

**GENDER DISPARITY IN CAREER MOBILITY IN
URBAN CHINA: A STUDY ON THE BARRIERS
IN THE WOMEN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT
IN HARBIN, THE CAPITAL OF
HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE**



WANG WEIHUA

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH**

2007

**GENDER DISPARITY IN CAREER MOBILITY IN
URBAN CHINA: A STUDY ON THE BARRIERS
IN THE WOMEN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT
IN HARBIN, THE CAPITAL OF
HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE**

WANG WEIHUA



UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Human Capital Management (MHCM)**

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH
2007**

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

BORANG PENGESAHAN STATUS TESIS @

JUDUL: Perbezaan Jantina Dalam Pergerakan Kerjaya Di Kawasan Bandar Di China: Kajian Mengenai Halangan Di Dalam Pemebangunan Kerjaya Wanita Di Harbin, Bandar Utama Wilayah Heilongjiang

IJAZAH: Sarjana Pengurusan Modal Manusia (MHCM)


SESI PENGAJIAN: 2005 - 2007

Saya, WANG WEIHUA mengaku membenarkan tesis Sarjana ini disimpan di Perpustakaan Universiti Malaysia Sabah dengan syarat-syarat kegunaan seperti berikut:

1. Tesis adalah hakmilik Universiti Malaysia Sabah.
2. Perpustakaan Universiti Malaysia Sabah dibenarkan membuat salinan untuk tujuan pengajian sahaja.
3. Perpustakaan dibenarkan membuat salinan tesis ini sebagai bahan pertukaran antara institusi pengajian tinggi.
4. TIDAK TERHAD



Disahkan oleh

 ANITA BINTI ARSAD
PUSTAKAWAN KANAN
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

(Penulis: WANG WEIHUA)

(TANDATANGAN PUSTAKAWAN)

Alamat Tetap:

6th Floor No. 58 Unit 8 DongDaZhi
Street NanGang District Harbin of
Heilongjiang Province, China
Zip Code: 150001



(Peryelia: Dr. Kalsom Abd Wahab)

Tarikh: 1 July 2007

Tarikh: 1 Julai 2007

CATATAN: @ Tesis dimaksudkan sebagai tesis bagi Ijazah Doktor Falsafah dan Sarjana secara penyelidikan, atau disertasi bagi pengajian secara kerja kursus dan penyelidikan, atau Laporan Projek Sarjana Muda (LPSM).

DECLARATION

The materials in this dissertation are original except for quotations, excerpts, summaries and references which have been duly acknowledged.

WANG WEIHUA

Matric No: PS05-002(K)-062(A)

1 Julai 2007



UMS

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this research paper is a monumental task. Without the support and understanding of those close to me, my dreams for this thesis would have never come to fruition. I am greatly indebted and would sincerely like to express my deepest gratitude to the following special people who helped to make this study possible:

Dr. Kalsom Abdul Wahab (my incredible supervisor), for your ongoing support, encouragement, invaluable guidance and expert consultation, and as usual being patient with me while I wrote this research project. Dr. Kalsom, you have patiently extended your constructive criticism and advice through the duration of my research project. I have really enjoyed working with you over these past several months. I appreciate your thoughtfulness and your sensitivity to my schedule and commitments outside this research. Thank you for being the phenomenal person you are. You are an amazing model of love, kindness, and charity. I enjoy sharing not only my research paper successes, but even more I enjoy sharing the life time with you.

Mrs. Sharija Che Shaari (my beacon light), for helping me to slow down when experience the shades of gray during this study time. You are a person far too special to describe in words. I can't tell you how much it means to me. No matter how bad my day, when I look at you, sunshine fills my life. Thanks for showing me a beautiful mind.

Su FengJu and Wang MingXiao (my mom and dad), for your understanding and perseverance over the last two years of this MHCM program, and for believing in me and sharing in both the good times and the bad. Mom and Dad, you treat me like a princess! Without your special love and support, I never would have become who I am today. Without all your help, I could never get everything done. Words cannot adequately express the love and appreciation that I feel for all that you are and all that you do for me. I look forward to continuing to reach highs we never dreamed of.

Wang WeiPing (my adorable sister), for showing me the power of persistence. Weiping, you are small, but you are mighty! I have never seen such tenacity and fortitude in such a girl. Your imagination and creativity are amazing! Thank you for your unconditional love. You are the most special gift that anyone has ever given me.

