

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Departmental Research Seminar

Self-Promotive Interdependence: Insights from Sub-Saharan Africa By

Prof. Shinobu Kitayama
University of Michigan



Date : 25 Apr 2025 (Friday)
Time : 10:30 am – 12 noon
Venue : M802, PolyU

Abstract

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is becoming increasingly central to global business, politics, and culture. Despite its extraordinary linguistic and ethnic diversity, two core themes appear to underlie much of this variation. The first is a strong form of interdependence, marked by deep commitments to ingroup identities. The second is a cultural emphasis on self-promotion, characterized by the active and often competitive pursuit of personal success. Uniquely, these two forces are not merely coexisting—they are dynamically integrated: the pursuit of self-interest is widely seen as a vital way to contribute to collective flourishing. In this talk, I introduce and explore this hitherto overlooked system of self-promotive interdependence. Drawing on recent empirical findings from across SSA, I compare this model with cultural patterns observed in other major world regions—including the Middle East and North Africa, East Asia, Latin America, and the West. I argue that this distinctive integration of self-promotion and interdependence helps illuminate the unique structure and function of group identity in SSA.

Prof. Shinobu Kitayama, the Robert B. Zajonc Collegiate Professor of Psychology and Research Professor at the Research Center for Group Dynamics at the University of Michigan, is a pioneering figure in cultural psychology. His groundbreaking research on the cultural diversity of mental processes has placed him at the forefront of this dynamic field. Prof. Kitayama's work spans diverse domains—from cultural neuroscience to the study of interdependence in non-Western societies—offering key insights into the psychological foundations of culture. His contributions have been recognized with numerous prestigious awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Research Award, the Distinguished Scientific Contributions Award from the American Psychological Association, and the William James Fellow Award from the Association for Psychological Science (APS). In addition to his scholarly achievements, Prof. Kitayama has held several major leadership roles. He served as President of APS from 2020 to 2021 and currently serves as President-Elect of the Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences.

All interested are welcome.



THE HONG KONG
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
香港理工大學

Department of
**MANAGEMENT
& MARKETING**
管理及市場學系