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An Investigation into the Contextual Factors that Influence the Identity Construction Processes of Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

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Abstract

Private ownership of businesses in mainland China has been permitted since 1981, and family businesses have now entered the stage of transgenerational development. Since the open-door policy in 1978, radical changes to economic systems in the People's Republic of China (PRC) have had a significant impact on the social and family values that structure the interactions of individuals in society. Nevertheless, research has not yet addressed the extent to which western influences, such as the values of capitalism, individualism, equality, and liberal thinking, have become integrated with traditional Chinese values emphasising socialism, collectivism, hierarchy and conservative. Furthermore, little research has investigated how second-generation business family members accept or negotiate these contradictory values and social norms that structure their social identification within family businesses.

To address this gap，this thesis presents an in-depth understanding of the contextual factors influencing the identity construction of second-generation business family members in mainland China. My research understands that identity is processual, and its constructions are temporary depending on the contexts, thus becoming multiple. Drawing on literature of family and societal influences on identity negotiation and identity conflict, an operational framework is developed to interpret this temporary, multiple and processual view of identity construction within the context of family business in mainland China.

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifty second-generation business family members in mainland China. Thematic analysis and content analysis were employed to compare both similar and different features of identity conflict and identity strategies in the respondents, as a result of the influences of various values and norms for social interactions within their family and societal milieu in mainland China.

Findings suggest that the influence of traditional Chinese values has different levels of intensity, because other values such as Chinese socialism and western capitalism have moderated or replaced (or in a few instances, enhanced) conservative Confucian values. In addition, western influences may have disrupted traditional Chinese social structure, but alternative social systems have not yet been developed to accommodate these non-traditional values. On one hand, this unique contextual feature of ambiguous values and norms for social

interactions in mainland China becomes a source of identity conflict and leads to negative emotions, feelings and reckless behaviours, making it difficult for second-generation business family members to take on independent leadership of the family business or to become entrepreneurial. On the other hand, the existence of alternative values provides a social space for these respondents to negotiate the social identification of their positions within the family businesses. Their identity strategies have embraced creativity and cross-contextual capabilities to blend resources for more socially acceptable role innovation, thus acting as the agent of social changes both inside and outside the family business.

A typology is presented conceptualising the nine types of multiple identity construction processes identified among the respondents, in terms of different characteristics of identity conflict and resolving strategies as influenced by the intersection of different family and non-family social structures. These research outcomes have great practical implications for helping practitioners and policy makers to identify the cause of identity conflict in relation to the impact of family structure and social structure, and thus specific means of support can be recommended for different identity types of second-generation business family members in mainland China.

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Declaration

I declare that all the material contained in this thesis is my own work.

Chapter 1 Introduction

This thesis investigates the factors that influence the identity construction process of second-generation business family members in mainland China. This chapter presents the background of the research, its significance, and the objectives of this thesis.

1.1 Background to the Research

Conventional identity studies thus differentiate people based on age, gender, ethnicity and roles in society (Tajfel, 1981 and Hogg, 2016). Webb (2006, p. 28) criticises this static view of identity for overlooking meanings created when individuals negotiate self-identity during social interactions, which is becoming increasingly important in modern society and organisations. Bauman (2000) points out that identity is becoming increasingly dynamic in accordance with an enhanced need for social validation and individuation. Brown (2001 and 2015) suggests that the conventional means of identity definition, including gender, social status, religion, ethnicity and social roles, have become more flexible and diverse. Identity studies put more emphasis on the interface that binds the individual to society (Swann and Bosson, 2016). There is an increasing prominence in identity research of reciprocal processes between the individual and society, particularly the reflexive identity work of individuals as the agent of social changes (Lok, 2010).

This critical view has directed researchers to understand how meaning is developed through social interactions when people seek to answer the question "Who am I?" Josselson and Harway (2012, p. 13) perceive that individuals struggle to come to terms with life in an ever more complex and dynamic social environment. Given this, Brown (2015) pointed out that it is vital to understand the contextual influence and the process through which identity is constructed by individuals in an organisation. To contribute to this understanding, this thesis studies how individual identity is constructed through social interactions within an organisation. The organisation considered here is the family business in mainland China and the individual concerned is the second-generation business family member.

Family businesses constitute the majority of private businesses across the world. This is true of China as well, where over 85.4 per cent of all businesses are family owned and managed

(Wang et al., 2016). In this research, I will focus on a key gap in literature with respect to family businesses, which is how the identities of second-generation members – or the younger members of family businesses – are constructed, and the impact of these identity construction processes on the performance of the business. Family businesses have been defined by Collins (2011) as entities where family members own the controlling interest in the firm and are actively involved in strategic management of the firm. Anderson et al. (2005) and Randerson et al. (2015) state that literature on family businesses, such as agency theory, have ignored a critical and vital activity that occurs at the micro level of business. There was little research on the interactions of family members in making business decisions. Identity has been recognised by Sundaramurthy and Kreiner (2008) as a concept that helps explain what people think about their environments, why they think that way, the way they behave and why in this manner. We do not know who they are, what they do when strategizing, or how and why they do what they do. It is for such an issue that a study of identity becomes important for family business studies.

In management literature, there is often an attempt to dissociate the actor from his/her actions. However, Raffelsberger and Hällbom (2009) specify that within a family business, it is often difficult to separate the actor from his/her actions. Haslam and Platow (2001) indicate that identity links actors with their actions, and indicates how and why they behave in a particular manner and choose to do certain things. Insofar as 'actions' refers to strategic management/operating processes that the individual engages in within the firm, it is identity that largely determines the how and why of such actions, and the outcomes thereof. Watson (2009) corroborate this point by stating that actions taken by family members within the family and business have a great deal to do with who they are and what the business means to them: in other words, who a person thinks he/she is defines their activities, and the outcomes of such activities. Here again is the suggestion that it is essential to study identity and its component elements in order to understand the processes of strategy making, and how these processes influence the outcomes of the business.

Despite this imperative, Sharma and Manikutty (2005) say that there has been a lack of attention paid to family businesses in respect of various systems and mechanisms that determine the psychological processes that are most relevant to the identity of the family business. Block et al. (2013) detail that family businesses focuses on economic models of

human behaviour, whereas running the family business is largely an outcome of relationships between family members. Kidwell et al. (2012) state that the family has the strongest influence and plays the most important role in the construction of identity. Klein (2008) elaborates this view and shows how the family is often the most powerful of social systems that young people encounter as they construct their identities. Gallo (2004) states that each family member is, in fact, a microcosm of the business, and when they act on behalf of the business, they in fact act on behalf of themselves. In addition, the indivdual interacts with entities outside the family. For the purpose of this dissertation, these entities may be collectectively termed 'societal structure'. These include people, institutions, concepts, value systems and ideologies that exist outside of the family and with which the invidiual invariably has to interact at various points in his/her life. According to Tyler et al. (2014), self is reflective of society. The point here is that societal structure also contribute to the development of the individual's indentity. This means that there is a need to understand the society in which the invidedual operates, bearing in mind that individuals always act in a social context.

This 'self' or identity, and the actions that are determined by it, come from knowing where individuals come from, what family they belong to, what family values are cherished, their family history, culture and tradition, and those of the society in which these individuals participate. These constitute the reality of the self-embedded within each person, and this self then becomes the frame of reference that impacts decision-making processes, thoughts and behaviour. In order to understand the impact of identity on strategic thinking, decision-making and behavioural processes within family businesses, Kjellander et al. (2012) suggest that it is important to examine various attributes of identity formation including role, attachment, belonging, and ownership. Identity is therefore a complex concept, and the context of its formation within family businesses is even less understood, given the lack of research into the subject. Given this background, it is necessary to understand why the study of identity construction is so important for understanding the second-generation members of family businesses in China.

1.2 Significance of this Research

Family businesses form a critical component of China's economic engine. Pan and Zhang (2004) found that Chinese family members in the business would prefer all the firms being

actively controlled and managed by the family members. Lu and Tao (2010) pointed out that family businesses guarantee market supply, encourage investment and increase China's exports, thereby contributing to the economic growth of China. Nevertheless, research conducted by Ye (2013) indicates that the importance of family businesses in China is currently threatened due to their inability to transfer management successfully to the next generation. These findings are corroborated by Tao and Yi (2012),whose research found that while the current owners of family businesses in China want the next generation to take over the business, only 35 percent of the next generation actually intend to do so.

Therefore, there are several problems amongst the majority of the younger generation of family business members that jeopardise their willingness to take over or work in their family concerns. There might be substantial conflict within families as the next generation comes of an age to play an active role in their respective family businesses. It is against this background that the study of identity formation amongst second-generation family members in Chinese business families assumes significance.

Given that identity formation is a social process, it is important to identify the social conditions under which the identities of younger members of family businesses are formed in China. Traditionally there are several major influences in Chinese culture that potentially impact identity formation. According to Hwang (2012), these include the impact of Confucianism, promotion of the collective good as opposed to promotion of individual good, respect for age, hierarchy, authority, and the importance given to hard work and thrift. It is these influences that impacted the formation of identities of the first-generation founder members Chinese family businesses. Wong (1985) indicates that family businesses in China are considered to be extensions of family systems, with the activities of individual members of the family expected to contribute and grow the wealth and status of the family business in order to pass it on to future generations. An investigation of the ways in which Chinese family businesses are managed shows that they place immense importance on values such as honesty, patriotism and filial piety (Guo, 2008, p56). The collectivist principles of Confucianism mean that harmony must characterise all interpersonal (including business) relationships (Zurndorfer, 2004). Organisational goals are collective targets, not personal objectives. Decision-making styles are centralised and conducted in a top-down manner, characteristic of the vertical hierarchies in traditional Chinese society.

Another influence on Chinese society has been Maoism/Communism, which has dominated political ideology in China since 1949 and whose impact continues to this day. First-generation Chinese business families emerged in the 1980s, when the Chinese government endorsed private ownership under 'socialist market economy reform' and a 'market-oriented economic system' operating in a socialist political system (Pistrui, 2005). Accordingly, Confucian values and a market environment characterised by institutional deficiencies in supporting private ownership are major external influences on the first generation of Chinese business families, hence the overwhelming focus on family values, maximisation of family wealth, and focus on family control of ownership and management.

However, the current generation of Chinese family business members, constituted by those who have entered their family businesses since the 1990s, have grown up in a society characterised by both economic and cultural changes. As China aggressively embraces capitalism (while continuing to adhere to Communist political ideology) and with the intensification of competition, traditional concepts, values and ways of operating are being threatened by new values and ideas. According to Dowling and Brown (2009), these include such new realities as job insecurity, increased privatisation, profits or losses in private businesses, increasing inequalities of income, budget constraints, and in both domestic and international competition. Research conducted by Huang and Gamble (2011) indicates how younger people in China are very different from the older generation in the workplace. For example, there is less inclination to be passive and take orders. Rather there is a growing trend towards dynamic activity, taking the initiative, innovating, and negotiating with superiors. Ding-qiang and Chao (2008) state that young Chinese today have absorbed many values that are highly regarded in Western culture. These include creativity, innovation, negotiation, confrontation, transparent communication, opportunism and professionalism. These may at times be antithetical to Chinese values. The survivor mentality that characterised behaviour in an economically unstable environment has given way to the aspiration for self-actualisation, reflecting Western philosophy and ways of being (Zhang and Ma, 2009). In a profit-driven environment, concern for economic egalitarianism has declined. More importance is given to efficiency, quality and economic performance. Chen et al. (2006) assert that the new generation increasingly believes that the insular mentality of Chinese business families emphasising family orientation, management and employment, in

fact, hampers the growth of the business. Wang (2009) states that modern Chinese management models incorporate both traditional Chinese values and Western management practices.

This research takes the position that the development of identity is essentially a process of identification with various roles. These roles are those that the individual would like to assume, and/or those prescribed by his/her family and/or those prescribed by society. This research takes the position that in the process of identification with various roles the individual experiences conflict, and the outcome of this conflict can lead to the acceptance or rejection of roles, which in turn results in an identity emerging. Nor is this identity fixed. It mutates depending on identification with newer roles and possible rejection of older roles. The present research draws on this notion of role-based identity to understand how second-generation members of Chinese business families negotiate their personal identities to balance various social identities in the current complex socio-economic context that characterises Chinese society. The significance of this research is that it will raise the awareness of family business researchers and policymakers, as well as family business consultants, in order to shape the identity of second-generation family members of Chinese business families through research, and lead to the provision of institutional support and professional advice.

1.3 Main Research Question and Research Objectives

Research conducted by Ling and Xi (2014) speculates that the more formally educated and ambitious young generation, who face new challenges and opportunities emerging in socialist market economy, may wish to limit family interests in the family business in mainland China. This will be to adapt the family business to the new economic order, and to explore own interests. Fan et al. (2008) and Cao et al. (2015) as sceptical with this speculation, and argued that, due to the lack of experience in controlling a family business, the ability of the new generation to manage the business cannot be compared with that of the founders. And, thus, they are more likely to remain conservative and bound to their families. They report that capitalism is still viewed with scepticism in China, and this uncertainty makes the adherence to traditional Chinese business values even more of an imperative.

However, research conducted by (Leung, 2010) indicates that second-generation family members of business families in China have ambivalent feelings on the involvement of the founders to enforce the traditions of the family business. Their research suggests a possible tension between the old and new in the attitudes of younger members towards the traditional family values and the norms of operating a family business. Carney et al. (2009) propose that the insights of second-generation Chinese may increase existing knowledge of family businesses in China. This shows the importance of the contextual dimension of family businesses that this research emphasises in seeking to understand identity construction. Even though increasing attention has been paid to the characteristics of younger Chinese, the exploration of family businesses from the perspective of social embeddedness has not been attempted before.

Therefore, this research seeks to discover **how the identities of second-generation family members are constructed in family businesses in mainland China? In order to achieve this,**

the 1ˢᵗ objective was to develop a framework to assist in interpreting the phenomenon of identity construction, looking at

a) contextual constructs, including the antecedents for identity construction embedded in family and non-family social structures; and

b) processual constructs, including identity salience, identity conflict and negotiating strategies.

Secondly, I have been able to meet *the 2ⁿᵈ objective* illuminating the antecedents of identity construction among second-generation business family members, through classifying the linguistic descriptions and representations of:

a) business family structure (family values, roles and relations); and

b) societal structure (social values, roles, education, and networks) that co-exist in the context of family business in mainland China.

Finally, this process of analysis has allowed me to meet *the 3ʳᵈ objective* developing a typology that conceptualises different types of identity construction processes by second-generation business family members in terms of

a) the cognitive and emotional features of identity salience, and identity conflict as the response to the intersecting multiple contextual structures; as well as

b) the behavioural features of identity negotiating strategies to impact on the family business succession, ownership and entrepreneurship decision making in mainland China.

1.4 Outline of the Thesis

My thesis is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1 introduces the research background and the research question.

- Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature and explains the development of the interpretive framework of identity construction in the context of family businesses in mainland China.

- Chapter 3 explains the methodological considerations for the research design and the choice of research methods.

- Chapter 4 presents the findings and analysis with regards to the contextual factors that influence the characteristics of the identity construction process of second-generation business family members in mainland China.

- Chapter 5 discusses and concludes the theoretical and practical implications of the original findings of this thesis, explaining its wider contribution, disclosing its limitations, and suggesting possible aims for future research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter is a review of literature on identity and theories on the impact of family and society on the formation of identity; identity is socially constructed, and simultaneously a process of psychological development (Mead, 1934, Laakkonen, 2012). The first objective of this research was to develop a framework to assist in interpreting the phenomenon of identity construction, looking at a) contextual constructs, including the antecedents for identity construction embedded in family and non-family social structures; and b) processual constructs, including identity salience, identity conflict and negotiating strategies.

2.1 Introduction of Literature review

That identity is not a static but a dynamic concept can be made out by the writings of George Herbert Mead (1934) that present a framework in a simplified form, "society shapes self shapes social behaviour," (cited in, Sheldon and Burke, 2000). Mead (1934) directed this structural symbolic construction approach to identity research and inspired researchers to specify and study the concepts of 'society' and 'self' within the Mead framework and to organise them as explanations of specified behaviours. From these studies, I understand that identity is a complex concept. It is a concept that is dynamic in nature and has many definitions. The recent identity theory has worked on conceptualising the notion that identity is not static. This school of thought emphases the notion that identity is constructed within interactions between the self and society. Society for the purposes of this research within the context of PRC family businesses is defined in terms of two broad social structures namely a) family and b) non-family structures (an individual's broader social milieu). The individual first interacts with his/her family and then with society at large. These two interactions shape the formation of identity. My literature critically discusses the various aspects and perspectives based on the initial identity theory of the Mead formula, and to position my research in the concept of identity. That is:

- Society influences the self by means of its shared language and meanings that enable a person to take the role of the other, engage in social interaction and reflect upon himself or herself as an object. This process of reflexivity constitutes the core of selfhood(McCall and Simmons, 1978).

- The self influences society reciprocally by the actions of individuals creating groups, organisations, networks and institutions (Stryker, 1980).

- The self emerges due to engagements/social interaction within the context of a complex, organised, differentiated society. It has been argued that the self must be complex, organised and distinct as well according to the dictum that the 'self reflects society' (Stryker, 1980).

According to Ramarajan (2014), an individual's overall self is organised into multiple parts called identities, each of which is connected with different aspects of society and the family. Three factors shaping the identity of a second-generation member of a Chinese business family include the individual, Chinese/Western societies and the business family. The individual engages in dialogue with the family and with other social structures resulting in the formation of an identity, as indicated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Identity Construction Processes in the Context of Family Businesses
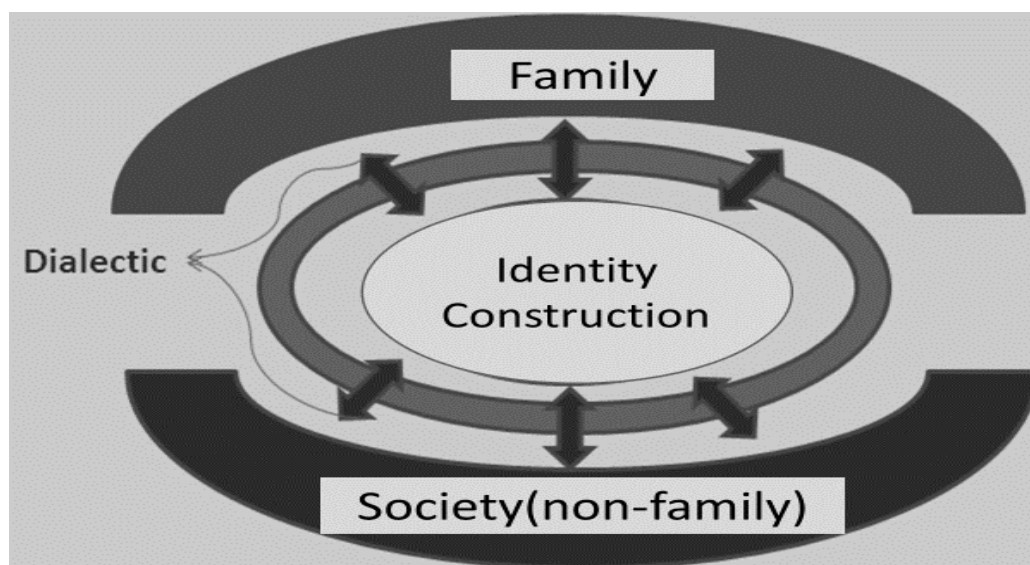
Source: own work

Because identity formation is dependent on the individual, family and society, this literature review will first discuss the various dynamics involved with the formation of the core individual identity and then explore how family and society impact formation of identity. These various components identified from the literature help to identify the unique and/or distinguishing features specifically relevant to Chinese families and societies. Thus, section 2.2 reviews the literature concerning:

- Defining the contextual and processual view of identity
- Formation of core identity

- Negotiation process of multiple social identifications
- Identity conflict in the process of identity negation
- How multiple identities formation is impacted by family structure
- How multiple identify formation is impacted by non-family social structure

From section 2.8, the literature review discusses the features of identity construction in the context of China, focused on the

- impact of Chinese family structural features on the process of identity construction process
- impact of Chinese social structural features on the process of identity construction

2.2 Developing the Contextual and Processual View of Identity

Section 2.2 discussed various processes that have been explored in the literature with respect to the construction of identity. In this section, my research explores the notion of this processual view of identity and the roles of family and society within the process.

Firstly, the discussion focuses on explaining why and how the social construction approach would fill in the gap of current identity study literature, which has been defined differently across disciplines of psychology, sociology, anthology, education and business studies. There is an increasing need for research on identity to penetrate boundaries across fields. There is review of literature on various definitions of identity and explain the emerging socio-psychological approach toward the study of identity. This will be followed by an explanation of the theoretical implications of this thesis arising from these definitions in order to interpret the identity of PRC second-generation business family members.

According to the essentialist perspective, identity is purely the outcome of one's thinking: 'I think, therefore I am' (Ashforth et al., 2008, p.8). According to Roccas and Brewer (2002), identity defined simply is all about asking and reflecting on how we see ourselves. Neisser (2017) states that an individual can identify with what he / she was in the past, what is true of him/her in the present and what he/she wishes to become in the future. Identity refers to self-descriptions or what one thinks of oneself and what a person believes is true of him/her. However, the essentialist view has not addressed the temporary and multiple features of identity given the influence of social structures on the formation of essential self.

The social view of identity has enriched the understanding of these dynamics in the identity theory regarding its temporary and multiple features. Sociologists think that identity is '*the self that typifies a person at any point in life as a result of surrounding social relationships*' (Stum, 2001, p.8). In this school of thought, social identity theory was found to emphasize identity as emerging from '*a person's concept of self, derived from knowledge and affiliation with respect to social groups along with the value and emotional importance ascribed to such affiliation*,' (Rane and McBride, 2000, p.11). However, emphasising the social influences is problematic, because it undermines the power of individuals to make an impact on the social world and improve the way of living.

Identity is therefore not something that is wholly decided by the person or completely imposed by his or her surroundings. Researchers, such as, McCall and Simmons (1978), Burke (2004) and Neisser (2017) proposed that social influence and social interactions, along with self-definition, are the two main mechanisms through which identity is constructed. Therefore, a person defines who he or she is through interactions with society; identities are the outcome of negotiations and interactions with society. Because this thesis is to interpret second-generation business family members, whose identity is constructed in the unique context of Chinese family business, it is critical that the social influences on the development of self are understood and presented.

Identity in this thesis is recognised to be a dynamic entity that has multiple components in relation to different sub-selves that have been constructed through social interactions Accordingly, section 2.3 discusses the development of relevant theoretical constructs that have explained the multifaceted features of identity in relation to the interplay between the self and social structure.

2.3 Integrating Social Construction Approach to Identity Studies

Based on the review of literature in this section, my research argues how the core identity is socially constructed, for which the development of core self becomes reflective and reciprocal. Research in this direction has set the foundation for this thesis to argue that identity and the self are interchangeable. Moreover, the self becomes multiple in respects of

the dialectic, reflexive and reciprocal relationships between individual minds and social structures.

There are opposing views on how the core identity develops. According to the essentialist view (Hitlin and Kwon, 2016, Erikson, 1980) ,the self, which is endowed with reason, intelligence and consciousness, engages in processes of thought to develop an identity. This self is solely created by the process of the mind. The core Cartesian self was thought to come into existence at the time of birth; it changes and evolves as a person's thought processes changes. The essence of the core, or the 'true self', however does not change. These views emphasise that the Cartesian identity is something disembodied and asocial. It cannot be impacted by anybody else with whom the person has interacted. Ashforth (2001, p. 28-29) states that sociological approaches to identity have rejected this view of identity, but established the concept of a single, unique 'self' or a 'private area' / 'the unique "I"', which then becomes the source of many identities that emerge, depending on different situations. The existence of this 'core identity' is what makes a person an individual; separate and isolated from all other human beings. The earliest studies of self-concept were related to self-evaluation leading to self-esteem, which is one's negative or positive self-evaluation.

However, Tyler et al. (2014) suggest that self-concept includes people's thoughts, feelings and imaginings as to who they are. It includes affective components, feelings of self-worth and efficacy. Accordingly, the concept of self refers to the entire set of meanings individuals have when they look at themselves. It includes self-observations, their understandings of who they are, observations on how others behave towards them, their wants and desires and their self-evaluation. Brewer (1991), Eriksson et al. (2012) assert that idealised views on exactly who a person is, and this part of their identity, remain relatively constant. Self-concept also includes the 'self-image,' termed the 'working image' that is imported into different situations. This working image is not as constant as the ideal self, but subject to constant change in different situations and interactions. Changes to the working self can also impact on the more fundamental idea of self. Alvesson et al. (2008) suggest that everyone goes through processes of reflection and appraisal, which result in the emergence of self-concept. While some views of the self are derived from direct experience, most are derived from how others perceive the person, and the extent to which such perceptions are communicated to the person. This process is the 'mirror' development of the self, and states that the views,

opinions and appraisals of others influence the formation of self-concept (Hardy and Oliver, 2014). This essential view of self is limited in that it does not account for the reciprocal relationship between the mind and social world. This thesis will therefore introduce the theoretical perspectives of identity with the notion that the mind is the source of the self. The mind itself arises and develops out of interactions with society. This process in turn defines social structure. My research applies this notion of identity in order to investigate the identity construction processes of second-generation. Therefore, the theoretical perspectives of identity concern the reciprocity between society and the individual, as well as the concept of reflexivity in the identity construction process (Mead, 1934; Brewer 2001 and Brown, 2015).

- **Concerning the reciprocity between the influence of society and individuals in the identity construction process**

Some studies attempt to explore the reciprocity between the mind and the influence of others in the formation of core identity. The reflections of 'self' are in turn impacted by the points of view of others with whom the person interacts (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2013). Thus, individuals comport themselves differently depending on their audiences. By considering the responses of others, the concept of self for the person assumes a shared meaning. This is the paradox in the formation of identity in that, whilst the self is distinct from others, it also contains elements of the perspectives of others with whom the person interacts (Tyler et al., 2014). Being both individual and social in nature, the self uses meanings to sustain itself, but since those meanings are shared and are used to interact with others, they result in the formation of social structure. Identities cannot be prefixed or unchanging, but are constructed due to social relationships that are themselves constantly changing (Brown, 2001). Benish-Weisman et al. (2015) and Hogg et al., (2017) extend these views and reports that in the process of interacting, individuals inform each other how to act; thus identities are largely produced by others. This process of reciprocity is another key element in the formation of the self. Reciprocity results in external categorisations, which in turn lead to inner identifications. Categorisations from others in society are either fully or partly internalised as the self-definitions of who a person is.

- **The concern of reflexivity in the identity construction process**

Human beings have the capacity to reflect upon themselves by considering themselves as objects. In this process of reflection, they are able to evaluate themselves, to take account, to

plan, to formulate and become self-aware to achieve consciousness. Reflexivity has also been explored in literature in relation to the formation of core identity. The mind is the cognitive portion of the human being and designates meanings both to the person and to others (Bloom and Keil, 2001). However, perfect cognition cannot take place without the response of others. This ability to think and to indicate thought to others is enabled by language that conveys meaning through symbols (*ibid*). When the self is expressed as a set of symbols, to which others may respond, the self emerges. Holland (1999) terms this entire process where the self emerges as 'reflexivity'. Identity, therefore, is as much an action as it is a product of the mind. This process of identity construction is on-going and results in the formation of identity.

Highlighted in Figure 2.2. the above studies indicate:

- Identity emerges from reciprocal relationships that exist between an individual and society. The individual influences society through actions, and such interaction results in the formation of social categories, including groups, institutions and organisations. Society also influences the individual through language and meaning.

- This, in turn, causes people to reflect on themselves as objects, and this process of reflexivity ultimately results in the self-forming and evolution of their identity because the identity emerges, in part, due to society. It is also important to understand the society in which the individual interacts, or has interacted with in the past.

Regarding this social interaction view on the concept of core identity (Mead 1934, Beech 2008), there are no fixed or eternal meanings the self could rely on to address the 'who am I' question. This thesis argues that it is more important to explore "the concept that individuals attach reflexivity to themselves; developed and sustained through processes of social interaction (Brown 2015). There is an increasing prominence of identity research regarding the reciprocal processes between the individual and society, particularly the agency that individuals act on in the conduct of reflexive identity work. The critical issue is that our theorising is still at a relatively early stage (Brown, 2015). Moreover, there is not an interpretive framework to analyse the relationship between the individual and the social structure in the process of identity formation. Given the importance of Chinese family business context to unique features of identities among second-generation business family members, section 2.4 below will review the existing research attempt to specify the

contextual antecedents and processual constructs for identity construction, and develop an original interpretive framework to address these research gaps.

Figure 2.2 The Contextual and Processual Perspectives of Identity Construction in this Thesis
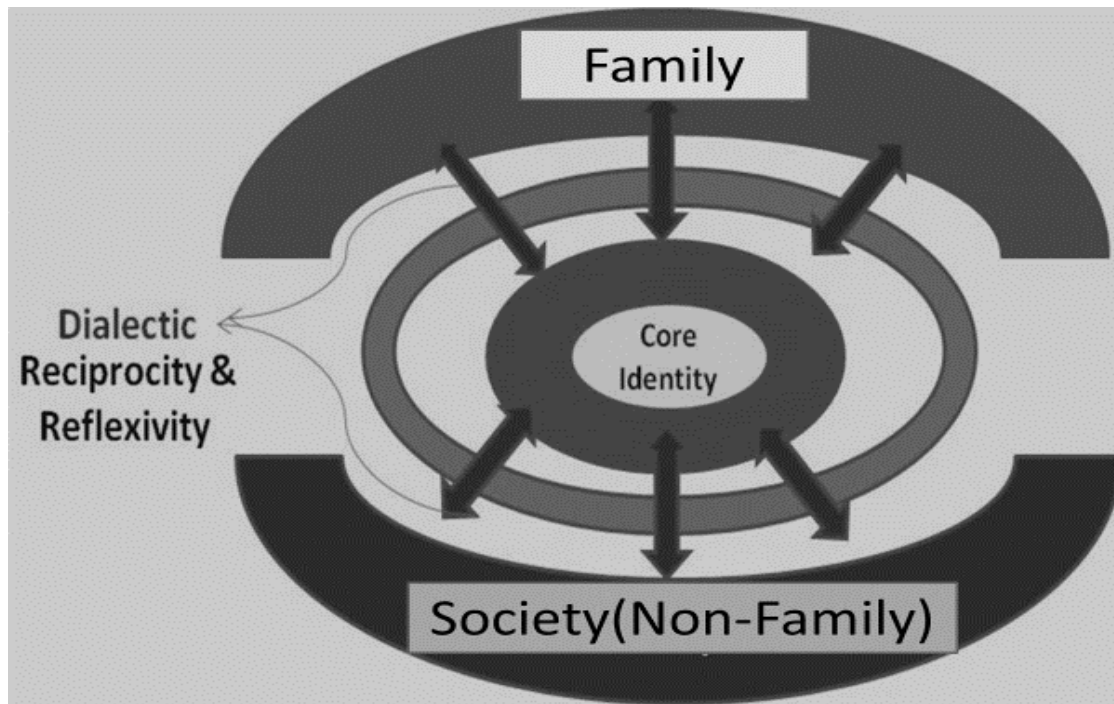
Source: own work

2.4 Identity Construction is a Negotiation Process for Social Identifications

Based on the review of literature in this section, the gaps in literature of identity construction studies were identified, in terms of recognising the identity construction as a reflexive and reciprocal social interactive process, where social structures were represented and shaped by the social identification behaviours of individuals.

There are various views about which aspects of society have the most impact on the formation of identity. According to the collectivist sociological view, it is culture, represented by the beliefs and practices of a group, which results in the formation of a person's multiple identities (Grossberg, 1996, Josselson and Harway, 2012). However, Holland (2002, p. 10-12) state that this culturalist view of identity does not account for the vast variability in behaviour amongst individuals belonging to the same culture. Identity emerges from within social groups or categories (*ibid*). Moreover, this view does not distinguish between groups or categories and does not account for the relationships between different roles in a group

(Ashforth, 2012). It is the structural symbolic construction perspective that considers all of these aspects. This perspective focuses on the linked social and psychological processes of identity formation, and it is applied in the current research to explore the identity of PRC second-generation business family members. A role is a construct that is closely associated with this perspective of identity, explaining how a person's behaviour is moulded by values, norms, standards and expectations in society (*ibid*). The implication of these various theories is that the concept of identity may be related or linked to the roles assumed by the individual in society. Accordingly, research linking the concept of identity to the construct of role, informs how multiple identities get formed and the dynamic relationships among these multiple identities (Buker, 2004; Hall, 2012). This includes concepts such as hierarchy of multiple identities as well as the commitment to a salient identity. In the following section, I will demonstrate these theories and constructs, and explains how this thesis has drawn on these to construct the identity of second-generation business family business members in mainland China.

The perspective of structural symbolic construction considers the self as being composed of several identities, each of which is related to a role. Each of these identities then incorporates all the meanings, expectations and views associated with that role. Sundaramurthy and Kreiner (2008) point out that perception of one's role is very important in the formation of identity because individuals act within a social structure in which they occupy particular and distinct roles. Thus, every person has a designation related to position; this designation is also internalised. Human beings symbolically designate all aspects of their surroundings and of their lives. Of these, the most significant are the symbols, designation and meanings given to positions or roles that an individual occupies in society. In this way individuals become synonymous with the different roles they occupy in society. For example, a person can have an identity as a father, as a friend, a colleague, or a doctor, according to the various roles he plays (Cooper et al., 2013). Each of these roles is then enacted according to the meaning ascribed to each of them by society. For example, the father role is enacted according to what society has interpreted the role of the father to be. These meanings and interpretations lend content to each of the identities that an individual assumes. Each position carries a shared expectation on behaviour and how a person in that role must behave with others. As individuals associate themselves with a particular position, they develop expectations as to their behaviour in those positions and as they designate others (*ibid*).

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Literature further corroborates the concept of identity being related to roles. According to Hall (2012, p. 20-25), identities are designations that have been internalised by the individual with respect to the various roles / positions he or she holds in society. This means that individuals can potentially hold as many identities as the roles they assume. The meaning that is ascribed to each identity by the individual forms the content of the identity. Ashforth (2012) specifies a fundamental distinction between identity and role where the latter refers to the designations that have been socially determined or imposed while the identity itself is something that has been internalised. Thus, while a person may hold the role as a manager or owner of a business, it is not to suppose that this role constitutes his identity. It may simply because the role is assigned to a person due to circumstances rather than of his own volition. In this regard, roles are constructed – by and for the individual – but it is only when they are internalised that they form part of the individual's identity.

In society, interactions are between individuals who occupy distinct roles or positions in groups and organisations (Thoits, 2012). Every individual interacts with those particular aspects of other individuals that are related to their roles and with the memberships they have in various groups and organisations. Every identity that a person may assume is enacted with respect to, and is related to, a corresponding other roles assumed by the significant other person. For example, a father identity is enacted in relation to a son or daughter identity, just as the husband identity is played out in relation to a wife identity. Whilst enacting any of these identities, only those processes of interaction that are appropriate for that identity are chosen. Magidson et al. (2014) show how individuals managed/organised between various role-based identities seamlessly and with very thought. For example, a person can be both friend and colleague simultaneously. According to these researchers, at any point, a situation that is not relevant to a particular role does not impact the interactions. The situations that are more likely to impact the interactions are relevant to the particular role being called into being or being enacted. For each identity there is an appropriate style of interaction.

Josselson and Harway (2012, p. 16-30) argued that interactions are not wholly determined by roles people occupy in society, while individuals are aware of expectations associated with various positions, and the expectations from any role will remain more or less the same across cultures, but its expression will vary. The development of identity and its expression

through various roles differ in a society that is more open and flexible compared to a more closed and rigid society (*ibid*). Kirkman et al. (2006) hold the view that cultural and social structures determine identity-based roles for individuals. According to them, role-based identities are frequently added to and changed as a person acts for him/her to self-actualise. An identity based on a role is defined as the '*character and role that persons assume for themselves as occupants of particular social positions*' (Kikman et al. 2006, p.20). Ashforth (2001, p. 102-11) separate role identity into idealised role identity and conventional role identity. The former is based on what people perceive their positions to be or the kind of positions they believe they occupy or aspire to occupy in society. In contrast, conventional role identity refers to the role that the person currently occupies. that an individual's aspirations become part of his/her role identity because self-actualisation is the primary motivation of human behaviour. Individuals evaluate themselves in accordance with the different interactions that conform to a particular identity in the self.

Identity construction is essentially a social interactive process between the individuals and society (Ashforth et al., 2008). According to Ashforth et al., (2008), individuals evaluate their performances and behaviour in accordance with the roles to which they aspire. Thus, role identity is not something imposed by society as much as created internally by the individual. In this connection, the aspiration of individuals leading to role identity must still be supported by relevant persons or groups outside the person's mind. These external, societal entities must grant the individual the right to occupy the desired roles as well as approve that person's assumption of those roles to which they aspire. In order to legitimise a particular role, society must also approve of the way these role identity aspirations are expressed and enacted in terms of style of expression, emotion, manner and tone. Thus, role identities are not only created in the person's mind but also through interactions with society for social identifications.

Other research on identity supports the perception that identity formation is related to roles assumed by the individual (Stets and Burke, 2005). Mitchell and Shepherd (2010) extend this view to suggest that all human beings envision a self-concept that is an ideal self; societal interactions are governed more by the relationship between working selves and the self-image. Thus, the idealised self influences an individual's self-perception in any situation; it is the outcome of the mind. However, behaviour is governed by multiple working selves

that are called into play in various situations. To Alvesson (2010), the self takes on a unique role in each situation, which in turn is dependent on the larger social structure and culture in which the individual operates. Role identity is formed by this interaction between the idealised self on the one hand, and society and culture on the other. By enacting any particular role, an individual incorporates the meanings and expectations associated with that role into his/her particular situation and according to his/her experience. This also accounts for the multiple identities that people assume. This happens because individuals have different experiences; any given role has several meanings in various societies and cultures and, therefore, the identity associated with it will differ from person to person. Barbara et al. (2011) further explained that the female identity can mean softness for some people, while others may associate it with motherhood, or even assertiveness and competitiveness. An academic can be a regular at school and take notes assiduously, or a person who attends school but also attends parties and has fun with peers. Thus, every identity has different meanings, and these meanings determine how people behave and how their behaviour confirms their identities when these meanings are shared in different societies, cultures and situations.

Extending these views, Hogg et al. (2017) and Farmer et al. (2011) state that for a thorough understanding of the formation of role identity, such as entrepreneurial identity, it is important to examine the internal dynamics that occur as individuals for various social identifications with roles. According to Farmer et al., (2011), role links identity with behaviour: to understand how an individual behaves, the self-meanings associated with a particular role identity have to be identified first. The meanings associated with a particular role are learned by interactions with society, where people act towards others as if they have an identity suited to the behaviour expected from their roles in particular situations. Thus, a role derives meaning from the reactions of society. This does not mean that individuals do not export some part of their own understanding onto the meaning of a role in society, but these differences are reconciled by means of interaction with society.

The theoretical perspective this thesis stresses is that identity is synonymous with the various roles that a person occupies. Roles therefore become the most crucial factor in identity formation. There are multiple roles that any person is called upon to enact in society and within the family. In the context of the second-generation members of Chinese business

families, it is understood that the roles will be those the individual assumes within the family and within Chinese society. It is thus necessary to understand how second-generation business family members in PRC view their different roles and negotiate values, norms, standards and expectations imposed on them within society/family, as well as how these interactions/negotiations shape their identities, and *vice versa*. Having explained the significance of social identification and role negotiation for individuals in constructing identities within social interactions, this thesis continues to discuss the various components and elements contained in the concept of role that can be employed to operationalise the contextual and processual view of identity.

2.4.1 Salience and Commitment in the Construction of Identities

Considering that identity is multifaceted, Ashforth (2001, p. 24-27) suggest that the various identities that a person may assume are organised in the form of a hierarchy termed 'salience hierarchy'. In this hierarchy, the salient identity is assumed many times in different situations. The idea of salience hierarchy predicts how a person may behave in a particular situation. Complementary to the concept of self-identity, role identity theory argues that core personal values may or may not impact a situational behaviour, thus the manifestation of identity in the form of behaviour therefore depends on situations (Thoits, 2012). What is implied here is that the more commitment a person has to any particular identity, the more salient that particular identity will generally be.

Identities are internal self-designations ascribed by individuals to the various roles they occupy in organisations (Reitzes and Mutran, 2002). By this, Brenner et al. (2014) explain that identities can be observed when people view the designations of their various roles as they critically link to society. These researchers stated that identities are organised in a hierarchy of importance (or salience) where those higher up are more likely to be called upon in any situation compared to those lower down. It is this hierarchy of salience that determines which of various possible identities are used as individuals enact their roles in society. When a particular role is freed from societal or situational constraints, an individual has the freedom to call upon more than one identity. When a certain identity is required within a social situation, individuals analyse the qualitative and quantitative appropriateness of the identity

to decide his/her level of commitment to a role (*ibid*). This process forms the basis of an individual's identity structure and thus influences the hierarchy of identity salience.

- **The qualitative dimension**

The qualitative dimension of salience hierarchy is that the more an identity is well-received by society and the more it conforms to society's standards, the higher it is in the hierarchy of salience. Commitment is the most important driver of identity formation and role enactment, which is a way of observing the structure of salience hierarchy (Sheldon and Burke, 2000). Commitment motivates an individual to use an identity that defines both the relationships and behaviour of a role to the self and to others associated with that role. The more commitment a person has for an identity, the higher this identity is in the hierarchy of salience and the more the person depends on the identity for his/her roles. However, commitment is also dependent on societal approbation. This is especially so when an identity is based on the perceptions and views of others; society defines the role and encourages behaviour that conforms to these perceptions and definitions.

- **The quantitative dimension**

As more groups of larger size approve an identity, that identity becomes higher in the hierarchy of salience. This is known as the quantitative dimension of salience hierarchy; it is dependent on the number of people linked to an identity (Reitzes and Mutran, 2002). When an identity is consistent with societal expectations, there will be less conflict and disagreement, leading to higher commitment to that identity. This would also depend on the size of the societal groups to which an individual ascribes.

From the above analysis, literature suggests that the positioning of a person's multiple identities in the hierarchy of salience is important as it shows how often an identity is used across different situations. An identity that is high in the hierarchy of salience result in individuals perceiving and even seeking out situations in which they can use such identities. This results in congruence between high identities and the expected enactments of roles in different situations. Such congruence leads to higher levels of commitment as the individual begins to depend on societal approbation of that identity. This thesis recognises that that salience and commitment are two important constructs in perceiving the role driven identity formation. Literature discussed above reveals that each person has multiple identities. It is

therefore intriguing to understand how PRC second-generation business family members structure their multiple identities due to the various roles they are required to perform. Most importantly, based on what qualitative and quantitative dimensions of these social roles/ groups they commit themselves to, a certain set of role identities have to be investigated (Dawson et al., 2013). This investigation will indicate the extent to which PRC second-generation business family members value different social roles/groups.

2.4.2 Self-esteem in the Construction of Identities

Commitment to an identity is not only internally driven, and it is also eroded by certain external situations (Owens and Serpe, 2003). For example, a lack of encouragement from friends and family or peers at work can impact commitment to a particular identity. This leads individuals to reject discouraged identities and adopt those roles that have been approved by society. Self-esteem depends more and more on the successful use of these new identities.

