FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

DO NOT DISS THE ABILITY OF DISABILITY: INVESTIGATING BRAND INCLUSIVITY AND CONSUMER-BRAND RELATIONSHIPS

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by

Sphurti Sewak

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To: Dean William G. Hardin III
College of Business

This dissertation, written by Sphurti Sewak, and entitled Do Not Diss the Ability of Disability: Investigating Brand Inclusivity and Consumer-Brand Relationships, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to Ananshi, Anay, Mamma, and Papa. Thank you for being the wind beneath my wings.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

DO NOT DISS THE ABILITY OF DISABILITY: INVESTIGATING BRAND INCLUSIVITY AND CONSUMER-BRAND RELATIONSHIPS

by

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Florida International University, 2023

Miami, Florida

Professor Jayati Sinha, Major Professor

Many companies increasingly include underrepresented consumer segments in their advertisements to portray inclusivity. One such underrepresented segment is the persons with disabilities (PWDs), with limited representation in the media. Using various product and service contexts, I establish that brand advertisements featuring disabled models having apparent physical disabilities with nondisabled models lead to higher perceived brand inclusivity and favorable consumer-brand relationships (CBRs). Moreover, I demonstrate that it is the perceived brand inclusivity that is driving a range of favorable CBRs. I also demonstrate two boundary conditions to the main and mediation effects, Social Dominance Orientation and Perceived Brand Message Authenticity, and obtain partial support for another boundary condition, Self-brand connection.

This dissertation is the first empirical research to investigate when and why including disabled models with nondisabled models in brand advertisements works for the brand while controlling for possible alternative process mechanisms. My findings advance the literature on brand inclusivity, linking it to the downstream consequence of

favorable CBRs. Moreover, my findings also add to the Social Dominance Theory (SDT), highlighting that the positive effects of featuring disabled models with nondisabled models in brand ads attenuate for high social dominance orientation (SDO) individuals. Lastly, the results also contribute to a critical component in brand authenticity literature, perceived Brand Message Authenticity (BMA), demonstrating that under conditions of high perceived BMA, the positive effect of featuring disabled models along with nondisabled models in brand advertisements attenuates. Practically, this research highlights that brand ads featuring disabled models with nondisabled models can make the brand appear more inclusive to consumers and foster favorable CBRs. With brands increasingly facing the challenge of standing out, inclusive ads featuring disabled models with nondisabled models can make the brand more relatable to consumers. Lastly, the findings also have consumer and societal well-being implications. Making PWDs feel seen by their representation in brand ads could potentially increase their involvement in the marketplace and could also possibly be a step towards normalizing disability and increasing societal well-being.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BIAF	Brands as Intentional Agents Framework
BMA	Brand Message Authenticity
CBRs	Consumer-Brand Relationships
DEI	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
LAD	Labeled as Disabled
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SBC	Self-Brand Connections
SDO	Social Dominance Orientation
SPB	Self-presentation by Brands
TCR	Transformative Consumer Research
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
WOM	Word of Mouth

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Brands' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (hereafter, DEI) initiatives aim at portraying brand inclusivity. In recent years, such brand initiatives have taken many forms, such as employing a diverse workforce, creating a more inclusive workspace, and communicating brands' commitment to DEI to more people. Recent research suggests that such efforts by marketers can help consumers view the brands in a more relatable context (Burgess et al., 2021). A domain of DEI initiatives that brands increasingly focus on is inclusive marketing. Hubspot, a popular organization offering a range of marketing solutions, defines inclusive marketing as brand promotions that portray diversity through people most customers can identify with (Customer Insight, 2021).

Inclusive advertising is integral to inclusive marketing and features underrepresented segments (such as disabled, LGBTQ+, body types, and diverse ethnic representations) in brand ads. Previous research acknowledges the importance of inclusive advertising, noting that such representation by marketers can lead to more societal involvement (Demangeot et al., 2019). Brands recognize the importance of inclusive promotions noting that it drives good business and societal well-being (Li, 2022). Relatedly, such inclusive advertisements are known to educate and acknowledge the presence of the underrepresented in society (Wisker, 2023). Several popular press articles have also noted the benefits of brands' inclusive advertising campaigns, such as consumers finding the ad more entertaining and memorable (Bump, 2021), the brand appearing more trustworthy (DePalma, 2022), and such brands being more likely to be chosen over other brands (Sukhraj, 2021). However, while the academic world has

emphasized research investigating such inclusive advertisements, there still remains much to be studied in this domain (Eisend et al., 2023).

In previous literature, brand inclusivity is defined around brands' initiatives targeted toward underrepresented customers (Valsesia et al., 2021) and through advertisements aimed at reaching out to more consumer groups (Pang et al., 2019). Although these two definitions are related, for this dissertation, I investigate brand inclusivity, specifically concerning advertisements that portray disabled models with nondisabled models. Specifically, I examine the portrayal of featuring PWDs having apparent disabilities along with nondisabled models in brand ads.

Including PWDs in brand ads dates back to 1984 when Levi's had the first television video commercial that presented a model in a wheelchair (Haller & Ralph, 2001). Lately, contemporary fashion brands like Tommy Hilfiger are designing inclusive products for their disabled customers and featuring disabled models in their ads (Casey, 2022). Likewise, *Teen Vogue* recently featured disabled models on their magazine cover (Brown, 2018). Table 1 presents some examples of the representation of apparent physical disability in ads and events by notable brands in their branding efforts:

Brand name	Advertisement	Year
Nordstrom	Nordstrom catalog featured a female in a wheelchair 	2014

Target	Target's Halloween ad featuring a girl in crutches 	2015
Tommy Hilfiger	"Tommy Adaptive" line featuring disabled models 	2016
Microsoft Xbox	Microsoft's adaptive controller featuring disabled children enjoying video games 	2018
Teen Vogue	Teen Vogue featured disabled models in a wheelchair, with a missing leg, and with Down's syndrome for its September 2018 issue	2018

	 	
L'Oreal Paris and The Prince Trust	L'Oreal united with The Prince Trust for the new Confidence Training Program in the UK, featuring a range of people, including those who are disabled 	2017
ASOS Online Clothing Brand	ASOS Activewear featuring a model in a wheelchair 	2018
McDonald's India	McDonald's "Eatqual" campaign featuring a disabled model enjoying her burger	2021

		
Savage X Fenty	Singer Rihanna's lingerie brand featuring a model with a limb difference 	2021
Celebrity Cruises	Celebrity Cruises promoted "all-inclusive" travel through a campaign featuring diverse models, including disabled models 	2022

Open Style Lab	As an introduction to the New York Fashion Week, Open Style Lab (a not-for-profit company with a commitment to making stylish clothes accessible to the disabled) debuted the first fashion show highlighting the portrayal of disability and adaptive clothing  	2022
Google	Google doodle honoring the life of Mama Cax, a disabled model and activist for the rights of the disabled 	2023

Table 1. Examples of brands that included PWDs in their advertisements

Disability is a worldwide phenomenon, with 61 million adults in the US alone (CDC, 2019) and a billion (approximately 15%) people in the world having a disability (WHO, 2021). However, global media has normalized the able-bodied ideal and can be held responsible for the large absenteeism of disability from brand advertisements (Dias de Faria & Moreira Casotti, 2019). Therefore, PWDs remain an underrepresented segment in the media. Such media representation of PWDs is recognized as a crucial step in normalizing disability (United Nations, n.d.). Even with the worldwide prevalence of

disability and acknowledgment of the benefits of its media portrayal, it remains the largest underrepresented minority in media (Kim, 2022).

In academic research, limited qualitative and quantitative research has investigated the portrayal of disability in brand advertisements. Haller and Ralph (2001) found in a content analysis of ad images in the UK and US that the depicted disabilities are mainly limited to wheelchairs and deafness. Another similar content analysis of ad images in the UK and the US found that even with an increased portrayal of the disabled, such depictions are often cliched and stigmatized (Haller & Ralph, 2006). Moreover, a content analysis of ads featuring disabled athletes in the Paralympics found that most PWDs felt that such depictions did not reflect the realities of the lives of most PWDs (Kearney et al., 2019). More recently, content analysis on editorials, ads, and online content found that most depictions of the PWDs adhere to conventional advertising aesthetics (Foster & Pettinicchio, 2022).

In empirical research, Panol & McBride (2001) found that ads featuring a disabled model can lead to higher purchases and willingness to use/try intentions, with no other differences in perceptions and feelings (Panol & McBride, 2001). However, this exploratory research used three ads portraying disability, comparing each ad featuring the disabled to one control ad. Only one ad out of three featuring the disabled showed this effect. Therefore, these findings were inconclusive in providing any concrete support for the portrayal of disability.

Similarly, the portrayal of disability in a video advertisement also had inconclusive results (Cooley, 2017). Specifically, there were significant differences for only one of the four measures in ad attitude and two out of four measures in brand

attitude. However, both results were in favor of the control video advertisement. Lastly, the control ad had a higher purchase intention. Since these findings did not hold for the composite score of attitudes towards the ad and the brand, they were also inconclusive in providing any support against the portrayal of disability.

More recently, research investigating the positive effects of featuring a disabled model in brand ad found that consumers viewed such ads more favorably, judged the ads as more novel, reported higher positive and negative emotions, pity, and admiration, and were more willing to buy the brand (Cossu et al., 2020). However, Cossu and colleagues (2020) did not investigate this effect for a range of consumer-brand relationships (CBRs) or establish the underlying mechanism and boundary conditions for these effects. Moreover, most brands feature disabled models with nondisabled models (as evident from Table 1); therefore, investigating a brand ad with a disabled model alone will likely yield limited insights.

In sum, this dissertation takes the first step in studying the portrayal of apparent physical disability, holistically examining this research gap. Specifically, I only investigate the impact of brand ads featuring a mix of disabled and nondisabled models (referred to as mixed-models ads throughout this dissertation). In this research, I use two types of ads: mixed-model brand ads and nondisabled-model brand ads. Specifically, mixed-model brand ads feature a mix of disabled models with apparent physical disabilities and nondisabled models, while nondisabled-model brand ads feature nondisabled models only. I establish that such a portrayal of apparent physical disabilities via mixed-model brand ads leads to increased perceived brand inclusivity with the downstream consequence of favorable CBRs. Moreover, I replicate my findings across

various product and service contexts while controlling for possible alternative process mechanisms and addressing potential confounds. Lastly, I investigate boundary conditions to highlight when the portrayal of disability can potentially be less effective. I examine the boundary condition of self-brand connection (SBC) and obtain partial support in one of my studies (Study 3B). Thereafter, I establish a trait variable, Social Dominance Orientation (SDO), moderating the hypothesized main and mediation effects. I show that the positive effects of featuring disabled models in mixed-models brand ads on perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs attenuate for individuals with high SDO. Lastly, I establish a brand-related variable, perceived Brand Message Authenticity (BMA), as a boundary condition. I show that for individuals with high perceived BMA, the positive effects of featuring disabled models in mixed-model brand ads on perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs attenuate.

1.2 Dissertation Purpose

Inclusive advertisements related to the disabled have been known to have two distinct aspects to them: ones that feature the disabled and ones that are accessible to the disabled (Palencia-Lefler, 2022). For this research, my focus is on the former and specifically only on the brands' inclusive advertising efforts centering around the representation of persons with disabilities (PWDs) and specifically those with apparent physical disabilities along with the nondisabled. Even with brand inclusivity attracting attention in recent years, the portrayal of disability remains an under-researched topic in marketing literature and an under-utilized approach by brand managers. Popular press articles have also noted that the representation of disability in mainstream media is

limited, an opportunity that brands have not fully availed (Sibley, 2021). Considering disability is omnipresent in our society and worldwide, its representation in brand advertisements and how it impacts CBRs warrants comprehensive investigation. Previous research on featuring disabled models in brand ads has led to inconclusive findings and has not investigated when and why the portrayal of disability works in brand ads. This research gap has been noted in previous literature with calls to investigate the persuasiveness of the representation of disability and other resultant consumer behaviors (Chu, 2022; Eisend et al., 2023). Therefore, this dissertation addresses this gap in current marketing research, examining the portrayal of disabled models having an apparent physical disability with nondisabled models in brand ads. I demonstrate that such depictions positively impact perceived brand inclusivity and, consequently, favorable CBRs. Moreover, I establish theoretically relevant boundary conditions to these main and mediation effects, highlighting situations when such a portrayal of disability would not work for the brands. As far as I know, this dissertation is the first empirical investigation on the portrayal of disabled models with an apparent physical disability along with nondisabled models and favorable CBRs, while controlling for possible alternative process mechanisms for other inclusive ads (such as those featuring LGBTQ+ and higher body weight models) and addressing potential alternative explanations and confounds.

Second, this research falls under the gamut of the Transformative Consumer Research (hereafter, TCR) movement that has recently gained impetus. This movement primarily focuses on the role marketing can play in promoting the well-being of people, society, and the environment (Mende & Scott, 2021). Therefore, this research highlights the potential of TCR by investigating the portrayal of one of the most prevalent yet

underrepresented groups in brand advertisements. Specifically, the portrayal of apparent physical disabilities in brand ads has the potential to make disability more acceptable in the marketplace, leading to overall societal well-being.

Third, this dissertation provides practical implications for marketers to include disabled models with nondisabled models in their ads while fostering favorable CBRs. Moreover, considering that disabled consumers in the marketplace feel vulnerable (Nau et al., 2016), representing them in brand ads can potentially make them feel more "included and accepted" in retail spaces. Therefore, I posit that it is a win-win situation for all. With the potential to normalize disability by making it more visible, brands can enjoy favorable CBRs.

1.3 Research Questions

In this dissertation, I aim to find answers to the following research questions:

RQ1. When consumers see brand ads featuring disabled models having apparent physical disabilities with nondisabled models (vs. nondisabled models only), is the brand perceived as more inclusive?

RQ2. Does the resultant brand inclusivity lead to the downstream consequences of favorable CBRs?

RQ3. Under what circumstances does featuring disabled models having apparent physical disabilities with nondisabled models strengthen or weaken the effect on perceived brand inclusivity and, consequently, favorable CBRs?

1.4 Summary

I have organized my dissertation in the following manner: I begin with a comprehensive review of the literature on inclusive advertising, the portrayal of apparent physical disability, brand inclusivity, CBRs, and my hypothesized boundary conditions (Self-brand connection, Social dominance orientation, Perceived brand message authenticity). This literature review is the basis of my six proposed hypotheses, answering my research questions in the previous section. Then, I have a chapter covering an overview of pretests and studies conducted, followed by details of each study. Out of the eight studies I conducted to test each of my proposed hypotheses, six were pre-registered (pre-registration details provided in the relevant study sections). I designed each study to test my hypotheses that the use of disabled models with nondisabled models (referred to as mixed-models ad hereafter) leads to increased perceived brand inclusivity (Study 1; pre-registered) with the downstream consequence of favorable CBRs (Study 2A, 2B, and 2C; pre-registered) when compared to an ad featuring nondisabled models only (referred to as nondisabled-models ad hereafter). Lastly, I also test three variables hypothesized to moderate these main and mediation effects, namely self-brand connection (hereafter, SBC) in Study 3A and 3B (pre-registered), social dominance orientation (hereafter, SDO) in Study 4, and perceived brand message authenticity (hereafter, perceived BMA) in Study 5. I test my proposed hypotheses using eight studies for various product and service contexts. Moreover, I conducted pretests before each of these studies to finalize my stimuli and cover story for all my main studies.

Study 1 establishes that the mixed-models ad (vs. nondisabled-models ad) leads to higher perceived brand inclusivity and that this effect holds even after controlling for

variables associated with a brand ad featuring a disabled model. Next, I present three studies (Studies 2A, 2B, and 2C) establishing the effect of the mixed-models ads on perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs (namely, brand and ad attitude, word of mouth for the brand, and purchase likelihood), as well as establishing the mediation through perceived brand inclusivity on favorable CBRs. These studies also attempt to minimize the effect of potential confounds and control for possible alternative process mechanisms.

Next, I present four studies investigating my proposed boundary conditions that attenuate the positive effects of mixed-model ads on perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs. Hence, these four studies test the proposed moderated mediation through perceived brand inclusivity on favorable CBRs by SBC, SDO, and perceived BMA. Study 3A tests the SBC as a boundary condition on perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBR (namely, intended loyalty) and the mediation through perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBR by manipulating it. Study 3B tests the SBC as a boundary condition on perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBR (namely, purchase intention) and the mediation through perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBR by measuring it. Study 4 tests SDO as a boundary condition on perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBR (namely, brand evaluation) and the mediation through perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBR by measuring it. Lastly, Study 5 tests perceived BMA as a boundary condition on perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBR (namely, word of mouth for the brand) and the mediation through perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBR by measuring it. I pre-registered Studies 1, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, and 3B on the platform aspredicted.org. I did not pre-register for Studies 4 and 5.

Out of the above-mentioned eight studies, I presented three studies (Study 1, 2A, and 2B) at the time of my proposal defense. Based on my dissertation committee's recommendations, I modified and reconducted Study 2C to address some of the concerns raised by the committee members during my proposal defense. Therefore, I have included five new studies: one main effect and mediation study (new Study 2C) and four new studies to test the proposed boundary conditions (Studies 3A, 3B, 4, and 5) to my proposed main and mediation effects to further my theoretical and practical contributions.

I conclude this dissertation after these eight studies with theoretical and practical implications and limitations of this research, paving the way for future research avenues.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

2.1 Inclusive Marketing

Recently, the emphasis on "research and practice" has started moving away from "diversity" and towards "inclusion" (Grier, 2020, p.61). This shift in practice has led to the rise of inclusive marketing, which aims to motivate and engage various audiences (Daszkiewicz, 2020). Inclusive marketing efforts lead to subjective social inclusion, resulting in increasing an individual's "sense of belongingness" (Licsandru & Cui, 2018, p. 332; Fisk et al., 2018). One way brands utilize inclusive marketing is by representing all people, which helps them connect to more consumer segments (Dimitrieska et al., 2019). Such inclusive marketing communications reflect the social acceptance of underrepresented or misrepresented consumer segments (Licsandru & Cui, 2018). Therefore, inclusive advertising forms an integral component of inclusive marketing communications.

2.2 Inclusive Advertising

A brand's marketing efforts aim to convey its beliefs and stance to its consumers (Lawal, 2020), with marketing communications being crucial to brand experience (Brakus et al., 2009). Specifically, advertisements attract consumers' interest and consequently influence their behavior (Kapoor & Munjal, 2019). Therefore, if a brand is committed to diversity and inclusion efforts, it should effectively convey this commitment to its consumers (Mundy, 2015). One of the ways brands can demonstrate inclusivity is by featuring underrepresented consumer segments in their ads. However, brand ads typically feature models with specific attributes driven by society's widely accepted "ideal."

Previous literature has supported this notion. Indeed, advertising aesthetics have primarily used models with slender bodies and attractive features, more so for female models (Martin & Xavier, 2010; Pounders et al., 2017). Research on such "idealized imagery" in brand ads with photoshopped images found that it impacts societal well-being adversely, particularly women's well-being (Blodorn et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2018). However, in recent times, deviations from these long-established ad norms have been a welcome change in society. Indeed, consumers expect and accept such signals from the brands. For example, brands such as Fenty portray brand inclusivity through their products and advertisements (Frisby, 2019). Therefore, there has been an upward trend concerning brand inclusivity, suggesting brands recognize it as being particularly relevant in today's world (Podoshen et al., 2021).

A well-known case in this regard was when Dove launched its ad campaign featuring women of various body sizes and races in 2006 to depict being inclusive (Corbett, 2006). Recently, many brands have followed suit to feature unconventional models in their ads. For example, cosmetics brand L'Oréal has collaborated with Unstereotype Alliance to change the stereotypical portrayal of beauty in advertisements (L'Oréal, 2021). Similarly, during the Haute Couture Week for the Spring-Summer 2022, the famous fashion house Valentino featured older and average-sized models to display its collection (Holland, 2022). In the travel industry, Celebrity Cruises collaborated with artists and photographers from varied backgrounds, orientations, and abilities to showcase the acceptance of all consumer segments and promote inclusive tourism (Hardingham-Gill, 2022). Therefore, these examples highlight that there has been a

gradual shift towards featuring models that do not fit this long-established "ideal," giving rise to inclusive advertising.

More and more consumer segments have been receptive to such inclusive advertising. For example, millennials, in particular, are highly accepting of multi-ethnic advertising, as they are more likely to identify as multicultural (Licsandru & Cui, 2019). Similarly, first-generation Americans are more receptive to ads that do not stereotype their cultural identity and are more inclusive (Pang et al., 2019). Today's consumers consider themselves unique and want to be "included, respected and recognized" (Light, 2014), which supports most consumers' acceptance of inclusive advertising.

Previous literature has also recognized the importance of inclusive advertising. For example, underrepresented consumer segments, such as those belonging to the LGBTQ+ community, struggle for social inclusion and have been known to deduce empowering undertones from marketplace messages associated with their identities (Tsai, 2011). Inclusive advertisements featuring various races are a practical way to represent consumer diversity in the marketplace (Harrison et al., 2017). Similarly, ads featuring various female body shapes and sizes are suggested to change their stereotypical representation in ads (Shinoda et al., 2020). However, despite this growing importance of portraying inclusivity, much remains to be done in consumer research, especially advertisements that celebrate consumer differences in the marketplace (Henderson & Rank-Christman, 2016).

