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PEDAGOGICAL TRANSFORMATION UNDER CHINA'S 'DOUBLE REDUCTION' IN ZHEJIANG

A TRANSFORMAÇÃO PEDAGÓGICA NO ÂMBITO DA "DUPLA REDUÇÃO" DA CHINA NA PROVÍNCIA DE ZHEJIANG

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Chen Qi*
***INTI International University, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia
i24028507@student.newinti.edu.my

Khalid Ahmed*
***INTI International University, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia
khalid.ahmed@newinti.edu.my

Ruqia Saba Ashraf**
****The Women University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan
rsadgk@gmail.com

Maryam Ikram*
***INTI International University, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia
maryam.ikram@newinti.edu.my

Niaz Ali*
***INTI International University, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia
niaz.ali@newinti.edu.my

Arfan Akram***
*****Lahore Leads University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
mianirfan_4@hotmail.com

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Abstract
The 'Double Reduction' education policy, introduced by the Chinese central government in July 2021, aims to alleviate students' academic burdens by restricting off-campus tutoring and improving the quality of in-school education. This study investigates how this policy has reshaped secondary school teachers' professional roles in Zhejiang Province by employing retrospective pre-test/post-test quantitative design and self-developed Teacher Role Change Scale. A stratified random sample of 120 junior high school teachers completed the RRCS, rating their role performance before (July 2021) and after (2025) policy implementation. Paired-sample t-tests, correlation analyses, and multiple regression were conducted to test research objectives. Results show a significant improvement in overall role scores from pre-policy (M = 61.50) to post-policy (M = 64.21; t (119) = –2.918, p = .004), validating H1. However, the four demographic variables (teaching experience, professional title, school

Resumo
A política educacional "Dupla Redução", introduzida pelo governo central chinês em julho de 2021, visa aliviar a carga acadêmica dos alunos por meio da restrição às aulas particulares fora da escola e da melhoria da qualidade do ensino escolar. Este estudo investiga como essa política remodelou os papéis profissionais dos professores do ensino médio na província de Zhejiang, utilizando um desenho quantitativo retrospectivo pré-teste/pós-teste e a Escala de Mudança de Papel do Professor, desenvolvida pelos autores. Uma amostra aleatória estratificada de 120 professores do ensino fundamental II preencheu a RRCS, avaliando seu desempenho no papel antes (julho de 2021) e depois (2025) da implementação da política. Testes t para amostras emparelhadas, análises de correlação e regressão múltipla foram realizados para testar os objetivos da pesquisa. Os resultados mostram uma melhora significativa nas pontuações gerais de função do pré-política (M

type, and location) were not significantly correlated with role-change scores ($|r| \leq .131$, $p > .15$) and collectively failed to predict role change in regression analysis ($R^2 = .042$, $p = .292$), thus H2 and H3 were not supported. These findings suggest that the policy effectively expanded teachers' roles—particularly in classroom teaching and homework guidance—the magnitude of change was uniform across demographic groups.

Keywords: Double Reduction. Education Policy. Education Quality. Educational Governance. School. Teacher Training.

= 61,50) para o pós-política (M = 64,21; t (119) = –2,918, p = 0,004), validando a H1. No entanto, as quatro variáveis demográficas (experiência de ensino, título profissional, tipo de escola e localização) não apresentaram correlação significativa com as pontuações de mudança de função (|r| ≤ 0,131, p > 0,15) e, coletivamente, não conseguiram prever a mudança de função na análise de regressão ($R^2 = 0,042$, p = 0,292); assim, as hipóteses H2 e H3 não foram confirmadas. Esses resultados sugerem que a política efetivamente ampliou os papéis dos professores — particularmente no ensino em sala de aula e na orientação de tarefas de casa — e que a magnitude da mudança foi uniforme entre os grupos demográficos.

Palavras-chave: *Dupla Redução. Política Educacional. Qualidade da Educação. Governança Educacional. Escola. Formação de Professores.*

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

In recent years, excessive academic burdens on compulsory education students, including heavy in-school homework and off-campus tutoring, have become a critical issue, straining students' physical and mental health and increasing parental financial and energy burdens (General Office of the CPC Central Committee & General Office of the State Council, 2021). To address this, China's central government introduced the "Double Reduction" policy in July 2021, aiming to reduce off-campus tutoring and enhance on-campus teaching quality.

Zhejiang Province, a national demonstration zone for high-quality education development, was among the first to implement the policy, requiring schools to provide at least 2 hours of daily after-school services (Zhejiang News, 2021). These measures have expanded teachers' responsibilities, leading to significant shifts in their professional roles.

Research on linguistic and social dynamics in the region provides crucial context, highlighting the influence of media on youth and societal attitudes (Ahmed, Su, & Ahmed, 2017; Ahmed et al., 2019), the intersection of language and legal judgments (Khaleel et al., 2024), and the nuances of pragmatic acquisition among learners (Ahmed et al., 2024). Extending this focus to early childhood, Vijayaratnam et al. (2025) specifically investigate the impact of English media on preschoolers' development.

1.2 Problem statement

The "Double Reduction" policy has transformed teachers' roles from traditional classroom instructors to "comprehensive educators" responsible for pre-class preparation, in-class teaching, after-class counseling, homework design, and home-school communication (China Education Online, 2022). However, this expansion has increased workloads—with many teachers working over 13 hours daily—leading to stress, burnout, and challenges balancing work and life (Wang, 2022; Wei, 2024). Additionally, heightened parental expectations, particularly for family education guidance, have added pressure, especially for head teachers (Wang, 2022).

