

CURRENT SITUATION OF PRIMARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' BURDEN REDUCTION

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ABSTRACT

At present, the reduction of burden in primary and secondary schools is more than a mere formality. Under the situation that one examination decides one's life, students' academic burden is not only not reduced, but increasingly heavy. Through self-compiled questionnaires and individual interviews, this paper was taken "the current situation of the implementation of burden reduction policy from the perspective of students" as the starting point, and probes into the two dimensions of individual behavior and causes. The results were showed that the burden reduction policy has not been fully implemented, which is manifested in the heavy burden of schoolwork, activities, psychology and physiology. To this end, the government, schools and families should be integrated, perfect the policy of reducing the burden, strengthen educational management, respect students' freedom of activity, and pay attention to students' physical and mental development.

Keywords: Academic burden; Physical and psychological health; Burden reduction; Education for all-round education; Education reform

Introduction

In today's society, education is developing rapidly. We should see clearly the trend of education development, and have a deep understanding of China's education system. In terms of teaching content and teaching methods, if they do not adapt to the current status of education, we should improve them by ourselves. Education reform and development include many aspects, but the main core is still quality-oriented education, we should remove the traditional teaching methods, let students

study independently, discover problems on their own, solve problems, give students enough time and freedom, to ensure that the comprehensive quality of students to develop. Whether the students can really "reduce the burden" is the key point of the transformation from traditional education to quality-oriented education. Therefore, this paper analyzes the current situation of whether homework is too much for primary and middle school students, discusses the reasons, and puts forward countermeasures to reduce the burden.

The problem of excessive school load has always been a hot issue concerned by the whole society, as well as a difficult disease in the stage of basic education in China. In particular, primary and secondary school students, their psychological and intellectual level are at a lower stage of life, the harm of excessive school load to them is particularly prominent, mainly manifested in the following points:

Based on the above harm of the heavy workload of primary and secondary school students, education authorities at all levels have successively formulated and promulgated many policy documents to reduce the workload of students. Although these policies have achieved some results to a certain extent, the current situation of excessive academic burden of students has not been fundamentally stopped, and it is even more serious in some cities and regions, so that the comprehensive promotion of quality-oriented education has encountered serious obstacles. The academic burden caused by the test and the college entrance exam has been moved down to the elementary school level.

Research Objectives

According to above research questions, this paper aims to complete following research objectives:

1. To find out the current situation of primary and secondary school students
2. To find out when primary and secondary school students go to bed every night
3. To explore reason of primary and secondary school students burdened so much study
4. To educate primary and secondary school students in a more scientific way

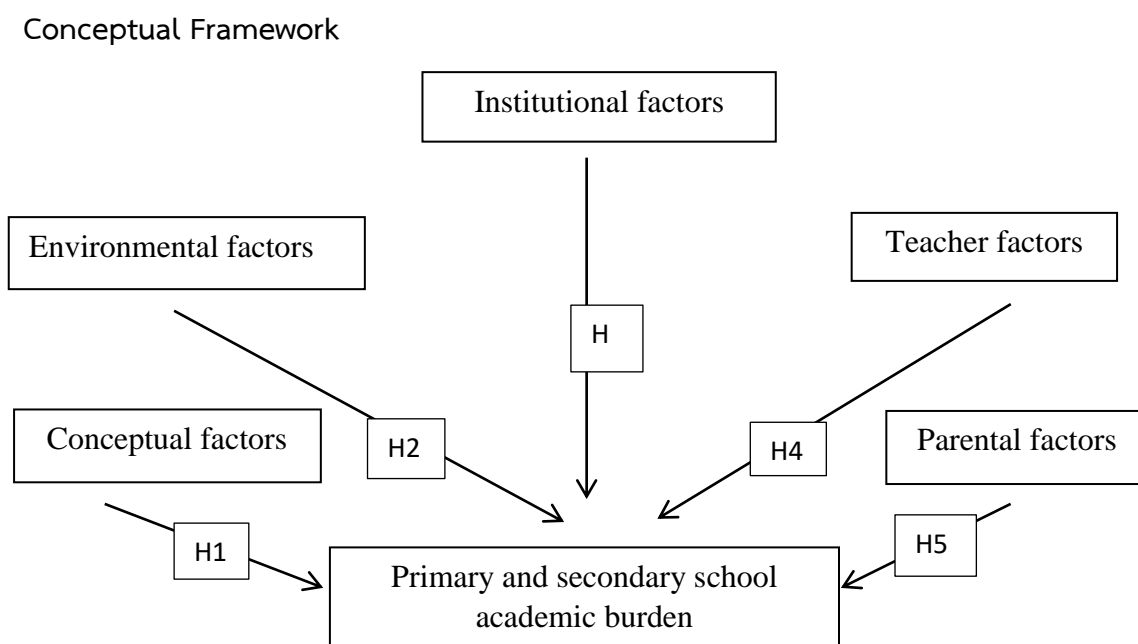


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

According to above conceptual framework, the research hypothesis is as follow:

H1: Conceptual factors has a significant positive effect on primary and secondary school academic burden.

