

# *The Dilemmas and Causes of After-School Tutoring Under China's Double Reduction Policy*

YUEJIA YIN<sup>1,a,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Management, Shandong University, 27 Shanda South Road, Licheng District, Jinan City, Shandong Province, China (250100)

a. yuejia@mail.sdu.edu.cn

\*corresponding author

**Abstract:** This paper reviews the dilemmas and causes of the double reduction policy, which aims to reduce the burden of students' homework and the burden of out-of-school training on students. However, the policy faces some dilemmas in the process of implementation, such as the consequences of lower teacher subsidies, difficulties in teacher competency, insufficient teacher motivation, and fewer teachers, which lead to lower quality of after-school services, as well as consequences of the lack of family education responsibilities caused by parents' over-reliance on school education. This paper will review what scholars have proposed as This paper will review the reasons for these dilemmas and propose solutions to address the causes of these dilemmas.

**Keywords:** Double reduction, After-school tutoring, Teachers, Home education

## 1. Introduction

Parents are always worried their children will lose out at the starting line, so they enroll their children in many extra-curricular classes. However, children's homework burden is heavy children. They are overwhelmed with the work they have to do at school and in extra-curricular classes. This may cause students to sleep late and make them sleepy in class. On the other hand, off-campus training is overheated, and there is a more serious problem of over-prescription and over-standard training, some off-campus training programs charge high fees, and there is a greater risk of excessive capital influx, and training institutions are "difficult to refund fees" and "run away with the money "These problems have led to several problems with students' homework and out-of-school training. These issues have resulted in an excessive amount of homework and extracurricular activities for kids, as well as an excessive financial and energy load for parents, substantially undermining the positive societal effects of education reform and development. To solve these problems, the General Offices of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council released guidelines on 24 July 2021 on how to further reduce the load of homework and extracurricular activities on students in compulsory education. This paper will review the causes of these dilemmas and propose solutions.

When reviewing the similar policy related to "Double Reduction Policy in other countries such as Korea, at the end of the 1960s, South Korea introduced a balanced and standardized education. It is aimed to achieve maximum uniformity and equity based on improving the quality of education and the reform of the junior and senior high school admissions system. It is also aimed to reduce students' academic pressure. In the late 1960s, the Korean government began to consider a series of plans to

control and outlaw private schools. In the early 1980s, a severe crackdown on non-school training establishments was initiated. The South Korean government established more than 30 "extra-curricular training inspection teams," which were to pick up and crack down on extra-curricular training institutions across the country. However, this series of initiatives to reduce the pressure on primary, middle, and high school education has not been effective due to the existence of the mark-based entrance examinations. The various forms of private out-of-school training have not ceased but have even become more covert and exclusive to the wealthy, with prices soaring due to the risks involved and the high demand for tuition. In light of this, lower and middle-class families made strong calls for the government to reopen out-of-school training institutions and even went to the streets to raise their voices for the right to education. By the 1990s, the ban on out-of-school training institutions was almost dead, and almost all high school students were enrolled in extra-curricular classes, which ended 30 years of failed attempts to 'double down.

## **2. Reasons for the Low Quality of After-school Services**

In this section, this paper would summarize seven underlying reason of "Double Reduction Policy," including "Low teacher's allowance," "Inadequate teacher capacity," "Inadequate teacher capacity," "Low teacher motivation," "Lower number of teachers," "Schools cope with work," and "Lack of family education".

### **2.1. Low Teacher's Allowance**

This section will introduce the insufficient after-school tutoring subsidy, which is not enough to compensate teachers for the time and effort they put in. In July 2021, a teacher reported receiving only \$42 or less than 40 cents a day for a semester of more than 100 days. Also, there are lots of previous studies mentioning the low salary of teachers, especially under the background of the "Double Reduction Policy" [1]. Song and Zhou analyzed this reason as one of the challenges for the schools' development [2]. However, Huang found this from the teachers' perspectives that those primary school teachers got tired of this workload because of the unfair payment. Lastly, Zhou and Xing summarized this as one of the heated topic in 2020, which should be paid attention to [3]. This paper would argue that this low salary for teachers is not enough to compensate for the time and effort they put in and may discourage them from tutoring after school.

