

American After-school Service Evaluation System and Its Enlightenment to Chinese After-school Services under the “Double Reduction” Policy

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Abstract: The introduction of the “double reduction” policy has further promoted the reduction of students’ burdens, the correction of After-school training, and the improvement of After-school services. Students and their parents have higher expectations for After-school services. How to establish a normalized, standardized, and diversified After-school service system and improve the quality of After-school services has become our compulsory education stage to solve the problem. Throughout the current research about After-school services in our country, we are still in the infancy stage, the implementation of After-school services is varied, and various types of After-school counselling organizations occupy a large proportion of After-school service market, which makes it difficult to conduct effective regulation and evaluation for a long time. After years of development of After-school services in the United States, they have very rich experience in the evaluation of After-school services and are worthy of our reference. Therefore, this research will be based on the service evaluation after class in terms of purpose, content, and method; the results analysis of these three aspects will summarize experience and draw lessons from it in combination with China’s national conditions on the basis of class services; and the formation that belongs to China after the class service evaluation system will be used to get inspiration, advice, and formation to provide more quality services after class in our country.

1. Introduction

In July 2021, the general office of the central committee of the communist party of China, the State Council, issued “Opinions on Further Easing the Burden of Excessive Homework and Off-Campus Tutoring for Students Undergoing Compulsory Education.” The delay services should meet the needs of the students’ basic school class. With the goal of allowing students to return to campus better, it proposes the requirements of “improving the level of After-school delay services and meeting the diversified needs of students” from the aspects of quality, time, and channels of After-school services [1]. The introduction of the “double reduction” policy has further promoted the reduction of students’ burdens, the correction of off-campus tutoring, and the improvement of After-school services.

Students and their parents have higher expectations for After-school services. The focus of After-school services has shifted from increasing the number of services to improving the quality of those services. Improving the quality of After-school services has become an important step in the standardization of After-school services.

As for the current domestic literature on After-school services, this article found that the quality of After-school services conducted by most schools is uneven, cannot meet the diverse learning needs of students, and is difficult to promote the healthy growth of students, mainly because there is no systematic evaluation system for After-school services in our country. Some studies have found that the best evaluation method for After-school services is multi-party joint evaluation, which is diversified and comprehensive. However, teachers are not very satisfied with the results obtained by the current After-school service evaluation method, believing that they do not reflect their real level. For example, Ouyang Chunyan mentioned it in her “Research on the Implementation Status and Countermeasures of After-school Services in Primary Schools in Shenzhen—Based on the Empirical Survey of 10 Primary Schools.” The evaluation methods of After-school services in schools are integrated, showing that 90% are multi-party evaluations and 10% are parent and student evaluations. In response to the question, “What do you think of multi-stakeholder evaluation?” 95% of the teachers chose to disagree [2]. The above may be due to the fact that the evaluation is not carried out fairly and strictly, resulting in the dissatisfaction of most teachers with the evaluation results. As can be seen from the above, it also reflects the imperfect supervision mechanism of After-school services, which in the long run will affect teachers’ enthusiasm for After-school services, cause emotional treatment of After-school services, and is not conducive to long-term orderly and quality development. It is urgent to further discuss and solve this problem. Therefore, the best way to effectively evaluate the After-school services is to guide their development with high quality and then play the key role of education.

Throughout our country’s current research on After-school services, we can find that current Chinese After-school service research is still focused on the After-school service contents and the improvement of the policy; there is no research to systematically construct the evaluation system of After-school services in China. At the same time, the implementation of After-school services is diversified, and various types of After-school counselling organizations occupy a large proportion of the After-school service market, which makes it difficult for the government to carry out effective supervision and evaluation for a long time. However, through searching foreign literature, the author found that, in fact, after years of development of After-school services in the United States, they have very rich experience in the evaluation of After-school services and are worthy of our reference. Therefore, based on China’s basic national conditions, we should learn from the US and set up a strict system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of After-school services, with the government as the main force and the community as a supplement, so that we can offer better After-school services.

