

RESEARCH REPORT

**TEACHER PERCEPTION ON EXTENDING TEACHING
HOURS IN THE SCHOOLS**

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RESEARCH STUDY: TEACHER PERCEPTION ON EXTENDING TEACHING HOURS IN THE SCHOOL

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The research attempted to find out how teachers perceived the mandate on extending teaching hours from 8.00am to 1.00pm for primary schools and 8.00.am to 2.30pm for secondary schools to 9.00 in the morning until 4.00pm. The majority of the teachers interviewed predominantly favoured the old system and pointed to no clear guidelines or programmes to govern the increase in teaching hours. They also found students lacked interest and motivation during the afternoon sessions, the majority were apathetic, bored and found it difficult to concentrate. It was difficult for teachers to be motivated themselves in light of student's lethargic and listless behaviour which tended to produce more behavioural problems than usual.

1. Introduction

The main aim of this survey was to explore teachers' opinion and their perception on extending teaching hours within schools in Samoa. Participants were given the chance to indicate and express their opinion on the impact of extending teaching hours on the following areas: students' academic performance, teachers' academic performance, student learning support, classroom and school programme and students and parents' discernment.

In 2012, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) mandated school teaching hours to start at 9.00am and end at 4.00pm. Prior to that the schools taught from 8.00am to 12.30pm for Infant classes, 8.00am to 1.00pm for Primary classes (Years 4-8) and Secondary Schools and Colleges (Years 9-13) from 8.00am to 2.30pm. The implementation of extending teaching hours has been controversial. Before its implementation a survey of principals, teachers and parents was carried out by the Policy, Planning and Research Division (PPRD) of the MESC. The survey and its recommendations resulted in extending teaching hours. After four years of implementation the MESC required a study be undertaken to evaluate whether extending teaching hours has been supported by the schools and is perceived as helping students' performance in schools throughout the country.

2. Objectives and Research Questions

The objectives of this research were to:

- Collect information on extending teaching hours and teachers' perceptions on students' academic performance.
- Investigate teachers' perceptions and understanding of extending teaching hours.
- Analyze the pros and cons of extending teaching hours.

- Examine extending teaching hours and the 2015 SPELL results.
- Evaluate extending teaching hours, the change on classroom teaching, academic focus and extracurricular activities.
- Confirm and validate the change in extending teaching hours.
- Assess teacher preference for or against the change.

Overarching question

How has extending teaching hours contributed to teachers' perceptions on students' academic performance in the classroom?

Sub questions

- Question 1 What are your perceptions and understanding about extending teaching hours?
- Question 2 Why was there a need to extend teaching hours?
- Question 3 What are the benefits in extending school hours?
- Question 4 How have students and parents responded to extending school hours?
- Question 5 What problems have you and the students faced in extending school hours?
- Question 6 Why are there concerns with the 2015 SPELL?
- Question 7 How has the change affected your classroom/school programme?
- Question 8 How has the change contributed to your perception on students' academic performance?
- Question 9 Which do you prefer: the change or before the change? Why?

3. Literature Review

The world has experienced tremendous changes in the last decades with the knowledge explosion and technological advancements in all areas of human development. Schools have responded to these changes by adding more subjects into the curriculum, introducing new innovative practices to teachers' repertoire of teaching skills and the influx of materials such as audio visual equipment, computers and software to assist teaching and students learning. Additionally, various education systems have responded to these global changes by extending teaching hours. The literature, however, points to different viewpoints on the phenomenon.

In Namibia extending teaching hours was met with mixed feeling by teachers' union although the director argued that this move would enable students to do their homework and study. It would also ensure that students have teachers support on hand. Consequently, teachers would also use that time for marking and preparation for teaching the following day (New Era,

Feb 4, 2016). Lockwood (2008) points out that even if the change “does not result in dramatically altered academic achievement, it should have some effect and, one would hope, a cumulative effect” (p. 25).

In Queensland it was pointed out that traditional hours should hone in on the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. It should also include developing students’ imagination, problem solving and thinking creatively and critically. The extension hours could focus on supervised extracurricular activities such as sport, music, drama, gardening or revision to reinforce classroom learning. In this way students are less likely to be on the streets or playing video games. Parents would also benefit as they could concentrate on work while their kids are at school and others could find employment. On the other hand, the voice of dissension argued about road congestion with school and work finishing at the same time. In addition, although full time teachers work for 25 hours a week they in fact work at least 46 hours (2015 State of Our Schools Report). Many teachers are overworked as they try to meet curriculum demands, school responsibilities amongst others. Moreover, the question of how many seek teaching as a promising career and not a fallback makes moot the argument that teachers have longer holidays (Courier Mail, February 19, 2016).

In England government has proposed to turn schools to academy trusts instead of comprehensive public education. It further supports secondary schools that offer longer school days with more extracurricular activities like sport and art. Moreover, government is moving to privatise education. Teachers’ unions and parents continue to resist the move pointing to teacher shortage, reduced funding, curriculum implementation and teacher workload as problems. They believe that schools changing to academies are not the answer to the problem (Express, M. Hall, March 16, 2016). Again in another newspaper advocates for the change indicate working parents would welcome the move. However, it should not be seen as children doing more lessons, rather it should be for extracurricular activities or the law of diminishing returns would apply. Moreover education reform that is perceived as taking away the voice of the local community will not necessarily improve standards (Independent, J. Merrick, March 16, 2016). It was also reported in England’s newspaper Independent in 2014 that government’s proposal of longer school hours would assist deprived children’s education and allowing women to be employed and contribute to the country’s economic growth. In addition, it would support learning as there was ample time to cover subject matter thus ensuring that teachers and pupils would not find the

pace hectic and taxing. Extracurricular activities were to be an essential part of the curriculum and all children would take part regardless of background. According to Hill (2008) the arts is “a powerful way to support a range of social and academic competencies” (p. 93). Furthermore, he argues that extending hours “can foster internal competencies known to support resiliency and positive youth development” (p. 94) as in collaboration and teamwork. However, teachers unions were adamant that this was not the way to go about the matter and children should not be slotted into such a mode pointing to primary children’s concentration span over long periods as counterproductive. Additionally, teachers work over long hours of 50 to 60 a week and they like the children needed time to revitalize. A comparison with Asian education systems does not hold as Gray indicated in a survey conducted by researchers that Chinese children suffer from stress related disorders linked to school performance and of the necessity to have children engage in play (Independent, F. Morse, January 30, 2014).

In Chicago, the implementation of longer hours was reported in The Atlantic newspaper as having funding problems especially with the extracurricular activities. Moreover, in a community with diverse needs parents were also concerned about children’s safety in after school programs. Significantly though, teachers continued to work longer hours in spite of the changes (The Atlantic, S. Neufeld, January 21, 2014).

Other schools in the United States also debated the pros and cons of longer hours. As reported in the USA Today, 2014 the proponents contended that the longer hours provided children with opportunities to become effective learners. Those on the opposing side maintain that quality not quantity is the issue. The data collected from the various schools pointed to mixed outcomes regarding scores in English and mathematics. In one primary school in Massachusetts English scores went up by 10% and math scores by 16% with the longer hours. However, in a New Jersey school doubling students’ time on math and language arts students scored 51% lower than their peers in language arts (USA Today, T. Richman, February 26, 2014). According to Lockwood (2008) “if proposed change is well presented, success is likely” (p. 10) and it has “the potential to boost student proficiency levels... with a more robust emphasis on academic achievement” (p. 4). Undoubtedly more research could throw light on the efficacy of longer hours.

Subsequently, the need to investigate the implementation of extending teaching hours has come at an opportune time. The more developed countries with education systems that have

undergone tremendous changes continue to seek viable options to support students' academic performance. Likewise, this study could point Samoa towards a direction that would fulfill students, parents and the nation's aspirations.

4. Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' opinion and perception on extending teaching hours in the schools in Samoa. To satisfy the purpose of the study, questions targeted how extending school hours have contributed to students overall performance in school, teachers' performance, students' learning support, classroom and school programme, and schools and parents discernment. It probed teachers understanding of the rationale for extending teaching hours, the philosophical underpinnings, the implementation and application that would contribute to efficacious practice.

This investigation was a mixed-method study using both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative part gathered information using interviews and the quantitative used a survey questionnaire to solicit information from teachers. This would contribute to a "breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration" (Johnson, Onwueguzie & Turner, 2007, p. 123). Not all schools and school teachers in Samoa participated due to time limitation and budgetary constraints, but the sampling technique used is sufficient enough to represent the whole population of schools in Samoa. Given the nature and the simple structure of the survey, all analysis including descriptive analysis and charts, were implemented on MS Excel using various methods particularly the use of Excel functions and pivot tables.

Information garnered from the teachers' perceptions, views and opinions on extending teaching hours in schools was to supplement the survey (Appendix A). According to Creswell (2013) qualitative research involves "the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns and themes" (p. 44). The gathering and presentation of explanations and descriptions from teachers' responses were classified into responses that showed evidence of similarity or uniqueness. These were then reclassified to enable a manageable analysis of data. In quantitative research, variables can be identified and measured. Thus a mixed method approach addressed getting rich descriptions from interviews and the survey provided numerical data on the questionnaire. Both components played a complementary nature in elucidating the phenomenon. The interviews targeted schools and teachers chosen to specifically assist the

study. On the other hand, the quantitative component gathers information from a wide population and employed a predetermined instrument to provide statistical data (Creswell, 2003) which could be generalized across the population.

There were several advantages in using the mixed method approach. The qualitative “focuses on meaning in context, requires a data collection instrument that is sensitive to underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data” (Merriam, 2009, p. 2). In addition, quantitative data focused on logic, numbers and convergent reasoning and the integration of both was “needed to understand the case at hand” (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 43).

In interviews the interviewer’s role is critical in connecting the participants to the phenomenon under study and interpreting how they make meaning of their experiences. It meant one needs to be cognizant of the nuances, similarities and differences in participants’ forthcoming responses, which Stake (2010) refers to as an “inquiry, deliberate study, a seeking to understand” (p. 13). In this aspect, investigating extending teaching hours in schools could be linked to an understanding of students’ academic performance.

The participants’ experiences and their interpretations may be different from those undertaking the study. Attempts to contain bias are minimized by listening intently to the voice of the other and are supplemented by the survey questionnaire.

Conducting this research is an attempt to link extending school hours with student performance. Merriam (1988) suggests the “design is employed to gain in depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved” (p. 19). The perspectives, experiences, values and beliefs of teachers in their practice and application in the workplace are critical. Subsequently, participants’ views would also form a core understanding of how the phenomenon is perceived and its relationship to students’ academic performance. The survey would also provide verification and confirmatory checks for the interviews conducted. Interpretation from the deliberate construction of authentic data should provide considerable insight into the phenomenon.

4.1 Population and Sample

The population selected for this study included fifteen teachers from seven government schools, three from Savaii and four from Upolu. Two primary schools and one secondary school were from Savai’i and two primary and two secondary schools from Upolu. Purposive sampling of primary schools was based on the results of the SPELL tests from a school in an at-risk district

which is the beginning level (critical L1c and basic L1b) and developing level (L2). Subsequently, another primary school was selected from a district which performed at the proficient (L3) and established (L4) levels. Two teachers were interviewed from each of the selected schools. The sample collected information from participants: their understanding of the reason for extending teaching hours, were more conversant and were aware of the implications of extending teaching hours. They had taught since its implementation and through their experiences in the interim years provided comprehensive and rich data. It also met the criteria for the investigation: taught in the last ten years (including classes taking the SPELL test), teaching qualification and their positions at the school including involvement in extracurricular activities.

A survey questionnaire was distributed randomly to schools across the country irrespective of districts and class levels. Approximately 694 questionnaires from 76 schools were disseminated and collected between September and December 2016.

4.2 Interviews and Talanoa Method

The main form of data collection in qualitative research is interviews although often supported by field notes, documentation and archival records for triangulation (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Robson, 2011). Qualitative interviews have been used in the social sciences, education and health sciences for decades (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and allow for information elucidation of the phenomenon from the participants themselves. The talanoa method which is similar to interviewing (Otsuka, 2005; Vaioleti, 2006) is widely used in the Pacific as a valid way of eliciting information. Moreover, *talanoa* is culturally appropriate as a holistic embodiment of the experiences, values, beliefs, knowledge, and cultural mores of those involved (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014). Robson (2011) refers to interviews as “a lengthy intimate conversation” (p. 288) that provides extremely enlightening information.

