

The comparison of high-achieving business women's ways to overcome career barriers between in China and America

Zhou Erhua, Zhao Lu, Lin Jia

School of Management, Huazhong University of Science & Technology

No.1037, Luoyu Road, Hongshan District, Wuhan, P.R.C, 430074

Email: iris.zhou.hust@gmail.com, zhaolu830127@yahoo.com.cn,

[llin_jia82914@hotmail.com](mailto:lilin_jia82914@hotmail.com)

Abstract

As the proportion of female employees gradually increases, women have begun to take more important roles in the progress of the world economic development. However, during the process of promotion, the female senior executives reduced sharply, that is to say, “glass ceiling” happens. The study chose ten successful business women (including five Chinese and five Americans) from the related lists of “Forbes” and “Fortune” to do qualitative research. The material of research came from their biographies, expert reviews, media interviews and website news. We compared the career barriers and coping strategies of high-achieving business women in the two countries that presented from the aspects of society, organizations, families and individuals and abstract several original results, which help women to absorb the experience each other and adopt appropriate strategies in their future career development with the integration of eastern and western societies. At the same time, the original conclusion may contribute to future empirical research as hypotheses on women career barriers and it will be useful for cross-cultural management research.

Key words : high-achieving business woman, career barriers, China, America

1 Introduction

In recent years, as the proportion of female employees gradually increases, women have begun to take more important roles in progress of the world economic development than ever before^[1]. “The survey of Chinese female administrators” published by “Female Leadership Research Group” from Beijing University in 2006 showed that global female entrepreneurs was not up to 10% during the 1980s, while the number has reached 20% now. Chinese female entrepreneurs’ corporations have been more than 20 million in 2004 which rank the 20% of the whole corporations. The operations of female entrepreneurs in China also are better than men’s (the number of profit companies operated by women was higher 7.8% than by men, the number of balanced ones was higher 4.3% and the number of deficit ones was lower 12.1% by the end of 2005)^[2]. However, during the process of promotion, the female senior executives reduced sharply, that is to say, “glass ceiling” happens which is from many factors such as physical weakness, family burden, “male business circle” in organizations and public expectance toward women. It was surveyed that middle-class female managers had the proportion of 42.1%, while high-class ones only rank 16.6% in 2005^[2].

The study initially reviewed the theories about career motivation, career barriers and dealing strategies, brought to the theory and empirical conception of high-achieving or success based on the standards of “Forbes” and “Fortune” including career achievement, media awareness and economic strength. Then we selected top 10 of having most influence high-achieving business women on the globe from China and USA according to the billboards of most authoritative magazines – “Forbes” and “Fortune” from 2004 to 2008 as the cases to take qualitative research. We can understand their ways to overcome career barriers by their biographies, expert reviews, media interviews and website news, summary and abstract their characteristics based on the common factors such as age, education background, previous experience and position and so on, and find the differences under different cultural and social background. Finally the study supplied some universal advice with business women, families, organizations and the society as the continuous integrating of eastern and western thoughts and offered some original idea for future researches about female career development.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Career motivation

Super (1957) argued that career motivation is the success motivation concerned about working^[3], while Farmer (1980) thought they were different and the former was the special dimensionality of the latter^[4]. Success motivation is a kind of intrinsic driving power. People consider something as important or valuable one and try their best to achieve the perfection which lead to the ambitious activities and want to show (McClelland, 1953)^[5]. So when being used to career development, success motivation is equal to career motivation.

The theories about career motivation are mainly brought forward by Farmer and London. Farmer thought that women’s successes were always behind the men and the career contributions were litter, maybe which had the relation with career motivation^[6]. He claimed the concept model in 1976 that environment and individual can influence on women learning and career, then brought toward the career motivation model based on the Bandura’s society study theory in 1985 that the factors of background, psychology and environment forecast career motivation and emphasize the mutual effects of psychology and environment^{[6][7]}. London (1993) thought career motivation was the power to arise and keep career plan, action and decisions, which included working motivation, management motivation and other

correlative motivations and had three dimensionalities – resilience, insight and identity^[8]. London thought the relations among career motivation, condition and career decisions/action can be illustrated by prospective or retrospective. As to prospective, environment support is benefit for career motivation in which resilience is benefit for improving insight and reasonable career identity, while the difference of career motivation can influence career decisions/action, vice versa (London & Noe, 1997)^[9].

