



## Developing Strategies for After School Sports Services under the “Double Reduction Policy” of Primary Schools in Chengdu City, the People’s Republic of China

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Received 17/07/2024

Revised 15/08/2024

Accepted 15/09/2024

### Abstract

**Background and Aims:** In 2021, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council also introduced “The Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Off-campus Training for Students in Compulsory Education”. The main objective of the study is to construct strategies for after-school sports services under the “double reduction policy” of primary schools in Chengdu.

**Methodology:** There are 647 public primary schools and about 5500 professional physical education teachers in primary schools in Chengdu by the end of 2022. A total of 12 public primary schools are randomly selected from 6 administrative regions (2 schools in each region) using the random sampling method as the survey object. 300 relevant teachers and 600 students’ parents were selected from the surveyed schools. The research methods used include a literature review and questionnaire method.

**Result:** Under the “double reduction policy”, the overall development of after-school sports services in primary schools in Chengdu is good and meets the relevant requirements of the policy. However, there are still problems in terms of teaching staff, venue equipment, and evaluation system. In response to the above issues, this study proposes a series of innovative and practical strategies by analyzing the affecting factors of after-school sports services.

**Conclusion:** In summary, although Chengdu's primary school sports services comply with the "double reduction policy," staffing, facilities, and assessment issues still exist. This research makes specific recommendations for how to deal with these problems and improve efficacy in general.

**Keywords:** Chengdu city; “double reduction policy”; After school sports service

### Introduction

Strengthening the physical fitness of young people and promoting their healthy growth is a major event for the future of society and even the country. Teenagers are physically and mentally healthy, resilient, and full of vitality, which is an important manifestation of a nation’s prosperity, an important symbol of national progress, and an important manifestation of the country’s strength. Strong youth are multi-faceted, including ideological and moral character, academic performance, innovation ability, practical ability, as well as physical health, physical strength, and sportsmanship.” Only by developing in this way can we better realize the Chinese dream of great rejuvenation.

According to the results of the Chinese students’ physical health test publicly released by the Ministry of Education of China, from 2016 to 2018, the health level of students has shown a more optimistic situation after a decade of continuous decline, with the failure rate declining, the excellence rate and the good rate rising. Although the big data is optimistic, some health problems still exist, such as mental health, depression, anxiety, etc. in primary school students. Moreover, today’s primary school students are afraid of suffering and have poor tolerance. The myopia rate of primary and secondary school students in China is more than half, and the number of overweight students on campus is still increasing. Therefore, to optimize implementation strategies of after-school sports services, improve students’ physical health level, enrich after-school cultural life, and cultivate students’ lifelong sports awareness and other goals, our country has issued many important policy documents. The most important one is the “double reduction policy”.

The People's Republic of China's "Double Reduction" policy, which was implemented in 2021, had a big impact on how primary education was structured, especially regarding after-school activities. This policy limited the amount of time spent on extracurricular tutoring and decreased homework to lessen the burdensome academic load that students were under. In this regard, after-school sports programs have become more well-known as an essential part of the curriculum. In the past, academic topics dominated China's after-school programs; however, the Double Reduction policy has moved the emphasis to holistic development, which includes physical education. The government's emphasis on sports stems from its understanding that students' overall well-being depends on their physical health. To guarantee that students receive a balanced education that includes physical development, schools



have increased the number of sports they offer and integrated them as a fundamental component of after-school programs (Zhang, 2022).

In 2021, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council introduced “The Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Off-campus Training for Students in Compulsory Education” (2021) (“double reduction policy” for short). The introduction of the “double reduction policy” has led education departments across the country to actively promote after-school service in schools, and to carry out various sports activity courses through after-school service forms. Every policy document is committed to standardizing the after-school service system, taking primary and secondary schools as the main battlefield to measure the important standards of after-school service development, reflecting the country’s attention to cultivating young people and children with comprehensive moral, intellectual, and physical, aesthetic, and labor development. The after-school service under the background of the “double reduction policy” is an important exploration of the development process of basic education in China, and it is also an essential part of education reform and development in the new era.

