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The Perceptions of Double-Reduction Policy Implementation on Students' Perception on their Academic Performance in Shanxi Province

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Abstract

The study seeks to explore the perceptions of teachers and students regarding the policy's impact. Using Ecological Systems Theory and Institutional Theory as a framework, the study employs a survey-based data collection method, gathering responses from students, along with interviews with ten experienced teachers to understand implementation challenges. Descriptive statistics and thematic ana9iv -0 qbn2w33elysis will be applied to analyze the data. 425 students have been chosen to conduct the survey, and 10 teachers have been selected to conduct the interview. Applying the IBM SPSS software and colour coding technique, all of the data are critically interpreted. The findings will contribute to existing literature by offering insights into the effectiveness and challenges of the policy, potentially guiding future educational reforms and policymaking. The findings highlight that the Double Reduction Policy significantly influences students' self-evaluation of academic performance through reduced workload, decreased anxiety, positive attitudes toward the policy, and decent work conditions.

Keywords: Microsystem, Ecosystem, Classroom Learning Outcomes, Academic Pressure, Supplementary Tutoring

Introduction

In Chinese society, educational achievement is highly valued as a means of upward social mobility, a source of family pride, and a pathway to social respect (Chen & Lin, 2024). However, the intense demand for academic success places significant pressure on students, contributing to heavy study burdens and persistent educational challenges. The Double Reduction policy is ostensibly a solution to the problem of overburdened education, but at its root, the Double Reduction policy is focused on the relationship between the State and the market, and between schools and society. According to Ma (2024), families, schools, and society should transition from fragmented and disorganised collaboration to a more

structured and coordinated partnership, working collectively to foster the cultivation of talent.

Implementation of "Double reduction" policy in the educational sector that is associated with reducing burden from students at primary school and junior secondary school students. Like other places of China, the policy is also implemented in schools of Shanxi province, and its contribution in the burden reduction of students (Wei, 2024). Teachers and students both have significant types of contributions in terms of managing the student learning along with the presence of double reduction policies.

The implementation of the Double-Reduction Policy in China aims to alleviate the academic burden on students by decreasing excessive homework and off-campus tutoring. When the objectives of the policy are well-intentioned, its impact on the academic performance of women students is contested, especially in a region like Shanxi Province. The educators and policy makers express various perceptions about whether this reform can effectively enhance the learning of the student or shift the pressure and various forms. According to Liu (2024), some schools struggle with adjusting the curriculum pace and maintaining academic rigor, while others report improvement in the performance and well-being of the student without any clear academic growth. Moreover, limited empirical data exist to evaluate the outcome of the policy within the local context. It raises questions about its implementation and effectiveness in improving academic performance. Thus, the study needs to explore the perception of stakeholders in Shanxi Province regarding the implementation of the Double-Reduction Policy and its real influence on the academic achievement of the students. It can help to identify the potential gap between educational realities and policy intentions.

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the perception about double-reduction policy implementation in terms of enhancing academic performance of students belonging to Shanxi province.