2.2 Career barriers

The concept of career barrier was firstly presented by Crites (1969) which means that in the progress of one's career development, he or she would meet some internal conflicts, including role conflict and some external conflicts^[10]. Swanson & Woitke (1997) give it a new definition later: the events or situations in individual or the external environment which make people's career development progress difficult. This definition is quoted by more researchers for its strong generality and we also use the definition in the paper^[11].

The discussion on female career barriers is rooted from insufficient revelation of women abilities and becoming low-achieving employees. Both male and female would meet career barriers to various degrees, due to the particularity of women's career development process and other reasons, women would meet some career barriers which men would not meet and most of scholars pay much more attention to the "women career barriers". The family responsibilities impact women's careers more (Burke, 1994)^[12]; women's relative under-representation and subsequent token status at higher organizational levels uniquely constrain their career progress, so most of the researchers pay more attention to the thesis of women career barriers.

After reviewing the conclusions of related studies of foreign countries, we found that recent studies are mainly focus on the career barrier factors. Career barrier factors are the product of the interaction of men and environment. First, social environment includes social system, social cultural and so on; second, organizational environment includes the organization of the system, the organizational culture and so on; third, family environment includes family background, family education, family responsibility and so on. Here the environment is classified by the environment scope, size, dimension and significance.

Previous scholars always classify the factors of women career barrier. Crites (1969), O'Leary (1974), Farmer (1976), Betz (1994), London (1998) are all divided the factors into two types: internal factors and external factors^{[10][13][6][14][15]}; Sobol (1963), Gutek, B.A. & Larwood, L. (1986), Swanson & Tokar (1991) are all divided the factors into three types: background/situational factors, personal/psychological factors, social/interpersonal factors^{[16][17][18]}. The paper classified career barrier factors into four types: personal factors, family factors, organization factors and social factors. Internal barrier factors mainly refer to personal factors, such as biological factors, psychological factors, personal experience and background. Among the external factors, comparing with the factors in social environment, the family and organization environment are more easily to grasp, and have a greater potential to be improved.

2.3 Coping strategies

Carver (1989) argued that coping strategies was a kind of thought and action under pressing^[19]. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) thought that dealing was when asked for excess resource exhaust people tries to adjust their cognize and action to change the relationship with environment for relief the impact and influence^[20].

The classification methods are various. Lazarus and Folkman's (1980) were widely utilized, that is, dealing is classified three kinds: question-tropism dealing, emotion-tropism dealing and compromise-tropism dealing^[21]. Dealing was classified by Matheny (1986) to twelve kinds: cognize

rebuild, question solution, press reduction, social skills usage, self-relieve, structure, find information, press supervision, positive reflection, escape/move back, restrain/deny and self-cure^[22]. Lazarus (1993) brought some press dealing strategies which London considered as dealing strategies to career barriers that are direct confront, keep distance, self-control, finding social support, taking responsibilities, escape, question solution designedly, positive re-evaluation^[23].

2.4 Conception of high-achieving or success

Different scholars comprehended "success" in different way. Hughes (1958) defined "success" in term of objective and subjective success^[24]. Objective "career success" was assessed by some objective outcomes, such as a progression in title, position and salary. Nevertheless, Hall (2004) presented that "success" can be defined as "the pride one feels from achieving his or her personal goals in life, rather than those goals shaped by organizations or society^[25]". Heslin (2005) thought that individual and contextual factors need to be taken into consideration when defining "career success"^[26]. Parker and Chusmir's (1991) construct of life success includes six dimensions: status-wealth; contribution to society; professional fulfillment; family relationships; personal fulfillment; security^[27]. Today more and more workers may value outcomes such as work-life balance or contribution to others as a measure of success in their career.

The paper chose the billboards of "top hundred of having most influence women on the globe" from "Forbes" and "top fifty of having most influence business women on the globe (except Americans) or in America" from "Fortune" during 2004 and 2008 to be sample space, because these billboards are most authoritative all over the world and the lists comprehends objective and subjective factors, which includes career achievement, media awareness and economic strength.

3 Methods and materials

3.1 Research methods

The research was mainly based on the related billboards in "Forbes" and "Fortune" from 2004 to 2008, from where we took five Chinese and five Americans as examples to do qualitative analysis. Initially, paper collected the all-round information about cases by their autobiography, related biography, newspaper, TV/internet interviews, their homepage and other websites. Then cases were analyzed separately to conclude their characteristics based on their saying and activities. Furthermore, the paper compared the cases at the angle of person factor, organization and family factor and society factor to find the difference of methods of overcoming the career barriers between two countries. Finally some advice was given for career development of Chinese business women and future research.