Wang Tao (my precious brother), for supporting my endeavors and for encouraging me to pursue my writing. It means a lot to know that you are proud of me for what I do.

Wang Bao (my youngest brother) not only are you my younger brother, but you have had an important impact on my spiritual path in life! Your intelligence, compassion, caring, and perceptiveness are far beyond your years.

Liu YunPeng (my brother-in-law), you are always there when I need your help, and you somehow manage to keep a smile on your face. Words can never express how much I appreciate all that you do! Da Peng, you make all my hard work worth it.

Meng QingHong (my special "sister") for giving life a special meaning. I am lucky to have such a special family number as you. You really have a very special place in my heart.

Special thanks for every special lecturers (Assoc. Prof. Dr. Roselina Ahmad Saufi, Prof. Dr. Mohd Shuaib Che Din, Dr. Hj. Kassim B. Mansur, Dr. Hjh Arsiah Bt. Hj. Bahron, Dr. Patricia Anthony, Dr. Jenniffer Chan Kim Lian, Dr. Pengiran Hassanah Bahar Pengiran Bagul, Dr. Vivin Vincent, Dr. Fumitaka Furuoka, En Mohd Rahimie Abd Karim, En Lim Thien Sang and etc.) who taught me when I studied in UMS. I know that you all worked very hard to ensure that this study came out on time and with the best quality possible. Without all of you, this research wouldn't have happened.

I would also like to thank my MHCM classmates whom together we journeyed the wise part of acquiring knowledge and endearments are always treasured, which always be remembered in my lifetime. Although all of you started out as classmates, I feel that our relationship goes much deeper than that.

My extremely heartfelt thanks for people who give me continuous support and cooperation patience and endless encouragement and help throughout this research.



UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

ABSTRACT

Although with the world's economy development, the society evolves, and the basic education improves, more and more female workers enter the job market have created a trend, the proportion of female top managers is uncoordinated. When women became important human resources, equal working rights emerges as an important issue. In China's organization, the high level position has less females comparing to the lower positions. This paper analyzes gender disparity in career mobility in Urban China. This search, taking the female executive leaders and male managers as the subjects, is aiming to understand the sexual discrimination difference of the superiors, and understand the different perceptions of Glass Ceiling of employees. The data used in this study contains a cross section of urban residents from the Women managers' directory in Heilongjiang province of China, and sample of male managers. The investigation intends to shed light on the following questions: 1) what is the pattern of gender differences in career mobility in Urban China? 2) What are the main determinants of gender disparity in career mobility? Multiple regression analysis is estimated. The empirical result shows that gender disparity is not associated with gender differences in human capital endowment, instead, Glass Ceiling, male stereotyping, family commitment, and women's negative attitude have significant negative effects on women's upward and downward career mobility.



UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

ABSTRAK

PERBEZAAN JANTINA DALAM PERGERAKAN KERJAYA DI KAWASAN BANDAR DI CHINA: KAJIAN MENGENAI HALANGAN DI DALAM PEMBANGUNAN KERJAYA WANITA DI HARBIN, BANDAR UTAMA WILAYAH HEILONGJIANG

