From Differential Mode of Association to *Tianxia* Worldview: A Study on Chinese Entrepreneurial Spirit

Chao Gang[1], Qian Chen[2*], Wang Lei[3]

[1] *School of Business Administration, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou, China*
[2] *School of Economics and Management, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China*
[3] *School of Politics and Public Administration, South China Normal University, Guangzhou, China*

Abstract: *China has made significant strides in economic and social development since reform and opening up over the past four decades. This process has been influenced by the exceptional innovation and entrepreneurship of Chinese business leaders, as well as their profound sentiments of compassion for the world and their country. It is of great significance to foster and promote an entrepreneurial spirit with distinctive Chinese characteristics. Not only is such spirit essential to the high-quality development of enterprises and the economy, but it is also a critical impetus for achieving Chinese modernization. Nevertheless, there is still a paucity of adequate theoretical discourse on the cultural origins and entrepreneurial spirit of outstanding Chinese business leaders. This paper employs the classical grounded theory method to conduct a 10-year follow-up research on 11 representative entrepreneurs and their enterprises. The results indicate that these entrepreneurs exhibit an evolving worldview along the paths of "self-cultivation and moral conduct", "assisting employees to achieve", "multilateral symbiosis", and "the oneness of existence" when interacting with themselves, employees, partners, the general public, and all things in nature. Such entrepreneurial spirit is embodied in this paper as the "Tianxia (all-under-heaven) worldview". Through theoretical construction, this study defines the concept of "Tianxia worldview" and extensively examines the distinctions and connections between the broad-minded "Tianxia worldview" and the kinship-centered "differential mode of association" in terms of internal structure, value orientation, and applicable groups. It is posited that the transition from the former to the latter is a continuous process of transcendence and evolution of the individual mindset. This study has theoretical significance in the context of advancing the research on the Chinese entrepreneurial spirit, transcending the constraints of the management approach based on the "differential mode of association", and enhancing the research on social responsibility from the perspective of "benefit corporations". It also has practical value in overcoming the trust dilemma and development impediment of family businesses, ensuring that enterprises consciously fulfill their social responsibilities in a broader social context, and achieving common prosperity and progress for both enterprises and society.*

Keywords: *Tianxia worldview, differential mode of association, Chinese entrepreneurial spirit, corporate social responsibility, grounded theory method*

JEL Classification Codes: L26, M14

DOI: 10.19602/j.chinaeconomist.2024.07.04

* CONTACT: Qian Chen, email: qianchen@sem.tsinghua.edu.cn.

Acknowledgement: This paper is a result of the Major Project of Marxist Theory Research and Construction in 2023 and Major Project of the National Social Science Fund of China (NSSFC) "Research on Education, Science and Technology, and Talent as Fundamental Strategic Support for the Comprehensive Construction of a Modern Socialist Country" (Grant No. 2023MZD010); General Project of the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) "The *Tianxia* Worldview of Contemporary Chinese Entrepreneurs: Concept Proposal, Scale Design, and Efficacy Verification" (Grant No. 72072061); 2020 Guangzhou Philosophy and Social Science Planning Project "Research on the Social Network and Development Mechanism of Enterprise-Driven Traditional Culture Revival in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area" (Grant No. 2020GZYB19).

1. Introduction

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the CPC Central Committee, with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, has consistently emphasized the important role of the entrepreneurial community and entrepreneurial spirit in national development, advocating for the cultivation of entrepreneurial talent. According to the Report to the 20th National Congress of the CPC, the primary objective of the comprehensive construction of a modern socialist country is to achieve high-quality development. It takes numerous outstanding entrepreneurs to assume great responsibilities in order to achieve high-quality development and create a new development pattern. During the past four decades of reform and opening up, China has made great strides in economic and social development, and the Chinese entrepreneurial community has expanded and strengthened. Chinese entrepreneurs have not only exhibited a profound sense of national pride and a broad-minded vision, but they have also demonstrated exceptional innovation and entrepreneurial spirit. They have become a critical force in advancing China's economic development, social progress, and common prosperity. Nevertheless, the field of academic research on the Chinese entrepreneurial mentality and its cultural origins is far from sufficient. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping has creatively put forth and elaborated on the vision of "integrating the basic principles of Marxism with China's specific realities and brilliant traditional Chinese culture",[1] emphasizing the importance of inheriting and promoting traditional Chinese culture from a national and historical perspective. In light of this, it is imperative that the academic community carry out a more comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the Chinese entrepreneurial spirit and national spirit from the perspective of China's historical and cultural traditions. Furthermore, it is also important to establish theoretical connections between the entrepreneurial spirit and high-quality economic development in present-day China, as well as to positively interpret the contemporary significance of the cultural spirit of the Chinese nation and the Chinese entrepreneurial spirit in the context of profound changes unseen in a century.

Zhang Jian, a top Confucian scholar in the late Qing dynasty, devoted his life to practicing the Confucian values that a wise man should "cultivate himself, manage his family, rule his nation, and ultimately bring peace to the world". At a meeting with entrepreneurs on July 21, 2020 and during his visit to the Nantong Museum on November 12 in the same year, General Secretary Xi Jinping praised Zhang Jian as an "epitome of patriotic entrepreneurs"[2] and a "sage and example of Chinese private entrepreneurship".[3] In today's China, many entrepreneurs embody Zhang Jian's excellence. For instance, Cao Dewang, founder of Fuyao Glass Industry Group, established the Heren Charitable Foundation through equity donation. "Entrepreneurs have three responsibilities", he said. "They must make their country strong, bring progress to society, and contribute to people's prosperity". Yu Donglai, chairman of Pang Donglai, a Chinese retail group known for its customer-centric approach, stated, "Whatever we do, we must keep others in mind, and our employees at Pang Donglai must put social interest first". Numerous Chinese entrepreneurs, spearheaded by Mao Zhongqun, chairman of Fotile Group, take upon themselves to promote traditional Chinese culture and benefit the world. Drawing upon wisdom from traditional Chinese culture, they fostered a corporate culture that promotes the all-round development of employees, the fulfillment of social responsibilities, and the concern for the future of the nation. These traits resonate with the virtues of traditional Chinese scholar-bureaucrats.

---

[1] Xinhua News Agency. Xi Jinping: Speech at the Entrepreneurs' Symposium [EB/OL]. https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2020-07/21/content_5528791.htm.

[2] Xinhua News Agency. Xi Jinping Praises Zhang Jian: A Sage and Example of Chinese Private Entrepreneurship [EB/OL]. https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2020-11/13/content_5561189.htm.

[3] Xi Jinping. Speech at the Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China [N]. People's Daily, July 2, 2021 (002).

Outstanding Chinese entrepreneurs demonstrate an innovative and enterprising spirit. In addition, we have observed in them such qualities as self-improvement for the benefit of others, the notion of family-state unity, as well as the belief that "the oneness of existence", which reflect the distinctive cultural traits of Chinese entrepreneurship. In a globalized world, such entrepreneurial spirit, rooted in a culture that seeks a new world order for the common good, will encourage Chinese entrepreneurs to assume their social responsibilities and invite more stakeholders to contribute to global value chains for mutual benefit (Sun et al., 2019). More importantly, Chinese entrepreneurship is defined by the scholar-bureaucrat spirit of Chinese society, including social commitment, patriotism, and the belief that the "world is for all". This cultural tradition needs to be explored, innovated, and elevated into cultural inspirations, values, and guiding principles for Chinese entrepreneurs. It should assist to tell the Chinese story to an international audience, showcase the virtues of traditional Chinese culture, and contribute Chinese wisdom to international management practices. Nonetheless, the cultural motivations and behavioral modes shown by Chinese entrepreneurs are congruent with the mainstream theoretical framework of the kinship-centered "differential mode of association" that explains the behavioral patterns of Chinese people.

In his 1948 publication *From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society*, Fei Xiaotong put forth the differential mode of association theory, based on his observations of Chinese rural society and the concepts of "love with distinctions" and "self-interest" (Fei, 2011). This theory is still regarded in sociological research as "the most fundamental descriptive concept of Chinese social structure" and is an important concept for research in the field of Chinese-style management. Building on the differential mode of association theory, numerous management theories have emerged, such as the "favor and face model" (Hwang, 2010), family businesses and "pan-familism" (Chu, 2000), the circle theory based on Chinese social networks (Luo, 2012), as well as differential leadership (Gao and Wang, 2013) and differential atmosphere (Liu et al., 2009). The differential mode of association theory provides some explanatory power for such behaviors as the "differentiated treatment between relatives and outsiders" and "nepotism" in traditional family businesses. Trust based on kinship, work relationships, and geographic ties made an undeniable contribution to the success of startup companies (Chen, 2003). However, differentiated treatment in the workplace can foster a sense of cohesion among insiders while potentially leading to feelings of unfairness for outsiders, creating a trust dilemma and hindering the sustainable development of family businesses (Li, 2002).

Despite Mr. Fei Xiaotong's "differential mode of association" theory developed in the 1940s that highlights the "selfish" character of rural folks, rural customs are by no means the entirety of Chinese culture, and "self-interest" cannot represent the mainstream values of Chinese culture. The mainstream ethos of Chinese culture has always found expression in the mottos that "the oneness of existence", "self-discipline and social commitment", and "lay down one's life for a just cause", which also symbolize the core spirit championed in today's China on its rising path. Regrettably, the ideal of "common good" has received insufficient attention and exploration from the academia. Zhao's (2011; 2015) philosophical and political theory of the "*Tianxia* system" is the sole influential one on this subject. However, his research into mainstream Chinese cultural traditions that drive the mottos of "family-state unity" and "the oneness of existence" is far outweighed by the marginal traditions of "differential mode of association".

The "differential mode of association" displays a "selfish" attitude to social interaction. If this theory is used to interpret Chinese people's behaviors, it would be hard to understand how China became a unified country and a major world power with a rich cultural legacy. Liang Shuming once stated: "Since ancient times, it has been passed down that 'all under heaven are of one family' and that 'all men within the four seas are brothers.'" Simply put, how come such open-mindedness is found in a society based on the patriarchal clan system? How could family-centrism and patriarchal clan system have enabled

the Chinese nation to expand so far in space and create such a long history? It should be understood that there is much more to Chinese culture than the relics of family centrism and patriarchal clan system" (Liang, 2005). Liang Shuming mentioned there was something far beyond family centrism and patriarchal clan system in traditional Chinese culture, which includes such tenets as "a person of great virtue can shoulder great responsibilities", "a wise man should cultivate himself, manage his family, rule his nation, and ultimately bring peace to the world", "love for family and nation", and "the oneness of existence". If the "differential mode of association" is not the dominant spirit behind Chinese people's behaviors, what is it? Is this mainstream spirit inherited, displayed, and promoted by contemporary Chinese entrepreneurs?

After 10 years of field research and literature analysis, this study selected 11 Chinese entrepreneurs with a strong sense of national pride to address the theoretical and practical questions raised above. We adopted the classical grounded theory method to analyze data and created a theoretical framework to explain the "*Tianxia* worldview" of outstanding Chinese entrepreneurs, including its connotations, important characteristics, and evolution. Then, we determined how this worldview differed fundamentally from the differential mode of association. It is important to examine the worldviews of successful Chinese entrepreneurs today from the perspective of cultural heritage. This is because the results can be used to shape and promote Chinese entrepreneurial spirit, uncover the cultural factors that make Chinese businesses last, understand the cultural basis for China's rapid economic development and social harmony, and figure out what cultural heritage drives the constant changes and innovations in Chinese society.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Basis

Research in the fields of economics and management has achieved abundant results on the topic of entrepreneurship, and views entrepreneurs as an economic factor, highlighting their entrepreneurial spirit with innovation as its core trait (Schumpeter, 2013; Peter Drucker, 2007). However, research in sociology, such as institutional logic theory, places more emphasis on the influence of culture and institutions on economic activities and behaviors (Thornton et al., 2012). Entrepreneurship is influenced by logical rationality and cultural diversity within the organizational field (Sun Li et al., 2019). Swedberg (2000), in his book *Entrepreneurship: The Social Science View*, noted that management scholars and economists had overlooked the broader connections between entrepreneurship, economic behavior, and policies and culture. After the 1970s, scholars discovered that it was one-sided to observe entrepreneurs and their careers solely from the perspective of "rational man" in economics. Consequently, they began to study related issues from the perspective of the "social man" (Wang, 1997). Morris and Schindehutte (2005) further indicated that the differences in ethos between Chinese and Western entrepreneurs can be traced back to local cultural values. Exploring the cultural roots of entrepreneurial spirit from a cultural perspective has been a research hotspot in recent years, prompting indigenous research on entrepreneurship. From a cultural perspective, the rise of Western entrepreneurship is inseparable from the emergence of Protestant Christianity.

Max Weber (2018), in his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, investigated the relationship between Puritan ideals and the spirit of capitalism, paving the way for sociological research into entrepreneurship. Weber's research was groundbreaking in that he saw entrepreneurship as a spiritual quality of entrepreneurs, influenced by social value orientations, moral standards, behavior patterns, and social institutions. He discovered that institutional changes could affect entrepreneur growth, while cultural origins could influence the traits of entrepreneurial spirit. Coleman (1994) developed an explanatory framework for the impact of Calvinist doctrine on the spirit of capitalism, which is illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Calvinist Doctrine and Capitalist Spirit

Source: Coleman (1994).

Using Weber's research approach, Du (2013) examined the relationship between Confucian ethics and entrepreneurship. He stated that the pursuit of personal values in Confucian society is not simply motivated by the desire to accumulate riches. Confucian principles play an important role in shaping the spirit of entrepreneurship in today's age, particularly in terms of public welfare, sense of duty, and integrity. Yu Yingshi, in the C*onfucian Ethics and the Spirit of Merchants* and the *Religious Ethics and Merchant Spirit in Modern China*, argued that the rise of Neo-Confucianism in the Song Dynasty, as well as the establishment of academies and public lectures by Confucian scholars in the Ming Dynasty, helped to popularize Neo-Confucian ideals. This had shaped the mindset of Ming and Qing merchants that one should "cherish all under heaven", which was similar to the Calvinist motivation to change society in accordance with God's will. By the late Ming dynasty, as merchants' social status improved, their sense of self-worth awakened, and a new social trend took hold based on the value orientation of "righteousness over profit, benefiting the world with profit, and the unity of righteousness and self-interest" (Yu, 2004, 2014). Shibusawa (2012), a modern Japanese industrial pioneer and spiritual leader in commerce, introduced the concept of "samurai business talent" based on the Confucian "view of righteousness and profit" in *The Analects and the Abacus*, which has extensively inspired the Japanese entrepreneurial spirit. Similarly, contemporary scholars suggested that the traditional cultural spirit of "the oneness of existence" and "in times of success, one should bring benefits to all" would help construct contemporary Chinese entrepreneurship after comparing Chinese and Western entrepreneurship from institutional and historical perspectives (Sun et al., 2019). According to Shan (2021), the concept of entrepreneurship comprises both an economic rationale and a moral dimension. "Social commitment and patriotism" are the fundamental ideals of the Chinese entrepreneurial spirit.

