

THE CAUSES OF CHINA “SHADOW EDUCATION” AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA ‘EDUCATION SYSTEM AND PARENTS’ CONSUMPTION BEHAVIORS AND PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research were: 1) to study factors influencing consumption behavior of parents of private tutoring agencies, 2) to study the relationship between shadow education and its effect on parents' children. The samples were 100 students which randomly selected from 500 students as a sample. The 100 sample students were all Chinese. All of them are students studying abroad in Chiang Mai University from different disciplines. They were all familiar with studying shadows education. The tools used in this research were questionnaires, observation plans and conservation record forms. The result found that 1) there were five factors that influenced parents in sending their children to private cram schools. 1.1) Family Income Level, 1.2) Student Achievement, 1.3) Parental Expectations, 1.4) Peer Influence, and 1.5) Gao Kao Examination. 2) Shadow Education depends on education system currently. Therefore, shadow education and parental education influence learners' learning. And it's not good for the mental health development of students. The government and schools should not only look at the problem of shadow education. Rather, adequate financial and human resources should be provided so that the school system can adequately meet the needs of all students. This will cause some students to not seek after-school teaching because they see the school as unable to meet their needs of them do not seek after-school tutoring because they cannot meet their needs.

Keywords: Shadow Education, Relationship, Consumption Behavior

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INTRODUCTION

Shadow education has many other names: cram schools, cram classes, private tutoring, etc. Private supplementary tutoring is known widely as shadow education (Bray, 1999). The world, especially in Japan and other parts of East Asia, shadow education has long been seen” (Bray, 2011: 11). Shadow education is attached to national and official education systems. That caused the existence of shadow education. Because the educational content is designed based on the knowledge taught by the national education system. Shadow education has become so popular in China that it no longer exists as a form of informal economy. Private tutoring agencies have their own business licenses and standardized business premises. It is large enough to have a profound impact on Chinese society and even the entire education system.

Shadow education is attached to the national education system and the formal education system that makes shadow education exist. Because the educational content is designed based on the knowledge taught by the national education system. The point in which parents send their children to tutoring at private tutoring agencies is to try to get better grades in school by taking tutoring outside of the classroom. Driven by the desire to get better grades, private tutoring agencies are booming in China to the point where they can be seen everywhere.

This research was therefore a study with a research question. What were the factors influencing parental consumption behavior of private tutoring agencies and the relationship between parental education shadow education and the impact on their children? The research objectives can be identified as 1) to study the factors influencing the consumption behavior of parents of private tutoring agencies, and 2) to study the relationship between parental education shadow education and its impact on their children.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Policy and Economic Development

China implemented “One Child Policy” in 1979, which designed to control the size of the rapidly growing population of the People's Republic of China. “One-child Policy” plays a positive role in equal access to education for female and male to some extent, because more than 90% of families have only one child, and they will concentrate all their income on one child, no matter gender. The implementation of the one-child policy means that parents can concentrate their increased income on the decreasing number of children (Lei & Chung, 2003). The disposable income of Chinese families has greatly increased along with rapid economic growth in the last three decades. Therefore, families in China have more Money to spend on their children and to invest in their private tutoring (Xu, 2009). A study in Cyprus found that wealthy families with only one child in secondary school spent a larger share of their total spending on tutoring, while less affluent families with multiple children did not because of restrictions on the amount they could spend on private tutoring, and wealthier households have more leeway to invest more money accordingly (Lamprianou & Afantiti, 2013).

The Teaching Mechanism and Philosophy of the School

Both Chinese school authorities and Chinese parents attach great importance to students' academic performance (grades). An example in Cambodia where teachers often provide private tutoring to their students in the same classroom after the official school day (Bray & Bunly, 2005). Teachers may say that the tutoring lessons are not compulsory, but parents know that if they do not pay to teacher, their child may not be able to acquire the knowledge of the subject and will be opposed by the teacher.

