A Comparative Study of the Latest Educational Reform Achievements in China Between East and West

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How to cite this paper: Jiayi Yu, Ting Wang, Quanhong Jiang. (2024) A Comparative Study of the Latest Educational Reform Achievements in China Between East and West. Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Science, 8(2), 405-413. DOI: 10.26855/jhass.2024.02.017

Received: January 31, 2024
Accepted: February 29, 2024
Published: March 28, 2024

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Abstract

Since the implementation of the “double reduction” policy, there have been multiple evaluations from all sectors of society. This paper investigates the implementation effect of after-school extended hours services in Beijing, Chongqing, Henan, and Shaanxi. It selects Beihang Elementary School and Chongqing Tianba Primary School as the focus of further research. The study utilizes the interview methods, comparative research methods, and the Likert five-point evaluation method to conduct an in-depth investigation. The research starts by analyzing supply and demand. The findings reveal that Beihang Elementary School and Tianba Primary School face limited resources on the supply side, high demand on the demand side, and poor communication between the two sides. The study identifies common issues related to inadequate communication between the supply and demand sides. Based on the theory of students' core literacy and the actual education situation, this study proposes the supply side to improve the hardware facilities, expand the activity space, correct the concept of education, and enrich the curriculum; on the demand side, it proposes to pay attention to family education, meet part of the demand, pay attention to the real demand and avoid blind consumption. Improving the quality and breadth of after-school extended-hour programs can promote students' comprehensive growth and make a significant contribution to the progress of education in China and worldwide.

Keywords

The education reform of China, "Double reduction" policy, After-school delay service in primary schools, Core literacy of students

1. Introduction

In a time of rapid economic development, the employment rate of women in Chinese society has increased rapidly, and the social pattern of "men dominating outside and women dominating inside" has been broken. On July 24, 2021, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council of China issued Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Off-Campus Training for Students in Compulsory Education (herein-after referred to as "Double Reduction"), which explicitly proposed to "improve the level of after-school services and
meet the diversified needs of students" (General Office of the Ministry of Education, 2021), pushing the importance of in-school tutoring to an unprecedented level. On September 18, 2021, the General Office of the Ministry of Education issued the "Notice of the General Office of the Ministry of Education on Promoting Typical Cases of Implementing "Double Reduction" in Schools," stating that schools around the world should study and learn from the actual situation and give full play to the role of the main school education (General Office of the Ministry of Education, 2014).

The notice said that local governments and schools should learn from it and give full play to the role of the main school education.

On the whole, local governments and schools have actively promoted the implementation of after-school extended hours services, and the coverage rate of compulsory education schools, the number of teachers and students participating, and the quality and level of service implementation have improved significantly compared to the period before the introduction of the "double reduction" policy. However, the effectiveness of the program is uneven due to uneven educational resources, disparities in economic development, and uncertainty in school implementation. It is important to provide a reference for optimizing the shortcomings of each school in each region and to promote the further implementation of the "double reduction" policy in China.

Most of the studies on after-school extended hours services in China focus on individual theoretical analysis and optimization of measures in a particular region or the overall implementation situation, but few have identified, analyzed, and solved problems from the perspective of comparative studies. The author has studied the basic implementation of after-school extended hours services in the eastern, central, and western regions of China, and then selected the elementary school of Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics (hereinafter referred to as Beihang Primary School) and Tianba Primary School to conduct an in-depth investigation, identify the problems, analyze the causes, and propose corresponding reference solutions to help China's education progress and contribute to the world's education reform.

2. Theoretical foundation

2.1 Theory of student core literacy

Students' core literacy refers to "the essential characteristics and key abilities that students should possess to adapt to the needs of lifelong development and social development" (Core Literacy Research Group, 2016).

The theory of Chinese students' core literacy is an authoritative research result led by Beijing Normal University and published by many universities for three years. It is divided into three aspects such as cultural foundation, six major literacies such as humanistic connotation, and 18 basic points such as national identity. It is an important theoretical basis to guide the development direction of China's educational transformation.

