

DON'T BIND WOMEN'S WINDS!



Yue Zhao

Factors Affecting the Career Development of Female Graphic Designers

A Mixed Methods Approach

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For women. For both!

Abstract

Women usually excel in their studies but are less well represented in their careers, while skilled women frequently leave their working lives for a variety of reasons. This phenomenon has drawn particular attention in the field of professional graphic design (GD). This research seeks to discover why it is that female graphic designers hold lower status in the workforce than males and the possible reasons for this situation. The main goal of the research is to understand the characteristics of female graphic designers, their position in both school and work settings, and the possible reasons for their lower status in the workplace. These questions will be considered from both an international and cultural perspective. The results will help female GD students and designers to become more aware of the challenges facing their career development. Additionally, the study will provide ideas for professional educators, managers, and institutions to help female graphic designers improve their abilities and their competitiveness in the career space.

This research employed a mixed method approach to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The investigation used a comparative approach and conducted surveys in both Finland and China. The survey for Chapter 4 was conducted in Finland, while for Chapter 5, 6 and 7, surveys were conducted in both countries. The four chapters all support the main research goal in combination, and 482 participants responded to the research survey. In Chapter 4, the research employed an ethnographic approach to collect qualitative data (number of participants = 98) to understand the relationship between the study setting and the work setting in the career process. In Chapter 5, the research utilized a story-writing method to collect vivid narrative data (number of participants = 140), which provided rich and detailed data on the personal characteristics and career perspectives of female graphic designers. These findings were used to explore the reasons for female graphic designers having less confidence in themselves. In Chapter 6, it used a mixed methods approach to collect qualitative data (number of participants = 126) and quantitative data

(number of participants = 76) to reveal the internal factors in female graphic designers that result in their lower status in the work setting. In Chapter 7, the study used interviews to collect qualitative data (number of participants = 42) in both countries in order to understand the impact of family and culture on the career development of female graphic designers.

The findings of this research are presented in three main themes: 1) the lower status of female graphic designers in the labor force is a global issue, and their performance in the study setting is an indicator of the situation in the work setting; 2) the reasons for their lower representation in the labor force include their lack of self-confidence and also the impact of family; and 3) internal factors play a role in women's career process and show strong connections with gender and culture.

The results of this research provide a good understanding of the characteristics of female graphic designers and the factors that affect their career process. Its findings are relevant for professional educators and managers and also for institutions that are trying to implement methods to improve the competitiveness of female graphic designers throughout their careers.

Keywords: graphic design, female graphic designer, design student, gender, gender position, culture, ethnography

摘要

女性通常在学业上表现出色，但在职场中的社会地位却低于男性，并经常有富有经验的女性职业者出于某种原因而离开职业岗位的现象出现，这种现象在平面设计领域已引起诸多关注。该研究预通过对女性平面设计师在职业环境中的地位偏低社会现状的深入调查与剖析，探究造成这一现状的可能性原因。从而了解女性平面设计师的自身特征和她们在学习环境和工作环境中的具体状况，以及她们在职业环境中地位较低的主要因素。这些问题将从国际的范围和文化的视角进行思考，该研究结果将帮助女性平面设计学生及设计师进一步了解其职业发展所面临的挑战。此外，该研究还将为平面设计教育工作者，企业管理人员和相关机构提供思路，以期帮助女性平面设计师提高职业综合能力和职业竞争力。

该研究采用了混合式的研究方法收集定量和定性数据，并采用比较方法在芬兰和中国进行了调查。第4章的研究主题在芬兰进行调查，第5、6和7章的研究主题则同时在两个国家展开调查。这四章作为该研究的核心部分共同支持该研究目标。在研究调查中共有482名参与者对研究调查做出了回应。在第4章中，采用了人种志研究方法收集定性数据（参与者数量=98），了解职业生涯过程中学习环境与工作环境之间的关系。在第5章中，研究调查采用了故事写作方法收集了生动的叙事数据（参与者人数=140），该数据提供了有关女性平面设计师的个人特征和职业观点的丰富而详细的数据。这些发现被用来探索女性平面设计师缺乏自信的主要原因。在第6章中，该研究主题采用了混合式的调研方法收集定性数据（参与者数量=126）和定量数据（参与者数量=76），以揭示导致女性平面设计师在工作环境中地位偏低的内在因素。在第7章中，研究主题采用访谈式的调查方法收集了来自两个国家参与者的定性数据（参与者数量=42），分析家庭和文化背景对女性平面设计师职业发展的影响。

该选题从职业技能，心理特征，自我认知和家庭影响四个方面展开研究，主要体现在第四、五、六、七章的论述中。本章通过人种志的调研方式对男女平面设计专业学生和平面设计师在小组工作过程中体现出的不同特征，认识到在教育环境中的表现预示着他们未来的职业发展；第五章探讨女性平面设计师的自信心对职业发展的影响。结果表明女性平面设计师的自信心是影响女性职业发展的重要因素，而自信的建立取决于先天特质和外部影响；第六章通过对女性平面设计师的专业体验的自我认知的分析，得出除了外部影响因素外，内部影响因素是导致女性平面设计师地位降低的重要原因之一。此外，由于文化背景的差异而体现出两国的内在因素有所不同；第七章则从家庭角度探讨了家庭环境及文化等因素对女性平面设计师职业发展的影响。同时，其结果表明文化差异导致了不同的职业经历和职业观点。

由此，该研究成果主要体现在三个方面：1) 女性平面设计师在职业环境中的地位偏低是一个全球性问题，她们在学习究环境中的表现预示着她们在未来工作环境中的状况；2) 缺乏自信以及家庭的影响是导致女性平面设计师在职业环境中地位偏低的两个重要原因；3) 内在因素在女性的职业生涯中起着重要作用，并且与其性别观念和文化背景有着密切的联系。

该研究对女平面设计师的特征以及影响其职业生涯过程的因素进行了全面的剖析并获得一定认知。该研究成果对职业教育工作者、企业管理人员以及试图提高女性平面设计师职业竞争力的相关机构提供有力的证据和一定的启发。同时也会引发女性职业者对个人职业选择的思考。此外，该研究还为未来的教育策略研究和特定文化的比较研究提供了建议，这些研究可以进一步改善女性设计师的地位。

关键词：平面设计，女平面设计师，平面设计学生，性别观，文化，人种志

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The global issue of women's lower representation in the labor force, which has been widely discussed by researchers and social commentators, also arises in the field of graphic design. As a graphic designer and graphic design educator, I have long admired Finnish design and design education, and this motivated me to come to the University of Lapland to research graphic design and graphic design education, to gain an understanding of design principles and markets, and to draw comparisons with China. I am very grateful for my supervisor Professor Emerita Riitta Brusila for allowing me to attend the Faculty of Art and Design as a visiting scholar in autumn 2012. During that period, I visited graphic design agencies, met with designers, observed courses and discussed relevant matters with supervisor and other teachers to develop a better understanding of how graphic design issues compare in two countries with quite different cultural and historical backgrounds. In comparing Finnish graphic design and education with China, I found that some things are similar, and some are different, but female graphic designers' status quo is quite similar. Why? The present study explores possible reasons.

I am deeply grateful to my supervisor, Professor Emerita Riitta Brusila, for affording me the opportunity to conduct this research at the University of Lapland. Her meticulous approach and inspiring guidance enabled me to find an appropriate research direction and method while maintaining my own space. At the beginning of my study, Professor Riitta helped to arrange the workshop to provide me with valid research data. I thank her for the book she gave me, which inspired me at the outset. Her teaching method has taught me to think, guiding my research and providing valuable inspiration for my future work. I appreciate her profound knowledge and keen thinking as my supervisor, and I am very grateful for her sincere guidance and warm smile, which gave me the confidence and motivation to complete this research.

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List of Abbreviations

GD	Graphic Design
FMI	Family Member Impacts
WLC	Work Life Conflicts
WLB	Work Life Balance

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*What you draw is
what you look like!*

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Research background and the aim of this study

The lower representation of women in the workforce is a reality around the world, and this is also true of the graphic design (GD) field: female graphic designers have lower status job positions than their male counterparts. However, according to data from Finnish and Chinese universities, between 2014 and 2019, the number of female GD students was almost double that of males at a range of educational levels (Table 1). Women surpass men not only in high school graduation rate but also in university enrolment and degree completion (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). In comparison, according to data from 25 Finnish and Chinese design agencies in 2014 and 2019 (Table 2), the performance and status of designers in the academic and work environment indicate that although females have proven themselves superior to males in the academic environment, the situation is inverted in the working environment. This problem is of great concern for educators, practitioners, and researchers in the GD field. A range of studies have been undertaken to help determine the reasons for female graphic designers' under representation in the workforce.

Table 1. The enrollment of GD students in Finnish and Chinese universities between 2014 and 2019

	Finland			China		
	BA Student	MA Student	DA Student	BA Student	MA Student	DA Student
Male	30%	37%	36%	39%	32%	34%
Female	70%	63%	64%	61%	68%	66%

Table 2. The situation of graphic designers in Finnish and Chinese design agencies in 2014 and 2019

	Finland			China		
	GD Designer	Art Director	Creative Director	GD Designer	Art Director	Creative Director
Male	65%	70%	100%	63%	50%	76%
Female	35%	30%	0%	37%	50%	24%

There are several reasons for this inequality between male and females. For women, their career development is affected by various factors, including social contexts, gender stereotypes, the education and work environment, and recruitment and retention (Trauth, Quesenberry, and Huang, 2006). Gender stereotypes are rooted in generalized beliefs about the characteristics and qualities society attributes to gender differences between men and women (Eagly, 1987). In general, men are characterized as aggressive, risk taking, decisive, and autonomous, whereas women are characterized as kind, caring, relational, and humble. These different characteristics and qualities anticipate different working roles for men and women as defined by gender (Heilman, 1997). In the past, many psychological theories suggested that women have an innate fear of success—that a lack of success is somehow inherent to their nature (Lips, 1997). These ideas have been completely discredited, but doubts regarding women’s ability to achieve still seem to linger in some quarters—not least among the women themselves (Neal, 2008).

Social inequality is present in many parts of society. There are many organizations consisting almost entirely of men (as in any patriarchy), although they have no explicitly articulated agenda linked to the male gender. Such movements and groups of men are not consciously gendered; they supposedly “just happened”, and these are regarded as the “normal” way of doing things, whether in government, business, or civil society (Hearn, 2000). This implies that the unequal positions held by men and women in the workforce are also somehow “natural” and not the result of gender stereotyping. These unspoken assumptions often negatively affect the treatment of women.

People’s social and family lives interact and constitute our human experience. Work interferes with family life and vice versa (Aldous 1969; Crouter 1984; Piotrkowski 1979; Staines 1980). According to Hassan, the importance of family to personal life in Eastern cultures differs from the importance of family in Western cultures. Hassan argues that different cultural traditions, family structures, and societal institutions result in different attitudes to work and family (Hassan, 2010).

The purpose of this study is to discover the possible reasons for the lower representation of female graphic designers in the workforce, and to explore both internal and external dimensions related to gender and culture.

This study employed a mixed methods approach to form a multilevel

interwoven framework involving the factors that affect the career development of female graphic designers. This was carried out through the four chapters embodies four themes (Figure 1). Chapter 4 investigated the relationship between GD education and professional work performance. To do this, the study used an ethnographic approach to understand the performance of GD students and graphic designers in the group work process. It compared the characteristics of men and women as reflected in both educational and work processes to highlight any relevant factors that may result in women’s lower social status. Chapter 5 explored the internal factors that cause women’s lower level of participation in the workforce. To achieve this, this chapter applied the qualitative methods of story writing and interviewing to understand the personal characteristics of female graphic designers as related to their professional issues. In Chapter 6, the study used a comparative method to analyze the different effects of external elements that contribute to women’s internal views and behaviors in the contexts of both the Finnish and the Chinese cultures. Chapter 7 used qualitative interviews to understand the impact of family members on the career process of female graphic designers, and it used a comparative approach to analyze the different effects of family according to cultural context. The four strands of this study have been individually presented in four chapters.

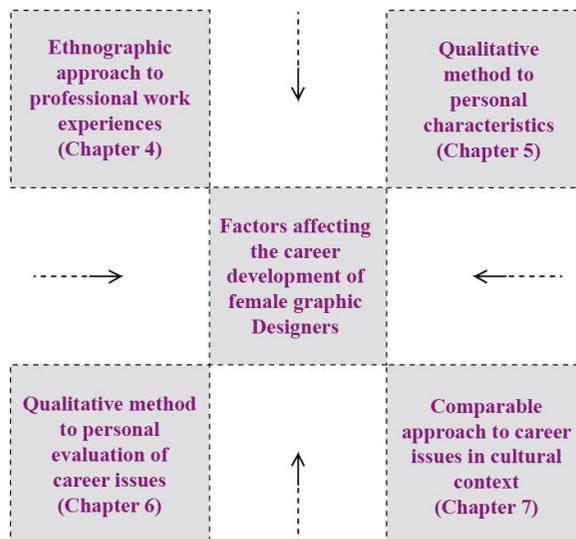


Figure 1. Four themes and research methods of this study

The results of the multiple research approaches exploring the factors that affect the career development of female graphic designers are combined to explain their low level of participation in the labor market. In addition, the findings may help professional educators and relevant social institutions to help women improve their self-confidence and to acquire the necessary career skills to become more competitive in the workforce. The research framework is shown in Figure 2.

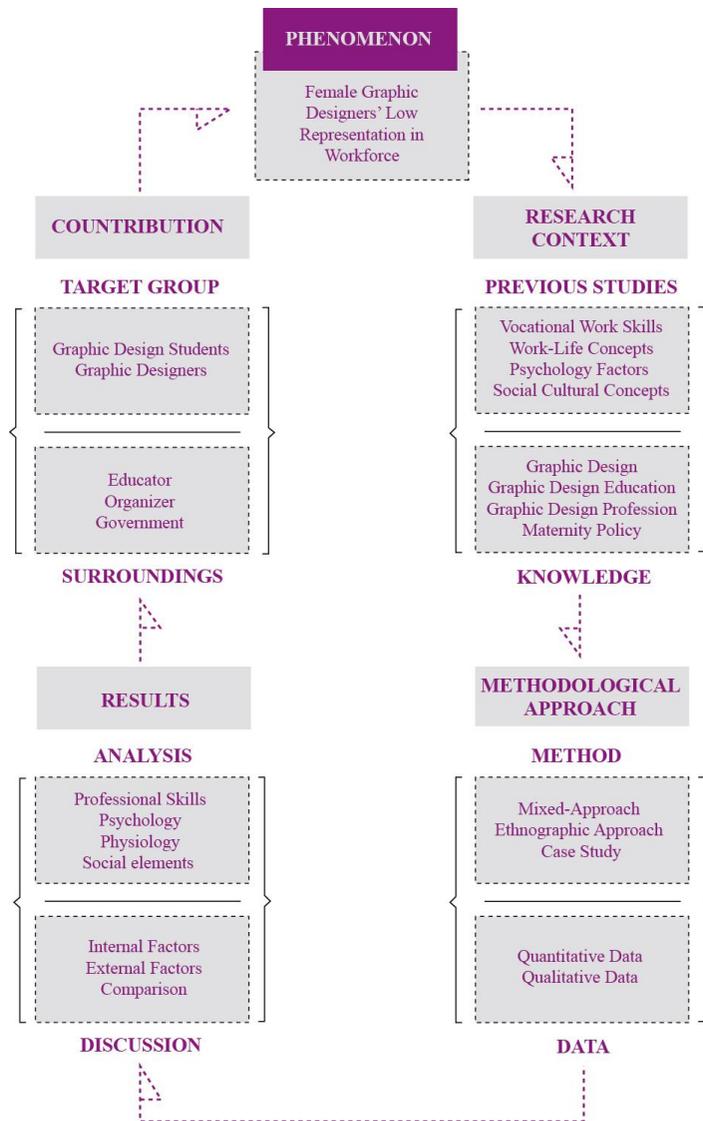


Figure 2. Research framework

1.2 Multiple approaches to studying GD career development

The main purpose of this research is to discover the possible reasons for female graphic designers' low position in the workforce. To achieve this, the research used a dynamic and comprehensive approach to study the educational setting, the work setting, and the relevant surroundings of female graphic designers and thereby, to uncover both the internal and external factors influencing their career development. This is shown in Figure 3. As this project has an international dimension, the research used a comparative approach to analyze the influences of different countries with different cultural backgrounds. Different types of quantitative and qualitative data were selected, including narratives, questionnaires, open ended answers, visual records, audio records, and photos. For this study, 482 participants from either Finland or China participated. These included students, designers, entrepreneurs, and educators. The investigation was conducted in design agencies, universities, design associations, work rooms, studios, and personal places in both Finland and China.

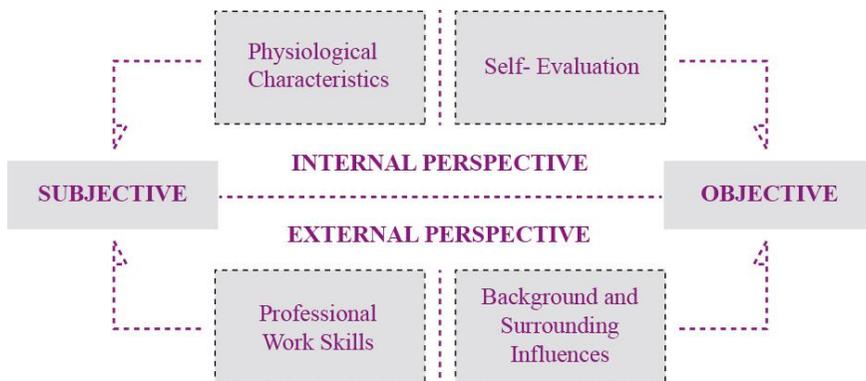


Figure 3. Internal and external factors affecting the career development of female graphic designers

This research was carried out from two perspectives, the internal and the external, and four aspects were investigated: professional work skills, psychological characteristics, self-evaluation, and background and surrounding influences.

For the professional work skill investigation in Chapter 4, an ethnographic approach was used to record the performance of GD students in group work at the University of Lapland, comparing the data of group work from graphic designers in workforce. The following questions were asked. *How do female GD students/designers perform in group work? How do group members evaluate the female members? What contribution do female students/designers make to team-work? What are the differences between male and female students/designers? What are the relevant differences between a study setting and a work setting?* In addition, quantitative data was collected by questionnaire to differentiate between the evaluation of the female students/designers themselves and that of the males regarding the females' performance in group work.

In Chapter 5, questionnaires and interviews were used to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data to investigate the theme of self-confidence by understanding the psychological position of female designers regarding their career development. The aim was to answer the following questions. *Why do many women lack self-confidence? What factors influence a woman's self-confidence?*

Chapter 6 analyzed the personal characteristics of female graphic designers. This chapter used the narratives of female graphic designers to obtain detailed data on the issues affecting their careers and to determine how much they enjoyed their careers. Chapter 6, thus, asked the following questions. *How do female graphic designers evaluate the graphic design occupation? How do they evaluate the effects of gender on their career development? How do they evaluate their choice of profession?* The narratives provided a broad understanding of the impact of gender on female graphic designers' professional satisfaction, and the data collected from the two countries offered different cultural perspectives on female careers.

Chapter 7 also adopted a narrative approach to explain the impact of the family on female graphic designers' career development. The purpose of this study was to become aware of the family's influence on the female graphic designer. The following questions were asked: *Are the family impacts positive or negative? What family factors affect the career development of female graphic designers? How do these family factors change in different cultural contexts? How do these female designers evaluate these factors? What do they think of the gender aspects of these factors?* These narratives provided a dynamic portrait of the family environment as it affects female graphic

designers throughout their career process.

Overall, the entire study was done in a comparative manner, and the subjects were viewed from both horizontal and vertical angles.

As mentioned above, the overall goal of this research was to understand female graphic designers' career process against different cultural backgrounds. The main research objectives are described in the four themes shown in Chapter 4, 5, 6 and 7: professional work skills, psychological characteristics, personal career evaluation, and family impacts on career. The four chapters involved a wide range of sociological concepts and scopes, such as gender stereotypes, social culture, psychological factors, vocational work skills, work-life concepts, and maternity policy. The main concepts and findings of previous studies and their contributions to the various research themes are discussed in the next section.

1.3 Concepts and Prior Findings

Chapter 4: This chapter focused on female graphic designers' skills in group work, which is representative of the social skills necessary for personal career development. Previous studies identified the GD profession as a creative practice of visual communication concerned mainly with thinking, action, and creation, and without particular technical requirements (Cross, 2002; Dorst and Cross, 2001; Graham, 2012; Lang, 2007; Lawson, 2006; Thames and Hudson, 2003). As described above that GD education and the GD market indicate that although female GD students are superior in their studies, they hold a lower status than males in the workplace. As group-work in the pedagogical environment can be interpreted as a social environment, several researchers (Frey, Fisher and Everlove, 2009; Johnson, 1975; Johnson, 1976) suggest that group work is an appropriate situation in which to study the gender position of women. Scholars such as Eagly (1987) and Heilman (1997) point out that gender stereotypes characterize women differently from men in both work and life, and they offer perspectives on female graphic designers from a gendered point of view.

Chapter 5: This chapter aimed to raise awareness of female graphic designers' psychological characteristics and to explore their abilities as expressed in the GD workplace. The research in Chapter 4 as with that of previous studies (Clark et al., 2006; NCES, 2005), indicates that female

graphic designers lack self-confidence and cooperative skills in group work. These findings support the internal and external perspectives and help to understand the characteristics of female graphic designers. In addition, psychological studies (Lips, 1997) suggest that women's lack of success is linked to their lack of self-confidence and that this is an important factor leading to the female graphic designers' lower status in the GD workplace.

Chapter 6: A personal evaluation of the professional experiences of female graphic designers reflects their level of satisfaction and their opinions on their profession life. In answer to the question "What do female graphic designers really want?" the subjective evidence obtained from the participants can help the researcher to understand internal influences on their career development. This study collected participants' narratives to understand how they felt about their careers. Although the GD profession is considered a creative profession without a gender-orientation (Cross, 2002; Dorst and Cross, 2001, Lang, 2007; Lawson, 2006), the reality is that female graphic designers hold lower positions in the workforce. In this context, social inequality is considered to be "normal" (Hearn, 2000; Trauth, Quesenberry, and Huang, 2006), and this will influence the individuals' judgment regarding the gender facts. As psychologists have stated, the subconscious is based on the conscious store (Janet, 1859-1947; Henri, 1970; Locke and Edwin, 1996; Kristof and Amy, 1996), and so both the social culture and the national culture will be stored as conscious awareness but will affect the individual's subconscious attitudes. This understanding will support the gender and cultural perspectives when exploring the extent of psychological influences on female designers' career development in their specific cultural contexts. The results will contribute to the study by describing the internal factors that affect the career development of female graphic designers.

