



## CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1. Relevance of the study .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2. Aims of the study .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.3. Research questions .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.4. Structure of the study .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. Theoretical background.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2.1 Career theory and previous research (regarding the careers of female Chinese executives) .....</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1.1. Definition of “career” (theoretical perspectives on the concept of career).....	11
2.1.2. The relationship between career and career success.....	16
2.1.3. Career theory and women’s careers.....	17
2.1.4. Career theory in flux (incorporating women’s careers into career theory).....	19
2.1.5. Women’s career patterns – traditional versus alternative paths.....	25
2.1.6. Existing research on the careers of female Chinese executives.....	28
2.1.7. Determinants of female career success .....	32
<b>2.2. External determinants of career development.....</b>	<b>38</b>
2.2.1. Historical, cultural and social context.....	38
2.2.1.1. Confucian values and their import for women’s careers.....	38
2.2.1.2. Overarching political conditions leading to greater equality (of opportunity).....	43
2.2.1.3. The image of female executives in China (think manager – think male?).....	45
2.2.2. Labour market context (socioeconomic influences) .....	48
2.2.2.1. China’s opening-up to the global market .....	48
2.2.2.2. Careers before and after the reforms .....	51
2.2.2.3. Opportunity structure .....	53
2.2.2.3.1. Proportion of women in senior management roles in China .....	53



2.2.2.3.2. Is there a glass ceiling phenomenon in China?.....	55
2.2.2.3.3. Equal or unequal? The situation of female executives .....	56
2.2.3. Influence of social origin and family situation on careers .....	59
2.2.3.1. Social origin and careers .....	59
2.2.3.2. Influence of women's own family situations on their careers .....	63
2.2.3.2.1. Roles and identities of career women.....	63
2.2.3.2.2. Careers with and without children.....	64
2.2.3.2.3. Advantages and disadvantages of combining work and family .....	65
2.2.3.2.4. Childcare models in China .....	66
2.2.3.3. Husbands' attitudes to wives' careers .....	68
2.2.4. The role of mentoring and networking.....	69
2.2.4.1. Mentoring as opportunity and obstacle for women.....	69
2.2.4.2. Networking and guanxi relations .....	71
<b>2.3. Individual success factors that support advancement to senior management.....</b>	<b>74</b>
2.3.1. Influence of education on career paths .....	74
2.3.2. Competencies and careers.....	77
2.3.3. Personality and careers .....	81
2.3.3.1. Studies on the connection between personality and careers .....	81
2.3.3.2. Personality dimensions that influence careers .....	84
2.3.3.2.1. Conscientiousness and achievement motivation .....	85
2.3.3.2.2. Leadership motivation .....	86
2.3.3.2.3. Openness to contact, extraversion and team orientation .....	86
2.3.3.2.4. Emotional stability.....	87
2.3.3.2.5. Capacity for self-presentation.....	87
2.3.3.2.6. Flexibility.....	87
2.3.4. Female leadership styles and careers .....	88
<b>2.4. Developing a theoretical model (conceptual framework) for the study .....</b>	<b>91</b>



<b>3. Description of the research and process.....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>3.1. Methodology.....</b>	<b>95</b>
3.1.1. Framing the research design .....	95
3.1.2. Specific features of qualitative designs.....	96
<b>3.2. Data collection.....</b>	<b>99</b>
3.2.1. Research method: multiple case study .....	99
3.2.2. Data collection instrument: problem-centred interviews.....	100
3.2.3. Ethical considerations .....	103
<b>3.3. Sampling strategy: the study group .....</b>	<b>105</b>
3.3.1. Defining the target group .....	105
3.3.2. Data collection process.....	108
3.3.3. Interview locations.....	109
3.3.4. The researcher's role.....	110
<b>3.4. Data analysis – qualitative structured content analysis.....</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>3.5. Theoretical reflections on the development of typologies .....</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>4. Research results and interpretation .....</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>4.1. Influence of external factors on the development of the female Chinese executives' careers.....</b>	<b>117</b>
4.1.1. Views on the influence of Confucian values on career paths .....	117
4.1.2. Views on the gender situation in China .....	123
4.1.2.1. Estimates of the number of women in senior management .....	123
4.1.2.2. Assessments of equality of opportunity .....	126
4.1.2.3. Does a glass ceiling exist for women? .....	130
4.1.2.4. The image of female top managers in China.....	133
4.1.3. Influence of social origin and family situation on careers.....	136
4.1.3.1. Influence of the women's families of origin .....	136
4.1.3.2. Influence of motherhood and childcare.....	143



