

THE IMPACT OF THE CHINA'S DOUBLE REDUCTION POLICY ON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' HOME EDUCATION

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Abstract

In 2021, China proposed a "double reduction" policy. This policy aims to reduce the pressure of school work and after-school tutoring for students.

Now almost a year later, many local governments have responded to this policy with their own education policies. The "double reduction" seems to have reduced the pressure on families and students, according to current online opinion. However, because of the "double reduction" policy, students are not able to acquire knowledge through after-school life as before, and urban children, especially those from dual-income families, usually lack family education. How does this vacuum affect students? We obtained the relevant information through interviews and searching the literature on the Internet. Based on informative data, this paper analyzes whether students receive appropriate home education to compensate for the previous impact on their learning ability due to extracurricular tutoring and after-school homework. It was found that due to the lack of adequate after-school homework and after-school tutoring, some very high-achieving students could still perform at a high academic level (upper elementary grades), but lower-achieving students' academic performance became worse due to the lack of parental discipline. Appropriate after-school tutoring may indeed safeguard the academic performance of some of the lower-achieving students. And these students usually lack home schooling due to their parents' busy schedules. Students who are better educated at home usually also demonstrate better academic and interpersonal skills. The majority of the lower achieving students have less academic and interpersonal skills because their parents are busy and do not have time for them. However, some students in the middle of the pack can still show some improvement in their academic and school performance if teachers express concern about their home education through in-depth conversations with their parents. Thus, teachers have a very important place as the link between the student's home and school. Teachers should be highly attentive and alert to the relationship between parents and students.

This paper argues that the school, as a cultural crossroads within the community, should play its role as an academic center, mediating conflicts between students as well as families, providing guidance to parents, encouraging positive performance, extending their place in the community, and playing an important role in the school's role in the community.

Keywords: Double Reduction, Family Education, Educational Innovation, Educational Equity, Parental Anxiety

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Homework is an important part of school education and teaching management, and is a necessary supplement to classroom teaching activities (Duan, Cheng-Rong, Lv, Lidan & Wang, Zong-Ping. 2014). To do homework, a student cannot run. But the problem is that some schools have too much homework, quality is not high, the function of alienation, not only cannot achieve the effect of learning new things, but also occupy the normal exercise, rest, recreation time of students. For a long time, compulsory education schools, especially elementary school, there is the phenomenon of "three and a half" after school, the original intention of this policy is to reduce the burden of students, but did not expect that, although the pressure on students to learn in school is reduced, but in the context of the education "arms race", parents for students This has led to an excessive burden on students outside of school(Weng, Zhe. 2022).

On April 26, 2021, the Ministry of Education issued a notice on strengthening the management of homework in compulsory education schools, making the prohibition of homework an important part of the daily supervision of out-of-school training institutions and effectively avoiding "reducing the burden in school and increasing the burden outside of school".(Xu, Qing. 2022)

1.2 The Double Reduction

The purpose of this policy is to 1. improve the education capacity of schools, 2. continuously regulate off-campus training (including online and offline training), and 3. reduce the excessive burden of homework and off-campus training on students in compulsory education. The "double reduction" means reducing the burden on students in school as well as outside of school. The specific measures of this policy include strict regulations on homework setting for primary and secondary school students, final exam arrangements, after-school activities, training institution operation and marketing.

1.3 Literature

1.3.1. Double Reduction and Anxiety

Many places have issued "double reduction" rules around the governance of out-of-school training and improving the quality of teaching in schools. Beijing has clarified that subject-based training institutions will not hold classes during the summer, Shanghai has cancelled joint exams and monthly exams for primary and secondary school students, and Zhejiang has categorized the subjects of out-of-school training institutions for statistical purposes.

It seems that Chinese students do not have to take on too much work anymore. But parents' anxiety does not seem to be lessened, and in some ways tends to be further increased. Parents are worried: Can my child learn well with less homework and no written assignments or tests even in the first and second grades? When training institutions are banned in large numbers and it is difficult to "enroll my child in a class", how will my child cope with the college entrance exam? (Xue, H. P. & Ding, S. H.. 2009)Thus, the implementation of the "double reduction" policy has brought new anxieties to parents, while alleviating their existing anxieties.

