

Female Entrepreneurial Capacity in China: A Comparative Study of Two Periods

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Abstract

This is a comparative study of women in China in their career choices as entrepreneurs based on self-efficacy theory, in two periods, 2002 and 2010. Existing literatures not only suggest, self-efficacy is an essential factor in career choices but also suggest that it varies considerably in genders. In addition, self-efficacy is developed through social persuasion which ultimately affects people's career choice. Literatures also suggest that China is a country, where women face much social pressure and barriers. So study assumes, Chinese women's self-efficacy is not that much due to social suppression and aims to see whether with time there has been any increase in self-efficacy in choosing their career as entrepreneurship.

Individual data of Global Entrepreneurs Monitor (GEM) and self-efficacy theory are used to test self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions, to interpret women's changing orientations towards their career as entrepreneurs compared to men, in 2002 and 2010. The findings of the study have been drawn based on three propositions to check self-efficacy. Each proposition findings are compared among genders for the periods 2002 and 2010 to understand the change in gap, as China progressed. The results suggest, in 2010, though Chinese men are more engaged in entrepreneurship compared to women, but the gap in genders in their self-efficacy & career self-efficacy is seen to narrow in 2010 than in 2002. The findings of the research will help in recognizing the importance of the factor self-efficacy and its importance in women's career choice.

Keywords: GEM, Self-efficacy, Career self-efficacy

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a career which postulates proper opportunity for women worldwide because it gives flexibility, more financial freedom thus better position in the society, change and innovation. And according to UNIDO (1995), this potential has been realized only in optimal way in most transitional economies and developing countries because a large number of contribution of women goes unnoticed in the informal sector and is not counted in national accounts (UNIDO, 1995). Several varieties of constraints are there on women which blocks women from upgrading their production ability in a continuous manner. These barriers can be poor access to market information, lack of knowledge in technology and finance, poor linkages with support services and an unfavorable policy and regulatory environment. These constraints are further amplified by the need to compete in an aggressive business environment with rapid technological changes and the globalization of production, trade and financial flows (UNIDO, 2001). Many of these constraints have impacts on both men and women but for women these constraints are much more bigger because of discriminatory socio-cultural values and traditions which are deeply rooted. In many cases, women are unable to benefit from services, and must struggle to overcome discriminations in business environment (UNIDO, 2001). These cases become more clear in country based study, as because country based study on women entrepreneurs can give an important insight on a particular country's socio-economical development, also existing literature shows women entrepreneurs are the building blocks of a society.

This study provides an analysis of the self-efficacy theory in career choice as entrepreneurs of women in China. In doing so, the study aims to further build on the application of the term 'self-efficacy' and how it varies in genders that leads to their ultimate career choice to be an entrepreneur by emphasizing the role of women in continuous changing society of China. It is suggested that a person's intention and ability to engage in certain activities is affected by self-efficacy, that is, the extent to which one has confidence in his or her own capabilities (e.g. Bandura, 1978; Boyd

and Vozikis, 1994) and so it is a very important concept to understand (Litt, 1988). There are several literatures on self-efficacy and how it varies by gender and its significance in career choices (e.g. Bandura, 1977; Bandura et al., 2001; Kickul et al. 2004; Scherer et al. 1989; Hollenbeck and Hall, 2004; Lent and Hackett, 1987; Nevill & Schleckler, 1988) and there is a developing literature on the position of women in the Chinese labour market and the factors that influence their progress (e.g. Cooke, 2003, 2010; Leung, 2002; Maurer-Fazio et al., 2011), but no literature is found on Chinese women's entrepreneurial intentions based on self-efficacy theory. As a consequence, there is a limited understanding of how best to support women's role in entrepreneurship in China and of the applicability of self-efficacy theory in understanding and informing this process of women's progress in the society. This gap in the literature also leads to lack of enough knowledge about how Chinese women entrepreneurs understand their careers, and how they respond to the opportunities and barriers that they face.

China has been pursued sweeping economic changes since 1978, in an officially sponsored transition from a Stalinist centrally planned economy to a socialist market economy (White et al. 1996). The need to curb the magnificent power of the Leninist state and change the balance of power between state and economy, state and society were the highlights among the Chinese reformers (White et al. 1996). In practice, China is facing new socio-economic forces, shifting power in their direction, and the possibility of political transformation due to its economic reforms. These reforms have set a continuous process of potentially fundamental social and institutional change in China (White et al. 1996). In midst of these reforms, how Chinese women's position changed in terms of their self-confidence in building their career can be an interesting area to study.

This study's analysis is rooted in the change in self-efficacy differences in genders to be entrepreneurs in context of changing culture of China. Relatively little is known about the self-efficacy towards career choices in China, like, choosing entrepreneurship as career in women mainly. The study draws discussion on a sample from China based on the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's (GEM) individual adult population secondary data of 2002 and 2010, on China. This country provides an interesting setting in which to do a comparative study of entrepreneur start-up activities in men and women in two periods because of the fact that this region is having transitional economy and currently playing significant role in the economy development of Asia Pacific & South Asian region according to GEM reports 2002 & 2010. In addition, the literature reveals that there have been noticeable changes in the socio-psycho-cultural and economic norms in this country and so whether these changes have helped women's condition to improve has been an interesting fact to explore.

