

The new independent higher education institutions in China:

Dilemmas and challenges

Luxi Zhang & Bob Adamson

The Hong Institute of Education

Authors Note

Luxi Zhang, Graduate School, The Hong Kong Institute of Education.

Bob Adamson, Department of International Education & Lifelong Learning, The
Hong Kong Institute of Education.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Luxi ZHANG,
RmB401, Grantham Hall, HKIEd, 10 Lo Ping Road, Tai Po, NT, HK. Email:
s0872108@ied.edu.hk

Abstract

One impact of globalization has been the expansion of higher education to meet changing current socio-economic and political requirements. This expansion places considerable stress on the public purse, and many states have turned to alternative solutions. In China, a new phenomenon has emerged: independent higher education institutions that complement public and private institutions in helping to cater for the expanded numbers of students. These independent institutions are formed through partnerships between existing institutions and the business sector. This paper first analyses the political, socio-economic and cultural contexts that shape the policy of developing independent institutions. However, dilemmas and challenges concerning the quality of independent institutions have arisen at the implementation level. The partnership between public and private sectors is unveiled through the story of City College of Zhejiang University, which was recognized by the state as a successful example of an independent institution. However, the study finds that this success was based on moves towards elitism, raising issues of social equity.

Keywords: Independent institutions, partnership, decentralization, challenges

The new independent higher education institutions in China: Dilemmas and challenges

Introduction

Higher education has flourished under globalization, at least in terms of student enrolments. The changing nature of socio-economic needs and the increasing complexity of skills and competences required for future employment have resulted in the governments around the world seeking to expand their provision of higher education (Ma, 2005). This expansion has placed strains on the public purse, especially in times of harsh economic circumstances, and governments have sought to increase the engagement of private agencies in higher education and to allow the development of competition and markets (Marginson, 2007). The competitive ethos and marketization produced four layers of educational-social practices in higher education: educational-social practices in higher education: the lived educational practices of the academic (teaching, writing, examining, administering, and so on); the social quest for status as students compete for educational opportunities and

institutions compete for prestige on the basis of research and scholarship; and commercial endeavours, through which institutions seek to generate income to fund other activities (Marginson, 2004).

Competition and marketization are also observable in China, a country that was once renowned for tight state control and central planning of higher education. However, after the then paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping initiated economic reforms in 1978, including the Open Door policy that encouraged foreign investment in the country, and subsequent landmark events such as the creation of Special Economic Zones in coastal areas of China in the early 1980s, the push to modernize the impoverished western regions of the country from 1999 onwards, and joining the World Trade Organisation on December 11, 2001, the state has loosened its grip. Following Deng's pronouncement in 1983 to "orient education towards modernization, the outside world and the future" (Agelasto & Adamson, 1998), major reforms in higher education were implemented. In 1985, large-scale changes were made to admissions policies, graduate employment assignments and governance, with regional and local governments and individual institutions being granted a greater degree of autonomy. In 1992, further reforms increased the influence of market forces as well as autonomous institutional operation, in an effort to render higher education more

sensitive to societal needs. The “211 Project” established in 1995 created an elite group of 100 universities, tasked with reaching world-class status in terms of scholarship and quality. This project was followed by moves to expand higher education, with a target of raising the enrolment of school leavers from under 10 percent in 1998 to 25 percent by 2010 (Gu, Li & Wang, 2009). To cater for this expansion in the 1990s, the state encouraged the further development and autonomy of *minban* (private) higher education, a sector that had been re-established in China in 1982 as an alternative channel for funding higher education (Mok & Chan, 1998).

Another innovation in the late 1990s was the establishment of *duli* (independent) institutions. These independent institutions are defined as ‘secondary undergraduate institutions, which are established according to new mechanisms and new models by state-owned colleges or universities’ (Ministry of Education, 2003). In essence, they are a partnership between the public and private sectors. “New mechanisms” refer to flexible ways of attracting financial support from different sources, while “new models” point to the new institutions enjoying independence in management, albeit regulated through cooperation with the parent state-owned institutions (Liu & Jia, 2003). The Ministry of Education stated that an independent institution should be run by entrepreneurs, following the principle of “seven independences”: independent

campus and basic facilities, relatively independent teaching and administrative staffing, independent student enrollment, independent certification, independent finance budgeting, independent legal entity and independent civil responsibilities.

