

# The history of policy responses to shadow education in South Korea: implications for the next cycle of policy responses

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**Abstract** Shadow education has been a challenge to public education in South Korea since the 1960s. Government has responded to shadow education with various types of policy responses. The assumption on the possibility of reducing the demand mechanism led the policy to eliminate competitive high stakes examinations and even prohibit participating in shadow education. However, the policy response with this assumption has not been effective. The policy responses to the problematic symptoms had been short period prescription, which were able to bring about immediate effects. South Korean experiences suggest that we need to formulate long-term policy frameworks for developing the quality of public education in responding to shadow education.

**Keywords** Shadow education · Private tutoring · Korean education

## Introduction

As supplementary private tutoring, or shadow education, has become an increasingly worldwide phenomenon—from

East Asia to Africa to Europe to North America (Bray 1999, 2006; Kwok 2004; Silova et al. 2006; Lee et al. 2009), the causes of its expansion have been studied, especially since the 1990s (e.g., Bray 1999; Baker et al. 2001; Bray and Kwok 2003). Policy responses to the expansion of shadow education also have been examined from a comparative perspective (Bray 2003, 2009). In doing so, South Korea has been of particular interest to educational researchers and policy makers, not only because of its most extensive use of shadow education but also because of its variety of policy responses.

Emerging initially as a form of one-on-one supplementary private tutoring (*gaeingyoseub*) at the individual level, South Korean shadow education evolved into various forms, including institutionalized cram schools (*hagwon*), correspondence courses (*hagseupji*), and Internet private tutoring services. The dramatic growth of the shadow education industry has led to various governmental responses that range from regulating all forms of shadow education outside the public education system to provide shadow education in forms of after-school programs within the public education system. The government has responded to this phenomenon by regarding outside-school shadow education as problematic, and sought to solve it by prohibiting shadow education or absorbing it through inside school activities. Despite numerous efforts made by the government, shadow education practices still continue in South Korea. In fact, the size and role of the shadow education business tend to increase even further, competing against the public education system, which suggests that the policy goals for regulating the expansion of shadow education have been limited in impact.

Examination of the history of educational policies implemented to respond to shadow education over the last half-century in South Korea, and analysis of the structures and patterns of a variety of policy responses will offer

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important policy implications to policy makers worldwide because there will be a better understanding of the role of the government in the expansion of the shadow education system. To this end, we first provide a brief definition of shadow education and examine causal mechanisms that led to the emergence of shadow education. Next, we examine the developmental process of policy responses in South Korea. Then, we analyze the structures and patterns of South Korean policy responses. We conclude with policy implications.

### The concepts of shadow education and demand mechanisms

In order to establish sound policy in response to shadow education, the first need is to define the problem of shadow education and understand reasons and motives for seeking shadow education. In this section, we briefly discuss the concept of shadow education and the demand mechanisms leading to shadow education.

#### The concept of shadow education

In general, supplementary private tutoring is defined as fee-based outside school lessons that provide supplementary instruction to students in academic subjects they have studied or will study in school and aim to help prepare them for the high-stakes exams administered in the public education system (Bray 1999, 2003; Baker et al. 2001; Silova and Bray 2006). It exists in various forms, ranging from one-on-one private tutoring (*gaeingawoe*) to a cram school (*hagwon*) to correspondence courses. In fact, not all aspects of supplementary private tutoring have been criticized and thus targeted by educational policy makers. One problematic aspect is that while aiming at preparing for the high-stakes tests in mainstream schools, supplementary private tutoring takes place out of the mainstream schooling system. In that respect, supplementary private tutoring has been referred to as *shadow education*. Due to its 'shadowy' role, supplementary private tutoring often imitates the school system, but sometimes it goes beyond being passive by competing against, and thus generating effects on the mainstream schooling system, which is uncharacteristic of 'shadows' (Bray 2003; Baker and LeTendre 2005).

#### Demand mechanisms seeking shadow education

Research has identified multiple individual, educational, and institutional factors that lead students and parents to seek shadow education (Bray 1999, 2003; Baker et al. 2001; Baker and LeTendre 2005). These demand