Based on the analysis of the evaluation of American After-school services in the aspects of purposes, contents, and results, this study will put forward suggestions on China’s After-school services in the above three aspects on the basis of combining China’s national conditions in order to form an After-school service evaluation system that belongs to China so as to provide better After-school services in China.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept Definition

There are a lot of explanations and introductions about After-school services and the evaluation system in previous studies. Ran Qiuling put forward the concept of After-school services, expressed the use of After-school services in the field of education after the promulgation of national policies,

and described the embodiment of After-school services. Cui Qing further optimized the concepts related to After-school services and proposed the value and significance of these services. As the result of this paper is the need to put forward relevant inspiration for China's After-school services, this paper will use the concept of After-school services proposed by Ran Qiuling and Cui Qing. In this research scenario, the concept of After-school services is described as follows: In the Guidelines issued in March 2017, the concept of "After-school services" was first put forward, also known as school care, After-school care, extended service, After-school service, etc. Schools provide organized life care, protection, and education for a period of time to promote the balanced development of students' physical and mental diversified service forms. So-called class service generally refers to the school as the main organization implementer. By fully utilizing the existing resources management, human resources, and site, students' After-school service responsibility makes full use of the time after class to develop science and technology, sports, art, and rich and colorful activities such as reading, to meet the personalized requirements and the comprehensive development of students. In addition, voluntary participation should be taken as the basic premise, and students should not be forced [3]. Some scholars regard After-school services as public welfare and an inclusive policy. It is a non-disciplinary teaching activity carried out by schools or other social groups after class from Monday to Friday with the purpose of reducing the burden of students and solving parents' problem of picking up children. Its essence has multiple values [4]. Due to the need to best fit the topic of this paper (multiple screening and comparison), Chen Yukun's definition of the concept of an evaluation system is more suitable for this paper. That is, evaluation is a judgment of the degree to which the object meets the needs of the subject, which is essentially a value judgment. In terms of evaluation elements, evaluation is mostly split into evaluation purpose, evaluation content, evaluation method, and evaluation result [5].

2.2. Research Methods

2.2.1. Document Analysis Method

Document analysis is a scientific research method to search, collect, identify, sort out, analyze, and study existing relevant documents and data so as to achieve a certain purpose of investigation and research. This paper mainly focuses on the evaluation system of American After-school services and studies the evaluation types, implementation, and subjects. Therefore, it is necessary to make full use of various approaches, such as library and online search, to collect domestic and foreign works, academic journals, magazines, and other documents related to "American After-school services," "After-school services," and "evaluation system" and conduct a comprehensive analysis on them. In order to understand and master the previous research status of cultural traditional education, form a systematic understanding and expand the research topic on the basis of previous research. At the same time, documents for this study are mined from documents for the previous study. This gives this study a strong theoretical foundation and a detailed factual foundation.

2.2.2. Comparative Method

The comparative method in comparative education is to make a comparative study of the educational system or educational practice in different countries (or regions) according to certain standards and find out the special and universal laws of education in different countries. The outstanding advantage of the comparison method is that it can show the characteristics of the research object [6]. At the same time, we analyze and summarize the experience and problems in the current evaluation of After-school service in the United States and then look into the current evaluation of After-school service in China to provide useful reference for the future development of Chinese After-school service evaluation.

3. Evaluation Systems of After-school Services in the United States

3.1. The purpose of the Evaluation System of After-school Services in the United States

After years of development, After-school services in the United States have already formed a complete set of evaluation systems. Many states have developed detailed evaluation tools according to the actual situation of local After-school services. For example, New York State's self-developed Quality Self-Assessment Tool (QSA) is designed to help After-school programs work with stakeholders to better grasp indicators of quality development in After-school programs and to reflect on all aspects of their program operations. This enables it to identify strengths and weaknesses in project development without external supervision and evaluation pressure [7].

3.2. Contents and Methods of the Evaluation System of American After-school Services

After-school programs focus on improving program quality based on program standards, the core competencies of program staff, the evaluation of research and methods for continuous improvement, and the further development of a support system that integrates training, comprehensive professional development, and technical assistance. For example, in Maryland's After-school system, evaluation and analysis are inseparable from program quality, which runs through the decision-making, design, operation, and improvement of After-school programs. The Maryland Excellence Counts in Early Learning and School Age Care program, for example, is a voluntary quality rating and improvement system that plays an important role in the evaluation of After-school programs. The system rates child care programs provided by families, child care centers, and public schools, as well as programs for school-age children, on aspects such as program licensing, learning environment, staffing and professional development, developmentally appropriate learning and program practices, child assessment, program management, policies, and accreditation. Youth Program Quality Assessment and School-Age Program Quality Assessment are designed to assess the quality of youth and school-age programs. They also identify the training needs of program staff, whose evaluation criteria are used to verify the safety and effectiveness of After-school programs across the state. The quality assessment focuses on the quality of the experiences that young people have when they attend seminars and classes, complete group projects, participate in meetings and discussions, and participate in regular activities. The assessment included: safety of the environment, supportive environment, interaction, engagement, adolescence-centered policies and practices, and expectations for the adolescence-centered children and program staff. In addition, the National Institute for Out-of-School Time is a leader in defining and promoting out-of-school time programs, recognizing extracurricular practice as an area of expertise based on evidence-based quality standards. The Institute does in-depth research, training, evaluation, and consultation for everyone involved in After-school programs. Its goal is to improve the quality of After-school programs for all children and teens by measuring the quality outcomes of all participants, evaluating the effectiveness of policies and practices, and teaching people how to evaluate themselves [8].