3.2 Research cases

The study selected five Chinese and five American high-achieving business women who are from "Top hundred of having the most influences women on the globe" published by "Forbes" and "top fifty of having most influence business women on the globe (except Americans) or in America" in "Fortune" from 2004 to 2008. These business women all reached a relatively high and stable rank in the list and meet the criteria of "high-achieving" or "success" we presented above. In order to insure the stability of cases' qualities, the paper took the times of on the lists, rank of the lists and newest principle as choosing factors.

Initially, we choose most prominent nine Chinese and eleven Americans (about ratio 1:2) from the billboards by statistics considering the time, number and ranking in the lists to make sure the stability of cases. The candidates are following (table 1):

Table 1 ranking in related billboards of "Forbes" and "Fortune"

	Forbes ^①					Fortune ^②				
	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Yang Mianmian	70	43	70			17	25	20	15	8
Zhang Yin		75				31	24			
Dong Mingzhu		93				33	48		48	42
Sun Yafang						26	27	25		
Zhang Xin	68									
Zheng Lijinfen	88									
Li Jing	95									
Xie Qihua				14	55			6	2	2
Ma Xuezheng				57	80			10	9	14
Indra Nooyi	3	5	4			1	1	1	11	12
AnneMulcahy			5	6		4	2	2	2	4
Irene Rosenfeld	6	9				2	5	5	27	
Pat Woertz		8	7			3	6	4	6	
Brenda Barnes			9	8		9	10	6	3	39
Oprah Winfrey			14	9	62	8	8	8	4	6
Meg Whitman				5			3	3	1	1
Andrea Jung	19					6	9	7	5	3
Sallie Krawcheck			6	7			12	9	7	7
Angela Braly	4					5	4			
Zoe Cruz			10				16	19	19	16

① “Top hundred of having the most influences women on the globe” in “Forbes”

② “top fifty of having most influence business women on the globe (except Americans) or in America” in “Fortune”

The candidates we choose should be in both billboards due to the authority dispute of these magazines, so Sun Yafang, Zhang Xin, Zheng Lijinfen and Li Jing are deleted; According to the times in the lists, we eliminate Angela Braly; according to the latest situation, we eliminate Meg Whitman, Sallie Krawcheck and Zoe Cruz; because of Andrea Jung’s inferior ranking in the “Forbes”, she is removed; comparing with Oprah Winfrey, the national popularity of Brenda Barnes is relatively lower, so she is excluded. The last candidates are Yang Mianmian, Dong Mingzhu, Zhang Yin, Xie Qihua and Ma Xuezheng in China and Indra Nooyi, AnneMulcahy, Irene Rosenfeld, Pat Woertz and Oprah Winfrey in America. Their brief introductions are as follow (table 2):

Table 2 brief introduction of ten candidates in China and America

	Yang Mianmian	Zhang Yin	Dong Mingzhu	Xie Qihua	Ma Xuezheng	Indra Nooyi	Anne Mulcahy	Irene Rosenfeld	Pat Woertz	Oprah Winfrey
Position	Associate chairman & president of Haier	President of Jiulong Paper & American Middle-South Corp.	President of GREE	Chairman & president of Baosteel	Senior associate president and CFO of Lenovo	President & CEO of PepsiCo	President & CEO of Xerox	CEO & chairman of Kraft Foods	Chairman, President & CEO of ADM	Chairman of Harpo
Industry	Home appliances	Paper reclaim & production	Home appliances	Steel	Computer	Synthesis	Copier	Food	Agricultural processors	Media
Age	67	51	54	65	56	52	56	55	56	54
Join age	43	27	36	35	38	38	24	27	54	19
Birthplace	Shanghai	Guangdong	Jiangsu	Shanghai	Tianjin	India	New York	New York	Pennsylvania	Mississippi
Degree	Bachelor of Engineering	Bachelor of Account	Master of Economy	Bachelor of Architecture	Master of Arts	Master of Management	Bachelor of English & Journalism	Ph.D. of Marketing & Statistics	Bachelor of Account	Bachelor of Arts
Working experience	①teacher, technician and senior engineer (1963-1984)②managed production, technology, quality, R&D, marketing, human resource, firm culture etc in Haier (1984-2008)	□reclaim waste paper in Hong Kong from 1985 □built American Middle-South Corp. (1990) □built Jiulong Paper in Shenzhen (1996)	□resigned from Nanjing to Shenzhen (1990) □salesman (1990-1994), sale manager (1994-1997), associate manager	□construct technician (1968-1978) □technical associate director, plan director, command associate director,	□translator in Chinese Academy of science in (1976-1990) □assistant general manager, managed account, finance,	□manager of ABB, Motorola, J&J and Boston Consulting Corp. (1986-1994) □development department associate president	□salesman, HR manager, associate president (1976-1999), CEO (2001), chairman (2002) in Xerox	□worked in Dancer Fitzgerald Sample, General Foods □various leadership in Kraft (1981-2003) □chairman	□accountant in Ernst & Young □joined Gulf Oil Corp. to manage refining, marketing, strategic planning,	□drug abuse, abortion and bearing, joined a beauty contest (1971) □broadcaster (1973), host of talk show in A.M.