Official figures show the total number of higher education institutions in China in 2009 was 2,689, of which 658 were private institutions in the regular higher education system and 322 were independent institutions (Ministry of Education, 2010). There were 2,414,000 full-time students in the 322 independent universities, constituting 86.7% of undergraduates in private schools (City College of Wenzhou University Propaganda Office, 2010). These independent institutions currently enroll some 40% of the all undergraduates in the regular higher education system (College Enrollment, 2009). Ministry of Education planned to enroll 3,180,182 undergraduates in the regular higher education system in 2009 (Ministry of Education, 2009).

Geographically, although these institutions are located in all parts of China except Tibet, the distribution is unequal: coastal provinces in the east of China such as Liaoning, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Guangdong as well as provinces in central China like Hebei, Hubei and Hunan have many more independent colleges than the less affluent areas in western China.

In principle, these prosperous independent institutions fill a gap between state-owned and totally private institutions. Nowadays, state-owned institutions face severe economic problems, such as a lack of financial investment and cutting edge resources (Tao, 2005). Conversely, private colleges or universities, even though they have a strong financial basis, suffer from a shortage of adequately qualified and experienced academic and administrative staff (Xiong, 2003). Independent institutions are therefore seen as offering an opportunity to draw on financial resources from the private sector and on human resources from the parent state-owned institutions. Three values of independent institutions, namely, excellence, independence and privateness are widely promoted (Hua & Yang, 2008). Excellence refers to the relative abundance of resources that independent institutions possess, in part from the existing parent state-owned institutions (good teaching traditions, teaching resources, quality management modes and teaching support networks) and in part from the private elements (the financial and other resources invested by the entrepreneur and the concomitant entrepreneurial spirit). The second value, independence, is embodied by the seven independences outlined above. Privateness stems from the opportunity to operate in a relatively less regulated environment based on the cooperation of state institutions and privately-operated societal groups. Although students' tuition fees are fixed according to specific regulations established by the government, the

independent institutions are intended by the state to be investment opportunities for privately-operated societal groups. However, despite the promising solutions offered by the policy of developing independent institutions, a number of dilemmas and challenges have emerged at the implementation stage.

This paper will first analyse the political, socio-economic and cultural contexts that shaped the policy of developing independent institutions; however, dilemmas and challenges are unavoidable in the development process. Hence, the focus will then shift to the emergent dilemmas in policy implementation through the study of a specific example. By analysing how the dilemmas and challenges are being addressed in one independent institution that has been deemed “successful” by the state, the paper identifies some possible strategies for developing these institutions, while also raising concerns over emergent issues of social equity.

The genesis of independent institutions

Political context

The genesis of independent institutions can be traced to political, social, economic and cultural forces. Politically, the reform can be seen as part of the on-going process of decentralization in China, which is “the limited shifting of authority in decision

making and the increasing of local authority and enhanced autonomy of education institutions” (Xu, 2005, p.87). Education reforms in higher education from 1949 (when the People’s Republic of China was founded) have experienced unstable progress by two competing political ideologies of socialism and capitalism, with two predominant educational patterns: one based on the Soviet model and one influenced by western styles (Xu, 2005). Before 1978 and except the hyperpoliticized periods during the Great Leap Forward (1958-1962) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the Soviet model was generally the standard for education reforms, and the central government played a key, top-down, regulatory role. Since the economic modernization programme was initiated in 1978, China’s education system—as with other facets of life in the country—has been exposed to the impact of globalization.

