

## Parent Time Input in Teenager Education Matters More Than Shadow Education

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*“Education is what survives when what has been learned is forgotten.”*

*—BF Skinner*

**I**N recent years, shadow education—paid private supplementary tutoring providing additional educational assistance for students who are preparing for a variety of examinations—has become one of the fastest growing industries in a number of countries around the world, causing concern among governments and education policymakers, who believe that shadow education exacerbates the financial burden on poor families and exacerbates education inequality (Yu & Zhang, 2022). The growing significance of educational accomplishments for students’ future careers, combined with the immense pressure schools face to maintain their ranking, may lead the majority of parents to seek out private tutoring as the most effective means of enhancing their children’s academic competitiveness. However, the opportunities for children from various socioeconomic backgrounds to participate in exam-focused shadow education are frequently mediated by their home economic strengths; as a result, children from low-income households face barriers to accessing shadow education. For instance, Byun (2019) found in his analysis that Seoul families often spend more than twice as much on shadow education as their rural counterparts. There is a widespread belief among global researchers that the substantial investment by families of superior economic

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status in shadow education has resulted in higher educational attainment and consequently exacerbated the imbalanced gap between students from different social strata that is “taken for granted”. Although the government and relevant education policymakers have attempted to implement some reforms to address these issues, such as providing financial assistance to poor families, they have failed to adequately respond to the extraordinary expansion of educational aspirations resulting from the existing position of the consolidated upper and middle classes. Entrich (2015) suggested that highly ranked public high schools in metropolitan areas would attract a greater proportion of students from affluent families who view extracurricular tutoring as a necessity during their high school years. This may encourage them to enroll in the most prestigious universities, thereby ensuring their social standing remains above average. This provides a plausible explanation for the rise in popularity of shadow education. Therefore, numerous types of evidence indicate that students’ participation in shadow schooling is significantly influenced by their social origins and family incomes.

In this issue, *Family Time and Money Inputs in Education and Teenager Development: Interpretation of Social Capital, Cultural Capital, and Shadow Education* by Li and He (2022) examined the connection between family financial and time investments in education and adolescent development. This study integrates home time and money inputs in education and reveals: there are class differences in family time and money investments in education; family time investment in education is the most influential factor on adolescent academic performance; social capital (parental participation) and cultural capital account for score gaps among students far more than shadow education. This article suggests that the influence of shadow education on the academic achievement of adolescents is not as great as previously believed. In addition to spending more money on off-campus supplemental tutoring for their children, parents from middle-class or higher socioeconomic backgrounds also devote more time to accompanying their children. In addition, extracurricular tutoring on weekdays (Monday through Friday) has a considerable detrimental influence on adolescents’ academic performance, whereas weekend tutoring has a significant favorable effect. The most important result of this study is that parents’ direct time investment in their children, like parent-child contact and parental companionship, has the biggest effect on adolescent academic success.

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