



## The Evaluation of China's Double Reduction Policy: A Case Study in Dongming County Mingde Primary School

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### Abstract

**Background and Aim:** The "Double Reduction Policy" has been formulated and implemented by the Chinese government to reduce the homework load of primary and secondary school students and regulate off-campus training institutions. This study aims to assess the impact of the double reduction policy implemented at Mingde Primary School in Dongming County. The evaluation will be conducted using the Stufflebeam CIPP Model, which includes an assessment of the policy's context, input, process, and product aspects. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the impact of the policy.

**Materials and Methods:** The research methodology used in this study is qualitative. Data was collected through document analysis and interviews with 20 key informants, who were purposefully selected. The informants included school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. The qualitative data collected was analyzed using content analysis.

**Results:** This research examines the implementation of the Double Reduction Policy in China, a top-down policy model aimed at reducing homework and after-school tutoring pressure on primary and secondary school students. The results indicate that the policy successfully eases pressure on families and students and enhances teacher development. However, it also increases management time and results in longer working hours for teachers after school. The research findings align with the experiences of school administrators, teachers, and parents involved in the policy implementation. The study highlights both the advantages and disadvantages of the policy, emphasizing the need for a balanced perspective considering the diverse perspectives of stakeholders.

**Conclusion:** The research on implementing the Double Reduction Policy in China provides valuable insights into its impact on various stakeholders. The findings reveal that the policy effectively addresses the issue of homework and after-school tutoring pressure, benefiting families and students by reducing their workload. Additionally, it promotes teacher development and strengthens free online learning services. However, it is essential to acknowledge that the policy also brings challenges, such as increased management time and longer working hours for teachers after school. This research provides valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders involved in education reform efforts. It emphasizes the need for comprehensive and thoughtful approaches when implementing policies to reduce academic pressure on students and improve educational outcomes.

**Keywords:** Policy Evaluation; Double reduction Policy; Educational Policy

### Introduction

Education is a cumulative process of development of intellectual abilities, skills, and attitudes, all of which generally form our outlooks and dispositions to action in life (Bamisaie, 1989). All human beings are born to learn continuously to survive, live, and thrive. The past several decades has witnessed a considerable expansion of education across the world, contributing to upholding people's dignity and empowerment and the advancement of social, economic, political, and cultural development. (United Nations, 2023) Education policy has been undergoing great transformation in China since the initiation of the economic reform and open-door policy in the late 1970s. The market-oriented reforms and pursuit of rapid economic growth in a globalized economy have had important impacts on China's education policy and development (Ngok, 2007). It is predicted that with the increasing financial investment from the central government and the strengthening role of the state in educational provision, the situation of rural educational provision will be improved, and the rural-urban divide may be alleviated over the next decade (Ngok, 2007). The Chinese government paid much importance to education. The state-run public education system primarily manages education in China, which falls under the Ministry of Education. All citizens must attend school for at least of nine years, known as nine-year compulsory education, which the government funds (Zhao Yusha, 2023). However high school children and adolescents have been facing stress, especially academic stress. High schools are highly competitive environments; the





primary source of stress comes from high expectations for academic achievement. The stress negatively impacted students' emotions, sleep, study, and mental well-being. They felt that too many brilliant students made it difficult for them to be outstanding. Most of the stress was experienced at the school. Students felt that there were expectations for them to perform well academically, which included getting high scores in examinations and ranking top in school. These expectations came from teachers, parents, other family members, and themselves. They wanted to meet these expectations (Zhou et al., 2023).

To cope and reduce academic stress, preventing physical and mental health in children and adolescents. Therefore, in July 2021, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council proposed the "double reduction policy that aimed to reduce students' academic burden, improve student mental health, and lower family spending on after-school tutoring. (Zhou, 2023). However, the implementation of the policy has also raised educational equity concerns among parents and critics. There are various challenges to implementing this policy. The first challenge of the Double Reduction policy is directly associated with resource allocation inefficiencies, the second problem of fairness such as parents with a higher educational background will be more advantageous in the process of participating in education, while parents with a lower educational background will have less of an idea of how to help their children, especially in high school. (Yao, 2023)

The Mingde Primary School, located in Dongming County, Shandong Province, China, is a privately owned educational institution. It operates under the supervision of the local education government bureau. The school currently has 450 students, 30 teachers, and 2 school administrators. It is the only private-public service school in Dongming County. Every semester, the school receives donations of books, school supplies, and other essential items from the Society of Caring Volunteers. (Dongming Education, 2022). The school is open to orphans, children from families in need whose parents are incapable of education, and rural students with excellent grades from all over the county. Students receive free room and board during the school year and are rewarded each semester based on their academic performance. If their grades are among the top 200 in the county, they can receive a scholarship of 10,000 yuan (Dongming Education, 2022). In addition, students at the school enjoy automatic admission to junior high and high school with excellent grades for exemption. If they end up in the top universities in China, the country will give a certain number of subsidies for house purchase and housing. These incentives are only available to students within Matilda Elementary School.

