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## CHALLENGES AND ADVANTAGES OF SHADOW EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS FROM MALAYSIAN EDUCATOR'S PERSPECTIVES

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### Abstract:

This study examines the challenges and advantages of shadow education (SE) in Malaysia from the perspectives of educators. Shadow education has become integral to Malaysia's educational landscape, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated a rapid shift to online learning platforms. The primary issues identified include a lack of essential skills and tools for online education, widening socioeconomic divides, and inconsistencies in teaching quality. There is a notable gap in understanding how these challenges and benefits play out in the Malaysian context. The objectives of this study are to identify the specific challenges and advantages of SE, understand how educators overcome these challenges, and explore the importance of SE's advantages in maintaining educational success. This qualitative analysis involved semi-structured interviews with seven private tutors, six teachers, and five shadow education institution owners, focusing on their experiences and perspectives. The findings highlight significant challenges such as accessibility, affordability, and quality control, alongside advantages like personalized learning, flexibility, and enhanced academic performance. The discussion underscores the need for effective communication, continuous professional development, and strategic integration of technology to harness SE's benefits while addressing its disadvantages. The study concludes with recommendations for policymakers to ensure equitable access to quality education through supportive SE frameworks.

### Keywords:

Educator, Malaysia, Pandemic, Private Tutoring, Qualitative, Shadow Education, Thematic Analysis

## Introduction

For the past two decades, shadow education (SE) has become a norm as it's a private supplementary education system since it mimics the formal government's education system's syllabus. SE sometimes was also called as private tutoring and has become a significant feature of Malaysia's educational system (Forsberg et al., 2020; Xiang et al., 2023 & Jansen et al., 2020). Before the pandemics of Covid-19, most SE was conducted in a traditional way where the class was in physical learning classroom mode. Eventually, this mode had drastically changed into an online learning platform to prevent the virus from spreading (Alharbi et al., 2021). The challenges of this drastic change have also changed the challenge and advantages that have not been addressed before (Zhang et al., 2022).

One of the primary challenges identified after the pandemic by educators was lacking the essential skills and proper tools to conduct the online class since the transition was so sudden. The competency and capability of teachers' teaching skills were issues addressed to ensure a quality learning session for the students (Agrawal & Ting, 2023). Fitri and Latif (2021) mentioned that in Aceh Jaya District, the outcome of these challenges is unsynchronized learning implementation process in early childhood education. abrupt transition to online learning platforms. Additionally in Malaysia, the roles of parents or caretakers were not highlighted in the continuation strategies of implementing education. This may cause failure in controlling student discipline and engagement, remarkably for students at primary level (Srivastava et al., 2022).

Next, the challenge is widening the socioeconomic divide that shadow education can perpetuate. Students from higher-income households have greater access to private tutoring, potentially gaining an unfair advantage over their less affluent peers. This disparity in access to supplementary resources can exacerbate existing inequalities within the education system, hindering social mobility and creating a more stratified society (Munir et al., 2023; Bray & Hajar, 2024).

However, the advantages of shadow education are also recognized by educators. Mainstream schools, often grappling with large class sizes and limited resources, may struggle to provide the individualized attention that students require. Shadow education can bridge this gap, offering students personalized guidance and targeted support to address their specific learning needs. Furthermore, the flexibility and responsiveness of shadow education allow it to adapt to the evolving demands of the curriculum, providing students with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in high-stakes examinations. (Yousaf et al., 2023; Liu & Bray, 2022)

As Malaysia continues to navigate the complexities of its education system, understanding the nuanced perspectives of educators is crucial especially after the pandemic to increase education quality. This study underscores the need for policymakers to carefully consider the implications of shadow education, balancing the benefits it can offer with the need to ensure equitable access to quality education for all students (Jansen et al., 2020 & Liu & Bray, 2022). Hence this study is to understand more about the challenges and benefits from the perspectives of educators in Malaysia by answering these research questions:

1. What are the challenges and advantages of shadow education in Malaysia?
2. How do you overcome the challenges and maintain your success?
3. Why are the advantages of shadow education important to maintain your success?