Agreeing with the concept of commitment to explain identity, Owens and Serpe (2003) bring in the concept of self-esteem. Committing to a social or role identity in a situation, a person's sense of self-esteem becomes dependent on the successful execution of the identity. This is especially so when an identity is formed with reference to the values and norms of society. The level of self-esteem one gains from the role enactment depends on to what extent these roles are considered to be desirable in society. Self-esteem increases when individuals are more committed to their roles and groups, on condition that a person evaluates role enactments in terms of societal and cultural definitions and expectations. As individuals begin to involve themselves deeply in such self-evaluations, their commitment to their roles for self-esteem becomes even more pronounced. Raffelsberger (2009) explains this by stating that if the son identity of a person is endorsed by a large group of his societal networks and by a large number within these groups, then it is the son identity that is used across different situations.

Self-esteem as a construct to understand identity encourages researchers to consider the impact of social ties in the formation of individual identity structures. The commitment of second-generation members of PRC business families to different identities because of the

need for self-esteem, and the formation of salience hierarchy as the result, is influenced by broader social aspects. These include as social values, norms, culture, role definitions and social expectations.

2.4.3 Hierarchy of Importance in the Construction of Identities

Madrigal (2001) suggests classifying identities in the form of a hierarchy. According to Madrigal (2001), some identities are more important than others; identities that are higher up in this hierarchy of importance are used more across different situations than lower ones. The most important identities reflect the principal self, where cultural standards, societal values and beliefs are incorporated into how individuals perceive themselves. This principal self is important as it influences behaviour in various situations through an identity called the programme level which, in turn, is comprised of all the goals that a person wishes to achieve (*ibid*). Kreiner et al. (2006) state that the more the programme level identity is influenced by the principal self and the more such influence is leads to the realisation of goals within particular situations, the higher a person's self-esteem. This also leads to a positive sentiment being evoked. Here the emphasis is not so much on hierarchy as it is on the internal dynamics of the individual self and how people seek to verify the various identities associated with their roles.

The degree of importance one identity assumes is dependent on societal support, commitment to the identity, and extrinsic and intrinsic rewards associated with the 'ideal self' (Reich, 2000). The level of prominence influences the likelihood of an identity being used. According to Malär et al. (2011), since identity is comprised of several sub-identities, they may all be organised into a hierarchy of prominence. Here it is the ideal self that determines various sub-identities. These researchers emphasised that interactions are determined by motives to legitimise role performances that are high in a person's hierarchy of prominence and which he/she desires to legitimise to him/her and to society (*ibid*). At the same time, a person evaluates the role performances of others to determine which identities are high in their hierarchies of prominence and whether to support these identities. To perform these actions, human beings use a vast repertoire of tools and information. Yarrison (2016) notes that social structure, which includes the broad expectations society attaches to various identities, is an important tool for such evaluation. There are also vocabulary, gestures and

motives, which people use to process information and to evaluate and legitimise those identities that are important to them and the identities of others in society (*ibid*).

Figure 2.3 shows that an individual can assume a number of identities. However, only those that are positively valued by society, congruent with the expectations of significant others, verified constantly in different situations and events, and conducive to enhanced levels of self-esteem are accepted, given more prominence and used more often.

Figure 2.3 Hierarchy of Prominence in Identity Formation
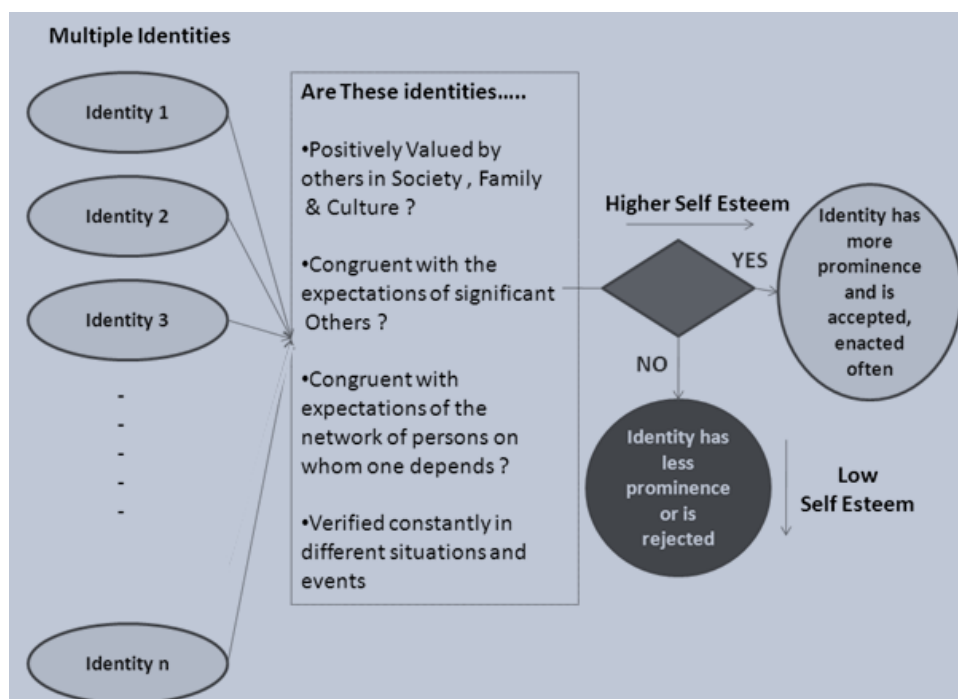
Source: Stets and Serpe (2013)

2.4.4 Negotiation in the Construction of Identities

Swann and Bosson (2016) held the view that for successful social role enactment, the process of negotiation between the self and others needs to be understood. According to their studies, role enactments are invariably performed with reference to other identities and interaction with them. People have different expectations of what behaviour is considered to be legitimate or satisfying in a role. Therefore, co-ordination and compromise between individuals are essential for role enactment. Without them, commitment to roles is reduced,

which results in considerable conflict and, consequently, individuals may reject identities to avoid conflict. Every person has the perception of an ideal self. However, for proper and effective role enactment, this ideal self must be corroborated and legitimised by society, and discrepancies need to be resolved to understand the ideal self and gain support (Settles, 2004). As found by Settles (2004), because of ambiguities of perception, identities can never be completely legitimised. This results in tension and dissatisfaction for individuals over the question of how much of their ideal selves has been accepted by society. It is this tension to secure legitimacy for the ideal self that drives individual behaviour and triggers feelings and emotions.

Rich (2007) has undertaken research on leaders' role-based identity, which is relevant to this discussion. They find that when negotiation processes between aspiring leaders and the larger group fails, the aspiring leaders become less satisfied with the roles that the group assigns to them, and leave the group. Alternatively, when the processes of negotiation are successful and when their performances gains consistent acceptance with the identity to which they aspire, aspiring leaders' self-esteem improves and they become more committed to the group and its goals. In this process of negotiation, there are various mechanisms and forms of behaviour by which individuals seek to legitimise their ideal selves. As found by Swann et al. (2009 and 2016), these methods include one method is to seek short-term gain from interactions where discrepancies are minimal. Often such support is sufficient for people to legitimise their ideal selves when, subsequently, such support proves insufficient. The second mechanism is people's selective perception of only the responses that confirm their identities. The third is to interpret responses selectively to gain legitimacy for a role. The fourth mechanism is to withdraw from interactions that do not support a particular identity. Here, the individual begins to search for interactions that support the ideal self.

Individuals experience emotional distress if these strategies cannot help them to find support for the role enactment (Robinson and Smith-Lovin, 1999, Jain, 2012). However, such experiences may teach them either to switch to other identities, or to be more cautious in revealing those aspects of the ideal self that are likely to be rejected by others and by mainstream society. Individuals' identity negotiation is motivated by three types of rewards (Kelman, 2006). The first are extrinsic rewards and include tangible reinforcement or acceptance for identity, such as money. In addition are intrinsic rewards that provide

intangible reinforcements of identity: these include rewards such as satisfaction, sense of achievement and comfort. Finally, both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards can work together to provide support for an identity. At all times in their expression of an identity, individuals are motivated to seek some or all of these rewards. A lack of reward indicates a failure to provide the necessary support for an identity.

From the literature above, we can understand that individuals improvise and adjust their identities according to the interpretations and perceptions of others. In the process of improvising, people employ various strategies that allow them to claim an identity that is important to them, or to present a certain identity that is more acceptable to society. Individuals also try to adopt identities that are most acceptable to others. Thus, social interactions revolve around identity negotiations when role performances are enacted to seek legitimacy and support for identities that are high in an individual's hierarchy of prominence or salience. The broad process of negotiation between people who lead to the formation of identity is complicated. It moves from tentative acceptance of individual claims or behaviour to a more in-depth exchange where individuals seek various rewards. Negotiation is a construct within which one can observe the behavioural and emotional characteristics of second-generation members of PRC business families who are motivated to gain support and rewards for role enactment in social interactions. It is important for this current research to discover the identity negotiation tactics used in the unique social, cultural and economic environment of family business and entrepreneurship.

2.4.5 Summary of Gaps in Research Concerning the Identity Construction Process

As reviewed in section 2.4, the main constructs in this perspective of identity are indicated in Figure 2.4. This thesis recognised these identity construction processes would reveal emerging meaning of identities constructed by these second-generation family members of PRC family businesses. Social interactive perspective of identity states that the self acts as a control mechanism altering behaviour and constantly monitoring the environment until one's actions gain an acceptable measure of legitimacy. Through this socially constructed identity process, new meaning emerges for individuals, who reflect on, contextualise and apply these meanings in later social interactions, indicating a greater understanding of social surroundings. This thesis observed the identity construction process within the context of

Chinese family business. Most importantly, through this process of observation and interpretation, my research aims to explore more sophisticated and dynamic social categories in order to describe the second-generation members of PRC business families.

Figure 2.4 Theoretical Constructs in the Concept of Identity Construction as a Negotiation Process for Social Identifications
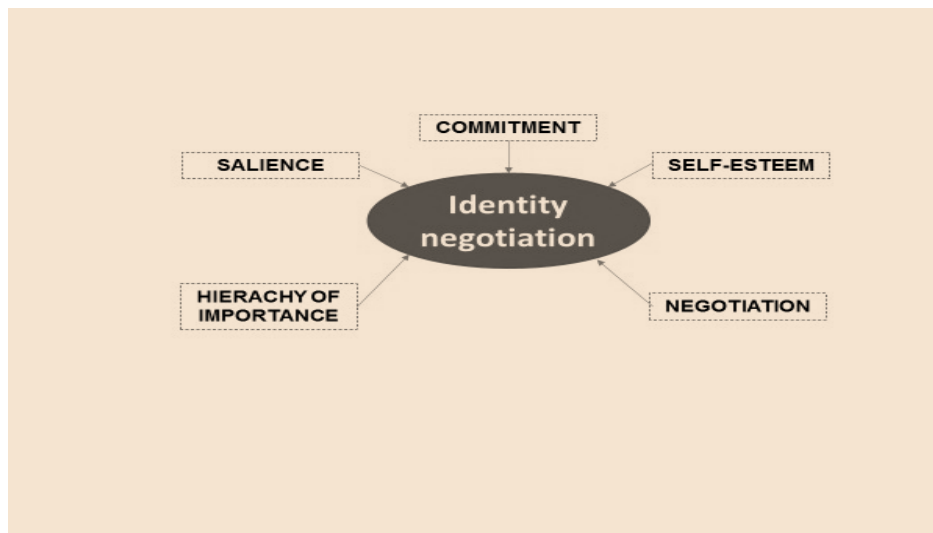
Source: own work

2.5 Identity Conflict in the Process of Identity Construction

This literature has focused on explaining the 'bright side' of multiple identities formation, such as self-recognition, role enactment and commitment, but has ignored the 'dark side' – the possibility of conflict (Shepherd and Haynie, 2009b). My own position on identity formation is that it cannot be supposed that the formation of identity is not conflict process, nor can it be assumed that second-generation members of family businesses in China come to form identities in a seamless, conflict-free manner. For these reasons, this thesis proposes that it is important to investigate sources of conflict in the formation of identity. The concept of commitment is essential for understanding the conflict in identity formation; therefore, this will be discussed in the following section. The discussion in this section explains conflict as a critical dimension in order to understand the formation of multiple identities.

Literature indicates that conflict is an essential component in the dialectical process through which role-based identities are formed. Conflict or crisis with respect to identity is defined by Schachter (2004) as a dissonance between aspiration and the perception of the reality of the self at its current stage. Schachter (2005) argued that identity conflict and crisis is the effect of modern society. In medieval and pre-modern times, identities were born out of tradition, and these traditional identities were not challenged. For example, there was no chance for a woman in the role of a maid to aspire to be anything higher in the social ladder. Hence, there was no room for negotiation or for transformation, and this precluded any possibility of an identity crisis or any problems in the development of an identity. Castells (2011, p. 36) say that identity crisis is a modern phenomenon that corresponds to the enormous political and socio-economic changes that have occurred in the world since the 1960s. Modern careers require individuals to possess multiple skills and perform various duties, which can threaten the stability of their professional identities (Webb, 2006, p. 24). Therefore, individual identities are in a state of permanent flux because of social segmentation along the lines of profession, specialisation and differentiation; and this puts pressure on any particular identity to change constantly in accordance with the outcomes of negotiation with society.

Conflict arises from negotiation in the formation of identity. The processes of negotiation in modern society result in the formation of more identities than in earlier eras. Societal changes have created existential uncertainties, and the resulting pressures have forced individuals to form 'liquid' identities (Josselson and Harway, 2012, p. 13). These are manifestations of a culture that increasingly demands individual, financial and psychological autonomy and freedom. Traditional modes of assuming identities, such as gender, social rank, religion and community, have reduced in importance whilst, simultaneously, scope has increased for a wider range of identities to be chosen by individuals (*ibid*). This is a symptom of a modern society that is becoming increasingly narcissistic, individualistic and self-centred.

From these views, this thesis suggests that the formation and manifestation of multiple identities cannot be a conflict-free process within Chinese family business. Identity crisis is an outcome of an individual's interaction with society. Various views have been put forth on the concept of identity conflict. It is important in discussing these views to have some

theoretical foundation in identifying sources of conflict in identity formation, as seen with the individuals mentioned in this thesis.

2.5.1 Social Verification and Identity Conflict

Verification, or lack thereof, is another source of conflict. According to Stets and Cast (2007), when an identity is affirmed and verified due to interpersonal interactions, individuals become more committed to an identity. The individuals develop emotional attachment to it, and act in accordance with the dictates and requirements of the particular group or social structure in which it is accepted. As an identity is verified in multiple encounters, individuals start to develop trust in others and exhibit positive emotions towards those who have verified their identity. As approval for an identity increases, so does its salience: it becomes more important as a guide to behaviour, and the person using the identity tries harder to ensure that environmental factors confirm it.

Literature indicates instances where a lack of verification leads to conflict. Haberman and Danes (2007) state that the lack of verification results in conflict in situations where the responses from significant others to whom one looks up, such as senior family members or role models in society, do not match identity standards. Significant others are defined by Sharma and Manikutty (2005) as those people whom the individual considers to be very important in their life. They can include parents, friends, relatives, other family members, and colleagues.

There are various conditions that result in conflict due to lack of verification as identified in the literature:
- According to Smith (2017), an individual's behaviour cannot change a situation or elicit the desired responses, no matter how hard he/she tries. When this happens, the person experiences a lack of self-worth and a sense of alienation, dislike and estrangement. Identities can at times conflict with one another, especially in those situations where the affirmation of one role does not allow the other roles to be confirmed.
- Another situation of conflict can occur when the individual has fixed expectations as to how others must respond to various identities. Here even the slightest rejection of any particular identity will lead to a rejection of the overall self, and cause considerable

trauma to the individual. Therefore, the degree of incongruity between an individual's expectation of approbation and the actual level of affirmation received is another source of conflict (Clarence Ng, 2014).

- Miscenko and Day (2016) suggest that there is also a potential source of conflict when an identity rarely becomes salient, leaving little chance for it to be verified. This results in doubts and ambiguities, which again become sources of conflict.

Some researchers suggest behavioural, emotional and social consequences for the lack of self-verification. When the responses of others fall below individuals' expectations, they experience conflict and become motivated to modify their behaviour in order to secure more appropriate responses (Pache and Santos, 2010). The extent of expectations also determines the level of conflict experienced by the individual (Sheldon and Burke, 2000). If expectations are greatly exceeded, a person needs to alter his/her standards: this causes more distress and conflict. Simply having expectations met does not necessitate a radical adjustment of identity standards: this leads to more positive emotions. Continuous failure to verify an identity will, over a period of time, lower the intensity of negative emotions. This happens because individuals then change their identity standards and lower their expectations of how others will respond. An individual can also leave a situation where there is continuous rejection, in order to avoid the associated conflict and negative emotions.

Conflict may be regarded as a negative phenomenon. According to Stoeva et al. (2002) and Silva et al. (2016), whatever the source of conflict, the outcome is distress and other negative emotions. These negative emotions may be exacerbated by several factors:

- The roles played by significant others are important in the verification process. Those who fail to validate a particular role identity are of particular significance here. If the disapproval is from persons whom the individual considers to be important, the distress level experienced by the individual is greater. In such cases, the individual becomes more motivated to adjust their behaviour to obtain the desired responses from significant others.
- Another condition is the salience of an identity itself. The more salient the identity and the greater the need for its verification, the more distress is experienced by a person using it whenever it is not verified.

- There is another condition impacting conflict. When an identity reflects a commitment to others (such as particular groups, or society at large and its cultural values and key beliefs), but these others reject the identity, intense sadness and distress result.

From the analysis in this section, this thesis observed that a lack of verification is another factor that results in conflict. In this process of negotiating a role identity, verification creates positive emotions that reinforce the identity being affirmed, whereas rejection of an identity creates negative emotions that weakens acceptance of that identity.

2.5.2 Confusion and Identity Conflict

Multiple identities can cause confusion and complicate the process of social identification (Balmer and Greyser, 2002, Kidwell et al., 2012). People may be confused as to which identity to choose and which to reject and this confusion results in conflict. The more similar the various identities in groups or society, the less difficult it is to choose one. In contrast, the more diverse the identities in a group, the more the scope for conflict.

In the context of family businesses, conflict is related to the dominance and intersection of identities within a group (Shepherd and Haynie, 2009b). If the dominant group is very large, such as the business-owning family, the interactions are more inclusive with less conflict. A family business is a versatile and supportive environment for newcomers. Conflict is related to individual perception of the degree of intersection or dominance between various identities contained within the group (Roccas and Brewer, 2002). The more similar the dominant identity of the individual with the dominant identity contained within the group, the lower the levels of conflict. The lower the level of similarity perceived, the more the possibility of conflict. Lumpkin et al. (2008) corroborates the model of merging in their studies of family business successors, finding that a family-orientated approach is a viable attitude for individuals participating in the business.

The interaction of individuals with society contributes to the complexity of conflict. Suh (2002) states that individuals choose to interact only with people with whom they are comfortable, or alternatively they choose to modify the behaviour of people they interact with, to make them similar to themselves. Milton and Westphal (2005) argued that this

phenomenon does not happen within a family and a neighbourhood, because the individual is surrounded by people from a similar culture, although within such close groups, the degree of similarity between the individual's salient identities and those of others in fact determines the extent of conflict. They explain that people's social identities are simple until they leave their families and interact with people from other cultures. This exposure to diverse cultures can lead to an integration of values that may be very different from those of an individual's home culture. This is because one particular culture is normally dominant at a certain time and place.

However, in multicultural societies, such identification and integration becomes more challenging. The level of cultural diversity within society affects the complexity of conflict (Settles and Buchanan, 2014). They state that the level of openness to change and conservatism within the social groups affects the feeling of conflict by individual group members. Those who are conservative develop simple social identities that are largely subservient to the dominant culture around them. However, those who are open to change imbibe other values and are influenced by other viewpoints that may contradict those of the dominant culture. Thus, these individuals develop more complicated identities; they do not simply accept social norms, and they are more tolerant and understanding. This is because of their awareness of the overlap and differences between various groups. On the other hand, simplistic individuals consider all others outside their group as outsiders, particularly if others are very different from themselves. This narrow focus can lead to stress, perception of threat and confusion.

This thesis can argue that complexity of identities leading to confusion in the individual is a third factor that results in conflict. An individual has multiple identities formed due to their interactions with multicultural society, for which an individual must choose among various identities, and in the process, they experience conflict. The more uniform the various identities in a societal group the less the conflict experienced by individuals within that group. The more differentiated the identities within the social group, then the more the conflict experienced by the individuals.

2.5.3 Emotion and Identity Conflict

Literature suggests that emotion is the most important sign of identity conflict. According to Folkman and Moskowitz (2000) and Klein (2008), enactment of roles that receives the positive reinforcement, or are judged to be adequate by society, strengthen an individual's commitment to an identity in question, and move it higher in his/her hierarchy of salience. This positive affirmation increases self-esteem, which increases commitment to an identity, which leads to the identity being moved up in the hierarchy of salience, and increases its likelihood of being employed in various situations. Stets and Tsushima (2001) and Silva et al. (2016) explain the reverse situation, that when a role enactment is inadequate and not in accordance with culture, societal expectations or situational definitions, this is manifested in the form of negative emotions. Thus, emotions become the markers of adequacy when identities are enacted, and they inform the individual whether their behaviour is acceptable.

Smith-Lovin (1990), Astrachan and Jaskiewicz (2008) highlight that positive emotions such as happiness and increased self-esteem are the result of an individual perceiving acceptance of a role enactment. This leads to greater commitment to the identity being enacted. Negative emotions such as anger, self-hatred, shame, distress, stress and guilt are results of the perception that the identity being enacted is not affirmed (Astrachan and Jaskiewicz, 2008). Such emotions lead to conflict, resulting in improvements in the role, reduced commitment to the identity, or the outright rejection of that identity and the adoption of a different identity more appropriate to the role being enacted.

Emotions indicate not only how individuals rate their own performances, but also how they assess them and inform others about their performances (Stryker, 2008). This is because role performances are always enacted with reference to others in society. Inadequate performances by others threaten to disrupt an individual's performance, and this also results in conflict and in the manifestation of emotions such as anger, disgust and disapproval. In this way, emotions become the tools through which individuals both perceive and indicate perceptions of adequacy of roles, and change both themselves as well as others in society. In addition, emotion indicates which identities are highest in an individual's hierarchy of salience (*ibid*). If the intensity of emotion is very high, either when an identity is confirmed or when it is not approved, this indicates a high level of commitment to the identity being enacted, and demonstrates that it is high in the hierarchy of salience. On the other hand, if the

intensity of emotional reaction is very low, this means that an identity is lower in the hierarchy of salience, and relatively unimportant to the individual.

These studies above have discussed that when identities are confirmed, there are few sources of inner or social conflict for individuals, and this is manifested through positive emotions. For individuals who seek to avoid conflict, emotions are a motivator to use those identities that are positively reinforced. Negative emotions create conflict that lead to improvements, changes of identity or rejection of identity. Conflict results from a clash of identities that are perceived by a person to be equally important (Ramarajan, 2009). When several identities are salient at the same time in a person's hierarchy of identities, internal conflict and tension results, and leads to situations such as identity clash and identity interference. Such conflict arises when individuals believe that they must give priority to one set of meanings, values and ways of behaviour over others in order to satisfy expectations. However, even these other identities might be equally important to the individual. This inability to validate or express the other identities leads to internal conflict and tension.

Literature in this section has shown that emotion is a source of conflict that leads people to confirm, reinforce or change and reject identities. Accordingly, in this thesis, emotion constitutes a crucial dimension that needs to be explored to understand and explain the theory of multiple identities conflict in relation to the phenomenon of identity as being role driven and multifaceted.

2.5.4. Summary of Gaps in Research concerning Identity Conflict

The concept of identity conflict, discussed in this section, is relevant to this thesis in order to understand the developmental feature of identity in respect of second-generation members of a family business in China. Individuals inevitably interact with social groups outside the family. In the context of family business, these include primarily non-family members involved in the family business, and social groups outside the family such as educational institutions, government institutions and friends. It may also be that an individual is exposed to a whole new society that is very different from Chinese society. During these interactions, various roles are played out with the aim of verifying related identities. The above literature highlights these processes of verification, as well as consequent emotional struggles and how

they can result in confusion: this provides a theoretical foundation for understanding conflict as another drive for the multiple identity construction processes of second-generation members of PRC business families. Since identity is constructed with respect to family and society, it is necessary to examine how the literature has discussed the impact of family on identity formation.

2.6 The Role of Family in the Identity Construction

Literature in this section addresses the dimension of family in relation to the identity construction process. Literature indicates that family may play the most influential role in the identity formation of the individual. Because of this, it is necessary to understand why and how family impacts the identity formation of individuals. These findings can then be related specifically to second-generation members of Chinese business families. According to Parsons and Bales (1955), the family is the most powerful of all social systems; it impacts identity formation amongst children, adolescents and young people.

Families differ considerably. Each individual family has its own shared values, experiences and structures. This accounts for the complexity and diversity of identities. Mullis et al. (2003) find that children brought up in nuclear families have fewer and less complex identities when compared to their counterparts brought up in extended or joint families. In the former case, less effort is expended to confirm identity, while in the latter where there are more personalities with which to interact, and the process of identity confirmation is more complex. It is important for identities formed within families to be confirmed in order to secure the peace of the family, improve communication, build trust and reduce conflict. Beyers and Goossens (2008) state that identity formation takes place primarily due to continual development of parenting, independence and family relations.

Steinberg and Morris (2001) find that family has an important impact on identity formation as family members are the most emotionally significant others for most people. Thus, family influences individuals emotionally by what relatives think, say, do or feel. Parenting has great influence on the formation of core self. According to Joussemet et al. (2008), who studied the impact of parenting on identity formation, the more individualistic and independent young people are encouraged to be, the more their identities are distinct from significant others, even though they are emotionally attached to these others. Such independent people develop

identities that strike the right balance between togetherness and individualism. On the other hand, very rigid families, where parents exert considerable levels of control, prevent the growth of distinct identities (Steinberg and Morris, 2001). Research conducted by Sundaramurthy and Kreiner (2008) comment that individuals who are allowed to be independent yet close to their parents are better able to express emotions in society, and have more adjustable identities as compared to those brought up in highly disciplined households.

Alongside this idea of adjustable identities, Cox and Paley (1997) defines family roles as mutual expectations negotiated between individuals and other family members. These negotiations lay down the individual's responsibilities vis-à-vis those of the family. Such negotiations also establish the individual's role and status in the family. Roles determine the kinds of behaviour expected of individuals, and their obligations and entitlements. Status defines an individual's position within the structure of the family.

From the studies discussed above, this thesis understands that family is a primary influence in the development of identity, and that different kinds of interactions with significant others in the family result in the formation of different types of identity. However, the particular types of identities formed amongst second-generation members of China's business families have not been explored in literature. This is one of the gaps in literature that this research will bridge.

2.6.1 The Influence of Family Birth Order on Identity Construction

The research referred to below shows that birth order shall be considered on the formation of identity within the family context. Siblings want to be different from each other and find their own identity. According to Townsend (1997), they behave in a manner that fits their birth order, because the relationships that children have with their parents impact their adulthood. Parents treat children differently according to their age, and this different treatment impacts their identity formation. All children, regardless of culture, strive to gain their parents' favour and attention. This creates competition amongst siblings as they all seek to gain parental favour. Barber and Thomas (1986) find that in business families, mothers favour daughters and fathers favour sons. According to Sylva and Wiltshire (1993), children who find more

favour with their parents grow up into adults with higher self-esteem and fewer behavioural problems compared to their less favoured counterparts.

More specifically, Townsend (1997) found that often firstborns have distinctive personalities as compared to those siblings born later, and this can be attributed to the differences in treatment by their parents vis-à-vis the younger siblings. The eldest are more confident of inheriting family businesses, and possibly wealth. They act as surrogate parents, displaying more authority and responsibility in a conscious effort to gain their parents' favour. However, later-born children have to seek more unconventional ways to gain favour. Firstborns are less risk-averse as compared to younger siblings, and they almost never drop out of university. Some of the characteristics of firstborns indicate that they do not like to share, and they tend to be careful, possessive, inflexible and authoritative (*ibid*). For these reasons, they rarely become agents of change within organisations. Conversely, it is the later-born who are least likely to identify with their parents: they display higher levels of conflict, perceive that they are being rejected, and rebel against parental authority. Excessive rebellion and sibling rivalry can cause family firms to fail (*ibid*).

The hierarchies present within the family, which place every child in a position, also impact their children's positions in family businesses. If some individual tries to contest this positioning, tension, rivalry and conflict result. In general, daughters rank below younger sons, who rank below their older brothers. It is this hierarchy that is most common across families. This explains why younger sons and daughters almost never become CEOs or leaders of their family businesses. Russell and Saebel (1997) confirm that this happens because senior family members wish to avoid ambivalence, rivalry and conflict that can potentially threaten the business.

Accordingly, it is important for this thesis to explore how the order of birth within the family impacts identity formation. According to Haberman and Danes (2007), parents across the world treat their male and female children differently, creating distinct identities for sons and daughters. It is Chinese tradition that the firstborn male child assumes the responsibility and duties of the father figure when he reaches adulthood (Costigan and Kroyzma, 2011). This expectation may run contrary to the principal self or ideal self that a firstborn male might wish to assume. However, it is not always the case that the male is the firstborn in the family.

There is a lack of literature on what happens to family businesses when girls are firstborn or there are only girls born within the family.

2.6.2 The Influences of Dyad Family Relationship on Identity Construction

A dyadic relationship in the context of a family business means relations between father/mother and son or daughter (Dumas, 1992). The review of literature seeks to understand these relations within the family businesses and the impact of dynamics on their family members. Davis and Harveston (1998) and Halkias (2012) suggest that an understanding of dyad relationships is necessary to understand the sense of possession that is discussed below and identity formation in family businesses.

According to Russell and Saebel (1997) and Haberman and Danes (2007), sons spend more time with their fathers in family businesses compared to daughters, while father-daughter relationships are far more harmonious because girls are less likely to confront fathers on issues of succession, power and control. Accordingly, daughters find it far more difficult than sons to manage their roles in family businesses. This is because when daughters assert their self-identities and personality strengths, these can be at variance with how they are perceived by the rest of the family, resulting in conflict. Venter et al. (2005) discovered that sons in family businesses have difficulty asserting their identities because they must follow in their fathers' footsteps. Male children come into conflict more directly and more frequently than females with senior family members over issues of power and control. Daughters are less aggressive; they prefer indirect conflict involving third parties, and conflict is less frequent. Attitudes to daughters are summarised by Halkias (2012), who find that daughters are expected to help out rather than succeed their fathers in the business. This results in attempts at balance between being invisible, that is, not having distinct identities, and forging separate identities by affiliating with their fathers, both by helping and by managing parts of the family business. However, sons do not merely help out: they seek to prove themselves by competing with their fathers (Vega, 2007). Because of this, very often fathers and sons assume different and separate roles within the business. Here, Vera and Dean (2005) present that female children assuming a passive caretaker identity have feelings of alienation, lack of purpose, inferiority and denial. It is for these reasons that the identities of male and female members of family businesses can be very different.

From the literature discussed above, this thesis observed that dyad family relationship is a dimension within the family business context to understand identity formation. An interesting discussion could be brought forward on the identities formed in the dyad relationship in the traditional Chinese family relationships with the elders, in contrast with the impact of social and economic reform on the structure of a family that is liable to a more liberal form. The current research studies these various forms of family relationship, within which the identity of the second- generation has formed in mainland China today.

2.6.3 Family Values that Influence Identities

Family values are the values, beliefs and ambitions of the key individual members of family businesses (Duh et al., 2010). These values determine how things are done within the family, how individuals are expected to behave, and what the culture of the family business is. They reflect the core values of founding parents in the family business; are unique to the family and guide interpersonal relationships, as well as affect business practices. Because family values are unique, they define particular features of family business members, and the family business thereby assumes its distinct identity (Sharma et al., 2012).

Family values are shared across generations through history, traditions, discussion, memory, and acknowledgement of past accomplishments. Therefore, family values in the family firm shape the identities of future generations of family members. Lam (2011) discovered that this is done not only to ensure that a business vision is passed down the generations, but also to minimise conflict within the family business. Discua Cruz et al. (2012) identify that family values in the family firms are generally entrepreneurial in nature and emphasise hard working, the ability to make money, and being thrifty. These are specific to the family business, and include stewardship and loyalty; they also encompass stronger governance and ethical standards for a business to operate in the transgenerational context.

2.6.4 Summary of the Gaps in Research Concerning the Role of Family in Identity Constructions

The literature in this section suggests there is considerable variability in the family entity as to its structures and values, and their incorporation into the identities of individual family members. Therefore, this thesis describes the process of negotiation and communication regarding family values and norms for interactions in the PRC family business. Particularly, my research explains how these family values and norms are interpreted by younger generations in the PRC family firms, given the dynamics in the current economic reform that affected the social and cultural structures of family life in mainland China. As previous research did not provide sufficient knowledge on the unique family value and norms that are embraced by the PRC second-generation business family members, it is important to understand how they negotiate values and norms underpinning their family roles in family businesses, given the social meaning of birth order and the existing dyadic relationship norms in a family.

2.7 Family Businesses as the Context for Researching Identity Construction

In this section, the discussion focuses on the influence of family on identity formation through its businesses. Having established that family has an important impact on the formation of identity, some scholars in the field of family business research attempt to understand the impact on identity construction from the unique context of family business.

2.7.1 Sense of Possession or Ownership

Sense of ownership may be defined as a state of mind whereby individuals believe a particular object (tangible or intangible) is theirs (Avey et al., 2009). It refers to feelings of possessiveness, and psychological attachment to the object; the possession becomes an extension of the self. The state of mind of ownership is the outcome of a combination of social practices and innate psychological conditions, such as territoriality. All human beings have an innate tendency to want to own things, and this sense of ownership has consequences for a person's behaviour, emotions, psychological state and identity (Brown, 2001). Pierce et al. (2001) counter this view by stating that ownership is actually learned at an early stage in a person's psychological development. Thus, objects that are perceived to be controllable are considered to be part of the self and identity; the motive for possession is to be in control.

The more the self perceives possession, ownership and associated rights, the greater the tendency of an individual to explore, influence and alter his/her surroundings. This action is directed towards the achievement of outcomes that may be desirable for the individual. If successful, it leads to affirmation of ownership.

Relationships between identity and possession/ ownership has been explored by Raffelsberger and Hällbom (2009) and find that possessions are symbolic expressions of the self because they are linked to a person's individuality. It is through interactions with possessions, along with frames of reference, that various self-perceptions are created, maintained, reproduced and changed. Possession leads to self-definition as a means for people to express who they are to society and it maintains the continuity of a specific and unique identity over time. How people typically use possessions to define who they are at various stages of life. Thus, teenagers identify themselves with the skills and traits they believe they possess. In adulthood, people define themselves by profession and by tangible possessions. Giving away possessions to one's children and grandchildren creates a sense of the self that is living on.

As sense of possessions define the individual, family members identify strongly with the family businesses that they own (Perren and Ram, 2004). This is because the business reflects family values, and it defines people's success, self-esteem, social interactions, roles and careers (*ibid*). Therefore, the owners of family businesses develop multiple identities within their businesses. A diverse base of identity formation is recommended. This also accounts for the excessive trauma that family members suffer from when their family businesses fail or they have to leave them, at the same time, they feel that they have lost a critical part of themselves (Kjellander et al., 2012).

Avey et al. (2009) assert that the psychology of ownership provides clues as to why individuals can either embrace or resist change. Individual reactions depend on the type of change. Individuals promote change directed towards an owned object if they initiate the change. This is because such actions reinforce a person's requirements for control, sense of continuity, self-enhancement and personal achievement. For these reasons, change is often resisted if it is imposed. Imposed change threatens an individual's control and sense of continuity, and it takes away a part of the individual to which he/she is attached. Forced

change threatens an individual's perception of ownership, and consequently results in shrinkage of the self towards nothingness. Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) state that attachment to a role influences psychological ownership and, consequently, identity. The greater the attachment to a role, the more prominence the identity associated with the role. Depending on levels of attachment to a role, a person can grow up to form a secure, avoidant or insecure personality. In addition, attachments to roles influence interpersonal relationships and role enactments. These attachments are the psychic representations of relationships that the individual has with other persons and objects.

According to Raffelsberger and Hällbom (2009), one of the representations of an individual's attachment to the family business is the degree of possessiveness he/she displays towards it, and his/her resistance to imposed change, or to leaving the firm. Exit costs of leaving a family business are very high, since an individual can lose business specific knowledge, experience, share of property, and employment. These losses can impact the individual's identity and cause them to revalue their family businesses, even at the cost of other opportunities outside the firm. Attachment is also reflected in organisational commitment to, and involvement in, family businesses. Ownership is manifested in the acceptance of the firm's values, vision and mission, willingness to work hard for it, and desire to continue membership of the firm. Attachment influences the degree of overlap between an individual's identity and that of the family business, as well as feelings towards other members of the family business and perceptions of each other's roles within the business. Sense of ownership or possession may therefore be considered the fourth factor that impacts the formation of identity within families.

2.7.2 Succession

Collins et al. (2016) claim that the issue of succession reveals several aspects of individual, family and organisational identity in family businesses. Literature indicates that succession within a family business is invariably a conflict-ridden process. Miller et al. (2003) asserts that issues of succession are the main reason for the high failure rate of family businesses. Across the world only 32 per cent of all family businesses are successfully passed on to the second-generation, while about 15 per cent survive to the third generation. These statistics

demonstrate that the successful transfer of management from one generation to another is critical in the life cycle of family businesses.

Most of the issues revolve around leadership and ownership succession. Cabrera-Suárez and Martin-Santana (2012) point out that for conflict-free succession, it is important that all parties are committed to the business and are sufficiently competent to run it. This can happen if there is proper transfer of knowledge from the predecessor to the new incumbent and introductions are made to appropriate networks, and if this is all done in an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual support. The indication here is that identity impacts issues related to succession. For instance, the older generation may find it difficult to relinquish something that has become part of their identity over the years (Letonja and Duh, 2015). Leaving the business impacts their personal identities, as well as their identities as perceived by family and society. Elders feel that their leaving the firm can impact family identities in a negative manner. Other family members may be reluctant to let the older generation go, which makes it even more difficult for elders to relinquish control or adapt to their new roles (*ibid*). For these reasons, it is difficult for the younger generation to gain control over the family business. Older family members become extremely attached to and possessive of the business they have nurtured for years, and feel they are losing part of themselves in surrendering control. The practical implication of this discussion is that to preserve a sense of their personal identities, the issue of succession is often not properly attended to by senior family members, and this may lead to the potential failure of the business.

Debate among these researchers has built the theoretical foundations for this thesis to understand that the decision of succession in the family business has to be explored when try to understand individual's experience and its impact on identity (Milton, 2008). It is relevant to the identity construction of second-generation Chinese, especially when we look at their sense of control in the roles they enact in family businesses. Younger generations have grown up in the mixed culture of traditional family-orientated thinking and Western individualism; it is important to explore the extent to which they feel attached to the ownership of family businesses. In the culture of Chinese business, which is predominantly influenced by the founder's ownership, it is important to understand the role identities these second-generations embrace and act out for the sense of possession and ownership. How successful or difficult they feel about imposing change to the founder culture in the Chinese family business

environment must be considered. What identity strategies they have engaged to resist change and take control of ownership, which has great practical implications for the second-generation who wish to embark on a career in the family business and exert their own mark in leadership, need to be understood.

The family business succession literature also highlights various new aspects that are critical for entrepreneurship identity development. Brumana et al. (2017) argue that the point of departure for the first generation occurs when second-generation translate and transfer new practices occurring in other communities of practice into the family business, overcoming limitations and possibility leading to innovation. In other words, the second-generation leverages on practices learnt elsewhere, potentially causing changes or transformation in existing business practices. Accordingly, entrepreneurial ability of a family business member depends on capacity to transfer and translate new practices, to renegotiate past and future meanings to fit present circumstances (Jaskiewicz et al., 2014).

Harrison and Leitch (2012) pointed out that this process of transformation is not without power struggles and issues of legitimacy and conflict that determine who can participate and how practice is renegotiated within family businesses. While the entrepreneurial identity is associated with a role, it is influenced by social norms on how that role is personified. According to Gilding et al. (2015), this can lead to challenges of legitimacy during the family business succession, because the entrepreneurial role has to be reconciled with other roles that an individual may occupy in the family / society. As suggested by Burns et al. (2016), the entrepreneurial identity is constructed through processes of negotiation with critical stakeholders. This process involves an internal dialogue through which the individual understands how his/her entrepreneurial identity can fit in with the demands and expectations of society. Eleanor (2011) explained how the younger generation become successors in the family business through processes of socialization involving reciprocal interactions with the other members of the family business in the surrounding business network, culture and environment.

2.7.3 Entrepreneurial Identities in the Family Business

This section presents the review of literature on definitions of entrepreneurship and includes explanations on the gap in literature to understand entrepreneurial role identity construction in the unique context of family businesses.

The conventional approach of defining entrepreneurship aims to conceptualise a standard list of entrepreneurial traits for performance and success in economic terms. These include the ability to innovate, take risks, and focus on action. Associated qualities include being good at organisation, facilitation and communication, relevant knowledge, the ability to tolerate uncertainty and social networking skills. Entrepreneurs must have a strong drive towards achievement and must be able to come up with solutions in tough situations because of experience (Schindehutte et al., 2006). The critical issue with this psychological approach pointed by Kjellander et al. (2012) was that it did not account for the wide variety and diversity that exists amongst individual entrepreneurs. In respect of this issue, a social embedded approach was introduced to understand the social relationships that exist behind any venture (Zellweger et al., 2013). This approach assumes that entrepreneurship or entrepreneurial capability does not get created in a vacuum, and promotes the contextualisation of attitudes, values and beliefs that motivate a person and / or a group to establish new enterprises (Zellweger et al., 2010).

Even though the family business is an increasingly important context for the development of entrepreneurship theory, it remains in the explorative stage. Researchers have achieved some important findings regarding the main research question; namely, how the family business environment would embrace the entrepreneurial performance that assures business activities across generations (Wright et al., 2014). Transgenerational entrepreneurship is a concept that epitomises the distinctive entrepreneurial features of family business. It is the family that develops entrepreneurial mindset and utilises resources to create new values and capabilities across generations (Habbershon et al. 2010, p. 1). For example, Jones et al. (2013) conducted a study of sixth generation family businesses and concluded that each generation developed a new line of activities within the overall umbrella of the business, which resulted in the firm achieving dynamic capability. Different generations of owners possess insight into market opportunities for new goods and services and are sensitive to new and unique opportunities. In addition, Jayawarna et al. (2014) reported that individuals coming from a family

background that supports entrepreneurship are more likely to have good entrepreneurial performances, because the family invests in developing human capitals and provides opportunities for members to gain the necessary experience.

Some researchers have started exploring the concept of entrepreneurial identity and incorporating multiple identities (Jaskiewicz et al. (2014), suggest that the construction of entrepreneurial identities in family business is a complex and dynamic process. It requires constant negotiation among different identities as the individual entrepreneur is a member of both family and business entities, and because the entrepreneurial role performance occurs in the interplay of family, ownership and management (Shepherd and Haynie, 2009b). Researcher, such as Laakkonen (2012) and Lam (2011), suggested that, due to the practice of dealing with multifaceted roles in everyday business, family business members would have stronger capabilities to utilise resources for new value creations (Habbershon et al., 2010). This is not the case for non – family business entrepreneurs. Their studies provided theoretical links to connect the characteristics of multiple identities to the understanding of individuals' dynamic capability of creating resources for entrepreneurial opportunities.