H2: Environmental factors has a significant positive effect on primary and secondary school academic burden.

H3: Institutional factors has a significant positive effect on primary and secondary school academic burden.

H4: Teacher factors has a significant positive effect on primary and secondary school academic burden.

H5: Parental factors has a significant positive effect on primary and secondary school academic burden.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The heavy burden of primary and secondary school students in China has a long history. Since the 1950s, the Party and the state have issued a series of documents to reduce the burden of primary and secondary schools. So far, in some places and schools, the work of reducing the burden has achieved certain results, but on the

whole, the problem of reducing the burden has not been fundamentally solved. On March 11, 2013, the Ministry of Education held a symposium to study and deploy the work of "reducing the burden" in compulsory education, to study the specific measures to deepen the work of "reducing the burden", and to deploy the activity of "reducing the burden 10,000 miles". This highlights the importance the government attaches to the burden reduction work of primary and secondary schools in compulsory education stage. The author cannot help thinking: the burden reduction work has been carried out for more than 60 years from the 1950s to the present, why has the burden reduction not been reduced? Is the burden reduction policy not effective?

Population and Sample size

The respondents were students from 11 primary and middle schools in six districts of Shijiazhuang, Hebei province: Chang 'an, Qiaoxi, Xinhua, Yuhua, Gaocheng and Luquan.

A total of 4701 valid questionnaires were collected from primary and secondary school students, teachers and parents from 31 provinces in China. Among them, there were 2,923 samples for primary school students (including questionnaire for primary school students, questionnaire for parents of primary school students and questionnaire for teachers of primary school students), and 1,778 samples for junior high school students (including questionnaire for middle school students, questionnaire for parents of middle school students and questionnaire for teachers of middle school students).

Research Method

Questionnaire survey and Individual interview with Data Collection Procedures in order to ensure the breadth and representativeness of the sample, 2~3 representative schools were selected from each district, and some students from 2~3 classes of each grade were selected as samples for the sample survey. A total of 345 questionnaires were sent out and 324 were recovered with a recovery rate of 93.9%. Among them, 298 were valid with an effective rate of 86.4%.

Data Analysis Procedures

1. Questionnaire survey. On the basis of collecting documents and policies for reducing load, a questionnaire was designed and compiled, with 31 questions in total, including multiple choice questions and tabular questions. The questionnaire survey mainly targets primary and middle school students in six urban areas of Shijiazhuang. Based on student's point of view, the survey during the policy issues, mainly includes

two dimensions: one is the student's main body behavior (the degree of understanding of the policy burden, on time every day, every day sleep time, etc.), the second is the main body behavior causes (outside of class time to participate in the cause of the tutorial activities, to participate in several disciplines such as competition activities outside the home, etc.).

2. Individual interview. In view of the shortcomings of the questionnaire, the author conducted individual interviews with the investigated students. Objective: On the one hand, to make a further in-depth investigation of some information obtained in the questionnaire, on the other hand, to obtain some questions not reflected in the questionnaire. All the responses to individual interviews were carefully analysed for a combination of quantitative and qualitative research.

Expected Finding and Discussion

Expected Finding

1. **Conceptual factors.** First of all, the concept of modern people is basically "valuing education over learning, valuing teachers over students, valuing knowledge over ability, valuing theory over practice, valuing rationality over emotion". Most parents think that only teachers assign a lot of homework, do questions, exams, questions to do more practice in order to get high scores, and then admitted to elite schools is promising; Secondly, the traditional view of talent has been formed for a long time, so the work of "reducing burden" must be difficult at the beginning, and the effect is not obvious.

2. **Environmental factors.** The increasing pressure of employment competition also increases the difficulty of "burden reduction" to a certain extent. College education is the only way to increase job opportunities in the fierce market competition. And the competition on employment inevitably causes the competition on entering a higher school. Therefore, the selection education of "survival of the fittest" and exam-oriented education for the purpose of entering a higher school occupy the leading position in primary and secondary schools.

3. **Institutional factors.** In terms of the development of productive forces, the heavy learning burden of primary and secondary school students is closely related to China's economic development. China's large population base, backward economic foundation can not provide everyone with the opportunity of higher education. There are many students who take the entrance exam, but they are admitted far less than those who take the exam. This system affects the evaluation standards of the society and schools on talents, and also affects the recruitment system of some enterprises.

