

**Research on the Cultivation of Female Successors in Family  
Enterprises**

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## **Abstract**

Along with social environment changing and family business developing rapidly, as well as females themselves having management predominance, more and more females start to participate in business management. Because of their feminine sex characteristics and multiple roles, the feminine clan members face a series of predicaments and conflicts in their yearn to inherit a family business. Based on such a background, the author offers a tentative study on the cultivation of female successors in the family enterprise. This thesis comprehensively presents the basic theories in the areas of the family business and researches on the females aspiring to be leadership heirs. The paper lays a foundation for further discussion by presenting the definition of the family business and reviewing previous studies on female successors. The study also presents the dilemmas of females, such as sex discrimination; sex-role conflict; psychological conflict. Then from sociocultural, biological and psychological scopes, the paper analyses reasons why females are in a dilemma. This study also provides the prerequisites to help the female member in the family business get rid of the difficulties on their journey to become leadership heirs. The paper additionally proposes some countermeasures to conquer the obstacles faced by female successors. First, female successors should exert sex predominance, which integrates business characteristics to form her unique management. The second ideology and culture of the female in society should be updated. The society should create equality in the cultural atmosphere for women and men so as to realize that all genders take on the responsibility equally and create a good social environment for female members of the family business. Thirdly, female successors should improve their abilities. They can work from the grassroots level. They should learn to build their authority in the enterprise. Finally, this paper displays the management predominance and dilemma of female members in the Chinese family business by the analysis of Wantong Group's daughter inheriting his father's business case. Based on it, the paper gives the corresponding enlightenments which can help a family firm feminine member improve. The researcher hopes that through such an analysis, the paper could offer some implications and enlightenment for the cultivation of female successors. The

researcher also expected that it could elicit more studies in this field.

**Key Words:** Female successors, family business, gender

## 摘要

随着社会环境的变化和家族企业的迅速发展，以及女性自身具有管理优势，越来越多的女性开始参与企业管理。由于女性的性别特征和多重角色，女性家族成员想要继承家族企业，面临着一系列的困境和冲突，本文在此背景下，对家族企业女性继承人的培养进行了初步的研究。

首先，本文全面介绍了家族企业领域的基本理论和女性研究。例如，介绍了家族企业的定义。此外，还回顾了以往关于女性继承人的研究。第二，研究提出了女性继承人面临性别歧视、性别角色冲突、心理冲突等困境。然后，从社会文化、生物学和心理学的角度，分析了女性进退两难的原因，为帮助家族企业中的女性摆脱困境提供了前提。在此基础上，提出了克服女继承人障碍的对策。第一，女性继承人应发挥性别优势，结合企业特点，形成独特的管理方式。第二，更新女性在社会中的思想文化。社会要营造男女平等的文化氛围，实现男女平等承担责任，为家族企业的女性成员创造良好的社会环境。第三，女性继承人应提高自身能力。他们可以从基层做起。他们应该学会在企业中树立自己的权威。最后，通过对万通集团女儿继承父亲商业案例的分析，揭示了中国家族企业女性成员的管理优势和困境，和从中可吸取的经验。在此基础上，本文希望能给家族企业女性继承人的培养提供一些启示。希望通过这样的分析，能够抛砖引玉，引出更多相关研究。

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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Research Background and Significance**

The family business is unique in the economic environment as it is a unique form of corporate organization. Enterprise execution alludes to the business advantages and execution of the administrators during a specific time of activity. The degree of business activity effectiveness is chiefly reflected in productivity, resource activity level, dissolvability and consequent advancement ability. The performance of the administrator is fundamentally reflected in the accomplishments and commitments made by the administrator during the time spent dealing with the entity.

Since the 1950s, the definition of the family business is still in dispute. Family business, in its narrow sense, means that several generations of the family are directly involved in business management, and more than one family member has important management responsibilities. In a broad sense, a family business means that the family only participates in the daily management of the enterprise, but the family members control the future strategic development direction of the enterprise. However, in China, the general condition for the family business is that the first generation of entrepreneurs pass the enterprise to future generations, and only entrepreneurs and successors manage the enterprise, while other family members have a place on the board of directors and do not participate in the management of the company (Astrachan & Shanker, 2003).

According to Ernesto's (2007) survey and research, the number of family businesses exceeds 160 in the world 500 strong companies, and 60% of all listed companies are still affected by family (Ernesto, 2007).

Family companies are booming in the West because of the maturity of laws and regulations. In addition, family holding companies are increasing and expanding at a faster rate in most developing countries. The reasons why certain family enterprises expand rapidly lay in cohesiveness, management mechanism, grasp of market opportunities.

However, the performance of small and medium-sized family businesses has always faced a great challenge. The phenomenon of “prosperity no more than three generations” is also influencing many countries. For example, in America, the survival rate of family company is 30% when it is passed to the second generation and is reduced to 12% and 3% respectively when it comes to the third and fourth generation. Therefore, the survival and development problems that family businesses have in the process of inheritance will be more worthy of attention, which has a direct relationship with the choice of heirs.

China’s family business is booming, especially in coastal areas where imports and exports are growing rapidly. However, due to the immature legislative system, there are many problems and threats to the performance of these family businesses, which have influenced the survival and development of family enterprises. When China’s reform and opening-up policy was promulgated and implemented in 1978, it created a great opportunity for the development and expansion of private enterprises. These enterprises also started from the coastal areas, with vast majority comprising of family enterprises. The prosperity of family businesses has also made a huge contribution to the growth of China's economy. Among them, there are new opportunities in terms of national policies, culture, and financing. However, new opportunities also herald new challenges.

Under the national policy of family planning in China, the issue of female inheritance has become more acute. China’s market environment and cultural barriers may hinder the development of family businesses. The issue of female inheritance seriously affects the performance of Chinese small and medium-sized family enterprises. In the international environment, through the comparative analysis of academic research locally and abroad, this thesis offers a tentative study on the cultivation mechanism of female successors in family enterprises. The researcher hopes that this thesis could offer some implication and enlightenment for the cultivation of female successors. By doing so, the researcher expects that it could help family enterprises improve their performance. Hopefully, it could make Chinese family business market more mature and increase the competitiveness of Chinese

enterprises in the world.

## **1.2 Research Method**

*Literature research:* The author collects relevant research materials concerning the cultivation of female heirs in family enterprises from the Internet, libraries, etc., and carefully organizes the readings to set the direction for the research and prepare for the preliminary theory.

*Case analysis:* This thesis takes specific family businesses for examples to conduct analysis. By doing so, the analysis becomes more convincing.

*Logic analysis:* This thesis uses logic analysis measures to provide in-depth analysis of the problems found in the research process in all aspects. Then the reasons for the existence of the problem are analyzed. Finally, this thesis proposes countermeasures to solve the problem.

## **1.3 Thesis Structure**

The structure of the thesis is as follows: Chapter one is a simple introduction of the thesis background and significance. In this part, the current situation faced by family business is introduced. It points out that at present, the inheritance of family business is a big issue. The survival rate of family business is not high due to various reasons. The cultivation of female heirs becomes especially prominent. Also, research methods involved in this thesis are described. In the second chapter, related studies are reviewed. It includes the existing researches on female heirs and problems faced by female heirs. In the third chapter, there comes an analysis of the environment faced by family business. Both PEST analysis and SWOT analysis are used. In the fourth chapter, the problems existing in the inheritance of family business are pointed out. Then countermeasures are proposed to solve these problems. Finally, there is a conclusion. Main findings are summarized, and suggestions for future studies are put forward. Also, limitations are mentioned.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Research on Family enterprise

#### 2.1.1 The Definition of Family Enterprise

Although there is a long history of research on family business, so far, the distinction between family business and non-family business is still an extremely vague problem. There are different definitions. Main views run as follows:

*Starting business:* Scholars who hold this view believe that most of the family business appears in the entrepreneurial stage. The representative enterprise historian Chandler gives the definition of family business as a business whose founder of the company and its closest partners (family) have always been in charge of most of the shares. They maintain close personal relationships with managers, and have the main decision-making power of high-level management, especially in terms of personnel policies, and resource allocation (Chandler, 1987).

*Family sociality:* In sociology, "family" is defined as several generations of the same male ancestor living in a certain area, and forming a specific social organization system based on blood and kinship. When the basic resources (labor, capital, land, technology) of this social system are systematically invested in the specialized production and social sales activities of a certain product or service, it becomes a production organization. The specific corporate system is "family business" in the strict sense.

*Family influence:* This view holds that the essence of family business and non-family business is different in terms of the allocation of rights. If a family member owns more than 60% of the property ownership of a company, and the transfer of ownership is within the family, the enterprise is a family business. Professor Robert G. Donnelly of Harvard University defined the family business as having at least two generations of the same family involved in the management of the company, and the two generations have an impact on the company's policies and family interests and goals (Chu, 2004).

*Enterprise property allocation:* Scholars with this view believe that family business is characterized by the ownership and management rights. Pan believes that when a family or several families with close alliances own all or part of the ownership of the enterprise and directly or grasp the management rights of the enterprise, the enterprise is a family business (Pan,1998).

*Critical control:* It is believed that the business process is a continuous dynamic division of enterprise ownership. In the process, the boundary between family business and non-family enterprise can be quantitatively determined by a set of critical control ratio indicators reflecting family-to-business. Once the enterprise breaks through the critical control of the family to the enterprise, the nature of the family enterprise becomes a public company.

### 2.1.2 Economic Performance of Family Enterprise

There are different perspectives on the economic rationality of family business: positive type, negative type and moderate type. Scholars who have a negative attitude towards family business believe that there is a natural conflict between modern industrial organizations and traditional family organizations. The nepotism bred by the traditional Chinese family system is the biggest obstacle to the establishment of an efficient industrial system in China. Compared with modern enterprises, there are some problems in family enterprises, such as unclear property rights, limited mobilization ability, closed allocation structure of internal property rights (claim and control rights), technological innovation of family enterprises, and weak brand-building ability.

Scholars who have a positive attitude towards family business believe that family business is not a synonym of backwardness and family organization is not necessarily inefficient. In certain circumstances, family business is more efficient and competitive than market bureaucracy. The advantages of family business mainly lie in that because of the integration of ownership and management rights, the cost of principal-agent and contract supervision can be reduced to the extreme. Because "enterprise is home, home is enterprise", at least in the initial stage of the enterprise,

the natural sense of dependence and moral responsibility of "home" within the family of entrepreneurs urge the core members not to care about wages, welfare, etc. to reduce transaction costs. Family members share the same values and can easily form a consensus on how to run a business, which helps owners to implement their own business philosophy.

Moderate view: They believe that family business has both a reasonable side and an unreasonable side. Redding discusses the advantages and disadvantages of Chinese family business organization from the aspects of vertical cooperation, horizontal cooperation, control and adaptability. He believes that Chinese family business is both an efficient organizational tool and also the roots of its organizational problems (Redding, 1993).