In conclusion, unlike early Western studies on entrepreneurship that focused on religious values and contemporary Western studies that emphasize innovation and entrepreneurial spirit, Chinese entrepreneurship research emphasizes social values such as "family-state unity" and "the oneness of existence" in addition to innovation and entrepreneurial spirit. However, the majority of these research remain theoretical discussions with major gaps. As a result, the purpose of this study is to promote the study of entrepreneurship from a local cultural perspective, by developing a concept of Chinese entrepreneurship anchored in traditional Chinese culture, defined by "family-state unity" and "the oneness of existence". This will address negligence of social and cultural factors in entrepreneurship from the management perspective, as well as provide facts and theoretical support for sociological research into the influence of traditional culture on entrepreneurial spirit.

3. Research Design

3.1 Selection of Research Methodology

This study delves into a contemporary Chinese entrepreneurial spirit rooted in the cream of traditional Chinese culture, focusing on a group of entrepreneurs who are influenced by and actively practice the values of "family-state unity" and "the oneness of existence". However, there is little research literature on the impact of cultural values on entrepreneurial spirit, as well as a lack of mature

and comprehensive theoretical results. Hence, the focus of this study is "phenomenon-driven" rather than "theory-driven" (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Based on a 10-year longitudinal observation and a 5-year specialized field investigation, this study suggests the following research questions: How do those entrepreneurs see themselves, others, society, and the environment? What is the evolutionary process and defining traits of this new breed of local entrepreneurial spirit? What are the cultural roots of the Chinese entrepreneurial spirit? What are the key distinctions and links between it and the "differential mode of association" framework as a major theoretical framework for describing Chinese people's beliefs and behaviors? These inquiries seek to investigate new concepts and develop new theories, hence our selection of the classical grounded theory research approach. The classical grounded theory constructs theory from real-world social phenomena (Jia and Tan, 2010), and its multiple coding analysis techniques refine and transform case data into categories, allowing researchers to study the relationships between categories and extract a more persuasive theoretical framework.

3.2 Sample Selection

The classical grounded theory posits that research questions arise spontaneously from the research context, rather than being exclusively taken from previous literature. At the start of the study, our team noticed that Entrepreneur A of TW Company felt a strong sense of social responsibility, devotion, and patriotism. His entrepreneurial drive was "saving the country through industry", with a dedication to pursuing a route for the long-term development of both businesses and society in China. Our research team later discovered that three organizations, GD, ZX, and FT, all prioritized employee satisfaction and social value as their corporate objective. Upon entering these companies for research, it was discovered that Entrepreneurs B, C, and D had strong cultural views and kindness toward others. Our study then delves into these entrepreneurs' personal experiences and psychological journey to better comprehend the spirit of current Chinese entrepreneurs from a dynamic and evolutionary standpoint. Following the principle of theoretical sampling (Jia and Tan, 2010), this study chose entrepreneur samples with the following characteristics: 1. They have focused on the purpose of life and their existential value, moving away from self-centered value orientations and toward higher-level demands according to Maslow's hierarchy (such as self-actualization). 2. They think that running a business entails pursuing both commercial value (profit) and creating social value (righteousness), with the primary goal being maximizing social value, which includes actively carrying out social obligations, resolving social problems, and supporting social advancement. 3. They promote social welfare via commercial models in which social value is predominantly represented in the enterprise's main business and operations, rather than only the entrepreneur's personal charitable deeds or the company's philanthropic efforts. 4. They seek sustainable development and long-term success for their enterprises in ways that serve society, rather than chasing short-term commercial gains or benefiting society at the expense of enterprise development. In addition to Entrepreneurs A, B, C, and D, this study chose four more entrepreneurs, E, F, G, and H, as samples and performed semi-structured interviews. To increase theoretical saturation, entrepreneurs I, J, and K were chosen for theoretical testing. It was discovered that the materials from these three entrepreneurs did not develop new dimensions and concepts for the "world is for all" framework and its evolution mechanism, indicating that theoretical saturation had occurred. Table 1 shows an overview of the samples.

3.3 Data Collection

Our team entered TW, ZX, GD and other companies for visits and field research after April 2010, and carried out open interviews and field research with four entrepreneurs A, B, C and D and their companies between March 2016 and September 2016. After establishing the research topic of "entrepreneurial spirit", we conducted field research for entrepreneurs E, F and G and their companies.

Table 1: Basic Information of Sample Entrepreneurs and Their Enterprises

Entrepreneur ID	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Enterprise abbreviation	TW	GD	ZX	FT	TY	LT	QD	JB	XYL	PDL	FY
Nature of enterprise	Private	Private (Listed)	Private	Private	Private	Private	SOE	Private	Private	Private	Private (Listed)
Year of birth	1967	1956	1966	1969	1956	1972	/	1962	1946	1966	1946
Educational background	PhD	PhD	Master's degree	Master's degree	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	/	Master's degree	Primary school	Junior middle school	Primary school
Year of establishment	1997	1990	1990	1996	1982	1996	2003	1991 1995 (factory director)	1984	1995	1987
Positions held	Founder and current Chief Faith Officer and Chairman of TW	Participated in the establishment of GD, currently Chairman and General Manager	Founder of ZX, currently Executive Director and General Manager	Founder of FT, currently Chairman and President	Led the joint-stock reform of TY in 2002, currently Lifetime Honorary Chairman	Founder of LT Environmental; current Party Branch Secretary and Chairman of LT Charity	Vice Chairman and CEO of QD since 2014	Factory Manager of JB in 1995, currently Party Secretary and Chairman of JB Group	Founder of XYL, Chairman of the Supervisory Board, former Chairman	Founder of PDL, Chairman and General Manager	Founder of FY, Chairman, former General Manager
Number of employees	500+	2800+	4000+	16000+	1400+	100+	450+	1200+	30000+	7000+	27000+
Social organizations or academies founded	Smei Academy	Academy of Family-like Organizational Culture	Happy Enterprise Alliance	FT Cultural Research Institute	TY Academy	LT Happiness Culture Charity Foundation	Morality Lecture Hall Platform	Le'an Filial Piety Foundation	XYL Night School	/	Established He Ren Charity Foundation
Corporation mission / vision / core values:	- Cultivate virtuous and talented individuals for society, uphold integrity and humility / Become a school-like enterprise practicing Confucianism / Firmly believe in cause and effect, practice disciple rules	- Pursue both material and spiritual happiness for all employees, contribute to human and social progress / Bring sage culture to the world to benefit mankind / The value of the enterprise lies in employees' happiness and customer satisfaction	- Pursue both material and spiritual happiness for all employees, contribute to human and social progress / Bring sage culture to the world to benefit mankind / The value of the enterprise lies in employees' happiness and customer satisfaction	For the happiness of all families / Become a great enterprise (Customer satisfaction, employee growth, social righteousness, business sustainability) / Integrating personal, enterprise, and product qualities	Build a self-reliant and harmonious TY for a century-long business / Create a world-class construction company / Help others succeed	Healthy water for more people (LT Environmental); Heng Qü Four Principles (LT Charity) / "Good water benefits the body, and culture nourishes the mind" (LT Environment); Wish everyone health and happiness (LT Charity) / Ultimate charity is about saving the soul (LT Charity)	People-oriented, safety first, corporate culture embedded in enterprise management, pursue excellence / Motivated employees, thriving business and harmonious society / Navigating challenges through self-reflections	Make satisfactory products for customers, cultivate talents for society / Be the most socially responsible and beneficial enterprise. Leave a sustainable business platform for posterity / Integrity, dedication, improvement, altruism	Let employees realize their self-worth, enjoy a successful life / Employee health and happiness; enterprise longevity / Pursue value maximization, not profit maximization	Spread progressive cultural concepts / Cultivate a sound personality, achieve a sunny character in life / Promote good, avoid evil	Make auto glass for Chinese people, and "FY Global" / Develop oneself, benefit the world / Hardworking, down-to-earth, learning, innovation
Representative instances	Adopted a "51-25-24" corporate governance structure; educate and employ rehabilitated and troubled young people; actively participate in rural construction	Built a happy enterprise through eight modules; acquired a struggling company in Malaysia, bringing the family-like organizational culture overseas	Learned the Inamori Philosophy, developed "ZX Precision Philosophy Manual", pursue "elevating mindset and broadening operations"	Created "Five Ones Happiness Method": set an ambition, read a scripture, correct a mistake, practice filial piety, do a good deed daily. Acclaimed as a modern "Confucian businessman"	Positioned the workplace as "school" and "home"; organized "TY Good Wife of the Year" recognition	Established LT Happy Culture Charity Foundation based on managerial wisdom inspired by traditional culture	Each team incorporates "Disciple Rules" into practice, model of "family-like organizational culture" in the state-owned enterprise	Ranking among Top 500 Chinese companies, the Company set up subsidiaries with a mission to improve people's welfare; the N1N project has partnered with over 100 universities in a "business-university community"	Ranking among top 30 Chinese supermarkets, XYL upholds the core service concept of treating customers like friends; educates employees through "XYL People" magazine; helps them achieve self-worth	Educate employees about ethics through DL Lecture Hall to promote good cultural concepts externally and enhance social civility	Charity should foster capabilities for those who need assistance to better themselves. Personal donations reached 11 billion yuan by 2020. Financial donations are just a "minor aspect" of charity.

Source: Compiled by authors.

As we explored additional core domains amid deepening research, we finally conducted selective coding and developed "latent pattern" on the topic of "entrepreneurial spirit". Our researchers re-entered the above-mentioned eight enterprises for case study in July 2021, and carried out additional interviews on the "entrepreneurial spirit" topic to improve the "latent pattern". In addition, we developed an inter-data triangular test in the following format to ensure reliability of research: (1) interviews with company stakeholders. Stakeholders were asked to express opinions on the entrepreneurs in question under the condition of anonymity to test the authenticity and objectivity of the entrepreneur interview materials. (2) Combination of first-hand and second-hand materials. Data were accessed and compiled from official company websites, WeChat public accounts, internal magazines and relevant books to compare with first-hand information. (3) Carried out surveys, visits and observations at the companies, and wrote survey logs. We did not collect survey data from I, J and K samples since they were primarily used for the theoretical saturation test and their second-hand data provided sufficient data support. The data sources are shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Data Collection

Entrepreneur ID	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Interview on the *Tianxia* worldview	Sept. 10, 2016	April 3, 2016	Mar. 22~23, 2016	July 13, 2016	Mar. 20, 2020	Jan. 16~17, 2019	Sept. 28~29, 2019	July 12, 2019	Nov. 30~Dec.1, 2019	/	/
Supplementary interviews	Jan. 2, 2019; Feb. 16, 2020; Mar. 19, 2021	Dec. 27, 2020	Oct. 13, 2020; Jan. 11, 2021;	Oct.10 - 12, 2020	Jul. 27 - Jul. 28, 2021	Oct. 13, - Oct. 14, 2019; Apr. 10, 2021; Jul. 3, 2021	Jan. 13, 2021 - Jan. 19, 2021 On-site survey	Dec. 2, 2019 - Dec. 3, 2019; Apr. 7, 2021 - Apr. 19, 2021 On-site survey	Dec. 30, 2020 Telephone interview	/	/
Number of interviews with entrepreneur	9	2	2	2	2	4	2	1	1	/	/
Interviews with senior executives / employees / stakeholders	Senior executives (8); Employees (20); Entrepreneurs from the 512524 Alliance (1)	Senior executives (2); Head of Happiness Promotion Center (1); Employees (8); Company visitors (1)	Senior executives at the headquarters (2); senior executives at subsidiaries (3); HEAD OF CORPORATE CULTURE (1); employees (18)	Senior executive (1); President of FT University (1); Employees (6); Distributors (1); Visiting entrepreneurs (4)	Chairman of the Board of Directors (1); Director of Cultural Promotion Department (1); Secretary of the Party Branch (1)	Vice General Manager (1); Vice General Managers of LT Technology (2); Grassroots employees (4); Volunteers of LT Public Welfare (2)	Vice manager (1); cultural secretary (1); secretary of the party committee (1); HR supervisor (1); department managers (4); employees (4); contractors (1)	Senior executives at subsidiaries (8); Principal of JB Vocational School (1); Employees of subsidiaries (8); elderly people from Lüyi Town Elderly Care Apartment (2); Le'an Cixiao Foundation (2)	Dean and Vice Dean of the Training Academy (2); General Manager (1); HR and Talent Development Managers (2); Tellers (2)	/	/
First-hand info (minutes)	661	860	823	692	893	961	1,021	1,357	880	/	/
First-hand info (words)	79320	121260	135795	110922	14992	154086	160884	218538	124382	/	/
Primary sources of second-hand info	Company's official WeChat account, internal publication *Practitioner*, entrepreneur A's speech materials, etc.	Company's official WeChat account, "2016-2020 corporate social responsibility report", company promotional video, etc.	Company's official WeChat account, "ZX Philosophy Handbook", internal publication "ZX Home", etc.	Company's official WeChat account, books "FT Confucianism", "FT Culture", etc.	Company's official WeChat account, internal meeting materials, etc	Company's official WeChat account, Evergreen Business course materials, etc.	Company's official WeChat account, corporate culture development plan, five-level coordination, and other internal materials	Company's official WeChat account, corporate social responsibility report, JB internal publication"The Way of the Heart", etc.	Company's official WeChat account, employee publication "XYL People", Book "30 Years of XYL", etc.	Company's official website, Donglai Bro's meeting records column, "Pang Donglai Cultural Philosophy Handbook", etc.	2016-2020 Social Responsibility Report, *Kind Heart Like Bodhi: An Autobiography* by Cao Dewang, etc.