Under the Double Reduction policy, the value of after-school sports programs cannot be emphasized. In addition to lowering academic stress, these programs help primary school kids develop healthy lifestyle choices, social skills, and teamwork. Students who play a variety of sports gain discipline, resilience, and physical fitness—all of which are essential for their overall development. Furthermore, these initiatives support the larger educational objectives of the Chinese government, which are to develop well-rounded people who are not just interested in achieving scholastic success. In keeping with the policy's goals of easing academic pressure and advancing comprehensive education, the increased focus on sports in after-school programs represents a strategic shift towards supporting a more sustainable and balanced approach to student development (Wang & Liu, 2023).

To promote after-school services, from policy calls to effective implementation of various after-school education activities, we are committed to breakthroughs in the following issues: how to innovate and highlight the connotation of after-school services? Effectively ensuring the safety of after-school service students? How to ensure classroom duration, integrate the strengths of all parties, and meet students’ multi-level, wide choice, and comprehensive learning supply? This study attempts to construct strategies for after-school sports services in primary schools to address the aforementioned issues. The results of this study can also provide theoretical references for teachers who participate in after-school sports services and scholars in subsequent research.

## Objectives

The main objective: To construct strategies for after schools’ sports services under the “double reduction policy” of primary schools in Chengdu.

The subsidiary objective: To analyze the affecting factors of after-school sports services of primary schools in Chengdu under the “double reduction policy”.

## Literature Review

**“Double reduction policy”:** Then The 2021, “The Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Off-campus Training for Students in Compulsory Education” (General Office of the Communist Party of China, General Office of the State Council) was officially promulgated. It is referred to as the “double reduction policy”, which refers to reducing students’ heavy homework burden, improving the quality of education and teaching on campus, and improving the level of after-school services. The “double reduction policy” has been implemented for nearly three years since its promulgation in 2021. Its nationwide promotion and implementation have entered a critical period. The formulation and improvement of relevant policies are also gradually advancing.

The policy mainly includes the following content. Firstly, regarding after-school services in schools, the “double reduction policy” clearly states the need to improve the level of after-school services in schools and meet the diverse needs of students. (1) Ensure after-school service time. Schools should fully utilize their resource advantages, effectively implement various after-school education activities, and meet the diverse learning needs of students on campus. Guide students to voluntarily participate in after-school services; Improve the quality of after-school services. Schools should develop implementation plans for after-school services to enhance their attractiveness. (2) Make full use of after-school service time to expand learning space for students who have spare time, and carry out diverse science popularization, cultural and artistic activities, labor, reading, interest groups, and club activities. Do not use after-school service time to teach new courses; Expand after-school service channels.

**After-School Services:** With the vigorous promotion of quality education, after-school services have received strong support from the government and relevant departments in recent years. Especially after the withdrawal of the “double reduction policy”, the national and local governments have issued a series of policy documents, which have become increasingly clear and specific in the implementation of after-school services. This has pointed out the direction for schools to formulate implementation plans for after-school services, effectively ensuring the effective development of after-school services, Better meeting the diverse needs of students, and promoting their comprehensive development.

In October 2021, the Notice of Chengdu Education Bureau and other four departments “Notice on Deepening After School Services in Primary and Secondary Schools and Improving the Level of After School Services” pointed out that the quality of after-school services should be improved, and the “custody expansion” and “5+2” after school service models should be fully implemented. The end time of after-school services in urban primary and secondary schools should not be earlier than 17:30 in principle. The school will develop a specific implementation plan for “one school, one case” after-school services based on the actual situation, implement various security measures such as personnel allocation, service content arrangement, and safety management, provide menu-style after-school service items and content for students to voluntarily choose, and promote after school services to students and their parents.

**After-School Sports Services:** On June 23, 2021, the Ministry of Education of China issued the “Guidelines for the Reform of Physical Education and Health Teaching (Trial)”, which encourages schools with conditions to carry out physical education elective class teaching and enhance students’ interest in physical education classes. It is pointed out that in the compulsory education stage, schools should further promote after-school sports services, improve the curriculum system of after-school sports services, and increase the types of sports projects, to meet the basic needs of students for physical exercise and sports guidance.

On July 6, 2022, the General Administration of Sport of China, the Office of the Ministry of Education of China, and the National Development and Reform Commission of China issued a notice on “Improving the Level of After School Sports Services in Schools to Promote the Healthy Growth of Primary and Secondary School Students”. The main purpose is to deeply implement the “double reduction policy” issued by the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council, enhance students’ physical fitness, and propose several requirements for carrying out after school sports services: to adhere to innovation and enrich the content of after school sports services; Coordinate resources and promote professional participation in after school sports services; Expand activity venues and create good activity conditions; Strengthen organizational support and formwork synergy.