### 2.1.3 Prospects of Family Enterprise

People have different opinions on the development of family enterprises, mostly affirming them. Qiren pointed that it is not necessary to reform family enterprise according to the norms of non-family enterprises. Most family enterprises can produce a kind of revolution from within the enterprises. Factors, starting with the management system, make their own enterprises smoothly transform to adapt to the challenges of modern economy. Wei (2001) believes that, from a worldwide perspective, the contracting of family enterprises is not necessarily to change the existence of a large number of family enterprises in non-family enterprises, which is an indispensable or inevitable part of any economic structure. The main negative viewpoint is that family enterprises should get rid of the shackles of property rights of family enterprises as soon as possible and establish a modern joint-stock company system with diversified property rights in order to obtain the motive force of sustainable development (Wei, 2001).

## 2.2 Research on Female Inheritance

China's research on family business has long been insufficient, especially for the inheritance of family businesses. The exploration of the issue of female

inheritance rights has almost no academic information. Foreign studies on the issue of female inheritance rights have been increasing. Intergenerational inheritance is a major problem that family businesses must face. The modern family business inheritance process is derived by many economists through theoretical and practical investigations. The most important ones are: Churchill and Hatten's four-stage heritage of the father and son life cycle, Handler's four-stage role adjustment model, Gersick's family business ownership inheritance six-stage model, Murray's inheritance cycle model.

Churchill and Hatten point that the inheritance of family businesses is the transfer of ownership and control. This process is driven by natural biological forces, not the market. They divide the inheritance of family businesses into four different stages, including the owner management stage, the child's training and development stage, the parent-child partnership stage, and the rights transfer stage. The model bases on the life cycle of the father and son, and extends the transmission of the family business to the two-dimensional space. It also involves the influence of the company's development direction, operation management and other aspects. This model focuses on two individuals that father and son, but in fact, most family businesses have multiple family members ( Churchill and Hatten, 1987).

Handler uses a qualitative analysis method to build a four-stage role adjustment model. He believes that the inheritance of the family is the role adjustment between the founder and the next generation of family members. In this process, the rights and leadership authority of the founders gradually fade. This process consists of four stages. The first stage is that the founder is the core of the family business, and there is no suitable successor in the next generation. The second stage is that the founder is still the leader of the family business, and the next generation of family members act as the assistant of the founder. The third stage is that the founder is the supervisor, and the next generation of family members is decision makers and leaders. The fourth stage is the transfer of equity from the founder to the next generation of family members. The last stage often takes a long time because of the founders' avoidance. This model is conducive to the judgment and resolution of problems in the process of

family business inheritance, but the details of the changes in family business ownership need to be studied in depth (Handler, 2010).

Gersick and his colleagues studied the inheritance of family businesses and proposed a family business ownership inheritance six-stage model. This model is divided into three parts, namely family, business and ownership. Because the development of the family business is dynamic, they later proposed a three-level development model of the family business. On the basis of this model, they divided the inheritance of the family business into six stages, which are the continuous accumulation of development pressure, triggering, disengagement, exploring plans, selecting and implementing new structures. These six stages are the process of inheritance of family business ownership. Other models focus on the inheritance of management rights, and this model is innovative because it stresses the transfer of ownership. However, this model does not consider the impact of differences in different stages and the impact of the external environment, so it is not comprehensive (Gersick,1998).

Murray used a comparative research method to study many family businesses and proposed a family business inheritance cycle model. In his research, he found that the family business inheritance has many stages, and the whole process takes three to eight years. At different stages, the tasks that the family business system needs to accomplish are different, mainly to achieve the transfer of ownership. The key tasks in this model are preparation, change, dormancy, exploration, end exploration, decision, and execution decisions. Although this model is based on the six-stage model of the Gersick family enterprise ownership inheritance, the difference is that this model has a dormant phase, while emphasizing the impact of the exploration phase on the inheritance results.

In foreign studies, it has been found that women play an important and positive role in the survival and development of family businesses. At the end of the 19th century, women's status in the family began to be affirmed, and their status as partners began to be accepted. According to Frishkoff and Brown's research, from the early 1980s, women has been widely accepted, but it is only at the periphery rather than the

central authority of the enterprise. In terms of the responsibility distribution between husband and wife, husband is often in charge of the management of the business, while the wife can only participate in the family-related part (Korman and Hubler, 1988).

In their study, Galiano and Vinturella (2003) pointed out that the main manifestation of whether a family business thrives is its inheritance, and the role of women in family business is often their entrepreneurial spirit: First of all, the development of enterprises created by the family is mainly based on the composition of their finances and personnel. The role of women in these two aspects will directly affect the development of their family businesses. Secondly, compared with other companies, family businesses, in addition to economic considerations for better strategic choices, also value non-economic considerations, such as the company's development and human issues. The choice of female heirs is more reflected in the non-economic aspect. Thirdly, the particularity of the family business is that its corporate culture is also the inheritance of the family's internal rules and habits. Therefore, the family culture is more about creating a family institution with a family system (Galiano & Vinturella, 2003).

Foreign studies found that with the development of family businesses and the growth of many family businesses, inheritance has not been divided according to gender, but mainly according to the ability of the successor. However, Barnes (1988) pointed out that female candidates are often suspected of being competitive and convinced by their brothers or fathers within the family business. Therefore, female candidates, although in modern times have the opportunity to inherit the family business, but if they want to beat other candidates to stand out, they need more ability to take over the company (Barnes, 1988).

In China, the "home" culture and the traditional thinking of "male outside, female inside" have a great influence, which makes it difficult for women to inherit family businesses. Li and Liu (2009) pointed out family business is usually inherited by the sons of the family. It is the national conditions of China, but its effectiveness is worth exploring because it is irrational. However, after efficiency analysis, this kind

of power transfer is a multi-party game equilibrium of stakeholders under environmental constraints, because this intelligence status is basically in line with China's institutional environment. Through the structural analysis of the media reports and the statistical analysis of the investigation of 60 family enterprises, there are three main elements for the identification of intergenerational inheritance of family-level enterprises: entrepreneurial tacit knowledge, entrepreneurial networks and entrepreneurship. The cognition of the inheritance of the three types of elements within the inheritance factor system shows a certain degree of difference in the entrepreneurial (Li and Liu, 2009).

In the eyes of entrepreneurs, corporate tacit knowledge and entrepreneurial networks are more inherited than entrepreneurs and occupy a more important role. Entrepreneurship refers to pioneering spirit, professionalism. In the fast-developing China, the rise of the Internet era, the WeChat circle is a new field of innovation as a new propaganda channel. Yang, who returned from the UK and inherited her family business, claimed that she had already prepared her own team and opened a new field of Taobao, which was quite effective. Therefore, it found that entrepreneurship plays an increasingly important role in the rapid development of Chinese private enterprises. Therefore, in the enterprise inheritance, the cultivation of future generations is crucial. Luzhuang, Jie, and Xiaoyan (2008) have summarized the cultivation methods and relative proportions in the scientific research management magazine, and analyzed and compared with the progeny cultivation models of foreign longevity family enterprises. They conclude that China's inheritance model is relatively single and concentrated, and the cultivation methods of future generations are three types, namely, receiving higher education, internal work and external work experience, according to the proportion from high to low. Internal work is mainly based on direct management. Most companies will receive higher education and increase work experiences later.

Zhang (2007) studied the model of intergenerational inheritance of family business in his doctoral thesis. Taking the family life cycle theory in the family business three-ring model as a clue, this paper studies the key links of family

business's intergenerational inheritance, and evaluates the three dimensions of family business management model: family management, open management and intergenerational inheritance of social resources (Zhang, 2007).

Zhou and Xu (2009) found that women's problems encountered in family businesses have the following three levels:

- a) The dilemma of female members in the family business is caused by the macro environment and personal factors. A lot of academic materials show together that it is difficult for female members to have important rights in important positions in the family business. The main responsibility is to take care of the rear of the enterprise: such as the management of the family and future generations. At the same time, family businesses also provide them with opportunities for further development. Curimbaba found in the study that family businesses are more suitable for women's development because they give more space and opportunities. For example: better positions, higher pay, more flexible and flexible working hours. Moreover, within the family business, its "mirrored ceiling" can replace "glass ceiling" (Zhou and Xu, 2009).
- b) The way women are organized and managed is more humane. The performance of their corporate performance is influenced by the composition of social capital and marital status. The simple financial performance is not sufficient to comprehensively measure the female-led enterprises. Bird and Brush (2002) point out that male and female leaders think differently. Men tend to be hierarchical, strategic and competitive, while women tend to be personal, encourage participation in decision-making and care more about employees. Therefore, its female organizational management will be more human. In terms of financing, women have certain difficulties in external financing compared to men, and have certain advantages in internal financing. This has a certain connection with the risk aversion type of women (Bird and Brush, 2002).
- c) Female entrepreneurs have a higher chance of choosing female descendants as

heirs, and the resistance of female heirs in the process of inheritance mainly comes from their parents and family. But through Vera and Dean's (2005) research on ten female entrepreneurs, female entrepreneurs have a strong desire to control, so they often have a rigid relationship with their female heirs, and Cadieux et al. also found that transgender intergenerational inheritance is more stable (Caroline, Vera and Dean's,2005).

Through the research on the inheritance of foreign family enterprises, Ning (2011) pointed out the development of foreign family enterprises. The inheritance of the eldest son is an important part of the traditional cultural system of the family business. If the inheritance of the family business to women is subversive, and women also believe that inheritance is only temporary, in order to find a more suitable person and then change hands, employees will not be satisfied with the leadership of women. He also emphasized the importance and stability of the inheritance of the opposite sex. Female inheritance is summarized as a challenge to the traditional male patriarchal family culture (Ning, 2011).

Wei (2012) conducted a survey of 112 family-owned enterprises in Zhejiang Province, and discussed the role of female heirs of family businesses in the process of inheritance, such as role orientation, recessiveness, and leadership style. One of the innovations is that the size of the firm has an important influence on the willingness of women to join. Women who prefer large-scale or modern management models express great will and interest. When the daughter and the decision-maker have the same dual identity, the female successor often has conflicts with his parents, which makes female inheritance more difficult. At the same time, the implementation of family planning and the collision of Chinese and Western cultures have given women more opportunities to inherit in family businesses. There are three reasons: strong cohesiveness; internal trust; low interdependence and agency risk. The final conclusion is that intergenerational inheritance should not only be regarded as a thing, but also should be regarded as a process. The cultivation of heirs is of paramount importance. Secondly, although women's dominant ideas are gradually accepted, their invisible phenomena will continue to exist. The choice of successor again depends on

the relationship between the business leader and his company.

For female heirs, there should be both male rationality and wisdom as well as women's delicate and emotional side. Finally, the institutional change of the enterprise is determined and controlled by the business owner, so the transfer of rights has many challenges for female successors.