Interviews were conducted in the third week of June in Savai'i and were carried out in the third week of September in Upolu. These were done face-to-face in the teachers' schools. Interviewees consent was solicited although they did not sign a form of agreement (Appendix B). Their permission to use a Dictaphone to record was requested. Teachers were given the freedom to use both Samoan and English to respond. It was important to use what would elicit in depth, insightful and revelatory information. Interviews were semi-structured and audio taped for fifteen minutes to one hour. The interview questions were open-ended as this encouraged more

participant involvement and established closer collaboration between the researcher and the participant (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Open-ended interviews were seen to be effective when the person being interviewed is deemed to be an expert Bogdan and Biklen (2007). Participants like to feel that they have contributed towards the development of ideas and thinking that will support, promote and authenticate their practice. Although the interviewer determined the pace of the questions, participants' goodwill set the tone for getting the raw data needed (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007).

Transcription of interviews took about three weeks. Seidman (2013) posits "in depth interviewing encourages people to reconstruct their experiences actively within the context of their lives" (p. 13). At the heart of in depth interviewing is a deep motivation and interest to find meaning to the phenomenon.

Douglas (1976) cited in Walford (2001) indicates four problems of interviews specifically "misinformation, evasion, lies and fronts" (p. 91). It calls for interviews that view participants' experiences holistically (Lewis & Noble, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994) and provide confirmatory checks to ensure a more balanced perspective. Walford (2001) claims "there is a need to be cautious in interpreting the words produced in an interview and should try to generate further data about the same topics in a variety of different ways" (p 96). In addition, Robson (2011) contends that interviewers need to listen more "Most interviewers talk too much. The interview is not a platform for the interviewer's personal experiences and opinions" (p. 282). In undertaking research interviews are one way of collecting data that the researcher analyzed and interpreted for decision-making.

Likewise, Otsuka (2006) points to limitations of *talanoa* method (2006) that when research is conducted inappropriately or in an unacceptable manner, the findings will be questionable. This has implications for the *talanoa* sessions. It is important that participants are made aware at the start of the purpose of the research, as this will ensure that significant dialogue takes place. Awareness of the socio-cultural situation contributes to the interchange of information flow that transcends participants' level in the hierarchical structure of seniority and position. It enables participants to tell their stories freely and provide their reality with ideas and examples to validate their experiences.

4.3 Survey Questionnaire

Dissemination of a survey to approximately 694 teachers provided support and verification for the interviews. These were delivered and collected by a MESC personnel to ensure timely distribution and due date. The survey questionnaire has two parts. Part A comprised of questions regarding the respondent's background such as school, district, level-taught, and number of years teaching. Part B contained ten (10) likert-scale questions with options scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with supplementary questions to be answered based on participants' responses on the primary questions.

4.4 Logistics

The time frame for the schools selected included the schedule for visits. Schools in Savaii and Upolu were initially scheduled for July during the semester break. However, a MESC visit to the Itu Asau in June enabled the researchers to conduct interviews in June (20-24) and the Upolu schools were interviewed on 19 August. Two teachers from each school were interviewed with the exception of Samoa College who had an extra staff. A total of one to two hours were spent on interviews. Both researchers were involved in interviewing the two teachers at the Itu Asau after which they concentrated on one each in the following schools which helped to expedite the process. It was envisaged that the primary schools and secondary schools in Upolu included both primary and secondary schools from the western and eastern side respectively. Similarly, the schools in Savaii also involved different districts. The schools in Savai'i (Itu Asau, Samauga and Sapapali'i) were covered in three days but the researchers were able to visit the schools in Upolu (Samoa College, Sagaga College, Fasitoouta Primary School and Saleilua/Poutasi) in one day only. In essence, the visits to schools in Upolu and Savai'i were completed in four working days.

Discussions with MESC before the visits to access schools ensured minimal disruption for the school programme and easier access for the researchers to and from the schools.

Table 1: Schools and Visiting schedule**Time Frame**

	School	District SPELL results	Proposed week/ day	Proposed time
<i>Survey</i>	76 schools (Apia & Upolu)	L1c, L1b, L2, L3 & L4	Dissemination – wk 3 Due – wk 3	June September
Interviews				
Savaii				
Secondary	Itu Asau College		Mon, 20 June	8.00-10.00am
Primary	Samauga	L1cb	Tues, 21 June	9.00 -10.00am
	Sapapalii	L34	Fri, 24 June	10.00-11.00am
Upolu				
Secondary	Samoa College		Fri, 19 August	8.30-9.30am
	Sagaga		Fri, 19 August	10.00-11.00am
	Fasito’outa	L1cb	Fri, 19 August	11.30-12.30pm
	Saleilua/Poutasi	L34	Fri, 19 August	1.00-2.00pm

5. Data Collection and Data Analysis

The data collected responded to the research questions that the research investigated focusing on extending teaching hours in relation to students’ academic performance. Results from the SPELL/PILNA Report 2016 enabled the researchers to select schools that could contribute in assessing the phenomenon.

Data analysis does not have a specific time frame, but is dependent on the data collected from start to end. First intuitions and thoughts, interviews and *talanoa* sessions elucidated information for analysis. Information gathered from participants was categorized as emerging themes, concepts and patterns (Creswell, 2007; Krueger & Casey, 2009; Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2013). Reading through the transcribed descriptions of participants’ experiences assisted in making connections. This step allowed code classification and categorizing of patterns and themes. Concepts from the transcribed interviews were categorized and subsequently subcategorized as themes. It sought meaningful patterns or themes that Corbin and Strauss (2015) refer to as “integrating the concepts around a core category” (p. 81) to reveal the extent in which teachers perceived the extending of teaching hours. Thus, making conjectures and connections from the data addressed the research questions. Raw data is simply raw data until the researcher synthesizes and integrates the themes into a holistic entity (Miles, et al.).

The excerpts from participants’ transcriptions needed to be completed before the analysis. Data analysis was used to make comparisons of participants’ explanations, descriptions and interpretations. Moustakas (1994) posits, “Reflective interpretation of the text is needed to

achieve a fuller, more meaningful understanding” (p. 10). Analysis of qualitative data can be presented using tables.

Quantitative analysis used data gleaned from the survey questionnaire to further augment interviews. Subsequently, tables, graphs and figures demonstrated the mixed methods multidimensional approach to inquiry.

6. Interview Findings and Analyses

These were examined under the Research Questions for ease of reference.

Question 1 What are your perceptions and understanding about extending teaching hours?

Extending school hours from 9.00 am to 3.30 pm was an initiative by the MESC with the intention that it will help to improve students’ academic performance.

The fifteen teachers who were interviewed gave different responses on their perceptions and understanding about extending teaching hours. A few of the participants revealed that extending school hours benefit the students and teachers. One of them said *“there is an acute need because student ability requires extra assistance and teachers can support them to complete work in the extra teaching hours.”* Some teachers in one primary school responded that they believe it is very useful for students as well as teachers *“it will give students ample time to go through each subject thoroughly and for the slow learners to have extra time with the teachers”* and *“helps to improve academic performance of students.”* One other teacher said *“the school has targeted the extended hours as helping children to learn, consolidating learning in the classroom.”* Another teacher at one primary school also added *“as a teacher it is good to extend teaching hours in order for the children to be able to reach targeted academic levels they are expected to achieve.”* Students literacy levels may improve with the extended teaching hours as pointed out by two teachers *“...personally extending school hours will help students achieve their goals in reading and writing. The extending of school hours gives us more time to work with the slow learners and also give us time to work on literacy tasks like reading and numeracy skills.”* *“Improvements have been shown in the academic work of students especially the ones with reading problems.”*

The majority of the teachers interviewed doubted extending teaching hours would bring any changes to students’ academic performance due to different reasons. One main reason given is tiredness, fatigue and lack of concentration at the last half of the day. One of the college

teachers said *“I was here during the old teaching hours and now during the implementing of the new school hours. I think the academic performance has not changed since the change of the new time. We have tried different strategies to cope with the new time. Students find it so hard to concentrate during the last two periods of the day.”* The other teacher said *“children are greatly affected especially after interval when they are tired and not as receptive as in the early hours.”* One of the teachers also pointed to the hardships that she also faced as a parent *“as a parent I do not support the extending of school hours. My kids are suffering from the extended school hours because in the afternoon they are bored and tired and they cannot concentrate...we have enough time to teach, as we all know the saying, short and sweet. There are no benefits from extending school hours, results are still the same.”*

The teachers’ perceptions and understanding about extending teaching hours were reflections of their classroom experiences with their students. Only a few of them have highlighted the importance of the extended teaching hours to improving learning especially in the area of literacy development. However most of the teachers who were interviewed both in primary and secondary schools believed that the extended school hours seemed to provide more problems for teachers, students and as well as parents. These include lacking concentration, boredom, restlessness and fatigue during the second half of the school day. Teachers also raised concerns about their own children’s inactive academic progress at school given the longer school hours. Generally, the teachers do not believe that extending teaching hours would improve academic performance of students more than the problems they present.

Question 2 Was there a need to extend teaching hours?

The responses given by the teachers for this question showed that they were not consulted thoroughly about the need to extend teaching hours. All teachers responded to the question by saying *“I don’t really know where the idea came from but we were told that school hours will be extended so for me I just go along with what was said.”*..... *“we were given questionnaires during one visit from the MESC but there was no meeting with them to discuss the new extended school hours. The next thing we know is that they tell us to start with the new times given.”* *“There was no consultation about change. We just follow what we were told..... We were not consulted officially but we were given questionnaires.”*

One teacher claimed *“I heard it was a MESC initiative to encourage schools to support literacy programs and expose students to different reading materials.”* There are lots of things that can

be done to bring changes to academic performance not just extending school hours as one teacher put it..... *“before the change, attempts were made to address problems in students performance but there were still gaps and problems. With the change now, there is still more work to be done.”*

A teacher at one of the colleges disapproved the need for extending teaching hours saying *“there is no need to change the time, it was good as it was and students are not doing any better with extending school hours.”* This view was supported by two other teachers at one college..... *“I think the new times do not work and so the students do not need the extra hours....no one was involved in the discussions for extending school hours and personally there was no need for extending school hours.”*

The responses explained the lack of communication between the MESC and the schools about the proposed change of school hours. Given the inadequate explanations and effort to discuss and consult widely with teachers to explain and justify the need for the change, teachers were not convinced and were not sure as to why the changes were made. It appeared from their responses that they were only informed of what they should do without any proper consultation.

Question 3 What are the benefits of extending school hours?

The benefits of extending school hours varied according to teachers responses. Three teachers pointed out that there are no or almost no benefits for students from extending school hours. They said *“I don’t think there are any major benefits. The results of exams are still the same over the last 3 years.....there are no benefits from extending school hours, results are still the same.....I don’t think there are any actual benefits.”*

The other teachers reiterated that there were benefits and some improvement for students and themselves. Some agreed that they now have more time to prepare..... *“there is more time to do preparations for classes each day before going home.....it gives me a chance to find resources and materials to help with my teaching especially with my subject area which is Mathematics. It gives me more preparations.....For me as a teacher it gives me more than enough time to prepare my lessons and activities for the next day.”*

Teachers pointed to the benefits of improving literacy skill and for those who live close by the school compound. One said that, *“children now have time to do a lot of reading when they finish their subject, during the last hours of the day, children can pick their activities to work on while they wait for other students to complete their required work for each subject*

before dismissal.” Another teacher supported saying, *“extending school hours help students achieve their goals in reading and writing.”* One teacher shared that it was beneficial for at-risk children, *“this change has assisted at risk students and some change is witnessed in their reading, spelling and writing.”* Another teacher said, *“students that live close by find it very useful. They have extra time to do their IAs and other work.”*

The benefits of extending school hours mainly highlighted its usefulness to teachers preparation times in completing activities and resources beforehand. For students, the need to target reading and writing skills and spending time with at-risk students were the real benefits of extending teaching hours.

Question 4 How have parents and students responded to extending school hours?

Although the interviews were for teachers, students and parents’ role were also vital in searching for answers and revealing the truth about the situation.

Of the eight college teachers who were interviewed, none gave positive feedback from the parents and students. They said parents’ complaint about the extended school hours for a number of reasons and were not reassured about the new dismissal time. Apprehension over the safety of students especially girls was raised. The parents worried about the girls who lived far away from school without private transportation. They got home late in the evening especially with an irregular bus service. For those who have private transport, the extended time was also a worry for working parents. They had to take time off to pick up children where previously this was done during lunch break.

Parents also did not support the extended school hours due to financial hardships. The longer school hours required two breaks in which case the parents have to supply extra lunch or lunch money for their children. For low income families providing for many children at school was an expensive task. More children meant more expenses.

From the teacher’s interviews, they said about 60% to 70% of parents do not support extending school hours.

At the Primary school level, seven teachers interviewed responded differently. Four of them in two schools explained that the parents responded positively and supported the change. One of the teachers said that *“most parents have positive responses to extending school hours. They said that keeping children for these hours at school also saved them from roaming around doing nothing when they get home. One came and thanked the principal for the reading*

program that helped her daughter improve her reading.” This was supported by one teacher at a different school saying, “so far I have not received any complaints from parents. The parents are okay with the change. Since most of the children live nearby, I suppose it is why the parents are not complaining about the new dismissal time.”