Table 2 Continued

Entrepreneur ID	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Second-hand info (words)	23896	67655	13469	125000	22533	37894	14177	184285	268724	145470	314736
On-site observation	Observations at enterprises	GD factory area, employee dormitories, etc. (2 times)	Dongguan Subsidiary (2 times); Ningbo Xingrui headquarters (3 times)	Visit to Group Headquarters; FT cultural experience camp	Visit to TY Group's green environmental technology company	Participate in LT's fourth evergreen business class for entrepreneurs	Visit to Qüjing Power Plant	Visits to 8 core subsidiaries of JB Group	Visit to XYL Huanghua Store	/	/
Number of codes	334	217	284	344	220	338	214	333	255	208	225

Source: Compiled by authors.

3.4 Data Coding and Data Analysis

3.4.1 Open coding

Our researchers created a database on entrepreneurial spirit. They examined the text materials of eight samples word for word and labeled each instance with a key word, such as a1, a2, a3, and so on. Based on the division of concepts, the key words were clustered and classified to produce more conceptual domains, which were labeled A1, A2, A3, and so on. Each conceptual domain expanded as a result of ongoing data collection, compilation, comparison, and analysis. The concepts were then further divided into main domains, denoted as AA1, AA2, AA3, and so on. Following this approach, we obtained 1,469 codes consisting of 134 first-order, 34 second-order, and 12 third-order concepts, which we compared and integrated based on events and domains to identify their characteristics and implications. This resulted in the creation of three primary domains with the most explicit code hierarchies and event clues, denoted as B1, B2, B3, and so on. During the open coding stage, the three main domains were defined in terms of an entrepreneur's relationships with himself, others, and nature, reflecting the philosophies of self-improvement, assisting others to achieve, and man and nature as one.

3.4.2 Selective Coding

Following a study of the domains from the previous stage, our researchers discovered a progressive link between the three major domains. The "assisting others to achieve" domain includes an entrepreneur's relationship with employees, customers, suppliers, government officials, communities, and the general public. There are also major variations in these relationships. Our researchers refined and adjusted the interview outlines to further our research and enrich the "latent pattern". They returned to the sites to collect data and determined the deeper motives, particularly those driving how entrepreneurs approached others, including all prospective stakeholders and non-stakeholders. The two data stages revealed a "latent pattern" that "one should put himself in the place of others", which is comparable to the classical scholar-bureaucrat ideal that "a wise man should cultivate himself, manage his family, rule his nation, and eventually bring peace to the world". This clue clarified the narrative logic of the main domain. In total, we acquired 2,972 selective codes, 94 first-order, 18 second-order, and eight third-order concepts, as well as four main domains. At this point, we further improved the main domains gained from grounding in the previous stage by defining an entrepreneur's relationship with himself as "self-cultivation and moral conduct" and those with employees, business partners, and the masses/nature as "assisting employees to achieve", "multi-stakeholder symbiosis", and "the oneness of existence", respectively.

3.4.3 Theoretical Coding

We clarified the meanings of the four core domains and performed the final abstraction to determine the links between core domains and sub-domains. Such a relationship reveals the "latent pattern" that underpins the process of social behaviors under inquiry, which will be uncovered in our research (Wu

and Li, 2020). According to the findings of our researchers during their work, the four main domains not only embody the relationships between different objects at the four levels of an entrepreneur's relationships with himself, employees, business partners, the general public, and nature, but they are also linked in a progressive and evolving manner. Finally, the four main domains, i.e., "self-cultivation and moral conduct", "assisting employees to achieve", "multi-stakeholder symbiosis", and "the oneness of existence", reflect the logic of extension and evolution of the Chinese entrepreneurial spirit, and are elaborated around the core domain of the "*Tianxia* worldview". During the theoretical coding stage, we realized that such a "*Tianxia* worldview" did not develop overnight. Instead, entrepreneurs engaged in introspection and soul-searching about the purpose of life, transcended self-interested values, and translated their personal values and convictions into corporate actions. With a broad sense of responsibility, they took steps to protect their employees, business partners, communities, and the environment. Finally, their ideological pattern and dominant mindset advanced from "differential mode of association" to "*Tianxia* worldview". Thus, "*Tianxia* worldview", a new concept of Chinese-style entrepreneurship with local cultural characteristics, and its core characteristics are further analyzed and refined. On this premise, this study provides an in-depth exploration of the relevant breadth and theoretical border of the "*Tianxia* worldview" and the "differential mode of association" from the perspectives of intrinsic structure, spiritual core, and applicable groups.

4. Case Study and Research Findings

4.1 Domain 1: Self-cultivation and Moral Conduct

Entrepreneurs emphasized self-cultivation and ethical conduct through introspection. Their contemplation shifted from the meaning of their personal lives to the purpose of their businesses and their leadership identities. Such introspection is the starting point and most significant spiritual core for entrepreneurs as they transition from the "differential mode of association" to the "*Tianxia* worldview". This domain has two primary dimensions: "altruistic mission" and "gentlemanly demeanor". Table 3 shows instances of representative codes.

Table 3: Instances of Representative Codes for "Self-Cultivation and Moral Conduct"

Sub-domain	Concept	Example of representative codes
B1 Altruistic mission	AA1 Dual missions	A2 Maximizing social value: Everyone has only a few decades to live. Within our professions, skills, and perceptions, we should do what maximizes value, not what maximizes profit, and we should maximize our value of life by benefiting our stakeholders and contributing to the society. (LT-F-f284) A4 Dual purposes: We say that a great enterprise is not only an economic organization that needs to meet and create customers' demand; at the same time, it is also a social organization that needs to actively undertake social responsibilities, guide people to do good deeds, and promote the integrity, kindness, and beauty of human society. (FT-D-d16) A7 Lasting business: Let the business continue with a sense of mission and responsibility, and create a sustainable business platform for posterity. This platform should be sustainable, evolving, responsible and ever-lasting. Only in this way can we build our business at JB that lasts for generations. (JB-S-h163)
	AA2 Sincerity and moral self	A10 Avoiding selfishness: You should put aside your own fame, fortune, and self-interest in order to unleash your potentials. If you aim to succeed only for yourself rather than for others, it will be difficult for you to gain the energy and achieve good results. (ZX-C-c36) A14 Good deeds bring good results: The principle of causality is recognized in traditional Chinese culture, whether it's Confucianism, Buddhism, or Taoism. Confucianism says, "A family that accumulates goodness is sure to have abundant blessings; a family that accumulates wickedness is sure to have abundant misfortunes". According to Taoism, "The way of heaven shows no favoritism but always sides with the virtuous". It is proverbial in Buddhism that good deeds bring good results. (FT-D-d28) A15 Just do good deeds: Price fluctuates around value. Any wealth obtained not by providing real value is unreliable because one's virtue does not match one's position. If you make counterfeit goods or cut corners, the more powerful you are and the more wealth you obtain, "Wealth obtained wrongly will be lost wrongly". Therefore, follow the way of righteousness and don't be obsessed about the outcome. (LT-F-f104)

Table 3 Continued

Sub-domain	Concept	Example of representative codes
B2 Gentlemanly conduct	AA3 Perseverance	A16 Diligence and eagerness to learn: Entrepreneurship is a noble cause. First of all, one should have faith and be willing to read books, and be able to timely apply what one has learned into practical use. One should reach the state that Confucius said, "Isn't it a pleasure to study and practice what you have learned?" (FY-S-k154) A17 Be glad to hear criticism: We advocate that subordinates offer more opinions, especially critical ones, to their superiors. The opinions offered can help leaders correct mistakes and reduce errors. By doing so, we hope that leaders at all levels are open to criticism, because our chairman is a humble person. (XYL-Executive-i235) A20 Courage to innovate: Our company should draw upon from the virtues of traditional Chinese culture, and establish our distinct corporate culture to guide our daily operations in safety, production, operation, Party building, Party conduct and clean governance, "7S" management, and team development. (QD-G-g53)
	AA4 Setting virtuous examples	A21 Introspections: "A true cultivator of the Tao does not see the faults of the world". Traditional culture is an inward study that requires self-discipline rather than changing others. All Western management philosophies are about managing others, while management in the Oriental culture is more about managing oneself. (TW-A-a149) A22 Unity of knowledge and action: Study and regularly practice what you've learned. Only by continually learning and putting it into practice can you truly benefit. Otherwise, you'll remain stuck in theoretical knowledge, treating it merely as scholarship, which is what I refer to as "studying Confucianism' rather than 'practicing Confucianism". (QD-G-g9) A23 Virtue should match position: a person's moral character or virtue must be commensurate with the position or status they hold. Status and power are not for flaunting but for securing the welfare of the people. As a manager, do not think about how to show off your authority or seek personal gain through your position. Instead, you should genuinely strive to benefit the people and employees. (JB-S-h92) A24 Teach by words and deeds: To promote traditional culture, Chairman D will use every opportunity to discuss the Confucian way of management. (FT-S-d287)

Source: Compiled by authors.

Entrepreneurs may start their businesses because they are unsatisfied with the status quo, wish to establish themselves and demonstrate their worth, or desire financial freedom. Regardless of the motivation, once those entrepreneurs reach financial security and achieve their initial objectives, they adopt other ambitions and pursuits in life. This method is consistent with Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. As the proverb goes, "The wealthy pursue etiquette", and those entrepreneurs have all contemplated the meaning of their lives. "When a person passes away, their tombstone will not mark how much money they made but what they did for humanity and nature" (GD-B-b17). This reflection on the meaning of life prompted entrepreneurs to reconsider the purpose and mission of their companies. Finally, they embraced altruism as their purpose, describing their company's mission as creating both economic and social value. This is referred to as the dual missions of entrepreneurs (AA1) in this study. Social mission is the pursuit of social goals by entrepreneurs (Short et al., 2009) and is regarded as an essential requirement for social entrepreneurship (Bruder, 2021). However, we discovered that entrepreneurs first founded their enterprises based on market logic, but over time, they gradually reconstructed the meaning of their personal life and the mission of their companies. This procedure demonstrates the dual objectives of economic and social responsibilities. In essence, it demonstrates the integration, balancing, and convergence of social and market logics. This fusion not only allows for the spontaneous integration of instrumental and value-driven principles within organizations, but it also promotes long-term business decisions and socially responsible behaviors (Xiao, 2020). The accomplishment of a dual objective is inextricably tied to entrepreneurs' self-development and prosocial motives. Prosocial motivation is the desire to put out effort for the benefit of others (Grant, 2008). Those entrepreneurs prioritize the legitimacy of their motivations and actions, preferring to do the right thing over pursuing material or profit-driven objectives. They often cite the motto "do good deeds without seeking rewards" to ensure that their actions are genuine and principled (AA2). The dual missions and sincerity define the basic characteristics of entrepreneurs as moral beings. Because the primary reason for entrepreneurs developing those attributes is the activation of their altruistic impulses, this study classifies it as an altruistic purpose (B1).

"A gentleman should constantly strive for self-perfection as heaven maintains vigor through movement, and should be cultivated to become tolerant as the earth bears everything on it". As moral leaders, entrepreneurs exhibit the core characteristics of "gentlemanly demeanor" (B2), as demonstrated by their spirit of relentless self-improvement, innovation, and refinement (AA3), as well as their awareness of leading by moral example: "If a leader is upright, others will follow without command; if not, they will not obey even with orders" (AA4). In management and economics studies, entrepreneurs are often defined as a central economic element, with the innovative spirit serving as a key characteristic. As a result, social ideals and responsibilities are viewed as essential to social entrepreneurship (Bruder, 2021). Entrepreneurs' "gentlemanly demeanor" accentuates an awareness of social responsibility and moral principles, in addition to an innovative power achieved through "relentless pursuit of self-perfection". More crucially, entrepreneurial innovations are driven by the desire to create philanthropic value while generating income through the fulfillment of ideals. In this way, Chinese entrepreneurs have combined commercial success and social benefit, demonstrating a public-interest entrepreneurial mentality (Chen et al., 2021).

Entrepreneurs adhere to an "altruistic mission" as a moral individual and "gentlemanly demeanor" as an ethical leader. These characteristics define his relationship with himself, i.e., self-cultivation and moral conduct (BB1). Self-cultivation encompasses self-discipline and self-improvement. The Confucian classic *The Great Learning* sets forth the idea that "self-cultivation is the root of everything", which is critical for a wise man to "possess the character and wisdom of a sage and rule his country as a king for the benefit of his people". Virtue is recognized as a fundamental component of outstanding traditional Chinese culture, and is extensively observed in studies of Chinese leadership behaviors. Based on the ancient Confucian paradigm of "self-cultivation and bringing peace to others", Zhu et al. (2019) created the concept of Chinese ethical leadership, which has two dimensions: "moral person" and "ethical manager". This ethical leadership notion offers a distinct perspective on comprehending the leadership model with Chinese characteristics. Chinese entrepreneurs, mindful of the virtues of "self-cultivation and moral conduct", consistently cultivate themselves while setting examples for others. They incorporate a sense of social mission and altruistic motive into the meaning of their life and business goals, combining self-interest with righteousness at a higher level of values beyond the single-minded focus on a market or economic orientation.

4.2 Domain 2: Entrepreneurs' Relationship with Their Employees: Assisting Employees to Achieve

The commitment to assisting employees to achieve greater success for themselves is an extension and evolution of Chinese entrepreneurs' "*Tianxia* worldview". This commitment is an ideological and behavioral embodiment of an entrepreneur's relationship with his employees. The "assisting employees to achieve" domain has two dimensions: "employee care and ethical guidance" and "employee happiness and growth".