			(1997) and general manager (2001) in GREE	associate chairman, general manager & chairman in Baosteel (1978-2000), retired in 2007	communication, human resources, and operation, executive director (1990-2007) in Lenovo and retired in 2007	(1994), CFO (2001), CEO (2006) in PepsiCo		& CEO of Frito-Lay in PepsiCo (2003-2006) <input type="checkbox"/> CEO (2006) & chairman (2007) of Kraft	finance, lubricant, and operation (1977-2006) <input type="checkbox"/> CEO & president (2006) & chairman (2007) of ADM	Chicago <input type="checkbox"/> built Harpo Corp.
Original family (with parents)		<input type="checkbox"/> military family <input type="checkbox"/> seven young sisters and brothers	<input type="checkbox"/> ordinary family <input type="checkbox"/> six old sisters			<input type="checkbox"/> conservative Indian middle-class family	<input type="checkbox"/> father is editor <input type="checkbox"/> four brothers		<input type="checkbox"/> mother is librarian <input type="checkbox"/> a brother	<input type="checkbox"/> poor single-parent black family
Core families (with husband)	Mother, husband (retired engineer), two daughters, two grandsons	Husband(Taiwanese, growing up in Brazil from famous university), two sons	Husband (dead 20 years ago), one son	Unmarried	Husband, a daughter	Husband, two daughters	Husband (retired sales manager of Xerox), two sons	Husband (colleague in General Foods), two daughters	Ex-husband (logistics consultant), three children	Unmarried
Important partner	Zhang Ruimin (chairman of Haier)	Liu Mingzhong (husband)	Zhu Jianghong (chairman of GREE)	None	Liu Chuanzhi (chairman of Lenovo)	Stephen Raymond (former President & CEO of Pepsico)	None	None	None	Jeff Jiekebosi (president of Harpo)

3.3 Research cases analyses

3.3.1 Yang Mianmian

(1) Individual: affinity (she pays attention to dress, keeps the peace and smile, talks tenderly, has life taste); tolerance (she thinks elitists should have IQ, EQ and tolerance ability, that is successor can stand on when coming across frustration); learning spirit (in the plan-economy period she persisted in self-studying when others were busy with buying food, playing, sleeping and so on; she insists on going to Tsinghua University and Qingdao Ocean University to take business administration and English classes and started to learn computer knowledge and driving in the 58-year-old); diligent (she works more than seventy hours per week); low-key (she always emphasizes Haier team spirit in stand of herself, even in the committee of national people's congress she still make use of each opportunity to introduce Haier); delicate (she asked for reproduction due to a hair in the semi-manufactured Haier refrigerator, she must arrive the marketing conference spot to deal with issues every time).

(2) Family: communication (she often takes back the newspaper of "Haier People" to read, discussed with families and absorbed their advice); responsible (do her best to do housework); husband support (her retired husband spares no effort to support her by taking care of families).

(3) Organization: strong enforce ability (she organized to establish Haier electronic business platform, brought modularized design platform, created B to B marketing model to satisfy individual need, urged operating flow rebuilding to reach "one order, one worker"); principled (she insisted on not low-price strategy); strategy thought (she took the "three steps" plan - going abroad, making stand and attaining first and the diversification strategy); partner's coordination (Zhang Ruimin is good at technology and creation and Yang emphasizes enforce); loyal (she joined in the Haier in 1984 and worked for 24 years, managed production, technology, quality, R & D, marketing, human resource, firm culture and consider Haier as her child).

(4) Society: social responsibility (she claimed to establish national name brand to strengthen international reputation, exploit countryside market to improve life qualities of peasants, develop the "green" and save-energy production in the national representative congresses and positively help to solve the problem of graduates' employment); opportunities (it is just the beginning of Chinese reform and open period when she came to Haier and the project called "Libo-Haier" from Germany saved the factory). Yang alleges that society does not accept or deny a person according to sex, only the performance can certificate everything and the contemporary era gives us the opportunity.