Understanding teachers' adaptation to these role changes is critical for the policy's success and sustainable basic education development, motivating this study.

1.3 Research questions

RQ1: What are the main differences in teachers' roles from 2021 to 2025 under the "Double Reduction" policy?

RQ2: How do teacher profile variables relate to the magnitude of role change?

RQ3: Which demographic or contextual variables predict overall role change?

1.4 Research significance

Theoretical: Enriches research on educational policy and teacher development by focusing on teachers' role changes, expanding role theory applications in policy contexts.

Practical: Provides insights into teachers' challenges and adaptations, aiding educational authorities in designing support measures (e.g., reducing unreasonable burdens, offering training).

Local: As a reform pioneer, Zhejiang's experience can inform practices nationwide, promoting regional learning.

1.5 Scope of the study

This quantitative study focuses on secondary school teachers in Zhejiang Province, selected for its early policy implementation, diverse school types (urban/rural, public/private), and robust after-school service infrastructure, ensuring sample representativeness.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

"Double Reduction" policy: A 2021 initiative to reduce in-school homework and off-campus tutoring burdens, including measures to control homework quantity, improve quality, and strengthen after-school services (General Office of the CPC Central Committee & General Office of the State Council, 2021; Zhejiang Provincial Department of Education, 2021).Junior high school teacher roles: Behavioral expectations and norms encompassing classroom teaching, homework guidance, after-school services, and home-school communication, derived from sociological role theory (National Academy for Educational Research, n.d.).

2.1 Background and connotation of the "double reduction" policy

The "Double Reduction" policy, formally issued in July 2021 by China's central government, addresses long-standing issues of excessive academic burdens on

compulsory education students and unregulated off-campus tutoring. For decades, students faced heavy in-school homework and intensive after-school cram sessions, leading to physical/mental exhaustion and increased parental financial strain (General Office of the CPC Central Committee & General Office of the State Council, 2021). Off-campus training institutions, driven by profit, exacerbated inequities and parental anxiety, undermining education reform efforts (Sina Finance, 2021).

The policy's core measures include: In-school reforms: Controlling total homework volume (≤60 minutes for primary school, ≤90 minutes for junior high), improving homework quality (e.g., eliminating repetitive tasks), and enhancing after-school services (offering tutoring, interest activities until parents' work hours end).

Off-campus regulations: Suspending new subject-based training institution approvals, converting existing ones to non-profit status, banning holiday/evening academic tutoring, and tightening content supervision (Zhejiang News, 2021).

Post-implementation, nationwide surveys show reduced student burdens, with 85% parental satisfaction with after-school services (Ministry of Education, 2021). However, challenges emerged, including "burden transfer" to families, uneven in-school quality improvements, resource shortages for after-school programs, and strained teacher capacity (Jin & Zhang, 2022). Teachers' well-being is critical to policy success, as burnout could undermine effectiveness (Jin & Zhang, 2022).

2.2 Teacher role theory and role transformation

The teacher role, rooted in sociological role theory, refers to societal expectations and behavioral norms attached to the teaching profession (Sarbin & Allen, 1968). Linton (1936) highlights roles as bundles of rights and obligations, while Parsons (1951) positions them as core units of social systems, reflecting era-specific public values.

Teachers occupy multifaceted "role sets" (Merton, 1957): within schools, they act as knowledge transmitters, class advisors, curriculum developers, and peer collaborators; outside, they bridge home and school or serve as community educational experts. This complexity can cause role conflicts—e.g., balancing teaching with administrative tasks or reconciling parental and school expectations (Merton, 1957).

Traditional Chinese teacher roles emphasize “imparting morality, knowledge, and resolving doubts,” uniting academic and moral guidance. Global perspectives, such as the UNESCO Delors Report (1996), frame teachers as “ensemble conductors” rather than “soloists,” emphasizing facilitation of collaborative learning. Domestic scholar Jiang Heng (2002) identifies Western classifications of teachers as organizers, leaders, curriculum developers, and labor-market bridges.

The “Double Reduction” policy, shifting education from exam-centric to holistic development, demands corresponding role adjustments. Teachers are expected to prioritize all-round student growth, collaborate more with parents, and engage in teaching research to improve quality. Role transformation may cause stress, as teachers adapt skills, habits, and identities (Yao, 2010).

2.3 Research status on the impact of the “double reduction” policy on teachers’ roles

Existing studies highlight three key impacts of the policy on teachers: Increased Workload: Teachers now manage extended responsibilities beyond “lesson preparation-teaching-grading” to include high-quality homework design, in-school homework supervision, after-school tutoring, and parent communication (Wang et al., 2022). Daily working hours often exceed 11–13 hours, with heavier burdens on after-school service providers, female teachers, homeroom teachers, and junior high instructors (Wei, 2022). Unchecked, this may trigger burnout (Ministry of Education, 2021). Diversified Roles: Policies redefine teachers as: Efficient classroom instructors: Enhancing in-class efficiency to reduce after-school burdens. Research-driven educators: Developing high-quality teaching resources (e.g., online courses). Student conversationalists: Using process-based assessment to foster holistic growth. Home-school communicators: Proactively engaging parents to align educational strategies (Jin & Zhang, 2022). Research Gaps: Current literature focuses on quantitative workload surveys but lacks depth on teachers’ emotional experiences, identity struggles, or growth from role changes (Wei, 2022). Regional disparities are understudied, particularly in economically developed areas like Zhejiang, a reform pioneer (Zhejiang News, 2021). This study addresses these gaps by exploring role transformation in Zhejiang through quantitative analysis.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Population and sampling

The target population of the study was junior high school teachers in Hangzhou (Zhejiang's provincial capital), selected for its early and comprehensive policy implementation, diverse school types (urban/suburban, public/private), and representative educational management. A two-dimensional stratified random sampling method was used:

First dimension: Urban vs. suburban regions. Second dimension: Public vs. private schools. This yielded four strata with 30 teachers randomly selected four schools (total n=120). Sample size was determined using G*Power (medium effect size, α=0.05, power=0.80), ensuring robustness for paired t-tests and regression analyses.