1.3.2. Anxious Family Education

The "double reduction" has begun to take action, but the parents' educational anxiety has not been reduced. The Chinese and high school exams are there, and how to ask schools not to violate the unified test, test ranking, not only the score, but the final result is still to score evaluation of students. The screening function of the college entrance examination is still there, the motivation to improve the score is still there, the parents' training needs are there. This is exemplified by the recent investigation and punishment of some "top-notch" training courses. (Li Yu. 2006)(Lei Wanpeng. 2005)According to media reports, after the release of the "double reduction" document, in some training institutions of parents in the WeChat group, anxious to refund not many, parents asked the most questions instead: if the training course can not be run, there is no way to make up the lessons privately? This is why some people claim that "the ones who really can't quit the out-of-school training are the parents".

The "double reduction" policy has taken away the ability of tutoring institutions to provide tutoring for students during breaks, and in the context of "educational competition," parents must take on the education of their children themselves. I have to admit that this anxiety is very serious. This is because many parents lack basic educational skills(Guan Y, Liu CHF. 1994).

By collecting publicly available information, we have identified several issues that parents are concerned

about. And these are the issues that are lacking in home education.

1. What should I do if my child is not learning well in class and really needs remedial work?
2. Wealthy parents are tutoring their children with one-on-one tutors, but what about "ordinary families"?
3. What if my child's grades don't improve without tutoring?
4. What if society evaluates graduates based on their school and education?

It can be seen that parents are mainly worried about the problem of class advancement and their children's academic performance.(A. Huiming. 2002) When these problems cannot be solved at school or at home, parents turn to social tutoring institutions, and therefore social tutoring institutions are very profitable(Yue Ying. 2002). The "double cut" policy has closed the opportunity for for-profit tutoring agencies to work on weekends. As a result, this responsibility has returned to the parents. So parents regain anxiety(Wei X, Qiu LQ. 1998)(Guan, Y.. 1994).

2 METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-method approach by analyzing research data and interviews from Beijing Normal University.

A questionnaire survey and individual interviews were conducted by a research team from the National Research Center for Education, China Institute of Education and Social Development, Beijing Normal University. The questionnaire survey covered principals, teachers, students, and parents in 3564 schools nationwide, with a total valid sample of 1,689,000; one-on-one interviews were conducted with 105 principals and 316 parents in 12 provinces and 36 districts and counties.

According to the Report, 96.8% of principals, 92.8% of teachers, 90.5% of parents, and 96.0% of students agreed with the "double reduction" policy. The "double reduction" policy was generally approved, and especially highly approved by students and principals.

In terms of students' homework burden, the Report shows that more than 88% of teachers consciously and strictly control the total amount of written homework, 75.3% of students feel that the amount of homework is less than last semester, and 83.4% of students can basically complete their written homework or most of their written homework at school.

"Reducing the burden is to improve the quality, and improving the quality can promote reducing the burden." In terms of school assignment design, the Report states that 53.2% of students believe that teachers "can assign targeted assignments based on my learning situation," 47.8% of students believe that "more assignments require brainstorming," and 45.9% of students believe that 45.9% of the students thought that "more homework has been given in science, sports, art and other activities".

According to the Report, 89.0% of students were satisfied with the after-school service, of which 64.2% were very satisfied; 88.4% of parents were satisfied with the after-school service, of which 48.3% were very satisfied. 85.8% of students participated in the after-school service, and over 74% of students participated in the after-school service 5 days a week. School after-school services average 120 minutes per day. School after-school services are rich in content, with more than 91% of schools providing homework help and various interest programs. School after-school services in all provinces are based on homework tutoring and various interest programs.