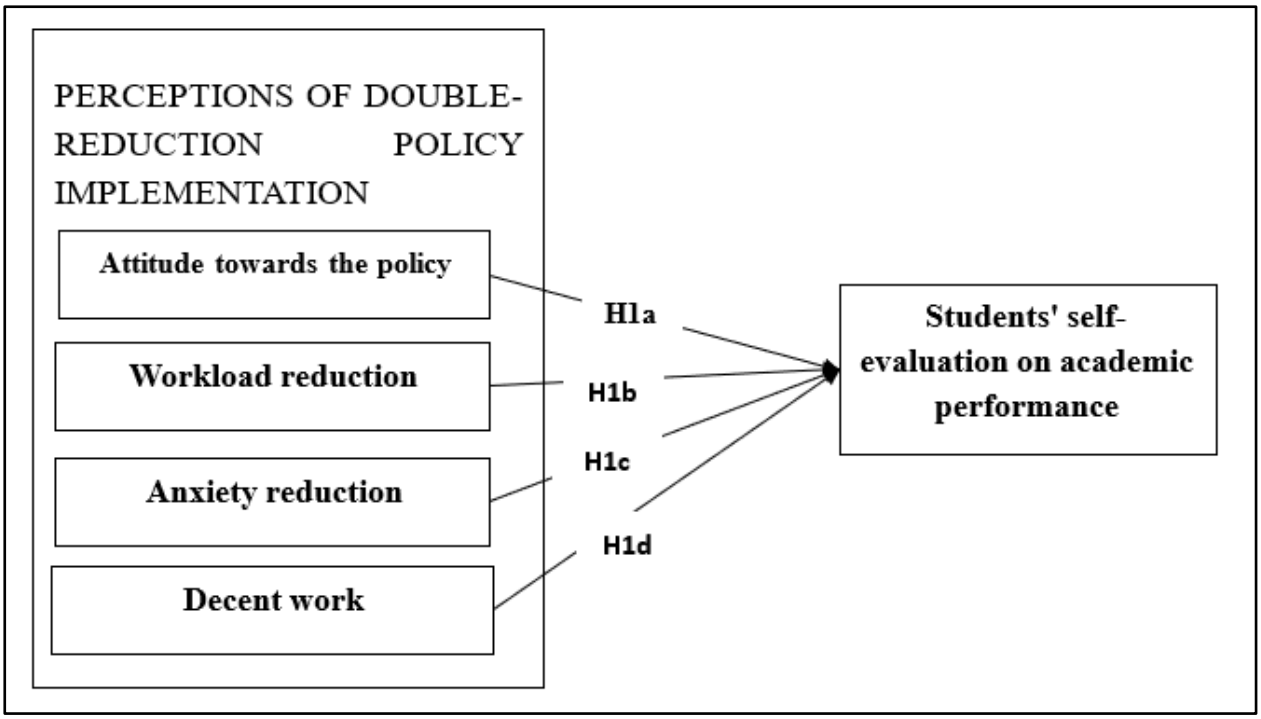

Figure 1: Research Framework

The following are the research objectives developed for the current study:
RO1: To analyze the perceptions of teachers on the Double-Reduction Policy implementation in enhancing students' perception on their academic performance in Shanxi Province
RO2: To identify the challenges faced by teachers in implementing the Double-Reduction Policy in Shanxi Province
RO3: To analyse the perception of students on their academic performance under the Double-reduction policy in Shanxi Province.

It is expected that the study outcome may have both theoretical and practical implications. It can be stated that the ideas that will be obtained from the study can be supportive for mitigating the gaps in the previous research work. In addition, the study outcome can be beneficial for the teachers as well as students in terms of improving their proper understanding about the double reduction policy that can be significant for enhancing overall performance of students. In addition, the outcome can be supportive for the policymakers belonging to educational institutions in Shanxi province, China.

Literature Review

According to the study conducted by Lu et al. (2023), the double-reduction policy was introduced by the Chinese government in 2021 and aims towards alleviation of excessive academic workloads on students by reducing homework and regulating private tutoring services. Liu et al. (2023) and Zheng, Zheng & Liu (2025) have mentioned in their studies that the policy objectives of double-reduction policy include reduction of excessive academic burden on students by limiting homework and curbing private tutoring services. Along with this, it has also been seen in the study conducted by Audras et al. (2022) that the long-term effects on college entrance exams of the double-reduction policy is not well studied yet. As per the study by Binah-Pollak (2024), the policy of double-reduction may promote well-rounded development even beyond academics.

Focus on the external factors is closely associated with proper establishment of the various kinds of development in double reduction policy. In addition, the long-term goal achievement is another significant aspect in this matter, which is closely associated with the learning satisfaction of the students. In addition, Zhang (2024) determinations of targeted suggestions are also impactful in terms of enhancing the learning ability in an effective manner. Thus, the promotion of social development should also be an effective situation. Decided way of learning is also effectively associated with the proper institutional instruction as well as supportive policies, which help students for learning.

In the context of the double reduction policy, Song (2022) has drawn a comparison between the policies in South Korea and China, highlighting that the Chinese government not only aimed at reducing after-school classes but also placed strong emphasis on the importance of in-school education, specifically, with the intent to improving the quality of education provided during regular school hours. This paper has further emphasised that since the implementation of the double reduction policy in China, students can stay at school longer than before, students can complete their homework at school, relieving parents of the need to supervise or urge them to do it at home. According to a survey conducted by Beijing Normal

University, 83.5% of over 1.6 million students reported that they no longer participated in subject-based off-campus tutoring. In addition to this, statistics released by the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2021) highlighted that 75.8% of urban schools nationwide provided after-school services during school days. Among more than 77 million parents surveyed, 97.3% expressed satisfaction with their children's schoolwork following the implementation of the "Double Reduction" policy (Chen & Lin, 2024).

Theories Related to the Study

According to the study conducted by Lasekan et al. (2024), the ecological systems theory which was developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner explains how human development is influenced by multiple environmental systems from immediate surroundings to broader society structures. The theory, as explained in the study conducted by Liu, Duan & Chu (2022), consists of a microsystem which includes direct interactions, a meso system which includes connections between settings, exosystem which includes indirect influences, macro system which includes cultural and societal norms and lastly, the chronosystem which includes time related changes. As per the study conducted by Spours (2024), each of these systems interacts dynamically which indicates that changes in one system can create changes in the others as well as can influence academic outcomes of the students as well.