On the other hand, three teachers in two different primary schools relayed parents concern about the extending of school hours. One main reason was the extra money to buy lunch since there are two breaks now. She responded that *“parents complain because they have to give extra money for their children’s lunches.”* Not only that, they said *“children are too tired when they come home. They do not do the usual chores at home in the evenings to help their parents with food preparations and all that.”* This was supported by another parent-teacher consultation in one school *“children are tired and not responsive in the afternoon.”*

At the primary school level, the responses from the teachers showed that over 50% of parents did not support the new extended school hours while the below 50% showed interest and positive feedback for the new school hours.

The student’s responses according to the teacher’s interviews also revealed a high percentage of children finding difficulties in learning during the extended school hours. In both primary schools and colleges this was the main concern given by teachers at both levels. One college teacher said, *“During afternoon classes students are tired and not paying attention. Teaching can be tiring and frustrating when students are not interested and easily distracted. Another teacher at college in support said “the children find it hard to cope with the extended school hours. In the afternoon, the students do not have any interest because of the time of the day. During this time the heat is unbearable and muggy so students feel sleepy and lose concentration. Teachers who teach at this time of the day would have to have a lot of endurance to bear with the students.”*

For teachers at college level, they received negative feedback from students when teaching at these late hours. One of them summed it up *“I would prefer to do something else and not spend time teaching students’ that are exhausted and dead beat.”*

In the Primary school level, the teachers’ responses varied. Four teachers at two different schools said that the students responded well to the new change. One of the teachers said *“students really make good use of these extended school hours with the assistance of teachers and the principal. In terms of reading and writing I think our program has given a lot*

of help to students who really needed this.” One teacher believed that the extended school hours gave opportunities for children who were interested in visual art or physical education “Visual art is another subject that interests children and the extended time allows for this. This is the case for P.E. as well and children can be involved in physical education or artwork up to 4 pm.”

However for some teachers at two different schools they mentioned that children at this level have problems learning during these hours of the day. One teacher responded that, *“children responded to extending school hours through various ways: uninterested, unmotivated, concentration span drops, tired, restless and not energetic. They do not listen during this time and teachers face behavioral problems.”* In support one teacher also said, *“Although activities are planned to provide diversity and support student motivation in the afternoon most of the students find it hard to concentrate.”*

At the end it seems the majority of parents and students do not support extending school hours. Parents concerns are mainly for safety and financial hardships. With the prolonged teaching hours, schools are unable to provide transport for students who travel long distances. In addition, the extra lunch break can be a factor resulting in students staying away from school and giving parents more responsibilities in finding the extra money to satisfy that need. Another important issue raised deals with the children’s role at home where they are expected to help and spend time with family. This is part of learning cultural values and mores which has lessened with the implementation of the new extended school hours.

For students there are improvements in reading and writing as indicated by some teachers however, the majority of students are not learning during these late hours. As revealed by teachers, temperatures in the rooms, overcrowded, and inconsistencies in planned activities and programs for schools have resulted in behavioral problems that have affected learning during extending teaching hours.

Question 5 What problems have you and the students faced in extending school hours?

In response the participants overwhelmingly pointed to the problems students and teachers face with extending teaching hours.

Twelve primary teachers mentioned that in class *“children are tired and they are not responsive in the afternoon”*; *they come to school with no homework done as they don’t have the time once they get home either because they are too tired or they finish their usual home duties and go to sleep”*; *“in the afternoon the students are tired, listless, sleepy and not listening”*; *“it*

is hard to get students to focus when it is too hot in the classroom.” One teacher said, “Despite the types of activities that have been prepared, students find it hard to listen and concentrate. When this happens we end up singing songs and reciting poems so they can still stay in the room. Most students run around the room or even leave the room to play outside the corridor with other children.” Another contributed “Class control is an issue especially when students do not want to sit still for a long period of time. Sometimes I lose control so I just let them be for a few minutes and at the same time calm myself until I am composed and then start again.”

Two primary teachers pointed to extending teaching hours as not posing problems because *“the school has a programme in place. If problems are encountered there is a book for parents to register concerns and to provide possible resolutions”*; *“In the beginning I had to get used to it because it was something new for teachers and students to stay for a few more hours...It has given me time to prepare everything for the next day before I go home. Before I used to take my work home and I ended up bringing that work the next day without anything done. When you get home all you want to do is to rest so you just rest. But with the extended school hours I am able to finish my preparations here at school and not worry about taking anything home. Students as well really make good use of these extended school hours with the assistance of teachers and the principal.”*

Secondary teachers also pointed to the difficulty in ensuring the students are productively occupied in class *“it is difficult to discipline them at these hours and the classroom is overcrowded”*; *“Extra work is provided for the students during that time and some take them home but few can do it. We do not have a special program for the extended hours of the day. We ask them to do homework during this time but most come back without any work done.”* *“Sometime students lack concentration during these afternoon hours especially if it is a hot day”*; *“If I have a class at period 6 and 7 I need a lot of patience, because by that time around 3 o’clock students get bored. When you try to teach something and students do not bother you may end up doing something that may get you into trouble. I can understand the students because I was a student myself so when I see that I am failing then I would just let them do what interests them, they are not primary school students and they know what is best for them at the time. In that way I do not waste my time as well, I would rather do something useful than preaching to a sleepy flock”*; *I hardly find time now to do my preparations at school because we go home at*

about 5.00pm or 5.30pm but before the change I had time to do some preparation at school before going home.”

Two secondary teachers believed extending teaching hours provided *“more time to prepare in the morning before school starts and moreover, classroom teaching hours for seven periods are extended to 55 minutes each.”* Another added *“student ability requires extra assistance and teachers can support them to complete work in the extra teaching hours especially in the basic skills of reading and writing.”* However for some teachers trying to motivate students when *“they have no interest”* is a matter of concern. *“At the moment we do not have a program for all students like what we had in the past. We had activities like PE and art work in the afternoon hours but now our principal told us to focus on literacy.”*

In addition teachers also pointed to families concern about girls getting home late as transportation is a problem, and as one respondent said *“teachers tried to provide transport for the students that live far away but then no one has the money to pay for all those expenses”*; *“the distance for some students to come to school and return home poses problems, for example the students from Tufulele are late unless they get up early in the morning to catch the bus and likewise in the afternoon students are late getting home because transportation is irregular.”* Another participant mentioned *“the girls are concerned about the longer hours and transportation. As for the teachers’ problems with interschool fighting could be escalated with schools finishing late where students would congregate at certain places as seen in the Avele and Maluafou conflicts.”*

“Lunch money is another problem for the students; they need to eat well to carry them through to 2.30pm” and with extending teaching hours this has implications for students physical well being in terms of sustenance and fitness levels.

Generally, the problems teachers have encountered with extending teaching hours are to do with students’ motivational levels, their ability to concentrate and be productive in the afternoon, lack of innovative programmes in place, increasing school violence, concerns about sustenance, transportation and girls getting home late. All have implications for the teachers planning which takes into account funding and resources to run programmes that are productive and support students’ improved performance.

Question 6 Why are there concerns with the 2015 SPELL?

Although the SPELL tests were conducted in the primary schools some secondary teachers were able to relate similar concerns to the SSC and SSLC examination results.

Most primary teachers acknowledge that the SPELL tests are considered *“very important in assessing children’s academic levels...results indicate Year 4 is doing well and Year 6 shows an increase in Mathematics and Samoan results.”* For one respondent *“in the last 3 years I have witnessed some positive change...the principal and staff have made plans to address recurring problems in the SPELL.”* Another teacher believes *“Results definitely need improvement...the need for assistance to improve SPELL”* while yet another feels that *“the concern is with the Year 4 English essay writing...I blame myself...there is a push to do well in the SPELL tests but there is very little support.”* One mentioned that while teachers try to do what they can *“the attitude of our librarian”* in borrowing and assisting is deplorable. Interestingly, one participant in one school said *“literacy is a priority and all students read from 8.00-8.30am but there is almost no improvement in students’ literacy level even with the extended the school hours.”*

Secondary teachers are concerned with the *“lack of basic skills especially from Year 9 students. We do have reading in the morning but students arrive at school after the reading period in the morning. We find students in year 9 who cannot read even in the Samoan language.”* Another added *“Students from primary level entering Year 9 bring additional literacy problems to secondary level schooling...we are still teaching what the students should have learnt in Years 6-8 at primary level. It shows that basic skills are lacking from the primary level.”* One other said, *“There are lots of students who are attending this school with low literacy skills. They have carried that over from the primary level so we have special classes for them and one of the experienced teachers is helping with those classes. The extended hours enable us to do something to assist those students who really need help with reading and writing.”* Further corroboration is given by another teacher, *“There are students who are not really good at reading and writing at this school. So teachers are trying their best to do what they can.”* Another reiterated areas that need to be addressed, *“No support from parents, children are not supported at school and home, and there is no time for pastor schools.”*

Primary teachers acknowledged an acute need for improved literacy and numeracy levels in the schools. However, while efforts are made towards increasing literacy levels there is little improvement. One pointed to the need for librarians that prioritize the use of the library to

support student learning. Another indicated the importance of essay writing. It would seem their needs to be a concerted effort with benchmarks and individual student profiles to guide teachers work specifying particular processes to ensure literacy and numeracy are addressed.

Secondary teachers are also concerned with the students from primary that lack the basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Coupled with this is the fact that as an examination oriented system teachers are concerned with ensuring that the curriculum is covered and so the problem continues.

Question 7 How has the change affected your classroom/school programme?

The teachers' responses in terms of the change and its impact on the classroom/school varied.

Differences in primary teachers' responses were evident and as one participant mentioned "*the change has not affected classes and the school's programme*" while another offered a different perspective that "*School-based programme should be reflected in a change in classroom performance but this is not as evident.*" However, in one school where music was introduced and supported the teacher had this to say "*all are involved in the implementation of the programme. In the last 3 years music has become part of the school's programme and is working well with children showing a lot of interest and enthusiasm.*" One teacher felt dubious "*although time has been used to go over subject errors, revisions, reading and homework most children are not interested. On the teacher's part the work is done because they have been mandated to teach but there is no real extension or in-depth because students are not concentrating or listening.*" Another shared the same view "*Nothing much has changed in terms of preparations. I prepared a lot even before the change and now I am used to that so I do not have problems with all the preparations for class, however there has been no major change in our school programs since the new time change. We have activities like reading and culture days for the whole school, apart from that there are no additional activities.*" On the positive side one had this to offer "*The more hours at school means more preparations and activities for students. So I have to work hard to improve myself as a prepared teacher. The extended school hours encouraged me to find ways to teach, gather resources, and motivate students so that learning is not boring especially at these hours of the day. I find that I need to work extra hard. My classroom preparation is now a difficult task unlike before.* In addition the teacher said "*The extra programs we implement have been useful even though it requires extra hours of*

commitment and patience. I believe I have also benefited from extending school hours, I say this because I was appraised at the school where I taught and I did not pass but my appraisal last year in showed that I have improved so I feel that the programs and the extended school hours also helped me.”

Teachers at secondary level also indicated contrasting views. One teacher pointed to their school programme as being “*quite stable.*” In other words, the change has not affected the classroom and school programmes. Another participant felt “*students are a lot keen to learn now than when I first started three years ago. Their level of understanding information and reading materials is a lot better.*” Still one other said “*I have to plan a lot of work activities for my classes. If I don’t then the students will find it very hard to concentrate during these last periods of the day.*” The majority was not too optimistic “*I feel tired at the end of the day... no new programs for the extended hours; we just do our own extra reading or homework with the students.*” Another mentioned “*students are affected because it is too crowded. I have 50 students in my class and most times I am not able to have time for students individually. The atmosphere in the classroom is hot and the lack of space to move around makes it hard to learn especially during these hot hours of the day.*” One other revealed “*There are students who are not really good at reading and writing at this school and the teachers are trying their best to do what they can.*”

There are differences in the way teachers perceive the change, however, it is evident that planning a programme to motivate and support and sustain student interest in learning is a critical factor. Teacher commitment to provide learning opportunities that would enable students to make the leap should aspire to incorporate a holistic education that incorporates the traditional subjects, the expressive and practical arts and extracurricular activities. This requires financial support from the government, the community and parents.

Question 8 How has the change contributed to your perception of students’ academic performance?

The respondents’ responses were indicative of diverse positions. There was a marked difference in primary teachers’ responses in comparison to teachers in the secondary schools.