Chapter 7: In this chapter, the attention is paid to family culture and work-life relationships in order to explore the external factors that affect the career development of female graphic designers. These external factors will affect their professional behavior and psychological cognition. Researchers have confirmed that, as a micro-social environment, the family affects the individual's career development (Aldous, 1969; Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986, 1998; Crouter, 1984; Piotrkowski, 1979; Staines, 1980). The relationship between work and life has been investigated as an important factor affecting

career choice (Aldous, 1969; Crouter, 1984; Piotrkowski, 1979; Staines, 1980). Maternity policy is another factor influencing women's lives and affecting their career development (Chandra, 2012; Osterberg and Hedman, 1988; Rantalaiho et al., 1997). This research was conducted in different countries against different cultural backgrounds, and the results will therefore help to clarify the relationship between career and life within its cultural context. Maternity policies can help understand the situation of mothers who are designers, and this will make it possible to compare the views of mothers who raise their children under different policies.

1.4 Research questions and targets

The study aimed to determine the factors that influence female graphic designers' career development. My previous experience as a graphic designer and as a graphic design educator motivated this research and provided a starting point for the present work. The research questions are as follows. *Why are female graphic designers in lower positions in the workforce? What are the possible reasons for this phenomenon?* This study seeks to provide baseline evidence for female graphic designers' performance in both the study setting and the work setting, to define the psychological characteristics that differentiate them from males, to explore the internal factors affecting the careers of female graphic designers, to determine the kind of influences that family members have on the careers of female graphic designers, and to direct future research and development. These issues are explored in Chapter 4, 5, 6 and 7. Figure 4 shows the structure of the factors that affect the career process of female graphic designers.

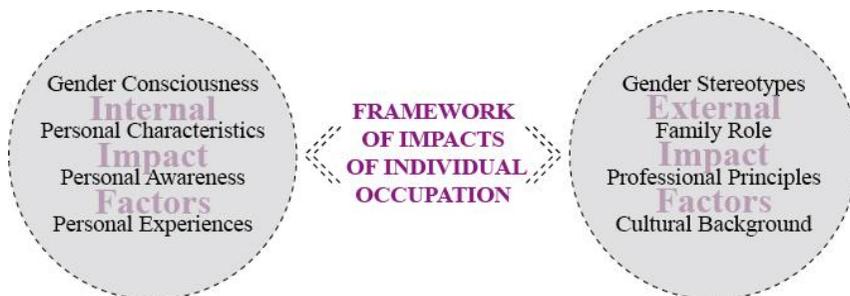


Figure 4. Framework of the impacts affecting the career development of female graphic designers

Chapter 4 target: Group work is increasingly used in university pedagogy to help students increase their group work skills and to gain social recognition through working with others. The factors investigated in this subject may predict the different gender-based roles affecting students' relationships, especially the female students' roles during group work in the university. This chapter studied on the influence of gender-based group work on GD students' future careers is presented in four parts: 1) why the study of group work is important for career development; 2) gender roles in work: comparing males' and females' experiences of studying and working; 3) an ethnographic approach that explores the future career prospects for female graphic designers; and 4) the implications of group work for establishing concepts and practice. This chapter provides a basic understanding of the pedagogical methods involved in group work, especially from a gendered viewpoint, as it relates to GD education. It explores how female graphic designers can improve the competitiveness of their future careers during their education.

Chapter 5 target: The enrolment of female GD students is higher than that of male students at all stages of higher education—at bachelor, master's and doctoral levels. However, female designers occupy much lower positions in the work environment than men. Some attribute this phenomenon to the stereotypes held in patriarchal societies; others point to biological differences. However, another important factor is that women often lose their confidence in many areas, especially as related to career advancement. Qualitative data were collected and compared for subjects in Finland and China, and the records were analyzed for differences between the two countries in terms of innate characteristics: experiences, age, culture, career, and gender perceptions. Accordingly, this chapter attempts to determine the following points: 1) the reason for many women's lack of self-confidence; 2) the factors that affect women's self-confidence; 3) the different effects of internal and external behaviors on males and females; and 4) the factors that can help women establish their self-confidence.

Chapter 6 target: Since the majority of female graphic designers occupy lower positions in the workplace, many of them give up design work for various reasons and at various stages. Factors include social contexts, gender stereotypes, education and work environments. Recruitment and retention also affect their careers (Trauth, Quesenberry and Huang, 2006). However,

there are, potentially, other factors affecting female graphic designers' career process. The purpose of this study was to explore the possible reasons for career satisfaction, or the lack thereof, among female graphic designers and to explore the connections between the internal and external influences. The motivations for that study are threefold: 1) to address the cultural context from a sociological perspective; 2) to address gender consciousness and the subconscious influence of gender from a sociological perspective; and 3) to address gender and GD issues from a psychological perspective.

Chapter 7 target: The aim of this chapter was to gain a better understanding of the effects of family on the career development of female graphic designers from different cultural backgrounds. The aim of the subject was to determine: 1) the influences that come from family; 2) the relationship between family and career choice; and 3) the differences in family influences according to cultural background. To answer these questions, this study focused on studying family-career relationships to explore the effect of families on the different career stages of female designers. Simultaneously, the study looked at family cultural influences, both positive and negative, that contribute to career development.

Table 3. Summary of the research design

Purpose of the study	Research questions	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods
<p>Chapter 4</p> <p>To identify possible links between the study setting and the work setting related to group work and gender issues.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is the study of group work important for career development? 2. What are the differences between the study and work experiences of males and females? 3. How is the future performance of female designers in the professional work setting indicated by their performance in the study setting? 4. What are the implications for group work, theory and practice building? 	<p>Focus group</p> <p>Questionnaire</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Online data collection</p>	<p>Case study approach</p> <p>Ethnographic study approach</p> <p>Qualitative content analysis</p> <p>Quantitative analysis;</p>
<p>Chapter 5</p> <p>To determine the causes of women's lack of self-confidence and possible influencing factors and to propose suggestions for future practice.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why do many women lack self-confidence? 2. What factors affect women's self-confidence? 3. What internal and external influences affect the confidence of males and females? 4. What factors can help women build their self-confidence? 	<p>Story writing</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Questionnaire</p>	<p>Case study approach</p> <p>Qualitative content analysis</p> <p>Quantitative analysis</p>
<p>Chapter 6</p> <p>To identify possible reasons for female graphic designers' low presence in the</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In addition to the influencing factors defined in previous studies on female graphic designers' career process, are there other possible factors? 	<p>Interview</p> <p>Questionnaire</p>	<p>Case study approach</p> <p>Qualitative content analysis</p>

labor force, and to explore the connections between the internal and external factors.	2. What factors influential female graphic designers' career process?		Quantitative analysis
<p>Chapter 7</p> <p>To gain a better understanding of family impacts on the career development of female graphic designers, in relation to different cultural backgrounds.</p>	<p>1. What family influences affect female graphic designers' career development?</p> <p>2. What is the relationship between family and career choice?</p> <p>3. What differences in family influence exist in terms of cultural background?</p>	Interviews	<p>Case study approach</p> <p>Qualitative content analysis</p>

1.5 Dissertation structure

The structure of the dissertation is organized as follows. First, the research topic (graphic design) and the main target of this research (the factors affecting female graphic designers' career process) are presented in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 presents the research background to the multi-dimensional perspective on the research theme. Chapter 3 presents the methodology for this research. It discusses ethnography as an approach to conducting practical and theoretical research and defines the practical approaches, including the mixed methods research. Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 focus on the main questions. Chapter 8 presents the conclusions to the work, and Chapter 9 discusses the results and suggests future research topics.

CHAPTER 2

Research background

In this chapter, the principal literary coverage of concepts and perspectives that relate to GD and the development of women’s careers is introduced. This section describes the GD profession in general and the educational methods used in the professional training. It also explores the sociology and gender concepts of professional development, particularly the factors that impact on the career development of women, as can be seen in scholarly research. The structure of the factors that impact on the subject, the literature contribution and its gaps are shown in Figures 5 and Table 4.

IMPACT FACTOR STRUCTURE

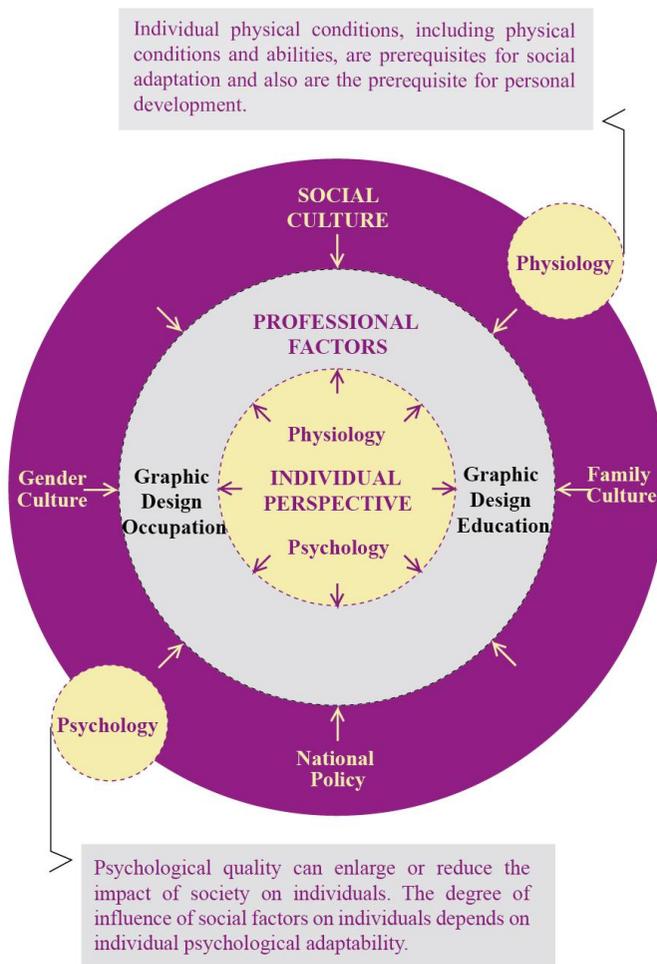


Figure 5. Structure of impact factors on personal career development

Table 4. Review of the existing literature and identification of its gaps

RESEARCH CONTEXTS	CONTRIBUTIONS	UNEXPLORED ISSUES
Professional Knowledge	The knowledge of GD and GD Education provide the basis for understanding the characteristics of the GD occupation.	For female graphic designer's low participation in the labor force, the possible reasons should be explored in the context of culture and gender: are there certain potential factors that will affect the career of female graphic designers? What is the relationship between these influencing factors?
Professional Process	Group Work Theory and Social Work Perspectives represent the conception and characteristics of group work and the role of professional experience.	This study needs to emphasize the detailed characteristics of female designers, because they can provide clues to find out the possible causes of female graphic designers' lack of labor participation.
Personal Characteristics	From a gender perspective, the findings explained the characteristics of women in terms of Physiological and Psychological Factors. Throughout these studies, self-confidence is considered one of the important factors for career success.	To discover the possible causes of women's lack of confidence, it is necessary to conduct research in specific fields, which can provide more targeted evidence for the analysis. The relationship between self-confidence and professional development needs to be more clearly described.
Gender Context	The various causes of female's low participation in the labor force have been presented in theories from a Social and Gender View and build the external factor framework on this theme.	Previous studies have mainly explored the external factors related to the problem, but not the internal reasons. In addition, the influence of internal factors on the career development of women in graphic design needs to be studied.
Social Cultural Context	Work-life Theory, Social Culture Concepts and Maternity Policy has confirmed the relationship between family and work in general and has examined work and family from multiple social and cultural perspectives.	This research needs to focus on the GD field. This study also lacks attention to comparison between different cultural backgrounds. In addition, the study lacked an understanding of the interactions between occupation, family, gender and culture in the dynamic process.

2.1 The graphic design profession

Graphic design is traditionally defined as a form of visual communication that uses typography, illustration, photography, and technological processes such as printing and interactive design for the purposes of persuasion, information, or instruction (Thames and Hudson, 2003). The tangible forms of visual communication produced by graphic designers include brochures, logos, magazine ads, package designs, and websites. Graphic designers produce visual communications for clients of all sorts, including large quantities of printed and packaging materials. According to Graham (2012), GD is concerned primarily with the transmission of visual information, and with the development of new technologies and methods of communication in recent years, practitioners have expanded into audio, video, and experience design. Lang (2007) defined GD as a creative practice involving idea generation, image creation, word interpretation, and media realization. Communication theories, models, methods, and practices are considered central to the process of meaningful representation. In their studies of design activities, Lawson (2006), Cross (2002), and Dorst and Cross (2001) compared architecture, engineering, and product design, Simon (1973) described GD as the tool-mediated activities that graphic designers engage in to solve "ill-structured" problems in client-initiated projects, unlike industrial design, which involves more technical skills and more often attracts male designers, GD is more concerned with thinking, action, and creation.

In the last 20 years, GD education has matured and now cultivates sufficient talent worldwide to meet the demands of the global market. However, Gallagher (1995) and Romano (1999) have noted that gender stereotypes still affect the workplace, there is always a difference in gender position in the work place, and the media industry still remains as masculine domains of work and production despite the evolution of democracy since 1997, moreover, there is widespread evidence of this effect in nowadays. In China, gender inequality in the media field reflects trends elsewhere around the world. For example, employment statistics for media students in Xi'an in 2013 show that the employment rate for male graduates was 78.4%, while the employment rate for female graduates was 71.9% (Zhang, Jiang, and Zhou, 2015). In terms of professional characteristics and quality

requirements, the GD profession has no gender orientation, but as described in the Introduction, the workspace is still dominated by men, even though women are more successful in the educational space. Targeted research is needed to study this reversal, and the present study explores possible reasons for the current situation in the GD field.

2.2 Group work as an effective pedagogical method and work practice

Traditional GD education focuses on the cultivation of aesthetic sensibilities and creative thinking. However, the increasing use of digital technology means that GD literacy now extends beyond formal aesthetics to broader notions of “professionalism” in terms of the knowledge and skills required to work as a graphic designer (Tan and Melles, 2010). This presents challenges for educators in ensuring that students acquire the necessary skill set within the limited time frame of their degree (Heller, 2006). Conventional lecture-centered teaching is confined to a particular location, structure, and learning style. To meet the broader needs of design professionals, collaborative learning is seen as a more effective learning approach, emphasizing student-centered tasks and decision-making skills as fundamental to the preparation of students for employment, where interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, lifelong learning skills, and teamwork are required (Rohidi, Ibrahim, and Yusoff, 2009). The typical collaborative learning environment involves group work; according to Smith and MacGregor (1992), collaborative learning begins with problems, and students become problem solvers who practice and develop a higher order of reasoning. Instruction based on small groups allows students to work together to maximize their own and others’ learning (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec, 1998), helping one another to achieve a common learning goal (Killen, 2007).

Extensive research on group work has confirmed its importance and value for both education and work. Since the 1970s, the work of Lev Vygotsky has led to widespread recognition that working in groups is a key element of the learning process (Frey, Fisher, and Everlove, 2009). According to Koshy (2008), “Group work, in general, has been proven to have many benefits for students as it replicates the workplace, develops their communication and survival skills, encourages cross-cultural understanding and relationships,

and so on.” As a pedagogical method, extensive research has shown that group work in education fosters “problem solving” ability that can subsequently be applied in real-world settings. For example, Lynch et al. (2007) argued that group work in education helps students to acquire what they refer to as “‘near real life’ educational experience,” which is similar to problem-based learning. Almond (2009) and Johnson (2005) found that group work provides students with opportunities to engage in peer-to-peer learning. Learning is enhanced when students can share and clarify their knowledge to build creative problem-solving capabilities. Freeman (2009) noted that, in university settings, group work is classified as general skills development. The ability to participate effectively in group work demonstrates that students have a broad range of skills relevant to the “real world”. According to Hauer and Daniels (2008), group work helps students to develop knowledge and problem-solving skills, and to deal with real-life problems.

As employers place increasing emphasis on teamwork skills and graduates’ development in this respect (Cranmer, 2006), group work assignments have become a major educational trend (Brown, Bull, and Pendlebury, 1997; Gottschall and Garcia-Bayonas, 2008). Focusing on the key basic skills that students need for the world of work, Davis (2007) identified a demand for decentralized learning, work, and personal development skills that facilitate practical and academic research.

Group work is an effective means of getting work done. Productive group work is an essential stepping stone to learning and mastery, and collaboration with peers is an essential element of learning (Frey, Fisher, and Everlove, 2009). Johnson (1976) argued that many researchers view positive interdependence as the defining quality and primary component of cooperative group work; that is, positive interdependent group work will produce better results. However, the rich body of research on group work in education and the workplace has not extended to the field of GD. The present study seeks to bridge this gap by investigating the role of group work training in GD education and in the GD workspace. In particular, the study addresses the lack of research on group work in a gendered context.

2.3 Self-confidence is seen as a significant factor in career success

As mentioned in the Introduction, in universities in both Finland and China, women are superior to men in the academic environment, in both representation and performance. Reports from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES; 2006) and the U.S. Department of Education (2004) also show that women surpass men, not only in high school graduation rates but also in university enrolment and degree completion. The superiority of female students is a global phenomenon. Related to these achievements, Clark et al. (2006) found that the attitudes and motivations of men indicate that, as a group, they do not seem to think that school is as important in their lives as women do. More so than men, women believe that coursework is meaningful and useful for their futures (NCES, 2005). These studies indicate that women have good ability in learning, and to a certain extent, they also show that girls are more conservative and obedient.

The patriarchal nature of the work environment still exists, as it does in the GD field. Here, the situation of men and women is reversed that women hold lower status in the workplace. Previous studies showed that various factors contribute to this phenomenon: the cultural context, social concepts, and self-confidence. As Lips (1997) reported, in the past, an abundance of psychological theories suggested that women have an innate fear of success, and that a lack of success was somehow inherent to their nature. A study by Neal, Moore, Moxham, Owens and Richardson (2008) confirms that a suspicion regarding women's real ability still seems to linger in some quarters, and not least among the women themselves. In a variety of educational and career situations women continue to express a lack of confidence in their own abilities.

In terms of career success, previous literatures have shown that self-confidence is one of the most important qualities. Brown et al. (2003) described professional confidence as related or integral to, professional identity, self-confidence, self-esteem, self-concept, professional self-concept, competent clinical confidence, critical thinking, and self-efficacy. In Moxham's (2008) study on nursing students, she points out that confidence has a significant impact on the clinical performance of a nurse. Hence, an individual's expectations of success are important. In addition, Neal (2008) suggests that women's lack of self-belief is triggered by something deeper than current professional systems and structures. The significance of an individual's self-confidence or self-esteem is clear when key explanations for

success are considered: ability, effort, luck, and task ease or difficulty (Lips, 1997).

The GD profession has its unique characteristics. This research seeks to discover what happens in the learning and working environment of a female graphic designer's career. To what extent does the situation of female graphic designers have to do with a lack of confidence? The performance of self-confidence in the career development of female GD students and designers needs to be explored.

2.4 Career development exists within a multilevel social life

Career development happens within a multilevel context in social life. Personal life and work are integrated with personal expectations and are affected by various impacts from different aspects of social life and culture. Apter (1993) states that it is often argued that women have choice, but that "choice has both voluntary and structured aspects; choices are made in circumstances we ourselves do not choose", and so the career journey or success of many women "cannot be explained by an internal flaw, but by the contexts in which they make decisions". For example, career choices for women may be "socially constructed through assignment to less prestigious work and underpinned by structural factors, such as the inadequacy of institutionalised childcare" (Thornton, 1996). As we have seen, choices may also be constructed through the performance of gender in strategic conformity with societal roles and expectations (Lucal, 1999). The expectations of social structure are seen as important factors influencing women's life and work choices.

2.4.1 Gender stereotypes are seen as an important influencing factor in women's life and work choices

The lower representation of women in the GD field is obvious and is seen as a significant problem. It has become of considerable concern to educators, practitioners, and researchers. A large number of studies have endeavored to determine the reasons for female graphic designers' under-representation in the workforce. Many reasons have been confirmed in previous studies, including social contexts, gender stereotypes, education

and work environment, and recruitment and retention (Trauth, Quesenberry, and Huang, 2006). Eagly (1987) noted that gender stereotypes are rooted in generalized beliefs about the different characteristics and qualities attributed to the gender differences between men and women by society. Heilman (1997) identified men and women with different characteristics and qualities that anticipate different working roles defined by gender. Moreover, as Hearn (2000) points out, the representations of men and women in society are regarded as "normal". This shows that some of the phenomenon of the imbalanced gender status does not result from conscious behavior but is seen as a "natural" choice or results from the participants' unconscious decisions. To a certain extent, this situation unfairly affects women's career process and treatment. Throughout life, gender perspective experiences have long-term effects on the individual's self-assessment - and lifestyle.

2.4.2 Family nurturing influences people's life and work expectations

Family is the background that provides the first training ground for people's career development. Family forms part of the human existence and is the background to personal career development. The family contributes to the formulation of a moral education, personal values, cultural tendencies, and life concepts, and it has a long-term impact on the development of personal careers. Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986, 1998) ecosystem theory points out that environmental factors, such as family and school, affect individual development, and the environment includes not only the family environment but also the social and cultural environment. There is also the view that family heavily influences the growth environment that leads to careers, as work interferes with family life and vice versa (Aldous, 1969; Crouter, 1984; Piotrkowski, 1979; Staines, 1980). Social life and family life interact and constitute the entire human experience.

2.4.3 The concepts of work-life balance and work-family conflicts

The concept of work-life balance (WLB) and work-family conflicts (WFC) are expressed as two counterparts that interfere with people's career development. On the basis of their individual circumstances and preferences,

people can and do have different views or attitudes toward work and family-related expectations, organizational commitment, personal and work-related values and goals, strategies to achieve success, and issues related to WLB. Chandra (2012) expressed the view that WLB is about responding to individual circumstances in a manner that helps individuals fulfill their responsibilities and aspirations to the mutual benefit of the individual, of the business, and of society at large. WLB can be seen as a fact and a phase of life and is best handled at the individual level. WFC is another framework that affects the relationship between personal life and career. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) confirm that WFC occurs when the demands or expectations associated with one domain are incompatible with those associated with the other. Haar (2004) examined WFC and family-work conflicts (FWC) as a predictor of turnover intention and tested the moderating effect of perceived work-family support from employers on these decisions. The treatment of the relationship between work and family directly affects the personal work situation.