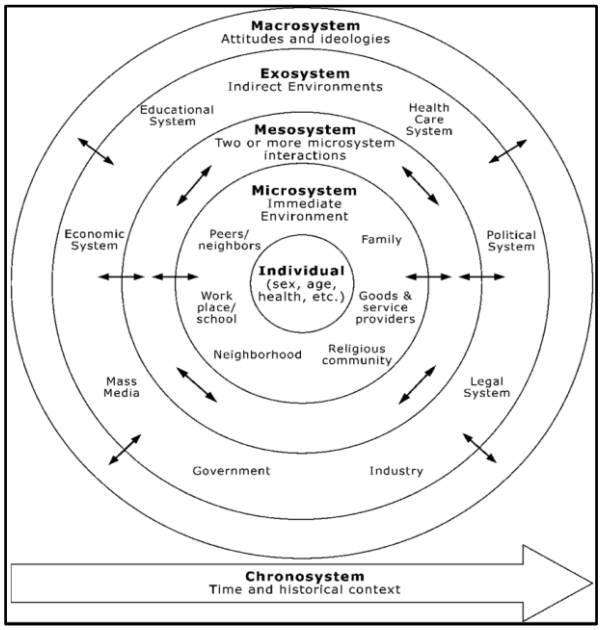

Figure 2: Ecological System Theory
(Source: Lesser, Matalon & Clauss-Ehlers, 2024)

Therefore, it should be mentioned on the basis of the findings that the generation of a positive attitude towards the approaches of learning is very important to generate a positive performance via students. In addition, the double reduction policy may be supportive for maintaining a balance between the learning as well as personal life of learners, thus, the "mesosystem" level of the theory is very much relevant in this specific case (Allen, 2024). It is because, the specific level, emphasized or related with the work-life boundaries and rhythm. Affecting mental health may result in underperformance, thus, focusing on the factors like improvement of attitude towards policy and workload reduction approaches are very significant.

Institutional Theory

Liu et al. (2023) mentioned that this theory explains groups of established rules, norms and routines. These institutions as per this theory can be both formal as well as informal. As further explained in the study conducted by Zhang et al. (2025), this theory explains how organisations respond to different types of pressures. These pressures based on this theoretical understanding include coercive pressure, normative pressure and mimetic pressure. According to the study by Wang et al. (2022), this theory posits that compliance with institutional norms is driven by the need to appear accepted and legitimate by different stakeholders. The theory, as per the findings of the study by Yuan, Shi & Di (2025), explains that over a period different organisations become similar in structure as well as behaviour. This mainly happens because of institutional conformity even in diverse situations.

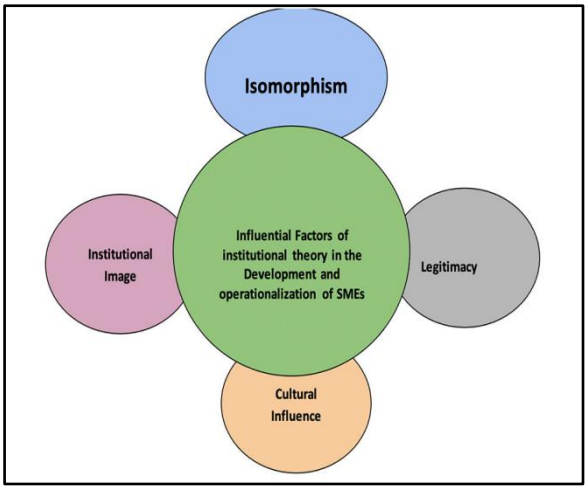

Figure 3: Factors of Institutional Theory
(Source: Zhang et al., 2025)

Academic progress of students is significantly impacted through institutional factors as well as progress of the learner. According to Henrekson & Wennström (2023), an improved level of common understanding is also very necessary for students, which is also effective to gain a subject-specific knowledge. In addition, with the context of institutional theory, it can be discussed that proper focus as well as alignment between rules, forms and structure is very effective, because it is associated with the behavior formation among students. Emergence of policies like double reduction may be effective for the generation of positive behaviour.