The Mingde School implemented the Double reduction policy in 2021, according to the guidelines set by the Chinese government. This policy was developed through collaboration among teachers, parents, and administrators to not only reduce academic stress for students but also to prioritize their overall development, including morality, intelligence, fitness, aesthetics, and labor skills. However, the implementation of this policy has resulted in longer working hours for teachers due to the inclusion of extracurricular services after school. Therefore, school administrators are tasked with finding ways to align their operations with the government's policy. It is believed that further improvements and developments are necessary to successfully achieve the government's goals.

According to the above statement, implementing the Double Reduction Policy may lead to success in certain aspects, such as enhancing students' learning. However, it may also have an impact on the management of administrators, teachers as well as parental expectations. Therefore, evaluating the outcomes and impact of the Double Reduction Policy is necessary and important for Mingde School. This evaluation will help in the development and improvement of school management to benefit students, teachers, and parents in the future.

## Research Objectives

This study assesses the impact of the double reduction policy implemented at Mingde Primary School in Dongming County, China.

## Literature review

The CIPP evaluation model and relevant research studies are utilized to assess the impact of the Double Reduction policy in The Mingde Primary School as follows:

### 1. Educational policy evaluation by CIPP Model

Evaluations are used in a large number of fields including in Education and Public Policy. Many evaluation designs and models have been used to evaluate institutes' projects, programs, or workings. Evaluation is about assessing the expected and unexpected outcomes and impacts of public policy (Knill & Tosun, 2020). United Nations (2017) has defined "Evaluation that evaluation as an assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, program, strategy, policy, topic, theme,



sector, operational area, institutional performance, etc. It focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments, examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors a causality, to understand achievements or the lack thereof. Policy evaluation, as the final stage of the policy cycle, involves analyzing the outcomes to determine the extent of success in achieving the objectives of a public policy. It also examines the impact on stakeholders and how they are affected. The CIPP evaluation model is widely utilized in the education field and public policy. Its primary focus is on improvement rather than validation (Lee, S. Y, Shin, J.S, Lee & S.H, 2019). The CIPP model is an evaluation model for evaluation given by Stufflebeam in 1983 which includes four elements: C- Context, I- Input, P- Process, and P- Product (Aziz, S., Mahmood, M., & Rehman, Z, 2019). Stufflebeam's CIPP evaluation model (1983) is a comprehensive program or project evaluation framework. It consists of four interrelated components:

1. Context evaluation: This component involves assessing the objectives of policy, needs, problems, and opportunities for the program or project and identifying the resources and constraints that may affect its implementation.

2. Input evaluation: This component evaluates the input resources for planning the program or project, including budget, human resources, materials and technology, and people's participation.

3. Process evaluation: This component involves evaluating the implementation of the program or project, including policy planning, policy implementation, and support.

4. Product evaluation: This component involves evaluating the output and outcomes of the program or project, including its effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. This policy will evaluate the policy's impact on school administration, students' quality of life, and parent's satisfaction with the double reduction policy.

Overall, the CIPP model provides a comprehensive approach to policy evaluation, considering the various program development and implementation stages.

## **2. Research on double reduction policy**

Some scholars and academics (Lai & Qin, 2022; Meng, Pu & Wang, 2022) have conducted studies to evaluate the effectiveness of the double reduction policy in terms of students' academic workload. The study by Wang, Q., Luo, X., & Yang, J. (2022) found that the impact of the double reduction policy is complicated and can be described as having both positive and negative effects on different sectors. Some studies have shown that the double reduction policy has positively affected students' lives by reducing the pressure on them and their families. Based on a study by Meng, Pu, and Wang (2022) found that the double reduction policy makes parents attach importance to cultivating their children and digging up their potential. Moreover, students could finish their homework more efficiently and have more chances to become qualified citizens with plans and practical skills. In contrast, the study by Kang et al. (2022) found that the policy has decreased the amount of homework and pressure on students in compulsory education, thereby providing them with more opportunities for personalized development. Furthermore, the double reduction policy can positively impact reducing depression and anxiety in students. Poor parental marital quality, chronic physical illness, and a psychiatric family history have increased the likelihood of mental health problems, particularly among girls. (Wang, D., Chen, X-Y., Ma, Z., Liu, X., & Fan, F, 2022). It concluded that the double reduction policy has positively impacted students by reducing pressure on them and their families, according to several studies. It has led to more efficient homework completion, increased personalized development opportunities, and improved mental health by reducing depression and anxiety, particularly among girls.