These studies provide a general perspective on the work-life theme and confirm the importance of the family's influence on work status. However, they were not carried out in the specific field of GD in which there are varied results due to the occupation's characteristics. In the GD field, the profession has a particular role in both work and the market. So, what kind of relationships and patterns are established between occupational requirements and work styles in relation to the family? What do WLB and WFC look like in the GD field, and what kind of impact factors will affect individual career development, especially for female employees? These questions all need to be explored.

2.4.4 Women's family role in the cultural context

Family is an important factor in the work-life system, and it directly or indirectly affects personal work. Family culture is a representation of the national culture and influences personal life and work indirectly and enduringly. Gender roles in families have been much discussed in previous studies. McElwain et al. (2005) express the view that work and family have traditionally been associated with gender-specific roles. The pressure of gender-specific roles in the family are definitely related to gender properties and traditional culture. In this study, a comparison of the family cultures of

Eastern and Western countries shows that the women in both these areas bear most of the responsibility for the housework in the family. In the Eastern country, China, although the one-child policy (1971–2016) has reduced the burden of childcare for married couples, the responsibilities for childcare and elderly care continue to fall disproportionately upon women, even though most of them work full-time. In the Western country, Finland, the Finnish people participate equally in the workplace, but the situation for women is similar to that in China, with women still bearing the primary responsibility for childcare and housework (Osterberg and Hedman, 1988; Rantalaiho et al., 1997). Chandra (2012) confirms that women are more likely to feel the pressure of work-life conflicts than men. Gender role in the family is not by natural selection, the national culture has an important influence on the concept of family. Hassan (2010) indicates that in Eastern cultures the importance of family in an individual's life is different from that in Western cultures. The East and West have different views on work and family due to variations in their cultural traditions, family structures, and societal institutions. Hassan shows that cultural traditions, family structures, and societal institutions are the important elements determining family roles and the division of labor. Rajadhyaksha and Bhatnagar (2000) also explain how gender-based socialization influences men to take on work roles and women to take on nurturing roles. Overall, the research into family and work, cultural penetration, and its interference in life and work has been long-term and extensive. It becomes clear that family impact, with different emphases on family and different views of family-work life, will heavily influence personal career development, especially for women.

At the same time, family-work relationship is one of the most important factors affecting women's career development in the GD field. However, much of the research has not explored this specific group; it has confirmed the relationship between family and work in general and has examined work and family from multiple social and cultural perspectives. Therefore, this research intends to provide a focused study on the GD field. In addition, culture is regarded as an important background for personal growth, but the research also lacks a comparative study against different cultural backgrounds. Moreover, the research needs to understand the interactions between career, family, gender, and culture in a dynamic process, as different results will emerge as social concepts change and professional fields develop.

2.5 Summary

This review of the concepts and perspectives related to the GD occupation and the relative impact of factors affecting women's career development, including gender, culture, and education is extensive. However, the general description has not previously been applied to the particular angle of the GD profession, in particular to the female graphic designer's career issues.

The knowledge and the understanding of group work and its effectiveness in education as expressed in research is exhaustive, and the characteristics and importance of group work have been determined. Group work is an effective way for students to learn social practice, and it is closely related to the cultivation of professional ability near to "real life". However, there is a lack of comparative research on group work between the learning environment and the working environment, especially an exploration of the relationship between these two environments in the GD field. Group work creates a micro-environment that highlights the designers' career development as well as their gender stereotypes. Therefore, in the gender context, a performance comparison of participants in GD group work is lacking. These results will be helpful by emphasizing the detailed characteristics of graphic designers. They can then offer clues to figure out the possible reasons for female graphic designers' low workforce participation.

From a gender perspective, the findings will explain the characteristics of women in terms of physiological and psychological theories and ideas, and they will present the relationship between abilities and personal characteristics from the perspective of the females' occupation. In terms of career success, self-confidence is considered to be one of the important factors that women lack, but research into the self-confidence of female graphic designers has not received much attention. In addition, the relationship between the different causes of women's lack of confidence also needs to be discussed.

Social culture, as expressed in the literature, includes gender culture, national culture, and family culture, all of which influence personal work and life both directly and indirectly. Research into the relationship between family and work provides a wealth of insights and detailed explanations of women's occupations. However, these studies have not focused on the field

of GD, and there is a lack of analysis and understanding of the interactions between occupations, families, and cultures. In relation to the family theme, the impact of family education on women's career development still needs attention.

Overall, the literature provides a wide range of perspectives and rich explanations regarding the unequal social status of women, and it describes factors related to women's low social representation from a social and gender view. It also provides the external factor framework for this theme. We should note that the factors influencing female graphic designer's career development have not been explored, nor have the internal influence factors and their relationship, nor the interaction between the internal and external factors. Moreover, the relationship between the personal factors and the environmental factors needs to be discussed. Therefore, research is needed to integrate these approaches and to conduct research in the GD field from a gender and cultural perspective.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

As described in the Introduction, the aim of the present research is to explain the phenomenon of the low representation of female graphic designers in the workforce from a gender and cultural perspective. Based on the literature review in Chapter 2, the explanation has multiple dimensions, and a mixed-methods approach was considered appropriate for collecting in-depth data, focusing on specific areas and events. The study ranges from narrower to broader inquiry into formative issues and the relationship between occupational processes and outcomes to explore how and why the current situation of female graphic designers differs from that of their male counterparts.

3.1 Methodologies

3.1.1 Mixed-methods approach

Mixed-methods research is a pragmatic approach that combines quantitative and qualitative methods (Morgan, 2007; Creswell, 2013) to produce a deeper, more valid, and more understandable account of the studied phenomenon (Creswell, 2003; Greene, 2007; Greene and McClintock, 1985; Jick, 1979; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007; Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006). Research on the careers of female graphic designers should include a comprehensive survey of internal and external personal characteristics, as well as micro and macro perspectives. For the purposes of this study, questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data on the low proportion of female graphic designers in the labor force, and qualitative data based on ethnography, story-writing narratives, and focus group interviews were used to explore the possible reasons for this phenomenon. This mixed-methods approach provides rich, detailed, and varied data as an adequate basis for objective analysis.

3.1.2 Ethnography

The study in Chapter 4 explored group work learning in both educational and work settings to examine possible links between the two. Viewing group work as a social process, the study adopted an ethnographic

perspective to “transcribe” or “represent” group work. The ethnographic approach involves making a detailed, in-depth description of everyday life (Beardon, 2009) and is suitable for observing what happens in the performance of a practice (Hargreaves, 2011). This approach also helps to account for the emergence and development of events in real time from the point of view of those involved (Johnstone, 2007). For the purposes of this study, an ethnographic approach facilitated the exploration of reasons for the overlapping of certain paired pedagogical strategies—education-work, individual-social, gender-non-gender, and uniform-special—which are important career development factors that students should learn about during their education period. Additionally, the ethnographic approach helped to identify suggestions that might contribute to the improvement of theoretical and practical strategies in education. This approach also facilitated real-time investigation of how GD group work is performed, the work that people do in such groups, and the changes that are made while completing a project. This account of group work in turn identifies an intuitive path for group work experiences, facilitating comparison of the two settings and helping to clarify any differences between male and female graphic designers.

3.1.3 Case study approach

In a case study, the case is an example of a larger set and is used to understand a given issue or theory. Case studies are further classified as intrinsic (a unique situation or subject), instrumental (a particular situation or phenomenon), and collective (Stake, 1994, 2004). Cases can be categorized as descriptive (intervention or phenomenon), explanatory (complex), or exploratory (lack of detailed preliminary research), and a further distinction can be drawn between single, holistic, and multiple-case studies (Yin, 2009). The present study can be characterized as multiple and collective, where each case is a sub-study that adopts a particular perspective on the topic. Chapter 4 addressed the case of group work, representing graphic designers’ professional work; Chapter 5 used the case of career stories to represent female graphic designers’ ideals and their career reality; in Chapter 6, the case of career evaluation to represent female graphic designers’ self-evaluation of their career life; and in Chapter 7 a case study of family

impacts focused on the designers' career environment. The four cases also explored occupational principles and internal and external elements. The results of these case studies are interrelated and complementary; together, these different perspectives on the same issue constitute the overall research framework.

3.1.4 Overview of study methods

Study in Chapter 4 used an ethnographic approach to collect dynamic data on the group work process. Simultaneously, the questionnaires and interviews provided quantitative information support for the analysis. Study in Chapter 5 employed a mixed-method approach, using story writing, face-to-face interviews, and open-ended and closed questions to collect quantitative and qualitative data for an analysis of female graphic designers' lack of confidence. In Chapter 6, the study also employed a mixed-method approach. Along with web-based interviews to collect qualitative data on female graphic designers' own evaluations of their career experiences, the study collected quantitative data using open-ended and closed questions to gain a general overview of those career experiences. And in Chapter 7, the study used face-to-face interviews and web-based interviews to collect qualitative data on female graphic designers' career processes in relation to their family life.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

This section describes data collection procedures and analysis in this study. To analyze cultural aspects of the issues in question, data were collected in Finland and China. The four chapters produced a range of conclusions from different angles in pursuit of the study's aim. Table 5 summarizes the various approaches to data collection.

Table 5. Data collection approaches

Subject	Method	Participants (N=482)				
		Situation		Sex		Education
Chapter 4	Focus group; Ethnographic approach; Questionnaires; Interviews; Online data collection;	Graphic design students (n=82)	Graphic design career people (designer-entrepreneur and design educators) (n=16)	Male: n=35 Female: n=63	Male: n=83 Female: n=405	All come from a GD background and hold college or university degrees universities
Chapter 5	Story writing; Interviews; Questionnaires	Design students (n=118)	Designers and design educators (n=22)	Male: n=42; Female: n=98		
Chapter 6	Interviews; Questionnaires	Design students (n=126)	Designers and design educators (n=76)	Female: n=202		
Chapter 7	Interviews		Designers and design educators (n=42)	Female: n=42		

3.2.1 Data collection

Chapter 4

In Chapter 4, quantitative and qualitative data were collected using an ethnographic approach. A case study of GD group work was conducted to compare the group work environment encountered in education and work settings. Focusing on the relationship between male and female GD students in group work, the study compared two specific periods: education and work. The research was conducted at a GD workshop at the University of Lapland and at design agencies in Finland to explore working relationships between designers from a gender perspective. A series of observations, qualitative interviews, quantitative questionnaires, and video recordings helped to identify possible reasons for gender-related inequality in GD group work settings.

The chosen means of data collection were questionnaire and in-depth

interview. The questionnaire consisted of closed and open-ended questions to capture detailed accounts of GD students' experiences of group work. Seventy-three design students from the Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland participated in this survey. In this group, 70% were GD students; the others were communication design, product design engineering, audiovisual media culture, and industrial product design students who had chosen GD courses. For comparison purposes, nine designers also responded to the questionnaires, and face-to-face interviews were conducted with four graphic design teachers, nine designers, two chief executives, and one art director. All of the interviews took place in May 2014 and were recorded and later transcribed.

Chapter 5

This chapter focused on self-confidence, which is an essential factor in academic and professional achievement among female graphic designers. Based on interviews and investigations with higher education students (bachelor, master's and DA) and female and male professionals, this chapter attempts to determine why these women lack self-confidence and to make suggestions for future practice.

Student data were collected from personal stories and responses to an open-ended questionnaire while career women and men participated through interviews. All participants in both countries (Finland and China) were asked similar questions about building self-confidence in different cultures. The themes discussed included personal characteristics, experience, culture, gender stereotypes, and social context, all of which are influential factors in building self-confidence. Both the Finnish and Chinese groups included students and career women and men, who were categorized by occupation and status. The Finnish group included 51 design students from the Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland and nine design educators and designers working for design agencies in Finland. Of these, 75% (n=38) were female, and 25% (n=13) were male; six of the career people were female, and three were male. In the Chinese group, there were 67 design students pursuing degrees at the Shandong University of Art and Design and at Shandong Women's University, as well as six teachers from those two universities and seven designers from design agencies in Shandong Province. Among the students, 68% (n=46) were female, and 32%

(n=21) were male; among the career women and men, eight were female and five were male.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 explored possible subconscious reasons for female graphic designers' low representation in the labor force and any connection between internal and external factors. This chapter involved two groups: graphic design students from universities in Finland and China, and workers from both countries. In order to address the research questions, the study explored cross-cultural datasets from Finland and China. One dataset comprised quantitative data from universities in both countries based on the questionnaire responses of 126 GD students regarding their feelings and plans in respect of their professional studies and future career. The other dataset comprised qualitative data collected in open-ended questions and face-to-face interviews with 76 female graphic designers from both countries. The interviews lasted between 60 and 120 minutes and explored the participants' educational process, work experience, results evaluation, and career expectations with regard to gender and GD. The interviews also explored participants' background, personal characteristics, and the broader themes of gender and GD.

In the datasets from both countries, 43% of respondents were from Finland, and 57% were from China. The women ranged in age from 22 to 60 years. All had a college or university degree involving GD, as well as diverse GD work experience as designers, illustrators, art directors, creative directors, managers, freelancers, students, and educators. As a result, the participating female designers reflected the influence of culture on their professional lives.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 focused on the family-career relationship and explored the impact of family on the different career stages of female graphic designers. This chapter involved a qualitative investigation of 42 female graphic designers in Finland and China in accordance with inclusion criteria tailored to both countries for meaningful cross-cultural comparison. All of the 42 designers were interviewed, and their career experiences were compared. To gain a comprehensive perspective, the study included a focus group involving female graphic designers with higher education backgrounds and more than

five years of work experience. For comparative purposes, the interviewees in Finland and China were similarly distributed in terms of work situation and age range. Because their family conditions could not be known ahead of time, family situation was not among the inclusion criteria.

These data collection processes yielded rich and detailed material regarding the influence of family on female graphic designers' careers and meaning-making in this regard.

3.2.2 Analysis

Analytical concepts

In this study, the target groups of GD students and educators included female graphic designers. The study of GD students, designers, and educators employed observation, questionnaires, interviews, story writing, and target project execution to capture participants' personal accounts of their career process and expectations. The comprehensive survey sought to establish a solid understanding of internal and external influences as a research resource that is at once broad and detailed. As shown in Figure 8, Chapter 4 demonstrated the relationship between study and work settings in female graphic designers' career experiences; Chapter 5 provided an internal analysis of their lack of confidence; Chapter 6 presented an internal analysis of the female graphic designers' career satisfaction; and Chapter 7 analyzed the external of family impacts on female graphic designers' career development in a cultural context.

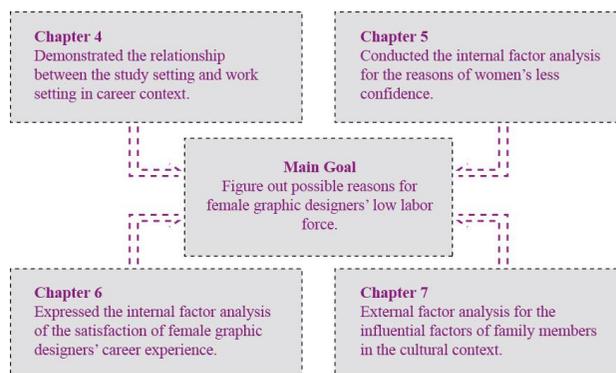


Figure 6. Analysis concepts

Study analysis

Chapter 4 employed a mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis. The predominantly ethnographic approach facilitated collection of detailed qualitative data on GD students' experiences of group work. The target group investigation involved three stages based on observation. Video recordings and photographs captured the relationships, positions, and performances of participants during group work. The quantitative questionnaire-based survey data were compressed using principal components analysis based on K-means clustering, a simple algorithm for grouping and clustering objects proposed by MacQueen in 1967 (Anil 2010), to identify similarities and differences between female and male designers in the work groups. The results of segmentation were used to study the group work experience from the target groups' perspective. The qualitative and quantitative data analyses contribute to the study in both specific and general ways. The results indicate that women's role in school group work inevitably influences their future work position.

Chapter 5 applied mainly qualitative methods to address the research questions about female designers' lack of self-confidence and to compare the impact of gender and cultural background on confidence building through various processes. The data from Finland and China were used to compare performance differences among female graphic designers in terms of culture and educational background and to identify common and specific factors that influence how women building self-confidence. The analysis served to clarify women's internal views about gender and confidence and facilitated comparison of conceptions of confidence building among designers who differ in terms of professional experience and career stage.

Chapter 6 again employed mixed methods for data collection and analysis. The quantitative data focused on GD students' feelings about their professional studies and future careers. The qualitative data referred to participants' backgrounds, personal characteristics, and the broader themes of gender and GD. Data analysis involved two steps: an assessment of key points to confirm the importance of the research hypothesis, followed by a comparative analysis to confirm that independent and dependent variables interacted in the expected directions. The analysis highlighted the importance of psychological perspectives in gender and GD research, as

psychological factors were found to have a profound impact on women's career choices in the GD field.

Chapter 7 collected rich qualitative data using a narrative approach. The narratives provided a macro-level perspective while comparisons of the various details facilitated micro-level differentiation. The analysis confirmed that family members influence female graphic designers' career development and assigned the different factors to distinct categories for comparison. The dynamic and comparative analyses facilitated the development of an inter-temporal cross-regional research model of gender issues.

3.3 Summary of methodological choices

The multiple methods employed in the present study delivered a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data highlighting the related factors that account for the low participation of female graphic designers in the workforce. These methods yielded a dialectical model of the internal and external influences affecting female designers' issues from subjective and objective perspectives and showing how gender intersects with the field of G

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CHAPTER 4

An Ethnographic Approach to Gender-Based Relationships in Graphic Design Group Work

Nowadays, the university pedagogy has increasingly used group work to help students increase their group work skills by gaining social recognitions while working with others. This chapter focuses on the theme that female graphic designers' performance in group work and the relationship of the studying and working. The factors investigated in this study may predict the different gender-based roles among students' relationships, especially the female students' roles during group work in university. In this subject, there are questionnaire and target group investigations carried out by the GD students and designers, which compares the different group work experiences between their education lives and career lives. The study uses the quantitative and qualitative data using an ethnographic approach to suggest that the roles women take during the group work of their school lives will inevitably influence their future work positions. These findings about different positions associated with gender differences will help the educators identify the potential problems in groups, and furthermore will help female designers to improve their ability and competitiveness during group work.

4.1 Instruction

As mentioned above, female GD students have proven themselves superior to males in the academic environment, but the situation is inverted in the working environment. There are several reasons for this inequality in the work positions, one of which can be linked to the gender stereotypes. In group work, especially in mixed-gender groups, the character differences are displayed more clearly, therefore, the roles taken in group work is a typical environment for the stereotype conception. Group work in education is the necessary step for students to experience work in group, due to the fact that the work environment is similar with the work place. Although group work has been used in teaching for thousands of years, it really was not until the 1970s and the work of Lev Vygotsky that groups were widely recognized as a key element to the learning process (Nancy, Douglas & Sandi, 2009). Learning activities are a social process. Therefore, productive group work is an essential stepping stone to learning and mastery, and collaboration with peers is a necessary part of learning or fulfilling tasks of everyone concerned (Nancy, Douglas & Sandi, 2009). A key feature of productive group work is what Johnson (1975,1976) calls positive interdependence, which is the

defining quality and most important component of cooperative group work. Then, the students' positions in their future careers not only depend on their talents, professional knowledge, and experiences, but also on their abilities of cooperation, especially for the high positions. Developing comprehensive skills would be the main purpose of conducting group work. Thus, the pedagogy strategy of using group work as the assignment form is a necessary step for students to learn how to work in groups. At this point, by comparing these two different yet relevant group work periods, i.e., the studying period and working period, the hypothesis for this subject is that the way students behave in group work during their school lives will predict their positions in the working place to some extent.

A case study on group work in the field of GD has been chosen in this project. The aim is to find out if a group work environment encountered when studying is similar to the one in the work place. Are there some definite links between them? Could the group work education strategy create equal opportunities for males and females to develop their careers? The study is focused on the relationship between male and female GD students involved in group work by comparing two particular periods in their lives: the studying period and the working period. Investigating group work in GD workshop and courses at the University of Lapland and design agencies in Finland will provide a basic analysis of working relationships between designers based on gender issues using the ethnographic approach. A series of observations, structured interviews, quantitative and qualitative questionnaires, and video recordings will be undertaken as the basic studying resources to identify the potential reasons for inequality between the working positions of male and female designers.

The study on the influence of gender-based group work on GD students' future career is presented through four parts: 1) Why the study of group work is important for career developing; 2) Gender-roles in group work: comparing males' and females' studying experiences with working experiences; 3) Ethnographic approach: exploring the future career prospects for female designers; And 4) Implications of group work theory and practice building. This chapter would offer the basic knowledge for group work pedagogy, especially for female GD education, from a gender viewpoint: How to improve female designers' competitiveness during the education period.

4.2 Research Method

As mentioned before, the investigations were among students who chose GD courses. These courses used the group work assignment as the final subject, and the main purpose of the group work subjects were teaching students to learn how to cooperate with each other, to get more ideas from team members and most importantly, to experience likely work settings. All these courses and workshops were arranged to use the group work assignment as the final result. Students were divided into small groups that consisted of 3-5 students in mixed-sex or single-sex groups, depending on the members registered in these courses. Furthermore, there a focus group was arranged to do a deep investigation via recording and interview of the performance during a three-meeting process. In this GD workshop, the subject was designed as a real design task. Every group member is the designer of its own group and simultaneously is also the client to evaluate other groups' work. The aim is to give students the chance to experience group work and learn important skills of working in groups, because group work is an important and necessary stage for graduating students to experience the "work environment." Nine students were divided into 3 mixed-gender groups, which facilitate the comparison between the working roles based on gender. To compare the study setting with the work setting, the investigation of the design agencies and graphic designers were conducted in two target design agencies: Seven-1 and Advertising Kioski in Rovaniemi. The content of the investigation focused on group work and gender issues, the data from which was used to compare with the study setting to identify possible links between these settings. In addition, further data was collected from Grafia and online investigation.

Participants

The sampling frame for this study is comprised of 73 design students within the Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland. In this target group, there were 70% GD students and others were Communication Design, Product Design Engineering, Audiovisual Media Culture, and Industrial Product Design students who chose GD Courses. According to this group, 58% were domestic students and 42% were international students; for those students, 71% were female and 29% were male. The

questionnaires were used for group work students in the GD courses and workshops. Along with the general investigation, a target group of 9 students used a set of questionnaires, with the questions implemented in three steps following the student's perception of group work; this process was conducted in a GD Workshop. All the students have adequate group work skills and experiences. For the questionnaire respondents, 22% were Finnish students and 78% were foreign students; 55% were male and 45% were female. This workshop was arranged for the investigation of group work without any guidance in group work skills in order to fully display their own performance in group work. The investigation was carried out through the entire group work process using various methods, including video recordings, photos, observations, questionnaires, and interviews. Their responses were recorded and transcribed. The target group of 9 students was divided into three groups, with each group consisting of three members. In order to learn the purpose and processes of using group work assignments in GD courses, 4 teachers were interviewed after the course. All the data was obtained during the group work courses. The purpose of choosing these courses that used group work in assignments was to obtain students' fresh perceptions of group work, which acted as an objective resource for this study.

