

A Comparative Study of Shadow Education Policies in Elementary Education in China, the United States and South Korea

Letong Wang

School of History, Culture and Tourism, Liaocheng University, Liaocheng, 252000, China

**Corresponding author. Email: 844759786@qq.com*

ABSTRACT

In recent years, China's shadow education market has been expanding. Due to the continuous expansion of the shadow education market in various countries, research on shadow education is very popular in the world. Through the research, it is found that in addition to China, the United States and South Korea have the existence of a shadow education market. However, the corresponding measures and attitudes adopted by the governments of various countries are different. This paper takes a comparative analysis of shadow education policies in China, the United States and South Korea, and traces back the history of the policy. Overall, China gradually tightens the policy on shadow education, while South Korea gradually loosens and liberalizes the policy, and the United States always liberalizes its policy on shadow education. The differences in their policies in these countries stem from the differences in social education equity, students' physical and mental health, family economic pressure, education cost and more importantly, the method of selecting students.

Keywords: *Shadow education, China, USA, South Korea, Comparative study*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

At present, shadow education is a spotlight in society and has gradually become a global phenomenon. Along with the expansion of shadow education, China has issued a series of relevant policies for its governance and regulation, and the "Double Reduction Policy" in 2021 is considered the most stringent control policy on shadow education. Through the research, we found that the shadow education market exists in all countries, but there are significant differences in the attitudes of different governments towards this phenomenon. Some countries even support shadow education. Why is there such a huge gap between shadow education policies among different countries? This paper conducts a comparative analysis of shadow education policies in China, the United States and South Korea, deeply explores the current situation of shadow education in each country and provides useful suggestions. In this paper, "shadow education" refers to "institutionalized education activities other than traditional education" [1], while the elementary education stage mainly includes three stages of

education: primary school, junior high school and senior high school.

This paper will conduct a comparative study on the policies issued by the three countries on shadow education, aiming to find the suitable direction for the future development of shadow education in China by analyzing the background, causes and results of the policies issued by the three countries at different stages. In the course of physical and mental development of primary and secondary school students play a positive role, reducing the negative influence, in order to achieve the real "burden reduction". The rational development of shadow education can help realize education fairness, reduce the gap between schools, and meet the educational needs of students to a greater extent.

1.2. Literature Review

In recent years, shadow education, as an important issue in the world, has been concerned by all walks of life. A research conducted by Mark Bray suggests that shadow education is based on schooling[2]. Another research conducted by Michael McVeighon points out that shadow education will impact educational decision-making [3]. Through literature review, it can be found

that the current research on shadow education still has a narrow perspective, mainly focusing on the policies of a single country and lacking cross-border analysis and comparison from a global perspective. Therefore, this study will focus on shadow education in the stage of elementary education and makes a comparative analysis of relevant policies issued by China, the United States and South Korea. Based on the comparative results of various policies, the paper summarizes the international shadow education governance experience and derives several effective suggestions for the introduction and implementation of Shadow education policies in China.

1.3. Methodology

In this paper, comparative analysis is mainly used for comparing and analyzing the shadow education policies in China, the United States and South Korea. Chinese scholar Yang Hanqing infers that "Comparative method is a method used to find out some common or unique rules of education policies in different countries or regions by conducting a comparative study of their educational systems or practices according to certain standards." [4] By collecting relevant information and materials through the Internet and comparing the history, motivation and influence of shadow education policies in three countries through content analysis, some meaningful suggestions are given in the end for the development of shadow education in China.

2. COMPARISON OF SHADOW EDUCATION POLICIES IN THREE COUNTRIES

2.1. Shadow Education policy in China

At the beginning of the 21st century, the rapid growth of shadow education in China has brought a heavy burden on primary and secondary school students. Therefore, the entire society has put forward a voice about reducing students' burden. In 2010, the Outline of The National Medium - and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) proposed that governments at all levels should take burden reduction as an important task in education work, and Guo Yanchun proposed that "standardize various social tutoring institutions and teaching auxiliary market" [5]. This is the first time China has proposed to regulate the shadow education market. In 2015, the Ministry of Education issued a regulation forbids primary and secondary schools and in-service primary and secondary school teachers from paying for after-school courses, which has been called the strictest "shadow education ban" in history. In 2018, The Ministry of Education has issued a circular to lighten the extracurricular burden of primary and middle school students and further strengthen control on shadow education. In 2021, the Ministry of Education

established the Supervision Department of After-school Education and Training to promote the implementation of the "double reduction" work. A series of policies have shown that the government will "reduce the burden" for students, and the governance of shadow education institutions is in an important position.