### Conclusion

Under the "Double Reduction Policy" implemented in primary schools in the People's Republic of China, the primary idea behind After School Sports Services is to support students' holistic development by easing the burden of academics and fostering their physical and mental health. In 2021, the Double Reduction policy will be put into effect to lessen the burden of excessive homework and tutoring provided off-campus, which has long been a feature of the Chinese educational system. Within this framework, the purpose of School Sports Services is to give students access to organized physical activities that improve their general fitness and well-being. These services include various physical education and sports programs that are incorporated into the school's after-school routine. They give students the chance to learn new skills, get regular exercise, and cultivate a lifelong love of sports and active living (Chen & Li, 2022).

This policy's introduction of School Sports Services is predicated on the knowledge that physical activity is essential to children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. The goal of the policy is to give primary school kids a more well-rounded and balanced education by introducing sports into their everyday curriculum. The primary idea is to provide students with sufficient opportunities to participate in physical activities that enhance their general well-being, in addition to relieving them of the burden of their studies. This method is in line with the Chinese government's more general educational objectives, which place a strong emphasis on developing well-rounded people who are fit physically, mentally, and socially. The Double Reduction policy, which prioritizes physical education and sports, marks a substantial shift towards a more balanced approach to education by acknowledging the link between physical health and academic success (Liu & Zhang, 2023).

### Conceptual Framework

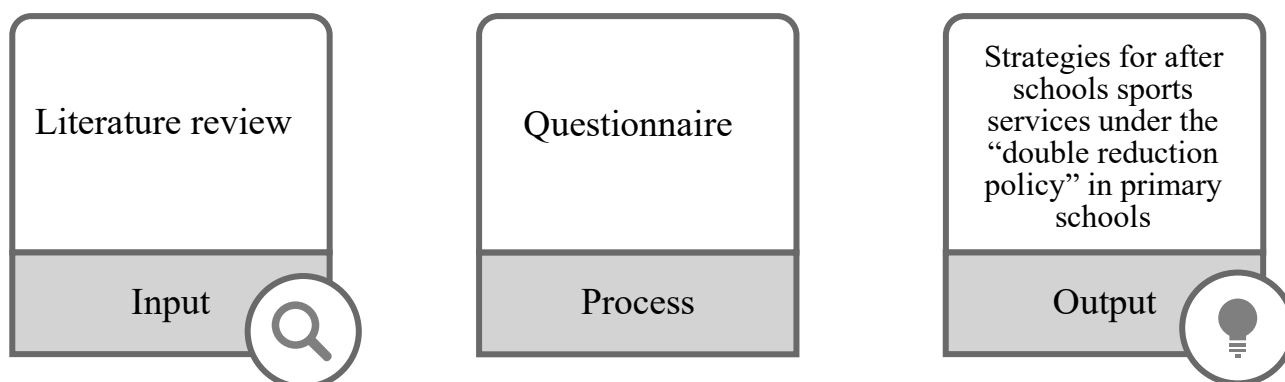


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

## Methodology

**Population specification and size:** According to “2022 Annual Report on Sports Work in Primary and Secondary Schools in Chengdu City” (2023, Chengdu Education Bureau), there are 647 public primary schools in Chengdu, and there are about 5500 professional physical education teachers in primary schools by the end of 2022. This survey and research scope is divided into 6 administrative regions in the areas under the jurisdiction of Chengdu according to the “Chengdu Master Plan”. A total of 12 public primary schools are randomly selected from 6 administrative regions (2 schools in each region) using the random sampling method as the survey object. 300 relevant teachers and 600 students’ parents were selected from the surveyed schools.

**Literature review method:** Literature review by consulting monographs, journal articles, newspapers, and magazines, and using websites such as CNKI, Web of Science, Elsevier, Springer Link, and reading a large amount of literature related to search and access relevant literature materials. Using keywords such as “double reduction policy”, “after school service” and “after school sports service”, search for relevant research from the past decade, and sort out and analyze the relevant research results and theories of after-school sports services of primary schools in China and internationally.

