

# Middle class educational anxiety and its resolution path under the background of "double reduction"

Yifan Zhou<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Political Science and Law, University of Jinan, Jinan 250022, Shandong Province, China

**Abstract.** The purpose of formulating and implementing the "double reduction" policy is to reduce the heavy homework burden and off-campus training burden of students in the compulsory education stage and promote the all-round development of students, which objectively relieves the educational anxiety of parents. However, the "double reduction" policy not only alleviates parents' original educational anxiety, but also leads to the generation of new educational anxiety, which presents a complex and diversified pattern. There are anxiety caused by increased time and energy, anxiety caused by learning mode and environment, anxiety caused by schooling, anxiety caused by collage entrance, anxiety caused by excessive expectations of parents. Therefore, only by joining hands to form educational forces can parents' educational anxiety be relieved effectively: Setting up reasonable educational expectations; Improve the quality and efficiency of school; Improving the examination evaluation mechanism; Strengthen home-school cooperation.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Research background

We can say that remarkable achievements have been made in education reform. At the same time, various educational problems have been exposed, especially educational anxiety.<sup>[1]</sup> Parents' educational anxiety is closely related to their children's educational forms. In today's era of rapid development of education, children not only have heavy school workload, but also endless after-school tutoring courses. Many children have blurred learning boundaries in and out of class, overlapping learning tasks, tasks that should be completed in school are completed in after-school tutoring classes, learning new knowledge in advance, etc. It not only increases the economic burden of parents imperceptibly, but also increases the psychological burden of children, so it is imperative to reduce the burden of primary and middle school students. In order to effectively reduce the homework burden and off-campus training burden of primary and secondary school students, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee issued the Opinions on Further Reducing the Homework Burden and Off-campus Training Burden of Students in Compulsory Education in May 2021 (hereinafter referred to as the "Double Reduction" Policy). The goal of "effectively reducing students' burden of homework, out-of-school training, family education expenditure and parents' corresponding energy burden within one year" was put forward.

At present, the "double reduction" policy has been implemented for more than one year. Parents' education anxiety has eased somewhat, but some forms of parents'

education anxiety still exist, and even in a small range of further spread. Studies have proved that parental anxiety has intergenerational transmission,<sup>[2-4]</sup> which can be passed on to children through heredity and environment. At the same time, it can also significantly increase their school misconduct and antisocial behavior, like which seriously affects the physical and mental health of the majority of adolescents.<sup>[2,5]</sup>

In fact, here's a set of data for the anxiety of studying: "2016 Annual Survey Report on the status of parent-Child Education in China" pointed out that the problem of education anxiety in families can not be underestimated, about 87% of parents admitted that they have education anxiety, 20% of parents think they are moderate anxiety, and about 7% of parents have serious education anxiety.<sup>[6]</sup> In addition, the Survey Report of Chinese Parents' Educational Anxiety Index released by Wisdom Education in 2018 also points out that 68% of parents feel educational anxiety, which is especially prominent in infants and children's primary school stage, indicating that educational anxiety is becoming a major problem plaguing the parents' generation.<sup>[7]</sup> Yu Xiulan, a professor at Nanjing University, points out that in China today, "the people who are most upset and anxious about their children's education are urban middle-class families. Their children can't afford to lose."<sup>[8]</sup>

### 1.2 Research methods and materials

In order to further study the mechanism of educational anxiety of middle class parents, this study adopts the interview method. Before the formal interview, the author conducted a trial interview with two people, on the one hand, to adjust the interview outline, on the other hand,

\* Corresponding author: 15588532259@163.com.

to better determine the interview subjects. Finally, the author selected 13 interview subjects (Table 1) for in-depth and detailed interview. These 13 interview subjects fit the concept of the middle class mentioned above. They include parents who attend after-school tutoring institutions, parents of students I tutor, and parents of acquaintances around me. Some basic questions of the interview are fixed, while the more in-depth questions are changed according to the different situations of the interviewees. The interview mainly includes three parts: first, the basic information of the interviewee's personal and family, such as gender, occupation, monthly income, family income, gender and age of children; The second is whether the interviewees currently have educational anxiety, the degree of educational anxiety, the main manifestations of educational anxiety, the resulting effects, the causes of educational anxiety and the suggestions for dealing with educational anxiety, etc.

