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Chengdu Primary and Secondary Schools under the Policy of "Double Reduction"

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Abstract

China's "double reduction" education policy is a relatively new statewide movement. There is still a gap in understanding of the policy, such as expectations and the empirical research due to the early stages of policy implementation. This study identifies the cognitive structure of the policy and uses the existing literature for implications that relate to the two goals of "double reduction" – reduce workload both at school and external tutoring. In addition, it identifies some of the concerns at the preliminary stage of implementation in schools, using the content analysis of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2022) and interviews with relevant stakeholders. The findings identify education ecology and student centralism as essential concepts in a double reduction for guiding behavioural commitments for improving students' quality of life in the educational process. Aside from document content analysis and in-depth interviews, the 306 valid survey return provides statistical evidence that demonstrates four key predictors that influence student workload reduction and off-campus workload reduction: exam pressure reduction, increased homework accuracy, improved work content rationality, and decreased extracurricular training. This study suggests a theoretical structure for future survey-based research and a questionnaire design based on the research findings. The current literature clarifies the findings, positions them, and offers theoretical and practical consequences.

Keywords: *Double reduction education policy, China.*

1. Introduction

China's recent implementation of the "double reduction" education policy sets the context for this study. Since the formation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Wiseman and Huang (2011) stated that Chinese educational policy had undergone dramatic reforms and reversals. Overall, educational policies reflect and align with domestic and global trends, as evidenced in policies to meet the demands of a more market-oriented economy and knowledge-based society (Megnigbeto, 2010). Various researchers have cast varied intellectual light on difficulties concerning educational policy implementation. Rawolle (2013) examines expectations and relationships in a policy context through the lens of a social contract, emphasizing, for example, that schools "play a vital role in promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual, and aesthetic development and wellbeing" (p. 54) of students. As a result,

research should focus on curriculum transformation and social contract issues. Rawolle (2013) recognizes that the emotional theme such as workload stress is a rare topic of discussion in the educational policy set.

Furthermore, Rawolle (2013) contributes from the standpoint of a social contract which requires all people to have general reciprocal obligations. The contract-like processes reveal new information on accountability to meet particular expectations and the relationships between people's dyads in regulated service providisions. Emotion is a prevalent socio-psychological phenomenon, and policymakers and practitioners can use it as an indicator to investigate many elements of teachers', students', and administrators' lived experiences, resulting from new policy requirements. Resistance to educational reform is one example of a potential obstacle. For example, despite concentrated efforts, decentralization measures in any educational institution are frequently adopted due to resistance (Wiseman and Huang, 2011).

China has implemented many educational policies and methods of implementation. Xiao and Meier (2011), for example, discuss the benefits of using technology to achieve more ambitious educational policy goals. In China's education policy reforms, technology is critical. In the past, the Chinese government has implemented four stages of technology adoption in schools:

Start-up (1977-1990), Initial trial (1991-1995), Stable development (1996-1999), and Rapid dissemination (1996-1999). (2000-2010).

Initially, the Chinese government sought to electrify education, a word used from the 1930s to 1991. Primary and secondary schools throughout China adopted satellite television education and other modern teaching methods in the beginning. During China's stable development phase (1996-1999), each region began to adhere to the principle of coordinated development based on local realities, and more information and communications technologies were increasingly applied. The contextual objective aligns with the Chinese government's policy of developing a knowledge economy, with technology at its foundation and as the driving force for economic and social development. Between 2000 and 2010, there was a significant technology infrastructure building, including high-quality networks and technology applications to support educational technology at all levels.

Economic challenges at home and abroad frequently drive education reform (Cheng, Ng and Mok, 2002). To live and thrive, society demands educational transformation (Pont, 2021), such as in the case of a COVID-19 outbreak, which necessitates additional psychological assistance and a shift in communication methods (Nishan and Mohamed, 2021). According to the OECD (2019), over 400 education policies have been enacted globally over ten years, with some reforms being ideological and others being technological. Thus, constantly being able to transform educational practices in a nation becomes the central motivation for policymakers. In the same context, Cheng et al. (2002) propose treating education as an open system, considering inputs (e.g., demand for education and supply of education), the education system's processes, outputs (both direct and indirect benefits), impacts on society (economic and non-economic effects), and feedback (manifested, such as, in terms of pressures and needs for change in education policy).

China recently implemented a statewide education program known as “double reduction” (see Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2022) to alleviate two student burdens: ***on-campus homework and off-campus tutoring***.

The new “double reduction” education policy has sparked widespread debate because its goals directly affect obligatory education stages, such as primary and secondary school systems. The following research aims are designed to capture the perceptions of students, their parents and the teachers, in the current state of “double reduction” policy:

> *The first research goal is to draw the implications from the cognitive structure synthesized from the Ministry of Education “double reduction” education policy declarations.*
>
> *The second research goal is to offer a snapshot of current perceptions of progress and experiences following the “double reduction” policy implementation.*

As a result, this present research has implications for policy implementation practices so that learning strategies can be more student-centric (Gardner, 2006; 2011), and more capable of holistically developing students (Ritchie and Tucker-Drob, 2018; Ferrero, Vadillo, and Leon, 2021; Karwowski and Milerski, 2021) by removing stressor areas and focusing on domains that improve students' productive functions in schooling.

2. Literature Review

Given that China's “double reduction” policy is still in its early stages of implementation, it is important to carry out a review of previous work in the field of educational reform policy implementation, for example. Idrees, Vasconcelos, and Cox (2011) stated that the literature would be minimal at the initial stage of content and qualitative explorations due to unclear issues and factors involved in the phenomena under consideration. The subject of interest will gradually become clear as the grounded theory technique is applied, which will enrich the literature review in the discussion phase (Idrees et al., 2011).