The society pays more attention to one's academic degree and diploma, etc., which makes students carry a heavy burden early, resulting in reluctance to learn and passive learning.

4. **Teacher factors.** Under the condition of market economy, some teachers pay too much attention to economic benefits and lack dedication and sense of responsibility. Some teachers lack the theoretical knowledge of pedagogy and psychology, and think that the more times students repeat the practice of classroom teaching, the better, so they assign a lot of homework, increasing the burden of students.

5. **Parental factors.** Every parent wants their children to be successful in the future, but parents expect too much of their children and put their hopes on their children. They take advantage of students' rest time and holidays to go to a variety of cram schools, which directly leads to physical and mental exhaustion of students.

In order to make the work of "reducing the burden" fully implemented, it is necessary to coordinate the work from the top to the bottom, cooperate with the school, society and family, and manage it in a comprehensive way.

Discussion

1. Overall implementation of the policy on burden reduction: The overall implementation of the policy includes the publicity and implementation of the policy. When asked "what do you know about the burden reduction policy for primary and secondary school students?", 8.4% of primary and secondary school students choose "understand", 22.8% choose "relatively understand", and 26.8% choose "not understand", 41.9% of primary and secondary school students do not understand the burden reduction policy.

From the survey results, it is not difficult to find that nearly half of primary and middle school students do not understand the policy of reducing the burden. When further learning about the implementation of the burden reduction policy of their school, 34.0% of the students think that the school "vigorously publicized and put it into practice, and the burden has been reduced", 17.5% of the students choose "vigorously publicized but not fully implemented, and the burden has not changed", and choose "slightly mentioned the burden reduction policy, Those who had not implemented the policy and those who had not involved in the policy accounted for 20.3% and 28.2% respectively. It can be seen from this result that most schools have not fully implemented the burden reduction policy in terms of overall publicity and implementation.

2. The implementation of lessening the academic burden: In the policy of reducing burden, it is very important to reduce the schoolwork burden of primary and middle school students. In the survey, when asked "how many books do you have for each subject besides textbooks?", the largest proportion of primary school students is 2-3 books (41.8 percent), followed by 0-1 books (30.8 percent). The number of middle school students who read two or three books ranked first (46.1 percent), and 18.4 percent of students who read more than five books. When asked "Where do you get the teaching materials you use?" (multiple choice), 47.1% of primary school students said they bought them at the request of their parents, followed by 35.9% who said they bought them at the recommendation of their teachers. Among middle school students, 57.1 percent said it was given by school, followed by 52.2 percent who said it was bought on the recommendation of teachers.

3. The implementation of reducing the burden of activities: The burden of activities here refers to the burden caused by all kinds of activities such as Olympiad, calligraphy and talent. So, how about the activity burden of primary and middle school students? When asked how many extracurricular activities do you take part in, 45.5 percent of elementary and middle school students did not take part in extracurricular activities, while 44.1 percent took part in one or two activities. The reason is that 43.0 percent of elementary and middle school students said they wanted to take part, while 45.3 percent said their parents asked them to. The Ministry of Education did not specify a ban on private tutoring activities, but called for regulation of various private tutoring institutions and the tutoring market. Parents are the biggest factor in the burden of private tutoring activities.

4. Implementation of alleviating psychological burden: Psychological burden refers to the psychological burden borne by students in the process of learning and physical and mental development, including the pressure from learning competition, parents' pressure and the pressure of entering school. When asked "what is the evaluation method of your school's test scores?", 71.2% of the students choose "ranking by scores and publishing", 18.6% choose "ranking by scores not publishing", while 7.1% of the students choose "ranking by scores not publishing" and 3.1% choose "ranking by grades" respectively.

5. The implementation of reducing physiological burden: The physiological burden refers to the physiological overload caused by the increasing academic burden and the decrease of students' sports and rest time, which is reflected in the decrease of students' physical fitness and lack of sleep. When asked how much sleep do you usually get, 52.2 percent of elementary school students said nine to 10 hours, 56.8 percent said seven to eight hours, and 26.7 percent said less than seven hours.

About 30 percent of the students' workload has increased instead of decreased. As shown in Figure 2, about 22% of the students' workload was "significantly reduced" or "somewhat reduced" after the reduction, while nearly half (47%) of the students' workload remained unchanged, while 31% of the students' workload was "somewhat increased" or "significantly increased".