Within the domain of inclusive advertisements, PWDs remain an underrepresented segment. With 61 million US adults and a billion people in the world having some disability (WHO, 2021), PWDs form the biggest underrepresented segment

worldwide. A recent survey corroborates this by suggesting that only 1% of the primetime ads depict disability, with even lesser depictions of them enjoying mundane everyday activities (Nielsen, 2021). Therefore, not only is disability underrepresented in brand ads, but it is also often misrepresented and stigmatized. Indeed, content analysis of ad images in the UK and the US corroborated stigmatized representations of PWDs (Haller & Ralph, 2006).

In the academic world, limited qualitative and quantitative research has investigated the representation of disability in brand ads. In what follows, I present the findings of each research in chronological order to highlight the research gap I am investigating. Using a content analysis approach, Haller and Ralph (2001) analyzed the ad images in the US and UK and found the depiction of only a limited number of disabilities. Specifically, they found that most portrayals of disabilities were limited to wheelchairs and hearing impairments. Panol & Mc Bride (2001) found that out of the three ads with disabled models, one led to higher behavioral intentions. Since the authors acknowledged this as an exploratory study, they did not further investigate why only one ad showed this effect. In another content analysis by Parashar and Devanathan (2006) for magazine ads from May to October 2003, the authors noted the glaring absence of representation of disabilities in ads. Haller and Ralph (2006), in their content analysis of ad images in the US and UK, noted that even with increased representation of the disabled, their stereotypical portrayals continue to stigmatize them. In an empirical investigation, Cooley (2017) found that a video ad featuring the disabled led to lower consumer attitudes for one of the four measures of ad attitude and two out of four measures of brand attitude. Lastly, the control ad had a higher purchase intention. A

content analysis of ads featuring Paralympic athletes by Kearney et al. (2019) found that such portrayal does not truly reflect the lives of the majority of the disabled. Therefore, such portrayal, in turn, proves detrimental to the inclusion of the disabled in the marketplace. In an empirical investigation featuring a disabled model, Cossu et al. (2020) found that viewing such an ad was rated more favorably, was judged more novel, evoked more positive and negative emotions, pity and admiration, and had a higher willingness to buy. They also ruled out self-presentation bias contributing to these effects and that public or private consumption did not impact the consumption choice (Cossu et al., 2020). More recently, Foster and Pettinicchio (2022) conducted a content analysis of editorials, ads, and online content, showing that although disability representation is received favorably by consumers, the featured disabled models still belong to a particular visually pleasing aesthetic.

In sum, only a few qualitative and quantitative attempts have been made to study the phenomenon of representation of disability in brand ads. Specifically, empirical investigations have either resulted in inconclusive findings or have only investigated brand ads featuring a single disabled model. Although previous investigations suggest that representation of disability will be received favorably by consumers, these effects have not been examined for a range of CBRs. Moreover, none of the previous investigations have controlled for possible alternative process mechanisms, have studied the portrayal of disabled and nondisabled models together (prevalent in most brand ads, as is evident from Table 1), and have investigated when and why such representation is beneficial for the brands. Therefore, as far as I know, this is the first empirical research investigating the research gap of when and why the portrayal of the disabled models

having apparent physical disabilities with nondisabled models in ads results in a range of CBRs.

2.3 Portrayal of Apparent Physical Disability in Brand Ads and Brand Inclusivity

Several documented cases have demonstrated indifference towards portraying disability in any form in the marketplace. For example, due to the market's limited toys showcasing disabilities, Rebecca Atkinson started the #toylikeme movement in 2015 (O'Neill et al., 2018). This movement prompted the brands to recognize that the toys they create should reflect the wide range of kids that play with them, leading to a "wheelchair barbie," among many others. Relatedly, when Ali Stroker became the first actor in a wheelchair to receive Tony Award for her broadway performance, she noted the absence of disability in mainstream media (BBC, 2019). These examples suggest that the representation of disability in the market is largely limited. Therefore, it is unsurprising that disability has also been largely absent from the mainstream media worldwide. A possible explanation of absenteeism in the portrayal of disability in ads could be that ableism is associated with "personal power and magnetism," and featuring a disabled model might counter that notion (Ganahl & Arbuckle, 2001). Even with some improvement in the portrayal of disability in mainstream media, disabled people in advertisements remain largely stigmatized: "broken and in need of repair" (Haller & Ralph, 2006). The examples above highlight the contrived view of disability that has dominated mainstream media worldwide, with previous literature also suggesting that much remains to be done to depict disability in advertisements (Bolt, 2014).

However, brands have increasingly started recognizing that disability is not just a charitable

cause and can increase brand profitability if tapped efficiently (Prager, 1999). The portrayal of the disabled is now shifting towards depicting them in an egalitarian world (Garland-Thomson, 2005). Only recently, brands such as Apple have made persons with disabilities (PWD) more acceptable and visible through product features and advertisements (Mokhtar & Hussain, 2019). Such initiatives, in turn, are suggested to foster independence and empowerment.

Inclusive advertisements featuring the underrepresented can potentially help the brands to connect with more consumers (Dimitrieska et al., 2019). Several consumer segments have been suggested to respond favorably to such inclusive advertising efforts. Millennials, in particular, find such inclusive marketing efforts appealing (Licsandru & Cui, 2019). To elaborate, Licsandru & Cui (2019) found that millennial customers are more aware of the marketplace dynamics and are attentive to diversity-focused marketing initiatives. Marketers can increase the effectiveness of their actions through inclusive marketing efforts focusing on the social inclusion of the disabled (Licsandru & Cui, 2018). Specifically, youths have a favorable attitude towards the depiction of physical disability, with females, in particular, having even lesser prejudice than males (Mandoo, 2019). The representation of physical disabilities in advertisements can be inspiring for able-bodied consumers as well (Shelton, 2017). Previous research demonstrated that multicultural ads are aimed toward subjective social inclusion and suggested this could potentially apply to disabilities (Licsandru & Cui, 2018).

Assimilating the above perspectives, it is likely that brand ads featuring disabled models having apparent physical disabilities along with nondisabled models will lead to higher perceived brand inclusivity than brand ads featuring nondisabled models only. Therefore, I compare mixed-model brand ads (featuring a mix of disabled models having an apparent physical disability and nondisabled models) with nondisabled-model brand ads (featuring nondisabled models only). Additionally, I define perceived brand inclusivity as how inclusive the brand appears to the customers based on the ads they view.

Formally, I hypothesize the following:

H1a: Mixed-models brand ads (vs. nondisabled-models brand ads) will lead to higher perceived brand inclusivity.

Recent research found that, after viewing an ad having a disabled model (vs. an ad having a nondisabled model), participants reported favorable responses toward the ad featuring a disabled model. Specifically, the ad featuring a disabled model had more favorable ratings, with consumers being more willing to buy the brand, evoking pity, positive and negative emotions, garnering more admiration for the model, and the ad being judged more novel (Cossu et al., 2020). Considering my mixed-models ad features disabled models, I deemed it prudent to control for the variables established by Cossu and colleagues (2020) in demonstrating my support for mixed-models ad leading to higher perceived brand inclusivity. Therefore, I propose that controlling for variables established by Cossu et al. (2020), namely positive and negative emotions, pity, admiration, and ad novelty, will likely not impact the increased perceived brand inclusivity driven by mixed-models brand ads (vs. nondisabled-models brand ads). I define and capture pity felt for

the models by adapting the measure from Kervyn et al. (2012). I adapt negative and positive emotions, and admiration for the models evoked by the ad, using measures from Aaker and colleagues (2012). Lastly, I define and capture perceived ad novelty by the participants using measures from Cox and Cox (1988).

Formally, I hypothesize the following:

H1b: Mixed-models brand ads (vs. nondisabled-models brand ads) will lead to higher perceived brand inclusivity, even after controlling for positive and negative emotions, pity, admiration, and ad novelty.

2.4 Downstream Consequence of Favorable Consumer-Brand Relationships

Consumers' relationships with brands can be complex, going beyond brand consumption and extending to the representation of the self, with calls to explore other contexts that might come into play (Alvarez & Fournier, 2016). As such, consumer-brand relationships (hereafter, CBRs) highlight consumers' feelings toward the brands (Fetscherin & Heilmann, 2015). Consumers tend to nurture relationships with brands they feel connected to (MacInnis, 2012). Previous research also suggests marketers can build stronger CBRs by being attentive to evolving consumer preferences (Ghorbanzadeh, 2021).

Brands are actively trying to portray inclusivity (Dimitrieska et al., 2019), in line with consumers' preference for such marketing efforts (Licsandru & Cui, 2019). Brands are increasingly embracing diversity, and advertisers are more likely to feature "unconventional" models in their advertisements (Williams et al., 1995). For instance, Williams and colleagues (1995) found that real estate advertisements featuring African

Americans were rated favorably by other African Americans. Moreover, cities with more racial minorities were more likely to have such representations.

Brands can signal their inclusivity values through ads with inclusive imagery (Boyd et al., 2020), which appeals to not only the underrepresented segment but also the general public. Specifically, Boyd and colleagues (2020) found that ad images depicting gender fluidity were more welcomed by the younger generation and females in general, with older males tending to dislike such brand communications. Brand inclusivity must go beyond the explicitly stated vision and mission, with inclusive brand ads implicitly conveying the same message (Di Bucchianico et al., 2013). For example, inclusive ads featuring LGBTQ+ not only assure LGBTQ+ consumers of the growing societal acceptance but have also had increased persuasiveness over time (Eisend & Hermann, 2019). Similarly, inclusive brand ads featuring plus-sized models increase brand attitude and purchase intention (Joo & Wu, 2021). Therefore, inclusive ads are suggested to garner favorable responses from most customers, whether they belong to the underrepresented segment or not.

Ads portraying inclusivity by not adopting stereotypical depictions of those historically underrepresented can connect with the underrepresented and the general public (Han & Tsai, 2016). For example, disabled athletes support the depiction of disability in advertisements and view it as a confirmation of their not being excluded in the marketplace (Hardin, 2003). Moreover, Hardin (2003) found that only "positive" representations of disability were rated favorably by these disabled athletes, recognizing that the majority of disability portrayals do not accurately reflect their daily lives. Relatedly, most consumers see inclusive ads featuring PWDs as inspiring (Shelton, 2017;

Cottingham et al., 2015). Specifically, Cottingham et al. (2015) found that disabled athletes were seen as inspiring by various stakeholders involved in a wheelchair soccer event. Through subjective social inclusion, inclusive advertising can lead to higher marketing effectiveness, which could apply to the portrayal of the disabled (Licsandru & Cui, 2018). Consumers show keenness to associate with brands that portray inclusivity with ads having disabled models (Cossu et al., 2020). Cossu et al. (2020) found a range of favorable reactions toward an ad featuring a disabled model. Considering consumers' increasing preference for such inclusive advertising portraying apparent physical disability, it is likely that mixed-models brand ads will lead to better CBRs when compared to nondisabled-models brand ads.

I define ad conditions and perceived brand inclusivity in the same way as I did in H1a and H1b. I define and capture CBRs in the following three hypotheses as ad and brand attitudes (H2a), word of mouth (hereafter, WOM) for the brand (H2b), and purchase likelihood (H2c). In particular, I define and measure perceived ad attitude by the participants using measures from Mitchell (1986). I define and measure perceived brand attitude by the participants using measures from Escalas (2004). I define and measure the likelihood of spreading positive WOM for the brand by the participants using measures from Maxham III and Netemeyer (2002). Lastly, I define and measure the likelihood of purchase intention by the participants using measures from Mackenzie & Spreng (1992).

I formally hypothesize the following:

H2a: Mixed-models brand ads (vs. nondisabled-models brand ads) will lead to a higher ad and brand attitude.

H2b: Mixed-models brand ads (vs. nondisabled-models brand ads) will lead to higher WOM for the brand.

H2c: Mixed-models brand ads (vs. nondisabled-models brand ads) will lead to higher purchase likelihood.

Brand ads featuring the underrepresented are seen as inclusive and signal their societal recognition and acceptance (Licsandru & Cui, 2018). Therefore, ads featuring disabled models are suggested to be perceived as inclusive. Increasingly, consumers favorably view brand inclusivity initiatives (Licsandru & Cui, 2019; Pang et al., 2019). Moreover, non-stereotypical portrayals of disability are also shown to elicit favorable consumer responses (Parashar and Devanathan, 2006; Foster and Pettinicchio, 2022). Such depictions of disability are also suggested to result in consumers showing a higher likelihood of associating with such brands (Cossu et al., 2020). Therefore, it is likely that the higher perceived brand inclusivity from the mixed-models ad drives the downstream consequence of favorable CBRs.

Given that portrayal of apparent physical disability in the mixed-models brand ad is hypothesized to lead to higher perceived brand inclusivity, I propose that it is this higher perceived brand inclusivity that will drive a range of favorable CBRs. Formally, I hypothesize the following:

H3a: The relationship between mixed-models brand ads (vs. nondisabled-models brand ads) and higher brand and ad attitudes will be mediated by perceived brand inclusivity.

H3b: The relationship between mixed-models brand ads (vs. nondisabled-models brand ads) and higher WOM for the brand will be mediated by perceived brand inclusivity.

H3c: The relationship between mixed-models brand ads (vs. nondisabled-models brand ads) and higher purchase likelihood will be mediated by perceived brand inclusivity.

After hypothesizing the main and mediation effects, I now proceed to hypothesize and propose three boundary conditions, moderating these main and mediation effects.

2.5 Proposed Boundary Condition: Self-Brand Connection

Consumers assign social attributes to brands, influencing the resultant CBRs (Wijnands & Gill, 2020). Self-brand connection (hereafter, SBC) is the extent of people perceiving a brand to help them achieve or represent their ideal self (Escalas, 2004; Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Indeed, higher SBC leads to a higher "brand as me effects" (Song et al., 2017), playing a crucial role in consumers' self-concept (Alvarez & Fournier, 2016; Escalas & Bettman, 2003). For example, it is suggested that SBC can be an important factor in the quality of association a consumer feels with a brand (Fournier, 1998).

SBC is a continuum, ranging from consumers feeling a full intersection between themselves and the brand (high SBC) to a substantial gap between themselves and the brand (low SBC) (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). The increase in this intersection leads to a proportional increase in brands becoming a part of the consumers' self-concept (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). Indeed, consumers with a higher congruency between self-

concept and a brand feel higher SBC (Kemp et al., 2012). Higher SBC leads to better CBRs (Escalas, 2004). To elaborate, Escalas (2004) found that when consumers feel high SBC, it results in favorable evaluations of the brand. Such consumers also display a sense of pride due to their involvement with a brand (Nandy & Sondhi, 2020). Moreover, high SBC is shown to result in higher purchase intention, with consumers preferring to opt for brands they feel higher SBC with even when other comparable brands are available (Park et al., 2010).

A brand's imagery leads to higher felt SBC and, consequently, the consumer's attachment to a brand (Thomson, 2006). Thomson (2006) found that such attachment increases brand satisfaction, with consumers showing higher trustworthiness and willingness to commit to these brands. A brand's marketing communications can be integral to brand experience, and SBC positively correlates with brand experience (van der Westhuizen, 2018). This brand experience is found to drive brand loyalty resulting from high SBC. When consumers feel brands' value aligns with their own or their ideal self, they feel higher SBC and a sense of commitment to the brand (Kuo & Hou, 2017). Specifically, Kuo and Huo (2017) found that SBC was a critical determinant of consumers' commitment and loyalty to a brand, even in the online brand communities' context. These findings support the role SBC plays in garnering favorable consumer responses.

Self-presentation by brands (hereafter, SPB) plays a vital role in SBC felt by the consumers of new brands (Tan et al., 2018). SPB can potentially signal alignment with consumers' self-concept and relates to the impression a new brand wants to create on consumers upon launch (Tan et al., 2018). Tan et al. (2018) further found that SPB can be

a crucial determinant and directly impact SBC for new brands. The relationship between SPB and SBC is relevant because my studies use a cover story of fictitious brands, presenting them as upcoming brands in their respective product and service categories.

Based on the above, the positive effect of featuring a disabled model in a mixed-models ad will likely attenuate for consumers feeling high SBC with a brand. Conversely, low SBC consumers are known to be more "accuracy motivated," basing their processing on "informational value" (Basar, 2021). Therefore, the presence of apparent physical disability in mixed-model brand ads will likely drive the perception of brand inclusivity, consequently leading to favorable CBRs.

I define ad conditions and perceived brand inclusivity in the same way as I did in H1a and H1b. I adapt the previously established definition of SBC from Song et al. (2017) and Tan et al. (2018). Specifically, I manipulated SBC by adapting it from Song et al. (2018), wherein high SBC participants mentioned characteristics that they share with a brand, and low SBC participants mentioned characteristics that set them apart from the brand. Moreover, I define and measure SBC using measures from Tan et al. (2018) that assess the degree of overlap a customer feels with a brand. Lastly, I define favorable CBRs as intended loyalty and purchase intention. I define and adapt the measure of intended loyalty using measures from Sinha and Lu (2019) that assess both the WOM and purchase intentions after seeing the brand ad. I define and measure purchase intention using measures from Minton (2020).

Formally, I hypothesize the following:

H4a: The effect of mixed-models brand ads (vs. nondisabled-models brand ads) on perceived brand inclusivity and intended loyalty will hold for consumers with low SBC and attenuate for consumers with high SBC.

H4b: The effect of mixed-models brand ads (vs. nondisabled-models brand ads) on perceived brand inclusivity and purchase intention will hold for consumers with low SBC and attenuate for consumers with high SBC.

Previous marketing literature has established that testing interactions by measuring and manipulating the moderator can provide strong support for a causal relationship between the constructs (Septianto, 2020). Therefore, this is a common practice in empirical studies testing and establishing interaction effects. In line with previous literature testing moderating variables, I manipulated SBC to test H4a and measured SBC to test H4b.

2.6 Additional Boundary Condition 1: Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)

Pratto and colleagues (1994) introduced an individual difference variable that is indicative of one's inherent preference for societal hierarchies. This variable was termed Social Dominance Orientation (hereafter, SDO) and was distinct from other possibly related traits such as authoritarianism. This conceptualization led to the development of Social Dominance Theory (hereafter, SDT), which delves deeper into the associated characteristics of individuals falling into various spectrums of SDO. People with high SDO display not only a supportive attitude toward group-based hierarchies but also tend to support initiatives that sustain their perceived superiority, maintaining the status quo (Cozzolino & Snyder, 2008; Han et al., 2019).

Previous research has documented several aspects of the high SDO with regard to individual personality traits and political ideology. For example, Cozzolino and Snyder (2008) found that high SDO individuals' tendencies to dominate were evident from their competitiveness with the intention to win at any cost. Han et al. (2019) found that those leaning toward being conservative were high in SDO, and those leaning toward being liberal had low SDO. Relatedly, high SDO individuals are also known to hold prejudice against those belonging to perceived inferior groups (Passini & Morselli, 2016; Pratto et al., 1994). Conversely, individuals with low SDO are known to support a more egalitarian world, supporting regulations that promote social parity (Pratto et al. 1994).

Moreover, high SDO individuals reject multiculturism and, while forming social impressions, do not consider relevant information (Foels & Reid, 2010; Levin et al., 2012; Rios et al., 2014). Levin et al. (2012) established that high SDO individuals are likely to view the blending of other cultures as diluting the superiority of their own identities and, therefore, tend to resist it. Rios et al. (2014) found that the tendency to dominate in high SDO individuals is also reflected in their lower preference for fair-trade products. Individuals with high SDO also do not favor efforts toward inclusion and find diversity unusual (Navarro-Mateu et al., 2019). Therefore, they expressed lesser interest in inclusive education (Navarro-Mateu et al., 2019).

SDT also theorizes that individuals with high SDO justify prevailing societal hierarchies using "legitimizing myths," which in turn lead to maintaining these hierarchies (Sidanius et al., 1994). People reporting high SDO also utilize these "legitimizing myths" to defend their consumption patterns. For example, Hyers (2006) found that high SDO individuals tend to justify the exploitation of animals in their use of

luxury and non-luxury items. Similarly, Cunningham and Melton (2014) found that high SDO consumers have an unfavorable attitude toward a business with inclusive ads featuring LGBTQ+, consequently impacting their decision to give business to such brands. Therefore, SDO has been found to influence an individual's consumption preferences in many contexts.

Assimilating the above perspectives, I propose that since individuals with high SDO prefer societal hierarchies, it is likely that they will not view the mixed-models ad and nondisabled-models ad differently. In other words, for high SDO individuals, the mixed-models ad and nondisabled-models ad will not significantly differ for perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs. However, low SDO individuals support a more egalitarian world and will likely view mixed-models ads as a significant step in this direction. Therefore, low SDO individuals will have higher perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs for the mixed-models ad.

I define ad conditions and perceived brand inclusivity in the same way as I did in H1a and H1b. I define and assess SDO using the well-established scale with sixteen items by Pratto and colleagues (1994), each measuring the belief in group hierarchies. Moreover, in this hypothesis, I define favorable CBR as brand evaluation using the measure from Chang (2010).