Simultaneously, for the comparison data from design agencies, the investigation was implemented by interviews with two chief executors and one art director, who are in two target design agencies. Nine designers responded the questionnaires, which included 5 male designers and 4 female designers. Furthermore, Grafia and other online investigation supported other data, primarily concerned with the positions and the proportions of graphic designers overall.

Measures

Questionnaires were used to obtain measures of perception of the group work and relevant demographic data (e.g., gender and nationality). The questionnaire included selection and open answers; all items were designed to identify key points. Responses from these questionnaires were coded based on the main constructs of perception of group work, and the questions were coded on gender to compare the same answers between male and female.

For the target group in the study setting, three sets of questionnaires

were used during the whole group work process to evaluate students' responses to group work: 1) interest and background; 2) perception of gender meaning in group work; and 3) feeling and achievement in group work. The first questionnaire was used before the commencement of the group work project. Its purpose was to evaluate students' interest in GD and knowledge of group work in order to measure students' attitudes towards participating in this group work. The second questionnaire was used during the middle stage of the group work project to evaluate students' professional plans in GD and their perceptions of gender meaning in group work. The third questionnaire was used after the final presentation, which was the last stage of the group work project to evaluate the feelings and achievements from group work. These questionnaires were designed to coordinate with the group work project so as to increase progressively the perception of group work. Video recordings and photos were used to measure the relationships and positions between the members in work groups, which could indicate the gender order in groups. An interview with the teacher was used at the end of the group work project, the results of which provide a macro and micro reference to the group work study.

For the work setting in the design agency, the content of the interview questions for the leaders and directors were on the same topics of group work and gender issues as the studying setting, but focused on a leader's view. The questionnaires on the group work topics collected from graphic designers were coded in gender to compare with the data from the study setting.

4.2.1 Quantitative Data

The sample consists of 73 students enrolled in GD courses at the University of Lapland compared with 9 graphic designers. The data collection divided by gender aimed to evaluate the different perceptions of group work for males and females in the study setting and work setting. The attitude towards participating in group work is shown in Table 6; the perception of working in groups is shown in Table 7.

Table 6: The attitude of students and designers to join in group work.

Total number:82	Studying setting		Work setting	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Interested in GD	82%	78%	100%	83%
Definite plan for career	71%	42%	100%	67%
Interested in group work	58%	40%	100%	67%
Share idea with others	94%	83%	100%	100%
Acted as a leader in group work	71%	33%	33%	20%

Data analysis of Table 5: For all the positive attitudes toward group work, the independent samples indicated that the proportion of males is higher than females both in the study setting and work setting, and all the proportion in the work setting are higher than that in study setting, and the data from open answers on this question indicate who is not interested in GD, showing that they are affected by others or have no other choice to learn GD and they might change their profession later, which is a possible reason why the proportion of designers who are interested in GD in the work setting is higher than study setting. The proportion of those interested in group work has similar results: males are more interested in group work than females, and the proportion in the work setting is higher than in the study setting, as all the male designers prefer group work, and the proportion is much higher than that of female designers. The possible reason for this result is examined in the analysis of Table 6.

For the attitude sharing idea with others in group work, in the study setting, the proportion of males is higher than females, and all the designers in this investigation prefer to share ideas with others. In the study setting, those who said they choose not to share ideas mainly attributed this choice to a lack of confidence. Regarding leadership, the results show that males preferred to act as a leader in the group more than females. The possible reason for the lower proportion of males in the work setting than that in study setting is that the leader has been the leader in work setting, as concerned above, the proportion of male leader in high position in design agencies is much higher than female. The data in Table 5 indicates that males are more definitely of their career plan and more interested in group work, and the situations are similar within the two settings. When comparing these two settings, the proportions of the attitude to group work

in the work setting are higher than those in the study setting, which are mainly because the designers have determined their career and have more experience in group work. The possible reason of the lower proportion of regarding leadership is that most of the male students who prefer to act as the leader in group work have already achieved their goals.

Table 7: The perception of students and designers of working in a group.

M(Male) F(Female)	Studying setting				Work setting			
	Positive aspects		Negative aspects		Positive aspects		Negative aspects	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Feeling in group work	53%	36%	14%	39%	100%	80%	0%	20%
Gender differences in group work	100%	68%	0%	32%	100%	85%	0%	15%
Gender difference of emotional challenges in group work	86%	68%	14%	32%	55%	55%	45%	45%
Dealing with conflicts	93%	56%	7%	44%	100%	50%	0%	50%
Gender differences of leadership in group work	100%	83%	0%	17%	100%	80%	0%	20%

Data analysis of Table 6: This table contains information about the participants' feelings during group work in the two settings. As the data shows in Table 6, the proportion of positive feeling of males is always higher than females, and females are more negative than males in group work. There are 36% of females who have strong satisfaction in group work, 25% of females feel relaxed, and 39% feel tension or confusion in group work, while it seems better in the work setting. All the males think that there is no difference between gender in group work and the leadership in group work; still, a few females think the differences exist. Regarding emotional challenges, males are better than females at dealing these challenges. In addition, there is a big difference between males and females' attitudes when it comes to dealing with conflicts; males seem more positive than

females in both settings. The data from this table indicates that the gender difference is mainly present in females' minds. Moreover, one of possible reasons of this kind of perception is the lack of self-confidence among females. Furthermore, counting for the connections between these sets of questions, the better their skills to deal with emotional problems and conflicts, the more positive feelings they have in group work.

4.2.2 Qualitative Data

Target Group in Study Setting

The target group investigation in the study setting was arranged for three presentation times, which were conducted through observation and questionnaires. The data of video recordings and photos were obtained to measure the relationships, positions, and performances of members in group work. The results are shown in Figure 7(1-3). The investigations in the target design agencies implemented by the interviews and their responses were recorded and transcribed.

Figure 7. *The positions of members in group work during the presentation process*

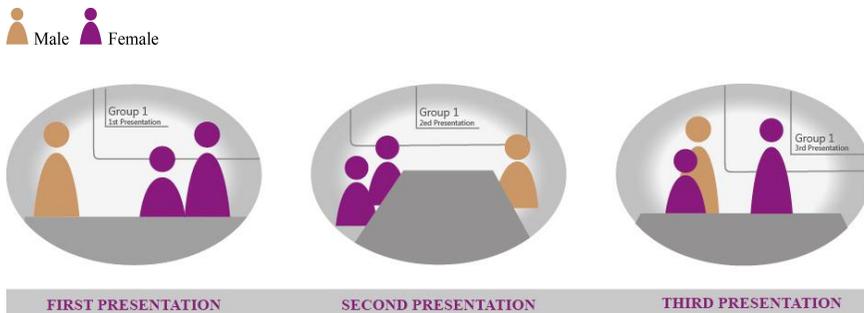


Figure 7-1: *Group 1*

Group 1 consisted of one Finnish male and two Italian females. In their first presentation, the two Italian females interpreted their ideas separately, while the Finnish male stood apart from them silently. In the second presentation, they separated their work equally. The Finnish male sat opposite to the females. One of the Italian females was talkative and arranged the work. At the final presentation, the talkative female presented their work; they were

closer than before and all enjoy in their excellent work. When their clients asked questions, the two females answered questions positively, and the male was always shy. In this group, they separated their work and the male shared his ideas with the two females. The talkative girl was the obvious leader and arranged their work actively; their nice schedule for their work resulted in excellent result.



Figure 7-2: Group 2

Group 2 included one Italian male, one Columbian male and one Italian female. During the three presentations, the Italian male helped the Columbian male to interpret their ideas; the group stayed together and worked together. When the clients asked questions, they gave positive responses. The Columbian male was talkative and acted as the presenter. They could cooperate with each other and worked in a positive atmosphere during the whole process, and got a very nice result for their project. It was obvious that they enjoyed the work and were proud of it.

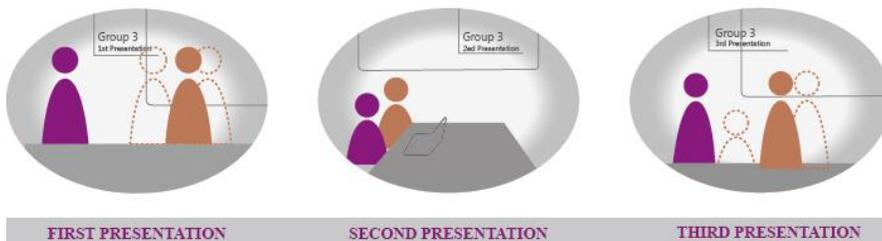


Figure 7-3: Group 3

Group 3 included one Finnish male, one Italian male, and one Bulgarian female. In the first presentation, this group did not work well together; the

two male students talked together without prior order, and the female stood far from them and was silent during the whole presentation. For the second time, the Italian boy was absent and the others gave one set of ideas; the female was still in silence during the whole meeting time, even when their clients asked questions. During the final presentation, the same situation appeared as the first time in which the two males exchanged their positions and presented without order. The Finnish male was talkative and answered the questions positively, and the Italian male supported him some time. Their work did not receive a high evaluation from their clients and, as stated above, this group did not work well together.

Interview of the Teachers

This interview stage was conducted with four teachers who arranged GD courses with group work at the University of Lapland; their responses were recorded and transcribed. Some relevant excerpts are listed below.

- General identification of group work: *different people with different ideas; brain storming.*
- The purpose of choosing the group work assignment in courses: *for students to practice their communication skills for future work.*
- What kind of skills students should learn from group work: *how to put the ideas in words; discuss with each other; responsibility; combine the members together.*
- How to get excellent results through group work: *free ideas; don't evaluate, just go through; talent; atmosphere; schedule; relationship.*
- Gender differences among members: *no differences; depends on personality; some differences; females question themselves; males keep their opinion and do not discuss much.*
- Elements that influence the member's satisfaction in group work: *workload; role; emotion.*
- Suggestion to female students: *don't be afraid of mistakes, learn by mistakes; do not only follow, open your brain, think more about your own ideas.*

Interview of the Leaders/Art Directors

The interview of the design agencies conducted with Seven-1 and Advertising Kioski in Rovaniemi consisted of three leader/art directors; their responses were recorded and transcribed. Some relevant excerpts are listed

below.

- General identification of group work: *group work is the basis for work; everyone is the necessary element in a group.*
- How to get excellent results through group work: *take into account the overall view; cooperate with each other; be a good leader; high talent.*
- Gender differences among members: *no differences; depends on personality.*
- Elements influence the member's satisfaction in group work: *evaluation; achievement; justice; role; honor.*
- Suggestion to female designers: *playing in your own nice work style with good schedule and consideration; think more about the whole group, overall view; don't be sensitive, just do.*

4.3 Discussion

The data indicated some linked factors between the study setting and the work setting. The measured links are identified as follows.

Interested in Group Work

According to the data, most of the GD students and designers prefer group work; the proportion of males who prefer group work is higher than females for both settings. In the students' questionnaires, which included the question of career plans in the last five years, a few female students claimed that they have no confidence in GD and want to try different work after graduation, and all of them prefer private work. So, the data indicates that it is possible that they may not choose GD work after graduation, which is the possible reason that the proportion in the work setting for interested in GD work is higher than study setting.

Gender Perception in Group work

The differences between gender roles in the study setting and work setting is almost the same; the gender differences do not always exist in males' minds, but do in females' minds, which affected their decisions and ambitions to make a better performance in work. Almost all the negative perceptions of gender differences were from females, especially those who lacked confidence in their own abilities, and without a clear profession or

career plan. Further evidence indicates that the reason is mainly due to a lack of confidence among female designers.

Leadership

Based on the ethnographic investigation, we can see clearly that male and female designers have the same ability to be a leader and arrange work well in different styles. In contrast, the perception of leadership is quite different between males and females based on a mass investigation by questionnaires. The proportion of male students who chose to act as a leader is much higher than that of female students, and for designers, the proportion is almost the same. The number of males who chose to act as a leader is 3 times higher than that of females. It shows that the ambition and expectation to be a leader among males is much higher than among females. In the work setting and career development, the perception of leadership is a critical factor that influences their position in the group.

Position in Group Work

As discussed above, the ambition and expectation of male students and designers are much higher than female students and designers. It is possible that this is the main relative factor for the differences in positions in group work. In addition, there are many other relevant factors related to the position choice in group work. The data of the target group during the group work shows that male students concentrate on work and like collaboration, while female leaders like arranging work in order and working separately. The way to deal with conflicts and the feelings in group work are the relevant factors influence their positions in group.

Obscure Problems among Female GD Students and Designers

The data from the interviews show that almost all the teachers and leaders signified that there was no big difference between male and female designers in talent, yet somehow, the difference exists among their work styles—males work more directly and females are more considerate with arranging work. The evidence from the target student group work shows that these two working styles all can get excellent results. In addition, the suggestions for female GD students and designers from teachers and leaders (e.g., don't be sensitive, concentrate on work, be bold, confident, committed, generous, think about the overall conditions, and improve

coordinating skills) indicate that female designers lack certain characteristics in group work. For the education purpose, female students should be more confident, not too sensitive about others' evaluation, and have a clear plan for their career. These two factors are the main factors that students should strengthen during the education period, which could provide better conditions and more skills in their future career development.

4.4 Conclusion

Based on the analysis of group work investigations, male and female GD students and designers have no big difference in professional talents, studying, and working. Regarding leadership, males and females work in different styles—males work more directly and females work with fine work arrangement—and both can achieve excellent results. However, the biggest differences that influence their perceptions of gender roles in group work and the ambitions to lead a group work depend on their self-confidence or their lack of self-confidence caused by uncertain profession plans. The research confirmed that having an explicit professional plan and confidence are the major contributors to career success and high social status' achievements. For the career purpose, group work is a significant project in pedagogy, and the perception and skills of group work are necessary for graphic designers to obtain a balanced chance in group work and their career. Results also suggest that female GD students and designers should not be sensitive about others' evaluation, but concentrate on work; be courageous, committed, and generous in group work, and take an overall view for the development of the whole group. Therefore, in order to increase female students' performance and competitiveness in career development, it is necessary and critical in pedagogy to provide methods to enhance students' confidence and group work skills; this would lead to providing an equal environment in career engagement for female graphic designers.

CHAPTER 5

Where is Women's Confidence? My Story....

In addition to the impact factors of stereotypes in a patriarchal society and the biological differences between male and female designers, another important factor that contributes to the low representation of women in the labor force is that women often easily lose their confidence in many areas, especially career advancement. This chapter focuses on self-confidence, which is an essential factor in female designers' academic and professional achievements. Based on interviews and investigations with higher education students (bachelor, master and doctor) and female and male professionals, this chapter attempts to determine the causes of women's lack of self-confidence and possible influencing factors and to propose suggestions for their future practice. The results offer implications for how professional educators and social workers can help women improve their self-confidence and acquire career skills.

5.1 Introduction

Women have surpassed men not only in high school graduation rates but also in university enrolment and degree completion (National Center for Educational Statistics NCES, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). According to the previous findings, the attitudes and motivations of boys indicate that, as a group, they do not seem to think that school is important in their lives as much as girls do (Clark et al., 2006). More than boys, girls find coursework to be meaningful and interesting and see the importance of their schoolwork for their futures (NCES, 2005). However, the superiority of females in academic environments is not reflected in working environments. Various factors contribute to this phenomenon: cultural contexts, established social conceptions, biological differences and self-confidence, which is more easily controlled and changed by one's own endeavours. As explored in Chapter 4 confidence is a significant factor in personal achievement and success, after only talent and opportunity, and women's inherent fear of success is an important psychological factor affecting women's achievement. These ideas have been completely discredited, but suspicion of women's ability to achieve still seems to linger in some quarters—not least among women themselves (Neal, 2008).

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the multiple processes in which females experience confidence establishment. Qualitative data were

collected and compared for subjects in Finland and China, and the records analysed for differences in innate characteristics/personality, experience, age, culture, career and gender perceptions. Accordingly, this chapter attempts to answer the following questions: (1) Why do many women lack of self-confidence? (2) What factors influence women's self-confidence establishment? (3) What are the different effects of internal and external behaviours on males and females? (4) What factors can be considered to help women build their self-confidence? The results will provide some implications for future research and professional practice.

5.2 Method

5.2.1 Participants

The participants in this study included two groups, one from Finland and one from China. Both groups included students and career women and men, who were categorised by their situation in society. In the Finnish group, there were 51 design students from the University of Lapland pursuing degrees in the Faculty of Art and Design and 9 designers and design educators working for design agencies and universities in Finland. Seventy-five per cent (N:38) of participants were female, and 25% (N:13) male; 6 career people were female, and 3 were male. In the Chinese group, there were 67 design students pursuing degrees at Shandong University of Art and Design and Shandong Women's University, 6 teachers from these two universities and 7 designers from design agencies in Shandong. Sixty-eight per cent (N: 46) of the students were female, and 32% (N:21) male; among the career women and men, 8 were female, and 5 were male. Data were collected from students through their stories and responses on an open-ended questionnaire, while the career women and men participated in the research through interviews. All the participants in both Finland and China were given similar questions on topics focused on self-confidence building in different cultures. The themes discussed included personal characteristics, experience, culture, gender stereotypes and social context, which are influential factors contributing to self-confidence establishment.

5.2.2 Data analysis

This chapter applied mainly qualitative methods to address the research questions concerning female's lack of self-confidence and to compare the influence of gender and different cultural backgrounds on the building of self-confidence through a variety of processes. The data collected from Finland and China were used to compare differences in performance due to culture and educational backgrounds and to identify the common and specific factors which affect women's self-confidence establishment. The students surveyed were questioned about the same topic but gave answers in different ways. There were three parts to the research: One, data were collected from the responses to the open-ended questionnaire in a rational way which focused on self-confidence establishment. Four elements were identified in the data: innate personalities, level of self-confidence, external influences and gender differences. Additionally, the data were classified on three levels of personal characteristics: optimistic, moderate and pessimistic. The different relevance of these four elements is shown in marked lines. Second, students were instructed to write about the topic in a sentimental way—the "My story" method, in which participants write a story about themselves, concentrating on the theme of personal characteristics and the influential factors in their realisation of gender development. In addition, students were asked to use 'he' or 'she' to write the story about themselves. The data were divided by nationality and gender. Third, data were collected from interviews with career women and men, including designers and design educators, who were divided by gender and age, and based on these four elements, different viewpoints on self-confidence and the most influential factors were exposed. These interviews explored in-depth participants' internal views of gender, confidence and factors and compared the conceptions of self-confidence establishment held by designers who have different professional scopes and are in different career phases.

5.3 Results

5.3.1 Gender stereotypes in multi-cultural backgrounds

The data come from the students' "My story" narratives and responses to open-ended questionnaires administered at the University of Lapland in Finland and Shandong University of Art and Design and Shandong Women's University in China, and the interviews with career persons in Finland and China.

Finnish participants

Sixty participants responded to the story-writing prompt; 44 were female, and 16 were male. According to the data from the "My story" narratives, there are different models for the acceptance of stereotypical conceptions of gender.

According to the data, half of the females have strong stereotypical conceptions of gender and received information from parents, teachers, media and other information channels. This information influenced them deeply, and they enjoy being a perfect lady, as the information tells them to be. It seems to be a standard of life which they prefer:

- *'She is really diligent and always does homework and [is] still in the university. ... She feels that she has to do as others [tell] her to do. She also likes to take care of others and contribute to their wellbeing...'*
- *'She has always been the good girl: not asking much, respecting people older than her and doing as she was told ... always did her homework, and never broke the rules...'*
- *'She takes as her life mission to become the stereotype of girly princess, and she has strict ideas of what a woman can do and what she can't. ... She is ridiculously conservative and has, for example, stated that women can't propose; women can't [make] the first move and can't work with machines ... and she doesn't even joke about this. She believes in this 100% ...'*

In addition, these respondents are afraid of being not seen as the 'fine lady':

- *'She is quite shy. [It's] especially hard [for her] to say an opinion or point of view if it's opposite to others' views. ...She is not used to joking or being "the funny person" in a group.'*

Eleven female respondents said that they began to accept stereotypical conceptions of gender as they grew up (even at the start the respondents did not agree with the gender stereotypes), but they do not want to be

different than others, so it seems best to join society. These respondents are concerned about others' opinions and evaluations:

- *'As a child, ... she didn't really like things [that] girls more often do. ... When she became a teenager, she wanted to be more like other girls because she didn't want to be different from others...'*
- *'Worry about what other people think about her She thinks that the factors which have influenced her most have come from outside of her family...'*

For these respondents, the gender rules seem to have limited their own characteristics and future lives:

- *'That role has limited/restrained her enormously during her life...'*

In comparison with other female respondents, a smaller number of 8 female respondents said they are not concerned about gender stereotypes. They have a stable conception of themselves, which is hard to change. Usually, these people have strong confidence and optimistic characteristics and do not care about what others think about them. They want to do whatever they want and try to be themselves, not others. They have moderate families which have not told them the standard rules for gender:

- *'She has never thought herself as a girl. ... She couldn't feel like belonging to the same "group" as other girls. ... She was a human, that's all ... '*
- *'She thinks the lines between boys and girls are getting blurred. ... She thinks anyone can do whatever they want and should be treated the same, no matter what they are.'*

Regarding the males' answers, most do not think they are stereotypical persons who do not mind gender conceptions for males and females. Some did not even like to talk about gender. Only 2 said that they had been influenced by traditional conceptions:

- *'After all he thinks that being boy or girl doesn't have to characterise or define the way of thinking. ... As a parent you don't need to control children to behave [with] girl or boy characteristics ...'*
- *'He thinks he's lucky to be able to do whatever thing he like without having to think if they're suitable for his sex. There are certainly some predetermined roles for boys and girls in Finland, but you don't have to fit into them if you have good self-esteem ...'*
- *'He doesn't really care how other people view him, but he tries to live in a way himself can respect.'*

The data presented suggest that females' gender perceptions mostly come from outside information, and they more easily accept it than males. The data also suggest that, relevant to why females more easily lose their confidence, information from outside is a main factor which influences their personal characteristics formation and limits their confidence establishment.

Chinese participants

There were 80 participants who responded to the open-ended questionnaire; 51 were female, and 29 were male. Compared with Finnish participants, the data showed similar results and similar points.