**Table 1.** Basic information of respondents.

NO.	sex	education	occupation	number of children
A1	Female	Doctor	College Teacher	1
B2	Female	Master	College Teacher	2
C3	Female	Tertiary	Activity Planning	1
D4	Female	Master	College Teacher	2
E5	Female	Master	College Teacher	1
F6	Male	Doctor	College Teacher	2
G7	Female	Tertiary	Full-time Housewife	3
H8	Male	Undergraduate	Company Leader	2
I9	Female	Undergraduate	Full-time Housewife	1
J10	Male	Undergraduate	Company Employee	2
K11	Female	Tertiary	Full-time Housewife	2
L12	Female	Undergraduate	Public Institution Staff	2
M13	Male	Undergraduate	Company Employee	2

## 2 Middle class education anxiety under the background of "double minus"

Education itself is not an unreplicable template, according to the different circumstances of each family to choose suitable methods and patterns.<sup>[9]</sup> However, in this process, the problems faced by parents are very similar. After that, we will analyze the current problems faced by middle-class parents and provide feasible policy suggestions as far as possible.

### 2.1 Anxiety about increased time and energy

Middle-class parents all have a certain accumulation and foundation in work, and the parents interviewed are basically around 40 years old, so it can be said that their jobs have been relatively stable. In the face of children's problems, these parents can only try to focus on their children. But under these conditions, children's schedules are timed down to the minute, and parents have little time to themselves, sometimes feeling content to let them have a little time to themselves, even if it's for a nap.

### 2.2 Learning patterns and environmental anxiety

After the double reduction, the school has greatly changed the arrangement of children's schoolwork. The school strictly implements the "double reduction" policy, but for parents, many things are difficult to implement. The state advocates reducing the workload in primary school, but parents are not willing to let their children idle.<sup>[10]</sup> Whether it is cultural courses or interest cultivation, whether it is children's independent choice or parents' communication and communication, in the environment where other children are developing at all levels, other parents dare not "sit idly by" and do their best to give their children.<sup>[11]</sup>

### 2.3 The anxiety of schooling

School choice has always been a problem that many parents worry about, and the corresponding faculty is also a factor of concern. The other problems that are troubling children in school study including the quality of teachers and the teaching model. Teachers who are patient and understand the psychology of education will bring positive influence to children, otherwise it will affect their lifelong character. Similarly, a poor teaching model will make children tired of learning. Many parents think that it is gratifying to meet a responsible teacher. In the context of fierce competition for teacher staffing, the yearning for teacher staffing makes some schools unable to retain talents, frequent change of teachers, random deployment of ill-suited teachers and other problems affecting the physical and mental development of children.<sup>[12]</sup>

## 2.4 College entrance anxiety

In the face of the problem of admission, there are two factors to consider, one is the choice of the children themselves, the second is the choice of parents. Children are in the young stage, physical and mental development is not mature, but also have some ideas, which may be unrealistic in the eyes of parents, plus parents need to combine the child's academic performance with the goal of education, sometimes have to choose some other path according to the actual situation.<sup>[13]</sup> Although the "double reduction" reduces the burden to some extent, in the eyes of parents, the reform of the school entrance system still does not alleviate their inner anxiety. The beginning of diversion in junior high school is undoubtedly to advance the anxiety, so in the eyes of parents, this burden can not be reduced, nor dare to reduce.

