

How should off-campus training react to the "Double Reduction" policy?

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Abstract. After the introduction of the "Double Reduction" policy, off-campus training institutions are under strict supervision. According to the policy details, discipline training institutions confront various problems, such as the closure of listing channels, the substantial reduction of financial income, and the unemployment of the training personnel. By analyzing the current situation of related institutions and their personnel, this study provides meaningful references for discipline training institutions in transformation direction and talent management. Also, it puts forward suggestions for training personnel to change their jobs.

1. Introduction

In recent years, there have been two main types of students' academic burdens: excessive homework in school and training outside school. For this reason, the Chinese government has decided to rectify the industry standard of off-campus training while prohibiting the placement of too much homework in schools. In July 2021, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Off-Campus Training for Compulsory Education Students" (from now on referred to as "Double Reduction"). To this end, training institutions have to change to survive. Thus, what is the "Double Reduction" impact on off-campus training? How should off-campus training survive?

2. The impact

On the eve of the "Double Reduction", three giants in China's education industry, Tomorrow Advancing Life, GOTU, and New Oriental, have evaporated 800 billion yuan in market value from their peaks[1]. Some training enterprises have transition difficulties, lack of funds, and even layoffs. Related practitioners face the pressure to choose a new career.

2.1 The impact on institutions

The "Double Reduction" policy seeks to eliminate the capitalization of Off-campus training and strengthen management, including material management, teacher recruitment, and advertising. Therefore, related institutions' primary business income has declined, and they have had to transform and downsize.

2.1.1 Closure of enterprise listing channels

The explicit provisions cut off the capitalization of education. All discipline training institutions shall not list for financing, and the listed firms shall not purchase the assets of discipline training institutions by issuing shares or paying cash. Foreign capital shall not hold or participate in disciplinary training institutions utilizing acquisition or joining. Institutions need sufficient and sustainable investment, which is bound to be challenging to develop.

2.1.2 The decline in finance income

The policy has affected the charging standards and training duration, restricting enterprises' income. Firstly, it leads to a decrease in chargeable items. Institutions can only carry out non-disciplinary training for students in compulsory education. Moreover, it requires transparent charging. All the charging items and standards publicized to society are subject to supervision. Finally, It compresses class hours and prohibits institutions from organizing subject training on statutory holidays or rest days. Each class hour is required to be at most 30 minutes, and the training will end by 9 PM [2].

2.1.3 Stricter regulation of companies

The policy also has imposed strict regulations on managing materials, advertising, and teacher qualifications. Firstly, it requires relevant personnel to have appropriate teaching qualifications. In addition, it prohibits companies from broad-casting advertisements and introduces measures for managing training materials. Similar operational regulation will only increase over a long period.

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2.1.4 Advance tuition run

Students applied for refunds of prepaid tuition fees on a large scale. However, almost all institutions had diverted payments to other uses, making the company's cash flow even more complicated once the refunds were too large, further increasing the probability of bankruptcy.

2.2 The impact on training personnel

With an overhaul of the educational industry, the supply of human resources within the subject-based tutoring sector exceeds the demand, which inevitably affects the training staff. Moreover, due to the tight cash flow, some institutions must re-optimize their organizational structure and personnel to reduce costs.

Since the promulgation of "Double Reduction", all K12-related business departments have laid off their employees. 51.4% of the original training employees seeking employment in July of 2021 had already left their jobs, a ratio higher than the average active job seekers on the platform (44.7%) [3]. Nearly half of the experienced teachers leave the training industry. They have lost their sources of income and direction of development, so they have to look for other jobs.

3. The current situation

By the end of September 2022, the former 124,000 offline subject-based training institutions had decreased to 5,415, a reduction rate of 95.6%. Training fees have fallen by an average of more than 40% compared to the previous ones[4]. Some top institutions have opted to transform. The other firms either violate the policy or continue to make profits by taking advantage of items that lack the definition of policy compliance. At the same time, the career prospects of off-campus trainers are not optimistic.

3.1 The current situation of institutions

The policy has led to a "nail-shaped" market development in the training industry. It shows a high retention rate of head institutions, while most small and medium-sized institutions actively or passively withdraw from the market. The phenomenon of "big head, small middle, and tail" has emerged[5].

3.1.1 Trying to transform as a whole

Leading companies in the training industry have been divesting or terminating their businesses or even opening up foreign markets. New Oriental transforms into quality-oriented education and family learning and provides Chinese online courses for overseas students. Other leading institutions are transforming mainly around quality education, vocational education, and intelligent hardware.

3.1.2 Non-compliance or distorted forms of training

However, most small and medium-sized institutions are challenging to transform due to target locking and insufficient funds. They continue to train by violating the policy[6]. To evade law enforcement inspectors, firms change to training at home and provide online training.