In the data on Chinese participants, 46% (N: 23) of females have strong stereotypical conceptions of gender. Most of their gender conceptions come from their families, and as children grow up, information also comes from schools, the media and the girls' peers. These respondents easily accept these gender conceptions from the beginning:

- *'Her parents educated her in a typical traditional way: Girls should be nice, silent, gentle, polite, take care of others...'*
- *'She never breaks the rule. She thinks the rules limited her characteristics but also thinks the rules made her nice. ... She wants to be the best one, and she tries her best to obtain the goal to be a "perfect lady" ...'*
- *'At certain level, she is more sensible. All kinds of social norms exist, information from social media, suggestions from surrounding people, cartoon figures from cartoons. ... almost every aspect of lives always remind her that she is a girl, and she needs to behave like one'.*

Of the female Chinese respondents, 28% (N: 14) began to accept gender stereotypes as they grew up and were influenced by external education. Sometimes, even if they do not agree with the stereotypes, they think that it is better to survive and obtain respect through such stereotypes which are widely spread and accepted in society:

- *'She wants to escape because the pressure on her that she should [be] married at her age in [the] traditional conception. ... She is shy talking about this before others. ... The pressure is becoming more serious as she is becoming older and older. She thinks she must find a husband before 30'.*
- *'When she was a little girl, she was a brave, just girl and ready to help other girls [escape] from the boys' naughty games. ... But once the teacher criticised her "brave activity" to punish a naughty boy severely,*

something was changed. ... [As] she grows up, she is always living in the mainstream culture, which is an easy and comfortable space for her.'

This kind of conception seems to have limited these respondents. They become shy, calmer and a little bit more pessimistic and control their passion and emotions:

- 'She's shy to face everyone. ... She has not enough confidence. She even has got a higher education and has a nice job in a good social position (most people think so), but she thinks she has nothing. ... She [is] eager to show her achievements to others [and] wants to get others' attention and respect'

Of the female respondents, 26% (N: 13) said that they are not concerned about the stereotypical conceptions of gender. No matter what they have experienced, they still make their own choices. To support such a performance, the data suggest that most of these respondents have optimistic personalities and were not influenced by their family, especially during their childhood:

- 'Her father always lets her do what she want. ... There's no information about gender choice. ... When she was 10 years old, her family had a big transition, and she had a bad experience in those 10 years, but she is still an optimistic and positive girl. ... She can do everything she wants to do ...'

- 'She doesn't think she is girly. ... Her parents haven't limited her actions that must be like a girl. "Just do want you want and what you can". ... She doesn't mind what others look at her like. "I am me, that's all".'

The data from the male Chinese respondents are similar to the data from male Finnish respondents. Eighty per cent (N: 23) of male Chinese respondents are not concerned with stereotypical conceptions of gender; they just want to be themselves:

- 'He thinks there's no influence from the external world on his gender perceptions. ... His choice is from his heart and his responsibility, not from others...'

- 'He tries his best to live his life better but nothing about gender'.

Only 20% (N: 6) think social conceptions of gender are normal and appropriate:

- 'He thinks that men feel more pressure than women because we live in this kind of culture that holds that men should contribute more and have more responsibility for family and society'.

Comparing the data from the male and female Chinese respondents, females are more easily influenced by external information, which contributes to their behaviour and personal characteristics formation. The data also suggest that external suggestion and information are significant factors in females' confidence establishment.

In summary, conceptions of gender come from external information sources, such as family, schools and the media. Females are more easily influenced by the stereotypical conceptions of gender in comparison to males who are not concerned about them much. Comparing Finnish respondents and Chinese respondents, there is not much difference between them. They are influenced by conceptions of gender to a similar extent.

5.3.2 Social influences

Psychological implications

Of respondents, 54% think that there are psychological implications from gender:

- *'I've got that feeling quite often ... that I should be more calm, not as loud and critical as I am ... '*
- *'From some elderly, I have heard indirectly the message, "You're a girl. You got to have your family, your kids, so you must know how to cook ... "'*
- *'I was socialised as a girl'.*

There were 31% who said they did not feel the pressure of gender norms:

- *'As a child I was occasionally told that I should 'be a nice girl' ... as I have a kind personality, nothing to do with gender'.*

Fifteen per cent think that people's perceptions of gender are not affected by social norms too much.

Psychological implications from family

Thirty-eight per cent of respondents think that there are psychological implications on gender from family. This information constantly influences respondents and affects them deeply, which is hard to change:

- *'It has been typical that girls do the household work and boys do [the] outdoor jobs ... '.*

- *'When I did something considered feminine, my parents said, "You are a fine girl"'.*
- *'Many times, I wanted to escape from the gender cage, but nothing has changed forever'.*

Fifty-four per cent think that there are no psychological implications from family:

- *'My family doesn't always ask my opinion, and there used to be certain tasks which were just for women but also tasks for men...'*

Eight per cent think that there is not so much influence: '

- *I know that, but I don't concern myself about that, just leave it there'.*

Psychological implications from education

Of the respondents, 38% think that there are psychological implications for gender from education. These deeply affected them throughout their education:

- *'In school, girls are supposed to behave like girls, behave well and control all impulses. ... I was supposed to be calm and nice. ... When a girl succeeded in school, the teachers and other kids thought that she is hard working. When a boy succeeded, everybody thought that he is talented...'*
- *'Teachers also expected that girls write more complicated things than boys. Therefore, it is also more difficult for girls if they have not achieved big success; however, for boys, that would not be a big issue'.*

As well, 62% think they did not feel the pressure of gender norms in education:

- *'I think the education had been quite equal to boys and girls, equality in the university...'*
- *'Good behaviour and kindness [were] expected from everybody, not just girls'.*

Psychological implications from the media

There were 62% of respondents who think that there are psychological implications on gender from the media. The respondents were deeply affected, especially the females, as they grew up:

- *'The role that [the] media sets for women has been quite narrowed. ... Still the traditional role of woman is promoted in [the] media: Women should be beautiful, take care of people, take care of [the] household, etc...'*

- *'There is [a] really strong message about the way you should be as a woman. ... Women have to be splendid and competitive when [they] compete with man.'*

There were 38% of respondents who thought that the media had no influence on them:

- *'[The] media is full of stereotypes of stupid females, sexist jokes and other false ideas ... nothing on my personality...'*
- *'I try to fight against these effects; I try to live my life in my own way, without stereotypes...'*
- *'I'm not been affected; that is because, since I was a child, I was aware of [how] society [is] trying to effect on me. Therefore, since I have always been conscious that, it helped me not to be affected.'*

Attitudes towards the psychological implications

Of the respondents, 15% prefer to have information on gender views and like to follow them and be the perfect model of what they believe they should be:

- *'I love them...'*
- *'I become sad because I can't be what media tells me to be...'*
- *'I have friends who have trouble because they think they aren't pretty enough'*

There were 77% of respondents who think the opposite and 8% who do not mind gender stereotypes and want to avoid them or confront them:

- *'Also, I become annoyed because I don't want to listen to the media ...'*
- *'We could think that this is real, which would destroy us...'*
- *'It is often with hierarchical order: Women are most of the time presented as less [good] than men. ... It's like discrimination'*
- *'As a feminist, I try to not be influenced by the propaganda from [the] public media; however, it is not easy to get away from them'*
- *'I try to create artwork that does not fit these stereotypes but challenges them'*

5.4 Discussion

Comparing innate characteristics and external influences, which is more important in forming personality? What factors influence self-confidence

establishment? Comparing female participants in Finland and China, what are their similarities, and what are their differences?

5.4.1 Personal characteristics establishment

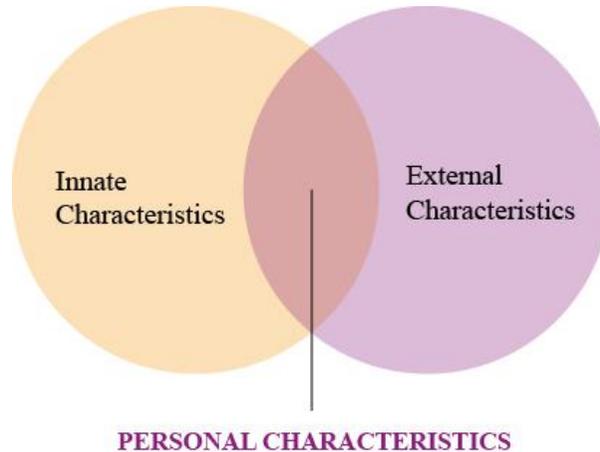


Figure 8. *Personal characteristics establishment framework*

According to this investigation, 54% of respondents think that their characteristics are mainly derived from inherited factors, while 31% see their characteristics as mainly affected by external influences (traditional conceptions, experience, family, education and the media). Of females, 54% think that their behaviour is in accordance only with their own wish to act as a human, not as a gender actor. However, some change their minds as they grow up and want to be normal girls who are not different than others, so they accept the recognised norms. Thirty-eight per cent of females have a strong feeling that they have been influenced by external influences, which have contributed to the establishment of their personal characteristics. In contrast to females, all the males think that their personal characteristics establishment has not been greatly influenced and that most of their characteristics they had from the beginning, inherited from their families. The data also suggest that females are more easily influenced by external information and more sensitive to the attitudes of the people around them. Their experience also is a main factor that influences their personal characteristics establishment. Additionally, unlike career women and men, students have few experiences of working in society, which makes it possible

for them to think that they have not been influenced by society deeply. In contrast, participants who have worked for several years feel that influence from society is an important factor in the formation of their personal characteristics, which to some extent contributes to their situation and position in society.

At this point, inherited innate and external influences appear to be two significant factors in personal characteristics establishment, but the degree of the effect of external influences depends on personal innate characteristics.

5.4.2 Self-confidence establishment

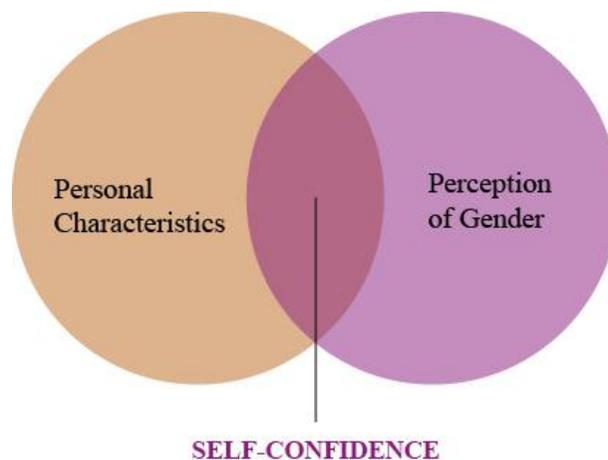


Figure 9. *Self-confidence establishing frame*

Regarding gender perceptions, the data suggest that 80% of females think that they are influenced by their family and educational backgrounds, and 62% think that they are influenced by the media. The data collected from respondents who said that they have been influenced by external factors show that 59% think that the gender guidance has had a negative influence on their self-confidence establishment, 27% a positive influence, and 12% no influence. Of all respondents, 85% think that their confidence or lack of confidence comes from their good and bad experiences. In addition, the data suggest that perceptions of gender influence personal self-confidence establishment. The discipline or standard gender model of a fine lady did not encourage self-confidence but, instead, limited it. The data indicate that

the discipline mostly acted as a negative factor in self-confidence establishment. Personal characteristics and perceptions of gender are the main factors contributing to self-confidence establishment, and the results depend on the balance of these two significant factors.

5.4.3 Self-confidence

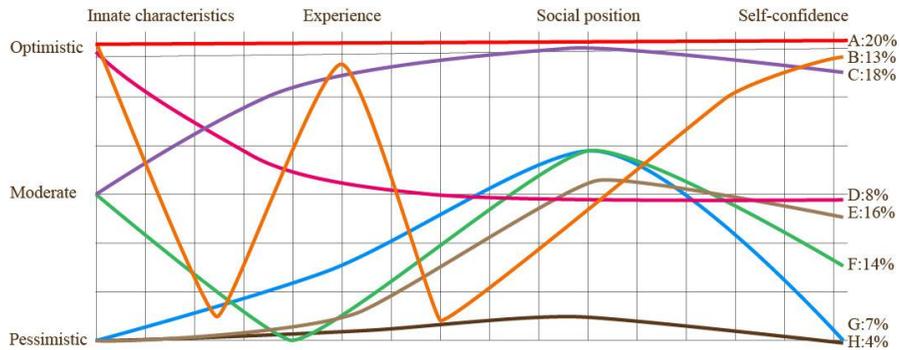


Figure 10. *Self-confidence establishment models*

According to the study, three relative factors—innate characteristics, experience (family, educational and childhood background, media influence and culture) and achieved social position—contribute to self-confidence establishment. These three factors have both positive and negative influences on self-confidence establishment. There are quite different tracks of self-confidence establishment based on different models. According to Figure 10, innate characteristics are the foundation of self-confidence establishment, and given different experiences and social positions, individuals will achieve different levels of self-confidence. As the figure suggests, people with an innate optimistic characteristic will achieve confidence along any track, but people with an innate pessimistic characteristic have difficulty obtaining confidence. Even when they have a good position in society and not so bad experiences, their inner world is hard to change. People with a moderate characteristic are influenced easily by their experiences and the social positions they have achieved. Good experiences help them to gain confidence, but bad experiences lead them to lose confidence. In addition, 38% of respondents said that their experiences in childhood were an important factor contributing to their self-confidence

establishment. Therefore, both innate characteristic and external influences are important for self-confidence establishment. Innate characteristics are fundamental conditions which are hard to change, but external experiences are a factor that can be changed in certain situations. This is the purpose of this study—identifying the possible factors that can be changed during higher education.

5.4.4 Gender differences

Female students liked to answer the questionnaires and write the story of their lives because it was a way of expressing their feelings and talking with themselves. They enjoyed the process of writing to show their own inner world and of discussing their feelings about the topics. However, males did not seem to like to talk about these topics, especially their inner world. Their answers were short and concise, with few details. The data from teachers suggest that female students always ask questions, even though they are skilled at studying. However, male students do not ask questions much and only do when they decide to. In addition, 81% of female respondents who lack self-confidence said that the main reason is their bad experiences when they were young, for example, pressure from parents, being educated in a wrong way, bad evaluations or low social position. However, males did not report these same problems.

5.4.5 Cultural differences

The factors which affected the self-confidence establishment of both Finnish and Chinese participants are similar on key points: innate characteristics, perceptions of gender and external influences from education, media and family. The only difference comes from their childhood experiences. The Finnish females' experiences are more complicated than those of Chinese females; however, Chinese females are more sensitive to others' evaluations than Finnish females. Therefore, culture, religion, area and language are not important factors in personal characteristic formation; instead, personal characteristics and international conceptions of gender are significant factors contributing to self-confidence establishment.

5.5 Conclusion

Personal characteristics are shaped by both innate characteristics and outside influences, but innate characteristics are the fundamental factor. Self-confidence is formed by personal characteristics, experiences and achieved social position. For the purposes of education, innate characteristics are the factor which is hard to change, but experience is the one that can be changed to some extent. Among those factors, what people experience in their childhood deeply influences their future characteristics, especially those people who have a pessimistic or moderate characteristic.

Culture, living area, national tradition and religion beliefs are other factors in females' self-confidence formation, but this study comparing Finland and China, a European and an Asian country, did not find many differences in females' confidence establishment. International perceptions of gender were a background for both.

Males and females concentrate on different parts of their lives. Males are more positive about doing, while females are more positive about thinking and more sensitive to the evaluation of others. This is also a significant factor in self-confidence formation and indicates why males are more positive and confident than females in many aspects.

It is clear that both internal and external factors greatly contribute to self-confidence establishment. For the purposes of improving the pedagogy process, it is suggested that, as the innate characteristics inherited from family are hard to change, the first vital step is to thoroughly explore individuals' external experiences and accordingly widen the conversation in education. Next, more effective methods for the education process should be developed to help female design students to improve their self-confidence and encourage them to pursue a better future.

CHAPTER 6

Gender Impact on Female Graphic Designers' Career Satisfaction

Based the findings of above studies, the purpose of this chapter is to figure out the possible reasons of women's lower representation in work force in their deep mind, and to explore the connection between the internal and external factors. A case study was conducted in two groups, one group is GD students from universities in Finland and China, another group is from workforce in both countries. This chapter concludes by describing female designers' gender conscious and subconscious, culture differences and career choices, ideal career life and real career life, aims to confirm the inner factors which contribute to female designers' lower situation.

6.1 Introduction

According to the previous studies, the results show that some phenomenon of gender imbalance have nothing to do with conscious behavior, but natural selection or unconscious decision-making by participants. Considering the low representation of women in the labor force and the "normal" way of doing things in social life, this choice will naturally affect women's unfair career process and treatment.

Graphic design has been depicted as unified thinking, using creativity involving various elements, and carrying out tool-mediated activities. Therefore, GD is concerned more about thinking and action, it is not like Industry Design which is related to more technical skills, and which more male designers hence chose as their career. Female and male GD designers' career decision-making processes are quite different, even if there's the same professional requirements for both and they have similar qualities in the GD field. Except for the influential factors listed above, are there some other potential factors that affect female GD designers' career decisions? And what kind of relationships exist between these influential factors? To this purpose, this study will confirm these questions in a case study between Finland and China in GD filed among female GD students and GD designers, analysis of the data from 202 women participants reveals a wide range of influences on women's career decision-making. Additionally, the results will yield a comparison from a global perspective which will take into account the influence of cultural background.

Concerned about the phenomenon and questions above, the situation of the low representation of women in GD market suggests research into female designers' career choice. Further, the globalization of the GD market

needs to consider these gender issues in a cross-cultural context. Hence, we decided to confirm the questions through a case study from two perspectives: the cultural contexts in which this issue is concerned; and the internal and external demands involved in this issue. Our motivations for studying this issue from these two perspectives are threefold: 1) to address cultural context from sociological perspective; 2) to address the gender conscious and subconscious influence from sociological perspective; and 3) to address gender and GD issues from psychological perspective.

6.2 Method

In order to address the questions of this subject, the cross-cultural datasets in two field studies of Finnish and Chinese GD students and GD designers were examined. One is quantitative data which was collected from Universities in both countries, 126 participants responded to questionnaires focused on GD students' willingness, feeling, planning for their professional studies and future career life. The other one is qualitative data collected by face-to-face, open-ended interviews with 76 female GD designers from both countries. The interview lasted between 60 and 120 minutes in length and investigated the participants' educational process, work experiences, results evaluation and career expectation regarding to gender and GD. The interviews explored the participants' backgrounds, personal characteristics and broader themes of gender and GD.

The data from both countries were used as a multicultural dataset for this paper. 43% of the respondents were from Finland, 57% of the respondents were from China. These women represent a wide range of demographic and personal characteristics. The range of age is from 22 to 60 years old. All of them have a GD educational background and degrees in Colleges and Universities. The women represent a diverse background of GD work experience including roles as designers, illustrators, art directors, creative directors, managers, freelancers, students and educators. As a result, based on their cultural background, these female designers were able to bring forward rich cross-cultural influences which are manifested in their professional lives.

Table8: GD students from Finnish and Chinese Universities

Total number: 126	China			Finland		
	57%			43%		
	Bachelor degree	Master degree	Doctor degree	Bachelor degree	Master degree	Doctor degree
	47%	47%	6%	56%	39%	6%

Table9: Interviewed graphic designers from Finland and China

Total number: 76	Finland					
	43%					
	GD designer	Art director	Creative director	GD freelancer	Entrepreneur	Other work related with GD
	30%	24%	10%	14%	12%	10%
	China					
	57%					
	GD designer	Art director	Creative director	GD freelancer	Entrepreneur	Other work related with GD
	35%	20%	8%	16%	12%	9%

To demonstrate how these influence factors are manifested in the career of female GD practitioners, we discuss four themes: culture influences and personal characteristics, ideal career life and real career life, conscious and subconscious, gender awareness and career choice. We explore these themes for several reasons. First, we build the prior theory of gender psychology theory by investigating the influence of gender conscious and subconscious contexts on women’s GD career choice. In doing so, we explore internal and external factors in both positive and negative sense. Second, the themes represent a range of diverse influences such as historical and cultural, economic and political, personal and domestic contexts. Finally, the themes demonstrate that it is important to consider psychological

perspectives in gender and GD research as it is the profound influencing factor in women's career choices in GD.

6.3 Results

As a manipulation check on career, gender and cultural background items, we used these items as the independent variable and used the respondents' degree levels of each option as the dependent variable. A significant effect on career choice was obtained on the equivalence relationship between culture, occupational nature and gender status quo. These comparisons confirmed the interaction between the items in the expected directions.

The results of the study are presented in the following two sections corresponding to the purposes of the investigation: (a) the exploration of correlates of cultural penetration and career aspiration and (b) the analysis of relationship between gender awareness and career choice.

6.3.1 Participants' backgrounds

Studying and work experiences

All the participants have a university background. About the participants from Finland, 22% of students have whole day work experiences, 29% of designers have worked in the same agency more than 5 years, 14% of designers are freelancers, 12% of designers are entrepreneurs. About the participants from China, 22% of designers have worked in the same agency more than 5 years, 16% of designers are freelancers, 12% of designers are entrepreneurs. Comparing these data from both countries, Chinese designers change their employer more frequently than Finnish designers, mostly the reason is that the Chinese design market is still in the development stage, so it still has some unstable factors, and designers change work places to find a more suitable path for their career. Furthermore, few Chinese students have whole-day work experiences, almost all of them are selected from high school, among the 82 Chinese design students, only 3 of them had work experience before they went to university. This is one reason for the higher turnover rate in China than in Finland. Additionally, a university certificate is one of the important factors to assess potential employees, so for this reason some of the students chose

to apply to study in university for future work, not their career. It's also a very important factor for career change after graduation, and this phenomenon has nothing to do with gender.

Choice of profession

On the point of participants' reason for their choice of profession, the data from both countries shows that the response given by almost all Finnish students was interest, there was only one student who was uncertain, and 92% of the students' responses related to considerations of future work fields. All the responses from Finnish GD designers were interest. Comparing this with the data from China, 85% of responses from Chinese students was interest, 92% of responses from Chinese GD designers was interest, and the secondary reason for choosing GD design was for a job. According to the data from both countries, in comparison, Chinese participants responses were more about job and income. Based on the data, it indicates that GD has no gender orientation in ability and provides good income in China, so there is a larger proportion of persons choosing GD for the purpose of work, additionally, it is also an economic factor in China that good income is the basis for good life and good future choice.

6.3.2 Female GD designers' ideal career life

Career plan

A considerable number (97%) of respondents have a career plan, only few of them haven't thought about their career or have no idea. At this point, 75% of them are willing to work in the GD field (among this cohort, 24% of them plan to run their own company, and others want to be an entrepreneur or still work as a graphic designer in a company or to be a freelancer), 16% of them want to be GD teachers, 5% of them want to be a professional artist in the future, and 4% of them will choose other fields which are not related to art. In summary, 21% of female designers wanted to change to fields like illustrator or artist or teacher, which they considered less competitive than to be a GD designer. Additionally, there are 15% of the participants who would like to be a freelancer because of *"the environment is more peaceful and more inspiring than work in an office"*, and included the reason that someone didn't like work with others. It should be indicated that a comparatively large

number of respondents keep their original career choice to develop in the GD field, and have a long-term expectation.