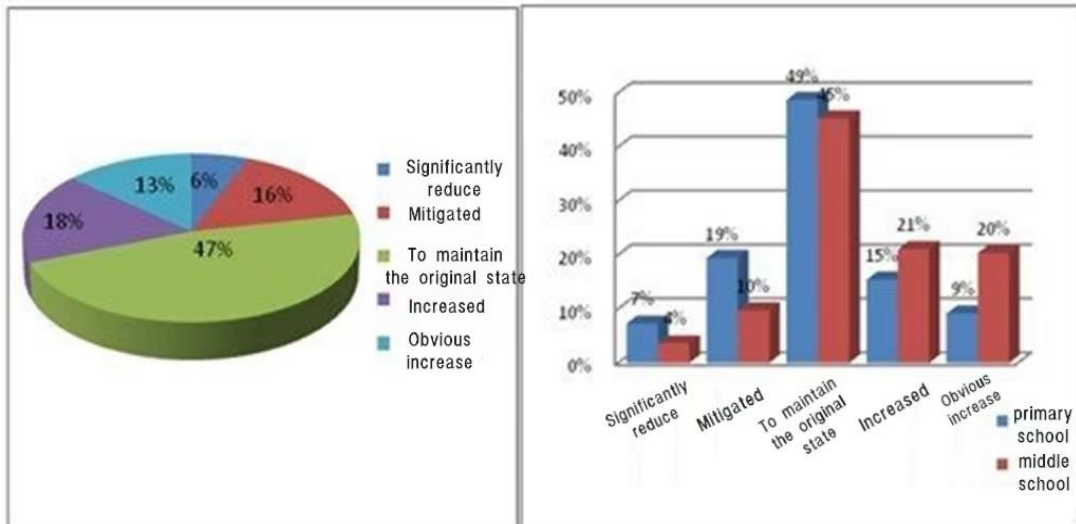
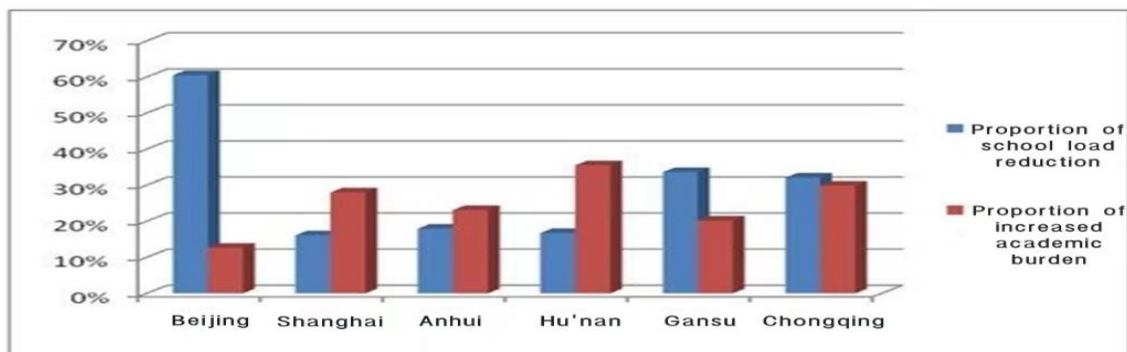


Figure 2 Schoolwork burden of primary and secondary school students after "load reduction"

As shown in Figure 3, in order to understand the implementation effect of "burden



reduction" in different regions, we compared the changes in the schoolload of primary and secondary school students in six representative provinces and municipalities directly under the Central Government. Among them, Beijing has the highest proportion of lessened workload, with 60.5 percent of students saying their workload has been reduced. Shanghai saw the lowest reduction of 16.1 percent. Hunan province has the highest proportion of increasing workload, with 35.5% of the surveyed students saying that their workload pressure has increased rather than decreased.

Figure 3 Comparison of the workload of primary and secondary school students in cities

6. More than half of the students spent more than an hour on homework. As can be seen from Figure 4, students who spend 30-60 minutes to finish homework have the highest proportion, accounting for 34% of the total sample, while 23% and 32% students need more than 60 minutes and 90 minutes to finish homework every day respectively. As shown in Figure 6, the proportion of primary school students who finish homework for 30-60 minutes is the highest, accounting for 41% of the sample of primary school students, and the number of middle school students who finish homework for more than 90 minutes is the largest, accounting for 49% of the sample of middle school students. It can be seen that the schoolwork pressure of junior middle school students is greater than that of primary school students.