However, some studies have depicted the drawback of the Double reduction policy such as the study by Zhan (2022), the Double Reduction policy's implementation in China has harmed the stock performance of education technology companies. The study analyzed different-sized education technology companies and calculated their CAR (cumulative abnormal returns) to ensure the reliability of the findings. Additionally, an alternative model, the constant mean model, was used to calculate the CAR, and the results remained consistent. This empirical research addresses the gap in understanding the impact of the "Double Reduction" policy on the stock prices of Chinese education technology companies. Kong (2023) studied the "Double Reduction Policy" and its impact on China's education system. This policy has significantly changed how students receive extra education in China and has affected millions, including those in the education industry. Although the policy has reduced stress for elementary and middle school students, there is still a need for more educational resources. This situation will worsen as China's population growth slows down. This research highlights the policy's negative impact on the stock prices of Chinese education technology companies and the education industry. Lastly, this policy also has been unevenly implemented by schools in different regions such as in Shenzhen, where the phenomenon of test questions exceeding standards still exists in some schools. This situation may have little short-term effect. Lastly, this policy also led teachers to face with

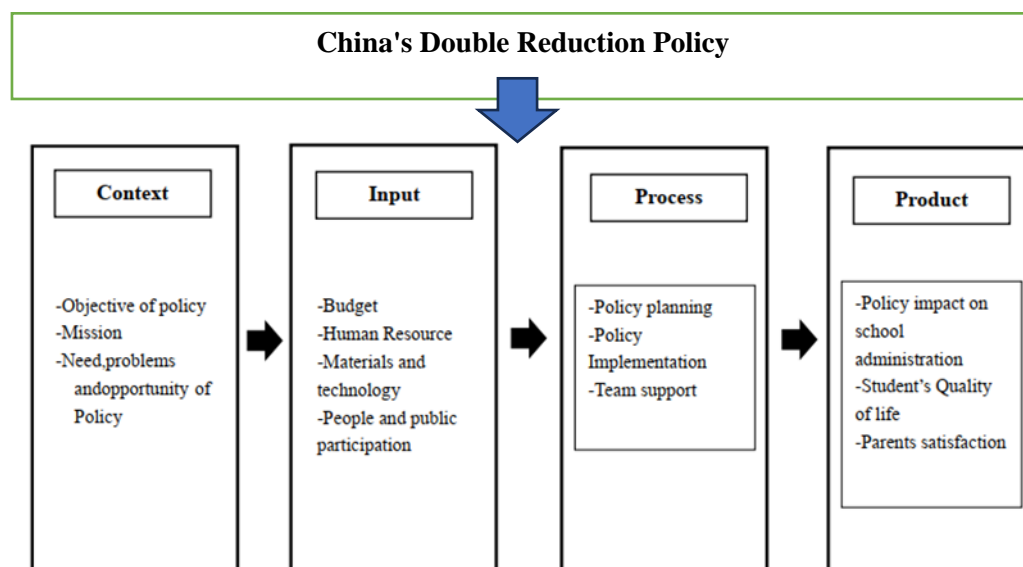


“time shortage” caused by the interruption of non-teaching tasks assigned by school administrators. (Lai and Qin,2022)

Based on the aforementioned studies, it can be inferred that the Double Reduction policy in China has certain limitations. It has adversely affected the stock performance of education technology companies and has not been implemented uniformly across different regions. Although it has alleviated stress among students, there is still a lack of sufficient educational resources. Furthermore, teachers are experiencing time constraints due to non-teaching responsibilities assigned by school administrators.

### Conceptual Framework

From the explanation of the policy evaluation theory by Stufflebeam (1983) and the literature review related to the double reduction policy above, the researchers applied the CIPP Model, which includes context, input, process, and product, as the conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1



**Figure 1** The conceptual framework of this study

### Methodology

The research has utilized qualitative methodology, including document analysis and in-depth interviews, as its primary research methods.

**1. The research area** is Mingde Primary School, Dongming County, Shandong Province, China. The Mingde Primary School is a privately owned educational institution that operates under the supervision of the local education government bureau.

#### **2. The Key Informants and selection**

The 20 key informants for in-depth interviews are selected from those who are involved and participated in the implementation of the Double Reduction policy in Mingde Primary School. The purpose of these interviews was to gather information from a diverse range of individuals with specialized knowledge, including four groups: school administrators, teachers, parents of students, and students from all grades at Dongming Mingde Primary School. The key informants were selected to include two school administrators (the school director/principal and the vice principal), ten students from grades 1 to 6, four teachers selected from the head of the department of the school, and four parents who are representatives from the school board committee.