To find the effect of self-efficacy in women leading them to choose career as entrepreneurs, and how self-efficacy changed in women in 2010 from 2002, a comparative analysis is done for the two years. To do this, the study first tested significance of difference in perception of self-efficacy to be entrepreneurs in genders with respect of skill, knowledge, experience and fear of failure and compared the results in two periods. Next, for the years 2002 and 2010, significance of self-efficacy as a factor of career choice is tested among genders by taking entrepreneurial activities and future intentions to be entrepreneurs into consideration and a comparison for the two periods is made. Followed by, analysis of significance of entrepreneurial career self-efficacy in traditional and non-traditional careers among genders is tested by taking their current entrepreneurial intentions, intentions of ownership of business and entrepreneurial endeavours under current employment into consideration and a comparison for the two periods is done. Finally, the findings are analysed and explained in realm of transitional Chinese society and self-efficacy theory, which will be useful for future research and policy development to develop career orientations of Chinese women as entrepreneurs that will be appropriate for context of China.

But before the analysis, the study starts by drawing a socio-demographic review of the position of women and women entrepreneurs in the society of China and the changing cultural. This is so, because culture has immense impacts on self-efficacy (Bandura 1977, 1986), which in turn will have influence on women's career. This is followed by reviewing of literature on self-efficacy theory, its significance in career choice and variation of career self-efficacy in genders, which provided the context and link for the analysis and interpretation of findings that follow.

1.2 Importance of Women Entrepreneurs and Women's Position in China

Quite a significant role is played by women entrepreneurs worldwide. It is a fact that women entrepreneurs are important building blocks of an economy and they are the drive for growth in the economy of a country (Minniti et al. 2005). There is also the fact that new ventures / businesses are basic components of the advancement of an economy and this is agreed by (Acs, Arenius, Hay, & Minniti, 2005). Since, women entrepreneurs and new ventures are so important for a country's economy, it is very important that we should know what pulls women behind than their male counterparts. If these factors are studied and improved than women human capital can be used properly in any nation.

General statistics shows, in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America women entrepreneurship is vastly increasing and in advanced economies, women own 25% of all businesses (Estes, 1999; Jalbert, 2000). According to

Women-Owned Businesses (2004), 6.7 million privately held majorities women-owned businesses account for \$1.19 trillion in sales and employ 9.8 million people, and this is only alone in United States. So, these statistics shows the acceleration rate of women-owned businesses to be impressive. These data signifies the value of studying women's entrepreneurship, and is a good proof that scholars and researchers are paying more attention to the field of women entrepreneurship.

In People's Republic of China, private business is a fairly new area of opportunity for both women and men. There was practically no existence of private businesses until the reforms of the 1980s and it had not been that long an amendment to the Chinese Constitution in 1988 legalized private business activities (Lu and Zhimin, 1997). From the beginning of that time period private business activities were first seen as tolerance but when it was realized that businesses created jobs and supplied goods & services which were scarce, later private businesses are encouraged (Lu and Zhimin, 1997). But to understand entrepreneurial self-efficacy among Chinese women, it is very essential to understand the position of women in Chinese society in the last few decades.

Women's equal rights in all aspects of life, for example – equal rights in the work place, including equal pay to men, inheritance of land and property, in initiating divorce and claiming their children, right to vote and equal access to education were guaranteed in China by the '1982 Constitution of the People's Republic of China'. China started to reform with the slogan of Maoist, 'women hold up half the sky' (Kitching and Woldie, 2004). Statistics showed in the study of Kitching and Woldie (2004), that there were 400 million women in China aged 15 plus years, 300 million women were economically active and two thirds urban and three fourths rural women engage in work outside the home, 44 % agricultural workers comprised of women. In 1990, statistics of Chinese women showed, 45% of professional and technical personnel were female, this statistic was up from 38% in 1982 (Kitching and Woldie, 2004); 11% were females among heads of authorities and government organisations, business organisation and institution, and this was 10% in 1982 (Hall,1997); Jobs which were unimaginable for females before the reform for example - secretary, interpreter, translator, businesswoman and tour guide were becoming new possibilities and the top dream jobs for Chinese women (Hall, 1997). In rural areas of China, out of a million self-employed people, engaging in commerce and service trades, two-thirds of them were women (Xinhua, 2000). In 1990, according to China Women's News, 4.6 million rural women were running businesses, that is, one - third of all rural businesses were women owned, this was a big jump in statistics of women entrepreneurs from 1980 (Kitching and Woldie, 2004). But there is a big gap in reality and the statistics discussed so far. Though China started to reform its society and conditions of women improved from 80s, but not many women involvement in professional jobs could be seen in China till early 21st century.

Though equal opportunity was established through the 1982 Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Communist government was committed to support gender equality (Loscocco & Bose, 1998) with males and females regarded as equal contributors to production, but traditional and cultural aspects hindered and pulled back women from taking participation in the economy (Summerfield, 1994). With the economic reforms as traditional institutions received more prominence, the traditional attitudes about the inferiority of women that had been repressed to some extent, resurfaced again. This could be evidenced in various job advertisements with signs that the advertised job was only for men, stories of female infanticide, articles in the press that claimed that women should prove that they were as capable as men otherwise they should go back to the kitchen (Summerfield, 1994).

Patriarchal society could be another main reason why women were not seen to practice their career freedom in previous studies. A patriarchal society can be defined as one where women are subject to oppression, exploitation (Walby, 1989) and powerful gendered ideologies (Granrose, 2007; Ebrey, 2003). And so men are more in charge of outside work than women, who are more into domestic work (Kitching and Woldie 2004). China is not only a patriarchal society but also a very strongly collectivist society, that is, individual priority is sacrificed over group priority (Yang, 1988; Kim & Markus, 1999; Ho & Chiu, 1994; Triandis, 1995; Yu & Yang, 1994). This has a great affect within families, in a form of family collectivism, with men being head of the family. Husband and his family's welfare are priorities under the doctrines of collectivist society (Yu & Yang, 1994, Liu et al. 2010) rather than a women's career (Granrose, 2007), where women is seen to be giving support to their husband by involving themselves in domestic chores and bearing and raising children.