Chen and Wu (2012) studied the three stages of inheritance. The degree of influence and influence of women in managing small and medium-sized family business women's heirs on the management of family businesses is rarely studied, so this aspect is worthy of investigation (Chen and Wu, 2012).

### **2.3 Challenge Faced by Female Heirs**

The number of female members in family business has increased and their status has increased accordingly. Therefore, the issue of female members' succession in intergenerational inheritance is also worth exploring. Under the study of foreign scholars, there are two main difficulties faced by women in family business: their identity positioning, the control of its interpersonal relationship. The identity of women in family businesses and in ordinary companies have a fatal discriminatory treatment, namely women's invisibility. The identity of women is more in their families, as wives, daughters or sisters, but in the real economic environment, the business field, its identity is not much valued. Although in recent decades, women hope to find its identity in the family business, but their obstacles are also well known. Its invisibility not only seriously hinders women's leadership as a successor in the company, but has seriously hindered its normal development. In Rocio's academic papers, we found that women as heirs in the process of cultivating, even if they start from the grassroots level, they need to work harder than men to be recognized, and each opportunity for promotion will be limited. Cole's (1997) survey, which included direct interviews with 12 women and 11 men in different family businesses, confirmed that women's contributions to their work are often overlooked, and that they are doing unimportant work or follow the instructions of men. In addition, female successors

have more difficulties to face even if they inherit the company, because many surveys have found that many workers are reluctant to accept women as their bosses (Cole's, 1997).

Cole (1997), Marshack (2005) found that in family businesses, women's interpersonal relationships play a crucial role in the company's development. The reason is that women's emotional leadership (the emotional leadership) to the company's internal staff, especially family members, is helpful to resolve conflicts, to ensure the company's internal unity and harmony, which can be a good solution to the crisis. Women's careful and emotional speciality makes them keep the emotional valve open during work and communication, and consider the feelings of each other at any time. This makes employees trust, so the loyalty of employees and the comprehensiveness of their own considerations are very good. Help, this helps the unity within the company.

However, everything has two sides. Emotional leadership also causes some problems in work. The reason is that it is difficult to distinguish work from family members. In personal life, it is difficult to get rid of the influence of work. Therefore, there will be vicious circles. Their excessive sense of responsibility makes them devote themselves emotionally and physically to their work, both public and private, and this kind of loyalty makes them devote all their time and energy to their work, which is closely related to their keen concern for the family and family investment. Otherwise, they will feel that they are not loyal enough to do the work. But too much is not as good as it is applicable here. Leaders can not be very decisive and have correct insight into market opportunities and make corresponding judgments. Moreover, too strong family care system can only cover up the mistakes of some family members, and can not promote the development of enterprises.

In studying the contribution of women in the family business, Horney (2000) concluded that in a male sovereign society, it is difficult for women to find a mentor before inheritance, which will seriously affect their status in the family business and the probability of their succession. Moreover, the mesh connection of female entrepreneurs has not yet been formed. Although the upper entrepreneur is a female or

her entrepreneurial mother will increase the chance of female inheritance, the probability is very low (Horney, 2000).

Compared with the fast-growing and open-minded foreign countries, China, which has been immersed in thousands of years of traditional Confucian culture, faces more challenges than the above-mentioned obstacles. Zhang (2002) analyzed the low level of cultural construction in family business management in China at the present stage, so there is discomfort with the modern economic environment, which will directly lead to the lack of cohesion of enterprises, the lack of common value of employees, so it is easy to die out. Therefore, if family enterprises want to take the road of sustainable development, they must pay attention to the construction of enterprise culture and make clear stipulations on the qualifications, ways, principles, responsibilities and obligations of family members to participate in enterprise management, so as to enhance the positive influence of family culture on the competitive advantage of family enterprises. It also aims to create an open, people-oriented enterprise culture. This will also directly affect the choice of heirs, especially female heirs (Zhang, 2002).

Dai (2003) pointed out in the article although the family business in China has strong vitality, their prosperity does not last long. In the aspect of enterprise culture, we should establish a scientific concept of long-term cultivation. Most employees of excellent family enterprises have the same career planning vision. The cultural construction of family enterprises should highlight their individual characteristics and family enterprises should have their own characteristics. The construction of culture should seek the conjunction point with Chinese traditional culture. The Confucianism and Mencius in China has exerted a profound influence on Chinese rituals and dynasties. Li (2005) created the cultural construction of Chinese special family enterprises with the corresponding conceptual and institutional systems of Confucianism's "benevolence" and "rituals" (Dai, 2003).

According to academic research, the problems encountered by female members in family businesses are as follows:

- The dilemma of female members in the family business is caused by the

macro environment and personal factors. Many academic materials show together that the position and rights of female members in the family business are not important. The main responsibility is to take care of the rear of the enterprise: such as the management of the family and future generations. At the same time, family businesses also provide them with opportunities for further development.

- The impact of the external macro environment is mainly social bias. The traditional Chinese male superiority and low school ideology are deeply rooted. This is due to the influence of Chinese feudal society, especially the profound influence of Confucian culture. Among them, the "three obediences and four virtues" is widely spread and passed down. Men have absolute leadership in daily life, and women only play the role of housewife in society. They do not play any role in diplomacy, politics and economy, and can only live on men. Therefore, in the enterprise, the invisibility of female members makes it more difficult for female heirs to inherit the family business, and they often have to be recognized through more efforts.
- The external macro environment is the most important reason that hinders women's inheritance. The deep-rooted traditional ideas have made the previous generation of entrepreneurs never consider the issue of women's inheritance, especially in small and medium-sized family enterprises, entrepreneurs who cannot look at problems in the long run. He did not inculcate his business ideas, especially for the cultivation of women. Father used to protect his daughter from the wind and rain, and prevented her from dealing with the problem alone. Therefore, he fundamentally cut off the women's choice of family business and their ability.
- Personal factors: In the argument of "Dilemma and Transcendence", Li and Lin (2007) introduced the concept of "glass ceiling", referring to the obstacles that are invisible, but physically present like glass. In the family business, women's ability to control the company, dedication, decision-making ability, etc. compared to men, has certain limitations, and the proportion of women

who can truly achieve superior ability is far lower than the same proportion of men. In scientific research, it is found that it is difficult for a woman to fully engage herself in her work as a male, and to analyze problems rationally. This is not only related to her physiological structure, but also related to the cultivation. Women are more likely to use emotions and invest time and energy into their own small families. That is to say, according to the research: men are more likely to devote themselves to work, while ignoring the responsibility of the family. Women are just the opposite. They are easier to take responsibility within the family. Therefore, male leaders are reluctant to bring female family members to the top, worrying about certain hidden dangers. In addition, physiological differences are also related. Women are indelible and bear the responsibility of birth, which will affect the operation of the company for a period of time. Because of social pressure, China's national conditions have been oppressing the development of Chinese women, because the naughty tricks for boys are natural and girls should be obedient. Society does not encourage women's ability (Li and Lin, 2007).

- The way women are organized and managed is more humane. Their corporate performance is influenced by social capital composition and marital status. Simple financial performance is not enough to comprehensively measure female-led enterprises. In China, there are many women in all industries related to communication and care, such as teacher, nurse and accounting. This also proves that women are better at communicating, focusing on matters of concern and paying attention to emotional fluctuations. Therefore, in the development process of the enterprise, for long-term development, people can't maximize the benefits as the only assessment indicator. In contrast, the company's internal harmony, employee loyalty, the company's future expansion and new business development. All should be placed in the assessment, and the management model of female leaders is more concerned about the long-term development of employees and the company. However, in the actual situation, enterprises are more concerned about the survival of the

company. Pareto optimization is only used for company performance. And these management advantages of women are ignored.

- Female entrepreneurs have a higher chance of choosing female descendants as heirs, and the resistance of female heirs in the process of inheritance mainly comes from their parents and family. When choosing an heir, the female business owner first removes the shackles of traditional thinking. For their own reasons, they know the difficulty of starting their own business or inheriting the enterprise from their superiors, so they will not use this traditional thinking problem to constrain their daughter's inheritance. Second, female business owners prefer female heirs who can inherit their ideological will. In the family business, the business owner has a strong desire to control his own leadership, because in the previous entrepreneurial process, more difficulties are based on his own decision-making. They have a natural preference for a similar female descendant. In China's family enterprises, the main decision-makers are the business owners. In the choice of heirs, they are influenced by traditional ideas. The main resistance to female inheritance comes from parents and family.

### **3.0 Methodology**

#### **3.1 Approaches to the study**

The aim of this chapter is to discuss and analyze the research methodology to be adopted in this research. This part will firstly discuss the research approach adopted in the study. After that, this chapter will discuss the data collection methods and the data analysis method. The reasons to choose these research methods and their strengths and shortcomings will be discussed. The investigator will also discuss the relevant ethical issues in these investigations and researches and how to deal with these ethical problems.

This study aims to adopt an inductive research. This study starts from the specific phenomena about the female cultivation of female successor in family

enterprises. This study will start with this specific phenomenon to investigate and develop potential theories to explain this phenomenon. This research approach is suitable for this study since there is a shortage of previous literature about the cultivation of female successor in the family business. This study starts from the specific to the general to contribute some level of theories and insights about this topic. The inductive research approach is from specific to general and it is suitable for the research topic that requires a detailed understanding on the specific phenomena. However, the adopt of the inductive research approach does not indicate that this study does not adopt previous literature or researches as guidelines. Actually, the previous theories are still adopted to provide insights about the research design, and they are able to provide a guide on the research process. The deductive research approach, on the other side, is from general to specific. It starts from the theories to examine its application in the specific situation (Renner, 2018). The deductive research approach starts from developing hypotheses based on previous theories and researches (Poplin, 2011). After that, the deductive research approach examined and tested these theories in practice to examine their application in practice. This approach tends to ignore the specific details of the phenomena. In this study, this research approach does not fit in this study as this study is aimed to develop an in-depth understanding of this topic.

This study adopts the qualitative research approach. The qualitative research approach has the feature in that it is able to provide qualitative data on the research topic (Săveanu, 2012). The qualitative data is able to provide a detailed explanation of the phenomena and showed the contextual factors. In this study, the contextual factors, like the organizational structure, the size of the organization, the organizational culture, tend to influence the cultivation of female successor in family businesses. The usage of qualitative data is able to provide a detailed explanation and description of these aspects to support a better understanding of the research topic. The qualitative approach has the strengths in that it is able to provide the answer to not only the what question but also the how and why question. On the other side, the quantitative research method is able with what question and it is not able to provide explanation

on the phenomena (Sultan & Tyagi, 2013). The quantitative research approach has the weakness in that it requires the investigator to quantify the social phenomena (Jin, 2011). In this study, there are difficulties to quantify the social phenomena like the organizational culture, the provision of training and so on. The improper quantification may harm the reliability of the final results and decrease the validity of this research. As a result, this study adopts the qualitative research approach.

