

# Analysis of the Implementation Bias of the “Double-decrease Policy” and Measures to Address it -- An Analysis Framework Based on Camera Execution

Xin Su

College of Business (School of Management), Northwestern University of Political Science and Law, Xi'an, Shaanxi, 710122, China

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**Abstract:** The “Double Reduction” policy has achieved remarkable results since its inception, but there are some deviations in the implementation process. Based on Xu Jianniu and Shi Gaojian’s “camera implementation” framework, this paper analyses the deviations of local governments in implementing the “double-decrease” policy, and finds that, according to the differences in institutional potential and resources for policy implementation, local governments have adopted It is found that, depending on the institutional potential and policy implementation resources, local governments adopt the implementation strategies of policy perfunctory, policy adaptive, policy experimental and policy compliant. Based on this, we propose measures to address the biases in the implementation of the “double reduction” policy at the levels of institutional potential and policy implementation resources, so as to promote the sustainable and effective implementation of the “double reduction” policy.

**Keywords:** “Double-decrease” policy; Camera-enforcement; Local governments; Policy implementation

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## 1. Introduction

The issue of reducing the burden on primary and secondary school students is a long-standing issue in the field of education in China, and a new focus of growing concern for the Party and the State from the height of future development.<sup>[1]</sup> On 24 July 2021, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the General Office of the State Council issued the Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework on Students in Compulsory Education and the Burden of Out-of-School Training (hereinafter referred to as the "Double-Reduction" policy, hereinafter referred to as the "Opinions").<sup>[2]</sup> 2022 The National Survey Report on the Effectiveness of the "Double Reduction" shows that the Double Reduction Policy has been effective in various aspects.<sup>[3]</sup> But why has the effect of the decades-long reduction failed to meet expectations? Some scholars believe that the fundamental reasons for the obstruction of the implementation of the double-reducing policy are the defects of the policy evaluation system, the lack of monitoring mechanism, the cognitive bias of the target group on the policy, and the influence of social concepts and consciousness.<sup>[4]</sup> Some scholars believe that the reason for the lack of the burden reduction policy is the irrationality of the policy itself, the unclear definition of the concept, and the lack of scientific content of the policy, etc.<sup>[5][6]</sup> Most of the existing studies are based on Smith's policy implementation analysis model, policy network analysis model, system theory perspective and stakeholder perspective to analyse and study the bias and problems in the implementation process of the "double reduction" policy. More attention is paid to the policy itself and the stakeholders, while less attention is paid to the policy implementation factors such as the policy implementation body and the policy resources. In this paper, we use a number of examples of "double reduction" policy implementation to analyse the deviations in the process of double reduction policy implementation through the "camera implementation" framework proposed by Xu Jianniu and Shi Gaojian<sup>[7]</sup>, and put forward some countermeasures to promote the implementation of the "double reduction" policy. It also proposes some countermeasures to promote the effective implementation of the "double-decrease" policy.

## 2. Policy implementation analytical framework for camera implementation

### 2.1 Factors affecting the implementation of the double-decrease policy

#### 2.1.1 Institutional potential

"Potential energy", also called "potential energy", is a physics concept that refers to a state quantity. In recent years, the term "potential energy" has been used in many academic studies. He Donghang and Kong Fanbin<sup>[8]</sup> proposed the concept of political potential energy based

on the academic expression of "high-level promotion" of Chinese public policy. Wang Jie and Zhang Yu put forward the term "institutional potential energy", which refers to the "potential energy" of the system formed by the superposition of multiple elements in the institutional field, and is the prerequisite constraint for the implementation of the system's power and effectiveness.<sup>[9]</sup> Based on this, this paper considers that institutional potential refers to the strength of influence and degree of coercion of policies issued by different levels in the process of policy implementation.

**2.1.2 Resources for policy implementation**

Hu Chunyan<sup>[10]</sup> argues that local governments actively integrate enforcement resources, thus providing a strong resource guarantee for the implementation of the system. This paper defines policy enforcement resources as the various forces, methods of means, etc. that policy enforcers can use to promote policy enforcement in the process of policy enforcement. The strength of policy implementation resources mainly refers to the degree of change in the quantity and quality of policy resources in the process of policy implementation.

**2.2 Camera implementation: an analytical framework for the implementation of the "double-decrease" policy**

Two important factors affecting the implementation of the "double-decrease" policy by local governments are institutional potential and resources for policy implementation, the different combinations of which constitute different scenarios for policy implementation. Under different policy implementation scenarios, local governments will adopt different strategies (see table 1):

**Table 1 Map of institutional potential and resource mix for policy implementation**

Institutional potential	strong	Policy changes	policy compliance
	weak	perfunctory policy	Policy experiments
		weak	strong

policy resource

**3. Differential behaviour of local governments in the "double-decrease" policy**

**3.1 Perfunctory policies: weak institutional potential and weak resources for policy implementation**

In terms of institutional potential, before July 2021, basically, the State Council and the Ministry of Education had separately issued a number of documents on load-shedding for primary and secondary school students; the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council had not yet jointly issued the Opinions, and the mandatory implementation of load-shedding policies was weak, and some local governments did not pay enough attention to load-shedding and the implementation of the policies had not been carried out.

