

# Research on Constraints and Alleviation Paths of Youth Physical Health Promotion in the Perspective of a Sports Power Country

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**Abstract:** Adolescent physical health is essential for national happiness and strength. Primary and secondary school physical education plays a vital role in their development. However, it faces challenges under the "double reduction" policy. This study, using field-capital-habitus analysis, explores the constraints and solutions for promoting adolescent physical health through physical education. Challenges include marginalization, insufficient resources, and a focus on exam scores. To address these, we propose improving sports facilities, enhancing skills, increasing resources, improving after-school sports, and shifting the focus from exams to comprehensive development. The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October 2022 also stressed the importance of sports development. Adolescents are crucial to this endeavour, but their physical health faces issues like obesity and myopia. This article emphasizes the need to enhance adolescent physical health and offers solutions at the family, school, and societal levels to promote their well-being.

**Keywords:** "Double Reduction" Policy; Adolescents; Primary and Secondary Schools; School Sports

## 1. Introduction

Teenagers are the future backbone of our country, bearing the mission of realizing the Chinese Dream. However, for a long time in China, primary and secondary school students have excessively pursued intellectual education while neglecting other elements of character education. This has led to an imbalance in the five elements of education, including physical education, moral education, aesthetic education, and labor education, weakening the practical rationality of the participants. This phenomenon has had adverse effects on students' physical health, leading to problems such as myopia, obesity, overweight, reduced strength, lack of endurance, anxiety, and depression. According to statistics, the myopia rate among Chinese elementary school students is 30%, while it's 55% for junior high school students. The rate of overweight and obesity among teenagers is as high as 22%, with an 11% detection rate for depression. In 2020, the myopia rate among Chinese elementary school students was 35.6%, and for junior high school students, it was 71.1%, with a teenage overweight and obesity rate reaching 19.0%, and a depression detection rate as high as 24.6% [1]. These health problems manifest complexity, harm, and severity, posing a significant threat to the physical and mental health of a vast number of teenagers. In response to this issue, the country has introduced the "Opinions on Further Reducing the Homework and Off-campus Training Burden of Compulsory Education Stage Students" policy [2]. The policy aims to reduce the academic burden and increase participation in physical education, moral education, aesthetic education, and labor education. It aims to regain the subjectivity of teenagers and promote the practice generation of "sensory life ontology." The core goal of the "Double Reduction" policy is to reduce the academic burden on primary and secondary school students while emphasizing the importance of physical education, moral education, aesthetic education, and labor education. This policy is directly related to the fundamental task of "cultivating virtue and nurturing people" and provides policy support for the reform of physical education in primary and secondary schools, contributing to the goal of cultivating "complete individuals" [3]. Currently, domestic scholars have conducted extensive research on topics related to the development of school physical education under the "Double Reduction" policy, after-school physical education services, physical education middle school entrance examination reforms, and the value of physical education [3]. In summary, physical education in primary and secondary schools plays a crucial role in promoting the comprehensive development of teenagers. It not only improves physical fitness but also contributes to the cultivation of moral qualities, the enhancement of

intellectual levels, the shaping of aesthetic emotions, and the transmission of labor values. These dimensions are interconnected, collectively forming a complete value system for physical education in primary and secondary schools that promotes the comprehensive development of teenagers. In the context of building a sports powerhouse, we should conduct in-depth research on how to promote physical education in primary and secondary schools to support and guide the healthy growth of teenagers (see Figure 1).

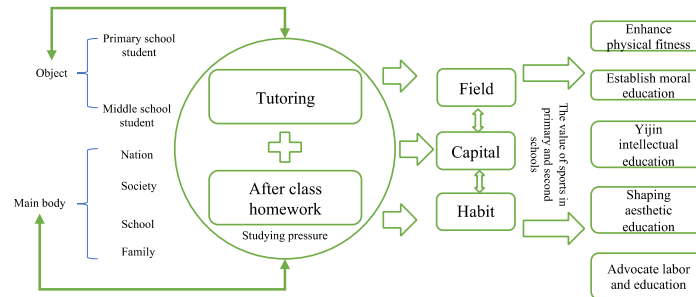


Figure 1: The Value of Physical Education in Promoting the Comprehensive Development of Adolescents in Primary and Secondary Schools

## 2. Challenges Faced by Promoting Youth Physical Fitness in Primary and Secondary Schools under the 'Double Reduction' Policy