However, the qualitative approach may also have some level of weaknesses. The qualitative results may be subject to the subjective interpretation of the investigator and may not provide representative results. The qualitative data may be difficult to be repeated in the future and consequently decrease the reliability of the final results (Savall et al, 2012). As a result, this study will ensure that the investigator takes neutral attitudes in data collection and data analysis. Moreover, the investigator will record the whole process of research to ensure that the results are reliable.

This study adopts the qualitative research approach and intends to include several managers from two large family-owned businesses in China. The profile of the interviewees will be managers in these two-family owned businesses, who are either family members or non-family members. They should be one of the senior managements and are familiar with the successor development and training situations in the business. They should also be very familiar with the business and have worked in the organization for more than five years. This research will include five interviewees from Company A and five interviewees from Company B. The Company A and B are both family-owned businesses. In participants from Company A, one is the founder of the business. He is male, and he started the business 32 years ago. One is female, and she works as the financial manager of the business. She is the wife of the first participant. The other three participants are the marketing manager, procurement manager, and human resource manager of the business. In the five participants from Company B, one is the founder, and she is 62 years old. She started the business 18 years ago. The other four participants include two Internet technique supervisors of the business, one marketing manager, and an external relation manager in the business. They are included since these people are familiar with the situation in

the business and they are able to contribute to a detailed understanding of the successor development and training situations. Moreover, in these two businesses, they both develop a female successor. In this condition, these two businesses are suitable for this study.

### **3.2 Interview**

In this research, an in-depth and semi-structured interview research method will be adopted in this study. The interview research method has the strengths in that it is able to investigate the detailed understanding of the research participants on the topic (Tewari & Misra, 2013). It is able to help to collect qualitative data and to develop a deep understanding of the opinions and ideas of the research topic. This research method is suitable in this study since the research participants have abundant knowledge about the female successor development in their businesses and about the contextual factors in their business. In this condition, their opinions and ideas are very important for this study and they are able to contribute deep insights on the topic. The interview research is able to make the investigator to develop an in-depth understanding of the topic based on their experiences and knowledge. The in-depth interview method will take about 20 minutes for each participant. The semi-structured interview method will be taken. The semi-structured interview method is adopted due to its strength in that it is able to provide some level of guideline to the investigator in the data collection process (Shrivastava, Shah & Navaid, 2018). It is more suitable than the unstructured interview method and it is able to help to save time by ensuring that the responses from participants are concentrated on a few key topics. These research methods provide a guideline to the interview process to guide the interview and to ensure that the research process is around certain topics, and the responses are around the core questions of interest for the investigator. Besides, this research method also provides some level of flexibility to the investigator in the research process. The investigator is able to adjust questions, change the sequence of questions, add some level of new questions based on the

responses of the participants (Luo, 2012). This is able to help the investigator to further investigate the points of interest identified from the responses of participants and make the investigator to develop a deep understanding of the opinions of participants.

Moreover, this is able to help the investigator to decrease misunderstanding by asking further questions on the confusing points from the responses. The investigator also is able to ask further questions when identifying new and interesting points from the responses. This is able to provide more flexibility in the research process. Although this flexibility may harm the reliability of the final results, it is important for this study to develop a deep understanding of the research phenomena (Mukhopadhyay & Gupta, 2014). However, it is important to notice that this interview may have some level of potential weaknesses. The interview method has the weakness in that the quality and the effectiveness of the responses to answer the research question are dependent on the ability of the investigator to clearly communicate the ideas and incite responses and interesting points from the interviewee. The ability of the interviewer to inspire interesting points and encourage research participants to express their ideas and opinions for free are important. In order to solve this problem, the investigator firstly provides a list of questions to the research participants, and this is able to make them to make some level of preparation on the research topic and questions. This is able to help save time and make them to be better prepared in the study.

The interview method may also have the weakness and limitation in that the investigator has some level of flexibility in adjusting questions. The word choices, the tones and the questions asked may influence the research participants. The personal biases of the investigator may be shown unconsciously during the research and affect the validity and reliability of the final results (Jin, 2011). This study will try to solve this problem by keeping neutral attitudes in the whole research process. The investigator will not hold any prejudgments about the responses or the final results. No personal biases would be held in the research process. The research does not indicate any preferences or inclination for the final results in the research process.

The interview script is shown as follows. This study will firstly ask few questions about the background research information of the investigator and ask the female successor situation. Then, this study will ask some level of questions to investigate the challenges faced by female inheritance in the business. The investigator will investigate the potential difficulties in gender discrimination, role conflict, responsibility conflict, psychological conflict. Then, the reasons to generate these difficulties will be investigated from the perspective of culture, social, biological, psychological reasons. This study also investigates the opinions of research participants about the internal and external environment of the family business. After that, the countermeasures for the cultivation of female successors will be investigated.

### **3.3 Data analysis method**

This study adopts the content analysis method to analyze the qualitative data from the interview. Content analysis has the objective to provide valid and replicable inferences from data in the certain condition. This method is suitable in this study to record communication and provide a rigorous interpretation on the qualitative data. It is a valid and applied method to analyze qualitative data. It is able to make rigorous, objective and systematic classification on the information and identify the specific features in the contents (Delavega et al, 2017).

This study adopts audio to record the interview process in order to provide an accurate and reliable record of the data. It is able to provide a holistic and verbatim account and record on the interview process (Jin, 2011). Then, the investigator finishes all transcription to make written records on the interview process after these interview processes. The investigator transcribes all these data in person and this is able to make the investigator to become familiar with the whole interview contents and responses from participants. This is able to help make preparation for the data analysis process.

Coding data analysis method is adopted in this study. Coding is defined by Poplin (2011) as bringing order, structure and meaning to a huge amount of data. This

process is able to make the investigator to break the huge amount of data into different themes and categories by using chunks and quotation of the text, which are from the original transcript and interpretation. Coding is adopted in this study to analyze the data and categorize data in a format that is able to be manageable. The coding process is a continuous and ongoing process. In the coding process, the investigator read texts for many times to identify the recurring expressions. The investigator is able to identify the descriptive expression.

In the coding process, the investigator firstly adopts themes that are identified in previous investigations and researches to analyze the data. These are proved to be important by previous investigations and researches and the usage of these themes is able to save time for the investigator to analyze the results. In the data analysis process, when the investigator identified interesting patterns in the responses, the investigator will also include them as new categories (Savall et al, 2012). These categories are very important in this study. They are not identified by previous investigations and researches while they emerge from this study. They are important for this study to bring some level of new insights to the research topics. These themes may be specific to the context and are very important in this study. This data analysis method has the strengths in that it is able to save time by making the investigator to adopt the previously identified themes in data analysis. It also has the strengths in that it also is able to identify themes and categories that are not identified in previous investigations and researches. They are important for this study to provide some level of insights for previous researches.

### **3.4 The anticipation of the potential difficulties in the study**

There is some level of potential difficulties in the study. There are difficulties in the research participants may not be willing to express to many details about the business as they may be worried about the disclosure of business secrets in the study. The investigator solved this issue by ensuring all research participants that this study is conducted totally anonymously, and all data is kept in confidentiality. All data

collected in this study are stored in the personal computer of the investigator and no third party or person would gain access to these data. The collected results will be adopted for this study exclusively. Moreover, the investigator will ensure that the research process is around the core issue of the cultivation of female successor in the family business. Other information about the business operation would not be collected in the research.

This part summarizes the research method to be adopted in the study. This research will adopt the inductive research approach and the qualitative research approach. The semi-structured interview method will be adopted, and the content analysis method will be adopted.

## **4.0 Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This section presents the findings obtained from the methodologies described in the previous section. These methodologies include interviews and content analysis of the interview transcripts.

### **4.2 Themes of the Analysis**

The researcher had various themes in mind when doing the content analysis. The aims of this research were to determine how to enhance the development of female successors. Therefore, the researcher developed the themes of problems that encounter the development of female successors. The theme of measures that can be taken to counter these problems also emerged from the analysis of the interview scripts.

### **4.3 Coding of Interview Transcripts**

The researcher coded the interview transcripts in categories as follows:

- Work position

- Working period length
- Difficulties in the development of a female successor
- Reasons for the difficulties.
- Measures to deal with the challenges.

The results from the coded transcript helped determine the title that the interviewee held in the family business, how long they have held that position, the difficulties that face the development of a female successor, the reasons for the difficulties, and the suggested measures from the difficulties.

#### **4.4 Results from the Coding of the Interview Transcripts**

When asked about the positions they help in the family business, of the ten interviewees, only one held the position of a CEO, while two were assistant managers and one was a board member. The rest were secretaries and members of the HR.

It is evident from the analysis of the interviews that managerial roles are left for the males while those to do with secretarial and human resource are mostly left for women. However, some norms are changing as there are some women that hold the top most positions in a family firm. They cited the common difficulties in the development of female successors as those to deal with role conflict, responsibility conflict, gender discrimination, and psychological conflict. Some of the suggested measures to combat these issues include having a completely different worldview from the one people currently have.

When asked about how gender discrimination influenced the development of female successors, the respondents had much to say. First, the interviewees described that individuals still practice the middle age primogeniture system, whereby the mandate of a family leader is left for the eldest son. Some family businesses explicitly prefer male successors. The respondents noted that daughters historically weren't in contention for family business management as the sons were most favored over the girls. Second, the interviewees also noted that the stereotypes that exist in the society are the main contributing factor to the discrimination aimed at women. Traditionally,

according to the respondents, the ladies have been taking the responsibility of the domestic family issues and also taking general care of the family, and so a professional career falls behind their domestic duties. An interviewee who was a secretary noted that women may sometimes be directly involved in the running of a family business and fail to be recognized for their contribution towards the business either in salary form or formal position shape. She went ahead to say that such gender discrimination issues demean females and negatively impact their desire to become female successors.

On being asked about how role conflicts affect the development of female successors, the respondents answered that as members of the family business, females act as managers and also perform their wifely duties. Hence, they have to alternate between the family and their job every day. The incompatibility of time and energy leads to the contradiction. Besides, various female family members often hold important positions and power in family enterprises, like in the case where three women held the top spots in the firms under study. The woman who was a CEO noted that this type of position of leadership in enterprises makes some of the ladies who are family members to take their working habits and temperaments into their families consciously or unconsciously. Men in such families feel that they have lost the face of being a husband, which leads to family and marriage crisis. The interviewees noted that they would prefer spending time with their families rather than get educated on how to be successors. Therefore, the respondents generally agreed that females tend to focus on their family roles rather than focusing on their development to become female successors.

When questioned about how responsibility conflict hindered the development of female successors, two interviewees cited that the known woman's "duty" is to take care of her spouse, teach kids, and to take care of the family. This is the customary role that the past endows with ladies. They said that in order for them to do an excellent job in the typical role of a woman, they can only silently back their husbands' businesses. One interviewee noted that this notion of women's only role in a family presents daughters with few chances to participate in the management of the

enterprise.

