

A Review of the Implementation Effect of the "Double Reduction" Policy in Beijing

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Abstract: This study examines the implementation of the "Double Reduction" policy in Beijing from four aspects: homework burden, off-campus training, after-school services, and teachers' workload. Findings show that the policy has achieved initial results, such as shorter home-work time, fewer training institutions, and wider after-school service coverage. However, challenges remain, including hidden homework, persistent parental anxiety, continued "shadow education," and increased pressure on teachers. To improve outcomes, the study recommends building a long-term mechanism by refining assessment systems, enhancing after-school service quality, strengthening teacher support, and guiding parents toward a rational view of education, aiming to promote both equity and quality in education.

1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the field of basic education in China has been confronted with severe challenges. Problems such as excessive academic burden on students, excessive expansion of the off-campus training market, and uneven distribution of educational resources have gradually emerged. Many primary and secondary school students spend far more time studying than the international average daily. Excessive homework time and high-intensity after-school tutoring have become common phenomena in students' growth process. This excessive educational competition not only affects students' physical and mental health, but also intensifies the economic burden on families, making the "score-only" approach dominant in society and causing widespread "educational anxiety" among parents. Meanwhile, the excessive intervention of the capital market in the off-campus training industry has led to the rapid expansion of subject-based training institutions, creating a trend of "intra-competition in after-school tutoring", which has further exacerbated the problem of educational inequality. Against this backdrop, in order to fundamentally address the issue of excessive academic burden on students, the government has introduced the "Double Reduction" policy, namely the "Opinions on Further Reducing the Homework Burden and Off-Campus Training Burden of Students

in the Compulsory Education Stage", which was officially released by the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and The General Office of the State Council in July 2021 (General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and General Office of the State Council, 2021). The core objective of the "Double Reduction" policy is to alleviate the homework burden and off-campus training burden on primary and secondary school students, to optimize the basic education ecosystem and promote educational equity. As one of the regions in China with the most concentrated educational resources, Beijing is not only representative in the implementation of the "Double reduction" policy, but also faces more complex challenges due to its high-density distribution of educational resources and a high-intensity educational competition environment. Therefore, this study takes Beijing as a case to explore the implementation effect of the "Double reduction" policy in this region. This article focuses on four aspects: the reduction of homework burden, the rectification of off-campus training institutions, the optimization of after-school services, and the adjustment of teachers' work. It systematically reviews the research on the implementation of policies in the existing literature and analyzes the impact of policies on different groups, such as students, parents, and teachers, in the actual implementation process. This study systematically

analyzes the current implementation status of the "Double Reduction" policy in Beijing, clarifies the policy's effectiveness and its impact on different groups, and provides a reference for future policy optimization. Meanwhile, pay attention to the new problems emerging in the implementation of the policy, such as "hidden homework", the shift of parents' educational anxiety, and the rise of "shadow education", which have significant impacts on the long-term effect of the policy. In addition, a comprehensive analysis of the successful experiences and shortcomings of Beijing's "double reduction" policy is conducted to provide references for other regions and offer empirical support for future educational reforms.

2 METHODS

This study mainly employs qualitative analysis to systematically sort out and comprehensively analyze the collected literature materials. Firstly, literature searches were conducted in Chinese and English databases such as CNKI and Google Scholar with keywords like "Double Reduction policy", "homework burden", "off-campus training", and "Beijing's education policy". Select CSSCI journals, core Chinese journals, authoritative journals in the field of education, and official policy documents issued by the government as the literature sources. Subsequently, thematic analysis was adopted for the selected literature to systematically code and classify the contents of the literatures from the perspectives of specific policy measures (homework burden, rectification of off-campus training, optimization of after-school services, adjustment of teachers' work) and different stakeholder groups (students, parents, teachers). Sort out the main viewpoints of the literature and the conclusions of empirical research. Finally, by using the method of inductive analysis, the author deeply explores and summarize the core themes that repeatedly occur in the existing research, distill the effects, existing problems and future research trends in the implementation of the "double reduction" policy in Beijing, and put forward corresponding research conclusions and suggestions.

3 RESULTS

The specific measures of Beijing's "Double Reduction" policy mainly involve four aspects, namely, reducing the burden of homework,

rectification measures for off-campus training institutions, optimization measures for after-school services, and adjustment measures for teachers' work:

3.1 Reduce the Workload

First, Beijing strictly implements the specific regulations on reducing homework burden in the "Double Reduction" policy, clearly stipulating that the daily written homework time for primary school students should not exceed 60 minutes, and for junior high school students, it should not exceed 90 minutes (Jing 2025). After the policy was introduced, schools in Beijing responded positively. By reducing mechanical repetitive tasks and promoting innovative forms of tasks such as stratified tasks, inquiry-based tasks and practical tasks, they attempted to truly reduce the burden from both the "quantity" and "quality" dimensions (He, 2025; Peng et al., 2025). For instance, existing literature has clearly pointed out that some high-quality schools in the Beijing area have begun to popularize the "stratified homework" model, that is, providing homework of different difficulty levels based on the ability differences of different students, which effectively improves the homework efficiency of students and avoids the repetition of simple and mechanical homework (Peng et al., 2025). In addition, some studies have found that the inquiry-based assignments promoted in some schools in Beijing (such as research projects and group collaborative projects, etc.) not only reduce the amount of homework but also improve students' autonomous learning ability to a certain extent, achieving relatively positive results initially (Peng et al., 2025). However, some studies have pointed out that there are still obvious deficiencies and problems in the implementation of measures to reduce the workload. For instance, after some schools reduced the total amount of homework, they assigned "hidden homework" in the form of online check-in tasks, extracurricular reading, etc., resulting in the actual academic pressure borne by students not truly decreasing (Wu and Wang 2024; Zhang 2024). After the reduction of homework, parents' concerns about their children's declining grades have intensified, and family education anxiety has instead shown an increasing trend to a certain extent (Wang, 2024).

3.2 Rectification Measures for Off-Campus Training Institutions

The "Double Reduction" policy in Beijing clearly stipulates strict supervision over off-campus training institutions for academic subjects, requiring that such

training must be transformed into non-profit organizations and not engage in capitalization operations or teaching beyond the curriculum, to curb the overheated education market and unfair competition (Wang and Huang, 2024). After the implementation of the policy, many off-campus training institutions for academic subjects in Beijing are facing closure or transformation. According to existing research findings, in the short term after the implementation of the policy, the scale of after-school training institutions shrank rapidly, which indeed alleviated the expenditure pressure of parents on after-school training (Zhao, 2024; Liu, 2024). However, relevant literature also points out that these rectification measures have brought about new problems, namely, the phenomenon of "shadow education" has begun to stand out: some parents have started to seek private tutoring, one-on-one online tutoring and small-scale high-end after-school tutoring. The after-school tutoring market has shifted from bright to dark, further highlighting the imbalance in the distribution of educational resources (Li, 2024).

3.3 Optimization Measures for After-School Services

To support the "Double Reduction" policy, the Beijing Municipal Government has clearly stipulated that schools in the compulsory education stage should provide free and diverse after-school services to extend students' time at school and meet their diverse learning needs (Xue and Li, 2024). Existing studies generally hold that after-school services have indeed alleviated the problem of parents taking care of their children before work hours to a certain extent and have provided a rich variety of extracurricular activities, including art, sports and technological innovation. The quality of after-school services and student satisfaction in some schools have also gradually improved (Xue and Li, 2024). However, the research also points out that the after-school services provided by schools in Beijing still have the problem of uneven quality. Some schools' after-school services are still limited to simple "self-study management" and have failed to effectively replace after-school tutoring, especially in areas with insufficient educational resources (Xue and Li, 2024).

3.4 Measures for Adjusting Teachers' Work

The "Double Reduction" policy in Beijing clearly regulates teachers' homework assignments, prohibits

teachers from assigning punitive and overly repetitive homework, and at the same time encourages teachers to improve classroom teaching efficiency through training and teaching research activities (Shen, 2024; Zhu, 2024). However, during the implementation of the policy, some studies have found that although most teachers recognize the positive value of reducing students' homework burden, in the specific implementation, many teachers have indicated that the pressure of classroom teaching has increased, teaching tasks have become more intensive, the pace of classroom teaching has significantly accelerated, and the teaching effect is difficult to guarantee (He, 2024). For instance, in the early stage of the policy implementation, some teachers in Beijing reported that due to the limitation of homework volume, the classroom teaching tasks were overly concentrated. They needed to ensure the teaching progress by compressing the classroom explanation time or reducing the interaction time with students. However, the actual working pressure did not ease but increased instead (He, 2024; Song and Xu, 2024). In addition, the policy has also increased the tasks and responsibilities of teachers in after-school care. The working hours of teachers have been significantly extended, which has also led to a certain degree of job burnout and dissatisfaction among some teachers (Song and Xu, 2024).

To sum up, in the process of implementing the "Double Reduction" policy, Beijing has achieved certain results in controlling homework burden, rectifying off-campus training institutions and providing after-school services. In particular, the significant reduction in homework volume and the popularization of after-school services in schools have effectively reduced the obvious academic burden on students and their families in the initial stage. However, many literatures have pointed out that there are still new problems in the implementation of policies, such as the actual learning pressure of students not decreasing but increasing, the intensification of parents' anxiety, the underground transfer of "shadow education", and the increased pressure on teachers in classroom teaching. These problems and challenges deserve continuous attention and in-depth study by future policymakers and researchers.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Limitations and Challenges