In addition, to the social factors there is also an important factor, which is known as self-efficacy, which is very essential to understand if we are to explain women's career choice in China, in terms of their social position. Self-efficacy, in general, refers to self-confidence that the person has about the required skills, knowledge and experience to succeed in an activity (Bandura, 1977), for example - new venture or any activity. And confidence needed for entrepreneurial endeavours is known as entrepreneurial self-efficacy (McGee et al. 2009). Interestingly, it has been found from work of Kickul, et al. (2004) that entrepreneurial self-efficacy differs by gender. For example- they found entrepreneurial self-efficacy were weaker in teenage boys than in teen age girls. For teen girls, it appeared that their perceptions that they had the abilities or skills to succeed as entrepreneurs were simply more important in considering future career options than for boys.

So from these discussion , it can be said regarding Chinese women, that not only their education but also other factors, like gender inequalities in careers and stereotyped role in the society would have impact on their self-efficacy and ultimately in their career choice. In a patriarchal society, such as China, occupations with lower status and lower position were compatible with women's inferior self-concepts that leads to lower self-efficacy, and their views about accessibility (Greene and Stitt-Gohdes, 1997). This view of patriarchal society can be much explained by its views towards non- traditional career for women like- entrepreneurship. For example-Zunker (1994) stated "the woman who gives her career development equal status with her husband's will find acceptance of her role personally challenging, with little support from many men and women" (p. 341).

More discussion on self-efficacy, its importance in choosing carrier and how career self-efficacy differs in genders are essential to draw propositions on Chinese women's self-efficacy in entrepreneurship field. And this is done in the following sections.

1.3 Background of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is central to intentions towards entrepreneurship and also self-efficacy predicts opportunity recognition (Scherer, et. al., 1989). To understand entrepreneurial intentions, it is essential to understand the background of self-efficacy.

Social learning theory of Bandura (1977) gave rise to the term 'self-efficacy' and it referred mainly to a person's self-belief of his or her capability to take or perform a task. In his original work , Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy expectations, as one's own belief about his/ her capabilities to perform an action or execute a behaviour successfully. In realm of this, Bandura hypothesized efficacy expectations would help to determine initiation of a particular behaviour, expended effort, how long the persuasion would stay when faced with obstacles and non- favourable experiences. Self-efficacy is not biologically obtained but could be acquired gradually through the development of a person's complex cognitive, social, linguistic, and/or physical skills that were obtained through experience (Bandura, 1982; Gist, 1987).

Bandura (1986), in his study , hypothesized efficacy expectations to be acquired in four ways, which were 1) Performance accomplishments 2) vicarious experience and this includes observational learning through modelling 3) verbal persuasion and 4) individual's physiological status . And he assumed self-efficacy vary along three dimensions which were 1) level 2) strength, and 3) generality. Here 'level' is referred to as one's feeling about what he or she is capable of doing; 'Strength' is referred to one's confidence about his or her capability ; 'Generality' is referred to number of situations in which one believed they had necessary efficacies. Therefore, the acquired skills through past achievements strengthens self-efficacy and contributes to higher motivation for future performance (Herron and Sapienza, 1992). This view was also suggested by Wood & Bandura (1989) ; Lent & Hackett (1987), that through experience individuals could acquire or develop self -efficacy in an efficient way and this may act positively in future performance. In addition to this, people may evaluate of their own capabilities by comparing themselves to others by observational learning of an individual who had been estimated with relevant skills that would be required to attain same outcome, and this may affect self-efficacy (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Another way to improve self-efficacy was through the social persuasion. Receiving favourable feedback & attainable encouragements about task performance may likely results in greater effort (Gist, 1987; Wood & Bandura, 1989). All these concepts together, when self-efficacy is assumed as a key preceding factor to new venture intentions, it is called as entrepreneurship self-efficacy (Boyd & Vozikis, 1994; Chen et al. 1998; Krueger & Brazeal, 1994).

From the literature of position of Chinese women and self-efficacy, it can be expected that culture have immense impacts on women's career, which may in turn affect women's experience, skill and knowledge through which individuals can acquire self -efficacy . Also, perception of negative factors, like, lack of social persuasion and fear of failure may hamper self-efficacy . Hence , Chinese women would show less self-efficacy for their social position and this could be reflected in terms of their less perception of their skills, experience and knowledge compared to men. In addition, Chinese women's social position would lead them to have more fear of failure and less self-efficacy compared to men. But women's self-efficacy is expected to increase with the changes in socio-economy changes of China. These assumptions guided to suggest this study's first proposition :

P1: It is suggested that women in China, would be less likely to have perceived knowledge, skill, experience to be an entrepreneur and more perceived fear of failure than men but however these differences in genders would be expected to be narrower in 2010 than in 2002, due to socio -economy changes in China.

1.4 Self-Efficacy As a factor for Career Choice

The purpose of the following discussion is to further explain the potential contributions of self-efficacy theory for career choice. This is to increase understanding of women's career choice as entrepreneurs in China.