Formally, I hypothesize the following:

H5: The effect of mixed-models brand ads (vs. nondisabled-models brand ads) on perceived brand inclusivity and brand evaluation will hold for consumers with low SDO and attenuate for consumers with high SDO.

2.7 Additional Boundary Condition 2: Perceived Brand Message Authenticity (Perceived BMA)

Beverland et al. (2008) established three central domains of brand authenticity: pure authenticity (relating to genuineness), approximate authenticity (relating to traditional symbolism), and moral authenticity (alignment with personal moral values). Consumers usually determine a brand's authenticity by comparing what it stands for with their personal standards (Beverland et al., 2008). Therefore, moral authenticity is likely to come into play in relation to inclusive advertisements, as it is suggestive of consumers' personal moral perceptions aligning with the depiction in brand ads.

Morhart and colleagues (2015) developed a scale to assess brand authenticity and suggested that marketing communications are essential to brand authenticity since consumers largely base their judgment of brand authenticity on how brands communicate (Morhart et al., 2015). Therefore, authentic advertising forms a component of brand authenticity. Advertising authenticity is defined as the depiction of the realities of our everyday lives within a consumption context (Stern, 1994). The more authentic an advertisement is, the more realism from mundane lives it entails (Stern, 1994). The core of such advertising authenticity is the portrayal of contrived individuals and situations that seem sincerely inspired by such life realities (Miller, 2015). Miller (2015) developed an ad authenticity scale to gauge perceptions of authenticity after seeing a television ad. This scale encompassed brand characteristics effectively communicated by the brand ad.

Previous research has established that incorporating diverse models in brand ads can positively impact their perceived ad authenticity (Shoenberger et al., 2020). In

particular, Shoenberger and colleagues (2020) found that unfiltered images of plus-sized models positively impacted ad attitudes and buying intentions. These positive effects were due to such images conveying higher brand authenticity. Similarly, when brands post socially responsible ad messaging, consumers perceive it favorably (Shoenberger et al., 2021). Shoenberger and colleagues (2021) investigated ad authenticity during the pandemic and found that perceived message authenticity was vital for the success of brand ads with prosocial messages. Relatedly, such perceived message authenticity is also known to drive favorable CBRs, such as attitude and purchase likelihood (Cornelis & Peter, 2017; Shoenberger et al., 2021).

Assimilating the above perspectives, I propose that when consumers have a higher perceived brand message authenticity (hereafter, perceived BMA), there will be no significant difference between mixed-models ads and nondisabled-model ads. It is so because the ads confirm to consumers' perception of BMA. However, in the case of low-perceived BMA, consumers tend to judge the brand message based on the information present (Jiang et al., 2022). Therefore, the presence of disabled models having an apparent physical disability with nondisabled models in mixed-models ads will still lead to increased perceived brand inclusivity and, consequently, favorable CBRs for consumers with low perceived BMA. Hence, there will be a significant difference between mixed-models ads and nondisabled-models ads for consumers with low perceived BMA.

I define ad conditions and perceived brand inclusivity in the same way as I did in H1a and H1b. I define and assess perceived BMA using measures from Shoenberger and colleagues (2021), with each item measuring how authentic brand messaging seemed to

the participants. Moreover, in this hypothesis, I define favorable CBR as WOM for the brand using the measure from Wang and Korschun (2015).

Formally, I hypothesize the following:

H6: The effect of mixed-models brand ads (vs. nondisabled-models brand ads) on perceived brand inclusivity and WOM for the brand will hold for consumers with low perceived BMA and attenuate for consumers with high perceived BMA.

2.8 Addressing Possible Alternative Explanations, Confounds, and Alternative Process Mechanisms

Possible Alternative Explanations and Confounds

First, it could be argued that disability could be driving the perceived brand inclusivity and, consequently, favorable CBRs. In other words, the presence of disability alone in an ad could be driving these positive effects on perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs. I test and rule out this possible alternative explanation in Study 2A. To address this possible alternative explanation, I added an ad condition with disabled models only (hereafter referred to as disabled-models ad) to the mixed-models ad and nondisabled-models ad. Therefore, if the mere presence of a disability is driving these effects, I should observe a significant difference between mixed-models ad and disabled-models ad.

Second, my cover stories in Studies 1-2B mention the fictitious brands as upcoming brands that stand for the belief that the brand is for everyone and wants to make sure it is communicated through the ad. Therefore, it could be argued that this

heavy-handedness of the cover story in priming inclusion is driving the positive effects of perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs. Previous research has recognized that cover story is integral to experimental manipulations and are expected to impact participant responses (Brown et al., 1998). Therefore, it was important to address this heavy-handedness of cover stories in Studies 1-2B as it may have impacted participant responses for perceived brand inclusivity and, consequently, favorable CBRs. Moreover, all studies conducted after Study 2C had the modified cover story with reduced heavy-handedness on priming inclusion.

Third, in Studies 1-2B, the number of models in mixed-models ads and nondisabled-models ads was different. Specifically, in Study 1, the nondisabled-models ad had four models, and the mixed-models ad had the same four nondisabled models plus two disabled models, adding to six models. In Study 2A, the nondisabled-models ad had two models, the mixed-models ad had the same two nondisabled models plus two disabled models, and the disabled-models ad had the two disabled models from the mixed-models condition. In Study 2B, the nondisabled-models ad had four nondisabled models, and the mixed-models ad had the same four nondisabled models plus two disabled models. Hence, it could be argued that the higher number of models in the mixed-models ad condition is driving the positive effects of perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs. I address these possible concerns and confounds in Study 2C by keeping the same number of models in both mixed-models ad and nondisabled-models ads. Moreover, I also tried keeping the models in the mixed-models ad and the nondisabled-models ad as similar as possible. In particular, out of the two disabled models in the mixed-models ad, one was made to look nondisabled, and the other was

made to closely resemble the disabled model in the nondisabled-models ad. I elaborate on this potential confound and concern in Study 2C.

Possible Alternative Process Mechanisms

Any research is supposed to establish the robustness of the findings by determining the possible alternative process mechanisms and accounting for them in studies carried out. Therefore, I found specific alternative explanations already established in the literature related to inclusive advertisements. I deemed it necessary to statistically control for them while demonstrating my main and mediation effects. In what follows, I outline three possible alternative explanations and process mechanisms based on previous research.

Cossu et al. (2020) investigated brand advertisements featuring a disabled model. The authors found that brand ads featuring a disabled model led to more favorable ratings of the ad, evoked more pity, positive and negative emotions, admiration for the models, and were judged more novel (Cossu et al., 2020). These findings were tested across four studies. They found that brand ads featuring a disabled model resulted in higher ad attitude (Study 1), evoking more pity, negative and positive emotions, higher admiration for the model, and the ad being judged as more novel with higher purchase likelihood (Study 2). Cossu and colleagues (2020) also found that these findings were not due to social desirability bias (Study 3) and did not change in the context of public or private consumption (Study 4). Since these findings were tested using a disabled model in brand ads, I deemed it necessary to address these findings and statistically control for them. Therefore, while H1a suggests that mixed-models ad leads to perceived brand inclusivity,

I formally proposed H1b, suggesting that the perceived brand inclusivity in mixed-models ad will remain significant even after controlling for all the previously mentioned variables (pity, positive and negative emotions, admiration for models, ad novelty). In what follows, I define each of the covariates used to support hypothesis H1b in detail. I define pity for models by adapting the measure from Kervyn et al. (2012). I define positive and negative emotions and admiration for models by adapting the measures from Aaker et al. (2012). Lastly, I define ad novelty by adapting the measure from Cox and Cox (1988).

Åkestam et al. (2017) found that inclusive advertisements featuring LGBTQ+ trigger thoughts related to others in society, leading to felt social connectedness and empathy, eventually leading to better ad attitudes. H2b suggests that mixed-model ads result in higher WOM for the brand. H3b suggests that perceived brand inclusivity mediates between ad conditions and WOM for the brand. I test these hypotheses in Study 2B, and to account for the process mechanism established by Åkestam et al. (2017), I measure the thoughts after seeing the mixed-models ad and nondisabled-models ad. I define the thoughts after seeing the ad by adapting the measure used by Åkestam et al. (2017). Specifically, after seeing the ad, I asked the participants to enter their thoughts, and it was an open-ended question. Next, I asked the participants to categorize their written thoughts as related to the ad, their own self, or other people in the ad or at large. Thereafter, I control for these thoughts in my mediation analysis from ad condition to WOM for the brand through perceived brand inclusivity. Therefore, if thoughts after seeing the ad would have impacted my proposed mediation, my indirect effect would

have turned non-significant. I elaborate on this alternative process mechanism in Study 2B.

Joo & Wu (2021) found that inclusive advertisements featuring models with higher body weight resulted in higher brand attitude and purchase likelihood through brand warmth. Brand warmth is a component of the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF) (Kervyn et al., 2012), which proposes that if the perceived intentions of the brand are positive, it can lead to higher purchase interest and loyalty, akin to how interpersonal relationships develop (Keller, 2012). H2c suggests that mixed-model ads result in a higher purchase likelihood. H3c suggests that perceived brand inclusivity is the mediator between ad conditions and purchase likelihood. I test these hypotheses in Study 2C, and to account for the alternate process mechanism established by Joo & Wu (2021), I measure brand warmth after seeing the mixed-models ad and nondisabled-models ad. I define brand warmth by adapting the measure used by Joo and Wu (2021), which assesses the perceived brand intentions with regard to the general public. Thereafter, I control for brand warmth in my mediation analysis from ad condition to purchase likelihood through perceived brand inclusivity. Therefore, if brand warmth would have impacted my proposed mediation, my indirect effect would have turned non-significant. I elaborate on this alternative process mechanism in Study 2C.

2.9 Conceptual Model and Research Positioning in Existing Marketing Literature

I present the detailed conceptual model in Figure 1, with details on studies conducted in Figure 2. Please refer to Table 2 to see how this dissertation is positioned within the larger research on disability portrayals in the marketing context.

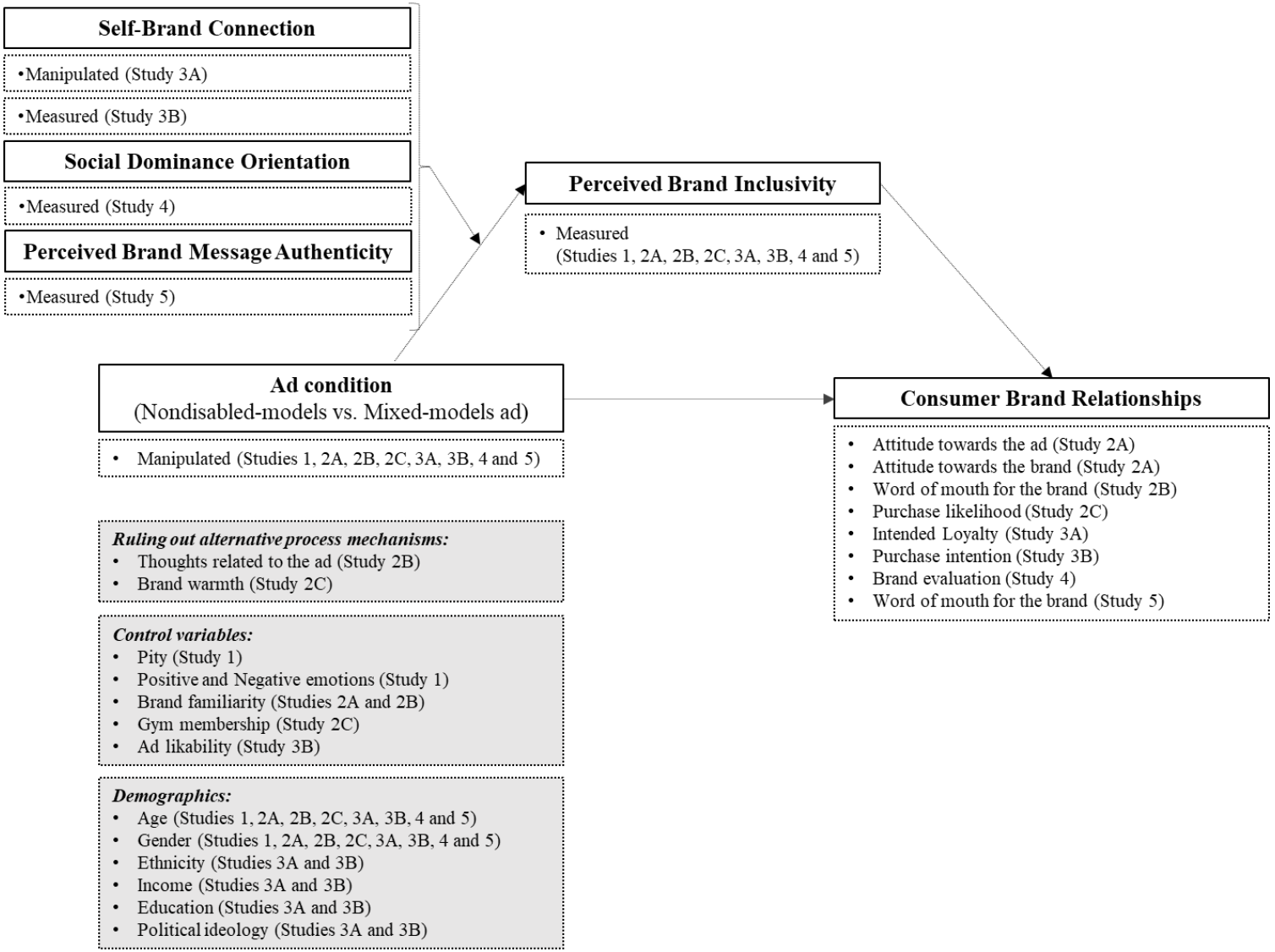

Figure 1. Conceptual model with the operationalization of the key constructs

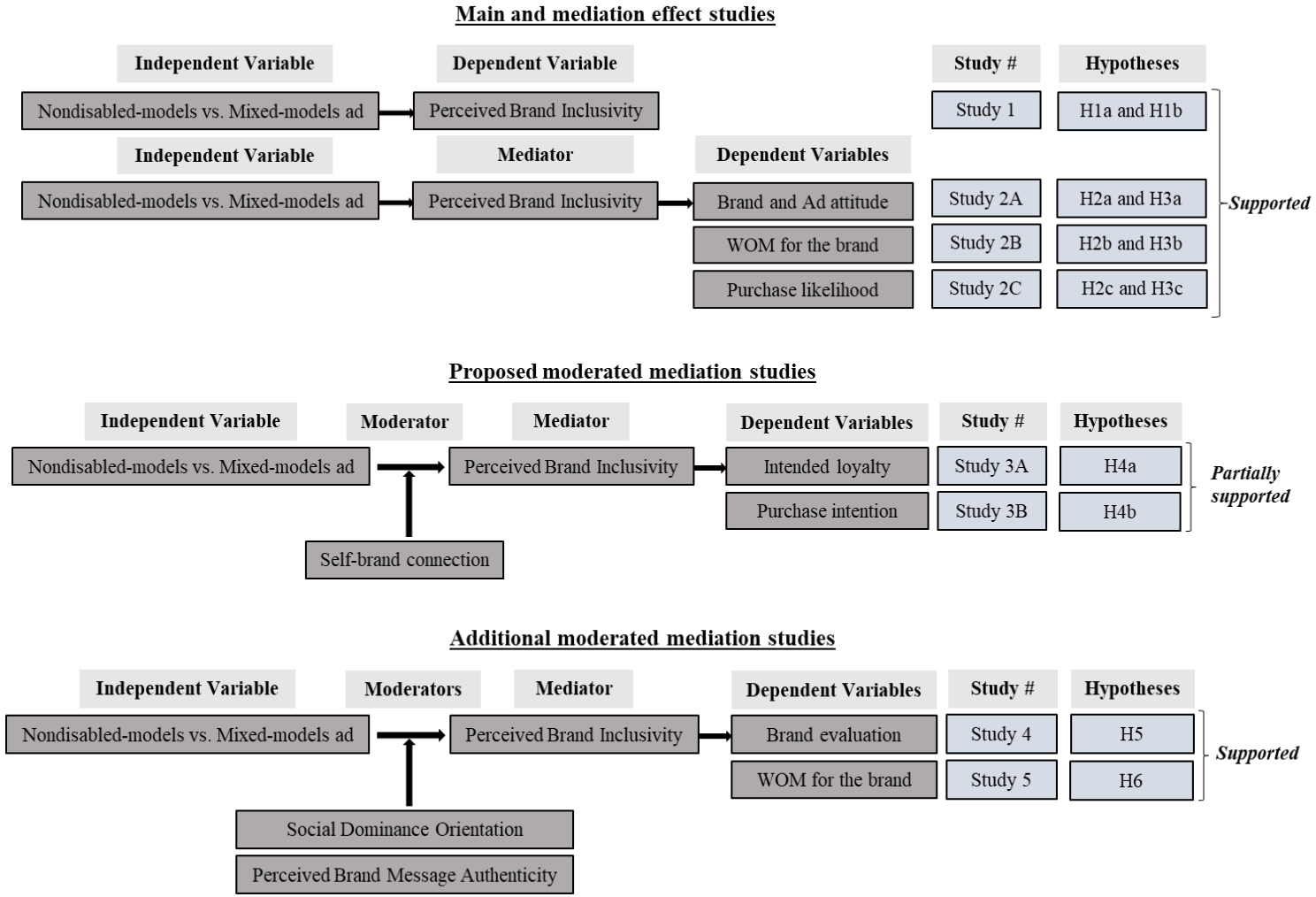

Figure 2. Details on studies conducted in line with the proposed conceptual model

Year	Source	Journal	Method	Sample	Consumption-Related DVs	Main Findings
2001	Haller and Ralph	Disability Studies Quarterly	Content Analysis	Advertising images in US and UK	N/A	Advertisers have featured the disabled in advertisements, but the portrayal is mainly limited to people in wheelchairs or those that are deaf.
2001	Sarabia Panol and McBride	Disability Studies Quarterly	Empirical	Undergraduate students	Perception of advertisement, Feelings towards advertisements, Behavioral intention (trying/using), Purchase Intention	The female portrayal of disability results in positive behavioral intentions; other results were inconclusive.
2006	Parashar and Devanathan	Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling	Content Analysis	Magazine advertisements from May to October 2003	N/A	Only a minuscule percentage of advertisements portrayed disability (via visual or text).
2006	Haller and Ralph	Disability Studies Quarterly	Content Analysis	Advertising images in US and UK	N/A	Although there has been an increase in the portrayal of disability in advertisements, such portrayal typically continues to stigmatize and stereotypically portray them.
2017	Cooley	Master's Thesis	Empirical	Undergraduate students	Brand and ad attitude, likelihood to purchase the product	No significant differences in video ads and brand attitude featuring the disabled; higher purchase likelihood for the control video ad (not featuring the disabled).
2019	Kearney, Brittain, and Kipnis	Consumption, Markets, and Culture	Content analysis	Case study analysis: We're the Superhumans campaign	N/A	The portrayal of the disabled in the 2016 Paralympic games creates a discourse detrimental to the inclusion of the disabled in the marketplace.

2020	Cossu, Estes, and Vosgerau	Advances in Consumer Research: Conference Proceedings	Online and field studies	Online participants, Students at a European university	Attitude towards the ad, Pity, Negative emotions, Positive emotions, Admiration for the model, Ad novelty, and Willingness to buy	The authors conducted four studies demonstrating that an ad featuring only a disabled model can positively impact consumers' opinions, emotions, and intentions.
2022	Foster and Pettinicchio	Journal of Consumer Culture	Content analysis	Magazine and online content	N/A	Although the representation of disability is favorably received by consumers, this representation is mostly limited to a certain visually pleasing aesthetic.
2022	This research	Dissertation	Online studies	Online participants from the US	Attitude towards the brand and Ad, Likelihood of spreading positive word of mouth, Purchase likelihood for service offered, and Brand evaluation	The dissertation investigates the portrayal of the disabled with nondisabled models and establishes when and why it results in favorable consumer-brand relationships, generalizing the findings across various product and service categories and ruling out/controlling for alternative explanations already established in the literature.

Table 2. Existing studies on disability in the marketing context

CHAPTER 3. OVERVIEW OF PRETESTS AND STUDIES

I conducted six pretests and used the pretested stimuli for all eight main studies. The details of the pretests are provided before each main study. Six main studies (Studies 1, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, and 3B) were pre-registered on the platform aspredicted.org. The last two main studies testing two additional boundary conditions, SDO and perceived BMA (Study 4 and 5), were not pre-registered. A brief overview of the pretests and the main studies conducted is provided as follows:

3.1 Pretests

All the ads were carefully curated to be the same except for the models featured in the two versions. My pretests tested the ad stimuli for inclusivity, believability, likeability, and brand familiarity. Specifically, Pretest 1 tested the stimuli for a fictitious electronics brand with two versions of ads: mixed-models ad and nondisabled-models ad. Pretest 2 tested the stimuli for a fictitious business clothing brand with three versions of ads: mixed-models ad, nondisabled-models ad, and disabled-models ad. Pretest 3 tested the stimuli for a casual clothing brand with two versions of ads: mixed-models ad and nondisabled-models ad. Pretest 4 tested the stimuli for a fictitious gym and fitness service brand with two versions of ads having the same number of models: a mixed-models ad and a nondisabled-models ad. Pretest 5 was used to finalize the manipulation of SBC to test SBC as a moderator to my established main and mediation effects. Pretest 6 tested the stimuli for a fictitious business clothing brand with two versions of ads (mixed-models ad and nondisabled-models ad) having the same number of models. Moreover, in Pretest 6, the models were the same in both ads. Therefore, the mixed-models ad had two nondisabled models and two disabled models. In the nondisabled-models ad, the two

disabled models were modified to look like nondisabled models by a photoshop professional.