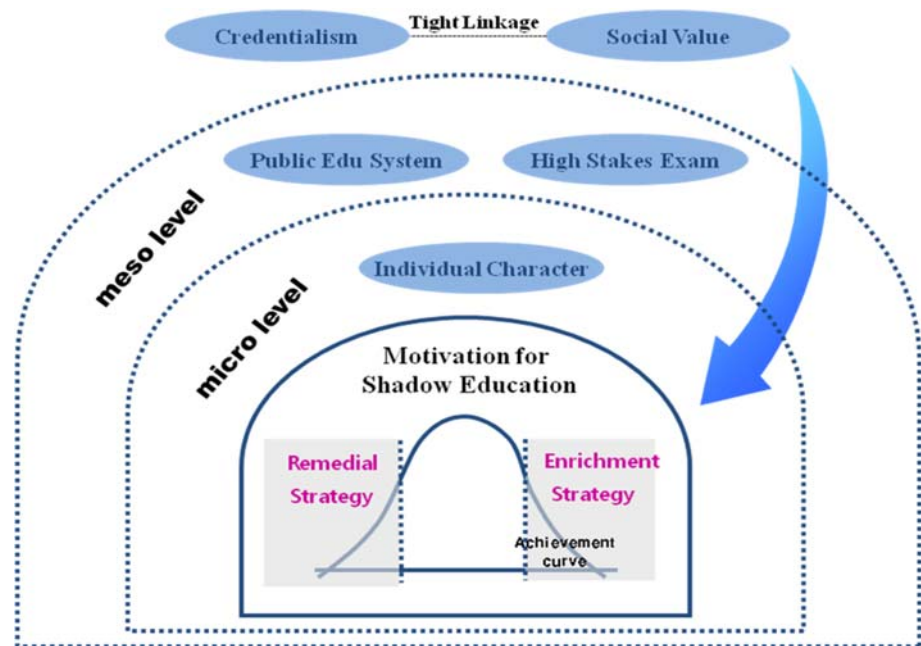
mechanisms can be conceptualized at the following three levels: (1) macro, (2) meso, and (3) micro (as shown in Fig. 1). At the macro level, credentialism is a main mechanism that leads to shadow education. Credentialism refers to a social value system in which educational credentials, such as a high school diploma and college degree, play an important role in status attainment. Schooling plays an increasingly important role as a device for social selection in today's modern society. Academic achievement in the school system in turn becomes important for distributing social roles. This linkage between educational credentials and status distributions leads to an increase in the social awareness of the importance of credentials (Baker et al. 2001). The result is an increase in competition for obtaining these credentials.

At the meso level, when high-stakes exams operate as a main mechanism for screening students for higher educational attainment, demand for shadow education tends to increase. In other words, the competition mechanism operated by high-stakes tests in the school system results in institutional demand for shadow education (Baker et al. 2001). Some features of the management of public school systems at the meso level are also associated with the expansion of shadow education. For instance, an increase in differences in prestige and quality among schools resulting from the low cost approach (Lee et al. 2009) and a decrease in school satisfaction (Kim 2004) tend to lead to shadow education.

Finally, at the micro or individual levels, participation in shadow education tends to be encouraged by individuals' beliefs that shadow education helps improve academic achievement, which in turn allows for access to selective universities and ultimately prestigious jobs. This tendency can be explained by the goal expectancy theory, which emphasizes the subjective recognition on the instrumentality allowing for achieving goals. From this theoretical perspective, the subjective evaluation of the positive effects of shadow education on educational outcomes leads to participation in shadow education (Lee et al. 2009). Psychological uneasiness of students who don't use shadow education can also induce their participation in shadow education. In a situation in which the majority of students participate in shadow education, those students who do not participate in shadow education may feel pressure to do so. This situation can be explained by the game theory model called "prisoner's dilemma," which suggests that a person who does not want to be involved in a certain context inevitably does so because all other people are involved in that context (Paik 1999).

In summary, shadow education tends to emerge in a particular context in which academic achievement on high-stakes tests plays a decisive role in the transition to upper levels of education, and higher educational attainment in

**Fig. 1** The conceptual framework of demand mechanisms leading to shadow education. *Source:* Lee and Lee (2008)



turn determines access to prestigious jobs in the labor markets. In such a competitive condition, low-quality public education tends to further increase the extent to which students and parents rely on shadow education. The subjective perception of the positive impact of shadow education on academic achievement leads students and parents to feel more anxious about not participating in shadow education, so they eventually enroll in a form of shadow education.

Analysis of these demand mechanisms that lead to shadow education has important implications not only for a better understanding of the emergence of shadow education but also for policy design in response to the expansion of shadow education. As noted earlier, shadow education has increasingly become a worldwide phenomenon. According to Baker et al. (2001, pp. 6–8), modal strategy of use of shadow education can be classified as enrichment strategy and remedial strategy. According to Baker et al., enrichment strategy occurs when “students with high performance tend to use shadow education for strategic advantages in future educational contests.” Remedial strategy occurs when “students with low performance tend to use shadow education to maintain minimal or otherwise acceptable achievement levels in schools.”<sup>1</sup> The results from analyzing the

tendency of modal strategy of participation in shadow education using international achievement studies such as the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS) by Baker et al. show motivations behind the pursuit of shadow education are mixed with enrichment and remedial purposes. Students’ motivations for seeking shadow education for the purpose of enrichment tend to increase as they advance to upper levels of education in which high-stakes exams play an important role (Lee and Lee 2008).