Generally, the primary participants’ referred to seeing “*some positive change from what it was 3 years ago in terms of children’s reading, spelling and writing especially in marking children’s work.*” Another pointed to a slight improvement “*in the academic performance of*

students” at the school and one other mentioned “in 2014 one student made it to Samoa College, also in drawing and writing competitions the children have shown they have the ability especially with incentives in receiving awards from SAAB.” This is supported by another teacher “The extended school hours I believe gives a slight improvement in the academic performance of the students here. In terms of reading and literacy I think our program has given a lot of help to the students who really needed this.” However, on the downside, one claimed, “Although there are many changes I personally see a drop in student performance if I compare it to the last 30 years of my teaching experience.” For yet another, “Extending school hours has not translated into any great difference from what it was before.” Evidently, “there is improvement for students especially those one who are really interested and try their best in class but not so much for those who are slow learners and do not come to school regularly.” In addition, “There is hardly any change to most students’ academic performance. Only those children who are eager to learn use this time wisely and get improved results.”

In the secondary area there are positive responses on changes in students’ academic performance. As one respondent articulated, “before they used to repeat the written question asked instead of responding to the question. Now they can copy written notes well, talk and interact more.” Yet another offered, “this has improved, especially for the year 13 level in the last 2 years.” One teacher mentioned “There are no new programs like P.E. and Music, dancing and performing art during the extended hours...does not see much improvement in the academic performance of students.” This was reiterated by another “the overall academic performance of students has not changed much as students are not really motivated to learn in the last two periods of the day.” Another added “Since the change of school hours, there has not been much change in students’ academic performance...community and parental support could help to improve the academic performance of students. We meet with the parents to explain what they can help out with but some parents do not want to cooperate. Our pastor gives support by providing home work centre from 7-9 pm and we also help out. Students attend probably because night time is cool and they meet and share with students from other schools.”

Overall there are conflicting views held by teachers in terms of students’ academic performance in the classroom. While primary teachers generally seem to see some positive changes in the classroom there were also those who felt that expectations from implementing the change have not been met. Secondary teachers also share similar views as the primary teachers.

However, one mentioned programmes that could support academic learning such as programmes in the expressive arts.

Question 9 Which do you prefer: the change or before the change? Why?

Responses to whether teachers preferred the change or what it was before indicated the majority chose the previous teaching hours. Of the fifteen participants, five from the primary and five from the secondary favoured the situation before the change. Four primary teachers and one secondary teacher showed preference for the change.

Obviously, most participants felt students' responsiveness and motivational levels were affected by the longer hours which may account for teachers' perception that even with the extended teaching hours students academic performance did not show a marked improvement. Also teachers generally do not perceive their performance as being maximized and contributing to students overall learning in the afternoon due to planning and organizational problems, classroom management, student fatigue and teacher motivation.

7. Survey Questionnaire Findings and Analysis

The survey questionnaire comprised of two parts:

7.1 Part A: General Information

This provides general, background information of the participants. The survey was carried out in both primary and secondary levels, mainly in schools selected in Upolu and Savaii.

7.1.1 Number of Respondents

Table 2 below shows the total number of participants. The distribution of participants among school levels is quite distinctive; the percentage of primary school participants is more than twice the number of those from colleges.

Table 2: Number of Participants by School Level

	Number of Participants	Percentage
Primary Schools	452	65.1
Colleges	239	34.4
Primary and College	3	0.5
Total	694	100

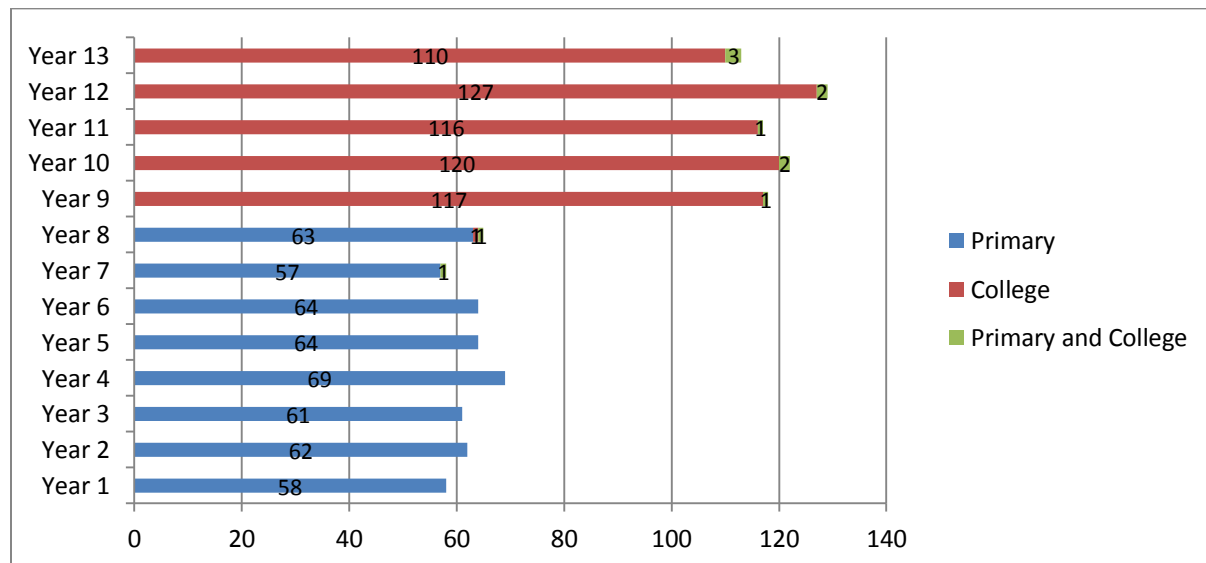
7.1.2 Number of Respondents Teaching in Each Class Level

Table 3 and Figure 1 below show the number of participants who teach in each class level from Year 1 to Year 13. Also note that some of the participants teach at more than one level. From the results, the majority of college teachers have Year 12 as one of their teaching class level.

Table 3: Number of Responses from Teachers Teaching in Each Class Level

	Total	Percentage	Primary	College	Primary and College
Year 1	58	6.0	58		
Year 2	62	6.4	62		
Year 3	61	6.3	61		
Year 4	69	7.2	69		
Year 5	64	6.6	64		
Year 6	64	6.6	64		
Year 7	58	6.0	57		1
Year 8	65	6.7	63	1	1
Year 9	118	12.2		117	1
Year 10	122	12.7		120	2
Year 11	117	12.1		116	1
Year 12	129	13.4		127	2
Year 13	113	11.7		110	3

Figure 1: Number of Responses from Teachers Teaching in Each Class Level



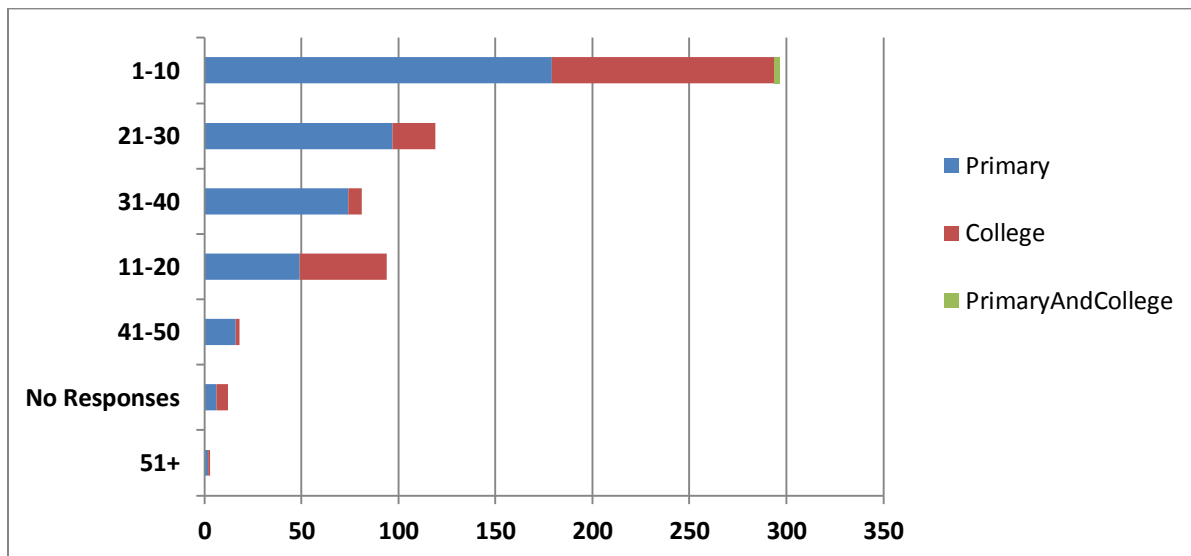
7.1.3 Years of Teaching

Table 4 and Figure 2 summarised the distribution of years of teaching among the participants. The number of teaching years has been grouped by a range of 10 years. The results show that the majority of participants have taught for less than 10 years at the time of the survey (53.4%), followed by those who taught between 21 and 30 years (20.8%).

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents Number of Teaching Years

Number Of Years Taught	Number Of Respondents	Percent	Primary	College	Primary And College
1-10	333	53.4	192	138	3
11-20	109	17.5	55	54	0
21-30	130	20.8	104	26	0
31-40	87	13.9	77	10	0
41-50	18	2.9	16	2	0
51+	3	0.5	2	1	0
No Responses	14	2.2	8	6	0
Total	694	100.0	454	237	3

Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents Number of Teaching Years



7.2 Part B: Results of the Main Questions of the Survey

Part B of the survey questionnaire presents results of the main questions of the survey.

The questions for the survey are listed below:

- B1: Do you agree with extending teaching hours?
- B2: Is there a need in extending teaching hours?
- B3: Has it benefit students academically?
- B4: Do parents agree with extending teaching hours?
- B5: Do students believe in extending school hours?
- B6: Are there problems in extending school hours?
- B7: Does your school have at-risk students in the 2015 SPELL test?
- B8: The change has affected the classroom and school programme?
- B9: Is there a change in students' academic performance?
- B10: Do you believe the change supports student learning?

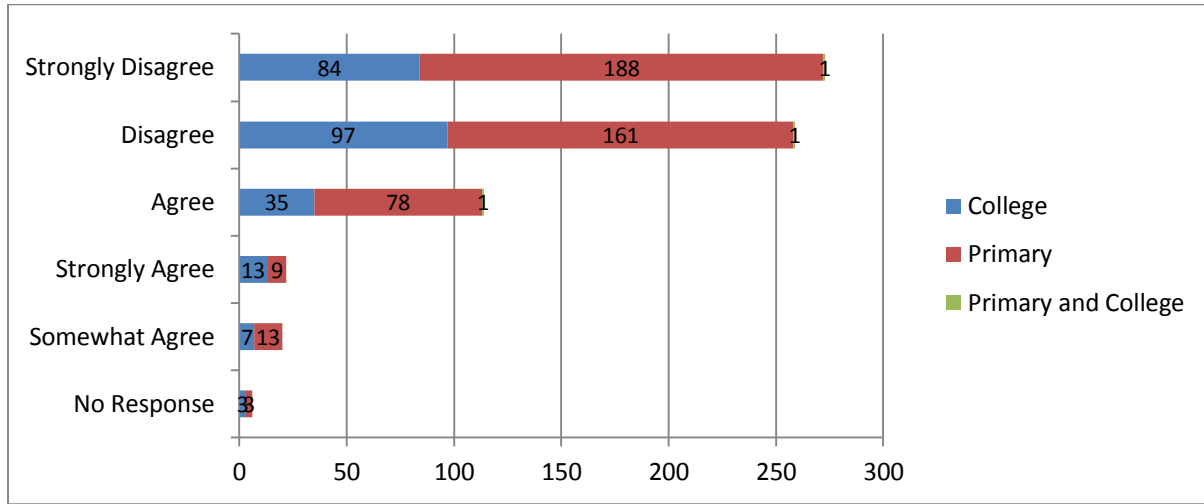
7.2.1 B1: Do you agree with extending teaching hours?

Table 5 and Figure 3 below show the participants level of agreement on extending teaching hours. The results reveal the majority of the participants *strongly disagree* (39.3%) with extending teaching hours, followed by 37.3% of those who *disagree*.