Theoretical Framework

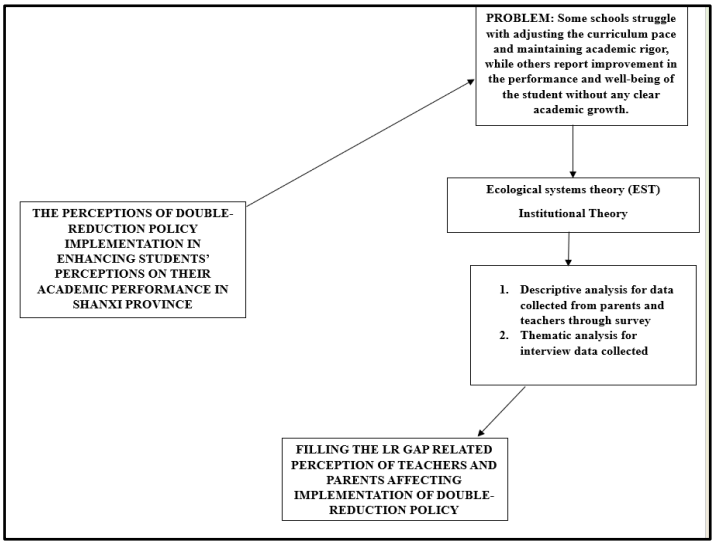

Figure 4: Theoretical Framework

As identified from the overall literature review, various aspects of double-reduction policy as well as its application is covered in this study. Furthermore, the effective ideas about the self-evaluation approaches of students are also investigated throughout the study and the different types of external academic pressure are also investigated throughout the research. Different opinions of previous researchers make the ideas more critical about factors impacting self-evaluation Thus, the literature review can be considered effective to strengthen the base of the study as well as less-investigated areas can be researched through further study.

Materials and Methods

The mixed method research design is suitable for this study as it helps to conduct a critical study on the perceptions of double-reduction policy implementation and its impact on students' academic performance in Shanxi province. The quantitative research design also assists the researcher to gather standardized data from a large number of respondents. It also helps to determine whether students perceive development in time management, academic pressure, and performance is possible after the policy implementation or not. It also helps in statistical comparisons across demographics like gender, age, and ethnicity.

In order to capture the contextual realities and nuanced experiences of students, interviews are employed for this study. In this case, respondents can express their personal challenges, insights, and feelings that help to expose student's perceived benefits through this policy implementation. Hence, it is defined that mixed-method research design becomes very helpful for this study to enhance the richness and validity. Quantitative research design helps to explore general trends, while qualitative design helps to offer in-depth explanation and holistic understanding about the proposed research topic.

The researcher has adapted a total of six items on students' self evaluation on academic performance. All of these items have been adapted from the previous study conducted by Firdousi et al. (2024). Adapting data from the previous study help to demonstrate its significance in this current study. The attitude toward the policy is one of the independent

variables of this study that have a significant impact on students' academic performance. The researcher has adapted a total of six items on this variable from the previous study researched by Karwowski & Milerski (2021). The researcher of this previous study critically analyzes the importance of attitudes toward the policy that help in this existing study. The other independent variable of this study is workload reduction. The researcher has adapted a total of six items on this variable from a previous study by Gul, Tahir & Batool (2021). The role of wordload reduction on students' academic performance has been analysed in this study, so relevant items have been adapted from that study. Another variable of this study is anxiety reduction that is also included in this research. The researcher has adapted a total of six items on this variable from the study conducted by Pahargyan (2021). Adapting items from the previous study helps the researcher to understand how anxiety reduction help to improve the academic performance of students. Decent work is one of the independent variables of this research that help in students' academic performance improvement. A total of six items have been adapted on this variable from the study conducted by Ferraro et al (2018).

The data collection will be done for the study from both teachers and students. It can be done by identifying the population first for each case. The target population of schoolteachers, especially in Shanxi, China is above 8000 (ceicdata.com, 2023). Double-reduction policy significantly implemented for school students; hence, the schoolteachers are selected as the target population for interview. The target population of teachers is to be considered in this study to select the responses about the double reduction policy. In addition, the number of students in schools of Shanxi China is above 677.7 million (ceicdata.com, 2024). Hence, procedures like sampling can be included in this study, as both of the populations are too huge to include in the survey.

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	26	140	103	340	181	1000	276	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

Note: "N" is Population Size
"S" is Sample Size.

Figure 5: Krejcie & Morgan Table
(Source: pubs.sciepub.com, 2021)

Based on the table and considering the student population, it is observed that 384 respondents will be shorter, as the population is very high. Hence, a sample size of 425 students will be suitable to conduct a survey with students (pubs.sciepub.com, 2021). In addition, for the interview purpose, a purposive sampling will be used that is associated with

an intentional section of participants based on characteristic knowledge and experience. Based on the huge population of teachers that is taken for the survey method, 10 teachers having more than 10 years of experience in the field will be selected.

