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**KENT STATE UNIVERSITY**

College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences

**DOCTORAL DISSERTATION DEFENSE**

of

Lifen Li

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Special Education

**Teachers' Lived Experiences of Disruptive Classroom Behavior in Self-Contained Classrooms for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders**

Friday, March 22

9:00 am

White Hall 403

Kent State University

## **Lifen Li**

M.A., English Language and Literature  
Zhengzhou University, China, 2010

B.A., Business English  
Zhengzhou University, China, 2004

Lifen Li served as a high school teacher for one year before joining the School of Foreign Languages at SIAS College, Zhengzhou University, China, where she worked for 12 years from 2005 to 2017. During this time, she developed a keen interest in comparative research between Chinese and Western cultures, translation theories, and ESL teaching practices. She published several articles on Chinese and English language translation research, language studies, and teaching practices. Additionally, she delved into studies on teacher-student relationships and classroom interactions. Collaborating with her colleagues, she conducted projects on the mediatorial role of teachers in foreign language teaching, foreign language acquisition, and evaluation theory, as well as practical research on College English teaching.

From 2017 to 2018, she was a visiting scholar at Akron University, focusing on classroom observation. During this period, her interest in teacher-student relationships and interactions expanded into the field of special education. In August 2019, she embarked on a new academic pursuit, pursuing a doctoral degree in special education, with a particular focus on students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

Looking ahead, Lifen aims to continue her research and teaching in higher education, focusing on culture and language comparison research, as well as special education teaching practices.

## **Teachers' Lived Experiences of Disruptive Classroom Behavior in Self-Contained Classrooms for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders**

This study aims to understand special education teachers' lived experience of encountering Disruptive Classroom Behavior (DCB) among middle school students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD) in self-contained classrooms. Employing an interpretative phenomenological approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight teachers who self-identified as having lived experience with DCB. Through rich descriptions provided by participants, the study aims to understand the significance they attribute to these encounters and the realization of their roles as educators in such settings.

Using a purposive and subsequent snowball recruitment approach, ten participants were identified, of whom eight in-depth interviews were conducted via Zoom, each lasting 45 to 60 minutes. Excluding one interview not classroom-based, the final analytic sample included seven participants' lived experience encountering DCB in self-contained classrooms for students with EBD. Following transcription, participant feedback was sought to ensure accuracy. Data analysis adhered to methodologies outlined by Peoples (2020) and Larsen & Adu (2021).

The findings present seven individual narratives alongside a collective narrative, elucidating the delicate balance between professionalism and empathy, the importance of understanding the origins of DCB, and the resilience required for effective management. The study underscores the necessity for tailored professional development, collaborative support, and empathetic teaching approaches for students with EBD. It emphasizes the profound impact of teachers on students' lives and the evolving demands within the teaching profession.