### ***Study Issues***

The study issues concerning the resilience and practices of shadow education entrepreneurs in sustaining business success post-pandemic encompass several challenges and advantages observed globally in the context of shadow education. These issues are critical to understanding the dynamics and impact of shadow education in the post-pandemic era.

### ***Challenges of Shadow Education Post-Pandemic***

One of the primary challenges identified is accessibility and affordability. Financial barriers significantly limit access to shadow education for students from lower-income families, exacerbating existing educational inequalities. Students from wealthier families can afford private tutoring, thereby gaining an unfair advantage over their less affluent peers. This disparity in access to supplementary resources widens the socio-economic divide, hindering social mobility and creating a more stratified society.

Another major challenge is quality control and consistency. There is a lack of standardized quality control in shadow education, resulting in inconsistent teaching quality. The qualifications and teaching skills of tutors vary widely, leading to uneven educational experiences for students, which can adversely affect their academic performance. This inconsistency in the quality of tutoring services raises questions about the overall effectiveness and value of shadow education. The integration of shadow education with formal education systems also presents significant challenges. Differences in curricula and educational approaches between shadow education and formal schooling can create confusion and additional stress for students. This misalignment can hinder students' academic progress, particularly when shadow education does not effectively complement formal education.

Technological challenges have become more pronounced with the shift to online learning during the pandemic. The sudden transition highlighted gaps in digital infrastructure and the lack of necessary skills among educators to effectively deliver online education. These technological shortcomings hinder the quality of online learning experiences for students, impacting their academic outcomes. Socio-economic inequality further exacerbates the challenges faced by students in accessing quality shadow education. Disparities in access to technology and digital learning resources significantly affect students from lower-income backgrounds, limiting their ability to participate effectively in online learning. This digital divide perpetuates educational inequalities, making it difficult for underprivileged students to keep pace with their more affluent peers.

Moreover, the high-pressure environment of shadow education can negatively impact students' mental health and well-being. Intense academic demands and high expectations from parents and tutors can lead to increased stress and anxiety among students. The competitive nature of shadow education, particularly in countries with highly competitive education systems, exacerbates these mental health challenges.

### ***Advantages of Shadow Education Post-Pandemic***

Despite these challenges, shadow education offers several notable advantages that contribute to its resilience and effectiveness. One significant advantage is personalized learning. Shadow education provides tailored instruction that addresses the individual needs of students, helping them better understand complex concepts and improve their academic performance. Personalized attention from private tutors enables students to overcome educational obstacles

and achieve their academic goals. Flexibility and convenience are also major advantages of shadow education. It offers flexible scheduling and adaptable learning paces, accommodating the diverse needs and learning styles of students. This flexibility allows students to manage their academic workload more effectively and ensures that they receive the necessary guidance to succeed. Enhanced academic performance is another key benefit of shadow education. The additional instructional support provided by private tutors helps students improve their academic outcomes. Students receiving personalized attention often perform better in exams and develop a stronger understanding of subject material. This supplementary support is particularly beneficial in subjects where students may need extra assistance. Shadow education also plays a crucial role in supporting formal education. It provides additional resources and teaching support that can bridge gaps in students' knowledge and reinforce what they learn in school. This supplementary assistance helps students to better grasp the curriculum and achieve higher academic results. Technological integration has further enhanced the delivery of shadow education. The adoption of digital tools and online platforms facilitates interactive and engaging learning experiences, making education more accessible to a broader range of students. Technological advancements have improved the quality and reach of shadow education, ensuring that students can continue learning despite disruptions caused by the pandemic. Parental involvement is another critical factor that enhances the effectiveness of shadow education. Active parental engagement in their children's education positively influences learning experiences and academic outcomes. Parents who closely monitor their children's progress and maintain regular communication with tutors can provide additional support, contributing to better academic performance. The resilience and practices of shadow education entrepreneurs in sustaining business success post pandemic highlight a complex interplay of challenges and advantages. While shadow education offers significant benefits such as personalized learning and enhanced academic performance, it also faces challenges related to accessibility, quality control, and socio-economic inequality. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach involving policy interventions, technological advancements, and continuous professional development for educators. Policymakers must ensure that the benefits of shadow education are accessible to all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, to create a more equitable educational landscape. Further studies could explore the long-term impacts of shadow education on student outcomes and the effectiveness of different regulatory and financial support mechanisms in addressing the challenges posed by this industry.