Table 5: Participants Level of Agreement with Extending Teaching Hours

	Total	Percent	College	Primary	Primary and College
Strongly Disagree	273	39.3	84	188	1
Disagree	259	37.3	97	161	1
Somewhat Agree	20	2.9	7	13	
Agree	114	16.4	35	78	1
Strongly Agree	22	3.2	13	9	
No Response	6	0.9	3	3	
Grand Total	694	100.0	239	452	3

Figure 3: Participants Level of Agreement with Extending Teaching Hours



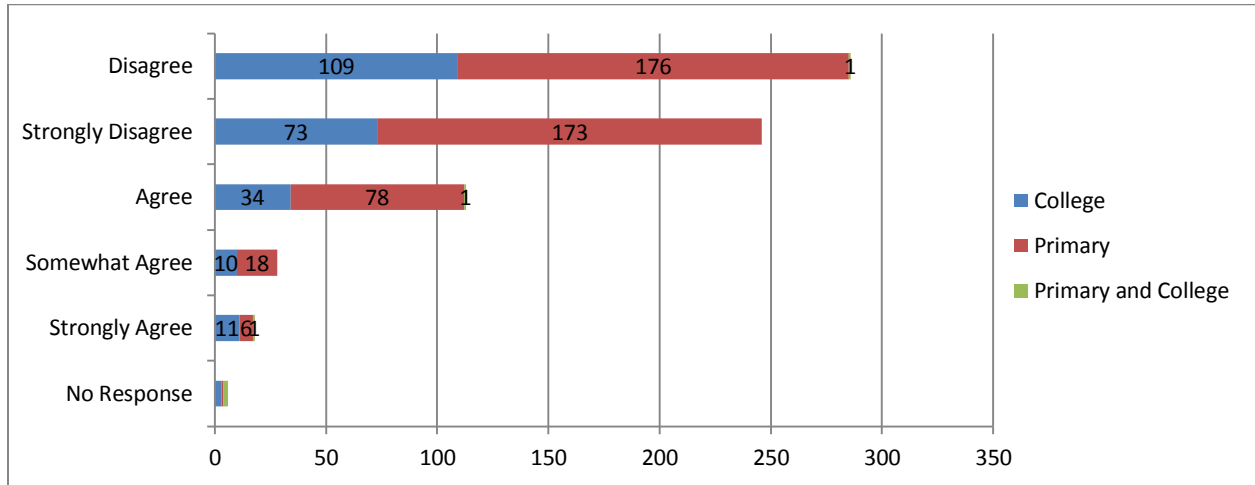
7.2.2 B2: Is there a need in extending teaching hours?

Table 5 and Figure 4 below show the participants' level of perception on the need to extend teaching hours. The results reveal that the majority of the participants *disagree* (41.2%), followed by 35.4% of those who *strongly disagree*.

Table 6: Participants Level of Perception on the Need to Extend Teaching Hours

	Grand Total	Percent	College	Primary	Primary and College
Strongly Disagree	246	35.4	73	173	
Disagree	286	41.2	109	176	1
Somewhat Agree	28	4.0	10	18	
Agree	113	16.3	34	78	1
Strongly Agree	18	2.6	11	6	1
No Response	3	0.4	3	1	2
Grand Total	694	100.0	240	452	5

Figure 4: Participants Level of Perception on the Need to Extend Teaching Hours



7.2.3 B3: Has it benefitted students academically?

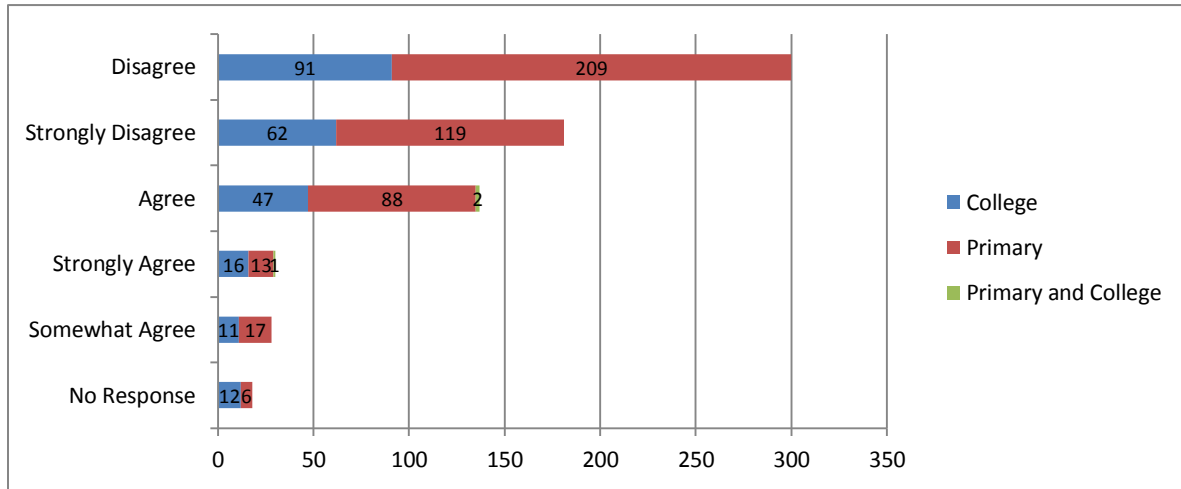
Participants were asked if extending teaching hours benefitted students academically. From the results shown in *Table 7* and *Figure 5*, 43.2% of the participants *disagree*, followed by 26.1% of those who *strongly disagree*.

In other words, 69.3% of all participants indicated that extending teaching hours did not benefit students academically, while 28% agreed that extending teaching hours benefitted students academically.

Table 7: Participants Level of Perception on whether Extending Teaching Hours Benefitted Students Academically

	Grand Total	Percent	College	Primary	Primary and College
Strongly Disagree	181	26.1	62	119	
Disagree	300	43.2	91	209	
Somewhat Agree	28	4.0	11	17	
Agree	137	19.7	47	88	2
Strongly Agree	30	4.3	16	13	1
No Response	18	2.6	12	6	
Grand Total	694	100.0	239	452	3

Figure 3: Participants Level of Perception on whether Extending Teaching Hours Benefitted Students Academically



7.2.3 B3(ii): Has it Benefitted students academically?

If YES circle responses you agree with:

- a. Students doing homework
- b. Teacher provides individual attention
- c. Reinforce concept understanding
- d. Extracurricular activities support academic performance

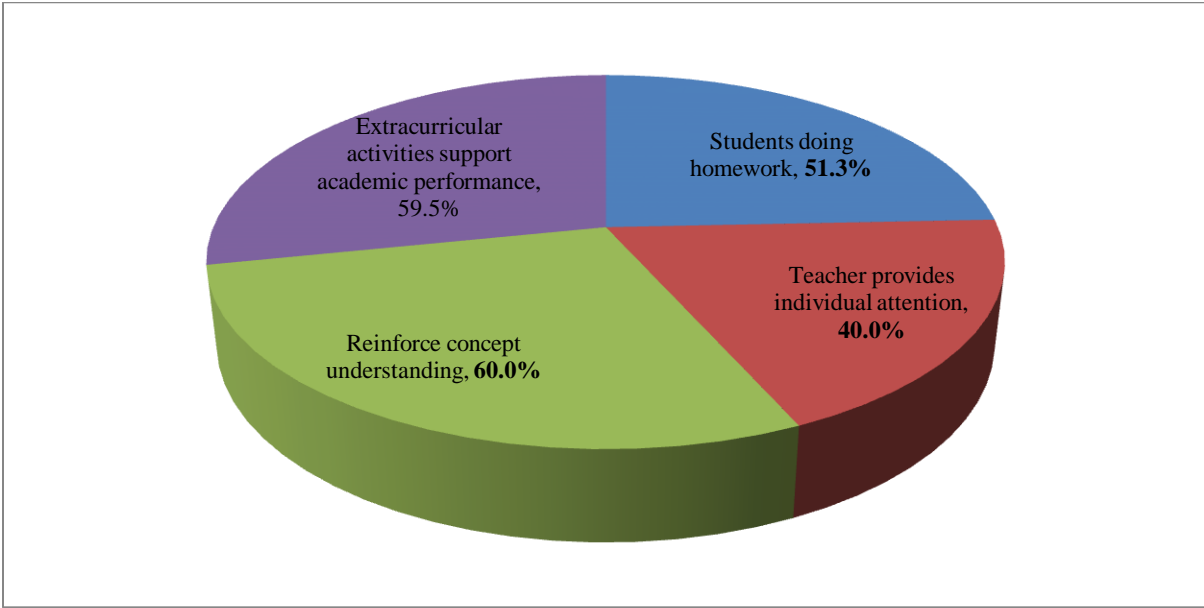
This question is a follow-up to Question B3. That is, if the participant selects any of the options 3, 4, or 5 to question 3B, then she or he should circle any of the above responses that he or she agrees with.

In Question B3 above, 28.0% (195) of all participants supported or agreed at some level that extending teaching hours have benefitted students academically. *Table 8* and *Figure 6* show the distribution of responses of those who agreed with this. Looking at the results, 60% stated that extending teaching hours has reinforced concept understanding, followed by 59.5% of those who indicated that extracurricular activities support academic performance.

Table 8: Distribution of Responses of Those who Agree that Extending Teaching Hours have Benefitted Students Academically

	Number of Participants	Percent
Students doing homework	100	51.3
Teacher provides individual attention	78	40.0
Reinforce concept understanding	117	60.0
Extracurricular activities support academic performance	116	59.5

Figure 6: Distribution of Responses of Those who Agree that Extending Teaching Hours have Benefitted Students Academically



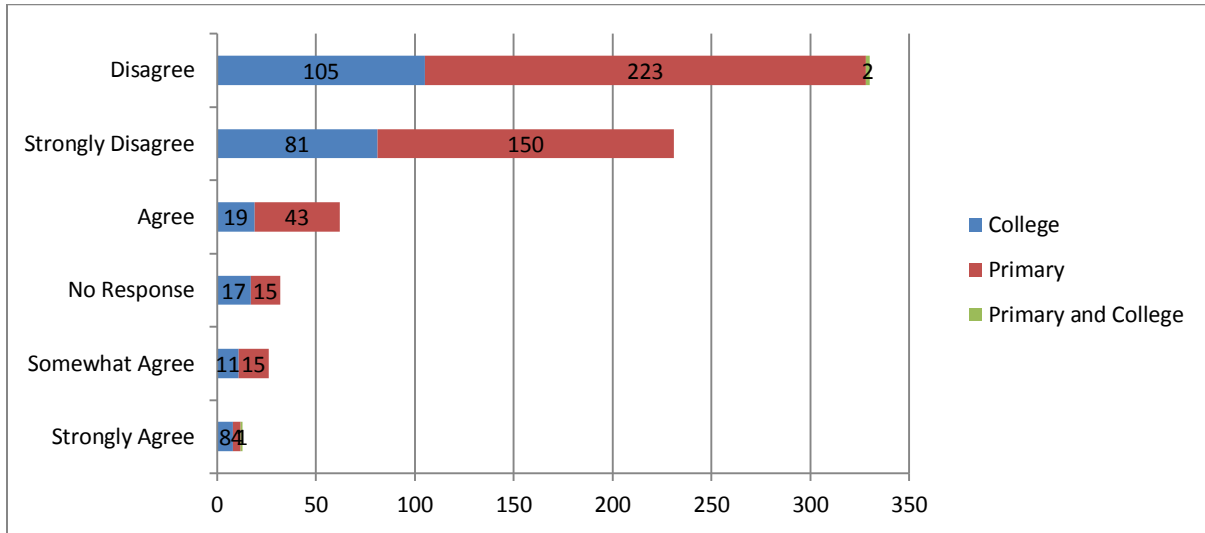
7.4 B4: Do parents agree with extending teaching hours?

Table 9 and Figure 7 below present the distribution of parents’ level of agreement with regards to extending teaching hours. The results reveal that 80.9 percent of the participants indicated negative responses to parents’ level of agreement towards extending teaching hours.