However, the literature on family business entrepreneurship is heavily weighted towards European / North American contexts (Letonja and Duh, 2015, Carsrud and Brännback, 2012, Shi and Dana, 2013). This means that different definitions of family business entrepreneurial traits may not adequately represent the reality of business families as the values, orientations and behaviour of families that change across different cultures. For example, Laakkonen (2012) confirms that of the multiple identities that entrepreneurs possess, some will fulfil the need for distinctiveness, and others for belonging. In some cultures, the need to belong is more important, and *vice versa*. Mitchell and Shepherd (2010) stated that for entrepreneurs, the need for distinctiveness can supersede the need to belong, which can result in conflict as well as impacting the individual's psychological wellbeing.

This stream of research, led by Wright et al., (2014), Habbershon et al., (2010), and Chrisman et al., (2004), has allowed entrepreneurship research to go beyond just economic performance and values, to start uncovering the social values and human elements within the family business that sustain entrepreneurial activities. Prominent research, such as Kontolaimou et al. (2016), Mills and Pawson (2012), have attempted to uncover various categories of

entrepreneurship processes and entrepreneurs in order to construct typologies. It is believed that this embedded approach would contribute to "the contextualisation of the operating environment and the behaviour of the individual" for entrepreneurship (Beaver, 2002, p. 41).

2.7.4 Summary of Gaps in Research Concerning the Intersectional Features of Family Businesses

Guided by the context embedded approach and its empirical studies in the field of studying family business and entrepreneurship (Beaver, 2002, p. 41), my thesis identifies the gaps in research regarding the unique values, resources and abilities of second-generation Chinese business family members as the capacity for the transgenerational development of Chinese family business. The focus of the study was to understand how these unique traits were manifested amongst these second-generations for utilising multiple identities in family business activities.

Accordingly, it is necessary to understand not only whether second-generation members of Chinese business families can exploit business opportunities, but how this ability is constructed. It is not just entrepreneurial traits that are important but the social interactions, situation, business environment and social dynamics that lead to the acquisition of unique capabilities in links to the multiple identities. There is a need to explore how these social interactions lead to the development of the unique entrepreneurial identity amongst second-generation Chinese business family members and whether entrepreneurship in the Chinese family business context is manifested primarily through starting of brand new businesses, or through innovation in existing family business.

2.8 Contextual Features of Family Businesses in Mainland China

Section 2.8 discussed the characteristics of Chinese families and unique developmental features of PRC political and economic systems that may potentially influences the social roles and interactions of individuals in the PRC family businesses, during which the second-generation business family members negotiate various sources of meaning for social identifications. This section focuses on explaining various values and social norms in the Chinese history and culture, which the second-generation business family members are likely to refer to for social identifications. The aim is to clarify the theoretical constructs of societal

structure of social interactions in family businesses that is in relation to the influence of Confucian values and developing political and economic systems in mainland China.

2.8.1 The Impact of Confucian Values on Chinese Family and Social Structures

Confucian values are in today still characterise Chinese society (Hwang, 2012). The emphasis is on the community and not on the individual. This means that the meaning of individual identity is determined by society and not by the individual. The collective interests group, such as a family or their firm, always has to supersede individual interest.

Confucianism has five virtues that still define these relationships in China today (Kelly and Keogh, 2006): '仁' *ren* ('benevolence'), '义' *yi* ('righteousness'), '礼' *li* ('propriety'), '智' *zhi* ('wisdom') and '信' *xin* ('trustworthiness') (Pan et al., 2012). Of these, *ren* is the most important as it summarises all the virtues highly prised in Chinese society. These include self-sacrifice for collective good and restraint, as well as modesty in pursuing one's own personal interest. Other important Confucian values include harmony and stability, considered to be essential for the survival and prosperity of the community (Pinheiro-Machado, 2008). These values guide individuals, who should avoid conflict, maintain harmony and commit to the five virtues in all social interactions.

In the Confucian terms, there are five basic social relationships that define Chinese society (Anderson and Lee, 2008): father and child, governor and the governed, husband and wife, elder and younger siblings, and friend and friend. These relationships are characterised by filial submissiveness, loyalty, duty, conscience, mutual trust, reciprocity and harmony. Only friends are equal. Simply, they define two basic relationships: between the ruler and the ruled, and between friends. The first relationship is structured as a hierarchy where the ruled are completely submissive to the ruler. However, it is considerate and reciprocal in that the ruler is expected to be kind, caring and benevolent to the ruled. It is this form of reciprocity that characterises all relationships in Chinese society, including those between superior and subordinate, employer and employee, husband and wife, father and children, and teacher and student. Trust governs relationships between friends. Another principle governing all relationships is the precedence of the old over the young (Kwan, 2012). Thus, age is a factor that defines hierarchies in all social relationships. This means that young people must at all

time being inferior to their elders, and respect their decisions in situations of conflict. Older people in turn must treat younger ones with care and understanding. While men are expected to be caring and protective to women in Chinese society, women are in turn expected to be submissive to men and avoid any conflict with them.

According to Wang et al. (2016), the impact of these values is building an atmosphere of trust and reducing opportunistic behaviour. Confucianism states that what may be good for the individual may not be good for society at large. At the same time, it acknowledges that interests differ and it allows for some degree of diversity, though not at the cost of harmony. According to Confucian thought, for an individual to establish and improve himself/herself, it is first necessary to establish and improve others in society (Gao, 1996). Unbridled competition is frowned upon, with economic activities build on collectivist principles of mutual support and co-operation. It is this principle that gave rise to the custom of social networking, '关系' *guanxi*, in business activities in China (Li, 2014). This form of networking is what distinguishes the Chinese way of doing business, where people do each other favours in a reciprocal manner. Here the individual is not independent, but an essential cog of a larger network that works together for mutual success. This collectivist approach also explains why Chinese people believe that self-esteem is not as important as public perception of the individual. This public perception is called '面子'*mianzi* and refers to how people are seen in the eyes of others (Chan, 2006). In such a society, individuals find it easier to follow mainstream culture and conform to social norms.

Hsu (1985) uses the concept of the Great and Small Selves to explain interpersonal relationships in Chinese society. In China, the self is heavily dependent on social roles and relationships. The only part of the self that an individual can completely call their own is their physical body, called the Small Self. Of greater importance is the social self, also called the Great Self, which includes the family, friends, colleagues and all those with whom the individual interacts. The Small Self is in fact dependent on the Great Self. The individual self can never be separated from social structure in China, but is in fact embedded in it. The family in China is considered to be the Great Self, where individual members are the Small Selves. Similarly, society at large, or even groups and organisations, are the Great Selves, with their members being called Small Selves, all of whom are arranged in a vertical or hierarchical structure.

According to Pan and Zhang (2004), Confucian and Buddhist thought still constitute the most basic influence on Chinese families. This has resulted in Chinese families displaying several unique characteristics. According to Shek (2006), there is an overwhelming emphasis on 孝 *Xiao*, filial piety, which is considered the highest of all virtues governing behaviour in Chinese families. Filial piety includes very high levels of devotion, affection, respect, duty and obedience. Children have to take care of aged parents, with several generations of families being expected to live together. Filial piety is expected throughout the life of the parents. Children have to obey their parents unconditionally at all times.

Along with the behavioural structure of filial piety in the Chinese family, parents (or elders in the family) will always take precedence over their children or the younger members of the family (Park and Chesla, 2007). It is this precedence of the old over the young that governs relations across the generations and amongst siblings. Thus, children have to be respectful and obedient at all times to senior family members. The same social code applies to interactions of siblings: the younger ones are expected to be respectful and submissive at all times to the elder ones. Instead of emphasising the dominant power of senior family members, they also point another key principle is that of mutual respect and reciprocity. While younger children defer to their elder siblings, the latter in turn shall be caring and kind at all times to their younger siblings. Similarly, while children shall serve their parents with piety and submission, parents in turn are expected to behave in a kind, caring and considerate manner towards their children.

Jacobs et al. (1995) explain these views by referring to the Chinese value of reciprocity. Filial piety is the outcome of children repaying their parents for their latter's care, nurturing and protection throughout their lives. It is for this reason that younger generations have to fulfil the wishes of their parents and support them as they grow old. This is also extended to the wider family: if a relative encounters difficulties, the rest of the family is obliged to render the necessary help. Yan and Sorenson (2004) state that Confucianism emphasises a collectivist ideology where the family system represents a microcosm of all social units in China. This means that there is more importance placed on the family as a social group compared to the individual, and the will of the individual is subordinated to that of the family. From this point of view, children are not individuals so much as members of a family.

Lü (2006) make the point here that filial piety also means restraining individual will for the greater good of the family. For the preservation of harmony within families, Chinese culture disapproves of aggressive or confrontational behaviour amongst young people. Confucianism permits even harsh discipline for the sake of harmony in the family (Tu, 1998). For example, '棍下出孝子 *gunxia chu xiaozi*', 'dutiful children are born out of the rod'. Discipline can take the form of both punishment and advice. It includes corporal punishment, withdrawal of reward, and even the extreme sanction of excluding the child from the social life of the family.

The principle of harmony also defines relationships between husbands and wives. According to Tu (1998), wives are expected to defer to their husbands and be submissive to them for the sake of harmony in the family. In turn, husbands are expected to be caring and kind to their wives. Another basic principle in traditional Chinese families is that of strict gender roles: children are expected to conform to these roles. Sons are expected to carry on the family name, and bring honour and glory to the family. According to Chinese culture, men have to take care of things outside the home, while women take care of things within the house. Similarly, husbands are regarded as being masters of the family, while women are expected to obey their husbands always （Cheng, 2007）.

Conventional Chinese society as influenced by the Confucian values and rules generally disapproves of individualism or behaviour that does not conform to social norms. In such a society, individuals are more likely to act according to the social norms and are submissive to the dominant party in social interactions. There is little scope for individual expression, choice or assumption of roles if these lead to conflict or disapproval. It is most relevant to this thesis to understand the impact of these conventional Confucian values on the identity construction of second-generation PRC business family members. However, there has been little research regarding the extent to which these distinctive conventional Chinese social values and norms structure the roles and social interactions of individuals in modern PRC society. My research is particularly interested in understanding how these Confucian values co-construct the identities of PRC second-generation business family members, who are subject to other distinctive, potentially contradictory, values in PRC.

2.8.2 The Impact of Developing Political and Economic Systems on Family and Social Structures in Mainland China

According to Wang et al. (2016) radical changes in the political system in China have had a significant impact on the social and family values that structure the interactions of individuals in PRC family business . Since 1949, Chinese society has been driven by socialist and Maoist political ideology with its emphasis on socialism, egalitarianism and class struggle between the rich and poor. The rights of women and children were given far more prominence post-1949, compared to the preceding traditional Chinese social systems. In addition, the state and its interests were considered to be more important than those of the individual or even the family Zhang and Ma (2009). Another major impact has been the one-child policy that has shaped the size and structure of Chinese families in the last three decades (Cao et al., 2015). Had China continued to follow its closed-door policy, Maoist ideology would still affect Chinese families even today. The opening of the Chinese economy and exposure of the Chinese people to Western values and education has created an alternative influence on traditional Chinese value systems, and consequently on the identity formation of the younger generation of Chinese.

Kim and Gao (2013) point out that family businesses have had to operate through myriad economic and political changes in China, including an environment where private entrepreneurship was discouraged by the government, from the initial market reforms in the 1980s to the development of the current socialist market economy. Studies indicate that the market environment in which family businesses have to operate in China is very complex and subject to many drivers. Shi and Dana (2013) describes the market environment as combining elements of Marxist legacy, traditional Chinese culture and capitalism. Gedajlovic et al. (2011) point out that Chinese markets are rich in non-tradable resources, with weak information systems, inadequate rights for the protection of private property, and limited contractual security.

This economic system is characterised by government control where the role of private businesses is acknowledged. Nevertheless, research conducted by Ling et al. (2011) indicate that family businesses have to struggle constantly in an institutional environment characterised by bureaucracy and the legacy of communist ideology. Family businesses operate in an atmosphere of high uncertainty, given the volatility of Chinese government

policy regarding private entrepreneurship in China. According to Wei (2013), the conservative faction in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) still wields considerable influence in government affairs and considers any form of private business as a potential threat to communist ideology, party legitimacy and government authority. Despite its open-door policy, Marxism and socialism still form the dominant policy within China. In China, there has been little removal of socialist institutions, but rather a gradual building of market institutions and the transition to a market economy has occurred with little change in political structure (Carney et al., 2009).

While it may seem clear that family businesses have to struggle to survive in Chinese markets, some researchers have a contrasting view. The uncertainty and instability that characterises the business environment in China benefits Chinese family businesses in some way. Peng (2004) mentions that the market environment in China can stimulate private business, including family business and entrepreneurship, because the incompleteness of policy, ambiguity of rules and frequent revisions of regulations actually allow for exploitable business opportunities. Ambiguity and uncertainty facilitate innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking behaviour: all of these are hallmarks of entrepreneurship (Kreiser et al., 2013). This means that the business environment in China is conducive to entrepreneurship.

It seems that there will always be some conflict between the political agenda of the party and government and the values and goals of private businesses in China, for which the social and political status of new generation family business owners and managers are not fully prepared. Such new owners of businesses still must operate in an atmosphere of uncertainty. This present research explores how social and political upheaval affects the formation of identity among second-generation members of Chinese business families. It investigates the extent to which they are able to negotiate legitimate political positions to change the social environment for the survival or innovation of family business and further entrepreneurial activities, such as entering the financial and aviation markets, which are tightly controlled by the state.

The Chinese economy is undergoing a transition and is characterised by weak credit systems, limited legal protection of property, and high economic uncertainty (Li and Xia, 2008). In such a scenario, family businesses develop in a pattern quite different from those in Western

economies. Family and familial networks become a support system for businesses in an environment where it is difficult to secure credit and institutional support. It is for this reason that family businesses are an important source of labour, capital and intellectual capital; they are the key catalyst of China's economic growth over the last three decades.

In an atmosphere of uncertainty and volatility, family businesses offer an opportunity for young people to begin their careers, branch off into entrepreneurship on their own and gain quick and easy access to capital, labour and other resources (Panikkos et al., 2002). Notwithstanding the dominant Marxist ideology in China, the prevailing collectivist Confucian values that focus on solidarity and trust play a key role enabling private businesses to protect their property rights. These rights assume importance in Confucianism in a political climate where private property is not protected. It is because of Confucianism that most family members believe their family business to be an extension of themselves, so that all their activities are geared towards maximisation of wealth, status and family reputation for them and their following generations (Pistrui et al., 2001). Research conducted by Guo (2008) on Chinese business families finds various qualities that are typical of entrepreneurs. These include perseverance, diligence, resourcefulness, integrity and harmony. At the same time, other qualities such as responsiveness, flexibility, adaptability to change, risk-taking, initiative and orientation towards profits are not displayed much. The uncertain policies of the Chinese government mean that the Confucian value of trust assumes great importance and forms the basis of relationships between family members, relatives and business partners as alternative (Au and Ho Kwong, 2009). Mutual trust is valued even more than contractual trust in Chinese communities. This also explains why Chinese people prefer to conduct business transactions through the informal *guanxi* personal/family networking systems (Dou and Li, 2012). *Guanxi* provides family businesses with the social capital required for wealth creation and growth, and for businesses to gain legitimacy.

Wang et al. (2016) suggest that in the fast-changing and developing economic and social environment of China, distinct differences have been observed between the older or founder generations and the younger generation. The older generation, comprised of people who came from humble backgrounds, had less access to socio-political and economic resources at a time when the distribution of resources was highly centralised and controlled by the state. Some of them were from lower strata of society, with only a few possessing a college

education or technical and management qualifications. Some were former military personnel with very little business experience. A large majority were from a peasant background or occupied positions of local leadership at the village or town level. Conversely, the younger generation, many of whom were either employed at or in charge of their family businesses, are far better educated and have been inducted early into the family business and purposefully trained by the older generation. Compared to the older generation, the younger generation has less work experience but displays eagerness to use education, training, knowledge and skills. They indicate that they wish to both maintain and extend their family businesses.

In addition, Wang et al. (2016) indicate a strong strain of individualistic behaviour amongst younger-generation Chinese, who wish to set their own distinct mark on their family businesses and do not want merely to follow in their parents' footsteps. They display more entrepreneurial behaviour in the sense of innovation and risk-taking, both within the family firm and in their pursuit of market opportunities outside the family business. Shi et al. (2012) point out that younger generations are less family- and relationship-orientated, and more market- and contract-orientated. They are more direct and aggressive in their pursuit of opportunities and in the acquisition of resources to exploit these opportunities. Dou and Li (2012) believe that this can result in conflict with the interpersonal harmony that characterises Chinese family and business networks.

Studies also find other trends and behavioural patterns, particularly amongst new-generation Chinese families, which are similar to those of modern Western families (Cao et al., 2015). Leung (2010) state that traditional Chinese family values are gradually being replaced by Western-style family values. There are fewer instances of children having to look after the elderly. There is a growing trend towards focusing on children, as compared to the overwhelming focus on the older generation in the traditional Chinese Confucian families. Parenting styles have become less hierarchical and dogmatic, and there is a shift towards more lenient, relaxed and unrestricted treatment of children. Studies amongst young Chinese couples by Poston and Glover (2005) indicate that more egalitarian gender roles are being played out because wives are no longer strictly confined to housework: instead, they may pursue careers of their own. Such equal opportunities have been advocated since the Mao era

with the saying '妇女能顶半半天' *funv neng ding banbian tian*, 'Women hold up half the sky'.

Chinese families have been impacted by large-scale economic reforms implemented in China since the 1980s (Wong, 1985). More prosperity, higher disposable income and a better quality of life have occurred, concurrently with an increasing incidence of family discord, marital disruption and parenting difficulties. According to Shek (2006), traditional Chinese family values – such as care for elders and submissiveness to the older generation – have gradually eroded, resulting in intergenerational discord and relational conflicts within the home. The egalitarian, socialist Chinese society has been replaced with one characterised by growing unemployment and economic disparity, which reflects a shift in social values away from those that stress egalitarianism and sharing. Research conducted by Yeung (2006) finds a change in the father-son relationship, with submissiveness and unconditional obedience gradually disappearing. Due to women's empowerment, better education and new employment opportunities, elders are losing their economic power, and they have a lesser role to play in such issues as choice of partner, career, and family spending. Wang et al. (2011) report a growing number of children being educated abroad. There is increasing pressure on traditional Chinese family values to change in accordance with Western values that stress small nuclear families, egalitarian roles for men and women, and individual needs as opposed to collective values.

The review of literature in this section has indicated that diverse types of family are likely to exist in mainland China. Traditional Chinese family values, such as filial piety, and the conventional family structure, such as gender disparity, have been challenged by some elements of western values, such as individualism and gender equality. The family business is a vital component of the PRC economic growth process. As the business operates in an environment which is increasingly influenced by Western capitalism, the culture of individualism is intertwined with the traditional collective and family orientated mindset; while, on the other hand, this environment is still governed by socialist state that has a tight control of political ideology and social and economic systems. However, the impact of these various social drivers on the structure of social interactions in the PRC family business has not been fully explored. My research would propose that these divergent family values and norms may be subsumed within the overall identity of second-generation PRC business

family members. This may mean that a young person brought up in a Chinese family business may be highly individualistic and different from the rest of the family, or they may conform to traditional Chinese values and roles. Therefore, the findings of my research will decode the distinctive linguistic, behavioural and cognitive features of PRC second-generation business family members. Findings in this respect may indicate the components and outcomes of their identity formation processes, with regards to the influences of these multiple sources for the identity construction in PRC family businesses.

2.8.3 Entrepreneurship in Mainland China

The general theoretical terms and concepts of entrepreneurial identity were explained in section 2.7.3, in which literature indicated the importance of understanding the contextual features of transgenerational entrepreneurship in the family business. In this section 2.8.3, my research explores the phenomenon of transgenerational entrepreneurship in the PRC family business context. The relevant contextual features that are likely to influence the entrepreneurial role identities of PRC second-generation business family members are discussed.

PRC entrepreneurship has distinctive characteristics in its practices, processes and outcomes. The initial development of entrepreneurship in PRC has suffered from insufficient support of state and relatively deprived resources in comparison to the state-owned enterprise. Shi (2014) state that entrepreneurship in mainland China has started during the 1981 and was heavily influenced by the authoritarian state governance that emphasised the power centralisation. This harsh history of entrepreneurship development in the communist regime in China has still impacted the attitudes of Chinese people towards entrepreneurship, and has threatened and prohibited the emergence of new generation entrepreneurship (*ibid*).

On the other hand, the Chinese have always had a strong family commitment with businesses that are perceived as the extension of the family system for surviving and developing (Poirine et al., 2017). Moreover, the Confucian culture stresses the importance of the family values. The legacy of this Confucian culture gives importance to values such as honesty, filial respect & piety, diligence, thrift, practical action, obedience and conservatism. These values promote collective action that strengthens social relationships and values group harmony. Family

members must promote harmonious relationships with family norms being the expected standard of conduct. As stated by Si et al. (2015), entrepreneurs in China are likely to believe in organisational collectivism, where challenges are treated as collective endeavours and are not personal objectives. Any endeavour has to contribute to family welfare. Legitimacy is achieved through conformance with Confucian cultural values and respect for age, hierarchy and authority. This is a cultural context for the conventional view of entrepreneurship in China, which has significant influence on the values and attitudes of first-generation family business members towards entrepreneurial activities. Nevertheless, it is not entirely clear how these conventional perceptions of entrepreneurship in mainland China influence the entrepreneurial identity construction processes of these second-generation business family members.

An alternative and more contemporary view on entrepreneurship in mainland China is suggested by Mustafa et al. (2015), who stated that the undergoing changes in both economic and social systems has significantly promoted the culture of entrepreneurship in modern China. They reported that the transition to market economy and more intense competition means that values and concepts in the conventional culture of entrepreneurship are confronted by new values. There is an increasing acceptance of such new economic realities as increased privatisation, less egalitarianism of income distribution, increased incorporation of capitalist values, more competition and tolerance for pursuit of individual goals and occupations, and job insecurity in state owned enterprise. These changes in the economic environment for creating businesses have increasingly promoted the entrepreneurship activities and the statue of entrepreneurial role in the power hierarchy of society in mainland China.

Shi (2013) found that this new economic environment has resulted in the new generation of entrepreneurs being different from the older generation of entrepreneurs who first founded family businesses in the 1980s. Lin (2011) states that the economic egalitarianism, particularly of income distribution promoted by the Chinese Marxist system, has been replaced by a focus on profitability. In addition, respecting the change of economic goals, Du et al. (2015) suggest that modern Chinese entrepreneurs have become more opportunistic, enhanced by values in western business culture, such as creativity, professionalism, and competitiveness. Confirming to this view, Yu and Cai (2017) report that young family

business members think that the traditional family business with emphasis on the family ownership and management would hamper long-term business growth. Moreover, they recognise the importance of innovation and diversification as being necessary for new generation family businesses to survive and succeed; thus, entrepreneurship is the key driver.

The review of literature in this section indicates that the western capitalistic thoughts of new generation PRC entrepreneurs are likely to conflict with the conventional entrepreneurial Chinese mind-sets that are influenced by socialist ideology and Confucian family values. Regarding the transgenerational goal for PRC family business entrepreneurship, there is a tendency for a family business model to marry western business processes that encourage innovation and flexibility with traditional Chinese family value systems. Nevertheless, there is little research to address how PRC second-generation business family members may shape or be shaped by the construction of entrepreneurial role identities taking place in the current PRC economic and social environment. In respect of this gap, this thesis asked which conventional values were still persistent, and whether new meaning has been created from the practice and perceptions of these PRC second-generation business family members for the family business transgenerational entrepreneurship.

2.8.4 Conflict Resolution in Chinese Businesses

Having ascertained that the formation of identity is rarely a seamless process, it is necessary to specify how conflicts are resolved in China. Literature indicates that the primary influence on conflict resolution in Chinese society is Confucianism. Section 2.5 explained the constructs of identity conflict theory. In this section, the discussion concentrates on how the unique conflict resolution culture in mainland China can provide a perspective to understand the identity conflict of second-generation business family members.

In traditional Chinese society, Yan and Sorenson (2004) argue that hierarchy is not as important as the collective good. This means that even the senior members of a family in a relatively powerful and dominant social position cannot pursue their self-interest at the cost of the family business or the interests of the family. For example, a business is considered to be the property of the family and not that of any individual. Chinese people believe that intra-familial conflict, tension and animosity all contribute to the detriment of the business

and family, and must be avoided. Hence, one mechanism to deal with conflict is to avoid it altogether. Long and Ng (2011) opine that in Chinese business families, competition for control of the business and attempts to discredit other family members do not occur with the same frequency and virulence as in Western family businesses. It cannot be supposed that sibling rivalry and interpersonal animosities do not arise at all in Chinese business families. Cai et al. (2012) point that even if they do, they are suppressed and not expressed for the sake of the business and family solidarity.

The study of Locke (2007) identifies two types of interpersonal conflict. The first type occurs due to the divergent goals of the parties concerned and conflicts of interest. The second type occurs when one party perceives the other to be violating social norms, ethics, justice and interpersonal relationships. Regarding the first type of conflict, Hwang (2012) states that Confucian ideology stresses maintaining interpersonal relationships. For example, the Chinese saying goes '买卖不再', 情意在 *mamai buzai, qingyi zai*, 'even if business is not successful, friendship must always be maintained', and this accounts for why Chinese people stress establishing good interpersonal relationships even as they negotiate business. The maintenance of interpersonal relationships within families is very important for Chinese, and this is why family members, friends and relatives are so prevalent in family businesses (Kim and Gao, 2013). According to Hwang (2012), Confucian thought emphasises the long-term goal. Interpersonal relationships are considered from a long-term perspective and from the point of view of help, support and access to labour and resources. Maintaining a good relationship is the overriding concern when conflict arises in social situations; disruption of family harmony is not tolerated. These studies identify the rule in Chinese society that in any conflict situation, individual desire gives way to consideration of the long-term interests of the parties involved. Concern for relationships, harmony and the traditional vertical hierarchies in Chinese families and society determine people's behaviour in times of conflict. For example, in a conflict situation, younger siblings defer to, accommodate and compromise with older ones on the issue being disputed.

Hwang (1998) point out that there are two strategies to resolve the second type of conflict. The rational strategy chooses a course of action depending on desired outcomes. The normative strategy makes a choice depending on the propriety and ethics of an action. While in the West it is the rational strategy that is used to sort out conflict, in China Confucian

ethics make the normative strategy almost inevitable (Pan et al., 2012). Social acceptability rather than rationality is the criterion for acceptable conflict resolution structured by Confucian ethics. Confucianism provides people with a rigid, regulated code of conduct for conflict resolution. Ethical resolution in a situation of social conflict is determined according to hierarchy, age and gender. Violation of this code of conduct, even due to emotional trauma caused by the conflict, is considered to be socially unacceptable and unethical (Lansford et al., 2005). Therefore, it is a normative reasoning strategy that guides conflict resolution in China. The ultimate goal of normative social structure for individual behaviour is to correct the ethical or social norms being violated so that society and social units such as family remain stable and easily managed.

The literature reviewed in this section showed that, within Chinese family businesses, the normative reasoning determines people's behaviour in situations of social conflict. Due to the prominent influence of Confucian values, the methods of conflict resolution in Chinese family stress the importance of negotiation, acceptance, obedience, submissiveness, deference and even avoidance. These conventional methods of conflict resolution in Chinese society are relatively less confrontational as these are normally associated in dealing with family conflict in other cultures. It could happen that some second-generation family members, particularly those exposed to western culture may become rebellious and wish to liberate themselves from social conventions that they believe would suppress the role identities they wish to assume. My research has attempted to understand the extent to which these conventional conflict resolution methods and their underpinning traditional Chinese values and social norms are respected by the second-generation business family members in mainland China.

2.9 Recapping Key Literature and Developing the Interpretive Framework

Based on this critical review of literature, the key gaps in literature were identified and the interpretive framework of identity construction in the context of family business in mainland China is presented and explained below.

The theoretical studies have been divided into four sections. The first section explored the literature on the formation of the core identity. An analysis of literature on identity construction indicates that identity is a complex phenomenon. It was found that the key

factors impacting negotiation of the core identity includes commitment, self-esteem, negotiation, hierarchy of importance, and salience. Moreover, identity construction is related to the social identities/roles that a person designates for him / herself internally and in relation to the family and to society. The formation of identity was found to be a dialectical process where conflict plays an important role. Accordingly, the second section of literature review explored the concept of conflict as it relates to identity. Some of the factors impacting conflict included emotion, self -esteem, verification, complexity, hierarchy and clash. The third section explored the family-related factors that impacted identity formation, which were found to be birth order, ownership/possession, gender, dyad, succession, the value systems of the family and entrepreneurship. The fourth section explored the society-related factors that impacted formation of identity and these were related to the Chinese business family, the political system in China and Chinese culture.

Figure 2.5 The Interpretive Framework of Identity Construction in the Context of Family Business in Mainland China
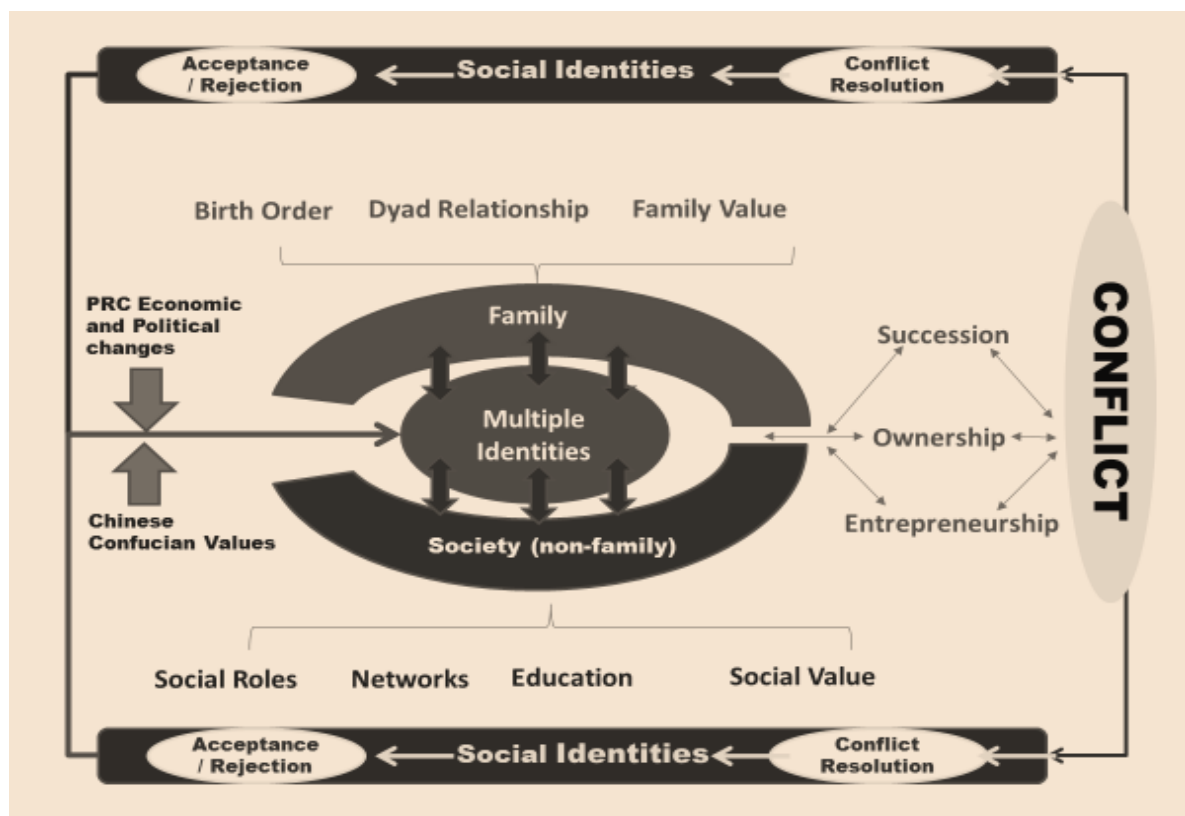
Source: own work

Based on the review above, the framework for analysing and interpreting the identity of the second-generation business family members is developed and indicated in Figure 2.5. Literature in support of each construct within this theoretical framework is reviewed in this chapter. The various aspects of family that impact identity is observed. These include birth order (Townsend, 1997), role attachment (Björnberg and Nicholson, 2012), gender (Dumas, 1992, Barbara et al., 2011), succession (Milton, 2008), family value systems (Kellermanns and Eddleston, 2004), cultural differences (Barkema et al., 2015), and entrepreneurship (Shepherd and Haynie, 2009b, Shepherd and Haynie, 2009a). Each of these aspects consists of empirical constructs. The various aspects of society that impact identity include political systems (Tsai, 2007), social roles (Stryker, 2008, Burke, 2004), social values (Hubler, 2009), education (Turner and Acker, 2017) and networks (Dou and Li, 2012).

The various aspects of conflict that arise as a result of social identification of multiple identities influenced by the negotiation process between the individuals and their family or other social structures, as shown in Figure 2.5. The various aspects of conflict that arises as a result of this dialectic between the multiple identities and familial/non–familial social structures are as indicated in figure 2.5. The theoretical constructs of identity negotiation include the complexity of identity (Roccas and Brewer, 2002), salience (Thoits, 2012), hierarchy (Yarrison, 2016), negotiation (Swann and Bosson, 2016), self-esteem and control (Raffelsberger and Hällbom, 2009), as well as the identity strategies for verification (Smith, 2017), confusion (Settles and Buchanan, 2014) and emotion (Silva et al. 2016), indicated in Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6 The theoretical Constructs of Identity Conflict

Conflict

Complexity	→	Intersection, dominance,
Hierarchy	→	Salience, commitment, rewards
Fragmentation	→	Confusion, contradiction,
Verification	→	Confirmation / Non - Confirmation
Overlap	→	Integration / Segregation
Emotion	→	Positive/Negative
Self Esteem	→	Efficacy, Worth, Success, failure
Self Evaluation	→	Ideal self

Belief
Expectations
Performances
Views
Perception
Aspiration
} **Conflict**
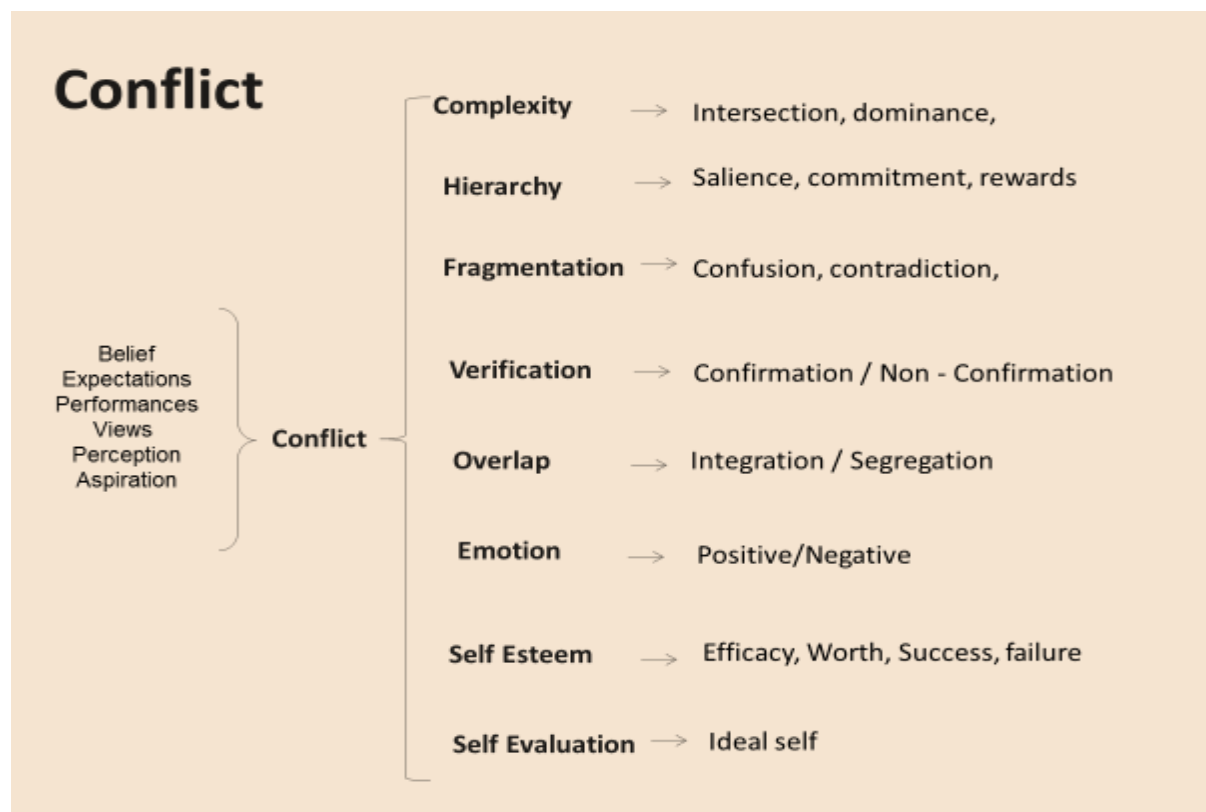
Source: own work

The chapter of methodology which follows will explain how the above theoretical framework is formed in the research process, in particularly the stage of data analysis, and how it was applied to explain the identity construction of PRC second-generation business family members.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology that was followed in this dissertation. My task here was to identify and develop a methodology that understand identities constructed when individuals interact with family and society in the context of family business in mainland China. In choosing a methodology, I was influenced by the studies conducted by Dekker et al. (2010), Yu et al. (2009), Raffelsberger et al., (2012), Hytti (2005), Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) and Laakkonen (2012).

Dekker (2010) and Yu (2009) affirm that a typology is of great assistance in dispelling confusion as to how potentially countless identities arising out of social interactions could be identified, categorised and analysed. The implication of these studies was that a identity conforming to a particular typology was something that was co-constructed by individuals in social interactions. This corroborated with literature stating that identity is something that is formed or constructed, and is constantly evolving and changing. Hytti (2005) and Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009), on constructing entrepreneurship identity, provides a clue to an effective method of collecting data: through a face-to-face interview, where the respondents were encouraged to 'talk' about their experiences in interaction with the researcher.

Studies conducted by Laakkonen (2012) and Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) on identity formation indicates how interview data is analysed through the processes of 'interpretivism'. This research recommended the 'interpretivist' approach to data analysis as being highly relevant to studies on family businesses. The aim of interpretation in this context is to begin the data analysis with a general focus, and then to identify key patterns and themes emerging from the larger mass of data collected (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009). The analysis does not intend to identify one truth, but rather to consider several perspectives, and to gain a wider understanding. Accordingly, the present research also highlights the importance of observation of the respondents as part of the whole process of interpretation, and recommended the semi-structured interview as a means of gathering primary data. Laakkonen (2012) introduced the concept of hermeneutics as a further refinement in the way qualitative data could be interpreted. He suggests that data interpretation is to look underneath the structure of words, and identifying meanings behind the ostensible and the obvious. According to the hermeneutical principle of analysing data, it is very important to embed

respondent answers in the cultural, historical and social context from which they emerge. This presupposes some knowledge on the part of the researcher in respect of these contextual implications of the phenomenon being uncovered. In terms of my research, this meant that I had to have some knowledge of Chinese culture, history, society, etc. I believe that being Chinese, and having lived in China for most of my life, has provided me with a unique cultural and social perspective on the qualitative data collected, which would not have been possible otherwise. From the above analysis, I have presented the key concepts and the research on identity construction that influenced my own methodology. To summarise, previous research on identity construction indicated the concept of typology as a framework for situating and categorising multiple identities, the interview as a means of collecting primary data, and the interpretative hermeneutical as an approach to analysing data and deriving accurate and key insights from such data.

This methodology had to be based on the understanding that identities may be constructed on the basis of meaning attributed to various events told in an interview. The interviews were analysed according to what respondents had to say about their roles and the meanings they ascribe to these roles, which would formulate a better understanding of how identities get constructed. I used these meanings to construct a typology framework that provides a basis for understanding the types and characteristics of identities amongst second-generation members of Chinese business families. This typology framework is constructed around the two dimensions of family and society. This is because from literature it was identified that the various facets of identity are constructed on account of the interactions the individual has with family and with society. Based on this perspective, the framework provided develops, enhances and structures what is currently already understood about the impact of family and society on formation of identity. The findings of the research contribute to how identities may be defined and how meanings ascribed to different identities are understood.

3.1 Social Constructionism as the Ontological Commitment

In choosing a philosophy to guide my research, I rejected both positivism and realism. These methods claim that scientific investigations produce objective, neutral truths which can be universally and globally applied. From common experience, it can hardly be supposed that identity is an entity that is completely and objectively rational, measurable, stable and predictable, formed as it is on social interactions that are subjectively interpreted. From literature I identified that the formation of identity is a highly individual process that is

subject to patterns of familial and social influence that are unique to each individual. Thus, I believe that identity formation is best understood in relation to subjective local contexts with due regard being given to the influences of discourse between the individual, his/her family, and society, and the subjective meanings that are ascribed to these interactions.

For these reasons, I chose the relativist, social constructionist approach. According to the social constructionist view, in the real social world of human beings, there are no objective or immutable truths (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2013). Truths may only be subjectively experienced, with multiple realities subject to multiple explorations and interpretations. Ontology is the study of how a reality comes into existence, the relation of this reality to surrounding individuals, society and the world in general, and how various related realities may be grouped and arranged according to a hierarchy, and divided on the basis of similarities and differences (Johnson et al., 2006, p. 102). In this research, I consider the concepts of reality propounded by subjectivist ontology, as opposed to those proposed by realist ontology. In the former philosophy, reality such as identity formation is the outcome of cognitive processes in individuals. The latter philosophy discounts human factors in the formation of reality. Subjectivist ontology considers the two realities of identity formation and human factors to be similar, and recognises numerous social realities. This is consistent with the concept of identity, where the self is composed of multiple sub-identities.

Social constructionist ontology assumes that every individual is an agent who impacts society (Eisenhardt, 1989). In turn society impacts the individual. This fits in with my findings from literature that show that identity is formed by interaction between the individual and society. Given that the reality of identity formation is relative and socially constructed, the epistemological perspective adopted in this research relates to the idea that identities can only be accessed and understood through interactions between the researcher and the respondents, which can then be interpreted. According to the social constructionist view, speech is used to construct a representation of a reality (Silverman, 2006, p. 93). That is, the reality of an individual's identity is verbalised in the form of subjective experience, and composed of elements that are recognised and shared socially. In this way, personal experiences and the meanings ascribed to the multiple roles that people assume in a society may be investigated: both the *how* and the *what* of what is being communicated are analysed. Social constructionism assumes that there is much to learn about how identities are constructed from the accounts that people give of their experiences, or the meanings attached to their roles.

Therefore, this research is not realist. It does not focus only on describing objective realities that may exist externally and internally to the person. The personal accounts which respondents share about their roles are transient and specific to the context in which they are produced. They are subjective, and provide multiple views of how identities are formed.