Physical education in primary and secondary schools plays a crucial role in promoting the physical fitness of adolescents. Under the 'Double Reduction' policy, the promotion of youth physical fitness through physical education in primary and secondary schools holds significant practical significance. From a national perspective, a series of top-level policies such as Double Reduction, Integration of Sports and Education, Sports Powerhouse, Healthy China, and the Report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China [4] have explicitly emphasized the need to strengthen youth physical education. These policies provide essential support for the development of physical education in primary and secondary schools. From a societal perspective, they effectively address the widespread concerns about the physical fitness of adolescents in society. From a school perspective, they contribute to the comprehensive deepening of reforms in the school sports system, enhancing the role and position of physical education in schools. From an individual perspective, these policies stimulate the enthusiasm of adolescents to participate in school sports and continuously improve their physical fitness [5]. It is evident that the 'Double Reduction' policy, by reducing academic training and supporting academically capable students to engage in physical exercise, presents unprecedented opportunities to better harness the educational potential of physical education in primary and secondary schools. However, there are still several challenges that physical education in primary and secondary schools faces in promoting the physical fitness of adolescents.

## 3. Teenagers' physical health is constrained by the dual challenges of school-tiered sports and inadequate capital supply.

Firstly, the problem of school-tiered sports has led to the marginalization of physical education in schools, limiting the development of teenagers' athletic skills. The core of this issue lies in the tiered education system, which unfairly compares academic achievements with physical education through examinations.[6] Traditional Chinese culture places a strong emphasis on academic achievements, leading to an inadequate appreciation of physical education. Additionally, there is a lack of self-awareness regarding physical education in schools. The formation of athletic skills requires time and long-term systematic training, which can pose certain physical risks. With increasing competition in sports and a low success rate, participation in physical activities is limited. Furthermore, from an economic and societal perspective, there are issues related to the social recognition and economic income of those in the sports industry, resulting in low social acceptance. Most importantly, problems in the design and execution of school physical education programs have left many teenagers without proficient knowledge of any athletic skills. This series of issues has marginalized physical education in youth education, hindering the development of athletic skills.

Secondly, the lack of capital supply has become a bottleneck in the effective implementation of after-

school physical education services. Schools have allocated more human, economic, and material resources to the development of traditional subjects in education, resulting in inadequate capital supply for physical education programs. This is manifested in a shortage of supply subjects, a narrow range of content, and weak service methods.[7] While the "Double Reduction" policy calls for improvements in the educational environment, the reality shows a shortage of physical education teaching staff, the occupation of physical education class time by other subjects, limited physical education equipment and facility resources, and monotonous physical activities. Moreover, the incentive mechanisms, evaluation systems, and security mechanisms for teachers conducting after-school physical education services are imperfect, limiting the effective implementation of such services in schools. As a result, students have a limited interest in these activities. Teachers' evaluations still primarily rely on academic achievements, with no clear evaluation criteria for cultivating physically and mentally healthy students as emphasized by the "Double Reduction" policy. Therefore, teachers lack motivation to implement the policy.

In conclusion, the challenges of school-tiered sports and inadequate capital supply are the primary obstacles to promoting teenagers' physical health. Addressing these issues requires collective efforts from society, including reforming school physical education curricula and teaching methods, improving reward and evaluation systems, enhancing the qualifications of physical education teachers, increasing investments in physical education equipment and facilities, and raising the social recognition and value of physical education. Only through such measures can we better promote the physical health of teenagers and achieve the goal of becoming a sports powerhouse.

#### **4. The Solidification of the "Score-Only" Mentality as an Obstacle to the Effective Implementation of the "Double Reduction" Policy**

Habit refers to the long-term established thinking and behavioural logic within specific domains, which influence decision-making and actions of individuals. In the realm of education, the entrenched habitual thinking of "score-only," "solely focusing on admission rates," and "preferring prestigious schools" has become deeply rooted. These notions have led to a situation where, despite the promulgation of the "Double Reduction" policy, schools still resort to evasive measures.[8]

The core objective of the "Double Reduction" policy is to alleviate students' academic burden, promoting their healthy growth and comprehensive development. However, to truly achieve this policy goal, it is necessary to address the deeply ingrained issues such as the "score-only" mentality. The government needs to formulate corresponding policies that cater to the interests of schools, parents, and students. Since schools, parents, and students are generally concerned about further education and employment prospects, practical solutions must be found to address these concerns. Despite some achievements made by the "Double Reduction" policy, such as reducing subject-related homework assigned by teachers and increasing students' sleep time, the fundamental reduction of students' academic burden remains challenging due to the continued emphasis placed by schools, parents, and students on further education and employment. Moreover, teachers' pursuit of economic capital exacerbates the situation. Therefore, achieving the desired results of reducing the burden while enhancing efficiency will require more time and comprehensive efforts.