Our grounded research found that these entrepreneurs reconstructed their relationships with employees around their identities as "ruler, parent, and teacher". In those identities, they instrumentalized their companies, adopted a family-like management style, and positioned them as schools, respectively. According to one entrepreneur's remarks, "In our traditional culture, an entrepreneur is supposed to not just lead, but care about everyone else and serve as an educator who instills correct values and positive corporate culture" (LT-F-f331). In their leadership roles, those entrepreneurs highly respect their employees' subjectivity (AA7). Employees, in their opinion, are first and foremost people, and they represent the company's purpose rather than an instrument for achieving corporate goals. Instead, the company should be used to help employees realize their full potential. By communicating its corporate culture and transforming the workplace, the company can foster in its employees a sense of purpose and value. Entrepreneurs genuinely care about the wellbeing of their employees (AA5) and treat them with paternal care in their role as a "head of family". As the dominant culture in Chinese society, family culture has an enduring influence on Chinese businesses. Research on parental-style leadership (Farh

Table 4: Example of Representative Codes for "Assisting Employees to Achieve"

Sub-domain	Concept	Example of representative codes
B3 Care and ethics	AA5 Care for employees	A27 Interest distribution: The Company implements an employee stock ownership system. Everyone from the cleaning staff to the vice president is given a certain number of dividend shares, though the amounts vary. This is because, at FT, everyone creates value. (FT-D-d87) A28 Parental care: He treats employees just like parents treat their own children. When solving a problem, think about how you would treat your own children. Then you not only set a good example but more importantly, give them the correct guidance, teach them, and give them skills so that they can constantly strive to become stronger. (GD-B-b52) A29 Care and mentoring: Caring for employees means to meet their needs and desires; mentoring means to develop employees' character, manage their desires, and make their desires more reasonable, moderate, and altruistic. (FT-D-d341)
	AA6 Employee ethics	A30 Cultivation of filial piety: To revive traditional culture, we must start with employees, teach them to be filial to their parents because "filial piety is the foremost of all virtues". Employees should be made to understand that "Harmony in the family leads to success in everything". They should know what it takes to be a good mom and a good wife. (GD-B-b25) / Staff in all departments should set an aspiration, read a classic, correct a mistake, care for their parents, and do a good deed every day. (FT-D-d165) A33 Expressing both kindness and strictness: Criticism can be expressed in a way that makes the person feel loved because such criticism means well. Criticism delivered with good intentions and compassion is more likely to be well-received by employees. (ZX-C-c76)
	AA7 Respect the subjectivity of employees	A34 Restore the subjectivity of employees: The discipline of human resources management appeared in the industrial age, when people were treated as a "resource" like machines, buffalos, and horses. This animalistic attitude treated people as resources with cost. By creating a department devoted to employee happiness and volunteering, we aimed to dispel this old notion and encourage our staff to love what they do. (TW-A-a305) A35 Sense of mission: From our merit accumulation system to the Little Droplet, our intention is that everyone should benefit others through self-management. (LT-F-f169) A36 Reshaping jobs: The environmental protection industry is a virtuous business. Employees should be instilled a sense of sanctity about what we do, and develop a sense of pride and confidence. (TY-E-e78) A37 Organizational instrumentalization: Everything we do right now, our goal is to empower people, including our employees and others, and TW is the vehicle, not the goal. What kind of aspiration is this? It is to make everyone live a worthy life and make the world better. (TW-A-a135)
B4 Employee happiness and development	AA8 Five aspects of happiness	A38 Material happiness: We must enrich our employees and make them feel proud. (TY-E-e29) A39 Health management: The Company's executives all have private general practitioners. In the past, some executives passed away due to hypertension, diabetes, excessive cholesterol, or car accidents, which is why smoking and alcohol are banned. This ban is well-intentioned for everyone's benefit. Their importance to health management has left me with a good impression. (JB-Survey Log-h35) A40 Inspiring conscience: TY is a home, a school, and a platform. Its essence is education and enlightenment. Wealth, fame, and fortune are not what TY pursues. The only purpose is to enlighten and inspire a happy life. The family-like organizational culture has awakened the inherent virtue of employees, stimulated their inner strength. Everyone's kindness, passion, innovation, hard work, responsibility, and dedication have also driven the development of the enterprise. (TY-E-e47) A41 Family harmony: "In my husband's eyes, I am a virtuous wife. In my mother-in-law's eyes, I am a filial daughter-in-law. In my son's eyes, I am a great mother. All of this stems from the education and cultivation I have received at XYL in the past 11 years". (XYL-Employee-i142) A42 Spiritual happiness: The workplace is positioned as "a school for learning, a class for working, and a home for living". Give more humanistic care to the teams and grassroots employees, so that employees have a sense of belonging to the team and the enterprise, thereby achieving "employee happiness" as part of the Company's mission. (QD-G-g91)
	AA9 Combination of virtue and talent	A43 Realize value: The purpose of business operations is to encourage employees to achieve a successful life, and a life that is beneficial to society, oneself, and without regrets is a successful life. (XFL-Culture Manual-i169) A44 Possessing both virtue and talent: Virtue means the cultivation of character, and talent means the cultivation of competence. (PDL-G-g133)
	AA10 Cultivate talent for the country	A45 Patriotic education: Only with a country can there be a home. At the beginning of each month, we hold a flag-raising ceremony. Through such ceremonies, we deepen our love for our homeland, our company, and our family. (GD-Employee-b165) A46 Respect employees' personal aspirations: Everyone has their own ambitions. Employees should be allowed go if they choose to pursue their goals. (JB-H-h269) A47 Cultivate talent for the country: Enlighten people with culture, educate people with virtue, and cultivate talent for the country. (TY-E-e200) / The greatest responsibility of an enterprise to its employees is to cultivate them into people beneficial to society, achieving filial piety to society. (JB-H-h322) A48 Encourage employees to "care for the elders of others as we do for our own; care for the children of others as we do for our own" by volunteering at nursing homes and kindergartens. Employees pay with their own money and do it in their spare time. More than 80% of the company's employees have signed up as volunteers now. (Person in charge of GD-Happiness Culture Promotion Center-b95)

Source: Compiled by authors.

and Cheng, 2000) and supra-familism (Chao et al., 2022) indicated the legitimacy and universality of entrepreneurs acting as "heads of a big family" in China's local management practices. In their role as educators, Chinese entrepreneurs place a high value on teaching their employees moral values (AA6), developing a sense of filial piety, and promoting traditional culture in order to exercise a subtle influence on them. Within the Western setting, coaching leadership emphasizes the role of leaders as "coaches", with a focus on assisting employees to achieve and enhancing their competency through interactions, inspirations, encouragement, and empowerment (Wang et al., 2016). As such, there is a fundamental difference in form and purpose between Western coaching leadership and how Chinese entrepreneurs educate their staff on the value of ethics, competence, and all-round development (Cheng et al., 2019). Furthermore, they combined compassion with integrity (B3), ensuring that staff are educated while feeling valued. The goal is to increase their happiness, maximize their potential, and foster talent for society. In this study, we refer to this aim as "employee happiness and development" (B4). Employee happiness, an essential topic in management, includes a sense of life happiness, job satisfaction, and psychological wellbeing (Zheng et al., 2015). In our case studies, the "five senses of happiness" that entrepreneurs aim to provide to employees (AA8) correspond closely to Chinese people's feelings of happiness. These "five senses of happiness" include: material fulfillment, health management, conscience, family harmony, and psychological wellbeing are associated with fortune, longevity, morality, tranquility, and a sense of belonging in traditional Chinese culture, respectively. After receiving the "five blessings", employees aspire to seek self-development and reach their full potential. The combination of ethics and competence (AA9) refers to assisting employees in improving their ethical conduct and professional competence so that they can maximize their potential. It is also a manifestation of entrepreneurs who seek self-improvement while assisting their staff in reaching their full potential not only as corporate members, but also as citizens for the greater good. They genuinely encourage their employees to advance their careers wherever they work and contribute to the country (AA10). For example, TW established a company tenet to "cultivate great talent and upright, ethical and competent persons for the society".

As Confucius stated, "the man of virtue, while establishing himself and pursuing success, also works to establish others and enable them to succeed as well", and "a gentleman helps others fulfill good deeds". In this study, we refer to the process in which entrepreneurs care for and educate employees about ethics in order to enhance their happiness and development as "assisting employees to achieve" (BB2). This means that entrepreneurs see employees as the subject and purpose, rather than a "resource" for achieving company goals. Some entrepreneurs, inspired by Mencius's philosophy that "the people are more important than the monarch", devised a "51:25:24" corporate governance model, which states that "while ensuring the company's funds for sustainable future development, 51% of the remaining profit should be dedicated to public-interest programs, 25% should be distributed to employees, and only 24% should be left to directors and executives" (TW-A-a166). The people-centered value statement that "everyone can become a sage", which views employees as family members and cares about their wellbeing and development, aligns with the important trends of "decentralization" and "de-leadership" (Hao et al., 2021). Meanwhile, entrepreneurs cultivate their staff not only for corporate reasons, but also to cultivate talent for the country and society, expressing their broad vision that their own fates are inextricably linked to their country.

4.3 Domain 3: Entrepreneurial Relationships with Partners (Corporate Ecosystem Governance): Multi-Stakeholder Symbiosis

Entrepreneurs believe that they (or their companies) have a mutually beneficial connection with business partners. Such reflections and behavioral manifestations of multi-stakeholder symbiosis are an extension of their "*Tianxia* worldview", which is expressed in two main dimensions: "value creation" and "cultural empowerment". Table 5 shows instances of representative codes. Business partners include corporate clients, suppliers, dealers, and even peer companies.

Table 5: Example of Representative Codes for "Symbiotic Partnerships"

Sub-domain	Concept	Example of representative codes
B5 Value creation	AA11 Seek perfection	A51 Conscience innovation: All industrial companies must prioritize altruism in their daily operations. Without an altruistic mindset, it is impossible to have a genuinely positive and innovative drive. (JB-S-h150) A52 Exceed Expectations: Benevolence starts with being user-centric and surpassing user expectations. If this cannot be achieved, the business will run into problems. Exceeding customer expectations involves creating an unparalleled user experience with exceptional products and services. (FT-S-d264)
	AA12 Win-win results for all stakeholders	A53 Win-win relationships: If you go all out to maximize profits, your business partners will feel the squeeze. We should pursue a win-win relationship. (FY-D-d93) / Supplier interaction principle: If I profit but the customer does not, the customer will not stay; if my profit is large and the customer's is small, the customer will not stay long; if the customer and I profit equally, the customer can stay long, and so can my profit. (XYL-Executive-i90) / Upstream and downstream partners: Our upstream partners and downstream partners are connected to achieve mutual integration and win-win. (JB-S-h28) A54 Reasonable profit: Product prices should be reasonable to ensure good quality with reasonable returns. (PDL-S-j51) / Procurement principle: We never ask our procurement staff to target at the lowest bids. Instead, procurement prices should be reasonable (XYL-I-i91) A56 Assisting partners: When building business relationships, we try to empower our partners through integrating resources and developing platforms. Our success comes naturally when we help our partners succeed. (JB-Executive-h271) A57 Respecting competitors: Peer companies are strategic partners with a competitive relationship with us. (JB-Executive-h174). Malicious competition does not create wealth for society; it only consumes wealth. Instead of "defeating our competitors", XYL is focused on "improving our own competence". (XYL-S-i75)
B6 Cultural empowerment	AA13 Treating customers as friends	A58 Customer-centric sales: Help customers buy what is right, not what is expensive; what is suitable is the best. (PDL-Employee Handbook-j50) A59 Concept transmission: When selling new energy cars, auto dealerships promote green lifestyles as a virtue in our traditional culture. (TY-S-e142) A60 Customer happiness: We must also promote Chinese culture that underscores the importance of a fulfilling and happy life for our customers. This requires a cultural touch to our products and services. (FT-D-d11)
	AA14 Improve market environment	A61 Ethical collaboration: The Company places great importance on ethics and moral education, combining the concept of causality from traditional Chinese culture with the core values of socialist core values. Only when employees believe in those principles will they refrain from corruption not just for fear of the consequences but more importantly, because of their faith. (GD-Social Responsibility Report-b178) A62 Fostering an environment of trust: Are we selling products or serving our customers? We are here for people, to build trust between individuals, and to help society solve trust issues. (LT-F-f135) A63 Empowering the industrial chain: FT has launched a cultural experience camp project specifically for dealers for them to learn about and believe in FT's corporate culture, enhance their motivation, resonate with FT, and work together with branch offices to practice the culture for better performance. (FT-S-d77)

Source: Compiled by authors.

In terms of customers, those entrepreneurs contend that "the value of an enterprise lies in creating value for customers". (ZX-C-c156) "Our success is determined by customer satisfaction. This is the core of corporate development. We should put ourselves in the shoes of employees and customers". (JB-H-h179) With the pursuit of excellence (AA11), they endeavor to improve product quality and create products and services that exceed consumer expectations through conscience-driven innovations. They truly help upstream suppliers expand their businesses and treat competitors with respect. They believe there are no fundamental conflicts of interest among partners. They are against "maximizing the interests of one party". As a result, they set appropriate product prices, respect partners' reasonable profit margins, and seek win-win situations for all parties (AA12). Overall, they follow the value principle of win-win for all parties and add genuine value to partners by aiming for excellence. This is further summarized in the study as value creation (B5). Enterprises highlight that their own worth can only be realized through "value creation" for partners, demonstrating the wisdom of "harmony" in traditional society. The essence of "harmony culture" is "harmony without uniformity", and may even find expression in the equilibrium, coordination, and unification among contending entities (Wang and Guo, 2012).

Entrepreneurs also actively empower their partners culturally (B6). "Empowerment" refers to positive energy. "People with deep love in their hearts have good intentions and avoid evil. They tend to be enthusiastic, cheerful, upbeat, and courageous. Such folks have greater vitality and can infect those around them". (FT-S-d323) They see consumers as friends (AA13), assist customers in developing a rational consumer concept through "well-intentioned sales", and communicate cultural values through products to increase customer satisfaction. Furthermore, they emphasize honest collaboration with suppliers and empower the entire industrial chain through cultural dissemination (AA14), so that partners no longer "focus on their own interests and the radius of enterprise interests", thereby driving the transformation of the entire market environment. This is also a critical shared value foundation for win-win situations for all parties with mutual benefits through long-term cooperation.

Through value creation and cultural empowerment, entrepreneurs have established a "multi-stakeholder symbiotic relationship" (BB3) between their companies and their partners. Definition of "multi-stakeholder symbiosis": "Through cooperation with partners, the top priority is always to create value for the other party, and one's own value is obtained only when the value of the partner is realized; a company should empower the supply chain through culture, encourage partners to establish a value concept of co-creation and sharing, and build a symbiotic and prosperous business ecosystem, thereby optimizing the market environment and promoting social harmony". With the advancement of digital technology, organizational boundaries are blurring, allowing businesses and diverse stakeholders to conduct open connections and interactive involvement more effectively. Organizational relationships are shifting from competition to symbiosis (Morgan-Thomas et al., 2020), and developing a symbiotic relationship is an important strategy for organizations seeking competitive advantages, coping with an uncertain environment, and capitalizing on entrepreneurial opportunities (Lu et al., 2021). However, contemporary research mostly investigates the impact of external contexts such as the market and institutions on symbiotic relationships (Pan and Lin, 2019). According to Adner (2017), the essence of symbiosis is the co-creation of value based on a shared knowledge of value orientation. The "symbiotic logic" in this study is primarily portrayed as "value creation" for society by companies and "cultural empowerment" for the business ecosystem.

