

3rd World Conference on

ARTS, HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCES, AND EDUCATION

October 16-17, 2023 | Paris, France



Shaping Postgraduate Students' Life Outlooks: When Neo-liberalism Meets Confucianism and Patriotism

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This study examines how Chinese postgraduate students' life outlooks are separately and collectively shaped by the interplaying neoliberalism, Confucianism and patriotism. The findings reveal that neoliberalism contributes to Chinese postgraduates' enterprising self by shaping their subjectivity in pursuing personal goals, infiltrating them with the market logic of efficiency, effectiveness and quantifiable outcomes, and according them a de-regulation predisposition. Confucianism prompts postgraduates for self-strengthening at individual level and guides them with interaction norms at interpersonal level. Patriotism underpins their psychological and emotional power based on strengthened memories of historical events and pride in national achievements, hence generating the most deep-seated collective identity. Counteracting and consolidating forces are identified from the three isms' interplay, resulting in Chinese postgraduates' partial individualization. Such partial individualization reflected from today's Chinese postgraduates, however, takes on new meanings from that on previous generations, featured with a more consistent rather than divisible dual-self.

Biography:

Dr. Tengteng Zhuang is currently an assistant professor / lecturer at Institute of Higher Education, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University which is one of the leading institutions in education science in Asia and the world at large. Having a dual background of engineering and education, Dr. Zhuang is focused on learning and teaching issues at university level and above. He has published articles covering topics of students' program satisfaction, student assessment, faculty members' teaching agency, and other higher education policy-related issues. His publications have appeared in various SSCI journals, such as British Journal of Sociology of Education, Higher Education Research & Development, Cambridge Journal of Education, Asia Pacific Education Review. Furthermore, Dr. Zhuang has frontline work experiences as an insider of the Chinese higher education sector, with experiences of both teaching administration and postgraduate student management. In recent years, his research interest has included a new area he perceives prominent in facilitating the overall quality of higher education: the formation of students' life and world outlooks from sociological perspectives. His most recent book is entitled Engineering Teaching in China's Higher Education: A Social Realist Approach published by Routledge.