

Development and Thinking of Extracurricular Sports Activities under the Background of "Double Reduction"

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Abstract: On July 24, 2021, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Government Office of the State Council issued *Several Opinions on Further Reducing the Students' Work Burden and Off campus Training Burden in China's Compulsory Education Period*. Since the promulgation of the "Double Reduction Policy", extracurricular sports activities have received unprecedented attention. This article focuses on their existing problems. The situation and future development have put forward a deeper requirement. By accelerating the establishment of extracurricular sports clubs, strengthening the allocation of teachers and the operation of the trinity linkage mechanism of home, school and community, we can accelerate the faster and better development of extracurricular sports activities in school sports.

Keywords: "Double reduction", Extracurricular sports activities, School sports

1. Introduction

The word "burden reduction" has always been an important issue in school education and society. The physical and mental health of students is constantly affected by problems such as excessive academic workload, excessive pressure for further education, extensive extracurricular training, and homework burden. Since July 24, 2021, in order to thoroughly implement the spirit of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee, and effectively improve the quality of primary and secondary education, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council have issued the "Opinions on Further Reducing the Workload of Students in Compulsory Education and the Burden of Extracurricular Training" (hereinafter referred to as the "Double Reduction" policy measures).^[1]

2. Existing problems and causes of extracurricular sports activities

Extracurricular sports activities are a major component of school physical education, and they constitute a significant aspect of school sports management, serving as an important means to achieve the objectives of physical education^[2]. These activities play a crucial role in fostering students' interest in sports, improving their physical fitness, and developing their athletic skills. Extracurricular sports activities refer to various sports exercises organized by schools during students' free time, aiming to review and reinforce classroom teaching content, enhance physical development, promote health, improve sports skills, and enrich their leisure cultural life. From the perspective of the development process of extracurricular sports activities, the earliest literature on this subject can be traced back to 1955, and it has been developing for 65 years. Throughout this 65-year period of development, it is evident that scholars have emphasized extracurricular sports activities through literature, elucidating their organizational forms, future directions, implementation approaches, and other aspects. However, up to the present, the level of development of extracurricular sports activities for primary and secondary school students in China remains relatively low. The activities exhibit a single organizational form and have not achieved the intended goals. The reasons for this are as follows: The status of extracurricular sports activities in school education is not high. Theoretically, extracurricular sports activities are a major component of campus sports. However, in practice, they have not received genuine attention and the efficiency is low. Physical education teachers have heavy teaching tasks, and the number of primary school physical education teachers is insufficient to meet the needs of extracurricular sports activities.

Moreover, since the proportion of extracurricular sports activities in corresponding class teacher's remuneration is not high, the enthusiasm of parents to participate in extracurricular sports activities is also low. Extracurricular sports activities are often encroached upon by "main courses" teachers. In the past, due to the excessive academic workload and homework for students, "main courses" teachers frequently occupied students' extracurricular sports time to improve the school's enrollment rate. School sports facilities and venues are severely inadequate. As all students in the school are expected to participate in extracurricular sports activities, a large portion of the school's sports venues and equipment cannot meet the demands. Additionally, due to the lack of management of extracurricular sports activities by teachers, there are certain safety hazards.

