

## Integrated Development of Online Educational and Training Institutions and Schools in Primary and Secondary Levels in The Post-epidemic Era

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**Abstract:** The global outbreak and the spread of the Covid-19 in 2020 has compulsorily driven the transition from traditional teaching models to online teaching. However, the issuance of the “double reduction” policy, which aims to ease the burden of excessive homework and off-campus tutoring, makes the transformation of major extracurricular tutoring institutions imminent. In this essay, by interviewing students, parents, schoolteachers at primary and secondary levels, and extracurricular tutoring teachers, we found that for most students and parents, online education institutions are important for their learning. At present, there are many problems with online education and tutoring institutions. However, we believe that if they can speed up the transformation of their mode and role, develop a curriculum, and make efforts to enhance their professional teaching staff, teaching contents, teaching mode, and teaching materials, they will be able to exist in a new form and work together harmoniously with schools, and then make joint efforts to improve students’ learning outcomes.

### 1. Introduction

In recent years, with the rapid development of modern information and internet technology, the education model has gradually moved from traditional offline education to online education. And the global outbreak and spread of the new crown epidemic in 2020 has led to disruptions in offline school delivery. This forced a complete transition from traditional to online teaching and learning. As a result, online education has grown exponentially. Students at primary and secondary school level became one of the most important audiences for online education. During the epidemic, the online education model ensured that primary and secondary school education was carried out in an orderly manner. The online education model has the advantage of breaking down time and space barriers, enriching teaching resources and providing a variety of teaching tools. While ensuring the health and safety of primary and secondary school students, online education provides teachers with a great deal of convenience in their teaching work.

Now that offline schooling has returned to normal in China, after-school blending of online and traditional education will become the norm in the post-epidemic era. This diverse and integrated educational practice is not a simple superimposition of traditional classroom and networked learning, but an organic integration of new teaching models with different teaching targets, contents and needs. At present, many traditional education institutions and emerging Internet companies are exploring the best model for online education in this kind of hybrid teaching. Among them, the K12 stage of education, which is highly valued in China's traditional education, is undergoing huge changes in the wave stirred up by this wave of online education. Some of the original extra-curricular tutoring institutions that had been focusing on traditional offline education. Such as Good Future and New

Oriental have started to dabble or increase their investment in online education to seek a new model of symbiosis with school education.

On 24 July 2021, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council issued the Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Off-Campus Training on Students at the Compulsory Education Stage. Since this year, many places have taken action to promote the process of "double reduction" by focusing on the management of off-campus training and improving the quality of teaching in schools, such as the cessation of subject-based summer courses at the compulsory education level in Beijing. The issuance of the "double reduction" opinion has led to an imminent transformation of major extra-curricular tutoring institutions. The search for a new teaching model that can co-exist with school education has become a major direction for the future development of extracurricular tutoring institutions.

Based on the analysis of questionnaire data from students, parents and institutions, this paper explores how to find a symbiotic positioning and model for primary and secondary extracurricular training institutions in the post-epidemic era in the light of the current policy environment of increasing state regulation of extracurricular online training institutions, and provides a scientific direction for the integration of multiple teaching models in the post-epidemic era.

## 2. Literary Review

Shao Juan and Hu Xiaoying (2020) argued that the well-developed internet, improved hardware facilities, people's increased awareness of independent learning, national policy guidance, and national self-confidence stemming from strong comprehensive national power are the main factors that have led to the surge in online tutoring. Liu Xiuying (2020) discussed the current development of online education at the primary and secondary school levels from two perspectives: supply and demand, respectively. On the supply side, national policies, laws, and regulations, such as *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of Private Education* and *Opinions on Encouraging Non-governmental Forces to Run Education and Promoting The Healthy Development of Non-governmental Funded Institutions* (issued in 2017) have provided policy and financial support to those privately run educational institutions, which is very favorable for various social forces to participate in the construction of private education and has encouraged the development off-campus tutoring institutions. During the epidemic, many training institutions went into a winter period as a result, but it coincided with the breeding of online teaching, a new form of extra curriculum. Coupled with the fact that the Top-10 tutoring institutions are mainly concentrated in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities thus Tier 3 and Tire 4 cities still have a big potential market, this new form of tutoring can continuously develop very fast. On the demand side, with a huge base of students at primary and sencondary school levels and imbalanced resources, those families who are desperate to raise their scores are turning to extra-curricular online tutoring institutions, which are flexible in terms of time, location, and format, as a good tool to improve their competitiveness. Additionally, people's income levels are gradually rising, as a result they are spending a higher proportion of their money on education, contributing to a substantial market. Lian Yujing, Liang Bin and Luo Ziqian (2018) mentioned that the largest number of people choose the traditional big three subjects of language, mathematics, and foreign language tuition, with science and chemistry following closely behind. At the primary and secondary levels, the higher the grade students are in, the more subjects they chosen and enrolled.

