

Parental Involvement in Senior Pupils' Learning in the Context of the Implementation of China's Double Reduction Policy

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Abstract: Parental involvement in learning, entertainment, emotion, and daily care is crucial to the growth and development of children. Due to the increasing significance of educational attainment in China, parental involvement in child learning is receiving ever-increasing weight and is now the most prevalent of the four aspects. In the wake of the implementation of the Double Reduction Policy, family education has encountered new obstacles, resulting in a shift in parental involvement in education. In the framework of policy execution, the learning involvement of parents of senior students merits special consideration, as they are burdened with the upcoming enrollment in secondary school. The objective of this essay is to describe the current state of parental involvement in learning under the new policy and investigate the causes of existing problems. Also presented are suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of parental involvement in child study.

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PARENTAL influence has a significant impact on all aspects of a child's development. The scholastic and professional success of children can be effectively predicted by parental participation. It can be broken down into four categories: education, amusement, emotion, and everyday care (Feng, 2011). The amount of parental learning involvement has far exceeded any other sort of parental engagement as a result of the growing significance of educational attainment. Unfair parental participation in children's education reflects the routine of home education and high levels of worry about children's academic achievement.

Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Off-Campus Training for Compulsory Education Students, also known as the "Double Reduction Policy," were released in July 2021. They say that students' homework loads must be controlled according to their educational phases and that after-school training institutions cannot hold "subject-based" training programs on national holidays, weekends, or during the winter and summer breaks (Ministry of Education, 2021). As a result, children spend more time with their parents after school. In order for their children to succeed in the competitive world of education, parents, particularly those of senior students (those in the fifth and sixth grades), know that home education must take on more responsibility. This article makes an effort to pinpoint issues with existing parental involvement in senior students' learning, such as insufficient time commitment, a limited scope, low efficacy, increased parent-child conflicts, and heightened parental concern; to investigate the causes of the current problems; and to offer proposals for enhancing the efficiency of parental learning involvement, such as developing democratic and egalitarian home environments, increasing parental educational beliefs, enhancing home-school and home-community collaboration, and changing the system of educational evaluation.

The Status Quo of Parental Learning Involvement in the Education of Senior Pupils

Inadequate Time Input

Conflict of Interests: None

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Parents who are involved in their children's learning do things like help them review lessons and make learning plans, look over their homework, and so on. The goal is to improve the quality of their homework and make sure they do other family-based learning tasks (Feng, 2011). In a survey conducted by Ye et al. (2022), more than 85.4% of parents of primary school students claimed that they lacked the time to assist their children with schoolwork, while 3.5% said they had never been active in their children's education. An assessment of the implementation consequences of the Double Reduction policy revealed that 24.3% of students were unable to complete tasks at school and had to do them at home; the bulk of these students were high school seniors (Nin & Yang, 2022). Therefore, despite the fact that the implementation of the Double Reduction policy has significantly reduced the workload of students, the amount of homework assigned to senior pupils remains substantial. Consequently, the majority of senior-level primary school students continue to finish their assignments at home.

Self-regulation in learning refers to a student's capacity to autonomously do homework, formulate learning plans, and manage learning time. Despite the fact that senior students have developed greater self-control than their junior counterparts, their self-regulation power is still restricted, necessitating parental engagement in their academic concerns along with their requirement to complete coursework at home. Involvement of parents in their children's education serves as a monitoring mechanism that not only improves children's learning efficacy but also aids in the formation of healthy learning habits.

Low Quality of Parental Involvement

Under the Double Reduction policy, the academic burden of students has been significantly reduced due to the regulation of homework and off-campus tutoring services. At the same time, it imposes new duties on parents, who must now assume greater responsibility for the after-school education of their children. However, many parents lack the expertise and experience necessary for educating children and view their engagement in their children's education as only checking homework. Parents may assist their children with homework they are unable to complete (Zhang, 2022) or provide them with additional exercises to complete after they have completed their teachers' assignments. According to these parents, homework is only a form of labor that keeps their children occupied or quiet (Dewey, 2004), which violates the Double Reduction Policy's goal. When homework consists of repetitive and overly practical tasks, it loses its actual value. Meaningful homework should consist of independent and exploratory tasks outside of classroom instruction (Luo & Meng, 2021). Children can only benefit from

the Double Reduction policy if they are assigned exciting, colorful homework rather than tedious writing assignments.

