

TUITION FEE INCREMENT AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION OF SELECTED PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN METRO MANILA

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ABSTRACT

Tuition fee increment is considered as the major source of financial earnings of every private educational institution in the Philippines. Apart from the provision of quality education, the survival and achievement of the goals and objectives of private educational institutions also depend on its capacity to generate financial earnings. This study assessed the increment of tuition fees of four private secondary schools in Metro Manila from school years 2005-2007. The study found that tuition fee increments post significant effects to the level of enrollment, compensation and fringe benefits of employees, improvement in development programs, services, and facilities of each private educational institution. The improvement in the said factors in return facilitated the provision of quality education to the students.

Keywords: Tuition Fee Increment, Private Secondary Schools. Quality of Education

INTRODUCTION

Education brings about a progressive society. It is therefore not surprising for any state to be concerned with the provision of quality education that is accessible to all its citizens. An educated citizenry creates a society that is in pace with a dynamic global community. This in return causes education to be synonymously identified with progress.

The problem of providing quality basic education has been one of the persistent problems plaguing the Philippines and even other third world

countries. This can be attributed to the scarcity of government resources, acceleration of the student population and the uncontrollable increases in tuition fees.

Although the government provides free education through public schools, most Filipino parents would still opt their children to be enrolled in private schools, if only they possess the choice and financial capacity. Unlike public schools, private schools are known for having smaller class sizes that facilitate better guidance and learning to students, up-to-date facilities, and in some instances private schools offer supplementary activities, which enables students to be equipped with additional skills.

The increase in tuition fees serves as the primary hindrance for students to avail of the quality education provided by private schools. The increase in tuition fees could already be considered as a recurrent problem in our society. Apart from tuition fees, the increase in other fees or the miscellaneous fees also account as reasons of why quality education in private schools are not accessible to most Filipino students. Although lawmakers are trying to address this problem, there is still no guarantee that tuition fee increase will eventually be regulated.

For school year 2006-2007, the Department of Education reported at least 52 private schools in the National Capital Region (NCR) that have applied for the imposition of higher tuition fees. In Manila alone, 17 private schools already filed for an application to increase tuition fees in the high school level.

In spite of the continuous imposition of higher tuition fees, most Filipino parents still opt to enroll their children in private schools. This is because of the initial belief that quality service is always equated to a higher price. There is no doubt that parents would always want what is best for their children. In effect, parents would really choose to enroll their children to private schools, who can deliver quality education, despite the price they have to pay.

The notion that the imposition of high tuition fees among private schools equates to quality education prompted the researcher to explore this topic. Specifically, this study aimed to provide readers information about the effects of tuition fee increase to the perceived quality of education among four private secondary schools in Manila.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general aim of the study is to assess the effects of the tuition fee increment on the quality of education in selected private secondary schools in Manila. Specifically, it sought to find out the status of the participating schools in terms of enrolment, tuition fee rates and rates of increase in tuition fee; profile of the faculty respondents and to what extent it influences the quality of education; the achievement of the student respondents; and the assessment of the Senior High School students and the Non-Teaching Personnel on the effect of the tuition fee increase on the quality of education being given by their respective schools.

METHODS

This study utilized the Descriptive Research Design. Specifically, the researcher made use of a survey questionnaire in generating the respondents' perceptions. The researcher likewise conducted a Documentary Analysis to supplement the results that were obtained from the survey. The study was able to cover 200 High School Students, 32 Faculty Members and 40 Non-Teaching Personnel of four Private Educational Institutions in Manila as respondents. Furthermore, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Percentage Analysis, Mean were the statistical techniques implemented to generate the results of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Status of the Respondent Schools

Of the four schools included in this study, two are accredited and the other two are not accredited during the period of the study.

During S.Y. 2005-2006, School B registered the highest number of enrollees among the four schools, while School C had the lowest number of enrollees. During S.Y. 2006-2007, School B still obtained the highest number of enrollees with School D getting the lowest number students of the four schools. Moreover, during the period covered by the study, enrolment rates increased by 7.41% in School A and by 8% in School C. However, a decrease in enrolment was observed in School B (7.63%) and in School D (22.48%).