The first step towards decentralization and the establishment of independent institutions occurred in two phases: the first occurred in the early 1980s, when the government began to encourage private companies to open colleges or universities. By 1982, there were over 100 private higher educational institutions across China (China National Institute of Education Research, 1995). These private institutions experienced tensions with central authorities concerning regulation and urged the government to tackle the problems. In the second phase, which began with the legal

status and autonomy of private institutions being clarified by the state in the ‘Provisional Regulations for the establishment of people-run schools for higher education’ in 1993, the sector grew significantly (Mok & Chan, 1998). The emergence of independent institutions can be dated to 1998 in the eastern seaboard provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang (Han, 2007). In 1999, the Third National Conference on Education recommended the spread of independent institutions from well-developed regions to other regions across the nation. In 2001, the Ministry of Education lent support for the establishment of independent institutions in the National Seminar on Private Higher Education in Guangzhou. These national events provided important political support, which was followed by official documents from the Ministry of Education setting out, for instance, the definition of independent institutions (April 2003), the seven independences (August 2003), and the requirement (2004) that independent institutions should award their own certificates, rather than those from their parent institutions (Xie, 2004).

Socio-economic context

Three socio-economic drivers can be identified as contributing to the development of independent institutions (Xiao, 2005). First, there were the problems of increasing educational needs and limited higher education provision that necessitated expansion

(Hua & Yang, 2008) and one solution was for the government, given its own limited resources, to look to the private sector alternative sources of financing (Tao, 2005). Second, the increasing complexity of workplace skills and competences required as China's economy diversifies led to the suggestion expressed at the Fifteenth National Conference in 1997 that the public sector provision of higher education should remain dominant while the new independent institutions could cater to the needs of the emergent and more sophisticated sectors of the economy (Hua & Yang, 2008). State-owned institutions would concentrate on educating undergraduate students through research-based programmes, while independent institutions would focus more on fostering practical application of knowledge (Wu, 2006). In this way, the development of independent institutions may help to provide more specialized graduates for the workforce. The third reason is the opportunity afforded by the partnership between state-owned institution and the private sector to tap in to the entrepreneurial skills of the latter in order to vitalize the relevance and quality of undergraduate programmes in independent institutions.

Cultural context

The development of independent institutions can also be seen as a cultural phenomenon. In China, education is highly valued as a means for social and economic

advancement, as well as traditionally serving as a marker of personal quality. There is an old saying in China that ‘Within books, one can find houses of gold. Within books, one can find ladies as fair as jade’. Education is closely related with one’s success in life, providing enhanced opportunities for making money and attracting a desirable spouse. A study by Xie (2001) found that more than 90% of respondents wanted their children to attend college or university.

Dilemmas and challenges

Although, on paper, independent institutions represent an innovative solution to the problem of expanding China's higher education provision in a way that matches the characteristics of its developing economy, some dilemmas emerged once the policy was operational eyes. Dong (2004) lists four tensions that have arisen from the development of independent institutions in China. These tensions are found in the areas of planning and management; student recruitment; the commercialisation of education; and scope.

As noted earlier, planning and management of higher education in China was, for significant periods of time, the preserve of the central government. Despite various reforms that have incorporated elements of decentralization, many aspects of the state

owned colleges and universities still fall under the central government's administration and planning. When formulating rules and regulations for the higher education sector, government departments still tend to treat independent institutions as if they were state-owned institutions—an understandable tendency given that independent institutions have state-owned institutions as the major partner.

Nonetheless, the centralized assumption of authority curtails the autonomy that is supposed to be the hallmark of independent institutions. Likewise the entrepreneurial nature of independent institutions would suggest that student recruitment should be based on market demands. However, in reality, the institutions are given set quotas and specific disciplines for enrolling students, which severely constrains their flexibility. In some cases, the institutions have difficulty reaching the quota as more prestigious universities cream off the best candidates. The independent institutions then tend to create junior college courses that feed into the programmes on offer in these specific disciplines, which means that additional resources are being committed to quota -driven rather than market-driven programs

