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Author

GAO, Guijuan

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Abstract

This article reports on field research conducted in 1999-2000 in three of the larger cities in China (Wuhan, Xiamen and Shantou). It explores the workings of the educational service of the self-taught higher education examination (STE) that emerged in China in the early 1980s. Findings from questionnaires, in-depth interviews, observations and analysis of documents led to the conclusion that the educational goal of the STE, although implicit, is frustrated and diluted because of the following reasons: (i) inefficiency due to an absence of controls through regulations and legislation specifically applicable to state, province and county levels of administration. (ii) Inadequate and inconsistent communication between high-level administration and the local operation of educational services. Lack of communication results in the STE as a system declining in national examinations. It emphasizes note memorization rather than creative thinking implicit in the purpose of educational service institutions. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)