**Questionnaire method:** Through preliminary research and reference to academic papers and master’s and doctoral papers on CNKI and other networks, design a questionnaire titled “Developing Strategies for After School Sports Services under the ‘Double Reduction Policy’ of Primary Schools in Chengdu City”. With the consent of the surveyed school, the author and undergraduate interns from the Faculty of Physical Education and Health of the Chengdu University of TCM entered the selected 12 primary schools to distribute questionnaires. The distribution of teacher questionnaires includes 300 physical education teachers in charge of the after-school sports service in the surveyed school, the parent questionnaire was distributed to 600 parents of students participating in after-school sports services in these 12 schools, which are distributed in two forms: paper questionnaires and electronic questionnaires. The detail of the questionnaire distribution is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Questionnaire distribution and collection status

Type	Distribute	Recovery	Recovery rate	Effective questionnaire	Efficiency rate
Teacher questionnaire	300	297	99%	290	98.3%
Parent Questionnaire	600	590	98%	568	94.7%

**Data Analysis:** Evaluate the content validity of the questionnaire and interview form through the utilization of the Program Validity Analysis method, employing the Indexes of Items of Objective Congruence ( $IOC \geq 0.6$ ). Use software to collect and organize the data obtained from the questionnaire. And, use the software package to analyze the data.

## Results

In this section, based on the previous research, the author analyzes and summarizes the relevant information from the questionnaire method and expert interview method. The relevant information



obtained was extracted organized, and analyzed from affecting factors of after-school sports services of primary schools in Chengdu under the “double reduction policy”.

#### Factors affecting Student’ participation in after-school sports services

This part of the study still attempts to understand which factors will affect children’s participation and enthusiasm in the process of participating in after-school sports services through a questionnaire survey of parents of students who participate in after-school services. Through a survey of factors affecting students’ participation in after-school sports services (table 2), it was found that under the implementation of the double reduction policy, the learning pressure in primary school has been significantly reduced. One important requirement of the “double reduction policy” is to reduce the homework burden on students, implement measures such as not returning home with backpacks, and try to let students complete homework at school to reduce their academic burden.

**Table 2** Questionnaire on factors affecting students’ participation in after-school sports services  
Multiple choice (N=568)

Affecting factor	Count	Proportion
High academic pressure	117	20.6%
Heavy homework after class	239	42.1%
Dislike sports	90	15.8%
No favorite sports programs in after-school sports services	145	25.5%
Insufficient sports venues and equipment	161	28.3%
Without the company of classmates	97	17.1%
Fear of injury	84	14.8%
Regular physical exercise is sufficient	111	19.5%
Favorite sports are already full of students	133	23.4%

However, 20.6% and 42.1% of parents still reported that high academic pressure and heavy homework can affect their children’s participation and enthusiasm for after-school sports services. 25.5% of parents stated that there are no favorite sports programs for their children in after-school sports services, indicating that the school’s after-school sports services cannot fully meet the needs of students and have significant limitations that are difficult to avoid. 28.3% of parents stated that the reasons affecting their children’s participation are the lack of school venues and sports equipment. 23.4% of parents stated that their children’s failure to grab desired courses, or their favorite sports programs being already full students may affect their participation in after-school sports services.

Overall, many factors affect students’ participation in after-school sports services, but they are mainly attributed to the implementation of policies, the importance and standardization of schools, teacher organization and implementation, and individual differences among students, which require a long time to optimize and improve.

#### Factors Affecting teachers’ Participation in after-school sports services at primary schools

**Table 3** Questionnaire on factors affecting teachers’ participation in after-school sports services  
Multiple choice (N=290)

Affecting factor	Count	Proportion
Busy with work, limited time and energy	150	51.7%
The management lacks guarantee and incentive mechanisms	95	32.8%
Dissatisfied with class fees	87	30%
Mismatch in own specialty	63	21.7%
Not recognized by parents	40	13.8%
Others	14	4.8%

Teachers are the leaders and organizers of after-school sports services, and teachers are the main force participating in after-school sports services teaching work, playing a crucial role in the development of after-school sports services. Through investigation (table 3), it was found that 51.7% of teachers reported being busy with work, and limited time and energy, which seriously affected their participation in after-school sports services and teaching. 32.8% of teachers believe that the lack of guarantee and incentive mechanisms by the management will affect their enthusiasm for participation. 30% of teachers believe that the low-class fee is another major factor affecting their participation in after-school sports services, which is also related to the public welfare and non-profit nature of after-

school sports services. At the same time, 21.7% of teachers believe that the deviation between their specialty and the specialty they taught in after-school sports services is also an affecting factor. For example, when the number of teachers is insufficient, they will draw teachers from other sports specialties to participate in some popular sports courses, such as track and field teachers attending football classes, gymnastics teachers attending dance classes, etc. 13.8% of teachers said their work was not recognized by parents as one of the factors affecting their work.