In conclusion, the "Double Reduction" policy has provided a clear direction for alleviating students' academic burden and promoting their comprehensive development. However, realizing this goal requires overcoming long-standing issues like the "score-only" mentality, implementing additional policy measures, and cultivating broader social consensus to achieve more significant effects.

#### **5. Physical Education Strategies for Promoting Physical Fitness in Primary and Secondary Schools**

Under the values and objectives of the "Double Reduction" policy, physical education in primary and secondary schools plays a crucial role in promoting the physical fitness and comprehensive development of adolescents. [9] This policy aligns with the trends in the reform of school physical education in the new era and corresponds to the values of comprehensive development. To implement the "Double Reduction" policy effectively, it is essential to elevate the status of physical education in schools, reduce students' academic burdens, and shift away from the traditional education model that solely emphasizes grades, rankings, and prestigious schools, guiding students' growth with a more holistic development philosophy.

First and foremost, elevating the status of physical education in schools is of paramount importance. The school's sports domain plays a pivotal role in the physical and mental development of students.

Schools should continuously enhance their position in the field of sports by providing more sports facilities and investing more resources to meet students' physical exercise needs. This will help change students' attitudes towards physical education and cultivate the habit of active participation in physical activities. Secondly, we need to create a healthier sports environment and promote the essence, functions, and diverse values of sports. Advocating concepts such as "Exercise is the Best Medicine," "National Fitness," and "Exercise Prescription" can foster students' interest in sports and encourage them to adopt a voluntary and habitual approach to physical exercise. Thirdly, schools should return to their role as the primary educational institutions and incorporate physical education into the core curriculum. Schools should enhance the quality of physical education classes and elevate the standard of after-school sports services. Teachers need to actively fulfill their educational responsibilities, encouraging students to actively engage in physical exercise. Additionally, schools should organize various sports events to encourage student participation and improve their athletic skills.

Through these measures, we can continuously enhance the role of physical education in primary and secondary schools in promoting the physical and mental health of students, enabling them to achieve better physical exercise and skill improvement within limited timeframes, thereby fostering the comprehensive development of adolescents.

## **6. Enhancing the Quality of After-School Physical Education Services by Continuously Improving Capital Supply**

To enhance the quality of after-school physical education services for adolescents, it is essential to continuously improve capital supply. Capital here is regarded as the resources provided to actors in social practices and can be material, economic, or human. Capital supply involves providing resources to meet demands. Research has shown that, to alleviate students' academic burdens, both the government and society must continuously enhance the quality of after-school physical education services to meet diverse needs.

1) To deepen the reform of the school physical education system and strengthen structural reforms on the supply side, a series of measures should be taken to promote support from various stakeholders such as the government, society, and enterprises. This reform aims to establish a more flexible and diversified sports service system to meet ever-changing demands. The government can formulate relevant policies, provide financial support, and promote the rational allocation of sports resources. Society and enterprises can participate in collaborative projects, providing funding and resource support to facilitate the development of school physical education. This multi-dimensional governance framework will better meet the physical education needs of adolescents and improve the quality of after-school physical education services.

2) The government and society should jointly invest in the construction of school physical education infrastructure to ensure that adolescents have access to proper physical exercise. This includes improving sports venues, equipment, and facilities, as well as providing adequate space for students to engage in sports activities. The government can increase economic capital investment to ensure the needs of school physical education classes and extracurricular sports activities are met. Furthermore, primary and secondary schools can actively hire retired athletes and retired physical education teachers who possess rich sports experience and knowledge. They can effectively guide and motivate students, enhance human capital, and promote the development of integrated education models.