Walaupun seiring dengan pertumbuhan ekonomi dunia dan masyarakat, serta peningkatan di dalam asas pendidikan, suatu aliran telah wujud yang mana semakin ramai wanita memasuki pasaran kerja, kadar jumlah pengurus besar wanita masih belum diselaraskan. Apabila wanita menjadi sumber manusia yang penting, hak persamaan kerja telah diketengahkan sebagai isu utama. Dalam organisasi di negara China, bilangan wanita di peringkat tertinggi adalah kurang berbanding dengan mereka yang berada di peringkat rendah. Kertas ini menganalisis perbezaan jantina di dalam pergerakan kerjaya di kawasan bandar di China. Pencarian ini memilih kumpulan ketua eksekutif wanita dan kumpulan pengurus lelaki sebagai subjek. Sasaran utama adalah untuk memahami perbezaan diskriminasi seksual di kalangan pegawai tertinggi dan juga perbezaan persepsi mengenai tanggapan umum (Glass Ceiling) terhadap para pekerja. Data yang diperolehi saling melengkapi di antara penduduk bandar di wilayah Heilongjiang yang terdiri daripada pengurus wanita dan sample yang terdiri daripada pengurus lelaki. Pencarian tersebut lebih menumpukan kepada persoalan yang berikut: 1) apakah corak perbezaan jantina dalam pergerakan kerjaya di kawasan bandar di China? 2) apakah faktor penentu utama dalam perbezaan jantina dalam pergerakan kerjaya? Data tersebut dianalisis melalui kaedah Analisis Pengunduran Berganda (multiple regression analysis). Hasil kajian tersebut menunjukkan, perbezaan jantina tidak berkaitan dalam membiayai modal manusia, sebaliknya, tanggapan umum (Glass Ceiling), tanggapan umum lelaki terhadap wanita (male stereotyping), komitmen terhadap keluarga dan sikap negatif wanita lebih menyumbang dan memberikan kesan negatif di dalam proses pergerakan kerjaya seseorang wanita.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITTLE	PAGE
DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
ABSTRACT	iv
ABSTRAK	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF APPENDICES	xii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview	1
1.2. Rationale of This Study	4
1.3. Research Problem	5
1.4. Research Objectives	6
1.5. Scope of Study	7
1.6. Significance of the Study	7
1.7. Why Focus on Gender Diversity	8
1.8. Organization of Thesis	8
1.9. Summary	9

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction	11
2.2. Definition of Key Concepts	12
2.2.1. Social Learning Theory	12
2.2.2. Bandura's Social Learning Theory	13

2.2.3. Theoretical Application to Women's Career Development and Advancement	14
2.2.4. The "Glass Ceiling"	15
2.2.5. Career	16
2.2.6. Career Development	18
2.2.7. Women's Negative Attitude	19
2.2.8. Family Commitment	22
2.2.9. Male Stereotyping	24
2.3. The Relationship between Factors of Barriers and Women's Career Development	25
2.4. Summary	27
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FRAMEWORK	
3.1. Introduction	29
3.2. Research Framework	29
3.2.1. Independent Variables	31
3.2.2. Dependent Variables	32
3.3. Research Hypotheses	32
3.4. Research Design	33
3.5. Definition of Key Variables	33
3.5.1. Glass Ceiling	33
3.5.2. Family Commitment	34
3.5.3. Male Stereotyping	34
3.5.4. Women's Negative Attitude	35

3.5.5. Women's Career Development	35
3.6. Sampling Frame	36
3.6.1. Sampling Size	36
3.7. Instrument Design	36
3.7.1. Concept Clarification	37
3.7.2. Development and Refinement of Survey Items	37
3.7.3. Validity	37
3.7.4. Reliability	37
3.8. Data Collection Method	39
3.9. Data Analysis Methods	39
3.10. Data Analysis Techniques	40
3.11. Summary	41
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS	
4.1. Introduction	42
4.2. Profiles of Respondents	42
4.3. Profiles of Sampling Collection Technique	46
4.4. Reliability of Measures	46
4.5. Descriptive Statistics	48
4.6. Hypotheses Testing	49
4.6.1. Hypotheses: Testing on Independent Variables	50
4.7. Summary of the Findings	52

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction	53
5.2. Recapitulation of the Study	53
5.3. Research Implications and Discussion	54
5.4. Recommendation	57
5.5. Limitation of the Study	58
5.6. Suggestions for Future Investigation	59
5.7. Conclusion	59
REFERENCE	61
APPENDICES	70



UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

LIST OF TABLES

TITLE	PAGE
Table 2.1: Potential Situations Faced by Female Managers' Career Development	26
Table 3.1: 5-Point Scale Response on Independent Variable	32
Table 3.2: 5-Point Scale Response on Dependent Variable	32
Table 3.3: Measures of Questionnaire Constructs	38
Table 3.4: Statistical Tools for Hypothesis Testing	41
Table 4.1a: Profile of Female Respondents	44
Table 4.1b: Profile of Male Respondents	45
Table 4.2: Cronbach Alpha for Variables	47
Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics of the Variables	48
Table 4.4: Multiple Regression Analysis Results on Independent Variables	50
Table 4.5: Summary of the Findings	52

LIST OF FIGURES

TITTLE	PAGE
Figure 1.1: Gender Disparity in Career Mobility: Layoff and Obtain Employment	2
Figure 1.2: Women Corporate Leaders as a Proportion of Corporate Leaders	3
Figure 3.1: Research Framework	30



UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

LIST OF APPENDICES

TITLE	PAGE
APPENDIX A The Cover Letter for Respondents	70
APPENDIX B The Follow-up Letter for Non-respondents	72
APPENDIX C Questionnaire	73
APPENDIX D Result of Detailed Data	78



UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Like so many developing countries, China is in the midst of a cultural revolution. These societal changes are especially noticeable for the Chinese managerial and professional women. Since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, the population of employed women has risen constantly. Although Chinese women legally enjoy equal rights with men in employment, Chinese women are vastly under-represented in the managerial arena.