4.4 Domain 4: Entrepreneurs' Relationship with Society and the World (Patriotism and Benefits for the World): the Oneness of Existence

"The oneness of existence" refers to entrepreneurs' reflections and behavioral manifestations of their relationships with the public, the natural environment, and everything else in the world. It broadens the entrepreneurial mindset. "The oneness of existence" has two dimensions: "benefiting society" and "the oneness of existence". Table 6 shows examples of representative codes.

For public welfare, those entrepreneurs have included many persons who were thought to be unrelated to their corporate interest into the scope of care. In a broader sense, they genuinely benefit society through an altruistic mission (B7). As Entrepreneur D stated, he hopes that "through the power of the enterprise, I'll strive to change the lives of people who have no interest relationship with me. My meaningful actions aim to benefit unrelated people, exert a positive influence on others, and spread some positive attitudes". (FT-D-d99) There are two types of ways that entrepreneurs help the public: First, offer material aid to create value for the recipients, i.e. donation and assistance (AA15). Second, convey positive attitudes to the whole public and enlighten individuals morally (AA16). Second, when it comes to the natural environment, entrepreneurs contemplate the relationship between humans and nature, as well as everything else in the world, and actively practice environmental conservation. The cultural basis of this is their tendency to consider of everything as an interrelated unity. "In Chinese traditional culture, everything is one. You and yourself, you and others, you and the environment, it is all one... We used to talk about sharing the same fate and breathing together. The COVID-19 pandemic exemplified this.

Table 6: Example of Representative Codes for "the Oneness of Existencel"

Sub-domain	Concept	Example of representative codes
B7 Contribute to society	AA15 Donation and assistance	A67 Rural development: My participation in the Happy Village Initiative in my hometown focuses on two aspects: fostering inner strength and caring for the elderly in terms of their physical and mental health. (ZX-C-c64) A68 Contributing to society: JB cares for its employees internally and gives back to society externally, and is committed to benefiting local communities as its business flourishes. JB aims to provide support for the elderly, education, and medical care for 500,000 people in Boxing County over the next 30-50 years, fulfilling its ambition of serving the country through industry. (JB-S-h68) A69 Fulfilling taxpayer obligations: When the company profits, it takes pride in paying more taxes and contributing to the country. (XYL-Executive-i36) A73 Caring for the elderly and young: The Binzhou Le'an Charity Foundation was established, expanding charity efforts for vulnerable groups such as the elderly and troubled youth under the "Silver Hair, Golden Youth" initiative. (JB-Executive-h240)
	AA16 Inclusive education	A74 Self-awareness and enlightening others (enterprises): Employees are beholden to and therefore willing to learn from entrepreneurs. Unlike schools, which teach but cannot enrich, enterprises provide employees with livelihoods and purpose. Enlightened entrepreneur represents a vital force in China. (ZX-C-c168) A77 Synergy between industry and education (schools): The Company has implemented an N1N initiative, which brings numerous universities and industries to the JB platform. The goal is to help universities improve the quality of education, benefit teachers, foster student growth, and enhance enterprise management. (JB-Research Log-h18) A78 Cultural revival (nation): Reviving traditional culture is not simply "copying" ancient classics but returning to the roots and creating new developments. By fully inheriting our traditions, we can develop a new Chinese culture, providing our people with faith and offering lasting spiritual motivation for economic development. (TY-E-e26) A79 Guiding people towards goodness (spiritual pursuit): Two years ago, we established TY's corporate academy as a platform of cultural promotion, learning and education not just for our employees but for the society at large. In my first half of life, I devoted myself to business. What is my aspiration for my second half of life? Education. (TY-E-e22)
B8 Interconnectedness	AA17 Environmental protection	A80 Green business: Green business includes green design, green manufacturing, green procurement, and green sales. (GD-B-b86) A81 Environmental innovation: To help restore the water quality of the Yellow River, the Company launched a project to make bricks from Yellow River sand. (JB-Survey Log-h27) A83 Resource recycling: Strive to create the largest renewable resource recycling park in Shanxi Province. (TY-S-e147) / Garbage is a misplaced resource. (JB-H-h281) A84 Cherishing resources: When students graduate from college, they leave behind books and daily necessities, which mostly end up as garbage. If we start using a charity market on campus, we can promote the concept of cherishing resources and encourage recycling. (LT-F-f265) A86 Respecting nature: Humans are insignificant and ant-like in front of Nature. A bucket of water spilled over ants is equal to a tsunami for humans. (JB-H-h138)
	AA18 Community with a shared future	A89 My connection with the world: The environment is my responsibility, and everything about my company is my responsibility. Everything is interconnected. No one is insulated from others. (TY-E-e125) A90 Unity of employees, company and society: Employee happiness, company development, and social harmony are interconnected. Employees are the cells of an enterprise, and the enterprise is a cell within society. When this cell is healthy, it naturally promotes the wellbeing of the enterprise and society. The state of unity I always talk about shows that all things are connected. (QD-H-h5) A91 Benefit for posterity: Our generation should create wealth for future generations. The more wealth for our posterity, the greater the virtue. (GD-B-b16) A93 World harmony: We want to tell the world that the realization of the Chinese Dream can benefit all countries because it is also a dream to promote harmony in the world. (GD-B-b9) A94 Promoting a community with a shared future: The fourth dimension of private enterprise management is to look beyond China and take a global vision of a community with a shared future for mankind. In the depth of the COVID-19 pandemic last year, we announced a vision to become a world-class eco-friendly business. (TW-A-a310)

Source: Compiled by authors.

The entire world is a community, and no one is immune. This is congruent with our previous references to harmony between environment and humanity, as well as the Chinese people's holistic outlook" (LT-F-f275). Environmental protection (AA17) and the promotion of a community with a shared future (AA18) jointly define the relationship between entrepreneurs and nature, and even all things in the world, which is summarized in this study as "all things as one" (B8).

Our surveyed entrepreneurs believe that "the oneness of existence" (BB4). They practice this belief

by improving social welfare through their deeds or business operations, protecting the environment, and fostering a "community with a shared future for mankind". As the saying goes, "every man has a duty to his country", the entrepreneurial notion that "the oneness of existence" means that entrepreneurs practice altruism to benefit the broader public beyond regular business considerations and the "stakeholder" domain. They provide donations and assistance to those in need, expand access to education, and contribute to environmental protection to maximize social value and promote sustainable development of human society, world harmony, and the realization of a community with a shared future. These behaviors are underpinned by their philosophy that "everything in the world is interconnected". Compared with "social responsibilities", "the oneness of existence" is a more scalable and broader concept as the "world" or "*Tianxia*" contains even non-stakeholders and the relationships of an entrepreneur with others, the nature and everyone else (such as shareholders, employees, creditors, suppliers, customers, government and social groups, the country, and the natural environment). Secondly, traditional practices of corporate social responsibility are rooted into the market logic of enterprises. Not only are those practices manifested as a classified governance model characteristic of the "differential mode of association", but those practices driven by market logic either discourage enterprises from fulfilling their social responsibilities or encourage them put on a phony show of philanthropy (Xiao and Yang, 2018). According to the "*Tianxia*" mindset, everything under heaven is interconnected with each other, and one must serve the common good (Zhao, 2015). With this broad mindset, corporate decision-makers avoid defining their relationship with stakeholders as antagonistic, and instead strive to establish coordinated, sustained and symbiotic relationships, fostering responsible corporate behaviors based on shared values to meet market needs while serving greater good for the society (Xiao, 2020).

5. Theoretical Construction

5.1 "Cultivate Himself, Manage His Family, Rule His Nation, and Bring Peace to the World": Evolution and Characteristics of Entrepreneurial Spirit with the "*Tianxia* Worldview"

The four core dimensions of "self-cultivation and moral conduct", "assisting employees to achieve", "multi-stakeholder symbiosis", and "the oneness of existence" correspond to the relationships of entrepreneurs with themselves, employees, business partners, the general public, and all things in the world. Starting with themselves, entrepreneurs continuously broaden their scope of assisting others. This evolution mechanism precisely aligns with the aspirations and code of conduct for traditional scholar-bureaucrats that a wise man should "cultivate himself, manage his family, rule his nation, and ultimately bring peace to the world", and echoes Mr. Fei Xiaotong's concept of "cultural consciousness" proposed in his later years: "cherish one's own beauty, respect other's beauty, and when both beauties are respected and cherished, the world will become one". The four domains of "self-cultivation and moral conduct", "assisting employees to achieve", "multi-stakeholder symbiosis", and "the oneness of existence" depict the progress of entrepreneurs' broadmindedness in treating others with care and respect. During theoretical coding, we identified and confirmed the core characteristics of the "*Tianxia* worldview" of entrepreneurs, including the mindset of "the oneness of existence" (inclusiveness) and the value orientation of "altruistic mission" (for the common good), as well as the behavioral logic of benefiting others by creating value to achieve material happiness and promoting educational inclusiveness to achieve spiritual happiness (as shown in Figure 2).

The "*Tianxia* worldview" has shaped the Chinese people's mentality and dominated their imagination of the world and the moral and civilized order. The political ideal that "the oneness of existence" also encompasses the ethical order that a man should "cultivate himself, manage his family, rule his nation, and ultimately bring peace to the world" (Liang, 2016), including the relational connotation of "inclusiveness" and the virtuous connotation of "common good" (Zhao, 2015). Among them, "inclusiveness" is manifested as a cognitive relationship of "the oneness of existence"

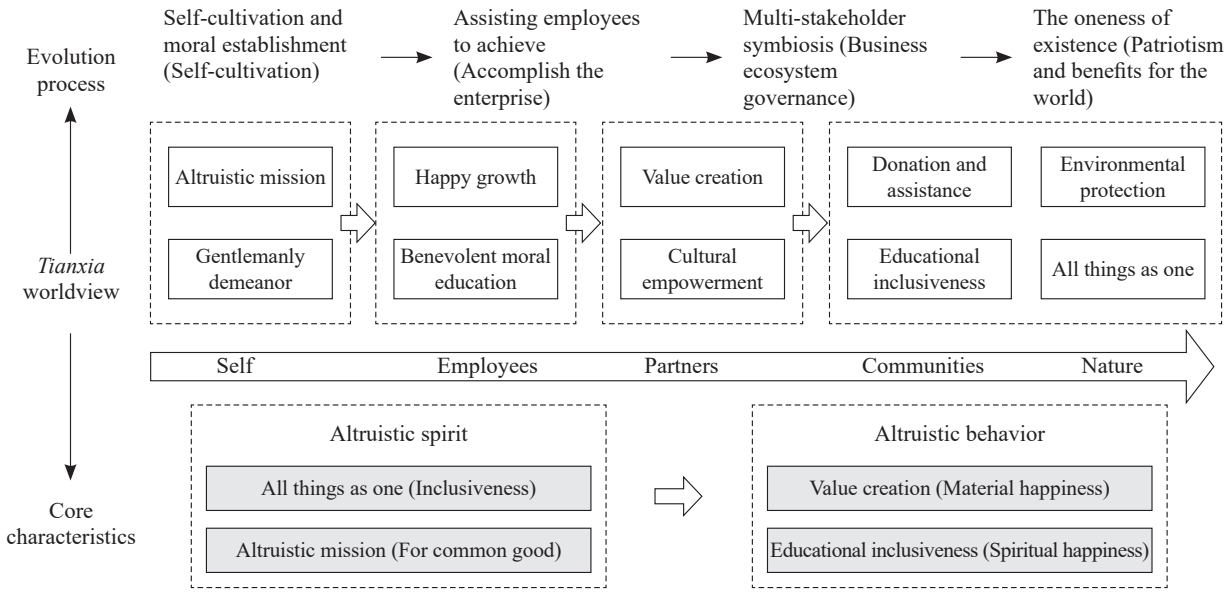

Figure 2: The Evolution Process and Characteristics of Entrepreneurial Spirit with the "*Tianxia* Worldview"

in the entrepreneurial spirit with the *Tianxia* worldview. Entrepreneurs recognize that there is a close relationship between themselves and others, and all natural things. They believe that only a harmonious and symbiotic mutual relationship conforms to the principle of universality and overcomes the false assumption of an antagonistic "self vs. others" relationship. Secondly, "common good" is reflected as an "altruistic mission" in the entrepreneurial spirit with the *Tianxia* worldview. "Common" refers to a virtue, a "benevolent way" for a king to rule his country (Zhang, 2011). It means that entrepreneurs need to "assist others to achieve" in order to "accomplish their own endeavors", and "extend consideration to others" in order to pursue their own worth to others and society. This pursuit is externalized through altruistic behaviors of "value creation" and "enlightenment", that is, the pursuit of the "material gains and spiritual happiness" (material happiness and spiritual happiness) of others as the specific behavioral manifestation of altruism. Apparently, this Chinese-style entrepreneurship with the "*Tianxia* worldview" reflects entrepreneurs' sense of responsibility and ethical orientation of "integrating righteousness and benefit".

5.2 Conceptual Definition of Entrepreneurship with the "*Tianxia* worldview"

5.2.1 Definition of "Tianxia"

"*Tianxia* (天下)" (all-under-heaven) was first conceived as a concept that transcends tribes and regions (Liang, 2016), and it over time expanded geographically from the "five zones of submission" to "nine zones of submission". In the *Tianxia* worldview, the "world" can be broadened in scope based on the growth stage of a company and its resourcefulness, which determine the extent to which entrepreneurs can be altruistic or benefit others. Just as the saying goes, "Cultivate yourself morally and spiritually when obscure, and dedicate yourself to the wellbeing of society when established". The minimum scope of *Tianxia* includes key stakeholders like employees and customers, whereas the maximum scope of *Tianxia* includes all human beings and the natural world in a community with a shared destiny, in which world harmony and sustainable development are highly valued. The difference lies in whether entrepreneurs embody the *Tianxia* ethos of "inclusiveness and common good" by developing partnerships with all stakeholders, broader communities, and nature. The "*Tianxia* spirit" is

exemplified by the mindset of "the oneness of existence" (inclusiveness) and the value orientation of "altruistic mission" (for the common good), which is central to contemporary Chinese entrepreneurial spirit.