The survey results show that 86.5% of students like school learning life, among them, the percentage of fourth, sixth and eighth grade students like school learning life is 90%, 88.1% and 79.9% respectively; 75.5% of parents think that the total time of their children's reading, sports, labor and social practice at home from Monday to Friday has increased, among which 28.2% of parents think it has increased by more than 2 hours. The percentage of parents who thought their children's total time spent on reading, sports, labor and social practice increased from Monday to Friday, of which 28.2% thought it increased by more than 2 hours, 35.9% thought it increased by 1-2 hours, and 11.4% thought it increased by less than 1 hour.

In terms of students' sleep time, the Report states that 68.2% of parents believe their children's sleep time has increased significantly, with an average of 9.3 hours in elementary school and 8.5 hours in middle school.

In addition, the Report shows that the burden of out-of-school training for students has been effectively reduced. 83.5% of students did not participate in out-of-school subject training and 63.3% did not participate in non-subject training. Among the students who participated in out-of-school subject training, 31.5% of parents believed that the number of subject training courses attended by their children had decreased.

Regarding the difficulties and challenges faced by the "double reduction" reform, the report mentioned that 91.2% of parents hope their children can obtain a bachelor's degree or higher in the future, and more than 50% of students believe that parents' high expectations are the biggest source of learning pressure.

53.2% of students think teachers can assign targeted homework

Regarding the main results of the "double reduction" reform, the Report points out that the "double reduction" policy is generally accepted, students' homework burden is effectively reduced, the quality of school assignment design is significantly improved, and the overall satisfaction of after-school services is high.

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More than 88% of teachers consciously and strictly control the total amount of written homework, 75.3% of students feel that the amount of homework is less than last semester, and 83.4% of students can basically complete their written homework or most of their written homework at school.

53.2% of the students thought that teachers "can assign homework that is relevant to my learning situation", 47.8% of the students thought that "there is more homework that requires thinking", and 45.9% of the students thought that "there is more homework that requires thinking". 45.9% of the students thought that "there is more homework in science, sports, art and other activities".

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The Report also suggests that students have a high level of satisfaction with school life, positive changes in the content of home learning activities, increased sleep time, and an effective reduction in the burden of off-campus training for students. The initial establishment of a collaborative parenting mechanism between home, school and society.

The Report shows that 86.5% of students like school learning life, with 90%, 88.1% and 79.9% of 4th, 6th and 8th graders liking school learning life respectively.

75.5% of parents believe that their children's total time for reading, sports, labor and social practice at home from Monday to Friday has increased, with 28.2% of parents believing that it has increased by more than 2 hours, 35.9% by 1-2 hours, and 11.4% by less than 1 hour.

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95.2% of parents believe that the school has carried out family education guidance work, and 56.2% "the school has a family education network platform", which has promoted the improvement of parents' scientific parenting ability.

Through these data, we seem to see that the "double reduction" policy is effective. However, according to the existing research, scholars believe that students' test anxiety is mainly influenced by two types of factors: individual and social. In terms of individual factors, test anxiety is positively related to external motivation and students' expectations of failure, and negatively related to internal motivation, self-concept of competence, expectations of academic self-efficacy, and beliefs about academic control(Zhang, Lianfang.2022). In terms of social factors, achievement expectations from significant others, evaluative feedback, and negative consequences of failure can influence students' test anxiety (Cheng Genyan. 2022), especially parents' academic expectations, psychological control, support, or pressure on their children can also influence students' test anxiety(Zhou Hongyu & Qi Yanlei. 2022). The process of comparing with "other children" may have different effects on the level of test anxiety depending on the results of the comparison (Sun, Y. & Chen, W.. 2022). According to the study of Qiong Huang and Renlai Zhou, one of the most important means

to alleviate test anxiety is to develop effective policies to reduce the burden (Fan Qin. 2022). The double-reduction policy was created precisely to alleviate test anxiety.

The Guangming Daily reported that the "double reduction" policy has reduced the burden of students, but more efforts are needed to alleviate "mothers' anxiety"(Fan Junmao. 2022).