3.2 Study 1

Study 1 establishes that mixed-models ad leads to increased perceived brand inclusivity (testing and supporting H1a). Previous research found that ads featuring a physically disabled model were assessed favorably and were associated with a higher willingness to buy, induced more pity, negative emotions, positive emotions, and admiration, and were perceived as more novel (Cossu et al., 2020). Therefore, the second objective was to control for the factors already established in previous literature and demonstrate the significant effect of perceived brand inclusivity (testing and supporting H1b). Hence, this study established the preliminary theoretical grounds for my further studies, using a fictitious consumer electronics brand as the premise of the cover story. The next set of studies established that mixed-models ad leads to higher perceived brand inclusivity with the downstream consequence of favorable CBRs.

3.3 Studies 2A – 2C

Studies 2A – 2C demonstrate that the mixed-models ad leads to higher perceived brand inclusivity with the downstream consequence of favorable CBRs. Hence, these studies establish the main effects of perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs in addition to the mediation through perceived brand inclusivity on favorable CBRs. Moreover, these studies rule out possible theoretically relevant alternative process mechanisms and confounding factors.

3.3.1 Study 2A

Study 2A demonstrated that the disabled-models ad and mixed-models ad do not differ significantly in their evaluation. Therefore, this study had two objectives. First, it may be argued that disability alone drives the perception of brand inclusivity. If that is so, I should observe significant differences between the mixed-models ad and disabled-models ad for perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs. Therefore, in Study 2A, I wanted to rule out this alternative explanation. Second, I establish that mixed-models ad leads to a higher brand and ad attitude and perceived brand inclusivity (testing and supporting H2a). Moreover, the effect on higher brand and ad attitude is mediated by perceived brand inclusivity (testing and supporting H3a). A fictitious business formalwear brand was the premise of the cover story for this study.

3.3.2 Study 2B

Previous literature established that inclusive ads featuring LGBTQ+ trigger thoughts related to others in society, resulting in favorable brand outcomes (Åkestam et al., 2017). Therefore, I had three objectives for conducting Study 2B. First, to establish that mixed-models ad leads to higher WOM for the brand (testing and supporting H2b). Moreover, the effect on higher WOM for the brand is mediated by perceived brand inclusivity (testing and supporting H3b). Second, to demonstrate that mixed-models ad does not trigger thoughts related to others in society. Third, to corroborate that when controlling for thoughts evoked after viewing the ad, the mediation through perceived

brand inclusivity on WOM for the brand remains unimpacted. This study used a fictitious casual clothing brand as the premise of the cover story.

3.3.3 Study 2C

For inclusive ads featuring higher bodyweight individuals, brand warmth mediates the brand attitude and purchase intention (Joo & Wu, 2021). Hence, Study 2C had five objectives. First, to establish that mixed-models ad leads to a higher purchase likelihood for the service (testing and supporting H2c). Moreover, the effect on higher purchase likelihood for the service offered is mediated by perceived brand inclusivity (testing and supporting H3c). Second, to extend and generalize the findings in a service context. Third, to corroborate that when controlling for brand warmth, the mediating effect of perceived brand inclusivity on the purchase likelihood for the service offered remains unimpacted. Fourth, to rule out the number of models in the brand advertisement impacting the results. Hence, in this study, both the ads featured the same number of models, and the featured disabled models resembled the models in the nondisabled-models ad as closely as possible. Fifth, till now, my cover story could be viewed as heavy-handed on priming inclusivity. Therefore, I toned down my cover story and limited it to the context of a new upcoming brand. This study used a fictitious gym and fitness center brand as the premise of the cover story.

3.4 Study 3A:

Study 3A tested the proposed boundary condition of Self-brand connection (SBC) by manipulating it. Specifically, I suggested that the favorable impact of mixed-models

ad on perceived brand inclusivity and intended loyalty will attenuate for consumers feeling high SBC (testing H4a). However, for the consumers feeling low SBC, the positive effect of mixed-models ad on perceived brand inclusivity and intended loyalty will still hold. This study did not work, and hence, my hypothesis H4a was not supported. Upon reflection, I realized that previous SBC manipulation had been done on established brands. Therefore, it is possible that I would have observed the hypothesized effect if I had used real brands for SBC manipulation. I elaborate more on this reflection in the discussion section of Study 3A.

3.5 Study 3B:

Study 3B tested the proposed boundary condition of Self-brand connection (SBC) by measuring it. As in Study 3A, I suggested that the favorable impact of mixed-models ad on perceived brand inclusivity and purchase intention will attenuate for consumers feeling high SBC (testing H4b). However, for the consumers feeling low SBC, the favorable impact of mixed-models ad on perceived brand inclusivity and purchase intention will still hold. The study did not work in entirety and only partially supported my proposed hypothesis H4b. Upon close inspection, I noticed that while the hypothesized interaction worked for perceived brand inclusivity, it did not work for the dependent measure of purchase intention. Therefore, it could be argued that an attitudinal dependent measure (instead of a more concrete measure such as purchase intention) might have been more appropriate to test this interaction. Moreover, as suggested earlier, previous research on SBC has looked at real and not fictitious brands. I elaborate more on these reflections in the discussion section of Study 3B.

3.6 Study 4:

Through Study 4, I tested and supported the proposed moderating effect of Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) to my main and mediation effects. I suggested that the favorable impact of mixed-models ads on perceived brand inclusivity and brand evaluation will attenuate for consumers with high SDO (testing and supporting H5). However, for the consumers feeling low SDO, the positive effect of mixed-models ad on perceived brand inclusivity and brand evaluation will still hold. This study used the stimuli for nondisabled-models and mixed-models from Study 2A.

3.7 Study 5:

Study 5 tested and supported the proposed boundary condition of perceived Brand Message Authenticity (BMA). I suggested that the favorable impact of mixed-models ads on perceived brand inclusivity and WOM for the brand will attenuate for consumers with high perceived BMA (testing and supporting H6). However, for the consumers with low perceived BMA, the positive effect of mixed-models ad on perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs will still hold. This study used the stimuli and cover story from Study 2C.

Table 3 presents the details of each of the studies conducted to support the proposed hypotheses. For each of the studies conducted, I provide the pre-registration details and link, study purpose, dependent variables tested, study participant details with the total number of participants considered for data analysis (based on the exclusion criteria outlined in the pre-registration), monetary compensation, and demographics.

	Study 1	Study 2A	Study 2B	Study 2C	Study 3A	Study 3B	Study 4	Study 5
Pre-registered	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Pre-registration details	AsPredicted #91138 https://aspredicted.org/LNX_RB1	AsPredicted #87004 https://aspredicted.org/GRV_JZ8	AsPredicted #87291 https://aspredicted.org/1ZY_WQL	AsPredicted #104938 https://aspredicted.org/N75_3W9	AsPredicted #109260 https://aspredicted.org/XJW_RVG	AsPredicted #110716 https://aspredicted.org/9QX_W7T	-NA- -NA-	-NA- -NA-
Hypotheses tested	H1a and H1b	H2a and H3a	H2b and H3b	H2c and H3c	H4a	H4b	H5	H6
Dependent Variables	Perceived brand inclusivity	Brand and ad attitudes	WOM for the brand	Purchase likelihood	Intended loyalty	Purchase intention	Brand evaluation	WOM for the brand
N (raw data)	254	377	272	252	600	600	351	361
N (for analysis)	252	375	256	248	594	593	346	349
Study type	Online (Prolific)	Online (CloudResearch)	Online (CloudResearch)	Online (CloudResearch)	Online (CloudResearch)	Online (CloudResearch)	Online (CloudResearch)	Online (CloudResearch)
Compensation	$0.16	$0.10	$0.10	$0.15	$0.20	$0.25	$0.25	$0.15
All study participants were adults (18 and above) recruited from the US								
Age								
Age (M/SD)	36.69 (12.20)	40.27 (12.57)	39.65 (11.78)	39.87 (12.21)	40.23 (13.05)	40.25 (12.27)	40.24 (12.43)	41.46 (11.99)
Age Range	19-71	18-78	19-69	20-79	19-91	18-81	20-84	20-84
Gender	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**
Male	50	40.9	38.5	41.4	46.0	41.3	42.5	45.6
Female	48.8	54.6	52.6	55.8	52.4	56.7	55.8	52.7
Others	0.8	1.6	0.4	0.8	1.3	0.8	1.7	1.1
Prefer not to disclose		0.3	0.7	0.4	0.3	1.2		0.6
Total	99.6*	97.4*	92.2*	98.4*	100.0**	100**	100.0**	100.0**
Ethnicity	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**
White	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	71.4	74.9	-NA-	-NA-

Black	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	11.4	8.8	-NA-	-NA-
American Indian	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	0.5	0.7	-NA-	-NA-
Asian	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	7.7	8.9	-NA-	-NA-
Native Hawaiian	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	0.3	0.2	-NA-	-NA-
Hispanic	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	6.9	5.2	-NA-	-NA-
Other	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	1.7	1.3	-NA-	-NA-
Total	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	100.0**	100.0**	-NA-	-NA-
Income	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**
< $ 20,000	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	12.1	12.6	-NA-	-NA-
$ 20-39,999	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	18.7	18.5	-NA-	-NA-
$ 40-59,999	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	19.4	21.8	-NA-	-NA-
$ 60-79,999	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	18.4	17.0	-NA-	-NA-
$ 80-99,999	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	10.1	10.3	-NA-	-NA-
$ 100,000 & above	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	21.4	19.7	-NA-	-NA-
Total	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	100.0**	100.0**	-NA-	-NA-
Education	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**
No high-school	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	1.2	0.7	-NA-	-NA-
High school graduate	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	9.1	12.8	-NA-	-NA-
Associate degree	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	33.2	27.5	-NA-	-NA-
4-year degree	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	39.9	40.3	-NA-	-NA-
Graduate degree	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	13.8	16.2	-NA-	-NA-
Doctorate	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	2.9	2.5	-NA-	-NA-
Total	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	100.0**	100.0**	-NA-	-NA-
Political ideology	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**	**Percent (%)**
Extremely conservative	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	5.7	7.4	-NA-	-NA-
Moderately conservative	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	10.3	10.1	-NA-	-NA-

Slightly conservative	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	13.8	9.8	-NA-	-NA-
Neutral	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	25.9	23.9	-NA-	-NA-
Slightly liberal	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	17.8	17.4	-NA-	-NA-
Moderately liberal	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	15.0	17.4	-NA-	-NA-
Extremely liberal	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	11.4	14.0	-NA-	-NA-
Total	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	-NA-	100.0**	100.0**	-NA-	-NA-

* Does not add up to 100% because of missing values
** Only considered complete responses for data analysis

Table 3. Details of studies conducted

CHAPTER 4. STUDIES CONDUCTED

4.1 Study 1: Effect of Mixed-models Ads on Perceived Brand Inclusivity

Study 1 (pre-registered on aspredicted.org) had two objectives. The first objective was to demonstrate that mixed-models ad (vs. nondisabled-models ad) leads to higher perceived brand inclusivity (supporting H1a). Previous research has found that ads featuring disabled models lead to pity, negative emotions, positive emotions, admiration, and ad novelty (Cossu et al., 2020). Therefore, I also controlled for these variables to establish the main effect on perceived brand inclusivity (supporting H1b). I predicted a mixed-models ad would lead to higher perceived brand inclusivity (H1a). This effect would remain significant even after controlling for pity, negative emotions, positive emotions, admiration, and ad novelty (H1b). The detailed measures for Pretest 1 and Study 1 are annexed in Appendix – B.

I first pretested the mixed-models and nondisabled-models ads to finalize the stimuli used in Study 1. The context of Study 1 was a fictitious electronics brand, and I first pretested the stimuli for inclusivity, believability, likeability, and brand familiarity.

Pretest 1

Participants. I recruited sixty participants from the online data collection platform, CloudResearch, in exchange for a small monetary reward (USD 0.10). None of the participants failed the attention check. Hence, I used the data from all 60 participants (M_{age} = 38.73 years, 46.7% female) for analysis. The pretest had two ad conditions: an ad containing four nondisabled models only (nondisabled-models condition) and an ad containing the same four nondisabled and two extra disabled models (mixed-models condition). The two ads were the same, except that two disabled models were added in

the mixed-models ad. Moreover, each ad was carefully curated to incorporate diverse racial backgrounds.

Design and Procedure. The study had two ad conditions: nondisabled-models ad condition and mixed-models ad condition. Therefore, the study was a single factor two conditions between subjects. I randomly allotted the respondents to either the nondisabled-models ad condition or the mixed-models ad condition. The cover story was the same in both conditions: "We are working with an upcoming electronics brand, Everyday Electronics, and below you will see one 'mockup' advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. Everyday Electronics as a brand stands for the belief that everyone should have access to electronics, and it wants to make sure that the same is communicated through the ad. This brand will soon be available locally, and at this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow; the continue button will appear in a few seconds." The cover story and stimuli were shown for a minimum of 20 seconds. Following this, the participants indicated their ratings in terms of inclusivity (7-point Likert scale – 1 = "not at all inclusive;" 7 = "very inclusive"), believability (7-point Likert scale – 1 = "highly unbelievable;" 7 = "highly believable") (Atkin & Beltramini, 2007), and likeability (7-point Likert scale – 1 = "dislike very much;" 7 = "like very much") (Kellaris & Cox, 1989). Thereafter, the participants responded to familiarity with the brand using a 7-point bipolar scale: "This brand is very unfamiliar/familiar to me," "I'm not at all knowledgeable/very knowledgeable about this brand," and "I have never seen/have seen advertisements about this brand" (Davtyan et al., 2021). Lastly, I had an

attention check question: “If you are reading this, please do not answer this question,” with a 7-point Likert scale – 1 = “Strongly disagree;” 7 = “Strongly agree” (Chugani & Irwin, 2020). Finally, all participants entered their age and gender. The stimuli for this study for the nondisabled-models and mixed-models condition are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Nondisabled-models mixed-models ad condition for Pretest 1

Results. I entered ad condition as the independent variable (hereafter, IV) and carried out a one-way ANOVA on ratings of inclusivity, which was significant, F (1, 58) = 4.88, $p < 0.05$; *Cohen's d* = 0.58. The participants who viewed the nondisabled-models ad ($M_{Nondisabled}$ = 5.87, $SD_{Nondisabled}$ = 1.06) perceived the ad as less inclusive than those who viewed the mixed-models ad (M_{Mixed} = 6.41, SD_{Mixed} = 0.83). Thereafter, I entered the ad condition as the IV and carried out a one-way ANOVA on the believability ratings and got non-significant results, F (1, 58) = 2.31, $p > 0.05$. Similarly, I entered the ad condition as the IV and carried out a one-way ANOVA on the likeability ratings and got non-significant results, F (1, 58) = 3.70, $p > 0.05$. Next, I tested the scale measuring brand familiarity and found it had high reliability (α = 0.93). Therefore, I averaged the three measures for brand familiarity and formed the brand familiarity index. Lastly, I entered the ad condition as the IV and carried out a one-way ANOVA on this brand familiarity index, and got non-significant results, F (1, 58) = 0.02, $p > 0.05$.

Discussion. In Pretest 1, I tested the stimuli for a fictitious electronics brand and found that the mixed-models ad was found to be more inclusive by participants when compared to the nondisabled-models ad. Moreover, the ad believability, likability, and brand familiarity did not differ significantly. In the following main study, I seek to establish that mixed-models ad leads to perceived brand inclusivity, supporting H1a. Moreover, brand ads featuring a disabled model have been found to evoke pity, negative emotions, positive emotions, admiration, and ad novelty (Cossu et al., 2020). Therefore, in establishing support for H1b, I also control for the above-mentioned variables, such that perceived brand inclusivity for mixed-model ads remains significant.

Main Study

Method

Participants. I recruited two hundred fifty-four participants from the online data collection platform, Prolific in exchange for a small monetary reward (USD 0.10). I pre-registered Study 1 on the platform aspredicted.org (https://aspredicted.org/LNX_RB1). Based on the exclusion criteria outlined in the preregistration (only excluding participants failing the attention check), I used the data from 252 participants for analysis (M_{age} = 36.69 years, 48.8% female). I randomly allotted the participants to either the pretested nondisabled-models or mixed-models ad condition.

Design and Procedure. First, the participants provided consent for participation in the study. Next, they viewed the cover story: "We are working with an upcoming electronics brand, Everyday Electronics, and below you will see one 'mockup' advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear

when it is in print. Everyday Electronics as a brand stands for the belief that everyone should have access to electronics, and it wants to make sure that the same is communicated through the ad. This brand will soon be available locally, and at this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow. The continue button will appear in a few seconds." The cover story and the stimuli were shown for at least 20 seconds. Thereafter, to record the perceptions of brand inclusivity invoked by the brand ad, I asked the participants to respond with their agreement to the two statements: "Everyday Electronics is an inclusive brand" and "the ad shown depicts Everyday Electronics as an inclusive brand" (both assessed on a 7-point Likert scale – 1 = "Extremely unlikely;" 7 = "Extremely likely"). Next, I asked the participants to answer the degree of felt pity towards the models in the ad (Kervyn et al., 2012), negative and positive emotions evoked by the ad, felt admiration towards the models in the ad (Aaker et al., 2012) and ad novelty by measuring the following aspects of the ad: Unusual, Original, and New (Cox and Cox, 1988). I assessed all these items (pity, negative emotions, positive emotions, admiration towards the models in the ad, and ad novelty) on a 7-point Likert scale – 1 = "Not at all;" 7 = "Extremely." Lastly, I used the same attention check question as in the pretest, along with the demographic questions recording age and gender.

Results

Statistical power. I post-hoc analyzed the power of my test with G*Power 3.1.9.7. I found that the statistical power to detect a 0.25 effect size using a one-way ANOVA

with two groups on 252 participants was determined to be 0.98 with $\alpha = 0.05$ (Faul et al., 2007).

Perceived Brand Inclusivity. I found that the two measures for perceived brand inclusivity were correlated significantly ($r = 0.80$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, I used the average of the two measures to form a perceived brand inclusivity index. I carried out a one-way ANOVA on this perceived brand inclusivity index using ad condition as the IV. I found a significant effect of ad conditions, F (1, 250) = 8.06, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.36. As expected, the mixed-models ad was perceived to be more inclusive (M_{Mixed} = 6.02, SD_{Mixed} = 1.06) than the nondisabled-models ad ($M_{Nondisabled}$ = 5.61, $SD_{Nondisabled}$ = 1.22). Figure 4 presents the significant differences between nondisabled-models and mixed-models ads for perceived brand inclusivity.

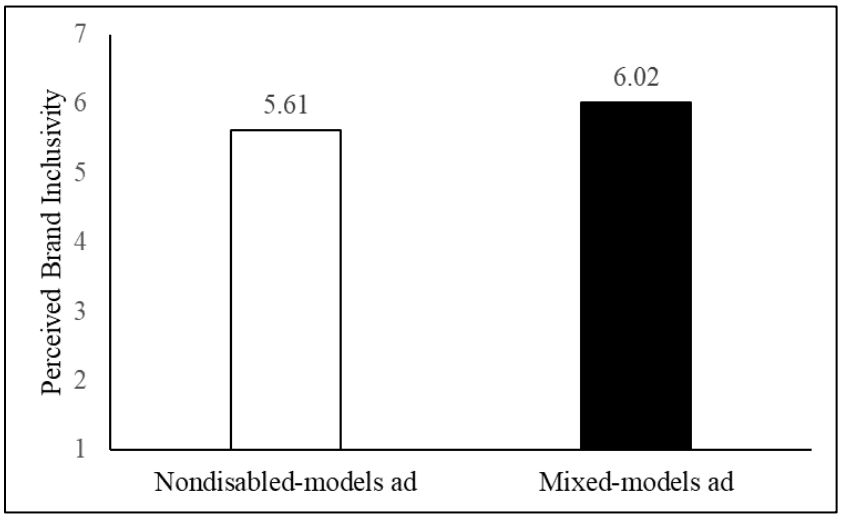

Figure 4. Significant differences between nondisabled-models and mixed-models ads for perceived brand inclusivity

Covariates. Thereafter, using ad condition as the IV, I carried out a one-way ANOVA on pity. The means differed significantly in favor of the mixed-models ad (M_{Mixed} = 2.37, SD_{Mixed} = 1.53) over the nondisabled-models ad ($M_{Nondisabled}$ = 1.72, $SD_{Nondisabled}$ = 1.25), F (1, 250) = 13.71, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.47. Here, I want to point out

that although this difference in pity was significant, the means for both conditions are well below the mid-point of 4. Next, using the ad condition as the IV, I performed a one-way ANOVA on the negative and positive emotions evoked by the ad and got non-significant results ($p > 0.05$). Moreover, on conducting a one-way ANOVA on admiration for the models with ad condition as the IV, the means differed significantly in favor of the mixed-models ad ($M_{Mixed} = 4.37$, $SD_{Mixed} = 1.62$) over the nondisabled-models ad ($M_{Nondisabled} = 3.68$, $SD_{Nondisabled} = 1.67$), F (1, 250) = 10.85, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.42. Lastly, I found that the three measures of ad novelty have good reliability (α = 0.78), and therefore, I averaged them to form an ad novelty index. Lastly, using the ad condition as the IV, I performed a one-way ANOVA on the ad novelty index and found that the results were significant. Specifically, the mixed-models ad ($M_{Mixed} = 3.97$, $SD_{Mixed} = 1.41$) had higher ad novelty than the nondisabled-models ad ($M_{Nondisabled} = 3.24$, $SD_{Nondisabled} = 1.41$), F (1, 250) = 16.67, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.52. Again, I would like to point out that the average of the two ad conditions is around the mid-point of 4, indicating that the mixed-models ad was not considered incredibly novel.

