

Discussion on How to Realize Educational Equity in China from the Perspective of Double Reduction Policy

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Abstract. In order to solve many existing problems in society, the double reduction policy was promulgated by China's State Council in 2021. Before that, too much homework has seriously affected students' physical and mental health, while the after-school tutoring agencies not only increase the economic burden on families but also lead to vicious competition to a certain extent. After the double reduction policy was promulgated, off-campus tutoring institutions around the country were under standardized management, and schools also launched more services to meet the needs of students. Since then, school has once again become the primary place for students to learn. The above problems are the causes of educational inequality. Moreover, there are many other problems in China, such as the unequal distribution of educational resources among different regions, the inability of rural students to receive better education, and the social climate of "score is the only one". These problems continue to simmer, creating anxiety throughout society. Therefore, the implementation of the double reduction policy has come to the point of no delay. The social desire for such policies shows that students with different economic conditions can no longer get the same level of educational resources, and the current schools are also unable to meet the needs of students and parents. This paper explores the existing educational problems in China from various aspects by taking the double reduction policy as the starting point. And these problems are analyzed, so as to give constructive suggestions one by one.

Keywords: Double reduction policy; Education burden; Educational equality.

1. Introduction

For many students in primary and secondary education in China, 2021 has undoubtedly been a year full of changes. In July 2021, The State Council, China's cabinet, issued a document which proposing the concept of "double reduction". The "double reduction" means to reduce too much homework or to reduce extracurricular tutoring [1]. The document mainly provides guidance on how to reduce students' academic pressure and how to standardize extracurricular tutoring institutions and other aspects. Since then, China's education has come to a new period.

In order to understand the influences of double reduction policy and the relationship between double reduction policy and educational equity, this paper collects various data and literature. Based on the analysis of the current educational environment, this paper also explores the significance and impact of the double reduction policy.

In recent years, Chinese primary and middle school students are under great pressure from schoolwork. Their spare time, especially their sleep time, has been seriously insufficient. After class, most students need to attend extra classes or finish too much homework [1].

This phenomenon has already occurred, including affecting the physical health of students on primary and secondary schools who are in the developing stage, the disruption of the market by unqualified tutoring institutions, and even affecting the equity of education. Extra-curricular tutoring is a complementary learning behavior that helps students improve their scores. In international academia, it is often referred to as Shadow Education.

The expenditure on education varies from student to student, no matter among students of different levels or from different regions. Research shows that the participation rate of students in public schools is higher than that of students in private schools, and the participation rate of students in rural schools is only half that of students in urban schools.

The economic level of the family is an important factor affecting the participation rate of extracurricular learning. In some way, it can be said that extracurricular tutoring behavior is different from the original intention of compulsory education. It has even hindered educational equity by affecting students from different classes of families [3]. Moreover, Before the implementation of the double reduction policy, excessive homework has seriously affected the physical and mental health of students, while off-campus tutoring institutions not only increase the economic burden of families but also lead to vicious competition to a certain extent. And these problems are the causes of educational injustice [4].

In order to improve the phenomenon, The China State Council issued a relevant document in July 2021, and the "double reduction policy" has been implemented since then. More than a year after the implementation of this policy, based on the collected information and literature, this paper explores the effects of the double reduction policy from the perspective of educational equity. As soon as the double reduction policy was introduced, primary and secondary schools across the country were undoubtedly affected. From students to parents, from teachers to tutorial institution, everyone is affected by it, and everyone has their own ideas [5].

The research of this paper includes the current social situation the impact after the implementation of the policy, and how to promote the development of education equity. In particular, education equity, which has been a concern for policy makers and the general public. Through this research, this paper hopes to take the double reduction policy as the starting point, and put forward some meaningful suggestions on how to further improve the double reduction policy and how to promote the development of educational equity.