An obvious difference between Chinese and Finnish participants is that Chinese designers prefer to choose stable work such as to be a design teacher which has high social status, good salary and less risk than designers in general. Among the participants who want to be a GD teacher, 70% of them are from China, compared to 30% from Finland.

The person female GD designers want to be

Most of the answers are positive, for instance,

- *"I can be who I want to be",*
- *"I'm really the one I want to be".*

And among GD designers, about 30% of them think that they can be the one better than current shape,

- *"I need to be a person who works harder, and especially a more organized person. I need a better routine",*
- *"I'm pretty OK with myself although I could be more daring".*

Another difference between Chinese and Finnish participants is that more Chinese participants think that their situation would be better if there were less influences from family and society,

- *"if I'm a man, I'll be better than me",*
- *"If wife and husband have equal opportunity in family, I can be as well as my husband, or even better than him".*

Such a difference indicates that Chinese women meet more influences and are more eager to get rid of the inequities than Finnish women.

According to the data above, we can figure out that most of the designers can be the one they want to be and hope to be better than now, their good expectation always related with to be braver or gain more confidence.

Best choice and life-long career

Among these participants, on the point of whether GD is the best choice, 62% of GD designers said yes, 38% of GD designers were not sure about it, but they still thought it was interesting work. For GD students, 67% of female students said that to be a graphic designer was their best choice because it was part of their interests, their hobby and GD is the creative field they love. For the students, 26% of female students were not sure whether it is the best choice even if they do well and get good evaluation from their

clients, and 7% of the students said no. Comparing these two groups, the data reveals that the percentage of positive answers is similar, no designer said no, while some students said GD is definitely not their best choice. Comparing the data from both countries, the obvious differences are that the proportion of Chinese students' negative answer (10%) is much higher than the proportion of Finnish students (4%), and this negative answer is in the context of the purpose of their choice of study.

When the question was about taking GD as a life-long choice, 74% of designers said that GD is their life-long career,

- *"This is something I'm actually good at and I could imagine that I would still be drawing logo sketches and designing books when I'm like 70 years old"*.

More than half of the participants used the words "hope", "wish", and also showed their worries about their "life-long career", such as "...I'm afraid it won't be always up to me...", and she has plan B for her future, "Life-long but hard when you get older unless you are a star", and 30% of designers were not sure about their future, the reasons were mainly about market and age.

Comparing the data between China and Finland, the results are similar, the positive proportion of Chinese designers is a little bit lower than Finnish designers on the point of whether GD design is the best choice. This result also has the context of the above analysis about the purpose for profession choice.

6.3.3 Female GD designers' real career life

Current situation

Most of the interviewed designers were satisfied with their current situation which they rated as interesting and full of creativity. They used the words "Love", "great", "enjoy", "satisfied", "very happy", etc., to describe their attitude to their design situation. About 20% of them thought that it was full of competition and worried about money; the reason for this was a combination of the competitive GD market, age and policy.

On the point of the current GD Market, compared to students' view, designers are more satisfied with their situation than students. The reason mostly is that students haven't entered the design market or have less experiences in the market, they haven't gotten enough acknowledge in this

field and, haven't gained a steady level of confidence in their professional career. According to the data on this point, we can figure out that female GD students have less confidence in their profession and cannot predict their future career because of their less experience in the GD market. In addition, the answer also indicates that female students are not brave enough for their future. Additionally, from the suggestions for female GD students or designers we can also see phrases such as *"to be more confident"*, *"to be more brave"*, etc.,

Comparing the data between Finland and China, in China, females' salary is the same as males' salary, while the salary is not same between men and women in Finland for a certain degree. But for climbing to high position in China, it's really hard for a Chinese woman, because in Chinese stereotype conception, taking care of family is women's primary responsibility which is harder than Finnish women. So, in China, if women want to have as good a career as men, they should expend more energy than Chinese man.

Barriers

According to the data, most of the designers think that there's no barrier in their career,

- *"It's all self-driven"*.

For young designers who have worked for less than 3 years, their barriers mostly are work experiences, work skills and money to improve their work capability. In contrast, for aged designers the main barrier is age,

- *"Design is for young"*,

- *"I am starting to worry if my age is going to be an issue in the future, I hope not. I am ambitious about my work, ... but I don't have energy to do so"*.

These characteristics indicate that, on the point of barriers, the factors that impede female designers' career development affect not only women, but men also. So, there's no difference between men and woman on this point.

But, expect the barriers illustrated above, according to the data on gender equality, a far more widespread factor is gender inequality in the market; men are well paid, women occupy lower positions. The reason for that is on account that:

- *"In agencies, they like to employ more male designers"*.

- *"the title is same, but the salary is different for man and woman"*,

- *"it's for marketing"*.

From the analysis of these data, it reveals that the unequal treatment in the

market resulted in unequal environmental conditions around female GD designers, and, it caused a vicious cycle which led to some young designers subconsciously accepting this unfairness.

Comparing the data from both countries, Chinese female GD designers were more concerned about giving birth and family responsibilities resulting in important barriers for their career development.

- *“graphic design agencies like to employ male designers because they do not need to give birth and take care of babies as women”*,
- *“in Chinese family, wives always take care of children and parents much more than husbands”*.

Consequently, the influence of family factors in China is far greater than in Finland.

Chances in market

According to the data of the chances in the market for female GD designers there are other factors which influenced female designers' career development. For one thing, the treatment of female designers in the market is unfair, it's a normal phenomenon in the world which include GD field. Participants hope:

- *“the field of graphic design should give more recognition to female designers”*,

for instance, in this case, men are given higher title and better salary than women in the market, especially in Finland. For another, most of the advice given is regarding how to improve marketing skills, not to improve professional skills. They expressed that:

- *“not many female designers are good at marketing themselves”*,
- *“...women are more sensitive. We aren't as brave taking chances (as man), and our salary aren't as good as male designers because we don't ask [for] better salaries”*,
- *“Women should demand more and be less 'apologetic' for their work and existence”*.

Furthermore, they also think gender is not a direct influence factor on career,

- *“Gender does not make top design's quality better or worse, but might influence the way careers are formed. Men ask for more aspiration and in the long run it makes a big difference. Female designers might be less self-centered admiration seekers”*.

Last but not least, many suggestions given to female designers focused on

encouragement,

- *“Women should be more brave and self-confident, because we are just as good designers than men”,*
- *“Believe in your strength, aim high”*
- *“Don’t copy others, BE YOURSELF, because it’s your uniqueness that else”.*

Comparing the data from both countries, the key words like “brave”, “to be confident”, “market yourself”, “aim directly”, etc., even if they had different backgrounds of education, social environments and cultures, but what they required for a good career was quite similar. For the difference between the two countries, in China, women have similar salary and chances of promotion to men, but at the beginning of a designer’s career, men are always given priority even when they have just the same capability as women, especially for young people. And for aged Chinese female designers, family is their main burden. This comparison indicates that female designers in China have more chances in the market, but they should take more responsibilities than Finnish female designers.

This study indicates that professional skills or abilities are not the point female designers pay close attention to, the response reveals more about women’s expectation and courage in relation to their career and social acknowledgment of female GD designers.

Influences for personal decision

According to the data from Finland, half of them made decisions fully based on themselves,

- *“I make my decision based on what I feel and want, not my surroundings”.*

And half of them said that they made decisions by both,

- *“Both have an effect, mainly on my own decisions”,*
- *“I have taken advises from my parents, siblings or my boyfriend...”.*

According to the data from China, 70% of the participants said that their decisions combined the influences from both—surroundings and their own,

- *“Much more on the surroundings than on my own actions”,*

and 30% of the participants said that their decisions were dependent on themselves. According to this investigation, females are easily influenced by others who are close to them, their parents, boyfriend, and etc.; they are the persons they can trust. And sometimes, they need their encouragement,

support and advice.

Comparing the data from both countries, the influencing factors is quite similar, but the apparent difference is that Chinese female designers' decision are influenced more by their surroundings, mainly are from their parents, or their parents are involved in main comments, especially when they are young or at the beginning of their career.

6.4 Discussion

The results of this investigation indicate that exploration of career decision-making process, career evaluations and surrounding context, as well as applying the gender psychology theory, was productive in studying female GD designers' career choice, and help to analyze what they really want in GD field. The investigation of cultural background and social status, was also useful in explicating group differences. The comparison of gender cognition in the context of different culture, and the analysis of the differences between value evaluation and value expectation, are also useful in explicating the differences between gender conscious and gender subconscious, which affect female GD designers' career development extensively.

6.4.1 Gender conscious

According to the analysis above, female designers have strong gender awareness, even if they said that they don't care about stereotype gender conception, but from their behavior, such as career choice and family issues, shows that they care about gender much. Their gender consciousness is coming from their parents, society, circumstances, culture and etc., Comparing these two countries, the gender consciousness in Chinese female designers' mind is deeper than Finnish ones. This is mainly because China has a long gender history which contributes to deep gender consciousness, which penetrates deeply into their mind. Even after thousands of years, it still influences their gender conception. So Chinese female designers care much about gender education and gender equality, asking for more equal opportunity in workforce.

6.4.2 Gender subconscious

In psychology, the word subconscious is the part of consciousness that is not currently in focal awareness. Psychologist Pierre Janet (1859-1947) argued that underneath the layers of critical-thought functions of the conscious mind lay a powerful awareness that he called the subconscious mind (Henri F.1970). In this case, it should be gender subconscious comes from gender conscious. And Locke and Kristof write that there is a limit to what can be held in conscious focal awareness, so an alternative storehouse of one's knowledge and prior experience is needed, which they label the subconscious (Locke, Edwin A.; Kristof, Amy L. 1996). From the above analysis, we can see that female designers' gender conscious comes from reactions promoted by outside factors. However, their gender subconscious is an unconscious reaction that results from a long-term external effect, and it can become a reaction that is not affected by objective conditions. According to this study, in the great majority of female designers' minds, female designers have the same ability as male designers in the GD field, their unequal status is mostly due to the unfair treatment in market and social options. However, from their responses we can also see their gender subconscious, the questions related to what kind of barriers and what kind of factors influence their decisions, especially what they suggested to female designers, all the responses indicate that their gender subconscious is the majority factor that influenced their behavior in the GD market. This kind of factors usually dragged their feet in the critical moment. They are not brave enough, do not aim high enough and are less self-confident; this does not come from their gender conscious, this is from their subconscious, so gender conscious is their appearance, gender subconscious is their inner cause.

6.4.3 Career ideal life and real life

The analysis of career plans indicates that female GD students' career plans related less with gender influences, it's mainly human project. For aged designers, their career plans have more gender consideration, and the evaluation of their current situation also confirms this option that the results were concerned with gender issues to a certain extent. The special pattern of the results suggests that the differences between career plan and career

status were in the context of gender, which means that the difference between ideal career life and real career life is related to gender issues. The influencing factors were confirmed in two parts, one is from external factors, such as culture, social, market, etc., another one is from internal factors, such as gender conscious and subconscious, value expectation and evaluation, etc.; the two parts are always in mixed effect and mutual transformation which influences female GD designers' career development.

6.4.4 Value expectations and value evaluation

In this study, value expectation means that what kind of person female GD designers want to be and what they plan to do. Value evaluation means to what society values female GD designers or to what extent female GD designers value themselves. The differences between value expectations and value evaluation may be key correlates of female designers' real wants, and the differences showing the impact of gender awareness on their value conception and value realization. So, this could have important counseling implications. For example, the suggestion for female designers could be useful in improving their competitiveness in the career process, the analysis of barriers could be useful for female designers to arrange a more suitable career path. Specifically, this study indicates the role of gender awareness in subconsciousness. This approach could also be helpful in identifying which influential factor is the major one in female GD designers' career choice and career development.

6.5 Conclusion

The results presented in this paper contribute to GD research that is focused on gender and GD as a career. It responds to the call for addressing issues from a broader perspective by examining internal and external influences on gender and GD issues. The analysis of four themes reveals a wide range of influences on a female's GD career choice that is based upon culture and psychology. These results reinforce the need to consider the interaction effect of internal factors and external factors on female GD designer's career development. Moreover, these results lend further support to the concept that cultural differences contribute to different designers' careers, and the

aforementioned findings both corroborate and extend the view that the inequality experienced by female designers is based on the dual effects of internal and external factors. Collectively, the particular findings from different groups in this investigation are congruent with the distinguishing characteristics of this group reported by others.

CHAPTER 7

Family Impacts on the Career Development of Female Graphic Designer

This chapter aims to gain a better understanding of family impacts on the career development of female graphic designers with regard to different culture backgrounds, and tries to explain the phenomenon that the career experiences of female graphic designers are different from those of males. In this chapter, we focus on studying the Family-Career Relationship to explore family impact factors and results on different career stages of female designers. 42 female graphic designers across Finland and China were interviewed, comparing their career experiences and the family member impacts (FMI) in gender and culture view. Simultaneously, the study also looked at family culture differences which contribute to career development on positive and negative dimension in a dynamic background. Further to explain the phenomenon of female graphic designer's lower status in workforce in the family culture context.

7.1. Introduction

Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystem theory points out that environment factors, such as family, school etc. are affecting the development of humankind. Family as the microscopic environment and the primary growth environment which has direct impact on the growth of human beings. "Environment" includes not only the microscopic environment around people, but also includes social and cultural environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986, 1998). As a person of social significance, people's social life and family life interact and constitute the human life. Career is one part of human social life, while family as another part of human life is an important influence factor and growth environment for a personal career. Work interferes with family life and vice versa (Aldous 1969; Piotrkowski 1979; Staines 1980; Crouter 1984). Work-life conflicts (WLC) and work-life balance (WLB) are the two states which directly relate to people's career development. As a part of human life and the background of personal career development, family contributes to moral education, personal values, culture tendency, and life concept that affect the development of individual careers in long term.

WLC and WLB are important factors in personal career development, especially for female employees. Whether in Eastern and Western countries, women bare the heavy burden of housework in family life. In China, despite the fact that the one-child policy has led to the reduction in childcare for married couples, childcare and elderly care responsibilities continue to fall

upon women disproportionately, in spite of the fact that most of them work full time. As a comparison, Finnish people have equal participation in the workplace, and the situation of women is similar as Chinese women who bear primary responsibility for childcare and housework (Rantalaaho et al., 1997; Osterberg & Hedman, 1988). Therefore, women are more likely to feel the pressure of WLC than men (V. Chandra*, 2012). In Hassan's study, the importance of family in an individual's life in Eastern cultures is different from the importance the family has in Western cultures. And Hassan also confirms that the different view on work and family due to differences in cultural traditions, family structures and societal institutions (Hassan, 2010). Rajadhyaksha and Bhatnagar explain how gender-based socialization influences men to take 'work roles' and women towards nurturing roles (Rajadhyaksha and Bhatnagar, 2000). Different emphasis on family and different view on work-family life are the influential factors on career development.

According to the above description, female graphic designers in Finland and China both have diversified market structure, the career styles of female graphic designers includes designer, freelancer and entrepreneur, and their lower social status are similar in both countries. Under these circumstances, family as the background of female graphic designers' career life is also one of the important influential factors for their career development. Therefore, in this subject, the purpose is to figure out what kind of influences come from family? What is the difference in family impacts under different culture backgrounds? And what kind of relationship exists between family and career? For these questions, this chapter adopted the quantitative investigation in Finland and China, the interviewees chose 42 female graphic designers in accordance with a certain condition from both countries, and the results provided a particular and comparative results for the topic on a global perspective in culture context.

Concerned about the phenomenon and questions above, the major interest of this subject is to explore the family influences on the career development of female graphic designers under different culture backgrounds. The contents are three-fold: (1) it aims to describe typical female graphic designer's family-career life in Finland and China which represents a Western country and an Eastern country; (2) it aims to study the relationship between career value and family value on female graphic designer's view in different cultural contexts; (3) it illustrates some of the

connectivity raised in the career decision-making process when the gender-culture and family-career are concerned.

7.2. Method

On this topic, it requires a wide dimension and dynamic data to understand the family impacts on the career development of female graphic designers. As Soderberg (2003) stated that narrative approach obtained chronology data has accounts of events occurring over time. The adopted approach provides a fertile alternative as a form of data, narrative data is defined as being relatively sensitive to language use in context but aims to find broader patterns beside the textual details. Generation to similar local contexts is possible, as is a connection to more general patterns (Liisa Ma"kela, 2008). The connection between common content provides a macro level of perspective, and the comparison between individual details provides a micro level of differentiation.

From these data, we can get rich materials and details from designers when they express their process and attitude to family members understandable, we can get the materials from every side of their family members at every stage related to their career. The investigation concentrates on how female graphic designers make meaning of their family-career experiences and the qualitative data allows for a rich understanding of the theme.

To attain a comprehensive and rich perspective on the topic we sought to obtain a focused group of female graphic designers for the study. The focus group was selected from persons with a high professional and educational background and have more than 5 years work experience. In order to achieve comparable composition, the conducted interviews from both countries have similar proportion in work situation and age proportion. Because we could not be aware of the interviewees' family condition, so the interview did not take the family situation into account before the interview.

The object of this study is to compare Western and Eastern female graphic designers' career experiences, and the differences of their perspective on family impacts on career in the context of gender and culture. The interview focused on four main aspects: (1) How about the female graphic designers' professional process from studying period till currently, (2) How about the influences from family members on female graphic designers' professional

process, (3) How do female graphic designers evaluate the impacts from their family members? (4) What kind of family impacts related to culture background?

Data analysis

Interviewees' characteristics

On this subject, we selected 42 interviewees which included 23 Chinese female graphic designers and 19 Finnish female graphic designers between the ages of 27-53, all of them having a high professional background in education and their work experiences were between 5-30 years. For their current situation, 45% (58% C, 42% F) were designers working in design agencies, 14% (50% C, 50% F) were art directors, 5% (50% C, 50% F) were creative directors, 17% (57% C, 43% F) were freelancers, 12% (60% C, 40% F) were design teachers and 7% (33% C, 67% F) were entrepreneurs (Table 1). Among them, 88% have children, 12% were single. The interview was mostly anonymous, because there were many issues involving personal privacy, only 5 interviewees gave permission to use their name, so in this paper, all the data were anonymous, we used interviewees' numbers to distinguish the data.

Table9: The current situation of the interviewees

Total number: 42

	Designer	Art director	Creative director	Freelancer	Entrepreneur	Design teacher
Total	45%	14%	5%	17%	7%	12%
Finland	42%	16%	5%	16%	11%	10%
China	48%	13%	4%	18%	4%	13%

Family member impacts types

For the data analysis, there were two aspects that needed analysis, the impact family members and impact factors. For the analysis of impact family members, based on the narratives, four groups were determined: parents, husband/boyfriend, children, relatives (grandparents, parents-in-law, uncle, aunt, sister, brother). For the impact factors analysis, first, we familiarized ourselves with the data and listed the relative factors which influence

designers' career development in different ways and from different family members. Secondly, the data was classified into three categories: positive, negative and others. Thirdly, based on the second classification, the content of the narrative meanings was refined, and scrutinized for differences and similarities within them. The five categories found were: supporting, determining, guiding, flexible and negative family members. Finally, we compared the family members' impacts between two countries based on different culture backgrounds.

Table11: The family influences on female graphic designers' career development in China and Finland

	Supporting	Determining	Guiding	Flexible	Negative
Parents	74%	10%	26%	86%	5%
Husband/ boyfriend	36%	2%	12%	93%	5%
Children	21%	12%	14%	67%	33%
Relatives	24%	5%	17%	83%	12%

Table 12: The characteristics of every type of Chinese FMI

Family member	Categories	Per %	Narratives
Parents	Supporting	91%	>My father told me very seriously: "We respect your choice, as long as you think it is right, we will support you." >My parents support me in my studying and working, not only support in spirit, but also in activity.
	Determining	17%	>I want to be a dancer when I am young, but my father said "Dancing is a profession that make living depends on youth", so father decided to teach me painting, "Painting can support your life".
	Guiding	22%	>In my professional life, my father is the educator and guider for my career process. My father is an artist, so I was influenced by art from the early age. And my father wants me to learn art and could be a fine artist in the future with well education, it's why I still try to apply higher education opportunity even I'm a little bit old, I hope to realize father's wishes.

	Flexible	78 %	>My parents let me do what I want to do, as long as it is a good choice, they will not interfere.
	Negative	9%	>My parents don't agree with my choice of art as my future career, they think it's no use for my life and living. I know it's their prejudice.
Husband/ Boyfriend	Supporting	35%	>My husband is my boss, he encouraged me to be a designer, he gave me confidence to take risk in my career process, and always give me some advice that lets me to be better and better.
	Determining	4%	>My husband didn't allow me continue to be a designer after we have baby, and now I'm a design teacher in an Art and Design school.
	Guiding	13%	>After graduation from university, I didn't choose to be a designer, but my husband think I should back to my profession, so do I.
	Flexible	87%	>I can do what I want to do, my husband gives me very flexible circumstances, he agreed with my decisions, and sometimes gives me some advice.
	Negative	9%	>He didn't want me to be a designer, because the work is hard, and the job is unstable, and it's not a respected work at that time in China.
Children	Supporting	13%	>My son was interested in what I designed, his praise encouraged me to do better. >My children like my illustration, they imitate me in their own way, I'm so happy to see that my children do well on it.
	Determining	22%	>Yes, I am determined by my children to in a certain extent, having children let me think about other choice of my career. I have to take responsibility for my child, I should have enough time to take care of him and educate him. >I should take care of my children when they are very young, and before they go to university, I should concentrate on children's education. This is a matter for parents, especially for mothers, so I changed to be a design teacher that I can have more regular work ours.
	Guiding	9%	>Children cannot guide my career, but they are the motivation for me to do better, that I want to be their hero and provide their better condition for the life and education.

	Flexible	57%	>I have one child, my parents-in-law took care of him till he went to primary school, he's healthy and smart, I'm pride of his grade. I work as a designer for 25 years, I just do what I want to do, child for me means flexible.
	Negative	43%	>No negative influence from children directly, but when my children are very young, the burden of taking care of them needs time and money. In China, nowadays, children's education not only depends on school, but also depends on parents, we should pay more attention to children's education in order to let them have a good future. This situation has a big impact on my work. >In order to take care of my children, I just keep my work in an ordinary state, the work can't be very busy, I have no energy to do more.
Relatives	Supporting	35%	>I'm growing in a single-parent family, when I'm learning art and studied in university, my grandparents supported me a lot, I'm very appreciative for their help. They give me the chance to learn my interested profession and encouraged me to work hard that responsible for me and my mother.
	Determining	9%	>My sister is a designer, when I was in high school, she taught me design knowledge and told me which profession is suit for me. Actually, my sister helped me to determine my profession, because I don't like design at the beginning, but now, design is fine, and it will be my life long career.
	Guiding	17%	>My grandpa is an artist, and my aunt is a design teacher, in my career life, they gave me much valuable advice, my achievements have directly relationship with them.
	Flexible	70%	>I haven't received any influence from my relatives, they just know I'm busy and I have a good salary, don't care others.
	Negative	22%	>My parents-in-law don't like my work, it's very hard and always work overtime, I have not enough time to take care of family, It makes them nervous.