Quantitative data analysis has been done by attempting steps like data cleaning to improve the quality of the research outcome. In addition, it can be followed by the reliability and validity test. Descriptive statistical analysis can be done with the cleaned data and Integration of the mean interpretation table can be done. Following is a table that segregates the tests that have been implemented for measuring the research questions of the study:

Table 1
Data Analysis

No.	Research Question	Research Design	Population	Instrument	Data analysis
1	RQ1: What are the perceptions of teachers on the Double-Reduction Policy implementation in enhancing students' academic performance in Shanxi Province?	Quantitative Study	Students in Shanxi, China	Questionnaire survey	Descriptive Statistics, Inferential Statistics
2	RQ2: What challenges do teachers face in implementing the Double-Reduction Policy in Shanxi Province?	Qualitative Study	Teachers in Shanxi, China	Semi-structured Interview	Thematic analysis
3	RQ3: What is the perception of students on their academic performance under the Double-reduction policy in Shanxi Province?	Quantitative Study	Students in Shanxi, China	Questionnaire survey	Descriptive Statistics, Inferential Statistics

The data analysis procedures that will be used in the study are mentioned above. The quantitative data analysis will be done through the help of IBM SPSS software. In addition, qualitative data will be analyzed through generation of themes based on interview transcript. There are three research questions presented in the table including their methods. In the first and third questions, quantitative study will be utilized and students in Shanxi Province will be the subject matter. They gather data through the questionnaire surveys. The study involves descriptive and inferential statistics. These aid in searching patterns, and in testing relationships. A qualitative study is applied in the second question. It is designed to reach the teachers of Shanxi. Detailed responses are obtained through the semi-structured interviews. It is based on the analysis that includes thematic analysis that aids in finding essential themes and issues. The design enables the study to tap both the perceptions and the challenges with regard to the appropriate approach to each of the questions.

Results

Demographic Profile Test

Table 2

Demographic Profile Test

		Count	Column N %
Gender	Female	206	48.5%
	Male	219	51.5%
Age	Below 12 years	128	30.1%
	12 to 15 years	208	48.9%
	Above 15 years	89	20.9%
Ethnicity	Han	52	12.2%
	Hui	70	16.5%
	Manchu	197	46.4%
	Mongol	82	19.3%
	Others	24	5.6%

The table shows the demographic character of the respondents. With regard to gender, 48.5% are females with a figure of 206 respondents. The sample contains 51.5 % males (219), which is out of the total set of respondents. In the case of age, 30.1 % of the respondents are less than 12 years, and this is equivalent to 128 respondents. The most numerous age group is students (12 years to 15 years), and the number amounts to 208 (48.9%) respondents. The individuals who were above the age of 15 constituted 20.9 percent and 89 individuals were the respondents. Concerning ethnicity, the largest group is Manchu since there were 197 of them in the sample, who constituted 46.4 % of the sample. Hui respondents are 16.5 percent consisting of 70 students. Mongol students account to 19.3, that is 82 respondents. 12.2 % or 52 respondents make up the Han ethnicity. The contacted group Others consists of 24 people that constitute 5.6%. These demographics indicate an impressive mixture of the sample population in gender, age and ethnicity.

Table 3

Reliability

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.955	.955	3

The reliability statistics table has a Cronbach's Alpha result of 0.955. It implies that the variables used are reduction of workload, self-evaluation of the students on academic performance, reduction of anxiety, and decent work are highly homogeneous. This is an excellent internal reliability affirmed by the same alpha value using the standardized items. This implies that the items that are to be employed in gauging these variables are compatible. The table indicates additionally that there are three items in this reliability test. A value of Cronbach's Alpha above 0.9 is put as excellent and hence the data is reliable in further analysis.

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

Table 4

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

Correlations				
		WR	AR	SSAP
WR	Pearson Correlation	1	.875**	.908**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	425	425	425
AR	Pearson Correlation	.875**	1	.848**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	425	425	425
SSAP	Pearson Correlation	.908**	.848**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	425	425	425

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

The relation table indicates how the variables workload reduction, anxiety reduction and the self-assessment of the students in terms of academic achievements are related. Pearson correlation coefficient between the variation in workload and the decrease in the anxiety level is -0.875. This implies that the relationship is very strong in a positive way. The more we alleviate workloads the more we alleviate anxiety. The relationship between the reduction of the workload and the self-evaluations of the students is 0.908. This is equally a very strong positive relationship. When the workload is less, there is a feeling of high self-evaluation among students in respect of academic and studying performance.

Multiple Linear Regression

Table 5

Multiple Linear Regression

Coefficients[a]								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	.090	.066		1.365	.173	-.039	.219
	WR	.714	.041	.710	17.525	.000	.634	.794
	AR	.247	.044	.227	5.597	.000	.160	.334

a. Dependent Variable: SSAP

The coefficient table narrates the impact of workload and anxiety reduction on self-evaluation of students relative to their performance in academics. The value of the unstandardized coefficient of work reduction is 0.714. Here, it implies that as workload reduction increases by a single unit, the self-evaluation of the students increases by 0.714 units. There is a positive relationship and a very strong relationship. The t-value is 17.525 and the significance value to 0.000 meaning that this effect can be considered as being significant.

