



Opponent's Assessment of the Dissertation

Title of Work: Cross-cultural perspectives on pedagogical leadership in schools providing compulsory education

Author: Danping Peng

Study Field: Education

Opponent: Lenka Haburajová-Ilavská, doc., PhDr., PhD.

Workplace of opponent: Tomas Bata University in Zlín, Faculty of Humanities

Danping Peng presents in the dissertation a comparative study that brings a very interesting point of view of the issue. The work consists of a total of 139 pages. It also contains a list of literature and numerous attachments. The work is divided into 7 separate chapters. In the introduction, the author describes the basic lines of theoretical and practical insights into the issue. It indicates the overall direction of work and its methodological anchoring.

1) The significance of the dissertation in a relevant research field

The author in the dissertation tries about the theoretical and practical analyses. The author does it very well. The dissertation describes the elementary attributes of leadership and their participants. It also highlights the elementary changes and alignment to participants of the research. The theme of the dissertation and its grasping is on a high professional level. On the basis of the results of the analyses, the author presents the possibilities of further development of the given situations of education and from the viewpoint of pedagogical disciplines and content fulfillment of the given direction of theory and practice.

2) Aims of the dissertation and used methods

The main aim of the thesis is to describe and to develop a concept based on the analysis. Well-chosen methodology - anchored theory. The results are well interpreted and visualized. The reader thus has a great support to understand the results in the form of data and to transform them into pedagogical theories. The author does not only highlights the positives but also describes the barriers. This fact also moves this work to an extraordinary level.

3) Results of the research

The research results are presented in a separate chapter. It is a big pity that the author did not put the results of the research into the theoretical parts of the work. This would further underline its exceptional. But maybe it's going to be in the future. However, I also very much welcome the transcendence of research results from the descriptive level to the metacognitive level, so the work achieves the elements of system approach and is not limited to description and statement but also tries to come with the new vision presented in the conclusions of the thesis. The hints of this vision can be seen in some schemas and tables. I believe that this author's work will be continued in the form of a comprehensive publication and the author will continue to continue her research.

4) Formal issues of the work

There are almost no formal mistakes in the work, especially the language level is excellent. The content level of the work is very balanced. The author works very well with scientific literature and adequately quotes the sources listed in references. The work is very clear and the formal adaptation of the work is sufficient.

Summary of the questions for the defence:

1. Describe the basic methodological strategy from the point of view of selection of research design, selection of methods for data collection, data analysis, and their evaluation.
2. Characterize the common points and interpenetrations between the results and the opportunity to use them in practice.
2. Describe the benefits of your work and the possibilities for further research.

Conclusion:

The dissertation work of Danping Peng **fulfils the criteria set by Palacky University, Faculty of Education for awarding scientific titles**. This work contributes to the field of education and brings new original findings. Therefore **I recommend this work for the defence procedure and after answering and explanation of the questions I suggest awarding *Danping Peng* with the academic title Ph.D.**



OPPONENT'S ASSESSMENT OF THE DISSERTATION

University, Faculty: Palacký University in Olomouc, Faculty of Education

Field: Education

Author: **Danping Peng**

Title of Work: **Cross-cultural perspectives on pedagogical leadership in schools providing compulsory education**

Supervisor: doc. Mgr. Jana Poláková Vašátková, Ph.D.

Opponent: doc. PhDr. Tomáš Čech, Ph.D.

Workplace of opponent: Palacký University in Olomouc, Faculty of Education
Institute of Education and Social Studies

Selection and topicality of the issue

The present dissertation addresses a significant scientific topic, which is consistent with the doctoral degree programme of *Education*, i.e. pedagogical leadership in elementary schools (schools providing compulsory education), both in terms of the barriers to effective education and functional elements supporting education in contemporary schools. The author partially deviated from the core issue defined by the title, i.e. exploring the situation from a cross-cultural perspective, but overall the dissertation contributes to the issue in question.