Policy responses to shadow education are contingent on what level (e.g., macro, meso, or micro level) and which factors (e.g., institutional or individual factors) should be targeted and manipulated through governmental intervention. For example, in order to respond to the expansion of shadow education at the micro level, policy makers may consider implementing policy that promotes the remedial purpose by reducing the enrichment purpose for participating in shadow education. However, if a policy focuses on the elimination of individual motives for using shadow education at the micro level, its goal may unlikely be accomplished. In short, policy responses should center on the meso level by reforming management of the public education system and high-stakes exam system. In the

<sup>1</sup> Basically, both enrichment and remedial strategies hold competitive aspects for attaining higher scores. However, according to the achievement level of students who belong to high performance group or low performance group, the strategy for participation of shadow education can be classified as two kinds mentioned above. As for highly performing students, their academic achievement levels are already above academic standard suggested by national curricula, and they don’t need to choose shadow education to understand contents more, but they are eager to stand at higher ranks than others of their

Footnote 1 continued  
group. That’s why they select shadow education and also this strategy is branded as “enrichment.” Contrary to situation of high performance group, students belonging to low performance group are not capable to meet academic standard and they need to learn and understand contents more. If the public school system doesn’t provide these students with appropriate remedial classes, then the only option for parents and students is shadow education. As for them, shadow education is a kind of medication for curing their conditions.

section that follows, we examine a variety of governmental measures on shadow education that were implemented in South Korea over the past five decades.

### The developmental process of policy responses to shadow education in South Korea

In the process of its educational development over the last half century, South Korea has observed the growth of various types of shadow education, beginning with one-on-one private tutoring and later emerging as institutionalized cram schools. The expansion of shadow education in the private sector has been dramatic, leading to the emergence of social concerns on the adverse effects of shadow education on the public education system. Accordingly, numerous efforts have been made to respond to the expansion of the shadow education system. In this section, we introduce several major anti-shadow education measures implemented over the past five decades, including:

- 1968 *No Middle School Entrance Examination Policy*
- 1978 *High School Equalization Policy*
- 1980 *7.30 Educational Reform Measure*
- 1980s–1990s Reforming the college entrance examination system and public education system for reducing household expenditure on shadow education
- 2000–2004 Introduction of educational policies for reducing household expenditure on shadow education by enhancing public education
- 2009 Reducing household expenditure on shadow education by increasing school autonomy

A detailed description of each governmental measure follows.

#### The no middle school entrance examination policy (1968)

Education opportunities for children dramatically increased in the decade following the end of the Korean War in 1953. While primary education became compulsory in the 1950s, an increasing number of baby boomers desired to advance to middle school. However, only a small portion of primary school graduates were able to do so because of a lack of middle schools. In those days, individual middle schools selected their students through entrance exams. In the late 1960s, competition for entering middle schools became so severe that many young students suffered tension and stress due to the middle school entrance exams; this occurrence has been called ‘examination hell (*siheomjiok*).’ Ultimately, many middle-school-bound students participated in shadow education, which was believed to help prepare for the middle school entrance exams. Under these

circumstances, the Ministry of Education (MOE; *Moongyobu*) proposed the *No Middle School Entrance Exam Policy (Junghaggyo Musiheomjedo)* in 1968. This legislation aimed at: (1) promoting normal development of children, (2) normalizing elementary school education, (3) reducing the disparities among middle schools, and (4) lessening financial burdens placed on families due to prevailing shadow education fees (Ministry of Education 1988, p. 391). This policy was first implemented in 1969 in Seoul (the largest and capital city of South Korea), in 1970 in other major cities, and finally nationwide the following year. The policy received national support as an alternative solution to the exam hell and prevailing shadow education (Kim 2000).

#### The high school equalization policy (1973)

Although the elimination of the middle school entrance exams reduced the intensity of competition for entering middle schools, it led to the dramatic expansion of educational opportunities at the lower secondary level. Yet only 40% of middle school graduates were able to enter high schools due to a lack of school facilities. The result was an increase in competition for entering high schools, especially the few elite high schools. According to *Chosun Ilbo* (June 15, 1971), a leading daily newspaper in South Korea, more than 70% of middle school students participated in shadow education in 1973. In addition, approximately 27% suffered mental and physical health problems due to stress on the high school entrance exams. This was termed ‘middle school third-year disease’. In order to address these social and educational problems, the MOE proposed the *High School Equalization Policy (HSEP; Gogyo Pyeongjunhwajedo)* in 1973. The main provisions of this policy were the elimination of the high school entrance exams and the introduction of the random school assignment system. It is believed that the HSEP was successful in reducing financial shadow-education burdens imposed on families at the lower secondary level. At the same time, however, this policy has been criticized as replacing the battlefield of shadow education, for high school students, with the need to score well on college entrance exams (Kang et al. 2005; Kim and Kang 1985). Such debates on the effects of the HSEP on shadow education continue to date.

#### The 7.30 educational reform measure (1980)

Despite the elimination of the middle and high school entrance exams, educational and social problems caused by the extensive use of shadow education continued during the 1970s, creating the widespread belief that children are unable to go to college without shadow education. Under this circumstance, the Doo-hwan Jeon administration

(1980–1988) proposed the so-called *7.30 Educational Reform Measure (7.30 gyoyukgaehyeokjochi)* in 1980, which aimed at having full control over shadow education. Building on the recognition that the high-stakes exams were major mechanisms spurring shadow education, this governmental measure banned the college entrance exams administered by individual colleges (*Daehakbyeol Bongosa*) and introduced the preliminary college entrance exam system (*Daehakyeobeegosaje*), where college-bound students were screened through the newly introduced high-stakes test and high school records (*Gogyo Naesin*). In addition, the college entrance quota increased thus reducing competition for entering colleges. An educational broadcasting system was established to provide low-cost private tutoring. All college students and school teachers were prohibited from earning money by offering any kind of private tutoring. Although the *7.30 Educational Reform Measure* failed to obtain the intended outcomes of removing private tutoring completely (i.e., private tutoring practices continued secretly), its policy goals and provisions were, to a large extent, reflected in subsequent anti-shadow education measures until 2000. In 2000, the South Korean Constitutional Court ruled that the law prohibiting high school students' attendance at cram schools was unconstitutional.