There is an unstandardized coefficient of reduced anxiety that is 0.247. It can be understood to imply that an increment of one unit in the scale reduction of anxiety contributes to self-assessment increase among students by 0.247 units. A significant effect is also confirmed with the t-value (5.597) and a significance of 0.000. Constant is 0.090 and cannot be termed statistically significant. The 95% confidence intervals of the two predictors are all above the

zero-value indicating that they are significant positively. The findings reveal that work burden as opposed to anxiety reduction influences the academic self-appraisal of the students in a greater way.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 6

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	**Status**
H1b: Workload reduction through the double reduction policy significantly impacts students' self-evaluation on academic performance	Satisfied
H1c: Anxiety reduction through double reduction policy significantly impacts students' self-evaluation on academic performance	Satisfied

As per the outcome of table 6, it has been pointed out that both hypotheses H1b and H1c become satisfied in this study. The p value in multiple linear regression becomes less than 0.05 that makes these hypotheses satisfied in this research. Based on the responses of participants, it has been figured out that writing notes or marking calendars help students to remind themselves about future events. During the same period, many teachers also responded that they asked students to develop their own priority list each day. Hence, it helps to enhance student's academic performance. During the same period, teacher's perception regarding wordload reduction has been clearly understood after double reduction policy implementation.

The other hypothesis H1c is also satisfied in this study as its p value has also become less than 0.05. It also refers to the fact that most of the teachers think that anxiety reduction helps students to enhance their academic performance. During the same period, double-reduction policy implementation also helped in the academic performance development of students by reducing anxiety. It also assists students to express their emotions, thinkings, in a systematic way that helps in their anxiety reduction.

Findings from RO3: The perception of students on their academic performance under the Double-reduction policy in Shanxi Province

Table 7

Cronbach Alpha

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.951	.951	3

As per the result of table 7, it has been identified that the value for Cronbach alpha becomes .951. It is between the range of 0.7 to 0.9. This value indicates that all of the items are well fitted in this study and significantly measured by the selected five-point Likert scale.

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

Table 8

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

Correlations

		ATP	DW	SSAP
ATP	Pearson Correlation	1	.832**	.945**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	425	425	425
DW	Pearson Correlation	.832**	1	.824**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	425	425	425
SSAP	Pearson Correlation	.945**	.824**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	425	425	425

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

The correlation table indicates that there are considerably positive associations between workload reduction, anxiety reduction, self-assessment of academic performance by the students and adequate work. Workload reduction also has a strong relationship indicated by Pearson correlation with decent work, 0.832. As workload is lessened, there is also a likelihood of working conditions and teaching environment improving. The relationship between decrease in workload and the self-assessment of students is furthermore intense with an ample correlation of 0.945. This implies that the reduction in workload relieves a student of a bad feeling towards academic performance. The two variables are also associated with anxiety reduction. The relationship between lowering anxiety and decent work equals 0.824. It demonstrates that conditions under which one can work and teach appear to be the best when the anxiety is reduced. The mutual relationship between the decrease of anxiety and self-assessment by the students is high as well. All correlations are statistically significant, at a 0.01 level indicating that the findings are very dependable. These conclusions indicate that fewer assignments and a low stress level create more favorable conditions of work and increase the rate with which students evaluate their achievements.

The outcomes of the multiple regression analysis are expected to demonstrate the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Table 9

Multiple Linear Regression

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	.051	.050		1.022	.308	-.047	.149
	ATP	.863	.029	.844	30.042	.000	.807	.920
	DW	.122	.028	.121	4.300	.000	.066	.178

a. Dependent Variable: SSAP

The unstandardized coefficient value for Attitude Toward Policy (ATP) is identified to be 0.863, indicating that a stronger belief in the policy's effectiveness is associated with a more positive perception of it among students. This interplay is further bolstered in accordance with the sig value derived in this case, which is .000, which is well within the desired threshold

of .05, further demonstrating that the attitude towards the policy has a statistically significant impact on students' self-evaluation on academic performance. In addition to this, the unstandardized coefficient value for Decent Work (DW) is identified to be .122 which demonstrates that various aspects of physical safety, health protection, trust, and well-being within the school environment also imparts a positive impact on the students' self-evaluation. The sig value achieved for this construct is identified to be .000 highlight the presence of a strong and statistically significant relationship. In addition to this, the t value derived for ATP and DW are identified to be 30.042 and 4.300 respectively which further adds to the relevance and significance of the constructs in the research model with ATP exhibiting a much stronger relationship with SSAP in comparison to DW.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 10