For some parents, being involved in their children's education simply means being present when they are learning at home (Li, 2022). Parents may focus on surfing their cell phones or other "essential" tasks while observing their children complete their schoolwork. The parents' interactions with their children are ineffective. Instead of negligent parental participation, children actually need high-quality parental interaction. Deep child-parent communications are just as crucial for senior pupils who have reached a certain level of abstract-logical reasoning as parental support for their schooling. The first and most significant role models for children are their parents. The interests, perspectives, and values of parents have a direct or indirect impact on how children's characters develop (Hong & Ran, 2000).

Intensifying Parent-Child Conflicts Due to Educational Anxieties

Alfred Adler's Separation of Tasks theory says that everyone has their own tasks to focus on and shouldn't get in the way of others'. This theory can help avoid problems in relationships between people. The "mixture of tasks" can also make it hard for parents and children to get along (Li, 2022). For example, one of the most important goals for senior elementary school students is to work hard and get into the best secondary school possible. If parents see this as their job, they may get in the way of their kids' education by giving them too many activities after school and having too high standards for them. They might get angry if the kids do not do what they want. Still, the kids cannot make big changes overnight just because their parents are putting pressure on them, and eventually the parent-child relationships get worse over time.

The *2017 Annual Report on New Types of Education Supplies* revealed that 48.3% of primary and secondary school students participated in off-campus supplemental tutoring, with each participant spending an average of over 5,000 CNY (Wang, 2018). According to the *White Paper on Chinese Family Educational Consumption*, in 2017, approximately half of all household expenditures in China were allocated to family education. These statistics reflect parental concerns regarding their children's education. They are so concerned about their children's academic ranks that they rely heavily on advanced instruction from off-campus tutoring firms. The Double Reduction program has alleviated some of the public's educational concerns (Yu & Yao, 2021). However, as noted previously in this article, the reduction of homework for senior pupils is limited; their parents must continue to devote considerable time to monitoring their studies. In addition, the policy requires offline training institutions to conclude tutoring by 8:30 p.m. on school days.

Parents must cram all after-school tutoring for their children into the window between the schools' and training institutions' closing times. This completely exhausts senior pupils, diminishes their self-motivation, and heightens their defiance, which in turn increases parents' anxiety.

A Lack of Comprehensive Home-School Collaboration

The Double Reduction policy highlights the importance of optimizing home-school partnerships in order to improve school education (Ministry of Education, 2021). Other national education policies emphasize the necessity of home-school collaboration. "More is less." The lowering of student academic burden does not imply that teachers and parents can relax their educational obligations; rather, it needs more scientific and systematic home-school contact in order to holistically improve educational efficacy.

Home-school communication in China, on the other hand, is typically cantered on student academic progress. Parents would seek assistance from teachers only when their children were having academic difficulties or when they needed to consult teachers about their children's middle school enrollment; teachers would contact parents only when their child fell behind in academic performance. Topics such as kids' spiritual pursuits and emotional needs are rarely addressed in parent-teacher dialogue. Such contact is limited and has minimal bearing on students' overall development.

Causes of Problems with Learning Involvement of Senior Pupils' Parents

Parents' Outdated Educational Beliefs

In China, parents with traditional educational beliefs often see schools as the primary actors in their children's education. Ye, Fang, and Zhang (2022) discovered that 62.7% of parents polled were unaware that their actions may have a significant impact on their children, instead arguing that schools and teachers should bear complete responsibility for their children's education. When faced with increased educational involution, parents resorted to off-campus additional tutoring to help their children succeed in the rat race. Approximately 95% of parents of compulsory education students expect their children to attend university or higher education (Wang, 2021). When they believe that family education is incapable of promoting children's academic success, they can only turn to external resources for assistance, and the limited availability of such services makes them even more concerned. That is why the implementation of the Double Reduction policy heightened their concerns, as the children's after-school education was now in their hands.