Educational reform in the college entrance examination system and public education system for reducing household expenditure on shadow education (1980s–1990s)

In order to implement educational reforms more systematically and comprehensively, the Jeon Government established the Presidential Council for Education Reform (PCER; *Gyoyukgaehyeok Shimuihoe*) in 1985. PCER proposed a series of educational initiatives, including: (1) reform of the college entrance examination system by allowing individual colleges to select their students through their own selection criteria and (2) revision of the HSEP by allowing private high schools to select their students. Later, this PCER was transformed into the Presidential Committee for Education Reform (*Gyoyukgaehyeok Wiwonhoe*), which proposed the *5.31 Educational Reform Plans (5.31 Gyoyukgaehyeokbangan)* in 1995. The main provisions of this measure, with respect to shadow education, were to enhance the quality of public education system and offer after-school programs. These specific reform plans guided the overall direction and contents of anti-shadow education policies implemented in the 1990s.

During the 1990s, social concerns were expressed in regard to the increasing growth of the shadow education system at the primary and lower secondary levels, both of which were thought to be indirectly related to the high-stakes exams for entering colleges. Parents' complaints

about heavy financial burdens due to the cost of private tutoring developed into a political issue (Seo 1997, p. 362). The result was the MOE's introduction of *Educational Plans for Alleviating Overheated Private Tutoring and Reducing Household Spending on Shadow Education (Gwayeolgwawoe Wanhwa Mit Gwawoebee Kyeonggam Daechaek)* in 1997. This measure differs from previous governmental measures in several aspects. First of all, the overall direction of the government's policy responses to shadow education changed from the prohibition of private tutoring to the reduction of household expenditure on shadow education. Second, the government's perception of a fundamental solution to shadow education centered on the enhancement of the public education system, rather than on the entire elimination of the shadow education system. In short, since 1990, the governmental measures in response to shadow education have focused on cutting demand mechanisms that lead to shadow education by improving the quality of public education (Seo 1997).

In order to strengthen the mainstream school system, efforts were made to: (1) improve educational conditions by decreasing student–teacher ratio, introducing differential curriculum, and diversifying criteria of evaluation, (2) maintain the HSEP to reduce inequalities among schools with the controls of the further establishments of special-purpose high schools and private independent high schools, and (3) prohibit individual college admission exams (*Daehakbyeogosa*) with the diversification of the criteria for student selection. An additional measure for solving the problem of growing private tutoring costs was the lowering of the difficulty level of the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT), known as *Suneung*, and the grade-level classification of its scores (e.g., first, second, and third grade levels), which had been reported in total. Low-cost alternative private tutoring through the Education Broadcasting System (EBS) and after-school programs were also provided.

Educational policies for enhancing public education and providing shadow education (2000–2004)

In 2000, the South Korean Constitutional Court declared the law prohibiting the establishment and operation of cram schools unconstitutional. Specifically, Article 3 (concerning the prohibition of high school students' attendance at cram schools) and Article 22 (concerning the punishment of the illegal operation of high cost of supplementary private tutoring) of the *7.30 Educational Reform Measure* of 1980 were ruled unconstitutional. The key rationale in the Constitutional Court's decision was that the government's prohibition of attendance at a cram school infringes on parents' and students' rights to learn. The immediate concerns that this decision might lead to the explosive

expansion of the shadow education system led the government to establish an advisory committee for shadow education institutions, known as *Gwawoegyoseup Daechaek Wiwonhoe*, in order to discuss alternative policy responses. In 2000, this advisory committee proposed the *Educational Plan for Prevention of Overheated Private Tutoring and Enhancement of Public Education (Gwayeolgwawoe Yebang mit Gongkyoyuk Naesilhwa Bangan)* to the MOE. This plan identified several major demand mechanisms resulting in shadow education, including: (1) the hierarchical structure of the postsecondary education system resulting in excessive competition for entering a few prestigious colleges, (2) the low-quality of public education, and (3) students' and parents' subjective evaluation of the positive impact of shadow education on academic achievement and their psychological anxiety about not using shadow education.

The main policy direction articulated in the 2000 education plan for addressing the social and educational issues caused by shadow education was the enhancement of the public education system. To this end, several policy tasks were proposed, including: (1) the continuous improvement in the public education system, (2) the implementation of the seventh national curriculum reform introducing differential curriculum and diverse evaluation methods, and (3) the diversification of the criteria for college admittance with the prohibitions of the individual college admission exams focusing on cognitive achievement regarding Korean, English, and math subjects. Other policy tasks included: (1) the provision of high-quality education allowing for the development of students' specialties and aptitudes, (2) the expansion of the financial support and education broadcasting system to students from low-income families and rural areas to reduce the gap in shadow education opportunities, and (3) the establishments of regulative measures for highly expensive private tutoring often resulting in social concerns. The 2000 *Educational Plan for Prevention of Overheated Private Tutoring and Enhancement of Public Education* highlights the transition of the policy agenda on shadow education, from the regulation of the shadow education system to the reduction of household expenditure on shadow education by strengthening the public education system.

