

Analysis of the Main Contradictions and Solutions in Achieving Educational Equity under China's "Double Reduction" Policy

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Abstract: This article aims to analyze the obstacles encountered by Chinese society in implementing the "double reduction" policy and the main contradictions in achieving educational equity, explore the new contradictions and problems brought by the "double reduction" policy to the education sector, and provide corresponding countermeasures for Chinese society, communities, families, and schools. It is hoped that this can improve the "double reduction" policy while eradicating the remaining irrationality in the Chinese education sector, enhance the level and quality of Chinese education, and develop an educational powerhouse. A comprehensive review was conducted through literature review, combined with knowledge in the fields of educational equity, educational policies, and comparative education. This article explores the four major contradictions behind the "double reduction policy" and proposes four guiding suggestions: balancing educational resources, optimizing the rationality of education and training, clarifying the responsibilities of families and schools, establishing a communication mechanism between families and schools, implementing a comprehensive evaluation system, strengthening the enrollment form of higher education, enhancing community resources, and improving community after-school services.

Keywords: "double reduction" policy, compulsory education stage, education equity.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research background

The "double reduction" policy, namely the "Opinions on Further Reducing the Homework Burden and Extracurricular Training Burden of Students in Compulsory Education Stage", is an important educational reform measure proposed in the current educational background [1]. The introduction of this policy has reduced students' homework and extracurricular training burdens, aimed at promoting educational equity, improving education quality, alleviating parental anxiety, and regulating the education market.

However, the implementation of the "double reduction" policy is currently not optimistic, and the desire to achieve educational equity is slowly being promoted due to factors such as hidden off campus training, differences in the quality of teachers in different schools, differences in the quality

of off campus services, and differences in regional implementation efforts [2]. Moreover, if the "double reduction" policy cannot be implemented reasonably and effectively, it may even create and exacerbate more educational inequality. The issue of educational equity today has entered an era of both opportunities and challenges under the guidance of the "double reduction" policy.

Therefore, researchers need to conduct an in-depth and effective exploration of the "double reduction" policy, identify the reasons for new educational inequality issues and implementation difficulties, and propose practical and feasible strategies for the implementation of China's "double reduction" policy and the resolution of educational inequality issues. If implementation strategies can be found, it may even eradicate many deep-rooted educational inequalities in China.

1.2. Research meaning

The significance of this study is mainly divided into theoretical significance and practical significance

1.2.1. theoretical significance

At the theoretical level, this study will enrich and improve the theoretical system of implementing the "double reduction" policy, supplement and revise existing theories, and fill the current research gap. By delving into the subjective and objective factors that affect the implementation of the "double reduction" policy, analyzing the various contradictions hidden behind it, this will better clarify the reasons for the educational inequality and implementation difficulties that exist and arise in China, and provide a solid theoretical foundation for subsequent implementation.

1.2.2. Practical significance

At the practical level, this study will propose more scientific and effective solutions to the problems existing in the implementation of the current "double reduction" policy, providing guidance for practical applications. This study has identified the obstacles encountered in the implementation of the "double reduction" policy and proposed solutions to promote more positive, reasonable, and effective policy implementation, thereby enhancing its value and application effectiveness in social practice.

2. Literature review

2.1. Current Status and Development Trends of Foreign Research

Since the 1990s, research on reducing academic workload in the United States has been focused on the relationship between the amount of homework and students' academic performance, and has concluded that excessive homework can have a negative impact on students' academic performance [3].

There are various views abroad on China's "double reduction" policy, but overall, most opinions believe that this policy has positive significance. Some analysts believe that China's "double reduction" policy aims to reduce students' homework and extracurricular training burdens, which protects students' rights, helps alleviate educational anxiety, and promotes educational equity and sustainable development [4]. Moreover, it plays an important role in regulating the education and training market, preventing excessive capital intervention, and ensuring the physical and mental health of students.

In addition, some viewpoints suggest that the "double reduction" policy can help reduce the cost of raising children, which may encourage childbirth. In the long run, this may have a positive impact on China's economic growth and social well-being. However, some argue that the implementation of

policies needs to take into account various factors, including parents' educational expectations, the quality of education in schools, and so on.