In the beginning of 21st century, self-efficacy has been described as one of the variety of socio cognitive influences on the career choices of children by Bandura et al. (2001) and the study found that academic self-efficacy had a very strong influence. Also, in career theory literature, concept of self-efficacy has been used rigorously. It gave logic behind chosen career options, career preferences or desire and important of all ultimate career oriented action (Betz and Hackett, 1981, 1983; Eccles, 1994; Hackett and Betz, 1981). Interestingly, gender could also be a likely factor that may affect innovative attitude towards business establishment. Harris and Gibson (2008) reported that there had been a significant difference between male and female business students in their need for innovation in business.

Bandura (1977, 1986) recognizes that enactive performance was the most powerful source of efficacy information; thus, exposure to sex-typed activities may result in differential skill acquisition and, consequently, gender differences in self-efficacy judgments for traditionally female or traditionally male career competencies. Therefore, these findings suggest social differences between men and women may be a causal factor that influence underutilization of women of their career talents (Hackett and Betz, 1981), and could be one of the reasons why there were not many women in many careers, like- entrepreneurship, which was traditionally male dominated in China.

From these literatures, it can be said that self-efficacy helps to choose career, and those individuals who have high entrepreneurial self-efficacy will choose entrepreneurial career as a preference. Due to prominence of stereotyping of gender roles in China, women may have less entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Thereby, they would be less involved in entrepreneurial activities and would show less entrepreneurial expectations than men. But situation of women and their self-efficacy towards career choice may improve with changes in socio-economy factors of China. So the next proposition is:

P2 : It is suggested that women in China were less involved in activities in past twelve months that would help to start a new business and they had less expectation than men to start a new business alone or with others, including any type of self-employment within the next three years, however these differences between genders would be expected to be narrower in 2010 than in 2002, due to socio-economy changes in China.

1.5 Gender and Career Self-Efficacy

Since China is a patriarchal society (Yu and Zhu, 2000 as cited in Kitching and Woldie, 2004), gender stereotyped career are more profoundly present. This fact can form a good argument of career self-efficacy of women in China regarding entrepreneurship.

In a major review of the career self-efficacy literature name of Lent and Hackett (1987); Nevill & Schleckler, (1988) were mentioned, whose research findings have provided support for the argument that career choice is largely and significantly depends on self-efficacy and self-efficacy differed by genders in traditional and non-traditional careers. This aggregate view was supported by research evidence that women were most likely to have lower expectations than men for success in a wide range of occupations (Eccles, 1994). Therefore, it was not surprising that in women there was measurable or rather significant lower levels of self-efficacy had been found in careers which were historically perceived as non-traditional (Bandura et al. 2001; Betz & Hackett, 1981; Scherer, et al. 1990), for example -entrepreneurship.

In China, inequality among genders and patriarchal society's norms created career choice to be segregated according to gender, therefore, it is less expected that women undersuppression would put much attention on their entrepreneurial opportunities and possibilities. In spite, even if they had necessary skills and capabilities to be in the area of entrepreneurial profession, they would tend to hide their entrepreneurial intention. On the basis of the gender and self-efficacy literature, the assumption is, women of China would show less entrepreneurial self-efficacy because of gender inequality and social issues. Therefore, it is expected they would not demonstrate any entrepreneurial intentionality, or behaviour to tackle challenging situations of risk and uncertainty which would characterize them as entrepreneurs. However, situation of women and their self-efficacy towards career choice may improve with changes in gender inequalities in China. And this may happen with the socio-economy changes in China. This is reflected in the third proposition:

P3 : It is suggested that women in China would have less intention than men, in trying to start new business alone or with others, including any self-employment or selling any goods or services to others and therefore women would have less intention than men, of owning all, part or none of the business. Also, women in China should have less intention than in men, in trying to starting new business, or new venture for the employer as part of their normal work but however these differences in genders is expected to be narrower in 2010 than in 2002, due to socio-economy changes in China.

2. Method

2.1 Sample

In this study, the data set which has been used was adult population individual-level survey data (APS) of 2002 & 2010 from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)¹.

In China, a standardized survey was administered by GEM on a representative sample, i.e. – the sample reflected the general acclaim for data ; miniature of the population ; coverage of the population (Kruskal and Mosteller, 1979). Sample consisted of more than 2,000 adults (18–64 years old) in both the years of 2002 and 2010. The surveys were conducted by telephone or face-to-face between May and August in the national language(s) and facilitated by a translation and back-translation of questions.

2.1 Procedures and Variables

From the data set of GEM, amongst numerous countries, only data of China was selected by ‘select case’ using SPSS .Chi-square test was run, for each year 2002 and 2010 separately ,to check the association and significance of ‘genders’ and each variable, for example- to test the first proposition (P1) about self-efficacy in females and males through perceived knowledge, skill, experience and fear of failure, variables chosen from GEM data for China were-

- a. Do you have skill, knowledge& experience?
- b. Would fear of failure would prevent you from starting a business ?

Each of these two variables were tested against gender for 2002 and 2010 separately to check the association and significance. This procedure was repeated to check second proposition (P2), that is, self- efficacy as factor for career choice in females and males, and variables chosen from GEM data for China were –

- c. Over the past twelve months have you done anything to help start a new business?
- d. Are you, alone or with others, expecting to start a new business, including any type of self-employment, within the next three years?

Chi-square was done with each of the above variables against ‘gender’ for the year 2002 and 2010 separately and association along with significance was checked. To check the third proposition (P3), to check career self-efficacy of males and females in China, three variables were chosen from GEM data for China were–

- e. Are you, alone or with others, currently trying to start a new business, including any self-employment or selling any goods or services to others?
- f. Will you personally own all, part, or none of this business?
- g. Are you, alone or with others, currently trying to start a new business or a new venture for your employer as part of your normal work?