Parents' Expectation about their Children

With the rapid expansion of shadow education, it has largely met the needs of tutors who are ahead of the competition. In this case, the tutoring industry has contributed to family anxiety and insecurity, leading to a copycat mentality among a growing number of parents who feel they have no choice but to let their students tutor to avoid falling behind the competition. For

parents of higher social status, to enable their children to continue to stand at the top of the social class in the future, they have high expectations for their children (Utomo, 2017). Parents pay attention to students' grades or the opportunities for students to obtain the highest education institutions. Therefore, the higher the parents' educational expectations for their children, the higher the scores will be, and the easier the children will enter the ideal school (Long & Pang, 2016).

Peer's Influence

Almost all the parents in Xu's study said they arranged tutoring because most of their children's peers, even the top students in the class, were receiving tutoring (Xu, 2009). Students with higher academic achievement may be affected by peer pressure because they feel a higher level of competition from their peers (Ma, 2011; Peng, 2008; Shen, 2008).

The Special Status of “Gao Kao” in China

The Gao Kao, or “college entrance examination,” is the last exam to test the learning outcomes of secondary school students and the main route to university. Widely regarded as the fairest assessment system, it is also regarded as the most important exam in a Chinese student's life. In Chinese families, children are given high expectations. Access to high education has become a standard to measure the success of a Chinese student. Since most higher education institutions in China only take “Gao Kao” as a reference, since most colleges and universities in China recruit new students merely based on students' Gao Kao performance, scores on Gao Kao are extremely important to Chinese students (Zhang, 2011).

Goldstick (2010) reported that “Many problems exist in the Chinese educational system and in the Gao Kao Examination. These problems include the inequality in the education that students have access to in different areas across Mainland China, the high importance of the exam for a student's academic and professional future, and how a student's 12-year education focuses on the one test taken during your last year of high school results resulting in student's lack of imagination and creativity” (p.1). The importance of “Gao Kao” has stimulated the development of private tutoring industry, further aggravating the inequality of education. Zhang (2013) mentioned that “students living in urban areas have more access to a higher quality of education than students living in rural areas. In addition, urban students had higher participation rates and expenditures per person in terms of private tutoring” (p. 5).

The Prevalence of Shadow Education is an Obstacle to China's Education Reform

Key public schools are considered the best in China, not only desirable for students, but also preferred places for teachers to work. Both students who graduate from key school and teachers who work at key school will be considered better, and they will be more likely to find better jobs and higher salaries. Key schools received priority for high-achieving students, outstanding teachers, and funding (Lin, 1999). The key schools recruit the most outstanding students every year because they have better teaching resources. Eventually, the teaching quality of schools in the same region in China is very different. This means not only the backward teaching resources, but also a much worse teaching environment. Excellent students are concentrated in key schools' students with poor performance and low learning desire are concentrated in relatively poor schools. Students have a great influence on each other. Such polarized education forces Chinese students to fight tooth and nail for paper grades, which are the only criterion for admission. The national government has recognized the challenges and has attempted to reduce the examination orientation, alleviate study burdens, and promote the overall development of students through curricular reforms (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2001; People's Republic of China, 2010). But the reality is that no matter what the government does, it will be difficult to change the status quo, because none of these reforms will shake up the examination system's role in China's education system.

Over-Commercialized Shadow Education has Misled Parents

You can see signs that you can only see in the market in ad of China private tutoring agencies, for example: Buy 10 classes and get one class free, the math class and the English class sign up for 20% off etc. Hong Kong companies even promote their services through aggressive advertising with images of “star tutors” to attract teenagers (Zhan, Bray, Wang, Lykins, & Kwo, 2013: 495). When so many options are presented to Chinese parents, it is hard not to take every factor into consideration, since private education is not cheap in China. The commercial facade is highly misleading, and parents often overlook several factors when making their choices, like whether this private tutoring agency is suitable for my children. Since most parents still believe strongly in the importance of shadow education, this means that the market for shadow education will never be small. It also means that it is difficult for shadow education to return to the essence of education.