ANCOVA on Perceived Brand Inclusivity. I introduced all the variables (pity, admiration, negative and positive emotions, and ad novelty) as covariates. Thereafter, using ad condition as the IV, I conducted an ANCOVA on the perceived brand inclusivity index. I found that the result continued to be significant, F (1, 245) = 5.42, $p < 0.05$; *Cohen's d* = 0.30. I present detailed results of Study 1 in Table 4.

Dependent Variables	Nondisabled-models ad		Mixed-models ad		Statistics*
	M	SD	M	SD	
Perceived Brand Inclusivity	5.61	1.22	6.02	1.06	F (1, 250) = 8.06, p = 0.005
Pity for models	1.72	1.25	2.37	1.53	F (1, 250) = 13.71, p < 0.001
Negative emotions	1.66	1.16	1.90	1.35	F (1, 250) = 2.26, p = 0.134
Positive emotions	4.87	1.63	5.14	1.47	F (1, 250) = 1.91, p = 0.169
Admiration for models	3.68	1.67	4.37	1.62	F (1, 250) = 10.85, p = 0.001
Ad novelty	3.24	1.41	3.97	1.41	F (1, 250) = 16.67, p < 0.001
Perceived Brand Inclusivity (with covariates)*	5.61	1.22	6.02	1.06	F (1, 245) = 5.42, p = 0.021
*Covariates: Pity for models, Negative emotions, Positive emotions, Admiration for models, Ad novelty					

Table 4. Detailed ANOVA and ANCOVA results of Study 1

Discussion

Study 1 successfully established that the mixed-models ad leads to higher perceived brand inclusivity, supporting H1a. Moreover, the effect of perceived brand inclusivity held even after controlling for pity, admiration, negative emotions, positive emotions, and ad novelty, supporting H1b. Noticeably, the existing research on disabled models established the findings with brand ads featuring either a disabled or nondisabled model. However, in Study 1, I established the effect of brand inclusivity in a mixed-models ad with models from diverse races, genders, and ages, including disabled models.

In the following studies, 2A, 2B, and 2C, I seek to establish the favorable downstream consumer-brand relationships (hereafter, CBRs) mediated by perceived brand inclusivity in the mixed-models ad. I also rule out potential confounds, alternative explanations, and control for alternate process mechanisms in each of these studies. Specifically, Study 2A tested H2a and H3a while ruling out the alternative explanation of

disability alone driving perceived brand inclusivity and the brand and ad attitude. Study 2B tested H2b and H3b for word of mouth (hereafter, WOM) for the brand, controlling for thoughts evoked after seeing the ad while testing my mediation effect. Study 2C tested H2c and H3c for purchase likelihood for a service offered, controlling for brand warmth while testing my mediation effect. Moreover, in Study 2C, I also reduce the heavy-handedness of my cover story, keeping the number of models the same in both conditions, with the models as closely resembling each other as possible.

4.2 Study 2A

Study 2A (pre-registered on aspredicted.org) had two objectives. It could be argued that featuring disability alone in a brand ad could be driving the positive effects on perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs. Therefore, the first objective of Study 2A was to provide evidence to counter this argument. Hence, I had three ad conditions in this study: nondisabled-models ad condition, mixed-models ad condition, and disabled-models ad condition (featuring disabled-models only). The objective of adding the third condition was that if disability alone drives this effect, there should be significant differences between mixed-models ad condition and disabled-models ad condition. Second, I wanted to establish that mixed-models ad leads to higher brand and ad attitudes (supporting H2a), mediated by perceived brand inclusivity (supporting H3a). I predicted that mixed-models ads would lead to an increased brand and ad attitudes (H2a). Moreover, I predicted that the perceived brand inclusivity would mediate these brand and ad attitudes (H3a). The detailed measures for Pretest 2 and Study 2A are annexed in Appendix – C.

I first pretested the ads for a fictitious business formal clothing brand to finalize the stimuli for Study 2A. As in Pretest 1, I pretested the stimuli for inclusivity, believability, likeability, and brand familiarity. The objective of the pretest was to check for any significant differences except inclusivity and, consequently, control for them in the main study.

Pretest 2

Participants. I recruited ninety participants from the online data collection platform, CloudResearch, in exchange for a small monetary reward (USD 0.10). None of the participants failed the attention check. Hence, I analyzed the data from all 90 participants (M_{age} = 41.41 years, 54.4% female). The pretest had three ad conditions: an ad containing two nondisabled models only (nondisabled-models condition), an ad containing two nondisabled and two disabled models (mixed-models condition), and an ad containing two disabled models only (disabled-models condition). The nondisabled-models ad condition had one nondisabled female and male model, the mixed-models ad condition had the same nondisabled female and male models as the previous condition and one disabled female and male model, and the disabled-models ad condition had only one disabled male and one disabled female model from the mixed-models ad condition. The three ads were exactly the same except for the models included as per the condition. As in the previous study, ads were carefully curated to include diverse racial backgrounds.

Design and Procedure. The pretest was a single factor three conditions between subjects' design. I randomly allotted the respondents to one of the three ad conditions:

nondisabled-models ad, mixed-models ad, or disabled-models ad. The same cover story was shown in all three conditions: “We are working with a new local brand, DressedUpper, and below you will see one ‘mockup’ advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. DressedUpper as a brand stands for the belief that everyone should have access to Business Formals, and it wants to make sure that the same is communicated through the ad. This brand will soon be available locally in stores. At this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow. The continue button will appear in a few seconds.” The cover story and stimuli were shown for a minimum of 20 seconds. Thereafter, the participants responded to the same measures of inclusivity, believability, likeability, and brand familiarity as in Pretest 1. Lastly, I used the same attention check as in Pretest 1, after which the participants entered their age and gender. The stimuli for this study for the nondisabled-models condition, mixed-models condition, and disabled-models condition are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Nondisabled-models, mixed-models, and disabled-models ad conditions for Pretest 2

Results. I conducted a one-way ANOVA on ratings of inclusivity with ad condition as the IV and found the results to be significant, F (2, 87) = 7.55, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.83. Planned contrasts revealed that, as expected, the nondisabled-models ad condition ($M_{Nondisabled}$ = 5.03, $SD_{Nondisabled}$ = 1.49) differed significantly from the mixed-models ad condition (M_{Mixed} = 5.72, SD_{Mixed} = 1.28), t = -2.15, $p < 0.05$; *Cohen's d* = 0.50 and the disabled-models ad condition ($M_{Disabled}$ = 6.27, $SD_{Disabled}$ = 0.87), t = -3.88, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 1.02. Further, the mixed-models ad condition and disabled-models ad condition did not significantly differ, t = 1.68, $p > 0.05$. Thereafter, I conducted a one-way ANOVA on the believability ratings with the ad condition as the IV. The results were non-significant, F (2, 87) = 0.41, $p > 0.05$. Similarly, a one-way ANOVA on the likeability ratings with ad condition as the IV also gave non-significant results, F (2, 87) = 1.73, $p > 0.05$. Next, I found that the brand familiarity scale had high reliability (α = 0.95), after which I averaged the three measures for brand familiarity to get the brand

familiarity index. I performed a one-way ANOVA on this brand familiarity index with ad condition as the IV and got significant results, F (2, 87) = 3.23, $p < 0.05$; *Cohen's d* = 0.54. Simple contrasts revealed that the nondisabled-models ad ($M_{Nondisbled}$ = 1.72, $SD_{Nondisabled}$ = 1.55) did not differ significantly from the mixed-models ad (M_{Mixed} = 2.18, SD_{Mixed} = 1.74), $p > 0.05$ and the disabled-models ad ($M_{Disabled}$ = 1.26, $SD_{Disabled}$ = 0.70), $p > 0.05$. Unexpectedly, the mixed-models ad and disabled-models ad did significantly differ, $p < 0.05$, t = -2.54. Although the means indicate values towards the lower end of the scale, I made a note to control for brand familiarity when using these stimuli in the main study.

Discussion. In Pretest 2, I tested the stimuli for a fictitious business formalwear brand. I found that both the mixed-models ad and the disabled-models ad were found to be more inclusive by participants. Moreover, the ad believability and likability were not significantly different. However, brand familiarity significantly differed between the mixed-models ad and the disabled-models ad. Hence, I controlled for brand familiarity and used it as a covariate in Study 2A. In the following Study 2A, I establish that mixed-models ad leads to higher brand and ad attitudes (supporting H2a). Moreover, these effects are mediated by perceived brand inclusivity (supporting H3a).

Main Study

Method

Participants. I recruited three hundred seventy-seven participants from the online data collection platform, CloudResearch, in exchange for a small monetary reward (USD 0.10). I pre-registered Study 2A on aspredicted.org (https://aspredicted.org/GRV_JZ8).

Based on the exclusion criteria outlined in the preregistration (only excluding participants failing the attention check), I analyzed the data from 375 participants (M_{age} = 40.27 years, 54.6% female). I randomly allotted each participant to one of the three pretested ad conditions: nondisabled-models, mixed-models, or disabled-models ad condition.

Design and Procedure. First, the participants provided consent for participation in the study. Next, they viewed the cover story: "We are working with a new local brand, DressedUpper, and below you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. DressedUpper as a brand stands for the belief that everyone should have access to Business Formals, and it wants to make sure that the same is communicated through the ad. This brand will soon be available locally in stores. At this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds." The cover story, stimuli, and the question recording ad attitude was shown for at least 20 seconds. Specifically, the question recording the ad attitude was a 7-point bipolar scale with four measures, anchored at "Bad/Good," "Dislike/Like," "Irritating/Not irritating," and "Uninteresting/Interesting" (Mitchell, 1986). Next, participants indicated their brand attitude using a 7-point bipolar scale with two measures: "very unfavorable/very favorable" and "very bad/very good" (Escalas, 2004). Thereafter, to record the perceptions of brand inclusivity invoked by the brand ad, I asked the participants to respond to the same two questions as in Study 1, suitably modified for the brand DressedUpper. Additionally, based on the pretest results, I recorded brand familiarity

using the same measures used in the pretest. Lastly, I had the same attention check question in Pretest 1 and demographic questions recording age and gender.

Results

Statistical power. I post-hoc analyzed the power of my test with G*Power 3.1.9.7. I found that the statistical power to detect a 0.25 effect size using a one-way ANOVA with three groups on 375 participants was determined to be 0.99 with $\alpha = 0.05$ (Faul et al., 2007).

Ad Attitude. I found that the three measures for ad attitude had high reliability ($\alpha = 0.93$), and hence, I took an average of them to get an ad attitude index. I performed a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on the ad attitude index. Results showed a significant effect of ad condition, F (2, 372) = 8.58, $p < 0.001$; *Cohen's d* = 0.43. Planned contrasts revealed that, as expected, the nondisabled-models only condition ($M_{Nondisabled}$ = 5.03, $SD_{Nondisabled}$ = 1.36) differed significantly from the mixed-models condition (M_{Mixed} = 5.57, SD_{Mixed} = 1.36), $t = 3.06$, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.40, and the disabled-models condition ($M_{Disabled}$ = 5.73, $SD_{Disabled}$ = 1.50), $t = 3.95$, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.49. Further, the mixed-models ad condition and disabled-models ad condition did not significantly differ, $t = 0.88$, $p > 0.10$. Figure 6 presents the significant differences in nondisabled-models and mixed-models ads and nondisabled-models and disabled-models ads for ad attitude.

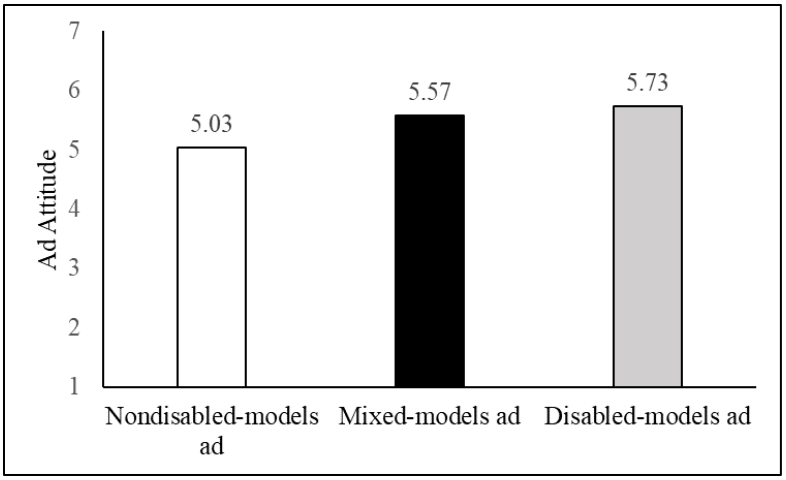

Figure 6. Significant differences between nondisabled-models and mixed-models ads and nondisabled-models and disabled-models ads for ad attitude

Brand Attitude. I found that the two measures for brand attitude were correlated significantly ($r = 0.95$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, I took an average of the two measures and formed a brand attitude index. I performed a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on this brand attitude index. Results showed a significant effect of ad condition, F (2, 372) = 7.29, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.40. Planned contrasts revealed that, as expected, the nondisabled-models condition ($M_{Nondisabled} = 5.12$, $SD_{Nondisabled} = 1.41$) differed significantly from the mixed-models condition ($M_{Mixed} = 5.63$, $SD_{Mixed} = 1.47$), $t = 2.72$, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.35 and the disabled-models condition ($M_{Disabled} = 5.80$, $SD_{Disabled} = 1.50$), $t = 3.68$, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.47. Further, the mixed-models ad condition and the disabled-models ad condition did not significantly differ, $t = 0.95$, $p > 0.10$. Figure 7 presents the significant differences in nondisabled-models and mixed-models ads and nondisabled-models and disabled-models ads for brand attitude.

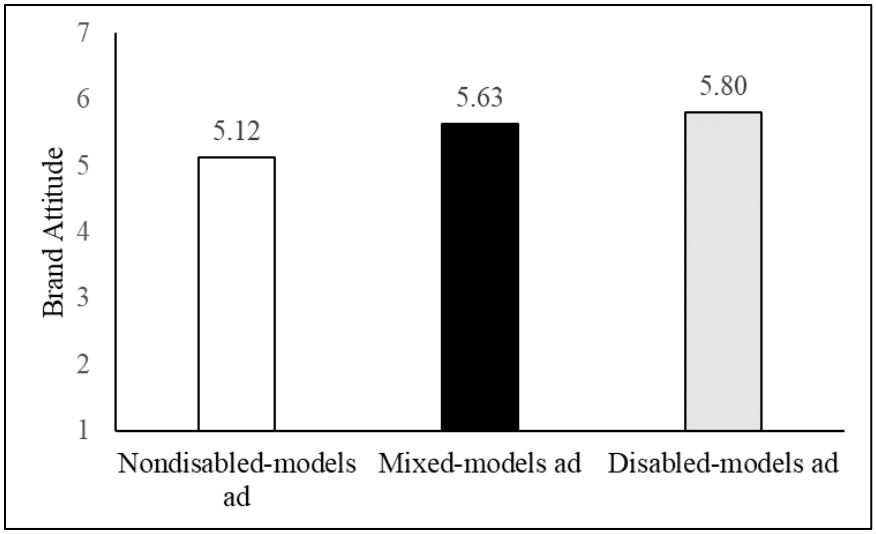

Figure 7. Significant differences between nondisabled-models and mixed-models ads and nondisabled-models and disabled-models ads for brand attitude

Perceived Brand Inclusivity. I found the two measures for perceived brand inclusivity to be correlated significantly ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, I averaged the two measures to get a perceived brand inclusivity index. I performed a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on the perceived brand inclusivity index. Results showed a significant effect of ad conditions, F (2, 371) = 12.18, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.51. Planned contrasts revealed that, as expected, the nondisabled-models condition ($M_{Nondisabled} = 5.30$, $SD_{Nondisabled} = 1.26$) differed significantly from the mixed-models condition ($M_{Mixed} = 6.03$, $SD_{Mixed} = 1.24$), $t = 4.52$, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.58 and the disabled-models condition ($M_{Disabled} = 5.94$, $SD_{Disabled} = 1.34$), $t = 3.97$, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.49. Further, the mixed-models ad condition and the disabled-models ad condition did not significantly differ, $t = -0.57$, $p > 0.10$. Figure 8 presents significant differences between nondisabled-models and mixed-models ads and nondisabled-models and disabled-models ads for perceived brand inclusivity.

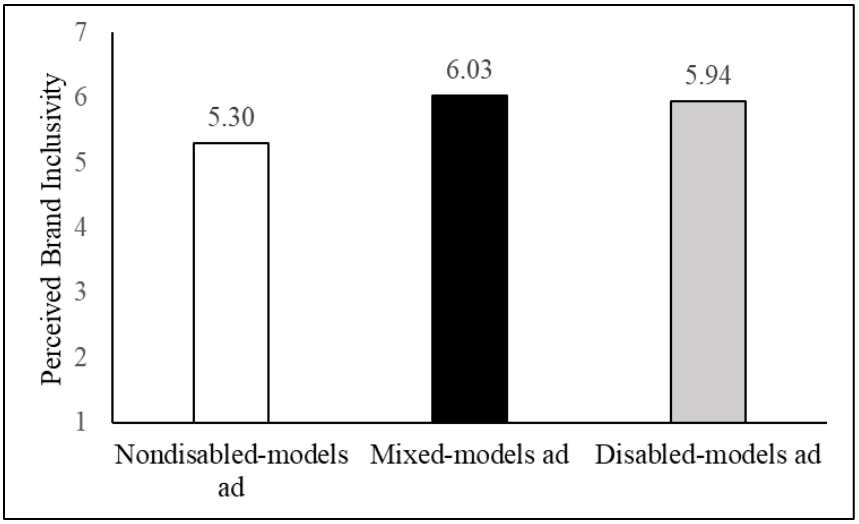

Figure 8. Significant differences between nondisabled-models and mixed-models ads and nondisabled-models and disabled-models ads for perceived brand inclusivity

Covariate. Brand Familiarity. I found that the three measures for brand familiarity had high reliability (α = 0.95), and hence, I took their average to get a brand familiarity index. I performed a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on this brand familiarity index. Results were marginally significant for the effect of ad condition, F (2, 370) = 2.78, p = 0.06; *Cohen's d* = 0.25. Planned contrasts showed that the nondisabled-models condition ($M_{Nondisabled}$ = 1.60, $SD_{Nondisabled}$ = 1.12) differed significantly from the disabled-models condition ($M_{Disabled}$ = 1.28, $SD_{Disabled}$ = 0.93), t = 2.33, $p < 0.05$; *Cohen's d* = 0.31. I found no other significant differences; the nondisabled-models condition ($M_{Nondisabled}$ = 1.60, $SD_{Nondisabled}$ = 1.12) did not differ significantly from the mixed-models condition (M_{Mixed} = 1.40, SD_{Mixed} = 1.09), t = 1.45, $p > 0.10$ and the mixed-models condition did not differ significantly with the disabled-models condition, t = 0.87, $p > 0.10$. Here, I want to highlight that all the means are well below the mid-point of the scale, indicating very low brand familiarity.

ANCOVA results using Brand Familiarity as the covariate. All my results remained significant when I conducted ANCOVA using brand familiarity as a covariate.

Specifically, the effect of ad condition on the ad attitude index remained significant, F (2, 369) = 8.93, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.44. Similarly, the effect of ad condition on the brand attitude index also remained significant, F (2, 369) = 7.60, $p < 0.01$. Lastly, the effect of conditions on the perceived brand inclusivity index also maintained the significant effect, F (2, 369) = 11.22, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.41. I present detailed results in Table 5.

