

Exploring the Relationship Between Family-related Factors and the Effectiveness of Shadow Education

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Abstract: This study investigates the influence of family-related factors on the effectiveness of shadow education, specifically examining the access to cultural capital, economic capital, social capital, and spiritual capital, and their impact on students' engagement. By analyzing these factors and their effects on children's participation in shadow education in Chinese households, the research provides insights for parents to identify root causes and determine strategies for improvement. The findings have significant implications for prospective parents, highlighting the critical importance of considering these factors to optimize their children's access and outcomes in shadow education. Addressing factors such as parental involvement, anxiety levels, and educational expectations is pivotal in creating a supportive environment that enhances children's educational opportunities. Furthermore, this research contributes to existing knowledge by exploring the complex dynamics between family-related factors and shadow education. Understanding family cultural, economic, social, and spiritual capital provides a deeper understanding of shadow education. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the significance of family-related factors in shaping the effectiveness of shadow education, emphasizing the role of different forms of family capital. By recognizing and addressing these factors, parents can foster an environment that maximizes educational opportunities and achievements in shadow education, empowering them to cultivate their children's educational potential.

Keywords: family-related factors, shadow education, cultural capital, economic capital

1. Introduction

The issue of educational fairness has gained significant attention in China recently, with both local and international scholars focusing on shadow schooling as a contributing factor to educational inequality. It is widely agreed among academics that shadow schooling exacerbates educational disparities and serves as a means of social reproduction and stratification in society [1]. Moreover, several studies have shown that shadow schooling reinforces social class divisions, particularly in cases where there is unequal access to family resources, thereby hindering China's efforts to achieve equal educational opportunities [2]. To address the adverse effects of family-related factors on shadow education, it is essential to understand the connection between these factors and the effectiveness of shadow education. This article aims to explore the efficiency of shadow education in relation to family-related issues.

2. Concept Definition

2.1. Family Capital

The scholar Coleman has categorized household capital into three types: physical, human, and social capital [1-5]. Family background primarily encompasses four dimensions: family economic capital (referring to the level of family income), cultural capital (referring to the educational level of the father), social capital (referring to the father's social position), and political capital (referring to the composition of the family) [4].

Family capital stems from the concept of social capital and influences people's behavior by providing practical resources [5]. In the context of education, students in higher education may utilize to achieve specific goals. The key components of family capital are family economic, social, cultural, and political capital.

Another study identified family capital as comprising economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital within the family context. Family social capital encompasses parental social network resources and parental involvement in their children's education [6]. Cultural capital combines elements of Bourdieu's cultural capital and Coleman's human capital.

2.2. Review of Relevant Studies

Recent studies can be categorized into five groups. A review of the existing literature is conducted for each category.

2.2.1. Cultural Capital

Through the utilization of data from the China Education Tracking Survey 2014, one researcher conducted an in-depth study on the impact of family cultural capital on students' access to shadow education [7]. This investigation specifically focused on students in China and examined the relationship. The findings indicate a significant variation in the level of engagement in extracurricular tuition among students from different family backgrounds. Notably, children whose parents possessed higher levels of education exhibited higher participation rates in academic and interest-based extracurricular activities. This suggests that students with greater family cultural capital were more inclined to participate in extracurricular tuition.

Similarly, based on data, some researchers discovered a positive correlation between the education level of the household head and the likelihood of urban students engaging in extracurricular tuition [8,9]. In another study, the impact of different forms of family capital on students' access to extracurricular tuition opportunities in Chinese cities was evaluated. The findings revealed that households with highly educated parents had significantly higher chances of their children participating in shadow education compared to families with lower levels of education [10].

Furthermore, using data from the China Family Tracking Survey 2012 (CFPS2012), some people identified a substantial beneficial effect of fathers' educational attainment on the likelihood of all Chinese compulsory school students participating in extracurricular tuition [9]. Some other researchers conducted a thorough analysis using the Tobit model to explore the influencing factors. The data revealed a strong positive impact [8].

In summary, the research consistently indicates that the level of education attained by parents, as evidenced by multiple studies utilizing various data sources.