According to the double-reduction education policy, the *student stressor* and *reform purpose* give the contextual and intellectual criteria for the literature study. Chengdu's elementary and secondary school students became the prism through which data was gathered. The present research was carried out at a time when students in primary and secondary schools were nearing graduation and thus were preparing for tests which will determine their next educational stage. Some students may experience burnout as a result of overwork (Engels et al., 2019).

2.1 Student Stressors

According to a research report from No. 1 high school Shaodong Hunan (2021), more than half of the surveyed students identify exam stress and study pressure. The government and societies are concerned that student anxiety and tension will negatively impact student motivation and personality development if these trends continue.

Various reasons, such as the pressure of new curriculum reformation and efficiency goals and administrative duties (Yu et al., 2016), stress can be induced in any educational setting. Physical, mental, and behavioural stressors (Cooper et al., 2001) and emotional and consequential or resulting stressors exist (Kongcharoen et al., 2020). For example, students may experience mental distress due to perspective, if not absolute, academic failure (Deb, Strodl, and Sun, 2014). If stress is not addressed, it might result in depression, anxiety, or other serious repercussions (Bjorkman, 2007). Student stress levels can differ depending on gender, family support, and the availability of stay-at-home mothers (Deb, Strodl, and Sun, 2014).

2.2 Educational Reform

As noted in the introductory section, reforms, 'such as China's "double-reduction" educational policy, which went into effect on July 24, 2021, represent a contingency requirement to 'meet market and society needs'. According to Li Yi, deputy secretary of the Beijing Municipal Committee of Education and Work Committee, the "double reduction" is intended to relieve students' burdens while also introducing educational reform, transformation, and improvement in their achievements (China Youth Dairy, 2021).

Reforms are necessary to adapt to new trends, such as economic and social conditions, to achieve better levels of advantage (Hefeker and Neugart, 2018). Uncertainties, such as the success of the reform (Hefeker and Neugart, 2018), develop during the early stages of education policy implementation (Stoffels et al., 2021). Reform success is determined by how one acquires a better understanding of the policy; for example, an efficiency-enhancing reform necessitates adjustment (Fidrmuc and Karaja, 2013). It is this logic which guides the present research effort.

China's central government has made significant contributions to boosting educational quality in China through policies and funding throughout the last 40 years. Reforms have come in waves in response to rising political and economic shifts (Fidrmuc and Karaja, 2013). Xiao and Meier (2011) provided a comprehensive evaluation of policies related to technological development in the education sector, identifying four policy periods:

(1) Start-up(1977-1990)
(2) Initial trial (1991-1995)
(3) Stable development (1996-1999), and
(4) Rapid dissemination (1996-1999) and (2000-2010).

The "electrifying education" period investigated the widespread use of technological devices in support of classroom learning, such as "slides, projectors, films, and radio" (ibid, p. 316). After developing regular habits in employing the necessary educational instruments, China entered a systemic reformation stage, dubbed the initial trial period by Xiao and Meier (2011), intending to improve education efficiency systemically. China used decentralization and popular mobilization at the systemic policy level (Qu, 2010). Due to the rapid advancement of computer technologies during the stable development period (1996-1999), China moved to establish a computer educational environment to support student learning, teacher planning and course design,

and administrative tasks, as outlined in China's Five-Year Development Program of School Computer Education (1996-2000). From

1996 to 2000, complete coverage was provided to ensure systematic coverage of education technology infrastructures and networks to firmly link to students' demands for extraordinary educational growth (Zhong, 2006).

It is not difficult to understand a strategic on-time linkage between changing social, economic, and political conditions and the forms and structure of educational policy reforms in China by evaluating the four phases of educational reforms in educational technology (Wiseman and Huang, 2011). Though educational policy execution, such as resource allocation, is a decentralization obligation (Mok, 2007), policy reform requires the central government to provide direction. Educational reform changes should not be coercive, mimetic, normative, or isomorphic, depending on the social and market context.

As inferred from theories of strategic management in commercial organizations, educational policy reforms frequently try to provide some comparative advantages in a globally competitive environment (Wiseman and Huang, 2011). Aside from educational technology (Xiao and Meier, 2011), other subjects covered in educational reform include educational governance, marketization and finance, teaching and teacher preparation, assessment and testing, special needs and inequalities, creativity development, and higher education (Wiseman and Huang, 2011).

3 Method

A mixed-methods strategy was used in this research.

3.1 Qualitative Method

The qualitative method is ideal in cases where education policies are still in the early stages of implementation. Tonini (2012) gathered qualitative data to learn more about “the influence of governmental, educational policy on local stakeholders, such as schools, teachers, students, and parents.” Among the findings was the need to emphasize educational quality rather than quantity.

The qualitative approach addresses the twin study goals. Students, parents, and instructors from conveniently selected elementary and secondary schools were requested to participate in this study because they are the most direct stakeholders in the “double-reduction” educational policy reform initiative. Teachers have a key role in educational transformation (Ham and Dekkers, 2019). Parental support is critical for educational transformation since it is a large-scale social process (Orly, 2015).

Data from in-depth interviews were grounded in a minimalist backdrop of theoretical knowledge, as evidenced in the literature review. There are two sections (1) student stressors, and (2) educational reform.

Data analysis began with open coding of the interview’s transcripts using codes, followed by regrouping of the codes to generate core codes or categories, all guided by a grounded theory technique (Murareneza and Mtshali, 2021; Douglas, 2003). Finally,

there was a picking of the focal core codes, or "the central phenomena that have evolved from the axial coding process" (Douglas, 2003) which addressed the research goals.