In terms of resources for policy implementation, firstly, the fragmentation of local government power resources and weak supervision have led to irregular fees charged by out-of-school training institutions. Second, local government financial and material resources are weak. Insufficient input budgets from local financial departments and lack of funds for schools have led to their failure to give teachers hourly fees when carrying out after-school services, and the lack of incentives for teachers to implement the policy, which has led to low motivation. Thirdly, media resources among intangible resources are weak. There has been insufficient publicity on the issue of burden reduction for primary and secondary school students, and various policy stakeholders have failed to recognise the importance of the issue of burden reduction.

**3.2 Policy adaptation: strong institutional potential and weak resources for policy implementation**

At the level of institutional potential, with the release of the Opinions in July 2021, the issue of double-decrease has attracted widespread attention in society as a whole, and all relevant parties have begun to take measures to implement the policy.

At the level of policy implementation resources, local governments lacked the capacity to recruit and train teachers. Some teachers are unqualified and have a slightly skewed understanding of the concept of reducing the homework burden in the mitigation policy, implementing only the reduction in the total amount and length of homework in the Opinions, reducing only the quantity of homework and neglecting to improve the quality of homework. In addition, when it comes to after-school services, only two of the "double reduction" policies have been implemented, namely, the provision of extended care services and the opening of evening self-study programmes.

### **3.3 Policy experimentation: weak institutional potential, strong resources for policy implementation**

In terms of institutional potential, before the release of the Opinions, although there was little pressure on policy implementation, some local governments still attached greater importance to the issue of the burden of schoolwork on local primary and secondary school students, and coupled with stronger local resources for policy implementation, the governments were willing to try to promote the effective implementation of the double-decrease policy.

At the level of policy implementation resources, first, some local governments have stronger financial resources. Local financial departments have set up special funds for the implementation of the policy, and are actively carrying out after-school services, effectively solving the problems that plague parents in picking up and dropping off primary and secondary school students. Secondly, local governments attach importance to the construction of teachers' teams and enrich the contents of after-school services, which are popular among students. Third, local governments have strong power resources and actively fulfil their supervisory responsibilities.

### **3.4 Political compliance: strong institutional potential and resources for policy implementation**

At the institutional potential level, on 24 July 2021, once the CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued their "high-level promotion" opinions, local governments attached great importance to them and quickly issued specific "double reduction" policy implementation plans.

At the level of policy implementation resources, firstly, local governments have centralised their power resources, actively guiding the transformation of subject-based out-of-school training institutions and establishing clear boundaries between subject-based and non-subject-based out-of-school training institutions. Second, local governments actively introduce teachers and professionals, and have complete material and financial resources. They are actively carrying out after-school services to reduce the burden of homework on students, improve the quality of classroom education, and promote the all-round development of students.

## **4. Responses to deviations in the implementation of the “double-decrease” policy**

### **4.1 Measures at the level of institutional potential**

The central Government needs to join forces with various departments to issue more specific and clearer, more frequent documents and policies related to the double-decrease, to enhance the programmatic and guiding role of public policy, and to provide space for local governments to implement policies creatively. At the same time, it should provide policy texts that are more closely aligned with the realities of the situation, and invest more funds and energy in them.

### **4.2 Measures at the resource level for policy implementation**

#### **4.2.1 Expanding the supply of resources for compulsory education**

##### **(1) Strengthening the supply and training of teacher resources**

Firstly, an inter-school co-operation mechanism should be established to strengthen exchanges and communication among schools and share quality school resources. Secondly, using "Internet+Education", we should make extensive use of online educational resources, integrate online and offline teaching, and build a smart cloud platform for primary and secondary school students. Finally, local education departments should establish a pool of high-quality teachers. In addition to school teachers, they can bring in talented people from retired teachers, college students, graduate student interns and volunteers who have volunteered for co-operation.

##### **(2) Broadening resource channels and increasing funding for education.**

Firstly, local governments can set up special funds for the remuneration of teachers for after-school services, and establish an incentive mechanism for teachers to stimulate their initiative, motivation and creativity in participating in burden reduction. Second, local governments should increase funding for schools that lack facilities and equipment for activities.

#### **4.2.2 Establishment of a sound supervisory and management system to increase supervision and control**

Firstly, local governments can set up supervision offices such as supervision offices or supervision centres, and set up a special reporting platform for the "double reduction". Secondly, it is necessary to strengthen the supervision of training institutions that have successfully transformed themselves, so as to prevent them from hiding their identities and providing subject-type tutoring in violation of the law.

#### **4.2.3 Extensive use of the mass media to change social attitudes**

Local governments need to make active use of the mass media to explain the true meaning of the "double-reducing" policy, to guide parents and the public to have a correct and profound understanding of the policy, and at the same time to guide public opinion and mobilise the enthusiasm of all target groups, so that schools, families and society can actively participate in the "double-reducing" policy. At the same time,

it guides public opinion and mobilises the enthusiasm of all target groups, so that schools, families and society can actively participate in the "double-decrease" policy and increase the recognition of the value of the "double-decrease" policy by all relevant parties.

## 5. Conclusions

Based on the framework of "camera-enforcement", this paper points out that institutional potential and policy implementation resources are important factors affecting the implementation of the "double-decrease" policy by local governments, and that different couplings of these two factors form four kinds of policy implementation situations, to which local governments adopt different coping strategies: policy perfunctoriness, policy adaptation, policy experimentation, and policy compliance. The local governments adopt different coping strategies: policy perfunctoriness, policy adaptation, policy experimentation and policy compliance. At the same time, in order to address the deviations in the process of policy implementation, measures such as expanding the supply of resources for compulsory education, establishing a sound supervisory and management system, increasing supervision, and making extensive use of the mass media to change social attitudes are proposed.

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