

## COMMODIFICATION OF EDUCATION IN THE FORM OF SHADOW EDUCATION

**Zaylobidinova Munira Gulomovna\***

\*Teacher,

Department of Foreign Languages in the Humanities,

Fergana State University, UZBEKISTAN

Email id: munira@gmail.com

**DOI: 10.5958/2249-7137.2022.00048.9**

---

### ABSTRACT

*This article is about the prevalence of shadow education in the world. It also discusses the phenomenon of commodification of education in the form of shadow education and its drawbacks for the society. The article also pointed out how shadow education exacerbates inequity in society and its negative impact on the schooling process.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Shadow Education, Commodification, Tutoring Center, Juko, Hakwons, Buxiban, Frontistirio, Dersane, Repetitorlik, Social Inequity.*

---

### INTRODUCTION

The demand for private tutoring has grown in recent decades. It has become a large business in the marketplace. Many people perceive it as a normal practice but other see it as a commodification of education. It is also known as "shadow education" because it mimics the formal schooling process and its size and shape changes according to schooling mainstream (Bray, 2009). [1] This metaphor was employed by Bray (1999) [2] to give a proper explanation to this phenomenon. Moreover, it is known as a hidden form of privatization of education system (Bray & Kwo, 2014) [3]. Stevenson and Baker (2021) [4] defined it as "a set of educational activities that occur outside formal schooling and are designed to enhance the student's formal school career" (p.1639). Bray M & Lykins C (2012) [5] gave more appropriate explanation by defining it as a shadow of a sundial which can tell observer about the time and the shadow of education reveals the features and practices of the regular school system (p.1). The terms like "private tutoring", "private supplementary tutoring", "private tuition", and "shadow education" mostly denote the same meaning although they have little variation in different literature. In this paper, I use all these terms interchangeably to study its driving factors of prevalence across the countries.

In many countries shadow education is accepted as a normal phenomenon, but in reality, education is commodified bringing social and economic implications. For example, burden on children, social and educational inequity, family pressure, impact on mainstream schooling, financial problems, and also corruption (Bray, 2009) [1]. Education is becoming out of free service and makes people focused on profits. In this paper, I would like to highlight the drawbacks of shadow education criticizing its influence on society.

## 1 Shadow education is a global phenomenon

Private supplementary tutoring is not a recent phenomenon, it has long roots as schooling itself (Bray et al., 2015) [6]. However, the great attention was drawn a few decades earlier, to define its common practice across the world. Studies found that shadow education is practised in some parts of the world such as Africa, the Arab States, Europe, Latin America and especially in Asia. In Canada, Australia and North America, shadow education is also evident but not as popular as in Asian countries.

According to Bray and Lykins (2012) [5] nearly half of Korean students attend cram schools namely *hakwons*. In Japan private tutoring companies namely *jukuandjabiko* are famous (Bray, 2009) [1]. There are also private institutions in other countries known by the name *buxiban* in Taiwan and some part of China, *dersane* in Turkey and *frontistirio* in Greece (Bray, 2009) [1].

According to Bray (1999) [2] in East Asia, shadow education has a long root relating to Confucian tradition which puts efforts on knowledge. In South Asia, it is also evident and especially in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan (Bray, 2009) [1]. In Europe private tutoring is more evident in Greece, Cyprus and Malta, as history claims it was existed for decades in those countries (Bray, 2011) [7]. In Central Asia and Eastern Europe, shadow education has expanded after political transition in 1990 (Bray & Kobakhidze, 2014) [8]. According to Bray et al. (2015) [6] private tutoring is modest in Western Europe, North America and Australasia but recently has grown due to the increase of competition among schools. Some African countries were also affected by shadow education. However, in Latin America, private tutoring is not much visible but has significant evidence in Argentina and Brazil. Among Arab countries private tutoring is highly demanded in Egypt, Jordan, and United Arab Emirates (Bray et al., 2015). [6]