2. The analysis of the status quo of education in China and correspondent

2.1 The background of the double simplification policy

On July 24, 2021, the General Offices of the CPC Central Committee and The State Council issued a document entitled "Opinions on Further Reducing the burden of homework and outside school Training for Students in compulsory Education". All regions and departments across the country are required to earnestly implement the contents of the document in light of actual conditions. In August of the same year, the decision-making department issued a notification again, preparing to inform the provinces of the progress of the "double reduction" work every two months. Since then, the double reduction policy has been officially implemented. "Double reduction" refers to reducing excessive "homework burden" and excessive "outside school training". Take a 2019 study of primary school students in Shanghai as an example. The results show that, first, primary school students generally lack sleep time. As the curriculum and homework are more difficult, pupils generally have a greater learning pressure. Second, there are group differences in the schoolwork burden of primary school students. Compared with students in township schools, students in urban schools have a heavier school workload. Thirdly, the Outside school tutoring has become an important factor affecting pupils' schoolwork burden. Primary school students in the process of outside school learning positive emotion is less, negative emotion is obvious [1]. Research data show that in recent years, adolescent students generally have decreased physical fitness, increased myopia rate, frequent psychological problems. This shows that the excessive academic burden has seriously affected the physical and mental health of students. Not only that, the parents of the students also generated serious anxiety. In order to make their children's grades better, parents not only need to pay time and energy, but also bear more financial burden. As a result, more social problems arise, which show that "homework burden" and "excessive after-school tutoring" are detrimental to students and parents [2].

The above is an analysis of the necessity of the "double reduction policy" from the perspective of students and parents. Next, it is necessary to analyze it from the perspective of society. From the social point of view, too much extracurricular tutoring is also one of the causes of vicious competition among students. A large range of extracurricular training will even affect the authenticity of the examination evaluation results. This is not only detrimental to the cultivation of innovative talents,

but also detrimental to the establishment of correct value orientation [3]. This is also the focus of this study: the reasons that hinder educational equity in China, and the methods to promote educational equity in China.

2.2 The status quo of education in China

Before discussing these questions, it is necessary to have a certain understanding of the current situation of China's educational environment. Compared with other countries, the degree of educational opportunity inequality of Chinese students is at a high level. In particular, compared with other East Asian and Southeast Asian countries that also belong to the Confucian cultural circle, China has a higher level of inequality [4]. However, according to a research report from 2003 to 2019, whether it is at the national level, the regional level, or the gender perspective, the level of educational inequality in China is generally declining. From a regional point of view, the improvement in the western region is better than that in the northeast, which in turn is better than the central region. In recent years, the unfair situation of women's education has been improved to a large extent, but compared with men, women are still treated more unfairly [5].

The above is an analysis of educational equity from the perspective of region and gender. However, research has shown that after-school tutoring, to some extent, is also a clear manifestation of educational inequity. Research shows that the amount of time students spend in school can reflect the level of inequality. If students have limited time at school, some students will go to after-school classes to study. For students from disadvantaged families, they invest less time in after-school tutoring and spend less money than students from better economic conditions. Therefore, the greater the difference in family economic conditions among students, the more obvious the increase in the degree of inequality among students [6]. It can be seen that excessive course load will affect the physical and mental health of students and parents, affect the social climate, and hinder the realization of educational equity.

2.3 Major Current Issues

All these problems reflect the inequity of education in China. In order to solve these problems, we first need to analyze the causes of the problems, so as to suit the remedy to the case.

First of all, a large number of students take part in after-school tutoring, which shows that families have diverse needs for education. These needs include individualized development of the child and the desire to improve grades. School ends too early for parents to take care of their children. Even some children do not want to participate in the remedial activities, but the classmates around them to participate, they have to join in. Therefore, the first point is that schools improve themselves so as to meet the needs of parents and students [7].

Secondly, there are two kinds of outside school tutoring, one for interest training and the other for improving scores. Most students take part in tutoring which could improve their grades. With the implementation of Project 985 and Project 211, the division between universities has become more and more obvious, and parents all want their children to enter "good universities". The research shows that the participation rate of rural students in the remedial classes to improve their performance is only half of that of urban students, while the participation rate of interest-oriented class is even only 1/5 of that of urban students. Due to the limitations of family economic ability, students from low-income families have fewer opportunities to take remedial courses. In this game, they will be the first to be eliminated, thus losing more educational opportunities [7].

Thus, the third problem also emerges, that is, there is a kind of thinking in modern society that "grades are the most important" and "high degree is the most important". Because of this, so many parents and students are anxious and choose to attend after-school tutoring to improve their grades. And there is a common idea in society that people who do not get good grades are failures, and those who do not get into "good universities" have no future. However, "educational equity" does not mean that every student is admitted to a "good university", but gives them equal opportunities so that they can make independent choices [7]. Whether students pursue academic studies or master a craft, they

are the ones who have made the "right choice." Whether they go to college or vocational school, children can have a bright future. The most important thing is to change the environment that is now going in the wrong direction. Whether students pursue academic studies or master a skill, they are all the ones who have made the "right choice." Whether they go to universities or vocational schools, they all could have promising futures. The most important thing is to change the environment that is now going in the wrong direction.