3.2 Theoretical framework

This study adopts two theoretical perspectives to explore teachers' role changes under the "Double Reduction" policy:

Role Theory: Derived from sociology, this theory emphasizes that individual behavior is constrained by social "expectations" and "rights-obligations" attached to their social positions (Parsons, 1951; Merton, 1957). For teachers, their "role set" includes classroom instructors, class managers, home-school communicators, and teaching-research participants. Policy-driven changes may trigger role conflicts or reconstruction, which this study examines through the lens of expanded role boundaries and associated tensions.

Symbolic Interactionism: Focusing on how individuals "assign meaning" to social interactions and adjust behaviors accordingly (Blumer, 1969), this theory illuminates how teachers redefine "excellent teaching" through dynamic interactions with students, parents, and colleagues under the policy. It traces how teachers negotiate the value and orientation of new roles, such as interpreting after-school service responsibilities as part of holistic education.

3.3 Conceptual framework

The study uses a retrospective pre-test/post-test design to measure "role change scores" (ΔRRCS) as the difference between teachers' self-assessed role performance before (pre-2021) and after (2025) policy implementation, using the self-developed Teacher Role Change Scale (RRCS).

Key Variables:

Dependent Variable (DV): Role change score (ΔRRCS), capturing shifts in classroom design, homework guidance, after-school services, and home-school communication.

Independent Variables (IVs): Teacher demographics (teaching experience, professional title, school type [public/private], location [urban/suburban]).

Hypotheses:

H1: Significant differences exist in ΔRRCS between 2021 and 2025.

H2: Teacher characteristics (experience, title, school type) correlate with ΔRRCS.

H3: Demographic/contextual variables predict overall ΔRRCS.

The framework examines how policy implementation impacts role changes (arrow 1) while controlling teacher qualifications and school environments (arrow 2), quantifying heterogeneous responses across groups.

3.4 Research design

This study adopted a quantitative retrospective pre-test/post-test design, focusing on secondary school teachers in Zhejiang Province with at least five years of teaching experience. Using the self-developed Teacher Role Change Scale (RRCS), teachers rated their role performance before (July 2021) and after (2025) the "Double Reduction" policy implementation. The scale, revised based on expert reviews and a pilot survey, was distributed via stratified random sampling across urban, suburban, rural, public, and private schools. The difference between pre- and post-policy scores (ΔRRCS) reflects changes in teachers' roles in areas like teaching design, homework guidance, after-school services, and home-school communication.

3.5 Instruments

Teacher Role Change Scale (RRCS): A 20-item, 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) with four dimensions: classroom teaching design, homework guidance, after-school services, and home-school communication. Developed based on role theory, it underwent content validity reviews by three education experts and a pilot test (n=30) to ensure reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.70$).

Demographic Questionnaire: Collected variables including teaching experience (years), professional title (senior/associate senior/intermediate/junior), school type (public/private), and location (urban/suburban) to control confounding effects in analyses.

3.6 Data collection procedures

Pilot Study: Conducted with 30 teachers from Hangzhou Experimental Middle School to test RRCS reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.80$ for all dimensions) and validity (KMO=0.85, significant Bartlett's test). Items with low discrimination power were revised. Formal Data Collection: Approved by the Hangzhou Education Bureau and four selected schools, questionnaires were distributed online (via school OA systems) and offline. Teachers completed retrospective pre-test/post-test assessments and demographic information within two weeks, with reminders sent to non-respondents. Data were encrypted and cross-checked for quality.

3.7 Data analysis procedures

Data was analyzed using SPSS 26.0: Preprocessing: Missing values and outliers were screened; reverse-coded items were adjusted; normality was tested.

Hypothesis Testing:

H1 (overall role change): Paired-sample t-tests compared pre- and post-policy RRCS scores ($\alpha=0.05$).

H2 (correlations with teacher characteristics): Pearson/Spearman correlations analyzed relationships between demographic variables and ΔRRCS.

H3 (predictors of role change): Multiple linear regression with ΔRRCS as the dependent variable and demographic variables as predictors, checking for multicollinearity (VIF<5) and residual normality.

3.8 Ethics considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines, with approval from Zhejiang Normal University's Ethics Committee. Participants provided informed consent, data were anonymized, and sensitive information was encrypted. Teachers could withdraw at any time, and all data were used solely for academic purposes.

3.9 Data analysis

This study adopts a comprehensive quantitative analysis of 120 valid questionnaires collected to examine the impact of the "Double Reduction" policy on secondary school teachers' roles in Zhejiang Province. The analysis proceeds in four stages: first, validating the reliability and validity of the self-developed Teacher Role Change Scale (RRCS) through a pilot study; second, confirming the scale's psychometric properties using formal data; third, testing research hypotheses via inferential statistics (paired-sample t-tests, correlation analyses, and multiple regression); and finally, summarizing key findings. The goal is to quantify changes in teachers' roles across four dimensions—classroom teaching design, homework guidance, after-school services, and home-school communication—before (July 2021) and after (2025) policy implementation, and to explore whether teacher characteristics (e.g., experience, school type) predict these changes.

