

Qualitative Research on Parents "Education Anxiety" in Haidian, Beijing and Their Views on "Double Reduction" Policy

Yibing Li¹

¹Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Beijing Forestry University, Beijing 100083, China
liyibing223@163.com

ABSTRACT

Recently, the education anxiety experienced by parents in Haidian and the awareness of competition have seen an upward trend as a result of the push of all sorts of extracurricular and tutoring classes agency. The social issues caused by education anxiety are emerging and growing, especially the involution among parents and students in Haidian, Beijing. Different parents have different attitudes towards the "Double Reduction" policy established in Beijing. In this study, 15 parents who lived in Haidian and experienced different levels of education anxiety were interviewed, and the data was coded by open coding, spindle coding, and selective coding. This study finally puts forward the mechanism of psychological change behind the parental anxiety of Haidian parents, the leading role of parental anxiety, and the reasons for the negative and positive attitude towards the "double reduction" policy and the future trend, and also makes a comparative analysis of parents with different genders and different educational systems.

Keywords: *Haidian parents, Education anxiety, Overloaded Kids, Educational involution, Double Reduction policy, Extracurricular classes*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

In recent decades, tutoring has become a common phenomenon worldwide. It was first prevalent in East Asian countries, and then expanded to Africa, Europe, and the Americas. Existing studies on Asian Americans have also found that Asian parents have higher educational expectations for their children than other ethnic groups, and this expectation can be further extended to the educational expectations of those children of their own.

In countries with Confucian cultural traditions, there is a belief that education can change one's fate, that is, the belief that "carp jump over the dragon's gate," which is dispersed throughout society, regardless of social hierarchy. Under this circumstance, China's parents have high expectations for their children's education [7]. At the same time, the one-child policy that began in the late 1970s and early 1980s has greatly reduced the number of children in urban families, which further enhances the parents' high attention to their

children's education, which may enhance parents' educational expectations.

In recent years, parents' educational anxiety and competitive awareness have become increasingly fierce under the impetus of various off-campus training institutions. Especially in developed urban areas, various social issues and contradictions induced by educational anxiety have become increasingly prominent. The top ten catchwords of 2021 issued by the Beijing Daily's "YAOWEN JIAOZI" editorial department are: "Great Changes Not Haven't A Hundred Years", "Well-off", "Catch-up", "Double Reduction", "Carbon Peak, Carbon Neutralization", "Crazy shopping", "Breakdown", "Overloaded Kids", "Lie Down", "Metaverse" [6]. Among them, "Double Reduction" and "Overloaded Kids" are closely related to educational anxiety. The competition among "Overloaded Kids" is particularly fierce in the Huangzhuang, which is located in the Haidian District, Beijing. Huangzhuang is also regarded as the Overloaded Kids' holy land, and the centre of the top six middle schools.

1.2. Summary of studies and problems posing

Educational anxiety is a complex emotional state of people's tension, anxiety, worry, and worry about the uncertainty brought about by the educational process and the educational results, which runs through the panic of "backward education" throughout education [8]. When the expectation in the educational process differs from the expected outcome, parents experience educational anxiety. In the analysis of the causes of educational anxiety, it focuses on the macro-social mechanisms level, such as the sense of scarcity of educational resources caused by competition and ranking, unfair competition and unbalanced quality educational resources, the integration trend of parents and children, the influence of media publicity and educational institutions, etc.

"Reducing students' homework burden and off-campus training burden in compulsory education" is referred to as "double reduction." Beijing officially released the "double reduction" measure on August 17, 2021. In the verbal sense, the so-called "Overloaded Kids" verbly mean that parents overload their children by putting them in many extracurricular classes, mobilizing all possible resources, constantly motivating children to move forward, and arranging learning activities for children to become the best in the competition. In the nominal sense, "Overloaded Kid" means a child raised by parents who keep putting a lot of educational pressure on their children [5]. Based on the above, the main research object of this study is the parents who have experienced different levels of educational involution in the Haidian District of Beijing. This qualitative research is mainly carried out on two aspects: what kind of education anxiety the parents have behind the "Overloaded Kid" and what kind of views the parents of Haidian have on the "double reduction policy."

1.3. Theoretical basis

On the PISA test in 2012, the average weekly extracurricular learning time of the students in the provinces participating in the test in China, together with off-campus counseling and private tutors, lasted about 17 hours. It can be seen that the effect of the burden reduction policy is not significant, the students' academic burden is still heavy, and the family anxiety has not been alleviated [4].