In 2004, the Moo-hyeon Roh administration (2003–2008) proposed the *Educational Plans for the Reduction of Shadow Education Cost through the Normalization of Public Education (Gonggyoyuk Jeongsanghwareul Tongghan Sagyoyukbee Kyeonggamaechaek; Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development 2004)*, which was consistent with the overall policy direction articulated in the 2000 educational plan. The specific policy objectives of this measure included: (1) the provision of private tutoring to students from disadvantaged

backgrounds, (2) the introduction of the teacher evaluation system, (3) the revision of the HSEP by allowing for limited school choice through the so-called 'pre-application and postrandomized lottery' (*Seonjiwon Huchucheom*) and diversifying the high school system, and (4) the transformation of the college admission system by increasing the role of high school records and promoting the diversification of criteria for student selection.

The Roh administration's policy responses to shadow education heavily emphasized the role of the public education system in the reduction of shadow education spending by improving the quality of public education and thus absorbing shadow education demand into public education. Efforts made to accomplish this goal included: (1) building an e-Learning system in addition to EBS, (2) offering differential and supplemental classes, especially in secondary education, and (3) providing after-school programs, especially in primary education. The 2004 educational plan differs from the previous governmental measures to shadow education due to its explicit attempts to provide a variety of forms of supplementary tutoring programs within the mainstream schooling system. The plan was also distinctive in that it focused not only on quantitative-aspect educational investments, such as the resolution to such issues as overcrowded classes and modernization of school facilities, but it also emphasized on qualitative-aspect educational reform, such as the introduction of differential curriculum.

The new government's policy responses to shadow education: increasing school autonomy and reducing shadow education spending (2009)

In 2009, the current Myung-bak Lee government (2008–present) proposed the *Educational Policies for the Reduction of Shadow Education through the Enhancement of the Competitiveness of Public Education (Gonggyoyuk Gyeongjaengryeok Hyangsangeul Tongghan Sagyoyukbee Kyeonggamaechaek)*, suggesting the following five approaches to addressing the problems of shadow education: (1) increase the competitiveness of the public school system by allowing for autonomy and diversification in the school system, (2) reform of the college admission system, (3) the provision of supplementary tutoring services in order to reduce financial burdens placed on families due to prevailing private tutoring fees, (4) the effective management (or regulation) of shadow education institutions, and (5) the establishment of institutional and cultural infrastructures.

Specifically, in an effort to strengthen public education, the present government proposed to: (1) grant greater autonomy to individual schools with respect to teacher recruitment and curriculum operation, (2) launch the 300 Project for the Diversified High School System (*Gogoydayanghwa 300 Project*), (3) establish the Teacher

Assessment System (*Gyowon Pyeonggajedo*) and School Information Disclosure System (*Haggyo Jeongbo Gongsiye*), both of which aim at enhancing school accountability, and (4) administer the national-level student achievement evaluation to ensure a minimum level of academic achievement and provide educational and financial support to students from low-income families. With the perception of the high-stakes exams as the major demand mechanism, the use of principals' recommendations and middle school records are being promoted in an effort to diversify the criteria for student selection in special-purpose high schools and private independent high schools, whereas the use of the high-stakes exams are discouraged.

This is also case for to the college admission system (weighing students' high school records and utilizing admission officers known as *Iphagsajeongkwan*, rather than relying on the test scores) are encouraged with an increase in autonomy for individual college's own student recruitment. In order to reduce the financial burden imposed on families due to shadow education costs, several alternative efforts are being made, including the expansion of after-school programs and the support for the e-learning system. In addition, the project called No Private Tutoring School (*Sagyoyuk Eomneun Haggyo*), in which students do not need any private tutoring to learn, is being developed. Some regulative measures for the operation of shadow education institutions (e.g., cram schools) are in preparation (e.g., regulated operating hours and fees). To ease parents' psychological anxiety about not using shadow education, the establishment of career counseling centers offering advice and guidance is being considered.

### **Analysis of the structure and pattern of policy responses to shadow education in South Korea**

In this section, we analyze the structures, patterns, and contents of South Korean shadow education countermeasure policies illustrated in the previous section. Implications on policy directions, designs, and strategies for addressing the issues of shadow education follow.

#### **Structure and goals of policy responses to shadow education**

South Korea's various approaches are expressed in a variety of measures built on different policy perspectives in terms of: (1) the definition of shadow education, (2) demand mechanisms leading to shadow education, (3) the definition of problems caused by shadow education, and (4) the necessity and effectiveness of regulative measures on shadow education. Although their forms vary, South Korean policy responses are built on the same definition and

perception of the first two aspects (i.e., definition of shadow education, and the definition of problems caused by shadow education). However, they differ in terms of the demand mechanisms leading to shadow education and the extent to which regulative measures are needed on shadow education and the extent to which they are effective.