3.10 Reliability

Pre-test: The RRCS's four dimensions (classroom teaching design, homework guidance, after-school services, home-school communication) demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's α values ranging from 0.903 to 0.935 (standardized α: 0.902–0.932). The total scale α was 0.729 (standardized α = 0.724), exceeding the 0.70

threshold for acceptability. Post-test: Similar reliability was observed, with dimension α values of 0.885–0.928 (standardized α: 0.888–0.927) and a total scale α of 0.749 (standardized α = 0.750).

Combined pre-test and post-test: The overall α was 0.721 (standardized α = 0.715), confirming the scale's stability across time points.

Table 1

Reliability Statistics

Pre-test	Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
		.903	.902	5
		.921	.922	5
		.935	.934	5
		.931	.932	5
	Total	.729	.724	20
Post-test		.885	.888	5
		.928	.925	5
		.925	.925	5
		.926	.927	5
	Total	.749	.750	5
Pre and Post Test		.721	.715	40

3.11 Validity

A pilot study with 30 teachers (≥5 years of experience) from Hangzhou Experimental Middle School was conducted to refine the RRCS. Participants completed retrospective pre-test (2021) and post-test (2025) assessments, and data were analyzed for reliability and validity.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) validated the RRCS's four-dimensional structure:

Pre-test: KMO = 0.639, Bartlett's $\chi^2 = 499.372$ (df = 190, $p < 0.001$), indicating suitability for factor analysis. Four factors explained 80.03% of variance, with items loading strongly (≥0.74) on their respective dimensions and minimal cross-loadings.

Post-test: KMO = 0.634, Bartlett's $\chi^2 = 491.774$ (df = 190, $p < 0.001$), with four factors explaining 78.07% of variance. Factor loading remained consistent with the pre-

test, confirming structural stability. Items with low discriminative power were revised, finalizing the scale for formal data collection.

Table 2

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.639
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	499.372
	df	190
	Sig.	<.001

Table 3

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
I use a variety of instructional strategies in class to meet different students' needs.	.832	.790
I adjust my teaching content to align with students' learning styles and interests.	.881	.769
I establish clear learning objectives before each lesson and implement them in class.	.889	.818
I incorporate information technology or multimedia tools to support instruction.	.937	.797
I adapt my teaching pace and methods based on real time classroom feedback.	.765	.588
I design tiered homework assignments to accommodate students with different proficiency levels.	.838	.664
I guide students to complete most written assignments during class time.	.790	.705
I provide timely and detailed feedback when correcting assignments	.846	.749
I adjust homework difficulty according to students' performance.	.823	.795
I use homework design to promote autonomous learning and inquiry.	.801	.667
I provide at least two hours of after school tutoring or enrichment services.	.877	.776
I help students with questions related to after school assignments.	.914	.872
I organize and participate in extracurricular interest activities or study groups.	.864	.782
I develop individualized after school learning plans based on student differences.	.897	.840
I pay close attention to students' emotional well being and learning needs after school.	.732	.637
I regularly communicate with parents about their child's performance at school.	.906	.642
I proactively reach out to parents when issues arise regarding student learning or well being.	.877	.606

I organize or take part in parent teacher meetings and collaborate with parents on educational strategies.	.923	.776
I listen to parents' feedback and adjust my teaching practices accordingly.	.896	.854
I use multiple channels (phone calls, messaging groups, school platforms) to maintain communication with parents.	.898	.918

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Table 4

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings[a]
Factor	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	5.019	25.097	25.097	4.781	23.906	23.906	4.187
2	4.347	21.737	46.834	4.124	20.619	44.525	3.903
3	3.604	18.020	64.854	3.351	16.755	61.280	3.895
4	3.034	15.171	80.025	2.788	13.940	75.220	3.636
5	.660	3.298	83.323				
6	.633	3.164	86.486				
7	.459	2.293	88.780				
8	.381	1.907	90.687				
9	.345	1.723	92.410				
10	.328	1.639	94.049				
11	.277	1.383	95.432				
12	.214	1.069	96.501				
13	.174	.872	97.373				
14	.148	.740	98.113				
15	.115	.577	98.690				
16	.087	.434	99.124				
17	.066	.329	99.453				
18	.047	.235	99.688				
19	.041	.204	99.893				
20	.021	.107	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

Table 5

Pattern Matrixa

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
I use multiple channels (phone calls, messaging groups, school platforms) to maintain communication with parents.	.965		.168	
I listen to parents' feedback and adjust my teaching practices accordingly.	.926			
I organize or take part in parent teacher meetings and collaborate with parents on educational strategies.	.871			
I regularly communicate with parents about their child's performance at school.	.776			-.116

