

Review of the dissertation thesis of Ms. Shujing Cui: *School Readiness: Beliefs about Preparing Children for Transition from Pre-primary to Primary Education in China*

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This thesis is devoted to the phenomenon of school readiness. Its goal is to find out how the ideas about school readiness among parents, kindergarten teachers, and primary school teachers differ and whether or how it is possible to classify parents according to their ideas about school readiness, educational styles, and the perception of the role of individual actors in the child's development. The relationship between the above-mentioned variables and socio-economic status of the family is also investigated.

The thesis consists of an introduction, a theoretical chapter, a methodological chapter, a description of the results, and a discussion section. The questionnaires used are included in the appendix.

In the theoretical chapter, the author presents four theoretical approaches by which the transition to primary school can be viewed, namely developmental, socio-cultural, bio-ecological, and ontological approaches, and discusses the differences and synergies between them.

In the next part, she focuses on methods for measuring school readiness, the effects of school attendance deferrals, and the influence of the family, ECEC, and primary school on the transition process, paying great attention to the issue of the continuity between pre-school and school education. She also deals with cultural differences in the concept of school readiness and in attitudes to the transition to school.

The theoretical chapter is very well structured and shows that the author has studied a large amount of Chinese and foreign literature on the topic. I appreciate the fact that she describes in detail the method used for conducting her literature review and carefully defines all the terms and concepts dealt with in the thesis.

In the methodological chapter, the author formulates research questions and hypotheses and justifies them with the support of the literature that has been studied. I greatly appreciate the careful reasoning. However, justification is missing in the case of the inclusion of parental beliefs regarding roles in school readiness. No justification is provided of why it seems useful to include this variable in the analysis. There are minor errors in the formulation of questions and hypotheses: questions 3b and 3c are identical, and hypothesis two seems unclear to me.

The author formulates hypotheses only for some research questions, with the justification that the others are descriptive in nature. This is fine in principle; however, regarding beliefs and school readiness, the author implicitly formulates hypotheses in the text regarding the comparison of the preferences of individual groups and discusses the confirmation of these hypotheses in the results section. This seems somewhat inconsistent.

The author describes how she proceeded in the selection of her sample and specifies the response rates within that sample. However, the sample size is not justified. It is not clear why 40 kindergartens out of all 5660 kindergartens in the city of Chongqing and 10 primary schools out of 40 primary schools in one subdistrict of Chongqing were chosen. Conducting data collection as the author did is not easy, especially if it includes parental cooperation. She managed to obtain a remarkable dataset. However, it is not clear why, in order to get a representative sample, 40

kindergartens from the whole city and 10 elementary schools from only one district were selected. This procedure is not explained and no justification is given of why it is legitimate to proceed in this way.

I appreciate the fact that the author describes in detail the scales used to measure individual concepts, namely school readiness beliefs, play beliefs, parenting styles, attitudes regarding roles in school readiness, and socioeconomic status, and the procedures for their localisation in the Chinese environment.

In the results chapter, the author first verifies the psychometric properties of the individual instruments and provides descriptive characteristics for individual groups of respondents. Then she answers the individual research questions systematically. The analysis is performed very conscientiously. The author describes and documents the individual steps in detail. I appreciate the fact that the psychometric properties of the individual instruments are properly verified and that the author also verifies the measurement invariance between individual groups of respondents.

In the final discussion, the author reflects eruditely on the results with the support of literature. Then the author includes an implications section in which she deals with the possible use of her knowledge. At the end of the chapter, the author describes some limitations of her study.

The text is well structured and the work is written comprehensibly. However, it would definitely benefit from better graphics. The numbering of the chapters and subsections is confusing (the same numbering of subsections is repeated within each chapter), while the formatting of the tables is somewhat confusing.

I consider the dissertation thesis of Ms. Shujing Cui to be of very good quality. In it, the author demonstrates a deep understanding of the issue under investigation based on detailed knowledge of foreign and Chinese literature, as well as the research she conducted. The data analyses were carried out very thoughtfully and the individual steps were properly justified and documented. The work fully meets the requirements set for dissertations; I recommend it for defence.

Defence questions:

- 1) Why did you sample kindergartens from the whole city of Chongqing but primary schools only from one subdistrict?
- 2) In the implications chapter, you describe a way in which your findings could be used to provide support for families. Do you think it is more important to focus primarily on ensuring that all children are well prepared for school or rather that the school is able to deal with children with different levels of school readiness?