

Letter from the Editor

BY ALBERT J. MILLS

Welcome to the Workplace Review for Fall, 2018. In this issue we get to showcase the research talents of some of our students from across the region. We have four papers, three of which have been authored or co-authored by undergraduate students.

In our first paper, Mount Allison University student Lydia Phillip, and her supervisor, Rosemary Polegato report on their research into brand aversion. Their study examines the role of the self-identity of selected consumers (e.g., millennials) and the influence of messaging (e.g. social media) that suggests that the product is contrary to their self-identity. From a survey of 102 participants the authors found that consumers who identify less with a reference group, compared to those who identify more strongly with the reference group, will experience *negative emotions* toward a *Dissociative Reference Brand* and will engage, at least moderately, in brand avoidance behaviours. Identification with Dissociative Reference Groups – through the dynamics of *brand aversion* and *negative emotions* towards the brand – ultimately lead to brand avoidance behaviours. Thus, the study – despite limitations - reveals the importance of consumer self-identity in consumer-brand relationships and reinforces self-identity as the determinate of whether a group is a *Dissociative Reference Group* or not.

In our second paper Acadia University student Candace Conrad examines the reasons why women’s sports experience “factors of failure” as a business enterprise. She identifies “three distinct themes” to explain the viability of women’s sports organizations – “severe gendering and sexism throughout sport,” the discourse of women’s sports organizations,” where there is a branding misalignment between trying to align women with sports in general to selling the idea of women’s sport as unique; and media inattention to women’s sports. She concludes with a series of questions for future research.

Next, Acadia student, Jenna Roberson, along with professors Donna Sears and Terrance Weatherbee focus on winescapes and the important role played by tour guides in linking individual wineries to the notion of the wine area or region. The paper follows a regional experiment – “The Wolfville Magic Winery Bus” or WMWB – and the reported responses of tourists to how they were understanding the winescapes involved and how that is mediated by the tour itself. They conclude with a call for further research “in other regions and contexts – how the winescape is experienced from the wine tourist (demand) perspective.”

Our final paper – by UPEI faculty Susan Graham and A. J. MacFarlane – return us to the theme of gender and represents our management education paper for this issue. In this paper the authors are examining issues of gender in business schools. Specifically, they are interested in why an imbalance continues to exist (e.g., more males than female students) in some business schools, particularly in the Canadian Maritime provinces. The study emphasis is on the UPEI business school “and the burgeoning research program mounted by business faculty “to both better understand and remedy this problem.” Their in-depth study gathers a number of data that reveal a continuing problem of inequality that justifies “further investigation into the gender and undergraduate business schools. The existing data from the Maritime provinces suggest that this issue is persistent, despite the gender over-correction in some academic disciplines or the continuous narrowing of the gender gap in

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other programs of study. Until a better understanding of the problem is developed, actions to address the problem may be inadequate.”

Afterword

Workplace Review seeks to publish high-quality articles from authors in Atlantic Canada, or on topics pertinent to the Atlantic Canadian and Canadian context. We are also pleased to consider special issues. If you have an idea for a Special Issue of the Workplace Review, please contact myself (albert.mills@smu.ca) and Ellen Shaffner (ellen.shaffner@smu.ca). To submit a paper for review, please contact Ellen Shaffner, Managing Editor, at the email above.