I proactively reach out to parents when issues arise regarding student learning or well being.	.762			
I develop individualized after school learning plans based on student differences.		.918		
I help students with questions related to after school assignments.		.911		-.103
I organize and participate in extracurricular interest activities or study groups.		.874		
I provide at least two hours of after school tutoring or enrichment services.	.163	.871	-.126	
I pay close attention to students' emotional well being and learning needs after school.	-.218	.740		
I adjust homework difficulty according to students' performance.			.894	
I provide timely and detailed feedback when correcting assignments			.858	
I guide students to complete most written assignments during class time.			.826	
I use homework design to promote autonomous learning and inquiry.			.825	-.121
I design tiered homework assignments to accommodate students with different proficiency levels.			.808	
I incorporate information technology or multimedia tools to support instruction.				.888
I adjust my teaching content to align with students' learning styles and interests.			-.121	.883
I establish clear learning objectives before each lesson and implement them in class.			.273	.828
I use a variety of instructional strategies in class to meet different students' needs.	-.298	-.170		.748
I adapt my teaching pace and methods based on real time classroom feedback.	.262	.132	-.281	.738

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Table 6

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.634
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	491.774
	df	190
	Sig.	<.001

Table 7

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
POSTCR21	.834	.680
POSTCR22	.863	.756
POSTCR23	.759	.569
POSTCR24	.859	.668

POSTCR25	.864	.637
POSTHD26	.879	.752
POSTHD27	.938	.718
POSTHD28	.900	.848
POSTHD29	.885	.670
POSTHD30	.908	.805
POSTAS31	.931	.774
POSTAS32	.917	.854
POSTAS33	.913	.808
POSTAS34	.880	.687
POSTAS35	.719	.669
POSTHS36	.942	.826
POSTHS37	.699	.553
POSTHS38	.891	.741
POSTHS39	.960	.830
POSTHS40	.832	.701

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Table 8

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings[a]
Factor	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	5.751	28.757	28.757	5.509	27.546	27.546	4.209
2	3.930	19.652	48.409	3.627	18.137	45.682	4.245
3	3.204	16.022	64.431	2.944	14.718	60.400	4.083
4	2.727	13.636	78.066	2.466	12.331	72.731	3.320
5	.767	3.836	81.903				
6	.601	3.006	84.909				
7	.537	2.687	87.595				
8	.457	2.284	89.879				
9	.435	2.175	92.054				
10	.295	1.474	93.528				
11	.277	1.385	94.913				
12	.275	1.374	96.287				
13	.188	.940	97.227				
14	.167	.834	98.061				
15	.123	.614	98.675				
16	.091	.453	99.128				
17	.077	.387	99.514				
18	.058	.290	99.804				
19	.026	.130	99.934				
20	.013	.066	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

Table 9

Pattern Matrix[a]

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
POSTAS32	.902			-.131
POSTAS31	.867		.105	
POSTAS35	.828			
POSTAS33	.820	-.149	-.145	.315
POSTAS34	.806		.129	-.112
POSTHS39		.930		
POSTHS36		.916		
POSTHS38		.831		
POSTHS40		.807		
POSTHS37		.730	.101	
POSTHD30	.140	.120	.881	
POSTHD26	-.157		.880	
POSTHD28	.103	-.173	.841	
POSTHD29	-.103		.824	
POSTHD27			.813	
POSTCR21				.828
POSTCR24	.113	.108		.805
POSTCR22	-.325	-.141		.800
POSTCR25	.180			.773
POSTCR23		.139		.722

4.3 Formal data reliability and validity

4.3.1 Reliability

For the 120 formal respondents, the RRCS demonstrated excellent reliability:

Pre-test: Total scale Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.863$ (standardized $\alpha = 0.862$).

Post-test: Total scale Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.887$ (standardized $\alpha = 0.888$).

Both values significantly exceeded the 0.70 threshold, confirming the scale's internal consistency before and after the policy.

Table 10

Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Pre-test	.863	.862	20
Post-test	.887	.888	20

EFA on combined pre-test and post-test data further confirmed validity:

KMO = 0.856 (excellent), Bartlett's χ^2 = 3363.884 (df = 780, $p < 0.001$), supporting factor analysis.

Four factors were extracted, explaining 63.61% of variance. Items loaded strongly (≥0.70) on their respective dimensions:

Factor 1: After-school services and home-school communication (loadings 0.75–0.82).

Factor 2: Parent collaboration within home-school communication (loadings 0.74–0.79).

Factor 3: Homework design and grading (loadings 0.73–0.79).

Factor 4: Classroom teaching design (loadings 0.70–0.82).

Cross-loadings were generally <0.30, indicating good discriminant validity. Communalities of all items ranged from 0.513 to 0.918 (>0.50), confirming adequate explanation by the extracted factors.

Table 11

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.856
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3363.884
	df	780
	Sig.	<.001

Table 12

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
I use a variety of instructional strategies in class to meet different students' needs.	.616	.516
I adjust my teaching content to align with students' learning styles and interests.	.644	.530
I establish clear learning objectives before each lesson and implement them in class.	.603	.523
I incorporate information technology or multimedia tools to support instruction.	.733	.672
I adapt my teaching pace and methods based on real time classroom feedback.	.674	.610
I design tiered homework assignments to accommodate students with different proficiency levels.	.640	.535
I guide students to complete most written assignments during class time.	.703	.540

