Response to the Committee Report

I would like to thank all referees and members of the committee for their valuable comments and suggestions, which have helped to improve the quality of the thesis and inspired future research direction. I created Chapter 4 to respond to each question in detail. Below is a brief summary and navigation for the specific questions raised in Committee Report.

1) The incorporation of the comments shall be included in the manuscript. Yao should provide an explanation of the definition of SME used in Paper 1 and strengthen her description of data cleaning and her choice of variables.

The response to the definition of SMEs is on page 136, the change in the text is on page 21 first paragraph.
The response to data cleaning issues is in section 4.3.2 on pages 143~147. The change in the text is on pages 37~40, Annex 2, Annex 3, and Annex 4.
The response to the choice of variables is on page 134, and the change in the text is on pages 11~15 where we discuss the hypothesis.

2) A separate document including Yao´s particular reactions to the comments is also required.

The reactions and responses are in Chapter 4 Response to Opponents' Reports on pages 131~153.

3) Moreover, Magda Pečená proposes a further research direction where she points to the link to both rating and scoring functions used by banks (to assess the risk of the clients, including also SME clients). The interconnections between the rating (and drivers of the rating/access to financing) and the factors that hinder the growth of companies are very similar and should be studied in more detail.

The second point in 4.3.5 Future Research Guide on page 151 reflects this valuable point.

Regarding the second and third essay, a better description of the data set should be delivered in order to clarify the structure of the analyzed portfolio and the purpose of the underlying loans (retail vs small corporates, and in retail: consumer vs. investment in micro (family) businesses).

The response to the loan purpose is on page 150 in section 4.3.4 second and third paragraphs. The change in the text is on page 76.

Also, the role of collateral should be clearly defined in this context. Magda Pečená also asks Yao to make sure that all figures in the second and third essay are consistent (e.g. an average loan value in the data set).

The response for the role of collateral is on page 151 in section 4.3.4 third paragraph. The change in the text is on page 55 paragraph under the table when discussing the fixed assets variables.
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The inconsistency of the data is because the funding model and default model is using different datasets, I only put the funding model dataset in paper 2. So I added a new summary of statistics Table 1(a) and Table 1(b) on pages 50 and 51 for both the funding model and default predicting model respectively.