

The Study of the History of Education in China (1978-2003): A Quantitative Analysis

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to investigate, using a quantitative approach, the academic study of the History of Education in China as this has developed over the past twenty years. The main findings are as follows:

1. As to the number of publications, at least 1577 articles and books were published during this period.
2. As to the area of study, publications dealing with the history of Chinese Education were most numerous, followed by those dealing with the history of Western Education.
3. As to topic or theme, essays and books dealing with “institutions and policies” were most numerous, followed by those dealing with “great thinkers and their thoughts.” Sub-themes in the area of classical (mainly Chinese) history included: curriculum and mode of instruction, academies, local education, primary education, and civil servant examinations. Sub-themes in the area of modern education included: education in communist-ruled areas, local education, studying abroad, and teacher education.
4. As to the form of publication, articles were more common than books.
5. As to the time of publication, 1993-2003 was the most productive period. And the rate of publication in this field is steadily increasing.
6. As to targeted period of research, Chinese educational studies tended to focus on modern history (from 1840 to 1949), while Western educational studies tended to focus on the period from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century.

Three general tendencies shared by these historical studies were noted: the tendency to deal with new themes or ideas, to do cooperative research (teamwork), and to collect and compile first-hand sources. A comparison of the development of the study of history of education in China with that in Taiwan was also made. Finally, we have made four suggestions regarding further research in this field targeting China, and noted three implications of further research targeting Taiwan.

Keywords: History of Education, Quantitative Analysis, Historiography of Education, Fundamental Disciplines