

Journal of Advertising

Volume 49 | Number 2 | April-May 2020

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Inclusive Advertising for a Better World

The expansion of various social and cultural norms across identity categories such as race, gender, sexuality, physicality and ability underscores the need of “inclusive” advertising that can appeal to individuals who resonate with diverse and changing demographic and psychographic groups (Lisandru and Cui, 2018). Lack of understanding of and respect for diversity can lead to detrimental effects on consumer wellbeing, such as marginalization, identity or stereotype threats (Henderson and Rank-Christman, 2016). Given the longstanding criticism of invisibility and stereotyping of minorities in advertising, as well as the recent controversies surrounding “woke advertising” as exploiting diversity and inclusion movements, it is crucial for research to provide theoretical and strategic insights on advertising inclusivity, or lack thereof, to understand the social and cultural impacts of advertising.

Diversity in advertising has been examined through various aspects (e.g., gender roles, cultural identity, political ideology, religious and spiritual appeals; Eisend, 2019; Milfeld, Haley and Flint, 2021; Northey et al., 2020; Waller and Casidy, 2021) for developing more personalized advertising. However, recent studies suggest that advertising messages featuring ethnic and religious minority brand endorsers (Rößner, Gvili and Eisend, 2021), as well as ads targeting African Americans and older consumers (Franklin, 2014; Rosenthal et al., 2021) fail to meaningfully engage with these communities. Similarly, people with disabilities remain largely absent in advertising representations (Timke, 2019). Recent years have witnessed an increase of ads promoting diversity and inclusion (e.g., The Financial Express, 2022; CU Boulder Today, 2022) that may break existing boundaries. At the same time, recent industry surveys suggest that

almost half of the interviewed American consumers (42%) strongly care about inclusivity in advertising and may boycott brands that fail to represent diversity (Statista, 2021). Furthermore, research shows that consumers who feel alienated or marginalized from brands can experience threats to their wellbeing (e.g., Kipnis et al., 2021). Therefore, research on inclusivity in advertising and on how to develop advertising for a diverse world is extremely needed both for the benefit of consumer wellbeing and for that of brand performance and reputation.

Recognizing diversity in advertising can elicit varied responses from different consumers (e.g., Choi et al., 2020; Taneja, 2020), this special section aims at addressing inclusive advertising by encouraging research related to the following areas:

- Exploring the relationship between inclusive advertising and consumer well-being
- Examining factors driving the effectiveness of inclusive advertising campaigns and the associated boundary conditions (e.g., consumer self-identification, personality, product involvement)
- Conceptualizing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the media, advertising, public relations, and marketing industries, especially in relation to how agencies help connect advertisers and diverse market segments
- Identifying effective strategies to communicate inclusivity in advertising to engage with both minority and majority consumers
- Highlighting the varied needs, concerns, and experiences of different minority groups in relation to inclusive or niche-targeted advertising
- Proposing new methodologies to explore under-researched, marginalized consumer groups' advertising responses, consumption patterns, and brand relationships
- Addressing the social, ethical, and political implications of artificial intelligence-powered advertising personalization in enabling or hindering advertising inclusivity
- Discussing the power dynamics between advertisers, digital media intermediaries, and consumer activists in promoting, negotiating, or resisting diversity and inclusivity movements via advertising.
- Investigating the impacts of “black swan” events (e.g., COVID pandemic) and other sociopolitical forces in a specific cultural context (e.g., recent legalization of same-sex marriage in Chile) on the implementation of and consumer response to inclusive advertising

Submission Instructions

All manuscripts should be submitted through the *JA* ScholarOne System at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ujoa>, during **January 15 – February 1, 2023**. Authors should select “SPECIAL SECTION: Inclusive Advertising for a Better World” as “Manuscript Type.” Please also note in the cover letter that the submission is for the Special Section on Inclusive Advertising for a Better World.

All articles will undergo blind peer review by at least two reviewers.

Authors will be notified no later than **March 2023** on the preliminary decision over their manuscript for the next round of review. The anticipated date for publication of the Special Section is **October/December 2023**.