Although the imposition of higher tuition fees resulted to a decline in enrolment for some schools, the researcher would like to emphasize that the increase in tuition fee cannot be considered as the sole factor in occurrence of such event. Other factors such as the parents' choice of another school, transfer of residence, and students' poor academic performance could also account as reasons of the enrolment decline.

Of the four schools, School B had the highest tuition fee rates, while School C had the lowest tuition fee rates for both school years covered. Furthermore, there was an increase in tuition fee in Schools A (8%) and B (5%), while there was no change in tuition fee rates in Schools C and D for S.Y. 2005-2006 to 2006-2007.

Profile of Faculty Respondents

The educational attainment of the faculty members is said to contribute to the provision of quality education to the students. Faculty members who have pursued further studies are expected to gain and practice additional knowledge and new methodologies in teaching. Of the four schools considered in the study, a significant number of the faculty members have earned Masteral units while some have already earned their Masteral degrees. The figures in particular relate that in School A, 75% of the faculty members have Masteral units and 12.5% have Masteral degrees; in School B, 37.5% have acquired Masteral units and 12.5% have Masteral degrees; in School C, 75% of the faculty members already have Masteral units; and in School D, 50% of the faculty members have Masteral units and 12.5% have Masteral degrees. None of the faculty members from the four schools have Doctoral units or Doctoral degrees.

The respondent teachers with the shortest length of service are from School B. Their mean length of service is 5.5 years in S.Y. 2005-2006 and 6.125 years in S.Y. 2006-2007. The teachers with the longest years of service are those from School C having a mean length of service of 10.375 years. Those in School A and School D have about the same length of service in their respective institutions with a mean of 8 years in S.Y. 2005-2006 and 9.25 years in school year 2006-2007. The data suggest that the respondent faculty members are still young and leave much room for improvement.

Among the four schools, the teachers from School A received the highest salary. In particular, the average monthly pay of the teachers in this

school ranged from Php 16,000 to Php 20,000. In School B, the average pay is between Php 11, 000 to Php 15, 000. School C provides an average monthly pay of Php 10,000. Lastly, in School D, the average monthly pay ranges from Php 15, 000 to Php 16, 000. Schools C and D chose not to impose increase in tuition fees. Hence, improvements in the salaries of the teachers in this school are not expected.

Most of the respondent teachers are either in the Teacher I or Teacher III level. It is also important to note that none of the respondent teachers had a change in rank during the two year period covered by this study.

Majority of the faculty members of the respondent schools involved in this study got either a "Very Satisfactory" or a "Satisfactory" rating in a job performance. Based from the evaluation of their teaching performances, they have shown average to above average work, as well as efficiency and effectiveness in their job as educators.

Most of the faculty members of the schools involved in this study have undergone either 1-3 in-service trainings or 4-6 in-service trainings during the two-year period covered by this study.

Senior High School Students Performance

In School A, the general weighted average of the Senior High School students had a mean of 80.30 in S.Y. 2005-2006 and 80 in S.Y. 2006-2007. In School B, general weighted average had a mean of 83.45 in the first year and 85.07 in the second year. In School C, the general weighted average of the senior students was 81.22 in S.Y. 2005-2006 and 82.24 in S.Y. 2006-2007. In School D, the general weighted average had a mean of 82.89 in the initial year and 83.45 in the succeeding year. In terms of general weighted average, the best performances were made by the senior students of School B, followed by those of School D, third are the students of School C and last are those in School A.

In terms of scholarship grants, most of the awards given by School A were for athletes. The grants awarded to students with outstanding academic performances were minimal. In School B, most of the scholarship grants were special grants. No scholarship grants were given in Schools C and D. It is important to note that only accredited schools give awards in terms of scholarship grants.