Dependent Variables	Nondisabled-models ad		Mixed-models ad		Disabled-models ad		Statistics*
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Ad attitude	5.03	1.36	5.57	1.36	5.73	1.50	F (2, 372) = 8.58, p < 0.001
Brand attitude	5.12	1.41	5.63	1.47	5.80	1.50	F (2, 372) = 7.29, p < 0.001
Perceived Brand Inclusivity	5.30	1.26	6.03	1.24	5.94	1.34	F (2, 371) = 12.18, p < 0.001
With covariate: Brand Familiarity							
Ad attitude	5.03	1.36	5.56	1.36	5.73	1.50	F (2, 369) = 8.93, p < 0.001
Brand attitude	5.12	1.41	5.61	1.47	5.80	1.51	F (2, 369) = 7.60, p < 0.001
Perceived Brand Inclusivity	5.30	1.26	6.03	1.24	5.93	1.34	F (2, 369) = 11.22, p < 0.001
* Variation in the degree of freedom is due to some incomplete responses							

Table 5. Detailed ANOVA and ANCOVA results of Study 2A

So far, I have established that both the ads featuring disabled models (mixed-models ad and disabled-models ad) do not differ significantly for perceived brand inclusivity and ad and brand attitudes. Hence, I proceed to now establish perceived brand inclusivity as the mediator for mixed-models ad on the downstream consequence of ad and brand attitudes.

Mediation: Ad Attitude. To test whether perceived brand inclusivity mediates the impact of ad condition on ad attitude, I used SPSS bootstrapping macro (Hayes, 2017) using Process Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap samples. Expectedly, the results showed a significant mediation of the condition and ad attitude through perceived brand inclusivity.

Specifically, the indirect effect excluded zero (β = 0.33, *SE* = 0.09, CI_{95} [0.17, 0.51]), and the direct effect included zero ($p > 0.05$). Please refer to Figure 9 for individual path coefficients.

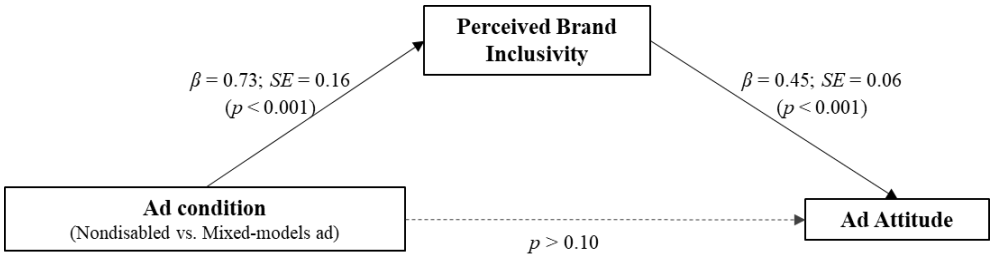

Figure 9. Mediation results for Study 2A (Ad attitude)

Next, I introduced brand familiarity as a covariate to test mediation through perceived brand inclusivity on ad attitude for ad conditions. Results remained significant, with the indirect effect excluding zero (β = 0.33, *SE* = 0.09, CI_{95} [0.17, 0.51]) and the direct effect including zero ($p > 0.05$).

Mediation: Brand Attitude. For testing whether perceived brand inclusivity mediates the impact of ad condition on brand attitude, I again used SPSS bootstrapping macro (Hayes, 2017) using Process Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap samples. Again, expectedly, the results showed a significant mediation of the condition and brand attitude through perceived brand inclusivity. Specifically, the indirect effect excluded zero (β = 0.40, *SE* = 0.10, CI_{95} [0.22, 0.60]), and the direct effect included zero ($p > 0.05$). Please refer to Figure 10 for individual path coefficients.

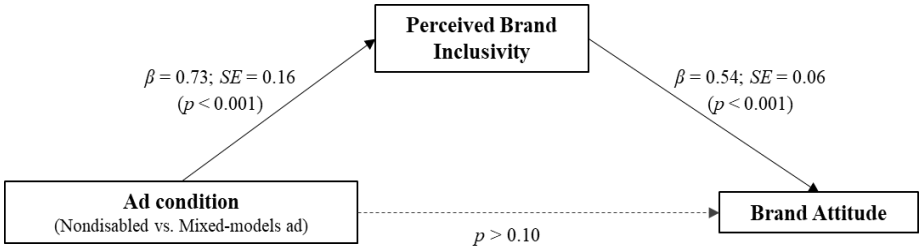

Figure 10. Mediation results for Study 2A (Brand attitude)

Next, I introduced brand familiarity as a covariate to test mediation through perceived brand inclusivity on brand attitude for ad conditions. Results remained significant with the indirect effect excluding zero (β = 0.39, *SE* = 0.10, CI_{95} [0.22, 0.59]) and the direct effect including zero ($p > 0.05$). I present detailed mediation results with individual paths and direct and indirect effect details in Table 6.

Individual Path Details	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity	0.73	0.16		0.42	1.05
Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Ad attitude	0.45	0.06		0.32	0.57
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity	0.73	0.16		0.42	1.05
Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Brand attitude	0.54	0.06		0.41	0.67
With covariate: Brand Familiarity					
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity	0.71	0.16		0.40	1.02
Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Ad attitude	0.46	0.06		0.34	0.59
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity	0.71	0.16		0.40	1.02
Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Brand attitude	0.56	0.06		0.43	0.68
Indirect Effect	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Ad attitude	0.33	0.09		0.17	0.51
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Brand attitude	0.40	0.10		0.22	0.60
With covariate: Brand Familiarity					
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Ad attitude	0.33	0.09		0.17	0.51
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Brand attitude	0.39	0.10		0.22	0.59
Direct Effect	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad → Ad attitude	0.20	0.16		-0.12	0.53
Ad → Brand attitude	0.10	0.17		-0.24	0.43
With covariate: Brand Familiarity					
Ad → Ad attitude	0.22	0.16		-0.11	0.54
Ad → Brand attitude	0.11	0.17		-0.22	0.44

Table 6. Detailed mediation results of Study 2A

Discussion

Study 2A successfully established that mixed-models ad results in higher ad and brand attitudes (supporting H2a). Moreover, perceived brand inclusivity mediated these effects (supporting H3a). Lastly, I could also rule out a possible alternative explanation of the mere presence of a disability driving these positive effects. Specifically, I found that the mixed-models ad and the disabled-models ad did not differ significantly for perceived brand inclusivity and ad and brand attitudes.

In the following study, I seek to establish mixed-models ad results in a higher WOM for the brand (H2b). This effect is mediated by perceived brand inclusivity (H3b). Lastly, I also control for a possible process mechanism established for inclusive ads featuring LGBTQ+.

4.3 Study 2B

There were two objectives of Study 2B (pre-registered on aspredicted.org). First, to establish that mixed-models ad leads to a greater WOM for the brand (supporting H2b), mediated by perceived brand inclusivity (supporting H3b). Second, it has been established that inclusive ads featuring LGBTQ+ trigger empathy through thoughts related to others in the community, consequently leading to a favorable evaluation of the ad (Åkestam et al., 2017). Therefore, another objective of this study was to control for this process mechanism by recording thoughts evoked after seeing the ad. I predicted that the mixed-models ad would lead to a higher WOM for the brand (H2b). Moreover, I predict this effect will be mediated by perceived brand inclusivity (H3b). The detailed measures for Pretest 3 and Study 2B are annexed in Appendix – D.

I first pretested the ads for a fictitious casual clothing brand to finalize the stimuli for Study 2B. As in the previous pretests, I pretested the stimuli for inclusivity, believability, likeability, and brand familiarity. The objective of the pretest was to check for any significant differences except inclusivity and, if any, control for them in the main study.

Pretest 3

Participants. I recruited sixty participants from the online data collection platform, CloudResearch, in exchange for a small monetary reward (USD 0.10). One of the participants failed the attention check. Hence, I analyzed the data from the remaining 59 participants (M_{age} = 38.66 years, 56% female). The pretest had two conditions: an ad containing four nondisabled models only (nondisabled-models condition) and an ad containing the same four nondisabled and two disabled models (mixed-models condition). As in all the previous stimuli, both the ads were the same, except for the models in each condition. Similarly, as in the previous studies, the two ads had models from diverse racial backgrounds.

Design and Procedure. This pretest was a single factor two conditions between subjects' design. I randomly allotted the participants to one of the two ad conditions: nondisabled-models condition or mixed-models ad condition. There was the same cover story in both conditions: "We are working with an upcoming apparel brand, Attire, and below you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. Attire as a brand stands for the belief that everyone should have access to stylish clothes, and it wants to make sure that

the same is communicated through the ad. This brand will soon be available locally and at this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds." The cover story and stimuli were shown for a minimum of 20 seconds. Thereafter, the participants responded to the same measures of inclusivity, believability, likeability, and brand familiarity as in Pretest 1. Lastly, I used the same attention check as in Pretest 1, after which the participants entered their age and gender. The stimuli for this study for the nondisabled-models condition and mixed-models condition are shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Nondisabled-models and mixed-models ad condition for Pretest 3

Results. I performed a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on inclusivity ratings and found the results to be significant, F (1,57) = 5.23, $p < 0.05$; *Cohen's d* = 0.61. Expectedly, nondisabled-models condition participants found the ad less inclusive ($M_{Nondisabled} = 4.63$, $SD_{Nondisabled} = 1.54$) than the mixed-models condition participants ($M_{Mixed} = 5.59$, $SD_{Mixed} = 1.66$). Thereafter, I performed a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on the believability ratings. The results were non-significant, F (1, 57) = 0.09, $p > 0.05$. Similarly, a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on the likeability ratings was also non-significant, F (1, 57) = 0.00, $p > 0.05$. Next, I found

that the scale measuring brand familiarity had high reliability (α = 0.92). Therefore, I averaged the three measures for brand familiarity and formed a brand familiarity index. On conducting a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on this brand familiarity index, results were non-significant, F (1, 57) = 0.01, p > 0.05.

Discussion. In Pretest 3, I tested the stimuli for a fictitious casualwear clothing brand and found that the mixed-models ad was found to be more inclusive by participants than the nondisabled-models ad. Moreover, the ad believability, likability, and brand familiarity did not differ significantly.

In the following main study, I seek to establish that mixed-models ad results in a greater WOM for the brand (supporting H2b). This effect will be mediated by perceived brand inclusivity (supporting H3b). I also measured and controlled for brand familiarity in Study 2B since the pretest and the main study were conducted close to each other in time. Lastly, I also control for an alternative process mechanism associated with inclusive ads featuring LGBTQ+.

Main Study

Method

Participants. I recruited two hundred seventy-two participants from the online data collection platform, CloudResearch, in exchange for a small monetary reward (USD 0.10). I pre-registered Study 2B on aspredicted.org (https://aspredicted.org/1ZY_WQL). Based on the exclusion criteria outlined in the preregistration (only excluding participants failing the attention check), I analyzed the data from 256 participants (M_{age} = 39.65 years,

52.6% female). I randomly allotted each participant to one of the two pretested ad conditions: nondisabled-models ad or mixed-models ad.

Design and Procedure. First, the participants provided consent for participation in the study. Next, they viewed the cover story: "We are working with a new local company, Attire, and below you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. Attire as a brand stands for the belief that everyone should have access to stylish clothes, and it wants to make sure that the same is communicated through the ad. This brand will soon be available locally in stores. At this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds." The cover story, stimuli, and the same two questions recording perceived brand inclusivity as in Study 1, suitably modified for the brand Attire, were shown for a minimum of 20 seconds. Next, three questions were administered to record WOM for the brand on a 7-point Likert scale – 1 = "Extremely unlikely;" 7 = "Extremely likely." Specifically, I recorded participant responses to the following three items: how likely are you to spread positive word of mouth about "Attire," I would recommend "Attire" to my friends, and if my friends were looking to purchase stylish clothes, I would tell them to try "Attire" (Maxham III & Netemeyer, 2002). Thereafter, I recorded brand familiarity using the same three measures as in the pretest. In order to control for the alternative process mechanism of thoughts evoked after seeing the ad, I adopted the same measure as Åkestam et al. (2017). I asked the participants to pen down their thoughts after seeing the ad and then categorize them under one of the following classifications: related to the ad,

related to your own self, or related to other people in the advertisement or at large. Lastly, I administered the attention check question used in Pretest 1 and demographic questions recording age and gender.

Results

Statistical power. I post-hoc analyzed the power of my test with G*Power 3.1.9.7. I found that the statistical power to detect a 0.25 effect size using a one-way ANOVA with two groups on 256 participants was determined to be 0.98 with $\alpha = 0.05$ (Faul et al., 2007).

WOM for the brand. I checked the three measures for the WOM for the brand for reliability and found them to have high reliability ($\alpha = 0.98$). Therefore, I averaged them to form a WOM index. I performed a one-way ANOVA with the ad condition as the IV on the WOM index. Results were marginally significant, F (1, 254) = 3.52, $p = 0.06$; *Cohen's d* = 0.24 in favor of mixed-models ad. Specifically, mixed-models ad condition participants ($M_{Mixed} = 4.41$, $SD_{Mixed} = 1.77$) had marginally significantly higher WOM for the brand than nondisabled-models condition participants ($M_{Nondisabled} = 4.01$, $SD_{Nondisabled} = 1.61$). Figure 12 depicts a marginally significant difference between nondisabled-models and mixed-models ads for WOM for the brand.

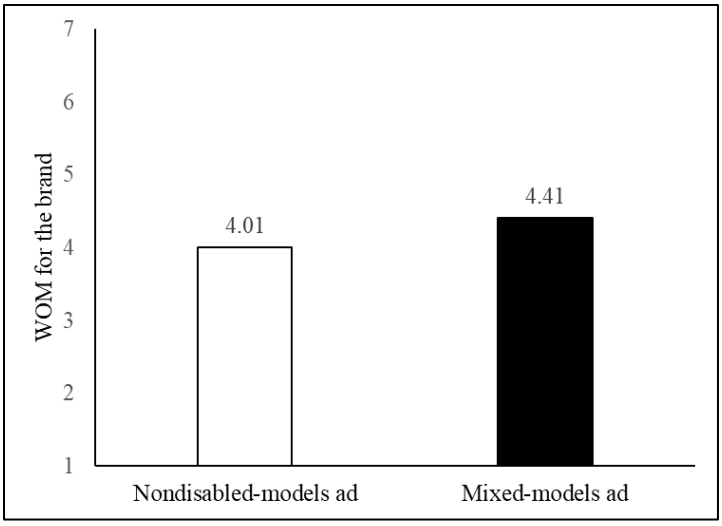

Figure 12. Marginally significant difference between nondisabled and mixed-models ads for WOM for the brand

Perceived Brand Inclusivity. I found that the two measures for perceived brand inclusivity were correlated significantly ($r = 0.88$, $p < 0.001$); hence, I took an average of the two measures to get a perceived brand inclusivity index. I performed a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on perceived brand inclusivity. Results were significant, F (1, 254) = 27.52, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.66. Specifically, the nondisabled-models condition ($M_{Nondisabled} = 5.18$, $SD_{Nondisabled} = 1.45$) was significantly less in perceived brand inclusivity than the mixed-models condition ($M_{Mixed} = 6.02$, $SD_{Mixed} = 1.09$). Figure 13 presents a significant difference between nondisabled-models and mixed-models ads for perceived brand inclusivity.

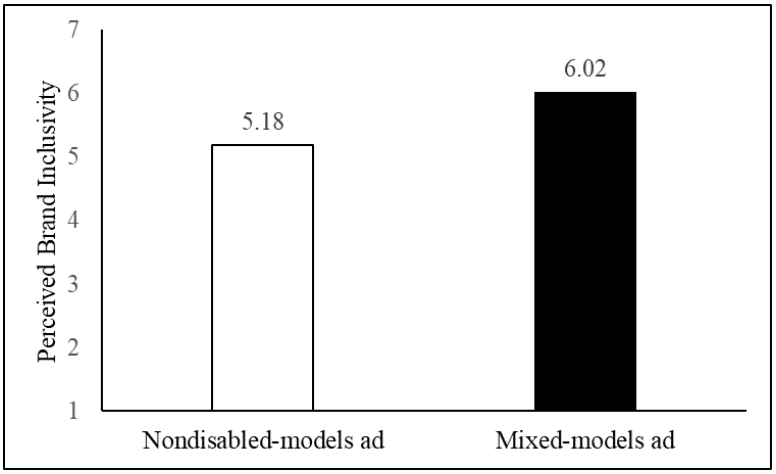

Figure 13. Significant difference between nondisabled and mixed-models ads for WOM for perceived brand inclusivity

Covariate. Brand Familiarity. I checked for the reliability of the three measures for brand familiarity and found them to have high reliability ($\alpha = 0.95$). Therefore, I averaged them to form a brand familiarity index. A one-way ANOVA with ad condition as IV on this brand familiarity was non-significant, F (1, 253) = 0.10, $p > 0.05$.

ANCOVA results. All my results held on conducting ANCOVA using brand familiarity as a covariate. Specifically, the effect of ad condition on the positive WOM index was marginally significant, F (1, 252) = 3.45, $p = 0.06$; *Cohen's d* = 0.24. Similarly, the effect of ad condition on the perceived brand inclusivity index maintained the significant effect, F (1,252) = 26.85, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.65. I present the detailed results in Table 7.

Dependent Variables	Nondisabled-models ad			Mixed-models ad			Statistics
	M	SD		M	SD		
WOM for the brand	4.01	1.61		4.41	1.77		F (1, 254) = 3.52, p = 0.062
Perceived Brand Inclusivity	5.18	1.45		6.02	1.09		F (1, 254) = 27.52, p < 0.001
With covariate: Brand Familiarity							
WOM for the brand	4.01	1.61		4.41	1.78		F (1, 252) = 3.45, p = 0.064
Perceived Brand Inclusivity	5.18	1.45		6.02	1.09		F (1, 252) = 26.85, p < 0.001

Table 7. Detailed ANOVA and ANCOVA results of Study 2B

Mediation: WOM for the brand. To test perceived brand inclusivity as the mediator from ad condition to WOM for the brand, I used SPSS bootstrapping macro (Hayes, 2017) using Process Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap samples. Expectedly, results showed a significant mediation of the ad condition and WOM index through perceived brand inclusivity with the indirect effect excluding zero (β = 0.50, *SE* = 0.10, CI_{95} [0.31, 0.71]) and direct effect including zero ($p > 0.05$). Please refer to Figure 14 for individual path coefficients.

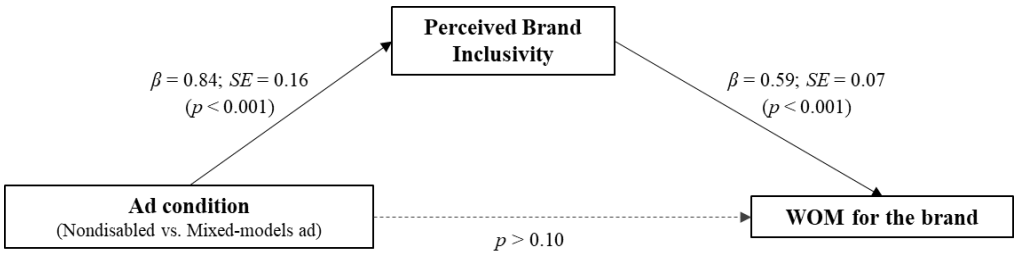

Figure 14. Mediation results for Study 2B

Next, I introduced brand familiarity as a covariate to test mediation through perceived brand inclusivity on the WOM for the brand. Results remained significant on introducing brand familiarity as a covariate, with again the direct effect including zero ($p > 0.05$) and indirect effect excluding zero (β = 0.51, *SE* = 0.10, CI_{95} [0.31, 0.71]). I

present detailed mediation results for this study with individual path, direct, and indirect effect details in Table 8.

Individual Path Details	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity	0.84	0.16		0.52	1.15
Perceived Brand Inclusivity → WOM for the brand	0.59	0.07		0.45	0.74
With covariate: Brand Familiarity					
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity	0.83	0.16		0.52	1.15
Perceived Brand Inclusivity → WOM for the brand	0.60	0.07		0.46	0.74
Indirect Effect	**Coefficients**			**Bootstrapped 95% CI**	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity → WOM for the brand	0.50	0.10		0.31	0.71
With covariate: Brand Familiarity					
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity → WOM for the brand	0.51	0.10		0.31	0.71
Direct Effect	**Coefficients**			**Bootstrapped 95% CI**	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad → WOM for the brand	-0.10	0.20		-0.49	0.29
With covariate: Brand Familiarity					
Ad → WOM for the brand	-0.11	0.19		-0.50	0.27

Table 8. Detailed mediation results of Study 2B

Controlling for alternative process mechanism. Next, I analyzed the self-reported category of thoughts the participants had entered. I conducted a chi-square test and found that the participants' thoughts were not different across the ad conditions (χ^2 (2) = 0.29, p = 0.86). Unlike the findings of Åkestam et al. (2017), most participants in both conditions reported their thoughts being related to the ad (nondisabled-models ad participants: 87/123 = 70.73%; mixed-models ad participants: 90/126 = 71.43%). Moreover, 20.3% of the nondisabled-models ad participants and 21.4% of the mixed-models ad participants reported their thoughts being related to the others in the advertisement or at large. Lastly, 8.9% of the nondisabled-models ad participants and 7.1% of the mixed-models ad participants reported their thoughts being related to their own selves.

