krafft, 2015). Despite its cost, parents and students trusted private tutoring more than the help groups provided at schools. Students who took private lessons in both the primary and preparatory levels reported that they do not have access to a help group in their school or community and wherever they exist they were not perceived as good as private lessons and they rarely offered help in the subjects needed.

In a recent qualitative study, Fraser and Hasan (2019) investigated the effectiveness of one-to-one tutors for Emirati secondary students academic achievement who were low achievers in mathematics. The poorly structured mathematics lessons, the ineffective teacher's instruction, and lack of teacher's monitoring and involvement in students' progress and needs were the main drive for students to seek out these lessons. Participants of this study revealed that they benefited a lot from private tutoring because they were provided with positive and constructive feedback from the tutor at the end of each lesson. Additionally, the tutor was able to cover all the learning objectives and curriculum and students understood all the mathematical concepts. As a result, students overcame their anxiety towards math and built stronger relationships with their tutor, a thing that couldn't be done with their own classroom teacher.

In addition to what has been discussed above, reasons for students to be engaged in one to one tutoring are mainly due to teacher-student ratio, low awareness and power of parents and students, and monopoly power of teachers (Ille, 2015). That is why, researchers suggested for educational institutions to keep parents informed about their rights and demands for more transparency and efforts from the teacher's part (Beati, 2015; Kabadaya, 2019). A unified call to reduce class size and hire more teachers was also raised (Beati, 2015; Ille, 2015; Kabadaya, 2019). Lastly, Ministries of Education in challenging contexts like Egypt are recommended to allocate budgets for educational reform in order to reconsider teacher's wages, develop new curricula, assessment tools, and professional development programs (Kabadaya, 2019).



Summary paragraph:

Evidence of one to one tuition in the Arab world is very limited. Studies that looked at private tutoring explored the reasons why students use this intervention rather than the impacts on academic attainment. In Morocco, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt students strongly believed that one to one tutoring is an intervention to improve their knowledge about a topic and improve their academic grades.

While the global evidence includes interventions in which public schools deliver intensive support to struggling pupils at no extra cost, evidence in the Arab World focuses much more on private tutoring. In one study in Egypt, researchers have raised concerns that the monetary reward for providing private one to one or small group tutoring creates a perverse incentive for teachers to encourage students to turn to private tutoring; and that this could lead to the deterioration of the public education quality. They highlighted a need for educational reform that would reconsider teachers' wages, the curriculum, assessment tools and increase the transparency between schools/teachers and parents.

To date, research on one to one tuition is scarce in this region despite the reported benefits on students understanding of key subjects. More research is needed in this area to examine the impact of this intervention on students' academic grades. More quantitative or mixed-method studies are also needed to have an overall understanding about this phenomenon from parents,, students, and teachers side.



References

Assaad, R., & Krafft, C. (2015). Is free basic education in Egypt a reality or a myth?. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 45, 16–30.

Beati, N. Y. (2015). Smaller class size, tutoring, physical education, and professional development: Perception of Saudi Arabia female teachers for improving the academic achievement of Saudi Arabia high school girls. University of the Pacific, Stockton, California.

Fraser, B.J. & Hasan, A. (2019). One-to-one tutoring and mathematics students' achievement in the United Arab Emirates. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives*, 16(1).

<https://doi.org/10.18538/lthe.v16.n1.330>

Ille, S. (2015). Private Tutoring in Egypt: Quality Education in a Deadlock between Low Income, Status and Motivation. Egyptian Center for Economic Studies Working Paper No, 178.

Kabadaya, M. F. S. (2020). Students' participation in private tutoring activities in Egypt in Egyptian lower primary schools: A qualitative investigation (Unpublished master's thesis). The American University in Cairo, Cairo.

Rocha, V., & Hamed, D. S. (2018). Parents' Perspectives on Paid Private Tutoring in the United Arab Emirates.

Rhazal, A., Ajana, L., Khouna, J., & El Hajjami, A. (2018). Private Tutoring and Internet Use Case of Moroccan Pupils in Qualifying Secondary Education in Urban Area. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 8 (2), pp 34-46.



**QUEEN RANIA
FOUNDATION**

مؤسسة الملكة رانيا

Search Terms

One-to-one tuition, one-to-one teaching, one-to-one tutor, intensive tutor, tutor, reading recovery.

Databases searched

Academic search complete

ERIC (EBSCO)

Education Source

Google scholar

ProQuest Central

ProQuest Dissertations

Web of Science