5.2.2 Definition of "worldview (Gejü)"

The Chinese phrase "*Gejü*" (格局) means "structure and format" in its original sense, but it can also refer to a person's mind, realm, spiritual character, and behavioral pattern. Confucianism's "Eight Steps" (*The Great Learning*) clearly define the hierarchical progressive structure of "family, country, and the world". "*Tianxia*" is interpreted as a unity. This unity is a concentric circle structure that eventually expands from "self to family, country, and the world" for a person. In our entrepreneurship research, "*Gejü*" also refers to the concentric circle structure of entrepreneurs who "put themselves in the place of others", as manifested in the sequence that extends from "self-cultivation and moral conduct" to "assisting employees to achieve", "multi-stakeholder symbiosis", and "the oneness of existence" in dealing with oneself, employees, partners, society, and even all things in nature.

5.2.3 Definition of the "Tianxia worldview (天下格局)*"*

Based on the above analysis, this study considers the "*Tianxia* worldview" as a Chinese entrepreneurial spirit based on merits of traditional Chinese culture. It takes "the oneness of existence" (inclusiveness) and "altruistic mission" (for the common good) as the core of altruistic spirit to achieve "material satisfaction and spiritual happiness" for others, and encompasses a path to implement such values and ideals through four domains, including "self-cultivation and moral conduct", "assisting employees to achieve", "multi-stakeholder symbiosis", and "the oneness of existence", in that order

5.3 Differential Mode of Association and the *Tianxia* Worldview: Differences and Connections

5.3.1 Comparison between the "differential mode of association" and the "Tianxia worldview"

Structurally, the differential mode of association and the *Tianxia* worldview both exhibit a concentric circle structure beginning with oneself while differing in distance and sequence. The differential mode of association consists of a gradually outward expansionary process centered on oneself; the *Tianxia* worldview also depicts a gradual process of "extending consideration to others" from "self-cultivation to regulating the family, governing the enterprise, and benefiting the world". This is because differentiation is a natural and basic approach for any natural person (whether Chinese or foreign) to cope with and perceive their living environment (Su, 2017). Although "egoism" and the motto that a wise man should "cultivate himself, manage his family, rule his nation, and bring peace to the world" share apparent similarities of an extended view from oneself to the broader community, their rationales are conflicting (Zhai, 2009). In terms of the spiritual core, the differential mode of association has a self-interested orientation, and the process of outward extension is primarily guided by kinship (Fei, 2011). As a result, those who follow the "differential mode of association" attach varying degrees of importance to people from different circles. They tend to put their personal interests as the foundation and starting point, and the outward extension fades with the remoteness of relationship. The spiritual root of the *Tianxia* worldview is "inclusiveness and for the common good", which indicates an altruistic mindset. Those with the "*Tianxia* worldview" treat all groups within their boundaries equally, based on their mindset of "the oneness of existence". They follow the principle to "cultivate yourself morally and spiritually when obscure, and dedicate yourself to the welfare of society when established", and contribute to the society from near to far because it is simply their convenient path. Their genuine goal is to achieve "a better world for all". To further understand the differences between the two, this study undertakes a thorough comparison based on relevant groups, behavioral manifestations, spiritual core, and structural characteristics, as indicated in Table 7.

Table 7: Comparison between the "Differential Mode of Association" and the "*Tianxia* Worldview"

Comparative dimensions		Differential mode of association	***Tianxia*** worldview
Applicable groups	Traditional society	The commoner class in rural society	Scholar-bureaucrats such as an elite circle of literati and politicians; traditional merchants influenced by Confucianism
	Modern society	Farmers, workers, craftsmen and business owners	Entrepreneurs, politicians and scholars with broader ideals, social commitments and patriotic pursuits
Behavioral manifestations	Traditional society	"Self-interest takes precedence over family interest, family interest over Party interest, Party interest over national interest, and national interest above humanity's interest". (From The Differential Mode of Association by Fei Xiaotong)	"I wish to be the first to worry about the nation's woes and the last to share in its prosperity". (From *Yueyang Tower* by Fan Zhongyan, a scholar-reformer in the Song dynasty); "To ordain conscience for Heaven and Earth. To secure life and fortune for the people. To continue lost teachings for past sages. To establish peace for all future generations". (From *Western Inscription* by Zhang Zai)
	Modern business	Familism and pan-familism; differential leadership; phenomena such as circle culture; behavioral manifestations such as differentiating between the close and the distant, appointing people based on personal connections, harming others for personal gain, etc.	Beyond familism and altruistic behaviors; promoting material satisfaction through value creation and spiritual happiness through enlightenment
Approach to oneself		Centered on the "selfish / small self" that focuses on one's own interests	Starting with for "the common good / the greater self" that focuses on one's own moral cultivation
Spiritual core		Selfish orientation	Altruistic orientation
Structural traits		Concentric circles, differentiating between the close and the distant, following the logic of consanguineous ethics, becoming more diluted towards the outer circles	Concentric circles, treat everyone equally, start with the moral self, take universal harmony as the spiritual destination, and benefit society by extending concern to others through the convenient path of "cultivating oneself and establishing virtue", "assisting employees to achieve", "multi-stakeholder symbiosis" and "the oneness of existence".

Source: Compiled by authors.

5.3.2 Shift from the "differential mode of association" to the "Tianxia worldview" represents continuous transcendence of the individual spirit

As in the words of Liang (2005), the duality of Chinese culture is embodied in a close yet tense relationship between the moral ideal to promote "the common good" and the temptation to seek "self-interest" in the mainstream and marginal aspects of its tradition. This relationship is "ambiguous and murky". In its mainstream tradition, the Chinese culture advocates "selflessness" and "altruism" as the moral ideals of Confucianism; in its marginal tradition, the Chinese culture reflects the moral practices of most ordinary people in their daily lives (Chen, 2015). Such differentiation has led to the "dual ethical structure" for the moral choice of Chinese people between "self-importance" and "selflessness", which embodies a deep-rooted tension in the Chinese culture. One manifestation of such cultural tension is the "differential mode of association" versus the "*Tianxia* worldview". The "self" or center in the "differential mode of association" represents "selfishness" based on closeness of relations in the marginal cultural tradition; the "self" of the "*Tianxia* worldview" is a "broader self" that devotes to the promotion of common good, manifesting the basic framework of the Confucian social structure. In Confucianism, the ego is associated with human impulses and is an original, instinctive self; the greater self is the spiritually exalted self, reflecting public values, public concerns, and even the transcendent world. Individuals' worldviews shift as their spiritual pursuit evolves, transitioning from the "differential mode of association" to a "*Tianxia* worldview". In Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, this process is essentially compatible with the transition from low-level survival needs to high-level self-realization needs.

In China's distinctive social structure and context of "family-state unity", the self-realization of entrepreneurs is manifested in a unique sense of family-state unity, i.e., one should upon himself to serve the interests of the nation. As Shibusawa Eiichi stated in *The Analects and the Abacus*, when businesses grow, entrepreneurs recognize that the wealth of an individual person could not have been achieved without the support of his country and society. As a result, the more riches a person accumulates, the more grace he has received from the country, and it becomes natural to repay society through such deeds as helping those in need. According to Yu (2014), unlike the external transcendence consciousness in Protestant ethics that one should seek God's redemption, Confucian thought advocates that people fulfill their obligations within the patriarchal family clan system and "establish virtue, merit, and speech" for their families and the country in order to achieve internal transcendence in spirit. Following this rationale, entrepreneurs realize that they must "appear courteous as they become wealthy". Their focus of attention shifts from "self-interest" to seeking the "common good", while their corporate mission changes from a merely economic to a social purpose. This ideological shift from the "differential mode of association" to the "*Tianxia* worldview" represents not only the constant transcendence of the individual spirit, but sheds light on a distinct cultural path for comprehending Chinese-style entrepreneurship. Thus, the "differential mode of association" and the "*Tianxia* worldview" are not at odds with each other. There is a middle ground between them, and it takes a gradual process of ideological evolution transcendence for one to complete the shift from "differential mode of association" to the "*Tianxia* worldview".

5.4 CSR through the Lens of the Differential Mode of Association and the *Tianxia* worldview

5.4.1 CSR through the lens of the differential mode of association: economic logic embedded in CSR

Traditionally, companies have sought to maximize shareholder return as their primary purpose, which is achieved through market-based and commercial operations, price competition, and efficiency improvement. According to this logic, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is defined as a strategic behavior that improves company performance (Tang et al., 2012) or a social reaction behavior (Clarkson, 1995). The academic community has developed several models and scales for CSR practice and evaluation, including the concentric circle model (Sethi, 1979) and the pyramid model (Carroll, 1991). In the context of commercial enterprises promoting their CSR guidelines or codes of conduct under the "social constraint", academia and the business community have launched a CSR movement to standardize commercial enterprises' behaviors in response to external changes in regulatory and cognitive institutions (Albareda and Waddock, 2018). Scholars devised an "embedded CSR approach" with commercial enterprises as the obvious starting point for exercising social responsibility, implying that CSR should be incorporated in company rules and systems, daily management procedures, and social topics of business relevance. After reviewing scholars' efforts to define the concept of stakeholders since the 1960s, Jia and Chen (2002) concluded that due to the diversity and complexity of stakeholder interests, enterprises may only accommodate certain stakeholders in their CSR performance and cannot meet all of their demands. Mitchell (1997) proposed implementing a "classified governance" strategy. Chen and Jia (2004) classified stakeholders into three categories: core, dormant, and marginal, based on three criteria: initiative, importance, and urgency. However, such CSR programs primarily serve corporate economic goals. Not only do they manifest in the classified governance approach founded on the "differential mode of association", but they can also lead to insufficient CSR motivation or behavioral alienation (for example, phony charity) (Xiao and Yang, 2018).

5.4.2 CSR through the lens of the Tianxia worldview: a new breed of CSR for dual economic and social motivations

Benefit corporations ("B Corps"), as a new organizational form, seek to combine commercial profit and social responsibility (Hiller, 2013). B Corps make business decisions that reflect their social mission

without overemphasizing or abandoning their commercial purpose. B Corps have intricately interwoven and, in some cases, merged commercial and social objectives, demonstrating the duality of economic and social goals under the dual value orientation (Stubbs, 2017). Through introspections on their own value and purpose, as well as those of their companies, entrepreneurs with a "*Tianxia* worldview" create social value while pursuing economic value, transforming their enterprises into B Corps. For example, in our case study, FT's vision is to "become a great enterprise" by not only meeting customer demand but also actively fulfilling its social responsibilities and promoting integrity, kindness, and beauty in our society. Entrepreneurs' "*Tianxia* worldview" involves a conscious commitment to the principle that "the oneness of existence". With the core values of "inclusiveness and for the common good", those entrepreneurs have transformed CSR into an endogenous consciousness of their companies, offering an alternative to the standard CSR model, which is driven by external institutions. This new CSR performance model effectively overcomes alienated behaviors such as phony philanthropy (Fan et al., 2014) and rent-seeking (Xiao and Zhang, 2016), promoting the attainment of equal benefits for everyone under heaven.

Although B Corps have elevated CSR to their corporate missions, CSR implementation is typically challenging, involving tensions and dependencies between various stakeholder interests (Howard-Grenville et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2016). Currently, when applying the stakeholder theory to CSR, few research has explored how to navigate potential stakeholder conflicts (Wang et al., 2020). Faced with this problem, outstanding Chinese entrepreneurs first recognize, through deep contemplation on their relationship with the world, that enterprises, society, and the natural environment form an interrelated community with a common future. This mindset of "the oneness of existence" allows them to overcome the constraint of the "subject-object dichotomy" and avoid viewing the connection between companies and stakeholders as a zero-sum game. Second, those entrepreneurs consider "assisting others to achieve" as an expression of their own life value and believe in the principle that "altruism is self-interest". They used the methods of "value creation" and "moral enlightenment" to not only generate value for others and meet their wants, but also actively guide them to be good persons, promote ethics, and achieve "material satisfaction and spiritual happiness". This wisdom of practicing social responsibility not only benefits others but also encourages their autonomy and initiative to assume social responsibility and achieve continuous value co-creation, mutual benefit and symbiosis, and value sharing among all stakeholders (Xiao and Yang, 2018; Chao et al., 2019). Finally, in the *Tianxia* worldview of CSR, while entrepreneurs are committed to expanding the scope of their social responsibilities, they follow a step-by-step approach beginning with themselves and gradually expanding to employees, partners, the general public, and the natural world. This philosophy of "cultivating yourself morally and spiritually when obscure, and dedicating yourself to the wellbeing of society when established" spurs them to maintain an altruistic value orientation in the process of "extending consideration to others" while taking a step-by-step approach to ensure effective and sustainable CSR practices (see Figure 3).