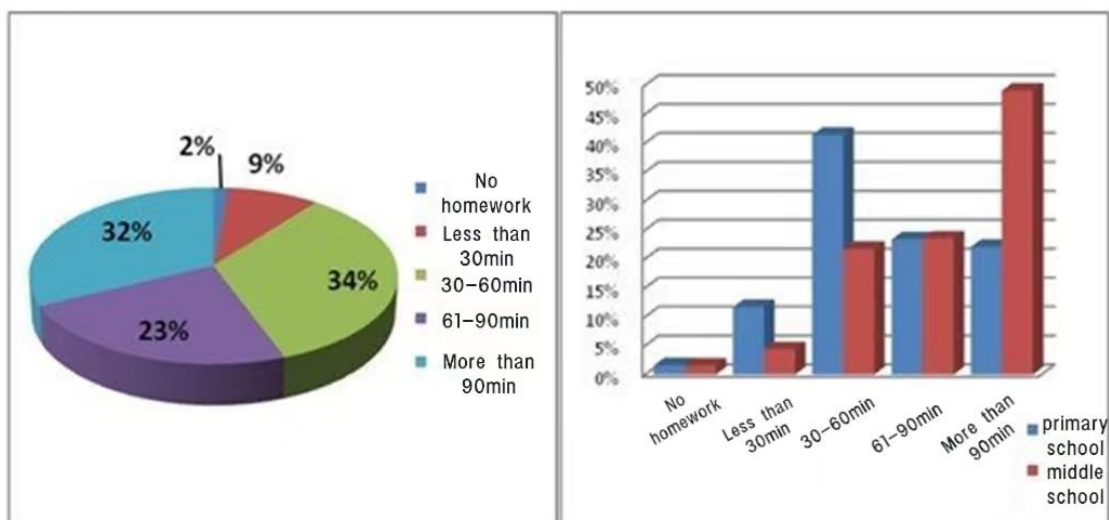


Figure 4 Homework completion time

Take the "load reduction Decree" issued by Beijing in 2013, for example, which clearly stipulates homework time for primary and secondary school students: no homework for first and second graders in primary schools; Grade 3 to grade 6 Chinese, math and English can be assigned homework, grade 3 to grade 4 daily total homework should not exceed 30 minutes, grade 5 to grade 6 daily total homework should not exceed 1 hour; The total amount of homework per day in junior high school should not exceed 1.5 hours. To this end, we selected samples from representative regions for comparative analysis.

As shown in Figure 5, in six provinces and municipalities directly under the Central

Government, the majority of primary and secondary school students spend 30-60 minutes to finish homework, and Shanghai has the highest proportion of students who spend more than 90 minutes on homework. As shown in Figure 7, more than 50% of the first and second grade students in all representative provinces and municipalities are required to complete homework. Even in Beijing, where there are clear regulations, the proportion reaches 52%. In Hunan and Anhui, the proportion exceeds 90%. Meanwhile, a certain proportion of junior high school students in all provinces and municipalities took more than 90 minutes to finish their homework, with Chongqing having the highest proportion at 78 percent, while in Beijing the proportion was still as high as 60 percent despite the restrictions imposed by the "burden reduction order".

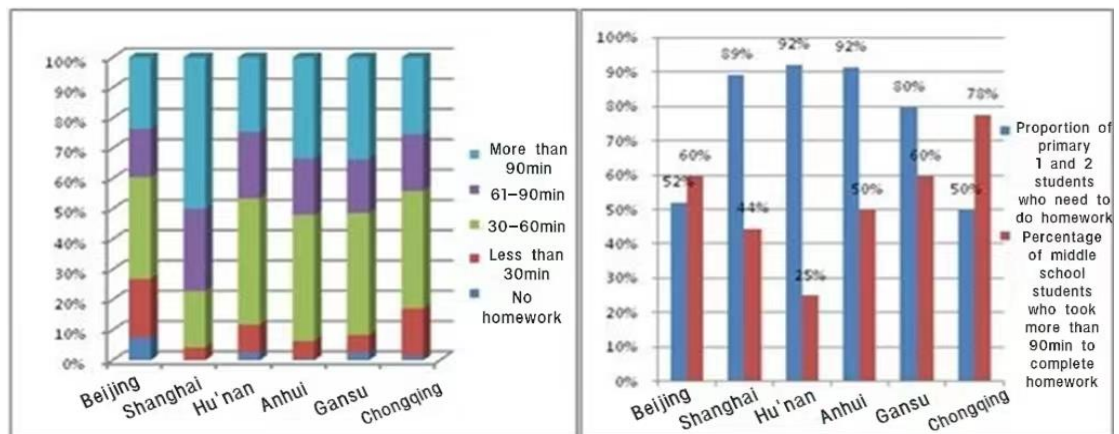


Figure 5 Comparison of homework time between cities

7. Nearly 60% of primary and secondary school students need to attend extracurricular training. As shown in Figure 6, among the surveyed students, 41% never participated in training, 45% participated in training between 1 and 4 hours per week, and 2% spent more than 10 hours in extracurricular training. As shown in Figure 6, most of the surveyed students spent less than 60 minutes to finish their homework, but 7% of primary school students and 18% of middle school students still spent more than 90 minutes to finish their homework.