To sum up, China's shadow education policy has been continuously tightened since 2010. Through the publication of a series of policies on shadow education, China further strengthens the supervision and regulation of the shadow education market, in order to achieve the purpose of promoting education equality and cultivating students to be well-rounded people. While regulating the education market, we should improve the qualification of teachers in shadow education institutions, make education services more professional, and protect the legitimate rights and interests of the educated.

2.2. Shadow Education policy in the United States

Overall, the United States government supports and encourages shadow education. In the United States, the government allows shadow educational institutions to provide a variety of services: students can also enjoy a variety of services through franchising, government grants, private education, volunteering (mainly education provided by churches), self-service (home-schooling) and other courses and activities. In order to maximize educational equity, the government will intervene in shadow education and provide financial support for it. Some schools or districts will purchase services to increase students' international competitiveness and promote their comprehensive development. The No Child Left Behind Act, enacted by the Bush administration in 2001, allows government-funded private tutoring. In addition, the Magnet Programs and the Gifted Programs run by middle schools have programs tailored to students' needs to improve students' learning enthusiasm, help students improve their academic performance, improve students' interest in learning. Also, the after school programs run by the federal government provide students with security on safety and education.

To sum up, the United States has a relaxed and encouraging attitude towards shadow education. Through the cooperation of the government, schools, and shadow education institutions, students' education work is carried out jointly, which reduces educational inequity to a greater extent, alleviating the financial pressure of the government, and safeguarding the rights and interests of disadvantaged students.

2.3. Shadow Education policy in South Korea

The shadow education policies of South Korea can be divided into two periods, with four different types of

policy implementation. In the 1930s, shadow education went through the "illegal" period with the "transfer policy" and the "no policy". Since the end of the 20th century up to now shadow education has been going through the "legal" period with the "compensation policies" and the "fair" policy. At first, shadow education was banned in South Korea, so the government did not allow any educational activities other than tutoring students in schools. However, the implementation process is very tortuous: since the policy is only aimed at reducing shadow education unilaterally but cannot meet the real needs of students, parents strongly oppose the policy banning shadow education. For the sake of social stability, the government has entered the stage of relaxing shadow education, allowing the existence of shadow education as a supplement to school education. The new policy holds that the quality of education in schools must be improved so that students' educational needs can be greatly satisfied inside the school, thus reducing after-school tutoring. Secondly, the new policy takes reducing the cost of shadow education as an important goal to implement. Finally, public schools are linked to the college admissions system, thus reducing the prevalence of shadow education and fundamentally changing the attitudes of parents. Under the action of "extracurricular school" measures, elementary education in South Korea has shown a good development trend. Some experience has been gained in popularizing social education benefits, slowing down the growth of investment in "private education" and strengthening the "localization" of school functions.

To sum up, South Korea's shadow education policy has changed gradually from strict prohibition to relaxation.

2.4. Comparison of shadow education policies in three countries

In terms of the relationship between school education and shadow education, China and South Korea believe that shadow education has a certain negative impact on school education. In both countries, shadow education affects students' physical and mental health and brings great economic pressure to families. Students study in advance before class, which squeezes in-class education and causes a waste of educational resources. At the same time, the chaos of the shadow education market aggravates educational inequality. On the contrary, shadow education in the United States serves as after-school supplement to protect the education needed by students from disadvantaged groups and reduce educational inequity. The content of Shadow education in the United States is mainly to help students with learning difficulties in a certain subject, and to improve the comprehensive ability of students. It pays more attention to the cultivation of students' individuality and advocates diversified development of students. China

and South Korea are mainly exam-oriented, which ignores students' development in many aspects. In China and Korea, students receive further education through selection, while shadow education aims to pass the entrance examination of universities, therefore shadow education has a negative effect in both countries. In terms of the cost of shadow education, the cost of shadow education in China is mainly covered by parents. Due to the imbalanced regional economic development, some individual families cannot afford the cost of shadow education, resulting in the problem of education inequality. The United States has a relatively healthy shadow education system, which is led by the American government, and schools, families, volunteers and society share the cost of shadow education together. The US government believes that shadow education can promote educational equity and reduce the pressure and cost of the education system. In terms of after-school time, after-school shadow education in the United States can help families who have no time to take care of their children to reduce the pressure of family education. Shadow education in China and South Korea takes up students' rest time to learn in advance or catch up with subject knowledge. The cost and pressure of after-school shadow education are all borne by families.