2.2 The theory of supply and demand in education

Education supply and demand is the relationship between the supply and demand of educational services and products, which is permeated in all aspects of education resource allocation. The supply of education is mainly based on educational institutions of all levels and types, which provide students with the opportunity to receive education within a certain period; the demand for education is mainly based on the state, society, and individuals, which mainly refers to the demand of these subjects to pay for education. The balance of education supply and demand is one of the criteria to measure the effective allocation of education resources, which can be regulated by the market and the government together.

2.3 Relevance to Extended Day Primary School Services

Elementary education plays a key role in the development of children. After the introduction of the "double reduction" policy, after-school extended hours services, as an important part of elementary school education, have received increasing attention from the government and society. Extended day services should be guided by theories of students' core literacy, improve quality and level, and promote students' overall development.

This paper analyzes the causes of the problems in the implementation of after-school extended hours services in elementary schools and proposes measures to solve them, starting from the supply and demand sides and combining market and government regulation.
3. Discussion

3.1 Status of Research in Countries and Regions Outside of China

After-school programs in many developed countries outside of China have developed relatively sound operational mechanisms and systems based on their own national conditions. In the 1990s, the U.S. government began to intervene in the field of after-school services, and Judith B. Erickson (1998) discussed the irrationality of school management during after-school hours in the United States; Cheolwon Lee (2010) argues that after-school tutoring is an effective way to alleviate educational inequality; Sara A. Helseth (2018) analyzes that the introduction of beneficial recreational programs in the community is conducive to the social empowerment of students; Japan has introduced eight policies to regulate the development of after-school services since 2007, including the After-School Children's Program; South Korea launched a related public policy program in 1995 to provide after-school services to students. Korea launched a public policy program in 1995, which has contributed greatly to reducing the demand for after-school tutoring and promoting educational equity.

3.2 Status of Research in China

The issue of after-school services in China was considered and taken care of at the level of management system in some regions around 2005, but it started late and has not yet formed a complete theoretical system. In March 2017, the Ministry of Education (MOE) issued the "Guiding Opinions on After-school Services for Primary and Secondary School Students", which clearly states that After "giving full play to the role of the main channel of after-school services in primary and secondary schools" (General Office of the Ministry of Education, 2017), the related academic research literature increased significantly, and the research direction shifted to the quality of after-school extended hours services; on May 21, 2021, after the introduction of the "double reduction" policy, the research on the quality and level of after-school extended hours services became more intense. On May 21, 2021, after the "double reduction" policy was introduced, the research on the quality and level of after-school extended hours services was further heated up. Hu Jinsong and Wu Huaihui (2016) discuss the essence of compulsory school trusteeship, pointing out that schools can charge reasonable fees and the government has the responsibility to legally supervise school trusteeship (Hu Jinsong & Wu Huaihui, 2016).

Jiang Yahui (2017) studied the time, content, and target of after-school services, and pointed out that after-school services have a single content and utilitarian purpose. Zhang (2021), Song (2021), and Huang (2021) analyzed after-school services in Australia, South Korea, and Germany, respectively, and suggested that China should enrich the content of after-school services, increase financial support, and promote the participation of multiple parties to promote the benign operation of after-school services. Define abbreviations and acronyms the first time they are used in the text, even after they have been defined in the abstract. Abbreviations such as IEEE, SI, MKS, CGS, SC, DC, and RMS do not have to be defined. Do not use abbreviations in the title or heads unless they are unavoidable.

4. Research Method

The author first surveyed a number of primary and secondary schools in four regions, Beijing, Chongqing, Shaanxi, and Henan, to get an overall understanding of the development of after-school extended hours services in each school in each region, and finally selected Beihang attached elementary school and Chongqing Tianba elementary school for in-depth investigation.