Furthermore, this present study applied Murarane za and Mtshali (2021)'s recommendation to use "credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability" for qualitative research assessments:

The use of verbatim transcript quotations accurately reflects the participants' perspectives rather than the researchers. Continuous re-examination of the codes or sharing with colleagues for criticism can ensure the data analysis' reliability or stability (Polit and Beck, 2012). This study relies on field notes and meticulously transcribed interviews for verification and confirmability (Murarane za and Mtshali, 2021). The study must also explain the samples and narrate the debate with conceptual and application links to the literature and research topics to establish transferability.

3.2 Quantitative Method

The quantitative survey of the second research objective aimed to identify the predictive factors which may explain the two goals of "double reduction" education policies: student workload reduction and off-campus workload reduction. At the exploratory level, each variable has only a single questionnaire item which used a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagreed, 2 = disagreed, 3 = neutral, 4 = agreed, 5 = strongly agreed) for the responses. Thirteen single-items are:

V1 = student workload reduced, V2 = off-campus homework reduced, V3 = increased homework accuracy, V4 = work content rationality, V5 = teaching method reform, V6 = improvement of student learning method, V7 = decrease in extracurricular training for major subject other than mathematics, V8 = increase training in arts and sport courses, V9 = increase in interest-subject competition, V10 = increase in exchange activities in interest-subject, V11 = reduced exam pressure, V12 = reduced pressure to enter school, and V13 = physical activity improvement.

This study employed simple regression analysis in addressing the second research goal, G*Power sample size determination, as recommended by de Araujo et al., 2016). G*Power is a tool to compute statistical power analyses for many different *t* tests, *F* tests, $\chi 2$ tests, *z* tests and some exact tests (Memom et al., 2020). G*Power can also be used to compute effect sizes and to display graphically the results of power analyses. Thus, for a valid regression test, a minimum sample size of 104 is required, as shown in Figure 1.

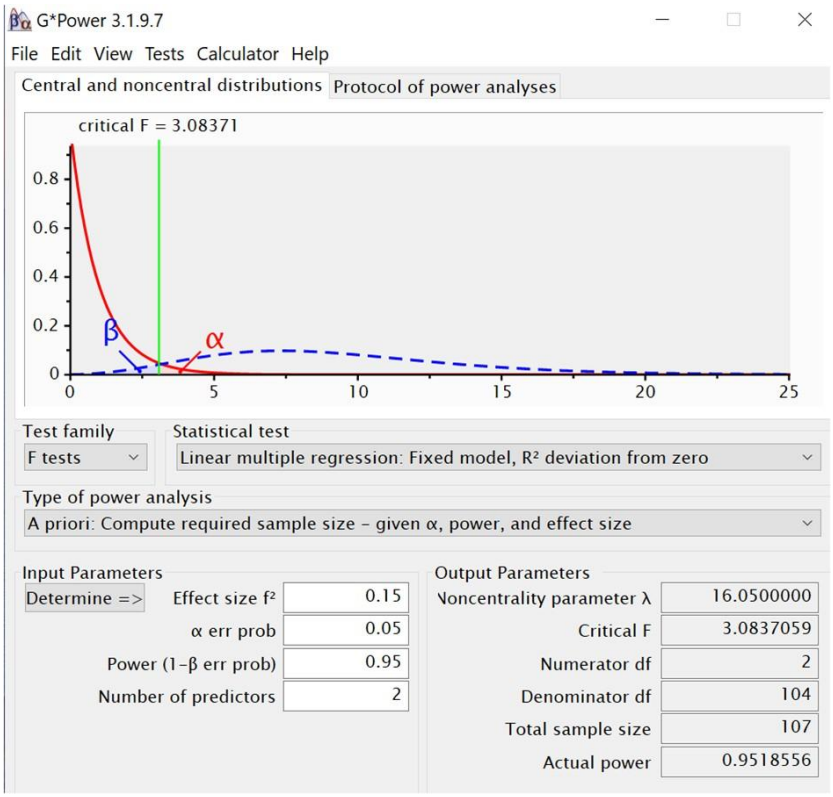

Figure 1. G*Power Sample Size Calculation

4. Results

Motivated by a desire to transform and streamline the interconnected system of education, the Chinese government is pursuing educational reform based on the "double-reduction" policy: on the one hand, to lower student burdens, and on the other, to alter and reform education for the better (China Youth Daily, 2021). The double-reduction policy, which reflects and fully implements the spirit of the Communist Party of China's 19th National Congress and the 19th Central Committee's Fifth Plenary Session, has two objectives: reducing students' homework burdens and off-campus training burdens in compulsory education. To put it another way, compulsory education institutions must successfully improve school education, continue to standardize off-campus training (both online and offline), and, as a result, effectively minimize the burden of excessive homework and off-campus training for compulsory education students. Off-campus education is a component of the more extensive environmental system, including an interconnected educational system that influences students (Miller, 2011). The integrated education system and regular schooling can have a beneficial or destructive impact on the development of pupils (Elizur, 2011).

4.1 Objective One

The first research objective was: to draw the implications from the cognitive structure synthesized from the ministry of education "double reduction" education policy declarations.

For Objective One, this study examined the education policy announcements websites of the People's Republic of China's Ministry of Education for themes (2022).

The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2022) emphasized *"building a good education ecology"* to school administrators, which includes strengthening governance and tasks of building morality and cultivating people:

> *"Implement the fundamental task of building morality and cultivating people, focus on building a high-quality education system, strengthen the role of school education as the main front, deepen the governance of school education."*

It was also clear that education policy revolved around "*student*-centralism" while also attempting to alleviate the load on parents. The following are the essence of the education policy's implementation:

> *"Adhering to students-oriented, reacting to students' concerns,..., focusing on the healthy growth of students' physical and intellectual abilities, protecting students' right to rest,..., and lowering the load on parents"* are the working principles.