4.1.3.3. Organising childcare .....	149
4.1.3.4. Husbands' attitudes to their partners' careers .....	152
4.1.4. The influence of mentoring and networking on careers .....	157
4.1.4.1. Accounts of the individual benefits of mentoring .....	157
4.1.4.2. Influence of bosses on careers.....	161
4.1.4.3. Use of networks for career development.....	164
4.1.5. Summary: how environmental factors influence the careers of female Chinese executives.....	169
<b>4.2. Individual success factors that support a rise to senior management .....</b>	<b>170</b>
4.2.1. The interviewees' education and qualifications.....	171
4.2.2. Descriptions of own competencies and skills .....	175
4.2.2.1. Summary of the descriptions.....	175
4.2.2.2. Understanding of the system and analytical skills as building blocks of careers	176
4.2.2.3. Expert knowledge.....	177
4.2.2.4. Communication and motivational skills.....	177
4.2.2.5. Visionary thinking and innovation.....	177
4.2.2.6. Intercultural skills.....	179
4.2.3. The study participants' personality features and careers .....	184
4.2.3.1. Overview of their self-descriptions .....	184
4.2.3.2. Achievement motivation and attitude towards competition.....	186
4.2.3.3. Financial motivation.....	191
4.2.3.4. Leadership motivation and need for power.....	194
4.2.3.5. Working behaviour.....	197
4.2.3.5.1. Conscientiousness.....	197
4.2.3.5.2. Flexibility.....	197
4.2.3.6. Social competencies .....	200
4.2.3.6.1. Openness to contact.....	200
4.2.3.6.2. Assertiveness and ability to deal with conflict .....	201



4.2.3.7. Emotional stability .....	205
4.2.3.7.1. Dealing with criticism and mistakes.....	205
4.2.3.7.2. Self-confidence.....	207
4.2.3.8. Image factors .....	209
4.2.3.8.1. Capacity for self-presentation.....	209
4.2.3.8.2. Initial impression on others .....	211
4.2.3.8.3. Importance of appearance.....	212
4.2.4. Leadership styles.....	214
4.2.4.1. Description of own leadership style .....	214
4.2.4.2. Women's leadership styles compared with men's .....	219
4.2.5. Assessment of own weaknesses.....	221
4.2.6. Summary: the impact of education, competencies and personality on careers.....	225
<b>4.3. Analysis of the female Chinese executives' career development.....</b>	<b>227</b>
4.3.1. The significance of careers for the interviewees .....	227
4.3.1.1. Individual definitions of career success and satisfaction with own career .....	227
4.3.2. Evaluation of own work-life balance .....	233
4.3.3. Career paths analysis.....	235
4.3.3.1. Recent positions .....	236
4.3.3.2. The start of the women's careers.....	238
4.3.3.2.1. Starting positions .....	238
4.3.3.2.2. Effect of choice of company type on careers .....	244
4.3.3.3. Moving up (analysis of career steps).....	249
4.3.3.3.1. Career steps: number of previous companies and positions.....	249
4.3.3.3.2. Geographic mobility during the women's careers.....	252
4.3.3.3.3. Reasons for changing companies .....	253
4.3.3.3.4. Reasons for choosing a position .....	257
4.3.3.3.5. Alternatives to actual career choices .....	259



4.3.3.3.6. Planned and unplanned career decisions .....	262
4.3.3.3.7. Downsides and challenges of careers .....	272
4.3.3.4. Future career goals .....	280
<b>4.4. Future prospects: views on China's economic development in the coming years         and the impact this will have on female executives .....</b>	<b>282</b>
<b>5. Developing a career pattern typology for the group of female Chinese     executives .....</b>	<b>287</b>
<b>5.1. Developing a career pattern typology for the group of female Chinese         executives.....</b>	<b>287</b>
<b>5.2. Discussion of the career pattern typology .....</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>6. Closing discussion.....</b>	<b>307</b>
<b>6.1. Summary of results and discussion .....</b>	<b>307</b>
<b>6.2. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>318</b>
<b>6.3. Implications for HRM and for women planning their career paths.....</b>	<b>322</b>
6.3.1. Implications for HRM.....	322
6.3.2. Implications for women planning their career paths.....	324
<b>6.4. Limitations and Future Research .....</b>	<b>326</b>
<b>6.5. Closing Remarks.....</b>	<b>328</b>
<b>7. Appendix .....</b>	<b>331</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Figures and tables.....</b>	<b>331</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Additional literature overviews.....</b>	<b>334</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Questionnaire .....</b>	<b>335</b>
<b>8. Bibliography.....</b>	<b>339</b>