#### **3. Research tool:**

This research utilized the methods of documentary research and in-depth interviews to gather data. Documentary research or secondary data involves studying documents from various sources, including books, a thesis, and research articles related to the double reduction policy. In contrast, in-depth interviews involve conducting extensive interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the topic.

#### **4. Data Collection**

1. The researcher coordinated with the school administrators to request data collection and scheduled interviews.





2. The researcher conducted on-site interviews with students, teachers, parents, and administrators during a specific month.

3. The researcher transcribed and analyzed the data simultaneously until complete saturation data was obtained. (Geertz, 1973)

### **5. Data Analysis and Assessing the validity of qualitative research**

The data collected in this study were analyzed using an inductive method and content analysis. Audio and text records from the interviews were converted into text data and sorted verbatim before being summarized. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative data analysis then involved four steps: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and data verification. To ensure the validity of the research, a triangulation method was employed, which involves using multiple methods or data sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. This study used method triangulation by data collection methods such as interviews and document analysis. Data source triangulation was also employed by incorporating data from various groups of participants, including school administrators, teachers, parents, and students, to ensure consistency across different groups. This approach strengthens the credibility and reliability of the research outcomes by avoiding reliance on a single data source or method (Patton, 1999)

## **Results**

In this research, the result has been classified into context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation, and product evaluation as follows:

### **1. Context evaluation of the Double reduction policy**

#### **1.1) Objective and mission of policy.**

The Double Reduction Policy (Chinese: 双减政策; shuāng jiǎn zhèng cè) is the educational policy of the Chinese Government to reduce homework and after-school tutoring pressure on primary and secondary school students, reduce families' spending on expensive tutoring, and improve compulsory education (ages 6–15). The objective of this policy is stated by the Chinese government as below: On July 24, 2021, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese State Council jointly issued "Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Off-Campus Training for Compulsory Education Students. Move the home the double reduction policy is a top-down policy of the Chinese Communist Party. The purpose of this policy is to (1) improve the education capacity of schools, (2) continuously regulate off-campus training (including online and offline training), and (3) reduce the excessive burden of homework and off-campus training on students in compulsory education. The Double Reduction Policy, mandated by the Central Government of China, has been implemented nationwide in public and private primary and secondary schools. Hence, this policy can be characterized as a top-down approach to implementation.

#### **1.2) Need, problems, and opportunity of Policy.**

As per the administrators' interview, the implementation of the Double Reduction policy addresses the needs of school administrators by easing the pressure on families and students. The policy's positive aspect is that it reduces the students' burden and requires teachers to develop themselves comprehensively in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor. It also strengthens and optimizes free online learning services and promotes the flow of regional cadres and teachers to serve the school better. However, the negative aspect of this policy is that it increases management time due to the addition of after-school services, resulting in longer working hours for teachers every day when returning home from work.

*"We had started implementing this policy in 2021. Our school is required to comply with the government's policy to reduce homework burden on students, and we believe that this policy is beneficial as it reduces stress on students and alleviates pressure on parents. However, the problem is that as a teacher, they have to spend more time teaching students in non-academic subjects such as sports, music, and art, which teaching non-academic subjects also adds to the time burden for teachers.. "*

(Interviewer: School administrator, name A1, May 28, 2023)



## 2. Input Evaluation

**2.1) Budget.** According to the interview, the central and local governments directly provided the budget for implementing the double reduction policy to support school administration. The government determined that this budget was sufficient to complete the project as planned. In addition, schools also have their budget from school administration, such as student fees, as a source of income.

*“To peration according to this policy Our school receives government funding and we operate on the school budget”*

(Interviewer: School administrator, name A1, May 28,2023)

## 2.2) Human Resource

The introduction of the double reduction policy has placed additional responsibilities on school administrators and teachers. Previously, the principal's role was primarily focused on managing the school, but now, they are also expected to teach students. Additionally, this policy has resulted in a shortage of teachers, with some teachers having to teach multiple courses. For instance, a math teacher may also be required to teach science courses. The school administrator has shared their concerns regarding this matter:

*“There is a serious shortage of teacher resources, and there are many areas that need to be managed in the school. However, due to the fact that I have to teach students every day, there are many loopholes in management.*

(Interviewer: School administrator, name A2, May 28,2023)

The teacher also had the same opinion about their heavy load of responsibility after the implementation of this policy:

*“I don't have time to rest every day. Previously, I only worked on the subjects I teach, and only needed to attend three classes a day. Now, I teach three courses alone, resulting in seven classes a day. There are really too few teachers”*

(Interviewer: Teacher, name B4, May 29,2023)