Because success depends on multistakeholder participation and the outcomes are passed on to the stakeholders, the *ecological orientation* becomes the guiding principle.

Throughout the various announcements, the core of *ecological orientation* may be noticed. For example, educational policies should simplify homework and provide more scientific assessments. Students can reduce off-campus tutoring and learning, and parents can reduce their financial burden if on-campus education provisions can dramatically enhance standards and quality.

Off-campus education will also need to change to meet the needs of students and societies requirements. For example, the quality of off-campus and after-school education is expected to improve significantly:

> *"Schools should formulate after-school service implementation plans to enhance the attractiveness, for example, by making full use of after-school service time, guiding students to complete their homework, providing tutoring and further developing students with learning difficulties, expanding learning spaces for students who wish to advance."*

Overall, Figure 2 depicts the Chinese government's "double reduction" policy signals, which forms the cognitive structure and logics that govern this study, addressing the first research objective.

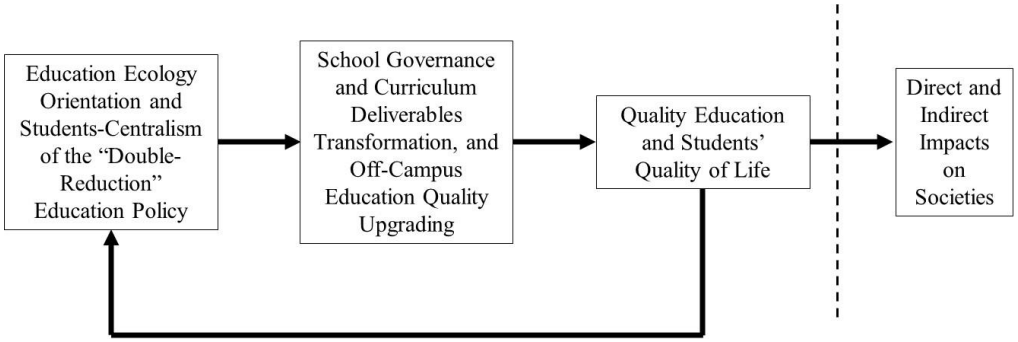

Figure 2. A Cognitive Structure of the "Double Reduction" Education Policy Messages

4.2 Objective Two - Qualitative Data

The second research objective of this study was to offer a snapshot of current perceptions of progress and experiences following the "double reduction" policy implementation. This section presents the finding of the qualitative in-depth interviews.

This study interviewed three stakeholders for primary data collection: primary and secondary students, parents, and teachers. The interviews provide a glimpse of the current situation and feedback for suggestions for improving the "double reduction" policy's implementation.

Compared to the instructors, both the students and parents had less favorable views of the "double-reduction" education policy implementation. Students still do not see many changes:

> *"If we look at the double-reduction policy, we can see that overall school hours have not altered much, homework is still required, as is tutorial classes, and there is much off-campus training." (Primary students)*

Furthermore, parents have reservations about the double reduction:

> *"I believe that the knowledge gained in school is insufficient to match the exam requirements. Hence, I believe that off-campus learning is still required."*

The parents of students reveal that social pressure drive them to take on off-campus tutoring. Moreover, the off-campus tutoring compensates for additional knowledge that may not be easily gained in school:

> *"The off-campus training has made me believe that learning is preferable to not learning at all. Chengdu's public-school education is pretty strong, although there is still a gap compared to the three big cities of Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. Because of future rivalry with students from these cities, off-campus training will be required to gain better skills and approaches for improving academic achievement."*

"I hope that knowledge not mastered in school can be checked and remedied, as the existing knowledge base lacks the competitiveness needed to compete in today's market."

The parents of students anticipate the curriculum delivery process to alter, mainly by acting on the students' actual learning capacities and states to stimulate their incentives for leveraging potential, as outlined below:

> *"I wish that teachers will educate more about learning methods and approaches and understand more about the actual condition of the students so that they can teach them according to their capacities and develop new ways to boost their learning potential and motivation."*

Interviews reveal the burdens of teachers, and some teachers believe that students who are organically driven and capable can advance their knowledge by participating in off-campus learning:

> *"Students capable of learning can still go outside to broaden their horizons. Time is limited, and teachers are responsible for fifty or more students, making it difficult to provide individual attention to each kid. Only 10 to twenty students attend off-campus colleges, and the content is usually not boring."*

Nonetheless, with the recently established "double reduction" policy, teachers are looking for new ways to increase training outside of school hours while not discounting the value of off-campus learning, which can provide additional benefits to students' interests and abilities:

> *"Through tuition, we strive to extend students' interests and open their minds to learning. Off-campus training can also enhance areas that are not covered in school. Students will be able to extend their interests and obtain a better comprehension of the courses due to this."*

> *"There is a component of the comprehension of off-campus training before the double reduction. Children can develop their interests outside of school with the support of out-of-school training providers, which is still extremely beneficial. Furthermore, concrete programs, such as writing and reading classes, can assist students in improving their academic performance."*

> *"We urge students to participate in extracurricular training if they can learn and have more energy to study at a higher level. This provides good supplementary usefulness."*

> *"Nowadays, classes with students in the same grade are relatively large; most classes have 45-50 students, and teachers have little energy to teach each student individually. As a result, I support out-of-school training institutes since they serve a useful purpose. Some students, for example, may believe that the in-school curriculum is easier, so they can attend off-campus institutions to improve. In contrast, others with lower grades can enroll in remedial classes. This will allow them to keep up with the in-school curriculum and bridge the achievement gap with their better-performing peers and benefit their physical and mental growth."*

In terms of curriculum deliverables, teachers see a need for topic breadth and depth, as well as promoting a pleasurable teaching and learning process for students:

> *"Raising the difficulty of a subject and broadening its breadth and depth, particularly with a focus on real life, is a good idea since students will be more grounded and will be able to experience the subject's charm in their lives."*

> *"We strive to teach in a fun way, with engaging, precise, and active classroom elements that encourage students to move from passive to active learning. Although most people prefe*r to learn in a classroom, we must improve the learning environment."