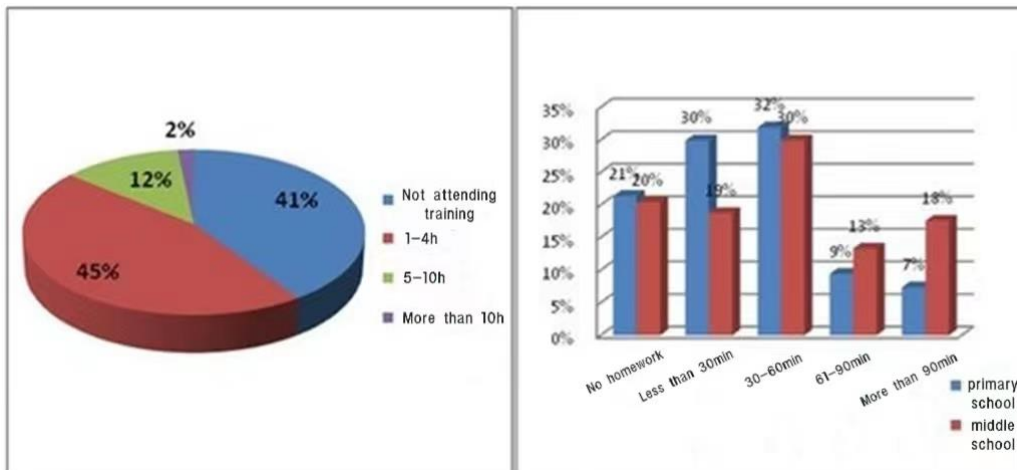


Figure 6 Time for extracurricular training and homework

As shown in Figure 7, the proportion of "no homework" and "less than 30 minutes" for homework" among primary and secondary school students in representative regions is both over half, which is significantly lower than the time spent on homework.

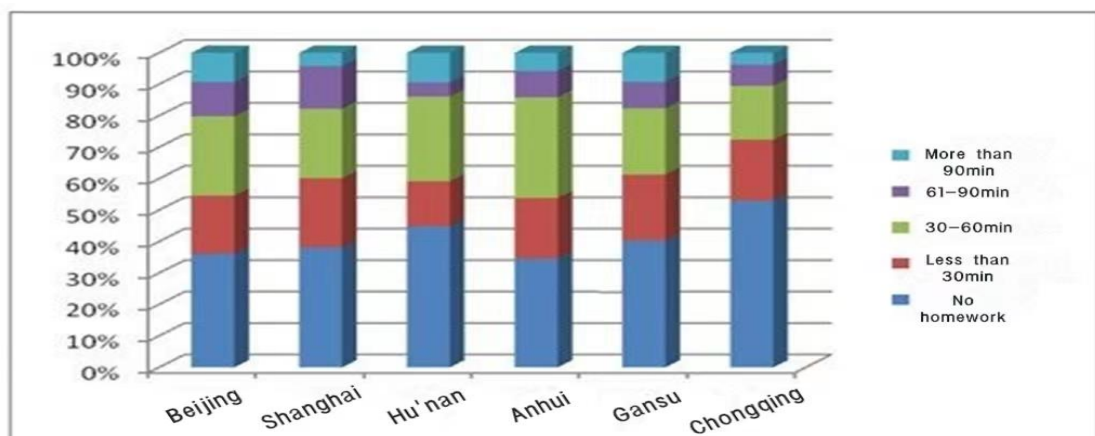


Figure 7 represents the comparison of extracurricular homework time between provinces and municipalities

8. Primary and secondary school students have serious weariness

As shown in Figure 8, among the investigated students, the proportion of "very strong" and "relatively strong" weariness is very high, reaching 48% and 24% respectively. Comparing the weariness of primary school students and middle school students, it is found that the "very strong" and "relatively strong" weariness of junior middle school students is higher than that of primary school students. It can be seen that the weariness of junior high school students is generally higher than that of pupils.

Whether the policy of "reducing burden" can help relieve students' weariness and how to relieve students' weariness need further research and discussion.