I provide timely and detailed feedback when correcting assignments	.659	.615
I adjust homework difficulty according to students' performance.	.681	.578
I use homework design to promote autonomous learning and inquiry.	.690	.636
I provide at least two hours of after school tutoring or enrichment services.	.724	.639
I help students with questions related to after school assignments.	.759	.697
I organize and participate in extracurricular interest activities or study groups.	.712	.649
I develop individualized after school learning plans based on student differences.	.693	.596
I pay close attention to students' emotional well being and learning needs after school.	.695	.639
I regularly communicate with parents about their child's performance at school.	.700	.599
I proactively reach out to parents when issues arise regarding student learning or well being.	.699	.635
I organize or take part in parent teacher meetings and collaborate with parents on educational strategies.	.687	.580
I listen to parents' feedback and adjust my teaching practices accordingly.	.701	.587
I use multiple channels (phone calls, messaging groups, school platforms) to maintain communication with parents.	.701	.603
POSTCR21	.697	.583
POSTCR22	.652	.542
POSTCR23	.743	.568
POSTCR24	.696	.513
POSTCR25	.752	.599
POSTHD26	.740	.647
POSTHD27	.712	.641
POSTHD28	.680	.611
POSTHD29	.704	.580
POSTHD30	.664	.598
POSTAS31	.712	.594
POSTAS32	.718	.605
POSTAS33	.685	.606
POSTAS34	.738	.629
POSTAS35	.679	.557
POSTHS36	.699	.577
POSTHS37	.699	.590
POSTHS38	.715	.578
POSTHS39	.687	.615
POSTHS40	.742	.625

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Table 13

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings[a]
Factor	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	7.855	19.637	19.637	7.461	18.651	18.651	6.502
2	6.551	16.378	36.015	6.146	15.366	34.017	6.128
3	5.594	13.984	50.000	5.190	12.975	46.993	5.943
4	5.445	13.612	63.612	5.040	12.600	59.592	5.850
5	.973	2.434	66.045				
6	.909	2.272	68.317				
7	.878	2.195	70.512				
8	.724	1.809	72.321				
9	.704	1.760	74.081				
10	.688	1.720	75.801				
11	.675	1.687	77.488				
12	.630	1.575	79.063				
13	.585	1.461	80.525				
14	.559	1.398	81.923				
15	.539	1.348	83.271				
16	.481	1.203	84.474				
17	.448	1.119	85.593				
18	.433	1.082	86.676				
19	.424	1.060	87.736				
20	.396	.991	88.727				
21	.395	.988	89.714				
22	.349	.872	90.586				
23	.330	.826	91.412				
24	.316	.791	92.202				
25	.302	.755	92.958				
26	.287	.717	93.674				
27	.279	.698	94.373				
28	.265	.663	95.035				
29	.249	.623	95.658				
30	.223	.557	96.215				
31	.219	.548	96.764				
32	.192	.480	97.244				
33	.187	.468	97.712				
34	.174	.435	98.147				
35	.151	.378	98.526				
36	.142	.355	98.881				
37	.132	.331	99.211				
38	.114	.284	99.495				
39	.104	.259	99.754				
40	.098	.246	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

Table 14

Pattern Matrix[a]

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
I help students with questions related to after school assignments.	.814		.103	
I proactively reach out to parents when issues arise regarding student learning or well being.	.803			
I provide at least two hours of after school tutoring or enrichment services.	.794			
I organize and participate in extracurricular interest activities or study groups.	.791			
I pay close attention to students' emotional wellbeing and learning needs after school.	.791			
I use multiple channels (phone calls, messaging groups, school platforms) to maintain communication with parents.	.775			
I regularly communicate with parents about their child's performance at school.	.773			
I listen to parents' feedback and adjust my teaching practices accordingly.	.771			
I develop individualized after school learning plans based on student differences.	.770			
I organize or take part in parent teacher meetings and collaborate with parents on educational strategies.	.759			
POSTAS34		.788		
POSTHS39		.787		-.109
POSTHS40		.786		
POSTAS33		.780		
POSTAS32		.777		
POSTAS31		.770		
POSTHS37		.762		
POSTHS38		.761		
POSTAS35		.741		
POSTHS36		.710		.203
POSTHD26			.793	
POSTHD27			.784	
POSTHD28			.780	
POSTHD30			.777	
POSTCR23			.758	
POSTCR25		.123	.758	
POSTHD29		-.107	.755	
POSTCR21	.111		.739	
POSTCR22	-.172		.730	
POSTCR24			.713	
I incorporate information technology or multimedia tools to support instruction.				.823
I provide timely and detailed feedback when correcting assignments				.789
I use homework design to promote autonomous learning and inquiry.				.783

I adapt my teaching pace and methods based on real time classroom feedback.				.780
I adjust homework difficulty according to students' performance.				.745
I design tiered homework assignments to accommodate students with different proficiency levels.				.738
I adjust my teaching content to align with students' learning styles and interests.				.723
I establish clear learning objectives before each lesson and implement them in class.		.100		.705
I use a variety of instructional strategies in class to meet different students' needs.			.171	.704
I guide students to complete most written assignments during class time.	-.234			.669

3.12 Inferential analysis

RQ1: Role Changes Before and After the Policy

Descriptive statistics revealed consistent improvements in teachers' role performance post-policy:

Table 15

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total_PRECR	120	10.00	22.00	15.1500	2.49924
Total_PREHD	120	10.00	24.00	15.5417	2.47643
Total_PREAS	120	6.00	22.00	15.2667	2.92406
Total_PREHS	120	7.00	22.00	15.5417	2.79825
Total_POSTCR	120	10.00	22.00	16.0083	2.57818
Total_POSTHD	120	10.00	24.00	16.3917	2.82038
Total_POSTAS	120	9.00	23.00	15.8000	2.85681
Total_POSTHS	120	9.00	22.00	16.0083	2.71472
Total_PRE	120	41.00	78.00	61.5000	6.90268
Total_POST	120	43.00	82.00	64.2083	7.61014
Valid N (listwise)	120				