The tension arising from commercialization of programmes offered by independent institutions is connected to questions of equity and social justice. Once the institutions have filled their allocated quotas, they can seek to attract more students. These

students will be fee-paying and are therefore attractive to the entrepreneurs, who are seeking to make a profit from the enterprise. The ability to pay may not equate to strong academic performance and deserving students who lack the financial resources to pay for their studies (and they would not be eligible for government grants if they were entering the independent institutions) may lose out on the opportunity for higher education and therefore social and economic benefits. Xie (2004) argues that the high tuition fees charged by independent institutions may dissuade some students from enrolling. At present, the annual tuition fee for undergraduates in self-financed independent institutions (around 12,000-15,000 RMB) is much higher than state-owned colleges or universities (3,000-5,000 RMB), and higher than the average salary in China. Thus, students from low salary families who do enter fee-paying programmes at independent institutions are taking on major financial burdens. Social equity, which is manifested in equal opportunity for higher education for every citizen, is hindered by this kind of social stratification (Hayhoe, 1996).

The fourth tension is closely related to the first two mentioned above. The tendency towards centralized planning and management, including the quotas for enrolment, limits the scope of individual independent institutions to develop their own strategic plans based on their particular contexts and aspirations. This is a potential source of

frustration to the entrepreneurs, whose assets of innovation and leadership were major reasons for enticing them in to the partnership with the state-owned higher education institution.

Other analysts have discerned further challenges facing independent institutions. For instance, Que et al. (2005) pinpoint five issues. First, the teaching workforce in independent institutions are not as stable as in state institutions. At present, most independent institutions employ their teachers on a contract system with pay reflecting the number of hours taught and bonuses for those who receive excellent appraisals. Permanent positions are rare. While this system saves costs, staff turnover is high, which can be detrimental to teaching quality. Second, finding the suitable state-owned college or university to be the parent institution can be problematical. Key universities are normally research-based and are not encouraged by the Ministry of Education to engage in the development of teaching-based independent institutions. This limits the choice of partner to provincial universities (being both research- and teaching-based). Third, independent institutions may need to tone down their entrepreneurial inclinations. Over-commercialisation, such as only offering majors that are money-spinners irrespective of social or economic needs may have a negative impact on the reputation of the parent state institutions. Fourth, a number of

independent institutions have encountered internal administration problems arising from their blurred legal status, imperfect financial regulation and defective management. Finally, compliance with the requirement of Order 26 (Ministry of Education, 2008) that independent institutions should become autonomous from parent institutions in matters such as certification, has proved difficult in the less developed western parts of China.

Tao (2005) identifies four more challenges. The first concerns private funding: it is risky to rely on a single source, such as an entrepreneur, as this fund might dry up at any time. Next, independent institutions often rely on the already well-known brand names of parent institutions, which might lead them to resting on their laurels rather than ensuring the quality of programmes that they are delivering. Another challenge is attracting enrolments to the institution, as a relatively new phenomenon with no historical tradition to inspire confidence in potential students. The final challenge is developing their own culture and ethos, as independent institutions often are closely tied to their parent institutions.

The common thread running through most of the issues that have been identified by these commentators is the challenge of creating, sustaining and enhancing the quality

of programmes that are delivered in independent institutions. Wu (2008) argues that the key to achieving excellence lies in improving the quality of teaching, as this will result in the delivery of relevant and valuable programmes, higher status of the institution and greater competitiveness in student recruitment. Establishing a culture of quality in teaching would also likely to impact on quality of the administration and on the attractiveness of independent institutions for private sector funding.

The China Alumni Association has been ranking the top 100 independent institutions in the country every year since 2002. The list of 2010 indicates that nearly 80 percent of the top 100 independent institutions are from the more affluent coastal and central areas. The list is based on a score of 100, using the average of three criteria: quality of teaching facilities, student support and care, and general impression. However, a huge difference in scores can be seen between the institutions ranking number 2 and number 100, which are 98.85 and 51.43 respectively. Table 1 shows some selected independent institutions with scores at intervals of approximately 10. Taking an overall score of 60 out of 100 as a baseline and beginning from rank 93, it appears that the overall scores of 230 independent institutions in the whole country (i.e., those ranking from 93 to 100, plus the remaining unranked 222 independent institutions out of the total 322) are below 60. Although the methodology is dubious—scores are

based on a restricted view of quality using proxy indicators—the fact that 71% of independent institutions score so badly indicates that there are major challenges to be overcome.