From the literature review, the conceptual framework can be drawn as shown in Figure 1.

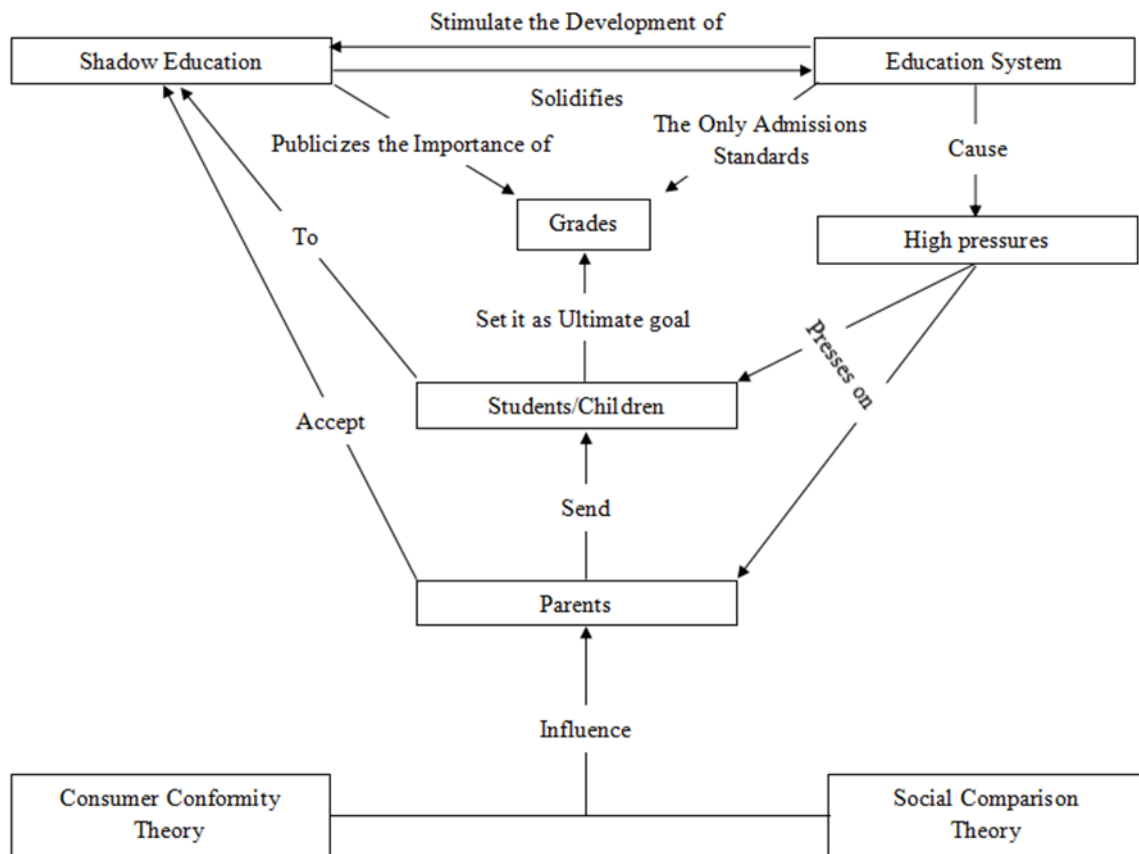


Figure 1 Conceptual framework of the research

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Population

The total population researcher studied was 500 students, all of them are students studying abroad in Chiang Mai University from different discipline. The researchers took a random sample of 100 students.

Data Collection

In this study, researcher will use two methods to complete our data collection, questionnaire, and observation. The researcher send the questionnaires to the selected target groups and collect them after answering the questions. Delivered questionnaire will be returned immediately after respondents fill in the questionnaire. Observation is another method of data collection that

researchers will use, which the researcher observes with the approval of the teacher. Observed data included: When most students study privately?, students' status, students' satisfaction, etc.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The Result of Study Factors Influences of Parent's Consumption Behavior of Private Tutoring Agencies.