The interviewees also emphasize the importance of constant feedback, research and development, and commitment:

> *"Our faculty has discussed the subject of twofold reduction. Our teaching and research teams will then design learning materials for our pupils in the following stage. A questionnaire survey is also conducted. We'll keep honing our skills to educate more effectively in the short time we have."*

> *"To improve students' overall academic and quality of life, the double reduction policy involves more self-discipline from students, better family education, and more efficient school education."*

While parents have reservations about the double reduction program, teachers offer a more optimistic outlook:

> *"I feel the policy's initial purpose is useful because today's children, particularly elementary school students, are under too much stress. Many of them may have to complete their homework for two to three hours every day. However, actual outcomes are not always proportional to the effort put in."*

A *model* summarizing the above findings will be presented in the discussion section.

a. Objective Two - Preliminary Quantitative Survey

A total of three hundred and six valid survey returns were collected from across Sichuan, including Chengdu, Ya'an, Leshan, Zigong, Meishan, and Neijiang, with 49 (32%) teachers, 51 (33.3%) parents, and 53 (34.6%) kids among them.

The two goals of the "double-reduction" education policy are treated as dependent variables. In Figure 3 four predictors, namely reduced exam pressure, increased homework accuracy, improved work content rationality, and decreased extracurricular training, are shown to form a positive relationship, and by using simple regression analysis, shown in Table 1, they explain 63.1 per cents of the variance in student workload reduction.

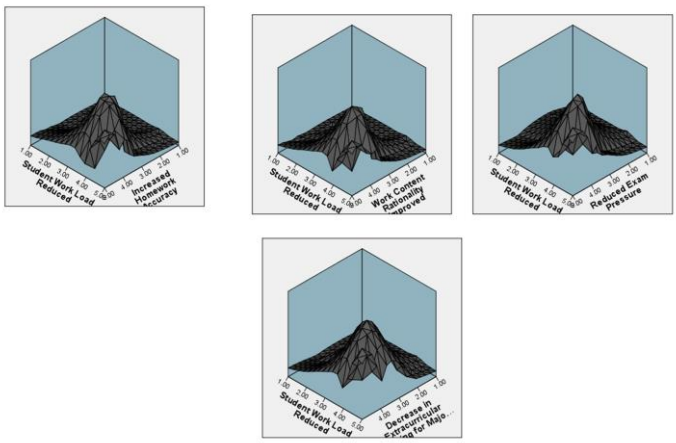

Figure 3. The Correlations Profiles of the Factors Predicting Student Workload Reduction

For the second "double reduction" goal, off-campus homework reduction, the multiple regression, shown in Table 2, offers the following equation:

Off-campus homework reduction = 0.305 student workload reduced + 0.241 reduced exam pressure + 0.16 increased homework accuracy + 0.148 work content accuracy + 0.134 extracurricular training for main subject other than mathematics

The correlation of the relationship between the predictors and off-campus homework reduction is given in Figure 4.

Table 1. Simple Regression Results of Student Workload Reductions

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.794[a]	.631	.626	.51992

a. Predictors: (Constant), Decrease in Extracurricular Training for Major Subject Other Than Maths, Increased Homework Accuracy, Reduced Exam Pressure, Work Content Rationality Improved

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	138.870	4	34.717	128.433	.000[b]
	Residual	81.365	301	.270		
	Total	220.235	305			

a. Dependent Variable: Student Work Load Reduced

b. Predictors: (Constant), Decrease in Extracurricular Training for Major Subject Other Than Maths, Increased Homework Accuracy, Reduced Exam Pressure, Work Content Rationality Improved

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.401	.175		2.295	.022
	Increased Homework Accuracy	.286	.063	.250	4.523	.000
	Work Content Rationality Improved	.222	.062	.215	3.575	.000
	Reduced Exam Pressure	.210	.054	.222	3.867	.000
	Decrease in Extracurricular Training for Major Subject Other Than Maths	.210	.061	.214	3.462	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Student Work Load Reduced

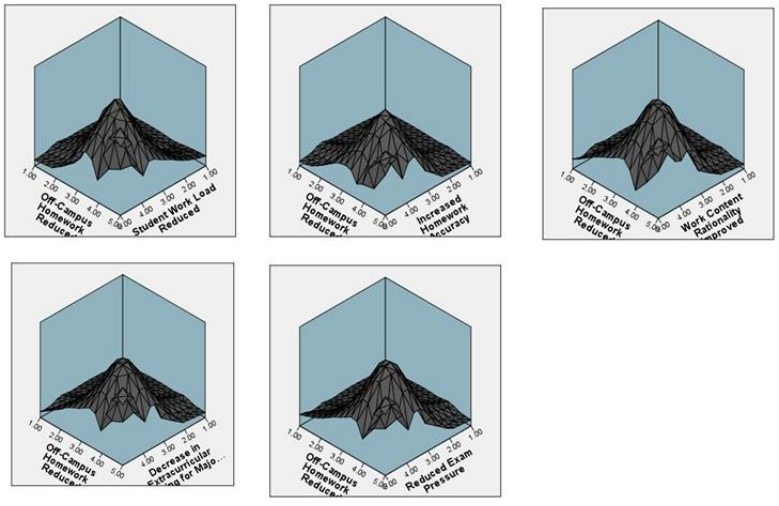

Figure 4. The Correlation Profiles of the Predictors Explaining Off-Campus Workload Reduction

Table 2 presents the regression result for explaining off-campus homework reduction, at 74.9 per cents of the variance ($R^2 = 0.749$).