Table 13: The characteristics of every type of the Finnish FMI

Family member	Categories	Per%	Narratives
Parents	Supporting	100%	<p>>My parents are supportive and always interested in what I do...My parents would like to financially support me, but they don't have much money. They have helped me with some big purchases, like when my computer broke a year ago. It is also good to know that if my company goes bankrupt or something else terrible happens I will always have support from my parents and will not end up homeless or anything.</p> <p>>My parents have supported my art and design career well.</p> <p>>They've been very supportive what comes to studying and working.</p>
	Determining	0%	No performance.
	Guiding	32%	<p>>My mother has always taken me in art galleries and cultural places, which has gained my interest in cultural and visual artifacts.</p> <p>>My parents have built my interest towards design and culture. My dad has also shown me what is to have an attitude and courage to be an entrepreneur.</p> <p>>They (Father, mother, grandfather)'ve both shown me that you need to be diligent yet humble and work hard to afford the life style you want.</p> <p>>My parents wanted us to educate ourselves and were very strict about school and tests.</p>
	Flexible	95%	>I am really happy that I have had a freedom to choose my own path, because I know, that this kind of a career concerns many people.
	Negative	5%	>I think they would have wanted their children to choose a career that is stable and secure financially.
Husband/ Boyfriend	Supporting	37%	<p>>My husband is supportive.</p> <p>>My boyfriend supports me with little daily successes.</p>
	Determining	0%	No performance.
	Guiding	11%	>Encouragement, also because my husband works as researcher, I perhaps got enthusiastic to read and study more, towards doctoral degree.
	Flexible	100%	>I love all the freedom and the fact that I can

			decide my vacations and how to do my job.
	Negative	0%	No performance.
Children	Supporting	32%	>Children are beginning to understand it and they seem happy and proud. >Now biggest influence for my career are maybe my children when they realize what I do and how much I can influence other with my work.
	Determining	0%	No performance.
	Guiding	21%	>I did experience burn-out when children were small and I tried to work as a freelancer. That teaches me a lot about self-care and timing and values.
	Flexible	78%	>Children are indeed influenced my job somehow, but I still can running on my path.
	Negative	21%	>When children were small, the challenge was to find time for studying.
Relatives	Supporting	11%	>My sister has supported me a lot. She has mainly supported me to find my own artistic touch by encouraging me to take more risks and underlining the importance of good education.
	Determining	0%	No performance
	Guiding	16%	>My aunt and uncle have shown me, that with visual mind one can also do a career and business.
	Flexible	100%	No one mentioned their relatives' interference in their career decisions.
	Negative	0%	No performance.

In these tables, five types of FMI are categorized. The data indicated that the impacts from family members are not only in one type but intersected and multiple. Among the interviewees, 98% of designers' career development were influenced by family members to a certain degree, 2% were not affected by any family members, 86% of designers were flexible, and their career development depended entirely on their own judgment and willingness, even if their family members gave them some advice they always insisted on following their own judgment and wishes. Eighty-eight per cent of them were positively affected by family members, support and guidance, 40% suffered negative influence directly and indirectly from family members and 14% were dictated to by family members. Among the impacts, the impact from children was proactive, and the influence on mother

designers was straightforward.

7.3. Results

The results of this study are presented in the following two sections corresponding to the purposes of the investigation: (1) the exploration of correlates of family influence factors and the degree of the influences and (2) the analysis of relationship between family influences and culture backgrounds.

Parents impacts

Data from these two countries suggested that, the five types of parents impacts on female designers expressed in the following patterns: (1) Eighty-eight per cent of designers' parents were supportive of designers' study and career development, (2) 10% of designers were dictated to by parents about what kind of occupation they should choose and that this mainly occurs during the study period, (3) 26% of parents were guiding, and the guidance was not only in regard to profession choice, but more importantly it inspired designers to be aware of design and be interested in GD, (4) 86% were flexible, which means parents did not interfere with designers' career choice, designers could run their career decision making process in their own way, (5) 2% of parents were negative, this proportion was from the interviewees who are designers. While there were some hidden phenomena outside the survey target, according to designers' narratives, they mentioned that some persons who wanted to learn GD but finally did not; they expressed that the negative influence came from parents, that the persons were not allowed to learn design. The negation stems from their parents' own perception of GD. This kind of phenomenon occurs more commonly in China than that in Finland.

Comparing the data from both countries, the support from parents on designers' study and career development are very close, all the supportive parents from both countries gave as much spirit and financial support as they could, especially in the study and early career period. Furthermore, some of the parents expressed their wishes to support designers whenever they need it. Chinese parents are more determining than Finnish parents,

17% of Chinese designers were dictated to by parents especially when they were students or in their early career. Finnish parents were more supportive and guiding than Chinese parents. This is due to different culture backgrounds, Finnish people are more independent, while Chinese family culture is more patriarchal. So, on career issues, parents manifested different impacts on designers; Finnish parents pay more attention to supporting and guiding and Chinese parents pay more attention to supporting and determining. We extracted the negative meaning of parents' determination from interviewee's narratives, and it results in the negative impacts from Chinese parents are greater than from Finnish parents.

Husband/boyfriend impacts

Among the interviewees, there were 29 married designers, 8 designers have a boyfriend, 5 designers were single. On this topic, the 5 types of impacts from husband/boyfriend described as following: (1) There were 33% of husband/boyfriend were supportive, they gave designers spirit and financial supporting, (2) 2% were determining, in this case study, the determining mode was expressed in two ways, one was positive and the other was negative. Positive determining is defined as encouragement to choose design as a profession; negative is disallowing the choice of design as a profession, (3) 12% were guiding, this kind of influence was always expressed vividly and effectively and penetrated into one's personal life, (4) 93% were flexible, the free atmosphere let designers develop their career in their own way, (5) 5% were negative, they didn't like the idea of work as a designer, especially for female designers, the reasons mainly were that design work is hard and unstable, and irregular working hours prevent designers from taking care of their families, this phenomenon occurs more commonly in China.

Children impacts

Children's impacts categories included the same five types, supporting, determining, guiding, flexible and negative, but it is different from other influences; most of them are passive, not active. Children's impacts are unconscious, but their existence and growth are influencing parents' life and

career, especially for mother designers. Based on these results and this opinion, children's impacts were characterized as follows: (1) 21% of children were supporting, children are interested in the mothers' work, proud and imitative of their actions, they are incentives to encourage mothers to do well and to be better, (2) 12% of children impacts were determining, that taking care of children put a heavy burden on mothers, so (3) it's also expressed 33% negative influence on mothers' career, and this kind of impacts resulting in mothers' career choices (4) which expressed 14% guiding impacts on mothers' career development simultaneously.

Comparing the data from China and Finland, Chinese mother designers were more influenced by children than Finnish mother designers. In Chinese maternity leave policy, puerpera have 6-months-leave to take care of their baby. Of the interviewees, 86% of Chinese mother designers take care of children with the help of their parents or parents-in-law before children go to kindergarten or later. In Finland, maternity leave begins about ten months before the expected delivery date. Collective labor agreements may include agreements on salary payment during maternity leave (Frilander and Taskinen, 1999; Tyoministerio, 2006a, b). Comparing the different maternity leave policies in the two countries, Chinese mother designers suffered a heavier burden than Finnish mother designers. Therefore, Chinese mother designers bore more negative influences from children than Finnish mother designers. However, the positive influence from children is direct and far-reaching, it encouraged mother designers to do better.

Relatives' impacts

Relatives' impacts include the influence from grandparents, parents-in-law, aunt, uncle, sister and brother. Among the data, 38% of impacts came from relatives among the two countries, the five types of relatives' impacts expressed as: (1) Twenty-four per cent of relatives' impacts were supporting, which included spirit and financial support, (2) 5% were determining, this was always from elders, (3) 17% were guiding, this was from different aspects and different people, (4) 12% were negative, the data shows that this only occurred in Chinese families. Among the 5 negative impacts cases, 1 was from parents, 3 were from parents-in-law and 1 was from grandparents, they didn't approve of work as a designer, this is because of the hard work involved and unstable income resulting in less time to look after their family.

The reason for this phenomenon is mainly because of the patriarchal family culture and the understanding of graphic designer work.

Comparing the data from both countries, relatives' impacts in China was more extensive than in Finland, this is because of the different family culture; a Chinese family includes 3-4 generations who usually live together or have frequent communication, and China has a long patriarchal history, daughters-in-law should respect the will of parents-in-law after they join in their husband's family. While Finnish people have a relatively independent living space. Thus, the career development of Finnish female designers is relatively less affected by the surrounding peoples.

In summary, FMI on female graphic designers' career development was multifaceted and multi-layered. Analysis shows the positive and negative implications of the five types of impacts as: Supporting and guiding contributed to female designers spiritual and financial support and guidance, resulting in positive influences on female designers' career development. Determining impacts are mostly positive factors for female graphic designers who were doing well in GD, while they are negative for people who missed out on or give up a GD career due to family members' determination of their career choice. The flexible impacts have no influence on female designers, but it allowed designers to move freely in their own way, therefore, this is positive too in a certain sense. In this case, the negative impact is 10% of the impacts, mainly from children and family care, and China's negative impacts are more serious than Finland's. Overall, the FMI on the career development of female graphic designers is overlapping and equivocal, the impacts of family members have greater and deeper influence on Chinese female designers than that on Finnish female designers.

7.4. Discussion

As a multiple check on family members which includes parents, husband/boyfriend, children and relatives, we used these items as the variable and used the impacts as the dependent variable. A multiple effect on female graphic designers' career development was obtained on the mutual relationship among family culture, gender culture and government policy. Through these comparisons, the FMI and hidden problems of the influence on female graphic designers' career development are more clearly defined.

7.4.1 The correlates of FMI and the degree of the influence

Multilayered FMI

From the above analysis of the data, FMI was categorized into five types: supporting, determining, guiding, flexible and negative. In this case, all the interviewees expressed that family members have influence on their career development, most of them were influenced by 2 or 3 types of FMIs differently, and more than half of them were influenced by more than 3 types of FMIs, which means the FMI on female graphic designers' career is multilayered. Therefore, this indicated that female graphic designers' career development is affected by family members to a certain extent, and sometimes positive and negative impacts existed simultaneously.

Long-term family influence on female GD designers' career development

In this case, 90% of positive FMI occurred during the professional studying period and early career period. The positive influences can provide female designers with interest-inspired, professional guidance, spiritual encouragement, financial support and rewards. The negative influences, which were mainly maternity leave, child care and the opposition to design work, were lesser than positive ones, which are mainly short-term relative to the entire career. However, the negative impacts expressed were more serious in China because care for family is a long-term burden for women, which influences career choices and leads to leaving the design field.

7.4.2 The relationship between family impacts and culture backgrounds

The range of family impacts correlated with national gender culture

In general, the influence from family members were mainly positively. Comparing the influences between the two countries, Finnish female designers were positively influenced more than Chinese designers, and Chinese female designers were negatively influenced more than Finnish designers. As the data suggested, Finnish family members are more independent, Finnish people respect individual wishes, and then people have more freedom to decide their own affairs. The proportion of positive

impacts (supporting and guiding) on Finnish female designers were about 20% higher than the impacts on Chinese designers. However, China has a long history of patriarchy, Chinese family members have a closer relationship than that in Finland. Parents always provide a lot of guidance and advice for their children's study and work, and many opinions were decisive. The positive impacts on Chinese female designers were about 85%. The deterministic ratio was 30%, and it cannot be directly defined as positive or negative influences, depending on the designer's satisfaction with the results, half of them were good. Therefore, the positive impact on Chinese designers was totally 80%, similar with the situation in Finland. The negative impacts in China were about 50% and in Finland were 21%. As discussed before, the negative impacts from Chinese family members depend on Chinese family culture, gender culture, maternity policy and market acknowledgement, which is embodied in traditional Chinese concepts, the concept of a modern Chinese family and educational concepts. Cultural differences were the main reason for the differences in family influences between the two countries. And it is worth noting that, the influence on female graphic designers was mainly from peripheral cognition and self-awareness.

The relationship between family influence and family gender culture

Based on data analysis, the positive influence contributed to the career development of female graphic designers in both countries. Whether spiritual or financial support both positively promoted the career development, and no participants mentioned that supporting had gender differences. While for the negative influence, there are obvious differences between the two countries. In China, the negative influence is mostly from family care. With the increasingly fierce competition among Chinese talents, children's education has received more and more attention. Mothers always spend a lot of energy on caring for children and arranging educational programs. This is why in the interviews, more than half of the Chinese interviewees showed that taking care of children was a major negative impact on their career development. This phenomenon is mainly due to Chinese family gender culture, caring for the family and children is the mother's duty. Even in modern society, men and women have equal status in law, but in fact, traditional gender culture still has long-term impact on modern Chinese gender view. The negative influence also happens in

Finland, but as a European country, and as a feminist nation, mother and father have relatively balanced responsibilities and obligations. That is the reason why Chinese mother designers received more negative influences from family than Finnish mother designers received.

7.4.3 Career choice in Policy context

Maternity leave is an inevitable experience that mother designers experienced. Maternity leave policy, as a background condition, is also an important impact factor on female graphic designers' career development. Maternity leave in Finnish law, which has reduced the burden on Finnish mother designers to raise children, is four months longer than that in China. This is also the reason why Chinese mother designers feel more pressure on child care issues.

7.5 Conclusion

From the results of multidimensional analysis, it confirms two things: (1) Family members are important external impact factors for female graphic designer individuals, and the influences are multi-layered and multi-faceted; (2) Family impacts have a close relationship with gender and culture, especially in China with its long history of patriarchy, and where the influences related to gender culture and family culture are more serious. The study also helps to recognize that avoiding negative effects is one of the ways to change female graphic designers' condition. It requires the efforts of national government and related organizations to create an environment that is more suitable for the development of female graphic designers. It also raises further questions: how do designers perceive external influences? how to deal with the relationship between family and work? and how to deal with the conflict between cultural traditions and the needs of the modern market? In consideration, female graphic designers should change their mindset to better adapt to the competition and development of modern society—change your action but change your mind first.

*More support,
more acquisition!*



CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

Graphic design, as a visual communication method and an innovative practice, has no inherent gender orientation in the profession. The low representation of female graphic designers in the workforce is due to various causes, including both personal and social reasons. However, research on women working in the GD field is still lacking. What happens to female designers? Where did the female graphic designer go? In order to answer these main research questions, the research adopted a hybrid approach, using both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, and analyzed the results from a dialectical perspective. The study results provide suggestions to educators and institutions to improve women's competitiveness in the developing international GD market. Specifically, the results could inspire practitioners to make their own career choices.

The research focuses on different themes conducted in Chapter 4, 5, 6 and 7: professional work skills, psychological characteristics, personal evaluation, and family impact. These subjects support the research through studying internal and external factors; moreover, Chapter 5, 6 and 7 conduct an international cultural comparison between Finland and China. The four chapters focus on the following sub-research aims.

Chapter 4 provides a basic understanding of GD work experiences in an educational setting and a work setting. This chapter highlights the different characteristics of male and female GD students and designers in the group work process and recognizes that performance in the educational setting indicates future career development.

Chapter 5 explores female graphic designers' self-confidence. This chapter confirms that the self-confidence of female graphic designers is an important factor affecting women's career development and the establishment of confidence depends on personal characteristics shaped by innate characteristics, which are the most important, and also on external influences.

Chapter 6 evaluates female graphic designers' professional experiences from their own point of view. The results confirm that, in addition to the external impact factors, the internal impact factors are among the most important reasons contributing to the lower position of female graphic designers. Additionally, this chapter shows that the internal factors differ between the two countries due to cultural differences.

Chapter 7 examines the impact of family on female graphic designers' career development. This research has an international scope, and the results

indicate that cultural differences contribute to different career experiences and career perspectives.

8.1 Factors affecting the professional development of female graphic designers

The position of female graphic designers in the GD education space and the GD workspace is reversed. The factors causing women's lower social status have been identified in the gender context, and include social contexts, gender stereotypes, education and work environment, and recruitment and retention by previous studies. In this study, when combined with the specificity of the GD field, the results are mixed.

8.1.1 The particularity of the GD profession and the GD market

GD as a profession, is characterized as involving creativity, marketing, cooperation, communication and problem solving. As described in previous theories and studies, GD is not inherently gender-oriented. According to the data collected from Finnish and Chinese universities in Chapter 4, female GD students surpass males in enrolment and performance. Therefore, in the study setting, female GD students have an advantage over male GD students.

As mentioned above, female GD students have an advantage in the learning environment, but they have a lower status in the working environment. The general factors in society have been defined in several themes as social contexts, gender stereotypes, education and work environments, and recruitment and retention. However, the GD market has its own particularities. As far as the characteristics of the GD profession are concerned, there is much market competition. The GD profession needs comprehensive professional qualities, such as cooperative abilities, professional skills, communication skills, but also awareness of competition. Based on surveys of GD students and designers in both countries in Chapter 5, 6 and 7, GD work is considered riskier than other jobs. When compared with the fine arts, fine arts are more independent and focus more on self-expression. This is one of the reasons for some female graphic designers leaving the GD field. It indicates that, to a certain extent, competition in the

GD field, experienced as market pressure, is one factor that causes women to leave. At the same time, the GD market competition also reflects a huge difference between the learning environment and the working environment. In contrast, few male graphic designers change their minds about their occupation. As shown in Chapter 5 and 6, they choose GD as a lifelong career. This is one of the reasons why men are better in the workforce, that is, they are more committed to their careers.

8.1.2 Psychological factors hinder the career development of female graphic designers

Inherent psychological factors influence women's learning and work performance. Women work very hard at learning when they are in control. Due to their lack of self-confidence, women have to work harder to achieve better outcomes, and as China says, "A slow sparrow should make an early start". There is no difference between female graphic designers and male designers in terms of their abilities, but their professional motivations are different. The survey in Chapter 5 shows that some women choose GD as a profession not because they like it, but because it is a better choice than others. In reality, they are not quite sure what will happen next. In contrast, almost all men choose GD because they like it and so they commit to it. In the long-term, men and women have different implementation models. Men make more stable choices, while women are more likely to change their initial career choices for reasons such as the huge risk of GD work, or the responsibility of raising children. In other words, in terms of behavior, men are more proactive, and women are more passive. Women perform better in the learning environment, whereas men perform better in the work environment.

According to the survey data of the target groups of GD students and designers in Chapter 5 and 6, the women's lack of self-confidence is caused by psychological and physical factors, and by influences from their surrounding environment. In the comparative study (Chapter 4) of GD students and designers in group work in the learning environment and the working environment, it was found that performance in the learning environment was indicative of future performance in the working environment. In addition, the design market has certain risks and strong competitiveness, and this indicates that self-confidence is particularly

necessary in professional development.

Regarding women's psychological situation, on the one hand, in response to comments and suggestions regarding female graphic designers in Chapter 6, it was suggested that women need to be more courageous when facing environmental pressures and professional risks. On the other hand, in terms of personal growth, girls are expected to be quiet and kind in social and family situations and in their education, while boys are encouraged to be brave and responsible. Additionally, gender stereotypes still exist in today's society, and this is one of the factors that affect women's psychological condition. As Hearn (2000) points out, the current representation of men and women in society is seen as "normal", and therefore people accept it at a subconscious level. So, women's psychological characteristics derive both from themselves and from an environment that influences their career choices and performance. Coupled with the risks and competitiveness of the GD industry, this phenomenon becomes even more prominent.

8.1.3 The influence of culture on the career development of female graphic designers is broad and far-reaching

In the study on women's occupational issues, gender is one of the important aspects of the discussion. As Trauth, Quesenberry and Huang (2006) confirm, gender stereotypes are one of the primary reasons for the lower representation of women in the workforce. In this research, the investigation was conducted among 482 participants, namely GD students and designers in Finland and China, over the years 2013–2019. The data indicates that gender stereotypes exist in various forms and in different aspects of personal and working life.

Based on the data from this study, firstly, we can see gender differences in both the educational space and in the workspace. During the educational period, there is no gender bias in the education of either of the two countries. The differences arise from the individual performance of the students, which is more related to the individual's innate tendencies.

Regarding workspace, Gallagher (1995) and Romano (1999) confirm that gender stereotypes still affect the workplace. There is always a difference in gender position in the workplace, and the media industry still remains a masculine domain, despite the spread of democracy since 1997. According

to the survey done for this research, patriarchy remains prominent. The proportion of men in high positions is far higher than that of women. In some cases, men who perform the same job as women are paid more than the women. Even in the same job, higher titles are always given to the men, and clients prefer to work with male designers. They usually think that the men are more credible. Although the policy is not biased against women, gender stereotypes are still seen in many situations.

Secondly, gender orientation also impacts women's career growth experience. According to data from the interviews with female GD designers, gender stereotypes are mainly expressed in the family where girls are taught to be kind and nice. This is one of the reasons that, in the interview with GD designers, the evaluation and suggestions for female graphic designers mainly involved hoping that they could be braver and more confident to be themselves (Chapter 6). Especially in the Chinese tradition, while an occupation is an important thing for girls, their future families are considered more important. This type of attitude will affect women's life choices and career plans in the long-term. This type of gender-oriented education not only comes from the family but is mostly conveyed by the social and cultural influences. The influence of the country's history and culture may be indirect, and its impact is often long-term and deeply-rooted.

Thirdly, family culture influences women's role choices within the family. McElwain et al. (2005) express the view that work and family have been traditionally associated with gender-specific roles. The pressure of gender-specific roles in the family are defined in relation to the gender properties and traditional culture. As the data in Chapter 7 show, women in both countries are responsible for the domestic work, but especially so in China. Even though most of them have their own jobs, they still do more domestic chores than the men. In addition, pregnancy and raising children is another difficult task undertaken by women. This makes some of them leave GD jobs to opt for more stable jobs or to become full-time wives to take care of the family. This phenomenon is even more prominent in China. In traditional Chinese culture, family is more important than occupation. Even today, although women are more independent than ever before, the cultural influences are still strong. Culture forms a background that affects all aspects of career and life. The competitive work of GD has a huge impact on the family. Families are even more important in China than in Finland.