## 2.5. Anxiety about parental expectations

The problem of excessive parental expectations is widespread. It is the inner hope of every parent. However, on the way to educate children, we must face the reality that children do not conform to our expectations. Some parents reflect when they encounter problems and correct their thoughts and behaviors. However, there are also some families that do not solve the problem.<sup>[14]</sup> There are some more timid children, parents may be anxious will not grasp the scale of speech or emotional fluctuations, the child will therefore feel more timid, nervous, thus affecting the performance in school.

## 3 The resolution path of middle class educational anxiety under the background of "double minus"

### 3.1 Set up reasonable education expectation

Educational concept is the reflection of the essential attributes of education in the human brain, which has a restrictive and guiding effect on educational behavior.<sup>[15]</sup> First of all, parents should correct the concept of education and abandon the utilitarian and short-sighted educational values. Secondly, parents should try their best to keep rational thinking in their children's education and reduce the occurrence of blind comparison and conformity.

### 3.2 Improve the quality and efficiency of school Education

First of all, on the renewal of the educational concept of the school, we should emphasize the implementation of the fundamental task of cultivating people by virtue and cultivating talents with all-round development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, the United States and labor. Secondly, in terms of teaching methods, teachers should see students as the subject of education. Thirdly, teachers should enhance the level of

homework design and improve the way of homework design.

### 3.3 Improve the examination and evaluation mechanism

At present, the most commonly used evaluation method in school education is examination. However, in the real education field, examination is simply equated with evaluation.<sup>[16]</sup> First of all, relevant subjects of education should set up a reasonable concept of examination evaluation, transfer the orientation of educational evaluation to the correct track of promoting the all-round development of students' morality, intelligence, physical fitness, the United States and labor, and give full play to the educational value of evaluation.<sup>[17]</sup> Secondly, it advocates the diversification of the content of examination evaluation. Thirdly, it innovates the way of examination proposition and weakened the role of test-taking skills, which is the key to realize the real burden reduction.<sup>[18]</sup> Finally, in the way of proposition, enhance the openness of test questions.

### 3.4 Strengthen home-school cooperation

Sukhomlinsky once said, "The effect of education depends on the consistency of school and family education. If there is no such consistency, the teaching and education process of school will collapse like a house made of paper".<sup>[19]</sup> Firstly, at the national macro level, the government should integrate all resources and establish a family education service system dominated by the state and school. Effectively improve parents' ability of family education.<sup>[20]</sup> Secondly, at the level of family and school, both sides should maintain the same concept of education. Thirdly, both sides should perform their respective roles and clarify their boundaries of educational responsibility.

## 4. Conclusions

The existence of educational anxiety is inevitable, but also afflicts the majority of the middle class in our country. However, in July 2021, the country introduced a "double reduction" policy aimed at reducing the academic load of children as well as the psychological burden on parents.

Does the "double reduction" policy really reduce the burden? How has its introduction and implementation affected middle-class families? Does it make parents less anxious? Therefore, this study selected 13 parents of middle-class families as research samples, and interviewed the parents through literature method, observation method and semi-structured interview method. The study found that during the implementation of the "double reduction" policy, educational anxiety has changed to different degrees. From the perspective of educational opportunity anxiety, school choice anxiety has been effectively alleviated, and college entrance anxiety is still at a high level. From the perspective of educational anxiety, the educational anxiety after

"double reduction" is more prominent in how to balance interest classes and cultural courses;The uneven quality of teachers is still a prominent problem after the "double reduction";Educational anxiety caused by improper management of school work has been effectively resolved;From the perspective of educational outcome anxiety, academic achievement anxiety has become the main form of parents' educational anxiety, and academic evaluation anxiety has been further strengthened and expanded.On this basis, the main influence is that for parents, the degree of educational anxiety affects parents' physical health, mental health and career development.For children, parents' educational anxiety is transmitted to their children, which affects their physical and mental health, learning interest and effectiveness.For families, marital relationship, parent-child relationship and family consumption structure are affected by educational anxiety.Fundamentally, policy and institution design, social environment and family subjective cognition are the main causes of educational anxiety. Among them, policy and institution design includes the design and implementation of policies and the asymmetric college entrance system.The social environment includes the revival of the education and training industry with new faces, the devaluation of academic qualifications, the scarcity and imbalance of high-quality education resources, and the intervention of capital.The subjective cognition of family includes the non-inheritability of cultural capital, the need of social expectation, class crossing or class regeneration, and unbalanced mentality.Therefore, only by forming joint educational forces can parents' educational anxiety be relieved effectively: changing educational concepts and setting up reasonable educational expectations;Play the role of the main battlefield of education, school education "improve the quality and efficiency";Improve the examination evaluation mechanism to promote students' all-round development;Strengthen home-school cooperation to help implement "double reduction".

