

Educational Practitioners' Perspective on After-school Services' Future Development- A Comparative Study between China and Ireland

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ABSTRACT

China and Ireland's investment in after-school education presents a polarization. Irish government issued a series of policies to support families having affordable childcare services and after-school services. Nevertheless, the importance of after-school education has not been emphasized by Chinese government and there are barely supportive policies. With such disparate policy guidance, there is an evident discrepancy in practitioner's perspectives on after-school education. Through conducting a semi-structured interview with 10 practitioners from China and 10 practitioners from Ireland, findings present that Chinese practitioners argue that after-school education in China is a valuable and considerable market, which is a significant benefit to the industry. They have confidence in Chinese parents who give priority to their child's education, choosing the service for their children to acquire extra knowledge and skills so that they could adapt to the highly competitive educational setting, which could help the industry expand in the future. Conversely, Irish practitioners are more likely to evaluate that after-school education in Ireland is a stable industry, seeking more opportunities from the government's subsidence would become their main goal for future development, rather than a business which targets parents as their potential customers. Irish practitioners view that after-school educational services are essential for children and a beneficial component for family well-being. Moreover, the after-school education industry in Ireland is not as competitive as in China. To conclude, the findings could provide readers with a better understanding of practitioners' disparate and contrasting perspectives on after-school educational service from a multi-culture level.

Keywords: capitalization; educational policy; educational system; nonprofit; market-oriented