2.2. Current Status and Development Trends of Domestic Research

The implementation of the current "double reduction" policy has created a great contradiction with the problems left by the old system, and has triggered new challenges to educational equity. Domestic scholars have conducted extensive research on the practical process of the "double reduction" policy, identifying many difficulties and analyzing the reasons. This is the problem of hidden variation in subject based extracurricular training due to the overlapping effects of multiple factors; The existing education gap is an important cause of the widening gap in the quality of after-school services and teaching quality; The deviation in the implementation of the "double reduction" policy further exacerbates the gap in the quality of after-school services and teaching quality [5]. In terms of policy implementation, scholars Liang Jun and Han Hongfeng believe that the practice of the "double reduction" policy has encountered difficulties in implementation, supervision, and assessment, leading to the falsification of fairness in the starting point, process, and outcome of compulsory education [2], and the promotion of the "double reduction" policy has a single form and insufficient consideration of regional differences [6]. At the same time, the purpose of "double reduction" is to alleviate parental anxiety, but according to the research of scholars such as Zhu Liwen, because parents have high expectations for their children's learning, they also have high expectations for the implementation of "double reduction". However, the satisfaction with academic workload, teaching activities, and after-school services is generally average, which makes it difficult to alleviate the burden on children. However, children in compulsory education generally face problems such as generalized anxiety and implicit injustice [7-8]. Therefore, it can be seen that families, schools, and communities in China have not found a reasonable path to achieve after-school services, and have not formed a reasonable "home school community" integrated service, which has not effectively alleviated parents' anxiety about academic pressure. Secondly, another major purpose of the "double reduction" policy is to eliminate extracurricular tutoring institutions, but these institutions greatly increase the difficulty of elimination by making training invisible in forms such as "one-on-one tutoring" and "live in teachers".

Therefore, China urgently needs to accurately implement the implementation standards of the "double reduction" policy, strictly regulate the entire process of policy implementation, supervision, and management, and promote the rational supply of educational resources. Innovate the assessment system for the "double reduction" policy and improve efficiency. The following is the path suggestions proposed by scholars based on the survey: Chen Yanping and Zhao Qianqian proposed to strengthen the main battlefield of school education, deepen the governance of off campus training institutions, handle the relationship between on campus and off campus education, and build a good educational ecology to solve the current education chaos [9]. Secondly, scholars such as Su Jinfeng believe that for county-level administrative regions, it is necessary to clarify the various obstacles that the "double reduction" policy may encounter in the implementation process, and then work together with the government, society, and schools to promote educational equity. Due to the small administrative area and economic development differences at the county level, the number of schools is controllable, and most schools are in the compulsory education stage. The government and education management departments have less difficulty in coordinating policy guidance, school investment, teacher allocation, resource integration, education supervision, and other aspects, making it relatively easy to achieve educational equity [10]. Secondly, in the face of the significant urban-rural gap, rural schools need to gradually improve the salary system for teachers' after-school services, strengthen the construction of rural teaching staff, and build a shared platform for after-school services [11-12]. Thirdly, schools and communities should not only implement the "double reduction"

policy, but also prevent it from bringing new unfair issues to family education. The community should provide more social practice services for students, enrich extracurricular activities mainly based on schools, and implement a funding guarantee system to further enhance students' dominant position in education and promote educational equity in families [13-18].

2.3. Summary

Chinese scholars have conducted an in-depth analysis of the problems encountered during the implementation of the "double reduction" policy. Overall, there are some challenges and difficulties in the rise of invisible off campus training, the implementation of regulatory assessment processes, the quality of after-school services, teaching quality, and regional implementation. This is due to the complexity and diversity of early education issues in China. Moreover, in terms of implementation pathways, scholars have focused on the scope of families, schools, and society.

However, there are still some unresolved difficulties brought about by the "double reduction" policy.

3. The contradictions encountered by the "double reduction" policy in achieving educational equity

3.1. The contradiction of imbalanced supply and demand in educational tutoring

According to the policy of "double reduction", various regions in China have gradually reduced the number of educational and training institutions in various forms such as online and offline. However, based on field investigations and literature searches, it is clear that the form of educational and training institutions is undergoing changes. For example, many institutions have shifted to underground models, offering one-on-one tutoring and home-based tutoring; It is not uncommon for retired teachers to engage in private tutoring activities. This reflects the strong demand of parents for after-school education and training, which has been refuted by current policies, resulting in a large number of underground tutoring. And the teaching staff and standardization level of these underground tutoring institutions are far inferior to those of large regulated tutoring institutions. In addition, the "double reduction" policy places the focus of governance on off campus training, "comprehensively regulating off campus training behavior," and "strictly controlling excessive capital inflows into training institutions," with the aim of blocking differentiated education related to family capital provided by the off-campus training market from the source and eliminating the unfairness caused by off-campus training [3]. However, there are differences in educational resources, quality, and level between regions, and this phenomenon is particularly evident in China. The software and hardware conditions of schools in the same district or city can even vary greatly. Therefore, the demand of parents and students for extracurricular training institutions is due to the uneven allocation of existing educational resources in schools, and the adoption of training is also aimed at providing students with more "fair" educational resources through private channels. Therefore, due to the greater supply-demand imbalance caused by the "one size fits all" approach towards large training institutions, I believe it will lead to greater educational inequality.