## Method

This qualitative study focused on the challenges and advantages of shadow education in Malaysia from the perspectives of teachers, private tutors and the owner of shadow education institutions. All participants were interviewed using semi-structured interview questions to allow interviewer exploring the thoughts and opinion of the participants in depth related to research objectives (Naz et al., 2022). Data collection methods were focused on the expressions and explanation individually and checking on the education certificates during the interview session. All participants included in this study had at least ten years of experience in teaching.

## *Participants and Settings*

The participants in this research had experience in the teaching field since before pandemic Covid-19. Most of them have never experienced teaching online before the pandemic but have started using online learning platform during pandemic and some of them continue using online platform even after the pandemic. Since the occasions on shadow education learning platform

are hugely different before, during and after the pandemic, the challenges and advantages from the perspectives of participants might be different.

Purposive sampling technique was used to choose the participants since there were some essential criteria that needed to be investigated aligned with the research objectives. For example, educators that have more than ten years of experience in teaching were chosen. The participants were chosen throughout all Malaysian area to get the whole picture of this findings. Hence, the interview session was conducted through an online platform due to the great distance of researcher with the participants and to able researcher recorded and study the interview session repeatedly. Campbell et al. (2021) mentioned that in a study using thematic analysis, the transcripts need to be read repeatedly to generate suitable themes. They can teach multiple subjects and have experiences in handling physical and online learning platforms, allowing the broader picture of the impacts shadow education in delivering qualities teaching lesson throughout the pandemic.

Seven private tutors, six teachers and five shadow education institution owners (SEIO) participated in this study. The number of participants was determined after the data collected was saturated (Lovrić et al., 2020). Since their academic background may have affected the result of this study, their academic certificates were checked to confirm their academic level. Their additional achievements have also been evaluated to measure their competencies in teaching using both learning platforms. This aligns with Aldosemani (2023) findings saying that additional skills and knowledge can assist teachers and tutors deliver the lesson more effectively.

### ***Data Collection Procedure***

The study was conducted for three constitutive months from the mid of January 2024 until mid of April 2024. There were no dropouts and the participants' demographic information was listed in table 1. Pseudo names were used to secure participants' identity and it able to resembles participants demographic information. The semi-structured interview session takes around 30 – 45 minutes to complete, depending on the interactions and ideas given by the participants. A total length of three months is needed to complete this interview session due to the hectic schedule of all participants. Interview questions were sent earlier to all participants to allow them to be well prepared. The interview sessions were recorded with the consent and permission of all participants. Triangulation of the data was analysed from the academic or any other certificates that relevant to participants background and from the observations of the participants behaviours were marked down for further analysis.

<b>Psedo name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Attend class</b>	<b>Digital</b>
Fatimah	45	Female	Private tutor	20	Urban	/	
Haris	35	Male	Private tutor	10	Urban	X	
Qistina	38	Female	Private tutor	12	Rural	/	
Tan	34	Male	Private tutor	11	Urban	/	
Dewi	45	Female	Private tutor	25	Rural	X	
Kumar	33	Male	Private tutor	10	Urban	/	
Christine	41	Female	Private tutor	15	Urban	X	
Hashim	55	Male	Teacher	30	Rural	/	
Andrew	45	Male	Teacher	20	Rural	/	



Maria	35	Female	Teacher	10	Urban	/
Nathan	38	Male	Teacher	13	Urban	/
Mike	35	Male	Teacher	15	Urban	/
Balqis	33	Female	Teacher	18	Rural	/
Thilaga	35	Female	SEIO	10	Rural	/
Ganesh	41	Male	SEIO	18	Rural	/
Lim	50	Male	SEIO	20	Urban	X
Farah	58	Female	SEIO	30	Urban	X
Angela	43	Female	SEIO	23	Urban	/