#### Factors affecting the development of after-school sports services

**Table 4** Questionnaire on factors affecting the development of after-school sports services

Multiple choice (N=290)

No	Factor	Count	Proportion
1	Relevant policy support	155	53.4%
2	The burden of students' schoolwork	183	63.1%
3	Parents' attention and support	164	56.6%
4	Student' interest	208	71.7%
5	supervision and evaluation system	170	58.6%
6	Parents' sports values	99	34.1%
7	Sports atmosphere in schools	102	35.2%
8	Teachers' specialties and teaching skills Level	109	37.6%
9	Cultivation of the teaching staff and supplement of teaching resources	146	50.3%
10	Teachers' income and subsidies	169	58.3%
11	Clear definition of rights, responsibilities, and interests of the three parties	74	25.5%
12	Perfection of relevant laws and regulations	59	20.3%
13	Provision of sports venues and equipment	193	66.6%
14	Feedback on the effectiveness of after-school sports services	80	27.6%
15	Fundraising	85	29.3%
16	Safety issues	91	31.4%
17	Social support	97	33.4%
18	School support	99	34.1%
19	Promotion channels and intensity	149	51.4%
20	Others	6	2.1%

Through the survey on the affecting factors of the development of after-school sports services from the perspective of teachers (table 4), most teachers believe that the support of relevant policies, the burden of students' schoolwork, the attention and support of parents, students' interest, supervision and evaluation system, provision of sports venues and sports equipment, the cultivation of teachers and the supplement of teachers' resources, teachers' class fees and subsidies, and the promotion channels and intensity have a great impact on after school sports services, accounting for more than half of the total. Among them, the highest proportion is students' interest in after-school sports services, reaching 71.7%; Next is the provision of sports venues and sports equipment, accounting for 66.6%; and then the burden of students' schoolwork, accounting for 63.1%. Secondly, some teachers believe that the parents' sports values, teachers' specialties, and teaching skills Level, the school's sports atmosphere, safety issues, promotion channels and intensity, and school and social support also have a great impact. A minority of teachers state that the Perfection of relevant laws and regulations, a Clear definition of rights, responsibilities, and interests of the three parties, feedback on the effectiveness of after-school sports services, and fundraising will also affect the development of after-school sports services.

#### The Strategies for after school sports services of primary school in Chengdu

**Enrich the content system of after-school sports services and learn from typical experiences.**

Based on the teachers' specialties, we should offer a full range of sports programs. We aim to expand the range of sports programs available and achieve diversification in after-school sports services. The goal of after-school sports services should be clear, and we should update teaching concepts in line with the "double reduction policy". We should explore new development models for after-school sports services in line with the new curriculum standards, happy sports, and happy sports, and learn innovative measures and typical experiences for after-school services in compulsory education.

### **Development planning needs to strengthen the synergy of family, school, and society.**

To address the unbalanced development between home, school, and society and the failure to play their respective roles, the three parties should fulfill their respective responsibilities, help students develop in an all-round way, jointly promote the implementation of the “double reduction policy”, and promote the high-quality development of after school sports services. The efficient service and students should achieve harmonious coexistence, coordinate development, and play an educational role to ultimately achieve common education.

### **Strengthen the cooperation between the government and society, and help improve the quality of teachers.**

Most of the after-school sports services in Chengdu’s primary schools are undertaken by the school’s physical education teachers, while a small number of less popular sports are taught by external personnel hired by the school. The advantage of having the school’s physical education teachers undertake after-school sports services is that they have rich teaching experience and a better understanding of their own school’s students, which makes the process smoother. However, the disadvantage is that the school’s teachers have already experienced a day of teaching before the after-school sports services, which makes them physically and mentally exhausted.