## 2.3) Materials and Technology

According to the interview with the school administrator, the materials and teachers are sufficient for students because this school is private and administered by the government. The school administrator had affirmed that:

*“Our school has enough classrooms to provide children with many interesting courses and enable them to develop comprehensively in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, and aesthetics. With sufficient funding subsidies, the school also provide various room for students such as music classrooms, handicraft classrooms, dance rooms, science rooms, etc. The library also has sufficient books, and there are corresponding books for grades 1-6, both in class. Computers are also sufficient for our students.”*

(Interviewer: School administrator, name A2, May 28,2023)

## 2.4) People Participation

After conducting interviews with parents, it was discovered that most of them actively participated in school activities, such as meetings. This can be attributed to their support for reducing the homework load on their children. Parents firmly believe that this policy will improve the quality of



education and promote the overall development of students, including their mental well-being. With more time allocated to non-academic pursuits like music classes and sports, students can engage in a more balanced and comprehensive learning experience. One participant specifically shared her viewpoint on this matter.

*"I agree with and support this policy as it can help reduce stress for our children.  
Therefore, we will participate in the meeting to listen to the school's policy."*

(Interviewer: parents, name A1, May 29, 2023)

### 3. Process of Double Reduction Policy

#### 3.1) Policy Planning

The county education bureau issued a notice to implement the policy immediately. It required all schools to implement it following the national policy after the government issued the policy in response to the national educational policy. The school administrator, or principal of Mingde Primary School, first held a meeting of all teachers to discuss how to carry out the double reduction policy. Subsequently, teachers organized a family committee to hold a parent meeting to implement the double reduction policy (Figures 2 and 3). The school administrator viewed that:

*"In order to smoothly carry out the "double reduction policy", we have held a meeting of all teachers and parents, and notified students that the school day will be postponed by 45 minutes in the future. We will carry out after-school service courses, which means adding an additional course after school to complete daily homework."*

(Interviewer: School administrator, name A1, May 28, 2023)



**Figure 2** The principal arranged a meeting with teachers to plan the double reduction policy.



**Figure 3** Meeting of parents and students at Mingde School, 2021.

#### 3.2) Policy Implementation

To carry out the "double reduction policy smoothly, Mingde School held meetings with teachers, parents, and students and issued some notices to parents and students to let them know about the rules and regulations. The school also increased class time for extra students to prevent parents from sending their children to all after-school training.

#### 3.3) Team support

[443]





Based on the interviews, it was discovered that all schools, teachers, and parents diligently adhere to the Double Reduction policy. This policy is a government educational initiative that aims to alleviate stress among students and improve their quality of life. From the teachers' perspective, they actively participate in meetings and execute teaching activities per the school administration's directives. These activities include conducting additional classes and organizing music and sports events to promote the mental well-being of students while also facilitating their academic development. Teachers willingly sacrifice their free time and work overtime every day after school to ensure the successful implementation of the dual reduction policy at the grassroots level.

On the other hand, from the parents' perspective, they willingly pay after-school service fees to schools, compensating teachers for their efforts in delivering these additional classes. This financial support from parents ensures the smooth operation of the dual reduction policy. Thus, it is worth noting that some teachers and parents share a common perspective on this matter, which is as follows:

*“ Since the introduction of the double reduction policy, as a teacher, I should actively respond to national policies and provide after-school services for students every day after school. Although it has compressed my rest time, it can reduce the burden on students and improve their grades. I believe it is worth it ”*

(Interviewer: Teacher, name B4, May 28, 2023)

*“ We willingly pay after-school service fees to schools, which in turn it could provide compensation to teachers for their efforts in conducting these additional classes. ”*

(Interviewer: parent of student, name D1, May 29, 2023)

#### **4. The product of the Double Reduction Policy**

##### **4.1) Policy result to the school Administration.**

Implementing the double reduction policy positively and negatively impacted the school administration. The advantages of the policy include the ability for schools to charge after-school service fees, which can be used to improve teaching quality, enhance teacher motivation, diversify teaching content, and upgrade teaching equipment. From a teacher's perspective, the policy encourages the development of non-academic skills alongside academic expertise, benefiting students by improving their well-being, fostering personal growth, and developing skills in areas such as sports, music, arts, and more. Additionally, the policy has reduced student pressure, allowing them to focus more on studying on campus, and has made teachers more proactive in their teaching. These improvements have resulted in better grades for students and an enhanced reputation for the school, leading to increased parental support for the policy. Based on the interview with a school administrator:

*“ Since the implementation of the double reduction policy, the pressure on students in our school has generally been reduced. The school has finally had funds to replace old wooden desks with new ones. Recently, it has also invited university professors to give speeches to students, which not only broadens their horizons but also stimulates their motivation to learn, and their grades and satisfaction have been greatly improved ”*

(Interviewer: School administrator, name A1, May 28, 2023)

However, the implementation of this policy also had negative impacts on the school administration. According to the interview with the school administrator, three policy disadvantages were identified:





1. School management has become more complex, requiring increased time and effort. The school now needs to manage students' learning and focus on their overall development, leading to more significant management pressure.