### ***Data Analysis***

All recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim for thematic analysis using the research question as a guideline, and themes were identified through Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework. Lange (2024) mentioned the process of six phase frameworks was first researcher need to familiarize with data, then identifying and marking any idea that relevant with research question as a code. After that, the themes were generated based on the codes and then it needs to be reviewed again back and forth so that they were able to answer all research questions that mentioned earlier. After that, redefine the themes if it's necessary before the final part, writing the report systematically to explain the whole idea. As for observation data triangulation, field notes were taken along the process, allowing researcher to highlight any significant behaviour related to the study. Campbell et al. (2020) mentioned that triangulation of data is very important in generating the most suitable themes.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

Since qualitative research is dealing with human subjects, ethical considerations are very important. Researcher needs to get the consent from the participants before undergoing the interview session. In the consent, researcher needs to explain about the title of the research, the purpose of the research, what are the data will be used for and what's the right and benefits that the participants will get from the research briefly (Newman, 2021). In this study, all these details were provided and well explained by the researcher to the participant before the interview session began. Since the interview was conducted online, all consents and permission from participants were obtained and recorded using google meet recorded session. After all the interviews, the transcribed data and themes generated from the analysis procedure were sent to the participants to double check the accuracy of the data.

### ***Research Findings***

Based on the research questions of this research, the data can be categorized into three categories as follows:

#### ***Research Question 1: What Are The Challenges And Advantages Of Shadow Education In Malaysia?***

##### ***Challenges of Shadow Education in Malaysia***

###### ***Accessibility and Affordability***

The main challenges identified by educators is the accessibility and affordability of shadow education. In Malaysia, shadow education institution was called as tuition center or "Pusat Tuisyen" in Malays language. Most students that come from low-income families could not

afford the shadow education's support. The educational inequalities will get wider each day due to this financial barrier limitations access to the benefits of shadow education.

- "Many students want to join tuition, but they just cannot afford my private tutoring package, which creates a difference between those who can access extra support and those who cannot." - Haris, Private Tutor.
- "During pandemic, some students from lower income families couldn't join my class since the parents can't afford to buy suitable gadgets for their children. Imagine if they have 5 children that need to attend school online class? So much money to spent on", Balqis, Teacher.
- "I feel frustrated when it's raining because the internet connection was very bad. Some of my classes had to be cancelled that caused me to have less income" – Thilaga, SEIO.

### ***Quality Control and Less Passion***

Another challenge in shadow education is the lack of consistent quality of the teaching service. Students' experiences vary teaching styles and input since the tutors come from different backgrounds. In fact, some of the tutors do not even have qualifications in the education field, leading to inconsistent teaching quality. Some tutors focused on income rather than the teaching outcome.

- "Nowadays, there are so many online tutors that bloom after the pandemic. If you have laptop and internet coverage, you can be an online tutor, but some don't have quality. Pity for the students if they paid for the services, but the tutor can't deliver enough since they're not for education background." Nathan, teacher.
- "Teaching is a passion. It's very important to have passion in this field because children nowadays are not like during our 80s'. They are very pampered. So, if you're not passion enough, you won't be long in this field." Dewi, private tutor.
- "Usually, I'll have probation period for the new tutor that I've hired because I want to see the effectiveness of their teaching skills and their passion level in this field. You need to have both criteria to be a good quality tutor" Ganesh, SEIO.

### ***Integration with Formal Education***

Educators highlighted that combining formal education with shadow education are very challenging since some tutors doesn't have background in education and the syllabus in Malaysia keep changing very fast. Hence, these differences create confusion and make the students more stressed.

- "Sometimes it's a challenge for me to teach students attending shadow education because they had misconceptions about some of the chapters which really affect the students' marks. Especially for the old tutors, they really need to keep up with the latest syllabus, not the old one" - Maria, Teacher
- "The syllabus in Malaysia is evolving very fast. Sometimes I get confused easily because no one guides us. We need to educate and update ourselves by using the internet and asking our friends that are working as a teacher. I need to do this so that I can help the students" – Fatimah, 45.

## ***Research Question 2: How Do You Overcome The Challenges And Maintain Your Success?***

### ***Effective Communication and Collaboration***

The effectiveness of communication and collaboration among stakeholders, government school teacher, parents, tutors are very important to maintain success. Any gaps or misunderstandings among tutors, parents and school teachers can be reduced by establishing clear communication channels.