At the time of the interview, in both the periods, respondents were asked whether they were alone or with others, trying to start a business, including any self-employment or the sale of goods or services to others. Respondents who answered affirmatively were then asked if they would personally own all, part, or none of this business. This additional question was used to separate those who were truly committed to a new venture from those thinking about but not yet committed to it. Asking respondents whether they were alone or with others, currently trying to start a new business or a new venture for their employer as part of their normal work, may help to recognize managers/ non-managerial employees working for their employers who had self-confidence to work as an entrepreneur and showed courage to gain some entrepreneurial experience which may help in their future entrepreneurial endeavour. A chi- square test was done with each of these variables against gender in each year of 2002 and 2010 to check association and significance.

3. Results

In this section ,the analysis of the findings are presented. First, the section starts with the descriptive analysis of the samples of the two years. followed by the findings of the propositions.

¹See <http://www.gemconsortium.org> for more details.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the respondents for the year 2002.

Gender	Male	Female
Total number of respondents (n) %	(996) 48.5	(1085) 51.5
Ave. age	40.13	40.28
Age range	18 – 64	

Table1,shows sample descriptive statistics of 2002.Total of 2,081 people were in the sample. This consisted of 48.5% of men and 51.5% ofwomen with average age of 40.13 years and 40.28 years respectively. The sample consists of people 18 to 64 years.

Table 2 . Descriptive Statistics for the respondents for the year 2010.

Gender	Male	Female
Total number of respondents (n)%	1649 (44.8%)	2028 (55.2%)
Ave. age	39.89	38.5
Age range	18 – 64	

Table-2, shows sample descriptive statistics of 2010. Total of3,677 people were in the sample. This consisted of 44.8% of men and 55.2%of women with average age of39.89 years and38.5 years respectively. Like the age range in sample of 2002, sample of 2010 also consisted of people with an age range of 18 to 64 years.

P1 : It is suggested that women in China, would be less likely to have perceived knowledge, skill, experience to be an entrepreneur and more perceived fear of failure than men but however these differences in genders would be expected to be narrower in 2010 than in 2002,due to socio –economy changes in China.

- a. Do you have the knowledge, skill and experience required to start a new business?

Table 3. Gender and the variable, Do you have skill, knowledge& experience ?

Year 2002			
	Gender		
	Male	Female	
No	512	739	
% within Variables	40.9	59.1	
Yes	446	286	
% within Variables	60.9	39.1	
n = 1983			
$\chi^2 = (df 1, 1982) = 73.984^{***}$			
*** p< 0.001			
Year 2010			
	Gender		
	Male	Female	
No	759	1182	
% within Variables	39.1	60.9	
Yes	726	647	
% within Variables	52.9	47.1	
n = 3314			
$\chi^2 = (df 1, 3313) = 61.686^{***}$			
*** p< 0.001			

2010 in comparison to 2002(Table -3) : ‘Gender’ and ‘Do you have the knowledge, skill and experience required to start a new business?’ were found to be significant in both the years in 2002 & 2010 ($\chi^2 =73.984$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$; χ^2

=61.686, df =1 , p < 0.001 respectively). The suggested proposition holds and there was enough evidence to suggest that being female was associated to having less perception of knowledge , skill and experience.

Due to continuous economic and social reforms in China, women’s condition as entrepreneurs and their self-efficacy were expected to improve in 2010 than in 2002 .This could be seen in the outcomes of the analysis above, of having knowledge, skill and experience to be entrepreneurs. Though Chinese women were still less in numbers in 2010 than Chinese men in having enough self-efficacy in terms of their perception, but the gap in perception between genders reduced to 5.8%in 2010 compared to 21.8% in 2002 . Increasing number of women in 2010, were showing self-efficacy regarding their abilities through knowledge, skill and experience to establish business compared to men.

b. Would fear of failure would prevent you from starting a business?

Table4. Gender and the variable, Would fear of failure would prevent you from starting a business ?

Year 2002		Gender	
	Male	Female	
No	716	719	
% within Variables	49.9	50.1	
Yes	217	248	
% within Variables	46.7	53.3	
n =1900			
$\chi^2 = (df1, 1899) = 1.465$	NS		
Year 2010		Gender	
	Male	Female	
No	926	1082	
% within Variables	46.1	53.9	
Yes	528	678	
% within Variables	43.8	56.2	
n = 3214			
$\chi^2 = (df1, 3213) = 1.657$	NS		

2010 in comparison to 2002(Table – 4) : In both the years the results were insignificant. This means fear of failure may not vary across the genders. But perplexing fact in 2010 was , if we see the gap in women and men who denied that fear of failure was a factor to keep them off from starting business, had increased. This finding goes against the proposition, because the assumption was, with social and economic improvements, the gap should reduce . This may be because of large number of missing data or sampling error.

P2 : It is suggested that women in China were less involved in activities in past twelve months that would help to start a new business and they had less expectation than men to start a new business alone or with others, including any type of self-employment within the next three years, however these differences between genders would be expected to be narrower in 2010 than in 2002, due to socio-economy changes in China.

c. Over the past twelve months have you done anything to help start a new business?

Table5. Gender and the variable , Over the past twelve months have you done anything to help start a new business?