3. THE ENLIGHTENMENT TO CHINA

Shadow education plays an important role in the whole education system. School education, family education and shadow education should cooperate to promote the development of students. China's current education system is based on school education and aided by family assistance. Policies on shadow education have been tightened. From a series of policies adopted by South Korea on shadow education, we can see that shadow education should develop in a balanced way as a supplement to school education. In the whole education system, shadow education can lessen the pressure of family education. But suppose it disappears, then the quality and level of demands on family education will skyrocket, and families with lower economic status will be too busy making money to devote extra energy to their children's education. The appearance of stay-at-home wives has solved this problem to some extent, but the pressure of making a living is all transferred to the husband, increasing the family economic pressure. Wealthier families can hire tutors to provide good education for their children. In addition, the brutal development of the shadow education market makes families with low income unable to afford huge education expenses, but rich parents can still provide shadow education for their children. This leads to more inequality in education. With the absence of shadow education, students have higher expectations and requirements for school education. As pressure mounts on China's school education system, the slightest misstep could lead to more inequality.

The cost of education is shared by school education, family education and shadow education. The financial pressure of shadow education can be reduced by providing government financial allocation. Lou Shizhou proposed that "The governance of shadow education should aim at comprehensively promoting the fair and balanced development of education and comprehensively implementing quality-oriented education." [6] The interests of all parties should be considered when making education policies for elementary education. While regulating the shadow education market, students' demand for shadow education services should be taken into consideration without affecting China's school education system. After all, market demand will not disappear simply because of policy tightening. Instead of outright prohibition, it is better to establish a reasonable and standardized shadow education market in order to jointly bear the education costs. The experience of shadow education policy in the United States suggests that the government should standardize and legalize the shadow education market through legislation, to support mainstream school education, in order to protect the interests of disadvantaged students and promote educational equity. From the perspective of laws and regulations, it is necessary to strengthen the standardized governance of the shadow education market, establish special institutions to supervise and manage it, prohibiting negative phenomena such as the wild expansion of the shadow education market and arbitrary charges. We will reduce the pressure on family education expenditure and protect students' equal right to receive education.

Back to the deepest reason, China's way of selecting students for universities provides an opportunity for the savage development of the shadow education market. Shadow education was originally intended to supplement the deficiencies of school education, but the shortcomings of "exam-oriented education" were gradually exposed, which not only suppressed the personality development of students, but also caused students to take grades as the goal and pass the entrance examination to enter a good university. This completely deviates from the original intention of school education, so shadow education has gradually become an obstacle to education in China. There are similarities between the examination policies in South Korea and in China. The gradual emergence of "shadow education fever" and "college entrance examination fever" in South Korea are all aimed at entering higher education institutions to gain employment advantages. The fierce competition for admission has led to the gradual increase of shadow education costs, which has caused great pressure on education funds for most families. From the shadow education market to carry on the deep analysis of the prevailing reasons, reflect on the examination policy problems and deficiencies, reasonable solution to the

problem of admission to avoid the problem of the prevalence of shadow education caused by "exam fever".

In a word, for shadow education, China should not completely ban it, but also should not indulge blindly. We should develop shadow education reasonably in the standard, supplement the mainstream education, give full play to its advantages and meet students' demands for education.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Through cross-country comparative analysis, this paper finds that different countries adopt different policies on shadow education due to differences in education equity, students' physical and mental health, family economic pressure, education cost and selection methods. China gradually tightens its policy on shadow education, while South Korea gradually loosens and liberalizes the policy, while the United States always liberalizes the policy on shadow education.

This paper mainly adopts the comparative research method. Although a lot of research information has been obtained, due to the limitations of the method, this paper also contains many deficiencies. In the future, it is suggested to consider the education policies of different countries from the longitudinal dimension through follow-up research. Large-scale research and investigation can also provide more detailed empirical data for the implementation effect of shadow education policy.

Through consulting materials, it is found that there is little research on shadow education in China, and the research field is narrow. This paper mainly discusses the causes, impacts and solutions of shadow education in China. This paper focuses on shadow education in the stage of basic education, and makes a comparative analysis of relevant policies issued by China, the United States and South Korea. According to the comparative results of various countries, the paper draws on and learns from the international shadow education governance experience, and provides effective suggestions for the introduction and implementation of Shadow education policies in China. Finally, the cross-country comparison is helpful to integrate Chinese shadow education research with international standards, so as to join the ranks of cross-country shadow education research as soon as possible.

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