



Research on After-school Activity Service in K-12 Education under the Context of Double Reduction Policy

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Abstract. In order to promote the healthy development of students, reduce academic pressure, and improve the quality of education, the Chinese education authorities have introduced the Double Reduction Policy. Based on the requirements of the policy and the actual needs of parents, primary and secondary schools, while focusing on the comprehensive development of students, have been conducting after-school services through diversified approaches, combining online and offline methods, and fostering collaboration between schools and families under the guidance and regulations of the policy. This research primarily investigates the satisfaction levels of students, parents, and teachers regarding after-school services. The survey results indicate that 64% are satisfied, 20% have a neutral attitude, and 16% are dissatisfied. Interviews reveal that elementary school students show high satisfaction with after-school services, demonstrating the significant effects of the policy. Dissatisfaction arises from increased teacher workloads, continued pressure from the high school entrance examination for middle school students. This study provides practical references for the formulation and improvement of after-school services in terms of the teacher and students' well-being, parents' participation, after-school activities design and policy support.

Keywords: Double Reduction Policy, after-school activity service, satisfaction, K-12 education.

1 Introduction

Quality education in China refers to an educational approach that emphasizes holistic development, critical thinking, creativity, and moral values alongside academic achievements. This educational philosophy aims to cultivate well-rounded individuals capable of contributing positively to society. The focus is not solely on exam results but on nurturing students' character, skills, and attitudes. Historically, China has placed significant emphasis on academic success, leading to a highly competitive and exam-oriented education system. However, this approach has been criticized for neglecting students' overall well-being and stifling creativity. In response to these concerns, the Chinese government has been promoting quality education reforms to address these issues.

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Quality education in China seeks to create a more balanced and student-centered learning environment. It encourages experiential learning, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and character development. Schools are encouraged to offer a broader curriculum that includes arts, sports, ethics, and social responsibilities in addition to traditional subjects.

The Double Reduction Policy, also known as "双减政策" in Chinese, aims to reduce the academic burden on students and alleviate pressure on parents. This policy is a part of the broader quality education reforms and focuses on reducing homework assignments and standardized testing. The main reasons behind the Double Reduction Policy include: Promoting Well-being: Excessive academic pressure has been linked to high levels of stress and mental health issues among students. By reducing homework and testing requirements, the policy aims to improve students' well-being and mental health. Fostering Creativity: Overemphasis on exams and rote learning can hinder students' creativity and critical thinking skills. The Double Reduction Policy aims to create more opportunities for students to explore their interests, develop creativity, and think independently.

Enhancing Equity: By reducing the emphasis on exam results, the policy aims to create a more equitable education system that values diverse talents and abilities. This can help reduce educational inequalities and provide opportunities for students from different backgrounds to succeed. The Double Reduction Policy is a significant step towards promoting quality education in China by shifting the focus from exam results to holistic development. By fostering creativity, reducing academic pressure, and promoting student well-being, this policy aims to create a more balanced and inclusive educational system that prepares students for success in the future.

2 Double Reduction Policy

The Double Reduction Policy in basic education is a policy launched by the Chinese government in July 2021 to alleviate issues such as students' heavy academic workload and excessive parental involvement [1]. This policy focuses on reducing students' homework load, frequency of exams, and limiting the time students spend in extra-curricular training classes. According to the policy document, the main points include: reducing students' academic burden by minimizing excessive homework and exams to ensure students have enough free time for rest, exercise, and personal interests; restricting the scale and operating hours of extracurricular training institutions to reduce students' reliance on such programs and prevent excessive guidance and influence on students; optimizing school teaching content and methods by promoting curriculum improvements that emphasize the development of students' comprehensive qualities and innovation, while reducing the emphasis on exam-oriented education [2].

In an effort to cultivate well-rounded students, alleviate academic burdens, and enhance the overall educational landscape, Chinese education authorities have implemented the Double Reduction Policy. This initiative aims to strike a balance between academic rigor and students' holistic development. By adhering to the guidelines set forth by this policy, primary and secondary schools have taken proactive measures to

offer a variety of after-school services tailored to meet the needs of students, parents, and teachers. Through a blend of online and offline strategies, educational institutions are fostering a harmonious partnership between schools and families to ensure a conducive learning environment.

3 Data Collection

According to the requirements of the policy and the actual needs of parents, primary and secondary schools, while focusing on the comprehensive development of students, have been guided and regulated by policies to carry out after-school services through diversification, a combination of online and offline methods, and cooperation between schools and families [3]. After more than 2 years of practice in after-school services, what is the satisfaction level of students, parents, and teachers with regards to these services? In this study, questionnaires were distributed to 31 primary school students, 69 middle school students, 26 parents, 13 teachers, and 10 other community members. Interviews were conducted with 4 primary school students, 4 middle school students, 4 parents, and 4 teachers. The main questionnaire and interview questions focused on student homework, student sleep, extracurricular activities, and academic performance; parental education expenses; and teachers' workload and income.

