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**Review of PhD thesis**

Author

mgr Xiaochen Bu

Title

*Building positive relationships at Sino-Polish workplace in Poland.*

Supervisors

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The formal basis for this review is a letter sent by dr hab. Agata Sudolska, Professor at UMK, informing me of my appointment by the Scientific Council of Discipline of Management and Quality Sciences, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, as a reviewer of the aforementioned doctoral thesis.





Politechnika  
Śląska



UCZELNIA  
BADAWCZA

## 1. Overall characteristics of the work

Reviewed doctoral thesis written by Ms Xiaochen Bu, Msc, investigates the relational dynamics between Chinese self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) and local Polish employees. It aims to explain how positive coworker relationships are built and sustained within this specific cross-cultural context.

**I acknowledge that Ms Xiaochen Bu, Msc, has appropriately selected the subject matter of her thesis within the discipline of management and quality science, having identified in both domestic and international literature the current state of knowledge and a research gap. Furthermore, in my opinion, Ms Xiaochen Bu, Msc has demonstrated a general understanding of the knowledge issues addressed in the thesis.**

## 2. Research procedure

Ms Xiaochen Bu, Msc, presents the main objective of the dissertation as: *to examine how Chinese self-initiated expatriates and local Polish employees build positive coworker relationships within the Sino-Polish workplace.*

To achieve the objective, Ms Xiaochen Bu, Msc, stated five research questions:

1. How do Chinese self-initiated expatriates' workplace attachment and belonging build differentiated embedding in the Sino-Polish workplace?
2. How do Chinese self-initiated expatriates' workplace attachment, belonging, and differentiated embedding influence positive relationships with Polish coworkers?
3. What role does the Chinese Guanxi play in fostering positive relationships in the Sino-Polish workplace and their links with workplace attachment, belonging, and differentiated embedding?



4. How do Chinese self-initiated expatriates and Polish coworkers co-construct relational, spatial, and temporal processes of differentiated embedding in the Sino-Polish workplace?

5. What forms of high-quality connections emerge between Chinese and Polish employees in the Sino-Polish workplace?

The research is grounded in the concept of differentiated embedding, assuming that belonging and attachment are dynamic, multi-layered processes involving relational, spatial, and temporal dimensions.

In my opinion Ms Xiaochen Bu, Msc, makes a notable contribution by integrating three distinct theoretical domains: (1) The PhD candidate goes beyond simplistic ‘integration’ models, adopting a dynamic framework that consider belonging and attachment as ongoing negotiation processes across relational, spatial, and temporal dimensions, (2) The thesis is among the first to empirically test the moderating role of the Chinese cultural concept of Guanxi (consisting of Ganqing, Renqing, and Xinren) within a Sino-Polish workplace, (3) The study uses HQCs as a primary indicator of positive workplace relationships, focusing on emotional carrying capacity, tensility, in mutual regard.

In the study, PhD candidate applies parallel mixed-methods design: (1) Quantitative Study, questionnaire survey of 121 valid responses from Chinese SIEs working in Poland, (2) Qualitative Study, semi-structured interviews with seven paired dyads (14 participants), each consisting of one Chinese SIE and one Polish employee from the same workplace.

**To conclude, it should be noted that Ms Xiaochen Bu, Msc, conducted her own research and presented findings, offering an original answer to the research problem.**

### 3. Comments and aspects open to debate

In my view, a doctoral thesis should also stimulate discussion, and I hope that my comments will provide an opportunity to build on the PhD candidate's future achievements.

In my opinion there are following limitations of the work:

The quantitative sample is relatively small and therefore limits generalizability.

Moreover the quantitative part relies primarily on regression and CFA analysis; while this is acceptable, it does not allow strong conclusions about causal mechanisms and could be strengthened in future work through extensive and rigorous approach to SEM.

Furthermore, the interview material may be affected by self-presentation and social desirability bias, especially given the relational sensitivity of topics such as trust, belonging, and reputation.

Ms Xiaochen Bu, Msc, does not ignore these limitations; on the contrary, they are explicitly acknowledged in the thesis. However, I would be interested to hear the ideas of a PhD candidate on how to avoid these limitations in future work.

From a reviewer's perspective, I may add that the symmetry of the design is somewhat limited, as the quantitative component reflects only the perceptions of Chinese self-initiated expatriates, whereas Polish employees seems to appear only in the qualitative phase. This does not invalidate the study, but it in my opinion means that the 'Sino-Polish' perspective is methodologically wider in the qualitative part than in the survey component. Likewise, because the work is ambitious conceptually, some constructs occasionally seem broad and would benefit from even sharper differentiation in future publications. These remarks, however, do not diminish the overall scholarly value of the dissertation.

I would like to emphasize, that dissertation is logically structured and proceeds consistently from literature review, through methodology, to findings, discussion, limitations, and future

research directions. Ms Xiaochen Bu, Msc, demonstrates familiarity with the relevant literature and succeeds in linking conceptual discussion with empirical analysis. At the same time, the text would benefit from careful language editing in places, including small grammatical and stylistic corrections, but these are editorial rather than substantive issues. Moreover the references should be applied more carefully (e.g. there should reference to numbered figure on the page 89).

**These comments and elements of discussion do not reduce the cognitive value of the work.**

### **Conclusion**

On the basis of all the above comments, opinions and assessments, I state that the doctoral thesis of Ms Xiaochen Bu, Msc., meets the requirements defined in the Act of 20 July 2018 - The Law on Higher Education and Science (Dz. U. 2023 poz. 742, as amended), i.e. the thesis presents an original solution to a scientific problem, presents the PhD candidate's general theoretical knowledge in the discipline and the ability to independently conduct scientific work,. Therefore, I recommend that permission for a public defence of the dissertation of Ms Xiaochen Bu, Msc, should be granted.

### **Konkluzja**

Uwzględniając wszystkie powyższe uwagi, opinie i oceny stwierdzam, że rozprawa Pani mgr Xiaochen Bu spełnia wymogi stawiane pracy doktorskiej, określone w art. 187 ustawy z dnia 20 lipca 2018 r. Prawo o szkolnictwie wyższym i nauce (Dz. U. z 2023 r., poz. 742, z późn. zm.), tzn. rozprawa ta przedstawia oryginalne rozwiązanie problemu naukowego, prezentuje wiedzę teoretyczną Kandydatki w dyscyplinie naukowej oraz umiejętność samodzielnego prowadzenia pracy naukowej. W związku z powyższym stawiam wniosek o dopuszczenie rozprawy Pani mgr Xiaochen Bu do publicznej obrony.

23.09.2026