Parents' lack of educational capacity is the result of outdated educational concepts. First, the majority of parents of senior pupils link involvement in their children's education with the supervision of homework. They are unable to identify relevant teaching approaches that match the features of children. Second, they lack sufficient information regarding child development. Senior primary school students are going through profound physical and mental changes as they shift from childhood to adolescence. In the absence of educational expertise, parents are prone to approach their children in early adolescence as little children, which frequently provokes a rebellious mindset in the adolescents. Thirdly, parents may have poor communication abilities. Frequently, parents are unable to communicate effectively with their children and transmit their feelings, opinions, and desires, resulting in confrontations with their children.

Parents frequently prioritize their kids' academic success and intellectual prowess over the most crucial concerns, such as their physical and mental health, moral development, and character building, because they lack a reasonable knowledge of how kids grow and develop. When parents place unreasonable academic success expectations on their children, it demonstrates that they are unaware of the unique characteristics and variances that exist among people.

A Paucity of High-Quality Educational Resources

The battle for admission to renowned secondary schools is mostly due to a lack of high-quality educational resources. The physical facilities and supportive environment of a school are among its educational conditions. The term "soft school environments" refers to the conditions that educated people perceive in the dynamic process of education, which, to some extent, have more significant effects on student educational outcomes. School physical facilities include teaching infrastructure, equipment, recreational facilities, and more (Wang, 2021). Even though China's universalization and balanced development of compulsory education have mostly eliminated geographic inequities in school facilities, shortages of teachers continue to have a substantial impact on education and teaching quality. That explains why senior pupils' parents worry about their children's education.

Incomplete Educational Evaluation Standards

The goal of the 2020 publication of the Overall Plan for Deepening the Reform of Educational Evaluation in the New Era was to advance the reform of student educational evaluation to support comprehensive moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and social development of students (State Council, 2020). Exam results continue to be the dominant factor in the evaluation of students' educational outcomes in reality, though. Although the Double Reduction

policy is intended to lessen the amount of homework and off-campus training students must complete, senior pupils who are anxious about approaching secondary school enrollment are unable to take advantage of it because of the assessment's emphasis on exams. As a result, tutoring at training institutions gives way to one-on-one private instruction; students receive more supplemental instruction materials, making up for the decreased amount of homework. It can be challenging for parents to strike a balance between their children's academic performance and their physical and mental health in test-ability-oriented education (Yu & Yao, 2021). In this case, exam results and the struggle for spots in elite middle schools become the main sources of worry for parents of senior primary school students.

Suggestions for Improving Parental Involvement in Senior Pupils' Learning in the Context of the Double Reduction Policy Implementation

Creating a Democratic Home Atmosphere to Improve the Effectiveness of Parental Involvement

The goal of the Double Reduction policy is not to promote a laissez-faire approach to student learning but rather to restore students' rest time and eliminate repetitive, pointless exercises, and to maximize the learning results of children, parental participation must be improved.

Some Chinese parents are unable to treat their children with equality and respect due to the influence of an ancient authoritarian society. They would most likely utilize their parental authority to force their children to obey. In terms of child learning, parents may impose their own standards on their children, such as asking them to do extra exercises and tailoring learning plans to their own preferences.

Children pursue two essential psychological needs: a sense of belonging and self-worth (Nelsen, 2016). Senior students often have a greater desire for attention and support from their parents than their junior counterparts. Parents should endeavor to understand more about child psychology, develop their parenting skills, and learn to listen to their children. Parents can reduce their own educational anxiety while also creating a motivating environment for their children by focusing on improving their competency rather than exam results. When parents and children have an equitable connection, children feel more relaxed at home, and doing schoolwork is no longer a daily chore. Equal dialogue and rational communication might encourage senior students of a vulnerable age to be more open with their parents, allowing the latter to provide appropriate support.