Constructing identities of second-generation members of Chinese business families may be done best through personal interactions with the respondents. The role of the researcher is key to the interpretivist approach. Therefore, I have consciously reflected on my role as researcher to approach respondents through personal interactions and explain how my experience of interviewing them face-to-face in their family firm enriches my understanding of respondents' business families and their social worlds. This assists the interpretive process. However, I also discuss the importance of remaining separate and objective as an observer.

In this section, discussions were about the relevance of social constructionist ontology as a philosophical guide for this research. This philosophy identifies that the framework of constructing identities of second-generation members of Chinese business families may be best done through personal interactions with the respondents. An individual's identity formation is structured by the influence of family and society, and these two are central to an individual's experience. The next section explains approaches to interpret data obtained through personal interactions.

3.2 Typology as the Research Approach to Construct Identity

One of the main challenges was how to structure the findings of my research. This was because I realised that every individual I met and interviewed would have a distinct identity. This means that there are potentially as many identities as the number of respondents. How to structure all these identities proved a dilemma. It was in the studies discussed below in this section that I encountered the concept of a 'typology' that would provide a solution to the dilemma of structuring findings in my research. In the study of Zahra et al. (2009), they attempted to identify the distinct identities of social enterprise. They faced the same dilemma that I faced, which was how to structure their research findings. Just as I acknowledge that there can be very many different identities which defy categorisation, they suggest that firms can take myriad forms, from very small businesses to small- and medium-scale enterprises to very large multinational companies. Just as there is no single, all-encompassing definition of individual identity, there is no clear definition of what the identity of a family business is, and

in fact there are multiple definitions of family businesses. There is no single study that has provided a universal method of analysing the dynamics between family, business and ownership (Kjellander et al., 2012).

All these factors corroborate my own experience in researching identity formation. There is no one definition of identity that I could use to structure my research findings or encompass the myriad different dimensions/constituents of human identity. Yu et al (2009) identified a continuum, the positioning of which could be used to distinguish identity. In this study, the challenge was to identify how family firms could be positioned, given the various possible dimensions that could be used for this purpose. From amongst the myriad dimensions, two were chosen: namely degree of family influence and degree of family control. They believed that these two dimensions most influenced the internationalisation of family businesses, and they were accordingly chosen as the two axes of the framework on which to position a particular family business. Based on these two dimensions, four types of family were chosen. This use of two dimensions to form a typology framework was also seen in the study of Yu et al. (2009), who sought to develop a taxonomy based on family business trends of behaviour. The two dimensions chosen were *systems* and *temporality*, based on which several types of trends and characteristics of business families were identified. Similarly, the research conducted by Dekker (2010) used a framework comprising the two dimensions of *professionalisation* and *formalisation* to identify different types of family firms. Based on this continuum, four distinct family firm types were identified.

All these studies provided me with clues on how to present data for showing identities as a social phenomenon. While there might be countless potential identities, they could be grouped into types based on certain similarities. Each 'type' of identity would be quite different from another. The typology framework could be based on two axes corresponding to two dimensions. I realised that I had already identified from literature that the two most important dimensions that influenced identity formation were *family* and *society*. I accordingly plotted the *family* dimension along the x axis of my framework, and the *society* dimension along the y axis of my framework. Each of the sub-dimensions corresponding to these two main dimensions were then analysed with respect to its relevance to the process of identity formation, and to identify the various identity types within the framework. The research outcomes are presented in chapter 4.

Having presented the main rationale of typology as an analytical approach to understanding identity, the following section further explains the epistemological assumptions underpinning the overall research design.

3.3 Interpretivism as an Epistemological Commitment

Several key inferences may be derived from the discussions on philosophy considered above. Identity formation is a complex phenomenon. Such a complex reality cannot be studied through any one perspective, but the aim is to obtain as many widely divergent views as possible on the processes of identity formation. This fits in with the philosophy of interpretivism, which states that any reality is too complex to be analysed objectively but is subject to multiple interpretations, all of which can be correct. To gather as many views as possible about identity formation, interpretivism recommends personal interactions between interviewers and respondents. Thus, I chose interviews as the means of collecting primary data. Here, language forms the tool for primary data gathering. Interpretivism provides a guide for selecting not only how data should be collected, but also how it should be interpreted. Interpretivism recommends hermeneutical and reflexive methods for proper and objective interpretation of results.

My view of constructionism is to recognise 'society as a conversation between people; the mind is an internalisation of that conversation; the self lies within and between the two' (Jenkins, 2008: 43). Taking this position, I do not recognise identity as something we are, but rather as something we do. It is embedded in the cultural context of intersubjective interactions (Webb, 2006: 29). Consideration of the social constructionist position helps us to recognise the role of researchers in the co-construction of knowledge through interpretation (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008: 33). Language is 'the basis of reflection on our own thoughts and actions, producing awareness of a self as both subject and object of our own and others' attention' (Webb, 2006: 16). Thus, it is necessary for this research to understand and create meaning in intersubjective interaction (Puig et al., 2008), such as the language used in interviews. My background being Chinese and a former member of a family business influenced my choice of research setting, and my familiarity with Chinese culture and ability to read Chinese help my interviewees to display their identities during the interviews. My background also helps me to interpret how the identity construction of second-generation Chinese people is shaped by the values and rules of their family businesses.

Knowledge of interviewee's social worlds can be achieved through inter-subjective depth and deep mutual understanding, as argued by Charmaz and Belgrave (2002). Cunliffe (2010) acknowledges that inter-subjective views between interviewer and interviewee are an essential component of interviews. Qualitative interviewing allows me to investigate an individual's subjective and complex social world in depth (Byrne, 2004). Therefore, I used semi-structured interviews with open-ended and flexible questions to access inter-subjective issues such as values and perceptions, which are less likely to be touched upon in a questionnaire or structured interviews with closed questions (*ibid.*).

An understanding of the identities of second-generation Chinese businesspeople was reached from this building-up process from literature, interviews, coding, thematic analysis and finally the emergence of a typology. Therefore, the characteristics of the process of knowledge creation in this thesis depend on interpretations by the researcher and the researched, their interactions (interviews and analysis) and reflections on these, i.e. the writing and dissemination of this thesis.

3.4 The Design of the Qualitative Research

I believe that adopting a qualitative approach facilitates the constructivist approach to identity formation and how respondents construct meanings and display certain forms of behaviour in certain situations, as well as why these occur. Willig (2012) states that qualitative investigations allow for the hidden subtleties involved in the formation of human identity to float to the surface. Such detailed examinations are not possible in quantitative research. The very subjectivity of human experience and consequently human identity formation calls for the adoption of the qualitative approach. Given the nebulous nature of human experience and the difficulties involved for both the interviewer and the interview in capturing such experience, this research will contain some ambiguities. In such a situation, I shall keep an open and flexible mind towards data. This is in accordance with Hollway and Jefferson (2000) view that in qualitative research, it is important for the researcher to keep a beginner's mind that allows for willingness to see things as if for the first time.

According to Alvesson et al. (2008), the social constructionist view of identity emphasises language and the researcher as the primary research instruments. It is thus qualitative in nature. Another consideration of a qualitative approach in this research is to recognise the role of the researcher in co-construction of knowledge (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009). My

background as being both Chinese and a former member of a family business influenced my choice of research topic. My understanding of Chinese language, behaviour and culture helped for more accurate transcriptions of the recorded interviews and in the interpretation of how the identity of second-generation construction family member is shaped in Chinese society. According to Avis (2003), the purpose of qualitative approach is to reveal the interactions between individual beliefs, cultural norms and social rules. This characteristic of qualitative inquiry helped me to understand the interplay of an individual's identity formation in the context of Chinese culture and society. Building on this understanding, I was able to interpret an individual's beliefs and values in relation to shared assumptions about the social interaction in family businesses.

The qualitative approach in this research is abductive, because the purpose of this research is to explain and enrich the explanation of the phenomenon of identity construction amongst second-generation members of Chinese business families. According to Johnson et al. (2006), in the abductive research process, the researcher wants to get a feel for what is going on so as to understand the background to the problem. Therefore, my idea behind interviewing respondents in their family and business setting was to gain the broader understanding of the psychological attachments, family identity, company culture, and to get a different subjective point of view which will allow for a more holistic view of the identity formation process. The objective is to increase the understanding of the processes of identity construction at a micro level environment.

From the above, the qualitative approach was chosen as I felt that, in the context of family businesses in China, and against the background of Chinese society, culture, and history, such an approach can generate better understanding of identity formation.

3.4.1 Inclusion Criteria

Baker and Edwards (2012) state that research requirements are fulfilled by the achievement of in-depth responses. In this section, the theoretical considerations in the design of criteria to recruit these respondents are explained, as well as the purposive sampling process that was used to identity the respondents in this research. Tongco (2007) states that the purposive sampling process involves the application of inclusion criteria that ensures only relevant persons are chosen for the research. This also eliminates bias and inaccuracies arising from random selection of respondents. In this thesis, the criteria to select participants for

interviews are individuals, who are either owners or managers of the family business in mainland China. The total of 50 respondents were recruited, and the first nine anonymous interviews were included in a pilot study to refine the interview schedule (Appendix 2) and guide the analytical direction explained in section 3.5.1. The main research was conducted with respect to 41 respondents (Appendix 3) whose views are analysed and presented in Chapter 4.

According to Shi and Dana (2013), second-generation members of Chinese business families are the progeny of the founders of family businesses in China who work in various roles in their family businesses. Accordingly, I chose the current transgenerational context of China as the research setting to explore identity construction in complex social settings. Therefore, I adopted the definition used in an annual report on Chinese family businesses. Ling and Xi (2014) define a family business as 'a business operation owned and controlled by one family that has either transferred, is in the process of transferring, or will transfer to the next generation'. This definition recognises transgenerational development, which is the central consideration of family businesses in China today. The key issues of this development are family ownership, and the power of control and succession. According to the respondent demographic introduced in the research background above, they are aged 25 to 45. The recruiting process was aided by a snowballing approach (Baker and Edwards, 2012, Noy, 2008).

To set the criteria for recruiting interviewees, I took account of the strong transgenerational aspect of family businesses and the cultural stance of my study, considering also the definition of family business and its historical context introduced in Chapter 1. My understanding of second-generation members of Chinese business families is that they are the children of first-generation founders of Chinese family businesses, aged 25 to 35, and work in family businesses that use processes of succession. This definition does not mean that I assume three types – owners, managers and workers – for Chinese businesspeople today, or that any of these roles are salient identities. Instead, each role is taken as a form of social identity that contributes partially to the overall structure of an individual participant's identity and may become salient, depending on subjective importance and situational relevance.

The location of fieldwork is especially important, because China's business landscape is highly diverse and not always understood by outsiders (Gedajlovic et al., 2011). For the

study, I recruited interviewees from Jiangsu and Zhejiang in the Yangzi Delta, where the development of family businesses provides insights into the lives of modern Chinese businesspeople. There are several reasons for this choice:

- The Yangzi Delta economic district is located in the eastern coastal region and is where the PRC's market-oriented economic reforms started. The eastern coastal region has more business establishments than the central and western regions combined (National Bureau of Statistics of China [NBSC], 2003). The regional imbalance in the PRC is an important indication for my research to be located in the eastern costal region. Thus, the identities of business people who operate family businesses in this region are suitable for this research because of their dynamic business acumen as a result of intensive and ever-changing economic activity in the region.

- According to NBSC (2003), nearly three quarters of all Chinese private enterprises were established in this region; most of them are concentrated in Jiangsu and Zhejiang in Yangzi Delta, and Guangdong in the Pearl Delta. These two areas account for nearly half of private ownership in the PRC, and the vast majority of companies are family owned and managed (Ling et al., 2012). Compared to the Pearl Delta, an important characteristic of family business in the Yangzi Delta is that the family rather than the state has control of business development (*ibid*). Family businesses in the Yangzi Delta tend to have less direct intervention from the state, and have survived and developed through a series of economic experiments that were initiated and relied on for their continuity by the family (Shi, 2012). This process is referred to as the Jiangsu-Zhejiang model (Wang, 2009).

Family businesses in Jiangsu and Zhejiang in the Yangzi Delta play a significant role in China's economic reform. They are typical of Chinese family businesses, in which the family is the source of motivation for the governance and innovation that support the development of the business. The location is appropriate for my fieldwork, given the economic environment in which family businesses take the lead of the nation's economic reform and develop for the next generation. Moreover, the intense concentration of family businesses in this region provided easy accessibility for visiting and interviewing respondents. The sampling process was not only purposely carried out in accordance with the criteria mentioned, but also aided by a snowballing approach (Baker and Edwards, 2012). There are two channels through which I recruited suitable interviewees. First, I used formal databases, such as the Family Business Networks (FBNs) in Asia, the Family Research Centre at Zhejiang University, and

Relaychina magazine in Shanghai. Second, my personal business background in this region allowed me to gain contacts through friends and acquaintances. More detailed background on the environment in which interviewees' family businesses operate, and their socio-economic context, is presented in the analysis within Chapter 4.

3.4.2 The Interview as a Primary Data Collection Tool

Qualitative interviewing as a means of understanding an individual's perceptions of life and work experiences is well-documented (Wengraf, 2001). In interviews, interviewees construct not just narratives but also social worlds, because the primary motivation is to generate data which give an insight into people's experiences (Silverman, 2006). Therefore, I chose qualitative interviewing as the method of collecting primary data on second-generation members of Chinese families. Non-standardised interviews enabled me to acknowledge an interviewee's different positions and respond accordingly, both at the time of interviewing and in the analysis. These interviews helped me to understand not just the choices, plans and goals of respondents, but also the social, cultural and organisational contexts within which these perceptions were formed.

Cunliffe (2010), in her reflection on organisational research methods, acknowledges that inter-subjective views between interviewer and interviewee are an essential component of interviews. Qualitative interviewing allowed me to investigate the subjective and complex world of family businesses in China in more depth. Interviews with open-ended and flexible topics allowed me to access inter-subjective issues such as values and experiences, which is less likely to be achieved from a questionnaire or structured interviews with closed questions. This approach enabled me to investigate the second-generation Chinese people's subjective perceptions of themselves and significant others, including me as the researcher interacting within their social world. These perceptions shape people's accounts of attitudes, values, aspirations of life, and work.

Social constructionists believe that language permits inter-subjectivity and gives people the ability to create and maintain a meaningful world. On the basis of this, Miller and Glassner (1997) argue that qualitative interviewing provides the opportunity to collect and rigorously examine narrative accounts of the social world. They add that, although narratives collected through interviewing cannot provide a mirror reflection of the true self and authentic social world, it 'may provide access to the meanings people attribute to their experience and social

world' (*ibid*). In line with the social constructionist position, through qualitative interviews I can gain knowledge of the inner social worlds of respondents through their narrative accounts.

Firstly, reflecting on the experience of recruiting interviewees in the study, I recognised the importance of social identity for an individual to mobilise the resources in his/her social networks in China. As strongly recommended in methodology books, for example Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 267), ethical procedures are considered as an effective means to protect the rights of interviewees, in turn enhancing the researcher's credibility when handling the information discovered from interviews. However, this was not practically justified in my experience with the interviewees in studies conducted in China. With or without ethical procedures, they were reluctant to give interviews or inclined to give superficial feedback if they were approached without referrals through family or friends, who are considered as inside their networks. My experience confirmed that China is a relationship-orientated society and Chinese people do not respond well to strangers as their social structure differentiates in-groups (friends and family) from out-groups (strangers) unless the out-groups are referred to them by someone from a trusted in-group. This insight is supported by interpretations drawn from the modern generation's social identity structure, of which traditional Confucian values and rules of family and collectivism are an essential part.

Secondly, all the face-to-face interviews were recorded and properly stored. As I am a native speaker of both languages, interviews were conducted in Mandarin (the official language of China) or Wu (the local language) as required by interviewees. Interviewees seemed to be more comfortably and deeply engaged in communication when in their native language environment. Xian and Woodhams (2008) argue that restriction of language is likely to impair the confidence of interviewees to formulate extended and individual responses. They presented a case of a researcher interviewing Chinese middle managers in English. They were likely to respond in the corporate English that they often used in the workplace to show their salient professional identity, rather than confidently providing extended and individualised responses when using their native language. Indeed, Gubrium and Holstein (1997) argue that language is also employed to construct identities for both the interviewer and the interviewee. Xian and Woodhams (2008), with regard to the use of native languages in the Chinese studies, suggests that communicating in respondents' language(s) has significant implications for three reasons: it allows respondents to express themselves fully, it establishes good

rapport, and it enables interviewers to interpret interviewees' statements with cultural understanding (see also Tsang 1998: 511). Language is often seen as a sign of social identity. After the pilot study, I felt it was easier to win the trust of interviewees when I reinforced my identity as Chinese and from the local area. It was noted, as Tsang (1998) suggests, that Chinese interviewees unconsciously distinguished 'us' and 'them' in the language they used. Therefore, interviews in my future research will continue to be held in the interviewees' native languages, either Mandarin or Wu, to emphasise my shared identity with the interviewees.

Thirdly, the interviews varied in length and venue due to arrangements often being changed at the last minute, or even during the interview, or interrupted constantly by phone calls. The latter was a common problem with the interviewees in the study. This observation is relevant to my research because it confirms my speculation that second-generation Chinese operate family businesses in a web of interlinked contexts, and may possess multiple roles which they have to perform concurrently. Multiple identities are likely to be constructed in this context. This was evident in my interviews, when interviewees were expected to respond immediately to the demands of various roles in their daily life and work. When interviews were interrupted, many participants would complain that they were not able to switch off their phones and they did not have lives of their own. This also indicates that in Chinese collectivistic communities, individuals often have to sacrifice their own needs for the responsibilities of their social identities. This was later confirmed in the analysis of the study in chapter 5.

Lastly, the pilot study was conducted in the early stage of this research, when the literature review was being undertaken and the research design was not finalised. Due to the lack of theoretical focus in the exploratory phase, I did not interact as well with my interviewees in the initial interview process as I would have wished. However, the initial interviews provided me with experience to improve the quality of the interviews in the next phase. One of the main issues was that early interviewees' narrative accounts deviate from my research focus on the contextual importance of identity construction, concepts of family businesses, features of the Chinese business environment, reflections on interviewees' past experiences, and the future of their businesses and themselves. Cole and Knowles (2001) suggest that one way to generate data is to clarify purposes with interviewees, and help them to understand that reflections on their experiences and the communication of their own thoughts are important. I

follow this advice to improve interviews in future research so that I can make interviewees aware of the interview topics. For the interviews in the next stage, I will send an invitation letter first to clarify my research interest and raise the awareness of interviewees, as well as stimulate thought amongst them. I will give a short briefing at the start of the interviews to remind participants of the research focus. As suggested by Czarniawska (2008), in the study I transcribed and translated only the results of the analysis, with relevant and important quotations noted down while listening to recordings.

3.4.3 Interview Language

In conducting the interviews and then analysing data, I anticipated the challenge of accurately recording responses. On the one hand, my report had to be written and presented in English. On the other hand, the interviews were conducted in Mandarin. My challenge therefore was to translate from Mandarin to English in a way that would avoid translation errors, and present data in a way that was more convenient for analysis. I knew from my experience of living in the West how language can become a problem for Chinese people due to differences in the usage of terms. For example, the reference to a person as a cow may be insulting to Westerners, but in China it refers to a hard-working person. In order to reduce inaccuracies, I first tried conducting the interviews in English, supposing that all my respondents were educated and that some of them – having studied in the West – would have a good grasp of English. However, I found that most of them, when reporting their views, used corporate English – the English they used at work or had used in college. This, I felt, took away from the individualisation of their responses. In addition, I found that by conducting the interviews in English, I was perceived to be arrogant by the respondents. I felt that this happened because of the perception that I could speak better English than the respondents because I had spent part of my life abroad. The respondents felt themselves to be at a disadvantage in such a situation. I realised also that by conducting the interviews in English, I was perceived to be a foreigner/outsider. This did not help me to win the trust of the respondents, or secure their confidence that would elicit more frank and detailed responses from them. Therefore, I tried to emphasise as much as possible that I was Chinese, and one of the ways I did this was by conducting all the interviews in Mandarin. I felt that this was a good decision as some topics – such as *guanxi* – could only be understood in Chinese. By shifting to Mandarin I saw the difference in the respondents' attitude when they started to fully express themselves, established good rapport with me, and helped me gain a better understanding of what they were saying from a cultural perspective. Also, given that what I was investigating was

identity, I found that Mandarin illustrated the ethnic identity of the respondents better than if I had conducted the interviews in English.

3.4.4 Translating Data

There were several issues that I faced in transcribing and translating data from the interviews from Mandarin to English. There are several linguistic differences between English and Mandarin. For example, there are Chinese words for which there is no equivalent in English. These include words such as *guanxi*, *lian*, *mientze*, *danwei* and *zhigong*, all of which are unique Chinese concepts. I realised that ascertaining the correct English words that would accurately represent the meaning of the Mandarin words would be a constant problem throughout the translation process. I had to constantly research and find synonyms in English that most closely matched the Mandarin meaning for many of the words. For example, the closest English word to *guanxi* is network. However, according to Huang and Gamble (2011), the concept of network conceptualised in Western literature is not fully equivalent to the word *guanxi*. Sometimes, the difficulties of finding equivalent words have led me to use cultural symbols that represent the identities of my respondents, and encouraged me to go deeper than language normally allows in the analysis. This experience was also found in the study of Xian (2011), who used the term 'lost in translation' to explain the dilemma for a researcher conducting an international research project.

There was an issue of grammatical style, as there is not much similarity in grammatical structure between Mandarin and English. In Mandarin there are no tenses, and the gender of personal pronouns are not articulated verbally. I had to refer to the context in which the interview was conducted to correctly ascertain the tenses, gender and pronouns for accurate translation into English. Another problem was that of interpreting data from the perspective of the Chinese socio-cultural context. The extensive use of idioms, proverbs and metaphors by the respondents had to be translated into English, and the challenge was at all times to ensure that they did not lose their original meaning in the translation process. For example, the metaphor of a pig – which means something negative in Western culture – stands for wealth, prosperity and familial togetherness in the Chinese cultural context. To solve this problem, I focused on ensuring that the interpretation was contextually, rather than verbally, correct. This meant that the words and metaphors were translated according to the meaning conveyed by the respondents during their interviews. I had to be reflexive in my approach to interpreting the data gathered from the respondents so as to 'penetrate the minds and

emotions' of the respondents. I would also like to state here that me being Chinese, having lived most of my life in China and part of it in the United Kingdom, did give me the advantage of understanding and bridging the cultural differences between China and the rest of the world. My dual role as researcher and translator afforded me the chance to analyse in more accurate detail the intercultural differences and the significance of identity construction in the uniquely Chinese context of a second-generation family business. This required paying more attention to elements related to Mandarin and to Chinese society and culture when constructing, interpreting, translating and writing in English.

3.5 The Interpretivist Phenomenological Method for Understanding Identity Construction

I chose interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) to interpret data about identity. This is because IPA examines in detail how individuals make sense of their social worlds and, in particular, the meanings ascribed to various experiences by them (Geanellos, 2000, Braun and Clarke, 2006). The approach here is phenomenological because it examines a respondent's life in detail. It looks at personal experience and deals with an individual's personal perception or account of events. This contrasts with attempts to produce objective statements of events experienced by the individual. I also chose IPA because it provides guidelines on how to interpret data on such a complex phenomenon as identity. According to Smith (2011), IPA recognises that research is dynamic, with the researcher playing an important and active role in the process. I attempt to enter the personal world of the respondent and gain an insider's perspective, but this cannot be done either directly or completely: access depends on my own concepts and interpretations of the respondent's personal world. This indicates that a two-way process of interpretation is involved, which is called double hermeneutics. Respondents attempt to make sense of their world, while I try to make sense of these attempts. This is done by asking questions of participants through personal interactions which take the form of interviews, and understanding as far as possible the points of view of participants. Thus, what is particularly relevant to this research is the hermeneutic view that interpretation, especially with respect to cross-cultural phenomena, needs to be done within the context of the surrounding culture, community, traditions and society. This means that participants in this research and their responses have to be interpreted in the context of Chinese culture, history and society.

Researchers, such as Schulz (2014), Noy (2008) and Laakkonen (2012, p. 33) suggest that adequate research methods in a hermeneutical study drive the incremental understanding of the phenomenon in the entire process of research. The understanding of the phenomenon increases through the academic process of the researcher engaging with the empirical studies of other researchers and the new understanding of the research subject. The design of this research is influenced by this hermeneutical approach of knowledge creation. Hermeneutical thinking, as explained above, has significant impact on the design of this research, as it influenced the use of the pilot study to improve on the main research of this thesis, as well as the decision on adopting the semi-structure interview and thematic analysis. Firstly, the pilot study was conducted based on the primitive understanding of the field, but the preliminary findings deeply informed the topics of interviews and direction for analysis in later stages of the main research (explained section 3.5.1), which is in line with the hermeneutical philosophy of "reflexive" knowledge (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009). Secondly, there are many ways of collecting primary data for qualitative studies including personal accounts, diaries and interviews (Englander, 2012). According to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009), hermeneutic thinking focuses on how people perceive a phenomenon that happens and tries to make sense of it in social interactions. Therefore, the semi-structured interview method was employed in this thesis to collect data, because semi-structured interviewing is a special setting of social interaction, where both the researcher and the respondents engage in an informed dialogue, such as a list of topics based on the existing knowledge of a subject, to make sense of social phenomenon (Coupland, 2007). Lastly, Evans (2016) points out that hermeneutical studies deal with the analysis of discovering new patterns, where just jumping to generalizations is discouraged. According to Gearing (2004), hermeneutical studies involve a detailed study of individual transcripts with the overall aim being to compare the different perceptions and understandings of the respondents. Therefore, the thematic analysis focused on the specific statements made by respondents, and whether they were similar or different from others to show the characteristics of their identities.

Hermeneutics recognises that phenomena such as identity formation will change as the understanding of individual processes of identity formation deepens. Hermeneutics believe that the mind of the researcher is a research tool to bring understanding, intuition and empathy to the process of interpretation, and enrich the social world with subjective and human experiences (Noy, 2008). Even so, hermeneutics recognises that at the start of any research, the mind of the researcher may be biased due to pre-understandings or pre-readings

of theoretical data. However, such fixed ideas gave way to a more receptive attitude that allowed me to gain a deeper and more objective understanding of the processes of identity formation. In Laakknenon's (2012) research where he positions hermeneutics, he does not discount the value of any pre-understanding that is based on understanding of theories, especially those that are accepted and widely applied by scholars. Thus, at all times, I compare and contrast empirical findings to the primary data collected in this thesis. In this way, old theories gain new meanings and significance during the hermeneutic process. This meant that I had to do an in-depth and detailed study on literature of identity formation, and apply key findings to this current study. For interpreting the data, both thematic analysis and metaphorical analysis were used.

Hermeneutics stresses the importance of intuition and empathy in the interpretive process. Accordingly, it was important for me to find ways to improve the whole process of understanding, interpretation and evaluation of subjective data, and the responses and dynamics of interactions. The concept of reflexivity is therefore relevant here. Reflexivity is the process of enhancing both integrity and trust between the parties involved in research, with the researcher gaining a deeper understanding of the overall process (Johnson and Duberley, 2003). I took utmost care to put respondents at ease by informing them about the purpose of the research and assuring them of complete anonymity and the confidentiality of data. Reflexivity extends to the language and concepts that are used in the process of communication; it affects the relationship with the interviewee and the language used when writing research papers. To this end, at no point was I demanding with respondents. Reflexivity mandates that concepts chosen for research reflect the assumptions underlying a report, thereby improving the trustworthiness and rigorousness of the reporting process (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2008). This is particularly valid in this research, as the findings need to be as objective as possible. Here I was guided by the findings of literature review. In addition, I paid special attention to anything new about identity that was not covered in literature.

Reflexivity in the context of empirical research involves constant and critical self-reflections on the researcher's interpretation and construction of empirical information. In an interview situation, the behaviour of researchers influences the responses of participants, which in turn impacts the communication shaping the identity of respondents (Cunliffe, 2003). In this scenario, reflexivity ensures that discussions gather facts on the one hand, and on the other

are treated as opportunities to gain added understanding. Therefore, I constantly thought about my own thinking and constantly questioned assumptions, even as I conducted research, gathered data and interpreted results. Xian (2011) specifies that this process is very important when transcribing interviews, for example transcribing interviews in Chinese into English, and in writing the final report itself, all the way from the introduction to the conclusion. In this way, the trustworthiness of the entire research is improved.

Based on the information above, reflexivity considers the value systems of researchers. For example, in this research it was necessary for me to put aside my own value systems when interpreting explanations given by respondents about why they did not want to join their family businesses. Conversely, I had to exercise caution whilst applauding the decisions of some of the respondents to take forward their family businesses. Reflexivity sensitised me to the possible negative impact of experience, bias and prejudice when interpreting the results of data, and also when conducting the interviews. This enabled me to take a more subjective stance when analysing and interpreting the data.

3.5.1 Refining the Research Through a Pilot Study

The purpose of the pilot study was to identify more relevant themes that might serve to enhance theoretical development, and to consider whether any refinement of methodology was necessary for the next stage. In the pilot study phase in August 2012 I visited China and conducted 9 interviews in total. Later, in April 2013, I managed 41 more interviews and had completed data collection. The initial themes that were derived with respect to identities of second-generation members of Chinese business families from the pilot study are summarised in Table 3.1 below. These themes were incorporated into the analysis in the later stage, shown in Chapter 4, relating to the understanding of family and society types, and its implications on the understanding of identity construction.

In line with the hermeneutic framework of interpretive processes outlined above (Shulz, 2014; Laakkonen, 2012; Noy, 2008), data collected from the initial stage of the study (the pilot study in this thesis) enriched the understanding of the topic and drove the development of theorising within the main study. The objective of the pilot study was to gain understanding of the process of identity construction by the second-generation members of Chinese business families. Various themes to be investigated in the pilot study have been identified from the literature review (shown in Appendix 2):

- Identity is being constructed, not innate.

- Identity is constructed with reference to meanings assigned to roles.

- Identity is constructed using processes of reflexivity and reciprocity.

- Identity is constructed through interactions with family and society.

- Constructs of family context that affect identity:
  - Birth order
  - Age/gender
  - Family value systems
  - Family relationship
  - Family roles

- Constructs of non-family social contexts (societal) that affect identity:
  - Networks
  - Age/gender
  - Social roles
  - Education
  - Political and economic influences in mainland China

- Conflict and its sub-constructs:
  - Hierarchy
  - Fragmentation
  - Verification
  - Emotion
  - Self-esteem
  - Control

These were the initial themes that corroborated with the themes explored in the literature review. For example, Laakkenon (2012), Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) indicated that identity formation always occurs through processes of interaction. Identities are constructed over time. This appears to be reflected in the identity formation processes of the second-generation business family members. Identity formation within families is impacted by personal and collective values that are transmitted within families from one generation to another (Lumpkin et al., 2008). They reflect the '*ways of being*' that the families want preserved and perpetuated. Data from my pilot study supported that business families are concerned about succession and hence wish to imbue young people with family values and

rules. Young people being groomed for succession are embedded in their own social, economic and historical environment related to the family business (Hall et al. 2004). As a result, there are multiple roles that the person may have to play including that of family member, businessman, shareholder or entrepreneur etc (Shepherd and Haynie, 2009). Each of these roles in turn impacts on how identity is formed. Lindgren and Wahlin (2001) state that during critical situations, people become very reflective about who they are and what they want to be. These situations force people to make role choices that can potentially result in conflict with others, or they will have to live with unresolved conflict and assume roles imposed upon them. These themes were developed into questions that I asked respondents during the pilot interviews (in Appendix 2). The questions covered the following topics:

- Demographics:
  o Age
  o Gender
  o Education
  o Marital status
- History of the family business from the start to its current position.
- Description of the family business.
- Indications of the most significant people in respondents' lives.
- How these significant people affect their identities.
- Analysis of the roles that respondents currently occupy.
- Analysis of how their interactions with their families affect identity formation.
- Analysis of how their interactions with their family businesses affect identity formation.
- Analysis of how their interactions with the society in which they have studied and worked affect identity formation.
- Analysis of key areas of conflict they encountered in the process of forming identities.

Table 3.1 The Preliminary Findings of the Pilot Study

Pilot Research Objectives	Themes in Literature	Preliminary Findings of the Pilot study
• Increasing the understanding of what traditional values mean to participants	• Predominant Chinese Confucian values and social norms (Jameson, 2007) • Expectations of first-generation family business founders (Dou and Li, 2012) • Ambivalent feelings towards founder parents (Shi, 2012) • Lack of experience or power to exert influence (Xiang and Teng, 2008)	• Family identification through education • Considering the male founder as the role model for leadership in the business and householder in the family • Gender issues regarding the right of female business people to succeed • Feeling obliged to comply with the role of the child in the family
• Increasing understanding of what Western values mean to participants	• Influence of individual culture (Li et al., 2010) • Influence of Western business practice (Anderson and Lee, 2008) • Higher level of education (Pistrui et al., 2001) • Professional business training (Zhang and Ma, 2009) • Being creative individuals in the family business (Chrisman et al., 2005) • Influence of market-oriented thinking in economic reform (Shi and Dana, 2013)	• Being independent, autonomous, and self-focused • Wishing to introduce Western professional management practices to the family business • Interpersonal competence to communicate with other stakeholders to negotiate social identities • Wishing to have own stamp on the leadership of the family business • Denial of family business role support when conflicting with individual achievement • Feeling pressure to break out of comfortable family business environments to be entrepreneurial

The preliminary findings of the pilot study were taken into consideration in the design of topics and questions for the interviews in the main research (Appendix 2). Apart from the themes identified in this literature as explained above in this section, the feedback from the participants encouraged me to proceed with the questions I prepared for the pilot study. Moreover, the themes in Table 3.1 that emerged from the preliminary finding were included in the interviews in the later stages of the main research (Appendix 2).

In addition, the preliminary findings result from the pilot study pointed to looking at the development of a typology of identity of second-generation business family members. An important and constantly recurring theme in the pilot study is that of how role conflict drives the identity formation. Younger people may sacrifice the roles they wish to assume or even their life goals in accordance with the expectations of older generations (Lumpkin et al. 2008). On the other hand, Ling and Xi (2012) and Sharma (2005) point out that generational differences in perception of particular roles, such as that of successor, can result in identity conflict of individuals. Based on the analysis of the pilot study, I identified two opposing sets of meanings described by the nine respondents in the pilot study to explain their experiences in family businesses. I observed some respondents to be imbued with traditional Chinese family and social values, although they view themselves as independent and autonomous people. On the other hand, independence and autonomy amongst some of the other respondents is synonymous with rebellion against traditional Chinese values. Some others rejected autonomy and independence in favour of sublimation within the family business. This discovery led me to believe that there are diverse ways in which participants interpret their experiences, even if they all come from the same type of family or the same type of society. Therefore, I wanted to discover in which family types and social worlds an identity was salient. The pilot study therefore aspired this thesis to classify the types of families in mainland China: traditional, moderately traditional and non-traditional Chinese. The same analysis indicates that there are three parallel types of society. By comparing these three types of family and society, a total of nine different types of identity were discovered from the interview within the respondents participated in the main research (Appendix 3).

3.5.2 Thematic Analysis in the Main Research

In this research, thematic analysis involves discovering the various identities of the respondents, the family and societal influences responsible for their creation, how different identities affect the performance of businesses, aspects of the spirit of entrepreneurship, and

which identities cause the most conflict in the family and with predominant values in society. Compiled data was transcribed onto a comparative grid to establish patterns.

Two categories of themes arise from a thematic analysis of data. The first is themes that arise from respondents' language and customs. The second is themes that are significant to the aims and objectives of the research in question. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the first set of themes reconstructs the themes that respondents use to describe their own experiences and give meaning to them. The other set helps researchers to develop theoretical insights using themes that further explain the social phenomena being studied. Thematic analysis leads to comparison, description and explanation of key themes and patterns that emerge from data (*ibid*). As various themes are compared and the understanding of the relationships between them is developed and refined, the themes themselves undergo changes both in content and definition. Researchers can code and analyse information at the same time to further develop concepts. Through a process of continual comparison of similarities in data, researchers can refine emerging patterns and themes, identify their salient characteristics, explore their relationships to one another, and develop a coherent explanation-based framework.

For the thematic analysis in this research, I used an eight-step cycle of analysis. Five steps were involved in coding: two for management of the codes, one for initial classification of codes, one for code consolidation to identity emergent themes, and one which involved the use of writing to extend the findings from the codes:

Step 1: Reading and Annotation – in this step I read, transcribed, re-read and organised the data from the 50 interviews. In this process, I noted down or annotated initial ideas at the side of the pages.

Step 2: Open Coding – this is the process of initial coding of the annotated data. The purpose was to deconstruct the data from the chronology of the interviews, and translate it into a format from which themes or patterns could be discerned. These codes took the form of individual units of meaning. Some examples include filial child, wife, entrepreneur, etc. They were given clearly identifiable names and definitions for easy analysis.

Step 3: Code Categorisation – during step 2, individual codes were identified. In step 3, similar codes were grouped together to form categories. These categories were then developed into a framework that would further the interpretation of the dataset in accordance with the research questions. This step also included processes of further concentration, re-naming and category merging, to make sure that definitions reflect the codes accurately. These categories are between logical groups and themes or patterns. For example, on the basis of this categorisation process, 9 distinct groups were discerned, each of which specified the same set of rules.

Step 4: Further Coding – during this step, the restructured groups were broken up into subordinate groups. This was done to extend understanding of the emerging themes beyond definitions to more qualitative aspects of identify formation, and to analyse differing views, attitudes, beliefs and types of behaviour associated with these groups of codes. This helps to explain the meanings of the codes.

Step 5: Reducing Data – this step involved the consolidation of codes and associated data on the basis of which a write-up could be done. The consolidated data indicate the extent to which themes and sub-themes affect identity formation.

Step 6: Summaries of Analysis – in this step, summaries of each code and category were created. In writing this summary I focused on quotations related to the codes. The attempt here was to identity patterns of coding and to consider background information in terms of which respondents had made a particular statement. Any patterns that may have been related to the profile of the respondents were identified. During this step I also situated each code within the overall context of identity formation. Here, the tasks were to identify how different themes are related to each other, how they answer the research questions, and how different codes could be sequenced into the form of a narrative or story that could be structured and expressed in the form of a coherent narrative. I considered the findings from the primary data along with those from the literature review to close research gaps.

Step 7: Validation – during this step I constantly tested, re-checked and revised the analytical summaries. This was a form of self-audit that I did to see whether any information was redundant or repetitive. Such information was removed, and I also attempted to go

through the data again, looking for relevant fresh information that could be added. I did this to try to find more insights, themes and evidence-based findings.

Step 8: Writing and Synthesis – during this step, I undertook to write out descriptive accounts emerging from respondents' views coherently, using supportive statements from the data to create the discussion and analysis chapters of the dissertation.

3.5.3 Constructing Identities by Analysis of Metaphoric Contents

In addition to thematic analysis, I also analysed metaphors to develop the typology of the nine identity types. I did this because metaphors reflect not only a way of using language but also a way of thinking. Metaphors indicate how people understand the world in which they live and their thinking processes (Low and Cameron, 1999, p. 56). Given that in this research I had to understand language and derive meaning from the thought processes of respondents as communicated in their interviews, analysis of the metaphors used by respondents adds to my findings. In addition, metaphors provide an easily accessible but profound understanding of the thought processes of individuals, by contrast with hyperbole, verbose explanations or sarcasm (Villamil, 2000). In this research I used the metaphor identification procedure (MIP) recommended by the Villamil (2000), which is a four-steps method:

Step 1 – I read through all the interview transcripts to understand the context in which each respondent used metaphors.

Step 2 – I marked out all the lexical units within the transcripts which could be either a single word such as 'pig', or a group of words such as 'going up' or 'going down' which had to be interpreted as a single unit.

Step 3 – I took into account the meaning of each lexical unit with respect to the whole text. For example, respondents who refer to their 'pigs' being important to them mean that their primary loyalty lies with their families. 'Going up' or 'going down' are general Chinese metaphors for getting ahead or being left behind. The attempt here was to compare the words used with their dictionary meanings. If the dictionary meaning of the words did not make sense in the context of the interview transcript, I decided that the words were metaphors.

Step 4 – I worked through the metaphors in detail, by examining the text, breaking up groups of words into individual words, and understanding the context in which the words are used. I thus created a record of all the metaphors used by each respondent.

From this analysis, I found that the MIP generated qualitative as well as quantitative results. By using metaphors as qualitative data, they provide illustrations of relationships between the words used and meanings as reflected in the thought processes of respondents. For example, some of the respondents describe operations in their family businesses as akin to 'three monks having no water to drink', meaning too many unnecessary relatives and local employees work in the family business. Another set of respondents refer to the situation within the family as 'mutes eating dumplings', which describes their helplessness to change their situation or those of their family business. In this way, respondents indirectly hint at concepts related to identity formation, such as conflict. In the qualitative result analysis, my task was to identity the metaphors and the thinking of the respondents that lies behind the metaphors.

The quantitative aspect of the analysis of metaphors was to count the number of times a metaphor was used, and by whom. The attempt here was to find out whether groups of respondents used a metaphor more frequently than others. The frequency of usage indicates salient, important features, and elements of commonality, until generalised conceptual categories emerged. These metaphors were also compared with those identified in literature to understand the possible reasons why respondents quoted those particular metaphors in the way they did. Based on this process of grouping and interpreting, definitions and explanations were developed for each of the nine identity types. Because metaphors are complex concepts, the most commonly occurring metaphors in each category were identified for the purposes of classifying the different identity types.

3.6 Ethical Issues

One of the ethical issues I had to address was that of power imbalance between the respondents and myself as the researcher. I realised that in attempting to represent the self and the other, I would automatically assume a dominant and privileged position by virtue of being the researcher, vis-à-vis my respondents. I redressed this shortcoming in several ways. Firstly, I adopted a style of interviewing whereby the respondents were able to tell me about

themselves in whatever way they wanted, according to their own experiences and understanding, without any interruptions from me. I discouraged any attempt to influence the way the interviews were conducted, or impose my own frame of reference on them. I used a robust method of analysing data whereby I drew on my own contextual knowledge of China and the West to derive several possible interpretations. This is reflected in the presentation of multiple perspectives side by side, without any attempt to reconcile them. For example, the issue of increasing sexualisation of women in modern Chinese society is presented side-by-side with the picture of women who are treated equivalent to men in some families. The diversity of various interpretations of a social phenomenon is indicated frankly and candidly. There is no attempt to condemn one or praise another.

Before conducting the interviews, I explained the nature of the research to the respondents, its aims and objectives, giving them the freedom to withdraw from the research at any time they wanted, explaining to them that the data would be kept confidential. This ensured that their participation was fully voluntary, with no coercion from my side. I think that the advantage of this voluntary participation is to elicit more candid responses from the clients. I also ensured that when conducting the interviews, the normal routines of the participants were not disturbed. Since the participants were divulging their life stories and their personal information, I treated such data as sensitive. The data was kept confidential, and is stored in password-protected electronic files on a computer system to which only I have access. Any hard copies of the interview transcripts were destroyed.

3.7 Summary of Methodology

The philosophy of interpretivism was used to guide this research. This is because a complex and social phenomenon like identity cannot be studied using positivist forms of research. For the same reason a qualitative, abductive approach was chosen for the research. The primary data was collected from 50 respondents via interviews. The data was analysed in a hermeneutic interpretive process to explore and interpret themes. The main aim of the analysis was to identify and consolidate emerging themes and patterns that would help to explain identity construction amongst second-generation members of Chinese business families.