## References

1. Yan Yunxia. Different choices, same Anxiety [D]. Nanjing: Nanjing University, 2019.
2. Fenigstein A, Scheier MF, Buss AH. Public and private self-consciousness: Assessment and theory. *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 1975 (4) .
3. Mattick RP , Clarke JC. Development and validation of mea-sures of social phobia scrutiny fear and social interaction anxiety. *Behaviour Research & Therapy*, 1998 (4) .
4. Bögels SM , Alberts M , De Jong PJ. Self-consciousness , self-focused attention , blushing propensity and fear of blushing. *Personality & Individual Differences*, 2013 (4) .
5. Conners-Burrow NA, Swindle T, Mckelvey L, et al. A little bit of the blues: Low- level symptoms of maternal depression and classroom behavior problems in preschool child-ren. *Early Education and Development*, 2015 (2) .
6. y. h. Lin. The parent-child education present situation investigation of 2016 year China report, <http://baby.sina.com.cn//news/2016-06-16/doc-ifxtfrf-0461203.htm>
7. intellectual class education parents grow institute: "the Chinese parents education anxiety index survey. <http://www.infzm.com/content/139563/>
8. the underlying give up education, middle and upper doesn't play the Chinese college entrance examination [EB/OL]. <https://m.sohu.com/n/467802274/?qq-pf-to=pcqq.c2c>
9. Chen Lidan.Education anxiety also exists in the United States [J]. *Education*, 2016(49) : 80.
10. Chen Huazi, Xiao Wei. Interpretation of Chinese Parents' "Education Anxiety" [J]. *National Institute of Education Administration*,2014(2).
11. Diao Shengfu, Li Xiangling.Discussion on Basic Education Anxiety [J]. *Journal of Foshan University of Science and Technology (Social Science Edition)*,2016(6)
12. Teng Yang, LIU Yanmei. Parents' Educational Anxiety: Representations, Causes and Solutions [J]. *Zhejiang Education Science*,2019,6
13. Liang Baming.Opportunities in Education Anxiety [J].*Huaxia Teachers*, 2012(04) : 42.
14. Wang Hongcai.Educational Failure, Educational Anxiety and Educational Governance [J].*Exploration and Controversy*, 2012(02) : 65-70.
15. Li Baizhen, Guan Ying.Research on Parents' Educational Concept [J].*Journal of Tianjin Normal University (Social Science Edition)*, 1995 (4) : 9-13.
16. Dai Jiagan.From Examination to Evaluation: The Task of Educational Reform [J].*China Higher Education*, 2007 (Z2) : 21-23.
17. Yu Yafeng, Yao Zhen.Education Anxiety of parents in the context of "double reduction" and its resolution path [J].*Journal of Xinjiang Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 2022 (4) : 1-11.
18. The cycle sequence.Family capital and Academic Anxiety -- Discussion on parents' Anxiety caused by "double Reduction" policy [J].*Journal of Guangxi Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 201,57 (6) : 96-106.
19. Sukhomlinsky.Advice for Teachers [M].Du Diankun, translated.Beijing: Educational Science Press, 1984:526. (in Chinese)
20. Yang Wenyue, Zeng Bin.Research on the Professional Team Construction of Family Education Guidance Service -- Based on the Family Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China [J].*Journal of Chengdu Normal University*, 202,38 (2) : 7-12.