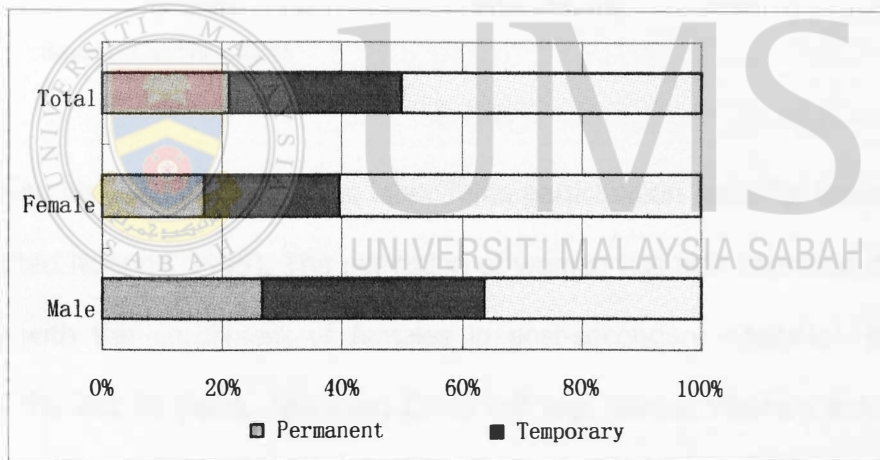
Several factors explain this minimal representation of Chinese women in management positions. Especially in Harbin, as in many other cities, there is a cultural stereotype belief of male superiority, defining management as a masculine domain. China's culture in fact emphasizes women's roles and responsibilities in the family. Historical cultural constraints about the nature of women often serve to perpetuate discrimination and do not allow women to be leaders. Given the Confucian adage that states "*it is a virtue if woman doesn't have ability*" it is not surprising that in the past, Chinese women were socialized to be "shy" and "unassertive". Although these values have undergone change, they still have a major influence in society's behavior.

Today, in spite of this traditional cultural influence, the model woman in China "does not see herself as just tender, virtuous, and obedient according to traditional Chinese values." Educated women no longer accept Mao ZeDong's description that women are "*the moon reflecting the sunlight*" (De Mente, 1999). Rather than be subservient to males, today's Chinese women are known as "*half the sky*" referring to

the fact that women can make the same contribution to society as men, and enjoy the gender equality and social status assured them since the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949 (Public Information Committee of the China Organizing Committee for the Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995).

Yet despite these statistics, women are still rarely seen in the upper ranks of management or in board rooms in urban China, especially in Harbin. The Glass Ceiling describes the intangible barriers that hinder the female to reach the top. In Harbin's organization, the high level position have less females comparing to the lower positions, and in the empowerment, female still lower than male (Li Chun Ling, 2005). The Glass Ceiling continues to separate men form women. (Figure 1)

Figure 1 : Gender Disparity in Career Mobility: Layoff and Obtain Employment (%)