5.5 The *Tianxia* Worldview: Chinese-Style Entrepreneurial Spirit

Business entrepreneurship, with innovation at its nucleus, has long held a prominent place in economics and management (Schumpeter, 2013). China's institutional evolution over the past 40 years of reform and opening up has primarily been a process of fostering and cultivating business entrepreneurs through institutional innovation. However, under the neoclassical economic paradigm, however, market-based business operations have given rise to persistent market failures involving externalities, public goods, information asymmetry, and insufficient market competition. There are numerous complaints, demands, and new expectations emerging in our society. Against this backdrop, the concept of social entrepreneurship emerged. Social entrepreneurship is defined as a moral approach to solving social problems (Chell et al., 2016) and characterized by the creation and innovation of solutions to pressing social challenges. However, social entrepreneurs face constraints such as limited financial resources and operational sustainability throughout the

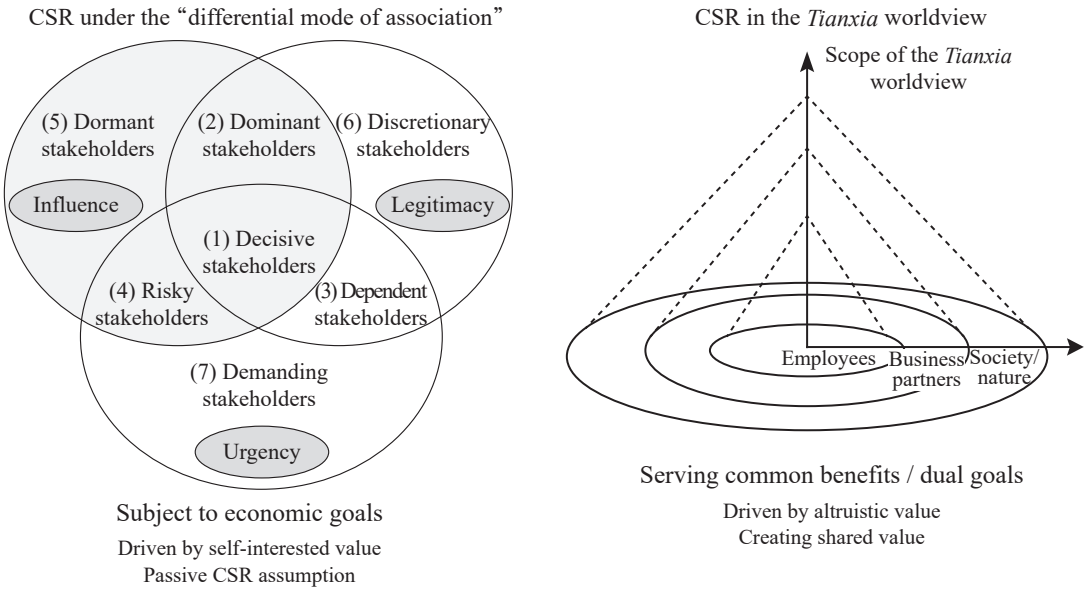

Figure 3: CSR through the Lens of the Differential Mode of Association and the *Tianxia* Worldview
Source: The left figure is from Chen and Jia (2004), while the right one was drawn by the authors.

organization's lifecycle (Bhatt et al., 2019; Gupta et al., 2020). Is there an entrepreneurial spirit that combines "business entrepreneurship" with "social entrepreneurship"? According to Chen et al. (2021), the spirit of "benefit entrepreneurs" necessitates achieving a balanced integration between business enterprises dominated by business entrepreneurship and social innovations and enterprises dominated by the social entrepreneurship for shared value creation and sustainable corporate performance.

The institutional logic theory (Thornton et al., 2012) emphasizes the influence of culture, informal institutions, and formal institutions. It posits that each institutional order contains both material and cultural components, and that entrepreneurship is influenced by logical rationality and cultural diversity in the organizational field. Institutional logics can be multifaceted: contemporary Chinese entrepreneurs can embrace the individual action logic of the market (seeking profits) while believing in the Confucian philosophies of righteousness versus self-interest, as well as responsibilities for all under heaven (Sun et al., 2019). The *Comprehensive Report on the Growth and Development of Chinese Entrepreneurs in 30 Years* demonstrates that the spiritual realm of Chinese entrepreneurs has been further elevated and that they are beginning to prioritize the broader wellbeing of humanity as China inaugurated a new stage of building a modern socialist country in all respects. While Chinese entrepreneurs continued to value integrity, dedication, and innovation since 2018, many more of them identify with values such as devotion, benefiting communities, social responsibilities and patriotism as their spiritual drive and motive. More than 40% of respondents to the 2022 "Entrepreneurial Spirit Most Wanted to Be Inherited" survey indicated "family-state unity" (Li et al., 2023). Such entrepreneurial spirit stems from Chinese cultural roots such as compassion, collectivism, and statism. It is evident that entrepreneurs who adopt a "*Tianxia* worldview" not only embody the innovative spirit of "relentless self-improvement", which is dominated by the market logic, but also exhibit the sense of responsibility that is dominated by the social logic. This is particularly evident in the Chinese humanistic spirit of "social commitment", "the wealthy must stay courteous", "unifying righteousness with self-interest", and the "family-state unity" as reflected in the motto that a wise man should "cultivate himself, manage his family, rule his nation, and ultimately bring peace to the world". These values are influenced by the dual institutional logics of materialism and culture. This spirit is the result of the innovative development and creative inheritance

of brilliant traditional Chinese culture by contemporary Chinese entrepreneurs, in conjunction with the characteristics of the commercial era and the laws of enterprise operation. It not only promotes Chinese-style entrepreneurship but also allows for the natural integration of social responsibilities into business operations. The pursuit of the "altruistic mission" and the mindset of "the oneness of existence" are precisely aligned with the requirements of contemporary Chinese-style modernization in order to create value of economic, social, and environmental significance.

6. Concluding Remarks and Future Outlook

6.1 Concluding Remarks

This study, which is based on a decade of sustained research on outstanding Chinese entrepreneurs and their corporate stakeholders, elucidates the evolution process of indigenous Chinese entrepreneurial spirit. Our main conclusions are as follows: (1) The "*Tianxia* worldview" is a Chinese-style entrepreneurial spirit that is rooted in the brilliant traditional Chinese culture. It is characterized by the Chinese humanistic spirit of "relentless self-improvement", "social commitment", "unifying righteousness with self-interest", and the personal ideals to "cultivate himself, manage his family, rule his nation, and bring peace to the world". This entrepreneurial spirit is a creative inheritance and innovative development of the brilliant traditional Chinese culture. (2) The "*Tianxia* worldview" is characterized by four dimensions: "self-cultivation and moral conduct", "assisting employees to achieve", "multi-stakeholder symbiosis", and "the oneness of existence", which are interconnected in an extending sequence. The altruistic spirit of "inclusiveness and for the common good" and the altruistic behavior of "material satisfaction and spiritual happiness" are the heart of these ethical principles. (3) The individual spirit undergoes a gradual evolution, elevation, and transcendence as it converts from the "differential mode of association" to the "*Tianxia* worldview". While both modes of association begin with a concentric circle structure, the spiritual nucleus of the differential mode is characterized by a self-interested orientation, and the process of outward extension is primarily guided by kinship and closeness. Conversely, the spiritual nucleus of the *Tianxia* worldview is altruistic, and the process of extending consideration to others is guided by the principle of "inclusiveness and for the common good". The transition from the former to the latter is a gradual process. (4) Businesses tend to veer towards "differential" social responsibilities based on economic interests due to the diversity and complexity of stakeholder interests. Nevertheless, entrepreneurs who adopt a *Tianxia* worldview can overcome the conflicts and zero-sum games among stakeholders and encourage the distribution of mutual benefits and value co-creation with stakeholders by "unifying righteousness with self-interest".

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

(i) This study advances the field of entrepreneurship research in the context of Chinese culture by proposing a new definition of Chinese-style entrepreneurial spirit, known as the "*Tianxia* worldview". The research on entrepreneurship in economics and management focuses on the basic characteristic of innovation (Schumpeter, 2013), but ignores the essential influence of objective factors such as culture and environment on entrepreneurship. According to the institutional logic theory (Thornton et al., 2012), sociological research on entrepreneurship supplements the view of entrepreneurs as "social man" by uncovering and constructing institutional and cultural roots of contemporary entrepreneurial spirit, but lacks empirical research. This study is the first to introduce the new concept of the "*Tianxia* worldview" of contemporary Chinese entrepreneurs. It illustrates how their worldview evolved from "self-cultivation and moral conduct" to "assisting employees to achieve", "multi-stakeholder symbiosis", and "the oneness of existence". The "*Tianxia* worldview" is defined based on the core characteristics of entrepreneurial spirit, which include the altruistic notion of "inclusiveness and for the common good" and the altruistic behavior of "material satisfaction and spiritual happiness". The "*Tianxia* worldview"

is not only the legacy of the traditional scholar-bureaucrat spirit, which includes the principles of "the oneness of existence", "family-state unity", but also a vivid creative transformation that is in tune with the characteristics of contemporary business society. This perspective is of significant theoretical value in the development of the concept of Chinese-style entrepreneurship and the promotion of research on entrepreneurship within the context of Chinese culture.

(ii) This study establishes a theoretical foundation for overcoming the limitations of the differential management model through theoretical construction and dialogue with the differential mode of association. The "differential mode of association" theory continues to have a significant impact on contemporary China and is also a critical concept in the study of "Chinese-style management" in the management field. However, "differential management" has progressively revealed issues such as brain drain (Hu, 2014) and insufficient trust (Li, 2002). In the 1940s, Mr. Fei Xiaotong introduced the "differential mode of association" to account for the "selfish" character of rural folks. This approach is consistent with the family-oriented aspect of China's marginal cultural tradition. Nevertheless, the mainstream spirit of Chinese culture and the core spirit advocated by China on its ascendant path have always been "the oneness of existence", "self-discipline and social commitment", and "family-state unity" as the noble ideals of Chinese culture. There has been in insufficient attention and exploration of the spirit of "common good" in the management field. Hence, this study, by combining the concrete actions of outstanding Chinese entrepreneurs with concept construction, clarifies the respective connotations and theoretical boundaries of the "*Tianxia* worldview" and the "differential mode of association", explores the possibility of their mutual transformation, and comprehensively depicts the dual ethical structure of Chinese people of "valuing oneself" and "selflessness". By implementing the ideals of "self-cultivation and moral conduct", "assisting employees to achieve", "multi-stakeholder symbiosis", and "the oneness of existence", outstanding Chinese entrepreneurs have contributed to the development of Chinese management theory, providing theoretical basis to transcend the constraints of the management approach based on the "differential mode of association".

(iii) This study offers a novel conceptual and operational path for corporate social responsibility from the perspective of B Corps. The current research on corporate social responsibility is focused on commercial organizations that pursue economic objectives, and has resulted in an "embedded CSR approach". This approach is susceptible to issues such as the assumption of CSR under the "differential mode of association", insufficient CSR motivations, or behavioral alienation. The "*Tianxia* worldview" of Chinese entrepreneurs, which is motivated by the dual economic and social objectives, transforms enterprises into B Corps. They possess the altruistic spirit of "inclusiveness and the common good" and the altruistic behavior of "material satisfaction and spiritual happiness", which turns CSR into an endogenous consciousness of enterprises. This promotes the establishment of coordinated and continuous symbiotic relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders, as well as the creation and sharing of comprehensive value for multiple stakeholders (Xiao and Yang, 2018). This approach offers a new theoretical perspective and practical pathway for CSR performance.

6.3 Management Implications

(i) The social value orientation of the "*Tianxia* worldview" assists entrepreneurs in their efforts to contribute to the high-quality development of the country and enterprises. The current domestic and international economic situations are complex and evolving, and more challenging than ever to navigate for enterprises and entrepreneurs. The ideals to "unify righteousness with self-interest" and "benefit the world" in Chinese traditional culture, particularly Confucian culture, have rectified the dynamic mechanism of the "economic man hypothesis" for entrepreneurs in Western economics. This emphasizes that entrepreneurs should possess spiritual traits such as social commitment, individuals as the foundation of the country, harmony and symbiosis, and family-state unity, in addition to positive attitudes such as relentless self-improvement, innovation, and entrepreneurship. This implies

that entrepreneurs should not only lead their enterprises to innovate and change, foster ingenuity in talent, and promote the sustainable and high-quality development of enterprises; they should also take responsibility for the country, share the concerns of the people, actively integrate corporate development into the country's overall development strategy, build world-class enterprises, and contribute to the high-quality development of the Chinese economy.

(ii) The evolving process of treating others as you would yourself in the "*Tianxia* worldview" gives fresh conceptual references and operational guidance for breaking free from the development bottleneck of family businesses. At present, numerous family enterprises in China are grappling with issues such as interpersonal trust and internal equality within the organization. The primary reason is that the interpersonal relationship structure has clear limitations. There is a lack of trust among business owners, which in turn affects the performance of non-family members at work and undermines the organization's equality mechanism. Also, business owners treat employees differently. These situations impede the ability of enterprises to adjust to the needs of long-term development, resulting in the stagnation of family businesses. The "*Tianxia* worldview" offers entrepreneurs a precise approach to reshape their relationships with themselves, others, and society by guiding them to follow the doctrines to "cultivate himself, manage his family, rule his nation, and ultimately bring peace to the world". The transition of entrepreneurs from the "differential mode of association" to the "*Tianxia* worldview" necessitates that they not only reevaluate and reconfigure their corporate mission and their personal ideals, but also reconstruct their relationship with employees. They can foster the "happy growth" of employees through "moral education of benevolence" and achieve the all-round development of employees, thereby fundamentally resolving the trust problem and providing feasible solutions to ameliorate the development predicament of family enterprises. Moreover, the "*Tianxia* worldview" serves as an incentive for organizations to cultivate confidence in the cross-cultural management process.

(iii) The "*Tianxia* worldview"-based new responsibility concept enables enterprises to more consciously and comprehensively fulfill social responsibilities in a broader social context, thereby contributing to the development of Chinese-style modernization. In the process of socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics, enterprises are the primary economic entities that drive social progress. Enterprises should assume a greater role in fostering social progress as the society's expectations for social responsibility continue to rise. First, from a values standpoint, entrepreneurs can embrace a mindset of "inclusiveness and for the common good" by taking stock of their place in the world, overcoming the "subject-object dichotomy", moving beyond the focus on "self-interest", and viewing the success of others - whether that be employees, partners, or the general public - as a reflection of their own personal worth. By "unifying righteousness with self-interest" and building "benefit corporations", entrepreneurs can fulfill social responsibilities in a more proactive and intrinsic manner. Secondly, entrepreneurs who hold a "*Tianxia* worldview" are more focused on providing for the "material satisfaction" of stakeholders through value creation, as well as their "spiritual contentment" by promoting kindness, good ethics, and wisdom, which in turn encourage others to take part in social responsibilities and collaborative value creation. The new social responsibility model, which is rooted in the "*Tianxia* worldview", not only offers a framework for the contemporary practice of corporate social responsibility, but it also has the potential to make significant contributions to the advancement of "modernization with the coordination of material and cultural progress" and "modernization with the harmonious symbiosis between man and nature".

6.4 Research Limitations and Future Outlook

In the future, the following aspects of this study can be improved, as it also has certain limitations: (i) There is room for improvement in the theoretical sampling. This study introduced the concept of the "*Tianxia* worldview" after focusing on how outstanding contemporary Chinese entrepreneurs contemplated the purpose of their own lives and progressively benefited the broader community.

