

Article

# Shadow Education in China and Its Diversified Normative Governance Mechanism: Double Reduction Policy and Internet Public Opinion

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**Abstract:** As a private supplementary education activity outside the formal education system, shadow education aims to help students pass exams smoothly and obtain better educational resources. In 2021, The Chinese Government issued “Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Students’ Homework and Off-campus Training in Compulsory Education” (referred to as the “double reduction” policy for short). We aim to strengthen the standardization of out-of-school training institutions and stimulate public debate on the Internet. However, research on the double reduction policy and how to guide the reform of shadow education in combination with online public opinion is still lacking. Based on this, the text of the double reduction policy and the popular spots for the development of online public opinion were selected for a text analysis, and a diversified and standardized governance mechanism of China’s shadow education was constructed. The results of this study show that the shadow education reforms need to pay attention to government policy documents and network public opinion, and develop public opinion warning lines. This study can provide the international academic community with information on China’s shadow education reform, providing valuable experience and a reference.

**Keywords:** shadow education; double reduction policy; internet public opinion; governance; China



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## 1. Introduction

Stevenson and Beck (1992) created the concept of “shadow education” [1]. Buchmann also defined it as “private auxiliary supplementary education activities that occur outside the formal education system and aim to help students pass exams successfully and obtain better educational resources” [2]. Some scholars suggested that the reason “shadow education” is used as a metaphorical term was that many of its counseling contents not only reflect mainstream education and constantly imitate formal school education [3,4], but also change with the change in school curricula [1]. Of course, some scholars are willing to use supplemental, out-of-school, and private tutoring to express such educational activities, but its essence remains the same. It may take on different forms, including cram schools, one-to-one private tutoring, and the examination of preparatory courses [5]. East Asian countries are the major markets for shadow education as they are known as the “cradle of private tutoring.” With the emergence of large, collectivized shadow education institutions in the market, Chinese shadow education has developed and expanded rapidly since the early 21st century [6]. With the rapid development of shadow education, most families need to spend an increasing amount of money on supplementary education every year, which greatly aggravates economic pressures on some low-income families or families with many children. “The Report on the Development of China’s New Education Format” (2017)—Basic education shows that the average expenditure of students participating in

after-school training at the primary and secondary school level nationwide is about CNY 5616, and the average student expenditure is CNY 2697. In addition, shadow education also exposes a series of problems. For example, Bure and Kobashizer (2015) believe that shadow education can effectively disrupt the current education process, and they associated it with an “invasive species” [7]. Instead of teaching professionally in regular classes, teachers force their students to take private lessons from them [8]. Although this may enable students to obtain more learning opportunities, it may also become a new factor of educational inequality in many societies [9].

Taking into account the negative effects of the current stage of compulsory education, such as the heavy burden on students, the uneven distribution of educational resources, and the increasing social inequality caused by shadow education, China issued the “Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Students’ Homework and Off-campus Training in Compulsory Education” in 2021. This new regulation is also called the “double reduction” policy. It puts all of the government’s power behind the supervision of tutoring training schools and strictly supervises the training of core courses provided by shadow education institutions [10]. The double reduction policy covers the strict approval of off-campus training institutions, the standardization of training service behavior, and the strengthening of normal operations. China’s radical shadow education reform in 2021 was unprecedented. At the same time, the double reduction policy has also triggered fierce discussion on the Internet, but has not been fully researched. As online public opinion covers a wide range of social groups, it has become an important reference for policy formulation [11]. In addition, online public opinion represents public opinion and aspiration to a certain extent, reflecting the public’s attitude and basic views on the reform policy of shadow education. Therefore, it is particularly important to analyze the policy of double reduction based on online public opinion, which could potentially shed light on the next step of the Chinese Government’s multi-plan governance mechanism.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the reform of China’s shadow education through the dual perspectives of online public opinion and the double reduction policy, and to build a diversified and standardized governance mechanism for shadow education. Therefore, this paper first extracts the high-frequency words from double reduction policy documents through a text analysis, and analyzes the objects and behaviors of micro-normative governance. Secondly, through a search of Baidu Index for “double reduction policy”, it introduces and analyzes the daily average retrieval volume of the popular aspects of the double reduction policy formulation. Finally, a multi-standard shadow education governance mechanism is constructed. After introducing the main findings of the study, the Discussion and Conclusion sections discuss the implementation principles of education policies based on online public opinion, which not only provides a new perspective for China’s shadow education reform, but also provides experience and references for other countries to reform shadow education.