3.2. The contradiction between the division of responsibilities for home school co education

The concept and practice of family school cooperation in China began in the 1950s and 1960s. On January 1, 2022, the "Law of the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of Family Education" was officially implemented, aiming to build a family education service system of "family responsibility, state support, and social coordination", promote the continuous development of family education, and fully demonstrate the importance that the country attaches to family education [19].

But so far, there is still no complete theoretical system to divide the responsibilities and obligations of parents and schools in student learning. The implementation of the "double reduction" policy not only reduces students' after-school learning pressure, but also inevitably opens up a new stage of home school co-education, and the problems of home school cooperation have gradually emerged during this period.

Firstly, there is a lack of clear sense of responsibility between parents and schools. Some parents believe that education is the responsibility of the school and shift the blame onto the school and teachers. Therefore, most home school exchanges are centered around students' academic performance, and parents often act as followers or even trainees, failing to reflect their dominant position [20]. As a result, the efficiency of home school co-education is low. However, teachers also lack a clear understanding of home school cooperation. The relationship between parents and schools should be a partnership, and both parties need to regularly understand and supplement each other's learning and living situations, rather than one party taking the lead. Teachers' understanding of home school co-education is not profound enough, and they only focus on students' exam scores. Only when students' academic performance declines or behavior problems are revealed, do parents practice discussing solutions instead of observing, discovering, and correcting them early. This not only delays the normal development of students, but also pushes the responsibility between parents and schools.

Secondly, the form of home school cooperation is superficial. At present, the forms of home school cooperation are still limited to parent open days, parent meetings, family committees, etc. Most of these are organized by schools for parents so they can come into the campus to observe and report on teaching achievements, without fully utilizing the main role of parents. The content of the parent teacher conference also only briefly evaluates the students' current situation around grades, discipline, and other aspects, and cannot let parents know the students' daily school status, mostly in a superficial form.

3.3. The contradiction between the "score only theory" and further education

The "double reduction" policy aims to alleviate the contradiction between educating people and entering a higher school faced by primary and secondary school students by addressing their homework burden and extracurricular training. But China's talent selection system has become deeply rooted, although a comprehensive evaluation system is now widely implemented, aiming to assess students' quality through multi-dimensional "morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor". But education and exams are parallel and complementary, and once the importance of exam scores is overly emphasized, it will stimulate the "score only" theory. When the evaluation based solely on scores becomes the main basis and standard for local education administrative departments to showcase their achievements, schools to gain fame and benefits, and teachers to be promoted, the main contradiction between promoting students' comprehensive development through quality education and improving students' grades through "exam-oriented education" will become apparent [21]. Therefore, if Chinese government only try to alleviate the deficiencies in the enrollment system by implementing policies, it can only be said to be a drop in the bucket, and it will actually backfire, making it difficult for students, parents, and teachers who truly comply with the "double reduction" policy to advance to higher education.

At the same time, Chinese parents have a significant misunderstanding and bias towards vocational education, and do not believe that vocational and technical colleges are a "dignified" path to further education. Therefore, it further promotes the "score based" approach, allowing students to "internalize" and obtain better distribution of educational resources in the eyes of parents.

3.4. The contradiction between community education resources and user groups

At present, the country attaches great importance to community education resources. The cultural and sports facilities in various communities in cities are complete, and many adults and left behind elderly people frequently use them, which can basically achieve the full utilization of resources. But the equipment, books, and activities for primary and secondary schools are not yet mature enough. Many community libraries are only open during student classes and not open during holidays and weekends, making it difficult for teenagers to share this high-quality public resource. Especially in third - and fourth tier cities, the phenomenon of idle resources is particularly evident. It is precisely because parents do not recognize or trust community education resources that more idle resources have emerged. At the same time, the situation in rural areas is even more pessimistic. Since the late 1990s, small-scale schools in rural areas have disappeared sharply. From 2000 to 2010, an average of 3 junior high schools, 63 primary schools, and 30 teaching points disappeared every day in rural areas across the country [22]. Rural primary schools and communities lack independent activity rooms, making it difficult to provide basic after-school services in the community.