Chapter 4 Findings and Analysis

In this chapter, I present the findings from the analysis of 41 interviews with reference to the theoretical framework in Figure 2.5. Constructs of societal context that influence the identity construction process, including expected social roles and values, norms of social networks, and expected values of educations were investigated. In addition, constructs of family context included expected family roles in accordance with the birth order and dyad relationship were analysed. I present in sections 4.1 and 4.2 various values and norms that exist in mainland China and are described and represented by the respondents in this thesis. Comparing the existing literature, I explain the several types of societal and family contexts, which the respondents connecting with to describe and define themselves in order to construct identities. In accordance with the research design in section 3.5.2, common narrative contents cross interviews were identified, and interpretations were provided regarding the extent to which values and norms respondents corresponded to or deviated from the literature on the structures of social interactions in Chinese society.

The literature also indicates that identity construction is a process, including the nature of identity conflict and identity work, whereby individuals constantly negotiate with various sub-identities in three critical decisions in the family business regarding succession, ownership and entrepreneurship. In section 4.3, I presented how this process of identity construction is influenced by the interplay of various values and norms evident in three types of societal and family contexts of family business in mainland China, as shown in section 4.1-2.

4.1 Analysing the Constructs of Societal Context for Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

Identity is the self that typifies a person at any point in life because of surrounding social relationships, according to the social values and norms that individuals identify themselves with (Raffelsberger, 2009). In the chapter 2 of the literature review, I identify the constructs of socital context for identity construction, including expected social roles, the norm within social networks, and the values of education. Regarding the family business of mainland China as the research context, the identity construction of individuals is predominantly influenced by traditional Confucian values (Anderson and Lee, 2008). Nevertheless, Wang et

al. (2016) state that the radical changes of political system in China has a significant impact on the social and family values that structure the interactions of individuals in Chinese society. Since 1949, Chinese society has been driven by socialist and Maoist political ideology with its emphasis on equality and subservience to state authority, as well as the influence of capitalist values such as equality, individualism, competition and materialism (Peng, 2004; Shi and Dana, 2013). However, little is understood about whether and how these various values and norms were represented in the societal context of family businesses in mainland China for the respondents to describe and define themselves. It is this gap in literature that my research attempts to bridge. In this section, the analyse focuses on how the values and norms that respondents identify as belonging to certain types of age and gender groups, as well as networks and educational background. The section 4.1.1 presents three distinct types of societal contexts in mainland China.

4.1.1 Expected Social Roles of Different Societal Contexts for Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

Society prescribes distinct roles for different age and gender groups of people (Wegge et al., 2008). In conventional Chinese society, elders and males are offered unquestioned authority and power in social interaction (Pan and Zhang, 2004). On the other hand, the younger generation is growing increasingly restive of these traditional prescribed restrictions and wishes to assume higher social positions (Shek, 2006). Nevertheless, the impact of age and gender on identity construction has not been fully explored in literature with respect to second-generation business family members in mainland China (Ling and Xi, 2016).

The data in Table 4.1 shows the common narrative contents of respondents that indicated Type A, B and C societal contexts of family businesses in mainland China, within which the expected roles of different respondents have been influenced by diverse values and norms for interacting with different age and gender groups.

Table 4.1 Expected Social Roles of Different Societal Contexts for Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

Type	Data	Interpretation
	indicating the expected social roles (comparing to literature, and further explained below the table)	regarding the type of societal contexts, from which these expectations derived
Type A	"Chidemi biwo chideyan duo (吃得米比我吃得盐多, *salt the elders had is more than rice I had*). I learnt a lot from them." **- Chaobo, male, age above 26, Furniture retailer, Owner** "Jiang haishi laodela(*姜还是老的辣*, Aged ginger is spicier*). Buting laorenyan，chikui zaiyanqi, (不听老人言，吃亏在眼前，*If the old dog barks, he gives counsel.*）" -**Moli, female, age above 30, Cooking ingredients wholesale, owner** "In the long Chinese history, men are always in charge. The social environment is easier for a male leader than for female ones in the business world." -**Tingting, female, age above 35, Manufacturer of female tights, CEO**	Traditional Chinese culture advocates the superior roles of elders and males in society (Yeung, 2006) The female leader role is not a norm in traditional Chinese society (Hai, 2016)

Type B	"We always say that younger generation is the flower blossom. The reality is that young people were usually not listened to." **- Li, female above 30, Real estate company, financial manager** "People are educated to respect authority, since the communist party came to rule. In China, power speaks. Everyone wants to be the boss." -**Xiaoya, female, age above 30, E-commerce, Owner** "In China, people in the higher position in the society are expected to set an example to others and can take care of them. It is a society run by elites." -**Xiaozhu, male, age above 30, PR event organiser, owner**	The young generation shall be listened to, even though it is not entirely the social reality in mainland China (Park and Chesla, 2007) The communist political system in China has enhanced the power distance in mainland China (Li et al., 2010, Li and Liang, 2015) The leader role is granted to individuals who serve the collectivistic goals (Kim and Gao, 2013)
Type C	"Respect for the elders shall not become a reason for them to yilaomailao *(倚老卖老, feel superior)."* **-Shanshan, female, age above 25, Manufacturer of Children Tights, Sales manager** "Some elders are weilaobuzun, (为老不尊, does not honour the superior social position of elders）. If a person is underqualified, they must give up the position no	Individualistic thinking is valued in the choice of social roles in young generations(Barkema et al., 2015) Modern western influence in China has promoted the qualification and competition to gain any social positions

	matter whether old or young."	(Huang and Gamble, 2015)
	-Yongzan, male, age above 20, Real estate development and sale, sales manager	
	"I do not think my generation feels huge pressure to live for others. It is my own choice to lead the family business, also my own choice to leave and start my own business one day."	
	-Ruxiao, female, age above 26, Manufacturer of accessories, CEO	

Source: own work

12 respondents (29%) connecting with the Type A society recognised that being an elder means having experience and wisdom, and that males have authority and power, thus placing significant importance on respect for hierarchy in traditional Chinese society (Yeung, 2006; Hai, 2016). This is indicated by the metaphor "*If the old dog barks, he gives counsel*", indicating that reverence for age is due to the perception that older persons are more dependable and shall be given more responsibilities to take the lead. Respondents compare older people to "*spicier ginger*" that indicates being skilful in demanding situations, and other metaphors such as "the *salt the elders had is more than the rice I had*", which really implied the superior position of elders in the Type A society. These views are in accordance with those of Yeung (2006), all of whom state that the characteristics of hierarchy are uniqueness of conservative Confucian society in China.

In addition, structured by the Type A social values and norms, 12 respondents (29%) were expected to follow the traditional Confucian rules that women should be subservient to men in social situations (Hai, 2016), indicated by phrases like "in the long Chinese history, men are always in charge". The expected roles for male respondents were as leaders of the family businesses, and women do not have to challenge the hierarchy of social positions for the male and female. It is because these respondents believe that the long history of Chinese society has approved that this is a stable structure and still prevalent in society today. Therefore, these respondents think that following the tradition would be beneficial to the "family business to be recognised". These attitudes and beliefs show absolute agreement and compliance with the conservative view of leader roles for men and women in the business world. Regarding the expected roles for different gender groups, Liu (2013) stated that female leader is not a norm in traditional Chinese Confucian society, thus are socially unacceptable. These views again corroborate the assumption that Type A reflects a traditional societal context that is sustained and structured by conventional Confucian values and norms.

18 respondents (44%) connecting with Type B societal context that respected the conservative Confucian value of respecting the elders all the time (Park and Chesla, 2007), but required to rethink the social position of young generation to be respected as much as the elders. In addition, it seems that the expected social roles presented by 18 respondents (44%) under the influence of Type B societal values and norms that are associated with the communist doctrine of high power distance and collectivism (Li et al., 2010). For example, a respondent

advocated that "young people are the flower blossom", which means that the young generation is the future of the country, thus shall be "listened" to. This statement implied that serving the country drives the society to recognise the value of young people. Two respondents spoke of the preferences of higher position in the society, for which it is important to consider the capabilities of a person "to take care of others" to be recognised as the leader in the Chinese society. On the other hand, these respondents emphasised the value of person for helping others as the critical criteria for being granted higher positions in the society. This coincides with the concept of equality in the Maoist era that everyone, regardless age and gender, can pursue the same careers to have merit-based allocation of roles (Kim and Gao, 2013). Statements from the respondents indicated that while the contribution of elders to the society must be respected, the expectations of social roles shall not be dictated by the conventional views of age and gender for the identity construction of individuals. Accordingly, the Type B societal context for the identity construction of individuals includes values and norms that were moderately traditional.

According to 11 respondents (27%), the Type C societal context supported the unconventional thought that everyone shall respect their own position in the society in comparison to the nature of traditional Chinese society in respect of hierarchy (Barkema et al. 2015). Two respondents criticised the conventional Confucian structure regarding the superior position given the elders, and argued that a person needs to prove one's worth of social titles regardless age and gender. Therefore, the elders will be respected only if they act on the superior position they have in the society. This implies that the values and norms of Type C societal context for the identity construction of individuals rejected social hierarchy in conventional Chinese society, but more prone to comply the social system evaluable the performance and capabilities of individuals for higher social positions, as most of capitalist society operates accordingly (Lane et al. 2016). In addition, the Type C societal structure, because of capitalism influence, permits individualism and promote competition and professionalism (Huang and Gamble, 2011). These 11 respondents (27%) stated that they were encouraged to be whatever they want to be. All evidence from the respondents hailed from the values and norms of Type C societal context indicated to be against the hierarchy from the conventional society, and are influenced by the modern western influences in mainland China, such as individualism and competition.

4.1.2 Norms of Social Networks within Different Societal Contexts for Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

Li (2014) states that the 'Guanxi' networking style, where people do each other favours in a reciprocal manner, is what distinguishes the Chinese way of doing business. Here the individual is not independent but an essential part of a larger network that works together for mutual success. This collectivist approach also explains why Chinese people believe that self-esteem is not as important as public perception of the individual. This public perception is called '面子'*mianzi* and refers to how people are seen in the eyes of others (Chan, 2006). However, there is research to be done regarding the extent to which these conventional social network norms can shape the identity construction of individuals. Table 4.2 shows the influences of different societal values and norms that respondents refer to when reporting on the experience of Chinese social networks.

Data in Table 4.2 shows the common narrative contents of respondents that indicated Type A, B and C societal contexts of family businesses in mainland China, within which the norms of social networks as reported by different respondents have been influenced by diverse values and norms according to literature.

Table 4.2 Norms of Social Networks within Different Societal Contexts for Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

Type	Data indicating the norms of social network (comparing to literature, and further explained below the table)	Interpretation regarding the type of societal contexts, from which these norms derived
	"A powerful dragon cannot crush snakes in its old haunts. *Guanxi (关系，networks)* is the door to any business, because a newcomer is not easily trusted and would never know things behind-the-scenes… If I have problems, I would first call people I know. I do not think it is old fashion, but most effectively way of sourcing information and resources. It is more reliable than a piece of paperwork (legal contracts) and cost saving." **-Wangan, male, age above 35, Plastic raw materials wholesale** "Chinese people give significant importance to *Mainzi (面子, being respected and supported by others).* I gave you Mainzi for it to be returned one day. Everyone plays the game. Argument is bitter for Chinese people; no one would want to lose Mianzi." -**Xiaosi, male, age above 25, Chopsticks factory, owner**	*Guanxi* networks that are sustained through mutual and collectivistic goals (Dou and Li, 2012) Business opportunities, information and resources are more effectively collected from informal networks in Chinese society (Hwang and Kwang, 2012) Society is a larger extension of family, and is a shelter or home for everyone (Au and Kwong, 2009)
Type A		

	"I grew up where neighbours are uncles and aunts, everyone is in a big family. The family business is an umbrella for us. It is now my responsibilities for taking care of the family." -**Bibo, female, age above 20, Boutique Hotel, owner**	
Type B	"If I need money, I would ask both friends as well as the bank. Why anyone wishes to exclude any possibility." - **Zhengpeng, male, age above 30, plastic mould factory, CEO** "The business is grounded here and connected with people around me. Sometimes, I feel tired to meet people and return favours. It is such an excessive effort to maintain these connections. However, I am not sure if I could ever be that successful, had I moved my business to any other places." -**Yanjun, male, age above 30, DIY tool manufacturer, sales manager** "I do not particularly like attending all meetings with the government officials, who wish to consult the business. However, without this	Reply on the local network would limited the opportunities deviated from the existing market (Du et al. 2011) To widen the scope of social network to access resources for small business in China (Bian, 2017) The involvement of government in the business is strategic (Huang, 2008).

	connection, you may not have the support to operate businesses in China, or sometime become obstacles.*"* -**Lina, age above 25, Manufacturer of LED lights, CEO**	
Type C	"I do not understand Guanxi, because it is inevitably involved with '*老虎和苍蝇（tiger and flies, corrupted powerful officials and lowly bureaucrats*'. I trust only the legal terms and conditions." -**Zhenjing, age above 30, McDonald license holder, owner** "Of course, I network, but I prefer formal occasions where people are bond through professionals. A cat would not ask a dog for help." - **Tommy, age above 30, Machine tool manufacturer, CEO**	Concerning the fairness and business ethics, these modern western business concepts, young generation is in favour of formal professional networks in mainland China (Du et al., 2015)

Source: own work

The responses from 12 out 41 interviews showed that they have positive experiences while encountered with the informal Guanxi networks, which indicates that the values and norms structured the networks in the Type A societal context is conventional. As reported by these respondents, the informal Chinese network of *guanxi* is highly regarded, because Type A society has the trust and reply on people within the close circle that are often connected through friends and family for information and resources to sustain businesses in the local region. This way of network is maintained through another fabric of conventional societal rule, *Mianzi*, which works as the mutual ground to establish business relationships (Due and Li, 2012). These respondents believe this is the most "effective", "reliable" and "cost-saving" of obtaining information and resources for the existing business. Respondents pointing out that "*the family business is an umbrella for all of us.*" Family business is referred to as "an umbrella" to people in the society as an extended home or shelter. This is indicated in their interview response that society was considered as an extension of the family. Social harmony is greatly valued ('argument is bitter'). These respondents' perceptions that Chinese businesses shall reply only on the people bonding through the extended family network is conservative (Au and Kwong, 2009).

18 respondents (44%) operate the business within the Type B societal context did not completely resist *guanxi* networks, but as it is comparing to its importance within the conventional society were less important. This was evident in the report of a respondent that both formal and informal social networks are accessible. Observed from the response of another respondent, who recognised that *guanxi* networks would help the business, but understood that only to the degree that the business would continually remain within the original market environment. This has confirmed research of Du et al. (2011) who argued that business in China would expand globally if only the international networks could be established. Given the pros and cons of the *guanxi* network, some research suggested the importance of combining both formal and informal networks that together would have helped solve the challenges of accessing resources for small businesses (Bian, 2017). This was particularly mentioned by respondents who agreed with this choice to network in the Type B societal context. On the other hand, Huang (2008) suggested the necessity of connecting to the Chinese government for the successful performance of the business. This heavy shadow of communist authoritarian business environment was confirmed by the interviews with respondents as necessary for the business to be connected to the most resourceful networks in

mainland China, the government. With the visions to breakout the conventional social circles, and the accessibility to the formal and government social networks, these 18 respondents (44%) become less conventional in their way dealing with the conventional *guanxi* networks for businesses. Accordingly, the norms of networks in the Type B societal context for identity construction are moderately conventional.

Observed from interviews with 11 respondents (27%) who identifying with the norms of networking within the Type C societal context, I found a fundamental distrust of traditional Chinese *guanxi* networks for the concern of fairness and business ethics, which are modern western business concepts (Du et al., 2015). The distrust of traditional *guanxi* networks was indicated in the metaphors of "tigers and flies" that directly pointed to the existence of unethical trade off in such networks. In addition, a respondent pointed out that 'a cat would not ask a dog to help', implying that they were not taking part of *guanxi* networks, and stated that they had more reliance on individual effort, and for supporting businesses. Therefore, it was evident that there were formal networks in mainland China respecting the norms of fairness, business ethics and professionalism and preferred by some second-generation business family members. It was because they connected with the Type C societal structure that has the influence of these western business concepts and had extremely negative views regarding the conventional *guanxi* networks, thus were non-traditional.

4.1.3 Values of Education within Different Societal Contexts for Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

According to (Cao et al., 2015), the opening up of the Chinese economy has given Chinese people more opportunities to encounter non-Chinese thinking. Local Chinese education has emphasised different values, skills and knowledge compared to some developed countries (Wang, 2011). Tao and Yi (2012) confirmed that the younger generation in family businesses in mainland China are more likely to receive education from a non-Chinese system with the support of affluent family resources, for which they were expected to outperform their business counterparts in who have not had such experiences. However, little research has explored the impact of such non-Chinese education on identity construction by second-generation business family members.

Data in Table 4.3 shows the common narrative contents of respondents that indicated Type A, B and C societal contexts of family businesses in mainland China, within which the values of education reported by different respondents have been influenced by diverse social perceptions regarding educational choices according to literature.

Table 4.3 Values of Education within Different Societal Contexts for Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

Type	Data	Interpretation
	indicating the values of education (comparing to literature, and further explained below the table)	regarding the type of societal contexts, from which these values derived from
Type A	"I do not travel much. This is a small town. My business is local. I do not need to travel all the way to learn from people doing businesses on the other side of sea." - **Moli, female, age above 30, high school in PRC, Cooking ingredients wholesale, owner** "When I returned from my study in the UK, people admired my experiences but did not necessarily mean that they understand my experiences; for example, my friends do not like me become confronting and direct." - **Tommy, male, age above 30, Bsc in e-commerce in the UK, machine tool manufacturers, CEO** "Even though women are more educated today, it does not mean that we could do any job we wish. For a business to be recognised, it is better to	There were challenges in the transnational education in China to lecturing competences, such as autonomous, critical thinking and creativity, discussion and arguing (Steinkuhl, 2016) The female leader role is not a norm in the traditional Chinese society (Liu et al. 2014)

	have a male leader." -**Xuefei, female, age above 35, part-time MAB in PRC, oven manufacturer, owner** "Like my friends around me, my parents send me to study in Australia for several years, so that my qualifications and language skills are rewarded to show off that their investment in my education that their daughter is superior of most people." -**Xujian, female, age above 20, high school in Australia, Sewing machine manufacturer, CEO assistant**	
Type B	"A person who has received education abroad would be expected to be more capable to help others. These people cannot understand the value of my education, because they have not had the experience. However, they wish to judge from how you perform." -**Chenjie, male, age above 25, BA in marketing in UK, shoes factory, CEO assistant** "When I came back after five years in the UK, I was a bit lost until I was invited to events organised by government particularly for people have overseas background. In China, you are connected to people in the higher league if you have the right (education) background. You would be	Collectivism emphasises that individuals shall identify themselves with the common goals (Li et al. 2010) The overseas education experiences would be appraised if it could serve more than personal interest (Wang et al. 2011) The value of overseas education could be seen as a type of human capital to exchange for the social capital, such as a symbol of high social

	supported if your knowledge and skills were demanded by the government for helping the economic growth. For that, you would have the chance to inform the policy makers." -**Kuili, female, age above 35, Msc in accountancy in UK, waster waste solution equipment provider, owner** "Our generation is extremely *Fuzao (浮躁，impetuous)*. Not many people care about social morals and responsibilities. Consuming luxury western brands, even western education, are necessary for social status, particularly in the circle of rich businessmen, to stand out. Therefore, nothing is as critical as making money, and no one cares how you make that money." -**Wangshi, female, age above 20, BA in hospitality in Switzerland, Dye factory, CEO assistant**	status (Turner and Acker, 2017, p. 34)
Type C	"I was born in so called 'Me generation'. Most of us are *'Sea turtles (海归，people return from overseas)'*, so we are not as narrow minded as our parents' generation that only know one way to succeed in life. We dream bigger and know more of the world outside China that success has many definitions. We are the future and have to stand up for what we believe, not just follow our parents' footsteps." -**Zhanghen, male, age above 20, high school in UK, Sushi**	An individualistic society celebrates the uniqueness of individuals (Meyer, 2000) The overseas education has provided young generation unique way of thinking, behaviour and different values except for conventional Chinese Confucian values and norms (Shi et al.

	restaurant, owner	2012)
	"I was sent to study in the UK. It was eye opening experience. People were fascinated by my stories, and admire my experience, and how I become different from them. This increased my confidence to pursue my dream, and become more independent..." **-Yaping, female, age above 20, BA in management in UK, Real estate development, CEO assistant**	

Source: own work

12 out of 41 respondents felt that there was no real need for them to learn from "people on the other side of the sea", meaning studying abroad, often in developed countries, such as the UK and the US. This shows that the Type A societal context includes a conservative perception of education outside China. Two respondents considered there was little need for foreign education, because experiences outside China were less relevant to their life in the local family business. Moreover, a respondent reported that it was difficult to convey the value of overseas education to people who live in such a closed society. Therefore, the Type A social context is conservative, because this social group has seen little value in respondents' foreign education in relation to their local and closed social life, where the interaction with others was strictly structured by conventional Confucian values and norms. For example, a female respondent reported that educated young females would not challenge the male-dominated conservative social hierarchy, because people identifying with values of Type A societal context are generally conservative and resistant to change. As stated by Steinkuhl (2016), these attitudes towards western education and the career opportunities of educated women outside the family are still predominantly conservative. Accordingly, the Type A societal context for the identity construction of these 12 second-generation business family members is traditional.

Interviews with 18 respondents (44%) confirmed that overseas education was more appreciated in the Type B societal environment, thus less conventional comparing to Type A societal context. The first condition for validating such a moderately traditional attitude was when the value of knowledge and skills learnt through the education outside the Chinese system, could serve collectivistic goals. This implied that Type B societal context includes collectivistic values, which emphasised on serving the common goals in social interactions (Wang et al., 2011). Secondly, another respondent pointed out that with education overseas, a person could have easier access to the social networks endorsed by government. Moreover, one respondent stated that "display of wealth and possessions" is important, as education is a symbol of social status in the business networks. These two statements implied that education is commodified and a symbol of social status to trade off other resources and show off wealth; this is a unique phenomenon in the Type B societal context for the identity construction of respondents. According to Turner and Acher (2017), this phenomenon is caused by economic growth in mainland China, where materialistic values of capitalism are overstated. A respondent ironically described this culture as 'Fu*zao*', which is a phrase used

to criticise the culture in mainland China of consumption as a symbol of high social status, such as qualification from developed countries, but not the actual substance, such as knowledge and skills (Wang, 2015). This phenomenon in the Type B societal context of recognising western education as a commodity to consume for high social status is not conventional. However, it is moderately conventional because people still believe that the overseas education of individuals could be worthy only if the obtained knowledge and skills could benefit others in society.

11 respondents (27%) who disclosed the views of overseas education in the Type C societal context stated that they regularly interact with "sea turtles", which is a reference to Chinese people who have settled outside China, especially in Western Europe and North America, and Australia, and returned to live and work in China (Shi et al. 2012). These respondents admitted that overseas education has marked them differently from others in the society. A respondent reported that the Type C societal environment matches the needs of the "Me generation", who give the utmost importance to self-interest (Meyer, 2000). This was evident as one respondent reported that education abroad has enhanced her locus of control. She was proud to state that people admired her opportunities to experience diverse cultures and to have different perspectives. Therefore, I recognised that Type C societal context, because of people admiring the distinctiveness of individuals as endowed by overseas education, is driven by individualistic values that are not conventional in mainland China.

4.1.4 Summarising Three Different Societal Contexts for Classifying Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

As discussed in section 2.8, there are various values and norms operating as the societal structure for the interactions of family business members in mainland China, thus operating as the antecedents of identity construction for second-generation business family members. In this section 4.1, the analysis identified three types of societal contexts within which the respondents have encountered different values and norms regarding expected social roles, networks and education to structure the social interactions. In this section, I summarised the values and norms reported by 12 respondents (29%)[1] for interaction within the Type A

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[1] Chaobo, Moli, Wangan, Xujian, Xuefei, Chenzhong, Tingting, Anming, Xiaosi, Bibo, Fuyin, and Xiaokang (12)

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traditional Chinese societal context, 18 respondents (44 %)[2] for interaction within the Type B moderately traditional Chinese societal context, and 11 respondents (27%)[3] for interaction within the Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context.

29% of the respondents reported that Type A society was rigidly structured in the form of a hierarchy and preferred different layers of society for different genders and age groups of people, rather than equality. Major importance was given to the preservation of these hierarchies and expected social roles to maintain social relationships. These norms were sustained because age is respected for its experience and wisdom in life and elders are skilful and dependable. Identifying with the Type A societal context also means to recognise males as representing authority and leader roles in society, as opposed to females who are submissive to males in social interaction. In addition, these 29% of respondents confirmed that the norms of social networks within the Type A societal context still relied predominantly on the conventional *guanxi* informal networks, and believed these types of networks to be the most effective, reliable and cost saving. Social harmony is maintained at all costs and contains the ultimate values in guiding social interaction and individual behaviour. Moreover, mainstream thinking within the Type A societal context held the belief that local Chinese education systems were sufficient for their businesses that operate locally and knowledge and skills learnt from other countries had little value of relevance. In accordance with literature (e.g. Dou and Li, 2012; Liu et al. 2014 and Hai, 2016), these 29% of respondents who identified the values and norms within the Type A societal context adhere to traditional Confucian social values and norms for social interactions. Therefore, the identity construction of 29% of respondents within Type A traditional Chinese societal context is likely to identify with the expected social roles, complying with the norms of local and informal networks, as well as remaining within the local education system to learn relevant knowledge and skills.

The values and norms that structure identity construction within the Type B societal context are moderately traditional as reported by 50% of respondents. Instead, Type B societal

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[2] Xiaoya, Li, CiCi, Yanjun, Lina, Junxia, Cenmin, Jiangbo, Zhoupeng, Chenjie, Zhengpeng, Xiaozhu, Wangshi, Kuili, Tommy, Xinhua, Lijing, and Su Li (18)

[3] Shanshan, Weibing, Yongzan, Ruxiao, Zhenjing, Yaping, xiaoying, Lingjie, Liwei, Zhanghen, and Weiwei (11)

structure included the collectivistic values in association with the ideology of the Maoist era (Park and Chesla, 2007), and the individualistic orientation and competitive nature of capitalism (Kim and Gao, 2013). Individuals within the Type B societal context promoted equality in social roles among different age and gender groups, such as advocating listening to the young generation which is recognised as the future of the country. Collectivistic goals are highly regarded. Higher positions in society, such as the decision-making role, are granted to individuals who would contribute to achieving the common goals of a group. In addition, there was an ambivalent feeling for the informal guanxi networks, and a sense that over-relying on *guanxi* would prohibit a business from breaking into the local market. Individuals identifying with the Type B societal context would be encouraged and helped to broaden the scope of formal networks through socialising with professionals and government officials. Moreover, it is felt that experiences obtained from non-local education are valuable only if the knowledge and skills would be able to serve the collectivistic goals, and that western higher education was commodified to satisfy the need to raise social status. Comparing to research (e.g. Li et al. 2015; Du et al. 2011 and Wang tal. 2011), Type B societal context which 50% of respondents identify with is moderately traditional Chinese, since conventional Confucian structures were disrupted by the capitalist economic system in mainland China, and individuals were driven to access resources and opportunities in different social calsses.

The 27% of respondents reported that identity construction within the Type C societal context is structured by individualistic and materialistic values that originate from the values of capitalism and Anglo-American culture (Barkema et al. 2015), thus not traditional Chinese. The 27% of respondents identifying with the Type C social context wanted to liberate themselves from conventional Confucian social structure regarding the hierarchy of individuals from different age, gender, education and networking backgrounds. This is because equality and fairness were evident as the key values in egalitarian relationships among individuals within Type C societal context, where self-actualisation is highly valued. Therefore, higher social positions for individuals within the Type C societal context would be based on the evaluation of the performance and capabilities of individuals. Type C societal context identifying the western anticorruption business ethics (He, 2000), thus promotes formal networks respecting the norms of fairness, business ethics and professionalism, and is sceptical towards the use of conventional informal and *guanxi* networks because of concern

about unethical trade-off in such networks. Perceptions of education includes the dominant culture of the "Me generation" within the Type C societal context. This generation was influenced by western education for the aspiration of personal ambitions and improving personal image. These 27% of respondents (either studying abroad or being educated in Chinese higher education institutions adopting syllabuses from developed countries, such as the UK and the US) identify with this perception of overseas education, reporting that people admired their opportunities to experience diverse cultures, and that their overseas education has marked them differently from others in the society. As shown in section 4.1.1-3, the evident values and norms within the Type C societal context of these 27% of respondents identified as non-traditional Chinese, according to literature (e.g. Huang and Gamble, 2011; Du et al. 2015 and Steinkuhl, 2016).

The impact of these values and norms in the Type A, B and C societal structures on the identity construction processes of the respondents will be presented in section 4.3. The next section analyses the diverse family contexts for the identity construction of second-generation business family members in China today.

4.2 Analysing the Constructs of Family Context for Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

In this section, data analysis illuminates the constructs identified in the interpretive framework (Figure 2.5) as relevant for understanding the impact of family contextual factors on the process of identity construction. These constructs include birth order and expected roles in dyad family relationships. Steinberg and Morris (2001) indicated that family has profound impact on the identity of individuals, because family members are the most emotionally significant others for most people. Thus, family influences individuals emotionally by what other family members think, say, do or feel. According to Frank et al. (2010), the family is the most powerful of all social systems; it impacts identity formation in childhood and adolescents, the initial stages of life. In addition, Beyers and Goossens (2008) state that the formation of identity is primarily under the continual influence of parenting and family relations. These views indicate that the nature of family has a profound influence on the formation of an individual's core self.

Hall (2012, p10) suggested that family sparks the dynamics of decision making in the family business, which leads to the characteristics of family business members. Accordingly, she pointed out a gap in family business research in understanding the diversity of family structure in different national contexts, and in understanding the insights into family business heterogeneity(Hall, 2012, p. 16). In mainland China, as explained in section 2.8, the values and norms that traditionally function as the structure for interactions within Chinese family have been challenged and reinterpreted in the current social and economic reform in mainland China. However, little is known about the extent to which these traditional family values and interactive norms have changed and how it would impact on the identity of family members in mainland China. In respect of this, this section 4.2, the investigation focuses on the values and norms of family that were identified by second-generation business family members, who have grown up in this transitional period in mainland China.

The findings below bridge the gap in literature and shed light on the representation of these traditional family values and norms within second-generation business family members. Through this analysis, various family contexts in mainland China which the respondents in this thesis have identified with can be understood. Data interpretation focuses on what respondents said about their families, and draws attention to common thoughts regarding the birth orders and expected roles in dyad relationship within their families.

4.2.1 Norms of Birth Order within Different Societal Contexts for Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

Literature suggests that birth order impacts the identity of individuals. Townsend (1997) states that siblings want to be different from each other and find their own identity. Family members behave in a manner in accordance with the birth order that would impact on the relationships that children have with their parents. More specifically, often firstborn children have different personalities as compared to those siblings born later. Costigan and Koryzma (2011) stated that it is Chinese tradition that the firstborn male child assumes the authorities and duties of the father figure when he reaches adulthood. However, it is not always the case that the male is the firstborn in the family. There is a lack of literature on what happens to the family and its businesses when girls are firstborn or there are only girls born within the family. In Table 4.4, I have identified various norms of expected family roles in accordance

with birth orders in different family types that influenced the identity construction of second-generation business family members in mainland China.

Table 4.4 Norms of Birth Order within Different Societal Contexts for Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

Type	Data	Interpretation
	indicating norms regarding the birth order (comparing to literature, and further explained below the table)	regarding the type of family contexts from which these norms derived from
Type D	"I must perform as good as my father to be trusted and respected by the other family members to manage the business… Everyone (in the family) looks upon me to lead the family business forward, because I am the eldest son (who has a younger brother). I was born with this responsibility without choices." **-Weibing, Male, age above 25, Hotel business, CEO** "My parents often say 'you are the big sister. Take care of your (younger) brother and sister and set a good example.' Therefore, it is undoubted that they (sister and brother) all listen to me." **-Xiaoya, female, age above 30, e-commerce, CEO**	The firstborn male child assumes the authorities and duties of the father figure when he reaches adulthood (Costigan and Kroyzma, 2011)
Type E	"My (younger) bother has never been interested in the family business. When my father got seriously ill last year, there was no one better than me, who used to work as a financial manager, to help the family business ...sometimes, my father would joke that I am the best of second."	The eldest male heir is preferred for taking over the father figure in the Chinese family (Yu and Cai, 2017)

	-**Anming, female, age above 35, Private Hospital, CEO**	The individual's professionalism is valued and appreciated (Stewart and Hitt, 2012), for which the conventional male roles in the family could be delegated to the younger siblings
Type F	"My father would call on a family meeting and listen to everyone's opinion (including the younger brother). Whether a cat is black or white, it must catch mice." **-Lijing, female, age above 35, Cosmetics manufacturer, owner**	"Whether a cat is black or white, it must catch mice" was the infamous slogan of former prime minister in 1978, Xiaopeng Deng, who approved introducing the capitalist system to develop the economy of mainland China (Yen, 2017)

Source: own work

The convention of the traditional Chinese family has imposed the authorities and duties of a householder role to the eldest child of the family (Costigan and Kroyzma, 2011). This norm has structured the interactions between the respondent, who is the eldest among siblings, with the other family members. Born in the Type D family, the 9 respondents (22%) reported how the expected roles in accordance with the Chinese conventional norms of birth order influenced identity construction. One respondent disclosed there was a great expectation of him as the eldest son to "behave as good as (his) father to be trusted and respected by other family members". The eldest child is expected to take the huge responsibilities of the leader role in the family regardless of his own will. Moreover, one respondent reported that the eldest child in the family was given unquestionable authorise and power over others. These were two common features across the families of these 9 respondents (22%), indicating they identified with the Type D traditional Chinese family.

21 respondents (51%) identified with the Type E family context. They reported that the norm in their families to arrange roles in accordance with the birth order was moderated by the influence of capitalist values, thus being moderately traditional. One respondent from a Type E family said in the interview that his role as the financial manager in the family business was granted on the condition that his brother, the eldest son, did not explore opportunities in the family business. This indicated that the Type E family was not strictly confined by the traditional family structure regarding the leader role prescribed to the eldest son in the family (Yu and Cai, 2017). Moreover, the interaction within the Type E family context priorities the level of professional expertise of younger children, and then the personal willingness of the elder child, is not at all traditional. Indeed, this is the evidence of conventional family rules being challenged by modern western business concept, as argued by Zhang and Ma (2009) being unfamiliar to the most of informal Chinese businesses. Nevertheless, there was ambivalent feeling towards the situation that the expected roles were arranged according to the birth order in the family. The dedication of this respondent was remarked by his father as being "the best of second". This implied that the Type E family did not completely disagree on the convention with regards to the elder child being granted the decision-making roles in the family. In line with the study of Yu and Cai (2017), this ambivalent feeling towards the expected roles according to the birth order in the family indicates that the Type E family context is moderately traditional.

The 11 respondents (27%) identifying with the Type E family context reported that their families were less concerned with traditional rules regarding the birth order of the young family members to interact with others. One respondent reported that all siblings were invited to take part in making decisions if demanded by the family without anyone being considered to be more important than another. This situation that the father encourages all children to speak up for the business is evidence of equal opportunities for all children in the family regardless of birth order. Acting on the principle of equality based on the individual willingness and capability in family interactions is the sign of western influence, which is shown in the metaphor "the colour of a cat is not as important as its ability to catch mice". This was the infamous slogan of a former prime minister in 1978, Xiaopeng Deng, who approved the introduction of the capitalist system to develop the economy of mainland China (Yen, 2017). There is little evidence in the Type E family to be traditional, since there was not a hierarchy in the interaction among siblings in accordance with the birth order. In fact, the interactive structure of the Type E family indicated the value of pragmatism, based on which the capitalist system was integrated to the economic system of mainland China (*ibid*); therefore, it is a non-traditional Chinese family context for the identity construction of second-generation business family members.

4.2.2 Expected role hierarchy in the Dyad Relationship of Different Family Contexts for Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

According to the research presented in section 2.6.2, the dyad relationship is the construct of family context that is in relation to the parents' view regarding the hierarchy of roles in family. This is relevant for identity construction by individuals within family interactions, because research by Haberman and Danes (2007) found that parents across the world treat their male and female children differently, creating distinct identities for sons and daughters. In conservative Chinese families, the male and female roles are strictly prescribed, and children are expected to conform to these roles (Tu, 1988). However, studies amongst young Chinese couples by Poston and Glover (2005) showed that more egalitarian gender roles are being played out, and women are no longer strictly confined to domestic roles, such as daughter and mother; instead, they are encouraged to pursue roles that are prescribed to males in Chinese family, such as head of the household.

On the other hand, economic growth in mainland China has disrupted these conventional gender structures in the Chinese family, and given way to other aspirations from diverse cultural contexts, such as gender equality from western capitalist countries (Zhang and Lee, 2012). However, little research was conducted for understanding the extent to which these conventional role structures in the Chinese family would impact on second-generation business family members to identify with their parents' expectations within the dyad relationship. Table 4.5 has analysed interview data that shows second-generation business family members identifying with various norms of family roles in the dyad relationship with parents, which indicated diverse types of family contexts for their identity construction in mainland China.

Table 4.5 Expected Role Hierarchy in Dyad Relationship of Different Family Contexts for Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

Type	Data	Interpretation
	Indicating expected gender roles in dyad relationship (comparing to literature, and further explained below the table)	regarding the type of family contexts from which these expectations derived from
Type D	"Nangengnvzhi （男耕女织， *Men are ploughers, women are weavers*） …no trespassing. My parents and my husband once complained why I could act like most of women, who would stay home and take care of the family.' They cannot understand why I am so keen to do the businesses, while it is unnecessary for me to earn. I think they think of me being the trouble maker in the family." **-Cici, female, age above 20, electronic cables manufacturer, marketing manager assistant** "In China, for thousands of years, men and women have their own positions. I remember my father used to say that 'all broken families are the same, because of men and women do not hold their places." -**Xiaoya, female, age above 30, E-commerce, Owner**	Traditional Chinese families there are strict gender roles to which children are expected to conform (Tu, 1988; Kwork and Cheng, 2015)

Type E	"I think my father put me on the CEO position, because they need me to help my brother out in the firm, and they know that I would fight (if the position was given to my brother), and it would be ugly." -**Tingting, female, age above 35, Manufacturer of female tights, CEO** "Sometime, I am confused why my parents send me to study abroad, if they do not expect me to help in the family business like my brother. What is the purpose of life for a woman is to find a husband who can help my parents in the family business, and take care of me? I felt ashamed and worthless." - **xiaoying, female, age above 25, Factory of tea drinks, Internship**	The harmony and family reputation that is ultimately valued in the conservative Chinese collectivistic culture (Li et al. 2010) Have reinterpreted Confucian views on gender according to the tenets of Maoism, which stresses gender equality (Poston and Glover, 2005) In modern China, offspring in the family, regardless of whether male or female, were recognised as family assets which benefit the family business through marriage (Constantin, 2016)
Type F	"It was only when I started working in the family business that I had more conversation with my parents but still rarely we talk. We are distant because I left home since I was sent away by them to study good schools… rarely stayed home... I would say that we are equal. My father is a teacher and a friend. I respect him but not to obey him unconditionally." -**Wangjun, male, above 30, Car manufacturer, CEO**	The child has equal position as the elders in the family, rather than being submissive to the elder as required by the conservative Confucian family structure (Kwan, 2012).

| | "I have never associated myself much with the role as the daughter of a family business owner ... I was a 'left-behind child', who was sent to stay in relatives and their friends' houses, when they were too busy with their start-ups… I became very competitive and had such an ego to approve myself being an independent and capable person, so that I could feel secure and in control".

-Xiaokang, female, age above 20, Poker cards manufacturer, CEO assistant | |

Source : own work

9 respondents (22%) identified with the Type D family context, within which the male and female family roles are strictly prescribed in accordance with the Confucian family culture. According to Tu (1988) and Kwok and Cheng (2015), males are the householders in the family, who make decisions and are responsible for taking care of other family members, while females are expected to follow the leadership of the male family members, and unconditionally support their male companions (father or sons) in the family. This is implicitly expressed in metaphors such as 'men plough, while women weave', which means that men take care of house affairs outside the family, while women take care of housework within. In the Type D family context, individuals have a firm belief that Chinese tradition in the family is of irreplaceable value to the survival of the business and its sustainable development. These respondents thought these conservative social norms regarding distinct roles for men and women have been a functional structure for the long history of Chinese society. They respected that the tradition should not be a choice, because becoming a choice would be disruptive to modern family life. Consequently, as shown in the complain of a respondent identifying with the Type D family context, little support was received from the family for the modern aspirations of females to become an independent woman and run a business like a man. The liberation of these female respondents from their conventional family roles was perceived to be "(not) understand(able)", "(not) normal" and "unnecessary". Women who fulfil the male roles in the family are disapproved of and held responsible for disrupting the family harmony, thus being marked as 'troublemakers'. These views are manifested in the interview data of respondents who identify with the Type D family context valued the traditional norms with regards to the disparate roles between males and females in the family.

The 21 respondents (51%) identifying with the Type E family context reported that their family did not completely comply with the traditional Chinese family norm in which men and women's duties are separate. Therefore, they confirmed that there was no strong objection to females fulfilling male roles in the family. One respondent reported that the parents could compromise but not necessarily believe in females fulfilling the same roles as the males in the family. This moderately traditional family phenomenon could be explained in relation to two cultural factors. Firstly, as the respondent reported that she was given a key role because the family business needs the maximum support of members. This was the drive for moderating the traditional family structure and can be traced to the Maoist era, during which

the rise of female roles in the family hierarchy was perceived as an opportunity to maximise the use of human capital for family economic activities (Leung et al., 2006). Moreover, confirmed by the study of Poston and Glover (2005) from the perspective of collectivism, the equality of both genders in the family would better serve the common goals of the family. Secondly, one respondent confirmed that there was concern within the Type D family context that to treat female and male heirs differently could create conflict that would jeopardise harmonious family life. Therefore, the non-conservatively Chinese attitude towards family role hierarchy was not caused by the influence of western ideology of gender equality. In fact, this indicated that the family harmony is still ultimately valued, as the respondent reported a fear within the Type E family context to not cause the 'fight' to justify the change of conventional Chinese family role hierarchy. Moreover, the family reputation depends on a peaceful family life being perceived by others, which indicated a collectivistic-orientated thinking (Ling et al., 2012). The similar narrative contents appear in interviews with 21 respondents who identify with the Type E family referring to the segregation of duties as equal sharing of labour between men and women, as well as respecting the traditional value of family harmony and collectivistic goals, and thus are moderately traditional Chinese.

In addition, there was an influence of moderately liberal values within the Type D family context with regards to power, opportunities and resources being equally distributed between female and male offspring in the family (Cai et al., 2012). Nevertheless, the value of female offspring for the family was commodified, and with immense value being placed on their marriage status. Even though people within the Type D family context value boys as much as girls, the designated role for girls are still housewife and mother. This finding from interviews with the 21 respondents who identify with Type D family context corresponded with the research by Constantin (2016) who found that, in modern China, female offspring in the family were expected to acquire more resources for the family through marriage. As the market-orientated economic reform developed in mainland China, interviews with 21 respondents revealed that conventional Chinese female roles were reinforced by the materialism of capitalist culture within the Type D family context. For this, the Type D family context is moderately traditional Chinese.