Based on the 2014-2015 school year data from China Education Panel Studies (CEPS), the linear regression model and the logistic regression model are constructed. The results show that the higher the family's economic level and family cultural level, the more the parents tend to adopt a consultative parenting style and actively participate in family-school cooperation. The greater the family's economic and cultural capital, the more inclined

they are to choose academic counseling classes to achieve class reproduction; parents with consultative parenting styles value not only home-school cooperation, but also their children's comprehensive ability development and choose art-interest classes for their children.

A study of Beijing's "Occupy Pit Class" found that families' willingness to choose a top-tier middle school is the most fundamental driving force for extra-curricular tutoring, and "Occupy Pit Class" provides a front-line opportunity for families with good qualifications and resources invested under the psychological domination of helplessness, fear, and mobility [2]. Competitive pressure and tutorial information can be transmitted through the parent network, where competitive pressure may be amplified, while tutorial information may provide guidance for parents to further conduct. Under the background of all families paying high attention to their children's education, parents' competitive pressure and related behavioral strategies from peer groups will become an important reference for their educational choices. The pressure of peer groups is not limited to whether to choose extracurricular tutoring or even what kind of tutoring classes to attend.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Research objects

The method of purposive sampling was used to select parents who lived in Haidian District of Beijing and had experienced different levels of educational involution for interview.

Inclusion criteria: ①The time they spent living in the Haidian District of Beijing accounted for more than half of the children's education stage. ②Children have gone through or are going through the stage of entering their elementary school, junior high, senior high and university entrance examinations (GaoKao). ③Children have participated in or are participating in any form of extracurricular class. ④Those parents have informed consent to participate in this study.

2.2. The introduction of the research method

In this qualitative research, semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to collect data. Each interview lasted about 60 – 80 minutes, which was all agreed upon by the respondents and followed the principle of confidentiality. The data analysis was completed by OSR Nvivo 12.0, and the encoding process followed the grounded theory method.

2.3. The introduction of sample sizes

In this study, 15 parents who lived in Haidian and experienced different levels of education anxiety were interviewed.

Table 1 The introduction of sample sizes

No.	Age	Gender	Education level	Occupation	Child's age
P1	43	Female	Bachelor	Freelance	14
P2	49	Female	Doctor	University teacher	20
P3	54	Male	Master	University administrator	20
P4	41	Female	Master	Stay-at-home mom	10
P5	49	Female	Bachelor	Junior high teacher	20
P6	47	Male	Master	Top manager of a foreign enterprise	10
P7	46	Female	Doctor	University teacher	14
P8	44	Male	Doctor	University teacher	9
P9	46	Male	Doctor	University teacher	Twins
P10	40	Female	Vocational secondary	Stay-at-home mom	16
P11	49	Male	Master	Top manager of a central enterprise	13
P12	49	Female	Junior college	Logistics personnel in a university	20
P13	37	Male	Master	University teacher	7
P14	53	Female	Bachelor	Business and finance staff	20
P15	54	Male	Junior college	University staff	22

3. RESULTS

3.1. Data analysis

The data analysis was completed by OSR Nvivo 12.0, and the encoding process followed the grounded theory method [1]. The first step of open coding takes "Haidian parents' anxiety about "Overloaded Kids" education and "double reduction" policy view" as the core to identify, emphasize, and list meaningful units, and give the concept a name until the theory is saturated. The analysis process was completed by one coder, with 80,268 original words in transcripts, 347 and 185 reference points, 28 and 29 topic-related concepts, respectively. In the second principal axis coding, the internal relations among these categories are clarified and sorted out. Through continuous comparison, the significance contained in the related concepts of these

themes is further extracted, and 5 and 2 related themes are obtained. The third step is selective coding, aimed at establishing a theoretical system with internal consistency. On the basis of existing concepts, a core category that can cover all categories and phenomena most often is selected or refined as the research ideas and clues, forming a global theory and explanation. Finally, the coder checked the coding process and the code name to ensure that the concept and the original data can be closely correlated, and that there is a systematic link between concepts to ensure that the theory reaches the saturation point of the concept.