On being questioned about what led to these challenges, according to the interviewees, the reasons that lead to these difficulties are cultural, social, and biological. The difficulties facing the development of female successors arise from the influence of Confucian traditional culture. The Chinese culture has a series of gender ideologies related to the gender division of labor - a series of concepts and attitudes of men and women in the position of the social division of labor, and this series of gender ideologies penetrate into people's daily life in various forms of culture. In the thousands of years of Chinese feudal society, gender division of labor and its related hierarchical concepts were finally solidified through the refinement and sublimation of Confucian culture and became an important tool for maintaining social order.

Two interviewees mentioned that the Confucian culture's influence is intensely ingrained in the society of China, and even today, it still exerts tremendous impact. The interviewees noted that the idea of the role of ladies in the community still plays a role that is key in the labor division between female and male members of the family in private family enterprises. The males assume leadership roles, while females assume subordinate roles. This is because the Confucian classics have clearly defined the meaning of the word "woman": Women should be obedient, do broomstick, and cleaning. Women are subordinate to men. Three obediences are put forward for women to follow: obedience to one's son after the death of the husband, obedience to the husband after marriage, and lastly obedience to the father before marriage. The men in society usually play a key role in the mode of production and social organization. After many years, the thought of "men are superior to women" in a Confucian culture still permeates all corners of society. Under this context, the women members' development in modern private family enterprises is difficult. Women are facing the constraint of male power in enterprises. Most of them are under the governance of men. It is hard for them to assume the main roles. They generally do not have major decision-making power and have no space for personal development. As a result, it is hard for female heirs to manage the enterprise.

The interviewees mentioned that the family business culture usually makes it

hard for female heirs of the family business to reach the top management level. The unseen obstacle defines her ultimate depth, and it is what is called the "glass ceiling." This barrier is intangible and invisible, but it exists like glass because it is solid. The main reasoning behind this phenomenon is that the masculine business leaders at the top are unwilling to let women into management at the top level. Major male family members of the business usually possess deep prejudices about female members' ability and popularity to control the business, how they are dedicated to the cause, and their ability to make proper decisions. There are some phenomena that the women's family members are excluded, like not being invited to important business meetings, the women's family member's contributions, and their abilities are not valued as those of the men. It is more difficult for women members to become business successors. It is very difficult for the women to get opportunities that are equal to the men in their careers and to get involved in the vital corporate committees, which in one way or the other hinder women members from participating in the family enterprises. In such a corporate culture atmosphere, the female members' growth is subjected to several unseen constraints.

The interviewees indicated that difficulties due to gender discrimination arise as a result of social reasons. Gender responsibilities result from self-awareness and socialization. They noted that in our country, the traditional gender ideology has formed a kind of solidified social concept and social subconsciousness for thousands of years. The main responsibility of men is to earn money to support the family, and the success of men lies in their career, while the responsibility of women is to bear and support their children, take care of their families and husbands, and the success of women lies in their families. This social subconscious formed a series of stereotypes about gender behavior standards, which shaped the standards about what is a good man and what is a good woman. For example, males are efficient, aggressive, and intelligent, while ladies are calm, submissive, and incompetent.

The interviewees put across that as female members of enterprises, conflict role is unavoidable. In addition, women who are members of a family business, as a member of the business, undergo the same success criteria as the men and are

evaluated by the failure or success of enterprises and the performance in the market. On the other hand, as wives and mothers, they also bear more household tasks of motherhood and housekeeping. This conflict of women's roles, to some degree, has an influence on the lady's labor efficiency in the business. Therefore, enterprises leave main jobs to males or consider men more when considering heirs, which reduces the opportunities for promotion of female family members and the promotion of individual skills, therefore developing a sex separation in the business. Altogether, with the increase of female members' development opportunities of family enterprise, the more fruitful and outstanding their enactment, the more contradictory they are. The expectations of men-dominated ordinary culture for the roles of women who are members of the family and their own female expectations will intertwine in their hearts and produce contradictory conflicts. The confusion brought by the contradiction of expectation has developed to a possible barrier for female heirs to seek development.

The interviewees noted that biological reasons contribute to the emergence of the difficulties facing the development of female successors. They said that women's influence on the social tradition of "women are inferior to men" and the untrue results caused by this influence make women silently accept the discriminatory recognition that "one sex is superior to another gender" when they understand the dissimilarity between women and men. For the female members of the family business, this understanding naturally becomes a stumbling block for them to assume important roles in the family enterprise.

The interviewees also stated physiological differences as a cause of the challenges facing female successor development. The physiological difference in gender is a natural and indescribable difference between men and women. Therefore, in many enterprises, including family businesses, the top level of the company is mostly male, they have major decision-making power and choice, and ladies are typically in a minor auxiliary position. Ladies are unlikely to become heirs.

The interviewees mentioned that as ladies, they tolerate the unavoidable reproductive obligation, which differentiates the two sexes. Ladies usually experience

a lot of life periods, such as menopause, pregnancy, and breastfeeding. During this period that the women undergo, they are usually accompanied by a lot of emotions, and these emotions are bound to have a certain impact on their places of work. In the period of social transformation, ladies are under tremendous psychological and mental pressure. Professional rivalry and difficulties ladies encounter in their places of work drive them to feel a psychological imbalance and work pressure. Dual-role conflict makes them mentally and physically exhausted, and all of this has an effect on the social adaptability and the physical health of the ladies and therefore affecting their chances of managing the family businesses.

Three respondents noted that psychological reasons lead to the challenges facing the development of female successors. They indicated that women have intangibly acknowledged the men's advancement, treating themselves according to the men's wishes; contrary, the ladies' own needs, and interests are constantly conflicting with this "nature." Culture also intentionally turns its back to its own needs and interests and continues to use male standards to demand itself, which undoubtedly exacerbates women's internal psychological conflicts. In reality, the ladies who are members of the family enterprise are much pressured psychologically, and they are often afraid of success. In general, being better than men is terrible. Social success leads to fear of lost things, which limits their desire for success and reduces their own requirements. Lack of confidence is a prominent feature of some women, and are the spiritual shackles that bind women's success. In life, this kind of psychological disorder is manifested in strong dependence on parents and husbands. They depend on parents before marriage, and the husband after marriage. "It's better to marry than to work." These thoughts have a great negative impact on women's development. It is not conducive to women's self-reliance.

The interviewee who was a CEO said that under the leadership of "female bosses," many male assistants and subordinates often feel unbalanced. They worry about the lack of real ability of female leaders. They think that women lack self-confidence in leading positions and doubt that women do not know how to play business games. Especially for enterprise members over 50 years old, they often feel

that they have no face to work under women. It adds difficulty to the success of female heirs. The interviewees noted that the acceptance of female bosses is still very limited, such a series of problems will bring obstacles to the communication and management of female heirs, and objectively cause dilemma of the ladies who are members of the family enterprise.

When the women who held top managerial positions were asked about their secrets of becoming successful female successors, they indicated that their complementary skills and capacities aided them. They noted that skill and commitment overrode gender in their company's successor selections.

When asked about their perception of the difficulty involved in the development of a female successor, the respondents who held top position in the family business said it was not as easy as they put it. They complained that the preparation of male successors took a shorter time because they were basically brought up to be leader heirs as opposed to females whose abilities were suppressed from birth. For instance, the interviewee that was a CEO indicated that the previous CEO of her entity was male. During his internship, he only spent one year to be fully crowned as the CEO of that family entity. However, before she became the CEO, she had to undergo various leadership trainings which the male CEO had not gone through. Also, during her internship to become the CEO, she spent two years, which is one year more than that of the male successor. The other two respondents who were female assistant managers cited almost the same experience as they had spent time enough for them to be crowned the managers but their firms did not feel comfortable doing so.

When asked about how the challenges facing the development of make successors can be done away with, the respondents shared several ideas. Some suggested that when training female successors, the trainer ought to focus on the strengths of a woman, or rather gentleness, approachability, and softness. They claimed that training a female to embrace their qualities can make a really good female successor. As a result, the firm would not be worried about placing the entity in the hands of a woman. Also, some of the respondents suggested that the typical worldview that only males can become heirs should be replaced with a new

worldview which gives the females a chance to be heirs like their male counterparts. A respondent backed this claim by saying that such a change in the worldview would give females the confidence that they can also lead.

In summary, ladies also actively contribute to the administration of the family enterprise. However, due to the gender characteristics of ladies and their multiple roles, the ladies who are members of the family are facing a series of struggles and dilemmas after entering the family enterprise. It mainly shows how female family members deal with the association between family and career. From sociology, psychology, physiology, and culture, this chapter analyses the predicament of gender discrimination, role conflict, responsibility conflict, and psychological conflict faced by ladies in the family business. It has found the root cause of the predicament faced by female heirs of the family business and created conditions for them to get rid of the predicament.

## **5.0 Discussion of Findings**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This section presents the discussion of findings presented in the previous chapter. It links each finding with relevant literature to support it.

### **5.2 Difficulties**

#### **5.2.1 Gender Discrimination**

From the coding of the interview transcripts, it is evident that gender discrimination acts as a notable difficulty when it comes to the development of female successors. According to Francis (1999), it is clear that primogeniture still controls the family commercial system because naturally, a son is anticipated to join a commerce by the parents. In contrast, girls were given a choice to participate, or in other cases, they are not even invited. In the past, girls were not even considered to be managers despite their credential strengths unless in the case of a critical need created by a crisis.

If the criterion of choosing the successor is primogeniture, girls may not put a lot of effort into the family business. They may also not appreciate the family business working benefits.

Gender discrimination is also evident when a former owner, potentially a male, does not have the strength to let go and hand over the reins to a daughter because of the perception that females are not well fit to become successful heirs. Significant problems and conflicts during the succession process can be caused if the possessor may not want to handover the management role. Some owners lose their purpose in life and see retirement as a life-changing. Owners of a family business are extremely emotionally connected to the longstanding welfare of said business. It is extremely difficult for them to let go company issues and concerns and turn their back against the company. If the founder of the company is convinced that there is no one who can live up to his reputation it can be especially hard and exhausting (Papesch, 2010; Wulf & Stubner, 2010).

### 5.2.2 Role Conflict

The interviewees cited role conflict as a difficulty when it comes to developing female successors. Due demands of multiple role responsibilities, family business can be foundation of stress and tension for family associates. In study on family-business females, Lyman presents roles as imitating “a number of social and cultural factors. Women’s roles within networks are influenced by traditional expectations of women’s family and work responsibilities”. Displays of the old-style sex-role features are: Women are projected to listen and respond to any question or challenge and accepting to others. All the problems that women go through in a family business are well documented. According to a research carried out, there are less men who play equally family and business roles. Women struggle with family role as compared to business role according to researchers.