It is worth noting that online tutoring, as an emerging education model, has generated many problems while developing at a rapid pace. According to Lu Lichuan (2020), online education at the primary and secondary school levels in China suffers from imperfect industry standards, inadequate government regulation, and insufficiently refined teacher thresholds, leading to a mix of institutions with different quality. In addition, the increase in user demand will lead to an intensification of the Matthew Effect, which means that large institutions with stronger resources, technology, experience, and marketing methods will always have a bigger hold on the market. He also mentioned that low matched rate of teachers and varying quality make the gap between educational resources more

pronounced as well. Online education also lacks interactivity, making it difficult for students to have an authentic classroom experience. Yang Mei and Qiu Guoyong (2021) pointed out that the lack of network lag and information technology, teacher's insufficient IT skills, students' insufficient self-learning ability and self-management ability all have an impact on online teaching and learning. Ren Shina (2021) reflected on the online education and tutoring industry at the primary and secondary levels from an ethical perspective, pointing out that such online tuition suffers from weak embodiment of moral and humanistic care. In this mode of education, students are in a state of being managed, and the only criteria are scores. The communication and interaction between students and teachers as well as among students themselves are insufficient. This kind of score oriented online tutoring is less responsive to the individual needs and interests. At the same time, the high cost of online tutoring courses puts financial pressure on parents. Apart from that, the over-abundant variety of resources and excessive marketing very much influence students' and parents' choice of courses. The quality of such online courses is uncontrollable. The fees are semi-transparent, and students' overuse of electronic devices also worried a lot parent. Overall, the problem of distrust is a big issue. Shi Zhongfu and Han Xiu (2020) point out that there is a large gap and uneven distribution between cities and towns in terms of online education resources, technology, and interaction.

The issue of off-campus online tutoring at primary and secondary levels has aroused hot discussion in recent years. In today's post-epidemic era, especially, the government has strengthened its discipline in this area. Previously, scholars have fully discussed the background, reasons, advantages, and disadvantages, as well as the influences of online tutoring courses. The main purpose of this essay is to explore that under the current increasing regulation against online extra curriculum at the primary and secondary levels, if online tutoring courses are possible or necessary to continuously exist. If the answer is optimistic, what role and mode of those online educational institutions should take to co-exist and cooperate with schools in a sustainable approach.

### **3. Research Design**

#### **3.1 Research questions**

Given the growing importance of online education, its popularity with social capital and the recognition of education stakeholders (parents, students, education administrators, teachers), online education will continue to grow, but recently it has been subjected to a series of governmental regulatory measures that have led both institutions (online education and schools) to consider how to respond. In order to be able to explore how the two can develop symbiotically, this study proposes to explore the following questions.

- 1) How different are the needs of school teachers, parents, and students for online education?
- 2) what the roles that online education providers can play?

#### **3.2 Study Subjects**

Students and parents in Neijiang City, Sichuan Province, teaching and training practitioners from New Oriental and Xueersi and teachers were selected as interview respondents for this study.

#### **3.3 Research tools**

This study used both questionnaires and interviews as research tools. The questionnaires were administered to students and parents, while the interviews were conducted with practitioners and schoolteachers.

##### **3.3.1 Questionnaires**

The questionnaires for this study are divided into two parts, a parent version, and a student version, with the parent version of the questionnaire divided into 5 sections and the student version into 4 sections. The dimensions and questions are shown in the chart below.

Table 1. Student Version

Dimension (student version)	Corresponding title numbers
Basic information	1-3
Options for online education	4-10
Satisfaction with online learning	11-14
The relationship between online education providers and schools	15-17
Basic information	1-3

Table 2. Parent Version

Dimension (parent version)	Corresponding title numbers
Basic information	1-2
Attitudes towards online education	3-5
Reasons for attending online education or not	6-11
Satisfaction with online learning	12-16
The relationship between online education providers and schools	17-18

### 3.3.2 Interview

The interviews are divided into two parts, one with New Oriental and Xueersi online education teaching and training practitioners, and the other with serving teachers in schools.