There are various reasons for its prevalence in a large scale. Mori and Baker (2010) explored two reasons; firstly, because people's perception of education has changed because their demand for the quality of knowledge has increased. People began to value education more than the other aspects and it shaped "schooled society". Shadow education expended across the world because "schooled society" spread across the world. Secondly, as private tutoring is another type of business, therefore, the market economy makes a significant impact on its growth (Mori and Baker, 2010). [9]

Baker et al. (2021) [4] used the Third International Mathematics and Science Study data to show that shadow education is growing phenomenon in all countries. However, Bray (2009) related the geographic spread of shadow education to economic, social and educational factors. In some countries, for example in Post-Soviet countries and Cambodia, teachers' low salary make them seek additional income, therefore, conducting tutoring lessons can solve some of their financial problems (Bray & Kobakhidze, 2014) [8]. Despite economic factor, educational factors also impact on the growing trend of shadow education. One of them is dissatisfaction of parents with mainstream schooling, other factors are catching up children with the school curricula and concern doing well in exams (Bray, 2009) [1]. There are also social factors such as people's perception and attitude if a kid is not attending private tutoring classes, for example, in Korea "if a kid is not very good and does not attend a private institute, people say the mother must be either crazy or poor" (Kim, as cited in Bray 2009, p.32). Most East Asian countries, Japan,

China, Korea and Hong Kong, are influenced by cultural factors. People keep on Confusion tradition and believe that effort is the main determinant to achieve success (Bray, 1999) [2].

### *Shadow Education in Hong Kong*

Hong Kong is situated on the South coast of China, with a high density of population. After 155 years of colonization, it was released from Britain and returned to China in 1997. According to Bray et al.(2014) [10] since 1978 education system of Hong Kong was changed 2 times and in 2009 it was replaced with 6+3+3+4 model (primary, lower secondary, senior secondary education, university degree), 12 years of free public schooling and 4 years of a standard university degree. According to a new system, the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination for 11-grade students and Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination for 13-grade students were established. Both examinations are highly responsible and main factors for further educational development. The enrolment for tertiary education and especially, for prestigious programs is extremely competitive. Therefore, private supplementary tutoring has become a big deal in Hong Kong and turned into billion-dollar business. As Zheng et al. (2018) [11] stated that a survey was conducted in 2011-2012 to identify the prevalence of shadow education among 9 and 12-grade students. It was revealed that 53.8% from 9 grade and 71.8% of 12-grade student were attending supplementary tutoring. Another survey was conducted in 2012 by Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups and according to it more than 50% of secondary school students and 22.1% of primary students in the level 3 or lower enrolled for private tutoring (Zheng et al., 2018) [11]. Hong Kong municipal is laissez-faire towards business investments and government regards private tutoring as commercial service. Therefore, there is a lack of legislation restricting advertisement of tutorial services. Private tutoring is offered by companies and informal organizations in Hong Kong. Although some students attend individual tutoring, the research conducted in 2011 showed that large companies control the majority of the market. Mainly, six large companies offer private tutoring services and their chain centres were almost tripled in 2009-2010 becoming 106 in number. In Hong Kong, popular tutors are advertised as “star tutors” and periodically appear in magazines, newspapers, or exterior of buses, and buildings (Kwo & Bray, 2011) [12]. Zhao (2015) [13] reported in South China Morning Post that Hong Kong “rock star” tutors earn even more than British Premier League Footballer which is another evidence of its good income.

### **Multiple forms of Shadow Education**

Shadow education has taken multiple forms and providers charge different prices. Some tutors works with a small number of students in a group. Usually, students join group-tutoring to do homework and revise the lessons taught at school. Silova and Bray (2006) [14] reported group-tutoring is popular in Mangolia (14%), Azerbaijan (18%) and Georgia (39%) from Post-Soviet countries. The reason is economic condition and people cannot afford one-to-one tutoring. Korea National Statistical Office reported that 12% of students receive group tutoring in 2010 (as cited in Bray & Lykins). The research which was conducted among 3 secondary schools in Hong Kong found that 53.5% of students were receiving group tutoring during 12 months in 2011/12 (Zhan et al., 2013) [15].