Year 2002		Gender	
	Male	Female	
No	84	74	
% within Variables	53.2	46.8	
Yes	116	64	
% within Variables	64.4	35.6	
n =338			
$\chi^2 = (df1, 337) = 4.431^*$	*p<0.05		
Year 2010		Gender	
	Male	Female	
No	265	256	
% within Variables	50.9	49.1	

Yes	225	201
% within Variables	52.8	47.2
n = 947		
$\chi^2 = (df1, 946) = 0.358$	NS	

2010 in comparison to 2002 (Table – 5): Very interesting and promising fact was observed in this particular analysis. In 2002, results were significant ($\chi^2 = (df1, 337) = 4.431^*$) and the gap was large between men's and women's involvement in activities that have helped them to start a business in past 12 months. But in 2010, the results were insignificant and the gap had narrowed much. More women were involved in business activities in 2010 than in 2002 and the variation across the genders regarding involvement in business start-up activities in past twelve months was not found. This may also be suggested from the findings that self-efficacy as a factor towards choosing entrepreneurship was more in women of China in 2010 than in 2002.

d. Are you, alone or with others, expecting to start a new business, including any type of self-employment, within the next three years?

Table 6. Gender and the variable, Are you, alone or with others, expecting to start a new business, including any type of self-employment, within the next three years?

Year 2002			
	Gender		
	Male		Female
No	581		694
% within Variables	45.6		54.4
Yes	379		312
% within Variables	54.8		45.2
n = 1966			
$\chi^2 = (df1, 1965) = 15.443^{***}$			
*** p < 0.001			
Year 2010			
	Gender		
	Male		Female
No	1042		1413
% within Variables	42.4		57.6
Yes	520		513
% within Variables	50.3		49.7
n = 3488			
$\chi^2 = (df1, 3487) = 18.326^{***}$			
*** p < 0.001			

2010 in comparison to 2002 (Table-6) : In both the years results were significant between the genders and the variable ($\chi^2 = 15.443, df = 1, p < 0.001$; $\chi^2 = 18.326, df = 1, p < 0.001$ respectively) . Women were still less in 2010 in number compared to number of men, in expectation of a business start-up in near future. But as the proposition stated the difference between the gender and the expectation to start business in next three years were narrowed much (only 0.6% difference between men and women) in 2010, compared to 2002.

P3 : It is suggested that women in China would have less intention than men, in trying to start new business alone or with others, including any self-employment or selling any goods or services to others and therefore women would have less intention than men, of owning all, part or none of the business . Also, women in China should have less intention than in men, in trying to starting new business, or new venture for the employer as part of their normal work but however these differences in genders is expected to be narrower in 2010 than in 2002, due to socio-economy changes in China.

e. Are you, alone or with others, currently trying to start a new business, including any self-employment or selling any goods or services to others?

Table 7. Gender and the variable, Are you, alone or with others, currently trying to start a new business, including any self-employment or selling any goods or services to others?

Year 2002			
	Gender		
	Male		Female
No	875		970
% within Variables	47.4		52.6
Yes	119		81

% within Variables	59.5	40.5
n=2045		
$\chi^2 = (df1, 2044) = 10.531^{***}$		
*** p < 0.001		
Year 2010		
	Gender	
	Male	Female
No	1234	1637
% within Variables	43.0	57.0
Yes	411	387
% within Variables	51.5	48.5
n=3669		
$\chi^2 = (df1, 3668) = 18.336^{***}$		
*** p < 0.001		

2010 in comparison to 2002 (Table 7): Gender and the variable ‘Are you, alone or with others, currently trying to start a new business, including any self-employment or selling any goods or services to others?’, when analysed for association, it was found to be significant in both the years ($\chi^2 = 10.531, df = 1, p < 0.001$; $\chi^2 = 18.336, df = 1, p < 0.001$ respectively). The outcome of the result matched the proposition. But the good thing is, the gap between women’s and men’s intentions of starting new business was narrowed in 2010. This means, women of China in 2010 showed increase amount of career self-efficacy towards entrepreneurship and this may led in the increased intentions of women in trying to start business at the time when survey was conducted compared to 2002. In addition, the results in both the periods were in line with the literature that career choice self-efficacy differs by genders in non-traditional career choices, like , entrepreneurship.

f. Will you personally own all, part, or none of this business?

Table 8. Gender and the variable, Will you personally own all, part, or none of this business?

Year 2002		
	Gender	
	Male	Female
All	38	25
% within Variables	60.3	39.7
Part	56	28
% within Variables	66.7	33.3
None	-	-
% within Variables	-	-
n = 147		
$\chi^2 = (df 1, 146) = 0.629$ NS		
Year 2010		
	Gender	
	Male	Female
All	136	142
% within Variables	48.9	51.1
Part	60	43
% within Variables	58.3	41.7
None	27	17
% within Variables	61.4	38.6
n = 425		
$\chi^2 = (df 1, 424) = 4.181$ NS		

2010 in comparison to 2002 (Table 8): Whether women wanted to own all of the business or part of the business, in 2010 compared to 2002, numbers and proportion of Chinese women with positive intention of owning business had increased. But however, in both the years, being men or women didn’t matter with how much business they intend to own.

g. Are you, alone or with others, currently trying to start a new business or a new venture for your employer as

part of your normal work?

Table 9. Gender and the variable, Are you, alone or with others, currently trying to start a new business or a new venture for your employer as part of your normal work?