After systematically sorting out and analyzing the

relevant literature on the implementation effect of the "Double Reduction" policy in Beijing, this study found that although the policy has initially achieved the original intention of reducing the academic burden of middle school students, it has also shown relatively obvious limitations and challenges. Firstly, in terms of the reduction of homework burden, most studies show that the duration of written homework in primary and secondary schools in Beijing has significantly shortened after the implementation of the policy, and students' daily study time has decreased, especially in schools with better policy implementation. This point is widely recognized. However, the study also pointed out that some schools have the problem of superficial forms of homework. That is, although the total amount of homework has decreased, some "hidden homework" (such as additional reading tasks and online learning check-in tasks) has instead increased the burden of students' autonomous learning, resulting in the anxiety of some parents not being effectively alleviated. Secondly, relevant research on after-school services indicates that after the implementation of the "Double reduction" policy in Beijing, free after-school care services have been widely promoted, which, to a certain extent, has replaced the additional after-school tutoring needs of families. However, existing studies have also generally pointed out that the content and quality of after-school services in schools in Beijing vary significantly at present. Some schools still mainly focus on simple self-study and video-watching, failing to effectively meet the actual needs of parents and students, nor achieve the expected results of the policy. Furthermore, in the research on the rectification measures of the off-campus training market, it was found that although the supervision of subject-based training institutions in Beijing was strict and effective, and many institutions were forced to close or transform, the phenomenon of "shadow education" began to emerge and gradually emerged. Some studies have pointed out that high-income families conduct disguised tutoring through underground private tutors, small-scale high-end tutorial classes or online private education, etc., which leads to a more prominent imbalance of educational resources among different families. This phenomenon further strengthens the existing educational competition pattern and may bring about new issues of educational equity. Finally, in terms of adjusting teachers' work, Beijing's policies explicitly prohibit teachers from assigning punitive or excessive mechanical repetitive homework, while advocating that teachers enhance the efficiency and quality of

classroom teaching. Relevant research points out that although teachers generally recognize the positive orientation of this policy, many teachers report that the classroom teaching tasks, and work pressure have not been reduced. Instead, they feel more burdened due to the increased workload of after-school services. Teachers still face many difficulties in adapting to policy adjustments and need further support from government departments. Based on the above discussion, this review holds that the implementation of the "Double Reduction" policy in Beijing has made certain progress in reducing homework hours and regulating the training market. However, in terms of alleviating students' actual academic pressure, reducing parents' educational anxiety, and optimizing teachers' working conditions, further deepening of reforms is still needed.

4.2 Future Research

The optimization of the future "double reduction" policy should focus on establishing a long-term mechanism and strengthening supporting reforms. Specific measures include: improving the examination and evaluation system, reducing excessive focus on scores, emphasizing the evaluation of students' comprehensive qualities, and guiding parents and students to establish correct educational concepts; Enhance support for teachers' professional development, provide more training and resources for teachers, help them adapt to new teaching requirements, and improve the quality of classroom teaching; Strengthen the education and guidance for parents. Through forms such as parent schools and lectures, help parents understand the significance of the "double reduction" policy, alleviate educational anxiety, and create a favorable atmosphere of joint education between home and school. Through the above measures, the aim is to achieve a dual improvement in educational equity and quality, ensuring that the original intention of the "double reduction" policy is truly implemented.

5 CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the implementation effect of the "Double Reduction" policy in Beijing, systematically analyzing the policy implementation and its impact in four aspects: reduction of homework burden, rectification of off-campus training institutions, optimization of after-school services, and adjustment of teachers' work. The research finds that the policy has achieved certain results in the initial

stage, such as shortening the duration of homework, reducing the number of off-campus training institutions, and increasing the coverage rate of after-school services. However, multiple challenges are still faced in the process of policy implementation. Firstly, parents' educational anxiety has not been completely alleviated. Some parents are worried about their children's learning outcomes and turn to other forms of tutoring, leading to the emergence of the "shadow education" phenomenon. Secondly, some students have increased their self-study tasks due to the reduction in homework. However, due to the lack of effective guidance and supervision, it may lead to a decline in learning efficiency, further raising parents' concerns. In addition, the pressure on teachers in classroom teaching has increased. To complete teaching tasks within the limited class time, teachers need to improve classroom efficiency and design more targeted teaching activities, which invisibly increase their workload. The limitations of this study are mainly reflected in the following aspects: Firstly, the study is mainly based on the policy implementation situation in Beijing, lacking a comparative analysis of other regions, which may limit the universality of the conclusion. Secondly, the research mainly relies on the analysis of existing literature and lacks first-hand empirical data support, which may affect the reliability of the conclusion.

Future research should further expand the scope of the study and incorporate the implementation of the "double reduction" policy in other regions for comparative analysis to enhance the universality of the conclusion. Meanwhile, it is suggested to carry out empirical research and collect first-hand data to evaluate the actual effect of the policy more comprehensively. In addition, future research should also focus on the long-term impact of policy implementation, especially on students' academic performance, mental health and all-round development.

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