When I conducted an ANCOVA with ad condition as the IV, WOM for the brand as the DV with Brand familiarity and Thoughts evoked after seeing the ad as covariates, the results remained marginally significant, F (1, 245) = 3.80, p = 0.05; *Cohen's d* = 0.25. Next, when I conducted an ANCOVA with ad condition as the IV, perceived brand inclusivity as the DV with Brand familiarity and Thoughts evoked after seeing the ad as covariates, the results remained significant, F (1, 245) = 28.46, $p < 0.001$; *Cohen's d* = 0.68.

Next, I introduced participants' thoughts as a covariate and conducted another mediation analysis with the ad condition as the IV, the perceived brand inclusivity score as the mediator, and the brand WOM score as the dependent variable (hereafter, DV), with participants' self-reported thoughts and brand familiarity score as covariates. I again used SPSS bootstrapping macro (Hayes, 2017) using Process Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap samples. The results remained significant, with the indirect effect excluding zero (β = 0.52, SE = 0.10, CI_{95} [0.33 to 0.74]) and the direct effect including zero ($p >$ 0.10).

Discussion

Study 2B successfully supported that mixed-models ad results in a higher WOM for the brand (supporting H2b). This effect was mediated by perceived brand inclusivity (supporting H3b). Lastly, I control for an alternative process mechanism, thoughts evoked after seeing the ad, impacting my proposed mediation. Since the results remained significant even after including thoughts evoked after seeing the ad, it corroborates the robustness of these findings.

In the following study, I seek to establish that mixed-models ad leads to a higher purchase likelihood for the service offered (supporting H2c), mediated by perceived brand inclusivity (supporting H3c). Moreover, I also control for an alternative process mechanism established in inclusive ads featuring women with higher body weight. Lastly, this study utilizes a service context while keeping the same number of models in both the ad conditions and a regular cover story with reduced heavy-handedness that could have possibly primed inclusivity.

4.4 Study 2C

There are five objectives of Study 2C (pre-registered on aspredicted.org). First, to establish that mixed-models ad leads to a higher purchase likelihood for the service offered (supporting H2c), mediated by perceived brand inclusivity (supporting H3c). Second, to control for an alternative process mechanism established for inclusive brand ads featuring plus-sized models. Specifically, it has been established that inclusive ads featuring plus-sized models lead to favorable brand outcomes (Joo & Wu, 2021) due to brand warmth. Therefore, I control for brand warmth in my mediation analysis through perceived brand inclusivity to support the robustness of my findings. Third, to generalize my findings in a service context. Fourth, to rule out the number of models in the brand advertisement impacting the results. Till now, the number of models in the ads presented to the participants was different. In other words, the mixed-models ad featured two disabled models in addition to the two nondisabled models in the nondisabled-models condition. Hence, in this study, both the ads featured the same number of models, and the disabled models resembled the models in the nondisabled-models ad as closely as

possible. Fifth, till now, my cover story could be viewed as heavy-handed on priming inclusivity. Therefore, I toned down my cover story and limited it to the context of a new upcoming brand. This study used a fictitious gym and fitness center brand as the premise of the cover story.

I predicted that a mixed-models ad would result in a higher purchase likelihood for the service offered (supporting H2c), with this effect being mediated by perceived brand inclusivity (supporting H3c). The detailed measures for Pretest 4 and Study 2C are annexed in Appendix – E.

I first pretested the ads for a fictitious gym and fitness brand to finalize the stimuli for Study 2C. As in the previous pretests, I pretested the stimuli for inclusivity, believability, likeability, and brand familiarity. The objective of the pretest was to control for any significant differences other than inclusivity in the main study.

Pretest 4

Participants. I recruited sixty-one participants from the online data collection platform, CloudResearch, in exchange for a small monetary reward (USD 0.10). Since no participant failed the attention check, I analyzed the data from all 61 participants (M_{age} = 36.11 years, 50.8% female). The pretest had two conditions: an ad containing four nondisabled models only (nondisabled-models condition) and an ad containing three nondisabled models from the nondisabled-models ad condition, out of whom one was made to look disabled, and an extra disabled model (mixed-models condition). Similar to all the previous stimuli, both versions of the ads included models from diverse racial backgrounds.

Design and Procedure. The pretest was a single factor two conditions between subjects' design. I randomly allotted the participants to one of the two ad conditions: nondisabled-models ad or mixed-models ad. There was the same cover story in both conditions: "We are working with an upcoming fitness brand, Energy Zone, and below you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. This brand will soon open locally and at this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds." The cover story and stimuli were shown for a minimum of 20 seconds. Thereafter, the participants responded to the same measures of inclusivity, believability, likeability, and brand familiarity as in Pretest 1. Lastly, I used the same attention check as in Pretest 1, after which the participants entered their age and gender. The stimuli for this study for the nondisabled-models and mixed-models ad conditions are shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15. Nondisabled-models and mixed-models ad condition for Pretest 3

Results. I performed a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on ratings of inclusivity and got significant results, F (1,59) = 23.90, $p < 0.05$; *Cohen's d* = 1.27. Expectedly, nondisabled-models ad condition participants perceived the ad as less

inclusive ($M_{Nondisabled}$ = 4.68, $SD_{Nondisabled}$ = 1.28) than the mixed-models ad condition participants (M_{Mixed} = 6.07, SD_{Mixed} = 0.91). Thereafter, I performed a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on the believability ratings. The results were non-significant, F (1, 59) = 0.00, $p > 0.05$. Similarly, a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on the likeability ratings was also non-significant, F (1, 59) = 0.58, $p > 0.05$. Next, I checked the reliability of the scale measuring brand familiarity and found it to have high reliability (α = 0.76). Therefore, I averaged the three measures for brand familiarity, forming the brand familiarity index. A one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on this brand familiarity index yielded non-significant results, F (1, 59) = 0.05, $p > 0.05$.

Discussion. In Pretest 4, I tested the stimuli for a fictitious gym and fitness brand and found that the mixed-models ad was found to be more inclusive by participants than the nondisabled-models ad. Moreover, the ad believability, ad likability, and brand familiarity did not differ significantly. In the following main study, I establish that mixed-models brand ad leads to a higher purchase likelihood for the service offered (supporting H2c), mediated by perceived brand inclusivity (supporting H3c). Moreover, I also control for the alternate process mechanism of brand warmth that is established for inclusive ads featuring plus-sized models. Lastly, I extend my findings to a service context while reducing the heavy-handedness of the cover story on inclusion and keeping the number of models the same and as similar as possible in both conditions.

Main Study

Method

Participants. I recruited two hundred fifty-two participants from the online data collection platform, CloudResearch, in exchange for a small monetary reward (USD 0.15). I pre-registered Study 2C on aspredicted.org (https://aspredicted.org/N75_3W9). Based on the exclusion criteria outlined in the preregistration (only excluding participants failing attention check), I analyzed the data from 248 participants (M_{age} = 39.87 years, 55.8% female). I randomly allotted each participant to one of the two pretested conditions: nondisabled-models or mixed-models ad condition.

Design and Procedure. First, the participants provided consent for participation in the study. Next, they viewed the cover story: "We are working with an upcoming gym and fitness brand, Energy Zone, and below you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. This brand will soon open locally and at this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds." The cover story and the stimuli were shown for at least 20 seconds. Next, the participants responded to their purchase likelihood for the service offered. Specifically, I asked: "Please indicate your probability that you would purchase a gym membership from Energy Zone in the future," recorded on a 7-point bipolar scale – 1 = "Unlikely/Improbable/Impossible"; 7 = "Likely/Probable/Possible" (Mackenzie & Spreng, 1992). Thereafter, I administered the same questions recording the perceived brand inclusivity felt by the participants after seeing the ad as in Study 1, suitably

modified for the brand Energy Zone. Then, they entered their responses to the two items measuring brand warmth by answering the following two questions on a 7-point Likert scale – 1 = "Strongly disagree;" 7 = "Strongly agree": "It seems Energy Zone has good intentions toward ordinary people," and "It seems Energy Zone consistently acts with the public's best interests in mind" (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; Joo & Wu, 2021). Lastly, the participants indicated if they already have a gym membership and answered the same attention check question from Pretest 1 and demographic questions recording age and gender.

Results

Statistical power. I post-hoc analyzed the power of my test with G*Power 3.1.9.7. I found that the statistical power to detect a 0.25 effect size using a one-way ANOVA with two groups on 248 participants was determined to be 0.98 with $\alpha = 0.05$ (Faul et al., 2007).

Purchase likelihood for service offered. I found that the three measures for purchase likelihood for the service offered have high reliability ($\alpha = 0.94$). Therefore, I averaged them to form a purchase likelihood index. I performed a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on the purchase likelihood index. Results showed a marginally significant effect of ad condition, F (1, 246) = 3.88, $p = 0.05$; *Cohen's d* = 0.26. Specifically, nondisabled-models ad condition participants ($M_{Nondisabled} = 3.77$, $SD_{Nondisabled} = 1.67$) showed a marginally significantly lower purchase likelihood than the mixed-models ad condition participants ($M_{Mixed} = 4.19$, $SD_{Mixed} = 1.70$). Figure 16

presents marginally significant differences between nondisabled-models and mixed-models ads for purchase likelihood for the service offered.

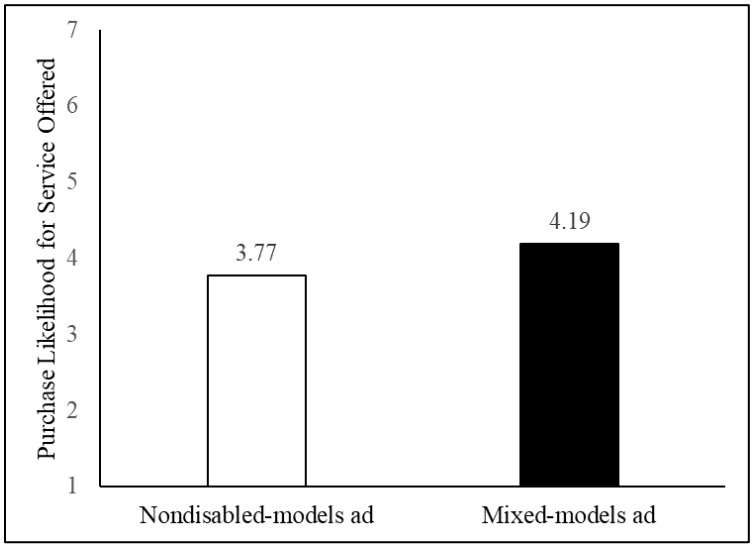

Figure 16. Marginally significant differences between nondisabled and mixed-models ads for purchase likelihood for service offered

Perceived Brand Inclusivity. I found that the two measures for perceived brand inclusivity were correlated significantly ($r = 0.82$, $p < 0.001$). Hence, I combined them and formed a perceived brand inclusivity index. I performed a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on this perceived brand inclusivity index. Results were significant for the effect of ad condition, F (1, 246) = 23.38, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.62. Specifically, nondisabled-models ad participants ($M_{Nondisabled} = 5.02$, $SD_{Nondisabled} = 1.56$) had significantly lower perceived brand inclusivity than the mixed-models ad participants ($M_{Mixed} = 5.87$, $SD_{Mixed} = 1.16$). Figure 17 presents significant differences between nondisabled-models and mixed-models ads for perceived brand inclusivity.

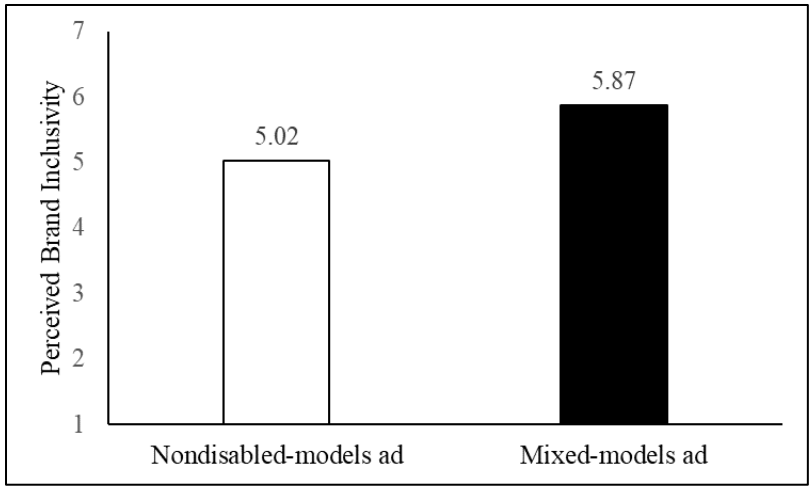

Figure 17. Significant differences between nondisabled-models and mixed-models ads for perceived brand inclusivity

Covariates. Gym membership. I conducted a chi-square test on the gym membership. It yielded a non-significant chi-square value (χ^2) = 0.06, $p > 0.1$, implying that the number of participants having gym membership in each ad condition did not differ significantly.

ANCOVA results. On conducting ANCOVA with gym membership as a covariate, all the results remained significant. Specifically, the effect of ad condition on purchase likelihood for the service offered became significant, F (1, 244) = 3.96, $p < 0.05$; *Cohen's* $d = 0.26$. Similarly, the effect of ad condition on perceived brand inclusivity maintained the significant effect, F (1,244) = 22.86, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's* $d = 0.61$. The detailed results are presented in Table 9.

Dependent Variables	Nondisabled-models ad			Mixed-models ad			Statistics
	M	SD		M	SD		
Purchase likelihood	3.77	1.67		4.19	1.70		F (1, 246) = 3.88, p = 0.050
Perceived Brand Inclusivity	5.02	1.56		5.87	1.16		F (1, 246) = 23.38, p < 0.001
With covariate: Gym membership							
Purchase likelihood	3.77	1.67		4.18	1.70		F (1, 244) = 3.96, p = 0.048
Perceived Brand Inclusivity	5.02	1.56		5.86	1.17		F (1, 244) = 22.86, p < 0.001

Table 9. Detailed ANOVA and ANCOVA results of Study 2C

Mediation: Purchase likelihood for service offered. Testing the mediation through perceived brand inclusivity from ad condition to purchase likelihood for the service offered, I used SPSS bootstrapping macro (Hayes, 2017) using Process Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap samples. Expectedly, the results showed a significant mediation of the condition and the purchase likelihood for service offered through perceived brand inclusivity with the indirect effect excluding zero (β = 0.40, SE = 0.10, CI_{95} [0.22, 0.61]) and direct effect including zero ($p > 0.05$). Please refer to Figure 18 for individual path coefficients.

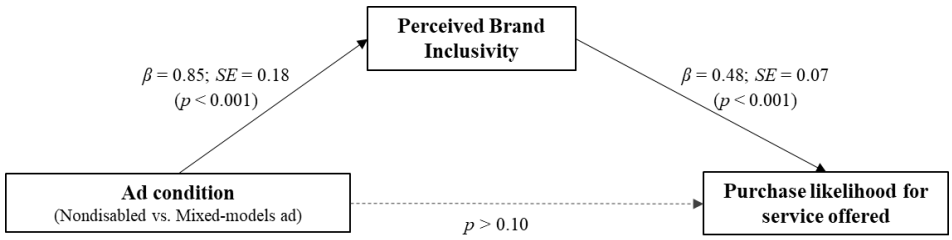

Figure 18. Mediation results for Study 2C

Next, I introduced gym membership as a covariate to test mediation through perceived brand inclusivity on purchase likelihood for service offered for ad condition. Results remained significant on introducing ad likability and gym membership as covariates, with again the indirect effect excluding zero (β = 0.40, SE = 0.10, CI_{95} [0.21,

0.61]) and direct effect including zero ($p > 0.05$). I present detailed mediation results for this study with individual path, direct, and indirect effect details in Table 10.

Individual Path Details	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity	0.85	0.18		0.50	1.19
Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Purchase likelihood	0.48	0.07		0.33	0.62
With covariate: Gym Membership					
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity	0.84	0.18		0.49	1.19
Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Purchase likelihood	0.47	0.07		0.33	0.61
Indirect Effect	**Coefficients**			**Bootstrapped 95% CI**	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Purchase likelihood	0.40	0.10		0.22	0.61
With covariate: Gym Membership					
Ad → Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Purchase likelihood	0.40	0.10		0.21	0.61
Direct Effect	**Coefficients**			**Bootstrapped 95% CI**	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad → Purchase likelihood	0.02	0.21		-0.39	0.43
With covariate: Gym Membership					
Ad → Purchase likelihood	0.03	0.21		-0.50	0.27

Table 10. Detailed mediation results of Study 2C

Controlling for alternative process mechanism. Through this study, I also intended to control for the alternative process mechanism of brand warmth leading to favorable CBRs in mixed-models ads. On conducting a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on brand warmth score ($r = 0.74$, $p < 0.001$), I got a significant result, F (1, 246) = 23.38; $p < 0.001$; *Cohen's d* = 0.51. In particular, mixed-models ad participants reported higher brand warmth ($M_{Mixed} = 5.53$, $SD_{Mixed} = 1.12$) than the nondisabled-models ad participants ($M_{Nondisabled} = 4.96$, $SD_{Nondisabled} = 1.17$). This result is not entirely unexpected, as a brand ad featuring disabled models might be deemed to have good intentions toward its consumers. However, this main effect became non-

significant on including perceived brand inclusivity as a covariate, F (1, 244) = 1.32; p = 0.25. Hence, the significant main effect of ad conditions on brand warmth was explained by perceived brand inclusivity. In other words, it indicates that, in this case, perceived brand inclusivity explains the brand's intentions of doing good for the consumers and society at large.

When I conducted an ANCOVA with ad condition as the IV, purchase likelihood as the DV with Gym membership, and Brand warmth as covariates, the results became non-significant, F (1, 243) = 0.19, $p > 0.1$. This unexpected finding suggested that perceived brand intentions are a crucial determinant of favorable CBRs. However, considering that we found that these perceived brand intentions are explained by perceived brand inclusivity, it again highlights the critical role of perceived brand inclusivity in the downstream consequence of favorable CBRs. Next, when I conducted an ANCOVA with ad condition as the IV, perceived brand inclusivity as the DV with Gym membership and brand warmth as covariates, the results remained significant, F (1, 243) = 8.17, $p < 0.01$; *Cohen's d* = 0.37. This result aligns with perceived brand inclusivity, explaining the brand warmth component in a mixed-models ad and not vice versa.

Next, I used the Hayes Process Macro model 4 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples. I entered the ad condition as the IV, the perceived brand inclusivity score as the mediator, and the purchase intention score as the DV, with brand warmth and gym membership as the covariates. The results were significant, with the indirect effect excluding zero (β = 0.11, SE = 0.05, CI_{95} [0.03 to 0.23]) and the direct effect including zero and not significant ($p > 0.05$).

Discussion

Study 2C successfully established that mixed-models brand ad leads to a higher purchase likelihood for the service offered (supporting H2c), mediated by perceived brand inclusivity (supporting H3c). Moreover, I controlled for an alternative process mechanism, brand warmth, impacting my proposed mediation. Since the results remained significant even after including brand warmth, it corroborates the robustness of these findings. I also successfully extended the findings to a service context while ruling out the number of models and the heavy-handedness of the cover story impacting the results.

In the following two studies, I test a boundary condition to the proposed effects: felt Self-brand connection (hereafter, SBC). Specifically, I propose that the positive effect of featuring disabled models in mixed-models ads on brand inclusivity and, consequently, favorable CBRs, will attenuate for consumers with high felt SBC. In Study 3A, I test the boundary condition of felt SBC by manipulating it (testing H4a). On the other hand, in Study 3B, I test the boundary condition of felt SBC by measuring it (testing H4b).

4.5 Study 3A

I proposed that SBC will moderate the mediation from ad condition to favorable CBRs through perceived inclusivity. Specifically, for consumers feeling low SBC, there will be significant differences in perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs in favor of the mixed-models ad. However, for consumers feeling high SBC, this effect will attenuate with no significant differences between perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs (supporting H4a and H4b). I also conducted exploratory analyses testing

moderation by a range of other demographics (ethnicity, income, education, and political ideology). The detailed measures for Pretest 5 and Study 3A are annexed in Appendix – F.

In line with SBC manipulation in previous literature (manipulation adapted from Song et al., 2017), I first carried out a pretest to determine the most frequently mentioned characteristics by the participants after seeing a brand ad. The most frequently mentioned characteristics were used to formulate a brand description that was used to manipulate SBC in the main study. Specifically, after randomly assigning participants to the ad condition, I asked all participants to read the same brand description, after which participants were randomly allocated to high-felt SBC or low-felt SBC. Participants in the high-felt SBC condition wrote five characteristics that they shared with the brand Energy Zone. In contrast, participants in the low-felt SBC condition wrote five characteristics that set them apart from the brand Energy Zone.

Pretest 5

Participants. I recruited seventy participants from the online data collection platform, Prolific in exchange for a small monetary reward (USD 0.20). Since no participant failed the attention check, I analyzed the data from all 70 participants (M_{age} = 35.14 years, 51.4% female). I used the same cover story and stimuli as Study 2C (EnergyZone health and fitness service brand). I randomly allotted each participant to one of the two ad conditions (nondisabled-models ad condition or mixed-models ad condition).

