Beyond the Stereotype of Male Consumption

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SESSION OVERVIEW

This session examined the behavior of male consumers that belies or defies stereotypical male or masculine activities. Each paper explored a culturally entrenched male stereotype or set of stereotypes (e.g., men are the breadwinners in a household, men hate to shop) and moved beyond these stereotypes to explicate how and why men may act contrary to them. There were four papers in this session: “Beyond the Stereotypes of Male Shopping Behavior,” by Cele Otnes and Mary Ann McGrath, “Husbands Play ‘Men:’ Feminist Interpretation of Women’s Participation in Preserving Male Stereotypes,” by Suraj Commuri, “What the @#$& is Going On? Linking Message Order Effects and Gender Differences in Ad Persuasion” by Frederic Brunel, Julie Ruth and Michelle Nelson and “The Role of Men in the Meaning and Production of ‘Homemade’” by Linda Price and Eric Arnould.

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS

“Beyond the Stereotypes of Male Shopping Behavior”
Cele Otnes, Rutgers University
Mary Ann McGrath, Loyola University of Chicago

This paper examines male shopping behavior, and argues that perceptions of “typical” male shopping are, like most stereotypes, more prevalent in the minds of consumers than in actual men’s actual shopping behavior. This study uses five different research techniques to explore issues pertaining to male shopper stereotypes. These include observations, interviews and projective techniques. The study then 1) describes three common stereotypes emerging from perceptions of male shopping behavior; 2) demonstrates how actual male shopping behavior sometimes supports, but more frequently debunks, these stereotypes, and 3) discusses the retail contexts, situational conditions, and shopper motivations accompanying shopping behavior that belies these stereotypes. Managerial implications and suggestions for further research are offered.

“Husbands Play ‘Men:’ Feminist Interpretation of Women’s Participation in Preserving Male Stereotypes”
Suraj Commuri, the University of Nebraska

About 80% of all households in the US are made up of dual-career couples, and women are the chief wage earners in about a quarter of all US households. The “husband as the good provider” model of a household’s productive organization is today far from the reality of many households. Though women have made strides in the external workplace to challenge the stereotypes associated with their gender, masculine stereotypes associated with the roles husbands play within the household continue to persist. A feminist