4 Results

4.1 Satisfaction Level

In general, the implementation effect of the Double Reduction Policy in primary schools has been positive. This policy has led to a reduction in homework, an increase in sleep time, and more choices for extracurricular interest classes and activities, which is reassuring as students' academic performance has either remained stable or even improved [4]. On the other hand, in middle schools, students still face the pressure of the high school entrance exam. The effects of the "double reduction" policy and after-school services are not as significant, with students continuing to experience homework and academic pressure. The data shows that satisfaction is at 65%, neutral attitude is at 20%, and 15% are dissatisfied. The specific breakdown of satisfaction is as follows (See Table 1):

Table 1. Satisfaction Level of the policy

Identity	Number	Satisfaction(%)	Overall Satisfaction(%)
Student	51	3.71	3.75
Parent	26	4.15	3.75
Teacher	13	3.46	3.75
Other	10	3.30	3.75

Notably, in terms of family education, both middle and primary school students have not felt a reduction in academic burden, as parents still contribute to academic pressures. Specific details are as follows from the interviews:

4.2 Factors

Awareness of the Double Reduction Policy.

Most primary school students are aware of the policy but lack a deep understanding, possibly due to their young age. Secondary school students have a better understanding, indicating effective promotion of the policy. Parents and teachers are generally well-informed about the policy.

Student Homework.

Following the implementation of the "double reduction" policy, most primary schools have reduced the homework load for students, although students may not fully understand the reasons behind this change. Secondary school students, however, have not experienced a significant reduction in homework and exams, mainly due to the extensive curriculum that requires practice and testing of knowledge.

Student Sleep Time.

With reduced homework, most primary school students have increased sleep time, although some may still be under pressure from parents to complete tasks at home. While some secondary students have increased sleep, many still do not get enough rest due to additional tasks assigned by parents or self-study requirements.

Student Academic Performance.

The academic performance of most primary school students has not declined due to the "double reduction" policy. They continue to diligently complete assignments and study. The policy has had minimal impact on the academic performance of secondary school students.

Teacher Workload.

Teachers in primary and secondary schools have reported an increase in workload, although some have not experienced significant changes as after-school services are outsourced to specialized interest classes.

Family Education Expenses.

While primary school parents have seen a decrease in education expenses, secondary school parents have not experienced the same reduction. In rural areas, the "double reduction" policy has led to increased family expenses, creating significant economic pressure.

Summary.

In terms of on-campus situations, the policies aimed at reducing academic burden have not been effectively implemented within the school. Moreover, when considering off-campus factors, these policies have also not been effectively implemented within the family environment. Regarding extracurricular activities and interests, some students have increased their participation, primarily due to the school increasing physical exercise time rather than extracurricular activities. However, some students have not increased participation due to overwhelming academic pressure. Finally, the practical results indicate that the policies aimed at reducing academic burden have not had a significant impact on the academic performance of middle school students. Based on the interviews, this could be attributed to several factors: Ineffective implementation of the policies within middle schools, leading to minimal changes in students' learning patterns. Some students are self-disciplined and motivated, which helps them stay on track with their studies, preventing a decline in grades.

5 Discussion

This study delves into the vital realm of after-school services, offering valuable insights and recommendations crucial for the enhancement and formulation of such programs. The focus is on addressing the Dual Reduction Policy, which involves reducing the burden on students and cultivating a more holistic approach to education. By analyzing the multifaceted aspects of after-school services, this study aims to provide concrete pathways and strategies for improving the overall educational landscape. It delves into various key components such as the role of schools, teachers, parents, and policy support in enhancing the quality and effectiveness of after-school services.

5.1 Teacher Aspect

Education researchers point out that the provision of after-school services has a certain rationale. Various stakeholders such as teachers, principals, and parents are indeed concerned about after-school services. However, implementing after-school services may increase teachers' workload, reduce their time for school-based professional development, and may even lead to teachers engaging in unpaid or poorly compensated work. This poses serious challenges to teachers' abilities, motivation, and physical well-being.

It is true that after-school services in primary and secondary schools need improvement. Besides enriching service content, reducing teachers' burdens should be a key focus. Schools can coordinate the implementation of flexible working hours for teachers, hire retired teachers, qualified social professionals, or volunteers as quality teaching staff, introduce high-quality external resources, involve non-disciplinary training institutions, and collectively strive to provide quality after-school services.