- "Sometimes, we invite trusted tutors to teach our students. We'll give them input on the latest syllabus system since we're sometimes busy with other outsource program that we need to attend... They're very helpful in keeping the students on track with the syllabus" - Mike, Teacher.
- "The syllabus is evolving very quickly. Thankfully I have friends that work as teachers in a formal school. They're the ones who keep updating me with the latest syllabus. It's very important to know the latest syllabus to help your quality of teaching" Kumar, Tutor.

### ***Continuous Professional Development***

Career enhancements are very important in professional development for tutors. Hence, to provide high quality teaching skills, tutors need to enhance their skills and knowledge with regular training sessions, numbers of workshop attended, certified programs and years of experiences in teaching.

- "I started my carrier as a home tutor 25 years ago. But since I often update my knowledge and skills, I manage to open my own tuition centre and create many job opportunities for the younger generation" Lim, SEIO.
- "We're transforming into digital world now. Hence, I need to update my knowledge by attending many workshops and training to upgrade my skills to compete with other tutors." Christine, Private tutor.
- "Thank God, the government always provides us with the training that enable us to enhance our skills in teaching. Pandemic really shows us the importance of digital to help the students keep track with the syllabus" – Andrew, teacher.

### ***Parental Involvement***

Other successful elements of shadow education are due to the parent's involvement since the children spend more time with their family rather than the teachers and private tutors. Parents assisting their children's learning process and maintaining regular communication with their children's teacher helps their children's performance tremendously.

- "Parents need to closely monitor and make sure their children finish their homework at home. We sometimes update the homework in our WhatsApp group to make sure our students can finish their work by the next class. We can see tremendous achievement in our students whenever the parents take serious on this matter. - Tan, Private Tutor.
- "We often update the student's latest performance on our website so that the parents could be aware about their children's performance. Sometimes, we also educate the parents on effective teaching skills so that the parents can teach their children also at home. This can give fast results on the children's performance. -Lim, SEIO.



### ***Adapting to Technological Advancements***

Technological advancements and integration of digital tools are very crucial for educators to empower in maintaining their success in shadow education realm. Since the pandemic, most of the teaching platform had been converted to online platform that needs educators to enhance their competency in handling educational software, interactive learning materials to deliver quality teaching experiences for the students.

- "Throughout pandemic, I've increased my knowledge in using many online teaching platforms and educational software by attending workshops and classes just to make sure my students could understand better." – Haris, Private tutor.
- "By using the right educational software and knowing how to handle the online teaching platform, it does really help my students to understand better. Technologies can be very helpful if you know how to use them correctly. Not only do we need to know how to use it, but the parents also to make sure the lesson is able to run smoothly without technical problem" Angela, SEIO.
- "Most government schools have an average of 30 students per class, and some even have 50 students. Even teaching in physical is a challenge when you need to handle many students. Hence, you really need to know what's the best educational software to make sure all students can understand your lesson if you want to conduct it online" Hashim, teacher.

### ***Research Question 3: Why Are The Advantages Of Shadow Education Important To Maintain Your Success?***

#### ***Advantages of Shadow Education***

##### ***Personalized Learning***

One of the key advantages of shadow education is their service to provide personal customized learning classes depending on the individual students' needs. Educators emphasized that this service really helps students understand complex concepts and enhance their academic achievements.

- "The main reason shadow education has high demand is because we offer personal classes based on the students' needs. Not all students can focus on the formal school system since they have a big number of students in the class. I can customize my teaching method suitable for the specific students. This technique is able to enhance their understanding and academic achievements." - Kumar, Private Tutor.
- "Shadow education can help students understand the complex syllabus that they are unable to understand at school. The problem with students here is they're too shy to ask questions in class, but some of my students can understand better after they joined the personal tuition class" – Maria, teacher.

##### ***Flexibility and Convenience***

Another advantage is shadow education can offer flexibility and convenience. The schedule made for students attending private class is flexible pertaining to the students' and parents' availability and followed the students individual learning paces. This uniqueness makes the students fully attend the class and helps them increase their academic performance.