A comparison of the top 100 independent institutions in China (see China Alumni Association, 2010) with their partners in the top 600 state universities and colleges at the city, provincial and national levels (see Ministry of Education, 2009), reveals that parent universities or colleges which rated high in overall scores do not necessarily have independent institutions with similar ranking. Among the top 100 independent institutions, 53 of them are linked with 211 project universities; 43 have parent provincial universities or colleges under the management of provinces or autonomous regions; while four of them have city-level parent institutions. For instance, Zhejiang University is ranked number four in the 211 project (scoring 52.91 overall) and its City College of Zhejiang University is rated second in the category of independent institutions with an overall score of 98.85. However, Fudan University is ranked third in the 211 list (with a score of 54.89), but its independent institution, Shanghai Institute of Visual Arts is ranked only 52 with a score of 76.09.

In the following section, the case of City College of Zhejiang University is presented,

with a particular focus on the strategies that it adopted in order to address the various dilemmas and to resolve the various challenges that it faced.

City College of Zhejiang University

The City College of Zhejiang University was set up in 1999, and was the first independent institution in Zhejiang Province. The college has achieved national fame and was recognized by the Ministry of Education as an excellent model for independent institutions in 2003 (Li & Dai, 2008). In July 2010, the college was named one of the ten “excellent” independent institutions in the country by the Ministry of Education (City College of Zhejiang University Propaganda Office, 2010). The “new mechanism” utilized by the college is a hybrid, involving the cooperation of state-owned institutions and the private sector. The local government invested 60 million RMB as start-up money for the college. The “new model” is a “state-owned institution + local government + private company” management system (Hua & Yang, 2008, p.40). Encouraged by the local government, entrepreneurs invested in City College, while the parent Zhejiang University—a 211 Project university with a very high reputation (ranked third in China) for research and teaching—undertook to provide resources in teaching, facilities and management staff to the college. The college was granted complete autonomy over the control of student matters. The

internal administration of the college was designed on a small scale but with efficiency in mind (Liu & Jia, 2003). Supervised by the college's board of directors, the principal has the responsibility to manage the college. Under the principal, there are nine departments and three other units, including the library. The departments offer a total of 37 different undergraduate majors and 70 other majors with full enrolment, which meant that there were more than 12,000 students studying full-time on the campus in 2008 (Li & Dai 2008). The City College was initially oriented towards the sciences: the departments of science and engineering were founded earlier than the departments specialising in the arts (Liu & Jia, 2003).

The City College has identified the main purpose of undergraduate education as developing students' practical skills (Zhuang & Zhou, 2004). To achieve this goal, student-centered education is advocated and new technologies and teaching methods are applied in the college to a bid to improve teaching quality (Zhejiang Education Online, 2009). The college also took a number of steps to establish a particular niche for itself. Two key strategies were creating distinctive majors and internationalization through co-operation with universities overseas. One of the unique majors was an elite class in advanced engineering (College Enrollment, 2009). Each year, based on the results of the nationwide College Entrance Examination, 70 students were chosen

from the top 150 science candidates in the nation to enroll for this major. The programme is multidisciplinary: students are required to study courses in science and engineering, economics and management, and in the arts. Another programme serves as a pathway into Zhejiang University's Software Department, and every year 100 of the top science students in City College are given priority entry and as postgraduate students in engineering.

International cooperation was seen as a means to enhanced quality of programmes on offer (Zhejiang Education Online, 2009). Under the terms of a Sino-US student exchange agreement, 300 students from the college attend short term study programmes at universities in the USA such as California State University each year. The college has joint programmes with overseas universities, such as Lincoln University from the United Kingdom. The Lincoln University programme is a 2+2 model that enables students from three departments, majoring in science and technology, computer science and architecture who have completed two years at City College to undertake two years' study in the UK in order to obtain a bachelor's degree from Lincoln University.

