Building the Transformative Consumer Research Community: Opportunities and Obstacles For Rising Scholars

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The purpose of this roundtable discussion is to hear from researchers who are at the early stages of their career yet are passionate about working on pressing social issues within consumer research. These emerging scholars are the experts on the hurdles facing colleagues who hope to pursue TCR. These scholars can raise awareness about the challenges and opportunities confronting people who want to pursue this research agenda, as well as the type of support that they need. Themes from a pre-conference electronic deliberation by rising TCR scholars will guide a problem solving session among senior and junior researchers. There are several potentially valuable outcomes of this roundtable. Perhaps the most immediate and direct outcome will be identifying and exploring the informal network of researchers interested in TCR and creating a database of TCR researchers and their research interests.

[to cite]:

[url]:
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Since David Mick’s rousing 2005 presidential address calling for more transformative consumer research (TCR), we have seen a flurry of activity and increased institutional support. For example, a special issue on TCR will be published in the *Journal of Consumer Research* in the Fall of 2008, the first TCR conference was held at Dartmouth in 2007 (and a second one is being planned for 2009 at Villanova University), and a Handbook of Transformative Consumer Research is currently underway.

The primary people involved in building the TCR community, such as the members of the TCR task force and TCR Board, have been senior researchers who are well established in their careers. While resources in the form of research grants have been distributed to support the research of young scholars, junior scholars have not been directly involved in the formal deliberations that have shaped the direction of TCR. Moreover, given the diversity of issues spanned by TCR, some emerging scholars have voiced a desire and need to network within the larger community of researchers studying social problems. The long term success of any program of research, of course, depends on the ability to attract, foster, and develop a cadre of new researchers.