

**Gender and Occupational Outcomes: Longitudinal assessments of individual, social, and cultural influences**

**Edited by Helen M. G. Watt and Jacquelynne S. Eccles, American Psychological Association, Washington DC, 2008, Pp. xxii + 384. ISBN 978-1-4338-0310-9 (hardback), \$69.95 USD.**

It is my pleasure to review this book, addressing the complex issue of gender and occupational outcomes which remains one of the most enduring, pervasive, and perplexing issues of our time. One only has to examine graduation rates for females in fields such as maths, science, engineering, and technology internationally to see the severity of the issue. It is critical to ensure females are achieving outcomes in these fields commensurate with males to address this critical social justice issue. It is also vital to close the salary gap to equalize socio-economic outcomes for females and ensure the full potential of all people is reached to enrich human and social capital globally. Yet we have a long, long way to go. However this rich and comprehensive volume offers us new rationales for addressing these issues, and importantly, fresh, research-derived, nuanced understandings to see the way.

A key strength of this work is that the authors are all leading international scholars. The compilation of their works has resulted in a powerhouse of cutting-edge research in the field in one volume. Importantly, sophisticated methods are employed, such that studies presented are at the cutting-edge of best international statistical practice using sophisticated and robust research design and methodology. Hence readers can be confident in the integrity of the results and the soundness of the recommendations derived.

The methods employed are clearly and concisely explained which is refreshing particularly for readers who may be unfamiliar with advances in quantitative research. This readability offers students, researchers, and practitioners a thorough and accessible understanding of the strengths of these approaches, as well as an excellent guide for developing and employing best practice methodology in sophisticated statistical models in their own research practice.

It is particularly impressive that all of the studies presented in the volume are longitudinal. Strong longitudinal studies in educational research are not as common as they should be, particularly in gender and occupational research. These longitudinal studies provide fresh research evidence that really tests how multiple processes unfold over time to produce tangible research-derived outcomes that underpin the solutions proposed. As such, these studies offer important new directions and implications for theory, research, and practice that I believe will contribute to driving the next generation of the international research agenda as well as global practice in this field.

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It is also refreshing to note that diverse cultural perspectives are included in this work – from the European Union, Turkey, Japan, Australia, U.S., and Canada – which enables a nuanced understanding into the complexity of the issues. The issues are also examined in the context of multiple cultural, political, social, and economic perspectives, providing enriched understandings.

Taken together, these studies irrefutably demonstrate that gendered occupational choices are pervasive, persistent, and a global phenomenon of enormous concern. However the work also shows us how to see the way forward in theory, research, and practice. Each author addresses theory, policy, and practical implications of their work thus ensuring the implications for future research and current educational policy and practice are clearly presented. The work links research evidence to clear policy recommendations, which is widely espoused as an important goal by governments and policy-makers internationally, and is rarely achieved. These recommendations are research-derived, thoughtfully developed, and compelling. The work is also a minefield of information for much needed future research directions which should be of invaluable assistance to students, researchers, and teachers.

This book is a truly impressive and exceptional compilation. It is a “must read” for educational researchers and students. I extend my congratulations to the editors and to the outstanding field of expert authors.

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