### **2.2. Inadequate Teacher Capacity**

The following section will introduce inadequate teacher capacity, which is harmful to teachers. Zhao Qiang, Wang Lili and He Yuhong argue that teachers who are responsible for teaching subjects, in general, are not competent enough to carry out quality extra-curricular activities in the face of demands for a wide variety of science, sports, arts, labor, reading and interest groups. In addition to this, I believe that the underlying reasons for the popularity of extra-curricular classes are (1) the difference between what is taught in school and what is tested, and the fact that teachers are unable to teach many advanced courses to students, given their different foundations and the limited time available in the classroom. However, if you only focus on the textbook basics, it is difficult for students to cope with a large number of questions and the complexity and flexibility of the selection tests. This will reduce parents' reliance on extra-curricular classes and allow them to focus on their children's school work. (2) Some students who have difficulty in keeping up with the classroom need to attend extra-curricular classes to keep up with the teacher's lectures. If the teacher can help these children by patiently answering their questions during homework help time, encouraging them, and helping them to build up their confidence in learning, these children will gradually become independent of extra-curricular classes [4].

### **2.3. Low Teacher Motivation**

The inadequate teacher capacity that mentioned above might also cause low teacher motivation. This section will describe the reasons why teachers are less motivated to work, and the negative effects have on teachers' health and the quality of after-school services. Zhao Qiang, Wang Lili and He Yuhong believe that teachers have to provide after-school services after completing their normal teaching duties. Their restricted rest time diminishes their motivation to work. In the long run, the teaching profession may become less attractive. If instructors are subjected to mental and physical strain for an extended length of time, their physical health and teaching quality may suffer [4].

### **2.4. Low Number of Teachers**

With the decreasing of teacher motivation, the number of teachers has reduced yearly. This section will introduce a lower number of teachers, which may be hard to ensure the quality of the after-school class. Zhao Qiang, Wang Lili and He Yuhong argue that there is no surplus of instructors in primary and secondary schools anywhere, particularly in distant regions where there is a severe shortage. Teachers are already overloaded with teaching work, and some of them even have to juggle multiple classes at the same time during after-school services, which is physically and mentally exhausting and makes it difficult to ensure quality [4].

### **2.5. Schools Cope with Work**

After reviewing from the perspectives of teachers, school is also an important component of this policy. This section will introduce the negative effect of how schools cope with the work. Li Guanghai and Li Hailong Individual schools turn after-school extended service hours into regular classes out of the mentality of coping with inspections from higher levels, and students are unable to complete their after-school homework for the day as usual after the extended service ends, instead of being burdened with an extra class [5].

## **3. Lack of Family Education**

This section will introduce the reason why family education is lacking and the negative effects that this phenomenon leads to. Zhao Qiang, Wang Lili and He Yuhong argue that some parents have a misunderstanding load reduction and after-school services and that schools, because of their official attributes as public institutions, make parents feel more comfortable with after-school services in schools, and to a certain extent become the "ideal place" for parents to reduce their load, leading to an excessive transfer of family education functions and parental educational responsibilities. The wrong idea that education in school is enough for children may make parents transfer their responsibility for family education, which will have bad influence on children [4].

## **4. School Level: Curricularisation of After-school Services**

Schools can optimize their after-school services from the perspective of curriculum and operation and provide students with basic, distinctive, and personalized after-school services, supplemented by off-campus public service and paid services. Schools can develop various after-school service models, such as "1+X+Y" service courses within the school, off-campus service courses and study tour courses, etc. In practice, after-school services are also implemented in groups.

#### 4.1. “1+X+Y” Service Courses on Campus

This section will describe how schools implement "1+X+Y" service courses on campus policy. Li Jialei, Chen Huijuan and Liu Yiyang consider that after-school services can be provided on a voluntary basis, providing students with personalized educational resources and teacher guidance. When the Opinions were first promulgated, many regions proposed a "5+2" model of after-school services based on the experience of pilot cities (i.e. after-school services) are provided in schools five days a week for at least two hours a day in compulsory education. Schools combine their cultural heritage with their own to develop excellent after-school programmes, using the "1+X" and "1+X+Y" after-school programme models. In the "1+X+Y" after-school service programme, "1" refers to classroom tutorials, providing guidance and answering questions for students to ensure the quality of their homework, as well as solving practical problems such as parents' difficulties in picking up and dropping off students, difficulties in homework tutorials, students being forced to attend off-campus training and overweight school bags. The school also provides guidance and advice to students to ensure they complete their homework. "X" is a school-based curriculum based on the school's characteristics and features, which students can choose and study according to their interests. "Y" is a club activity, mostly after-school or in the activity room, but some "Y" courses are set up to enhance students' professional and special skills or personalised services. "Some Y courses charge a fee for the course and provide the corresponding services [6].