Objectives of the dissertation – formulation, difficulty and achievement

The main objective the present study is to explore the concepts of pedagogical leadership, its dimensions from various perspectives, and the factors that affect them in educational practice. This general objective is formulated in an appropriate way and is consistent with the content of the dissertation. However, in the introduction to the research part the objective is defined as follows: 'explore pedagogical leadership in schools providing compulsory education from the cross-cultural viewpoint, or from the perspective of a "culture foreigner" concerning pedagogical leadership in practice'. As mentioned below, the research includes headteachers and teachers in elementary schools, but the dissertation lacks a deeper focus on the 'cross-cultural viewpoint' or 'perspective of a culture foreigner'. Therefore, the main objective could have been defined in a more exact and clear way, and structured into several partial objectives, or provided with more clearly defined research questions. The main research question 'What is the process of PL development in particular Czech schools providing compulsory education?' also includes the following note: 'will be answered from cross-cultural perspectives'.



From a general perspective the objective has been achieved, but not entirely in terms of the previously announced cross-cultural viewpoint.

Structure of the dissertation, theoretical background

The length of the dissertation just reaches the minimum of 115 pages plus 3 annexes on additional 24 pages (concept of the interview for headteachers and teachers, overview of coding categories, and 'Leadership in schools' questionnaire). The first chapter includes an introduction and theoretical background, in the second chapter the author D. Peng addresses the issue of pedagogical leadership from a general perspective, the third chapter is devoted to the actors of pedagogical leadership. These chapters seem to form the theoretical background of the whole dissertation. They are not extensive, but in a systematic way structure the key knowledge about the issue. An advantage of the dissertation is a comparison of a number of valuable resources and findings from many countries; the findings are properly cited and literary resources are properly referenced. However, a clearer analysis of the previously announced cross-cultural aspects of pedagogical leadership is missing.

A more extensive part of the dissertation the author's own contribution to the issue in the form of research aimed at elementary school headteachers and teachers (chapters 4 and 5), followed by discussion and conclusions (chapters 6 and 7) – see below.

Empirical research and methodology

To achieve the defined research objectives, D. Peng used a qualitative research design with a semi-structured interview as a research tool. The interview was made with ten respondents (five headteachers and five teachers in Czech elementary schools); the concept of the interview is enclosed in the annex. The data obtained were properly analysed by means of the grounded theory model. All methodological approaches and considerations were clarified using appropriate resources in chapter 4, including the selection of the procedures, validity of the research, ethics of the research and other aspects. The process of data coding and systematization is of high quality and confirms solid methodological preparation. In the open coding procedure, the properties and dimensions of the categories should have been clearly defined; the coding items somewhat coincide (please explain during the defence procedure what are the outcomes of the different stages of coding). The final discussion (chapter 6) represents a coherent outcome based on grounded theory; it is a comprehensive and well-researched summary of the findings, associations and links that reveal the reality of pedagogical leadership in Czech schools. I appreciate the inclusion of the partial quantitative research; the question is however whether it fulfils its role in the context of the previously announced triangulation of results. But again, the quantitative research is well-based on appropriate methodological approaches.

Formal requirements



The author used a number of valuable scientific resources, almost all in foreign language, and used them correctly in terms of citations and references (according to APA). The dissertation is well-structured and meets all formal requirements.

Summary

In her dissertation, Danping Peng presented a valuable theoretical-empirical study. The dissertation confirms the author's knowledge about the issue based on a number of valuable resources, which were handled in a proper way. The author has shown very good methodological competences and presented a comprehensive study, which I recommend for publishing after some necessary changes are made. The minor reservations suggested above do not affect the quality of the dissertation in a fundamental way; they are rather suggestions for further research on this issue.

Questions and tasks for the defence procedure

1. Please explain the procedure in each stage of coding and specific outcomes (primarily in relation to axial and selective coding).
2. Please explain your idea about the cross-cultural perspective of pedagogical leadership and the way it was reflected in data analysis and interpretation.

Conclusion:

The present dissertation by Danping Peng **fulfils the criteria in the field of *Education* set by Palacký University in Olomouc, Faculty of Education** for awarding scientific titles. The work contributes to the field of education and brings new original findings. Therefore **I recommend this work for the defence procedure** and after answering and explanation of the questions **I suggest awarding Danping Peng with the academic title Ph.D.**

Brno, 7 August 2017

doc. PhDr. Tomáš Čech, Ph.D.