

## 13

GENDER AND AGE IN  
CONSUMER BEHAVIOR*Two Permanent Markers of Our Identities*Dear Woman, Just for You, We Colored  
This Beer Pink!

Back in 2011, a woman entrepreneur named Shazz Lewis founded a company in Easton, MD, named Chick Brewery. On the company website, she described the idea as:

*One day, we were in our local store looking for an interesting beer to take home, and thought “Isn’t it strange that out of hundreds of beers, none are designed to appeal directly to women? In fact, most are clearly marketed to men.”*



So, she decided to make a beer specifically for women. After trying several concoctions, she settled on one. The beer was light American ale, with a fruity flavor and a hint of apple and/or peach. It had just 97 calories (even less than a typical light beer did then), 3.5 carbs, and 4.2% ABV. And the brew itself was also pink in color. She got the beer brewed in a craft brewery, Minhas Craft Brewery, in Monroe, WI. And, yes, the beer was called Chick Premium Light Beer.

The label on the bottle was pink with the line art of a black dress featuring a neckline adorned with white diamond stones. With the black dress art, the bottle in fact looked like the figure of a woman. And the case pack was in the shape of a purse, also pink in body and black label. The package carried a tagline “Witness the chickness!” And marketing material used the message “We love Chick Flicks, Chick Lit, and now we can love Chick Beer!! Enjoy!

This message was supposed to resonate with women. Unfortunately, the resonance never happened. One reviewer commented:

*“Feminists and beer-loving women have been asking for sexism and more respect when it comes to beer, and Chick Beer is doing just the opposite.”*  
(Kelsey Wallace)

No sales data are available, nor is it known how long the brand survived. One thing is sure, it never took off and it died quickly.

Further Reading: Kelsey Wallace, Douchbag Decree: Chick Beer, the “Beer for Women” July 28, 2011, Bitchmedia.org; <http://independentbeers.com/2011/11/review-chick-brewing-company-chick-beer/>

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*My age and gender define me but I have no control over them!!*

**T**he Concept of Gender Role Identity and Consumption

1

TO UNDERSTAND

**T**he Differences Between Men and Women in Shopping, Consuming, and Gift-Giving

2

**P**opulation Pyramids and their Significance for Marketers' Long-Term Plans

3

LEARNING

**B**oomers to Millennials and Other Age Segments in Consumer Populations

4

O B J E C T I V E S

**F**amily Life Cycle and Children's Influence in Families

5

**C**onsumer Socialization of Children and Intergenerational Influence

6

## INTRODUCTION

Men and women differ in many ways as consumers. Their needs and preferences differ for many product categories. As everyone knows, men and women differ in the kind of clothes they wear. Yes, there is unisex clothing, yet there are clothes that only women will wear, e.g., a skirt, dress, or a blouse. Along with clothing, of course, the accessories differ as well: shoes, purses, scarves, jewelry, etc. Also, women's personal grooming needs are different, so the makeup and skin conditioners they buy are also different from what men would buy. Beyond these three product categories, should marketers also design and offer different products in other categories? Do men and women prefer different products, seek different leisure activities, and shop differently? Do they respond to different product presentations and advertising appeals? Why did Chick Beer fail to appeal to women, even though the marketer went to great lengths to craft the new product and its branding? At the heart of that failure is a concept called *gender role*.

## GENDER

### *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*

First, a clarification. The terms “sex” and “gender” are sometimes used interchangeably but mean different things. Sex is defined as “either of the two major forms of a species that differ biologically and are typically referred to as male or female; in contrast, ‘gender’ refers to the roles and traits typically associated in a society with one or the other sex.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, sex is biological; gender is sociological.

Every society has men and women, but not in equal numbers. In the world as a whole, their numbers are about equal (male to female ratio, 1.017), but across nations, their ratio varies widely—from 0.84 to 3.02 (see Table 13.1).<sup>2</sup> We can observe vivid differences in their consumer behaviors, but these vary from one society to another. These differences emerge from three sources: (1) biology; (2) motivations and psychology; and (3) socialization and cultural norms.

Biology creates different needs in men and women, and some of their consumption is determined by those needs (e.g., lighter sports equipment for women). In terms of motivation and psychology, beyond the popular literature (such as the book *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*) stereotypes, men and women differ in their mental makeup—such as women are more nurturing (to be discussed below). Finally, society socializes men and women into different roles and imposes different expectations for dressing, careers, and domestic responsibilities. Indeed, many of the consumption and behavioral differences attributed to biology and the psychological makeup of the two genders are instead culturally-induced differences. But defying old stereotypes, women are now taking up careers historically assigned to men, and men are engaging in homemaking and child-rearing tasks. One factor that shapes these changes is *gender roles*—the social roles assigned to a person based on sex. Let us see how.

