

Gender inequality study shows women under-represented on marketing academic journal boards

April 7 2021



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Women are significantly underrepresented in the editorial boards of marketing academic journals, and awards and recognition favor men, new research from the University of Bath School of Management has found.

In their study "It's hard to be what you can't see—gender representation in marketing's academic journals," Professor Andrea Prothero of Business and Society at University College Dublin and co-researcher Professor Pierre McDonagh examined gender representation in 20 marketing academic journals through three areas—the gender composition of editorial boards, special issue celebrations and the awards process.

The research found that since 2017 the number of women in editorial board roles had grown by 4.5% and that the number of female editors-in-chief had risen to 39 percent from 18 percent over the same period. But men still held 68% of all editorial board roles and the discrepancy was even greater at the advisory board level.

"The results are stark, disappointing and somewhat shocking. I think many people might expect both marketing and academia to be progressive areas but in 2021 it is simply not acceptable for example, that 88% of advisory board members within our journals are men, or that some journals in our field have never had a female editor-in-chief," McDonagh said.

Prothero said she and McDonagh were moved to study this issue as they believed many scholars were not aware of the scale of the gender

discrimination problem in marketing [academic journals](#) or of the particular challenges around awards and celebrations of academic achievement.

"Our research also highlighted how journal celebrations also favor men. Special issues for example include reflections from previous editors (who are mostly men), and invited commentaries (who are mostly men). And, where journals and/or their related associations celebrate outstanding research through awards processes, those awards which are named after leading figures in the field are all named after men!" she said.

McDonagh said he and Prothero were not arguing that women are deliberately excluded from awards and recognition, but that structural, systemic and institutional biases meant male colleagues were privileged over women.

"And this of course, also means that injustice and inequality for female academics are perpetuated. Our goal is to get scholars in the marketing academy to think differently about things that are hidden in plain sight. We also want them to join us in asking for meaningful change with respect to existing gender discrimination in the marketing journals," he said.

McDonagh said publishing houses and editors should take four steps towards tackling gender representation issues.

Firstly, build diversity into existing [journal](#) review boards, and second, introduce a quota system to ensure diversity of people across advisory boards, manuscript review boards, and in roles such as associate editors, co-editors, and editors-in-chief. Publishing houses in particular, have been discussing more inclusive and diverse editorial boards across academia, but Prothero said it was important to move beyond talk and

implement new policies. And, while this study focused on [gender](#) representation, other dimensions such as race were equally as important.

"As a third step, we should ask awkward questions of the leaders in our field—why do the majority of named awards in our field honor white men? We request awards which also honor the leading people of color and females in our field, he said.

Finally, Prothero and McDonagh urged editors-in-chief to celebrate those less visible to others.

"We have female role models for younger scholars to inspire them to greatness, but they are not celebrated or included either in editorial boards or in special issue celebrations to the same extent as men. Let's rectify this. Quite simply the current status quo is an injustice—not everyone is a white male academic, so why do they dominate everything?" he asked.

More information: Andrea Prothero et al, 'It's hard to be what you can't see' - gender representation in marketing's academic journals, *Journal of Marketing Management* (2021). [DOI: 10.1080/0267257X.2020.1862984](#)

Provided by University of Bath

Citation: Gender inequality study shows women under-represented on marketing academic journal boards (2021, April 7) retrieved 17 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-04-gender-inequality-women-under-represented-academic.html>

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