3 RESULTS

First, most of the studies defaulted to the premise that students are the main subjects of anxiety, without realizing that students and their parents are in fact a "community of anxiety".

In China, the family, not the individual, is the basic unit of social life(Ji, H.D. & Tan, Q.. 2022). Therefore, the pressure from academic performance and further education not only leads to students' anxiety, but also leads to parents' anxiety, and even parents' anxiety may be more serious than students'. Secondly, the existing studies are mainly quantitative, discussing variables such as "interest in learning," "self-efficacy," "motivation," and "learning anxiety" and "test anxiety. Learning anxiety" and "test anxiety". Research on test anxiety has even focused on physiological and psychological issues such as eye movements, cognitive and neural mechanisms. The purpose of such studies is to determine the physiological and psychological mechanisms through the interrelationship of variables and to develop appropriate anxiety management and intervention programs. Therefore, in the existing studies, anxiety is considered as an individual psychological problem that requires psychological intervention programs to alleviate. In fact, academic anxiety and test anxiety have become extremely common in the basic education sector in China, and are far from being an individual psychological problem, but a widespread social problem. As early as 2012, it was reported in the media that "education anxiety' has become a common disease among parents"(Fu Dingchen (2022-04-17). 2018 data from the *Chinese Parents' Education Anxiety Index Survey Report* showed that 68% of parents were anxious about their children's education(Hao Junlong. 2022), and by the end of the year, the percentage of parents who were anxious about their children's education was 68%. , and by 2021, the proportion of parents who feel anxious about their children's education is as high as 87.0% (Du Zhongying (2022-04-17). With such a large area of anxiety, individualized psychological treatment based on the interrelationship between specific variables is not enough. This requires us to change the perspective of our study and re-examine the issue of parental anxiety from a sociological perspective: Why do parents become anxious whether the burden is reduced or not? How do parents' anxiety arise? How can parents' anxiety be effectively alleviated?

Another interesting thing is that a lot of people have a very low opinion of that report. Many people expressed their disapproval of the report in the comments section. Many people expressed their dissatisfaction in the comment section for the "double reduction" of the super high degree of approval. Many parents think that without tutoring institutions, what should they do with their children's education?

So the issue ultimately comes back to the "de-anxiety" of home education and the quality improvement of school education.

Through reading a lot of literature and interviewing parents, we found that parents' anxiety comes from their worries about students' future development.

4 DISCUSSION

We believe that the impact on students' home education is first and foremost the result of excessive parental anxiety. The years behind the rapid development of tutoring institutions is the absence of family education as parents are busy with work and unable to take care of their children. If tutoring institutions are to be removed from the lives of students in a short period of time, then home education must immediately serve as a supplement. Then the school should play its role as the first responsible person for home education. The school should take on the responsibility of educating parents to learn how to homeschool their students.(Ministry of Education. 2022)

The starting point of the "double reduction" is to return subject education to the main position of school education and to reduce the economic and mental burden on families. What is currently under control is the unreasonable and excessive after-school tuition, but not a ban on it. Specifically, it is to strengthen school education - classroom teaching, homework help, after-school activities, to curb the need to participate in out-of-school training at the source. Among the 30 "double reduction" opinions, 16 of them are about improving the quality of school education.(Xu, Bingru & Yang, Ying,2022)

At the same time, there are already provinces and cities promoting the balanced development of education, and as the equalization of quality educational resources further accelerates, the "school choice fever" will

gradually cool down. Recently, Beijing has announced in the "double reduction" program of teachers, principals to implement a large area of rotation, especially in three years, the Dongcheng District compulsory education school cadres and teachers exchange rotation ratio, from 10% to 20% to 100%; and Shanghai, Zhejiang and other more provinces and cities have long been exploring.(Liu Weizhao. 2022)

In addition, the state also introduced the "five management" to help schools do not deviate from the right track of education. In fact, compulsory education is the basic human rights determined by the state by law, is a guaranteed education, everyone has a share, the same treatment, it is non-selective, non-elimination, non-competitive, to help us return to the original.