On the whole, the current Chinese education in the starting point, process and results show a certain unfairness. Among them, the more prominent contradictory factors are the gap between urban and rural areas, class gap, gender difference, ethnic difference and so on. Generally speaking, the educational fairness of disadvantaged groups needs to be guaranteed. Specifically, it includes the education in rural areas, the education of migrant workers' children, and the education in ethnic minority areas [8].

For these disadvantaged students, in order to narrow the gap with other students, educational administrations and schools need to provide them with diversified extracurricular tutoring.

2.4 Policies and methods

In order to improve these problems, the Chinese government has formulated and implemented many policies, including double reduction. In these documents, the amount of homework, school services, training institutions and other issues of public concern have been put forward to improve the methods [9]. The first is to meet the needs of students. A year after the double reduction policy was implemented, primary and secondary schools across China have rolled out after-school services. Research has shown that this policy measure can help reduce inequalities in educational opportunities. Of course, to improve this situation, schools need not only to extend the time of students at school, but also to improve themselves. Both teaching facilities and teachers need to be guaranteed [6].

The second is to weaken the status quo of unfair educational resources. The most effective way to solve this problem is to try to make the starting line the same for every child. It is important to weaken the distinction between "good" and "bad" schools, like by rotating good teachers between different schools. For example, on August 25, 2021, Beijing Municipal Commission of Education announced that Beijing would vigorously promote cadre teachers' teaching rotation in different schools [3].

The third is to do well in education streaming. In a report, it was clearly pointed out that current students' ability to adapt to society and start businesses is not strong. Innovative, practical and compound talents are in short supply. In 2019, The State Council issued a report titled "Modernization of Education in China 2035," which clearly stated that the country should promote the coordinated development of secondary vocational education and regular high school education. The proposals of these policies have all reflected the training of special and skilled talents is a general trend of educational development in our country [10].

Based on the above survey the background and target of the double reduction policy have been clearly pointed out, and the status quo of educational equity in China has also been analyzed to some extent. In order to further promote the development of education in China, it is necessary to solve the problems of high academic pressure on students, inequitable distribution of educational resources and cognitive bias in society.

3. Conclusion

In this research, the antecedents and consequences of the double reduction policy, some major problems existing in China's education, and how to promote the development of China's education sector are focused on.

A survey was carried out after the double reduction policy was implemented. The results show that more than 71 percent of respondents believe that educational resources will be more balanced in the future; About 70 percent said they would pay more attention to comprehensive quality education; About 62 percent of respondents believe vocational education will become a new option. In short, the

purpose of these policies such as "double reduction" and "school suspension order" is to return education to its essence [8].

Objectively speaking, take the double reduction policy as an example, any policy may be beneficial to some people and disadvantageous to others. For those students from poor families, they have more opportunities to learn than before. But for some students from better families, they may think that it will reduce their chances for extra study. However, for the country and society, excessive tutoring creates a large gap between students, which leads to conflicts and panic. This is also a waste of resources, which is not conducive to cultivate innovative talents [9].

From this, some suggestions for further realization of educational equity in the future can be inferred. First of all, strengthen the management of the school, promote the further development of the school, so as to keep up with the changing needs of students. For example, diversified and personalized training for students. For parents who do not have time to care for their children, the school day for students can be extended.

The second is to ensure that educational resources can be reasonably allocated. Such as making full use of the Internet, providing "second classroom" and other services. Or dilute the idea of "good schools" by keeping them mobile with good teachers. Relevant policies should be formulated for vulnerable groups such as remote areas, ethnic minorities and children of migrant workers to ensure that they will not be denied the opportunity to study due to objective reasons.

Finally, it is necessary to ensure the simultaneous training of academic and technical talents, reverse the misconception of the society on "score first", and enable students to choose the career they are really interested in in the future. The research of this paper shows that in order to develop China's education, many existing problems must be solved first. To some extent, the double reduction policy can alleviate some existing problems. But in the future, all sectors of society still need to work together from all aspects. That is to say, the double reduction policy does not mean that the problem has been solved, but means the beginning of solving the problem.

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