3.2. Word frequency

The tables below show the frequency of words with a minimum length of 2,3,4 and 5.(According to the original materials)

Table 2 The frequency of words with a minimum length of 2

Original words	Length (Chinese)	Total	Weighted percentage (%)
Child	2	719	1.32
School	2	292	0.54
Competition/ Compete/ Compare	2	271	0.50
Parents	2	252	0.46
Extracurricular	2	166	0.30
Elementary school	2	148	0.27
Study	2	146	0.27
Extraordinary/ Special	2	145	0.27
Policy	2	139	0.26
Anxiety/ Anxious	2	137	0.25
High school	2	111	0.20
Fundamental/ Essence	2	107	0.20
Teacher	2	106	0.19
Others/ The majority	2	97	0.18
Agency/ Organization	2	97	0.18
Junior high	2	94	0.17
Grade	2	93	0.17
Time	2	89	0.16
Subjects	2	88	0.16
Math	2	86	0.16

Table 3 The frequency of words with a minimum length of 3

Original words	Length (Chinese)	Total	Weighted percentage (%)
One to one/ private teacher	3	48	0.09
Kindergarten	3	24	0.04
All-round student	3	22	0.04
Extracurricular classes	3	21	0.04
Tuition classes	3	21	0.04
Tutorial classes	3	19	0.03
Puberty/ Adolescence	3	18	0.03
More and more/ Gradually	3	17	0.03
Naturally	4	15	0.03
Impose uniformity	3	14	0.03
The majority	3	13	0.02
Postgraduate/Master	3	13	0.02
Physics and Chemistry	4	12	0.02
Haidian district	3	11	0.02
Students with special	3	11	0.02

skills			
Nearly/Almost	3	10	0.02
Robot	3	10	0.02
Higher education	4	10	0.02
Difficult path	3	9	0.02
Ballet	3	9	0.02

Table 4 The frequency of words with a minimum length of 4

Original words	Length (Chinese)	Total	Weighted percentage (%)
Naturally	4	15	0.03
Physics and Chemistry	4	12	0.02
Higher education	4	10	0.02
Take things step by step	4	8	0.01
Suffer a drastic decline	4	6	0.01
Treat others with respect	4	6	0.01
Outstanding	4	5	0.01
Developed country	4	4	0.01
Compulsory education	4	3	0.01
Shoulder heavy responsibilities	4	3	0.01
To the best of one's ability	4	3	0.01
Dubitate/ Doubtful/ Uncertain	4	3	0.01
Hope that their children will be successful	4	3	0.01
Dream/ highly coveted	4	3	0.01
Every trade has its master	5	3	0.01
Reverse psychology	4	3	0.01
985211 (Top-tier universities)	6	2	0.00
Everything goes smoothly	4	2	0.00
Achieve overnight	4	2	0.00
Do more with less	4	2	0.00

Table 5 The frequency of words with a minimum length of 5

Original words	Length (Chinese)	Total	Weighted percentage (%)
Every trade has its master	5	3	0.01
985211 (Top-tier universities)	6	2	0.00

3.3. Coding results

The figures and tables below show the Coding results of parents "Education Anxiety" in Haidian, Beijing and their views on "Double Reduction" policy.