3.3.2 Zhang Yin

(1) Individual: opened characteristic (she is lively and likes fresh colors, keeps smile, talks concisely); affinity and delicate (she is without prejudice to poor waste paper collectors and often communicate with them); economical (she still stays in the company dorm and drives TOYOTA); low-pitched ("Hurun" waited for three years to interview with her and interviewer found there is not propagandizing department in Jiulong Paper); self-confident (she said I had confidence to earn, so wealth was not important for me).

(2) Family: origin family (Zhang is the oldest children among the eight children that urged her stateliness, self-confidence and diligence); husband support (he helped her to create the new operating model that they utilized empty containers returned China from USA, optimized industry chain and accumulate capital).

(3) Organization: principled (she violated the "industry regulation" to insist on not mixing water

into paper pulp for quality); masculine style (she is bold and unconstrained to do business and generous to employees); creative (she advocates human-based management model called "personal family, the company extended family" and integrates the value chain though cost, technology and scale); strong financing capability (she financed two billion Yuan to reduce the debt from 79.5% to 48.7%).

(4) Society: social responsibility (she said all the money she earned would be put into reinvestment in China and her career is in the homeland forever); opportunities (it is the time to start of reform and open in China that she began to carve out, she built the Middle-South company in the USA when American economy recovery, she invest in Shenzhen to produce save-energy paper when Hong Kong's flourish). Zhang argued that sex is not her career barrier, although women are relatively weaker in the side of physical, while she feels to get more care as woman in the daily life.

3.3.3 Dong Mingzhu

(1) Individual: masculine characteristic (she is called "steel rose" due to her beauty, talks quickly and loudly); affinity (she is easy-going after working and likes introducing girlfriends or boyfriends for the employees).

(2) Family: origin family (she was gentle and quiet in the childhood without ideas of her own); principled (she refused her brother's private request of asking GREE products which leded they did not keep touch for 10 years); core family (she become sturdy from the death of her husband when she was about 30 years old, now she has been a strongwoman "who passed the road would never exist anything").

(3) Organization: principled (once joining in the GREE she spent 40 days to reclaim another other salesmen's debt; she stopped cooperating with the national biggest dealer "Guomei" because the dealer reduced products price without agreement of GREE; due to eating in one minute before off duty, an employee was deducted whole month bonus and criticized to sob by Dong; claim not to participate "Low-price War" to protect the product quality); responsible (she upgraded the fundamental workers' salaries to make sure everyone's quality-life; when the GREE's managers hopped job together, she desert several million bonus per year as salesman to be a manager having several thousand wage); arbitrary (she positively asked for managing finance to control the debt in this submission country and said hubristically that she never took errors; "I like peace, but peace and fair are from struggle" she said); partner's support (when the criticism coming, Zhu Jianghong supplies adequate support with her that he gave the whole managing right to Dong and paid attention to R & D himself); creative (she developed new operating model such as cooperate with competitors, off-season rebate, build direct sale company and share the stock to dealers); prudent (she does not allow the credit sales); flexible (after split with "Guomei" two companies still partly cooperate).

(4) Society: social responsibility (Dong brought toward "whole industry spirit" that means businessmen's aims are not only earning money but also increase social value). Being female Dong acknowledges the career barriers and thinks women should not depend on others due to the sex and should be more confident, strong, dedicated and caring.

3.3.4 Xie Qihua

(1) Individual: masculine appearance (she dresses plainly, speaks coarsely and acts with slightly masculine tasting); low-keyed (she never accepted interviews about private life); clear-headed (she chose to be the tutor in Shanghai Jiao Tong University for integrating practice and abstract

thinking); tolerant (she was sent to countryside to be technician in the Chinese Cultural Revolution for 10 years and joined in Baosteel from group leader to president).

(2) Family: Xie never released her family situation. She would like read and play table tennis after working in stand of engaging in social activities.

(3) Organization: strategy thought (she merged several steel companies to restructure for value-added of state-owned assets and advocated direct investment to rich-iron countries to promote competitive advantages); human-based management (Baosteel is the first firm to implement five-day working system and workers can be paid leave); prudent (she is relatively conservative to utilize the capital market); flexible (Baosteel established modern company system in stand of old state-owned system by entering the stock market; when Baosteel needed to add shares, her team persuaded every Shareholder by flexible share price); loyal (she worked in th company for 30 years from the establishment of Baosteel to her retirement).

(4) Society: she thinks women have special characteristics in the management - pay more attention to details and more pragmatic in the formulating planning, have more affinity and cohesion in the management.

