VENUS AND MARS MAY BE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK:  
FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

While a great deal of research has been based on student evaluations of faculty, less studied is the academic climate as perceived by the male and female professor. There is some research that shows that men and women faculty who teach the same subject to a similar class have very different experiences from one another (Sandler 1991) and that female faculty members experience things differently since they are subject to "culturally conditioned gender stereotypes" (Bennett 1992, p. 170). Therefore, this study was undertaken to assess the perceptions of the academic climate among marketing faculty, to examine whether there are differences in these perceptions according to the gender of the faculty member, as well as to compare the actual policies the faculty establish for students (e.g., office hours). Finally, with so much written about the "generation X" student, we wanted to get some idea as to whether faculty were experiencing problems due to disruptive behaviors in the classroom.

A survey was developed to measure faculty self-reported experiences in the classroom/office and faculty perceptions of their treatment by students. Faculty were asked for information on occurrences of complaints, disruptions, being asked for exceptions, etc., in addition to information on their office hours, how students address them and how they think students perceive them. The survey was sent to all Western Marketing Educator Association members at four-year colleges. The original sample was approximately 420 (90 of which were women). Because the number of females returning surveys was relatively low in the initial sample, 72 surveys were sent to female professors listed in the American Marketing Association directory who were at 4-year universities in the western region of the U.S. The final number of surveys returned was 152, with 50 female and 102 male respondents.

Overall, male and female faculty report about the same number of classroom disruptions, requests for exceptions to due dates and explanations/changes to a paper or exam grade by students. Additionally, male and female faculty believe they receive similar levels of respect by students and that students seek advice on personal matters from them in equal numbers. However, some gender differences do exist. For example, males are more likely to think that their students see them as experts, perceive them to have a lot of business experience and consider them humorous while female faculty are more likely to believe that students see them as setting high standards and assigning a challenging workload. In addition, women faculty report being addressed by their first name or by Ms. or Mrs. significantly more frequently than male faculty and being addressed as Dr. or Professor significantly less than male faculty. Males report holding more office hours than women.

In addition to the interesting information from the survey results, the findings can also serve as an important benchmark for faculty. Faculty can compare their experiences and their policies with those of other marketing faculty who are at similar institutions. In addition, it would be useful to conduct the survey again in the future to track trends in behaviors of marketing students and behaviors and perceptions of faculty.

REFERENCES
