

Supervisor's Recommendation for the Defense of PhD Candidate Shujing Cui

Shujing Cui embarked on her doctoral studies in 2018 within the Institute for Research and Development of Education (IRDE) at the Faculty of Education, Charles University. She successfully fulfilled all exams and partial study requirements, including the State Doctoral Exam.

Additionally, during her academic journey, Shujing excelled in securing and completing a project funded by the Charles University Grant Agency (GAUK) with the grant number 368321. The project, titled "A Comparison of School Readiness Beliefs Among Parents, Preschool, and Primary School Teachers in China," showcased her commitment to scholarly pursuits.

Furthermore, Shujing actively contributed to other research projects at IRDE, such as the Meta-research in education (funded by Charles University Primus projects, Grant number PRIMUS/20/HUM/009, led by Dr. Ivan Ropovik) and the "Systemic Risk Institute - SYRI" project, funded by the European Union—Next Generation EU (Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, NPO: EXCELES) with the grant number LX22NPO5101.

Shujing's dissertation, titled "School Readiness: Beliefs about Preparing Children for Transition from Pre-primary to Primary Education in China," is founded on meticulously collected data. The data collection faced challenges due to Covid-19-related preschool closures in China, but Shujing navigated these obstacles effectively. Utilizing two-stage probability sampling, she achieved high response rates, collecting data from 1204 Chinese parents, 245 kindergarten teachers, and 133 primary school teachers. Additionally, during the Covid-19 disruptions, unable to return to Prague, Shujing diligently acquired statistical knowledge required for her dissertation, attending multiple statistical courses based on R and MPlus in China and the USA. She adeptly applied this knowledge, employing various methods in the Structural Equation Framework, including Multigroup Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Analysis of Measurement Invariance, and Latent Profile Analysis.

As an integral part of her doctoral studies, Shujing engaged in numerous travels, presented her research at international conferences, and conducted on-site data collection in China. Her scholarly contributions are evident in her publication record, with three journal papers published, where she served as the first or corresponding author. Notably, one of the papers was published

in the Scopus journal *Orbis Scholae* (sole author), and others in journals with impact factors, namely *Frontiers in Psychology* and *Review of Education* (British Educational Research Association journal). Additionally, she contributed two papers in Chinese to the journal *Studies in Early Childhood Education* and presented one paper in conference proceedings. Four more papers are in an advanced stage of preparation or have already been submitted to international journals with impact factors. Shujing's publication profile reflects excellence in quality and diversity.

It is essential to address the originality of Shujing's work and the outcome of plagiarism checks conducted through the Theses/Turnitin system. The result indicates a 93% match, with a 91% overlap with the previous version submitted for an internal small defense at IRDE. However, all other similarity indices are below 1%, affirming the originality of her work. As her supervisor, I have witnessed the gradual development of her work through consultations during the entire course of her studies.

In conclusion, Shujing Cui's work, "School Readiness: Beliefs about Preparing Children for Transition from Pre-primary to Primary Education in China," meets the criteria for dissertations. Through this work and her extensive publication activity, Shujing has unquestionably demonstrated her aptitude for scientific research and the ability to reflect on pedagogical issues within broader contexts. As her supervisor, I wholeheartedly recommend her dissertation for defense.

David Greger, Ph.D.

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