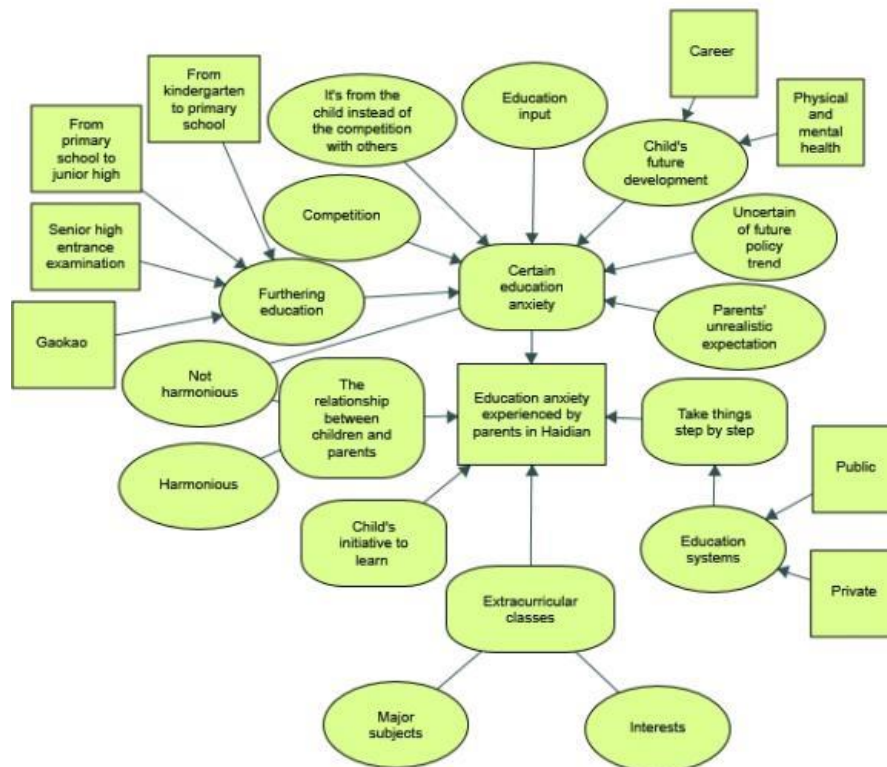


Figure 1: Concept map of "Education anxiety experienced by parents in Haidian."

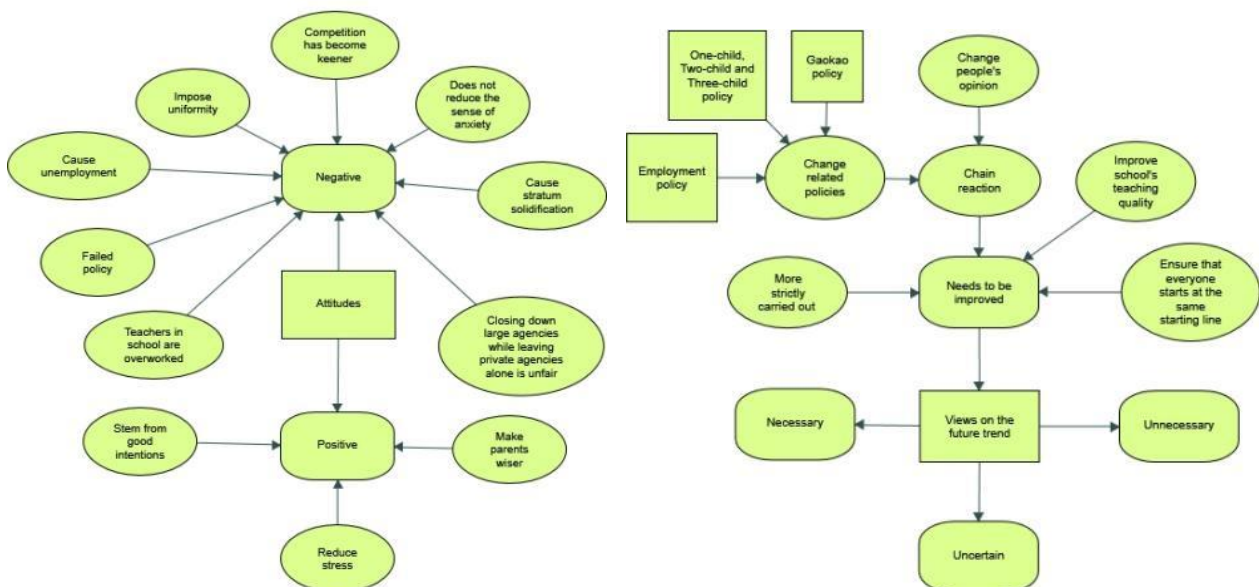


Figure 2: Concept map of Haidian parents' views on "Double Reduction" policy

Table 6 Coding results of parents "Education Anxiety" in Haidian, Beijing

Core categories	Selective coding	Spindle coding	Open coding	Reference point
Education anxiety experienced by Haidian parents	Different types of education anxiety	Furthering education	"From elementary school to junior high", "Gaokao" etc.	97
		Competition	"The majority", others etc.	35
		Uncertain of future policy trend	"Ambiguous Gaokao policy "	1
		It's from the child instead of the competition with others	"Respect for children's will", "Pay attention to their own interests" etc.	6
		Education input	"High education input", "the most percentage of parents' income" etc.	15

		Parents' unrealistic expectation	"Hope for top-tier schools" etc.	6
		Child's future development	"Career", "Mental and physical health" etc.	39
	Take things step by step	Education systems	"Public", "Private" etc.	40
	Extracurricular classes	Major subjects	"Math", "Physics and chemistry" etc.	33
		Interests	"Ballet", "Robot" etc.	29
	The relationship between children and parents	Harmonious	"Intimate", "Enjoy spending time" etc.	26
		Not harmonious	"High pressure spending together", "Conflicts" etc.	20

Table 7 The coding results of parents' views on "Double Reduction" policy.