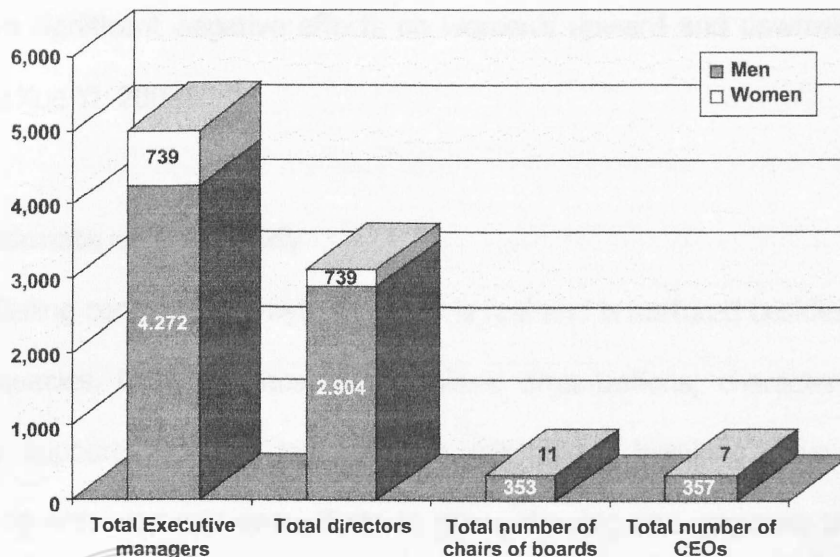


Source: (2002) Female Employers Survey of Chinese Labor Union

In Korari's paper entitled "*Managerial Women in the People's Republic of China: the long march continues*", (Korari, 1994) lists several factors currently affecting women's access to managerial jobs. Issues like entrance into the Communist Party which leads to the better positions, different acceptance standards for women into the prestigious universities, and workplace practices in terms of job opportunities have limited women's movement into upper management positions.

Negative attitudes toward women leaders are not unusual in China. Women managers are believed by many people, to be “unfair, hard to work with, and narrow-minded” compared to their male counterparts (Rajerison, 1996) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Women Corporate Leaders as a Proportion of Corporate Leaders



Source: Catalyst (2004)

China has one of the highest labor force participation rates for women in the world (United Nations, 1995). The education of women has also improved drastically in China, with the enrollment of females in post-secondary education increasing tenfold in the last 50 years. However, China still lags behind Western industrialized countries in the university education of women and in their integration into all levels of organizations. In fact, as recently as 1994, despite the rapid improvements, still only half as many women as men were enrolled in China’s post-secondary education compared to Canada, the USA and the UK where the women constitute 56 per cent, 55 per cent and 48 per cent, respectively, of the university students.

In the West, although men and women have been graduating in relatively equal numbers from universities, they have not achieved equivalent organizational success (Cao Yang, 2001). Organizations in China are still in the process of learning

how to deconstruct the Glass Ceiling and make the most of the talents of their managerial and professional women (Li Ruo Jian, 1995).

The empirical result shows that gender disparity is not associated with gender differences in human capital endowment; instead, the Glass Ceiling, and some other factors have significant negative effects on women's upward and downward career mobility (Lu Xue Yi, 2003).

1.2 Rationale of This Study

The Glass Ceiling considered a myth by many is real and is nurtured besides women's own inadequacies. Only the most decentralized organizations, characterized by a culture that supports women's top positions, will help in breaking down the Glass Ceiling, along with women's own efforts to grow, develop and empower themselves through academic and career development (Guo Fan, 1995). Present research seeks to examine the reality of the Glass Ceiling Phenomenon in current urban China, especially in Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang province of China.

In China, women are considerably more "visible" than men in major organization since almost all women are assigned to first-line sales or customer service jobs. Furthermore, evidence suggests that women are not readily welcomed into managerial ranks although government policy is viewed as favorable for a woman's career. Therefore, sexual division of labor is relatively more dominant. The employment pattern of sexual division of labor within organization can be traced back to the history of the revolution which occurred during the 1940s. The barrier affected the women's career development by Glass Ceiling and attitude (Guo Fan, 1995).

On the other hand, more men monopolized the managerial and technical positions which were regarded by management as central to strategic decision-making. The division of labor as a result of the organization led to a polarized wage

structure, with a majority of low-skilled high-turnover female workforce occupying the bottom, and a highly-trained male professional-managerial group occupying the top of the pyramid. It sheds some light on how women are employed in different hierarchical positions and functional responsibilities, and how the company's human resource management practices have affected women's employment status in Harbin of China.

Female employees are likely to be discriminated against by senior management from the perspectives of horizontal and vertical job segregation. Identifies two major categories of constraints arising from organizational barriers (Glass Ceiling, male stereotyping, family commitment) and societal barriers (women's negative attitude) posit that these asymmetries are influenced by the Chinese women's career development.

This paper seeks to examine the relationship between the barriers women faced and their career development by female and male senior managers in a major organization for which barriers is now a strategic corporate objective. A majority of female employees are employed in lower hierarchical positions at the bottom of the organizational and managerial pyramid, while male employees occupy most of the professional and managerial positions at the top.