Table 2. Simple Regression Result of Off-Campus Workload Reduction

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.865[a]	.749	.745	.44651

a. Predictors: (Constant), Student Work Load Reduced, Reduced Exam Pressure, Increased Homework Accuracy, Work Content Rationality Improved, Decrease in Extracurricular Training for Major Subject Other Than Maths

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	178.410	5	35.682	178.968	.000[b]
	Residual	59.813	300	.199		
	Total	238.222	305			

a. Dependent Variable: Off-Campus Homework Reduced

b. Predictors: (Constant), Student Work Load Reduced, Reduced Exam Pressure, Increased Homework Accuracy, Work Content Rationality Improved, Decrease in Extracurricular Training for Major Subject Other Than Maths

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.175	.151		-1.156	.248
	Increased Homework Accuracy	.190	.056	.160	3.391	.001
	Work Content Rationality Improved	.160	.054	.148	2.932	.004
	Reduced Exam Pressure	.237	.048	.241	4.961	.000
	Decrease in Extracurricular Training for Major Subject Other Than Maths	.137	.053	.134	2.581	.010
	Student Work Load Reduced	.317	.050	.305	6.412	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Off-Campus Homework Reduced

Comparatively, the parents have the least agreement of all the variables studied, and the statistical significance are V2 to V10, as shown in the enclosed block in the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) Table 3.

Table 3. ANOVA Result

	Per cent	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	V8	V9	V10	V11	V12	V13
Teacher	32	4.22	4.28	4.18	4.06	4.22	4.06	4.1	4.06	4.02	4.16	4.08	4.06	4.44
Parent	33	4.05	3.88	3.84	3.9	3.88	3.86	3.86	3.86	3.88	3.94	3.82	3.84	4.25
Student	35	4.3	4.18	4.37	4.3	4.32	4.32	4.28	4.28	4.26	4.39	4.15	4.16	4.39
F		1.101	3.258	7.42	3.216	5.297	4.881	3.165	3.395	3.093	4.309	1.917	1.69	0.702
Sig.		0.335	0.041	0.001	0.043	0.006	0.009	0.045	0.036	0.048	0.014	0.151	0.188	0.497

Note: V1 = Student workload reduced, V2 = off-campus homework reduced, V3 = increased homework accuracy, V4 = work content rationality, V5 = teaching method reform, V6 = improvement of student learning method, V7 = decrease in extracurricular training for major

subject other than mathematics, V8 = increase training in arts and sport courses, V9 = increase in interest-subject competition, V10 = increase in exchange activities in interest-subject, V11 = reduced exam pressure, V12 = reduced pressure to enter school, and V13 = physical activity improvement.

5. Discussion

This research makes a significant contribution by providing a perceptual knowledge of policy reform and Verstehen, or the perspective of relevant stakeholders on research concerns (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey, 2020). As a result, this research gives the perceptual issues and structure of viewpoints that can be useful in implementation, and students, teachers, and parents in making responsible adjustments to their techniques. This section discusses the findings in light of previous research and offers policymakers and other stakeholders some implications.

5.1 Addressing the First Research Objective

A review of the central government's websites on the "double-reduction" education strategy reveals a cognitive framework that connects ideology to behaviour, with implications for educational ecology. The primary purpose was to reduce homework, but this does not indicate that students will receive a good education. Instead, as shown in Fig. 1 of the "results" section, which coincides with Rosario et al. (2018), a systematic transformation is required, focusing on school governance and a change in curriculum deliverables and off-campus education quality upgrading (2018).

Rosario et al. (2018) studied a sixth-grade student as an example and found that homework assignments with purposes that students can relate to the work they do in class; dre more likely to be perceived as high-quality homework (i.e., well-chosen by their teacher, engaging, related to the class material taught, and useful for understanding the material covered in class). Furthermore, Rosario et al. (2018) provided robust empirical evidence showing that students who believe their homework to be of higher quality are more likely to put forth more effort, complete homework more frequently, perform better on assignments and get higher marks. The emphasis on homework quality put out by Rosario et al. (2018) should be included in the cognitive and behavioural efforts in implementing the "double reduction" approach.

Elias, Elliot, and Elliott (2017) suggest using an online homework system to minimize teachers' workload while reducing homework marking, which can be considered part of the transition of curricular deliverables for the double-reduction education strategy.

A more systems-oriented strategy is proposed for governance integrity, such as using the internet of things (IoT)-based cloud computing technologies to unify campus portal services, security, and maintenance systems (Faritha et al., 2020). Furthermore, digitally connected campuses can improve student learning and environmental sustainability by using PDAs to access students' homework assignments and test performance through online portals and by using movies uploaded to the cloud for students' evaluations (Faritha et al., 2020).

Previous studies on the usefulness of private tutoring have yielded mixed results (see Park et al., 2016). There are still gaps in the available literature that address causal chain questions such as "What is the effectiveness of private tutoring intervention," No clear solutions have yet been found (Zhang and Liu, 2022). The research findings of Jayachandran (2014) are relevant to China's double-reduction education policy; that is, the popularity of after-school tutoring in poorer nations was important because of the poor quality of regular classroom teaching, if not addressed openly and consistently.

Every stakeholder must acknowledge and work toward success, which requires an "education ecological orientation." External demands, rather than internal accomplishment expectations, should be the key motivators for employing private tutoring, according to Benckwitz et al. (2022). Private tutoring is frequently a front for the school's academic, social, and emotional support functions (Abdel-Moneim, 2021).