4.1 Interview method

The author used a combination of online and offline interviews to conduct the survey. For Beihang attached primary school selected offline interview, in the afternoon. For Chongqing Tianba Elementary School, online interviews were conducted by contacting classroom teachers to learn about students indirectly and by obtaining contact information from students and their parents with their permission, and more than 20 students were randomly sampled from grades 1 to 6, totaling 135. In the interviews with the students and parents, the questions included the arrangement of the after-school extended-hours service, the type of service, the extra tutoring, the satisfaction evaluation of the extended-hours service, and the suggestions for its implementation.
4.2 Comparative analysis method

After obtaining the details of the after-school extended hours services in the two schools, the author further summarized the data. From a horizontal perspective, I compared the development of the two schools, the satisfaction of the subjects, and the students' out-of-school tuition, and from a vertical perspective, I analyzed the after-school extended hours service. We also analyzed the percentage of students' out-of-school tutoring before and after the implementation of the after-school extended hours service in terms of subjects and non-subjects, and supplemented it with pie charts to make it more intuitive.

4.3 Likert five-point assessment method

The author conducted an overall satisfaction survey for each interviewee during the interview process and used the Likert five-point scale for assessment. A total of 108 valid results were obtained for Beihang Primary School and 123 valid results were obtained for Tianba Primary School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q</th>
<th>How satisfied are you overall with the school's after-school extended service?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 point</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>Not too dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 points</td>
<td>Soso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 points</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 points</td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Survey results and problem findings

5.1 Investigation results

5.1.1 Basic development situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content arrangement</th>
<th>Association Capacity</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
<th>Teacher arrangement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beihang Elementary School</td>
<td>(1) Self-directed study (2) Subject extension: additional extension of language, mathematics, and other non-class contents (3) Club activities: chorus, soccer, martial arts, rope skipping, bridge, cross-country, modeling, astronomy, debate, etc.</td>
<td>The total capacity of the club is sufficient, but some popular courses are in short supply</td>
<td>Different club activities are scheduled from Monday to Friday in different time slots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tianba Primary School</td>
<td>(1) Self-study (2) Community activities: sports, music, art, science four major categories</td>
<td>Each course has about 30 students per year, with a total capacity of about 120 students (the total number of students per year is about 250).</td>
<td>Club activities are held every Thursday at the same time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.2 Overall Satisfaction

According to the results of the Likert scale, among the 108 valid results of Beihang Elementary School, the number of "satisfied" and "more satisfied" is 74, accounting for 69%; the number of "average" is 23, accounting for 21%; the number of "dissatisfied" and "not very satisfied" is 11, accounting for 10%. The number of "dissatisfied" and "not very satisfied" is 11, accounting for 10%. The number of "dissatisfied" and "not very satisfied" is 11, accounting for 10%. Among the 123 valid results of Tianba Primary School, the number of "satisfied" and "more satisfied" is 55, accounting for 45%; the number of "average" is 39, accounting for 32%; The reasons for dissatisfaction or dissatisfaction were that the extended-hours service added to the study burden but did not have better learning effect.
5.1.3 Off-campus tutoring

(1) Overall number of students

The number of students who opted for after-school tutoring before the launch of the extended service at Beihang Elementary School was 91, accounting for 81% of the surveyed students; the number of students who opted for after-school tutoring after the launch was 73, accounting for 65% of the surveyed students, down 16% year-on-year. In Tianba Primary School, 69 students (51%) chose to continue the out-of-school tutoring before the extended service was launched, and 58 students (43%) chose to continue the out-of-school tutoring after the service was launched, representing a decrease of 8% year-on-year.