South Korean policy responses have defined shadow education as fee-based supplemental private tutoring in which students participate to be competitively advantageous in the public education system. Accordingly, the identified main demand mechanism leading to shadow education has been competition for obtaining higher and more prestigious academic credentials. The major problems of shadow education include the following: (1) the exacerbation of inequalities in education, (2) heavy financial burdens, (3) adverse effects on the mainstream schooling system, and (4) severe psychological harms to children. Among those problems, the first three have emerged as central issues at the societal level.

South Korean policy responses have suggested the overall policy directions and measures for addressing the problems caused by the excessive use of shadow education. Although not explicitly articulated, their specific policy goals have included: (1) the equalization of student ability and school resources to prevent inequality among schools, (2) the prohibition of illegal private tutoring practices, (3) the enhancement of the quality of public education system, and (4) the reduction of financial burdens due to private tutoring fees by providing alternative forms of private tutoring.

#### **Patterns of policy responses to shadow education**

Patterns of policy responses can be categorized into four types (Equalization of Schools, Prohibition of Shadow Education, Enhancement of Public Education, and Provision of Supplementary Tutoring Program), which are based on the policy assumptions regarding the possibility of effective regulation of shadow education and the approaches to problems caused by shadow education (i.e., whether they address causes or symptoms of the problems). There are two policy stances on whether or not shadow education can be controlled. One stance is that the expansion of shadow education can be effectively controlled, suggesting the possibility of the entire elimination of shadow education. The other stance is that the impact of governmental regulations on shadow education is limited at best, suggesting the impossibility of the entire removal of shadow education. Stances embedded in South Korean anti-shadow education policies tend to have changed from the former to the latter.

In regard to the former policy stance, the so-called 'causal treatment approach' (*Wonin Yobeob*) suggests efforts to directly respond to the causes of shadow education. For

example, if excessive competition for entering prestigious colleges is identified as the main demand mechanism leading to shadow education, the causal treatment approach would propose policy eliminating such competition. On the other hand, if the low-quality of public education is regarded as the main cause leading to shadow education, the causal treatment approach's policy response would be to improve the quality of public education. In short, with its long-term impact, the causal treatment approach attempts to remove the demand mechanisms that lead to shadow education.

On the other hand, the so-called 'symptomatic treatment approach' (*Daejeung Yobeob*), suggests efforts to temporarily relieve social and educational problems caused by shadow education. The symptomatic treatment approach uses a series of actions to reduce the seriousness of social and educational issues that have resulted from the extensive use of shadow education, and these measures are expected to have an immediate impact. Prohibiting shadow education by law and providing alternative educational services through EBS or the e-learning system are examples of the symptomatic treatment approach.

Based on these two policy stances and approaches to the expansion of shadow education, four types of governmental policy responses to shadow education are explained below.

#### *Policy equalizing school intakes and resources*

The first type of policy response to shadow education is the equalization of school quality, assuming the possibility of the government's effective control over the expansion of shadow education. Under this policy, the hierarchical system of mainstream schooling and the high-stakes exam system are considered to be primary demand mechanisms that lead to shadow education. As a result, solutions to the issues of shadow education are the equalization of school quality and the abolition of high-stakes exams. The *No Middle School Entrance Exam Policy* of 1968 and the HSEP of 1973 best describe this policy approach. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, serious inequalities existed between elite schools and remaining schools, and the competition for entering these elite schools was severe, resulting in many social and educational problems associated with shadow education. Under these circumstances, policy makers believed that the equalization of school intakes and resources and the eradication of the entrance exams through policies like the HSEP would eliminate shadow education entirely. However, the outcomes of such policies equalizing school intakes and resources and eliminating the high-stakes exams are unclear due to the continuous growth of shadow education after the implementation of the HSEP; therefore, the impact of such policy is under debate. Contrary to the intent of introducing

this policy, the reality is that participation in shadow education is increasing, and issues associated with school choice are continuously rising. Furthermore, the existence of a limited number of special purpose schools with high standards stimulates overheated competition for entrance into these schools, which inevitably induces a high reliance on shadow education.

#### *Policy prohibiting shadow education practices*

The second type of policy response to shadow education is the implementation of a regulative measure on both supply and demand of shadow education, assuming that the expansion of shadow education can be fully controlled. The *7.30 Educational Reform Measures* of 1980, which banned high school students' attendance at cram school and school teachers' involvement in any kind of private tutoring activities, best represents this type of policy response. Although this type of regulative measure tends to have an immediate impact on shadow education, it may be accompanied by several side effects, including the emergence of illegal forms of shadow education (Jeong 1991, pp. 169–192).

The conflicts between legal bans on private tutoring and individual desires to seek private tutoring led to the emergence of illegal and secret shadow education practices and an increase in the cost of private tutoring because of the growing risks. The South Korean Constitutional Court declared Articles 3 and 22 of the Law of establishment and operation of private cram school unconstitutional in 2000. This ruling opened the way for students to attend cram schools, and the government had to consider alternative policy responses to shadow education. One implication of this regulative measure was the impossibility of entirely eradicating private tutoring without the elimination of excessive competition for entering colleges.

