



Navigating teachers' perceptions and experiences of shadow education expansion and regulation in Kazakhstan: a mixed-methods study

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-methods study is the first to examine schoolteachers' perceptions and experiences of fee-based private tutoring in Kazakhstan. Data from 952 teachers using a close-ended questionnaire and 60 semi-structured interviews revealed that 39.6% of participants engaged in tutoring, primarily driven by financial necessity and professional growth. Teachers who refrained from tutoring cited heavy school workloads and personal obligations as deterrents. Qualitative findings highlighted ethical and professional conflicts arising from insufficient monitoring of the tutoring market. These included managing requests from parents of tutored students and conflicts of interest when promoting their tutoring services or those of affiliated centres. Teachers demonstrated limited awareness of existing regulatory frameworks, with most opposing strict prohibition but advocating for improved regulations. Recommendations include teacher licensing, clearer guidelines for tutorial centres, and systemic reforms to address financial pressures and workloads. This study enhances understanding of teachers' roles in shadow education and advocates balanced regulatory strategies.

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Private tutoring; regulations; shadow education; teachers; mixed-methods inquiry; Kazakhstan

1. Introduction

A significant body of educational literature systematically focuses on formal education, characterised by a recognised curriculum and relative standardisation, uniformity, and stability. However, this focus seems to overlook the dynamic growth of 'shadow education' despite its substantial impact on formal education systems and society. Shadow education is commonly used to describe fee-charging private tutoring in academic subjects that students receive outside of regular school hours (Bray 2023). It is named as such because much of its content often mimics the curricula and examination systems of mainstream schooling (Bray 2023). This definition does not include extra-curricular classes related to culture or sports. The providers of shadow education include serving teachers who provide tutoring as a supplementary occupation, commercial enterprises that operate tutorial centres, and