## 2. Literature Review

Although shadow education has a long history in some parts of Asia, it has only been in recent decades that shadow education has flourished [12]. Education in a majority of countries and regions in Asia is heavily influenced by Confucian culture [5], emphasizing the significance of education as a tool for personal development [13]. Some families from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds around the globe recognize the importance of shadow education. In many global education systems, including China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, etc., high-risk examination pressure and certificate inflation also contribute to the long-term existence of shadow education [14]. In contrast to high-stakes testing and national achievement incentives, shadow education is driven by institutional factors, such as restricted access and lower levels of funding, according to some studies [15]. In North America, Australia, and Western Europe, the dominant culture places a premium on talent rather than effort, so the development scale of shadow education is relatively limited [16].

Shadow education in China emerged between 2000 and 2003, developed between 2004 and 2010, its use of traditional institutions declined between 2011 and 2015, and new opportunities brought on by the two-child policy and the advancement of Internet technology began to take effect from 2016. Since then, China's shadow education has expanded in scope and investment. The emergence of shadow education has significantly impacted the ecology of education [17]. Most families must spend a significant amount of money on tutoring each year due to the rapid growth of shadow education, and research indicates that participation in shadow education is positively correlated with family income [18]. The disparity in social purchasing power contributes to the disparity in educational resources. Additional educational opportunities may increase educational inequality between low- and high-income students and between high and low achievers, according to some evidence [13,19–21]. In addition, the government is aware that the rapid growth of shadow education will lead to educational inequality and further erode social justice. Therefore, it may be necessary for the government to intervene to promote equal educational opportunities [22]. In addition, the government is aware that the rapid growth of shadow education will lead to educational inequality and further erode social justice. Therefore, it may be necessary for the government to intervene to promote equal educational opportunities [22]. Some countries have implemented a series of policies to restrict shadow education, such as teacher qualifications and fees [23], and regulators are carrying out their responsibilities to promote the healthy growth of shadow education. To further manage shadow education, on 24 July 2021, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Students' Homework and Off-campus Training in Compulsory Education," also known as the "double reduction" policy. Shadow education has entered a period of restraint, ushering in significant difficulties and obstacles. The Jilin Daily emphasized the importance of closely monitoring the dynamics of public opinion regarding the "double reduction" reform. With the proliferation of the Internet in particular, the significance of online public opinion guidance in times of crisis has become increasingly prominent [24]. The analysis of dissemination content based on network public opinion is of great importance to the healthy and stable development of the reform of shadow education. It is also conducive to reducing students' academic pressure and anxiety and parents' financial burden and promoting social equity. In China, Baidu Zhidao, a relatively professional social media network for academics to exchange knowledge [25], enables users to learn about the real-time dynamics of the double reduction policy via a Baidu search and to freely comment on news and topics. With the implementation of the "double reduction" policy, the Chinese government has taken several extreme measures to manage shadow education. China's shadow education reform has been extensively discussed by scholars from various perspectives, including Chinese parents' investment in shadow education. However, due to the inequality of private tutoring, mainstream teachers, power in China, and peer pressures, there is still much to be learned. Following the promulgation of China's double reduction policy, the future development path of China's shadow education has been paved with diversified and standardized governance. This study is valuable because it provides theoretical support for the Chinese government's shadow education reform and serves as a model for other nations. As far as we know, the current research on shadow education in China focuses on the following aspects: emphasizing the important role of mainstream Chinese teachers in shadow education [26]; the increasingly required investments in education required from Chinese parents [17]; discussing the impact of policies on shadow education [27]; the influence of peer pressures on students' participation in shadow education [28]. In summary, the current academic research on shadow education is diverse and presents many valuable research results. However, it has not yet explored the diversified normative governance mechanism of China's shadow education from the perspective of the double reduction policy and online public opinion. Based on the above analysis, this study proposes the following research questions:

1. How does the double reduction policy guide shadow education reform?

2. What is the most popular aspect of double reduction policy development from the perspective of online public opinion?
3. How to build a governance mechanism for the multiple planning of shadow education based on the double reduction policy and network public opinion?