Efforts are also made to serve the needs of students in entering a highly competitive

job market. Two projects, the ‘2003 project’ (Qianjiang Evening Newspaper, 2001) and credit reform, were established for students (City College, Zhejiang University, 2005). The ‘2003 project’ was a response to the requirement introduced in 2001 that every higher education institution in Zhejiang Province had to publish the employment rates of their graduates on an annual basis. In order to help their student find employment, the college created websites and also conducted lectures and workshops on improving their employability, as well as advice on job hunting, interview techniques and other forms of career guidance for their students. Since the implementation of the project, the employment rate of City College graduates has been very high, above 93% for several years and a rare phenomenon is that about 60% of the graduates find jobs in the city (Hangzhou) in which the City College is located (Zhejiang Education Online, 2009). The credit reform in 2004 set a minimum requirement of 160 credits for students and a flexible time frame for meeting the requirements. This meant, for instance, that students could accelerate their progress through the programme or take extra time as necessary. The students were also presented with a broader range of choices of courses to take. Unlike the old system, which set out a fixed programme of study in annual blocks, the credit reform allowed students to select the courses they are interested in or needed.

The City College also instigated moves, overseen by a committee made up of teacher stakeholders from the academic and business communities, to enhance the quality of student experience by building on the close links with businesses that arose from the partnership that formed the basis of the independent institution. Co-operative agreements were established with local enterprises and organizations. The enterprises (such as Hangzhou Huada Genetic Research Center) and organizations (for instance, Hangzhou Development Plan Committee) became involved in the running of the City College and in exchange, they helped to provide opportunities for students to have practical experience, such as internships.

The college leaders also addressed staffing challenge. The potential problem of high staff turnover and the deleterious effect and that this might have on the quality of teaching was resolved by offering attractive terms and conditions. The staff employed by City College were selected on the basis of their practical experience in the workplace as well as their teaching qualifications (Zhuang & Zhou, 2004). Once employed, the teachers were provided with further professional development opportunities, such as training courses in pedagogical issues and part-time or even full-time placements in commercial enterprises so they could maintain their familiarity with modern trends. Zhuang and Zhou (2004) found that these strategies

had led to a relatively stable teaching force of sufficient size to deliver all the programmes offered by the college.

While the City College has been recognized nationally for its successes, it has not managed to address all the dilemmas and challenges that were identified earlier in this paper. One particular shortcoming of City College lies in its very high tuition fee, which is around 16,000 RMB per academic year (Zhejiang Education Online, 2009). Although Zhejiang Province is one of the wealthiest provinces in China and such fees would not seem exorbitant to residents from higher socio-economic backgrounds, they are clearly well beyond the reach of families who earn salaries around the national average. There is the danger that some of the academically elite students who would otherwise have been admission to some flagship programmes in the City College might find themselves excluded for financial reasons.

Conclusion

The emergence of independent institutions stems from political, socio-economic and cultural forces that are driving the current higher education reforms in China. These institutions represent a solution to a key tension—the need to expand the provision of higher education without it making too many demands on public finances. They also

provide a place in the education system where innovation and entrepreneurship might flourish, although this aspect as yet to find full expression because of the constraints imposed by the lingering tendency towards centralization of policy-making and management of higher education affairs. Experience to date has shown that the implementation of independent institutions has not been entirely smooth, with teaching quality being a major cause of concern.

The story of City College of Zhejiang University shows that many of these problems are not insurmountable, provided that there is sufficient commitment from the stakeholders in both the public and private sectors to establish a genuine partnership that is not simply based on finance. The ethos of City College is student-oriented and the College seeks to create a culture of quality by attending to the professional development needs and career aspirations of teachers—the first layer of lived educational practices described by Marginson (2004). The partnership with the business community has provided students with opportunities for hands-on experience of the workplace, while international collaboration allows significant numbers of students the chance to broaden their horizons through study overseas. This attention to quality plus the attempt to create some distinctive programmes and the judicious selection of key state-owned institution, Zhejiang University, all represent a form of

successful social competition for status goods in Marginson's (2004) terms, and endowed the City College with a strong reputation that is reflected in its high student enrolments and national recognition.