3. Extracurricular sports activities glow new vitality under the "double reduction" policy

Although there are no specific documents related to the "Double Reduction" policy in the field of primary and secondary school physical education, it is bound to have a significant impact on physical education as education reforms deepen. The introduction of the "Double Reduction" policy reflects the increasing emphasis on the holistic development of students' physical and mental well-being, as well as the attention given to their overall health. It indirectly weakens the sole emphasis on test scores and reflects the need for more comprehensive talents in China. Determining what should be done at each stage is currently of utmost importance. In the past, students were burdened with excessive academic workloads, schools had surplus educational facilities, high fee standards, numerous violations, economically disadvantaged families, and heavy mental burdens, which were persistent problems in compulsory education [3]. In response to this, the "Double Reduction" policy has made specific arrangements for school management and teaching in educational institutions, outlining specific requirements such as the "Three Limitations," "Three Administrations," and "Three Improvements." One of the main tasks under the "Three Improvements" is to enhance the quality of after-school services. It specifically mentions the establishment of diverse scientific, cultural, artistic, labor, reading, interest-based organizations, and practical activities, while teachers are not allowed to use after-school service time to teach new lessons. Therefore, it is evident that after the implementation of the "Double Reduction" policy, physical education in Chinese schools has gained new vitality. Objectively analyzing this, firstly, the "Double Reduction" policy explicitly states the need to reduce the quantity and time of homework to alleviate the heavy homework burden on primary and secondary school students, thus freeing up sufficient leisure time for students. This time can be fully utilized for extracurricular sports activities, even participating in sports competitions, which is beneficial for releasing students' academic pressure, fostering a positive sports spirit, promoting interpersonal communication, and preventing the occurrence of mental illnesses. Secondly, the "Double Reduction" policy unleashes more physical energy for students. Professor Bobbitt, the founder of modern curriculum theory, pointed out that the human body is like an energy reservoir. Generally, the consumption and supply of energy in the human body are balanced. However, when this balance is disrupted, the stored energy in the body decreases, and the efficiency of the body correspondingly declines. When the energy expenditure of the body is less than 30%, the body can become excessively fatigued or enter a diseased state [4]. Therefore, it can be inferred that due to the limited mental energy of primary and secondary school students, when their mental energy consumption is reduced in school, they will have more time and energy to invest in extracurricular sports activities, which is conducive to the development of good sports habits and the improvement of physical fitness. Lastly, the "Double Reduction" policy greatly restricts the development of extracurricular subject training institutions, while injecting new vitality into sports training institutions. This enables them to allocate more resources and funding to sports activity research and improve the quality of training classes, providing broader development space and more opportunities for students to choose the sports they enjoy.

4. Ways to improve extracurricular sports activities under the "double reduction" policy

4.1. Accelerate the establishment of extracurricular sports clubs

According to literature reports, extracurricular sports activities have rapidly developed in foreign countries and have formed a relatively complete three-tier system, ranging from schools to inter-schools to sports clubs. Sports social activities between classes, schools, and clubs have enriched extracurricular sports education for foreign students. Students participating in sports such as soccer, basketball, volleyball, baseball, rugby, and long-distance running are abundant [5]. In contrast, in China, the problem of students not acquiring complete sports skills after completing the compulsory physical education curriculum for nine years of basic education or even in high school and university has been a persistent

issue, and one important reason is the insufficient development of extracurricular sports clubs. "The reasonable establishment of extracurricular sports clubs can stimulate the enthusiasm of primary and secondary school students to master modern sports techniques. Additionally, through professional learning, self-exploration, and cooperative learning, students can quickly acquire a sports skill. After all, compared to classroom teaching time, after the implementation of the "Double Reduction" policy, there will be more ample extracurricular time. Effectively utilizing this leisure time to engage in extracurricular sports club activities can create a diversified practice environment for the majority of learners and provide an important guarantee for learners to quickly master sports techniques. Therefore, schools will promptly establish several extracurricular sports clubs based on teacher capabilities and facility requirements. Through participation in sports clubs, students can independently understand sports events, study sports events attentively, and grasp learning techniques. Through the club format, students can cultivate interest in sports through their participation in activities, allowing interest to guide the learning of sports disciplines and providing a suitable environment for the development of extracurricular sports activities. This fundamentally provides a strong engine and favorable conditions for the development of extracurricular sports activities and creates an environment conducive to learning and freely choosing sports skills for students.

4.2. Improve the management system and strengthen the allocation of teachers

Firstly, it is necessary to establish strict regulations for extracurricular sports activities and consistently enforce them. This is also a necessary measure to strengthen management, enhance students' emphasis on physical education, and ensure that sports activities can take place in a safe environment. Additionally, primary and secondary schools should include the time allocated for extracurricular sports activities in the workload of physical education teachers. This will increase their motivation to engage in extracurricular sports activities and incorporate the evaluation of students' participation in extracurricular sports activities and their teachers' performance into the assessment of the school's physical education teachers, thereby enhancing their motivation and sense of responsibility. Secondly, it is important to improve the management and supervision system of sports activities, which requires enhancing the core qualities of physical education teachers. The improvement of core competencies among physical education teachers plays a leading role in the development of extracurricular sports activities. The successful implementation of extracurricular sports activities relies on highly competent physical education teachers, their role modeling, their ability to serve as examples, and their guidance for students. As students are the main participants in extracurricular sports activities, they require the correct guidance of physical education teachers. Therefore, it is urgent and important to enhance the core qualities of physical education teachers. Through training, teachers should deepen their understanding of extracurricular sports activities, increase opportunities for professional knowledge and external training, and continuously improve the professional level of primary and secondary school teachers and their practical knowledge of physical education teaching theory. Thirdly, physical education teachers should free their minds, keep up with the times, and avoid guiding modern students with outdated ideologies. As modern physical education teachers, they should strive to explore and learn about the forefront of learning and physical education teaching. By using advanced thinking and perspectives, they can better promote the development and innovative changes in extracurricular sports activities, improve the organization and implementation methods of extracurricular physical education activities in schools, and enhance the use of fun educational methods. This will fully stimulate the subjective enthusiasm of primary and secondary school students for self-directed learning in extracurricular sports activities and foster their desire to engage in such activities. Ultimately, this will effectively improve the physical literacy of primary and secondary school students and achieve the goal of lifelong physical education.

