

Doctoral School Research Award Report

I am a final year PhD student in the School of Business and Management. Doctoral School Research Award enabled me to attend the European Group for Organization Studies (EGOS) conference (Vienna, July 2022). This annual conference is very prestigious, being the top conference for scholars in the Organisation Studies discipline. The finance allocated was able to cover the conference registration, return flight tickets, hotel, and Schengen visa.



Picture: Attending Conference Opening Ceremony at Library and Learning Centre, WU Wien, Austria

The focus of this conference paper is work/family conflict (WFC) amongst Chinese female entrepreneurs. An increasing number of Chinese mothers started their business hoping to be financially independent from their husbands yet flexible enough for domestic and child-care responsibilities. However, they found themselves instead struggling with WFC and their own identities as Chinese mothers. Drawing upon 34 in-depth interviews with Chinese female entrepreneurs with child/ren under 18 years old, this article sets out to understand what has motivated them to be entrepreneurs and how WFC was experienced and potentially managed by the interviewees and with what consequences. The analysis draws heavily on narrative identity theory, which sees identity evolution as an ongoing process through experiencing and adaptation, especially focusing on how WFC is caused, experienced and negotiated between entrepreneurial and motherhood identities. In conclusion my paper argued that a new feminist identity is forming and developing through managing WFC.



Pictures: WU Executive Academy Building and the Conference Room on the Top Floor

I received tremendous encouragement and constructive feedback from scholars who participated in this conference. My discussant read my paper and provided me with a two-page long written feedback via email before my presentation. She gave me crucial advice of writing a coherent journal article and where to publish it. Apart from my discussant, I also received written encouragement from a Work/Family scholar who I have cited in my paper. During the breaks and dinners, many have informally shared their experiences of completing a PhD degree with me. I felt solidarity with them knowing that it can be a difficult journey even for now-well-achieved scholars. I become more confident in staying in academia after my graduation.



Pictures: New Friends at the Conference

I really appreciate Doctoral School for making my trip possible. It was an important conference for me to attend for both receiving critical feedback and establishing academic connections. I am also grateful to my supervisors, Gillian Symon and Louise Ashley, for their continuous support throughout my PhD journey.