

Policy Influence over the Development of Private Education in China

Ning Tang¹, Ximing Chen², Cinnamon Bennett³, Karl Baker-Green⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Sheffield Hallam University, UK

Abstract

This paper explores the policy impact on private education in China. It first defines private education in the Chinese context, followed by a review of socio-economic policy changes and their influence over the development of private education in China from a historical perspective. This historical reflection will pave the way for the next focus on more recent policy changes, including the Chinese Covid policies and new regulation of the private sector, both of which have significant implications on the future of private education in post-Covid China.

This paper builds on recent education policy reviews which concentrate on Chinese government policies and regulations specifically about private education (e.g. Zancajo 2019, Dong 2020, Liu 2023), private education governance systems (e.g. Dong 2017, Xin 2021), and hurdles and challenges in the operation of private education (e.g. Zhou 2018, Zancajo 2019, Jiang 2021, Liu 2023). It links these policy issues regarding private education to the background of socio-economic policy changes in China, therefore examining the development of private education in a broader context of socio-economic development of China. More specifically, the paper locates the investigation of private education in the policy context of the following historical periods:

- Socialist transformations and monopoly of state ownership (1949-1965)
- The Cultural Revolution and the destruction of private enterprises (1966-1976)
- Economic reform and the resurrection of private enterprises (1977-1991)
- Open-door policy and socialist market economic strategies (1992-2021)
- Regulations of the private sector and the consequences of tough anti-coronavirus policies (2021-update)

The paper will conclude with the argument that it is not sufficient to discuss the policy issues pertaining to private education without looking at its broader socio-economic policy background in the Chinese context.

Keywords: private education, China, policy changes, historical perspective