### 3. Research Design

Text analysis is moving from the text's surface to its depths to discover meanings that cannot be grasped via a simple reading. It quantifies characteristic words extracted from documents, newspapers, and other sources and represents this as textual data. This method is widely used because of its objectivity and other advantages [29].

Consequently, we interpret the true meaning of the reform that lies beneath the policy document's surface through a text analysis. We analyze the word cloud, frequency, and coverage of double subtraction policy text using the Nvivo12.0 software. By visualizing the first 50 high-frequency words of the double reduction policy, we can clearly grasp the key event content of the double reduction policy document. Additionally, from the two aspects of regulating the governance object and behavior, the double reduction policy is interpreted in depth to provide a direction for guiding the shadow education reform. In addition, this paper used the Baidu Index to search for the "Double Reduction Policy" between 24 July 2021, when the "Double Reduction Policy" was introduced, and 23 February 2022, after its introduction. The search index is based on the search volume of netizens on Baidu. Next, the index used keywords as statistical objects to analyze and calculate the weight of the search frequency of keywords on Baidu and in mobile web searches. We further provide a new perspective for the implementation of the most popular aspects of double reduction policy development based on the perspective of online public opinion. Finally, based on the double reduction policy and online public opinion, a governance mechanism of multiple planning for shadow education is constructed.

### 4. Analysis of the Double Reduction Policy Text

The double reduction policy lists educational departments such as the Education Bureau, schools, children's play centers, and youth activity centers, as well as publicity, Internet information, market supervision, politics and law, public security, the People's Bank of China, the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission, and other regulatory departments. From a macro perspective, the double reduction policy emphasizes the regulation and governance of shadow education services. It stipulates that schools must reduce the amount of after-school homework assigned to students and provide tutoring and other services. This is reflected more intuitively in the policy document of double reduction. For instance, frequently occurring words such as "training", "off-campus", "institution", "service", and "governance" are prominent in the text of the double reduction policy. Figure 1 is the result of analyzing the top 50 high-frequency words in the Double Reduction policy text with Nvivo12.0 software.

For the intended audience of micro-normative governance, the double reduction policy emphasizes the training of key normative governance disciplines and multi-departmental collaborative normative governance. As shown in Table 1, in addition to related terms such as off-campus training institutions, school students, service work, and homework, the terms "department" and "discipline" also rank among the top ten.

From the perspective of micro-regulated governance behavior, the double reduction policy not only emphasizes that off-campus training institutions shall not utilize national statutory holidays, rest days, and winter and summer vacations to organize subject training and carry out after-school services but also aims to strengthen source, system, and comprehensive governance, promoting group-based school running, school district governance, and urban and rural school governance. As shown in Table 2, the frequency of words associated with standard governance behaviors, such as after-school services, not taking vacations and rest days, strengthening governance, and homework guidance, all ranked among the top ten. Both Tables 1 and 2 use the Nvivo12.0 software to analyze the word

frequency and coverage of the double-reduction policy text, eliminating “education” as the fifth-ranked term.



**Figure 1.** The word cloud analysis results of the top 50 high-frequency words in the “double reduction” policy.

**Table 1.** Word frequency and coverage rate related to normative governance objects in the “double reduction” policy.

Serial Number	Words	Word Frequency	Coverage
1	train	79	36.10%
2	institute	44	27.37%
3	student	42	20.16%
4	school	41	25.63%
5	service	37	14.91%
6	work	35	17.59%
7	off-campus	33	16.46%
8	homework	31	9.76%
9	department	29	14.46%
10	subject	24	12.2%

**Table 2.** Frequency and coverage of words related to normative governance behavior in the “double reduction” policy.

Serial Number	Words	Word Frequency	Coverage
1	<i>carry out</i>	17	7.20%
2	<i>prohibit</i>	14	6.94%
3	<i>strengthen</i>	14	6.71%
4	<i>govern</i>	13	4.65%
5	<i>guide</i>	12	6.38%
6	<i>according to law</i>	11	6.28%
7	<i>promote</i>	11	2.53%
8	<i>manage</i>	11	4.24%
9	<i>forbidden</i>	9	3.49%
10	<i>utilize</i>	9	4.00%



#### 4.1. Popular Aspects and Analysis of the Development of Double Reduction Policy from the Perspective of Network Public Opinion

In the experiment, we searched for “double reduction policy” in the Baidu Index, and the analysis reveals that the average daily retrieval volume for “double reduction policy” between July 2021 and March 2022, when it was released, was 11,457. As shown in Figure 2, this generally reflects the characteristics of high attention in approximately three months following the introduction of the “double reduction” policy in July 2021 and low attention in the subsequent four months. The implementation of the “double reduction policy” has had a profound effect on the growth of online public opinion. Therefore, analyzing the development of public opinion in the past is extremely useful for predicting the development trend of online public opinion towards shadow education after the “double reduction policy” and further enhancing government policy for shadow education.