First of all, to clarify a problem, this out-of-school training governance, is not a blanket shutdown of all discipline-based out-of-school training institutions. In the working day, after-school tutoring of subjects is still allowed, and parents can still enroll their children in relevant training courses.

Second, the document calls for "improving the quality of education and teaching to ensure that students learn enough and well in school". Schools are required to optimize teaching methods, improve the quality of classroom teaching, and enhance students' learning efficiency at school; teach strictly according to the curriculum standards from zero, teach as much as possible, and ensure that students meet the academic quality standards set by the state. The government is required to expand quality educational resources and improve the overall standard of school operation. The quality of teaching in schools is improved, and students can learn well in school, so they do not need much extra tuition.

The "double reduction" also has a supporting initiative - after-school services. One of the components of the after-school service is to guide students to complete their homework carefully, to provide remedial tutoring and question and answer sessions for students who have difficulties in learning, and to expand the learning space for students who have the ability to learn. In other words, if students do not learn well in class, the teachers will provide remedial tutoring and question and answer sessions during the after-school service time.

After the "double reduction", parents have a concern is that the ban on out-of-school training institutions, "ordinary families" can not give their children remedial classes, but richer families have the conditions for their children to hire tutors for one-on-one tutoring, will this cause a new injustice?

As mentioned earlier, tutoring outside of school is not completely banned, and the advantage of one-on-one tutoring may lie in the provision of tutoring on holidays and double-holidays. On August 8, the Beijing Municipal Education Commission issued a report on the problems found in the inspection of out-of-school training institutions, and one of the cases investigated was an individual who conducted one-on-one training in a cafe. It is not known whether one-to-one tutoring will become a trend in the future, and it is not known whether tutoring will be fully rationalized or restricted. But Beijing's investigation of this cafe one-on-one training is also a signal.

In addition, in this case the tutor is a minority, a few children learn early, which may not be good for these children. The school is strictly in accordance with the curriculum standard zero start teaching, early learning but may corrupt children's interest in learning. It is not true that the more tutoring you do, the better your child's performance will be, as discussed below.

For high-achieving students, taking extra classes outside of school can do more harm than good: the more hours they spend in extra classes each week, the more their academic performance decreases rather than increases. At the middle school level, for example, 34.9 percent of high-achieving middle school students take more than three hours of remedial classes per week. In the group of high-achieving students, the more hours per week they participated in out-of-school remediation, the lower the students' intrinsic learning motivation and subjective well-being. This was also true among the group of students with moderate achievement.

In addition, early learning and excessive remediation in out-of-school training can create a host of problems for children's normal learning.

Over-learning can cause students to lose interest in the in-school classroom, decrease the efficiency of in-class learning, and form a dependence on remedial learning, which in turn further increases the learning burden. Brain science research has proven that over-education can cause brain damage in children. It is futile and counterproductive to go beyond the child's brain development stage and blindly overlearn to receive information that the brain cannot process. And excessive tuition may lead to boredom and even psychological problems in children.

As you can see, extracurricular training in the subject, the improvement of students' academic performance is limited. At the secondary school level, parents pay too much attention to their children's learning, especially test scores or rankings, often to the detriment of student growth and development; a good family and school humanities environment can help disadvantaged students achieve academic success. Therefore, to improve children's performance, what is more effective than remedial classes is good family education.

The key factors influencing parenting behavior are, first, the extent to which a child's future income level depends on educational success, and, second, the degree of inequality of educational opportunity. Our society attaches importance to education, and most employers (including institutions and institutions) look for schools and education when recruiting, and a diploma from a good university can lead to better job opportunities and higher income.

When a diploma from a prestigious school or a high degree gradually becomes a prerequisite for success and high income in the secular sense, parents spare no effort to improve their children's academic performance through various means (such as off-campus training) in order to get high scores and get into a good university. This is the source of parents' anxiety.

The evaluation of society, in fact, still originates from the evaluation of education. We have divided colleges and universities into grades, and schools have divided students into grades according to their scores, and this evaluation system already exists and is used by employers to screen "talents".

