

The Impact of China's Double Reduction Policy

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Abstract:

This paper addresses China's education policy, focusing on the effects of China's double reduction policy, particularly on Chinese schoolchildren. The background of the study is set in China, with the object of studying being Chinese schoolchildren. The research methodology involves analyzing the influence of the double reduction policy by collecting data from secondary sources. The aim of the essay is to investigate the impact of China's double reduction policy. This article will first provide an summary of China's education policy, including China's nine year compulsory policy, the reopening of Gaokao in the year 1977, and the double reduction policy. Secondly, the influence of the double reduction policy will be the primary emphasis of the article. Meanwhile, the paper will mention the influence of the rural-urban education gap. Thirdly, the paper will mention the assessment of China's double reduction policy's efficacy. Lastly, this article will discuss the further direction for Chinese double reduction policy. In conclusion, the amount of homework and tutoring courses has successfully decreased due to the double reduction policy, eased their anxiety and stress, and introduced innovative approaches-smart homework. Moreover, it creates a more diverse education environment for Chinese students.

Keywords: The double reduction policy; urban-rural education gap; homework and extracurricular tutoring course; smart homework.

1. Introduction

In 2017, China's tutoring rate for primary school students was 33.4%, and a 43.7% rate for secondary school students in 2017. Meanwhile, the after-school tutoring sector was estimated to be worth 87 billion yuan [1]. As the after-school tutoring industry ex-

pands in China, the pressure on both students and parents may increase, with parents having to increase the amount of spent on education and children taken time off from work because of after-school tutoring. Therefore, in 2021, the Chinese government proposed the double reduction policy to reduce the pressure of after-school homework and tutoring for

Chinese students.

2. Overview of China's Education Policy

2.1 China's Nine-year Compulsory Education Policy

The nine-year compulsory education policy is the educational framework that China implemented to ensure that schoolchildren and teens have the right to an education [2]. The Compulsory Education Law was approved by China on April 12, 1986, during the Fourth Session of the Sixth National People's Congress. The nine-year mandatory education program was formally introduced on July 1, 1986 [3].

2.2 Reopening of Gaokao

China's imperial examination system has a long history. It was first used in the Sui Dynasty to identify talented individuals who could make significant contributions to the nation. Following the establishment of New China in 1949, China created a new examination system known as Gaokao [4]. During the cultural revolution, universities were closed because there were suspicions of spreading class bozoids. In 1966, the Chinese college entrance exams (Gaokao) were abolished, and entry into universities was reserved for working-class children recommended by the grassroots [5]. Then, after the end of the cultural revolution, Chinese university entrance examination (Gaokao) was reintroduced in 1977.

2.3 The Double Reduction Policy

The Chinese government unexpectedly proposed what is currently known as the "Double Reduction" Policy in July 2021. The suggestion recommended reducing the amount of schoolwork given to children and increasing the authority of private tutoring services [6]. The industry was quickly agitated by the double reduction policy, and on August 18, 2021, Beijing formally became the first region to implement the guidelines. In this regard, the president of New Oriental Education & Technology Group declared that "significant results will be obtained over two years and that the overburdening of schoolwork, after-school assignments, and family spending on education will be effectively reduced by the end of 2021" [7].

3. Urban-rural Education Gap in China

China's level of adult literacy rate has grown since the

1980s, and at the same time, college enrollment has risen, as sixty percent of high school graduates enroll in college each year [8]. In China, there is still a disparity in schooling between metropolitan and rural regions. Compared to students from rural areas, urban students have greater opportunity to receive high-quality education. Only 20 to 30 percent of students attend school in the countryside, and their performance is typically lower than that of students in metropolitan areas, according to study by Li and Yang [9]. As a result, there is still a significant educational divide in China between rural and urban regions, giving urban and rural children unequal opportunities for educational resources.

4. The Effects of the Policy of Double Reduction on Education

According to Hong's study, schools must use the double reduction policy, which imposes a 90-minute homework limit and fewer non-essential exams, prohibits parents from completing and correcting homework, and should reduce parental expenditure on education [10]. It prohibits educational institutions from providing remedial classes to students, as a result, many of these institutions have closed down or transformed.