##### 4.1.1. Development and Use of Off-campus Service Courses

This section will describe how schools can fully use off-campus service courses. Mu Min proposes that to make up for the large gap between the supply of teachers and the demand for teachers after the "double reduction" of the after-school service channel and to reduce the workload of teachers, the education administration should put teachers in place by the national establishment standards. Primary and secondary schools are required to allocate teachers in a reasonable and balanced manner and encourage school staff, such as teaching assistants and administrative staff, to actively participate in after-school services as lead teachers or tutors for after-school services. Teachers from outside schools retired teachers, qualified social professionals, or volunteers who are passionate about education and have special skills and abilities to perform after-school services may also be employed to share the pressure with subject teachers. During the provision of after-school services, schools should make full use of on-campus resources, such as classrooms, libraries, playgrounds, sports halls, activity centers, laboratories, etc. They should also make full use of social resources, such as youth palaces, science and technology centers, museums, art galleries, sports venues, and other public cultural service venues, as well as social resources around the school, such as museums, exhibition halls, libraries, science popularisation bases, sports venues, etc. In rural areas can go to agricultural demonstration bases and modern agricultural demonstration parks, and those close to enterprises can go to enterprises. Therefore, it is necessary to use social and educational resources to enrich students' after-school activities.[7]. However, Huang Xiaoling believes that in addition to introducing offline quality curriculum resources, schools can also introduce online quality curriculum resources such as the national primary and secondary school network cloud platform, primary and secondary school "classroom in the air," sports, arts, and technology education activities platform, thematic education network platform, etc., to expand the learning content of after-school services. Non-disciplinary educational mobile application resources developed by relevant social organizations will be made available to schools free of charge after filing and auditing to provide appropriate support for students' personalized learning. Huang Xiaoling is concerned that the quality of after-school services varies greatly between schools and regions, depending on factors such as the total supply and distribution of resources. Localities are also actively taking measures to favor rural areas and disadvantaged

schools in terms of payment guarantees for after-school services and government purchases of educational services to guarantee optimal resource coverage [8]. Yang Dejun, Huang Xiaoling, Zhu Chuanshi, Fan Jiawu and Yu FaBi argue that the current after-school service has a relatively single curriculum content, mainly focusing on arts and sports, science and popularization, labor and other areas, and should promote the overall articulation and coordination of the after-school curriculum, provide reference and specific guidance on the overall arrangement of the curriculum, and start from improving the comprehensive cultivation system of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor, and enrich the supply of after-school service in terms of quantity, quality [9]. In addition, Yang Dejun, Huang Xiaoling, Zhu Chuanshi, Fan Jiawu and Yu FaBi suggest that schools should strictly control the quality of the curriculum, standardize access audits, and audit the categories, content, teachers, teaching and learning materials and related curriculum resources of after-school service courses. Regional monitoring should also be strengthened, and the supervision of schools' after-school programs should be increased to provide dynamic monitoring and guidance on the supply and implementation of after-school service programs and safety and security. An evaluation mechanism involving students, teachers, parents, schools and government departments can be set up to evaluate and provide feedback to promote the continuous improvement and healthy development of after-school programs [9].

#### **4.1.2. Group Operation of After-school Services**

This section will describe how to develop intra-group school cooperation and what benefits group schooling can bring. Li Jialei, Chen Huijuan and Liu Yiying argue that group schooling is a way to integrate the teaching strengths of multiple schools from the perspective of school education with a large and systematic teaching system and to achieve resource sharing and unified management in the operation of after-school services. In the case of the Shougang University Affiliated Middle School Group, for example, under the group schooling model, Shougang University Affiliated Middle School has unified management in terms of teaching philosophy, management methods and educational research activities, and shared resources in terms of management, teachers and equipment, for example, the team of teachers from Capital Normal University and Shougang University Affiliated Primary School have had in-depth exchanges and played an important role in improving teachers' business [6].