(2) Ratio of subject classes to non-subject classes

Among the students who chose to participate in out-of-school tutoring before the extended service, 22, 34, and 35 students in Beihang Primary School participated in subject-only tutoring, non-subject-only tutoring, and both, accounting for 25%, 37%, and 38% of the 91 students, respectively; 14, 34, and 25 students in Tianba Primary School participated in subject-only tutoring, non-subject-only tutoring, and both, accounting for 18%, 61%, and 21% of the 73 students, respectively. The number of students who participated in subject-only tutoring, non-subject-only tutoring, and both were 38, 16, and 15 respectively, accounting for 55%, 23%, and 22% of 69 students; after the launch, 36, 12, and 10 respectively, accounting for 62%, 21%, and 17% of 58 students.

5.2 Problem discovering

Through the above data analysis and interviews, we got the following points:

In terms of basic development and overall satisfaction, Beihang Elementary School is generally satisfied with the extended-hours service, with strong teachers and rich, systematic, and professional course content; however, some of the popular courses have small capacity and solidified time, and there is an imbalance between supply and demand because they have not done their due diligence to understand the complete needs of students and parents before they are offered. The overall satisfaction of the extended-hours service of Tianba Primary School is relatively low, the teachers are relatively insufficient, the courses offered are small and complicated, the format is single and the capacity is very small, and the subject and non-subject courses are arranged at the same time, so the students' enthusiasm to participate is low.

In terms of the overall situation of out-of-school tutoring, the total number of students enrolled in extracurricular classes and the number and percentage of participants in both places decreased after the implementation of the extended-hours service, which is closely related to the measures related to the "double reduction" policy and the partial satisfaction of the demand for tutoring by the extended hours service, indicating that the extended hours service in each place has actually achieved certain results. In comparison, the total number of extracurricular classes and the proportion of extracurricular subject classes enrolled in Beihang Elementary School decreased more, indicating that the effect of the extended hours service was more significant.

In terms of the proportion of out-of-school tutoring classes and non-subject classes, the proportion of non-subject classes in Beihang Elementary School increased after the extended hours service was launched, while the proportion of subject classes in Tianba Elementary School increased. Based on the interview results and rational analysis, we believe that this is related to the school's policy environment and peer pressure. In addition, the lack of capacity of some popular non-disciplinary courses in Beihang Elementary School stimulates students' needs but cannot meet them, which helps students to participate in non-disciplinary training outside of school. The subject-based curriculum at Tianba Primary School is mainly self-study, and lacks extension, making it difficult to meet the needs of some students; the content of the non-subject-based curriculum is general and complicated, single in format, short in duration, and small in capacity; the imbalance between the subject-based and non-subject-based curriculum is somewhat guided by the score theory, which to some extent promotes students' demand for off-campus subject-based tuition.

In conclusion, the implementation of after-school extended hours service in both primary schools in Beijing Haidian, the center of education in China, and primary schools in the municipalities directly under the central government have different degrees of problems and fail to achieve the desired effect of the national policy of double reduction. The author attributes the problems to the contradictions between the state, society, school supply, and family demand, and in the following chapter, I will analyze the causes of the contradictions between supply and demand for after-school services and propose measures to alleviate them.
6. Reasons for Inquiry

6.1 Limited supply of school resources

First of all, to enrich the variety of after-school extended service courses and improve the quality of after-school extended service, more professional venues, equipment, teachers, and other hardware conditions are needed. However, the quality and quantity of hardware that schools can provide is limited because some schools do not allocate their resources appropriately, do not make adequate use of off-campus venues and resources, and do not have the necessary funding to do so.

Second, there is an objective information gap between economically underdeveloped and economically developed regions in terms of educational resources, and in order to compensate for the educational problems caused by this information gap, local education departments are more likely to have the educational concept of exchanging time for marks, thus underestimating the overall development of students, resulting in a serious imbalance between subject and non-subject courses offered in after-school extended hours services, which to some extent also conveys incorrect educational ideas to parents and students. To some extent, it also conveys incorrect educational ideas to parents and students.