3.3.5 Ma Xuezheng

(1) Individual: opened characteristic (she is dying red hair, dressing on style, optimistic and easy-going who singed the pop-song in the company party) ; adventurous (she organized several geological reviews to Tibet in Chinese Academy of Science); learning ability (her first task is help a expert to translate after three years preliminary English study and become Lenovo's CFO without any math foundation).

(2) Family: origin family (she got encourage-education in the childhood and established self-confidence and anti-pressure ability); effective schedule (she went back home to cook into Semi-finished products and went out to work, then her husband continued for her daughter).

(3) Organization: effective communication (she spend 14 hours in communicating with chief accountants, comptrollers, inventors, M & A director, etc); self-confident (she often jokes why not submit me if the employees in IBM submit the cookies seller); loyal (she worked in Lenovo for 18 years until her retirement); tolerant (once joining in Lenovo she only was appointed ordinary worker and seller for 6 months); adventure spirit (Lenovo was only a small company when she joining it).

(4) Society: frustrated (in the period of Culture Revolution, Ma was sent to countryside for four years and forced to desert policy desirability; because of the complicated interpersonal relationships in Chinese Academy of Science she was force to change her career to business). Ma is not feminism infuser, but she thinks female indeed pay more time and energy under the traditional society and high-achieving women should have more flexibility. .

3.3.6 Indra K. Nooyi

(1) Individual: open characteristic (she established rock band, joined cricket team, frantically loved NBA and organized adventures when other girls done housework and cooked); adaptability (on arrival of America, she adapted western-style life quickly); widely knowledge (she got the bachelor of math, physics and chemistry, MBA in India and master of management in America); strong-minded (she insisted on herself lifestyle and went to America to study under traditional surroundings, successfully persuaded CEO to desert chain restaurant operation to adapt structure when being CFO).

(2) Family: original family (although born in the conservative India tribal Nooyi's parents are relatively open who encouraged children to discuss after dinners which gave her confident and strong-minded); core family (she is the traditional Hindu in life and stays in a county with families and goes church to pray; she is owned her success to three factors: family, friends and faith.)

(3) Organization: severe (her style of concise, pithy, vigorous and resolute may leads to employees' press and got the sobriquet called "steel woman"); partner's support (the former CEO Stephen Raymond is her best partner who is so entrusted on her that she retired in advance); experienced (she was employed as manager of ABB, Motorola, J&J and Boston Consulting Corp before joining the PepsiCo).

(4) Society: Indian social life influenced on Nooyi deeply (she still likes wearing the Indian silk to work or take conference to show eastern beauty). She is sure there is "glass ceiling", but it is broken easily if learning continuously. At the same time, she recognized that as a foreign woman she must be more industrious (she is the last one to leaves offices everyday and keep learning until Christmas).

3.3.7 Anne Mulcahy

(1) Individual: pretty (she is beautiful and slim, keeping smile); vigorous (she is a gymnastics and pop-song's fan).

(2) Family: original family (her brother Thomas Doran is also a leader of Xerox. Her mother is a housewife who takes care of Anne's two sons); core family (her husband is former sales manager of Xerox who understands and supports her); clear life boundary (she always said I try my best to work while it is just work).

(3) Organization: loyal (she started her career as a salesman in 1976 and worked as department manager, area manager, associate president and president, she knows every department, even each employee, although production and finance are weak for her); enforce ability (she accepted lessons to asked employees to take coffee to company respectively to lose cost and do her best to absorb the debt.); communicative (she persuaded 52 banks to increase loan during the lowest of Xerox); creative strategy (research budget never be cut down even most difficult time); decisive (at the beginning of reform she decided to stop the production line of desktop inkjet printer).

(4) Society: She acknowledges the existence of "ceiling" and thought women need to invent more energy.

3.3.8 Irene Rosenfeld

(1) Individual: active (she plays all varsity sports especially rollerblading and paved paths and likes playing the piano); direct (she likes direct communication style, for example the former boss praised her "you are grate, even I do not find you are female."); modest (she can be attracted to understanding others' grate thoughts); widely knowledge (she holds a Ph.D. in Marketing and Statistics, a Master of Science in Business Administration, and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Cornell University); adaptability (she as regional manager led the restructuring and turnaround of key businesses in the United States, Canada and Mexico).

(2) Family: ambitious (her aim in the childhood is to be American president); core family (she met her husband on the job at General Foods and her two daughters - one is an environmental engineer, the other is a senior at Cornell).

(3) Organization: experienced (she is a 26-year veteran of the food and beverage industry and has a long history of bringing a consumer focus and innovation to building businesses; she advanced in a variety of leadership roles at Kraft referencing operations, technology, information systems,

execute etc); team spirit (once being CEO she opened the office door to signify her decision to deal with the crisis with team).