#### *Policy enhancing the quality of public education*

The third type of policy response assumes that shadow education practices reflect individual rights to learn; therefore, the government's regulative approaches are inappropriate. From this policy perspective, the provision of low-quality public education is the main mechanism that leads to shadow education. Accordingly, the policy approach to reduce the demand for shadow education is the improvement of the quality of public schools. The policy contents differ according to the perception and conceptualization of the quality of public education required to reduce the demand of shadow education. This policy approach is reflected in such various governmental efforts as reducing student–teacher ratio, assessing teacher performance, and introducing differential curricula. However, the impact of this type of policy response on shadow



education still needs to be examined. We need to formulate the policy frameworks that will guide the development of authentic achievement and credibility with teachers.

#### *Policy providing supplementary tutoring programs*

The last type of policy response assumes that while shadow education practices cannot be fully constrained by governmental measures, the gap in shadow education opportunities results in the gap in mainstream schooling opportunities. From the standpoint of this policy response, governmental involvement in the shadow education system is necessary in order to reduce inequalities in educational opportunities resulting from the opportunity gap in shadow education. This policy approach is best described by the governmental efforts to reduce financial burdens imposed on families due to shadow education fees and provide supplementary tutoring programs to students from disadvantaged backgrounds within the public education system. The provision of after-school programs and the establishment of the e-learning system are examples of this type of policy response. However, this type of policy response may raise public criticism that the government is fostering shadow education in mainstream schooling. Table 1 presents a comparison of characteristics of the four different types of policy responses. In the section that follows, we discuss policy implications.

#### **Implications to the development of strategic policy response to shadow education for the next cycle**

Despite these numerous efforts made by the South Korean government, shadow education practices still continue to date. In fact, the size and role of the shadow education business tends to have increased even further in contemporary South Korean society. In that respect, the policy goals to respond to the expansion of shadow education have been unachieved. What should policy makers then do for responding to shadow education? Our analyses of structures and patterns of a variety of policy responses implemented in South Korea revealed several important implications for the next cycle of policies related to shadow education.

Korean policy experiences in dealing with shadow education clearly imply the existence of the energy of “education fever” demanding shadow education. We also experienced the “balloon effects” of the energy of education fever, discharging in the other direction when it is suppressed with anti-shadow education policy. The policy goal to reduce the demand mechanism for shadow education can hardly be achieved. The policy responses often resulted in adverse effects. This represents a vicious cycle of policy action and its reaction of the energy of education

fever. The energy of education fever seems to be a constant rather than a variable that is subject to the effects of policy responses.

Korean policy experiences also suggest the need to formulate policy frameworks that induce positive and cooperative reactions from the energy of education fever in order to cultivate the characters and develop the necessary competencies of students in this knowledge-based society. Strategic directions and tasks for the enhancement of the quality of public education are suggested here as are policy frameworks for this need.

#### Strategic directions and tasks for the enhancement of public education

Policy responses to shadow education for the next cycle should focus on the enhancement of public education along with the development of appropriate measures on shadow education. Without efforts to strengthen the mainstream schooling system, the goals of policy responding to shadow education could not be accomplished. Although past South Korean governments’ anti-shadow education policies set the enhancement of public education as one of their policy goals, more creative approaches are needed to achieve this policy goal, and they are as follows (Lee 2008):

- Redefinitions of academic achievement and criteria in the knowledge-based society;
- Diversification of educational programs and expansion of school choice;
- Increase in autonomy in the college admission system and introduction of “the self-directed learning category” (*Jagijudojeok Hagseubjoenhyeong*) as a new category in special screening to the college admission system;
- Transformation of the high school system from the vertical and hierarchical structure to a horizontal and diversified one;
- Increase in autonomy in school operation and accountability; and
- Change in the role of the government from that of a regulative agency to a cooperative and supportive one in regard to education.

Redefining academic achievement with a focus on fostering holistic human development and core-competency in the knowledge-based society should be the departure of the enhancement of public education. While educational programs and services should be diversified in order to address students’ diverse needs, students also need to be allowed to choose educational programs that fit their needs. The structure of the educational system should be horizontal and diversified, allowing for an increase in relevance of educational opportunities by promoting equity and excellent simultaneously. To this end, more autonomy in the

**Table 1** Comparison of characteristics of the four different types of policy responses

	Different types of policy responses			
	Equalization of schools	Prohibition of shadow education	Enhancement of public education	Provision of supplementary tutoring program
Assumption	Shadow education practices can be effectively controlled	Shadow education practices can be effectively controlled	Shadow education practices cannot be effectively controlled	Shadow education practices cannot be effectively controlled
Definition of problem	Intensive competition for entering elite universities	The inequalities in educational opportunities	The deficiency of public education induces the demand of shadow education	The inequalities in shadow educational opportunities
Approach	Causal treatment	Symptomatic treatment	Causal treatment	Symptomatic treatment
Policy goal	Relieving competition intensity and reducing the demand of shadow education	Prohibiting the use of shadow education	Reducing demand mechanisms	Reducing the gap in shadow education opportunities
Specific policy measures	Abolishing the high-stakes exams and equalizing school intakes and resources	Banning private tutoring with legal coercion	Reducing the student–teacher ratio and introducing differential curricula. Measures depend on the conceptualization of the quality of public education	Providing after-school programs and private tutoring through EBS and the e-learning system
Adverse effects	Weakening public education and increasing reliance on shadow education	Illegal and secret private tutoring practices emerging and the unit cost of private tutoring rising	Less tangible immediate and positive effects	Fostering shadow education in mainstream schooling

school operation and college admission system should be granted. Finally, the educational system needs to be qualitatively transformed beyond and above the simple quantitative improvement of the educational conditions.