According to the results, the researcher concluded that the main reasons for parents to send their children to attend the tutoring school are as follows: 1) Family income level. 2) The child's grades. 3) Prepare child for the Gao Kao. 4) Parental expectations. 5) Peer influence.

Family income level: Shadow education, as a family's educational investment in the next generation, is of great value to the children and the whole family's economy. Parents want their children to go to the ideal university when they grow up, even starting in kindergarten, so they have been investing in shadow education beyond formal education. Parents want the next generation to have a good educational environment, so in this case, parents will naturally seek more educational investment for their children outside the mainstream education. In order not to let their children lose at the starting line, parents will give their children a variety of tutoring classes. The child's grades : most students with poor academic performance hope to improve their grades by attending private cram schools. High-achieving students also need to improve their grades. Prepare child for the Gao Kao: Gao Kao is very important for Chinese students; they must work harder than others to get into a good university. Parental expectations: According to the survey, highly educated parents, who have clear ideas about their children's education, tend to be highly educated and their family's economic situation is relatively better. They are more willing to pay for their children, hoping that their children can receive the best education in good conditions. Peer influence: students with higher academic performance may be affected by peer pressure because they feel a higher level of competition from their peers. This may show important information as follows.

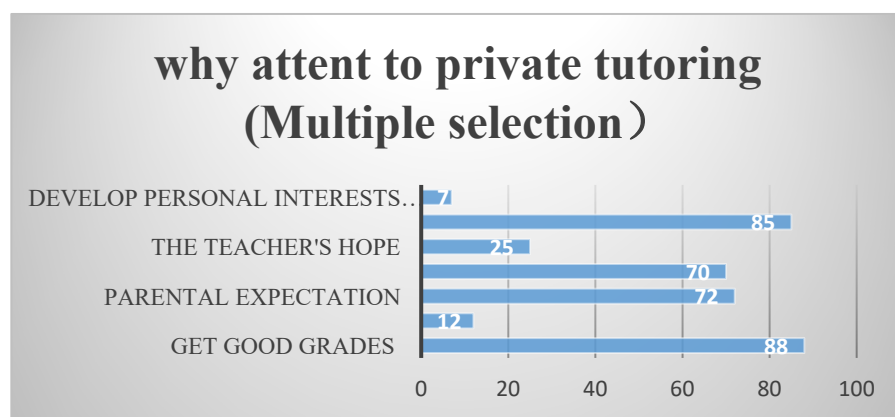


Figure 2 shows the reason of the students who participated in the survey participated in private tutoring.

The Figure 2 shows 100 students who participated in the survey participated in private tutoring. An important reason is to get good grades and to prepare for college entrance examinations (Gao Kao). In addition, more than half of students attend private tutoring because their parents expect it to be.

The Result of the Relationship between Shadow Education and Its Effect on Parents' Children.

According to the survey results, shadow studies can improve students' grades. But the development of shadow education also brings negative effects such as great pressure on students. The relationship between shadow education and parental education is mutually stimulating. Therefore, in the current Chinese education system, shadow education and parents stimulate each other and influence each other, as shown in Figure 3.