1.3 Research Problem

Realistically, one problem does not have only one cause. Therefore, by focusing on professional women are faced (Glass Ceiling, male stereotyping, family commitment, and women's negative attitude), and find how these phenomenon in these fields affect women's career development, and also may find some solution to problems meted by especially in Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang province of China.

1.4 Research Objectives

Examines the situation faced by women in Harbin of China, finds that women are confronted by a significant number of barriers, beginning with difficulties in joining the industry. In addition, the administrative or human resource management roles traditionally occupied by women do not lead to mainstream roles and senior management roles. To increase prospects, women need to be able to take on the more mainstream roles in the industry. The main investigation of the study is therefore into the barriers preventing women from taking good position, conclusions and suggestions for reform are made.

Therefore, the objectives of this research are divided into two parts. The first part consists of the main objective while the second is the supplementary objectives.

The main objectives of this research are as follows:

To examine whether factors of these phenomenon professional women faced (Glass Ceiling, male stereotyping, family commitment, and women's negative attitude) has a negative impact on women's career development.

The supplementary objectives of this research are as follows:

- a) To discuss the solution of barriers problems through finding the impact of factors of the women's career development.
- b) To help Chinese professional women get a great source of inspiration and practical advice.

The objective of this investigation was to study on gender disparity in career mobility towards the barriers in the women career development in the current urban China especially in Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang province.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The objective of this research is finding the relationship between barriers and women's career development. The focus groups identified a number of issues in societal barriers, and organizational barriers, that women felt were the main barriers to them entering and working in urban China, especially in Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang province.

All female managers and a sample of male managers in a variety of management roles were surveyed and to lend advice and comments. These women included owners or managers, college administrators, as well as retail, service, and manufacturing managers. Some were new to their roles, others had years of experience.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected using an electronic questionnaire survey designed to obtain the views of female and male managers on strategies that would contribute to a better gender balance, promote diversity and raise leadership capacity in the organization, these two factors as a major issue in impeding the career progression of female managers.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This project will help women develop and use their own feminine style to its advantage. Yet this research is not exclusively for men. For men, in addition to learning about how women manage differently, they can also benefit from this paper by learning more about their own responses to women in today's workforce. It helps bridge the gender gap, not reinforce it.

The research on the relationship between barriers and women's career development is far from maturation, much study can be done here. This paper gives a helpful trial. It not only provides an example for further study on barriers in the

women's career development, but also improving the strategy human capital management of urban China, especially in Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang province.

1.7 Why Focus on Gender Diversity

This paper focuses on gender diversity for several reasons. First, women have attained a critical mass in the professional and managerial ranks of a significant percentage of Chinese companies, and women constitute the largest segment of the increasingly diverse Chinese labor pool. Women are a highly educated group from which corporate China will need to recruit and develop future leadership.

The second reason to focus on gender diversity is that women have had a leading-edge role in transforming the Chinese workplace. The growing dependence of US companies on women's workforce participation has been accompanied by a growing recognition that family/personal needs of all employees are legitimate concerns. Initially, conflicts related to work/family balance were seen as women's issues.

Today employees expect companies to assist them with work/life balance, including programs/policies that address individuals' needs for workplace flexibility, and dual-career couples' needs for relocation assistance.

The third reason to focus on women is that the lessons companies learn from managing gender diversity will serve them well in developing initiatives to manage other forms of diversity.

1.8 Organization of Thesis

This dissertation contains five chapters.

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the study and its importance. In addition, background of gender disparity in career mobility in urban China, rationale of this study, research problem, the objectives of the study, the scope of the study, and the significance of the study is also included.

Chapter 2 elaborates the literature related to the study and the definition for the variables, evidence from this part; the key concepts will be the focus in this chapter.

Chapter 3 illustrates the research framework and methodology that is used in this dissertation. The research framework basically gives an overview of the variables included. While the methodology includes some hypotheses testing, sampling, data collection procedures, and instruments used, this chapter also described the research method used and the reason for choosing this method. The definition of terms used for this study is also included in this part.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study. Profile of respondents, reliability test analysis, descriptive analysis of variables, inferential analysis and hypotheses testing are included also.

Chapter 5 discusses the implications, recapitulation, limitations of study, some suggestions for future research, and conclusions drawn from the study.

1.9 Summary

Although with the world's economy development, more and more female workers enter the workforce, the proportion of female top managers is uncoordinated. Under this background, many interested researchers began to study it.