Upgrading Parents' Educational Ideas to Reduce Parent-Child Conflicts

The “side effect” of the Double Reduction policy is that parents of senior primary school students are more anxious. In light of this strategy, parents may attempt to fill the gap by creating after-school learning programs for their children if they are concerned about how the reduced academic workload may affect their children’s test scores. Early adolescent kids often become resistant to their parents’ over involvement in their education, which exacerbates problems between parents and their kids. Parents should adopt more scientific educational principles in order to make their engagement acceptable to children.

The transition from primary to secondary education should not be seen by parents as a final and conclusive event, but rather as one of many stages in their child’s life. Parental participation is a sustained endeavor. The parent-child relationship suffers when instant results are overemphasized. Parents should also refrain from placing unreasonably high expectations on their kids’ academic performance. Children have a variety of skills and abilities. Overly demanding standards for a child’s academic success can make them feel burdened and under strain. Given their abilities, the learning objective chosen for the child must be feasible, challenging, and applicable. Children get a huge boost in self-efficacy when they achieve tough but attainable goals, and the cooperative efforts of the children and their parents in meeting the challenge also offer opportunities for parent-child emotional engagement.

Strengthening Home-school and Home-community Collaboration to Bolster Parents' Educational Competence

The main objective of the Double Reduction policy is to support students’ overall development, which calls for parents to have high levels of educational competency. Parents with poor educational skills find it difficult to select effective teaching methods and, as a result, are unable to produce high-quality parental involvement in their children’s education. Additionally, the primary source of parents’ educational worry is a lack of educational competency (Yu & Yao, 2021). So, parent education efforts should be increased in communities and schools.

Schools should encourage parents to use internet resources like “parent classrooms” and “family microlectures.” For the purpose of maximizing parents’ educational goals, assumptions, and practices, teachers can organize specialized parent meetings where they can provide parents with advice on home education and scientifically supported child-education strategies. Additionally, parents might freely take part in their children’s extracurricular

activities. Schools are now obligated to provide after-school services in the afternoon as a result of the policy's release. When parents are available during the service period, they can help schools plan after-school programs for kids. This is a great chance for parents to spend time with their kids and foster stronger emotional connections. This can be used as a good illustration of how parents can positively influence their children's learning.

Parents who require assistance might also receive home education counselling from the community. Parents should work with competent professionals to identify issues with their family's education and come up with remedies (Yuan, 2009). As a result, parents who have never received formal training in child education can gain some basic knowledge of the subject, develop better communication skills, and increase the impact of their involvement in the learning of their children. In addition to child learning, professional guidelines can be expanded to include emotional and psychological problems.

Accelerating the Reform of Educational Evaluation and Expanding the Forms of Parental Learning Involvement

The skewed educational evaluation system based on academic results is to blame for the existing one-sided parental learning involvement. Senior students need to work extremely hard or even engage in advanced learning to achieve good marks and get accepted into exclusive secondary schools as a result of the rising educational competition. As a result, parents' efforts have been focused on supervising homework and improving their children's exam scores. This phenomenon runs counter to the idea of the Double Reduction program, which seeks to increase students' overall competencies while reducing the amount of work they have to do after school.

Currently, teachers are in charge of evaluating students. The evaluation of pupils' performance is based on the teachers' grades. This restriction should be overcome through a new paradigm for educational evaluation that includes feedback from numerous sources, including parents and peers. A thorough evaluation strategy might inspire parents to become more involved in their children's education and to focus on things other than homework and tests.

Conclusion

It is necessary to look more closely at the impacts of the Double Reduction policy. However, it has a significant impact on learning when parents of senior primary school students are involved. Undoubtedly, the changing environment has presented parents with new challenges regarding their chil-

dren's education. Parents must adopt scientific perspectives on education, pay attention to their emotional interactions with children, and foster egalitarian, peaceful home environments if they want to increase the success of their efforts to support their children's learning. It is essential for schools and communities to offer qualified assistance to parents to improve their educational competency in order to ensure responsible parental involvement. Additionally, the elements of parental participation may benefit from the reform of the school evaluation system. In order to carry out the goals of the Double Reduction policy and support children's healthy development, more study is required to investigate how to enhance parental involvement in their children's education.

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