**Figure 2.** Overview of the development of the double reduction policy from the perspective of online public opinion on the retrieval index.

After the implementation of the double reduction policy in July 2021, the popularity of the double reduction policy grew online, with a significant increase beyond the average daily retrieval volume, and this state of high public opinion persisted for three months until mid-October. The number of searches fell below the daily average until the second half of the year. Table 3 shows three peaks, A, B, and C, in interest in the “double reduction policy”.

**Table 3.** Popular events in the development of the double reduction policy after the double reduction policy.

Serial Number	Time	Search Index	Summary of Popular Events in the Development of the Double Reduction Policy
Figure 2 (Point A)	6 August 2021	38,044	“Under the double reduction policy, the education industry has ushered in new opportunities”, “After the implementation of the double reduction policy, where is the way out for millions of teachers who make up classes? Most people choose this path”.
Figure 2 (Point B)	30 August 2021	41,466	“School has started what mothers care about most about the double reduction policy?”, “What does a double reduction in education mean? Policy content? Full text of the document on double reduction in education.”
Figure 2 (Point C)	8 January 2022	9986	“The double reduction policy must be implemented without the cooperation of parents, and must not be treated as a child’s play” “It is difficult to implement the double reduction policy. “ Why do you only find the reason in the training institutions? Will the school district housing disappear?”

Point A—6 August 2021: In the initial period of the double reduction policy, the concepts of reduced pressure on students and parents, technology-empowered education, education informatization, quality education, and the increased responsibility of school teachers were elucidated, along with keywords, including “education equity”, “AI”, “artificial intelligence”, and “the job market”. Point B—30 August 2021: Close to the beginning of the school year, and in the near future of the school year, more people interpret the double reduction policy, highlight its significance, and strengthen the establishment of research on the policy. According to some reports, the double reduction policy has been implemented. Point C—8 January 2022: On the eve of the student holiday and after the implementation of the double reduction, it was reported that parents were required to assist in the implementation of double reduction, as well as the difficulties and obstacles in the implementation of double reduction. This “double increase” has increased students’ discretionary time, training opportunities, and training time for quality education. Parents have increased their spending on quality education but cannot evaluate its quality. Consequently, it is proposed that relevant departments are incapable of high-quality education. If the education market develops abnormally, a dynamic and comprehensive evaluation will be conducted to promote the industry’s growth.

#### 4.2. Multi-Standard Shadow Education Governance Mechanism

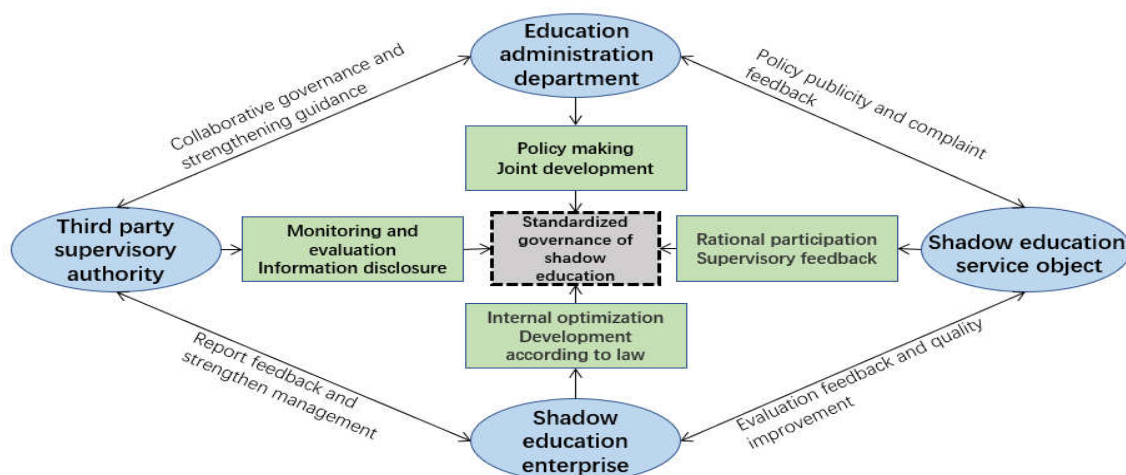
##### 4.2.1. Multiple-Planning Governance Mechanism Guided by the Policy of Double Reduction