#### **4.2. Improve the Status and Treatment of Teachers to Strengthen Logistical Support**

This section will introduce some suggestions about how to improve the status and treatment of teachers and how to strengthen logistical support. Mu Ming proposes to increase teachers' salaries and benefits, improve their social status, strengthen the protection of their logistical services, improve their quality of life, relieve the pressure on their survival and increase their motivation to work. When approving the total amount of performance pay, the relevant departments should consider the nature of after-school services, fully consider teachers' participation in after-school services, and include the amount of funding for teachers' after-school service subsidies as incremental to performance pay and establish corresponding items. Teachers' performance in participating in after-school services and exchange rotations should be taken into account as an important reference for title evaluation and commendation and reward to protect teachers' labor rights effectively. Attention should be paid to teachers' living standards and practical difficulties, and long-term mechanisms to help teachers resolve practical living difficulties should be actively explored. Attention should be paid to and reasonable solutions to problems such as long commuting times arising from teachers' participation in exchange rotations. For example, the distance between the teacher's residence and the rotation school and transport factors should be included in consideration of teacher rotation, and lunch break

dormitories should be provided for teachers with long commuting time in the morning and evening. It is important to pay attention to the physical and mental health of teachers and actively explore ways to provide better health services for them. For example, in addition to regular annual medical check-ups, the physical and mental health of teachers can be safeguarded by offering medical and health talks, gyms and sports camps, etc., to solve the worries of teachers who are dedicated to teaching and educating [7]. Cai Tian suggested in a survey of six pilot districts of primary and secondary school teachers in Beijing that in response to the poor performance of teachers, the Beijing government has slowed down the pace of the rotation policy and 'reduced the pace' by implementing 'same-district' or 'intra-group' rotations, considering the actual life and work adjustment of teachers in the renewal of the teacher rotation system. An analysis of the means and differences in teachers' willingness to improve after the policy tilt also shows that teachers are more likely to recognize a reasonable financial allowance and a preference for their title [10]. Zhang Rongfei and Tian Liangchen also believe that schools should include teachers' after-school service workload and the quality of after-school education in evaluating teachers' titles and salary subsidies and provide teachers with a moderate compensation mechanism to enhance their motivation [11]. Yang Dejun, Huang Xiaoling, Zhu Chuanshi, Fan Jiawu, Yu Fabi believe that schools can improve the precision of school management, develop rules for teachers' after-school service work arrangements, workload recognition, and performance assessment, standardize work tasks, hours and requirements, pay attention to the scientific nature of after-school service course content and time arrangements, pay attention to the correlation between teachers' in-class and after-school course work, and reduce inefficient and repetitive work [9].

### 4.3. Home-school Level

This section will describe what parents need to do to improve the quality of their home education. Zhao Qiang, Wang Lili and He Yuhong believe that parents should realize the importance of home education, pay attention to it, raise awareness of home-school cooperation, take the initiative to participate in school education management, focus more on their children's overall quality and ability development, pay attention to information released by teachers on public websites and other platforms, keep abreast of students' performance and learning progress at school, and read more articles about We also read articles on family education to educate our children more scientifically [4].

## 5. Conclusions

In this review, the researcher analyses the reasons for the difficulties faced by the double reduction policy, mainly the low quality of the after-school services; the low quality of the after-school services refers to the single content and form of the after-school services; The main solution solutions that this paper proposed are 1) improve the quality of curricularisation of after-school services 2) improve the status and treatment of teachers to strengthen logistical support 3) enhance home-school cooperation; the teacher's allowance refers to the teacher's stipend and subsidy, which is appropriate compensation for the labor and living expenses of the teacher under special working conditions, in this case, after-school tutoring. It is a form of compensation that supplements the salary. In the future, it is hoped that with the joint efforts of the government, the school, and the family, students will be able to choose their favorite after-school activities according to their interests, develop their hobbies, make friends with like-minded people, and broaden their horizons. In the process, students can develop their hobbies, make friends with like-minded people, broaden their horizons and think about problems in practice.

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