

CONUNDRUM OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN SINGAPORE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the prevalence of private commercial schools in Singapore, many of which may not have met the regulatory requirements if strict monitoring actions were to be applied to them. The majority of private commercial schools in Singapore are small and have no proper facilities including libraries, student recreation facilities and computer labs. While over 600 schools have been deregistered since 2009, either voluntarily or involuntarily, following the introduction of the Council for Private Education Act which in 2009, over 300 schools are still operating. Of these 300 schools, only less than one-fifth can be considered to have proper facilities. This first part of this paper explores the possible reasons why some private commercial schools are still in operation despite not meeting the recommended regulatory guidelines. It suggests stricter actions could be taken by the Council for Private Education to ensure that private commercial schools contribute to the improvement of the overall education landscape in Singapore and makes recommendations where the Council for could increase its vigilance on these schools. It also recommends a framework relating to the monitoring and review of the current audit process of private commercial schools. The second part of the paper explores the failure of private commercial schools to deliver quality education to their students and the reasons students are still choosing the private education route as an option for their studies. Contrary to popular assumptions, private commercial schools in Singapore pose no significant competition to public schools. Teachers at private commercial schools had not receive as much training and development as those in public schools. Profit seemed to be the main driver for these commercial schools.

KEYWORDS: Private Schools, Quality Education