Overall, psychological characteristics are the internal factors, and culture

(including gender culture, social culture and family culture) are the external factors that simultaneously affect women's lives and occupations. They form a whole where the factors affect and integrate with one another. In the GD field, the characteristics of the GD profession provide the subjective factor, but it is the gender awareness in the female consciousness that determines what kind of occupation the women want, and what kind of life they prefer. Nowadays, gender stereotypes exist primarily in ideology and objective outcomes, but seldom in policy.

Regarding gender issues, the gendered culture, forming the core of this research, is reflected in many aspects, such as the family culture, the national culture, and the social culture. The family, as an important carrier of culture, comprehensively reflects various cultural characteristics. Culture, directly or indirectly, affects people's lives and work. Some influences are positive, and some are negative. For women, the negative impact of family on their professional development is greater than that on men, especially in the field of GD. In this study, gender stereotypes still exist widely and affect people's work and personal lives. For women, in addition to the physical reasons related to raising children, cultural influences, especially gender stereotypes, are important factors affecting the women's career choices, especially in the highly competitive GD field, and these impact on the women's self-perception as internal factors.

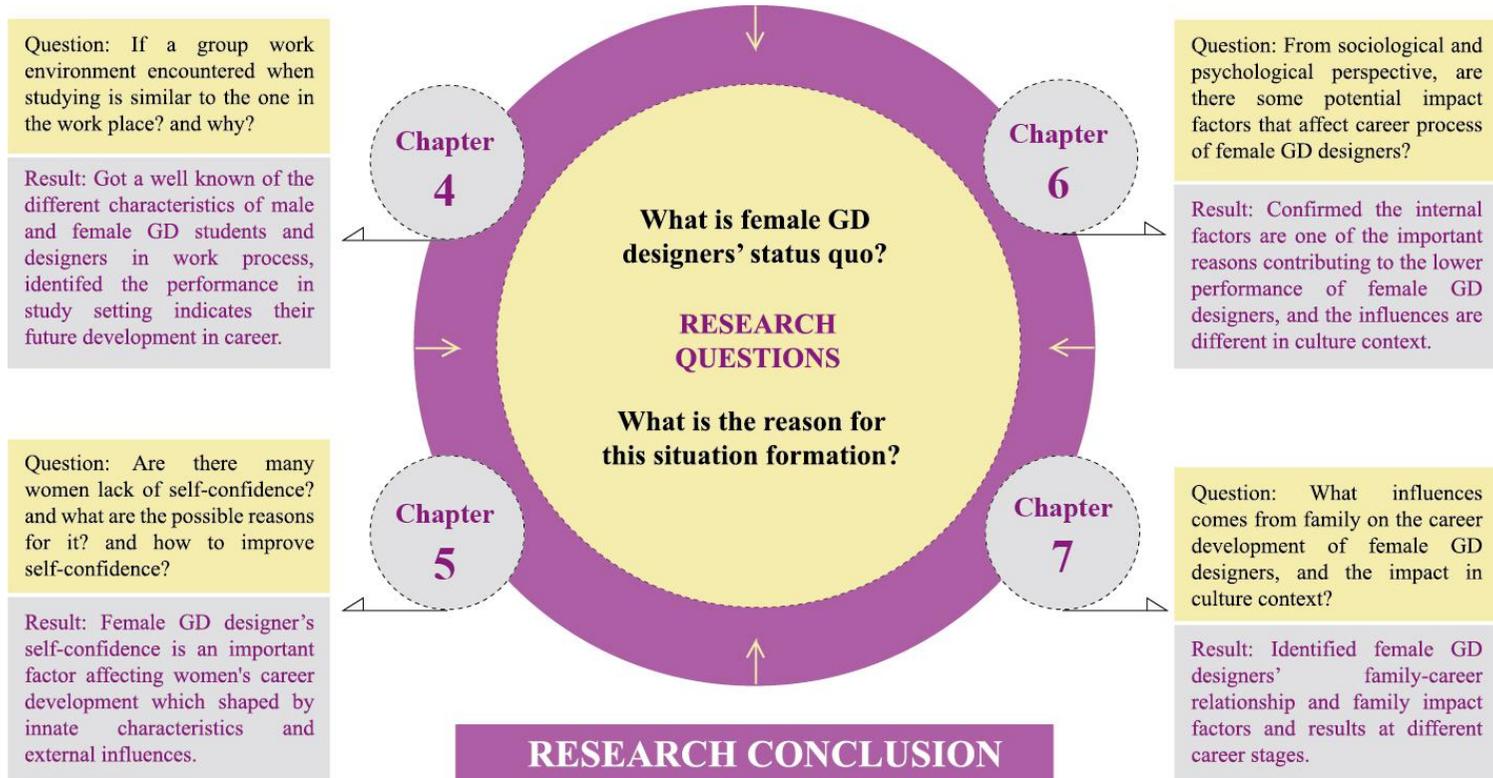


Figure 11. Research conclusion

8.2 Contributions

The contributions of this thesis are divided into methodological and practical ones.

8.2.1 Methodological contributions

This research offers insight into female graphic designers' career issues; it used a mixed methods approach to investigate, analyze, and answer the research questions. Additional methodological assets lie in its use of story writing methods, case studies, and ethnographic methods.

Mixed methods research

The mixed methods provided vivid evidence for every sub-question from different angles. Chapter 4 and 5 employed mixed methods, and the quantitative and qualitative data provided general and detailed data supporting the studies. The quantitative approach portrayed the general impression of female graphic designers' performance and situations, whereas the qualitative data provided a detailed description of the internal and external characteristics of the participants. The adopted case studies provided a targeted portrait of the sub-questions, and the ethnographic approach provided a vivid and dynamic procedural perspective on specific issues. Overall, this work provides a mixed methodology map for specific issue research.

Ethnography study approach

An ethnographic study approach was applied in Chapter 4, which focused on group work. Data were collected by video recording, photo taking, and simply watching. The results allowed for a comparison between the study setting and the work setting. Furthermore, the ethnographic research helped to conduct research on unique research topics.

Story writing

Chapter 5 collected stories from female GD students and designers. Participants were given specific themes, including past professional experiences and future career plans, which combined with their professional

realities and ideals. The story writing was based on their own experiences and willingness. This method provided vivid portraits of professional issues and helped to explore their internal thoughts; furthermore, it helped to find the differences between female graphic designers' ideal careers and their actual ones.

Multiple case studies

In this research, the case studies included a group work study, a self-confidence study, a career evaluation study and a family impact study. These case studies illustrated the career process of female graphic designers and contributed to the formation of a career study model in gender and culture context.

8.2.2 Practical contributions

Self-confidence building

In this research, internal factors greatly influenced female graphic designers' career development.

In Chapter 5, the study results expressed that female graphic designers lack self-confidence. The findings showed the importance of self-confidence in work and explored the internal and external factors relating to women's lack of confidence. Furthermore, it highlighted how pedagogy processes should pay more attention on the individuals' external experiences.

In Chapter 6, the study results showed that female graphic designers need more courage to face the GD market and that consciousness and unconsciousness factors play a role in determining individual career choices. This section suggested that these factors stem from the influences of surrounding environments, such as education, family, and society. But they mainly depend on their own understanding and interpretation of the surroundings. As a result, female graphic designers should conduct more self-analysis to better plan their careers.

In Chapter 7, the study revealed how family members affect female graphic designers' career development. This chapter identified that except for external influences from family members, women's emphasis on family or work was also an important factor in determining their career choice and development. Then, this study indicated that family influence on women's

career depends on both external effects and internal decisions. Furthermore, the study also highlighted that avoiding negative effects is one of the ways to change female graphic designers' current conditions. In addition, national governments and relevant organizations need to improve their social environment to make them more suitable for female graphic designers' career development. They should also motivate female graphic designers to change their mindsets to better adapt to the competition and development of modern society.

Career planning

Career planning should start with a professional choice. But sometimes, it starts from an unclear beginning. As the research investigation showed, designers are inspired and influenced by family members and educators for their professional choices. Furthermore, the investigation pointed out that among the students, some had a definite idea concerning their career plan, whereas others were uncertain. The results of this research pointed out the factors affecting female graphic designers' career development. The research also confirmed that internal influences affect career decision making, as concerns over family and career as well as confidence in doing things can affect an individual's psychological judgment and decision making. At this point, the study suggests that designers should avoid negative influences from the outside world and ignore the opinions of others. They should have the confidence and clear goals to do what they want to do.

8.2.3 Suggestions

The career development of female graphic designers goes through different stages, such as the growth stage, studying stage, and work stage. The career process occurs in different environments with different people, such as family members, educators, colleges, and clients. All of these factors affect women's career development to a certain extent. The impact factors influence women's career positively or negatively, directly or indirectly, and in the short or long term. In order to change the low participation of female graphic designers at work, this research gives some suggestions for focus groups and related networks. The advice for female GD students is that

when you choose a major, you must make a good plan, focus on your career and don't give up lightly. For female GD designers, this research suggests that you should believe in yourself and become a good one, and have the courage to face various challenges in your career. For educators, the suggestion is to give students more professional insights and career guidance in addition to teaching students professional knowledge and skills; For families, the author suggests that families should treat women in the same way as men, and encourage them to be brave and to prepare for the challenges in life; For companies and institutions, we suggest they treat men and women the same. The fact is that the more you pay, the more they can do; and for the people around them, they need to understand the facts about female graphic designers and consider effective methods to improve their status.

8.3 Future Research

8.3.1 Practical research on pedagogy

The purpose of this research was to understand female graphic designers' status quo and to find the reasons for their low workplace participation. Chapter 4 showed that the students' pedagogy process indicates their future performance. The performance of graphic designers in educational group work projects will inevitably influence their future work positions. And in Chapter 5, 6 and 7, the research explored the various reasons for women's low performance in work settings. Based on these results, further research should be conducted to find effective solutions for improving female graphic designers' competitiveness in the workforce as well as their self-confidence.

8.3.2 Longitudinal research in single cultural background

This research was conducted in Finland and China. Most of the study was focused on comparing the graphic designers' study settings and work settings horizontally. Thus, only a small amount of content was vertically compared. As described in the sub-studies, education, culture, policy and social conceptions are all influential elements in the career process for

individuals, the elements in this study were horizontally compared and contributed to the study of gender and culture differences. However, vertical research in a single cultural context can provide insight into the changing situations of female designers from a historical perspective. Such an approach can uncover the development path of female graphic designers as well as the correlation between a changing environment and female graphic designers' career process.

8.3.3 Building confidence

Chapter 4 confirmed that self-confidence is one of the most important elements for female graphic designers to have a successful career. Chapter 5 showed that the lack of confidence is one of the important factors leading to the lower status of female graphic designers in the workforce. As educators and designers expressed, female designers need more courage in facing challenges. Lack of confidence was evident throughout the whole career process, including both the studying period and working period, and it is largely due to personal characteristics and various external influences. Therefore, for the purpose of building female designers' self-confidence, women should fight with themselves, to succeed in your career, you must first defeat yourself. Furthermore, educators and managers should find ways to build women's confidence so that they may perform better in the GD market.

8.3.4 Strengthen the horizontal comparison study

This research was conducted in Finland and China and compared individual career paths under these two different culture backgrounds. Yet there is still a lack of research that used a horizontal comparison in Western or Eastern culture regions. Such a study could help to identify the differences between female graphic designers in a similar culture context and understand why. Furthermore, the differences between female graphic designers with similar culture backgrounds can help to explore individual differences associated with career development.

8.3.5 Comparisons between males and females

All of the participants in the Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 studies are female. In these two chapters, the study analyzed career issues from female graphic designers' own perspectives and explored female characteristics. But for the studies considering cultural-related and gender-related research, it is necessary to take into account the views of male graphic designers and to strengthen the comparison between males and females. After all, this is still a society with a patriarchal imprint.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Questionnaire about Group Work

Participants: Graphic Design Students

Gender: Male Female

Nationality: _____

Profession: _____

1. What's the reason you decided to learn graphic design?
Personal interest Get a good job
Don't care No other choice
Other: _____
2. Do you have a plan for your career? Would you like to give a brief description?

3. Which kind of work do you prefer: private work or group work? Why?

4. Do you think there are some differences between males and females in group work? Is there something special about graphic design group work as compared to other professional groups? Please give some examples.

5. What do you think about group leaders? Are there differences between male leaders and female leaders? Please give your reasons or examples.

6. Do you like sharing your ideas with others?
Yes No
Reasons: _____
7. What positions do you prefer in group work?
Leader Presenter Participant
Reasons: _____
8. In general, how do you feel in group work?
Excited Relaxed Tense Confused
9. If your idea is not accepted by your group members, what would you do?
Insist on your idea and try to persuade others
Feel comfortable in accepting the other idea
Accept the other idea but unwillingly

Finish the work independently

Other: _____

10. How would you deal with conflicts in group work?

Coordinate Avoid Ignore

Other: _____

11. Do you think some emotional problems arise in group work? Who do you think would have more emotional problems in the work: males or females? Please provide some examples.

12. What factors influence your satisfaction with group work?

Learning Workload

Fairness Commitment

Grade Learning

Feeling of group-based achievement

13. What's the most important thing in group work in order to achieve a good result?

14. What have you learned in group work?

15. Would you like to offer some suggestions to male and female designers to enable them to perform better in group work (even if they are already excellent)?

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix 2: Questionnaire about Group Work

Participants: Graphic Design Students

Gender: Male Female

Nationality: _____

1. Why did you decide to learn graphic design?
Reasons: _____
2. Do you have a plan for your career? Would you like to give a brief description?

3. Do you like working in groups?
Yes No Don't care Other: _____
Reasons: _____
4. What kind of position do you prefer in group working?
Leader Participant
Reasons: _____
5. In general, how do you feel in group work?
Excited Relaxed Tense Confused
Other: _____
6. How would you deal with conflicts in group working?
Coordinate Avoid Ignore
Other: _____
7. What factors influence your satisfaction in group work?
Workload Justice Commitment
Perceived learning Feeling of group-based achievement
Others _____
8. Do you think there are some emotional problems in group work? Who will have more emotional problems: male or female? Is it the same problem? Would you like to give some examples? Will it influence the work?

9. Do you think there are some differences between male designer and female designers when working, especially in group work? If so, what are the differences? Would you like to give some examples?

10. Comparing male and female leaders in group work, are there some

differences between them? Who is preferred for group work? Would you like give some reasons?

11. What's the most important thing in group work in order to achieve a good result?

12. Would you like to offer some suggestions to male and female designers for better performance in group work (even if they are already excellent)?

To female designers: _____

To male designers: _____

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix 3: Interview Questions about Group Work

Interviewee: Graphic Design Educator

1. Could you give a general explanation for group work? Are there some special meanings in design tasks?
2. What's the purpose of group work assignments? What tasks or courses involve group work? And which degrees?
3. What skills do students learn from group work?
4. What are the most important factors for group work to be successful?
5. Do you think there are differences between mix-sex groups and single-sex groups? Which one is better for girls? Would you like to give some reasons?
6. Do you think women and men have differences in talent and abilities in studying design? Would you like give some examples?
7. Between men and women, who likes group work more? What's the difference between individual work and group work for men and women? Would group work have the same influence on both? If there are differences, could you give some reasons for them?
8. Do you think there are some differences between male student and female student in group work? If so, what are the differences? Would you like to give some examples?
9. Do you think there are some emotion problems in group work process? Who would be more emotional, men or women? Who is influenced more by positive and negative emotions? Does emotion influence group work? Would you like to give some examples for these emotion problems?
10. Are there differences between male and female leaders? And which gender is preferred for group work? Would you like to give some reasons?
11. As a design teacher, do you use the same methods to educate male and female students?
12. What influences members' satisfaction in group work?
13. Would you evaluate male and female students in the same project doing the same job differently? Do you have the same or different expectation in studying and career development for both genders?

14. What do you think about feminist teaching?
15. Do you think group work in education is important for students' future careers? Would you like to give some reasons?
16. Male designers and female designers have unequal positions in the workforce. What do you think about this phenomenon? Could you give some reasons?
17. How do students achieve their goals in group work? What are the important factors?

Appendix 4: Interview Questions about Group Work

Interviewee: Graphic Design Agency Director

Company: _____

Name: _____ Duties: _____

Gender: Male Female Date: _____

1. Would you like to give a general definition for group work in design agency?
2. What's your expectation for group work as a director?
3. Do you think there are some differences between male designers and female designers, especially in group work? If so, what are the differences? Would you like to give some examples?
4. Do you think there are some emotional problems in group work? Who will have more emotional problems in the work, males or females? Do emotional problems affect the work process? Why you think these emotional problems happen?
5. Are there some differences between male and female group leaders? Whom do you prefer? Would you like give some reasons?
6. What's the most important factor in group work in order to achieve a good result?
7. What factors influence members' satisfaction in group work?
8. Would you like to give some suggestions to male and female designers for a better performance (even they are already excellent) in group work?
9. What do you think could strengthen graphic design education? Would you like to give some suggestions?

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix 5: Story Writing

Participants: Graphic Design Students

My Story

Please write a story from your life. Think about your characteristics as a girl or boy, and what factors will affect you as a girl or boy (e.g., suggestions from parents, information from social media).

Please use "*she*" or "*he*" when writing your story. Thanks for sharing your story! ☺

Appendix 6: Interview Questions about Female Graphic Designers' Career Advancement

Interviewee: Graphic Designers

1. How long have you been a designer? And do you have a career plan for the future?
2. What do you think about your current situation as a designer?
3. Are there some barriers in your career advancement? What are they?
4. Do you think your career decisions have been made by you, or have they been influenced by your surroundings?
5. According to your career, could you evaluate your circumstances around you? For example, family, workplace, social attitudes?
6. According to your career, how would you evaluate your career to this point? And do you think that you are the person you want to be? If not, could you describe what kind of person you want to be?
7. Is it the best choice for you to be a designer? Why?
8. Do you regard graphic design as your lifelong career or just a short-term job?
9. How would you evaluate female graphic designers' work in general?
10. Do you think male and female designers have the same potential to be graphic designers? If not, what are the differences? What do you think about the current graphic design market?
11. Do you think that relationship skills are important for group work? Are there differences between males and females in this respect?
12. What do you think about graphic design compared with other design fields? What are the similarities? What are the differences?
13. How would you explain the reality that most female designers occupy a middle or lower job position?
14. Do you think that it is a problem that female designers occupy such positions?
15. How would you evaluate graphic design education, especially in terms of the career advancement of female designers?
16. What should female designers improve upon to compete with male designers?
17. What in your opinion are the specific barriers facing female designers?
18. What skills should female designers learn to have a better career or to

become a better leader? And what advice would you give to female graphic designers and female design students?

19. Do you think male and female have different way of thinking? (This question is for both designers and clients.)

Appendix 7: Interview Questions about Female Graphic Designers

Interviewee: Manager

1. How many female graphic designers work in your agency? What's the percentage of male and female designers in your agency over the past three years?
2. How many female designers have quit your agency over the past three years? Would you like to suggest reasons for their decision to quit?
3. How many female designers moved to another agency over the past three years? What about male designers?
4. What is the promotion rate for female designers in your agency? What is the rate for male designers?
5. Do people return to design agencies or become freelancers after short-term absences—for instance, after giving birth, or for other reasons? What proportion are female designers?
6. Is graphic design different from other design fields? If so, how?
7. Do you think relationship skills are important for group work? Are there differences between male and female designers in this respect?
8. Would you like to evaluate female graphic designers' work in general?
9. Do you think male and female designers have the same abilities to be graphic designers? If not, what are the differences?
10. What do you think about the current graphic design market?
11. How would you explain the reality that most female designers occupy middle- or lower-ranking jobs?
12. Do you think it's a problem that female designers occupy such positions?
13. How would you evaluate graphic design education, especially in terms of the career advancement for female designers?
14. What do female designers need to improve on to compete with male designers?
15. What in your opinion are the specific barriers facing female designers?
16. What skills should female designers learn to ensure a better career or to become a better leader? What advice would you give to female graphic designers and female design students?

Appendix 8: Questionnaire for Female Graphic Designers

Participants: Graphic Design Students

Gender: Male Female Degree Level: Bachelor student
Nationality: _____ Master's student

1. Why did you choose to study graphic design? Is this the best choice for you to become a designer? Why?
2. Will you continue to do graphic design work after you graduate? Do you regard graphic design as your lifelong career or just a short-term job?
3. What's your plan for your career development? And what kind person do you want to be?
4. Do you think that you will change your profession some day? If so, what do you think you will be?
5. Is graphic design different from other design fields? If so, how?
6. Do you think male and female designers have the same abilities to be a graphic designer? If not, what are the differences?
7. What do you think about the current graphic design market?
8. How would you evaluate graphic design education, especially in terms of the career advancement of female designers?
9. How would you explain the reality that most female designers occupy a middle or lower job position?
10. What do you think about the specific barriers facing female designers?

Thank you very much for your participation!

Appendix 9: Questionnaire for Graphic Designers

Participants: Graphic Design Students

Gender: Male Female Degree Level: Bachelor student
Nationality: _____ Master's student

1. Why did you choose to study graphic design? Is this the best choice for you to become a designer? Why?
2. Will you continue to do graphic design work after you graduate? Do you regard graphic design as your lifelong career or as just a short-term job?
3. What's your plan for your career development? And what kind of person do you want to be?
4. Do you think you will change your profession for some reason some day? Would you like to give some reasons? And what will be your new choice?
5. In your opinion, what distinguishes graphic design from other design fields?
6. Do you think male and female designers have equal ability and talent? If not, what's the difference?
7. What do you think about the current graphic design market?
8. How would you evaluate the graphic design education process, especially in relation to female designers' career advancement?
9. At present, most female designers occupy a middle-ranking or basic position, How would you evaluate female designers' situation, and would you like to offer your opinions on this phenomenon?
10. Are there barriers that prevent female designers from having a great career like a man? If so, please give some examples.

Thank you very much for your participation!

Appendix 10: Interview about Family Impact on Female Graphic Designers' Career Development

Interviewee: Graphic Designers

1. Could you tell me about your family?
2. Would you talk about your professional experience? How long have you been a graphic designer? What has your career process been like?
3. Please discuss your working situation as a graphic designer. Are you satisfied with it?
4. Do you want to gain further professional experience? Would you like a promotion or something else?
5. Please describe how your family has affected your career development.
6. Please assess the impact of your family members on your career process. Have they been positive or negative?
7. Please describe the impact of different family members at different stages of your career.
8. Did you go back to your original work position after your maternity leave? How long after?
9. How did you take care of baby when it was still very young?
10. How old must a baby be to enter kindergarten in Finland?
11. What were your working conditions like after you had the baby?
12. To your knowledge, do some designers who become mothers change professions after they have a baby? If so, could you explain why?



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