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## WSJ: Relative Blames Suicide At China Factory For Mattel Toys On Dispute With Supervisor

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By Laurie Burkitt Of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

BEIJING (Dow Jones)--A worker in a Chinese factory that makes toys for Mattel Inc. (MAT) committed suicide last month after what a relative says was a dispute with her supervisor.

Hu Nianzheng, 45 years old, jumped from the sixth floor of the Shenzhen Sanwei Taiqiang Production Ltd. factory on May 16, following a dispute with a factory manager three days earlier, said Qu Xiwu, Ms. Hu's son-in-law. The factory manager had scolded Ms. Hu for poor work performance and threatened to fire her, Mr. Qu said.

Managers of Shenzhen Sanwei Taiqiang factory declined to comment. The company makes toys for Mattel. It's unclear if it also supplies other brands.

A spokeswoman for Mattel, of El Segundo, Calif., said the toy company is in contact with the factory's managers and will continue to monitor the situation. "Mattel is deeply saddened by the reported incident," the spokeswoman said in an email, adding that the factory is a contractor and isn't owned or operated by Mattel.

Shenzhen police said they have opened an investigation of the Sanwei Taiqiang factory. No other employees at the factory have committed suicide since Ms. Hu's death, according to the police.

Working conditions in the coastal Chinese factories that make much of the world's toys, clothes and gadgets have come under increased scrutiny in recent years, in part because of a series of employee suicides at Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., the world's largest contract manufacturer of electronics by revenue.

In response to the Sanwei Taiqiang incident, New York-based advocacy group China Labor Watch called for Mattel to improve the management and oversight of supplier factories. The group also urged Mattel to offer compensation to Ms. Hu's immediate family.

Mr. Qu said the factory has already given the family 90,000 yuan, or roughly \$13,900, but he said that is only enough for the short term.

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