11 respondents (27%) identifying with the Type F family context reported that the family role hierarchy was disrupted by liberal values and materialism. As shown by Kwan (2012), the

modern Chinese family has shifted the focus from the need of elders to those of children, due to the one child policy. Consequently, the position of children was elevated in the family structure, so the conventional norm of being submissive to the elders was disrupted. Even though many of the respondents in this study have siblings, they felt the culture of family has changed to a more liberal type. This was evident in the statement of one respondent calling his father a "friend". On the other hand, according to Kwok and Cheng (2015), the structure of traditional Chinese family was affected by the capitalistic values which the government of mainland China has introduced to the economic system, for which the materialistic values were prioritised. According to these 11 respondents, the dyad relationship with their parents was affected by the family economic activities in their childhood, and consequently influenced their personality in adolescence. A respondent used the phrase 'left-behind child' that is explained by Cao et al. (2015) to be associated with children who have grown up in the family where the parents are often so busy with economic activities that they are absent from the family life of their children, which creates communication barriers as the child becomes independent. This was a common complaint from these 11 respondents identifying with the Type F family context. It was reported by one respondent, who could have been speaking for all 11 respondents, that the distant and lonely family life in childhood led to a strong strain of individualistic features, such as being independent and competitive, which has created "a sense of security and control" in a lonely family life. Therefore, the Type F family context is equal and liberal because of the institutional deficiency regarding the child policy, as well as the values of materialistic life being prioritised in the family that caused the children to have a distant relationship with their parents, and become more independent. Therefore, the Type F family context which the 11 respondents identify with confirmed the study of Leung (2010), who speculate that the modern economic development disrupted the stable dyad relationship within the conventional Chinese family lifestyle, and thus is non-traditional.

4.2.3 Summarising Three Different Family Contexts for classifying Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

In this section, I analyse the narrative contents of the respondents in the interviews, when discussing the traditional family values and norms regarding the interactions with the other family members as the son or daughter (dyad relationship), as well as the elder or younger children (birth order). Given the dynamics in the current economic reform that affect the social and cultural structures in the family life in mainland China, it is crucial to understand

how second-generation business family members sought to describe and define themselves; particularly, how these values and norms regarding the conservative Chinese family role hierarchy in relation to the birth order and dyad relationship were described and represented.

In this section, I identify three types of family contexts, within which the respondents reported to have encountered different values and norms that structured their interactions with the family, thus act as the antecedents of identity construction for second-generation business family members. The table 4.14 shows the values and norms reported by 9 respondents[4] (22%) for interaction within the Type D traditional Chinese family context, 21 respondents (51 %)[5] for interaction within the Type B moderately traditional Chinese family context, and 11 respondents (27%)[6] for interaction within the Type C non-traditional Chinese family context.

Reports by 22% of respondents who identified with the values and norms of Type D family context confirmed that the values and norms were traditional Chinese. They reported that the authorities and duties of a householder role are succeeded by the eldest child of the family. Values held within the Type D family context did not appreciate modern and western influences, and consider them to be threats to historical Chinese family tradition that makes family members unified and family life stable. This is in line with the findings of Pujiang (2006), who stated that fidelity, obedience and respect for elders, and preservation of family harmony are still highly valued within the Chinese Confucian family. As pointed out by Lu (2006), the conventional Confucian family is patriarchal and little support is provided for the modern aspirations of females to become independent women; for example, behaving like a male figure in the family. The liberation of these female respondents from their conventional domestic roles, such as mother or wife, were not understood, and considered as abnormal and unnecessary, even a challenge to the harmonised family life that is invaluable to conventional family members. All these values and norms within the Type D family context which these

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[4] Chaobo, Moli, Wangan, Xiaoya, Li, CiCi, Shanshan, Weibing and Yongzan (9)
[5] Xujian, Xuefei, Chenzhong, Tingting, Anming, Xiaosi, Yanjun, Lina, Junxi, Cenmin, Jiangbo, Zhoupeng, Chenjie, Zhengpeng, Xiaozhu, Ruxiao, Zhenjing, Yaping, Xiaoying, Lingjie, and Liwei (21)
[6] Bibo, Fuyin, Xiaokang, Wagnshi, Kuili, Tommy, Xinhua, Lijing, Su Li, Zhanghen, and Weiwei (11)

22% of respondents identify with correspond to the traditional Chinese Confucian family culture (*ibid*), and were in complete contrast to non-Chinese family structure.

As reported by 51% of respondents, the Type E family context identified with Confucianism but not completely abided by the traditional family structure for interaction among family members. Individuals' willingness and professional expertise, which was not conventionally important in the Chinese family (Zhang and Ma, 2009), drove the change of conventional family role hierarchy within the Type E family context. Nevertheless, this change was considered as a compromise rather than liberation from the strict Chinese family role hierarchy. It was commonly believed by these 51% of respondents that equality of genders in the family would better serve a Chinese family that prioritises collectivistic values (Li et al., 2010). In addition, these 51% of respondents admitted that other family members did not completely reject the idea of having a female heir replacing the male heir in the family roles. Nevertheless, this moderately conservative attitude was driven by conservative collectivistic values to help individuals to avoid conflict, maintain harmony and commit to common goals, as well as the Maoist ideology of stressing gender equality in order to maximise the labour resource in the family (Liu, 2016). Moreover, the materialistic values driven by capitalist economic activities have reinforced conventional female family roles (Constantin, 2016). Accordingly, the Type E family context which 51% of respondents identified with were tolerant of western radical influence but the views of family were still conservative and incline to resist changes, and thus were defined as a moderately traditional Chinese family context.

According to interviews with 27% of respondents identifying with the Type F family context, I observed more lenient family structure that embraced an equal dyad relationship less concerned with traditional rules regarding peripheral roles than in the conservative Confucian family (Pujiang, 2006). Respondents disclosed that all siblings were invited to take part in making decisions if demanded by the family regardless of birth order. In addition, Halkia (2012) stated that the daughter and son would assume different identities as being treated differently by their parents. These 26% of respondents as the children of family business owners were more prone to have individualistic thinking and rebellious personality regardless of gender. This is in line with research by Leung (2010) revealing that, due to the influence of the one child policy, the modern Chinese family has gradually changed, shifting its focus

from attending to the needs of the elders to those of their children, thus flattening the structure in the family dyad relationship (Leung 2010). Moreover, this institutional factor has disrupted the conventional Chinese family norm of young family members obeying the elders; therefore, the position of young members was raised in the family role hierarchy (*ibid*). As stated by Sorenson et al. (2009), the introduction of capitalist economic values to mainland China has caused Chinese families to prioritise materialistic values, and disrupted the stable dyad relationship within the conventional Chinese family lifestyle. This was confirmed by 27% of respondents who had similarly lonely family lives in childhood, as their parents strove to start up the family business to improve their financial condition. It was reported in their interviews that the lonely family life of their childhood has created communication barriers between children and parents, and embraced the independent and competitive personality of the child who wishes a sense of security and control in a lonely family life. Accordingly, the characteristics of interactions within the Type E family context indicated the influence of western values such as individualism and equality (Breslin, 2009), and are thus defined as the non-traditional Chinese family context.

The following section 4.3 will present the analysis of the interplay between these values and norms within Type A, B and C societal contexts, as well as Type D, E and F family contexts in the identity construction processes of these respondents.

4.3 Analysing Multiple Identities Constructed by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

In this thesis, the social construction approach recognised that identity construction is a reciprocal and reflexive process (Figure 2.2), within which social structures influence the interactions among individuals, yet are shaped by the identity of individuals. This approach facilitates the aim of this research to understand new meanings that emerge for individuals, who reflect on, contextualise and apply these meanings in later social interactions, indicating a greater understanding of social surroundings (Sheldon and Burke, 2000; Hogg, 2014). Guided by this theoretical perspective, the previous sections 4.1 and 4.2 focus on explaining how the existing structures, within diverse types of societal and family context in mainland China, were represented as the respondents sought to describe and define themselves.

In this section, the analysis sheds light on:

- The nature of identity conflict reported by respondents, due to the intersection of structures within the various contexts (identified in section 4.1 and 4.2) of family business succession, ownership, management and entrepreneurship in mainland China.

- Identity strategies reported by respondents in the construction of more sophisticated and dynamic multiple identities in response to conflict; acting as an agent of social change to negotiate on terms of these structures within the family business in mainland China.

- How the characteristics of identity conflict and identity strategy describe the conceptual names assigned to these more sophisticated types of multiple identities constructed by second-generation business family members in mainland China.

A typology (figure 4.1) emerged from the analysis of interviews with respondents regarding how structures from different societal and family contexts influence the identity construction of respondents. Figure 4.1 displays nine types of multiple identity construction processes found in this thesis:

- Type 1 **Steadfast Conservative identity** resulted from the process of multiple identity construction influenced by **Type D** traditional Chinese family structure **being verified within** the **Type A** traditional Chinese societal context.

- Type 2 **Confused Family Rebel identity** resulted from the process of multiple identity construction, influenced by **Type D** traditional Chinese family structure, being **moderated within** the **Type B** moderately traditional Chinese societal context.

- Type 3 **Radical Family Rebel identity** resulted from the process of multiple identity construction influenced by **Type D** traditional Chinese family structure **being resisted** by **Type C** non-traditional Chinese societal context.

- Type 4 **Conformist Adjuster identity** resulted from the process of multiple identity construction, influenced by **Type E** moderately traditional Chinese family structure being **constrained by** the **Type A** traditional Chinese societal context.

- Type 5 **Creative Negotiator identity** resulted from the process of multiple identity construction influenced by **Type E** moderately traditional Chinese family structure that **integrate** with **Type B** moderately traditional Chinese societal structure.

- Type 6 **Conformist Pusher identity** resulted from the process of multiple identity construction influenced by **Type E** moderately traditional Chinese family values being **challenged by Type C** non-traditional Chinese societal values.

- Type 7 **Confused Societal Rebel identity** resulted from the process of multiple identity construction influenced by **Type F** non-traditional Chinese family values that **defy Type A** traditional Chinese societal structure.

- Type 8 **Compromised Societal Rebel identity** resulted from the process of multiple identity construction influenced by the **Type F** non-traditional Chinese family values that **confer Type B** moderately traditional Chinese societal structure.

- Type 9 **Reckless Liberal** identity resulted from the process of multiple identity construction influenced by **Type F** non-traditional Chinese family values being **reinforced by** the **Type C** non-traditional Chinese societal structure.

Each section below demonstrates the characteristics of each type of multiple identity construction process. The comparison of key differences among each type of identity is presented in section 5.1 where its theoretical and practical implications are also explained.

**Figure 4.1 Formulating the Typology of Multiple Identity Construction by Second
-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China**
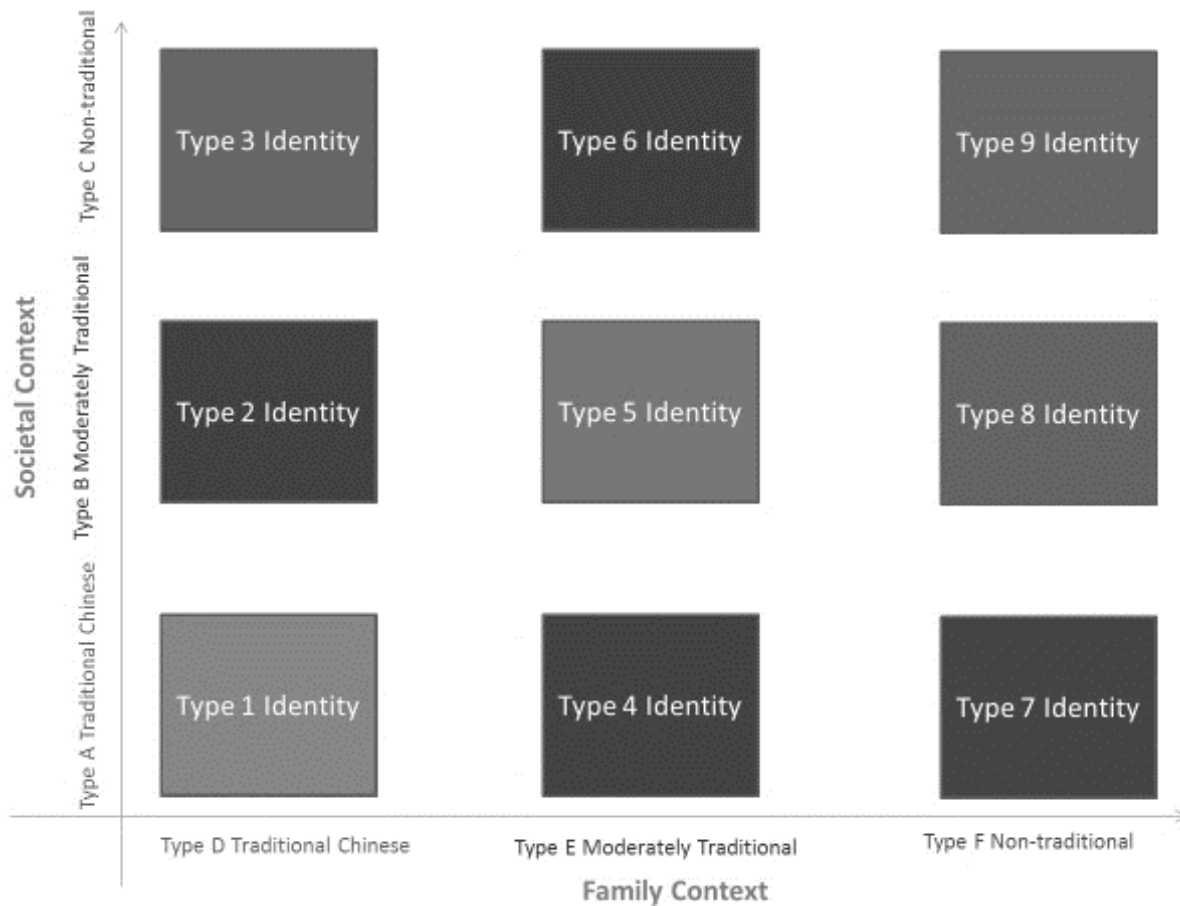
Source: own work

4.3.1 Constructing Type 1 Steadfast Conservative Identity

Type 1 multiple identity construction could be identified from interviews with 3 respondents
(7%) (Table 4.6), who enacted a multifaceted role within the family business according to
Type D traditional Chinese family values and norms verified within the Type A traditional
Chinese societal context in mainland China. The Type 1 was conceptualised as the Steadfast
Conservative identity.

Table 4.6 Respondent Profiles of the Type 1 Steadfast Conservative Identity

Name	Age Group	Sex	Country of Education	Siblings	Position in the family business	Type of Business	Annual turnover in RMB (Million)
Chaobo	26-30	Male	Japan, BA in international business	Single child	Sales manager	Manufacture of Chinese herb wine	150 m
Moli	31-36	Female	PRC, local high school	One younger brother	CEO assistant	Cooking ingredients wholesale	0.5 m
Wangan	36-45	Male	PRC, local high school	One elder sister	Owner	Plastic materials wholesale	>100 m

These respondents readily espoused the values of their families within the Type D traditional Chinese family context, recognising the social importance for preserving these values for verifying an identity within Type A traditional Chinese societal context for a family business in mainland China. The openness to change and conservatism within a society affects the complexity of identity conflict (Roccas and Brewer, 2002). Simplistic individuals consider others defying their culture as outsiders. Accordingly, these respondents who only experienced the traditional Chinese culture showed no sign of identity conflict in the process of constructing Type 1 multiple identities. Benish-Weisman et al. (2015) suggested that the more congruent an identity is, in line with social expectation, the more individuals would have higher commitment to that identity. Raffelsberger and Hällbom (2009) pointed out that an individual's attachment to the family business can be observed through the degree of possessiveness, the resistance to imposed change, or to leaving the firm. They also found that the exit costs of leaving a family business such as losing business specific knowledge, experience, share of property and employment, can impact the identity of individuals, and force them to follow the identity standard, even at the cost of losing opportunities elsewhere. These respondents reported a strong sense of ownership towards the family business and attachment to the prescribed roles. The characteristics of identity conflict and identity

strategies were displayed among these respondents who were identified to construct Type 1 multiple identities.

The independent personality was not shown, because they made decisions on meeting the expected conservative filial child role that could guarantee family business succession and protect the family ownership in the business. For example, Moli firmly believed in the conservative norms with regards to the male heir succeeding and owning the family business. She stated:

  "Through my marriage, the family wealthy would have different family name…To be honest, I kind agree with them (my parents) just to think how hard they work for what we had today."
Apparently, this female respondent, who is currently managing the family business before her brother finishes university education and takes over, defended the conservative gender structures within family business in mainland China. Her statement indicated the invaluable role of these conservative structures within the Type D family context for the preservation of family ownership during the succession. This culture within the Type A traditional Chinese society was complied with the ownership arrangement within her family business succession plan. Structured by the aligned traditional family and societal structure, she did not report any identity conflict regarding her role as the CEO assistant supporting her younger brother. She steadily supported that the conservative Chinese family business norm of a male heir succeeding the ownership of business is better if the business continues with the family name (Harrison and Leitch, 2012).

Both Chaobo and Wangan, considered that the family business successor and owner roles were the designated purpose of their life, because these roles were imposed on them as members of a traditional family. Wangan stated:

"Why me? People recognise this family name (in the business). My father asked me. I am his only son, I shall be responsible."
His statement disclosed the expected social responsibility for a male heir to carry on the family name in business. Similar perceptions were found in the interview with Chaobo, who passionately declared:

"What is good for them is good for me… They (my parents) had hardship to start this business… the business grows with the support of people around us. It would be such a shame if it will die in my hands."

Data indicated that both male respondents constructing the Type 1 identity have been steadily adhered to traditional Chinese family values of filial piety and the traditional collectivistic societal values of becoming a greater self for serving a broader community. For example, Chaobo came back to the family business, because he believed that his parents always looked out for his good, stating that, "what is good for them is good for me." In addition, both Chaobo and Wangan perceived a social responsibility for children of a business family to take care of people living on the profit of the business through sustainable development of the transgenerational capability.

The findings above indicate that respondents constructed of Type 1 identity did not display any sign of inner conflict during the family business succession and had a strong sense of ownership, because of the influence of the traditional Chinese family norm of the male heir succeeding the master role of the household. This section of analysis demonstrated that these respondents did not have their own ambition to be innovative in the family business, nor did they start any new businesses. This characteristic of their identity strategies was in relation to the influence of the traditional Type A societal structure that heavily relies on informal *guanxi* family networks and tacit knowledge of the family business for management; hence, sustaining the preservation of Type D traditional Chinese family structure embedded in the management of family business and its entrepreneurial activities. To coordinate these multiple identities, the characteristics of identity strategies of the respondents are elaborated below.

These respondents held the opinion that traditional Chinese business custom, such as prioritising the pervasion of family wealth and relying on the *guanxi* networks, is the most suitable for their family businesses. Influenced by these traditional structures, the family business manager and owners were expected to manage the family business exactly as it was established by the first generation, following in the footsteps of their parents. Wangan declared that:

  "The business was found by him (my father), I will listen to his advice. I think my father was right that there is no guarantee of return (from investment in other businesses) as secure as my current business... in this town, we have the sole licence to operate since my father started... even though it is renewed every year, but he (the inspector) is a family friend ...profit is guaranteed."

From his statement, it was clear that his management goal was set by his father who wished him to preserve the family wealth, which was the common goal of Chinese family businesses established to sever the economic function of the family (Carney et al., 2008). This indicated that Wangan, as the family business owner, was influenced by Type D traditional Chinese family norms where the children are a filial son or daughter, submissive to their parents (section 4.2.3). He thus recognised the only way to meet this expectation as a filial son was to maintain the existing model of family business sustained through the local network extended from the family. Therefore, for Wangan, investing innovation and entrepreneurship into the family business was unnecessary for his family business operation within the Type D traditional Chinese societal context. Most importantly, disrupting tradition would go against his salient conservative family role as a filial son, which required him to follow exactly what he was expected by the family elders.

Based on the findings above, these respondents constructed Type 1 identity steadfastly adhered to the expected roles within the Type D traditional Chinese family context, such as the eldest male as family business successor where the younger child or females are not entitled to ownership of the family property (explained in section 4.1-4.2). At the same time, they identified with the Type A traditional Chinese societal context, which has verified their conservative attitudes towards traditional norms of giving the successor and owner roles to the eldest child, and preferred the son of the family. There was not any inner conflict because of the overlap between family and society structures that these respondents identified with, which means that the cost of switching to another role is too high. Consequently, these respondents are steadfast in their loyalty to their conservative Chinese values and do not wish to challenge any status quo of the conservative society in which their right to succeed and share of ownership were strictly limited. There were no motives externally or internally of these respondents to make impact on the changes of these structures, in order to liberate them, that would enable any possibility of leading innovation or being entrepreneurial within the family business. They considered that these possibilities of switching to new identities is not verified by the societal and family context of tradition and a history of success, such as becoming an entrepreneur, as they were too risky and costly for an individual.

4.3.2 Constructing Type 2 Confused Family Rebel Identity

Type 2 multiple identity construction could be identified from interviews with 3 respondents (7%) (Table 4.7), who enacted a multifaceted role within the family business according to Type D traditional Chinese family values and norms moderated within the Type B moderately traditional Chinese societal context in mainland China. The Type 2 was conceptualised as the Confused Family Rebel identity.

Table 4.7 Respondent Profiles of the Type 2 Confused Family Rebel Identity

Name	Age Group	Sex	Country of Education	Siblings	Position in the family business	Type of Business	Annual turnover in RMB (Million)
Li	31-36	Female	Australia, chartered accountant	One younger brother	Financial Manager	Real estate development company	<100 m
Cici	20-25	Female	UK, MSc in risk management	One younger sister	Marketing Manager	Electronic cables manufacture	>100m
Xiaoya	31-36	Female	PRC, BA in business and management	One younger sister; one younger brother	Owner	E-commerce	<10 m

Influenced by these contextual features, the Type 2 multiple identity construction indicates that respondents considered themselves to be professionals and leaders; they felt frustrated but did not fight against the filial child expectation of their traditional Chinese family. When these respondents first started working in their family businesses, they had rebellious actions seeking to assume professional, leader and entrepreneurial roles, in order to help the family improve the business. This finding indicated that these respondents who conformed to the ideal self within values influenced by the moderately conservative attitude of Type B family towards their western education must serve a common goal. Unfortunately, their endeavours were not rewarded by the appreciation of conservative family members. According to Hirsh

and Kang (2016), if society does not verify identity, it can result in the person feeling unrewarded, thus acting indifferent to the socially ascribed roles. These feelings of being unrewarded and indifferent role behaviour were reported by Stets and Tsushima (2001) as the negative effect of multiple identities. According to Kidwell (2012), to escape from such emotion, the person becomes more cautious in revealing identities that are likely to be rejected in social identification. These features of multiple identities have been confirmed with findings from the interview of Li, Cici and Xiaoya, who identified with the Type 2 identity, and the interview with Li is insightful for the understanding of the confused family rebel identity.

In the Type D traditional Chinese family, respondents pointed out that the roles of young family members were imposed upon by the elder generation; there was little room for a younger person to choose. Chinese family interactions were conducted according to Confucian traditions of respect, filial piety, obedience, emphasis on hierarchy and preservation of family harmony (Lu, 2006). These qualities were evident in interviews with Li, who disclosed her "disappoint(ment)" regarding the unrewarding experiences of performing professional and leadership roles within her conservative family. The conservative Chinese family demanded a young female heir to be inferior to the male heirs and obedient to the elders (*ibid*). Li, who acted on the finance director in a real estate development company, complained,

"I am a bit disappointed really...I have my career in Australia, when my father was ill and I voluntarily to help because my brother was still in the university...when I took over I immediately saw the problem of contracts were signed without credit checks because the suppliers had guanxi with senior family members in the firm... I therefore formalised that procedure of supplier selection to stop any dodgy businesses... they did not respect me as the decision maker because I am the daughter, who is only temporarily replacing the role...they appealed to my parents, and called me 'cold blooded' ...In the end, I was asked to close my eyes..."

As Financial Manager of the firm, she wishes to implement her knowledge as a qualified charted accountant in Australia, because this was her salient identity, which strongly conforms with the value of professionalism that she internalised as a core part of self during her professional training in Australia. Influenced by the value of overseas education within

the Type B moderately traditional Chinese societal context, she voluntarily came back to serve the family business with her professional knowledge, which indicated the influences of collectivistic values in her sense of family business ownership. However, her salient professional identity was resisted within the Type D traditional Chinese family context, being perceived as rebellious behaviour that challenged the role hierarchy serving harmony within the family. Her professionalism was thus resisted and condemned by senior family members in the business, which was evident as she was called "cold blooded".

Moreover, because the Type D traditional Chinese family context in mainland China structured the family business roles in accordance with the norm that the family leader role was prescribed to the eldest and preferred son (Pujiang, 2006), her professional opinions and decisions as finance director were not respected by this type of family. This situation made her feel disappointed and unsatisfied because her ideal self of being a professional was not appreciated, but was indeed oppressed. It shall be noted that influenced by the collectivistic values of Type B moderately traditional Chinese societal context, Li would not fight for justice because she believed that a great leader would be good at serving others (Kim and Gao, 2013). This was clearly manifested in the characteristics of her identity strategy of coordinating these contradictory values to construct multiple identities. Despite the negative emotions caused by identity conflict in her experience of managing a conservative family business, emotions were not expressed through taking radical rebellious actions. Even though she was not satisfied with the leader and managerial roles defined by the conservative family, her sense of family business ownership remained intact, because she did not quit her position. In fact, she has entered a process of negotiation with her family in order to reach a compromise, which was expressed as "close my eyes." Furthermore, the supplier checking procedure was not abolished even though it did not function fully. Nevertheless, she did question her current status of being compliant with the expected conservative family roles, and she reluctantly integrated them to her core self. This was evident in that she decided to work part-time in the family business.

The findings above show the characteristics of Type 2 multiple identity construction. Key features include the fact that they were supported by the family to learn western values and management styles that could have enabled them to improve the business for the family. This complies with the characteristics of the Type B moderately traditional Chinese societal

context that the western education would be valued only if it is able to serve others (section 4.1.4). However, identity conflict occurred when they could not negotiate their salient professional and leadership roles within the Type D traditional Chinese family on management decisions. They suffered emotionally from the unsatisfying social rewards received by their salient identities, while feeling sympathetic to the conservative family members and understood their position as a filial child. Therefore, they chose to remain silent and did not rebel against the authority of elders within the conservative family. This is for the sense of ownership that was associated with the responsibility of the leadership role to serve others, valued within the Type B moderately traditional Chinese societal context. Nevertheless, they were disappointed with their status of being, and were in denial about this, thus acting indifferently to their positions within the family business, such as working part-time in the family business and wish to pursue professional careers elsewhere but no action was taken in the end. Therefore, their rebellion is compromised. The Type 2 Confused Family Rebel identity was named because the process of multiple identity construction was an inner rebellion of these respondents that was not expressed outwardly, and their expected roles in the conservative family were assumed reluctantly and acted upon indifferently.

4.3.3 Constructing Type 3 Radical Family Rebel Identity

Type 3 multiple identity construction could be identified from interviews with 3 respondents (7%) (Table 4.8), who enacted a multifaceted role within the family business according to Type D traditional Chinese family values and norms resisted within the Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context in mainland China. The Type 3 was conceptualised as the Radical Family Rebel identity.

Table 4.8 Respondent Profiles of the Type 3 Radical Family Rebel Identity

Name	Age Group	Sex	Country of Education	Siblings	Position in the family business	Type of Business	Annual turnover in RMB (Million)
Shanshan	26-30	Female	UK, BA in marketing	One younger brother	Sales manager	Manufacture of children tights	< 10 m
Weibing	26-30	Male	UK, BA in	One	CEO	Hotel Business	>200 m

			hospitality	younger brother			
Yongzan	20-25	Male	US, high school	One elder bother	Sales manager	Real Estate development	< 200 m

Respondents constructed of Type 3 multiple identities reported considerable conflict and rebellious behaviour had to fight for the ideal self of being professional leaders working with the conservative family in the business. They have mainly confirmed that the values and norms of a westernised and liberal Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context for family business succession, ownership, management and entrepreneurship, are due to their overseas education. However, they were born and forced to work with the family member connecting with the Type D traditional Chinese family context. Identity conflict was inevitable within the coordination of two completely opposing identities, even though the identity of conservative family member was peripheral. As found by Swann et al. (2009), a method of negotiating multiple identities is to withdraw from interactions that do not support an identity, as individuals seek to legitimise their ideal selves. As shown in findings below, Shanshan, Weibing and Yongzan constantly questioned their positions within a family business that required them to behave in accordance with the conservative Confucian gender role and birth order structures when making decisions on family business.

Kidwell et al., (2012), pointed out, that when a person has multiple identities which clash with each other, they will experience feelings of misery, sorrow and frustration. These feelings were reported by respondents of Type 3 multiple identity construction. For proper and effective role enactment, Settles and Buchanan (2014) suggested that an ideal self must be corroborated and legitimised by society, and discrepancies need to be resolved in order to understand the ideal self and gain support. Accordingly, respondents in the construction of Type 3 multiple identities acted as an agent of change within the family business, for instance, by introducing modern business concepts and systems to radically transform conservative family businesses, in order to create an environment within which their salient aspirational leader roles could be acknowledged. These characteristics of identity conflict and identity strategies of Type 3 multiple identity construction are evident in the interview data presented below.

Shanshan, Weibing and Yongzan have rebelled against their identities being imposed by the values and norms of Type D traditional Chinese family values, which have structured the family business in mainland China. For example, Shanshan, who was appointed sales manager after she graduated from BA in marketing in the UK, asserted strong opinions against her mother's decision to have her younger brother succeed the family business. Moreover, despite the fact that she was the person in the family business that earned the profit, little share was given to her. She spoke with a frustrated tone:

"It was a war in the family... they shall be grateful for the profit I bring by working day and night...I fight like a tiger...even went to consult family mediators to help legalise my entitlement to the ownership (of the family business) ... after this, relatives treated me miserably, because they thought of me as a shame of the family, who try to steal the business from my brother...I wanted what I deserve...how my mother could be so blind that I learn and work so hard (for the firm), while my careless brother was driving posh cars and play...some of my friends felt for me, because they had similar problems with their family, and thought they would have done the same in my position... ".

Shanshan expressed great frustration on the gender inequality often being ignored within the family business that is managed and owned by a traditional Chinese family (Scheffler, 2010). Shanshan felt 'miserable' at the word 'shame' which was how she was perceived by her family, because she considered herself to be equal with her brother in having an opportunity to succeed the business and share ownership. Shanshan showed sorrow regarding the attitude of her mother being "blind" to her effort and contribution to the family business, in comparison to her "careless" brother. It is evident that Shanshan experienced feelings caused by identity conflict as a negative effect of multiple identity construction.

Educated in the culture of a society like the Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context in mainland China (refer to section 4.1.4), she gained individualistic thinking, the ability to challenge attitudes, and a competitive personality. She was prone to complying with a social system that would assign the higher social position on the basis of the performance and capabilities of individuals. This individualistic thinking, expressed through her statement of, 'I wanted I deserve,' has transformed her into prioritising the core self as an aspirational leader.' She attacked the imposed, conventional, social hierarchy, structuring the role of family business successor and owner. She promoted competition during the family business succession that would enable her to question the status quo. She used the words 'war' and

described herself as a 'tiger' to show her radical rebellion. She fought through, and used, the professional 'family mediator' to deal with the ownership problem. This was aspirational to some of her friends, being similar to other conservative Chinese family businesses which often ignored the problem in order to maintain family harmony (Gilding et al., 2015), thus showing Shanshan as an aspirational leader.

Weibing and Yongzan, both male, second-generation, business family members, had similar feelings of frustration, misery, and sorrow with regards to the traditional hierarchy role that structured their interactions with elder family business members. They were expected to be submissive to elder family members in making management and entrepreneurial decisions. Because they also had similar overseas educational backgrounds, they formed a core self that strongly identified with the values of individualism and professionalism, thus they were more likely to follow the values and norms of Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context for the family business operation in mainland China. Hence, they were as rebellious as Shanshan in taking the radical approach of pushing these non-traditional values and norms to manage their positions in the family business. For example, Weibing reported a situation during the succession period, where he made key senior family business members redundant in order to claim his leadership. His story was reported in the news as being aspirational for other second-generation business family members, which set him as a role model (source cannot be provided for being anonymous). He was still angry when telling his story in an interview:

"When I started as a CEO assistant, the nature of competition in hotel sector has changed (in Mainland China), customers now would pay for the excellence of the service. My hotel still operated in a model of providing low rates to long term contract customers, who usually had guanxi with some family members (in the firm). I talked to my father to push a change, but were resisted by those family members...I think they thought I was young and inexperienced as compared to them who started this hotel with my father. ...as a little family boy, I shall not challenge them..., so I took different approaches, I hired a few foreign managers who used to work in XX hotel (a famous western hotel chain brand) and negotiated a franchise ... standards were introduced ..., including the HR terms (human resource management), ... these people were made redundant... my father handed this hotel to me, because he did not know how to manage this franchise...we invested quite significant amount, but become one of the best (hotel) in the city... ".

Weibing was frustrated at the excessive control of decision-making by incompetent senior family members in the hotel. Through strategic change to become a franchise of a famous western brand hotel chain, and relying on his knowledge and insights of hotel management gained by overseas education, he successfully introduced his vision of the hotel business to the family business that was managed by a traditional Chinese family. Moreover, supported by the human capital gained through his education, he has reached the lead position in this power struggle by radically disrupting the conservative Confucian role hierarchy that structured his interactions with senior family members, including his father. His identity strategy was to confront the influence of conservative social roles that contradicted his core self of a capable individual, and his salient identity, formed through overseas education, has enhanced his confidence to become competitive and professional. Through this experience, he has transformed from successor of a traditional Chinese family business to an aspirational leader and role model to second-generation business family members.

Findings above showed the characteristics of Type 3 multiple identity construction. Since Type 3 identity respondents were brought up in traditional Chinese households, they firstly sought to gain a sense of ownership towards the family business through approval of the family. Nevertheless, their family did not wish to understand the knowledge and skills that representing the professional leader role identity that was endorsed by their non-Chinese education. Hence, identity conflict was evident in their reported feelings of misery, frustration and sorrow. Secondly, they disconnected themselves from these emotions and feelings through rebellious behaviours to gain leadership in the family business by politically eliminating the power of the conservative family members. They introduced unconventional business practices that their conservative family could not comprehend, such as the legal structure of ownership and franchise within western companies to claim the leadership position within the power struggle of family business succession. Relying on their superior knowledge gained through western education, they alleviated the resistance from conservative family members towards their rebellious child role in the claim of leadership power within the family business.

4.3.4 Constructing Type 4 Conformist Adjuster Identity

Type 4 multiple identity construction could be identified from interviews with 6 respondents (15%) (Table 4.9), who enacted a multifaceted role within the family business according to

Type E moderately traditional Chinese family values and norms constrained within the Type A traditional Chinese societal context in mainland China. The Type 4 was conceptualised as the Conformist Adjuster identity.

Table 4.9 Respondent Profiles of the Type 4 Conformist Adjuster Identity

Name	Age Group	Sex	Country of Education	Siblings	Position in the family business	Type of Business	Annual turnover in RMB (Million)
Xujian	20-25	Male	Australia, high school	One adopted elder sister	CEO assistant	Sewing Machine manufacture	< 150 m
Xuefei	36-45	Female	PRC, MBA	One elder brother	Owner	Oven manufacture	>100 m
Chenzhong	36-45	Male	PRC, high school	Single child	Owner	Machine Tool manufacture	< 100 m
Tingting	36-45	Female	PRC, MBA	One younger brother	CEO	Manufacturer of female tights	>100 m
Anming	36-45	Female	PRC, MBA	One younger brother	CEO	Private Hospital	< 50 m
Xiaosi	26-30	Male	PRC, primary school	Single child	Owner	Chopsticks factory	<10 m

With regards to their positions within the family businesses, respondents of Type 4 identity reported that identity conflict was the influence of vision and values derived from the Type E moderately traditional Chinese family context, being constrained by the structures of Type A traditional Chinese societal context, in which the family business operated. This was

demonstrated in an interview with Type 4 identity respondents. For example, Xuefei, who felt sad because her role as the female family business owner was disapproved in the conservative Type A societal context:

"*When my brother passed away, the entire family was devastated. …I was pushed to this position…,they (the employees) was not convinced that a young woman who just landed on the job could manage the firm...what made me felt really sad was that my father who is still in sorrow for the loss of his son, and left me to face this alone,...I grew up quickly in this struggle, a person cannot be perfect for everyone…, what matter the most is my father's firm, I do everything regardless how hard it is for myself...*".

From the narratives of Xufei, it was apparent that her family would compromise to a certain extent for their young female business family members to have equal roles to succeed and lead the family business. Conventionally, young, female family members would not be able to have a voice in decision-making within the family. This moderately conservative attitude was driven by conservative collectivistic values to help individuals commit to common goals, as well as the Maoist ideology of stressing gender equality in order to maximise human resources within the family (Liu, 2016). Therefore, the compromises of her family were not unconditional as they would only allow altering Chinese family tradition in the business, if the expectations of the family were met. This ambiguity of the family attitude towards a female family business owner has resulted in distinct features of identity conflict and identity strategies. The research of Vohs and Baumeister (2016, p. 367) suggested that an inadequate response by others results in conflict that is manifested by negative emotions. Pache and Santos (2010) found that individuals would activate a self-defensive mechanism that could change their identity standards, so that individuals could adjust themselves to the role. Xufei declared that she was sad and lowered her expectation of support received from others, so that she could mature and become stronger as an independent person who could lead the business and take care of her family after the death of her brother. Therefore, her salient identity is still being the filial daughter to support the family through continuing to enact her role as the leader of the family business, even though she was not fully capable of handling the position independently. These traits of identity conflict and identity strategies were also evident in an interview with the other Type 4 identity respondents.

The interviews with Xujian, a male successor, showed that because the collectivistic value is still the fundamental goal of the Type E moderately traditional Chinese family context, their

families would expect respondents to adjust themselves if their individualistic goals contradicted the family business goals. Xujian, who recently returned to prepare for succeeding the family businesses after graduating from high school in Australia, stated in an interview:

"My mother refused me to continue my study in Australia, and demanded me to start immediately working in the firm, because my father had issues with his partner, who wished to take control of the business, and need someone who they could completely trust to help. ...for quite a bit of time, I felt depressed... I was not ready to be sophisticated and mature as my father, who could manage a person (the business partner) who is really experienced and much old.... In addition, I did not learn much in high school because I was too young ...it was two years holiday...but I must repay my parents, who worked so hard in the business to provide everything best in my life, and funded me to study abroad as I wished...so I decided to stay and try out...".

Findings above show that the family of Xujian, similarly to Xufei and the other respondents, did not provide sufficient resources or support of their psychological wellbeing for becoming an independent leader to handle their positions in the family business. As stated by Hogg (2016), conflict is affected by openness to change within the social interaction. Those who are conservative develop simple social identities that are largely subservient to the dominant culture, while those who are open to change imbibe other values that may not conform (*ibid).* There were great difficulties for these respondents to meet the expectation of the family to manage family ownership in the business, because most of them had not had much experience of learning the culture, business knowledge and skills outside the existing family business, let alone outside mainland China. Because of this unsophisticated nature of their multiple identities, they have overly relied on the vision and support of their family to enact their roles in the family business. Therefore, these respondents were struggling in the process of adjusting and learning to become mature and independent family business owners and managers, who could share the family responsibility of taking care of the business.

Overall, the Type 4 multiple identities of these respondents were defined as Conformist Adjuster identity for the reasons summarised as follows. Due to the impact of the Type E moderately traditional Chinese family context, the families of these respondents would allow the second-generation business family members to have their liberty and equal roles in the family, so that they could serve the family goals in the business. In such a moderately

traditional family environment, respondents were free to explore and develop his/her own identities if these roles served the goal of the family. It was shown that their families did not provide sufficient resources or pay attention to the wellbeing of these respondents for them to become confident and independent individuals, who could manage the given roles within the family business. This was shown largely related to respondents who lacked the cross-culture experience to utilise multiple identities that would enable them to become more sophisticated and visionary and to think outside of the box. This contextual influence has resulted in distinct features of identity conflict and identity strategies. As a result, they have overly relied on the vision and support of their family to enact their roles in the family business. Even though these respondents struggled alone, they are still deeply connected to the family, and therefore did not resist the idea of compromising self-interests for the need of family and continued to help the family in the business. Therefore, these respondents conformed to their roles to help with the family goal to improve on the business, but were struggling in the process of adjusting and learning to become a mature and independent family business owner.

4.3.5 Constructing Type 5 Creative Negotiator Identity

Type 5 multiple identity construction could be identified from interviews with 9 respondents (22%) (Table 4.10), who enacted a multifaceted role within the family business according to Type E moderately traditional Chinese family values and norms integrated within the Type B moderately traditional Chinese societal context in mainland China. The Type 5 was conceptualised as the Creative Negotiator identity.

Table 4.10 Respondent Profiles of the Type 5 Creative Negotiator Identity

Name	Age Group	Sex	Country of Education	Siblings	Position in the family business	Type of Business	Annual turnover in RMB (Million)
Lina	26-30	Female	UK, MSc in finance	One younger brother	CEO	Manufacturer of LED lights	>100 m
Junxia	31-36	Female	USA, MBA	Two younger	CEO	Real estate development	>300 m

				sisters; one youngest brother				
Cenmin	26-30	Male	Japan, BA in international business	Single child	CEO	Manufacturer of Chinese herb wine	150 m
Jiangbo	26-30	Male	UK, MSc in Finance	One younger sister; one brother	CEO	Accessories manufacturer	>300m
Yanjun	31-36	Male	PRC, MBA	Single child	Sales manager	DIY tool manufacturer	> 150 m
Zhoupeng	26-30	Male	USA, high school	Single child	Owner	Exporting wholesale	<50 m
Chenjie	26-30	Male	UK, BA in marketing	Single child	CEO assistant	Shoe factory	>50 m
Zhengpeng	31-36	Male	Australia, BSc in economics	Younger sister	CEO	Plastic mould factory	< 100 m
Xiaozhu	31-36	Male	UK, MA in international business	One elder sister; One elder brother	Owner	PR event organiser	>50 m

Kreiser et al. (2003) stated that ambiguity and uncertainty facilitate innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking behaviour that are all hallmarks of entrepreneurship. As shown in section 4.1-2, there were ambiguous and paradoxical values and social norms with the Type E and B moderately traditional Chinese family business contexts, for example individualistic values were permitted if it served the common goal of family and society. Under the influence of these contextual factors for constructing Type 5 multiple identities, findings below showed that these respondents had great versatility and flexibility, which allowed them to engage with family business activities that demanded entrepreneurial traits from their family members to serve the transgenerational purpose of the family business (Habbershon et al., 2010). Despite the ambiguous values with the moderately traditional

Chinese family business context, little evidence of identity conflict was shown in interviews with these respondents. In fact, these respondents, as young generation Chinese born after the 1978 open door policy, had an abundant and exhilarating experience of dealing with various sources of identity through interacting with different cultures and societies. Hence, they have more possibility of negotiating opportunities, because these respondents were accepted by incongruous social groups that allowed them to integrate various values and social norms for social verification. Moreover, through these experiences, they have gained a positive acceptant attitude towards challenging experiences of negotiating inconsistent values for identity constructions. According to Heilman et al. (2010), inner acceptance, which is a sense of knowing and positive thinking, creates space for reflexivity between the core self and various social experiences, which have the effect of stress reduction and increased creativity. As shown in the findings below, having this positive acceptant attitude towards opposing values and social norms, these respondents were capable of utilising resources for negotiating new values that combine those of different family and societal contexts. Because of the influence of moderately traditional Chinese values, data below also indicated that this positive attitude and strong dynamic capability were employed to serve the transgenerational goal of their family business rather than venturing out for individualistic entrepreneurial ambitions. These characteristics of identity conflict and identity strategies were relevant to the findings of Type 5 multiple identity construction being Creative Negotiator.