Year 2002			
	Gender		
	Male		Female
No	901		993
% within Variables	47.6		52.4
Yes	93		64
% within Variables	59.2		40.8
n = 2051			
$\chi^2 = (df1, 2050) = 7.898^*$			
* p < 0.05			
Year 2010			
	Gender		
	Male		Female
No	1457		1883
% within Variables	43.6		56.4
Yes	187		133
% within Variables	58.4		41.6
n = 3660			
$\chi^2 = (df1, 3659) = 25.904^{***}$			
*** p < 0.001			

2010 in comparison to 2002 (Table-9): The variation across the genders and the variable, 'Are you, alone or with others, currently trying to start a new business or a new venture for your employer as part of your normal work?', were found to be significant in both years ($\chi^2 = 7.898$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.05$). In 2010, as suggested by the proposition, that the difference of women and men in trying to start entrepreneurial activities under the current employment reduced than what was in 2002, but still the suggestion holds that Chinese women were less in number than their men counterparts but their career self-efficacy towards entrepreneurship was better in 2010.

4. Discussion

Overall summary of the results found in the data analysis showed that there were persuasive evidences that perceived desirability and intension towards entrepreneurship existed and varied among males and females in China, in 2002 and 2010. The study intended to make contributions regarding change in self-efficacy of women in China in becoming entrepreneur by doing a comparative study of two periods, 2002 and 2010.

First argument was based on the concept of 'self-efficacy' to explain whether women had self-confidence to be an entrepreneur through two factors, *skill, experience, knowledge* and *fear of failure* on the likelihood to engage in business start-up activity. This argument was developed by taking the gist of the studies done by Herron and Sapienza, (1992); Gist, (1987); Gist and Mitchell, (1992); Bandura, (1982); Boyd and Vozikis, (1994); Krueger and Brazeal, (1994). These authors suggested that self-efficacy was not biologically obtained but could be acquired by experience, learning, and social persuasion. The acquired skills, experiences, knowledge would in return strengthen one's self-efficacy. And negative factors, for example, lack of social persuasion, fear of failure, may weaken one's self-efficacy.

In both the years - 2002 and 2010, fewer women, compared to men perceived they had required knowledge, skill and experience to be an entrepreneur. This showed they have less confidence compared to males to be an entrepreneur. The finding of this part, also reflected the fact that, Chinese government's policies on the rights and equality between sexes had not been put to an end to traditional gender stereotypes regarding roles and duties within the family and society since the reform (Zheng, 2010). Inequality, may never allow women in the society to grow their self-confidence even if they get proper education, knowledge and skill. They would perceive them inferior compare to their male counterparts. Because, in general belief, one's efficacy serves as a resource factor that act as buffer to neutralize distressing experiences fostering positive perceptions (Bandura, 1995). In contrast, individuals who are characterized by low perceived efficacy are prone to self-doubts, and anxiety (Bandura, 1995). The discussion on previous empirical findings of studies does reasonably said that individuals were more inclined to prefer a career choice as an entrepreneur if they had the confidence to be successful based on the knowledge, skills and experience they possessed and on their exposure to others who could help them providing useful knowledge (Boyd and Vozikis, 1994; Chen et al. 1998; Krueger and Brazeal, 1994). Moreover, this finding also supported arguments of Kourilsky and Walstad, (1998). They suggested and as discussed earlier, females tend to underestimate themselves even though both the genders may possess similar skills.

Self-Efficacy was also tested through respondents' fear of failure, in the years 2002 and 2010. Surprisingly, more

females than males showed positive attitude towards failure, that is, they don't think fear of failure would prevent them from starting a business. Also, the variable 'fear of failure' didn't have significant association with genders. The outcome goes against the existing literature, for example - in a study done by Jianakoplos & Bernasek(1998), showed that entrepreneurs as individuals deal with risky situations differently. There was some evidence that low risk tolerance was more visible in women than in men, like, in financial matters .Not only this, when women were asked about their attitudes, women reported a lower propensity toward risk than men (Johnson & Powell, 1994) and appear to be more risk averse than men (Levin, et al. 1988). Scholars like Wagner, (2004), Johnson & Powell, (1994)found that fear of failure could be an important factor that determined the difference in rate of new business creation between men and women. Johnson and Powell, (1994) explained the idea that women's low risk tolerance explains why there were low growth rates in female-owned companies. But in this study, result was against these literatures. This could possibly be explained in two folds. *Firstly*, the equal opportunity law and government supports in China made more females to be positive towards entrepreneurial thinking. *Secondly*, increased in gender pay gap in China, may led women to switch their career to be an entrepreneur, with a belief , that they would get more financial freedom. This phenomenon could be partially explained by the study ofMcMullen at al.,(2008),that opportunity-motivated entrepreneurial activity (OME) and necessity-motivated entrepreneurial activity (NME) was positively related to labour freedom. But further research is necessary in this area, in the context of China.

Second argument, was based on the concept of 'self-efficacy as a factor of career choice', to see whether women had more self-efficacy towards their career choice in 2010 than in 2002to get involved in entrepreneurial activities. From the study of Hollenbeck and Hall, (2004) as suggested , to demonstrate entrepreneurial intensions, behaviour self-efficacy belief was very crucial instead of their objective ability for having entrepreneur as a career. Belief of behaviour self-efficacy could be demonstrated by getting involved in activities that prepare the person for starting new business (Hollenbeck and Hall, 2004).

In 2002, less number of females compared to men showed any positive intentions of doing business, by getting involved in any activities that would help them to start a business. There was a gap of 28.8 % between men and women in getting involved in activities in past twelve months thatwould help them to start a new business. And being involved in activities in past one year varied among genders. But when involvement in activities in past one year was checked in 2010, the difference between men and women was found to reduce to 5.6%. Also, surprisingly genders didn't differ in their involvement in business activities in the past year.