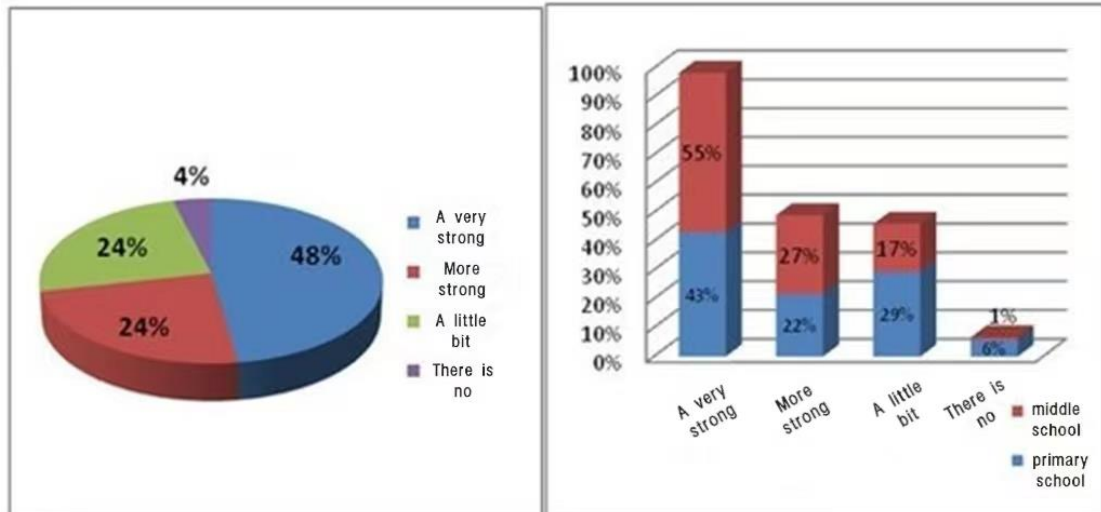


Figure 8 Analysis of weariness

As shown in Figure 9, the proportion of primary school teachers and middle school teachers who think their students have strong weariness (including "very strong" and "relatively strong") is 78.4% and 92.6% respectively. Are higher than the students themselves on their own weariness cognition (62.2% and 80.1%, respectively) and parents of primary school students and junior high school parents of their children weariness estimation is relatively "optimistic", that children weariness is "very strong" and "relatively strong" proportion of 58.3% and 78.1%, slightly lower than the same proportion of students.

Among representative provinces and municipalities directly under the Central Government, primary and secondary school students in Gansu have the most serious weariness in learning, with the total proportion of "very strong" and "relatively strong" weariness exceeding 80%. Beijing accounted for 50.4 percent. It can be seen that, on the whole, the weariness of primary and secondary school students is universal, and teachers' cognition of the severity of weariness is higher than that of students themselves and their parents.

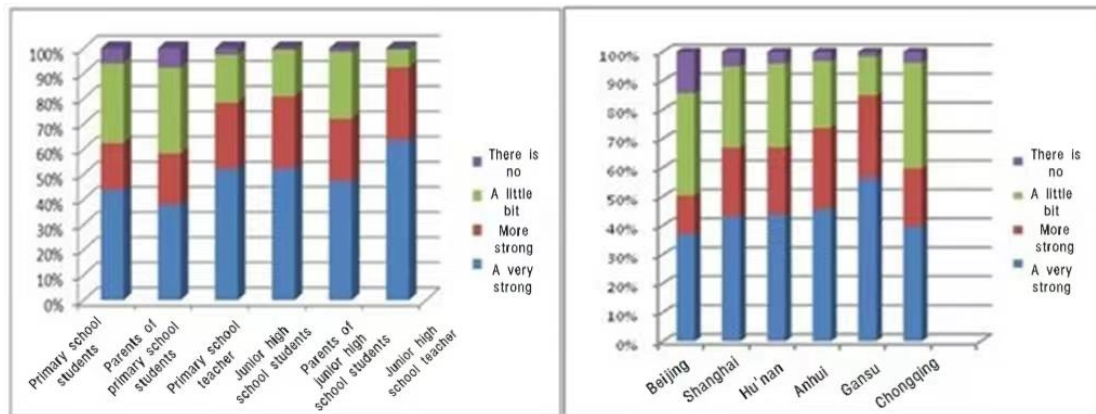


Figure 9 Comparative analysis of weariness

9. More supervision is needed to reduce the burden. As shown in Figure 12, among the five most concerned questions, "We hope the government will strengthen the supervision of burden reduction" is mentioned with the highest rate of 2,391 times. It was followed by "fear of being the same again after a gust of wind" (1,855 times). It can be seen that students, parents and teachers all focus on the effectiveness and long-term nature of policy implementation. How to put the problem of "burden reduction" into practice and long-term implementation is the key.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary of Finding

From the analysis of the above results, it can be seen that the burden reduction policy has not been fully implemented. From the perspective of education, the root cause is the uneven distribution of educational resources and the imperfection of educational evaluation system. Due to the uneven distribution of educational resources, parents must obtain high-quality educational resources in order to let their children survive better, which leads to the problem of school choice. Under the current conditions, the evaluation method for obtaining high quality educational resources is the enrollment examination system. Students have to improve their academic performance through extracurricular tutoring and sea exercises, thus resulting in the problem of academic burden.