Table 9: Participants' Perceptions on the Parents Level of Agreement towards Extending Teaching Hours

	Grand Total	Percent	College	Primary	Primary and College
Strongly Disagree	231	33.3	81	150	
Disagree	330	47.6	105	223	2
Somewhat Agree	26	3.7	11	15	
Agree	62	8.9	19	43	
Strongly Agree	13	1.9	8	4	1
No Response	32	4.6	17	15	
Grand Total	694	100.0	241	450	3

Figure 4: Participants' Perception on the Parents Level of Agreement towards Extending Teaching Hours



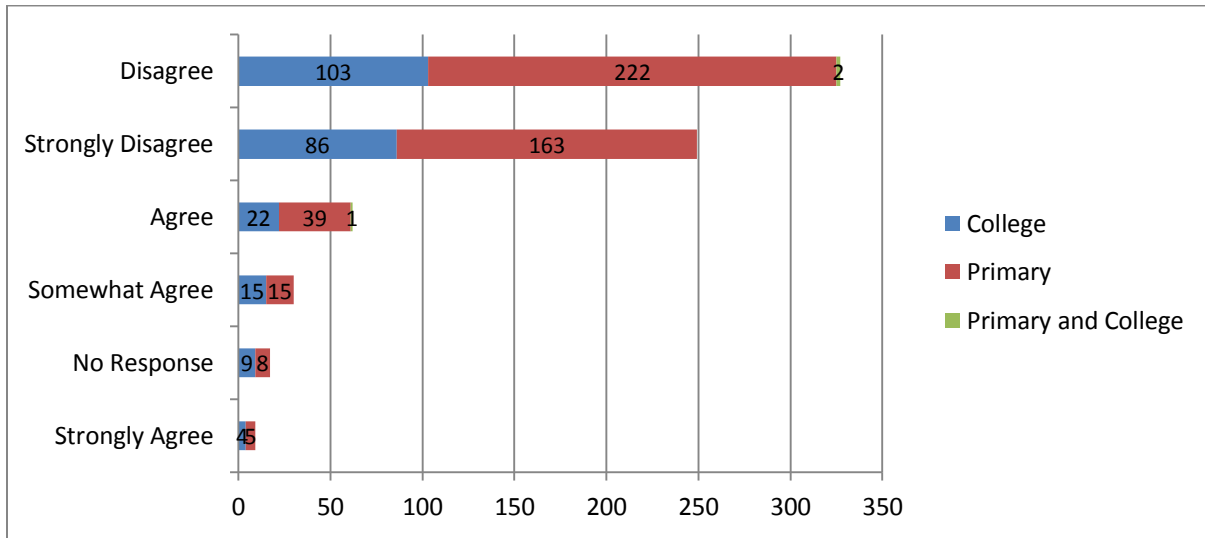
7.5 B5: Do students believe in extending school hours?

Table 10 and Figure 8 below show the participants' responses regarding their perceptions on student's belief on extending school hours. The results show that almost 90 percent responded negatively.

Table 10: Participants' Perceptions on Students' Beliefs in Extending School Hours

	Grand Total	Percent	College	Primary	Primary and College
Strongly Disagree	249	35.9	86	163	
Disagree	327	47.1	103	222	2
Somewhat Agree	30	4.3	15	15	
Agree	62	8.9	22	39	1
Strongly Agree	9	1.3	4	5	
No Response	17	2.4	9	8	
Grand Total	694	100.0	239	452	3

Figure 5: Participants' Perception on Students' Beliefs in Extending School Hours



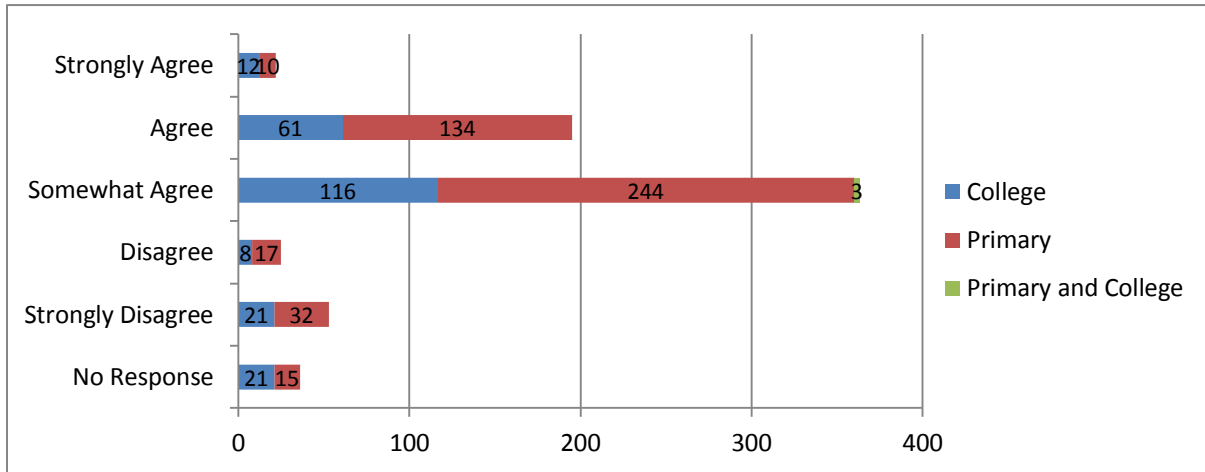
7.6 B6: Are there problems in extending school hours?

Participants were asked to state if there were any problems they faced in extending school hours. Table 11 and Figure 9 below revealed that 83.6% of the participants agreed at some stage that there were problems with extending school hours. These problems have been further identified in Question B6(ii).

Table 11: Distribution of Participants' Responses on whether there are Problems in Extending School Hours

	Grand Total	Percent	College	Primary	Primary and College
Strongly Disagree	53	7.6	21	32	
Disagree	25	3.6	8	17	
Somewhat Agree	363	52.3	116	244	3
Agree	195	28.1	61	134	
Strongly Agree	22	3.2	12	10	
No Response	36	5.2	21	15	
Grand Total	694	100.0	239	452	3

Figure 6: Distribution of Participants' Responses on whether there are Problems in Extending School Hours



7.6.1 B6(ii): Are there problems in extending school hours?

If YES, circle responses you agree with:

- a. Students concentration span is affected
- b. Students are tired and restless
- c. Students attention wander during the lesson
- d. Low interest and motivation

This question is a follow-up to Question B6. That is, if the participant selects any of the options 3, 4, or 5 to question B6, then she or he should circle any of the above responses that she or he agrees with.

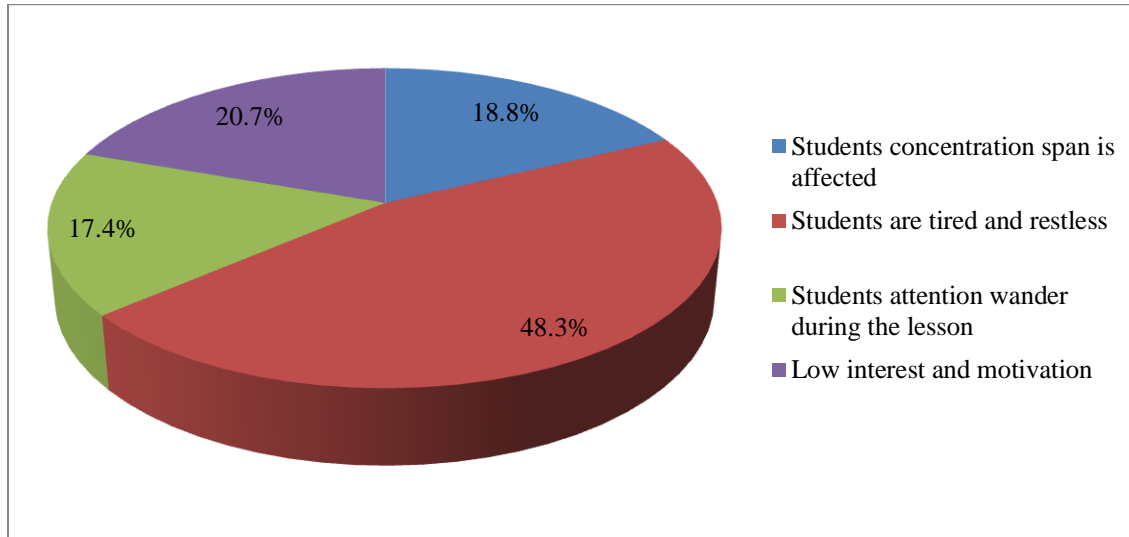
In Question B6 above, 83.6% (580) of all participants supported or agreed at some level that there were problems in extending teaching hours. *Table 12* and *Figure 10* below show the distribution of participants' selected responses.

Table 12: Participants' Responses on various Problems Facing Students in Extending School Hours

	Number of Participants	Percent
Students concentration span is affected	76	14.5
Students are tired and restless	224	42.7
Students attention wander during the lesson	71	13.5
Low interest and motivation	78	14.9

Table 12 above and Figure 10 below show the percentages of participants' responses on various problems that arose with extending school hours. From the results, the majority of participants stated that extending school hours caused the students to get *tired and restless* (48.3%).

Figure 10: Participants' Responses on various Problems Facing Students in Extending School Hours



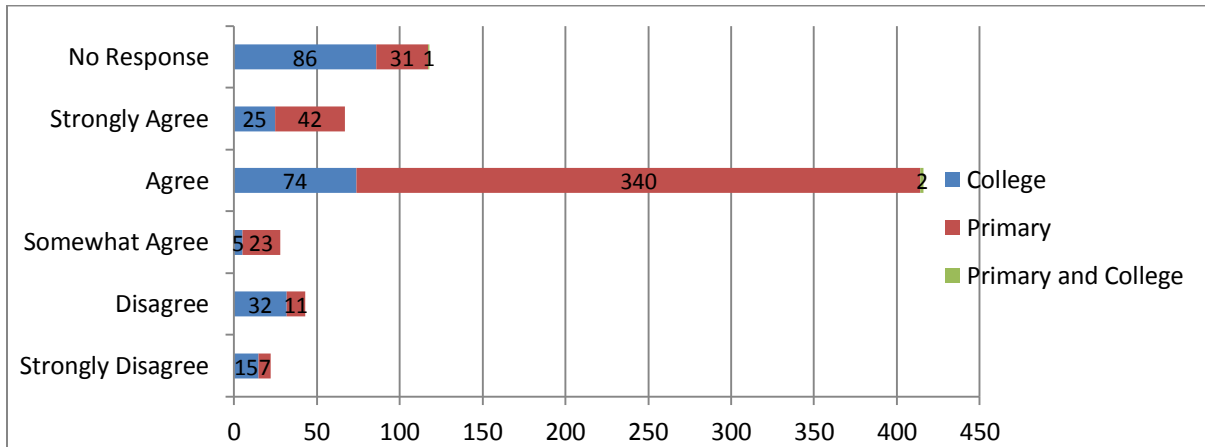
7.7 B7: Does your school have at-risk students in the 2015 SPELL test?

Participants were asked to state if their school have at-risk students in the 2015 SPELL test. As shown in Table 13 and Figure 11 below, 73.6% (511) of all participants stated that their schools have at risk students in the 2015 SPELL test. Of this number, 79.3% (405) were primary school teachers; the higher percent at this level is logical as the SPELL test mainly targets primary schools.

Table 13: Participants' Responses on At-risk Students in the 2015 SPELL test

	Grand Total	Percent	College	Primary	Primary and College
Strongly Disagree	22	3.2	15	7	
Disagree	43	6.2	32	11	
Somewhat Agree	28	4.0	5	23	
Agree	416	59.9	74	340	2
Strongly Agree	67	9.7	25	42	
No Response	118	17.0	86	31	1
Grand Total	694	100.0	237	454	3

Figure 11: Participants’ Responses on At-risk Students in the 2015 SPELL test



7.7.1 B7(ii): Does your school have at-risk students in the 2015 SPELL test?

If YES, circle responses you agree with:

- a. Mainly in Samoan
- b. Mainly in English
- c. Mainly in Mathematics
- d. In all three areas

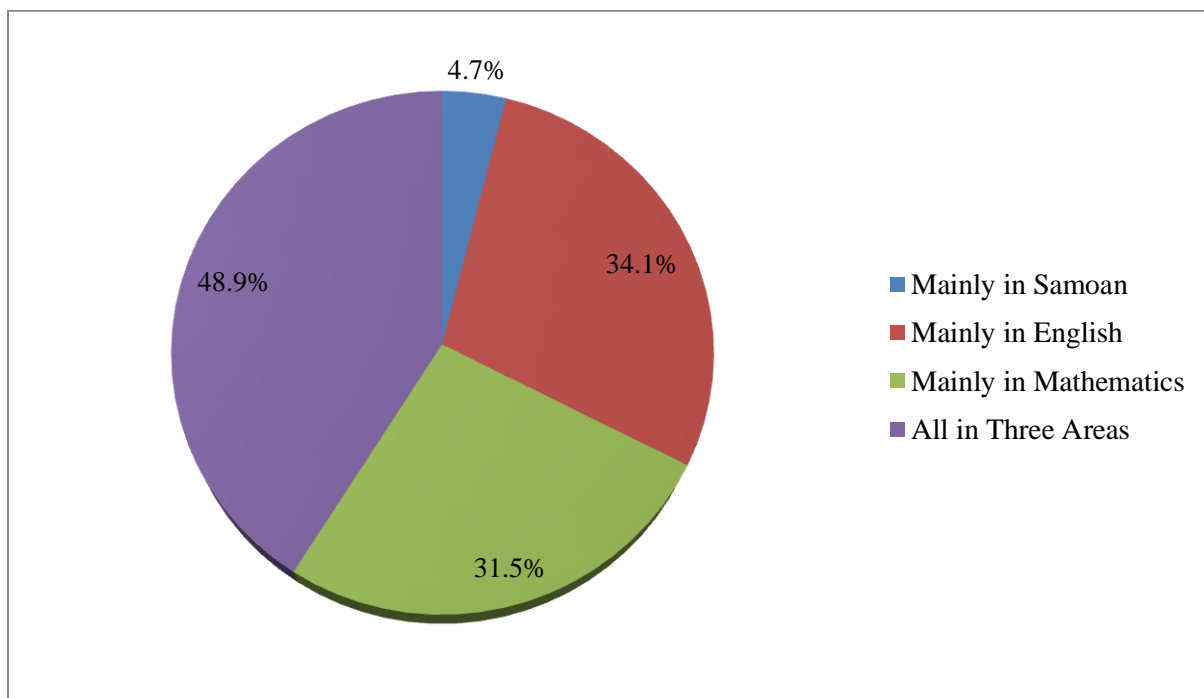
This question is a follow-up to Question B7. That is, if the participant selects any of the options 3, 4, or 5 to question B7, then she or he should circle any of the above responses that he/she agrees with.