4.1 Reduce Chinese Students' Burden

China's double reduction policy decreases Chinese children's burdensome homework. Through Yang and Wu's survey on the distribution of high school English writing scores, one district had more than 20,000 middle school graduates out of more than 90,000 scoring zero on the English writing tests, and more than 50,000 students scored only half as well [11]. Through their survey, more than 20,000 students were unable to write correct sentences in English, and more than 50,000 students were unable to express a thing correctly in English. Hence, through their research, the large number of practice and homework may not improve students' performance, but rather may cause a negative effect. Therefore, reforming homework that is burdensome for students is necessary. The double reduction policy encourages teachers to design higher-quality assignments. For instance, through selection, adaptations, and self-creation to create higher quality assignments. Also, school year teams are expected to monitor the overall quantity of homework assigned in each subject area to guarantee that there isn't any written homework assigned in grades one or two and that writing assignments don't exceed an hour in length in third to fifth grade. Furthermore, the average time of middle school students' homework takes no longer than ninety minutes to complete.

In addition, middle school students typically finish their homework in no more than ninety minutes. Teachers should also assist elementary students in finishing their basic written homework assignments in class and middle school students in finishing the majority of their written assignments. Making sure they are aware of the learning circumstances of their students, teachers should give them specific instruction and answer their questions [12].

Double reduction policy also reduces students' burden of tutorial courses. From Chinese children's development, the average weekend time spent on extracurricular tutorial classes by Chinese children aged 3 to 15 is 3.2 hours, and the tuition fee for extracurricular tutorial classes per child is RMB 9,211, which takes up 12.84% of the disposable income of a family. The reason that Chinese students attend extracurricular tutorial classes is not just because they desire supplementation and help with their on-campus courses, they also need a competitive edge to admission to key and famous universities [13]. Also, Chinese parents' obsession with extracurricular tutoring to help their children's academic performance, which increases children's academic pressure, could be linked to China's firmly established cultural belief that education is the key to prosperity and social mobility [14]. Therefore, as a new instruction, the double reduction policy specifically asks for lowering the demands placed on compulsory school students for extracurricular tuition and reducing the pressure on students by considering schooling as the primary pathway for students' learning [15].

4.2 Smart Homework

In order to satisfy the obligation to lessen the load, smart homework is gradually spreading in China. Zhang et al. indicated that the application of smart homework lessens the quantity of homework assigned to students in elementary and secondary schools, raises the degree of achievement of homework, decrease the need for after-school remedial courses, and leads to a heightened sense of self-efficacy, leading to becoming more engaged in their studies and greatly improving the efficiency of their studies [16]. "Smart homework" is a network that runs on smartphones, PCs, televisions with television sets and dot as codes, structured information graphs, the cloud inquire about banks, AI engines, and other technologies. It is set up and developed by the Jiangxi the Provincial Office Department of Education [17]. Using smart pens, teachers assess homework performed on paper in homework books containing dotted matrix code. Then, the smart pen is used to send homework data to an online system. This is the first step in the smart homework process. Secondly, each student receives a number of false questions, in

addition to exercises for consolidation and pertinent microcourse materials. Thirdly, students could use the platform to study the number of mistaken questions, watch microlesson films, and reinforce the mistaken questions. Otherwise, schools and teachers can see statistics and the usage of smart homework [18]. Consequently, a new type of homework has been implemented in China as a result of the double reduction policy. Compared with traditional forms of homework, students might benefit from smart homework that help them emphasize and solidify their errors, while schools and teachers can see the statistics of the smart homework, which can help them better understand the learning situation of the students.

4.3 Achieving a Diverse Education

In order to accomplish a diverse education, tutoring institutions are encouraged to change into more varied institutions by the double reduction policy, such as liberal arts courses, physical education, dance, and art [15]. Therefore, students have a wider choice of courses than just those subjects taught in schools. Moreover, students can relax and develop new skills through these diverse programs.