In interscholastic awards, students from School B received the most awards having 35 in S.Y. 2005-2006 and 23 in S.Y. 2006-2007. School D received a handful of awards (6 in S.Y. 2005-2006 and 2 in S.Y. 2006-2007). The students of School C received 1 award in S.Y. 2005-2006 and another 1 in S.Y. 2006-2007. The students of School A have one award during the two-year period covered by this study. Thus, it can be seen that School B performed the best in terms of interscholastic awards, while School A had the least among the four schools.

The biggest number of art/literary awards was received by the students of School D with 7, followed by the students of School B with six awards and School A with five. School C received no awards in the art or literary area.

In the field of sports, the students of School A obtained twelve awards in S.Y. 2005-2006 and seven awards in S.Y. 2006-2007. School B is second in rank with three sports awards in S.Y. 2005-2006 and nine awards in S.Y. 2006-2007. School D comes third in rank with 5 sports awards in S.Y. 2005-2006 and another five sports awards in S.Y. 2006-2007. The students of School C received no sports awards.

Improvement of Student-Related Functions from the Perception of the Senior High School Students

Student Development Programs obtained an overall mean of 2.95 having an interpretation of "Great Extent". This shows that from the point of view of the Senior High School students, there were immense improvements in the Student Development Programs, which can partly be attributed to the increase in tuition fee of students. Specifically, the greatest developments were made in spiritual and religious programs, student activity programs and classroom teaching. The least changes were on financial assistance and scholarship program.

Student Services got an overall mean of 2.76 also having an interpretation of "Great Extent". This illustrates that from the perception of the Senior High School students, there were noticeable developments in the Student Services in which the tuition fee increase was an influencing factor. The highest assessments were given to safety and security, registration and records and guidance and counseling. The least changes were observed in canteen and bookstore. This suggests that there is still improvement in the areas of canteen and bookstore in the respective schools.

Instruction Related Hardware attained an overall mean of 2.72 having a qualitative interpretation of "Great Extent". This proves that based on the views of Senior High School students, there were considerable improvements in the said area, which is partly a result of the tuition fee increase. Projector screen got the highest rating, while karaoke/ cassette recorder had the lowest rating.

Instruction Related Software acquired an overall mean of 2.60 having an interpretation of "Great Extent". This demonstrates that from the point of view of the Senior High School students, there were significant developments in the said area. Specifically, the greatest improvements were seen in the item of Internet and the least change was seen on filmstrips.

The area of Instruction Related References and Reading Materials acquired an overall mean of 2.82 having a qualitative interpretation of "Great Extent". This shows that important changes in this area were observed by the Senior High School students. This is partly due to the tuition fee increase. The highest change was observed in books and the lowest changes were seen on realia, dioramas and models.

The area of Amenities Related Functions had an overall mean of 2.45 with an interpretation of "Moderate Extent". This is the only area that fell in the range of "Moderate Extent". This illustrates that the Senior High School students were able to perceive average or mediocre changes in this part. The greatest improvements were seen in computer laboratory, science laboratory and chapel. The amenities that were least improved were the comfort rooms, practical arts shop and literary/music room. These are the amenities that still need much improvement.

Enabling Environment obtained an overall mean of 2.69 interpreted as "Great Extent". Senior High School students were able to spot sufficient changes in this area. The most improved items are seen in site accessibility and conduciveness to learning, while minimal changes were observed in the courtesy of security guards.

Improvement of Employee-Related Functions from the Perception of the Non-Teaching Personnel

Positive assessments were seen in the job performances of the Non-Teaching Personnel of the respondent school during the two-year period covered

by this study. All Non-Teaching Personnel of the 4 schools were able to obtain "Satisfactory", "Very Satisfactory" and "Outstanding" ratings. This proves the efficiency and effectiveness of the said personnel in the performance of the work.

The Non-Teaching Personnel were very much involved the Development Programs offered to them as exemplified by an overall mean of 2.72. Specifically, the Non-Teaching Personnel were most involved in religious and spiritual programs, social/ physical growth activities and professional non-degree programs such as seminars, workshops and trainings. They were less involved in professional degree programs such as Masteral or Doctoral studies and in memberships in professional organizations.