The good thing is, this evaluation system has been in the middle of the school. The "double reduction" policy requires that local governments are strictly prohibited from issuing promotion targets or one-sided evaluation of schools and teachers by promotion rates, and strictly prohibit the ranking of exams, and resolutely overcome the tendency to only score; everywhere to actively improve the admissions model based on junior high school academic level exam results, combined with comprehensive quality evaluation of high school admissions. In other words, at least the primary and secondary school level has gradually "de-graded", the rest, is the college entrance examination reform, perhaps the university should also "de-graded".

Parents also need to think clearly, children's college entrance examination scores competition over others, will be successful?

China has 21.83 million people with university education, accounting for 15% of the total population, and the employment of college students is becoming increasingly difficult, relying on the government to stabilize the target of 70%, while some places have a serious "skilled labor shortage", that is, college students are more difficult to employ than vocational school graduates.

From the perspective of some parents, they think that if their children go to top universities, they will not worry about finding jobs. Even if the prerequisite of "high employment rate in top universities" is valid, if the goal of school is Tsinghua University, Peking University or 985 or 211, there is only a 1/1000 or 5% chance. Unless your child is really good at the subject and good at the test, it will be very difficult to achieve this goal. Moreover, by this standard, excluding the 5%, the majority of children are just "average", so why can't you accept that your child is average? Why must children compete academically with 95% of the population?

I think this may be the reason why some parents are anxious about homeschooling. They expect too much from their children and stereotype homeschooling as being about getting good grades. This is a big factor in student anxiety.

After all, it would be a path for children to start a business and create jobs for others rather than "compete" for jobs in the job market. Obviously, this is not something that can be acquired through academic remediation. This is a sad but reversible part of Chinese parents' inertia. We have seen a lot of uploaders from China on tiktok, people who have tried to start their own businesses, and they have given a lot to their businesses and have achieved a certain level of success. This success is worth being recognized. But many parents are still the same as Japanese and Korean parents. In their eyes going to a big company is the only way out. This poor thinking has made China, Korea, and Japan too involute in their education. A large number of people work hard just to cope with exams. This is sad.

5 CONCLUSIONS

To summarize this study, family education is a very important part of children's education and is the foundation of school and social education. Family education is a lifelong education, which begins on the day of a child's birth (and even goes back to the fetal stage), and family education during infancy and early childhood is the education at the "beginning of a person's life", which plays a fundamental role in a person's life. After children go to primary and secondary schools, family education is not only the foundation of school

education, but also a supplement and extension of school education. The goal of education should be to ensure the healthy development of the child's body and mind before the child enters society to receive collective education, and to lay a good foundation for receiving kindergarten and school education. Family education is the foundation and starting point of the whole life education, and it is the education that has the most profound influence on a person's life, and it directly or indirectly affects the realization of a person's life goals.

The policy of double reduction has put forward important requirements for family education. The newly released "Family Education Promotion Law" clearly states that parents or other guardians should establish a sense of responsibility that the family is the first classroom and parents are the first teachers. Parents or their guardians shall assume the main responsibility of implementing family education for minors, and educate minors with correct thoughts, methods and behaviors to develop good thoughts, conduct and habits.

On the level of parental anxiety, we believe that after-school tutoring and the utilitarian attitude of tutoring institutions towards education continue to stimulate parents, leading to more anxiety. The "double reduction" policy is not just to eliminate tutoring institutions, but to allow families to resume their responsibility for family education, which in the past was entrusted to tutoring institutions by parents in the form of after-school tutoring.

Schools should provide parents with the necessary help, especially in the areas of mental health and educational skills. Other social organizations such as women's federations or NGOs should try to help parents train and educate around the "double reduction" policy. I know that some social enterprises are working on parent-child relationship training. This kind of coaching for parents is very important, as it is a way for parents to learn how to be parents. In the future, we hope that the double reduction policy will really help students reduce unnecessary burdens, and that parents will not be overly anxious and will spend more time educating their children.

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