- "Some parents have two jobs, so it's hard for them to send their children to shadow education class, but that's not a problem for us because we make the schedule and topics based on their availability and needs. By ensuring good attendance, the students are able to keep up with the complex concepts and perform better in their exams." – Lim, SEIO.

- "Usually, I'll follow my time with the parents and students' availability. This way, it's easy for me to arrange my time as well. I also can prepare earlier the teaching handouts since the students will tell me the topics that they want to learn in our next session. This way, I can prepare and practice earlier and perform well during my teaching session with the student." -Christine, Private tutor.

### ***Enhanced Academic Performance and Self-esteem***

Educators agreed that shadow education can help students' academic performance due to the special attention and additional support by private tutors. The enhancements of academic performance may help increase the students' self-esteem. Furthermore, the encouraging environment, special attention and personal support from the tutors may boost the students' self-esteem and make them excel in life. - "Most of my students attending shadow education are able to enhance their academic performance. The tutors are able to give them extra attention rather than us since we need to focus on other 30 students." - Hashim, Teacher "One of the most significant benefits of shadow education is the confidence it brings to students. The students can develop a positive attitude towards learning and increase their self-esteem by the special personal attention and regular encouragement they receive from their tutors."- Andrew, Teacher. - "From my experiences, most students really need shadow education to cover the gaps in school. By filling the gaps, students who are struggling may grab the enrichment opportunities for high-achieving individuals."- Kumar, Private Tutor.

### **Findings**

The findings of this research shed important light on the disadvantages and advantages of shadow education in Malaysia. The results of the thematic analysis pointed to a few important issues, including the value of quality control, the accessibility and affordability of shadow education, and the merging of shadow and formal education. The study also emphasized the important advantages of customized instruction, adaptability, and improved academic achievement connected to shadow education.

### ***Research Question 1: What Are The Challenges And Advantages Of Shadow Education In Malaysia?***

The study identified several challenges of shadow education, including accessibility, affordability, quality control, and integration with formal education.

#### ***Accessibility and Affordability***

One of the primary issues with shadow education is its limited accessibility and affordability. Educators have reported that students from lower-income households frequently lack the financial means to access private tutoring services, which exacerbates educational disparities. This financial barrier restricts underprivileged students' access to the benefits of supplementary education, thereby widening the gap between socioeconomic classes (Munir et al., 2023; Bray & Hajar, 2022). To address this issue, policymakers should consider implementing measures to subsidize or provide more affordable shadow education options, ensuring that all students have equal access to supplementary education.

Despite these challenges, shadow education offers numerous advantages, such as personalized learning experiences, flexibility, and enhanced academic performance. The individualized attention from private tutors enables students to better comprehend complex material and foster academic progress. The adaptable nature of supplementary lessons, tailored to students' unique learning paces, makes shadow education a convenient supplement to the mainstream education system. The supplementary support and targeted focus offered by private tutors contribute to meaningful improvements in students' academic performance (Bray & Hajar, 2022).

However, the reliance on shadow education can also lead to significant academic pressure and mental health challenges for students. Some research has indicated that the intense study hours and high stakes nature of shadow education can contribute to elevated stress and anxiety levels among students (Wei & Guan, 2021). Nonetheless, the heavy reliance on shadow education can also result in substantial academic pressure and mental health issues for students. Existing research has suggested that the demanding study hours and high-stakes environment associated with shadow education may contribute to elevated levels of stress and anxiety among students (Liang et al., 2022).

To address the concerns surrounding shadow education, policymakers in Malaysia should implement a multifaceted approach. First, they should strive to enhance the quality and responsiveness of the public education system, which could diminish the perceived need for supplementary tutoring. Second, regulatory frameworks should be established to ensure the quality and accountability of private tutoring services, shielding students and families from potential exploitation. Finally, initiatives aimed at offering affordable and accessible shadow education options, such as subsidized programs or school-based extracurricular activities, could help to create a more equitable educational landscape and mitigate disparities in opportunities.