(4) Society: active (she joins in a number of industry and community organizations, including The Economic Club of Chicago, board of directors for the Grocery Manufacturers Association and the Cornell University board of trustees); barriers (she left Kraft because of disagreeing the new strategy as the CEO of North America Region and verified her ability through perfect performance in Frito-Lay).

3.3.9 Pat Woertz

(1) Individual: life-long learning (she is a graduate of Columbia University and serves on the Board of Trustees of the University of San Diego and the Board of Visitors of Pennsylvania State University, which recently awarded her its highest recognition for alumni); intensive (at Chevron she switched jobs every two or three years, trying to get beyond her comfort zone; during pregnancy she went into labor during a meeting and drove herself to the hospital).

(2) Family: original family (while other families were spending summer vacations, parents took Pat and her brother on educational tours of corporate America); core family (her ex-husband made the sacrifices that allowed her to keep climbing the corporate ladder; she traveled frequently even as she raised three kids).

(3) Organization: experienced (she held positions in refining, marketing, strategic planning and finance, information technology etc in Gulf Oil from 1977); strategy (she is internationally recognized, working frequently with government officials, heads of state, business partners and community stakeholders across the globe); passion (she focuses on the well being of employees. when her organization began to show poor safety performance in some locations, Pat championed a global, cultural movement to raise awareness, change behavior and make safety a personal value for all workers); communication (she instituted an email address giving employees a place to address complaints; she held very frequent teleconference calls with her senior team); team spirit (she encouraged everyone to talk about their strengths and weaknesses and develop more trust amongst themselves).

(4) Society: active (she is a member of the National Petroleum Council, the International Business Council of the World Economic Forum, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, The Business Council and Business Roundtable, Board of Trustees of the University of San Diego and the Board of Visitors of Pennsylvania State University, vice chairman for the Kennedy Center Corporate Fund); barriers (she left after losing CEO of Gulf Oil to ADM because she did not allow to take things as they are; she was an outsider at a company that's never had an outsider in charge in the 104 years); facing the competition with men, she is confident (She has always been the men's tee when playing golf which is higher 15 points than women's).

3.3.10 Oprah Winfrey

(1) Individual: ordinary appearance (she looks mediocre, black and fat, lacking of elegance when smiling); gift (the God gave her a gift that she has essential speaking skill and grate memory which urged her to be the "king of talk show"); industrious (if there is no performance, she might sit the front of computer to adjust her magazine word by word); modest (after success she said "I am glad to be rich, but I still stand on the earth, what different is that my shoes are more expensive.").

(2) Family: original family (she was born in rural to a poor teenaged single mother and was raped at nine, and at fourteen, gave birth to a son who died in infancy; her childhood was poor: smoke,

drugs, drinking and debauchery sex life were around her until father took her back and disciplined seriously); core family (she rejected her boyfriend's offers of marriage many times, maybe she is afraid of losing freedom).

(3) Organization: almighty (she is all-around to be the chairman of Harpo, host of talk show, leader of reading association, amateur actor, producer of film and magazines);

(4) Society: social responsibility (Oprah is keen on public welfare that she donated her speech income to local charity organizations many times and launched "children protection act" in 1991 to appeal to build database of criminals who hurt children).

4 Finding

The paper introduced the cases in detail above and we need to classify their characteristics according to the factors of person, organization, family and society. The results are following (table 3).

Table 3 characteristics summary of the ten high-achieving business women above

	Yang Mianmian	Zhang Yin	Dong Mingzhu	Xie Qihua	Ma Xuezheng	Indra Nooyi	Anne Mulcahy	Irene Rosenfeld	Pat Woertz	Oprah Winfrey
Opened characteristic		√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
Affinity	√	√	√					√		√
Tolerance	√			√	√		√			
Low-keyed	√	√		√						
Learning spirit	√				√	√			√	
Delicate	√	√								
Enforce ability	√		√	√		√	√	√	√	
Creation ability		√	√	√						
Adaptation		√			√	√		√		√
Low turnover rate	√	√	√	√	√		√			
Family harmony	√	√			√	√	√	√		
Financing capability		√			√		√	√		
Team spirit				√				√	√	
Key partner	√	√	√		√					
Opportunities	√	√				√				√
Social responsibility	√	√	√							√
Barrier feeling			√		√	√	√	√	√	

The study will compare the ways to overcome career barriers of high-achieving business women's between in China and America from the aspects of individual, family, organization and society below.