The questions in the educational interviews with online institutions in primary and secondary schools covered three areas: assessment of the quality of teaching and learning in online education, the teaching and learning process under anticipation, and the relationship between online educational institutions and schools. The topics are as follows.

1) Please provide a brief summary of your basic information (subject specialization background, years of teaching experience, subjects currently taught, length of time in current position, and whether you have a teaching certificate)

2) What types of training have you received prior to teaching?

3) How do you think these training measures will help the quality of teaching services in the future?

4) What do you think of the current quality of teaching in the school?

5) Does the quality of teaching in the school meet the current needs of students to learn and cope with examinations?

6) What do you think are the reasons why schools are not meeting the learning needs of students?

7) Do you agree to attend tutorials?

8) What do you think of the quality of education at your educational institution? Can it meet the shortcomings of students' learning at school?

9) What do you think is the relationship between online tutoring education institutions and schools?

Four areas of interviews of in-serving teachers in the school are basic information about the teachers in the school, their views on teaching and learning in the school, their evaluations of the online lessons used during the epidemic and their views on online education. The topics were as follows.

1) Please provide a summary of your basic information (subject specialization background, years of teaching experience, subjects currently taught, time in current position)

2) How do you feel about the current quality of teaching in schools?

3) How do you organize your students' lessons and assignments? Are there too many homework assignments or after-school exercises?

4) What are your views on students attending extra-curricular classes?

- 5) Are you satisfied with the format of the online access classes in the epidemic?
- 6) What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of online classes compared to offline classes?
- 7) Do you feel that online access to classes has had any impact on the quality and outcomes of teaching in offline classes first? If so, in what specific ways?
- 8) Which teaching method do you think you prefer, online or offline education? What are the reasons?
- 9) What do you think of online education?
- 10) What do you see as the relationship between online and offline education?
- 11) What are your thoughts on the future of online education?

## **4. Analysis of Data**

### **4.1 Results of the students' version of the questionnaire**

A total of 46 students in primary school, 15 in junior secondary school and 7 in senior secondary school participated in this questionnaire. Of these, 39 students reported using online education for enhanced learning after school.

### **4.2 Options for Online Tutoring Providers**

When it comes to the choice of online tutoring institutions, teaching quality is the primary factor that students consider, with 83.82% of students choosing this item. This is followed by faculty strength and service quality, accounting for 58.82% and 42.65% respectively. About a quarter of the students also consider reputation and fee rates. The questionnaire shows that three-quarters of the students believe that attending online education institutions for training is the result of joint negotiation between parents and themselves, and about 14% of the students even initiate this demand. The main goals of these students in online education training are to make up for weak subjects, develop advantages, and consolidate knowledge, with the need to make up for weak and develop advantages being greater. At present, the online education modes chosen by these students are mainly one-to-one tutoring, small live classes, and large live classes. In terms of subject choice, math and English are the two subjects that students most often choose for online tutoring, followed by Chinese. It is worth noting that 39.71% of students chose online educational institutions for art and interest-based training. Among the students who participated in the questionnaire, the probability of online training was 1-2 times per week for about 40, 3-5 times for 24 students, and even up to 6 times or more per week for 3 students. It is evident that online institutional training has an important supporting role in the learning of these students. These students believe that the main benefits of participating in online educational institutions are the freedom to control their study time and place, and the ability to share more good teachers. In addition, about half of the students cited the effectiveness of tutoring, the ability to improve their grades quickly, and the ability to interact with more people as important reasons for choosing an online provider to supplement their learning.

### **4.3 Satisfaction with Online Tutoring Courses**

When undertaking training with an online education provider, about half of the students said they would interact with the teacher and about a quarter said they would interact with other students online. Over 86% of the students felt that interaction between teachers and students is necessary. Of these 68 students, 40 thought that the quality of the content of the online education provider training was high enough to meet their learning needs. However, 16 students still expressed uncertainty about the quality of the institution's teaching, and two students outright denied that the institution's teaching would meet their expectations. Nearly 50 students felt that the teaching methods of the educational institutions were appropriate and that the course content was of the suitable length for their learning habits. Of these students, about a quarter would watch the lecture videos repeatedly to reinforce their knowledge. Forty-nine students said that the online education and training providers were able to answer their problems in a timely manner. However, when asked how to deal with difficult problems

in their studies, most students chose to ask someone close to them or to search for answers on the Internet, while only seven students said they would seek help from teachers at online education institutions.

