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**Auckland, New Zealand**

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**Re; Shujing Cui's doctoral thesis Beliefs about Preparing Children for Transition from Pre-primary to Primary Education in China**

Shujing Cui's doctoral thesis on school readiness is a quality piece of scholarly work that delves deep into the nuances of educational psychology, particularly focusing on the alignment of school readiness beliefs among various stakeholders. The thesis is grounded in a comprehensive theoretical framework and employs a robust methodological approach, making it a significant contribution to the field – in China, and potentially globally.

The author explores the misalignment of school readiness beliefs between parents, kindergarten, and primary school teachers, providing a detailed analysis of the underlying factors contributing to these discrepancies. The methodology is meticulously designed, with a large sample size that enhances the credibility and generalizability of the findings. The use of Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) to identify patterns in parents' school readiness beliefs is particularly noteworthy, as it provides nuanced insights into parental attitudes that have significant implications for children's educational outcomes.

The literature review in Shujing Cui's doctoral thesis is both extensive and insightful, providing a solid foundation for the research. It comprehensively covers a range of studies on school readiness, including various theoretical perspectives and empirical findings. The review skillfully situates the current study within the broader context of existing research, highlighting gaps and inconsistencies in the literature that the study aims to address. The inclusion of diverse viewpoints, from sociocultural theories to psychological approaches,

demonstrates the author's deep understanding of the subject matter and adds to the multidisciplinary appeal of the work.

The study employs a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive analysis of school readiness beliefs. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of the topic, as it captures both the statistical trends and the rich, contextual insights from individual participants. Notably, the use of Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) in examining parents' school readiness beliefs is particularly innovative, offering a sophisticated means of identifying underlying patterns in the data. This methodological rigor ensures that the findings are robust and reliable, making a significant contribution to the field of educational psychology.

However, a critique of the literature review might point out that while it is thorough in covering a wide range of studies, it could benefit from a more critical analysis of the methodologies employed in previous research. While the thesis acknowledges the diversity of methods in existing studies, a deeper critique of their limitations and the potential impact on the findings would strengthen the argument. Additionally, the review could have explored more on the global perspectives of school readiness, as most studies cited are from Western contexts. Including research from a broader range of cultural settings would enhance the understanding of school readiness as a globally relevant concept.

Cui's research also makes a significant contribution by examining the relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and parents' school readiness beliefs. The findings highlight the complex interplay between SES and parental expectations, adding a critical dimension to our understanding of educational disparities. This aspect of the research is particularly relevant in the context of policy-making, as it underscores the need for targeted interventions to support families from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

Moreover, the thesis stands out for its exploration of the association between parenting style and school readiness beliefs. This holistic approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing children's preparedness for school. The study's implications for parental

intervention programs are particularly valuable, offering practical insights for educators and policymakers aiming to enhance children's school readiness.

The research's focus on a specific region in China offers both unique insights and generalizable findings that are valuable beyond the immediate context. The in-depth exploration of school readiness beliefs in this particular cultural setting provides a rich understanding of how socio-cultural factors influence educational expectations and practices. This specific focus allows for a detailed examination of the nuances that might be overlooked in broader studies. While the findings are deeply rooted in the local context, the themes and patterns identified have broader implications. The insights into how socioeconomic status, parenting styles, and cultural expectations intersect can inform policy and practice in other regions of China and even globally. This research underscores the importance of considering local contexts in educational research while also contributing to a more universal understanding of school readiness, highlighting the interconnectedness of global educational challenges.

In conclusion, Shujing Cui's doctoral thesis is an exemplary piece of research that provides deep insights into the complex dynamics of school readiness. Its methodological rigor, comprehensive analysis, and practical implications make it a valuable resource for educators, researchers, and policymakers. The work fully meets the requirements set for dissertations, and I recommend it for defense. I also recommend parts of the thesis to be published in academic journals, eg *Policy Futures in Education* (Sage).

**Questions for viva, some to consider:**

1. How can the misalignment of school readiness beliefs between parents, kindergarten, and primary school teachers be effectively addressed through policy and practice?
2. What are the implications of the study's findings for developing culturally sensitive parental intervention programs?
3. How does the relationship between socioeconomic status and school readiness beliefs impact educational equity, and what strategies can be implemented to mitigate these effects?

4. In what ways can the study's findings inform the training and professional development of early childhood educators?
5. What are the potential long-term impacts of the identified patterns of school readiness beliefs and parenting styles on children's academic and social-emotional development?
6. Considering the limitations in the methodologies of previous studies discussed in the literature review, how does your research methodology address these gaps and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of school readiness?
7. How can the insights from your study, conducted in a specific part of China, inform our understanding of school readiness in different cultural, socioeconomic, and educational contexts both within China and globally?

Yours sincerely



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