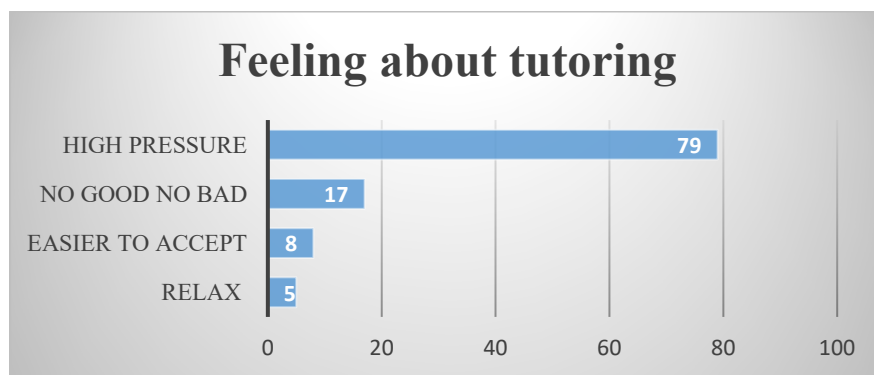


Figure 3 shows the shadow education and its effect on parents' children

The Figure 3 shows the survey results, it is not difficult to see that for most students, their feeling of private tutoring is high pressure. Among 100 students who participated in the questionnaire, 79 felt high pressure, accounting for nearly 80 percent. As far as researcher know, students are used to going to private tutoring lessons, whether it is after class or on weekends, they will feel more pressure, because students usually have a lot of homework in school, after school or weekends have to go to tutoring school, there is no way to complete the homework assigned by teachers. Parents have improved their children's academic performance by sending them to cram schools, but they have occupied their children's leisure time. This is another part of the time to make up for the original course, itself is a pressurization process. Children have less spare time, less time to rest, more time to study, the pressure becomes greater.

According to the results, only a small number of students think that private tutoring is relaxed and easy to accept, only 13 out of 100 students think so. Most of these ideas come from students with better grades. For example, excellent students are guided by teachers in tutoring schools and learn more systematic and scientific learning methods. The teacher teaches them to preview the content before each class in order to understand the content better, which improves the students' learning efficiency. Then the courses in the tutorial class help students to improve their professional knowledge and have a deeper understanding than what they were exposed to in school.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Pressure from the “Standard Answer”

China's traditional education mode is the most typical “exam-oriented education” (Meng, Tang, & Wu, 2021), which means the method of knowledge learning by infusion. In essence, it is a process of copying teachers' knowledge to students through language and props. In this process, students' learning ability and teachers' teaching ability are not considered. Such a way of education is bound to consume a lot of students' time and energy. The advantage of this kind of education is that it can guarantee the high level of knowledge of the public. Whether it is the final exam questions, or the homework completed at home every day, Chinese education treats students equally and without discrimination. This has kept the “hard” knowledge level of

Chinese students at a high level. The disadvantages are students' personalities are greatly suppressed in such an environment. Chinese education does not consider any student's individual talents or interests. All students are required to memorize all knowledge points of all subjects. Chinese education can even be called the obliterate of individual character (Schmitz, 2011). The “standard answer” has been carried out in every Chinese student's life. Not only science subjects such as mathematics, physics, and chemistry, but subjects requiring personal understanding such as Chinese were also given standard answers. When analyzing an article, no matter whether the student's answer is reasonable or not, if it does not conform to the standard answer, it is wrong. Standard answers are not just found in schools; many are set up throughout the education system. From kindergarten to undergraduate, this is the “standard answer” in the road of learning. Desperate for higher grades, this is the “standard answer” in learning methods. Chinese education is the culmination of “assembly line” education. Individuality is not advocated here; Standardization is required here. Young Chinese have grown up in such a “standardized” environment, and everyone is aware of the drawbacks of such an approach. Every year, the education department stresses the importance of personality and interest cultivation, and parents are urged to sign up many “interest classes” for their children who have not yet entered school. But that doesn't change anything, because very few people care if the child is really interested or if the interest is imposed by the parent. Such “interest classes” are just another manifestation of shadow education.