4. Solution measures

4.1. Balance school teaching resources and optimize education and training reasonably

The Chinese government should vigorously support the education conditions in poverty-stricken areas, balance the teaching resources of schools between regions, and reduce the teaching gap. Not only should the teacher responsibility system be regularly promoted to encourage normal students and teachers to go to poverty-stricken areas to support teaching, but also by improving the welfare benefits of teachers in poverty-stricken areas, urban teachers can be attracted to flow to rural areas. Secondly, more financial support should be provided to poverty-stricken areas, and high-tech and intelligent devices should be introduced into impoverished rural campuses. Narrowing the gap through online courses, online classrooms, and other means, allowing students in impoverished areas to access more advanced teaching methods and content.

In terms of the control of disciplinary education and training institutions, government departments should actively listen to the opinions of the institutions, conduct background checks, and pay attention to the needs of parents before completely banning them. While complying with policy factors, it is also necessary to strike a balance between educational equity and educational demand, and redefine a reasonable and compliant educational standard. Different regions should flexibly implement policies based on their actual situations.

4.2. Establish a communication mechanism between home and school, clarify the responsibilities of home school education

Teachers should provide timely feedback to parents on students' learning status, learning tasks, etc. within the school, so that both parents and schools can always pay attention to students and put them at the center. It can also help parents understand the daily teaching content of teachers, forming a positive and mutually understanding relationship. At the same time, parents should also provide feedback on their students' homework and extracurricular activities after class, in order to form a closed loop and establish an effective communication mechanism between home and school.

The division of responsibilities for home school education can be organically combined with the communication mechanism between home and school. Parents, teachers, and schools should discuss and divide the responsibility system together, so that responsibilities are clearly and finely implemented to each party, in order to form a unified co-education system.

4.3. Implement the comprehensive evaluation system and enrich the forms of enrollment for further education

Although the examination system of middle and high school entrance exams has been deeply rooted in China, governments should gradually implement a comprehensive quality evaluation system, so that the comprehensive evaluation system runs through the learning evaluation process of students and occupies a certain percentage in the enrollment of students for further education. Parents, teachers, schools, and society should not only focus on students' final exam scores, but also pay attention to their growth process. Relevant policy researchers can first conduct comprehensive quality enrollment pilot programs in schools and universities with relatively complete comprehensive quality evaluations, and through evaluation, identify a fair and just enrollment form that can balance process education without losing integrity.

4.4. Enrich community education resources and improve after-school services in the community

After the implementation of the "double reduction" policy, communities should also strengthen their position as a major subject in education. Firstly, it is necessary to continuously improve the cultural and sports equipment in the community, especially by supplementing recommended reading books for compulsory education, creating a student after-school service center, and providing students with places for self-study, reading, and activities after class. Secondly, it is possible to establish good connections with nearby schools, preferably forming a "one-stop" service, making full use of the ample extracurricular time brought by the "double reduction" policy to enrich students' mental and experiential activities such as extracurricular practice, and cooperating with parents' off work time to allow students to safely and fully spend their after-school time. Finally, society should make good use of the publicity role of the community, expand the importance of promoting the "family school community", and encourage schools and parents to actively cooperate.

5. Conclusion

At present, it is the golden period for the implementation of the "double reduction" policy, and related issues and contradictions have emerged one after another. If the Chinese government can seize this opportunity for reform, it will have the chance to eliminate the unreasonable and unfair problems that still exist in the education system. Therefore, governments must attach importance to this policy change, balance educational resources between different regions, and tilt towards remote areas. Urgently promote intelligent teaching systems and software, improve the quality of school teaching, and narrow the education gap. Secondly, schools should take the opportunity to clarify the role and status of the home school community in the growth process of students, clarify responsibilities and obligations, and promote the improvement and implementation of relevant laws and regulations on family education. Teachers should also improve their teaching level and educational literacy, actively communicate and coordinate with parents, and innovate new forms of home school co-education. The community should play its due role in promoting and practicing, encouraging students to engage in social practice while also providing comfortable and sufficient activity rooms for students to study and rest. Finally, in response to the problems of "internal competition" and "anxiety" brought about by China's original enrollment system, the admission examination office should not act too hastily, as it is easy for people to take shortcuts and take advantage of opportunities. Therefore, it is possible to gradually promote and modify the rules through pilot projects and other means, in order to form a comprehensive education enrollment system that is most in line with China's educational situation and combined with comprehensive quality evaluation.

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