2. Parents tend to attribute student performance issues to the school, necessitating more energy in handling the parent-school relationship.

3. The pressure on the school's management team has increased. They were balancing academic performance and addressing the needs of students while managing relationships with parents, which requires additional energy and resources.

#### **4.2) Student's Quality of Life**

Based on student interviews, it has been found that implementing the Double Reduction Policy has positively affected their health and stress levels. The reasons for this include:

(1) Reduced homework burden after school, relieving students of excessive academic pressure.

(2) Increased interest in learning, allowing students to develop holistically regarding morals, intellect, physical fitness, aesthetics, and practical skills.

(3) Less homework and fewer training classes encourage active learning and cultivate independent learning abilities, enabling students to explore and meet individual needs.

(4) Children with special skills benefit from having more time to focus on their talents. In contrast, children without specific skills have more opportunities to develop their interests, making learning more enjoyable. Some students had a favorable opinion about this policy as follows:

*"I can go to bed early every day, don't have to stay up late every night to write my homework, daily after-school tutoring can finish the homework, home can do I like sports or entertainment, every day can help parents do housework, reduce the burden of parents"*

(interviewer: student, name C9, May 28,2023)

Another student also expressed their opinion positively toward this policy:

*"Now I live a fulfilling life every day. I study every day and feel stressed every day. Now I can study many courses, and I feel that my interests have improved, and even my academic performance has improved"*

(interviewer: student, name C3, May 28,2023)

#### **4.3) Parents satisfaction**

Based on the interview with parents, parents' opinions regarding the results of this policy can be divided into two different perspectives. Some parents believe that it has had positive outcomes, including Allowing parents more time to rest, as they do not have to take care of their children's academic work outside of school hours, and reducing the financial burden on parents, as they do not have to pay for outside tutoring fees. Some parents said that:

*"If you didn't learn things in class can also strengthen the class, now do not allow extracurricular tutoring, every time after school, never saw the child to take homework home, grades have been declining, very worried about whether you can be admitted to a good school in the future"*

(interviewer: parents, name D4, May 29,2023)

*"I think the double reduction policy is good. Previously, my child did homework every night until early morning, and I was very worried about their health. However, after the policy came out, the child could rest earlier, and I could better accompany the child, enhance parent-child relationships with him, take him to do interesting things, and have time to relax and entertain him on weekends"*

(Interviewer: parents, name D3, May 29, 2023)



However, some parents hold opposing views on the policy. Their concerns include: (1) Some parents are concerned that their children's inability to seek tutoring outside of school after classes may negatively impact their academic performance, potentially affecting their ability to compete in future high school and university entrance exams. (2) Certain parents lack an educational background and rely solely on the school for their children's education. They cannot be guided during the evenings due to the prevailing "exam-oriented" education system, which emphasizes high scores as a selection criterion. These parents feel pressured to spend more money to ensure their children have more opportunities to enter prestigious schools, resulting in increased expenses. Some parents expressed their opinion that:

*I don't think the double reduction policy is very good. As a farmer, before the policy, 300 yuan could be used for a year of tutoring. Now, after the policy comes out, 300 yuan can only be used for an hour of tutoring, which is even more expensive. Watching my children's classmates invite their teachers to their homes to quietly tutoring makes it even more expensive, I am very worried that because I don't have the money to pay, I am afraid that my children's grades may not be as good as those who attend tutoring classes*

*(Interviewer: parents, name D1, May 28, 2023)*

## Discussion

This part will explain the discussion of the research result as follows:

### Context evaluation,

The research results found that the Double Reduction Policy in China was formulated by the Central government. This reflects the policy implementation as a top-down policy model that aims to reduce homework and after-school tutoring pressure on primary and secondary school students, reduce families' spending on expensive tutoring, and improve compulsory education. It has been implemented nationwide in both public and private schools. The results of this research reflect that this policy is a top-down model of policy implementation that is supported not only by government agencies but also by school administrators, teachers, and parents. This result is consistent with Van Meter & Van Horn (1975) proposal that the success or degree of policy implementation is determined by six variables including policy standard, policy resources, inter-organizational communication, and enforcement activities, characteristics of the implementing agencies, system environment, and the disposition of implementation. Furthermore, this policy eases pressure on families, and students and enhances teacher development, the Double Reduction Policy in China addresses the needs of school administrators by reducing pressure on families and students. The policy benefits students by reducing their workload and promoting teacher development in various areas. It also strengthens free online learning services and encourages regional cadres and teachers to serve schools better. However, the policy increases management time and results in longer working hours for teachers after school. The result of this research is consistent with Kang et al. (2022) which found that the policy has led to a decrease in the amount of homework and pressure on students in compulsory education, thereby providing them with more opportunities for personalized development. Moreover, lastly, the double reduction policy can positively impact reducing depression and anxiety in students (Wang et al., 2022).