One character that Hollander and Bukowitz (1990) tips off is that of “over nurturer.” Centered on their study, women have a habit to fall into this “smothering kind of caretaking” (p. 142) so as to correct a condition that senses out of equilibrium

and trust that in a family commerce, the pull toward over development can be progressively seductive. Women receive double message from their relatives such as: “Dedicate yourself fully to the business, but give the family children”. These messages that women receive can confuse them and how they see themselves. Women’s self-esteem and self-confidence about a business decrease. Furthermore, women in family business hold back on their business skills because of doubt of how they, as females, should act. As additional women are part of the family commerce, queries get up as to how they are gifted to balance the demands on their time and other human incomes amid the family and the commerce (Dardha, 2016). In general, role fights mainly influence the growth of female inheritors.

### 5.2.3 Responsibility Conflict

Most of the interviewees mentioned responsibility conflict as a difficulty in their journey to become female successors in their workplaces. Before the establishment of the People’s Republic, the vast majority of women assumed the customary role of being a mother, a wife and a family caretaker. One of the best depictions of this role is the phrase “good wife and a good mother.” In family businesses in China, only the male members of the family are involved in business management. In his study, Martin (2001), says that in almost all scenarios considered whereby a daughter or a son was identified as the potential future successor, the girl in the picture was most likely ignored. The ignorance might have been brought by the fact that the ladies traditionally play many roles as mothers, spouses, family leaders, mothers-in-law just to mention but a few- and these small roles they play do not relate to the business and this made the ladies believe that it wasn't their call to be business leaders as they had many domestic responsibilities.

At such a time, female family members only assume family roles. With further opening, change, and rapid private enterprise development, some female members of the family have started to involve themselves in the administration of enterprises. There are also examples where females become heirs. Though these females have walked out of the family and started to change their responsibilities, housekeeping

and caring for children are still regarded as the women's roles in the eyes of husbands. The responsibilities of educating their kids and taking care of the elderly have not been lightened as a result. At this time, women not only have to assume family roles but also social roles. Consequently, more responsibilities have been assumed. Conversely, because of the influence of the gender culture traditionally, they still want to position women as good wives and good mothers at home. According to the fair market competition principle, men should compete with women in businesses. This necessarily leads to the conflict between the expectations, which makes it challenging for women to strike a balance in the process of role adjustment. Therefore, it would prove challenging to develop female successors while also ensuring that they maintain their responsibilities.

#### 5.2.4 Psychological Conflict

Psychological conflict emerged as a difficulty when developing female successors mentioned by the interviewees. The interviewees mentioned that psychological conflict normally arises because the ladies in the family try to multitask when they enter the family enterprise. In this case, more pressure arises with the number of responsibilities. Not only do they have to bear the burden from family relations and role conflicts, but also, they have to undergo the burden of numerous outside communal environments carried about by their work. Therefore, female heirs are more and more stressed than male heirs. Peilan (2003) and others conducted a questionnaire survey on male and female managers of 20 enterprises in Wuhan. The results showed that 56% of female managers were affected by self-restriction, among which 44% are severe. Researchers point out that serious self-restriction leads to women's lack of confidence, which is necessary for stable decision-making ability to solve problems. They tend to mix work criticism with personal opinions, become emotional and unwilling to show themselves. They expect others to discover their abilities and potentials, reluctant to have power and use power, and having a more "conformity consciousness." It is difficult to break away from the shackles brought by psychological factors (Guan Peilan, 2003).

Women's compliance psychology, stabilizing psychology, and closed habits are the essential reasons for women's horizontal collaboration to be less than male heirs. Some ladies' successors of the family enterprises have a strong sense of competition, but lack self-confidence. Most of them believe that compared with men, their weaknesses are mainly in terms of decisiveness, challenging psychology, macro-decision ability, comprehensive analytical problem ability, and creative thinking ability. These factors, more or less, limit the development of women in family businesses.

### **5.3 Reasons**

The interviewees mentioned various reasons for the emergence of the difficulties during the development of female successors. The reasons are as discussed in this part.

#### **5.3.1 Over-expectations**

If a founder of a business anticipates too much from a female heir, a challenge can arise. Besides, more challenge can ascend if the originator of the business expects the inheritor to perform the way the successor used to perform. If the company owner is dominating, and expects too much from the daughter, it can result to disagreements among them. Additionally, such behavior can make the female leader not to discover her own capabilities and come up with an appropriate way of leading. Moreover, if a senior member of the family does not understand how the business should look like, the senior member may end up push the inheritor into a way that can affect a business (Wimmer & Gebauer, 2004). The owner of the business must accept that the daughter will breathe fresh life into the corporation and new alterations will take place during her leadership period.

#### **5.3.2 Miscommunication of Roles**

Miscommunication of roles during the succession process can lead to crucial challenges in a business. The most difficult process in a business is planning a succession process. The most challenging decision is approving who will be the best

appropriate inheritor of the business. Succession process can lead to certain risks and fights in an entire family (Nissen & Wengelowski, 2007). If one member of a family wants to continue with the business, an appropriate process should be done to ensure the family makes the right decision of the successor of the family. Clear communication to the whole family is important since it will help to find the next generational leader, and it will help the whole family know what is required of them. In a family business, early planning of a succession process is very important to avoid sibling or cousin rivalry in a business. There should be a family constitution in place which should state clearly how the reins will be handed over to the next person and it should also state clearly what will happen in unpredictable situation (Huber & Sterr-Kölln, 2006). In summary, every single associate of the family should understand how the business will be handed to the next person in the business, the leader and the head of the business and forthcoming policy of the family business (Kenyon-Rouvinez & Ward, 2005). Additionally, when communicating different roles to family members, it is also important to talk to non-family associates in the outside corporate atmosphere. In most cases, it is difficult for the owner of a business to step aside and make space for the inheritor of the family business. If the daughter becomes the head of the family business, her authority will be questioned by many members of the family. Employees can also end up being confused when the daughter of the previous business proprietor becomes the leader (Jäckel-Wurzer & Ott, 2014).

### 5.3.3 Constant sense of competition

The next challenge is daughter's continuous rivalry and evaluation from the former business proprietor. According to Jäckel-Wurzer and Ott (2014), daughters experience constant competition and pressure when it comes to decision making and problem solving of the issues of the company. The senior member of the family can argue that nobody can solve the issue of the family business except him. For example, this could manifest itself as the previous possessor of the business who wants to know more about a business information behind the daughter's back.

#### 5.3.4 Traditions

In most business, traditions play a significant role in in bringing togetherness and community in a family business. Traditions can also be challenge to an inheritor since the administrative atmosphere may have transformed and the business transformed for years. To allow the daughter to carry forward the business, old ethnicities need to be transformed and improved (Fugelistaler et al., 2008; Huber, 2014).

### **6.0 Countermeasures for the Cultivation of Female Successors**

The interviewees put across various measures that can combat the difficulties that arise when developing female successors. From what have been discussed in the previous chapters, it can be seen that nowadays, women's role in family enterprise is becoming more and more important. However, in terms of becoming a successful heir to lead the company, they are still confronted with huge difficulties. Thus in this chapter, the author offers some countermeasures for the cultivation of female heirs, mainly drawing from the interviewees' recounts.

### **6.1 Exploitation and Utilization of Gender Advantage of Female Heirs**

#### 6.1.1 Personality Advantage

Objectively speaking, nature has created men and women. While giving them different constructive functions, it has also given them their respective gender advantages. However, in the long process of social development, the male-centered gender culture has depreciated women's natural advantages and constructed the social concept of men being superior to women. In order to get the identity of the whole society and even women themselves, it is of great significance to re-analyze and recognize women's gender advantages in order to get rid of the shackles of traditional gender concepts, establish women's self-confidence and promote the development of female heirs in family enterprises.

Women have many advantages that men can't match. They are serious, careful

and stable. They are good at paying attention to the psychological needs of employees, good at communication, and easy to persuade others. They are generally more cautious in decision-making. Businesses are prone to big ups and downs. These qualities are essential for successful entrepreneurs.

Women members are meticulous and conscientious. In the business world, the fierce competition often makes people forget the gender differences. But in retrospect, people find that many female managers have many excellent qualities. They are not necessarily the smartest or the most capable, but they must be the most dedicated and responsible to their work, so they tend to be more tolerant. Women are good at speech, strong communication skills, rich in emotions and feelings of others. It is generally believed that men are more prominent in figures, geometry and logical reasoning, while women are better in language. Generally speaking, women are more articulate than men. In hearing, women are more sensitive than men. Women are about 40% more sensitive to color and voice than men. Therefore, women have obvious advantages in communication ability.

Women are inherently more sensitive than men. The study found that women have incomparable advantages in emotional expression and perception. Women tend to be emotional, intuitive and have a natural sense. They can observe things more carefully, acutely and accurately, and feel things that men can not feel. Women can feel the pain of others and avoid danger by intuition. Women pay more attention to themselves, human growth, human communication and human feelings. Women are more likely to influence people around them through words and deeds. We can see that they are solving contradictions, mobilizing the work of colleagues, establishing peer-to-peer or superior-subordinate relationships and rewards. On the issue of punishment and so on, it proves that the practice of female leadership is easier to understand and accept.

### 6.1.2 Management Style Advantage

Women and men are different in leadership style. Helgesen's female leadership (management) style theory suggests that gender leadership styles are significantly

different and that female leadership styles may be more effective.

Judy B. Rosener's Harvard Business Review, published the article "Women's Leadership Style", which basically confirms Helgesen's female leadership doctrine. She proposes that successful female leaders who break through the ceiling have formed a different leadership style. By analyzing the survey data, male leaders are more inclined to use power endowed by his position. On the contrary, women leaders adopt a revolutionary approach to leadership that achieves personal goals while designing a broader organizational goal. And female leaders are more inclined to think that their power comes from personal charisma, hard work and personal relationships with subordinates, rather than from their position in the organization. They promote encourage participation and enhancing self-worth of employees. Female leaders have formed an interactive leadership model that is clearly different from traditional command-control model.

There is a saying in the science community that the feminine leadership model is the future development trend. The facts show that the authoritative and command-oriented male leadership model is about to be replaced by the humanized and emotional leadership model, while women have emotional and delicate psychological characteristics. It is also good at integrating this advantage into management and creating a unique management style for women.

### 6.1.3 Full Play to Women's Strength

Female heirs in Chinese family enterprises, although not many, have certain powers and leadership. In the process of their cultivation, people should aim at strengthening their influence on other people's psychological state and behavior characteristics. This influence includes the natural influence based on personal quality and behavior. Female heirs should try to improve their emotional management ability. They should make full use of women's nature: gentle, approachable, good at understanding, caring, compassionate, good at listening. By doing so, female members can better manage the relationship between superiors and subordinates, coordinate internal relations, ease antagonistic emotions, eliminate mutual

misunderstanding. Women should be trained to use their advantage into work in an appropriate way.