In Question B7 above, 73.6 percent (511) of all participants supported or agreed at some level that there were at-risk students in their schools in the 2015 SPELL test. *Table 14* and *Figure 12* below show the distribution of selected responses in the three main areas; Samoan, English, and Mathematics. As revealed from the results, the majority of participants agreed that there were high numbers of students who were at-risk in all three areas of English, Mathematics, and Samoan (48.9%), followed by English at 34.1%, Mathematics at 31.5%, and a very small number were at-risk in Samoan (5.7).

Table 14: Distribution of Participants’ Responses on At-risk Students in English, Mathematics, and Samoan

	Number of Participants	Percent
Mainly in Samoan	24	4.7
Mainly in English	174	34.1
Mainly in Mathematics	161	31.5
In all three areas	250	48.9

Figure 12: Distribution of Participants’ Response on At-risk Students in English, Mathematics, and Samoan



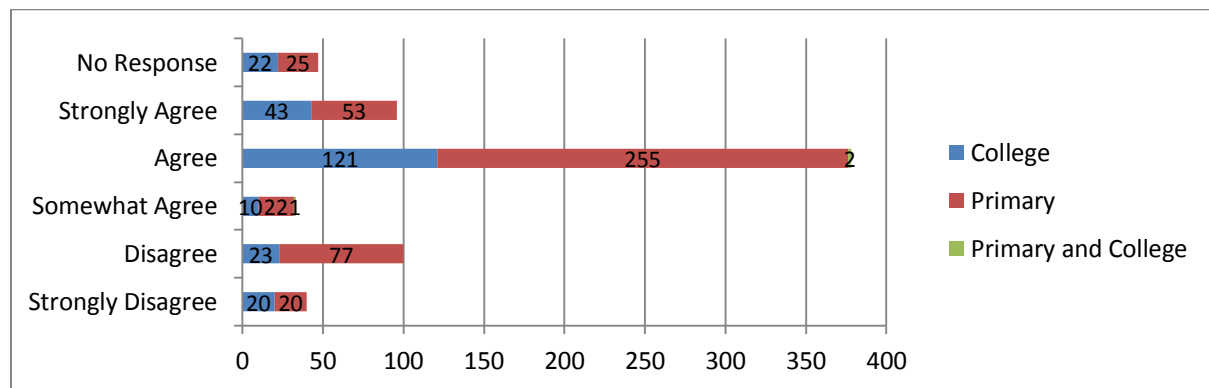
7.8 B8: The change has affected the classroom and school programme?

Participants were asked to state if the change in school hours has affected the classroom and school programme within their schools. The distribution of participants’ responses has been displayed below in *Table 15* and *Figure 13*. From the results, 73.1% (507) of participants indicated that the change has very much affected the classroom and school programmes in a negative way. These negative impacts are listed and discussed in Question B8(ii).

Table 15: Participants' Perceptions on whether the Change has affected the Classroom and School Programme

	Grand Total	Percent	College	Primary	Primary and College
Strongly Disagree	40	5.8	20	20	
Disagree	100	14.4	23	77	
Somewhat Agree	33	4.8	10	22	1
Agree	378	54.5	121	255	2
Strongly Agree	96	13.8	43	53	
No Response	47	6.8	22	25	
Grand Total	694	100.0	239	452	3

Figure 13: Participants' Perception on whether the Change has affected the Classroom and School Programme



7.8.1 B8(ii): The change has affected the classroom and school programme?

If you said YES to the question above, then

Circle responses you agree with:

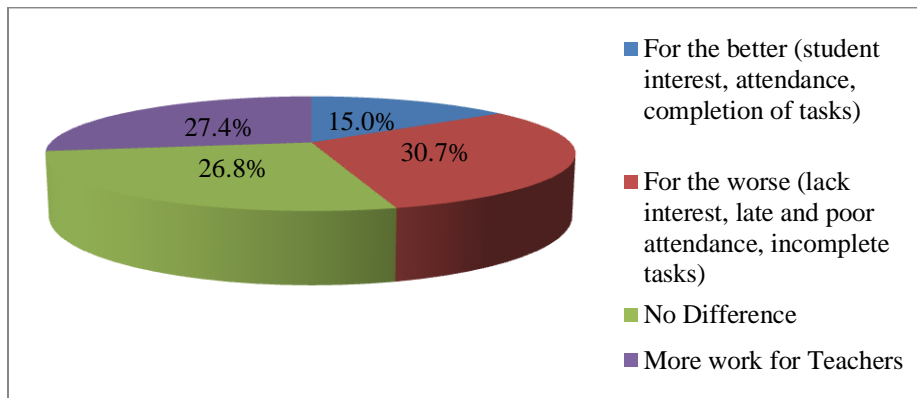
- For the better (student interest, attendance, completion of tasks)
- For the worse (lack interest, late and poor attendance, incomplete tasks)
- No difference
- More work for teachers

This question is a follow-up to Question B8. That is, if the participant selects any of the options 3, 4, or 5 to question B8, then she or he should circle any of the above responses that he/she agrees with.

In Question B8 above, 73.1% (507) of all participants supported or agreed at some level that extending school hours had pretty much affected the classroom and school program in a negative way. *Figure 14* below show the distribution of the participants selected responses on the various impact of extending school hours on classroom and school programme.

Of this number, 30.7% indicated that for the worse, the change has resulted in lack of interest, late and poor attendance and incomplete tasks, 27.4% stated that the change has made no difference at all, 26.8% specified that the change has resulted in more work for teachers, while 15.0% stated it was for the better and the change has improved students interest, attendance, and completion of tasks.

Figure 14: Distribution of Participants' Opinion on the Impact of Extending School Hours



7.9 B9: Is there a change in students' academic performance?

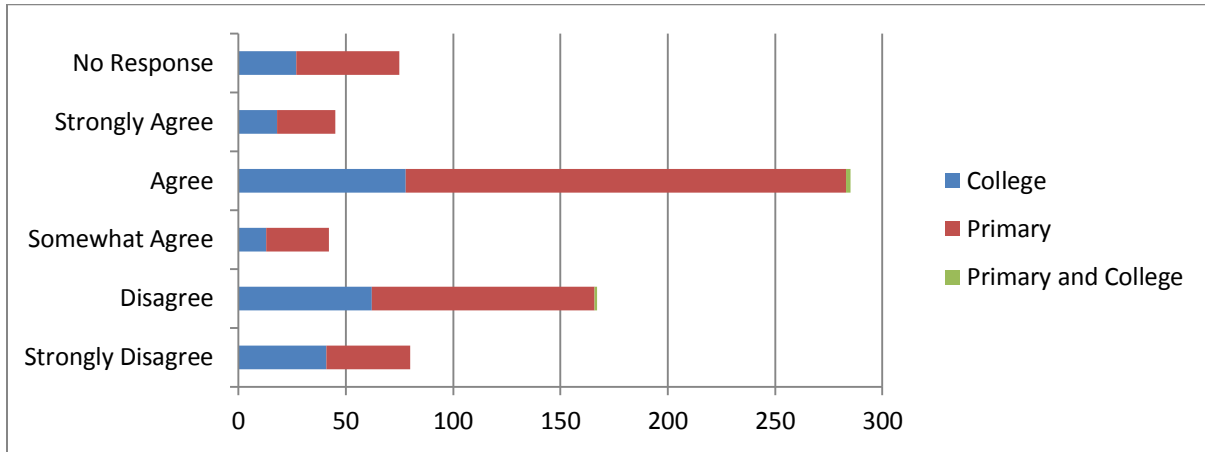
In Question B9, participants were asked to state their opinion if there was a change in students' performance since the extending of school hours. *Table 16* and *Figure 15* below present the results.

Of the total participants, 35.6% (247) disagreed and there was no change in the students' academic performance, and 53.7% (372) hesitated that there were some changes in students' performance since extending school hours. These changes have been presented and discussed in Question B9(ii)

Table 16: Participants' Perception on whether there was a Change in Students' Academic Performance after Extending School Hours

	Grand Total	Percent	College	Primary	Primary and College
Strongly Disagree	80	11.5	41	39	
Disagree	167	24.1	62	104	1
Somewhat Agree	42	6.1	13	29	
Agree	285	41.1	78	205	2
Strongly Agree	45	6.5	18	27	
No Response	75	10.8	27	48	
Grand Total	694	100.0	239	452	3

Figure 7: Participants' Perceptions on whether there was a Change in Students' Academic Performance after Extending School Hours



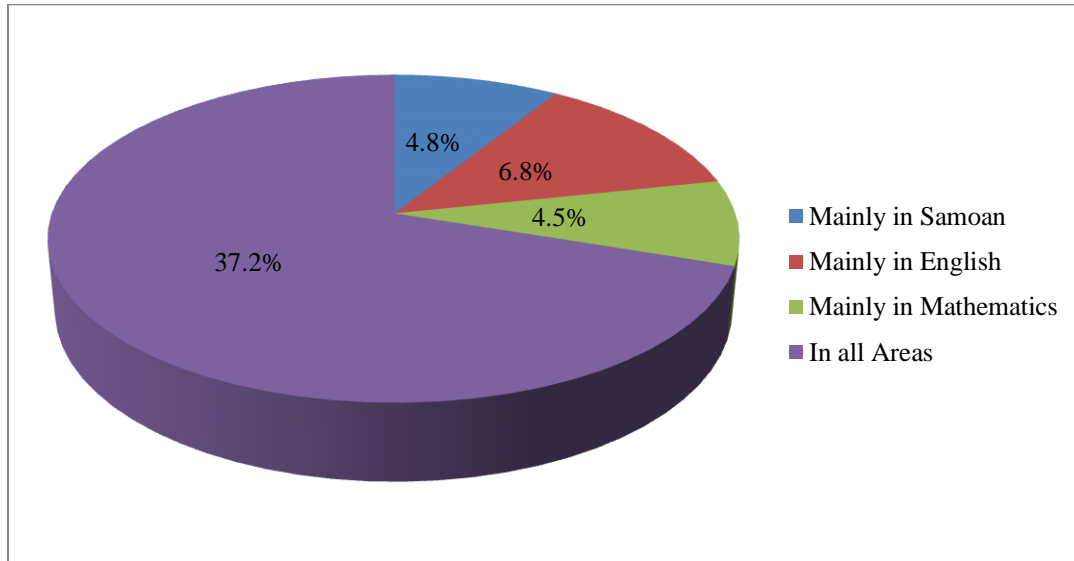
7.9.1 B9(ii): Is there a change in the students' academic performance?

If you said YES to the question above, then
Circle responses you agree with:

- a. Mainly in Samoan
- b. Mainly in English
- c. Mainly in Mathematics
- d. In all areas
- e. None

In Question B9 above, 53.5% (372) of all participants supported or agreed at some level that there were changes in the students' academic performance after extending teaching hours. Of this number the majority of participants, 32.7% (see *Figure 16* below) indicated that there was a change in students' academic performance in all three areas, followed by 6.8% that stated there were changes in English, 4.8% for Samoan, and 4.5% for Mathematics.