Core categories	Selective coding	Spindle coding	Open coding	Reference points
Attitudes	Negative	Competition has become keener	"More involution" etc.	21
		Does not reduce the sense of anxiety	"The anxiety is not formed just overnight" etc.	12
		Impose uniformity	"Can't be change overnight" etc.	10
		Closing down large agencies while leaving private agencies alone is unfair	"They have Higher performance-price ratio" etc.	6
		Cause unemployment	"Many staff in those education companies lost their job" etc.	2
		Cause stratum solidification	"Rich parents have more money for private education" etc.	17
		Teachers in school are overworked	"More burden on teachers' shoulders" etc.	5
		Failed policy	"Why not encourage competition" etc.	8
	Positive	Stem from good intentions	"Good intentions" etc.	24
		Reduce stress	"Prevent the involution to some extend" etc.	14
		Make parents wiser	"Not crazy anymore" etc.	2
Future policy trend	Needs to be improved	More strictly carried out	"Do it just for show" etc.	8
		Chain reaction	"Change related policies at first", "Change people's opinion at first" etc.	31
		Improve school's teaching quality	"School's teaching quality is more important" etc.	3
		Ensure that everyone starts at the same starting line	"Education should be more fair" etc.	2
	Uncertain	Have no idea	"Can not predict the future" etc.	4
	Necessary	"Double Reduction" policy is necessary	"It's necessary to carry out this policy" etc.	14
	Unnecessary	"Double Reduction" policy is a failed policy	"It's a failed policy"	2

4. CONCLUSION

4.1. Conclusion of parents "Education Anxiety" in Haidian, Beijing

Through the comparison and analysis of the materials, it can be learned that the core categories of parents' mentality are constructed mainly from the following four aspects: (1) On these four levels, education anxiety is most reflected. Educational anxiety is mainly affected by six aspects: higher education, compared with other parents or children, unclear policies, educational investment, high expectations, and unclear direction of future course selection. The most concerning topics for parents in Haidian are 'From elementary school to junior high and "Gaokao". (2) Working according to the department mainly refers to following the education system. (3) The extra-curricular classes include subject-extra-curricular classes and interests-extra-curricular classes. Among them, "math" and "physical and chemistry" are the most frequently mentioned subjects, and "robot" and "ballet" are the most frequently mentioned non-subjects. (4) In terms of the parent-child relationship, it mainly includes two aspects: harmonious parent-child relationship and unharmonious parent-child relationship. The harmonious parent-child relationship usually occurs "when the child is very young" or "after the child goes to college or university". The unharmonious parent-child relationship usually occurs in the period of "preparing for the further education examinations" and "Children's puberty".

It can be seen that parents' education anxiety is mainly from "Furthering education" and "Extracurricular classes". For the aspect of "Furthering Education", Haidian parents are most concerned about the Stage of "Elementary school to junior high" and "Gaokao". This is consistent with the previous study in developed cities on the parents' education anxiety. On this basis, We further explore the causes and mechanisms of Beijing Haidian parents' education anxiety.

In the overall interview results, we also found the similarities and differences between different types of parents, which is something new discovered based on previous studie:

All 15 of the parents interviewed indicated that they are or were experiencing some level of anxiety about their children's education, and they all send their children to various types of extra-curricular classes beginning in kindergarten or elementary school.(2) Male parents are less concerned about their children's education than female parents, and their input is also lower compared with female parents. However, in general, male parents have higher expectations for their

children than female parents. (3) When compared to parents whose children attend university, elementary and secondary school parents have a poorer parent-child relationship than university and kindergarten parents; elementary and secondary school parents have much higher levels of educational anxiety than kindergarten and university parents. (4) Overloading children will not only cause higher levels of education anxiety for parents, but also affect the harmony of the parent-child relationship to a certain extent. (5) Compared with their children's performance, most parents pay more attention to their children's physical and mental health development. (6) Parents who pay more attention to children's personal interests and show more respect for their children's personal will are more likely to have a harmonious parent-child relationship.