The policy framework and measures for China to comprehensively promote the correction of shadow education governance have been largely established [30]; the definition of governance objects tends to be clear, governance methods are becoming increasingly specific, and the participation of subjects is becoming increasingly diverse [31]. Based on China’s national scenario, the guidance of the double reduction policy for shadow education, and the three main aspects of Japan’s shadow education—government regulation, industry self-discipline, and market regulation—we perform their respective roles and combine them [32] to construct a shadow education under the double reduction policy. Figure 3 depicts the multi-normative governance mechanism of education. Focusing on four types of meta-subjects, including education administration and management departments, supervision and auxiliary departments, shadow education service objects, and shadow education institutions, the multi-governance of shadow education should be implemented, including the policy formulation and multi-management of the education department; the supervision, evaluation, and external assistance of auxiliary departments; the rational parsimony of the shadow education service objects; and the rational parsimony of the shadow education institutions. This model can, to some extent, address the problem of the insufficient authority of the education department in the governance of off-campus training norms, allowing for the more efficient and professional governance of shadow education norms [33]. The multi-norm governance mechanism map of education that we constructed can effectively serve as a policy-making foundation for the education department of the Chinese government and consists of four types of meta-subjects: administrative departments, supervision and auxiliary departments, shadow education service objects, and shadow education institutions. The closed loop of effective feedback sheds light on the macro-governance of shadow education in other nations.

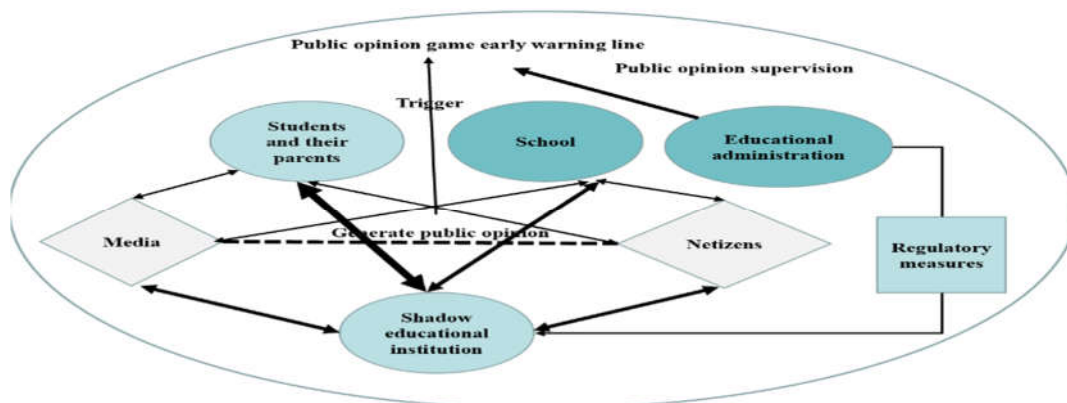
##### 4.2.2. Governance Mechanism Based on Multiple Standards and Network Public Opinion

There is a complex game relationship between shadow education institutions, students and their parents, education administrative departments, schools, media, and netizens who are connected to public opinion regarding shadow education. The subject relationship of shadow education from the viewpoint of public opinion primarily focuses on the four pairs of strong game relationships between students and their parents, education official institutions, media, netizens, and shadow education institutions. In the multi-standard governance mechanism of shadow education from the perspective of online public opinion, education administrative departments, schools, and other educational official departments

are required to actively obtain the public educational opinions of students and their parents, the media, and even netizens and shadow educational institutions to achieve earlier and better education. It can also provide first-hand information for the government to predict, intervene, and guide online public opinion [34]. Figure 4 is the model diagram derived from this study and the preceding analysis. It is feasible to concentrate on constructing a long-term mechanism for education administrative departments, schools, and social media to effectively manage public opinion of shadow education networks.