Schools, as the carrier of the burden reduction policy, should fully implement the burden reduction policy, but the current educational evaluation and assessment method is linked to students' scores, there is a problem of implementation limit. From the point of view of society, the competition of human capital, social evaluation and employment system, the phenomenon of academic background and lack of ability

also increase the burden of students.

Therefore, reducing the burden involves education and social root causes, such as the imbalance of educational resources, changing the way of education evaluation and social evaluation, and the policy of reducing the burden will be "more and more reduced and more negative". The author suggests that on the basis of solving the above root problems, the following specific measures can be used to truly reduce the burden of students.

Recommendations and Future Research

1. Improving policies for reducing burdens: In the questionnaire survey, when asked about "" during the policy community, the reduction of the negative ', in your opinion, what is the cause of the claim", 28.3% of students choose "the disadvantages of the policy itself," suggests that during the problems do exist in the policy itself, embark on investigating students understanding of the policy burden, 41.9% of the primary and middle school students don't know -- policy. Therefore, the practicality of burden reduction policy needs to be verified. The target of burden reduction policy is primary and secondary school students, so the opinions of students should be widely solicited, and the policy should be implemented within the range acceptable to students based on the reality of students, so as to meet the needs of most students.

On the other hand, the current burden reduction policy involves the internal affairs of education, but there are parents, society and other influential factors in the implementation process, so there are implementation limits. In order to solve the problems in the implementation process, the opinions of parents and society should be taken into consideration in the formulation of the burden reduction policy to jointly guide the all-round development of students.

2. Strengthening management of school education: From the investigation and analysis, it can be seen that primary and secondary school students still have a heavy workload, and schools have the greatest influence on this aspect. Therefore, when the national policy changes, the specific measures of the school should be adjusted as follows: First, improve the supervision system of burden reduction. Continue to retain reporting mailbox, complaints telephone, regular feedback and other supervision measures, but also students free speech rights. Second, we need to update our educational philosophy. Take the concept of quality education as the guide, standardize behavior. Third, improve the quality of teachers. On the one hand, improve teachers' moral cultivation and personality charm, on the other hand, improve teachers' teaching methods, optimize the teaching process, reasonably assign homework, improve teaching quality, reduce students' workload from the teacher side.

3. Respect students' freedom of activities: According to the survey, 45.3 percent of students went to private institutes because of their parents' demands, indicating that parents have a strong influence on the burden of activities, which has greatly affected the implementation of the burden reduction policy. Therefore, parents should consider students' lifelong development, participate in talent classes on the basis of seeking their children's opinions, encourage their children to participate in social practice activities, and balance the study pressure. On the other hand, some illegal training institutions are also indirectly depriving students of freedom of activity, so it is urgent to rectify and standardize social tutoring institutions. In general, we should start with parents and social training institutions to reduce students' after-school burden and give them freedom of activities.

4. Promote students' mental health development: In the survey, when asked "what aspect of burden do you prefer to reduce for the burden reduction policy", 37.5% of the students chose "psychological burden", while the psychological burden of middle school students is heavier than that of primary school students. The reason is caused by various competitions and evaluations. Therefore, schools should abolish the relevant score ranking and announce the way of grade evaluation, and implement the grading system; Standardize discipline competition activities, create a benign competition environment, reduce the psychological pressure of students. On the other hand, teachers should be good at creating effective teaching scenarios to mobilize students' enthusiasm and initiative, so that students can realize their own value and reduce psychological load. At the same time, schools and parents should create conditions to provide students with opportunities for social practice, enrich their life experience, change their learning pressure and balance their psychological burden.

5. Ensuring basic physiological needs: From the investigation, it can be seen that the implementation of reducing the physiological burden of primary and secondary school students is not ideal, which is manifested in the failure of "one hour of sunshine sports activity" every day, and the serious lack of sleep of middle school students. This is very bad for the healthy growth of primary and secondary school students. In order to ensure the basic physiological needs of students, the school can divide the time into sections to ensure that primary and secondary school students have one hour of activities every day, enrich the forms of activities, and improve the quality of sunshine sports activities.

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