4.1 Individual

- (1) Chinese women's characteristics are relatively more conservative than Americans which is expressed from their appearance, dress and costume.
- (2) Chinese women have more affinity and are more delicate both in private and public life than Americans, so they can make the best of sex advantage.
- (3) Chinese women's are low-keyed a lot than Americans about private life to protect families which may be related to Chinese custom.

4.2 Family

- (1) The ways of original families' support are different: American families supply more support for high-achieving business women's education, culture edification and practice action, so the educational levels of American women are higher and have more excellent communicating and persuading abilities than Chinese at large, whereas the Chinese families exert a subtle influence with activities on daughters' characters about independence, optimism, willpower and so on.
- (2) In core families the patterns of husbands' supports are different: Chinese husbands participate in wives' occupation career or bear more family obligation, yet most American husbands offer mental conciliation.

4.3 Organization

- (1) Facing career barriers, Chinese women express more tolerance, so they have relative low turnover rate.
- (2) Chinese women are apt to conservative business activity which can prevent risks but cannot more effectively utilize resources and expand companies' scales in a short period of time.
- (3) Chinese women are inclined to pay more attention to pivotal partners, while American women emphasize team spirit.
- (4) Chinese women like thinking and determining independently, American women always convince partners to get expectant result.
- (5) During the process of building up the prestige, two countries' women exhibit the masculine, but in the daily management, Chinese women can show the motherhood to infect underlings.
- (6) In the form of organization, Chinese women are inclined to play the roles in wholly-owned organizations, while American women share part of stock and utilize more resource as CEOs or chairmen.

4.4 Society

- (1) Chinese women would like to take social responsibility for their reputations, while American women would like to spend more time on families and spare time.
- (2) Chinese women obtain the respect by insisting on principles and tough activities, however, American women use powerful communication and persuasion to be accepted, correlative working experience is advantageous as well.
- (3) American women feel the career barriers from sex more heavily than Chinese.

5 Conclusions

The results above display the tremendous change about women occupation career barriers, that is traditional family barriers gradually diminished, but the establishment of "women business culture circles" and the women's breakthrough in the field of technical management and working age need future effort. Nowadays, because of mutual communication and learning the all-rounded differences between Chinese and American high-achieving business women become more and more decreased. Now we supply some general advice for business women through sociological

theory.

5.1 Social exchange theory

Social exchange theory was born in America in the late 1950s which is based on strengthened principle, economics principle and game theory advocated by behavioristic psychology. It argues that the relationship between people and society is interactive. Everyone is inclined to maximize the benefit and minimize the investment, so the relationship of excessive input and less output will be stopped, and vice versa ^[28]. Based on above theory, it is helpful to inform “female business circle” that the incentive of governments, organizations and the propaganda of public opinion. In recent years, the revival of “feminism” made a significant contribution to female social influence and the rate of female senior leaders gradually upgrades in the political and business fields. Women are going out of families to undertake the same work as men and getting economic autonomy whose family roles gradually diminish. While organizations still relatively discriminate toward women which becomes one of most serious barriers.

P. M. Blau claimed that social exchange was limited voluntary activity for repay and social exchange relations exist in the closely related communities established on mutual trust ^[29]. So farsighted investment and business credit is essential to developing women career. All of the samples above pay attention to it. For example, Yang Mianmian and Dong Mingzhu did not join in the “Low-price Unrest” in Chinese home appliances industry coincidentally for production quality; Zhang Yin violated the “industry regulation” to insist on not mixing water into paper pulp for quality; Anne Mulcahy ensured R & D research budget even during the low ebb of Xerox. Under male business circle, female leaders’ principled can be more essential.

5.2 Social capital theory

Social capital theory was born in the late 1970s which claims that social capital is personal ability to get benefit making use of their specific positions in the structure, including the relations to relatives, friends, classmates and countrymen etc. The forms of social capital include obligations and expectations, informational networks, norms and effective punishment, the authority relationship, multi-function community organizations and the intentional organizations ^[30]. James S.Coleman considered the joint between micro and macro as starting point to systematically study social capital ^[31]. Pierre Bourdieu thought field domain was social occasion with different expression forms connected by various social relations ^[32]. Because the social patterns of women and men are different, female social spectrum is mostly confined to the same sex. In the “male business circle” women social capital is relatively poor. This custom confront will reduce with the increase of female business leaders. Meanwhile female communication styles should be inclined to men’s which will speed up the integration of social capital. The samples are called “female steel”, “steel rose” etc, because they have a few male characteristics such as tough, magnanimous, principled, having overall views and so on.

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