#### Diversification of the educational system and the limitation of the equalization model

The vertical and hierarchical structure of the South Korean education system has been a major demand mechanism that leads to shadow education. Although the equalization of the educational system reduces disparities in educational conditions across regions and schools, it tends to increase the standardization of the educational system and reduces school accountability in secondary education. Unlike the secondary education system, the postsecondary education system may not be capable of being equalized. In that respect, the equalization model has a limitation as an alternative measure on shadow education. Instead, the horizontal and diversified model may be able to address the problem of shadow education by providing ‘care’ for students from disadvantageous backgrounds and ensuring diverse learning opportunities. In order to transform the educational system from the vertical and standardized model to a horizontal and diversified one, various pathways should be permitted within the educational system. To this end, efforts to diversify educational programs at both upper-secondary and postsecondary levels should be made, especially since secondary education is, to a

great extent, influenced by the college admission system. In other words, policy efforts to shadow education will be more effective when postsecondary education, in addition to secondary education, should be taken into consideration. In order to support school efforts to diversify educational programs, use of a differentiation reward approach, such as the so-called *Choiyakbowan* (最弱補完) principle,<sup>2</sup> needs to be considered. The horizontal and diversified model will then lead to the meaningful differentiation of the educational system beyond the standardization caused by the equalization model.

Introduction to the “self-directed and autonomous learning category” as a special pathway to college admission

While it is important to develop the diversified and specialized educational programs that address individual differences in abilities and aptitudes, the criteria in student selection for the college entrance also should be diversified accordingly. The use of total scores based on the high-stakes exams for student selection tends to result in the stratification of the postsecondary educational system and

<sup>2</sup> The *Choiyakbowan* principle, used as a leading principle in the *Saemaoul Movement*, refers to a strategy that aims at increasing the entire social capacity by placing apriority on support to the weakest part of a society.

excessive competition for entering a few top-tier universities. On the other hand, along with the diversified educational program at the secondary level, the use of a variety of selection criteria and diverse tracks would lead to the reduction in inequalities among colleges, which in turn makes competition constructive rather than destructive. Introducing the “self-directed and autonomous learning category” as a new path to the college admission system could be one example of policy responding to shadow education. This would allow for a system that links the governmental efforts for diversifying the high school system to those for diversifying the college admission system. In that respect, the Lee administration’s efforts to support “No Private Tutoring Schools” will be more fruitful by linking its efforts to provide incentives to both high schools which offer “self-directed and autonomous learning” programs and colleges which select those students who devote themselves to self-directed learning courses for a certain portion (e.g. more than 50%) of the total of new students.

Provision of information for the autonomous judgment about the use of shadow education

Shadow education practices should be considered as the results of rational decisions made by individuals based on their subjective judgment about the use of shadow education. In that respect, policy responses should aim to make a difference in students’ and parents’ perceptions, attitudes, and participating behaviors for shadow education by providing information about the effects of shadow education (Heyneman 2008). In a situation in which little information and evidence exist about the effects of shadow education, the expected benefits of shadow education tend to be over evaluated by individual students and parents because they tend to rely on anecdotal and unproven beliefs that shadow education makes a difference in academic achievement; thus, they feel anxious about not using shadow education. The provision of information and evidence about the causal effects of shadow education on educational outcomes through scientific research can help students and parents *objectively* evaluate the costs and benefits of shadow education. In other words, policy providing information about the impact of shadow education, and thus promoting individuals’ autonomous judgments about whether participation in shadow education is reasonable and worth investment, can make a difference in individuals’ participating behaviors in shadow education.

Establishment of long-term policy development and research and international cooperation

South Korean experiences revealed that the resolution to the issue of shadow education is far from easy. Despite

their variety of approaches, past South Korean’s anti-shadow education policies have failed to achieve their goals largely due to the lack of comprehensive and continuous strategies. An immediate and short-term response to the emergent issues caused by shadow education would be inappropriate, highlighting the importance of the development of the long-term strategic framework. In regard to evidence-based policy, the governmental support of steady research on shadow education, rather than the appointment of an ad-hoc task force, on shadow education is necessary, especially since it may help develop long-term strategic policy for shadow education while providing information about the policy impact on shadow education. Given that shadow education is increasingly becoming a worldwide phenomenon, it should be researched beyond Korea under international cooperation and collaboration in order to obtain the necessary collective, critical responses to shadow education. By exchanging information and outcomes of policy interventions on shadow education, knowledge at the international level can be accumulated and diagnosis and treatment expenditures can be saved.

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