2.2.2.Economic Capital

Utilizing data from the 2004 China Urban Residents' Education and Employment Survey, researchers discovered a significant positive correlation between household economic income and the likelihood of urban students engaging in extracurricular tuition in China [8]. The impact of different forms of household capital on students' access to extracurricular tuition opportunities in Chinese cities was investigated. The findings indicated that a higher per capita monthly household income corresponded to an increased probability of children attending shadow education.

Moreover, other studies conducted an in-depth analysis using Tobit models to examine the factors influencing households' investment behavior in shadow education. The results revealed disparities and inequalities in the groups investing in shadow education between rural and urban areas and across regions. Low-income households faced greater pressure to allocate funds for education and had fewer financial resources available for investing in shadow education for their children.

To summarize, multiple studies, including the aforementioned research, highlight the significant positive impact of household economic income on students' participation in extracurricular tuition, indicating that higher income levels increase the likelihood of children attending shadow education. Additionally, there are differences and inequalities in the investment behavior of shadow education between rural and urban areas, with low-income households experiencing greater challenges in allocating financial resources for their children's education.

2.2.3.Social Capital

In a study, extracurricular tuition, students' grades, and social reproduction among junior high school students in China were examined [8]. The findings indicated significant variations in the extent of student engagement in extracurricular tuition based on different family capitals. Specifically, students whose parents had higher occupational categorization showed greater involvement in academic and interest-based extracurricular tuition, suggesting that students with more family social capital were more inclined to participate in such activities.

Jiang Shuai and Long Jing, utilizing CEPS micro survey data, employed Ordered logit regression models and SEM models to explore the effects of diverse family capital and its micro-level mechanisms in the education acquisition process [7]. The investigation revealed that "shadow education" (extracurricular tuition) and parental involvement in a child's education played a significant mediating role. However, it was suggested that although shadow education can enhance access to quality education and academic achievement, its market-based operation actually contributes to educational disparities. Shadow education indirectly impacts the allocation of educational resources in schools and undermines the space for regular schooling, resulting in more negative effects than benefits.

Gao Xiang and Xue Haiping use structural equation modeling. The results indicated that active parental involvement was a strong driver. Furthermore, higher levels of parental involvement increased the likelihood of students accessing shadow education [6].

In a study by Shi, Meng, and Bi, Yumin using CEPS data, family socio-economic status, parental involvement, and children's participation in shadow education were investigated. The three dimensions of parental involvement—parental expectations, homework supervision, and homework assistance, also partially explain the effect of family socio-economic status on children's participation in shadow education.[5].

2.2.4.Spiritual Capital

Parental educational expectations had a significant positive effect on the probability of all students in China's compulsory education stage participating in extracurricular tuition [4].

Kung, Yixuan, Chen, Tao, and Xue, Haiping performed an empirical analysis utilizing data from the China Household Financial Survey (CHFS) in 2015. Their focus was on investigating whether family educational anxiety leads to increased investment in extracurricular tuition. The study found the following: (1) Both categories of family educational anxiety have a favorable impact on extracurricular tuition investment, with typical anxious families prioritizing both "subject-based" and "arts and sports" tuition, while overly anxious families prioritize solely "subject-based" tuition; (2) Families with high capital experience typical anxiety, whereas low economic and cultural capital families are more likely to experience excessive worry; (3) High economic and cultural capital families can alleviate excessive anxiety through investment in extracurricular tuition, while low economic and cultural capital families remain trapped in a cycle of excessive anxiety due to their limited resources; (4) The education of overly anxious families often surpasses the boundaries of parental love for their children [2].

3. Conclusions

The research conducted so far has primarily studies on different factors, such as income level, parents' education level, and social status, on the effectiveness of shadow education. However, there has been limited research on other crucial dimensions, including parental expectations, parental involvement in students' education, and parental anxiety regarding their academic performance. These factors play a significant role in determining the effectiveness of a student's engagement in shadow education.

It is well recognized that the effectiveness of shadow learning relies not only on the financial support provided by the family or the expertise of the parents but also on the amount of time and effort invested in it, the level of expectations set by parents, and their anxiety about their child's educational progress. It is necessary to comprehensively consider all external and internal aspects of the family's influence.

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