Junxia has explained the tactful and reserved style of communication used to influence her father into considering her opinions in the decision of company restructuring, which was introduced to rule out old and improper conduct by the senior family members in the firm. She explained that:

"*A family business would inevitably have the young, especially female, successor encountered difficulties to manage the senior male family members. …it does not have to be a war.... I play Taiji (太极，avoid direct confronting). In 2014, when the government provided a new scheme for credited firms to build public housing. I did not directly tell my father to invest, but facilitate any activities and people around him that would influence his decision to apply this scheme as an opportunity to expand to public sector. However, my real interests were to use the government regulation as an excuse to rule out few senior family members who have enchanted their positions in the firm too long …, I respect them as the elders in the family who started this business with my father, but they have not done much for so many*

years. I saved their Mianzi（面子， reputation）by not directly fire them, which also would make my father look bad…My father did not reject, because I made him think it was his idea and good for the company….".

Junxi, as a young, overseas educated and female CEO, was supported by her father to rule out the problem caused by the enchantment of unqualified senior family members in the company projects. Instead of complaining about the difficulties she encountered, she positively accepted their conservative attitudes and creatively manoeuvred within this social situation by using a less confrontational approach. She employed two identity strategies to negotiate the role of a young, overseas educated and female CEO in managing elder male family members, including her father. Firstly, she played "Taiji *(太极)* " which was a metaphor meaning avoid direct conflict. By using this Chinese conflict solution to save the "Mianzi（面子）" of those senior family members, meaning their reputation, she avoided causing "a war" with senior family members by showing them respect and empathy. Secondly, she used a tactful style of communication that allowed her to influence the decision of her father without challenging his authoritarian leadership in the family business. Employing these two identity strategies, she was able to manipulate the thoughts and feelings of those family members whose values and social norms she conformed to; hence alleviating the resistance for business change.

Other respondents of Type 5 identity have reported similar experiences in dealing with multiple identities. Even though these respondents had issues with simultaneously connecting with opposing values, such as preserving family values whilst sustaining the competitiveness of the business in new generations, they have not reported negative emotions. Instead, they have shown a positive attitude toward seeking agreements that would sever the transgenerational goal of the family business. They can achieve this goal by relying on their knowledge and ability of combining information to create opportunities that would allow them to fulfil these multifaceted roles within the family business. Cenmin, who studied BA in international business in Japan and became the CEO of a traditional Chinese herbal wine manufacturer stated in an interview:

"The business was created because our family had an ancestor who was a Chinese herbal doctor in Ming dynasty …, I have studied how these traditional Japanese products expanding internationally…the domestic market for this traditional wine is limited, because the young generation in China, like me, think the modern western culture is cool and cannot appreciate

tradition...,..., I set a mission to preserve this family legacy through expanding to international markets, where the Chinese tradition would be more appreciated, such as in Japan, or may appear exotic, such as in European countries...my parents was worried about investing in unknown markets...I would not think they were ignorant, they just cannot see what I see; vice versa..., I tested some markets ..., we can talk on numbers(sales) ...".

According to the report of Cenmin, his overseas education background was helpful in fulfilling his role as a filial son to preserve the family legacy embedded in the business. His ability to integrate the multiple identities that were conventionally incongruous was derived from his cross-culture experiences. Having lived in China as part of a young generation, he could foresee the risk of over relying on the existing domestic market where customers' tastes have changed because of the influence of western modern culture. His overseas education and life experience provided him with knowledge of customer tastes in different countries. Influenced by these cross-culture experiences, he could see opportunities in new international markets for a product that has core value embedded in his family tradition and Chinese history. Even though it was challenging for him to share these market insights with his parents who have not had his experiences, he was empathetic, and found common ground in which to communicate, such as objective measures that would rule out the cultural influences, which he referred to as "*we can talk on numbers."*

The findings above show the characteristics of Type 5 multiple identity construction. The construction of Type 5 multiple identities was influenced by ambiguity within the Type E and B moderately traditional Chinese values and social norms. Even though the second-generation business family members were supported by the family to learn and train themselves outside the family business, their multiple identities could only be appreciated where their knowledge and skills could serve the common goals between the individual respondents and the family. This was the conformist feature of the Type 5 multiple identity construction, and the creative feature was shown because these respondents understood the value and social norms the resistant attitude was associated with. They did not behave in a confrontational, aggressive or patronising manner. Instead, they creatively shared unconventional values and ideas, and negotiated with resistant groups in languages and manners of their culture; therefore, their decisions were more likely to be accepted by the affected groups. This dynamic capability was derived from respondents who had formed a tolerant and acceptant attitude towards the contradictory values and norms within the Type E

and B moderately traditional Chinese contexts. This positive accepting attitude has enabled the respondents to create space between the self and the experiences of identity conflict. This segregated space has allowed them to step back and think positively towards their ambiguous roles in the moderately traditional Chinese family business. This positive acceptance towards the ambiguity within the construction of multiple identities has led to creativity in integrating values, opinions and ideas from different contexts; blended to more socially acceptable approaches for role innovation that would help deal with role conflicts with other family business members.

4.3.6 Constructing Type 6 Conformist Pusher Identity

Type 6 multiple identity construction could be identified from interviews with 6 respondents (15%) (Table 4.11), who enacted a multifaceted role within the family business according to Type E moderately traditional Chinese family values and norms challenged within the Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context in mainland China. The Type 6 was conceptualised as the Conformist Pusher identity.

Table 4.11 Respondent Profiles of the Type 6 Conformist Pusher Identity

Name	Age Group	Sex	Country of Education	Siblings	Position in the family business	Type of Business	Annual turnover in RMB (Million)
Ruxiao	26-30	Female	USA, BA in fashion design	One younger brother	Marketing manager	Manufacturer of accessories	<100 m
Zhenjing	31-36	Female	Australia, BA in management	Single child	Owner	McDonald license holder	>60 m
Yaping	20-25	Female	UK, BA in management	One elder sister	CEO assistant	Real Estate development	<150 m
Xiaoying	25-30	Female	US, BA in international business	One younger brother	CEO assistant	Tea factory	>100 m

Lingjie	26-30	Male	PRC, MBA	Single child	CEO	Mould factory	<100 m
Liwei	20-25	Male	US, BA in risk management	Elder sister	CEO	Commodity investment	>200m

In relation to the Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context for business practice, the Type 6 respondents reportedly started new lines of family business alongside of the existing family businesses through their connections with their own professional networks. Interestingly, their processes of multiple identity construction were often nurtured by their families who were often either investing in their education or start-up funds. The reason for this support, as explained in section 4.2, is that the Type E moderately traditional Chinese family would support the liberty of family members if their experiences outside of the family would ultimately serve the family goal, thus the context for the identity construction has the ambiguous values for social identifications. Parents often invested in the education of their children to become independent and capable individuals to fulfil their responsibilities in the family, but were not entirely able to trust their ability to do so on their own. The family has sceptical views on the independence of these 15% of respondents to develop identities that were deviated from the family expectations. As reported by the respondents below, the family often arranged roles in the family business and expected them to utilise what they had learnt through their education to improve the business.

However, the family was sceptical about their ambition to pursue their professional roles within the family business which deviated from the goal of the family. Settles and Buchanan (2014) stated that ambiguity of social perceptions results in tension to secure the legitimacy of the ideal self, which drive the feeling of dissatisfaction and ambivalence of the receivers. These respondents reported identity conflict, because they felt unsatisfied with their positions arranged by the family in the firm. One of the ways in which individuals negotiate identities when they encounter conflict is to withdraw from interactions that do not support a salient identity, and search for interactions that support the ideal self (Swann and Bosson, 2016). Findings below indicate that because their families did not entirely trust these respondents, who could have their own career and become independent from the family, these respondents kept pushing the boundaries of their positions in the family business to satisfy their needs of

professional roles. However, they felt that they owed the family "a gratuity of debt" because of the materialistic support they provided for them to pursue individualistic goals. They felt wrong to fight for justice, but would not give up trying to "win their hearts" by sharing their life experiences outside of the family business, in addition to celebrating their achievement with them. This ambivalent feeling towards their relationship with the family that prohibit the pursuit of a professional or entrepreneurial role, marked the characteristics of Type 6 multiple identity construction, as shown in findings below.

Ruxiao, Yaping and Liwei reported that their families have treated them equally as their siblings have higher positions in the traditional Chinese family role hierarchy in exchange for their service to the family business. They were expected to conform to the roles arranged by the family to serve the family goal in the business. This caused identity conflict because the independent, career-driven, professional identity formed in the western education or westernised modern business school in mainland China had challenged the self-sacrificing and submissive roles their families expected. Ruxiao, who wished to build own brand for the family business by developing a new line of accessories in oriental themes, spoke of her bittiness:

"We do not design our own pieces, but manufacture for other brands...When I suggested to build our own brand, my mother said 'you cannot run before learning how to walk'....I have been seen by them as idler since my childhood, they think I could only rely on them to survive. When I do not follow their expectation, they think me as fooling around. It seems that I can never do anything right by myself. ..., I am still grateful for the best they have arranged for me, for which I owned them a debt of gratitude...but I cannot abandon my dream. ...I transformed a company's warehouse to a café bar for customers, where I display a few my design for sale...my mother think I wasted my time away, even though some customers actually liked to manufacture my design of products ...leaving the company would upset my mother, I would stay as long as she would not interfere my little pleasure..."

It was evident that her professional identity was tolerated to the extent to which the core competence of the family business remained intact. Because her talents and capabilities were not appreciated within the position she had in the family business, Ruxiao reported a feeling of "bitterness" about her current position, which is evidence of identity conflict caused by the multiple identity construction and influenced by her education, areas of specialisation and

decision of entrepreneurship involving the support of family. Her overwhelming drive was to become a designer, which apparently does not conform to her mother's expectation of her to focus on her role as marketing manager. Nevertheless, she was still trying to find a suitable place in the family business, which would allow her to have space for personal "pleasure." Despite her assertions of independence, Ruxiao admitted that she felt that she owed them "a debt of gratitude." She had independent views and opinions. At the same time, she conformed to her role of filial child to respect the feelings of her mother and her expectation of her to serve the family business. Ruxiao had characteristics of multiple identity construction that were to push the boundary of her position as marketing manager in the family business to create space where her salient identity, being a designer, would be appreciated. She has achieved this multiple identity construction through exploiting the gap in family business roles that existed because of the ambiguous attitude of her mother towards her independent thinking regarding the goal of the family business.

Similar features of Type 6 multiple identity construction were found among the other respondents, whose roles as owner and manager of the family businesses were challenged by the professional identities formed when they encountered the Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context through education. Zhengjin, who won the bid for the McDonald licence in her home city, shared her work identity in order to push the boundaries of her role as the filial daughter and sever the family business in a way not expected by her father, who wished her to take over the family business:

"*I used to work in McDonald and was impressed by the standardised production line, performance measurements and marketing strategies. This standardisation approach, as some people would argue, that has hindered the incentives of humanism, such as the relationships. However, from my working experience in McDonald, I think in fact the western approach has incorporated the objective measures to evaluate the humanism in the business. I was so convinced that McDonald suits my personality being methodical. ....I won the licence over other higher bids, because McDonald wanted people who shared the same value. ...my parents paid the initial licence fees, but my father still think that I would take over the family business once I had my try.... ... my cunning plan was to get them involved to bend the rule...I organised a series talks for his employees ... he was not convinced by my suggestion to borrow from McDonald's standard approaches to reduce the operational cost caused by the managerial ambiguity in the family business, but was delighted to hear from*

some of his trusted employees told him how enlightened they felt about my talk... In case, I would have to take over one day, I need to work on a business model that was less ambiguous than this family business where too humanism makes it look unprofessional."

Exposure to education and life in the Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context has enabled Zhenjing to reflect on the difference in the principles of conflict management between the western enterprises in comparison with the family business in mainland China. Because of her multiple identities, she could make enlightened decisions regarding taking the successor role of Chinese family business within the ambiguous Type E moderately traditional Chinese family context. She criticised this principle of conventional conflict resolution in the family business, where humanism, such as the family relationship, was placed before rationality and role (Sheng et al. 2006). She believed that this led to the family business managerial role becoming too ambiguous to be perceived as professional. Therefore, she preferred the systematic approach of western expertise to ensure rules and rationality guide humanism, which did not conform to the role performance in her family business. Identity conflict became evident when she felt ambivalent about the consequence of her thoughts being deviated from the expectation of her father for her to take over. Her identity strategy was to "get them (the family) involved to bend the rule". It was through learning and sharing activities that she attempted to build common ground with other family members. Consequently, communication was improved, and it became easier for them to accept her acting as the agent of social change through developing her multiple identities that were deviated from her expected family business roles.

The findings above show the characteristics of Type 6 multiple identity construction. Their identity conflict was caused by the ambiguous attitude of family towards the salient identity of these respondents to become a designer or professional manager connecting with the Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context for businesses. They felt ambivalent toward this ambiguous attitude of their family with regards to their developed multiple identities. Feeling "unsatisfied" "bitter" and "ambivalent", they acted as the agent of social changes within the family owned business. They pushed the boundaries of their positions within the family business, where the ambiguous family role structures provided room for negotiation. They attempted small scale entrepreneurial activities in relation to the existing family business, and shared with the family their successful entrepreneurial experiences. However, they received

sceptical views from the family and have not yet celebrated. Nevertheless, concerning the feeling of their family members, their identity strategies were still confined by the traditional Chinese family value of not subverting family expectations with individualistic goals, and by being a filial child in order to show parents their gratitude. Hence, these respondents were independent and assertive but still conformed to family expectations.

4.3.7 Constructing Type 7 Confused Societal Rebel Identity

Type 7 multiple identity construction could be identified from interviews with 3 respondents (7%) (Table 4.12), who enacted a multifaceted role within the family business according to Type F non-traditional Chinese family values and norms challenged within the Type A traditional Chinese societal context in mainland China. The Type 7 was conceptualised as the Confused Societal Rebel identity.

Table 4.12 Respondent Profiles of the Type 7 Confused Societal Rebel Identity

Name	Age Group	Sex	Country of Education	Siblings	Position in the family business	Type of Business	Annual turnover in RMB (Million)
Bibo	20-25	Female	PRC, BA in hotel management	two elder brothers	Owner	Boutique hotel	<50m
Fuyin	36-45	Male	PRC, MB in management	One younger sister	Owner	Textile factory	<100m
Xiaokang	20-25	Female	PRC, BA in management	One elder sister and brother	CEO assistant	Poker cards manufacturer	>50m

Because of the influences of Type F non-traditional Chinese family, the Type 7 multiple identity construction had the sign of identity conflict reported by the respondents, who claimed to be "confused". As discussed previously (section 2.5.2), confusion is a sign of identity conflict. Suh (2002) states that individuals would rarely feel confused to identify with people from a similar culture, and would have a simple identity structure until they have

multicultural experiences. Evidence above indicates that the respondents were not confused and live independently from their liberal Type F families until they have encountered the informal networks of their family business operating within the Type A traditional Chinese context. Settles and Buchanan (2014) argue that the level of cultural diversity within society affects the complexity of identity structure and the likelihood of conflict. These researchers state that identity conflict is related to the level of conservativeness with regards to the dominant culture in society, as well as the level of openness to change (*ibid*). Shown in the data below, the cause of identity conflict in the Type 7 multiple identity construction process is that these respondents were caught between two opposing cultures; that is, identifying with the values of liberty and equality in interactions with their family, while being constrained by the conservative nature of their culture, which influences their social identifications with the business community. These two contexts for social interactions were mutually exclusive. Respondents reported that they often encountered resistance with regards to the unconventional female leader role in their family business embedded in the Type A traditional Chinese societal context. In addition, the male respondent also reported confusion with regards to criticism of the behaviour of the eldest son who prioritises professional roles outside the family business. Findings below further explain how their confusion were caused due to these roles not being in line with Confucian role structures that expect male leadership serving the collectivistic goals in society to be the norm (Yeung, 2006).

In the Type A conservative Chinese society group, the acceptable roles for women are those related to being a wife, mother, and housewife. Women are expected to defer to men and be submissive to them (Liu, 2013). The female respondents who are in the Type 7 multiple identities group reported that they have always been given the freedom to pursue a career of their own, thus it was "shock" that they could not be accepted to make decisions for their family business. They mentioned how the female role becomes problematic not only in succeeding the ownership of tangible asserts, but also in the challenge for the succession of intangible assert, such as the family networks. Bibo, who owns a boutique hotel that was invested in by her parents, explained that in the conservative Chinese community where her family businesses is relied upon for the family to survive, it is difficult for the role of a female family business successor to be socially accepted:

"It is difficult for a young woman to be taken seriously in the business. Sometimes, people would say 'why has the company sent a little girl, please go and get your father or brother, I

do not talk to someone who cannot make decision.'… they do not even give me a chance to communicate, and insist to see the men in the house. …I do not understand what is the difference…. The truth is my father would still ask my opinion after he had meetings with them, because all the men in the family have no idea how to run a boutique hotel which was solely my idea in the very beginning."

The type of business community from which her role hails has the assumed cultural norms that women assume roles in the house, while men are expected to pursue positions outside the house to earn for the family. Given the dependent roles females assumed in interactions in and outside the family, women were often regarded as being inferior to men, thus are expected to be submissive to men, which often results inequality for their rights (Pan et al., 2012). It is not the social norm for females to take over the males' roles in the conventional business seniors. Therefore, in the case above, when a daughter takes over the male role in the family business, it was difficult for the others in a community structured in this way to accept. Therefore, the female respondent was displaced in the family business and marginalized in her business community, because there is little space for a female family business leader in a conservative business society. Bibo, who has an educational background in hotel management and "travelled Europe in [his] gap year to have the experience of [running] boutique hotels" may have the experience required to run the family businesses, and be capable of communicating with stakeholders and make business decisions. Nevertheless, she is too unconventional for the role of family business owner in the Type A traditional Chinese business community. She said she "does not understand the difference" between a male and female business owner, and does not know why the conventional social norms regarding the leader role of family business must be a male.

In addition, Xiaokang reported that females are seen as "evil" if they fight for the ownership of family assets in a firm or try to compete for a leadership role, because this is not how women should behave in a conservative society. Interestingly, the male heir spoke of their inner struggles at being perceived as immoral when he decided not to succeed the family business. Fuyin, who shared the ownership with his sister, complained that it was "scandalous" in a conservative society for an eldest son to abandon the family business and pursue alternative careers and build his own wealth. He was criticised for his reckless behaviour when he started his own computer game company. He stated:

"I do not want to work with my parents, with whom I rarely communicate since they are too busy with their own businesses. I did not think they needed my help because they never ask. Moreover, my sister is the one who is interested to work with them. However, people in this town are conservative. They cannot understand this situation in my family. They think that my sister is sinister to push me out of the family. It was such a scandalous story in the town. This gossip sometimes makes me think if I bring shame to the family. I felt bad for my sister and try to avoid going back home in case I upset her, or am forced to face these unbelievable people. My parents could have explained, but they feel they should not explain about the affairs of their children."

His statement shows that he started to worry about if he brings shame to the family, even though he is liberated from the conventional filial child role as permitted by his liberal family. According to Nisbett et al. (2001) and Kidwell et al. (2012), people who have less experience of other cultures would not be able to understand and tolerate the differences of other individuals in social interactions, and this narrow view of social roles leads to the perceptions of threat and confusion. Indeed, neither Fuyin nor people in his surroundings attempted to understand and decode the difference between their perceptions. It is seen as socially unacceptable for him to not repay his parents the debt of gratitude, and so is punished with marginalisation, because the conservative people in his home town did not know how to respond to his unconventional choices. He himself did not wish to consider compromising, or seek less radical approaches, even though he was confused and started having self-doubt. His family choose not to give any opinion regarding his personal statue of wellbeing, even though it could have been helpful if the family provided some advice in dealing with such different perceptions. As Allan and Killick (2008) suggested, communication is the key in the cross-cultural context of social interactions in effectively increasing understanding and tolerance. However, as explained in section 4.2.3, many non-traditional Chinese families, influenced by profit-driven thinking, have a dysfunctional family dyad relationship between the children and family that leads to ineffective communications. In the case of Fuyin, the communication with each of the family members and the surrounding society was dysfunctional, thus causing the confusion.

The findings above show the characteristics of Type 7 multiple identity construction. As discussed in section 4.2, the Type F non-traditional Chinese family context did not expect them to follow the rigid Confucian values and norms. Therefore, these respondents did not

feel any conflict caused by the independent relationship with their liberal families, who would provide space for the children to pursue their own career and have equally considered the rights of female and male children to the ownership and successor role of the family business. However, all three respondents reported that they were confused. These respondents were confused with the situation that modern society in mainland China is still conservative in regard to the traditional roles of women as being a filial daughter or a good wife, and cannot accept divergent identities, such as a female family business owner. Because of collectivistic culture, society would punish these unconventional respondents who priorities their individualistic goals. They were marginalised and displaced in the society because of their pursuit of unconventional beliefs and roles. This is despite these respondents being educated in China, were they had limited experiences communicating with people from different backgrounds and could not understand or adapte to any alternative set of values and behaviours. Moreover, the distant family relationship and liberal attitude of their parents in the Type F non-traditional Chinese family was reported as being problematic for the respondents to gain any support for their modern aspirations receiving any wider social acceptance. There was no attempt from the individuals, the liberal family or the conservative society to communicate and help these respondents deal with the confusion and clarify the differences of their perceptions. The dysfunctional cross-cultural communication in the family business of these respondents was not helpful to stimulate their reflections on the feelings of confusion, thus they did not have radical rebellious behaviour to resist the emerging multiple identities. The rational individualistic thoughts and rebel roles of these respondents were alien to the conservative norms within the society surrounding their family business, as were the existence of these conservative attitudes in modern Chinese society to the respondents.

4.3.8 Constructing Type 8 Compromised Societal Rebel Identity

Type 8 multiple identity construction could be identified from interviews with 6 respondents (15%) (Table 4.13), who enacted a multifaceted role within the family business according to Type F non-traditional Chinese family values and norms that confers the Type B moderately traditional Chinese societal context in mainland China. The Type 8 was conceptualised as the Compromised Societal Rebel identity.

Table 4.13 Respondent Profiles of the Type 8 Compromised Societal Rebel Identity

Name	Age Group	Sex	Country of Education	Siblings	Position in the family business	Type of Business	Annual turnover in RMB (Million)
Wangshi	20-25	Female	Switzerland, BA in hospitality	One elder brother and One elder sister	CEO assistant	Dye factory	>50m
Kuili	31-36	Female	UK, Msc in accountancy	One younger sister	Owner	Waste Water solution equipment company	<200m
Tommy	31-36	Male	US, BSc in e-commerce	One elder brother, One younger sister	CEO	Machine tool manufacturers	>200 m
Xinhua	36-45	Male	PRC, MBA	Two younger sisters		Petrochemical Manufacturers	>200 m
Lijing	36-45	Female	PRC, MBA	One younger brother	Owner	Cosmetics manufacturer	< 100 m

Comparing to the Type 7 confused societal rebel, these respondents reported the process of Type 8 multiple identity construction has similar influences from the Type F non-traditional Chinese family. As shown in the findings below, these Type 8 respondents admitted that their family is liberal regarding their independent thinking, and respect their decisions. Nevertheless, they also reported the similar feeling of loneliness, and complained about the lack of psychological support from the modern Chinese family, due to parents being disconnected from their children by the demanding business activities in a rapidly developing mainland China (Kwan, 2012). The dysfunctional family life has driven the formation of an independent self, which has pushed them more to identify with the non-traditional Chinese

values they have encountered through education or business trips abroad. None of these Type 8 respondents thus reported any conflict to identify with their non-traditional Chinese liberal family context. For example, Kuili, who returned to China after her education in the UK, talked about her decision to not join in the craft manufacturer business (which includes producing conference souvenirs), and started a partnership with her uncle in a waste water solution equipment business. She said in the interview:

"The (family) business depends on the guanxi with people in charge (in the government and companies). My parents would try everything to connect to these people at the personal level to explore business opportunities. Ironically, they were too busy at maintaining the guanxi with others, while have not had any time for me since they start the business...I do not want their life, or the kind of business deals they negotiate. ...when my uncle approached me, I was delighted to see an opportunity to commit to a socially responsible business, ...only to find that regardless what businesses you are in, here [in mainland China], the secret to [business] success is the same, the guanxi. ...I own a high-tech company working with a group of scientist and technicians, but every day I worried about approaching these officials through guanxi networks with their family and friends to explore opportunities. I did not do anything different from my parents...However, guanxi is not as unethical as I thought, it was simply that you must be known in the circle to be trusted. This is the way works in China, if anyone wishes to achieve something."

The statement of Kuili represents all of the Type 8 respondents, who have constructed Type 8 multiple identities. They firstly have the willingness to act as the agent of social change, only to find they were too naive and inexperienced to act on the ideal self of being both socially responsible and an ethical business person within the Type B moderately traditional Chinese societal context. There was not sufficient institutional support for them to achieve their visions of the business that is radically different from the first-generation family business. In the case of Kuili, she tries to breakout the conventional "*guanxi business*" through connecting with the professional networks of scientists, but discovered the tactics of selling products in mainland China to be the same "secret" of her parents' family business - the *guanxi* networks. Remarkably, Kuili did not take radical rebellious approach to pursue the ideal self, even though she has a strong sense of self-actualisation at the personal level. According to findings in section 4.1.4, the collectivistic values are highly regarded in the Type B moderately traditional Chinese societal context. Multiple identity research suggests that a person's self-actualisation connects to both group and personal needs, and a productive and

sustainable potential of self-actualisation is at a collective level rather than just a personal level (Haslam and Reicher, 2007). Their study also pointed out that the group-based needs become an essential motivational factor in situations where the social identity of the individual is salient. Findings of Kuilin indicated that she compromised herself when she decided she must learn the local tactics of guanxi networks to be able to access opportunities that are given to the trusted insiders in the guanxi circle of people within the Type B societal context.

These features of Type 8 multiple identity construction shown in data collected from interviews with respondents indicated that the Type B moderately traditional Chinese societal context has moderated their strong sense of individuality formed within the Type F non-traditional Chinese family context. The social systems within the Type B moderately traditional Chinese society would not sufficiently accommodate the unconventional views of these respondents. Despite these respondents being given the liberty by their family to try their own innovative business ideas, their attempts did not radically impact on the business interpersonal relationship with the external stakeholders, such as the customers. There was identity conflict caused by their wish to disconnect from the family business that is sustained by the guanxi networks, while realising that the feasible strategy to be innovative in the Type B moderately traditional Chinese societal context is to commit themselves to the predominant culture rather than pushing their individualistic values and thinking. Because supports were not provided by either their liberal families nor their business surroundings for the radical changes they push for in the business community, these Type 8 respondents compromised and started connecting with the conservative guanxi networks - not out of respect for tradition, but rather to rely on the traditional support to make changes. They become more mature in handling identity conflict caused by their multiple identities and started connecting to both informal and formal networks. They may have compromised on the use of conventional social systems of networks for resources and opportunities, but they were aware of the alternative values and ways of business practice, and started making small and incremental changes.

4.3.9 Constructing Type 9 Reckless Liberal Identity

Type 9 multiple identity construction could be identified from interviews with 2 respondents (5%) (Table 4.14), who enacted a multifaceted role within the family business according to

Type F non-traditional Chinese family values and norms reinforced within the Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context in mainland China. The Type 9 was conceptualised as the Reckless Rebel identity.

Table 4.14 Respondent Profiles of the Type 9 Reckless Liberal Identity

Name	Age Group	Sex	Country of Education	Siblings	Position in the family business	Type of Business	Annual turnover in RMB (Million)
Weiwei	31-36	Male	UK, MA in international business	One adopted younger sister	Owner	Fast Food manufacturer	>50 m
Zhanghen	20-25	female	UK, MA in marketing	Younger brother	Owner	Sushi Restaurant	>50 m

These two respondents were born in the Type F non-traditional Chinese family and have affluent experiences of the Type C non-traditional Chinese society, thus they claimed to live in the most liberal environment in mainland China. However, their interviews showed that they suffered the most from identity crisis in the social verification process of their salient liberal identities, which led to the reckless attitude towards his/her own feelings. According to Stets and Cast (2007), the process of verification is important for a person to feel confident with his/her salient social identity, and the lack of verification can lead to identity crisis, as the person loses their focus on goals, resulting in considerable ambiguity about which objectives to pursue in life. Findings in this section showed that Weiwei and Zhanghen has been struggling to form a core self that helped them unify multiple identities formed outside

the family, for which they felt that they were in the constant conflict with regards to "who I am". Even though they have kept on trying at all costs to be perceived as a successful entrepreneur within the Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context for businesses, they showed a lack of confidence due to the numerous failures of attempts at entrepreneurial activities. Observing from the interview data of the Type 9 respondents presented above, their identity crisis was largely related to the limited psychological support from their liberal family. It is also related to the regulatory and institutional deficiency in the social systems of mainland China to accommodate the values of Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context in mainland China.

The influence of western values and the capitalistic system, such as individualistic thinking, equality and competition, were evident in the process of multiple identity construction reported by Weiwei and Zhanghen. Both were excited when they discussed the entrepreneurial atmosphere and opportunities in mainland China for young people to start their own ventures. Both admitted that their ego for becoming a successful entrepreneur, because they were inspired by the family business which their parents started, as well as stories of their counterparts who do not have the family business background, start from scratch and become well known for their achievement. Weiwei spoke of the frustration about his ambitions of becoming a well-known entrepreneur in mainland China:

"*When I graduated from the UK university, I was had such an ego to become rich and famous. I had no doubt, because I have better education than my parents, and more resources than other young people in mainland China. …nowadays, the competition is more ferocious that the business game of my parents' generation. Young people do not care about tradition, morals and responsibilites when it comes to money, … this is not the capitalism I knew, I am a complete outsider, my parents do not care what I do, and I do not know what I want. I do not want to settle with this small family business of my parents', neither do I want this kind of success. I just stay home and wonder around.*"

On coming back to China with the thought that the country has transformed to a more opportunistic and capitalistic economy that has many opportunities for young people, he was lost in his own reality that "*this is not the capitalism I know*". Mittal (2006) discerns that a person experiences a lack of self-worth and a sense of alienation, dislike and estrangement, when the social verification failed, and results in doubts and ambiguities which become sources of identity conflict. Haberman and Danes (2007) state that identity crisis occurs in

situations where a person cannot identify with the identity standard established by significant people and role models in society. Weiwei's descriptions of his attempts at entrepreneurship, however, become confused with his reckless behaviour to achieve the general standard of success in the Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context that becomes ever-materialistic. He feels that he is "a complete outsider" to his family and societal surrounding. Weiwei also briefly mentions the problem of lacking support from his family, which was also the cause of his feelings of loneliness. This problem of family in contributing to the process of Type 9 multiple identity construction has been explained further in analysing the interview of Zhanghen.

As discussed in section 4.2, due to the influence of the one child policy, the focus of the Chinese family has shifted from attending to the needs of elders to those of children, so the position of young members was elevated in the family hierarchy. In addition, Chinese families prioritise materialistic values in the family life that has disrupted the stable dyad relationship within conventional Chinese family lifestyle. Zhanghen reported the disappointment at the relationships with her parents, who were absent from her life in order to manage the family business. The distant dyad relationship in the Type F non-traditional Chinese family context creates communication barriers between Zhanghen and her parents. This barrier has led to her rebellious behaviours of selling the ownership of her Sushi restaurant, and her reckless attitude towards the other new ventures she involved herself with the money. She said in the interview how she abused the money given to her by her parents on her attempts at entrepreneurship:

   "When I returned from my study abroad, I did not know what I wished to do. The family does not need me to earn money, and my parents never care what I do with their money. ...In China, when you are a kid from a rich family, you are entitled to many things, people would approach you with good or bad intentions. When I just returned to China after so many years abroad, I was naïve and too inexperienced to distinguish. ...also, when money comes easy, I was not controlling. ...now, my parents would not trust me with anything."

Graham and Matusukis (2000) suggested that reckless behaviour involves a failure to take precautions which could have been taken. Indeed, her behaviour indicates that due to fast-economic development, materialistic values have been prioritised in the family and social interactions. It was clearly shown in the statement of Zhanghen that there was no moral structure, effective legal protections or family and social interventions to help the
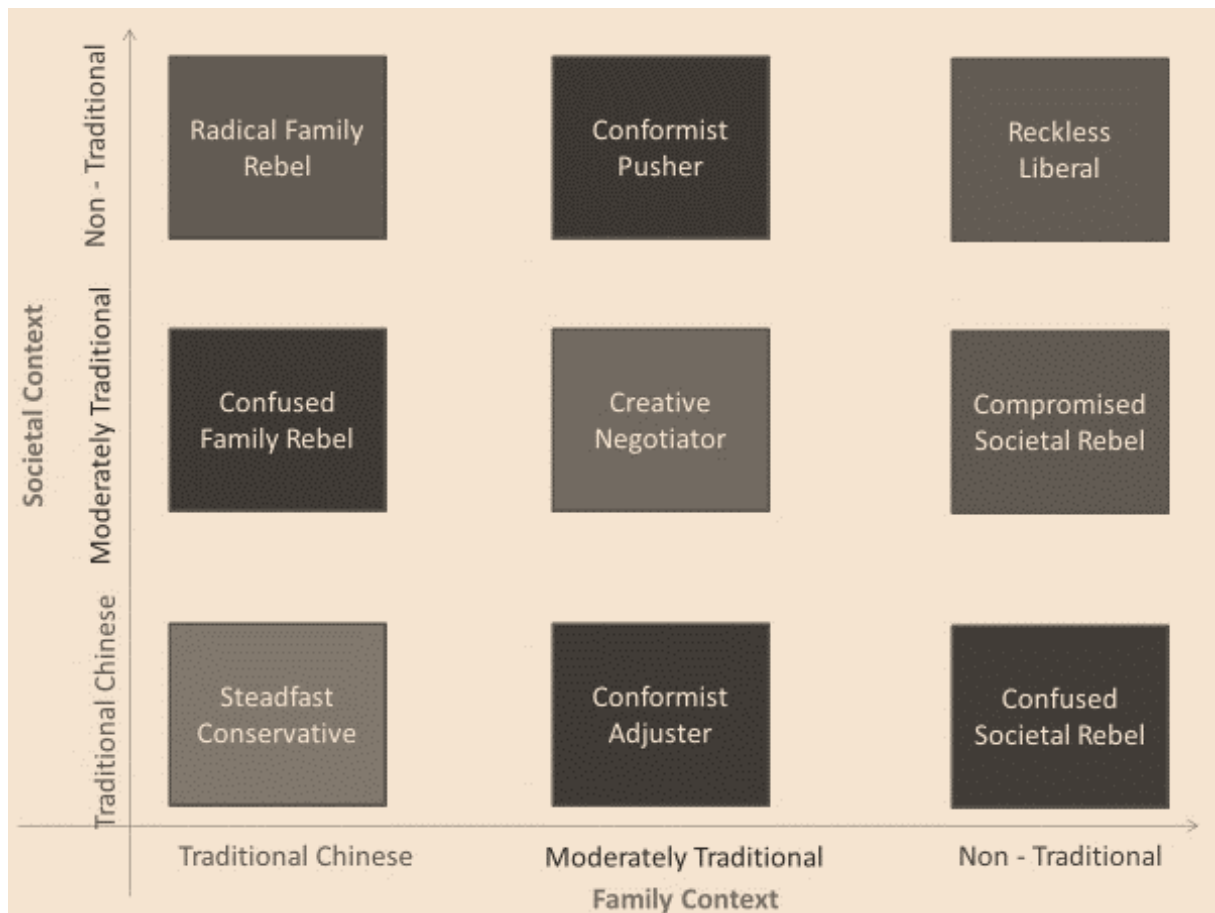
second-generation business family members, such as Zhanghen and Weiwei, learn to avoid the dangers of entrepreneurship in the non-traditional Chinese family and societal context, such as the fraudulent financial risks or the psychological issues caused by a materialistic family and social life.

The findings above show the characteristics of Type 9 multiple identity construction show that these respondents have suffered identity crisis which led to the reckless behaviours towards the ownership and entrepreneurship in relation to the family business. In their interactions with Type F non-traditional Chinese families, individuals grow up with the freedom to ascribe to any role or identity they like. They were permitted to pursue their individualistic needs. However, evidence shows that they struggle to verify his/her entrepreneurial and liberal self in the environment that provided little meaningful purpose for the business but money. The individual is also highly critical of the influences of non-traditional Chinese values, such as materialism, that he/she feels is harmful to the long-term development of society and the functional family life. They may, to a certain extent, have reflected on their reckless attitudes towards their privileged social position as the family business successor, and realised that the loss of convention, morality and values in mainland China today is related to the influence of the non-traditional Chinese values. Regrettably, they have not yet realised their reckless attitude towards their identities as the family business successor and abuse of their privileged social position would threaten the survival of existing family business.

4.3.10 Summarising the Typology of Multiple Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

Based on the findings and analysis in this chapter (summarised in Table 4.15), a typology of multiple identity construction processes of the second-generation business family members in mainland China is formulated (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2 A Typology of Multiple Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland

Source: own work

Table 4.15 Summarising the Key Findings on the Nine Types of Multiple Identity Construction Processes by Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

Types of Multiple Identity Construction	Salience Hierarchy of Multiple Identities Influenced by the Contextual Factors of Family Businesses	Identity Conflict To negotiate multiple identities	Identity Negotiating Strategies Impact on Family Businesses
Type 1 Steadfast Conservatives (7% of respondents)	● The salient identity of conservative family members that steadfastly adhere to the Type D traditional Chinese Confucian family culture, such as the eldest male as family business successor where the younger child or females are probably not entitled to ownership of the family property ● The equally salient identity of conservative family business owners/managers that followed the footsteps of their predecessors in staying connected with the Type A	● There was no sign of identity conflict, because of the overlap between family and society structures that these respondents identified with, which means that cost of role innovation is too high ● No motives externally or internally to impact on the changes of social structure within the family business, that would enable any possibility of leading innovation or being entrepreneurial	● Resist Western influences, connecting to the local networks, and staying in the local education system ● Follow the social identity standard for the position in the family business, even at the cost of losing opportunities elsewhere ● Male successors have control of the family business, prefer not to get outsiders involved. Female family members do not challenge the status quo of the conservative society in which their right to succeed and share ownership of are strictly limited

	traditional Chinese societal context for family business operations		● Not willing to ascribe new identities that were not verified by the traditions within the societal and family context such as becoming an entrepreneur – these are seen as too risky and costly for these respondents
Type 2 Confused Family Rebels (7% of respondents)	● The salient identity of conservative family members that conform to the expectation of the conservative family to assume householder's responsibility, and being submissive to the elders within the Type D traditional Chinese family context ● The less salient identity of family business professional manager, conforming to the values of western education for serving collectivistic goals, within the Type B moderately traditional Chinese societal context	● Identity conflict occurred when their salient professional and leadership roles in the family business were not rewarded by the conservative family ● Felt sympathetic to the conservative family members ● Having an inner rebellion that was not expressed outwardly ● Disappointed with their status of being, and were in denial about this ● Felt frustrated and unsatisfied	● Learning and applying the non-traditional Chinese values and management styles to improve the business for the family ● The less salient family business successor role was assumed reluctantly and acted upon indifferently ● Compromising on the conservative attitude of the family towards their attempts to act as leader and professionals in the family business ● Working as part-time roles in the family business to cause less emotion

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			and feelings
			• Keep the struggle to themselves, and not act out to upset the conservative family
Type 3 Radical Family Rebel (7% of respondents)	• The salient identity of being a professional leader, that conforms to the values and norms of a westernised Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context for family business succession, ownership, management and entrepreneurship, are due to their overseas education • The peripheral identity of conservative family member, because they were born within the Type D traditional Chinese family context	• Identity conflict was inevitable within the coordination of two completely opposing identities • Feelings of misery, frustration and sorrow, because their family did not wish to understand the knowledge and skills that represent the identity of professional leader role that was endorsed by their non-Chinese education	• Politically eliminate the power of conservative family by transforming the business based on their superior knowledge gained through western education • Restructuring the family business through introducing the legal structure of ownership and acquiring franchise within western companies to claim the leader position • Withdraw from interactions with the conservative family by recruiting and working with non-family professionals in the firm

			● Connecting to professional networks outside the conservative family to seek social support for the salient professional identity
Type 4 Conformist Adjusters (15% of respondents)	● The salient identity of being a member of the Type A society to conform to the collectivistic values of Type E family context ● The less salient identity of being an independent leader that liberates from the Type A conservative Chinese societal gender role structures	● Identity conflict was caused because within the Type B family context, the conformist adjuster would allow to have their liberty and equal roles in the family, so that they could serve the family goals in the business ● Felt they were struggling alone in the process of adjusting and learning to become a mature and independent family business owner ● Their families did not provide sufficient resources or pay attention to their wellbeing for them to become confident and independent individuals ● In addition, conformist adjusters	● Conformist Adjusters have overly relied on the vision and support of their family to enact their roles in the family business. ● They did not resist the idea of compromising self-interests for the need of family and continued to serve the goal set by the family in the business ● Lowered the expectation of support received from others, so that these respondents could mature and become strong enough as an independent leader to lead the business and take care of the family

		lacked the cross-cultural experience to utilise multiple identities that would enable them to become more sophisticated and visionary and to think outside the box	
Type 5 Creative Negotiators (22% of respondents)	• The salient identity of becoming a leader or an entrepreneur that is independent from the Type B societal context and Type E family context, and feel in control • The equally salient social identification of being a member of the Type B societal context and Type E family context that values the most of collectivistic goals	• Creative negotiation had an abundant and exhilarating experience of dealing with various sources of identity through interacting with different cultures and societies • Little evidence of identity conflict because the creative negotiator act on the family business leader that serve the common goals between the family and theirs in the business • Creative Negotiators understood the value and social norms the resistant attitude was associated	• Do not behave in a confrontational, aggressive or patronising manner • Have a positive accepting attitude towards challenging experiences of negotiating inconsistent values for identity constructions • Utilise cross culture knowledge and skills to negotiate new values that combine those of different family and societal contexts • Creatively shared unconventional values and ideas, and negotiated with resistant groups in languages and manners of their culture; • Commit themselves to the mutually

		with within the family and society	benefit of all parties
		● This knowledge has enabled a dynamic capability to integrate various values and social norms for social verification	● Serving the transgenerational goal of their family business rather than venturing out for individualistic entrepreneurial ambitions
Type 6 Conformist Pushers (15% of respondents)	● The salient identity of becoming a professional leader that strongly identifies with the values of Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context ● The less salient identity being a member of the Type E moderately traditional Chinese family to conform to the collectivistic values	● Felt ambivalent that the Type E moderately traditional Chinese family would support the liberty of family members if their experiences outside the family would ultimately serve the family goal ● Felt unsatisfied with their positions arranged by the family in the firm ● Felt wrong to fight for justice ● Felt bitter, because the family has sceptical views of their ambition to pursue their professional roles within the family business which deviated from the goal of the family	● Pushing the boundaries of their positions within the family business, where the ambiguous family role structures within the Type E family context provided room for negotiation ● Starting new lines within the family business alongside the existing family businesses through their connections with their own professional networks ● Sharing with the family about their successful entrepreneurial experiences in the professional world outside ● Concerning the feeling of their family members, and not ignoring the family expectation in place of individualistic interests

		• Felt disappointed that their achievement in the professional world outside the family business were not celebrated by the family	• Did not resist their families who were often either investing in their education or start-up funds • Would not give up trying to "win their hearts" by sharing their life experiences outside the family business, in addition to celebrating their achievement with them.
Type 7 Confused Societal Rebels (7% of respondents)	• The salient identity of being a member of a liberal family identifying with the values of Type F non-traditional Chinese family context • The peripheral identity of being a member of networks within the Type A traditional Chinese context	• The female respondents were confused by the situation that the modern society today in mainland China cannot accept identities that are divergent from the conservative roles of women, such as a female family business owner • The male respondents were confused because of the collectivistic culture; society would punish these unconventional respondents who priorities their individualistic goals	• Could not understand or adapt to any alternative set of values and behaviours • Did not wish to consider compromising, or seek less radical approaches, even though these respondents were confused and started having self-doubt • Neither did the respondents show enough radical rebellious behaviour to resist the emerging multiple identities • No attempt by individuals, the liberal family or conservative society to

		● Felt being marginalised and displaced in the society because of their pursuit of unconventional belief and roles	communicate and help these respondents to deal with the confusion and clarify the differences of their perceptions
Type 8 Compromised Societal Rebels (15% of respondents)	● The salient identity of being a member of a liberal family identifying with the values of Type F non-traditional Chinese family context ● The less salient identity of being a member of guanxi networks within the type B moderately traditional Chinese societal context	● Identity conflict caused by their wish to disconnect from the family business that is sustained by the guanxi networks ● Felt disappointed that their attempts did not radically impact on the business interpersonal relationship with the external stakeholders, such as the customers ● Felt frustrated because support was not provided by either their liberal families or the business surroundings for the radical changes they push in the business community	● Realised that the feasible strategy to be innovative in the Type B moderately traditional Chinese societal context is to commit themselves to the predominant culture rather than pushing their individualistic values and thinking ● Compromised and started connecting with the conservative guanxi networks, but not for respecting the tradition but to rely on the traditional support to make changes ● may have compromised on the use of conventional social systems of networks for resources and opportunities, but they were aware of

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			the alternative values and ways of business practice • Connecting both informal and formal networks to make small and incremental changes
Type 9 Reckless Liberals (5% of respondents)	• The salient identity of being an individual that is independent from the liberal family that identifies with the Type F non-traditional Chinese family context • The equally salient identity of being an ambitious entrepreneur that makes radical changes of society according to the values of Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context	• Suffering from identity crisis, because of limited psychological support from their liberal family • Struggling to form a core self that helps them unify multiple identities formed in the social verification process of their salient liberal identities, and • Complaining about the regulatory and institutional deficiency in the social systems to accommodate the values of Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context in mainland China • Lacking confidence due to the numerous failures of attempts at	• Trying at all costs to be perceived as a successful entrepreneur within the Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context for businesses • Pursuing their individualistic needs, and being careless of how they felt • Having reflected on their reckless attitudes towards the privileged social position as the family business successor • Becoming highly critical of the influences of non-traditional Chinese values, such as materialism, that he/she feels is harmful to the long-term development of society and the functional family life

		entrepreneurial activities	• In denial of their feelings, and having
		• Struggling to verify his/her entrepreneurial and liberal self in the environment that provided little meaningful purpose for the business but money and profit	not yet realised that their reckless attitude towards their identities as the family business successor and abuse of their privileged social position would have threatened the survival of existing family business

Chapter 5 Discussions and Conclusion

This chapter comprises two major sections. Section 5.1 aims to explain how the findings and analysis in Chapter 4 fill in the research gaps identified in the Chapter 2 literature review. Discussions are based on comparing the findings of nine types of multiple identity construction processes in relation to the three types of family and societal context in mainland China identified in Chapter 4, and explain how these findings fill in the gaps in literature that relate to the research aim and objectives. In section 5.2, I summarised the contributions to knowledge made by this thesis. This section begins by discussing the theoretical, empirical and practical implications of key findings, revisiting the main research aim and objectives. It follows by evaluating to the extent to which my research has achieved these aims and objectives, as well as discussing the limitations of the research and the scope for future study.

