

KIM, Y. C., & JUNG, J.-H.

**Shadow Education as Worldwide Curriculum Studies
[Curriculum Studies Worldwide series].**

Cham: Palgrave Macmillan and Springer Nature, 2019, 212 pp.

Shadow education has become a worldwide phenomenon. Kim and Jung suggest that many students and their parents no longer have blind faith in school teachers or public education in general (p. 164–165), and therefore, they rely less on teachers and seek help elsewhere. “We are living in an era of ‘posts’ [...], postmodern schooling is a form of rejection of modern schooling and may lead to the death of traditional schooling” (p. 161). Shadow education (tutoring in academic subjects) offers a popular strategy commonly used by dissatisfied parents, and, thus, can be seen as an important space where students engage in educational activities and complement their learning experiences. In the book entitled *Shadow Education as Worldwide Curriculum Studies* the authors try to depict shadow education as a part of curriculum, by framing the term “shadow curriculum”. According to the authors, due to its growing popularity and influence on mainstream schooling, it is important to study shadow education from a curricular perspective.

Both South Korean authors Young Chun Kim and Jung-Hoon Jung have been researching in the field of curriculum studies for over a decade. Kim, as a professor in the Department of Education at Chinju National University of Education, has been investigating curriculum and its links with shadow education. Jung, as an instructor in the Department of Education of Chonnam National University, has been looking at curriculum also from intercultural perspectives such as its practical forms, influence and social norms. Such attention to both curriculum and shadow education make them a promising team to write a book about shadow curriculum worldwide.

Shadow education is becoming increasingly similar to schooling: often it has its own classrooms, buildings and content, which is why it sounds sensible to talk about its curriculum. The authors remark that *shadow curriculum* involves syllabi, objectives and outcomes, guidelines and educational ideas, nevertheless, the elaborate definition of the central concept does not appear earlier than towards the end of the book, because, as the authors explain, the curriculum cannot be understood without a wider context, which is presented first.

The book under review is divided into nine chapters. In the first chapter, various types of curricula are briefly described. The authors also discuss why shadow education and its curriculum became a research topic.

The second and third chapters focus on shadow education specifically: its beginnings, terms, current discourse, and patterns in specific locations, countries and regions around the world (such as South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, India, England, Germany, Croatia and Bosna and Herzegovina, USA, Canada) in detail. Various definitions of shadow education are presented and compared. The authors remark that shadow education had a subordinate position to public education

110 in the past, but conclude that nowadays this is no more the case. Thus, it should no longer be framed as a “shadow” of education, but rather as another legitimate form of education (p. 25). Nevertheless, they still use the term “shadow education” throughout the book. Furthermore, five basic forms of shadow education are presented: home-visit private tutoring, private tutoring institutes, subscribed learning programs, internet-based private tutoring, and after-school programs.¹ Each form is described with examples from different (mostly East Asian) countries, subdivided into types, and summarized briefly at the end of each section.

Chapters four, five and six deal with three different uses of shadow education. First, to prepare and succeed at school and college admissions, second, to remedy student’s learning problems. The authors speculate that mathematics is “arguably one of the most popular subjects for shadow education worldwide”, since many students find it difficult (p. 105). Subsequently, a typology of mathematics shadow education is described in depth, although the authors admit that only their research in South Korea revealed those forms and other countries may have other variations. Third, shadow education is also used by gifted and highly motivated learners, whose needs are supposedly often ignored by schools and therefore they are often engaged in shadow education, too (p. 127).

The seventh chapter discusses the definition of shadow curriculum, which the authors understand as “supplementary curriculum out of schooling provided by educational business industries that is intended to improve academic success among individual students in formal education” (p. 149). According to the authors, shadow curriculum:

- is based on students’ academic needs,
- is oriented towards student academic success,
- is focused on school grades and exam preparation,
- accelerates different learning opportunities based on family investment,
- is oriented toward personalized learning,
- exacerbates the competitive aspect of education.

The last two chapters deal with the role of shadow curriculum in a society and in research. The present time is seen as a postmodern schooling era. The authors assert that “...the status of schooling is eroding: It is competing with shadow education, and in some places, shadow education is winning” (p. 162), therefore, theoretical discussions about shadow curriculum are of great importance. Suggestions on what kind of curricular approaches should be applied to further study shadow curriculum and many specific questions in nine different areas of research are then provided by the authors.

The book is well structured and clearly arranged – in the introduction to a chapter, the topics are elaborated, at its end there is a short summary, a list of references, and at the end of the book there is an alphabetical index. The main arguments are supported by references from international literature, including various quotes from case studies carried out by the authors. A major part of the book is a quality compilation of

¹ Traditionally, after-school programs are not considered a part of shadow education, however the authors claim they are often offered by private tutors or agencies that have contracts with schools, and therefore, they see them as a form of shadow education, too.

existing literature from around the world, laying the ground for a more precise definition of shadow curriculum theory and helping the reader to understand the matter.

However, in some cases, the authors have misinterpreted the primary sources or supported their claims with non-relevant literature.² Many facts are mentioned in the chapters of the book repeatedly,³ for example various definitions of shadow education, the metaphor of a shadow, Gangnam moms.⁴ In such cases, mere references to the relevant chapters and sections might be sufficient. Chapters 2–6 seem to be written in a slightly different style from the rest of the book and have a different arrangement and structure than the other chapters. It raises the question whether the two authors worked together or whether they wrote parts of the book separately and merged them later. Moreover, chapters 2–6 offer a great number of typologies and their subtypes, which sometimes seem unnecessary and puzzling for the reader. A more careful selection of information based on its importance would also be desirable. For example, there are many redundant pieces of information (such as prices for individual types of tutoring in different countries) included in the main text. Some tables may seem dispensable, too.

To sum up, *Shadow Education as Worldwide Curriculum Studies* presents a useful overview of existing research on shadow education with a focus on its types, objectives, and developments worldwide. For scholars who are beginning to familiarize themselves with shadow education, the book may be a useful first step; however, for advanced shadow education researchers, it does not provide much new information. The situation in East Asian countries (with the focus on South Korea) is well described in the book and supported by many examples based on various (also the authors' own) studies. In some instances the authors describe a certain phenomenon comparing it to "Western countries". However, this comparison does not occur systematically and seems quite random. Primarily, the authors theorize the concept of shadow curriculum and suggest that it should be considered as important as school curriculum. They support this statement with evidence and offer many avenues for future research.

Acknowledgement

The review was financially supported by the Grant Agency of Charles University, Faculty of Education (project GA UK No 424119).

Gabriela Novotná
gabriela.novotna@pedf.cuni.cz

² For example, on p. 120, they discuss the effectiveness of internet-based private tutoring in mathematics referencing two articles neither of which deals with this topic.

³ On the one hand, this does not have to be necessarily a weak point if the reader is only interested in separate chapters.

⁴ Gangnam moms is the term used for excessively solicitous South Korean mothers who try to manage academic success for their children. A similar trend can be seen in the USA (helicopter moms) and in China (tiger moms). They "collect information for their children's education [...] and make decisions for them" (p. 36).