**Figure 3.** The multi-standard governance mechanism of shadow education based on the double reduction policy. Please confirm whether you would like to use the Open Review option.



**Figure 4.** Shadow education oversight mechanism from the standpoint of public education opinion.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. The Fundamental Principle of the Double Reduction Policy for Shadow Education

Based on the word frequency analysis of high-frequency objects and behaviors in the text of the double reduction policy, we can conclude that the primary objective of the policy is to reduce the training burden on students and their parents, effectively alleviate parents' anxiety, and benefit the masses, while also preventing shadow education from hindering public schools by providing quality resources [35]. In order to reduce the training burden on students and their parents, students should reduce their academic load, avoid the situation of "reducing the burden on campus" and "increasing the burden outside the school," implement guidelines for conscientiously evaluating the quality of compulsory education, and incorporate the results of "double reduction" into the quality of compulsory education in counties and schools. Important evaluation contents include the participation of students in after-school programs, as well as the reduction in shadow education and training costs,



etc. For subjects, shadow education is classified as a non-profit organization, avoiding the need for traditional shadow educators to keep an eye on the school curriculum. They can provide short-term help with homework and test preparation [36], which is conducive to advanced and long-term education, increasing pressure on students and reducing the heavy financial burden on families that off-campus training imposes [37]. Off-campus training not only increases the academic pressure on students and the economic burden on their families, but it also affects general educational aspects and teaching order, exacerbating the disparity in educational resources caused by unequal economic statuses [38]. According to studies, children spend several hours per day using devices for entertainment purposes (time cost), which accounts for 40 to 50 percent of total family education expenditure and about 20 percent of annual per capita consumption expenditure (economic cost) [39]. Therefore, the effective management of shadow education can alleviate students' and parents' stress and anxiety and resolve some educational equality issues from another angle. It adheres to strict governance, comprehensively standardizes shadow education, and no longer approves new subject-based off-campus training institutions for compulsory education not to compromise the primary position of school education. The commercialization of education has caused significant problems in the education space [40]. Education's ultimate objective is decapitalization. It aims to shift the emphasis on school curriculum development from before class to after class, from the content system of the curriculum to the subject behavior practice accompanied by the curriculum as an intermediary [41].

## 5.2. Education Policy Implementation Based on Network Public Opinion

To establish a new multi-standard shadow education governance model based on network public opinion, implementing shadow education policies led by schools and education administrative departments is essential. Schools and education administrative departments should be aware of the huge impact of online public opinion on ideology and pay close attention to dynamic changes in this type of public opinion. The timely acquisition, accurate analysis, and reasonable disposal of online public opinion should be priorities. Additionally, public opinion data awareness and public opinion data processing capability should be improved. Faced with a public opinion crisis, relevant departments dare to confront public doubts, release timely information, block the channels for disseminating malicious online public opinion, and cleanse the public opinion space. Furthermore, through the formulation of documents similar to "Internet Public Opinion Security Monitoring Indicator System Based on the Double Reduction Policy," public opinion warning lines, such as the average value of public opinion, should be set; a security monitoring method should be established; and the sensitive and representative network of public opinion should be captured and identified to ensure its safe and stable development online, according to a firm's requirements. The first requirement is to regulate and manage shadow education in a targeted manner based on public opinion. For example, as shown in Figure 2 (Point A): "After the implementation of the double reduction policy, where is the way out for millions of teachers?" Faced with such a large number of shadow education teachers, it is necessary to properly arrange the future employment of such teachers, an idea that has aroused widespread concern among the public. The daily retrieval volume of 38,044 items is strong evidence for this. The second requirement is to assist students and their parents with solving problems and accurately explain them based on public opinion. For example, "The school has started. What is the double reduction policy that mothers are most concerned about?" It is necessary to pay more attention to the problems that parents care about, alleviate their concerns, and gradually transition the idea that parents excessively rely on shadow education to improve their children's academic performance. The third requirement is to base decisions on public opinion. For example, regarding online public opinion, it is difficult to implement the double reduction policy. The public can be widely consulted to seek a reasonable rectification plan to ensure the smooth implementation of this policy. If necessary, direct the media and internet users to determine public opinion. We should strive to adopt the multi-standard governance of shadow education from the