5.1 Discussions

In this section, I revisit the dynamic processes of negotiating multiple identities reported by the respondents in section 4.3, and discuss the causes in relation to the influence of family and societal structure identified in section 4.1-2. As highlighted in the Chapter 2 literature review, there are many gaps in understanding not only whether these respondents can commit to their family business roles, but also how motivation, willingness and abilities were constructed in the dynamic environment for the family business transgenerational development in mainland China. Literature in section 2.4 and 2.5 suggests that identity confirmation depends on societal acceptance. Multiple identities may cause identity conflict because only one salient role can be verified in social interactions, which may be in contradiction to other roles a person aspires to. If society does not verify an identity, negative feelings and emotions would drive a person to become more cautious in revealing identities that are likely to be rejected within the social interaction, to feel less emotional. Yet, multiple identities provide alternatives and choices for individuals to commit to roles with higher social acceptance in order to feed self-esteem. Accordingly, this thesis argues that even though the ambiguous values and norms in the context of family business in mainland China become sources of identity conflict, this unique contextual feature also provides space for the identity work of these respondents to act as the agent of social changes within the family business.

The findings in section 4.3 showed that identify conflict occurs when the values, motivation, willingness and abilities representing the core self of these respondents are not in line with the expectation of relatively conservative family (29% of respondents), or are too radical to be accepted in the social interactions outside the family (37% of respondents). The construction of these types of multiple identities thus occurs mainly in the struggle to cope with emotions and feelings. Exceptionally, steadfast conservatives, creative negotiators, and reckless liberals (in total 34% of respondents) have all denied feelings of conflict but for different reasons, which have different theoretical and practical implications. The theoretical and practical implications drawn from the comparison of these findings are explained below, and necessary means of support are recommended to deal with identity conflict in the different contexts of family business, where the second-generation business family members constructed multiple identities.

5.1.1 Discussing the Contextual Influences on the Identity Conflict in the Process of Multiple Identity Construction by the Second-Generation Business Family Members

Family business researchers suggest that because the context of family is unique, the family business and its members thereby assume a distinct identity (López‑ Fernández et al., 2016). Accordingly, the family has the strongest influence, and plays the main role in the construction of the core identity of its members (Rane and McBird, 2000). The literature in section 2.6 has identified a gap in understanding the values and structures of business-owning families in mainland China, and how the unique family features can potentially impact on the identity construction processes of second-generation business family members. 29% of respondents reported that identity conflict occurred when they tried to negotiate with the conservative family on the necessary identity for them to connect with social environments that were moderately or radically different from their conservative Confucian Chinese families. They reported that their family could not appreciate the value of their independent thinking, and considered their behaviour that deviated from the traditional Chinese family roles as a threat to their harmonious family life. Because of these attitudes towards alternative western values, their professionalism, leadership or entrepreneurial intentions, associated with their education outside the Chinese system, were not appreciated and were resisted by other family members in the business. These respondents felt dissatisfied, bitter, frustrated, sorrowful and ambivalent.

If the conflict cannot be resolved, as the evidence suggested in section 4.3, they either continually feel suppressed and devalued in the roles that were prescribed by the conservative family, or are likely to leave the family business and pursue an alternative career that fulfils their independent professional or entrepreneurial selves. This would become a major problem for the family business transgenerational development in mainland China. Considering the motivation and willingness of these dissatisfied respondents who work in the family business, it is in the best interests of the family to be more flexible and adaptable to the self-verification process of their second-generation business family members. Indeed, these families should allow younger family members to speak out instead of abruptly imposing their expectations on them; simply ordering them to comply with conservative values and rules is doomed to fail to make them feel committed to the family business. Greater tolerance will in turn lead to improved family relationships, which is critical in making young family members feel confident and secure in committing to the business.

Research by Brenner et al. (2014) suggests that the level of openness to change and the level of conservatism within a society affect the possibility of identity confirmation. Given the open-door policy of 1978, China is more open to the world and receptive to the influence of non-traditional Chinese values and social norms (Zhang, 2001). Within the majority of 61% of respondents who received an overseas education and others (except two local high school graduates) with experience of westernised Chinese educations in big cities such as Shanghai and Beijing, 37% of reported that their societal milieu is still conservative and is sceptical or critical of their individualistic thinking and the liberal spirit embraced by less conservative families. They felt that family businesses should proactively prepare themselves for increasing competition in domestic markets under western influence. Dynamic market structures influenced by contradictory social systems, both socialist and capitalist, require a more open-minded and adaptable societal milieu to allow individuals to gain and share cross-cultural knowledge and skills. In this scenario, scepticism towards alternative values, sources of resources and professional skillsets in the societal milieu of these second-generation business family members will negatively impact on the development of their cross-context capabilities in dealing with the complex market environment in mainland China, failing to exploit any entrepreneurial opportunities for the transgenerational development of family businesses. Also, the findings from these 39% of respondents suggest

that, for family businesses in the mainland China to compete more aggressively in international markets and operate more profitably, there must be better appreciation of the cross-cultural experience of these second-generation family members who are well-educated, more exposed to the world outside their families, and more insistent on self-expression and self-actualisation. This would result in a more dynamic style of leadership, communication patterns and co-constructed roles, and more transparent decision-making processes, which would benefit the family business development in the long term.

5.1.2 Discussing the Contextual Influences on the Construction of Entrepreneurial Identity by Second-Generation Business Family Members

There is increasing research to understand the family business as the distinctive context for the construction of entrepreneurial roles. Family business researchers such as Shepherd and Haynie (2009b) argue that the family business has expedited entrepreneurial decision making, because of the capacity of the family business as an organisation to align identity conflict within the role of entrepreneurs for the needs of both distinctiveness and belonging. Mitchell and Shepherd (2010) suggest that the family business has an overarching aim to not engage with entrepreneurial activities at the cost of family relationships. To contribute to this school of thoughts, my research investigates the features of multiple identities constructed by second-generation business family members who have experienced complex social, cultural and economic changes in mainland China. Great insights are found in the interviews with the steadfast conservatives (in section 4.3.1), creative negotiators (in section 4.3.5), and reckless liberals (in section 4.3.9), which provide practical implications for the necessary support within the different family and societal contexts in mainland China for the development of entrepreneurial identity.

The findings in section 4.3.9 show that the construction of multiple identities by reckless liberals (5% of respondents) do not display strong traits of entrepreneurial identity, even though they are influenced by the most liberal non-traditional Chinese family and societal environment, within which individualistic thinking and aspirations are highly regarded. The main issue with the low entrepreneurial commitment of the reckless liberals (5% of respondents) is their reckless attitude towards social structure bonding them to any responsibility; they thus lack persistence and commitment to any role (Miller, 2016),

including their attempts at entrepreneurship. According to the analysis in section 4.1-2, non-traditional Chinese family and societal contexts have overstated individualistic and liberal values, and this has disrupted conventional Confucian structures. However, according to Lin (2011), western influence in mainland China may provide opposing values which have disrupted traditional Chinese social structure, but alternative social systems have not yet been developed to accommodate these non-traditional values: thus there is a sense of confusion among younger generation regarding their identities. It is evident in section 4.3.9 that the reckless liberals (5% of respondents) have developed diffused adolescence, according to Bradley and Matsukis (2000), and are most likely to show reckless outward behaviour because they lack commitment. As shown in the data, their diffused adolescence is caused by the absence of parents in family life and the influence of materialistic lifestyles that typify Type C and F non-traditional Chinese family and societal contexts. Therefore, drawing from reflection on the construction of reckless liberal identity, it is recommended that social systems be developed in Type C non-traditional Chinese societal context, because social identification improves identity confirmation and increases the level of commitment (Swann and Bosson, 2016, Reich, 2000). Institutional support, such as establishing networks for second-generation business family members, can provide guidance in redefining the roles of family business manager, owners or entrepreneurs according to their non-traditional Chinese values, so that the others would not feel as confused as the reckless liberals (5% of respondents) found in this thesis. More importantly, the literature stated the concept of the core self, which unifies the many identities that emerge through social interactions, and argued that the existence of this core self is what makes a person unique and separate and isolated from all later social experiences (Klotz and Neubaum, 2016). Accordingly, the Type F non-traditional Chinese family should aim early on to enhance the development of core self that helps to unify the multiple identities developed in later social interactions, which can effectively increase the sense of ownership of their social roles, and improve the persistence of these reckless liberals to commit to their attempts at entrepreneurship, and feel more responsible.

Compared to the findings about reckless liberals, the analysis in section 4.3.1 showed that steadfast conservatives (7% of respondents) have different needs with regards to the social supports to overcome the low commitment to entrepreneurship. The findings indicated little trace of identity conflict in the construction of steadfast conservative identity, because Type

A traditional Chinese societal structure is reinforced by Type F family structure, therefore the cost of role innovation is too high for individuals to switch to any alternative values. It is evident in data analysed in section 4.3.1 that the steadfast conservatives (7% of respondents) take great pride in the family and the Chinese tradition in business. They believe that the existing business structures of conventional values and norms, tested in the history of family business development, are less risky. Very concerned with preserving Chinese conventions, the steadfast conservatives (7% of respondents) reported that they are happy to remain in the local and closed environment to sustain the existing business, and resist venturing out. Research by Shi (2013) on entrepreneurship in Chinese family business suggests that the lack of vision in alternative values and business practices is a great threat to the family business in mainland China. Therefore, my research suggests that even though traditional Chinese family and societal contexts provide a great sense of belonging and ownership which helps steadfast conservatives to commit to the existing family business, these respondents must reflect on their resistant attitudes towards western influence. Rather than considering any challenge to the Chinese tradition as a source of conflict and threat to the social and family harmony, they may wish to learn from the positive attitude of creative negotiators towards contradictory values in the construction of multiple identities.

As shown in section 4.1-2, the values within the Type B and Type E moderately traditional Chinese family and societal contexts in mainland China have a great degree of ambiguity. Despite this unique contextual feature of ambiguous values and paradoxical social norms, the findings in section 4.3.5 indicate that little evidence of identity conflict was shown in interviews with creative negotiators (22% of respondents). On the contradictory, these 22% of respondents have developed versatile personalities and dynamic capabilities that are the strong traits of entrepreneurial identity (Chavez, 2016). The findings showed that these respondents have affluent cross-cultural experiences, from which they have gained the knowledge of contradictory values and developed a positive attitude towards the experiences of identity conflict as the result of encountering different cultures. This has led to the creativity of conveying values, opinions and ideas from different contexts in the manners or languages that are more socially acceptable for people living in different family and societal contexts. Employing these strategies of identity work, in comparison with other respondents, these 22% of respondents have negotiated more external support to help them manage innovation within the existing family business or to explore and exploit opportunities in

international markets. The findings in chapter 4 indicated that, facing the increasing influence of western values in mainland China, many traditional Confucian values may be challenged by opposing values, but some conservative values and systems are still relevant for maintaining interactions within the family entity and the broader society. Accordingly, these less aggressive and conflicting approaches within identity work by creative negotiators (22% of respondents) are invaluable to other second-generation business family members who may wish to negotiate their vision of family business within societal contexts that are resistant or sceptical towards change, and to gain sufficient support to act as the agent of social changes.

5.2 Conclusion

To conclude this thesis, I would like to reiterate my main motivation for this research, its main aim and objectives, and explain its significance in the field of identity studies and family business research. My main motivation for doing this research is that I have some friends and relatives who are second-generation business family members in mainland China. I was intrigued by the similarities and differences in their experiences, and particularly how they felt they are different from their parents in managing existing family businesses and exploring new opportunities. I wished to know how they could cope with the difference while enacting their roles in the family business. My reading into the subject of family business surprisingly showed how little we know this group of second-generation business family members, like my friends and relatives. Yet researchers such as Ling and Xi (2014-16) have highlighted the importance of understanding the motivation, willingness, abilities and vision of the new generation of family business owners and managers in mainland China for the transgenerational development of family owned firms. In fact, since first-generation family business owners started up in 1981, when private ownership of businesses was permitted in mainland China, this is the first time in history that we have faced this phenomenon of rising positions of second-generation business family members in the transgenerational development of family businesses in mainland China.

In contrast, family business studies have mainly concentrated on the context of European/North America culture (Tsai et al., 2017, Gedajlovic et al., 2011). Moreover, the existing research into Chinese family business sees many of them conducting themselves outside mainland China, such as Hongkong, Taiwan and overseas Chinese communities which have different social, cultural and economic contexts for family business development

(Ling and Xi, 2016; Shi and Dana, 2013). Exceptionally, research into family businesses in mainland China has predominantly focused on the first-generation family business owners, who started the family business in 1981 when private ownership faced the institutional deficiency in mainland China as a socialist country (Pistrui, 2005). Therefore, the empirical findings have largely overstated the impact of traditional Confucian family culture on the identity of family business owners and managers in mainland China, such as the family having tight control over ownership and management to maximise family wealth as the ultimate business goal (Shi, 2012).

However, increasing research has reported that the young generation in mainland China has encountered values that may be contradictory to traditional Chinese values, having grown up in the period of economic and cultural change as the country opened to the western world (Shan et al., 2016). Nevertheless, research has not yet addressed the extent to which western influences such as the values of capitalism, individualism, equality and liberal thinking have been integrated with traditional Chinese values emphasising socialism, collectivism, hierarchy and conservative (Steinkuhl et al., 2016, Lane and Myant, 2016); or how second-generation business family members accept or negotiate these contradictory values and social norms that structure the social interactions of family businesses in order to construct identities. Therefore, **my thesis helps to understand the distinctive identity constructed by second-generation business family members who have faced complex social changes in mainland China.**

5.2.1 Theoretical Contribution I: Developing a Framework to Interpret the Contextual and Processual View of Identity Construction

In the field of identity studies, there are two main schools of thought. The essentialist treats the identity as the self that is fixed and immutable (e.g. Steinkuhl et al., 2016). Another is the social view of identity that typifies a person according to existing social categories such as age and gender (Hitlin and Kwon, 2016, Erikson, 1980). Hogg (2014) and Tajfel (1981) have reflected on the construction of identity in organisation studies, and argued that neither approach by itself can address the temporary and multiple features of identity in the modern organisation without undermining the power of individuals as the agent of social changes to make an impact on the organisation. Therefore, they called increasing attention to the social

construction approach towards identity study in which identity is not entirely decided by the person or completely imposed by his or her surroundings, but by a dialectic, reciprocal and reflexive relationship between both processes (Alvesson et al., 2008).

Accordingly, the social constructionist approach seeks to understand new meanings emerging for individuals who reflect on, contextualise and apply these meanings of identities in later social interactions, indicating a greater understanding of social surroundings (Sheldon and Burke, 2000, Mead, 1967, Hogg, 2014). This is in line with the aim of this thesis to explore more sophisticated and dynamic social categories that are identified in order to better describe the identity of second-generation business family members, given the changes within the context of family businesses in mainland China. Hence, my research adopts the social construction approach to understand identity. However, the development of this social construction approach itself in the field of identity research is problematic for not having a researchable framework. The social construction approach can be traced to George Herbert Mead (1934), who asserted that the formula for identity construction is that 'society shapes self shapes the social behaviour' (cited in, Sheldon and Burke, 2000). Nevertheless, the ambiguous concept of "society" and "self" in Mead's frame as the explanation for social behaviours was difficult to operationalise for systematic empirical research (*ibid*). **One of the major theoretical contributions of this thesis in filling this gap in identity research is to develop the interpretive framework of identity construction (Figure 2.5) by**

- recognising that identity is dynamic and processual, and its construction is temporary depending on the contexts, thus becoming multiple (Hogg, 2016, p. 3-17);
- hence, this framework integrated the theoretical constructs of family (section 2.6) and society in mainland China (section 2.8) to illuminate the contextual features of multiple identity construction (Yarrison, 2016); and,
- linking the constructs of identity negotiation (section 2.4) and identity conflict (section2.5) to address identity construction as a temporary process for social identification of individuals depends on the context of the social interaction (Brown, 2015).

This framework can be used to indicate additional, new aspects of identity construction in different contexts, which is further explained section 5.2.5.

5.2.2 Theoretical Contribution II: Illuminating the Three Types of Family and Societal Contexts in Mainland China for Identity Construction by Second-Generation Business Family Members

The interpretive framework (Figure 2.5) developed in this thesis assists to illuminate these family (family values, roles and relations) and societal contextual factors (social values, roles, education, and networks) that influence the identity of second-generation business family members (section 4.1-2). **Three types of family contexts (traditional Chinese, moderately traditional Chinese and non-traditional Chinese) and three types of societal contexts (traditional Chinese, moderately traditional Chinese and non-traditional Chinese) which co-exist in mainland China were identified in the analysis and are relevant to the different salient role-based identities evident amongst second-generation business family members in their interviews.**

Regarding the family business of mainland China as the research context, literature suggested that the radical changes of political system in China have had a significant impact on the social and family values that structure the interactions of individuals in Chinese society (Ashforth et al., 2014). Findings in section 4.1-2 shed light on the research gap regarding how various values and norms in the societal and family context of family businesses in mainland China were represented by the respondents to describe and define themselves for social identification. Findings indicated that the influence of these conservative Confucian values has different levels of intensity because other values, such as Chinese socialist and western capitalist, have moderated or challenged (or in a few instances, enhanced) these conservative Confucian values.

As evident in the Type A societal context and Type D family context, traditional Chinese Confucian values still predominantly structure the social identification of second-generation business family members in mainland China. Within the Type B societal context and Type E family context, it is moderately traditional Chinese because the existing traditional Confucian role hierarchy was enhanced by the influence of high-power distance in the socialist societal structure, therefore the age and gender structures were rigid in the social identification of individuals. Another example is that Chinese conventions and western influences were regarded as equally important if they could serve the collectivistic values that are in fact derived from both Confucianism and communist ideology (Wang et al., 2016). Type C

societal context and Type F family context are the most influenced by western values and social norms, thus are non-traditional Chinese.

As discussed below, the ambiguous values and norms for social interactions in mainland China, on one hand, become a source of identity conflict and lead to negative emotions, feelings and reckless behaviours. It is evident in interviews that these experiences have led the second-generation business family members to have difficulties in taking independent leadership of the family business, innovatively managing existing businesses, or becoming entrepreneurial. On the other hand, the co-existence of various values and social norms have provided a social space for these respondents to negotiate social identifications in the positions of their family businesses, which have embraced creativity and enhanced their dynamic capability to blend resources for more socially acceptable role innovation.

5.2.3 Theoretical Contribution III: Conceptualising the Typology of Multiple Identity Construction Processes of Second-Generation Business Family Members in Mainland China

The data presented in this thesis exposed the cognitive and emotional features of identity salience, and identity conflict as the response to the intersecting multiple contextual structures; as well as the behavioural features of identity negotiating strategies to impact on the family business succession, ownership and entrepreneurship decision making in mainland China. **As summarised in section 4.3.10, nine types of multiple identity construction processes are identified, including the steadfast conservatives, confused family rebels, radical family rebels, conformist adjusters, creative negotiators, conformist pushers, confused societal rebels, compromised societal rebels and reckless liberals.** This typology is one of the major contributions to knowledge is because there was no theoretical, operational definition to describe the second-generation business family members in mainland China (Zhang, 2015). My research made the first attempt to provide a typology that can shed light on their unique values, beliefs, motivation, willingness, and abilities, being co-constructed between the individuals and its family within the complex societal context of family business in mainland China. There are two main practical implications from comparing the findings of different types of identity conflict and identity strategies within the

typology of multiple identity construction by second-generation business family members in mainland China.

5.2.4 Practical Contributions: Sharing the Identity Strategies of Dealing with Identity Conflict by Second-Generation Family Members in Mainland China

My resaerch adopts the social construction approach to understand the identity construction, by which identity conflict is recognised as a double-edged sword in the process of individuals' social identification, causing confusion and negative emotions (Ling and Xi, 2016). On the other hand, identity conflict can drive the transformation of core self by embodying new perceptions, and trigger role innovation within social interactions (Cheng et al., 2014).

As discussed in section 5.1, the typology can serve as guidance for family business stakeholders, such as the business family, the family business succession consultant and the government, to understand what must be done to help young family members alleviate and cope the identity conflict caused by the multifaceted role they play within the family business in mainland China. Most importantly, the identity strategies identified within the findings in section 4.3 have practical implications. The other second-generation business family members can identify with different types of multiple identity construction process reported by the respondents, and learn from their strategies to communicate with people who are resistant or sceptical towards their independent behaviours within the family business, and negotiate sufficient supports to fulfil their visions for the family business.

The findings in section 4.1-2 showed that the traditional, Confucian family and societal values in mainland China were challenged by western influences, but social systems that accommodate the new values have not been well established. There is ambiguity within the values and social norms that structure the social interactions of individuals. Consequently, there is increasing challenge for most of the respondents, apart from the steadfast conservative (7% of respondents), to completely identify with the conventional Chinese Confucian values, or negotiate alternative ways to claim independence and gain more social acceptance for acting on the moderately traditional, or non-traditional Chinese values.

With regard to respondents identified as confused family rebels (section 4.3.2), radical family rebels (section 4.3.1), conformist pushers (section 4.3.6), confused societal rebels (section 4.3.7) and compromised societal rebels (section 4.3.8), this thesis concerns the emotional consequence that these respondents have suffered by avoiding conflict in maintaining harmony within the family or social relationships. Therefore, I would suggest that the need for harmony must be carefully considered against the cost of individual needs. Understanding and tolerant attitudes of family and public for their distinctive behaviours within family business is critical. The implication that can be drawn from this is that most Chinese families should attempt to move away from traditional modes of thinking and interactions with their children, and become more adaptable to change and more tolerant of alternative values. In addition, institutional support such as establishing networks for the second-generation business family members can provide guidance in redefining the roles of family business manager, owners or entrepreneurs according to their non-traditional Chinese values, so that others would not feel as confused and frustrated as these respondents. Nevertheless, in the cases of these identities, the conflict was overt, and caused the disruption of existing societal structure, and disharmony within the family. The respondents with "rebellious traits" were often seen as too self-centred and a threat to family and society, thus triggering sceptical and resistant attitudes that prevented them approaching others for support.

The findings from respondents such as steadfast conservatives (section 4.3.1), creative negotiators (section 4.3.5) and reckless liberals (section 4.3.9) have provided practical implications for second-generation family business members to gain support for the development of entrepreneurial identity. In respect of the unsuccessful attempt by reckless liberals to be more entrepreneurial, the thesis suggests that there is a need for early family and institutional intervention aimed at enhancing the development of core self that can effectively increase their sense of ownership towards their social roles, become more commit their trails of entrepreneurship and less reckless. In contrast, the steadfast conservatives have low motivation to be innovative and become more entrepreneurial, and they are less likely to create new values or obtain new resources for the transgenerational entrepreneurship of the PRC family business. In fact, their ties to the conservative Chinese family business are too strong to allow them to accept any alternatives. From the perspective of family business transgenerational development, I would suggest the steadfast conservative should expose

themselves more to different cultures, through which they might be able to form new visions for the future of family business.

As far as entrepreneurial identity is concerned for benefiting the transgenerational family business development, the creative negotiators (22% of respondents) have the most potential, because they have cross-culture experiences, which provided them with the quality of entrepreneurship, such as being versatile and flexible. They have a positive attitude to managing identity boundaries for their social interactions within the family business. They have the cross-context capabilities to creatively convey their opinions and ideas in a manner and language more socially acceptable for people in different family and societal context. Entrepreneurship is socially situated cognition (Weingart et al., 2015). Given that the findings in section 4.1-2 indicate that some conservative values and systems are still relevant for maintaining interactions within the family entity and the broader society in mainland China, this thesis argues that these less rebellious and reckless approaches within the identity work by the creative negotiators are invaluable for other second-generation business family members who may encounter resistance or scepticism towards their deviation from conventions, and who need support to make an impact on family businesses.

5.2.5 Limitations of this Study and Scope for Future Research

In this section, I demonstrate the limitations of this study and suggest future research. Firstly, mainland China is a vast country with great regional differences (Mitchell et al., 2011). In section 3.4.1, I explained that my research limited the fieldwork to the developed region of mainland China, recruiting interviewees from Jiangsu and Zhejiang in the Yangzi Delta. However, this means that the views expressed here are restricted to the regional culture of this area, and therefore may not be relevant to second-generation business family members in different regional contexts for family and societal interactions. A survey of second-generation family members from different regions of China may be conducted for a more holistic view of different types of identities, and how they are formed among second-generation family members.

Secondly, in section 4.1-2, my research explores how relevant values within Confucianism were reinterpreted in terms of the respondents. It might be possible that the relevance of other

Confucian values and norms, such as the concept of trust (Tan et al., 2009), can enlighten a new avenue of research. Similarly, it may be relevant to explore other values and social norms of socialism and capitalism in mainland China.

Thirdly, this research has developed a typology to describe the features of multiple identity construction processes of second-generation business family members. Future research can examine the correlation between different features of identities and family business performance, or explore whether the identity of a family member is a factor that provides a strategic competitive advantage. This line of research may contribute further to the theory of family business heterogeneity aimed at linking the core competence of the family business to the unique contexts of the family business (Zhou et al., 2017).

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英国博士论文采访邀请函

尊敬的先生/小姐：

　　　您好，本人，是英国威斯敏斯特大学博士研究员。我的课题是中国家族企业第二代在守业 和创业初期的角色调整。

　　　1978 年至今，中国家族企业第一代企业家们，白手起家创造了显赫的成绩；他们创业的故事和精神为公众所推崇。现如今，家族中的第二代成员逐渐参与到家族企业的经营管理中，或者开拓自己的企业家之路。在此期间，涌现出了一批优秀的企业家和未来家族企业的领导者。因此，这个研究项目将密切关注这些家族第二代成员领导，管理和创业的故事。项目的研究成果可以促进社会各界对于家族企业第二代成员的了解，并增进社会各界对这些新一代企业家想法的重视和认同感。

　　　为了节约您宝贵的时间，我会亲自拜访或者通过网络采访。采访时间将近一小时，问题主要围绕以下三点。第一，作为企业的接班人或者创办人，你的日常工作和活动是怎么样的。第二，你觉得成为企业接班人或者创办人之后，你最大的变化是什么；比如更成功，更有成就感，或者更谦虚。第三，在这个过程中，有没有特别有感触的故事，比如奋斗，学习的经历，家人，朋友的支持。如果你愿意，可以分享你觉得有价值的故事，不局限于这三点。

　　　您的采访内容只作为学术研究，任何商业用途必须经过当事人同意。您对这个采访有相对自由的掌控度，我完全尊重您选择回答问题的权力，您有权随时终止采访，和要求删除任何采访内容。

　　在采访之前，如有任何疑问请联系　江南　女士

　　邮件：　n.jiang@my.westminster.ac.uk

　　手机：

　　地址：　威斯敏斯特大学，伦敦

 感谢您对学术研究的支持和理解，希望能分享您作为新一代企业家的精彩故事

　采访人　　　江南

2012 年 8 月 6 日

Translated:

Dear _____,

My name is Nan Jiang. I am a PhD researcher from the Westminster Business School. My research topic is understanding the identity of the second-generation business family member in mainland China.

Since 1978, the first-generation family business owners started their ventures from scratch and created a generation of family business that becomes the backbone of the economic growth in mainland China. Nowadays, the second-generation business family members start taking part in the family business, or venture out to start up. Many interesting stories of young family business leaders and new generation of entrepreneurs emerge in news and reports. Accordingly, this research is interested in understanding the managerial and entrepreneurial roles of these second-generation business family members. The research outcome will enrich our understanding of new generation business family members, and bring their voice to the family and society in mainland China.

I understand that time is precious to you, thus I will visit you in person or online if preferred for interviews. The interview will last in an hour, and the questions will cover three main topics. 1) The position and daily activities in the family firm. 2) The experiences of working in the family business, such as challenges and achievement. 3) The relationships with people, whom you interact for the businesses, such as the family members and significant others. The interview questions are designed according to these main topics, but not limited to them. The participants are welcome to share anything that are important to them.

The interview is conducted for academic research. Information will not be used for other means without the consent of participants. The participant reserves the right to not answering questions, stopping the interview at any point of time, and omit any information that of their concerns.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if any question. My contact details are:

  Email: n.jiang@my.westminster.ac.uk
  Mobile:
  Address: 35 Marylebone Road, University of Westminster

Thank you for the support of academic research, and looking forwards to hearing from you.

Researcher: Nan Jiang

6th August 2012

Appendix 2 Key Themes Suggested in Literature and the Pilot Study for Refining the Interview Questions of Main Research

Literature of family business, the PRC contexts and identities	Themes Derived from the Pilot Study	Interview questions and topics relevant to the themes	The interpretive purpose of discussing these themes
• A successor as being embedded in one's own social, economic and historical environment see through family's business (Sharma and Chua, 2013, Jaskiewicz and Dyer, 2017)	• Cultural aspect of identity construction	• What is the core value of a successor and their family, whether those could be seen in the business? • How do they describe the culture of one's family business? • How do these cultural values influence their respective businesses?	• Their perceptions on the PRC's cultural environment for operating a FB • How these values are understood by a successor had meaning for their businesses and themselves, which bear on the identity construction
• Predominant Chinese Confucian values and social norms (Jameson, 2008) • Expectations of first-generation family	• Family identification through education • Considering the male founder as the role model for leadership in	• How important are your parents' opinions in decision-making in life? • Do you have a family member as a role model? If not, who	• Increasing the understanding of what traditional values mean to participants

business founders (Dou and Li, 2012) • Ambivalent feelings towards founder parents (Shi, 2012) • Lack of experience or power to exert influence (Xiang and Teng, 2008)	the business and householder in the family • Gender issues regarding the right of female business people to succeed • Feeling obliged to comply with the role of child in the family	else? • How important to meet the expectations of your parents? • What do you think about the women who manage the family business?	
• Influence of individual culture (Hall et al., 2004) • Influence of Western business practice (Anderson and Lee, 2008) • Higher level of education (Pistrui et al., 2001) • Professional business training (Shi et al., 2001) • Being creative individuals in the family business	• Being independent, autonomous, and self-focused • Wishing to introduce Western professional management practices to the family business • Interpersonal competence to communicate with other stakeholders to	• To the extent of which you can make your own decision? How do you feel? • Do you think working in the family business is a professional job? • Are your education/other life experiences outside family, such as traveling or jobs, relevant to your current life in the family business?	• Increasing understanding of what Western values mean to participants •

(Chrisman et al., 2005) • Influence of market-oriented thinking in economic reform (Ling and Xi, 2012)	shape social identities and negotiate personal identities • Wishing to have own stamp on the leadership of the family business • Denial of family business role support when conflicting with individual achievement • Feeling pressure to break out of comfortable family business environments to be entrepreneurial	• Do you think you are in control of what you do in the family business? • Would you continue working in the family business?	
• Symbolic representations chosen by the individual to convey who (she) is (Laakkenon, 2012: 58) • A shared identity consisting personal and collective	• Identities are only realized through interaction and communication • Family's values, transmitted through	• General background of participants (education, marriage statue) • The history of company (initial position, and current position) • Important people in their life	• Reflect on the history of family in the company, stories of family, management, and ownership • Defines the identity of the participant as having the past, present and future of who

values that family wants to perpetuate,	rules • Identity is temporally constructed	impact on their identities	(s) he wants to be and become • Identities get reflected on individuals' past histories and hopes and wishes for the future • The reflection takes place in the present
• Identities as being constructed in interaction through language (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009) • True identity may get thrown away or transformed due to the expectations of old generations (Lumpkin，2008)	• Identities being constructed in interaction • Personal identity	• If they would like to describe the business as family business • How they would like to describe their roles in the PRC FB	• Create understanding of a successor's own account of identities • They make sense of their own qualities for operating a PRC FB • Not to label them with a scholarly approved stamp of roles • Their feelings of responsibilities and expectations of parents

• Culturally embedded features of identification may be related to Generational difference (the PRC context, Ling and Xi 2012) • Generational difference and similarities are part of the identity work that aims to distinguish oneself from others while defining what is unique to a successor (Alvesson & Deetz 2007)	Generational difference related to the culturally embedded features of identification	• How family relationship influences their qualities to work for the PRC FB • Whether they consider themselves different from their predecessors	• A successor's own perceptions as potential similarities or difference between two generations with in one's FB
• Family values and rules constructing the identity of a successor (Lumpkin *et al.* 2008, 130) • Identities are negotiated in context (Li et al., 2010)	Family values constructing identities	• What does the family mean for their businesses? • How do they think of family ownership, management as influenced the business, whether it is competitive, resources, or restrain	• Reflect the successor's value system, showing their perceptions of family ownership and management from personal as well as family's view

• Social identity perspectives on social rules governing the family values that construing identities (Hytti, 2003)	• Thoughts about transgenerational wealth, succession experience, the vision of the firm	• How the family values and rules could be kept serving the business • Ask a successor to reflect on family business and their roles as situated in a family, in a business system, or in a social network	• The suggestion for their future oriented identities • How a successor formulates a thinking tool based on their wishes for identities to help the value of PRC family to perpetuate
• It is often during critical situations when people are especially reflective of their lives (Hoang and Gimeno, 2010) • Certain crisis forces a person to make radical selections of identity • identity is usually in crisis in fundamental relational issues to be resolved, to live with unresolved conflicts	• Identity in crisis • Identity work	• Any major incidents, or forces in one's life that they either felt push them forward, or hindered their ambitions, simply had a great influence on them in any way at all	• Describe how they express themselves, taking account of other's opinions • Identity work to integrate ways of 'being with' others and ways of 'being with' oneself

• Possess multiple roles in the interplay of family, business, the founder and shareholder • Each role has identities and own culture (Shepherd and Haynie, 2009)	• Conflict in the family and the business	• Whether and how they perceive the role of conflict in their personal and business lives	• Sensitive, family-related issues that are meaningful to the successor and to me as a researcher, to understand multiple identities in a given role

Appendix 3 The Profile of Respondents

Name	Age Group	Sex	Country of Education	Siblings	Position in the family business	Type of Business	Annual turnover in RMB (Million)
Chaobo	26-30	Male	PRC, BA in management	Single child	CEO	Furniture Retailer	< 100m
Moli	31-36	Female	PRC, local high school	One younger brother	CEO assistant	Cooking ingredients wholesale	0.5 m
Wangan	36-45	Male	PRC, local high school	One elder sister	Owner	Plastic materials wholesale	>100 m
Li	31-36	Female	Australia, chartered accountant	One younger brother	Financial Manager	Real estate development company	<100 m
Cici	20-25	Female	UK, Msc in risk management	One younger sister	Marketing manager assistant	Electronic cables manufacturer	>100m
Xiaoya	31-36	Female	PRC, BA in	One younger	Owner	E-commerce	<10 m

			business and management	sister and one younger brother			
Shanshan	26-30	Female	UK, BA in marketing	One younger brother	Sale manager	Manufacturer of children tights	< 10 m
Weibing	26-30	Male	UK, BA in hospitality	One younger brother	CEO	Hotel Business	>200 m
Yongzan	20-25	Male	US, high school	One elder bother	Sales manager	Real estate development	< 200 m
Xujian	20-25	Male	Australia, high school	One adopted elder sister	CEO assistant	Sewing machine manufacturer	< 150 m
Xuefei	36-45	Female	PRC, MBA	One elder brother	Owner	Oven manufacture	>100 m
Chenzhong	36-45	Male	PRC, high school	Single child	Owner	Machine Tool manufacture	< 100 m
Tingting	36-45	Female	PRC, MBA	One younger brother	CEO	Manufacturer of female tights	>100m
Anming	36-45	Female	PRC, MBA	One younger brother	CEO	Private Hospital	< 50 m
Xiaosi	26-30	Male	PRC, primary school	Single child	Owner	Chopsticks factory	<10 m

Lina	26-30	Female	UK, master's in finance	One younger brother	CEO	Manufacturer of LED lights	>100 m
Junxia	31-36	Female	USA, MBA	Two younger sisters and the youngest brother	CEO	Real estate development	>300 m
Cenmin	26-30	Male	Japan, BA in international business	Single child	Sales manager	Manufacturer of Chinese herb wine	150 m
Jiangbo	26-30	Male	UK, MSc in finance	One younger sister and brother	CEO	Accessories manufacturer	>300 m
Yanjun	31-36	Male	PRC, MBA	Single child	Sales manager	DIY tool manufacturer	> 150 m
Zhoupeng	26-30	Male	USA, high school	Single child	CEO	Exporting wholesale	<50 m
Chenjie	26-30	Male	UK, BA in marketing	Single child	CEO assistant	Shoes factory	>50 m
Zhengpeng	31-36	Male	Australia, Bsc in economics	Younger sister	CEO	Plastic mould factory	< 100 m
Xiaozhu	31-36	Male	UK, MA in	One elder	Owner	PR event	>50 m

			international business	sister, One elder brother		organiser	
Ruxiao	26-30	Female	USA, BA in fashion design	One younger brother	Marketing manager	Manufacturer of accessories	<100 m
Zhenjing	31-36	Female	Australia, BA in management	Single child	Owner	McDonald license holder	>60 m
Yaping	20-25	Female	UK, BA in management	One elder sister	CEO assistant	Real estate development	<150 m
Xiaoying	25-30	Female	US, BA in international business	One younger brother	CEO assistant	Tea drinks factory	>100 m
Lingjie	26-30	Male	PRC, MBA	Single child	CEO	Mould factory	<100 m
Liwei	20-25	Male	US, BA in risk management	Elder sister	CEO	Aluminum commodity investment company	>200m
Bibo	20-25	Female	PRC, BA in hotel management	two elder brothers	Owner	Boutique hotel	<50m
Fuyin	36-45	Male	PRC, BA in management	One younger sister	Owner	Textile factory	<100m

Xiaokang	20-25	Female	PRC, BA in management	One elder sister and brother	CEO assistant	Poker cards manufacturer	>50m
Wangshi	20-25	Female	Switzerland, BA in hospitality	One elder brother and One elder sister	CEO assistant	Dye factory	>50 m
Kuili	31-36	Female	UK, Msc in accountancy	One younger sister	Owner	Waste Water solution equipment company	<200 m
Tommy	31-36	Male	US, Bsc in e-commerce	One elder brother, One younger sister	CEO	Machine tool manufacturers	>200 m
Xinhua	36-45	Male	PRC, MBA	Two younger sisters		Petrochemical Manufacturers	>200 m
Lijing	36-45	Female	PRC, MBA	One younger brother	Owner	Cosmetics manufacturer	< 100 m
Wangjun	31-36	Female	UK, BA in international business	Single Child	CEO	Car manufacturers	< 100 m

Weiwei	31-36	Male	UK, MA in international business	One adopted younger sister	Owner	Fast Food manufacturer	>50 m
Zhanghen	20-25	Female	UK, MA in marketing	Younger brother	Owner	Sushi Restaurant	>50 m