4.3. Strengthen the linkage mechanism of school, family and society

In the context of "reducing academic burden and non-essential tasks" (known as "Double Reduction"), the exploration of the organic integration of school, family, and society plays a crucial role in school education. The collaborative educational model of "family, school, and community" is still in the early stage of theoretical exploration, and it requires standardization and necessary directions for its development. Under the backdrop of "Double Reduction," this unique educational model holds great potential for development. Its development not only benefits students' growth but also drives the construction of surrounding infrastructure, with its impact even radiating throughout society. Therefore, utilizing this educational model, I propose the following suggestions for extracurricular physical education activities: Firstly, it is necessary to improve the construction of campus sports facilities and equipment and increase investment in physical education. The new curriculum standards propose that

"sports venues and equipment provide the material guarantee for carrying out quality education, further improving the quality of physical education, and promoting the physical and mental health of primary and secondary school students." Schools should establish the basic facilities for physical education courses, actively seek government support for campus sports funding, and obtain community assistance to alleviate the problem of insufficient funds for campus sports. The campus sports budget should account for a considerable proportion of the education budget and gradually increase the investment in campus sports funding. Additionally, for schools with relatively limited field resources, measures such as "time displacement" should be taken to improve field utilization efficiency and effectively alleviate the issue of inadequate space. Secondly, active and effective extracurricular and family physical education teaching activities should be carried out in conjunction with the implementation of the "Opinions on Deepening the Integration of Physical and Educational Development to Promote the Healthy Growth of Young People" jointly formulated by the General Administration of Sport and the Ministry of Education^[6]. Family-based extracurricular physical education assignments have become one of the new approaches for the development of physical education in our country. The implementation of the "Double Reduction" policy has greatly reduced the academic burden and learning pressure on primary and secondary school students, effectively freeing up their free time. Therefore, this also provides feasibility and possibilities for the implementation of extracurricular physical education assignments. Schools should arrange after-school assignments that are conducive to students' physical and mental development, improve their sports skills, and cultivate their interest in sports, taking into account students' interests, age, gender, and other factors. Furthermore, it is important to establish a supervision system for after-school collaboration between families and schools, allowing parents to effectively supervise and accompany their children in exercising after school, enhance parents' emphasis on physical education, and strengthen the connection between parents and children. Thirdly, since the implementation of the "Double Reduction" policy, the prospects of extracurricular sports clubs outside of school have been promising. Parents can choose extracurricular sports clubs that suit their children's preferences. In this process, children and adolescents can make friends and grow together, and the sustainability of exercise is closely related to peer influence^[7]. Through extracurricular sports activities in society, students can enhance their individuality and social interaction skills.

5. Conclusion

The "Double Reduction" policy is one of the important achievements in the reform and development of the education field. As the implementation of the "Double Reduction" policy presents both opportunities and challenges for extracurricular sports activities, and promoting extracurricular sports activities is an important way to cultivate students' sports skills, sports interests, develop a sound personality, and establish lifelong values of sports in society. Better cultivating students' sports interests and habits, nurturing their lifelong awareness of sports, is conducive to enriching their extracurricular life, pleasing both body and mind, enhancing friendships among classmates, better cultivating sports talents, and also promoting athlete selection. Ultimately, it helps reduce students' burdens, facilitates the realization of the idea of health as the top priority at all levels of schools, and alleviates or resolves inherent problems from the past, better promoting students' physical and mental development. However, in the face of limited venue and equipment resources, how to effectively carry out extracurricular sports activities, promote them from various perspectives, and break new ground in various forms of organization, has become a new driving force for development, relying on internal measures within schools. It is not only necessary to pay attention to the upgrading of sports facilities and venues but also, more importantly, to improve the professional quality and level of physical education teachers. Schools should provide a soil and nutrient for the growth of these physical education teachers. By continuously improving the competence of teachers, fundamentally improving the internal environment of the school, how to break through the past barriers, initiate new extracurricular sports activities, and solve current problems are also of primary importance for future development.

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