6.2 Strong demand for family tutoring

In order to understand the real attitude of parents toward "double reduction," the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China conducted a survey in August 2021 on a sample of parents of students in compulsory education. The survey used a quota sampling method to weight the data by the proportion of the compulsory education population in each province in 2020 and the urbanization rate in China in 2020. 511,043 valid samples were collected, covering 31 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government) and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps.

"As an implicit education evaluation indicator, "parental education anxiety" has been mentioned several times in national education reform documents in recent years. According to a survey conducted by China Youth Daily on parents' educational anxiety after the implementation of the "double reduction" policy, 72.7% of parents said that their anxiety was reduced, 38.4% said that it was slightly reduced, and 6.5% said that they were more anxious (Huang Chong et al., 2021). The survey showed that 42.1% of parents no longer enrolled in extracurricular training courses or switched to sports and art hobby classes, 26.1% said they would continue to enroll in classes, 26.8% said they would spend more time tutoring their children, and 36.8% chose to wait and see what support measures would follow.

These figures suggest that the current double reduction policy is not fully meeting the needs of families. So why do parents have to "roll" so much?

First of all, China's thousands of years of literary tradition have made the concept of "all things are inferior, but only reading is superior" deeply rooted in every family's education. The concept of "everything is inferior, but reading is superior" is deeply rooted in every family's education. Parents generally believe that good grades mean, in part, a higher probability of a decent job, a higher social status, and a better quality of life in the future. Second, China has an education streaming system that uses secondary and higher education exams for talent selection, and students who cannot meet the relevant standards are required to receive vocational education early. The current level of vocational education in China is still very limited, and there is much room for improvement in social recognition, and an invisible chain of vocational discrimination is "hidden" in social life. At the same time, with the rising economic standard of living, more and more families can afford to help their children pass two important exams and naturally want their children to receive the best quality education within their ability so that they can be more competitive.

With the introduction of the double reduction policy and the restriction on out-of-school tutoring, parents have shifted some of their demand for tutoring to after-school extended hours services, and their expectations have naturally risen, making the problem of after-school extended hours services even more pronounced.

6.3 Poor supply-demand interface between home and school

There is a seemingly symbiotic relationship between home and school, but due to the difference in their primary functions, there is a natural barrier. Currently, most schools in China still have many gaps in their home-school cooperation mechanisms, and there are significant problems with poor communication and unclear responsibilities. There may be a lack of due diligence before the program is offered, and a failure to fully understand what parents and students would most like to receive in the way of extended day services directly leads to the school offering classes that are not aligned...
with family needs.

7. Solution measures

To solve the problem of after-school extended hours service, we need to start from both the supply and demand sides and promote the active participation of the society, government, and other parties to jointly provide solutions to improve the level of after-school extended hours service and balance the demand of families for after-school tutoring, so as to play the role of the main position of the school and let education truly return to the campus.

7.1 Supply side: Improve the level of after-school extended hours services

7.1.1 Improve hardware facilities and expand activity venues

Whether or not we can provide good hardware conditions for after-school extended day services directly affects the effectiveness of the services, as sports equipment, training facilities, and activity venues need to be improved in both quality and quantity. In this regard, schools with limited funds and resources should fully consider the needs of students and parents, and adjust the supporting facilities required for extended day services based on extensive knowledge and statistics, so as to maximize the optimal allocation of resources and better meet the demand side; social welfare organizations and groups should strengthen cooperation with schools and make full use of off-campus venues and resources such as children's palaces, cultural centers, science and technology centers, etc. The most fundamental solution to the hardware problem is to solve the funding problem, and the institutional guarantee of funding is also a key link to the sustainable and in-depth promotion of after-school extended hours services. Therefore, the government should establish and improve the financial guarantee system of after-school extended hours service, adjust the financial policy, strengthen the financial coordination, and provide appropriate financial subsidies to schools that lack funds and need to improve hardware facilities, so as to provide economic support for the development of after-school extended hours service.