This high status and competitive advantage were achieved by the City College mimicking, to some extent, its parent university, which is seeking a world-class reputation. By targeting elite students, international partners, reputable companies to work with and a quality teaching force, the City College positioned itself in the upper echelons of the ranking system. This suggests that there is a process of stratification in the independent institutions, just as there is in the traditional higher education institutions. However, although both Zhejiang University and the City College might be placed in their respective top stratum, the stratification does not always lead to the status of the independent institution mirroring that of the parent institution.

While the experience of the City College provides some strategies that might be emulated by other independent institutions, a major issue arising from the development of this institution is the question of social equity. This issue has two dimensions. The high tuition fees charged by the college—representing participation

in the competitive economic market in status goods (Marginson, 2004)—means that the chances of studying in the college are not equal for students from wealthy and poor family backgrounds. Second, the elitist approach of City College is facilitated by its geographical location in a wealthier part of the country (Hangzhou), where the resources to invest in and support these initiatives are available, while the poorer regions that have not benefited to the same extent from China's economic development over the past thirty years, are missing out once again. This imbalance is reflected in the uneven spread of independent institutions across the country and may maintain and even exacerbate the existing socio-economic divide. One solution might be for the college to undertake entrepreneurial activities in the commercial sector (Marginson, 2004) in order to generate income to support students from lower income backgrounds. However, further research is needed into these independent institutions and how they can address the issue of social equity, and the many other dilemmas and challenges that they face.

References

Agelasto, M. & Adamson, B. (1998). Editors' Introduction. In Agelasto, M. &

Adamson, B. (eds.) *Higher education in post-Mao China*, pp.1-9. Hong Kong:

Hong Kong University Press.

China Alumni Association, (2010). The top 100 independent institutions in China.

Retrieved September 24, 2010, from: <http://cuaa.net/cur/2010/pm07.shtml>.

China National Institute of Education Research (1995). *A study of NGO-sponsored and private higher education in China*. Beijing: UNESCO.

City College, Zhejiang University, (2005). *Undergraduate Education*. Retrieved April 10, 2010, from http://www.zucc.edu.cn/zucc_list.php?id=2.

City College of Zhejiang University Propaganda Office. (2010). 2010 National Summit Meeting of Independent Institutions was held in Wuxi. Retrieved November 12, 2010, from:
http://www.zucc.edu.cn/news_show.php?recid=18085.

College Enrollment, (2009). A display of the most unique independent institutions. Retrieved April 10, 2010, from Gaokao website:
<http://gaokao.eduu.com/e/20090303/4b8bc9b76aa8f.shtml>

Dong, P. (2004). The profound conflicts effecting on the sustainable development of independent institutes and their system support conditions. *Journal of Beijing Economic Management Institute*, 4, 53-56.

Gu, J., Li, X. & Wang, L. (2009). *Higher education in China*. Hangzhou and Paramus, New Jersey: Zhejiang University Press and Homa & Sekey Books.

Han, M. (2007). Current situations and policy analysis of the development of

independent institutions. *Science*, 8, 25-26.

Hayhoe, R. (1996). *China's universities, 1895-1995: A century of cultural conflict*.

New York: Garland Pub.

Hua, Y. & Yang, D. (2008). Rational considerations of independent institutions in

China – needless to be all state-run. *China Higher Education Research*, 1,

39-41.

Li, K. & Dai, X.X. (2008). City College of Zhejiang University's exploration in

cultivating high quality applied and creative talents. *Science and Technology*

Innovation Herald, 9, 195.

Liu, L. & Jia, H.Y. (2003). New thoughts, new measures, new models: The reforms

and explorations of City College of Zhejiang University. *Exploring Education*

Development, 8, 15-16.

Ma, L.T. (2005). The analysis of the development of independent institutions. *Journal*

of National Academy of Education Administration, 5, 77-80.

Marginson, S. (2004). Competition and markets in higher education: a 'global' analysis.

Policy Futures in Education, 2, (2), 175-244.

