**CME Ph.D. Speaker Series**

**The College of Management and Economics**

**presents**

***Fei Song***

Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University

***How competitive are female professionals:***

***A tale of identity conflict***

**Wednesday, February 15, 2012**

**3:30pm – 5:00pm**

**Macdonald Institute (MINS 300)**

Reception to follow

Please contact Lisa Cauley ([lcauley@uoguelph.ca](mailto:lcauley@uoguelph.ca)) for more information.

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***“How competitive are female professionals:***

***A tale of identity conflict”***

**presented by Fei Song**

Abstract

We develop and test experimentally the argument that gender/family and/or professional identities, activated through priming, may influence preference for competition. We focus on female professionals for whom these identities may conflict and male professionals for whom they may be reinforcing. We primed MBA-student participants by administering questionnaires that concerned either gender/family or professional issues. Subsequently, participants undertook a real-effort task and chose between piece-rate and competitive-tournament compensation. For females, professional priming resulted in a significantly greater preference for competition than gender/family priming. Priming had significantly different effects for males. This contrast highlights an identity conflict for female professionals. Beyond the laboratory, we argue that avoidance of competition by many female professionals may arise from the increased salience of gender/family identity, influenced by marriage and motherhood over time. Such activation of internalized identities might affect career choices and performance, thus contributing to the observed gender and motherhood wage gaps. In particular, it suggests that while employer discrimination against mothers or in favor of males or fathers may exist, many mothers may find themselves pulled by their identity as women/mothers away from full and committed participation in the competitive environment of the corporate world, while many males/fathers may not face this conflict.

Dr. Song obtained her Ph.D from the Schulich School of Business with a focus in Organization Behaviour. Her research has been significantly influenced by social psychology and experimental/behavioural economics theories and methods. Dr. Song’s research interests include 1) behavioural decision-making, and 2) strategic compensation and productivity. She has published widely in top management and social science journals and teaches in the areas of organizational behavior, cross-cultural and global management, strategic thinking and negotiation, strategic compensation, and research methods.

Please contact Lisa Cauley at [lcauley@uoguelph.ca](mailto:lcauley@uoguelph.ca) for further information.