Furthermore, school administrators and education authorities have a moral responsibility to reduce demand for off-campus learning while boosting on-campus learning quality. Thus, the double reduction policy attempts to change China's education system by alleviating external pressures through systematic quality delivery of on-campus education, thereby lessening the desire for more fabulous off-campus courses. As shown in Fig. 1 of the cognitive structure of the "double reduction" education policy, the "double-reduction" matches the notion of egalitarian practices of the education policy (Wiseman, 2021), which has a direct or indirect impact on the futures of societies.

5.2 Addressing the Second Research Objective - Qualitative Interviews

All stakeholders are subject to a variety of pressures. Instructors, students, and parents all distinct experience pressures, which may or may not be aligned. For example, teachers may encounter institutional demands, while parents' attitudes and actions in caring for and planning for their children may be influenced by societal normative constraints. Under duress, students may have an influence. According to a research study, coercive, normative, and mimetic pressures influence many decisions made by individuals, groups, organizations, industries, and nations (Martinez-Ferrero and Garcia-Sanchez, 2017). These pressures form the driving force for isomorphism, changes, and evolution (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983): coercive pressures from external trends and requirements, normatively for mandatory compliance demands, and mimetic pressures in response to the referenced behaviors of other stakeholders. The topics of neo-institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) are mimetic, coercive, and normative forces, which define a component of the social context that influences how decisions are formed. The effect of the institutional environment, which represents the game's rules, is reflected in institutional pressure (Chen and Cheng, 2020).

Second, differing isomorphism pressures might lead to varied value judgments, beliefs, and attitudes toward the "double reduction" education program. Furthermore, most teachers agree that capable students should be encouraged to broaden their knowledge through off-campus study, while poorer students should use off-campus and off-school hour learning to catch up on their progress. As a result, possibilities for diversity, varied needs and requirements of kids and parents, financial (for example), and the school's learning quality should be made available.

As a result of the discovery, the MOA (motivation, opportunity, ability) framework can affect the diverse behavioural adjustments of different stakeholders in the implementation of "double reduction" policies. In conclusion, the in-depth interviews resulted in a model that describes the critical stakeholders' attitudes and behaviours in the context of the "double reduction" education policy implementation, as shown in Figure 5. Soma, Li, and Maclaren (2021) use the MOA framework to investigate consumer responses to food waste awareness programs.

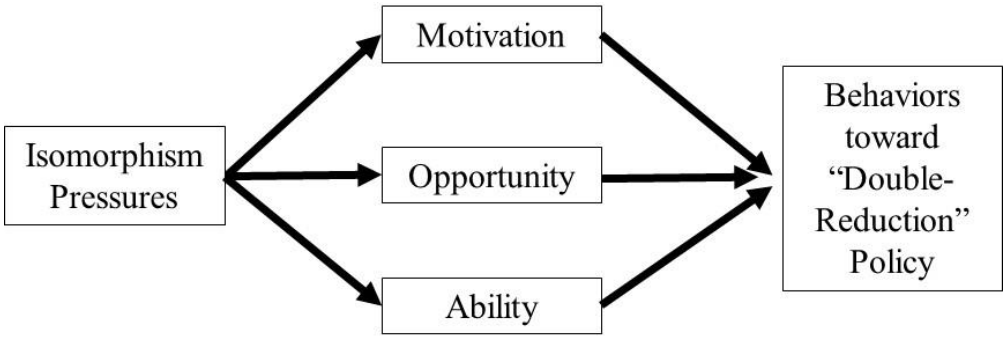

Figure 5. The Attitudinal and Behavioral Structure of "Double Reduction" Policy Stakeholders

5.3 Addressing the Second Research Objective - Preliminary Quantitative Survey

Figure 6 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis, which reveal four key factors that influence the goals of the "double-reduction" policy implementation: (1) reduced exam pressure, (2) increased homework accuracy, (3) improved work content rationality, and (4) decreased extracurricular training.

The findings are consistent with previous studies, such as student performance prediction based on exam pressure (Kuzilek, Zdrahal, and Fuglik, 2021), and contain additional elements not covered in the existing literature. The literature emphasizes the importance of parental assistance in reducing students' homework stress, but not homework burden (Moe et al., 2020).

Homework quality can be determined by homework correctness and work content rationality (Rosario et al., 2018). Though reducing extracurricular training had a good impact on student workload in this study, Pham et al. (2021) found that extracurricular activities positively impact negatively other goals such as youth development.

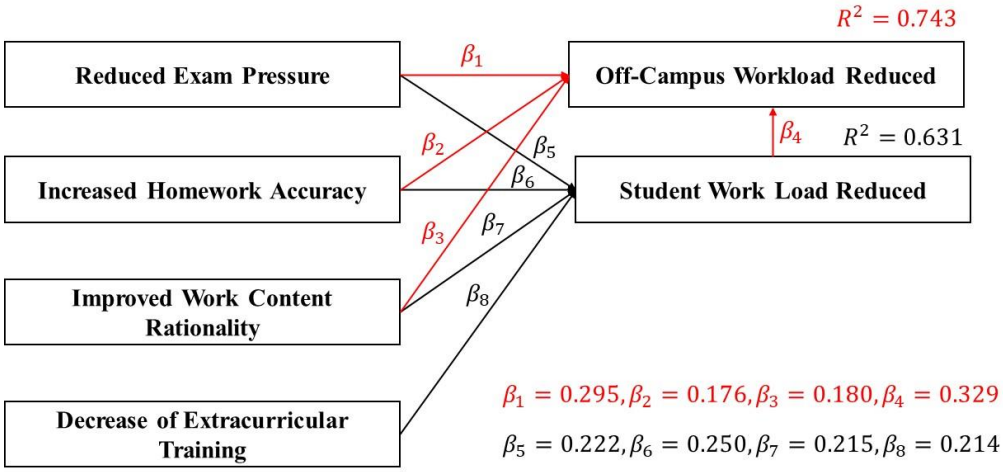

Figure 6. The Determinants for the Two Double-Reduction Goals

5.2 Limitations

There are several limitations. Due to time and resource constraints, this study did not undertake a systematic comparative study of other research by scholars working on educational policies within and outside China. Wiseman and Huang (2011) present some apparent differences; for instance, the scholars working from within China take a perspective of asking how China can compete globally and modernize, whereas working outside of China tend to present it as a problem which the West has in competing with China.

