

**A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF THE MOTIVATIONS OF
WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN A TRANSITIONAL
AND DEVELOPING ECONOMY:**

THE CASE OF CHINA

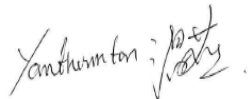
Submitted by Yan Wen-Thornton, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management Studies.

March 2013

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright
material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper
acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified
and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a
degree by this or any other University.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yan Wen-Thornton' followed by a stylized flourish.

Acknowledgements

First of all, my appreciation and thanks to my supervisors Dr Adrian Bailey and Professor Gareth Shaw for their guidance and advise in helping me to complete this thesis.

Secondly, my gratitude and thanks to the nine Chinese women entrepreneurs who participated in this research and agreed to be interviewed and shared their stories, experiences & thoughts with me. Especially I must thank Mrs Ruibin Ma for your generous sponsorship by providing £5000 of funding to support this research.

Thirdly, I must thank my sister, my friends and the Beijing Haidian District Women Federation in China, for their help with sourcing entrepreneurs to be interviewed.

Finally, sincere thanks to my husband and my daughter for their understanding, support and encouragement.

鸣 谢

首先，感谢我的博士生导师 Adrian Bailey 博士，Gareth Shaw 教授 对这篇论文的指导和建议。

其次，感谢九位中国女性企业家同意并且参与到调研中，谢谢你们愿意和我分享你们的故事和经历以及思想感悟。特别是，我要感谢马瑞彬女士的慷慨大方，为这次调研提供 5000 英镑的研究经费。

再次，感谢我在中国的妹妹，我的朋友以及北京市海淀区妇联为这次调研推荐人选和联络。

最后，感谢我的丈夫和我的女儿对这个调研项目的理解，支持和鼓励。

Abstract

This research is a pioneering longitudinal study of Chinese women entrepreneurs that focuses specifically on the government economic reform period of 1980 to the present. The study makes a significant contribution to entrepreneurship studies and it contributes to our knowledge of women entrepreneurship in transitional economies.

The study investigates the drivers that influence and factors associated with Chinese women's entrepreneurial success in China. The research also explores the motivations of Chinese women entrepreneurs in starting-up their business in the reform periods across the last three decades.

A total of nine Chinese women entrepreneurs in three groups who set up their own business in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s were investigated for an in-depth interview, using narrative approaches, in a qualitative research methodology. How Chinese culture, government policy and massive domestic market demand have influenced Chinese women's entrepreneurial identity and motivation are the main outcomes of the project. Additionally, the barriers, family issues and effects of relationships were uncovered during this research.

Key words: China, Women, Chinese women entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurship, Motivation.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
List of Tables and Figures.....	ix
List of Plates.....	x
List of Abbreviations.....	x
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 The researcher’s narrative.....	2
1.3 Research Aims and Objectives.....	6
1.4 Structure of thesis.....	7
Chapter 2 Literature review.....	9
2.1 Introduction.....	9
2.2 Review of Entrepreneurs.....	10
2.2.1 Aim and Structure.....	10
2.2.2 Definitions.....	10
2.2.3 Psychological Perspective.....	11
2.2.4 Sociological Perspective.....	12
2.2.5 Economical Perspective.....	13
2.2.6 Summary.....	15
2.3 Review of Research into Women Entrepreneurs.....	15
2.3.1 Aim and Structure.....	15
2.3.2 Motivations.....	16
2.3.3 Culture.....	19
2.3.4 Family.....	22
2.3.5 Networking.....	24
2.3.6 Financial capital.....	25

2.3.7 Government.....	26
2.3.8. Summary.....	29
2.4 Review of Chinese entrepreneurs.....	29
2.4.1 Aim and Structure.....	29
2.4.2 Background.....	30
2.4.3 The First Decade Reform Period (1980s).....	33
2.4.4 The Second Decade Reform Period (1990s).....	35
2.4.5 The Third Decade Reform Period (2000s).....	38
2.4.6 Summary.....	42
2.5. Review of Chinese women entrepreneurs.....	42
2.5.1 Aim and structure.....	42
2.5.2 Chinese women in the past and present.....	43
2.5.3 Research on Chinese women entrepreneurs.....	45
2.5.4 Summary.....	53
2.6 Conclusion.....	53
Chapter 3 Methodology.....	55
3.1 Introduction.....	55
3.2 Methods discussion.....	57
3.2.1 Contrast between quantitative and qualitative.....	57
3.2.2 Narratives in qualitative research.....	62
3.2.3 Narratives in entrepreneur research.....	65
3.3 Data generation	67
3.3.1 Sample selections.....	67
3.3.2 Ethical and linguistic issues.....	71
3.3.3 The interview design and process.....	72
3.4 Data analysis.....	80
3.4.1 Riessman’s model.....	80

3.4.2 Transcription.....	83
3.4.3 Coding and framework analysis.....	85
3.4.4 Reading and translation.....	88
3.5 Trustworthiness.....	90
3.5.1 Credibility.....	91
3.5.2 Transferability	93
3.5.3 Dependability.....	94
3.5.4 Confirmability.....	95
3.6 Conclusion.....	96
Chapter 4 Motivations of Chinese women entrepreneurs:.....	98
Three stories in 1980s.....	98
4.1 Introduction.....	98
4.2 Ruibin’s story.....	100
4.2.1 Introduction.....	100
4.2.2 Narrative and interpretation.....	101
4.2.3 Discussion.....	107
4.3 Hua’s story.....	109
4.3.1 Introduction.....	109
4.3.2 Narrative and interpretation.....	111
4.3.3 Discussion.....	116
4.4 Shuying’s story.....	118
4.4.1 Introduction.....	118
4.4.2 Narrative and interpretation.....	119
4.4.3 Discussion.....	126
4.5 Further analysis and reflection.....	127
4.6 Conclusion.....	134

Chapter 5 Motivations of Chinese women entrepreneurs:.....	135
Three stories in 1990s.....	135
5.1 Introduction.....	135
5.2 Xiling’s story.....	136
5.2.1 Introduction.....	136
5.2.2 Narrative and interpretation.....	138
5.2.3 Discussion.....	147
5.3 Lixin’s story.....	148
5.3.1 Introduction.....	148
5.3.2 Narrative and interpretation.....	148
5.3.3 Discussion.....	154
5.4 Xuemei’s story.....	155
5.4.1 Introduction.....	155
5.4.2 Narrative and interpretation.....	156
5.4.3 Discussion.....	160
5.5 Further analysis and reflection.....	160
5.6 Conclusion.....	167
Chapter 6 Motivations of Chinese women entrepreneurs:.....	168
Three stories in 2000s.....	168
6.1 Introduction.....	168
6.2 Jian’s story.....	169
6.2.1 Introduction.....	169
6.2.2 Narrative and interpretation	170
6.2.3 Discussion.....	176
6.3 Lily’s story.....	177
6.3.1 Introduction.....	177
6.3.2 Narrative and interpretation.....	178

6.3.3 Discussion.....	187
6.4 Sumei’s story.....	188
6.4.1 Introduction.....	188
6.4.2 Narrative and interpretation.....	189
6.4.3 Discussion.....	194
6.5 Further analysis and reflection.....	195
6.6 Conclusion.....	199
Chapter 7 Conclusions.....	201
7.1 Introduction.....	201
7.2 Discussions and Summary of main findings	202
7.3 Contribution to knowledge	215
7.4 Research limitations.....	220
7.5 Further research.....	222
7.6 Conclusion.....	223
Bibliography	225
Appendix 1 A Consent Form.....	248
Appendix 2 The feedback and confirmation.....	250
Appendix 3 Codebook.....	254