The result of this part could be justified in two ways. *Firstly*, through the study of Bandura (1982) . He stated that people may develop a robust self-assurance that boosts self-efficacy as they continuously manage threats which led them to try hard to succeed. As Chinese women were continuously suppressed that may led them to try hard and gain self-confidence. Due to the movement of Chinese society towards liberalization, more women experienced less protection against discrimination, and became remote from the protection of the state as an employer, so probably women were forced to develop self-confidence in trying for a career of their own where they would find independence, like , entrepreneurship. *Secondly*, the finding may suggest an understanding of China's changing society. In midst of gender differentiation and stereotypes of Chinese women in the patriarchal society, percentage of women aged between (18-64) with no education had been significantly reduced (Attané2012) . In 2010, this fell to 6.6 percent in rural areas and to 3.5 percent in urban areas (Attané 2012). Access to secondary and higher secondary education had tripled between 1990 and 2010 (Attané 2012) . Education was a factor amongst other factors that improved women's status and also it changed the power relationship with men (Attané 2012) .

The findings of Attané (2012)further supported the outcome of this study when intension of genders in expecting to start a new business, including any type of self-employment, within the nextthree years, was checked . This was also done to check 'self-efficacy as a factor of career choice'. In both the years 2002 and 2010 more number of males compared to females positively responded that they had intention to start a new business in next three years. But compared to 2002, in 2010 more females expressed intention to start a new business in next three years. Though, more males had intensions than females but the gap in the intentions of females' to be future entrepreneur than males' was much reduced . Moreover, future intensions to start new business varied among genders. Therefore, this portion of the analysis showed that though gender segregation existed in China in 2010, but gap in intention among genders had much narrowed . This result was similar to the literature discussed in this study, that males were more active in entrepreneurial activities than females and they had more confidence than females. In addition, since self-efficacy was one of the important and non-detachable element in the entrepreneurial intention model (Segal et al. 2005; Ajzen and Madden, 1986), one thing could be suggested from here that increase in female intentions to start business in 2010 reflected that Chinese females were growing more self-confidence to choose their career as entrepreneurs. More women getting education in 2010 (Attané 2012)might have played important role in this.

Third argument, was based on the concept of 'career self-efficacy differs by gender' which would lead to explain

self-efficacy differed by genders in traditional and non-traditional careers. This assumption was in line of the studies done by Lent and Hackett (1987); Nevill and Schleckler, (1988).

The findings for this part of the study was done in three folds. *Firstly*, by checking overall expectation among genders to choose entrepreneurship as careers at the time of the interview. In both the years ,2002 and 2010, women's expectation of starting a new business was less than men. But in 2010, gap had narrowed much in genders. It can be said that more females were expecting to be a self-employer in 2010. But since the association between expectation to be entrepreneurs and genders was found to be significant ,so this result was in support of the literature regarding women entrepreneurs, and this was no different in China, that is , men were still leading in the entrepreneur career. This supported the work of Lent and Hackett , (1987) ; Nevill & Schleckler ,(1988) that career choice was largely and significantly depended on self-efficacy and self-efficacy differed by genders in traditional and non-traditional careers. And since China had been a patriarchal and collectivism society, this part of the finding did show that though women had gained self-efficacy considerably in 2010 but couldn't outnumber their male counterparts.

Secondly, those who responded with positive expectation in the above portion were asked about their ownership of their intended business. This analysis helped to recognize people who were serious in their expectation of being an entrepreneur. From the results, it could be seen that what proportion of business people would be own was insignificant among genders. This was promising because intension of owing business did not vary in men and women, that more females were having the confidence to own all part or part of the business in 2010 compared to 2002.

Thridly, the study also examined that whether work-experience helped career choice and that in return increase self-efficacy among genders. Researchers have shown that the willingness of people to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities depends on their career experience (Carroll & Mosakowski, 1987; Cooper, et al. 1989). Career experience can improve self- efficacy and may led managers/employees to be future entrepreneurs. This view was also supported by Blanchflower and Oswald, (1998) ; Taylor (1996), that among genders those who were employed individuals, were more likely to start a new business.

In 2010, increased number of women were trying to start a new business or a new venture for their employer as part of their normal work, than in 2002. Though the number of females were less than males but endeavour of women in initializing entrepreneurial activities with the present employment increased. Finding of this was another evidence that women were developing increased self-efficacy to show their capability to take risk to start new business for their employer. They may also have had high probability for future entrepreneurs but till 2010, it was a matter of future speculation. In addition, men and women varied in their endeavour to start a new venture for their employer. This did show there was segregation in self-efficacy among genders in China(i.e self-efficacy differs in genders) and this particular finding supported argument of Buttner and Rosen (1988), that, women had less risk-taking skills compared to men.

At the core of the existing literature on women's position in China, the assumption was that women were generally vulnerable with limited opportunities and resources, but in spite, fear of failure did not have any significant association with women to be entrepreneurs. It was further interesting to point to the results from the country-specific analyses that had been undertaken. Though women did not perceive to have enough skill, knowledge, experience but the overall results showed that more women had intentions to be future entrepreneurs in 2010, irrespective of what proportion of business they would own, no fear of failure could stop them and more women took participation in risk taking activities for their employers in their present job. Till 2010, this was also true, that women didn't outnumber men in entrepreneurial activities and their self-efficacy did differ from men but considerable improvements in their career choice as entrepreneurs were visible in this study.

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