#### **4.4 The Relationship Between Online Tutoring Institutions and Schools**

Regarding the relationship between learning at school and learning at online educational institutions, the number of students who think that there is already a lot of school work thus the extra work at institutions makes them feel more pressed and the number of students who think that the number of tasks set by institutions is reasonable thus both school and institutional learning tasks are completed on time are approximately equal. Fifty-nine students, or 86.76% of those who participated in the questionnaire, thought that online educational institutions could explain their knowledge in a more refined way and make them understand what they were taught at school more thoroughly. About 23% of students think that, in general, participating in online education is a relief from having to study for a long time at school and being able to freely choose what, when and where to study. About 26% of students think that participating in online training adds extra class work and total hours of study, making it difficult to balance the study tasks assigned by school, which is a burden increase. About half of the students believe that participating in online education neither increases nor decreases the burden. This shows that participation in online educational institutions has different effects on students with different receptive abilities and varies from person to person. Overall, online educational tutoring allows students to share better educational resources, but the existing teaching contents and models do not fully meet students' expectations. Online tutoring providers need to make some improvements to make this kind of extra-curriculum a good complement to school education.

### **5. Discussion**

From the results of the questionnaire, it is easy to see that the quality of teaching is the primary factor that students consider. Most of the students attended online educational institutions as a result of joint negotiations with their parents, and some of them even require initiatives to attend such training. The most important goal of these students is to make up for weak subjects and to develop advantages. This shows that it is difficult to consider every student's situation with generalized school education, therefore, for many families, online educational institutions play an important role. In turn, online educational institutions should continue to make efforts in finding quality teachers, teaching resources, developing content outlines, and preparing teaching materials. Most students believe that the quality of content trained by online educational institutions meets their needs and helps them achieve their learning goals. However, when faced with a problem, most students still choose to seek help from those around them rather than turn to the teachers at online education providers. Online providers may need to improve on timeliness and question – answer mechanisms. Most students believe that online providers can give a more detailed and comprehensive explanation of what they have learned in school so that they can better understand and grasp it. It is worth noting that since students' ability to receive and resist stress varies from person to person, many students say that participating in such online tutoring adds an extra academic burden that makes it impossible to balance the learning tasks assigned by school and institutional tutoring. Therefore, in the future, government authorities may need to regulate the functions between schools and online tutoring and develop a syllabus that will enable online educational institutions to complement school education well and assist students at all levels to achieve their academic goals.

For parents, more than half of them believe that school education does not meet their children's educational needs, and as the use of the Internet and electronic devices in education becomes more popular, more parents are starting to let their children try online education as an emerging mode of learning. In their opinion, the primary advantage of online education is the freedom to schedule learning time. In terms of learning effectiveness, some parents directly stated that online education has significantly helped their children's learning. In addition, it is worth noting that nearly half of the parents said that online education also has the effect of improving their children's motivation and

increasing their sense of accomplishment. An overwhelming majority of parents agree that online education helps students solve their geographical problems while giving them free time to study and provide various teaching resources. Therefore, they hold the view that online tutoring institutions can be integrated with schools and make joint efforts to promote their children's learning. However, without the supervision of teachers, students themselves have a greater influence on the effectiveness of online education than traditional schooling.

In terms of online education institutions, there are currently no uniform standards for the qualifications of teachers, and teaching qualifications are not mandatory. Pre-service training alone is clearly not enough, so institutions must strictly regulate and assess the competence and level of their teachers if they want to improve the quality of education they provide and develop in a healthy manner. Online education institutions can make up for the shortcomings of heavy schooling tasks and lack of relevance in large class sizes, assisting schools to consolidate and expand students' knowledge. According to teachers at the institution, student motivation and learning ability are the main factors affecting the effectiveness of teaching. However, most of the teachers in the schools disagree with the online tutoring, saying that it adds to the students' learning burden, is not conducive to their absorption of knowledge, and that the quality of these educational institutions cannot be guaranteed. In addition, teachers believe that online tutoring has a negative impact on the eyesight of primary and secondary school students who are at a prime stage of physical development. In line with the institutional teachers, schoolteachers also believe that student self-discipline is a key factor in learning outcomes. Therefore, whether learning at school or at an online institution, the student is always the main subject of learning and attention must be paid to mobilizing the student's learning initiative and motivation.

To sum up, if online institutions, with the help and supervision of the government, are committed to making efforts in the areas of teacher strength, teaching quality, teaching content and form to complement the school, accelerate the transformation and seek integration with the school, then the emerging model of "online + offline" may become the new education industry model in the future.

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