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Status
H1a: Attitude towards the double reduction policy significantly impacts students' self-evaluation on academic performance	Satisfied
H1d: Decent work significantly impacts students' self-evaluation on academic performance.	Satisfied

From the abovementioned table it can be observed that Hypothesis H1a, which focuses on exploring students' attitude towards the double reduction policy has been thoroughly supported with the findings. This demonstrates that students tend to feel more confident and rate their academic performance better when they perceive the objectives of this policy in a positive light. This highlights the importance of awareness, acceptance, and support of the policy among all stakeholders for its success. Similarly, the next hypothesis (H1d) developed herein is focussed on assessing the interplay of decent work on students' self-evaluation on academic performance, which has also been supported through and through with the responses acquired from the students.

The assumptions were made to explore key dimensions, specifically focusing on students' perceptions of physical safety, health security, resource adequacy, interpersonal trust, and work-life balance. The responses have regarded decent work attributes as a significant determinant. It implies that policy implementation should not only focus on reducing the burden of assignments on the students but also must ensure that the overall learning environment supports student well-being and effective teaching. The confirmation of both hypotheses reinforces the notion that students' attitudes and decent work conditions play a critical role in shaping their positive perceptions of academic performance under the double reduction policy.

Qualitative Analysis

Findings from RO2: The challenges faced by teachers in implementing the Double-Reduction Policy in Shanxi Province

Improvements or Challenges in students' engagement and participation due to double-reduction policy implementation

The Double-Reduction Policy has brought both improvements and challenges in the participation and engagement of the students across the school in Shanxi Province. Positively, reducing homework and tutorial requirements has developed more opportunities for

students to engage actively in classroom learning. Liu et al. (2023) stated that students have highlighted increased attentiveness during lessons, greater enthusiasm to explore extracurricular interests, and more willingness to participate in group activities. For some learners, less workload has lessened fatigue and stress, enabling them to interact more freely and confidently in classroom discussions. However, Zheng, Zheng & Liu (2025) claimed that it shifts alignment with the policy's goal of fostering more meaningful, school-based learning experiences.

Redesigning unit plans with clear learning goals to reduce academic workload of students

The Double-Reduction Policy has prompted schools in Shanxi Province to rethink instructional design, with an emphasis on developing redesigned unit plans. This clearly articulates learning goals while reducing unnecessary academic workload. The teachers are encouraged to focus on essential skills and knowledge rather than overloading students with repetitive tasks. Audras et al. (2022) claimed that unit plans are increasingly being streamlined for privatizing core competencies to ensure classroom time for using effective application, comprehension, and critical thinking. Such a design allows the student to engage deeply with content without being burdened by excessive assignment. Xue & Makela (2024) highlighted that a main feature of these redesigned plans is the establishment of measurable and clear learning goals communicated to students at the start of each unit. This transparency helps the learners to track their progress for evaluating their academic growth more independently.

Teaching

The outcome of the qualitative data analysis helps in identifying that the double reduction policy is very much student-centric by nature. In addition, it is associated with providing the scope of creative learning as well. According to respondent 8, teachers are giving high attention towards the implementation of student-centered practices like making group discussion to increase their engagement towards the learning. In addition, respondents like teacher 1, also helps in identifying that "double-reduction" policy is very much student-centric and it helps in the achievement of well-rounded development of students. Thus, it is expected that a long-term achievement can be gained through the support of student-centric learning. In addition, previous literature also supports that the double reduction policy is helpful in the reduction of over-reliance on private tutoring (Eliga et al., 2024). It is gaining a high level of popularity and valuable insights are gained from the overall previous research work.

Effectiveness of After-school tutoring and Double Reduction policy

The Double-Reduction Policy can directly identify the widespread dependence on after-school tutoring by limiting its scope and promoting school-based alternatives. In Shanxi Province, the effectiveness can be observed through emerging challenges and intended outcomes. Lu et al. (2023) mentioned that the policy has successfully maintained excessive private tutoring, which previously placed heavy psychological and financial burdens on families. By shifting the focus to in-school teaching and officially supervised after-school services, several students have reported a reduction in stress and maintenance of a healthy balance between personal life and study. The school organised an enrichment program to provide extracurricular activities, structured academic support, and opportunities for individual guidance. This partially compensates for the withdrawal of commercial tutoring.