Table 16

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Total_PRECR	15.1500	120	2.49924	.22815
	Total_POSTCR	16.0083	120	2.57818	.23535
Pair 2	Total_PREHD	15.5417	120	2.47643	.22607
	Total_POSTHD	16.3917	120	2.82038	.25746
Pair 3	Total_PREAS	15.2667	120	2.92406	.26693

	Total_POSTAS	15.8000	120	2.85681	.26079
Pair 4	Total_PREHS	15.5417	120	2.79825	.25544
	Total_POSTHS	16.0083	120	2.71472	.24782
Pair 5	Total_PRE	61.5000	120	6.90268	.63013
	Total_POST	64.2083	120	7.61014	.69471

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							Significance	
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
Pair 1	Total_PRE - Total_POST	2.70833	10.16783	.92819	-4.54625	-.87042	-2.918	119	.002	.004

A paired-sample t-test confirmed a significant overall improvement (t(119) = –2.918, p = 0.004), with a mean difference of –2.71 (95% CI: [–4.55, –0.87]). Classroom teaching design and homework guidance showed the largest gains, while after-school services and home-school, communication trended upward but did not reach statistical significance.

H2: Correlations Between Teacher Characteristics and Role Change

Correlation analyses examined relationships between four demographic variables and total role change scores (CHANGETOTAL):

Teaching experience: r = –0.023, p = 0.806 (no significant association).

Professional title: r = 0.118, p = 0.201 (no significant association).

School type (public/private): r = 0.131, p = 0.154 (no significant association).

School location (urban/suburban): r = –0.127, p = 0.168 (no significant association).

All p-values exceeded 0.05, indicating no systematic relationship between teacher characteristics and the magnitude of role change. Thus, H2 was not supported.

Table 17

Correlations

		Teaching Year	CHANGE TOTAL
Teaching Year	Pearson Correlation	1	-.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.806
	N	120	120
CHANGETOTAL	Pearson Correlation	-.023	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.806	
	N	120	120

Table 18

Correlations

		Professional Title	CHANGETOTAL
Professional Title	Pearson Correlation	1	.118
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.201
	N	120	120
CHANGETOTAL	Pearson Correlation	.118	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.201	
	N	120	120

Table 19

Correlations

		School Type	CHANGETOTAL
School Type	Pearson Correlation	1	.131
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.154
	N	120	120
CHANGETOTAL	Pearson Correlation	.131	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.154	
	N	120	120

Table 20

Correlations

		School Location	CHANGETOTAL
School Location	Pearson Correlation	1	-.127
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.168
	N	120	120
CHANGETOTAL	Pearson Correlation	-.127	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.168	
	N	120	120

H3: Predictors of Role Change

A multiple regression model with CHANGETOTAL as the dependent variable and demographic variables as predictors yielded:

Model fit: $R = 0.205$, $R^2 = 0.042$ (adjusted $R^2 = 0.008$), indicating the model explained only 4.2% of variance in role change.

ANOVA: $F(4,115) = 1.255$, $p = 0.292$ (model not significant).

Individual predictors: None of the variables significantly predicted role change:

Teaching experience: $\beta = 0.007$, $p = 0.942$.

Professional title: $\beta = 0.114$, $p = 0.221$.

School type: $\beta = 0.111$, $p = 0.231$.

School location: β = –0.111, p = 0.234.

Tolerance values (≈0.97) and VIF (≈1.03) ruled out multicollinearity. Thus, H3 was not supported.

Table 21

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.205[a]	.042	.008	10.12455	1.928

a. Predictors: (Constant), School Location, Professional Title, School Type, Teaching Year
b. Dependent Variable: CHANGETOTAL

Table 22

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	514.547	4	128.637	1.255	.292[b]
	Residual	11788.244	115	102.506		
	Total	12302.792	119			

a. Dependent Variable: CHANGETOTAL
b. Predictors: (Constant), School Location, Professional Title, School Type, Teaching Year

Table 23

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-.237	3.754		-.063	.950		
Teaching Year	.015	.200	.007	.073	.942	.968	1.033
Professional Title	1.037	.842	.114	1.232	.221	.978	1.023
School Type	2.283	1.895	.111	1.205	.231	.979	1.022
School Location	-2.246	1.879	-.111	-1.195	.234	.969	1.032

a. Dependent Variable: CHANGETOTAL

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The RRCS demonstrated high reliability (α > 0.86) and valid four-dimensional structure (63.61% variance explained) in formal data. Paired-sample t-tests confirmed significant overall improvements in teachers' role performance post-policy (H1 supported), with the largest gains in classroom teaching design and homework guidance.

However, no significant associations were found between teacher characteristics (experience, title, school type/location) and role change magnitude, and demographic variables failed to predict changes (H2 and H3 not supported). After-school services and home-school, communication showed modest, non-significant progress. These findings indicate the "Double Reduction" policy uniformly expanded teachers' roles across demographic groups, with improvements concentrated in core instructional responsibilities.

This study empirically analyzed the impact of the "Double Reduction" policy on the professional roles of junior high school teachers in Zhejiang Province, revealing three key findings: First, the policy significantly reshaped teachers' roles. Post-policy, teachers' overall role performance scores ($M = 64.21$) were significantly higher than pre-policy ($M = 61.50$; $t(119) = -2.918$, $p = .004$), with notable improvements in classroom teaching design and homework guidance. This aligns with the policy's core goals: reducing off-campus tutoring and enhancing in-school education quality. Teachers expanded from traditional "knowledge transmitters" to multi-dimensional roles, including "high-quality classroom practitioners," "scientific homework designers," "after-school service organizers," and "home-school communication coordinators." For example, in homework guidance, teachers increasingly adopted tiered assignments and real-time feedback, while in classroom teaching, they integrated more diversified strategies and technology—changes directly reflecting policy requirements for improved in-school education efficiency.