In addition, the sample drawn from accessible schools may pose significant restrictions on the generalizable of the findings. Other provinces and jurisdictions will have different learning environments, different quality levels of teachers, there thereby affect the ways double-reduction is being implemented. Thus, a wider research population base is recommended. Thus, researchers, if interested, should make a careful adaptation to their methodology.

This research is exploratory, but its value is believed to be significant for future research. For instance, because homework quality has been shown to be an essential factor, further research could investigate the different homework behaviors and approaches (Flunger et al., 2017) and purposes (Rosario et al., 2018). In addition, future research should extend to consider dependent variables beyond the two goals of double reduction, as other goals could have both direct and indirect outcomes of an educational program, such as youth development (Pham et al., 2021).

5.3 Further Research

The content analysis of documents from the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2022) and in-depth interviews yielded two theoretical frameworks in this study. By applying the theory of planned behavior, more research may be done to validate the two theoretical models and expand the single-item questionnaire-based survey to multi-items (Ajzen, 2002). Figure 7 shows a potential extension based on this study's survey findings.

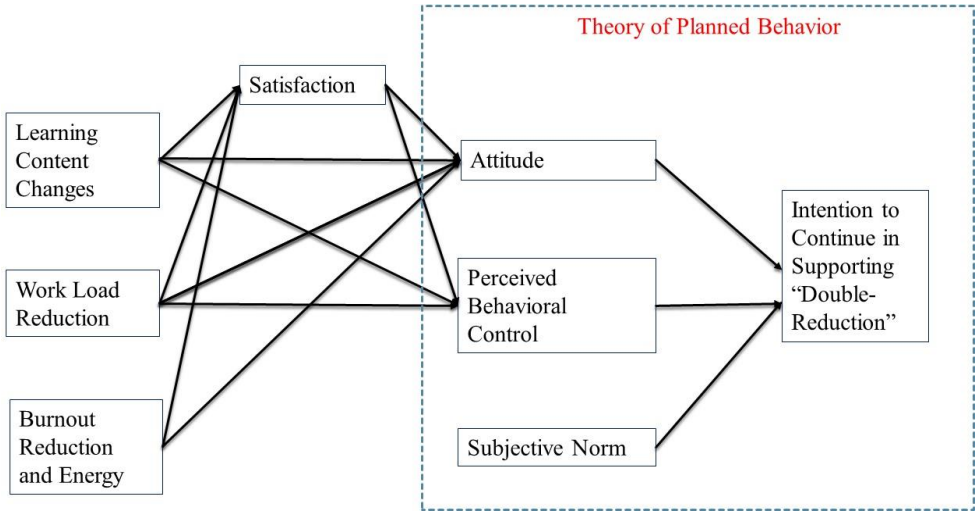

Figure 7. Proposed Theoretical Structure for Further Survey-based Research
Note: Recommended questionnaire items for Figure 7 are listed in the Appendix.

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APPENDIX

Proposed Questionnaire Design for Further Research

Note: 1 = strongly disagreed, to 5 = strongly agreed.	1	2	3	4	5
Subjective Norm of the Double-Reduction Policy Implementation: • So far, the people around me have said positive things about the double-reduction policy. • So far, the people around me say positive things about the ways the double-reduction policy is being implemented. • So far, the people around me fully support the double-reduction policy.					
Attitude towards Double-Reduction Policy Implementation: • I think double-reduction helps reduce students' workload. • I think double-reduction helps improve students' stress levels. • I think double-reduction helps provide more time for students to improve their academic performance. • I think double-reduction helps provide more time for students to master the additional skills they need.					
Learning Content Changes after Double-Reduction Policy Implemented: • Learning content has been revised to benefit less student workload. • Learning content has been revised to be more focused. • Learning content has been revised to influence the quality of learning,					
Work Load Reduction: • Since the implementation of the double-reduction policy, exam pressure is reduced. • Since the implementation of the double-reduction policy, my studying workload is reduced. • Since the implementation of the double-reduction policy, extracurricular activities have been reduced.					
Perceived Behavioral Control: • Since the implementation of the double-reduction policy, I have had more ability to control my studying time. • Since the implementation of the double-reduction policy, I have had more ability to improve my studying performance. • Since the implementation of the double-reduction policy, I can control my stress level to a minimum level.					
Satisfaction toward the double-reduction implementation: • So far, I am delighted with the double-reduction policy. • So far, I am very satisfied with how the school implements the double-reduction policy. • So far, after the double-reduction policy implementation, I am delighted with the studying workload level given to me.					
Burnout Reduction and Energy: • After the double-reduction policy implementation, I feel more relaxed. • After the double-reduction policy implementation, I feel less stressed. • After the double-reduction policy implementation, I have more energy to do more things.					

Intention to Continue "Double-Reduction Support": • I strongly support that the "double-reduction" policy continues to be implemented. • I am not hesitant to say good things about the "double-reduction" policy. • I will continue to support the double-reduction policy.					