5.2 School Aspect

Teachers have expressed that after-school services are an important aspect of the "dual reduction" policy, which is consistent with previous research. It can be seen that after the issuance of the "Opinions," school after-school services have become the main focus area for implementing the "dual reduction" policy [5]. Since its implementation, nationwide coverage of after-school services in primary and secondary schools has been basically achieved, effectively addressing issues like the "3:30 PM" and the trend of excessive training. They believe that the key to improving the quality of after-school services lies in the organic integration of after-school services with daytime courses. Specifically, the following three suggestions are made: Diverse and rich curriculum content: After-school services should adapt to the diverse needs of students, providing a more diverse and rich curriculum content to meet the interests and developmental needs of different students. Flexible implementation of courses: Explore flexible implementation methods such as tiered and rotating schedules to make after-school services more adaptable to individual student differences, allowing students to learn at their own pace and based on their interests. Scientific and humanistic curriculum support: By introducing measures such as flexible working hours, stimulate teacher initiative to ensure the quality of after-school service implementation. These measures can help teachers better cater to student needs and provide more personalized services.

5.3 Parent Aspect

The Dual Reduction Policy refers to a series of measures introduced by the Chinese government in the field of education aimed at alleviating the problems of students' heavy academic burdens and excessive parental involvement [6]. Parents may have different opinions and viewpoints on this policy. Some parents believe that since the implementation of the policy, everyone's spending on tutoring has indeed decreased. However, they also express concerns about whether their children's academics will be affected, as academic performance plays a crucial role in their children's future education.

Some parents believe that the policy helps alleviate students' academic pressure, allowing children to enjoy learning and life better. They believe that excessive academic burdens may have negative effects on children's physical and mental health, thus welcoming government measures to alleviate this issue. They believe that by reducing the time spent on extracurricular tutoring and homework, students can have more time for hobbies and physical exercise, enhancing the cultivation of comprehensive qualities. Other parents may hold different views on the policy. They might worry that these policies will impact their children's academic performance and competitiveness because education competition in China is intense, and many parents hope their children can achieve good results to ensure future development. These parents may think that reducing extracurricular tutoring time and homework load may cause their children to fall behind academically compared to their peers, losing their competitive edge.

Of course, some parents may hold neutral views, hoping that the government can balance academic burdens with students' developmental needs when implementing the

policy [7]. They believe that education should not only focus on students' academic performance but also emphasize nurturing creativity, social skills, and physical and mental well-being. They hope the government can formulate reasonable policies to ensure students have enough time for other activities beyond academics and guarantee the improvement of educational quality.

5.4 Policy Aspect

However, it is essential to consider funding issues when implementing these measures. Schools should receive sufficient financial support to ensure the quality and sustainability of after-school services. Additionally, to ensure the effectiveness of after-school services, the formulation and supervision of relevant policies are also necessary. Zi Liping and Peng Yawei (2023) also pointed out the issues of improving the quality and efficiency of basic education through after-school services under the background of the "dual reduction" policy. Only through the joint efforts of all parties can the work of after-school services in primary and secondary schools be sustainable. Policy support is also highlighted as a critical factor in shaping the landscape of after-school services. Recommendations are made for policymakers to develop comprehensive policies that prioritize the well-being and academic growth of students, while also fostering collaboration between schools, parents, and the community.

6 Conclusion

The focal point of this research revolves around evaluating the satisfaction levels of various stakeholders, including students, parents, and teachers, in relation to the after-school services provided. The results of the survey paint a nuanced picture: 64% of respondents express contentment, 20% remain neutral, and 16% voice discontent. Delving deeper into these findings through interviews, it becomes evident that elementary school students exhibit a high degree of satisfaction with the after-school programs, underscoring the positive impact of the Double Reduction Policy. However, challenges persist, particularly concerning the increased workload faced by teachers and the enduring pressure stemming from the high school entrance examination for middle school students.

This study serves as a valuable resource for educational policymakers and administrators seeking to refine and enhance after-school services in alignment with the overarching goals of the Double Reduction Policy. By examining the feedback provided by stakeholders, educators can glean insights into areas that require improvement and devise targeted strategies to address prevailing concerns. Moreover, the research underscores the importance of fostering a collaborative ecosystem where schools and families work hand in hand to nurture students' academic growth and personal development.

As the educational landscape continues to evolve, it is imperative for educational institutions to adapt and innovate in response to changing needs and societal expectations. In terms of school involvement, the study suggests the need for schools to create

a conducive environment that complements after-school programs, fostering a seamless transition from formal education to supplementary activities. Teachers play a crucial role in implementing engaging and enriching after-school activities that cater to the diverse needs of students, nurturing their interests and talents beyond the classroom.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of parental involvement and support in ensuring the success of after-school services. Policy support is also highlighted as a critical factor in shaping the landscape of after-school services [8]. Recommendations are made for policymakers to develop comprehensive policies that prioritize the well-being and academic growth of students, while also fostering collaboration between schools, parents, and the community. In conclusion, this study serves as a comprehensive guide for stakeholders involved in after-school services, offering actionable insights and strategies to navigate the challenges posed by the "Dual Reduction" policy and ultimately enhance the educational experiences of students.

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