Nevertheless, the principle that "the oneness of existence" is profoundly ingrained in the cultural roots of the Chinese people and is a long-standing aspect of the brilliant Chinese culture. As a result, this philosophy can be expanded to encompass a broader audience. For instance, there are public servants who embody the altruistic spirit of increasing people's sense of happiness, academics who embrace the spirit of "taking upon themselves to serve the interests of the nation", and average citizens who, reflecting the family-state unity, possess the "altruistic spirit" by caring about the country despite their humble positions. Furthermore, only three of the 11 samples that were chosen for this study have established factories overseas. The scope and profundity of "the world" in the *Tianxia* worldview can still be further expanded, despite the fact that the samples reflect the entrepreneurs' awareness of the community with a shared future and the altruistic spirit towards the employees and the governments of host countries. For instance, additional examples of entrepreneurs who are actively engaged in fulfilling international social responsibilities under the "Belt and Road Initiative" may be included. The universality and influence of the "*Tianxia* worldview" concept will be improved by conducting research on a broader group. (ii) Perform research on the mechanism and impact of entrepreneurs' "*Tianxia* worldview" on society and employees. The "*Tianxia* worldview" scale can be further developed through subsequent research, which can provide evidence for the influence of the *Tianxia* worldview on the economy and society through large-sample data research, as well as research on the mechanism of influence of the *Tianxia* worldview on employee behavior. (iii) Entrepreneurs who adhere to the "*Tianxia* worldview" are dedicated to the "simultaneous pursuit of righteousness and self-interest" for their businesses. When there is a tradeoff between "righteousness" and "self-interest", however, their decision to strike a balance between the two can be influenced by the development stage, life cycle, and external environment of their companies. For instance, enterprises in the stage of startup or decline are more likely to prioritize survival (self-interest) and focus on their own development. Conversely, those in the mature stage have a greater capacity and obligation to engage in social responsibility to "benefit the world when established". In order to elucidate this intricate dynamic relationship, future research may consider implementing a systematic theoretical framework to investigate the patterns in which companies pursue "righteousness and self-interest" in various developmental stages, as well as their adaptations and responses to various external environments. (iv) Establish the concept of "dual worldviews" that integrates the "differential mode of association" and the "*Tianxia* worldview". Under this framework, the "differential mode of association" has a greater impact on China's marginal cultural traditions, while the "*Tianxia* worldview" has a stronger influence on China's mainstream cultural tradition. There are transitional realms between the two, and one can even morph into another. This concept of "dual worldviews" allows for a more thorough description of the Chinese people's character and behaviors. CE

References:

Adner R. Ecosystem as Structure: An Actionable Construct for Strategy[J]. Journal of Management, 2017(1): 39-58.

Albareda L., Waddock S. Networked CSR Governance: A Whole Network Approach to Meta-Governance[J]. Business & Society, 2018(4): 636-675.

Belz F. M., Binder J. K. Sustainable Entrepreneurship: A Convergent Process Model[J]. Business Strategy and the Environment, 2017(1): 1-17.

Bhatt B., Qureshi I., Riaz S. Social Entrepreneurship in Non-Munificent Institutional Environments and Implications for Institutional Work: Insights from China[J]. Journal of Business Ethics, 2019(3): 605-630.

Bruder I. A Social Mission Is Not Enough: Reflecting the Normative Foundations of Social Entrepreneurship[J]. Journal of Business Ethics, 2021(3): 487-505.

Carroll A. B. The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility: Toward the Moral Management of Organizational Stakeholders[J]. Business

Horizons, 1991(4): 39-48.

Chao G., Gu X. R., Wang L. et al. Transfamiliness: The New Form of Family Culture in Contemporary Chinese Companies[J]. Foreign Economics & Management, 2022(10): 20-35.

Chao G., Qian C., Chen H. H. et al. Research on the Generalized Exchange Behavior of Traditional Culture Practicing Enterprises[J]. China Industrial Economics, 2019(6): 173-192.

Chell E., Spence L. J., Perrini F., Harris J. D. Social Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics: Does Social Equal Ethical? [J]. Journal of Business Ethics, 2016, 133(4): 619-625.

Chen H. H. Evolution of the Management Model of Family-Run Enterprises: Reflections Based on the Perspective of Pan-Familism Culture[J]. Journal of Social Sciences, 2003(7): 124-128.

Chen H. H., Jia S. H. Empirical Research on Stakeholders' 3-Dimension Classification in Chinese Enterprises[J]. Economic Research Journal, 2004(4): 80-90.

Chen J., Yang Z., Yin X. M. The Logic and Realization of Sustainable Shared Value Creation from the Perspective of B-Corporate Entrepreneurship[J]. Social Science Journal, 2021(5): 145-157.

Chen Z. J. The Differential Mode of Association and the Duality of Chinese Culture[J]. Social Sciences in Yunnan, 2015(3): 142-149.

Cheng X. L., Chao G., Wang L. et al. Research on the Mission of Chinese Corporate Academy in the Context of Cultural Rejuvenation[J]. Chinese Journal of Management, 2019(7): 977-986.

Chu X. P. Research on Family Business: A Topic with Modern Significance[J]. Social Sciences in China, 2000(5): 51-58.

Clarkson M. E. A Stakeholder Framework for Analyzing and Evaluating Corporate Social Performance[J]. Academy of Management Review, 1995(1): 92-117.

Coleman J. S. Foundations of Social Theory[M]. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Drucker P. Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Practice and Principles[M]. Translated by Cai W. Y. Beijing: China Machine Press, 2007.

Du W. M. The Challenge of Singapore: Neo-Confucian Ethics and Entrepreneurial Spirit[M]. Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2013.

Eisenhardt K. M., and Graebner M. E. Theory Building from Cases: Opportunities and Challenges[J]. Academy of Management Journal, 2007(1): 25-32.

Fan S., Tian Z. L., Lin J. A Review of the Literature of Corporate Hypocrisy from a Perspective of Corporate Social Responsibility and Prospects[J]. Foreign Economics & Management, 2014(2): 2-12, 23.

Farh J. L., and Cheng B. S. A Cultural Analysis of Paternalistic Leadership in Chinese Organizations. In Management and Organizations in the Chinese Context[M]. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2000.

Fei X. T. From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society[M]. Beijing: Commercial Press, 2011.

Gao L. M., Wang L. Does Favoritism Leadership Style Is Effective?—Cultural Adaptability Analysis and Theoretical Extension of the Chaxu Leadership [J]. Business and Management Journal, 2013(4): 183-194.

Grant A. M. Does Intrinsic Motivation Fuel the Prosocial Fire? Motivational Synergy in Predicting Persistence, Performance, and Productivity[J]. Journal of Applied Psychology, 2008, 93: 48-58.

Gupta P., Chauhan S., Paul J., Jaiswal, M. P. Social Entrepreneurship Research: A Review and Future Research Agenda[J]. Journal of Business Research, 2020(5): 209-229.

Hao X. G., Zhang J. Q., Lei Z. Q. Platform Leadership: The Multi-dimensional Construction, Measurement and Verification the Impact on Innovation Behavior[J]. Journal of Management World, 2021(1): 186-199, 216, 12.

Hiller J. S. The Benefit Corporation and Corporate Social Responsibility[J]. Journal of Business Ethics, 2013, 118: 287-301.

Howard-Grenville J., Buckle S. J., Hoskins B. J. et al. Climate Change and Management[J]. Academy of Management Journal, 2014(3): 615-623.

Hu G. D. Research on the Family Metaphor of Chinese Local Organization and Its Network Governance Mechanism Based on the Perspective of Enlarged Familism[J]. China Industrial Economics, 2014(10): 97-109.

Huang G. G. Favor and Face: The Power Game of Chinese People[M]. Beijing: Renmin University of China Press, 2010.

Jia S. H., Chen H. H. A Review of Stakeholder Definition Methods[J]. Foreign Economics & Management, 2002(5): 13-18.

Jia X. D., Tan X. H. The Actual Value of the Classical Grounded Theory and Its Spirit to China Management Research [J]. Chinese Journal of Management, 2010(5): 656-665.

Li L., Wang R., Peng S. Q. The Thirty-Years Growth of Entrepreneur: Entrepreneurship Leads Enterprises towards High-quality Development: A Comprehensive Report on the 30-year Survey of the Growth and Development of Chinese Entrepreneurs[J]. Journal of Management World, 2023(3): 113-136.

Li X. C. Trust Loyalty and Familial Dilemmas [J]. Journal of Management World, 2002(6): 87-93.

Liang S. M., Academic Committee of Chinese Culture Academy. The Complete Works of Liang Shuming[M]. Shandong: Shandong People's Publishing House, 2005.

Liang Z. P. The Concept of "Tianxia": From Ancient to Modern Times[J]. Tsinghua Law Journal, 2016(5): 5-31.

Liu J., Zhang K., Zhong L. F. The Formation and Impact of the Atmosphere of the "Error Routine" of the Work Team: A Case Study Based on Successive Data[J]. Journal of Management World, 2009(8): 92-101.

Lu S., Cai L., Zhan T. Y., Cai Y. R. A Review and Prospects of Inter-orgnizational Symbiosis[J]. Foreign Economics & Management, 2021(10): 68-84.

Luo J. D. Relationships and Circles: The Phenomenon of Circles in the Workplace of Chinese People[J]. Chinese Journal of Management, 2012(2): 165-171.

Mitchell R. K., Agle B. R., Wood D. J. Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience: Defining the Principle of Who and What Really Counts[J]. Academy of Management Review, 1997(4): 853-886.

Morgan-Thomas A., Dessart L., Veloutsou C. Digital Ecosystem and Consumer Engagement: A Socio-Technical Perspective[J]. Journal of Business Research, 2020, 121: 713-723.

Morris M., Schindehutte M. Entrepreneurial Values and the Ethnic Enterprise: An Examination of Six Subcultures[J]. Journal of Small Business Management, 2005(4): 453-479.

Pan J. L., Lin J. Construction of Network Entrepreneurial Platform Leadership Characteristics Model: Based on the Grounded Theory[J]. Journal of Business Economics and Management, 2019(5): 958-978.

Schumpeter J. A. Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy[M]. London: Routledge, 2013.

Sethi S. P. A Conceptual Framework for Environmental Analysis of Social Issues and Evaluation of Business Response Patterns[J]. Academy of Management Review, 1979(1): 63-74.

Shan X. "Family-country" Belief: The Gene of Chinese Entrepreneurs[J]. Nanjing Journal of Social Sciences, 2021(10): 171-180.

Shibusawa E. The Analects and the Abacus[M]. Translated by Yu B. Beijing: Kyushu Publishing House, 2012.

Short J. C., Moss T. W., Lumpkin G. T. Research in Social Entrepreneurship: Past Contributions and Future Opportunities[J]. Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, 2009(1): 161-194.

Stubbs W. Sustainable Entrepreneurship and B Corps[J]. Business Strategy and the Environment, 2017(3): 331-344.

Su L. A Rigorous Reconsideration of the Pattern of Sequential Difference[J]. Journal of Peking University(Philosophy and Social Sciences), 2017(1): 90-100.

Sun L., Zhu R., Zhang Y. L. Entrepreneurship: A Comparative Institution-History Perspective [J]. Foreign Economics & Management, 2019(9): 3-16.

Swedberg R. Entrepreneurship: The Social Science View[M]. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Tang Z., Hull C. E., Rothenberg S. How Corporate Social Responsibility Engagement Strategy Moderates the CSR-Financial Performance Relationship[J]. Journal of Management Studies, 2012(7): 1274-1303.

Thornton P. H., Ocasio W., Lounsbury M. The Institutional Logics Perspective: A New Approach to Culture, Structure, and Process[M]. New York: OUP Oxford, 2012.

Wang C. H., Guo X. X. Traditional Chinese "Harmonious Culture" and Harmonious Governance of Family Enterprises[J]. Journal of Management World, 2012(7): 182-183.

Wang D. D. My Thoughts on Economics[M]. Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1997.

Wang H., Gibson C., Zander U. Editors' Comments: Is Research on Corporate Social Responsibility Undertheorized? [J]. Academy of Management Review, 2020(1): 1-6.

Wang H., Tong L., Takeuchi R., George G. Corporate Social Responsibility: An Overview and New Research Directions: Thematic Issue on Corporate Social Responsibility[J]. Academy of Management Journal, 2016(2): 534-544.

Wang Y. F., Zhang J. R., Lin X. C., Zhou L. H., Zhu Y. A Literature Review of Coaching Leadership Behavior and Prospects[J]. Foreign Economics & Management, 2016(5): 44-57.

Weber M. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism[M]. Translated by Yan K.W. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2018.

Wu S. R., Li M. H. Grounded Theory: History and Logic [J]. Sociological Studies, 2020(2): 75-98.

Xiao H. J. The Reflection and Transcendence of the Creating Shared Value as a Corporate Social Responsibility Paradigm[J]. Journal of Management World, 2020(5): 87-115.

Xiao H. J., Yang Z. Benefit Corporation: A Desirable Organizational Paradigm for CSR Practice[J]. China Industrial Economics, 2018(7): 174-192.

Xiao H. J., Zhang Z. Theoretical Study on Corporate Social Responsibility Rent-seeking Behaviors[J]. Business and Management Journal, 2016(2): 178-188.

Yu Y. S. Confucian Ethics and the Spirit of Business[M]. Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2004.

Yu Y. S. Religious Ethics and the Spirit of Business in Modern China[M]. Beijing: Kyushu Publishing House, 2014.

Zhai X. W. Re-discussion on the Contribution, Limitations, and Theoretical Heritage of the "Differential Mode of Association"[J]. Social Sciences in China, 2009(3): 152-158.

Zhang S. G. The Traditional Chinese Concept of Kingship and Its Modern Transformation[J]. Modern Philosophy, 2011(6): 93-102.

Zhang X., Zhu L., Xu D. Z. The Positive Nature of History: Exploring the Cultural Genes of the Proposed Chinese Approach[J]. Social Sciences in China, 2019(1): 4-21, 204.

Zhao T. Y. The contemporaneity of Tianxia[M]. Beijing: CITIC Press, 2015.

Zhao T. Y. The Tianxia system[M]. Beijing: Renmin University of China Press, 2011.

Zheng X., Zhu W., Zhao H., Zhang C. Employee Well-Being in Organizations: Theoretical Model, Scale Development, and Cross-Cultural Validation[J]. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 2015(5): 621-644.

Zhu W., Zheng X., He H., Wang G., Zhang X. Ethical Leadership with Both "Moral Person" and "Moral Manager" Aspects: Scale Development and Cross-Cultural Validation[J]. Journal of Business Ethics, 2019(8): 547-565.