Unlike group tutoring, individual tutoring in another form which is conducted one-to-one with a single tutor and single tutee. Individual tutoring can be offered by class teacher or a university student most of the times for a short period to catch up with the school program. Working with

one student, a tutor can tailor the lessons according to his needs. In Hong Kong chained centre, a self-employed tutor, or an independent company can offer individual tutoring. Usually, one-to-one tutoring is more expensive, therefore, less active than group-tutoring. Silovaet.al (2006) stated that individual tutoring is widely spread in Post-Soviet countries such as Croatia (73%), Poland (67%), Slovakia (64%), Ukraine (62%), Lithuania (56%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (54%). On the other hand, Bray and Lykins (2012) investigated that in 2010, 10% of Korean student and in 2012, 44.3% Hong Kong student received one-to-one tutoring.

Due to technological development, another form of tutoring-online tutoring-is evolving. Online tutoring maybe conducted at home of tutors via web-chat across the borders where tutees also can receive individual classes at home. Online tutoring can offer flexibility and privacy; students can also use recorded version of tutoring classes. However, it is difficult to regulate and therefore, in can possess potential danger for children. For example, they can be emotionally manipulated by others (Bray & Kwo, 2014) [3]. India is advanced in offering online tutoring courses and Tutor Vista, Educomp are the largest online tutoring companies (Bray & Kobakhidze, 2014) [8].

In Uzbekistan, tutoring is oriented to prepare students for examination. *Repetitorlik* is widely spread word for tutoring among Uzbek people. Nowadays, it has become a part of schooling and parents cannot imagine educated child without tutoring classes. Tutoring, also, has become a profitable business, and one can see many advertisements of tutoring centres on large billboards in the streets. It is common phenomenon that undergraduate students conduct classes in tutoring centres. There are some reasons for this, firstly, they are less paid, secondly, they are young and full of energy, and thirdly they are easy manageable. Tutoring is a good means of income for Uzbek students and very much convenient part-time work. Students can schedule the tutoring classes to their convenience which does not match with their university classes. For some reasons many part-time work cannot offer this opportunity. Usually, in Uzbekistan, tutoring is conducted in a large group because it brings good financial income and time flexibility where individual tutoring is time-consuming and makes low income.

## **Social inequity**

Bray and Kwo (2014) [3] studied socio-economical, gender, racial/ethnic, rural/urban dimensions of social inequity related to shadow education. It is evident that high-income families invest more for private tutoring and purchase better quality education comparing with low-income families. Consequently, children from low-income families having high diligence cannot afford private tutoring which creates socio-economic inequity among children. There is also evidence, children from urban areas receive more and higher quality of private tutoring while children from remote areas cannot purchase even the less expensive form (Bray & Lykins, 2012 [5]; Bray & Kwo, 2014) [3]. Shadow education also brings gender inequity in some countries. For example, in Uzbekistan, more girls attend private tutoring classes because they should study hard to secure high score in the entrance exam for higher institutions. The reason is men, who finished military service, receive 50% additional point to the total score in the entrance examination, therefore, their score increases significantly.

For some reasons shadow education can be profitable business for the governments. In countries like Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan private tutors and private tutoring companies pay income taxes (Silova, 2010, p.340) [16]. Moreover, some countries such as

---

Cambodia cannot ban private tutoring because the government is unable to provide teachers with a high salary, therefore, they need a second job to survive (Bray et al., 2015 [6]; Chandara, 2011, 14:23 [17]).

The growth of shadow education exacerbates inequity and quality education becomes feasible for those who can afford it. Tutoring brings more opportunities for those who are able to purchase tutoring services. The Convention on the Rights of The Child states that primary education should be free for all and the authorities who sign the Convention should encourage giving educational opportunities such as making it accessible to every child, take measures to make it free and offer financial assistance for those who need (United Nations High Commissioner for Human rights, 1989). Likewise, Sustainable Development Goal 4 of United Nation Association, which was ratified by 150 world leaders, states “by 2030, that all girls and boys will complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes”(2015). Although this statement covers public sectors, not private sectors such as shadow education, the quality of education is dropping down in public sectors when the role of the private sectors is increasing. For example, in Cambodia teachers sometimes skip the lessons and children attend private supplementary classes to catch up with the school curriculum (Chandara, 2011, 11:05) [17].