4.2. Conclusion of Haidian parents' views on the "Double Reduction" policy

Through the comparison and analysis of the materials, it can be seen that the views of parents in Haidian on the "Double Reduction" policy mainly include two core categories: "Attitudes" and "Future policy trend". The core category of "Attitudes" is constructed from two levels: "Negative" and "Positive". The core category of "Future policy trend" is constructed from the four levels: "Needs to be improved", "Uncertain", "Necessary" and "Unnecessary".(1) The overall attitude of Haidian 's parents towards the "Double Reduction " policy is mainly "Negative", which mainly includes 8 levels: "Competition has become keener", "Cause stratum solidification", "Does not reduce the sense of anxiety", "Failed policy", "Impose uniformity", "Closing down large agencies while leaving private agencies alone is unfair", "Teachers in school are overworked" and "Cause unemployment". In terms of "Positive", it includes the following 3 aspects: "Stem from good intentions", "Reduce stress" and "Make parents wiser". (2) There are 4 types of Haidian parents' views on the future trend of the "Double Reduction " policy: "Needs to be improved ", "Uncertain", "Necessary" and "Unnecessary". "Needs to be improved " is the main part, which includes "Ensure that everyone starts at the same starting line" and "Improve school's teaching quality".

The majority of those parents believe that this policy is necessary and stems from good intentions. However, the parents think that there are also several things that need to be improved, and it doesn' t meet the expected goal. The method to make this policy more effective is to focus more on the reaction chain behind it. Firstly, people' s opinions on different kinds of occupations and education levels should be changed. Secondly, the related policies should be carried out in the meantime, such as the Gaokao policy, the Three-child policy, and the employment policy, etc.

4.3. Deficiencies and prospects

This study has the following problems: ①Most of the samples in this study are highly educated, and most of them are university staff. Therefore, the results of this study are not completely random and it is not fully representative of the population at large, and there are certain errors. ② The concept map and coding results of this study are still complex, and we need to further extract the most core concepts. ③ The theoretical basis of this study is weak as there are few studies of the same nature.

This study explains the mechanism of psychological change behind the "Overloaded kids" of parents in the Haidian District of Beijing, the leading role of educational anxiety, and the reasons for the negative and positive attitudes of parents in the Haidian District of Beijing towards the "double reduction" policy and the future trend of this policy. We also make a comparative analysis of parents with different ages and genders, parents with different educational systems, parents with different educational levels, parents with different occupations, and parents with children at different ages, and finds out the differences between them. In future studies, we can further explore the reasons for the above conclusions, as well as the relationship between parents' education anxiety and "Double Reduction" policy views, related concepts, causes, and mechanisms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Guangxin Wang at Beijing Forestry University. This research could not have been completed without his instruction.

Next, I would like to extend my deepest thanks to my English teacher Ms. Melissa O., who helped me a lot with correcting my expression and grammar.

Finally, I'm extremely grateful to the 15 interviewees who participated in my research. This project would not have been successful without their support.

REFERENCES

- [1] Anselm L. Strauss, Juliet M. Corbin. (1998). Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory. [M].SAGE Publications.
- [2] CHEN Bin-li, BAI Xiao-xi. (2015). SES,Peer Pressure on Parents,and Private Tutoring of Primary Students in Beijing:Evidence from a Survey in Haidian District. [J]. Tsinghua Journal of Education. (05),102-109.
- [3] Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. (2008). Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory. [J].SAGE Publications.
- [4] Feng Bo and Song Lili. (2018). Interpretation of the current situation of parental education anxiety in Chinese cities. [J].Management observation, 2018 (23): 141-143.
- [5] Huang Xuejing. (2021). Anxiety ' s "Over-loaded kids":interpretation, derivation and others. [J].Learning Chinese (05), 89 - 90.
- [6] Lu Yanxia. (2021). 《 YAOWEN-JIAOZI 》 releases this year ' s top ten catchwords. [N]. Beijing Daily, 013
- [7] Qin Jiayao. (2021). The enlightenment of family education anxiety in China from the perspective of burden reduction failure. [J]. Jilin Education (34), 5-6.
- [8] Zhang Yichao (2017).Children ' s comparison, middle-class anxiety and class solidification. Educational research and comment. [J]. (5) : 33-35.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