### **Expand the teaching staff and strengthen teacher training.**

The number of physical education teachers should be increased. The Sichuan Provincial Department of Education should appropriately increase the number of physical education teachers based on the participation scale of students in each school and the need for curriculum reform and development. At the same time, the Chengdu Municipal Education Bureau should establish a special supervision group to investigate and deal with the phenomena of crowding, misappropriation, and not filling vacancies in schools according to law. The total number of vacancies should be reported to the Provincial Department of Education for overall management and should be reasonably used through teacher recruitment and talent introduction to effectively increase the number of physical education teachers in Chengdu primary schools. Relevant departments should also focus on strengthening the training of physical education teachers, innovating training methods, scientifically arranging training content, and paying attention to improving the professional ability of teachers.

### **Increase the utilization of site resources to meet various sports needs.**

Through the investigation and analysis of primary schools in Chengdu, it can be seen that one of the reasons hindering the high-quality development of after-school sports services is the lack of venue resources. Firstly, the government and schools should first increase funding to assist in the construction of sports venues and the purchase of sports equipment. Second, for schools, it is necessary to break through traditional concepts, develop sports resources through multiple channels, and seek support from various aspects to effectively solve the problems of insufficient venue resources and single-service content in the development of after-school sports services.

### **Improve the teaching evaluation, teaching supervision, and student evaluation system.**

A multi-level, classified, and targeted supervision and evaluation mechanism is constructed to promote the participation of multiple subjects in supervision and evaluation, and include schools, teachers, parents, students, and social organizations in the evaluation system of after-school services. Regular evaluations and inspections are conducted on the implementation of after-school services, the learning effect of students, the satisfaction of students and parents, the performance subsidies of teachers, the management of schools, and the quality of courses. The effectiveness of the implementation of after-school services is also supervised through evaluation, testing, observation, and other methods.

## **Discussion**

The strategy that “Enrich the content system of after-school sports services and learn from typical experiences” was consistent with Zhao (2023). She proposed in her research that “after-school sports services should be aimed at all students in need, and schools should change their traditional teaching mode. Attention should be paid to diversity in the planning of organizational forms and teaching methods. Taking students’ interests and hobbies as the starting point and foothold, appropriately adding sports activities for after-school sports services.

The strategy that “Development planning needs to strengthen the synergy of family, school and society” was consistent with Chen (2023). She points out in his paper that “In after-school sports services, schools are in a dominant position, families are the foundation, and society is in an auxiliary position. We should gradually form a linkage between families, society, and schools to jointly assist in the development of after-school sports services and guide students in physical exercise”.

The strategy that “Strengthen the cooperation between the government and society, and help improve the quality of teachers” was consistent with Diao (2023). He proposed in his research that “To ensure the teaching ability of physical education teachers, the government needs to provide training funds and venues, and regularly conduct training for teachers.

The strategy that “Expand the teaching staff and strengthen teacher training” was consistent with Ye (2022). She points out his view in his paper that “In the development of after-school sports services, there are two key issues with the teaching staff: insufficient supply of teachers and uneven teaching abilities. Therefore, in the process of after-school sports services, it is necessary to expand multiple channels to introduce human resources, and establish a strict screening system in the introduction process to select outstanding physical education teachers to participate”.

The strategy that “Improve the teaching evaluation, teaching supervision and student evaluation system” was consistent with Guo (2023). He proposed in his research that “All after-school services require the construction of a hierarchical, classified, and indicator-based supervision and evaluation mechanism, promoting the participation of multiple subjects in supervision and evaluation, and incorporating schools, teachers, parents, students, and social organizations into the evaluation system of after school services.

The strategy that “Increase the utilization of site resources to meet various sport’s needs” was consistent with Gao (2023). He states that the government and education departments will increase investment in school facilities and equipment, expand the construction of sports venues, and increase the number of sports venues and equipment. And make full use of existing equipment, explore its derivative value, and increase the utilization rate of existing equipment. Finally, public sports facilities, gyms, and swimming pools around the school can be utilized to provide after-school sports services.

### Recommendation

The strategies obtained from this research should be presented to higher-level organizations to determine the possibility of its actual use.

The strategies should be brought to meetings with relevant organizations to find ways to improve and adapt them to Chengdu or other cities in China.

There should be a trial of the strategies. Using an appropriate trial period, make it be used in more primary schools to find problems with the strategies and bring them to improve further.

Based on the results of this study, relevant scholars can explore other strategies for after-school sports services, and jointly promote the high-quality development of after-school sports services under the “double reduction policy”.

The strategy proposed in this research has strong representativeness and universality, so other after-school services can also refer to this strategy for optimization.

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