3.3. Results of the Evaluation System of After-school Services in the United States

In 2014, the After-school Services Alliance released "An In-depth Look at After-school Services: Results are Significant and the Future is Bright." The report was evaluated by university research institutes and youth development institutes. The evaluation methods were empirical research and interviews, and the evaluation conclusion was that students who participated in After-school service programs had positive changes in school attendance, school activity participation, emotional attitude, and behavior performance. In 2017, the After-school Service Alliance released "the Conclusions of the Research on Community Learning Centers in the 21st Century" and "the Conclusions of the

Research on After-school Service Programs,” reaffirming the positive impact of After-school services on students, including promoting student learning, improving attendance, improving engagement in learning, and enhancing basic skills. In addition to the After-school Service Alliance study, a number of other neutral scholars or groups have done similar quality assessment studies and come to the same conclusion: After-school service programs not only help students do better in school, but they also make them less likely to do dangerous things.

However, some studies have found that the positive effects of After-school services are not significant. Robert Apsler argues that the quality of some studies evaluating After-school services is difficult to maintain. First, there are defects in the methodology of the research, which cannot stand logical scrutiny and a reality test. Second, it is difficult to obtain the data of the appropriate comparison group because more than half of the middle school students chose to give up after participating in the project for one year, and the average time for students to participate in the project is short—about 30 days for middle school students and 60 days for primary school students [9]. Obviously, students benefit differently depending on how long they participate in the service, but these students have been grouped together in many studies. If students in the experimental group are compared with those who do not participate in After-school service projects at all, it is difficult to determine whether the difference is between the experimental group, the intervention group, and the control group, or the difference within the experimental group itself, even if there are differences in the results. For example, students who actively participate in After-school activities have better academic performance, which may be due to the fact that students who participate in After-school services work more subjectively and are more willing to improve their academic performance. If we make a comparative study between schools that offer After-school service programs and those that do not, even if we find that the overall performance of students in schools that participate in After-school service programs is better, it cannot be ruled out whether this is caused by the difference in the original level of the two schools [10].

4. The Enlightenment of the Evaluation System of American After-school Services to Chinese After-school Services

At present, in order to respond to the call of the national policy, cities have actively promoted After-school services. This is a form of educational progress, but there are still a series of difficulties and problems in the process of implementing After-school services. To effectively implement and improve After-school service activities and ensure the healthy development of services, according to the above exploration of the American After-school service evaluation system, we suggest that the evaluation system of Chinese After-school services start from the three aspects of practical design, ideological cognition, and system establishment, so as to realize the overall synergistic effect of education and give play to the joint efforts of various educational forces.

4.1. Make Clear the Value Position and Service Subject of After-school Services

Today, the “double reduction” policy is a major measure to help balance the development of the education ecosystem. Under the “double reduction” policy, schools’ After-school services, as the “necessary supplement” of school education, are in essence “the return of the origin of education,” and the underlying logic is “the rediscovery of people.” After the implementation of the “double reduction” policy, how to cooperate with the school to “reduce students’ burden and improve education’s quality” is an important issue. The concept of After-school services in our country has not been systematically defined, and we need to explore the Chinese After-school service and its development history, combined with references to American After-school services, to form a final fit for our concept of After-school services. After-school service, in essence, is an important tool to

promote the reform and development of national basic education, but it is also an important tool to promote the balanced development of compulsory education. In fact, it is also the key to easing the rat race of social education, managing the order of educational institutions outside the school, playing the main front role of school education to a greater extent, and effectively implementing quality education. At the micro level, After-school services will truly realize students' all-round development of ability in areas such as morals, intelligence, physical fitness, work, and aesthetics; effectively stimulate teachers' sense of responsibility and mission; relieve parents' anxiety; return to the true nature of education; and promote the all-round development of individual human life. It is of great significance to orderly promote the work of "double reduction" and promote the high-quality development of basic education. In the actual service development, the school should play a good role as the master, give full play to the advantages of the site, personnel, and other resources, and on the basis of ensuring the safety of students through the normal "blank period" after school, according to the actual situation of students, the service content should be implemented in a planned, organized, and targeted way to meet the needs of students' personalized development.