The Non-Teaching Personnel believe that the tuition fee increment affected their Compensation to a "Great Extent" having an overall mean of 2.93. Specifically, the tuition fee increment is able to ensure that the perfect attendance is given due recognition, graduate studies units earned are given credit in terms of rank and monetary equivalents and that appropriate honoraria are paid for additional assignments/overtime work rendered. Furthermore, the Non-Teaching Personnel of the school respondents exhibited contentment with regard to their salaries and remuneration.

The Non-Teaching Personnel were able to see that the tuition fee increment was able to affect to Fringe Benefits they receive to a "Great Extent" having an overall mean of 2.88. It was able to ensure that they were able to get 13th month pay, vacation leave with pay, their maternity leave, as well as educational benefits for their legitimate children. However, the Non-Teaching Personnel believe that the tuition fee increment was least affected in the areas of parking privileges, research and study grants.

The Non-Teaching Personnel of the respondent schools were also convinced that the tuition fee increment exacted by their school from the students had a positive effect for the improvement of the facilities they were using having an overall mean of 2.87 interpreted as "Great Extent". These improvements were particularly observable the clinic, staff office, chapel and in the comfort room. The areas of canteen/ cafeteria and communication lines were the least improved facilities.

The area of Enabling Environment obtained an overall mean of 2.96.

This shows that the Non-Teaching Personnel perceive that the tuition fee increase was able to improve this particular area. Improvements are most evident in site accessibility and conduciveness to work. Developments are least seen in information dissemination.

Effects of Tuition Fee Increment on the Senior High School Students

The Senior High School students believed that the imposition of the tuition fee increase was able to improve the Student Development Programs, Student Services, Facilities and Equipment and Enabling Environment.

The F-test was used to gauge the differences among the assessments of Senior High School students on the different indicators in the four schools. It revealed that Instruction Related References and Reading Materials had no significant differences in assessment. All the other areas had significant differences in assessment.

Effects of Tuition Fee Increment on the Non-Teaching Personnel

The Non-Teaching Personnel feel that the imposition of the tuition fee increase was able to improve the Job Performance, Personnel Development Programs, Compensation, Fringe Benefits, Facilities and Equipment, and Enabling Environment.

The F-test was also used to gauge the differences among the assessments of Non-Teaching Personnel on the different indicators in the four schools. It was revealed that Personnel Development, Compensation and Enabling Environment have no significant differences. The areas of Fringe Benefits and Facilities and Equipment had significant differences in assessment.

Profile of Senior High School Faculty that Influenced the Quality of Education

One of the indicators of quality of education is the faculty. This significantly refers to the profile of the teachers.

Teachers play a major role in an academic institution. They are what we call the "engineers of human formation" and the "facilitators of learning." And usually, the quality of education being offered by an academic institution is gauged through the quality of its faculty roster (Maduli, 2004).

In this study, the profile of faculty was utilized. The overall influence was assessed in terms of how it affected the quality of education of the school respondents. It revealed that Educational Attainment, Length of Service and Salary had "Less Influence" to the quality of education. Moreover, Rank, Job Performance and In-Service Training does not influence quality of education.

CONCLUSIONS

The increase or decrease in enrollment cannot be entirely attributed to the imposition of higher tuition fees. It was observed in the study that there were both increases and decreases in the enrollment level among the schools considered.

The faculty members are well equipped in terms of their educational attainment. Most of them have pursued advanced studies, which make them better facilitators of quality education in private schools.

The students involved in the study rendered notable achievements in both curricular and co-curricular aspects. This is reflected in their general weighted averages, scholarship grants received, interscholastic awards, art, literary and sports awards.

Over the time period considered in the study, the Development Programs, Student Services, Facilities and Equipments, Administrative Competencies and Skills have improve to a great extent for the accredited schools and less for the non-accredited schools considered in the study.

The increase in tuition fees fostered positive effects to the Job Performance, Personnel Development, Compensation, Fringe Benefits, and School Facilities of the accredited schools, but to a least extent for the non-accredited schools.

On the overall level, the study has found that both the Students and the Non-Teaching Personnel of the accredited schools were benefited on the imposition of the increase in tuition fee.

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