## CONCLUSIONS

In general, shadow education has been intensified since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For the continents such as Western Europe, North America, and Africa it is a recent phenomenon but for East Asia, South Asia, and former USSR it was embedded into the culture and became a part of daily life. It has taken different modes and developed into a robust social institution which exacerbates educational and social inequity. Shadow education effects on mainstream schooling and its negative impact is visible in the form of commodification of education. It also brings pressure and stress to the children and disconnects them from outdoor activities. Especially, it marketizing education when teachers offer their services to their students. In Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore and mainland China it turned into an industry run by entrepreneurs with various outlets. It is embedded to the culture so deeply that people cannot imagine schooling without private tutoring. Overall, shadow education has become more commercial business than a partnership institution which can serve for improving students’ knowledge.

## REFERENCES

1. Bray M. *Confronting the Shadow Education System: What Government Policies for What Private Tutoring?* Paris, France: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP); 2009.
2. Bray M. *The Shadow education system: Private tutoring and its implications for planners.* Paris, France: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP); 1999.
3. Bray M, Kwo O. *Regulating private tutoring for public good: policy options for supplementary education in Asia.* Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC), The University of Hong Kong; 2014.

4. Baker DP, Akiba M, LeTendre GK, Wiseman AW. Worldwide shadow education: Outside-school learning, institutional quality of schooling, and cross-national mathematics achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 2021;23(1): 1–17.
5. Bray M, Lykins C. Shadow education: private supplementary tutoring and its implications for policy makers in Asia. Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC), The University of Hong Kong; 2012.
6. Bray M, Kwo OWY, Jokić B. Researching Private Supplementary Tutoring: Methodological Lessons from Diverse Cultures. Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC), The University of Hong Kong, and Dordrecht: Springer; 2015.
7. Bray M. The Challenge of Shadow Education: Private Tutoring and its Implications for Policy Makers in the European Union. Brussels, Belgium: European Commission; 2011.
8. Bray M, Kobakhidze MN. The Global Spread of Shadow Education: Supporting or Undermining Qualities of Education? In: Napier DB. (Ed). *Qualities of Education in a Globalized World*. Istanbul, Sense Publishers; 2014.
9. Mori I, Baker D. The origin of universal shadow education: What the supplemental education phenomenon tells us about the postmodern institution of education. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 2010;11(1):36-48.
10. Bray M, Adamson B, Mason M. *Comparative Education Research: Approaches and Methods: Second Edition*. Hong Kong, China: Comparative Education Research Centre The University of Hong Kong; 2014.
11. Zheng M, Law Z, Chan V, Gurung E. Why is private tutoring such a big deal in Hong Kong? *South China Morning Post*. South China Morning Post. 2018. Available at: <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education/article/2149572/why-private-tutoring-such-big-deal-hong-kong>
12. Kwo O, Bray M. Facing the shadow education system in Hong Kong; 2011.
13. Zhao Sh. Hong Kong's rock star tutors: Meet the teachers earning more than the average British Premier League footballer. *South China Morning Post*. 2015. Available at: <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education-community/article/1893444/hong-kongs-superstar-teachers-talk-about-their>
14. Silova I, Bray M. *Education in a Hidden Marketplace: Monitoring of Private Tutoring Overview and Country Reports*. Budapest: Education Support Program (ESP) of the Open Society Institute; 2006.
15. Zhan S, Bray M, Wang D, Lykins C, Kwo O. The effectiveness of private tutoring: Students' perceptions in comparison with mainstream schooling in Hong Kong. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 2013;14(4):495–509.
16. Silova I. Private tutoring in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: policy choices and implications. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 2010;40(3):327-344.

17. Chandara T. (2011 June 24). ReanKua - Why Private tutoring? Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKcuoKrJD0w>