4.2. Develop Rich Teaching Contents and Form Systematic Teaching Methods

In American After-school services, the teaching content is rich, and they adhere to the student-centered philosophy, provide students with a more diversified choice of activities, and promote the comprehensive and diversified development of students. As another supplementary teaching method of school education, After-school services are of great help to the improvement of students' quality education. But at present, the Chinese school curriculum is relatively single, based mainly on tutoring work and students' independent learning; the characteristics of the Chinese curriculum are not comprehensive, and it is difficult to achieve the diversification of service education in the short term. As a new form of trusteeship, extending After-school services not only helps teachers take care of students after class but also enriches students' After-school lives to a large extent, gives full play to students' potential, and encourages students to grow in many aspects. The After-school services provided by schools or third-party off-campus institutions should be flexibly adjusted according to the hobbies and needs of students and the educational objectives of the school's or institution's educational philosophy, including psychological counseling courses, sports interest courses, patriotic education courses, and wilderness survival skills courses. We can also give students more research activities, lead them to visit tourist attractions in other regions, or visit and experience science and technology museums. From campus to off-campus, students can get a variety of forms of care and learning, from the knowledge level to the cognitive level to the emotional level of comprehensive development, which can achieve the essential purpose of After-school services.

4.3. Formulate a Systematic and Comprehensive After-school Service Evaluation System

The After-school service in the United States has a relevant After-school service quality evaluation system, no matter if it is at the federal level, the state level, or the local level. This fundamentally provides the possibility of building a comprehensive customer service system. The implementation subject of After-school services in our country is varied, and various types of After-school counseling organizations are dominant in the After-school market, which makes it difficult for the government to carry out effective supervision and evaluation for a long time. Therefore, when conducting evaluation activities, the school should first clarify the evaluation objectives and then clarify the responsibilities of each department. In the evaluation, each department performs its own duties to ensure efficiency. Finally, the evaluation results should not only be presented in the form of specific values but also in the form of an evaluation report to clarify their own advantages and shortcomings and make targeted improvements. Generally speaking, the greater the weight of an indicator, the more

important it is. Therefore, we suggest that schools pay attention to the organization and input of this part when carrying out activities. For off-campus third-party institutions, we need to put forward clear supervision requirements, implement a strict examination and approval system for off-campus training institutions, and make clear provisions on training time, teaching content, and teaching staff qualifications so as to further reduce the burden of off-campus training for students. In our research, we know that the After-school service evaluation system in the United States has not only the Ministry of Education but also some third-party institutions' own targeted After-school service evaluation tools. For example, SEDL's National Center for Quality Afterschool in the United States developed and designed a set of After-school service guidelines by studying a number of excellent After-school care examples. It is used to guide the day-to-day operations, staff development, and partnerships of the After-school service. The guidelines include four evaluation indicators: program organization, academic programming practices, supportive relationships in afterschool, and achieving program outcomes. Under each indicator, there are two sets of tools: Quality-O-Meter and Planning for Action.

5. Conclusion

The “double reduction” policy is a major decision to comprehensively implement the Party’s educational policy, carry out the fundamental task of cultivating virtues and cultivating people, and build a high-quality basic education system. It is also a strategic layout for the reform and development of basic education. The introduction of the concept of After-school services is actually a great advance in education and other fields. It extends the time dimension of education but also broadens the space dimension. Then, combined with the competitive demands of contemporary society, a series of off-campus training institutions emerged. However, the current domestic education policy does not have a perfect enough system for After-school services, which leads to the disordered expansion of off-campus training institutions, causes disorder in the internal order of the education system, destroys the balance of the education ecosystem, and produces a lot of education problems. The United States is one of the first countries to implement the “After-school programs” in primary and secondary schools and has rich practical experience. Therefore, after summarizing and analyzing a large number of Chinese and English texts, this paper attempts to make reference to the purpose, content, methods, and results of the American After-school service evaluation system, examine the status quo of Chinese primary and secondary school services, learn from the experience of the American After-school service evaluation system, and explore the improvement of Chinese primary and secondary school service level from the various aspects. Using what we know about our country, this article aims to make our After-school service system better.

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