



Master's Thesis Evaluation Form

Student's name: Xichong Wang

Thesis title: A study on the impact of the workplace reality show on the audience in China

Name of the supervisor: Irena Reifová, Ph.D.

Name of the opponent: Tereza Fousek Krobová, Ph.D.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis? Please give your reasons for the suggested grade in detail below.

1. *Does the author show understanding of one or more theories, and use theory to generate a hypothesis or to make the problem area more understandable.*

Comments: Opening of the theoretical section accurately summarizes the academic literature on development and different types of reality television programs (RTV). For instance, the notion of different generations of RTV is clearly explained and effectively illustrated. The section on the history of RTV in China lacks references to literature so that the source of the information remains unclear. The chapter discussing the concept of authenticity in RTV should be more consistent, now it piles up rather contradictory perspectives (such as the idea that filming reality as-is would be dull, versus the notion that RTV does not live up to its promise of depicting actual life situations).

However, the theoretical section is notably lacking critical-theoretical perspective and examination of the connection between workplace reality programmes and the dominant ideology in Chinese society. The thesis presents workplace RTV as a learning opportunity that provides Chinese viewers with valuable information on how to succeed in the job market and enhance their competitiveness. The student effectively identified the theory of learning from RTV, as presented in Anette Hill's works, as a relevant approach to workplace RTV. While the theory of RTV as a source of practical and social learning for specific tasks is valid, it should not overshadow the understanding that RTV also disseminates compact ideological narrative foregrounding the cult of work and individual performance. Theories emphasizing that RTV's focus on disciplined life, personal growth, and self-perfection is in sync with the values of capitalism and neoliberalism, is not represented in the thesis, although widely covered in the literature. The thesis pictures RTV as kind, guiding hand helping Chinese job seekers through work culture permeated with the devastating pressure on individuals to become high achievers. This is academically uncritical and incomplete account of the genre.

2. *Is the research question articulated clearly and properly? Is the research question sufficiently answered in the conclusion?*

Comments:



Research questions are formulated clearly, and they are derived from previous theoretical treatment of the workplace reality programmes. Research questions are not presented prominently enough, being buried in the text on page 21.

3. *Is the thesis based on relevant research and literature and does it accurately summarize and integrate the information?*

Comments: The thesis is supported with satisfactory literature review. Xichong Wang identifies relevant publications which are mostly interpreted accurately. There are only minor mistakes in the List of references, such as inconsistencies in references to books. (The location of the publishers is not consistently mentioned.)

4. *What is the quality of the data or the other sources? Are the sample method, data collection and data analysis appropriate?*

Comments: Although practical section was reworked, there are still issues with regard to the methodology and statistical analyses, which remain unclear. A significant issue is that Xichong Wang reported (upon my request for the file) that her SPSS datafile was lost when her notebook was stolen. This unfortunate event prevents a more thorough examination of the statistical tests.

From the submitted thesis it is not clear on what platform the survey questionnaire was collected. Information on the content of the consent form should be more thorough and the form should be appended to the thesis. The operationalization of the research questions with the questionnaire is unclear and lacks transparency. The thesis describes 5 topical segments of questions, but it is not clear how they correspond to the questionnaire as it is not divided into corresponding segments. (Questions related to anxiety can be identified by their wording, but it is unclear, for instance, which questions are intended to measure viewers' "self-regulation".) The way variables are presented in the tables is confusing. Variables do not have specific names, working names are used instead (e.g. anxiety_1, anxiety_2...) They should have been renamed in SPSS by changing value labels. The working names make tables very chaotic and hard to understand.

There is significant inconsistency in the reporting of the results. (Given that the datafile is missing, it is difficult to delve deeper into the analysis.) Significance levels are misreported – instead of $p < .001$ there is 0.01. It is also unclear what significance levels are deemed important as there are two significance levels under some tables (for instance table 12).

Table 14 in which H1 is accepted: $F(2, 918), p < .001$ should be explained. There is no such F value including 918 and it is unclear where it comes from and on what grounds the H1 was accepted. Table 15, in which H1 is accepted: $F(10, 910) = 3.778, p < .001$ also needs explanation, as the value 910 is nowhere to be found in the table. There is similar situation with reporting in table 16, $r(919) = 0.886, p < 0.01$. What does value 919 stand for?

5. *Are the findings relevant to the research question? Are the conclusions of the thesis based on strong arguments?*

Comments:

Findings are relevant and respond to the research questions. It is difficult to assess if the conclusions are completely valid though because datafile is missing. Doubts may rise about



decisions to reject H0 and accept H1 in tables 14, 15 and 16 as there are dubious values included.

6. *Are the author's thoughts distinguished unambiguously from the borrowed ideas?*

Comments:

There were major issues with understanding the proper way to cite sources in the course of preparing the thesis. However, Xichong Wang made significant improvements in her ability to cite sources correctly, and it now appears to be adequate.

7. *Is the thesis containing original/innovative research (in terms of topic, approach, and/or findings)?*

Comments:

The topic of workplace RTV in China is an excellent choice as it addresses the highly relevant issue of work cultures in Chinese society, which is one of the most competitive and performance-oriented societies in the world, especially in urban areas. Unfortunately, the opportunity to study the Chinese variant of neoliberalism through the issue of how the audiences are adjusted to the high-performance standards was not taken advantage of.

8. *What is the quality of style and other formal requirements?*

Comments:

The broken style and varying level of English hindered my complete understanding of the work during the consultations. Eventually, Xichong Wang significantly improved the style, compared to the previous versions. Some problems are persisting, there are typos, some vernacular formulations should be explained or avoided ("resigning naked in the age of 30"...). But generally speaking, the quality of style is acceptable.

9. *Are there any other strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, which are not included in the previous questions? Please list them if any.*

Comments: No.

10. *What topic do you suggest for the discussion in the thesis defence?*

Comments:

I suggest that absence of critical approach to RTV as neoliberal pedagogy is addressed during the defence. The student should also explain operationalisation of the RQs in the questionnaire and inconsistencies' in reporting the results.

11. *Declaration that the supervisor has read the result of the originality check in the system: [X] Theses [] Turnitin [] Original (Urkund)*

Supervisor's comment on the originality check result:



The overlap with other works as reported by the anti-plagiarism tool in SIS (Theses) was 5 %.

Overall assessment of the thesis:

I recommend the thesis for a defence and propose it is graded D.

(Please, state clearly whether the thesis is or is not recommended for a defence and write the main reasons for the recommendation).

Proposed grade:

(A- B: excellent, C-D: very good, E: good, F: fail)

Date: 27.1. 2023

Signature: Irena Reifová, Ph.D.