Marginson, S. (2007). The public/private divide in higher education: A global revision.

Higher Education 53, 307-333.

Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2003). Order 8: Several

suggestions on regulating and strengthening regular institutions' trial running of independent institutions by new mechanisms and modes. Retrieved November 11, 2010, from the Faculty of Applied Technology, Hunan Engineering College website: <http://www.hnieyy.cn/article.asp?id=1208>.

Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2008). Order 26:

Installment and management methods for independent institutions. Retrieved November 11, 2010, from The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China website: http://www.gov.cn/flfg/2008-03/07/content_912242.htm.

Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2009). Order 87: 2009

student admissions in regular higher education system planned by Ministry of Education and National Reform Committee. Retrieved November 12, 2010, from: http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s180/201001/xxgk_77129.html.

Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2010). Year 2009 statistical

report on national education development. Retrieved November 11, 2010, from: http://www.moe.edu.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/moe_633/201008/xxgk_93763.html. Qianjiang Evening Newspaper. (2001). *City College, Zhejiang University initiates '2003 project' on full scale*. Retrieved April 10, 2010, from

News Office of Zhejiang University website:

<http://www.news.zju.edu.cn/news.php?id=344>.

Mok, K.H. & Chan, D. (1998). Privatization or quasi-marketization? In Agelasto, M.

& Adamson, B. (eds.) *Higher education in post-Mao China*, pp.281-298. Hong

Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Que, H., Du, W., & Gu, M. (2005). Several thoughts about the development of

independent institutions. *Modern Education Science*, 2, 25-27.

Tao, R. (2005). *Probing the emergence and development of independent institutions*.

Master Thesis, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing.

Wu, J. (2008). Improve teaching quality: the fundament of independent institutions'

'excellence'. *China Higher Education*, 10, 47-48.

Wu, X. (2006). *On the problems and solutions of cultivating talent in independent*

colleges: The case of Zhejiang Province. Unpublished Master Thesis, Zhejiang

Normal University, Jinhua.

Xiao, Y. (2005). *On independent colleges' adaptability to the market*. Unpublished

Master Thesis, Huazhong University of Science & Technology, Wuhan.

Xie, B. (2001). Thinking about several problems of establishing state-owned private

institutions. *Journal of Southern Institute of Metallurgy*, 5(22), 44-46.

Xie, S. (2004). The path for the development of independent institutions: leading by

‘independence’ and succeeding by ‘excellence’. *College and University*

Admission, 11, 38-39.

Xiong, Q. (2003). Developing independent institutions is a big policy. *Research in*

Educational Development, 9, 19.

Xu, S. (2005). Impacts of globalization on higher education reform in China: A trend

of decentralization and autonomy. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*,

4, 83-95.

Zhejiang Education Online, (2009). *A recording of City College, Zhejiang University's*

2009 online recruiting consultation meeting. Retrieved April 10, 2010, from

http://ks.zjol.com.cn/05ks/system/2009/06/26/015622564_04.shtml

Zhuang, H.J & Zhou, J.Q. (2004). Research and practice of applied talents' training

model in the undergraduate level: The actual record of creative education reform

in City College of Zhejiang University. *Journal of Higher Education*, 25(6),

108-109.

Institute Name	Province	Rank	Overall Score	Teaching Facilities	Student Cultivation	Composite Image
City College of Zhejiang University	Zhejiang	2	98.85	95.23	100	91.04
Xiamen University Tan Kah Kee College	Fujian	13	89.64	88.94	90.58	79.16
Guangzhou University South China Institute of Software Engineering	Guangdong	40	80.21	77.82	78.91	76.19
Nanchang University College of Science and Technology	Jiangxi	66	69.74	65.49	63.93	75.63
Kede College of Capital Normal University	Beijing	92	60.16	53.51	54.53	70.18
Guangxi University Xingjian College of Science and Liberal Arts	Guangxi	100	51.43	43.08	48.24	61.41

Table 1. Selected independent institutions in Top 100 in China (China Alumni Association, 2010)

(Total words: 5118)