## **7. Reshaping Comprehensive Development for Adolescents: Breaking Free from the "Score-Centric" Shackles**

To promote the comprehensive development of adolescents, it is imperative to break free from the habit of "score-centrism." This habit is deeply rooted in the logic of social practices, stemming from past actions, and continues to influence current behaviours. While this habit ensures the effectiveness of past experiences in current actions, it also gives rise to certain issues. In primary and secondary schools, this habit manifests as an excessive pursuit of academic scores at the expense of neglecting holistic development. As a result, both students and educators find their actions constrained. The education system has long been influenced by the notions of "score supremacy," "admission rates," and "prestigious school admissions." Over time, schools, educational authorities, parents, and students have placed excessive emphasis on scores, leading to the utilitarian and narrow-minded nature of the education system. This has resulted in an excessive academic burden and a narrow perspective for students in

compulsory education. Although the government has introduced a series of policies to address this issue, it has not been fundamentally resolved. Within this "knowledge-centric" environment, parents bear excessive financial and emotional burdens, and some training institutions engage in irregular practices. Therefore, the government has proposed the "Double Reduction" policy, aiming to construct a healthier educational ecosystem that promotes the comprehensive development and healthy growth of adolescents. The core idea of this policy is to break free from the mindset of "score supremacy," change the goals of education, and prioritize students' comprehensive development. This represents a significant shift from "score-oriented" to "comprehensive education."

To achieve this goal, various approaches must be adopted. Firstly, we need to change the mindset of society, schools, and families. Scores should no longer be the sole measure of success, and the quality of education should not be judged solely based on admission rates and prestigious schools. Instead, the focus should be on health, with comprehensive development as the fundamental guiding principle. This requires collective efforts from society to widely disseminate health education concepts and establish the correct educational values. Furthermore, schools and educational authorities should cease excessive reliance on exam results to evaluate schools and teachers' performance, instead emphasizing students' overall competence and comprehensive development. Secondly, we need to deepen the reform of the school education system, strengthen the enforcement and supervision of the "Double Reduction" policy, ensure alignment between policy objectives and tools, and harmonize the interests of all stakeholders. This entails establishing a scientific policy implementation evaluation system, monitoring policy implementation, and promptly identifying and resolving issues. Simultaneously, the government and educational authorities should provide more policy support, encourage schools to innovate teaching methods, reduce students' academic burdens, and create a more relaxed learning environment. Lastly, we need to establish a mechanism for collaborative synergy among families, schools, communities, and the government, allowing all parties to participate in adolescent education and creating a multi-stakeholder-driven dynamic mechanism for comprehensive governance. This requires greater parental involvement in their children's education, understanding their growth needs, and providing support and guidance. Schools and society should also offer adolescents more opportunities for comprehensive competence training and extracurricular activities to aid in their comprehensive development.

Through these measures, we can better promote the comprehensive development and healthy growth of adolescents. This not only benefits their personal growth but also contributes to the progress and prosperity of society. Therefore, we should work together to create a better educational environment for the future of adolescents.

## 8. Conclusion

The issue of physical fitness among adolescents has garnered widespread societal attention, particularly in the context of the "Double Reduction" policy. The health of young people is closely linked to the prosperity of the nation and the happiness of its people, making it of paramount practical significance.

The introduction of the "Double Reduction" policy not only provides clear direction for the development of school physical education but also injects new vitality into the physical fitness development of adolescents. It has been proven that physical education in primary and secondary schools plays a crucial role in promoting the physical fitness of young people. Through scientific and moderate physical exercise, the physical fitness levels of adolescents can be improved, effectively addressing the issue of the imbalance in the "Five Education" domains—intellectual, moral, physical, aesthetic, and labor. Therefore, it is imperative that we earnestly implement the guidance of the "Double Reduction" policy, adhere to the philosophy of comprehensive development, and consider the healthy growth of the vast number of primary and secondary school students as our fundamental principle and value orientation. Physical education in primary and secondary schools plays a significant role in safeguarding the actual lives of young students and can promote the comprehensive integration and development of the "Five Educations" (morality, intelligence, physical health, aesthetics, and labor skills). To achieve this, we can establish a comprehensive health domain, encourage collaborative efforts among various departments, entities, and organizations, leverage synergistic effects, and continually improve the physical fitness levels of the broader youth population.

We can foresee that this will bring about profound changes, altering the traditional mindset of prioritizing test scores, enrolment rates, and prestigious schools, and ushering in a transformation from a system that emphasizes "single examination-oriented education" to one that prioritizes "comprehensive education." This shift will pave the way for the physical fitness and comprehensive development of

primary and secondary school students.

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