### Input evaluation,

From the result of the research, it was found that the input aspect of implementing the Double Reduction policy in schools has been supported by sufficient budgets provided by the central and local governments and the schools' income sources, such as student fees. However, this policy has increased the responsibilities of school administrators and teachers, with some teachers having to teach multiple subjects due to a shortage of teachers. In terms of materials and technology, the school administrator stated that they are sufficient. Most parents actively participate in school activities, supporting the policy's aim to reduce homework loads and promote overall student development. Parents believe this policy will improve education quality and enhance students' well-being through a more balanced learning experience. This result reflects the readiness of the school resource input in implementing a



double reduction policy. This result is consistent with Van Meter & Van Horn (1975) proposal that the success or degree of policy implementation is determined by six variables including policy standard, policy resources, inter-organizational communication, and enforcement activities, characteristics of the implementing agencies, system environment and the disposition of implementation

#### **Process evaluation,**

The research results found that the double reduction policy began with a notice from the county education bureau to all schools to implement the policy according to national policy. The school administrator of Mingde Primary School held a meeting of all teachers to discuss how to carry out the policy, followed by a parent meeting organized by teachers. The school notified parents and students to inform them of the rules and regulations and increased class time to prevent excessive after-school training. All schools, teachers, and parents diligently adhere to the policy, with teachers sacrificing their free time and working overtime to ensure successful implementation. Parents willingly pay after-school service fees to compensate teachers for their efforts in delivering additional classes, ensuring the smooth operation of the policy. Meng et al. (2022) study findings explained that 96.8% and 96% of principals and students had approved of the double reduction policy. This research also reflects that China's central government has significantly contributed to boosting educational quality in China through policies and funding throughout the last 40 years. (Xue & Tan, 2022)