Second, demographic variables showed no significant correlation with role change magnitude. Teaching experience, professional title, school type (public/private), and location (urban/suburban) exhibited weak correlations with role change scores ($|r| \leq .131$, $p > .15$) and collectively failed to predict changes in regression models ($R^2 = .042$, $p = .292$). This suggests the policy's impact on teacher roles is universal across groups. Regardless of seniority, title, or school context, teachers faced similar pressures to adapt to new responsibilities, such as extended working hours for after-school services and intensified parent communication.

Third, role transformation involved both positive expansion and latent tensions. While teachers' competence in key areas improved, the study also noted increased workloads (average daily working hours exceeding 13 hours) and role conflicts—such as

balancing teaching duties with after-school care or managing parental expectations with administrative demands. These tensions reflect the policy's dual effects: promoting educational quality while imposing heavier burdens on teachers.

4.1 Tensions in role expansion and reconstruction

From the perspective of role theory, the "Double Reduction" policy triggered a process of role reconstruction accompanied by significant tensions. Merton's "role set" concept helps explain this: teachers' traditional roles (e.g., classroom instruction) now intersect with new roles (e.g., after-school tutors, parent counselors), creating complex role sets. Policy mandates—such as ensuring most homework is completed in school and providing 2+ hours of after-school services—expanded teachers' responsibilities beyond conventional boundaries, leading to role overload.

Empirical data confirms these tensions. Teachers reported compressed personal time and intensified work rhythms, with female teachers and homeroom teachers facing greater strain due to overlapping work and family responsibilities. Role conflicts emerged between "professional educator" and "caregiver" identities, as teachers struggled to balance instructional quality with emotional support for students. Parsons' structural functionalism framework further illustrates this: the education system's shifting demands (from exam-oriented to holistic development) forced rapid adjustments in teachers' role norms, creating dissonance between institutional expectations and individual capacity.

Notably, role expansion also has positive potential. The need to design tiered homework and diverse after-school activities pushed teachers to enhance professional skills, such as differentiated instruction and activity design, which may foster long-term professional growth. However, without systemic support, these pressures risk leading to burnout, undermining policy effectiveness (Jin & Zhang, 2022).

4.2 Meaning-making and behavioral adjustment in new roles

Symbolic interactionism provides insight into how teachers subjectively adapt to role changes. Blumer's emphasis on "meaning assignment through social interaction" explains teachers' dynamic renegotiation of their roles. Initially, many viewed after-

school services as a burden, but through interactions with colleagues, students, and parents, they gradually redefined these responsibilities as integral to "holistic education."

For example, teachers reported shifting perceptions of homework design: from "task assignment" to "tools for autonomous learning," reflecting a deeper understanding of the policy's goal to reduce mechanical repetition. Similarly, home-school communication evolved from "reporting student performance" to "collaborative education," with teachers proactively sharing educational strategies via multiple channels (e.g., messaging groups, parent-teacher meetings). These adjustments were not passive compliance but active meaning-making: teachers aligned new roles with their professional values, such as viewing after-school care as part of "nurturing students' comprehensive development."

This process was influenced by contextual factors. Schools with strong collaborative cultures facilitated faster role adaptation, as teachers shared best practices in lesson planning or parent communication. Conversely, teachers in rigid environments often struggle with role ambiguity, highlighting the importance of organizational support in shaping role acceptance.

This study enriches educational policy and teacher role research in three ways:

Validating role theory: It confirms Merton's "role strain" and Parsons' "social system role norms" in the context of Chinese education reform. The uniform impact of the policy across demographic groups suggests institutional pressures (policy mandates) override individual differences, expanding role theory's application to top-down policy implementation scenarios.

Extending symbolic interactionism: By highlighting teachers' active role negotiation, the study shows policy effects depend not only on mandates but also on subjective meaning-making. This complements prior research (e.g., Yao, 2010) by demonstrating how micro-interactions shape macro-policy outcomes.

Bridging gaps in "Double Reduction" research: Most existing studies focus on student burdens or policy implementation (Wei, 2024; Wang, 2022), while this study centers teachers as key agents, revealing the policy's "unintended consequences" (e.g., role overload) and filling the micro-level research gap.

The findings offer actionable insights for policy refinement and educational practice:

Strengthen teacher support systems: To address role overload, schools should optimize workload distribution—for example, hiring auxiliary staff for after-school services and streamlining administrative tasks. Financial incentives (e.g., subsidies for extended hours) and psychological counseling could mitigate burnout.

Enhance targeted training: Workshops on differentiated homework design, efficient parent communication, and after-school activity planning would equip teachers with skills for new roles. Training should be tailored to avoid "one-size-fits-all" approaches, even though demographic variables showed no correlation with role change.

Improve home-school collaboration mechanisms: Schools could establish standardized communication protocols (e.g., scheduled parent-teacher meetings, digital platforms for feedback) to reduce teachers' informal communication burdens. Community resources (e.g., volunteer educators) could also share after-school service responsibilities.

Policy optimization: Policymakers should balance "burden reduction" for students with "burden alleviation" for teachers, avoiding rigid mandates (e.g., mandatory 2-hour after-school services) and allowing flexibility based on school conditions.

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