Figure 16: Distribution of Participants' Opinion on Areas where Students' Academic Performance have changed after Extending School Hours



7.10 B10: Do you believe the change supports student learning?

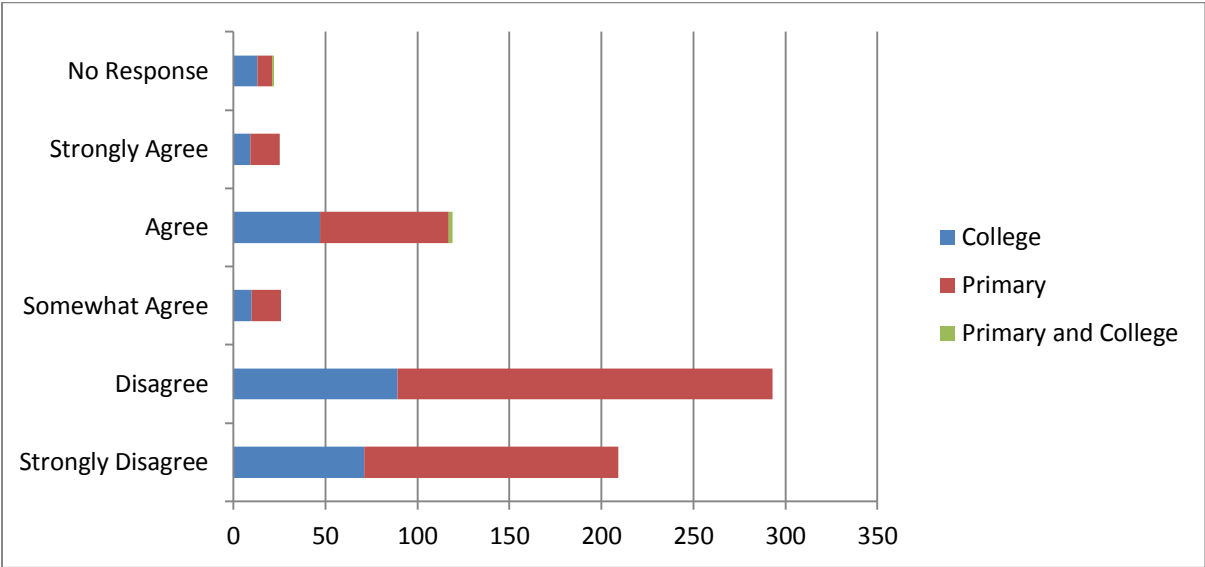
The final question on the survey examined the participants' perception on their beliefs whether the change supported student learning. As shown on *Table 17* and *Figure 17* below, the majority of respondents, which is 72.3% (502) disagreed or did not believe that the change supported student learning.

Only 24.4 percent (170) of the respondents agreed or believed that the change supported student learning.

Table 17: Participants' Perception on whether they believe the Change Supports Student Learning

	Grand Total	Percent	College	Primary	Primary and College
Strongly Disagree	209	30.1	71	138	
Disagree	293	42.2	89	204	
Somewhat Agree	26	3.7	10	16	
Agree	119	17.1	47	70	2
Strongly Agree	25	3.6	9	16	
No Response	22	3.2	13	8	1
Grand Total	694	100.0	239	452	3

Figure 17: Participants' Perception on whether they believe the Change Supports Student Learning



7.11 Descriptive Statistics

The following table (*Table 17*) presents a detailed summary of the descriptive statistics of each question in Part B of the survey.

Table 18: Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Part B of Survey (SPSS)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Do you agree with extending teaching hour?	688	1	5	2.06	1.173	1.375
Is there a need in extending teaching hours?	691	1	5	2.09	1.131	1.279
Has it benefitted students academically?	676	1	5	2.31	1.193	1.424
Do parents agree with extending teaching hours?	662	1	5	1.94	.968	.937
Do students believe in extending school hours?	677	1	5	1.90	.943	.889
Are there problems in extending school hours?	672	1	5	3.93	1.059	1.122
Does your school have at-risk students in the 2015 SPELL test?	576	1	5	3.80	.878	.770
The change has affected the classroom and school performance	647	1	5	3.60	1.104	1.218
Is there a change in students' academic performance?	619	1	5	3.08	1.239	1.534
Do you believe the change supports student learning?	672	1	5	2.19	1.165	1.357
Valid N (listwise)	485					

7.12 *Significant Testing*

As outlined in the introduction section, this project focused on examining the overall perceptions of school teachers in Samoa, with regards to extending school or teaching hours. Significant testing on the overall opinion of the participants was implemented based on the following aspects.

- Overall perceptions on extending teaching hours
- Students' academic performance
- Teachers' academic performance
- Students' learning support
- Classroom and school programme
- Students and parents discernment

All of the above aspects (variables) were measured using a one-way sample T-Test. The T Test procedure compares the means of two groups or (one-sample) compares the means of a group with a constant. In this case, the data was treated as one group, as the ratio of primary and college participants was highly imbalanced for a comparison between two groups to be possible. The factor condition for each variable is *highly significant* in all cases (see Tables 19 and 20 below). That is, all significant values are **0.000** which are far less than the **0.05** which is the confidence interval used. This confirmed that the overall perception of participants towards extending school hours is highly significant in a way that they **do not support** or **agree** with extending school and teaching hours.

Table 19: One Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Do you agree with extending teaching hour?	688	2.06	1.173	.045
Is there a need in extending teaching hours?	691	2.09	1.131	.043
Has it benefit students academically?	676	2.31	1.193	.046
Do parents agree with extending teaching hours?	662	1.94	.968	.038
Do students believe in extending school hours?	677	1.90	.943	.036
Are there problems in extending school hours?	672	3.93	1.059	.041
Does your school have at-risk students in the 2015 SPELL test?	576	3.80	.878	.037
The change has affected the classroom and school performance	647	3.60	1.104	.043
Is there a change in students' academic performance?	619	3.08	1.239	.050
Do you believe the change supports student learning?	672	2.19	1.165	.045

Table 20: One Sample T-Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	.05% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Do you agree with extending teaching hour?	46.072	687	.000	2.060	2.06	2.06
Is there a need in extending teaching hours?	48.575	690	.000	2.090	2.09	2.09
Has it benefitted students academically?	50.378	675	.000	2.312	2.31	2.31
Do parents agree with extending teaching hours?	51.475	661	.000	1.937	1.94	1.94
Do students believe in extending school hours?	52.411	676	.000	1.900	1.90	1.90
Are there problems in extending school hours?	96.273	671	.000	3.935	3.93	3.93
Does your school have at-risk students in the 2015 SPELL test?	104.027	575	.000	3.804	3.80	3.80
The change has affected the classroom and school performance	83.031	646	.000	3.603	3.60	3.60
Is there a change in students' academic performance?	61.812	618	.000	3.078	3.08	3.08
Do you believe the change supports student learning?	48.803	671	.000	2.193	2.19	2.19

8. Conclusion

The main purpose of this project survey was to explore perceptions and opinions of school teachers in general on extending teaching hours in schools in Samoa, both at primary and secondary levels. The survey focused particularly on the positive and negative impacts and effects of extending school hours on both students and teachers not only academically, but also personally, and in general.

Throughout the analysis, it was obvious that the majority of teachers do not support the concept of extending teaching hours. However, it is interesting to note that in the survey questionnaire more than half the participants supported or agreed that there were changes in students' academic performance after extending teaching hours. This could be attributed to changes in one of the three subjects for the SPELL test in Samoan, English or Mathematics that primary students sit at Year 4 and Year 6.

Participants' responses to extending school hours on students' performance indicated many problems students face as a result of extending teaching hours such as boredom, listlessness, apathy and fatigue. Likewise, teachers also suffer from issues to do with classroom management and maintaining students' motivational levels especially during the late afternoon when it is hot and humid. Moreover, student interest could be supported through extracurricular activities that supplement academic work. Vibrant and successful classroom teaching as well as planned and effective school programmes supported by parents, the community and government can be a positive spinoff. Students and parents' discernment act as major influence on any decision-making process as it affects the well being of all.

The implications for extending teaching hours were numerous both on the positive side and adversely. Advocates for the longer hours indicated that students gained more individual attention from teachers including direct and ongoing assistance in problem areas, homework and continuous reinforcement of earlier classroom work. Furthermore, teachers had ample time for marking and preparation for the next day's work. Moreover, students were exposed to extracurricular activities that supplemented classroom learning. On the other hand, opponents of longer hours pointed to mental fatigue that affected both students and teachers and could prove counterproductive with primary students' concentration span. In addition, longer hours and more teaching was not the answer, rather it was the quality of teaching and the programmes offered and not necessarily quantity. With the 2015 SPELL test results there was certainly a mismatch

between extending school hours and students' academic performance. As such, utilization of the longer hours needed to be assessed in terms of programmes, teachers' capabilities, students' potentials, funding and resources.

This study provided suggestions and recommendations to assist MESC in the effective implementation of extending teaching hours and/ or to review its efficacy in lieu of research findings. Moreover, the research is pertinent as it provides a challenge for faculty members to ensure graduates from the programme exit with an extensive repertoire of teaching skills and knowledge. The focus is on a holistic education that includes forging better links between academic performance, the arts and extracurricular activities. In the event negative implications surface as a result of the study, the MESC and stakeholders could convene as focus groups to discuss the way forward.

9. Recommendations

The following recommendations may help MESC in making decisions to take the issue forward:

1. More consultation with teachers and principals in government schools to solicit views and opinions at district level.
2. Further research conducted with parents and the wider community on the strengths and weaknesses of extending teaching hours.
3. Government support is essential to support extracurricular activities to reinforce academic performance.
4. School initiatives in the areas of the Expressive Arts, Sports and Health, and Design Technology can be stimulating and provide students with other aspects of school life in developing their hidden potential.
5. Extending the parameters of talent quests, sports, art and music competition to encourage and foster the fa'asamoa and its links to the academic areas.

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11. Appendices

Appendix A Survey Questionnaire

A. General Information

School _____ District _____
Level taught _____ No. of years of teaching _____
Did you take part in the survey before implementation? _____

B. Questions

On the following 5-point scale, indicate the degree to which the following questions demonstrate your perception on extending teaching hours. Circle the appropriate box.

1. STONGLY DISAGREE
2. DISAGREE
3. SOMEWHAT AGREE
4. AGREE
5. STRONGLY AGREE

2. Do you agree with extending teaching hours?

1. STRONGLY DISAGREE	2. DISAGREE	3. SOMEWHAT AGREE	4. AGREE	5. STRONGLY AGREE
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3. Is there a need in extending teaching hours?

1. STRONGLY DISAGREE	2. DISAGREE	3. SOMEWHAT AGREE	4. AGREE	5. STRONGLY AGREE
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4. Has it benefit students academically?

2. STRONGLY DISAGREE	3. DISAGREE	4. SOMEWHAT AGREE	5. AGREE	6. STRONGLY AGREE
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If YES circle responses you agree with:

- a. Students doing homework
 - b. Teacher provides individual attention
 - c. Reinforce concept understanding
 - d. Extracurricular activities support academic performance
5. Do parents agree with extending teaching hours?

1. STRONGLY DISAGREE	2. DISAGREE	3. SOMEWHAT AGREE	4. AGREE	5. STONGLY AGREE
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6. Do students believe in extending school hours?

1. STRONGLY DISAGREE	2. DISAGREE	3. SOMEWHAT AGREE	4. AGREE	5. STRONGLY AGREE
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7. Are there problems in extending school hours?

1. STRONGLY DISAGREE	2. DISAGREE	3. SOMEWHAT AGREE	4. AGREE	5. STRONGLY AGREE
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If YES circle responses you agree with:

- a. Students concentration span is affected
 - b. Students are tired and restless
 - c. Students attention wander during the lesson
 - d. Low interest and motivation
8. Does your school have at-risk students in the 2015 SPELL test?

1. STRONGLY DISAGREE	2. DISAGREE	3. SOMEWHAT AGREE	4. AGREE	5. STRONGLY AGREE
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If YES circle responses you agree with:

- a. Mainly in Samoan
- b. Mainly in English
- c. Mainly in Mathematics
- d. In all three areas

9. The change has affected the classroom and school programme?

1. STRONGLY DISAGREE	2. DISAGREE	3. SOMEWHAT AGREE	4. AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
-------------------------	-------------	----------------------	----------	-------------------

Circle responses you agree with:

- a. For the better (student interest, attendance, completion of tasks)
- b. For the worse (lack interest, late and poor attendance, incomplete tasks)
- c. No difference
- d. More work for teachers

10. Is there a change in students' academic performance?

1. STRONGLY DISAGREE	2. DISAGREE	3. SOMEWHAT AGREE	4. AGREE	5. STRONGLY AGREE
-------------------------	-------------	----------------------	----------	----------------------

Circle responses you agree with:

- a. Mainly in Samoan
- b. Mainly in English
- c. Mainly in Mathematics
- d. In all areas
- e. None

11. Do you believe the change supports student learning?

1. STRONGLY DISAGREE	2. DISAGREE	3. SOMEWHAT AGREE	4. AGREE	5. STRONGLY AGREE
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Appendix B Interview Participants' Consent Form

Please read and circle the appropriate choice

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. I agree to take part in this research. | YES | NO |
| 2. I am aware of the purpose for the research and my role in it. | YES | NO |
| 3. I agree to be audio recorded and transcribed | YES | NO |
| 4. I am aware that the information will not disadvantage me. | YES | NO |
| 5. I understand the data will inform policy makers. | YES | NO |
| 6. I agree to the data being used at conferences and publications. | YES | NO |
| 7. I understand that I can withdraw anytime from the research. | YES | NO |

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____