Challenges faced by teachers and need of training

According to Jiang, Ding & Shen (2023) creativity, enjoyment and reduction of pressure is attracting the Chinese students towards the policy. In addition, however, inadequacy in the financial as well as technical resources is associated with various kinds of issues in this specific case. Furthermore, it can also be identified that coordination within multiple departments is lacking also, which affects the teacher's performance. According to respondents 1, it affects the learning quality as well as teaching satisfaction. Furthermore, respondent 2, helps in identifying that implementation timeline often creates issues along with the lack of systematic investments. According to respondent 3, the examination pressure is not always effectively managed through the help of double reduction policy. Thus, the need for relaxed guidelines as well as necessary support is expected by teacher 7.

Conclusions

The quantitative findings generated in respect to RO1 helps in identifying that the third as well as second hypotheses get addressed through the multiple regression testing. For example, it should be mentioned in this context the role of workload reduction as well as anxiety reduction is associated with the improvement of overall academic performance. The reductions of workload of teachers as well as students both are important to enhance the skills of the learners as well as their overall learning quality. Thus, it should be mentioned in this context, the self-evacuation capability as well as academic performance of students can be improved, while a double reduction policy is implemented to reduce workload. Reduction of load can be effective to increase the learning interest of students in an effective way. Furthermore, anxiety reduction is an important factor which is associated with the improvement of perception among students regarding their teaching role. In addition, it should be mentioned that in this specific case reduction of anxiety among the students regarding learning load and teacher role may positively influence their academic performance. Both of the significance values in this case are 0.00. Thus, the outcome helps in generating ideas in respect to research question 1.

Theoretical Implications

In the context of Ecological Systems Theory of Bronfenbrenner, it provides a useful lens to analyze the Double-Reduction Policy's impact on students' academic self-perceptions. The policy influences students at not only the Microsystem level but also exosystem and macrosystem levels. Along with this, government regulations and societal expectations influence academic culture. By decreasing reliance on reshaping classroom learning and tutoring, the policy indicates how interconnected systems collectively shape the self-evaluation of the students' performance. However, this theoretical framing suggests that the academic perception of the students is the main factor of a multilayered environment that influences rather than individual capability.

On the other hand, institutional theory helps to explain how Double-Reduction Policy shapes student perceptions through broader norms, rules, and legitimacy pressures. In Shanxi, schools must comply with government directives for decreasing academic burden, which alters institutional practices such as after-school programs, homework assignments, and assessment methods. The self-evaluation of the students can be influenced by how schools internalize and implement these institutional changes. The policy demonstrates the institutional pressure from the state to redefine and reshape the learning norms for academic

success. Thus, the institutional theory highlights that students' self-perceptions are not merely personal judgments but responses to institutionalized educational reforms.

Practical Implications

From the practical perspective in Shanxi Province, the Double-Reduction Policy carries significant implications for educators, policymakers, and parents. For the teachers in the schools, the policy emphasizes the requirement to strengthen the in-class teaching quality, providing a diversified after-school support. This ensures that students can achieve their academic goals without external tutoring. Teachers must adopt more student-centered approaches, encourage self-reflection, and integrate formative assessment so the students can evaluate their progress positively and realistically. In the case of policymakers, the findings suggest that effective monitoring and equitable resource allocation are critical. In Shanxi, disparities between urban and rural schools highlight the need for targeted interventions. It includes expanding access to quality after-school programs and training teachers in under-resourced areas. It ensures consistency in policy implementation to influence how students perceive their learning outcomes directly. In the case of parents, the policy underscores the significance of shifting attitudes towards academic achievement. The parents need to encourage balance development, resilience, nurturing confidence, and self-motivation among their children, instead of reinforcing test-based pressure. Therefore, the practical implication is considered to be that collaboration among all stakeholders is vital to maximizing the Double-Reduction Policy's intended benefits.

Contribution

This study makes significant theoretical contributions by extending Ecological Systems Theory and Institutional Theory to the context of educational policy reform in contemporary China. The findings demonstrate that students' academic self-evaluation is shaped not only by immediate classroom interactions (microsystem) but also by institutional norms, policy mandates, and societal expectations (exosystem and macrosystem). By showing how workload reduction, anxiety reduction, decent work, and policy attitudes collectively influence student perceptions, the study enriches existing theoretical models with evidence from a large-scale compulsory education reform. It highlights that academic performance perceptions emerge from multi-layered environmental influences rather than isolated individual factors, offering a refined understanding of student development in regulated educational systems.

Contextually, the research provides real-world insights into how the Double-Reduction Policy is being interpreted and implemented in Shanxi Province. It uncovers gaps between policy intentions and classroom realities, particularly regarding teacher challenges, resource disparities, and implementation inconsistencies across schools. The mixed-method findings offer practical guidance for educators, administrators, and policymakers by identifying conditions that improve students' well-being and academic confidence. The study contributes local empirical evidence to national debates on reducing academic pressure, strengthening in-school education quality, and promoting balanced student development under China's evolving education reforms.

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