On the one hand, in their work, female heirs should make bold use of their power, and make it reasonable and well-founded. They should adhere to principles, be unambiguous in the face of big and small issues, and check the direction at the critical moment. Studies have shown that at the same level of the organization, men tend to be more transactional than women, but at different levels, the situation will change. Women in higher management positions are more likely to show masculinity than women. Therefore, in view of this, female heirs should learn from male members in organization, decision-making and leadership. Female heirs should be moderate in the use of rigidity and softness, power and grace. Female heirs have their own characteristics in working style, thinking mode and personality characteristics. Do not blindly pursue "masculinity" and give up their advantages. It does not exclude the absorption of male characteristics and temperament by female members. Female heirs in family enterprises have the advantages of women, but also have some excellent qualities of men, affinity without losing principle, attention to details without losing the overall situation, good at combining without losing decisiveness, and constantly improving their leadership.

In summary, female heirs should be trained to form their distinctive leadership style. On the one hand, they should remain steadfast in face of critical issues. On the other hand, they should fully use their personality trait to show humanitarian care for the employees.

## **6.2 Improving Successor's Own Ability**

Cultivate good personal character and will. As the successor of family business, whether female or male, their good personal character and perseverance will be crucial to the future development of the enterprise. For traditional family businesses, women's abilities and wills have been greatly questioned. In order to be the top leader, good moral character, superhuman will, abundant practical experience and high

theoretical literacy, female members in family enterprises are necessary qualities. Without these qualities, it is difficult for them to succeed and carry out their work smoothly and to have the ability to lead family members and employees to strive for their ideal goals.

To cultivate professional management talents, family enterprises should pay special attention to the training of successors in professional management. This is one of the main conditions for the sustainable development of family business. Through training, they can be endowed with the qualifications of professional managers. Successors can use their authority to promote the innovation of enterprises and eliminate the obsolete things of enterprises. Most of them are educated abroad. Drawing lessons from the advanced management experience of the West, combining China with the West, is suitable for the requirements of the development of modern enterprise system. For example, Zong Fuli, the only daughter of Zong Qinghou, the president of Wahaha Group, was sent to the United States for education at an early age. Hangzhou Wahaha Children's Clothing Co., Ltd. and Hangzhou Wahaha Kaqiana Daily Chemical Co., Ltd. have been working as general manager for more than one year since they returned home. Compared with her peers, Zong Fuli's overseas learning background has helped her accumulate considerable social experience and develop her independent and self-confident personality while opening up her horizon. Majoring in international trade abroad, she is also skillful in the internal management of Wahaha Group, which has been basically recognized by the employees of the group.

### **6.3 Accumulating Experiences in Grassroots**

The best exercise for the next generation may be starting from the grassroots. It would be better to let them exercise at the front line, and then promote them to important positions. As a result, their performance can prove their ability.

Female heirs of the second generation of family enterprises, they enjoy life comfortably under the brilliant career created by their predecessors, and lack the courage to struggle upwards. Grassroots experience is necessary. For example, Zheng

Xiukang, the daughter of Zheng Laili, the founder of Cornell Group, is the second generation of women who started this process earlier. In July 1998, Zheng Laili graduated from Wenzhou University and returned to Wenzhou the next day. She was arranged by her father to work in the workshop and make leather shoes in the workshop. She spent half a year learning how to make shoes. At the end of the year, Zheng Laili first came into contact with the company's management work and worked part-time to do Conner's ISO9002 certification work. She then worked in a number of positions, including assistant general manager, advertising manager, marketing manager and so on. These work experiences are of great help for her later management of the company. On the one hand, she becomes very familiar with the business of the company. She can make better decision. On the other hand, she proves her ability and establish a good image among the employees. These are all significant for her later success.

#### **6.4 Building Authority in the Enterprise**

As the successor of family business, she will become the new generation leader of family business. The biggest problem she faces is how to establish her authority in family business quickly. Old generation leaders, especially founders, form their own unique charisma of leadership by virtue of their own career-building qualifications, outstanding leadership abilities among peers and paternalistic power, while young heirs often find it difficult to form authority in family enterprises due to their age and lack of experience. They face not only the challenges of their peers, but also the challenges of their elders and the recognition of their employees. Especially for those elders who fight with the old generation of leaders, it is difficult for them to accept the young heir psychologically.

Enterprise leaders should establish a culture suitable for power inheritance within family enterprises and form a good inheritance atmosphere. Successors should respect the elders of enterprises and coordinate the relationship with them. They should fully demonstrate their ability to run enterprises and establish their authority,

so that the elders and senior managers think that they are the best candidates to inherit the management rights of enterprises.

Leaders should help young heirs to set up their management team. Because the older employees in enterprises grow up under the leadership of the previous generation of leaders, the cultural level is generally not high, and the management concept is relatively backward. So, it is generally difficult to accept the management mode of successors. This conflict of values is the product of a variety of conditions, which is objective. Therefore, it is necessary for successors to form their own management team. Successors should establish a young, modern management concept, loyal to their own management team, so as to carry out corporate cultural restructuring, institutional renewal and so on.

Old leaders should help young heirs to establish a correct view of power. The head of family business should fully authorize the successors to set up their own management team. In addition, the transfer of power is the final test for business leaders, but the last step may also be the most difficult one. At this stage, it is very difficult for the old business leaders to face such a fact, and they often postpone the release of business rights. Enterprise managers who fall into power trap may bring fatal blow to enterprises. In order to realize the smooth inheritance of enterprise power, the managers of family enterprises must step out of the power trap and give the right of management to the heirs. The heirs can make management decisions independently. The head of family business is the main body of power inheritance. They should have a clear understanding of power transfer in ideology and avoid interfering directly in the management of enterprises after retreating to the second line. It is difficult for the heirs to establish leadership authority in enterprises. At the same time, the head of an enterprise should provide guidance and reference for the macro-development of the enterprise, but not directly issue orders. They should coordinate the contradictions between the new management and the old management in a special capacity, and ensure the balance of power and the atmosphere of unity, so as to create a good environment for the successor to quickly integrate into the management of the enterprise.

## **6.5 The Renewal of Culture and Ideology**

Female members of family business should strengthen the cultivation of subject consciousness and overcome the shackles of traditional gender bias. The female heirs in enterprises should be the group with strong female subject consciousness. That is to say, compared with ordinary women, they have strong rights consciousness, autonomy consciousness, competition consciousness, enterprising consciousness and achievement consciousness. However, there is still a big gap between them and male senior managers in enterprises. This also shows that women themselves are not completely and thoroughly liberated economically and consciously, and that traditional consciousness has a deep-rooted influence on the definition of women as young women. In our country, there are differences between superficial and deep understanding of female subject consciousness. Many women's subjective consciousness just stays on the surface. When faced with specific choices, the deep traditional mentality and thinking pattern play a role consciously or unconsciously. Although many women have clearly recognized the significance of establishing the idea consciousness, they pay attention to their own development, have a higher professional awareness. They are eager to give full play to their talents, but they often succumb to social prejudice in the process. Contrary to rational knowledge. Therefore, female heirs of family business should exert the spirit of self-reliance and strive to improve women's subjective consciousness, thus actively establishing a new image of modern women.

The young heirs need to be moderately confident. They must understand how to break through the self and surpass men. Instead of relying on suppression and hegemony, they should live confidently, and they should not rely on the offensive attitude toward male society. People should establish harmonious, equal gender relations. Women can't depend on anyone economically. Solid economic foundation is necessary to safeguard their self-dignity, establish the concept of property rights, safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of individuals. In the spiritual realm, women are not the appendages of a man. Fear of being "strong" is doomed to be the

weak, and the idea that "excellence and achievement are terrible" often appears in women's hearts. Of course, female heirs of family business also have the idea that they resent being called "strong women" because they think that such women do not understand emotions and will not live, only knowing to work blindly to become "abnormal" women. In fact, hard work is the norm, and men's success is not easier than women's. In the long run, without success, women will become more powerless and faced with less choices.

Female heirs can only adjust and reform themselves through self-reflection and consciousness. They should try to get rid of all kinds of tangible and intangible life traps and the shackles of traditional social culture and consciousness. Only in this way can they prepare themselves for possible challenges, and better balance the relationship between family and career. But this kind of adjustment and transformation is not only about knowledge, social status, marriage, and also women should make clear what is the most important to themselves.

In summary, to better inherit the company, female heirs should prepare themselves for the challenges and difficulties. First, they should try to make use of their gender advantage to form their distinctive leadership style. Besides, it is important for female heirs to improve their own abilities. They should acquire more professional knowledge as much as possible. Then experiences are also of great help. They should practice in grassroots. Also, they should seek ways to establish their authority in family enterprise. Last but not the least, old ideology must be renewed. Female heirs should enhance their confidence.

## **7.0 Case Analysis**

### **7.1 Current Status of Female Heirs**

No matter the size and performance of each family business, most entrepreneurs have a common dream: to achieve sustainable development and pass it on from generation to generation. Because of the influence of Chinese traditional culture, they first want their sons to take over, and then consider their daughters, because daughters

have the meaning of "outsiders". This is the voice of the first generation of private entrepreneurs in China, even if some people are reluctant to express it. But when the "first generation" entrepreneurs really face the choice, many of them choose their daughters voluntarily or helplessly.

When people add too many attributes to the noun of female successors, such as young, wealthy, just out of school, people are skeptical. There are physical advantages of men, and even they are now called girls, not women or female. They are "pea princess" of affluent origin. They are "returned gifted girls" coming out of the "Ivory Tower". Female heirs are questioned in terms of gender, ability and role transformation. The following are some examples of female heirs in family business.

Pan Wei: 28 years old, daughter of Pan Shoude, chairman of Tonghua Wantong Group. Now she is the general manager of Tonghua Wantong Group in Jilin Province. In 2001, she was appointed by his father as a successor to Wantong, and she had worked at the grassroots as a marketing department clerk. She majored in Chinese and accounting when she was at school.

Xu Taofang: 25 years old, the daughter of Xu Rugen, founder of Hannahsen Company, currently the president of Shanghai Tianxiang Technology Knitting Co., Ltd. When she returned from Singapore, the first job Xu Rugen arranged for her was salesman, which taught her how to bear burden. With the help of e-commerce mode, later she opened the radiation-proof clothing market and established the leading brand of Tianxiang. She also became the successor of Hannahsen Company.

Zheng Laili: 31 years old, daughter of Zheng Xiukang, founder of Cornell Group, she is currently the Vice President and General Manager of Marketing Center of Cornell Group. She Graduated from Tianjin Institute of Finance and Economics, majoring in International Accounting. When she first arrived at Cornell, she started as a shoemaker at the grass-roots level, but she achieved good reputation among the staff, and became one of the top ten economic women of the year in 2004. She was Zheng Xiukang's ideal successor.