perspective of online public opinion before popular ideas begin to spread; guide students, their parents, education and training institutions, media and netizens to negotiate and solve problems; and more effectively promote the implementation of education policies to avoid popular topics of public opinion. The rapid and extensive dissemination of online public opinion can cause the spreading of rumors and the emergence of other grave developments; this frequently causes great unpredictability and is difficult to regulate [42]. Finally, it is necessary to investigate the working mechanism of the normalized investigation of public opinion in the shadow education network. The double reduction policy emphasizes that the normalized investigation mechanism must be further enhanced and that the context and information regarding off-campus training institutions must be understood in a timely manner. The response to this policy point may be refined to investigate the normalization investigation mechanism of shadow education from the viewpoint of network public opinion. On the one hand, it is possible to conduct standardized research using the Baidu Index, Sogou Index, and other basic-level convenient and competent network public opinion analysis platform tools [43]. Additionally, shadow-education-related topics must be subject to regular inspections.

### *5.3. Shadow Education Multi-Governance Mechanism Based on Double Reduction Policy*

In contrast to governments (such as Cambodia and Myanmar) that have taken an extreme approach to the rising prevalence of shadow education by outlawing it, the Chinese government has attempted to regulate it [44,45]. Under the guidance of the double reduction policy, this study developed a multi-standard governance mechanism for shadow education. Firstly, there should be policy formulation and pluralistic management in the education sector. Based on the relationship between the education administrative department, the management department, and education, shadow education must be conducted under the formulation and implementation of a policy by the education administrative department. The education administrative department formulates a series of policies for developing shadow education under policy formulation, such as the double reduction policy. The formulation of shadow educational institutions has, to a certain extent, suppressed shadow educational institutions. Secondly, a supervision of auxiliary departments and external assistance should be carried out, with an evaluation of this supervision. The State Administration for Market Regulation, along with the Central Propaganda Department, the Central Internet Information Office, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission, and the State Administration for Radio, Film, and Television, issued the “Notice on Doing a Good Job in Off-campus Training Advertisements” on 9 November 2021. The “Notice” emphasizes the need to further improve the multi-departmental joint management and control mechanism, give full play to the role of the special coordination mechanism for the “double reduction” work, improve management and control mechanisms such as information sharing, analysis and judgment, and joint response to key public opinion, and strengthen credit. It also stresses the need to supervise and guide industry self-discipline and form a synergy of cross-departmental collaborative supervision [46]. Thirdly, the rational participation and supervision feedback of shadow education service objects are necessary since students and parents are the service recipients for shadow education. The implementation of the double reduction policy has increased parents’ participation in their children’s shadow education. However, some parents still have a “soft spot” for shadow education, which means that the government should gradually increase the rational participation of parents in shadow education in order to slow the implementation of the double reduction policy. Similarly, shadow service recipients should rationally supervise service providers during or after the experience of being served, provide positive feedback to them, complain and provide feedback to the management department, protect their own rights and interests, and promote the sound development of educational services. The “Double reduction policy” is a significant modification to the distribution pattern of public education services [47]. To ensure

educational equity, we must insist that mainstream school education is the foundation of national education and that off-campus training is supplementary. As part of education development, shadow education should determine the primary role of public education in schools, maximize its own benefits, and supplement rather than replace it. If shadow education wishes to maintain a competitive advantage and continuously grow, it must clarify its functional positioning objectives at a macro level and make adaptive adjustments to specific development strategies in order to accelerate internal optimization [48].

## 6. Conclusions

The development and normative governance of shadow education in China are viewed through the lens of the policy of double reduction and online public opinion. In addition to paying close attention to the macro policy documents of the Chinese government, we should also pay attention to the online opinions of students, parents, the media, and netizens, as well as the diverse voices of Chinese society. The interpretation of the text of the double reduction policy will aid in understanding the future development trajectory of shadow education, ensuring its healthy and stable growth, and integrating the educational concept. The objective is for schools and education administrative departments to formulate public opinion warning lines, such as the average value of public opinion, based on an in-depth analysis of network public opinion data. In order to protect the interests of students' parents, it is necessary to limit the spread of rumors and gossip on the Internet. Overall, it is hoped that this research will provide sufficient information on China's shadow education reform for international educators and scholars, allowing them to understand the dynamic development of China's shadow education. Evidently, due to differences in cultures and economic models, other nations must rely on sound advice that is appropriate for their own education systems.

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