Panel Discussion Doing Gender Research For a Wide Audience

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Panel Discussion
Doing Gender Research for a Wide Audience

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Gender research remains in the closet in many consumer behavior and marketing research circles. Gender is often relegated to individual differences, gender differences, or subjected to ill-thought-out post hoc analyses. Furthermore, much research on gender limits its conception to psychological issues, leaving out cultural, political, sexual, and philosophical realms that make gender such a compelling and complex research topic. Gender rarely plays a central role in framing research, with notable exceptions; of course, but generally gender has become a boutique item in the mainstream mall of consumer research.

This is not to say the gender researchers are under-represented, or to lament the marginalization of gender in current research streams. Rather, for those of us who are interested in gender, it will remain a key issue for years to come, regardless of its academic trendiness. This session was designed to show how a few researchers frame gender as part of their broader research program. The intention is upbeat—we want to demonstrate how gender can be incorporated into research studies that relate to well-established consumer and marketing research topics, and that appear in mainstream forums. We are not suggesting that our interest in gender need be masqueraded in order for us to publish, rather, we have each developed strategies for connecting gender with topics with broad appeal in order to get the conversation started with diverse audiences.

The panel will present a brief overview of their thoughts on the issue, complete with concrete examples from our experience, respond to questions, and generate discussion of this important career management and scholarly production topic. We expect to have diverging opinions, particularly on the goals of doing gender research that should contribute a multifaceted insights into the issue. We will try very hard not to lapse into the "woe is us" school of discourse, for each of us have found gender research critically important to our academic careers thus far. We don’t mean to imply that we are able to offer clear answers to the problem, but we do have strong opinions of how to include gender in consumer research that should be of vital interest to the conference attendees.