7.1.2 Correct the concept of education and enrich the curriculum

Under the background of "double reduction", after-school extended hours services are actively carried out around the world, but the curriculum of some schools is not reasonable enough, and the ratio of academic classes to non-academic classes is not balanced and the mode is single, which cannot meet the needs of parents and students for academic development and comprehensive development. As the main service provider, schools should make adjustments in the design of the after-school service system, balance the time, frequency, and format of academic and non-academic classes, break the single curriculum model, and add new ideas, flexibility, and diversity. Schools are not the only providers of after-school extended hours services. Students from universities, retired teachers, teachers from institutions, cultural and sports workers, and other social forces should participate in after-school extended hours services such as homework tutoring, club activities, and subject development according to their own abilities, so as to strengthen their teaching force and help provide more comprehensive and rich extended hours services and better cultivate students' core literacy. The government should also take advantage of the information technology era to explore the construction of a national digital network platform for after-school extended hours services to share curriculum resources, bridge the information gap between different schools and regions, and alleviate schools' anxiety about promotion rates.

7.2 Demand side: Adjusting the demand for after-school tutoring at home

7.2.1 Pay attention to family education to meet part of the demand

With the development of the economy and social changes, the role of family education on students' performance, personality development, and quality cultivation has become more prominent, and good family education can promote children's overall development and internalize some of their needs. Parents should make good use of the time they spend with their children, and through family activities such as knowledge quiz, parent-child interaction, homework tutoring, etc., they can enhance parent-child relationships while cultivating their children's thinking, broadening their knowledge, and stimulating their interest in learning. The government should also increase publicity on the importance of family education, create a favorable social atmosphere, improve family education laws and regulations and supporting policies, and promote the construction of a scientific family education guidance service system to provide favorable support and protection for family education guidance.

7.2.2 Pay attention to real needs and avoid blind consumption

The excessive demand for tutoring stems from parents' educational anxiety. To alleviate the phenomenon of "in-volume"
and avoid blind consumption of time, energy, money, etc., parents need to change the misconception of blindly accumulating "knowledge and skills" in their children.

First of all, as the main site of education, schools should develop a fair and reasonable education evaluation mechanism, avoid over-emphasis on grades, focus on process evaluation and diversified evaluation, pay attention to the overall development of students' moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic development, and give full play to the role of "weathervane"; secondly, in the Internet era, the mainstream social media should increase the propaganda of correct education concepts, and break the "only one" concept of education. The government, as an authoritative national institution, should convey the correct value guidance: promote the change of talent selection system, change the single selection standard of only looking at grades, improve the comprehensive evaluation system, and establish a sound and scientific talent selection mechanism. The government, as an authoritative national institution, should provide the right value guidance: promote changes in the talent selection system, change the single selection criterion based on grades, improve the comprehensive evaluation system, and establish a scientific and reasonable talent selection mechanism; build a high-quality vocational education system, enhance the social recognition of vocational education, and stimulate students' and parents' demand for diversified education; increase publicity, advocate the establishment of the concept of vocational equality, and break the invisible vocational discrimination chain.

8. Conclusion

The solution to the problem of after-school extended hours service in elementary school is related to the future of China. In this study, we analyzed the differences and identified problems, and explored the causes from both the supply and demand sides to propose solutions that can be jointly implemented by families, schools, society, and the government, in order to promote the healthy operation of after-school extended hours services in elementary school, promote the overall improvement of students’ core literacy, and better play the role of In the process of the study, the author strives to promote the operation of after-school extended hours services in primary schools, promote the overall improvement of students' core literacy, and better play the role of the main school.

In the research process, the authors endeavor to approach each subject based on the actual situation and address current issues. However, there are still areas of immaturity in the analysis and discussion. In the future, the author aims to enhance their analytical skills and delve deeper into research in this area, with the aspiration of making a meaningful contribution to the field of education.

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