

## Research Note

### **A Comparative Study of the Direct and Indirect Influence of Females in the Licensed Retail Industry between the UK and Hong Kong**

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#### **Purpose**

Women have become more prevalent in the customer base of the licensed retail industry throughout recent years, with women being part of media scrutiny due to their alcohol consumption habits. In addition to this, the TV show 'ladette to lady' has shown the changing mannerisms to the female population today compared to that of the past. Due to the changing roles of women in society, their drinking habits and influences on the licensed retail industry have also developed. This paper examines the needs and wants of females, as well as the indirect effects of their presence in the industry in regards to the male clientele, and male job roles within the industry.

#### **Methodology/Approach**

Questionnaires were conducted by e-mail to Hong Kong respondents, in the UK the same survey was conducted by both paper and e-mail format. There were a limited number of participants due to contacts in Hong Kong, the majority of which were of Western origin. In the UK, most respondents were students at Sheffield Hallam University; however, there were respondents from across the UK. In addition to this, the majority of the sample was aged between 18 and 25 due to their high proportion of the market in the licensed retail industry.

#### **Findings**

In Hong Kong, there is a clear divide between the needs and wants of men and women. Although the sample size is very small so cannot be generalised, it is a possible assumption that the sample is fairly reflective of the Western population of Hong Kong. In the UK, the gender divide is gradually closing, with men and women's responses being very similar, with few clear differences; one of these being the female's desire for security. In addition there were mixed responses for 'flirting' as a positive aspect of a barperson's job, as well as persuasions of venue choice due to attractive promotions staff. Across the board, bar service was preferred, either in a quick service or friendly manner, it was much preferred over table service. The number of people choosing to drink out of the home was also much higher than media speculation would lead us to believe, showing that the licensed retail sector is still a huge part of the drinks market.

## Value

This paper is of value to the licensed retail industry particularly that of the UK, due to the nature of the questions and responses included in the study. With the majority of those visiting licensed premises being in the age range of those questioned, the answers are particularly applicable to the modern day need for certain criteria to be met in order to gain their custom. Therefore providing importance to the industry in order to gain popularity, profitability and market share.