3.1.3 Transition to the nebulous zone of policy

Some institutions profit from businesses not specified in the policy, not divesting themselves of their original training business. For example, Bilibili up-hosts upload recorded training classes, and users coin to obtain learning materials. Whether such behavior is compliant or not is unknown.

3.2 The current situation of trainers

The significant changes in the training industry have increased employment problems.

3.2.1 Serving as an off-campus subject teacher.

The study took the form of interviews with six staff from training institutions. They said their discipline is loose because all teachers go out to teach, so signing in is unnecessary. Moreover, courses have been reduced from four classes daily to one class. Finally, because they cannot get performance-related pay, their salary decrease. They know it does not conform to the policy to continue doing this work, but they have no choice.

3.2.2 Entering other industries

80% of the faculty members withdrew from the education industry, and these talents later chose games (8.7%), artificial intelligence services (6.8%), and e-commerce platforms (5.7%) as their next station[7].

3.2.3 Teaching in other fields

In July 2022, MileagePlus launched a questionnaire and interviewed thousands of off-campus trainers. The survey showed that of those who chose the training industry after the promulgation of the policy, the majority of them chose to work in quality education (24.7%), adult education (17.9%), and vocational education (15.6%).

4. Recommendations

Institutions and personnel should cooperate with implementing the policy so that education can return to its essence.

4.1 Recommendations for institutions

4.1.1 Seeking transformation possibilities

Transformation is the only effective way to meet the needs of students' holistic development, supplement school education and ensure the continuity of off-campus education[8].

4.1.1.1 Quality Education

Quality education concludes art education, physical education, STEAM education, research-based education, and camp-based education. Nowadays, quality education is in the ascendant period with the support of national policies. The reason is that the country aims to cultivate students who need the comprehensive development of "moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor." In addition, policies are generally favorable, encouraging parallel supervision and promoting industry standardization, which is conducive to the further expansion of the quality education industry. Finally, after the "Double Reduction", quality education in government financial support and family investment has increased, and institutions can obtain more benefits. However, due to the fierce competition in the industry, small institutions are prone to face difficulties in enrollment and a shortage of teachers. Only large institutions with sufficient funds can try.

4.1.1.2 After-school care services

The "half past three" phenomenon has always been a problem for families and schools. Currently, teachers are the ones to implement the task. However, it is beyond the scope of teachers' work[9]. To alleviate the enormous work pressure on school teachers, third-party service providers must join forces with schools.

4.1.1.3 Adult vocational education

In the new era, the Chinese government attaches great importance to vocational education and places it in a more prominent position in economic and social development and education reform[10]. The government encourages enterprises and other social forces to organize vocational schools and vocational training institutions following the law[11].

4.1.1.4 Intelligent Hardware Development

After the "Double Reduction", subject training received strict restrictions, but for students and parents, the demand for resources has not decreased but increased. Intelligent educational hardware has highly integrated subject resources to support the development of liberal education and meet the various learning needs of students. According to the 2022 China Education Smart Hardware Market and user insights report released by research, 16.3 percent of parents now spend more than 30 percent on smart educational hardware, which will

rise to 29.5 percent in the future. Therefore, despite the impact of consumption downgrade caused by the epidemic, parents still hold a positive attitude toward intelligent educational hardware.

4.1.2 Managing talents rational

Small educational institutions can retain teachers of English and politics, change teaching objects and expand to adult education, such as CET, postgraduate examinations, IELTS, and TOEFL, and also retain some teachers to carry out after-school services. On this basis, they can reasonably downsize. Firms should conduct exit interviews and formalities correctly for those laid off to avoid unnecessary labor disputes. In addition, enterprises should encourage staff and increase their working fervency. Finally, actively employ technical talents and non-subject teachers to promote transformation.

4.2 Recommendations for trainers

The reform drives the whole body, and we should consider not only the education problem but also the employment of educational talents.

4.2.1 Taking the teacher preparation examination

Most trainers have been involved in education and teaching-related knowledge or have obtained teacher qualification certificates in their previous jobs. The public education system needs them.

4.2.2 Private teacher or part-time teacher

Such jobs are off the government payroll; most teachers think these occupations are less stable, but also, these positions are less demanding. Engaging in these professions can quickly end unemployment while fulfilling their desire to teach and educate.

4.2.3 Non-discipline teacher

Arts and sports training have promising prospects. According to the data of Skyeye, more than 33000 enterprises related to the above two types of training have added, an increase of 99% compared with the same period in 2020. Teachers with basic subject classes can receive training to participate. In addition to quality education, the demand for vocational and adult education personnel continues to grow.

4.2.4 Engaging in We Media Industry

Trainers can transform into knowledge-based bloggers, edit texts, film education-related videos, and share knowledge. All of these can make rational use of their rich teaching experience and knowledge.

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