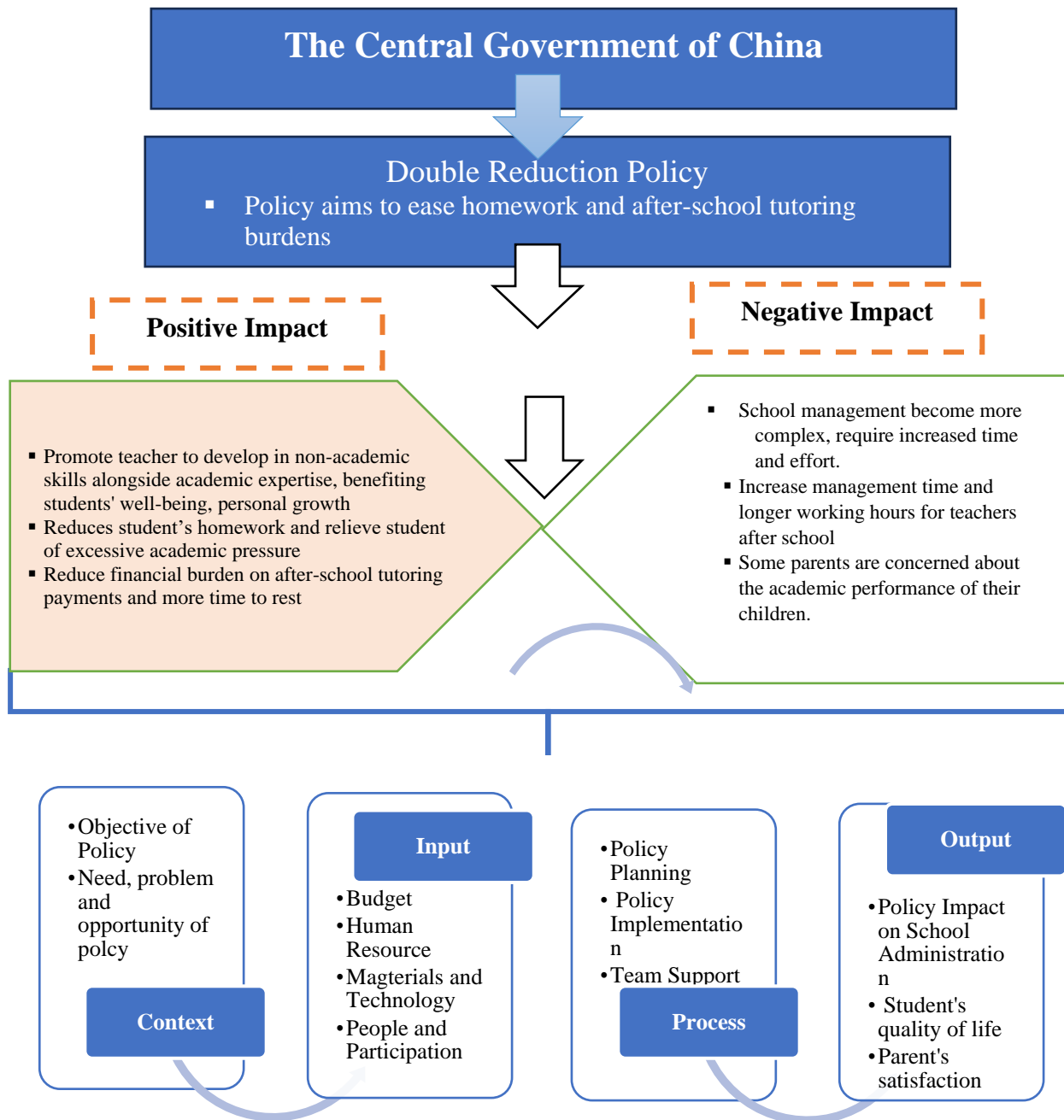
#### **Product evaluation,**

From the results of the research, it was found that the double reduction policy had both advantages and disadvantages for school administration, students, and parents. The policy allowed schools to charge after-school service fees and reduce pressure on students and teachers, leading to better grades and an enhanced reputation for the school. However, it also led to increased management complexity and pressure. Students reported positive effects on their health and stress levels, with reduced homework burden and increased interest in learning. However, parents had divided opinions on the policy. Some saw positive outcomes, such as reduced financial burden on after-school tutoring payments and more time to rest.

In contrast, others expressed concerns about negative impacts on academic performance and that parents must pay for extra school classes. Some parents find tutors to teach their children secretly, such as online, instead of in an institution. The results of this research reflect that the Double Reduction Policy had benefits and drawbacks, and its impact varied depending on the stakeholders' perspective. Although the policy has reduced stress for elementary and middle school students (Kang et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022), Some concerns still exist, such as the fact that some parents' anxieties are increasing in terms of the academic performance of their children (Zhou, K., 2023). There is still a need for more educational resources. This situation will worsen as China's population growth slows down. This research highlights the policy's negative impact on the stock prices of Chinese education technology companies and the education industry (Zhan, 2022; Kong, 2023). This research demonstrated both positive and negative impacts of the double reduction policy.

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the research on implementing the Double Reduction Policy in China provides valuable insights into its impact on various stakeholders. The findings reveal that the policy effectively addresses the issue of homework and after-school tutoring pressure, benefiting families and students by reducing their workload. Additionally, it promotes teachers to develop non-academic skills alongside academic expertise, benefiting students' well-being. However, it is essential to acknowledge that the policy also brings challenges, such as increased management time and longer working hours for teachers after school and a number of parents are concerned about the academic performance of their children. The research findings align with the experiences of school administrators, teachers, and parents involved in the policy implementation. This indicates that the results are reliable and representative of the overall impact of the Double Reduction Policy. This research provides valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders involved in education reform efforts. It emphasizes the need for comprehensive and thoughtful approaches when implementing policies to reduce academic pressure on students and improve educational outcomes. The conclusion provides a summary of the research study's findings as presented in Figure 4.



**Figure 4** Summary of the research study's findings

## Recommendation

### Policy and Managerial Recommendations

Based on the empirical evidence result from this study, the following policy and managerial recommendations can be recommended based on the research findings:

1. The findings reveal that the policy can effectively reduce the burden of homework and after-school tutoring pressure, benefiting families and students by reducing their workload. However, this policy also brings challenges, such as increased management time and longer working hours for teachers after school. Therefore, the government should look to measure or improve the policy or rules. Regulations to boost the morale and strength of teachers who have to work more in schools





2. This policy also leads to increased administrative complexity and pressure on school administrators. Therefore, the government should find measures. Alternatively, improve policies, rules, and regulations to help reduce the complexity and pressure of management for school administrators.

3. Parents are also concerned about the academic performance of reducing homework and tutoring time outside of school. Therefore, the government and school administrators should seek measures to improve academic management to develop knowledge and skills for students in the subjects necessary for entrance examinations to study at the secondary school and university level.

#### **Further research recommendations:**

Further investigation is necessary to assess the efficacy of the double reduction policy in elementary-level government and private schools. This can be achieved through the use of mixed-methods research approaches.

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