Comparison and Conformity among Chinese Parents

Parents expect their children to grow up along the path they have planned, and any deviation will be corrected immediately. The reason is Chinese parents are eager to get something in return for their children. That is achievement, specifically school achievement. Children often become a topic of conversation among parents, and the focus of the conversation is often on their children's performance in school. Before you know it, children become the capital for parents to keep up with the Joneses. In the parents' view, a child's performance in school is equal to the success of their own way of education. Under the influence of the “social comparison theory” (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975), parents make judgments on their own education mode by comparing with other parents. When they think they are failing or need to improve, they tend to invest more in educational resources, which is called shadow education. Do so the purpose is to improve their children's grades, and indirectly to meet their desire to keep up with the Joneses (Dunning & Hayes, 1996). Most of these investments are not negotiated with the children, are wishful thinking, and are mandatory. What's more, parents will not feel that it is wrong not to communicate with their children, because they convince and comfort themselves that it is right to do so for the sake of their children. As such comparisons become the norm among parents, the phenomenon described by “consumer conformity theory” (Schwartz, 1992) will begin to show itself. When investing in shadow education becomes a consumption recognized by a certain number of parents, more and more people will try to follow the public's consumption intention. Even though they may know nothing about shadow education. Because once they think shadow education is good for their children, they will not hesitate anymore. Parents want their expectations to come true, but it is impossible for all children to get ahead. Conflicts arise when children do not perform as well as expected. Parents will blame their children for not valuing their own efforts and think they have been let down.

The Impact of Shadow, the Education of Parents on Children.

Shadow education brings additional educational resources, while more educational resources under exam-oriented education system does mean that students can achieve higher scores. It is just like a simple mathematical formula, but the reality is that we cannot use formulaic thinking to think about the advantages and disadvantages of shadow education. But the accumulation of educational resources can backfire. For example, Chinese parents are generally eager to get something from their children, namely the “expectation” of their children. Parents often express

their dissatisfaction when actual achievements fall short of “expectations.” This imposes on the child the idea that “you have failed me”. Such a phenomenon is not conducive to the children's mental health development, parents' “expectations” will eventually turn into the children's “stressors.” Parents often choose shadow education when they fail to meet their “expectations”. Hope to gain additional educational resources through extra-curricular study. But under both physical and psychological pressure, these additional educational resources are likely to become even greater pressure on students. Chinese students are often required to memorize many knowledge points every day and are regularly assessed. Students with the aim of passing examinations and achieving goals often have to continue studying into the night. Such a tense rhythm, in the physiological aspect, the late work and rest time is easy to make the growing period of students in the physical unbearable, affecting the learning status of the next day. Psychologically, negative emotions such as anxiety and resistance are the inevitable result of stress (Kim, Jang, & Kim, 2022). China's education has been very perfect in terms of the structure of knowledge, but there are still obstacles in terms of the knowledge system of mental health. Chinese people learn “Ideological and Ethical Education” in primary school and “Social Political Education” in junior and senior high schools. But more is the idea tendency and the behavior way on the restraint. When students are depressed and frustrated in the process of learning due to exam setbacks, they are often unable to adopt a correct and positive attitude to face the failure. The lack of education system in this aspect leads students to avoid and ignore negative emotions and miss the best opportunity to solve psychological problems, which becomes an obstacle to students' mental health development (Freire, 2000). Shadow education is an extra burden of learning, which will lead to the change of students' emotions and reduce their self-control ability, that is, the ability of individuals to control their own impulses, desires, and anger (Otten & IKAB, 2009). The heavy burden of tutoring inevitably causes more psychological stress on students, so they are more likely to be irritable, anxious, and even depressed. Since investment in shadow education is already a necessary consumption in the concept of Chinese parents, the resulting contradictions are also inevitable. In the process of conflict outbreak, the child is the weak, the blamed party, which will bring more psychological problems. When students spend a lot of time on tutoring, they will have less free time, which will make them pay too much attention to study and exams. However, there is a correlation between students' test failure and excessive attention. The tension brought by excessive attention often leads to students' inability to perform to their normal test level. High intensity of tutoring and poor learning performance will reduce students' sense of self-recognition and increase their psychological pressure.

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