### ***Research Question 2: How Do Educators Overcome Challenges And Maintain Their Success?***

Educators utilize various approaches to navigate the challenges posed by shadow education and sustain their success. Fostering effective communication and collaboration among all stakeholders, such as students, parents, tutors, and formal school teachers, is essential. Establishing clear communication channels facilitates the alignment of tutoring with school curricula and addresses any discrepancies or conflicts that may arise. Furthermore, leveraging technology can enhance the accessibility and quality of shadow education.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the reliance on shadow education in Malaysia, as it has accelerated the shift towards online learning. The closure of schools and the transition to remote instruction have placed significant demands on both students and teachers, leading many to seek supplementary support through private tutoring. This has further widened the socio-economic divide, as students from lower-income households may lack access to the necessary technological resources and infrastructure to engage effectively in online learning (Asadullah & Bhattacharjee, 2022).

Ongoing professional development for tutors is crucial to maintaining high-quality educational services. Regularly scheduled training sessions, workshops, and certification programs ensure tutors possess the requisite skills and knowledge. Likewise, parental involvement is a critical

factor, as active engagement in their children's learning process and frequent communication with tutors facilitates progress monitoring and issue resolution.

Leveraging technological innovations and incorporating digital resources into shadow education is an additional approach. Utilizing online platforms for tutoring sessions, implementing interactive learning materials, and adopting educational software can enhance the learning experience and increase student engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated the adoption of technology in the realm of shadow education, as remote tutoring has become more prevalent. This shift has presented both opportunities and challenges, as it has improved accessibility for some students while also highlighting the digital divide that exists within the Malaysian education system (Kader et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the impact of shadow education in Malaysia is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. While it can provide valuable support for students, it also has the potential to exacerbate educational disparities. Effective collaboration, regulation, and a holistic approach to education are necessary to harness the benefits of shadow education while mitigating its negative consequences (Wei & Guan, 2021; Xiang et al., 2023; Zhan, 2023).

### ***Research Question 3: Why Are The Advantages Of Shadow Education Important To Maintaining Success?***

Shadow education provides vital benefits by catering to students' individual learning requirements, fostering academic self-assurance, and offering supplementary academic support. Personalized attention and customized instruction help learners overcome educational obstacles, cultivate confidence, and accomplish their academic aspirations. The nurturing and motivating environment facilitated by private tutors enables students to develop a constructive approach towards learning, enhances their self-confidence, and allows them to thrive academically (Puyo, 2020).

Additionally, shadow education can serve as a valuable resource for students struggling in specific subject areas, offering them the opportunity to receive targeted instruction and support to improve their understanding and performance. Furthermore, the flexibility and individualized nature of shadow education can accommodate the diverse needs and learning styles of students, ensuring they receive the tailored guidance necessary to succeed (Yung et al., 2023). Shadow education supplements formal schooling by offering targeted academic assistance. This includes remedial teaching for underperforming students and enrichment activities for high-achieving learners. The flexibility and adaptability of private tutoring sessions make shadow education an appealing choice for students and their families. (Xiang et al., 2023)

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the role of shadow education in Malaysia is a complex issue with both advantages and disadvantages. While it can provide valuable academic support and personalized instruction, the unregulated nature of the industry and its potential to exacerbate educational inequalities require a multi-faceted approach to address these challenges. Policymakers, educators, and stakeholders must work collaboratively to develop a comprehensive strategy that harnesses the benefits of shadow education while ensuring equitable access to quality education for all students in Malaysia.

This strategy should include measures to regulate the shadow education sector, such as establishing licensing requirements for tutors, developing standardized curricula and teaching methodologies, and providing financial support or subsidies to ensure low-income families can access these services. Additionally, efforts should be made to strengthen the formal education system by enhancing the quality of instruction, reducing class sizes, and providing more personalized support for students, which could help minimize the need for supplementary tutoring. By taking a holistic approach that addresses both the supply and demand for shadow education, policymakers can work to ensure that the benefits of this industry are equitably distributed, and that no student is left behind in the pursuit of academic excellence. Further studies could explore the long-term impacts of shadow education on student outcomes, as well as the effectiveness of different regulatory and financial support mechanisms in addressing the challenges posed by this industry.

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