4.4 Reducing Chinese Students' Anxiety and Pressure

Among Chinese students, academic stress is more closely linked to poor mental health than it is in Western nations [10]. Academic strain is frequent among Chinese students, which may be related to the overemphasis on academic excellence in China, where admission to a prestigious college is the only path to success. In Wang et al.'s research, 28398 primary and secondary school students--14981 boys and 13417 girls--with an average age of 12.28 years were surveyed using an electronic questionnaire, they found that after the start of the double reduction policy, there was a significant decrease in the levels of depression and anxiety among these students [19]. These reductions were associated with sleeping for more than eight hours, a reduction in the amount of homework, participation in more leisure activities, more time spent with their parents, and a reduction in the academic stress. Therefore, from Wang et al.'s research, the double reduction policy has been effective in reducing anxiety and depression in adolescents, because of the longer sleeping hours, fewer homework assignment, more time spent on recreational activities, and more time spent with parents [19].

4.5 The Influence on Rural-urban Education Gap

While the implementation of the double reduction Policy

did control the number of private tutoring courses to some extent, irrespective of the policy, those who have the ability to afford the private tutoring courses will still provide it for their children, while those who cannot afford will be forced to stop private tutoring course due to the policy's enforcement [20]. Hence, it may lead to a wider disparity among urban and rural in terms of education, as families in urban regions tend to be more affordable than families in rural areas. Meanwhile, Xue and Makela stated that minority students and students in rural regions in China will be disadvantaged by the double reduction policy since Gaokao focuses on memorization skills, so practice tends to give students outstanding academic results [21]. Thus, the double reduction policy's control of homework will lead to less study time for minority and rural students, which will lead to less practice, and since most of them could not afford tutoring, their performance in Gaokao will drop, which will permanently marginalize them, causing an exacerbate in China's educational inequality. Thus, the start of the double reduction policy is unfavorable to the children from rural areas and minorities because parents in urban areas have enough financial capital to offer tutoring classes for their children regardless of the policy, thus increasing their competitiveness among their peers. However, compared to children in rural areas who will be forced to stop taking tutoring courses because of the policy. Moreover, the policy's control over homework will lead to a lack of practice and learning time for rural and minority children, which will lower their academic performance.

5. Evaluation

Although the double reduction policy alleviates the load of homework and extracurricular tutoring courses and relieves anxiety and pressure of students, its implementation raises the pressure on parents to a certain extent. Long periods of extracurricular tutoring were suddenly restricted, and it is impossible for students and parents to immediately change their minds about not accepting extracurricular tutoring [13]. Through Jin and Sun's research, the questionnaire surveyed the parents of Chinese middle school students. Due to the existence of high school examinations, the majority of parents still look for private tutors to guide their children because parents want their children to get into a high school so that their children have a possibility to get into a famous university [13]. As a result, the pressure on parents and students has not been completely alleviated by the implementation of the policy due to the fierce academic competition among Chinese students and the high expectations of parents for students' academic performance. Parents will continue to engage private tu-

toring for their children, their children's spare time will still be taken up by tutorials, while private tutors usually charge more, and parents will still feel stressed to invest in their children's education.

6. Recommendation

There is a widespread belief in China that the only path to success is to achieve academical success in order to be admitted to a prominent university, and this concept has deeply impacted generations of students, parents and teachers in China. According to Zhang's research, by reflecting on the double reduction policy, Chinese principals need to let parents and students understand the true meaning and core value of education, which is not just about admission to a prestigious university but about life-long learning. Meanwhile, a fair, equitable, and holistic education should also be promoted [22]. Therefore, the double reduction policy will be truly effective. It takes a long time to modify Chinese conceptions of education, it is challenging to change the ideas of Chinese parents, students, and teachers about education in a short period of time.

7. Conclusion

In summary, China's double Reduction Policy has given students more opportunities to receive a diversified education and has lessened their anxiety and stress through lowering the amount of homework and their reliance for tutoring courses. Moreover, smart homework generation has helped students improve their learning efficiency. However, the urban-rural education gap still exists, and rural and minority students may end up with unsatisfactory grades in the college entrance exams due to receiving the influence of the policy, whereas students in urban regions are more likely to continue to purchase private tutors to ensure that they are not affected. Therefore, the double reduction policy needs to be sensitive to the urban-rural education disparity and the pressure on students and parents caused by the deep-rooted Chinese education philosophy that emphasizes academic success.

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