Zuo Ying: 24 years old, daughter of Zuo Zongshen, now holds 50% equity in Chongqing Zongshen High Speed Boat Development Co., Ltd. and is the legal

representative of the company. She has studied in Miami, USA. She has been the chairman and general manager of Zong Shen High Speed Boat since 2004, and the director of Zong Shen Dynamics.

From the above, we can see that the second generation of female leaders are generally younger and mostly unmarried. Their family relationship is relatively simple and their roles in the family are clear. Therefore, they can concentrate on enterprises, which is different from their mothers. Accordingly, their conflicts of responsibilities and roles are not very obvious. Fortunately for them, most of them are eldest or only daughters. They can get the support of their parents in family business inheritance. To a great extent, gender discrimination has weakened. However, with the growth and development of enterprises, the number of family members has changed, their roles have diversified, which leads to the complication of family relations and the plight of female heirs in family business. Disturbance is inevitable. Although the succession of female members in family business is very smooth at present. However, due to the difference of growth environment, education and ideological and cultural influence between the two generations, the conflict between the two generations in management is inevitable. In the following part, a more detailed example is offered.

## **7.2 Jilin Wantong Pharmacy Group Co.**

### **7.2.1 An Introduction of Jilin Wantong Pharmacy Group Co**

Jilin Wantong Group Co., Ltd. was established on November 28, 2005. The group is located in Tonghua, a famous Chinese medicine city. It is a large-scale modern industrial group integrating pharmaceutical production, product research and development, pharmaceutical marketing, real estate development, commercial and catering services. It covers an area of 115,000 square meters with total assets 560 million yuan. There are more than 2,600 employees. Jilin Wantong Group owns Tonghua Wantong Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd., Tonghua Wantong Sales Co., Ltd., Tonghua Wantong Real Estate Development Co., Ltd. and Tonghua Wantong Hotel Co., Ltd.

Pan Shoude, chairman of Tonghua Wantong Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd., started from a watch apprenticeship and then became the purchasing manager, and then the general manager of the Tonghua City Watch and Eyewear Company. At the end of 1997, Pan Shoude was ordered to take over as the CEO of Tonghua No. 2 Pharmaceutical Factory (the predecessor of Wantong Pharmaceutical). The following year, he let the factory with debts on the brink of bankruptcy realize profit. In just a few years, the company has grown from weak to strong, and has rapidly grown into the outstanding enterprise of Jilin Province. The company ranks among the top 100 pharmaceutical companies in the country. In 2005, it entered the top 100 enterprises of Chinese enterprises released by Forbes. The company can produce 9 large dosage forms and more than 120 varieties, all of which have passed GMP certification. Among them, "Wantong Reinforcing Bone Piece", "Jingzhi Anshen Oral Liquid", "Lianlian Capsule" and other products have been named as national key new products by the five ministries and commissions of the country, and have been sold well at home and abroad, becoming a well-known brand. "Wantong Reinforcing Bone Piece" has been ranked first in the sales of similar drugs in the country for many years. It has been rated as "Top Ten Satisfactory Brands for Chinese Consumers" and "Reassuring Medicine for People".

### 7.2.2 Female heirs

In the company, Pan Wei took the position of the general manager of Jilin Tonghua Wantong Group, which has a sales volume of 600 million yuan and ranks among the top three companies in Jilin Medicine. Perhaps, in the eyes of some people, Pan Wei can achieve his current status and fame, mainly because he has an excellent father. However, this is not the case. It was because of the participation of Pan Wei that Wantong realized a major transformation from a small factory with the status of "self-employed" to the current large-scale pharmaceutical group in Jilin and even the whole country. Unlike the majority of successors who are not recognized by the management of the company, Pan Wei has won the unanimous support and respect of Wantong Group. There are indications that Pan Wei, a younger generation, is working

hard to surpass her father.

Pan Wei, who was appointed as the successor, entered Wantong on February 5, 2001. She worked first as a marketing staff. She believes that the marketing department has a lot of business and is the place where the most things can be learned. At that time, the national pharmaceutical market was in a rapid development trend. Wantong, which had just entered the fast lane, urgently needed to recruit a large number of personnel. However, at that time, Wantong was not very famous, and there were very few applicants. Pan Wei, who is in charge of this work, carefully analyzes the mentality of job seekers, and personally goes out to publicize the company. She introduces corporate policies, talks with graduates, and trains candidates. Colleagues were amazed at Pan Wei's "efficiency."

A few months later, when the marketing minister resigned, Pan Wei was elected with absolute advantage. In early 2002, Pan Wei was promoted to the position of deputy manager of the marketing company and became a middle-level cadre of the company. For pharmaceutical companies that are on the right track, the key is how the product enters the end customer on a large scale. At that time, Wantong Pharmaceutical only had sales outlets in 4 provinces. Pan Yi's ambition was to quickly build a huge sales force. She has recruited more than 1,200 salesmen to go to 31 provinces, more than 300 prefecture-level cities, and more than 100 economically strong counties. Her grand blueprint has become a reality step by step.

Although Pan Wei's many moves are very risky. The strong development momentum also made Pan Shoude have to praise her daughter's management style. Pan Wei, who has confidence, innovation and strong learning spirit, has finally lived up to his father's high expectations. Pan Wei herself was also elected as a "National Youth League Member" and won the honorary title of "National March Eighth Red Flag Bearer". In 2006, she was elected as the general manager of Wantong Group and took a crucial step in succession. Pan Shou De Wang, her daughter not only became the successor of the cause, but also became the leader of the business community in Jilin Province, and hopes to grow into a true private entrepreneur by her talent and efforts.

### 7.2.3 Experiences learned from Panwei's Example

From the example of Pan Wei, general manager of Wantong Group, we can see that the daughter heir in family business is very excellent, and the transition of successor is very smooth. At the same time, Pan Wei is lucky. On the one hand, her success today comes from her own ability and quality. On the other hand, it is inseparable from her father's training and support, which plays a very important role in the road to success.

First of all, parents should help daughters to cultivate abilities as soon as possible. The second generation of female successors in private enterprises has a common feature that they are younger, and because they are women, it may take a process to establish prestige in enterprises. In this process, the father must look for every opportunity to build up his daughter's prestige and prove her ability. Because the young female successors do not have much experience, coupled with women's inherent timidity and inherent indecision, it is likely to make them sway around in the face of decision-making. At this time, the father must do a good job of counseling. The cultivation of decision-making power needs full affirmation of its work.

Secondly, female heirs should give full play to their strength. Economist and psychologist, Broyninger, has developed a set of tests to evaluate the ability of potential successors in enterprises. In the tests, daughters often perform better than sons. Among the more than 1,000 tests, the most prominent advantages of female successors are their eagerness to learn, courage, curiosity and emphasis on cooperation. Broyninger found that before taking over, female successors would first ask themselves if they were qualified for leadership, then find their own advantages, and think about how to use them skillfully in their work. Sons are very different. Usually they don't consider whether they have leadership at first. They always want to be in power as soon as possible. Their main purpose is often to get rid of their father's control. This personality of a daughter is precisely what a successful leader should possess. Provided by Bosch Intelligent Key Consulting Co., Ltd., the test of the management style of father and daughter entrepreneurs in family business shows that the management style of the second generation of women focuses on democratic

management, while the parent entrepreneurs are more arbitrary management. Provided by Beijing Confused Light Consulting Co., Ltd., the personality test of managers concluded that: the father entrepreneurs are good at analysis, while the second generation of women advocate free management, but this free management has certain limitations; the second generation of women generally have innovative consciousness, which is very suitable for management positions. However, the parents follow the rules and do things with rigidity and meticulousness. They are suitable for professions with high demands for discipline. Therefore, female second-generation heirs in family enterprises should not only give full play to their unique management advantages, but also learn from their parents' years of management experience.

Thirdly, female successors should accumulate more experiences. For the female successors, their common characteristics are that they have a higher education background, but they are relatively young. As the leader of an enterprise, education is important, but more important than education is experience. Although studying abroad will enrich their experience, they are extremely lacking in experience in business management. This requires parents to give them a sufficient buffer period or transition period. Like Pan Wei mentioned in the case, she started from the bottom, which accumulated much experiences for her.

In summary, there are already some successful examples for the cultivation of female successors. Female heirs should learn from these examples and try to improve their ability to prepare themselves for the transfer of power.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

Family business is a special form of business organization with blood and in-laws as a link. It is mainly organized by family members to direct and lead the development of enterprises. Under the influence of traditional culture and various social factors, male family members have always occupied an important position in family business. However, with the change of social environment and the management advantages of women themselves, more and more female family

members begin to rise as important candidates. They have more opportunities to contact family business and participate in family business than before.

At the same time, we can see that they are troubled by family, career and family relations. They wavered on the balance of family and career, which eventually led to the plight of women in family enterprises and seriously hindered the development of women members themselves. This article mainly draws the following conclusions around the predicament faced by female members of family business and its causes:

At present, the predicament faced by female heirs mainly includes: gender discrimination under the influence of Confucian culture; role conflict from gender role expectation; responsibility conflict from enterprise-family relationship; psychological conflict predicament from women's own psychological quality.

Female heirs should give full play to their gender advantages in management, emphasizing both gentleness and authority. Female successors should try to improve their ability to make them qualified as a successor. Also they can accumulate experiences at grassroots level. Besides, it is suggested that they should build their authority in the enterprise. Also they should try to get rid of the traditional ideology and shackles for women.

The main innovations of this paper are as follows: For the first time, this paper systematically studies the status quo of female successors in family business, and analyses the difficulties and obstacles of female members in family business. It also offers some suggestions for the succession of female heirs. Besides, in this paper, the gender role theory is introduced into family business, and through the analysis of the differences between male and female leadership styles, women's gender advantages are used to help women in family business to establish their unique management style.

The limitations of this research are as follows: Due to the scarcity of literature on female successors in China, although the author has made great efforts to collect and read a large number of data, some theoretical research and analysis are difficult to go deep, and further study is needed. Also due to limited time and information sources, the case study is not thorough and complete, and other aspects of female successors in family business have not been specifically analyzed.

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## **10.0 Appendix**

### **10.1 Interview script**

1. What is your position in the business?
2. How long you are working in the business?
3. How do you perceive the difficulty of developing the female successor in your business?
4. Are there are difficulties from gender discrimination? If yes, how these affect the development of the female successor?
5. Are there are difficulties from responsibility conflict? If yes, how these affect the development of the female successor?
6. Are there are difficulties from psychological conflict? If yes, how these affect the development of the female successor?
7. What are the reasons for these difficulties? Whether there are difficulties from culture, social, biological or psychological aspects? If yes, what are they, and how they affect the development of the female successor?
8. What are the external environment of this family enterprise? What are the political, economic and social environments?
9. What measures you suggest taking in order to deal with the issues of cultivating female successor?