Design and Procedure. This pretest was a single factor two conditions between subjects' design. I randomly allotted each participant to one of the two conditions: nondisabled-models ad condition or mixed-models ad condition. There was the same cover story in both conditions: "We are working with an upcoming fitness brand, Energy Zone, and below you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. This brand will soon open locally and at this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds." The cover story and stimuli were shown for a minimum of 20 seconds. After seeing the ad, I asked all the participants to write five characteristics that came to their minds after seeing the ad. Lastly, I administered the attention check question used in Pretest 1, after which the participants entered their age and gender.

Results. I tabulated the most frequently mentioned characteristics and did not use any characteristics that were mentioned less than five times. Please refer to Table 11 for the most frequently mentioned characteristics with the number of times each was mentioned.

Characteristic	***Frequency***
Inclusive	28
Fit/ Fitness	16
Fun	11
Health/ healthy	8
High energy/Energetic	8
Athletic	7
Strong/Strength	7
Diverse	6
Accessible	5
Workout	5
Exciting	5
Exercise	5
Colorful	5

Table 11. Most frequently mentioned words for manipulating SBC in Pretest 5

Based on the most frequently mentioned characteristics, I formulated the brand description as follows: "Energy Zone is an inclusive fitness brand that creates fun, healthy, energetic, and athletic activities to increase its customers' strength. It has a diverse customer base and accessible facilities that makes workout and exercising exciting in its colorful environment." This brand description was used for manipulating felt SBC in Study 3A.

Discussion. In Pretest 5, I formulated a brand description based on the most frequently mentioned words. This brand description was used to manipulate SBC in Study 3A. In the following main study 3A, I test the moderating effect of felt SBC on the mediation from ad condition to favorable CBRs through perceived brand inclusivity (H4a). I expect that for consumers feeling low SBC, there will be significant differences in perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs in favor of the mixed-models ad. However, for consumers feeling high SBC, this effect will attenuate with no significant differences between perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs. I also conducted

exploratory analyses testing moderation by a range of other demographics (ethnicity, income, education, and political ideology).

Main Study

Method

Participants. I recruited six hundred participants from the online data collection platform, CloudResearch, in exchange for a small monetary reward (USD 0.20). I pre-registered this study on aspredicted.org (https://aspredicted.org/XJW_RVG). Based on the exclusion criteria outlined in the preregistration (excluding incomplete responses and responses from participants failing the attention check), I analyzed the data from 594 participants (M_{age} = 40.23 years, 52.4% female). I randomly allotted each participant to one of the two ad conditions (nondisabled-models or mixed-models ad condition) and one of the two felt-SBC conditions (high or low felt-SBC).

Design and Procedure. First, the participants provided consent for participation in the study. Next, they viewed the cover story: "We are working with an upcoming gym and fitness brand, Energy Zone, and below you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. This brand will soon open locally and at this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds." The cover story and the stimuli were shown for at least 20 seconds. Next, I randomly allotted the participants to one of the two felt-SBC conditions: high SBC or low SBC. Specifically, high SBC condition participants saw the following: "Energy Zone is

an inclusive fitness brand that creates fun, healthy, energetic, and athletic activities to increase its customers' strength. It has a diverse customer base and accessible facilities that make exercising exciting and fun. Based on the ad and the description for the brand Energy Zone, please mention five characteristics **that you share with the brand Energy Zone."** Low SBC condition participants saw the following: "Energy Zone is an inclusive fitness brand that creates fun, healthy, energetic, and athletic activities to increase its customers' strength. It has a diverse customer base, and accessible facilities that make exercising exciting and fun. Based on the ad and the description for the brand Energy Zone, please mention five characteristics **that sets you apart from the brand Energy Zone."** This description and the question to enter the five characteristics that they share/ set them apart from the brand Energy Zone was shown for a minimum of 20 seconds. Hence, Study 3A had a 2 (ad: nondisabled vs. mixed-models) X 2 (Felt SBC: high vs. low) design. Next, participants answered two measures of SBC which served as a manipulation check (Tan et al., 2018). In particular, I asked them the following two questions: "Energy Zone seems to be a part of me and who I am," and "I feel I am personally connected to Energy Zone," both assessed on a 7-point Likert scale – 1 = "Strongly disagree;" 7 = "Strongly agree." I then asked them their perceptions of perceived brand inclusivity through the same two questions as in Study 2C. Thereafter, participants answered three questions measuring their intended loyalty (Sinha & Lu, 2019) – How likely are you to spread positive word of mouth about the brand? (assessed on a 7-point Likert scale – 1 = "not at all;" 7 = "very much"); If my friends were looking for a gym and fitness brand, I would tell them to try the brand (assessed on a 7-point Likert scale – 1 = "not at all;" 7 = "very much"); In the future, I intend to purchase

services from the brand Energy Zone (assessed on a 7-point Likert scale – 1 = "Strongly disagree;" 7 = "Strongly agree"). Lastly, the participants answered the same attention check question used in Pretest 1 and demographic questions. In this study, since I wanted to conduct exploratory analyses with a range of demographics, I recorded age, gender, ethnicity, income, education, and political ideology.

Results

Manipulation check. I found that the two questions measuring felt SBC were highly correlated ($r = 0.90$). Therefore, I averaged them to form an SBC index. I performed a two-way ANOVA using ad condition and felt SBC as the IVs on the SBC index. Results were significant for the effect of felt SBC on the SBC index, F (3, 590) = 72.63, $p < 0.001$; *Cohen's d* = 0.70. Specifically, high SBC condition participants ($M_{High\ SBC} = 4.03$, $SD_{High\ SBC} = 1.58$) felt significantly higher SBC than the low SBC condition participants ($M_{Low\ SBC} = 2.92$, $SD_{Low\ SBC} = 1.59$). Hence, the manipulations worked as intended.

Moreover, I also got a marginally significant effect of ad condition on the SBC index, F (3, 590) = 3.36, $p = 0.07$; *Cohen's d* = 0.16. Mixed-models ad participants ($M_{Mixed} = 3.65$, $SD_{Mixed} = 1.66$) reported marginally significantly higher SBC than the participants in nondisabled-models condition ($M_{Nondisabled} = 3.38$, $SD_{Nondisabled} = 1.66$). Lastly, the interaction of the ad condition and felt SBC was non-significant, F (3, 590) = 0.28, $p = 0.60$.

Intended loyalty. I found that the three items measuring intended loyalty had high reliability ($\alpha = 0.93$). Therefore, I averaged them to form an intended loyalty index. I

conducted a two-way ANOVA using ad condition and felt SBC as Ivs on the intended loyalty index. Results were significant for the effect of felt SBC on the intended loyalty index, F (3, 590) = 31.93, $p < 0.001$; *Cohen's d* = 0.46. In particular, high SBC condition participants ($M_{High\ SBC} = 4.44$, $SD_{High\ SBC} = 1.57$) reported significantly higher intended loyalty than low SBC condition participants ($M_{Low\ SBC} = 3.69$, $SD_{Low\ SBC} = 1.65$). Also, the results were significant for the effect of ad condition on the intended loyalty index, F (3, 590) = 31.93, $p < 0.05$; *Cohen's d* = 0.22. Mixed-models condition participants ($M_{Mixed} = 4.28$, $SD_{Mixed} = 1.57$) reported significantly higher intended loyalty than the participants in the nondisabled-models condition ($M_{Nondisbaled} = 3.91$, $SD_{Nondisabled} = 1.70$). This result effectively replicated my previous main effects of mixed-models ads and favorable CBRs. However, the hypothesized interaction between the ad condition and SBC for the intended loyalty index was non-significant, F (3, 590) = 0.79, $p = 0.37$.

Perceived brand inclusivity. I found that the two items measuring perceived brand inclusivity were correlated significantly ($r = 0.82$; $p < 0.001$). Therefore, I took the average of these two items to form a perceived brand inclusivity index. I conducted a two-way ANOVA using ad conditions and felt SBC as Ivs on the perceived brand inclusivity index. Results were significant for the effect of felt SBC on the perceived brand inclusivity index, F (3, 590) = 10.45, $p < 0.001$; *Cohen's d* = 0.26. Specifically, high SBC condition participants reported significantly higher perceived brand inclusivity ($M_{High\ SBC} = 5.72$, $SD_{High\ SBC} = 1.37$) than the low SBC condition participants ($M_{Low\ SBC} = 5.32$, $SD_{Low\ SBC} = 1.54$). Also, results were significant for the effect of ad condition on the perceived brand inclusivity index, F (3, 590) = 31.75, $p < 0.001$; *Cohen's d* = 0.46. Participants in the mixed-models ad condition reported significantly higher perceived

brand inclusivity (M_{Mixed} = 5.86, SD_{Mixed} = 1.39) than the participants in the nondisabled-models ad condition ($M_{Nondisabled}$ = 5.21, $SD_{Nondisabled}$ = 1.46). This result effectively replicated my previous main effects of mixed-models brand ads having higher perceived brand inclusivity. However, the hypothesized interaction between the ad condition and SBC on perceived brand inclusivity was not significant, F (3, 590) = 1.66, p = 0.20. Table 12 presents detailed results of the two-way ANOVAs on intended loyalty and perceived brand inclusivity.

Dependent Variables	Nondisabled-models condition					Mixed-models condition					Interaction Statistics
	High SBC		Low SBC			High SBC		Low SBC			
	M	SD	M	SD		M	SD	M	SD		
Perceived Brand Inclusivity	5.46	1.33	4.93	1.55		5.96	1.36	5.74	1.42		F (1, 590) = 1.66, p = 0.198
Intended loyalty	4.21	1.63	3.58	1.73		4.67	1.48	3.81	1.56		F (1, 590) = 0.79, p = 0.373

Table 12. Detailed ANOVA results for Study 3A

Moderation by felt SBC on mediation through perceived brand inclusivity on intended loyalty. I proceeded to establish moderated mediation on intended loyalty through perceived brand inclusivity by felt SBC by using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV (coded as -1 = nondisabled-models condition and 1 = mixed-models condition), felt SBC as the moderator, perceived brand inclusivity as the mediator, and the intended loyalty index as the DV. The analysis showed that the indirect effect of moderated mediation included zero (β = 0.18, SE = 0.14, CI_{95} [-0.09 to 0.45]). Moreover, the direct effect was also non-significant (p > 0.05; β = -0.01, SE = 0.12, CI_{95} [-0.25 to 0.22]). Therefore, hypothesis

H4a could not be supported. I present detailed moderated mediation results for this study with individual paths and direct and indirect effect details in Table 13.

Individual Path Details	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition X Felt SBC → Perceived Brand Inclusivity	0.30	0.23		-0.16	0.76
Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Intended Loyalty	0.59	0.04		0.51	0.67
Indirect Effect	**Coefficients**			**Bootstrapped 95% CI**	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition X Felt SBC → Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Intended Loyalty	-0.01	0.12		-0.25	0.22
Direct Effect	**Coefficients**			**Bootstrapped 95% CI**	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition → Intended loyalty	0.18	0.14		-0.09	0.45

Table 13. Detailed moderated mediation results for Study 3A

As mentioned at the beginning, another aim of this study was to test for moderation by demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, income, education, and political ideology). However, since these responses were recorded after the SBC manipulation, I recommend that the results of these exploratory analyses should be read with caution. Lastly, since these were exploratory analyses, I started with testing the moderated mediation. Only if the moderated mediation was significant, I proceeded to test the individual moderations on the mediator (perceived brand inclusivity) and DV (intended loyalty).

Exploratory Analyses. Age. I tested the moderated mediation on intended loyalty through perceived brand inclusivity by age using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, age as the moderator, perceived brand inclusivity as the mediator, and the intended loyalty index as the DV. The analysis revealed that the indirect effect of moderated mediation included

zero (β = -0.01, SE = 0.01, CI_{95} [-0.02 to 0.01]). Moreover, the direct effect was also non-significant ($p > 0.05$).

Exploratory Analyses. Gender. I tested the moderated mediation on intended loyalty through perceived brand inclusivity by gender using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, gender as the moderator perceived brand inclusivity as the mediator, and the intended loyalty index as the DV. The analysis revealed that the indirect effect of moderated mediation excluded zero (β = 0.31, SE = 0.13, CI_{95} [0.06 to 0.57]). Moreover, the direct effect was not significant ($p > 0.05$).

On closer inspection of the moderated mediation, I observed that the significant effect on perceived brand inclusivity was for both genders and stronger for females. Since both genders showed the effect, I did not proceed with testing the moderation on perceived brand inclusivity and intended loyalty individually.

Exploratory Analyses. Ethnicity. I tested the moderated mediation on intended loyalty through perceived brand inclusivity by ethnicity using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, ethnicity as the moderator perceived brand inclusivity as the mediator, and the intended loyalty index as the DV. The analysis revealed that the indirect effect of moderated mediation included zero (β = 0.02, SE = 0.04, CI_{95} [-0.05 to 0.09]). Moreover, the direct effect was also not significant ($p > 0.05$).

Exploratory Analyses. Income. I tested the moderated mediation on intended loyalty through perceived brand inclusivity by income using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, income

as the moderator, perceived brand inclusivity as the mediator and the intended loyalty index as the DV. The analysis revealed that the indirect effect of moderated mediation included zero (β = 0.001, *SE* = 0.02, CI_{95} [-0.03 to 0.04]). Moreover, the direct effect was also not significant ($p > 0.05$).

Exploratory Analyses. Education. I tested the moderated mediation on intended loyalty through perceived brand inclusivity by education using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, education as the moderator, perceived brand inclusivity as the mediator and the intended loyalty index as the DV. The analysis revealed that the indirect effect of moderated mediation included zero (β = 0.03, *SE* = 0.05, CI_{95} [-0.07 to 0.14]). Moreover, the direct effect was also not significant ($p > 0.05$).

Exploratory Analyses. Political ideology. I tested the moderated mediation on intended loyalty through perceived brand inclusivity by political ideology using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, political ideology as the moderator, perceived brand inclusivity as the mediator, and the intended loyalty index as the DV. The analysis revealed that the indirect effect of moderated mediation excluded zero (β = 0.12, *SE* = 0.05, CI_{95} [0.02 to 0.21]). Moreover, the direct effect was not significant ($p > 0.05$).

Upon closer inspection of the moderated mediation, I found that participants leaning towards being conservative (-1SD) did not perceive the two ads differently (β = 0.14, *SE* = 0.12, CI_{95} [-0.10 to 0.38]). However, participants leaning towards being liberal (+1SD) perceived the two ads differently for perceived brand inclusivity and, consequently, intended loyalty (β = 0.58, *SE* = 0.11, CI_{95} [0.37 to 0.80]).

Thereafter, I tested for the moderation effect of ad condition and political ideology on intended loyalty using Hayes Process Model 1 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I found a significant interaction (β = 0.26, *SE* = 0.08, CI_{95} [0.10 to 0.42]), such that participants leaning towards being conservative (-1SD) did not differ significantly in their intended loyalty (β = -0.18, *SE* = 0.22, CI_{95} [-0.61 to 0.24]). However, participants leaning towards being liberal (+1SD) differed significantly in their intended loyalty (β = 0.81, *SE* = 0.19, CI_{95} [0.44 to 1.18]) in favor of the mixed-models ad condition.

Lastly, I tested for the moderation effect of ad condition and political ideology on perceived brand inclusivity using Hayes Process Model 1 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I found a significant interaction (β = 0.20, *SE* = 0.07, CI_{95} [0.06 to 0.33]), such that participants leaning towards being conservative (-1SD) did not differ significantly in their perceived brand inclusivity (β = 0.24, *SE* = 0.19, CI_{95} [-0.13 to 0.60]). However, participants leaning towards being liberal (+1SD) differed significantly in their perceived brand inclusivity (β = 0.98, *SE* = 0.17, CI_{95} [0.66 to 1.31]) in favor of mixed-models ad condition.

Discussion

Study 3A tested the boundary condition of felt SBC by manipulating it and testing H4a. H4a proposed that SBC will moderate the mediation from the ad condition through perceived brand inclusivity to intended loyalty. For consumers with low (high) SBC, the mixed-models ad will differ (not differ) significantly from the nondisabled-models ad for perceived brand inclusivity and intended loyalty. While the study successfully replicated

my previous main effects on perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs, I did not find support for hypothesis H4a. From this study, I learned that although the SBC manipulation was adapted from previous literature (Song et al., 2017), Song and colleagues (2017) used real brands while manipulating the SBC. Considering much of the previous literature has manipulated SBC using real brands, one of the reasons this study possibly did not work is because I adapted the SBC manipulation using fictitious brands. Therefore, I aim to test SBC manipulation and its moderating effect using real brands in the future.

I also conducted exploratory analyses using a range of demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, income, education, and political ideology) in this study. Although the moderation by age, gender, ethnicity, income, and education was not significant, I did find significant moderation by political ideology on the path from ad condition to perceived brand inclusivity to intended loyalty. I found that conservative participants did not view the two ads differently for perceived brand inclusivity and, consequently, intended loyalty. On the other hand, liberal participants viewed the two ads differently for perceived brand inclusivity and, consequently, intended loyalty in favor of the mixed-models ad condition. These results highlight the possibility of mixed-models ads being possibly ineffective in states leaning toward being conservative. Therefore, I aim to test this interesting finding by investigating the moderating effects of political orientation in the future. However, I also recognize that since the response to political ideology was recorded after SBC manipulation, these results should be read cautiously. Moreover, this study was conducted in November 2022, around the time of the midterm elections, when

political ideologies were salient in the people's minds. Therefore, I am cognizant that the timing of the study could have also impacted my results.

In the following study, I test the proposed boundary condition of felt SBC by measuring it (testing H4b). Hypothesis H4b states that SBC will moderate the mediation from the ad condition through perceived brand inclusivity to purchase intention. For consumers with low (high) SBC, the mixed-models ad condition will differ (not differ) significantly from nondisabled-models ad condition for perceived brand inclusivity and purchase intention.

4.6 Study 3B

In Study 3B, I measure felt SBC to test H4b. Hypothesis H4b states that SBC will moderate the mediation from the ad condition through perceived brand inclusivity to purchase intention such that for consumers with low (high) SBC, the mixed-models ad condition will differ (not differ) significantly from the nondisabled-models ad condition for perceived brand inclusivity and purchase intention. Although the study manipulating SBC did not work, I tested H4b measuring SBC. Additionally, in this study also, I conducted exploratory analyses testing moderation by a range of demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, income, education, and political ideology). Lastly, in this study, I also modified the stimuli used in Study 2A to include the same models, with one ad featuring four nondisabled models and the other ad featuring the same four models, with two of them being shown as disabled. Therefore, this study was designed to demonstrate the robustness of my findings by accounting for another confounding factor for my findings

till now. I started by conducting a pretest for the new stimuli before the main study. The detailed measures for Pretest 6 and Study 3B are annexed in Appendix – G.

Pretest 6

Participants. I recruited sixty-two participants from the online data collection platform, Prolific in exchange for a small monetary reward (USD 0.10). After excluding the participants failing the attention check, I analyzed the data from 60 participants (M_{age} = 35.12 years, 51.7% female). I randomly allotted each participant to one of the two ad conditions (nondisabled-models or mixed-models ad condition).

Design and Procedure. The pretest was a single factor two conditions between subjects' design. I randomly allotted participants to one of the two conditions: nondisabled-models or mixed-models ad condition. There was the same cover story in both conditions: "We are working with a new local brand, DressedUpper, and below you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. This brand will soon be available locally in stores. At this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds." The cover story and stimuli were shown for a minimum of 20 seconds. Thereafter, the participants responded to the same measures of inclusivity, believability, likeability, and brand familiarity as in Pretest 1. Lastly, I used the same attention check as in Pretest 1, after which the participants entered their age and gender. The stimuli for this study for the nondisabled-models ad condition and mixed-models ad condition are shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19. Nondisabled-models and mixed-models ad condition for Pretest 6

Results. I performed a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on ratings of inclusivity, and I got significant results, F (1,58) = 19.84, $p < 0.05$; *Cohen's d* = 1.17. Expectedly, the nondisabled-models ad condition participants ($M_{Nondisabled}$ = 4.97, $SD_{Nondisabled}$ = 1.52) perceived the ad as significantly less inclusive than the mixed-models ad condition participants (M_{Mixed} = 6.37, SD_{Mixed} = 0.81). Thereafter, I performed a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on the believability ratings, and the results were non-significant, F (1, 58) = 0.39, $p > 0.05$. However, a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on the likeability ratings was significant, F (1, 58) = 5.64, $p < 0.05$; *Cohen's d* = 0.63. Specifically, the nondisabled-models ad condition participants ($M_{Nondisabled}$ = 4.20, $SD_{Nondisabled}$ = 1.32) perceived the ad as significantly less likable than the mixed-models ad condition participants (M_{Mixed} = 5.00, SD_{Mixed} = 1.29). I noted this difference to control for it in the main study. Next, I checked the reliability of the scale measuring brand familiarity and found it to have high reliability (α = 0.88). Therefore, I averaged the three measures for brand familiarity, forming the brand familiarity index. When I performed a one-way ANOVA with ad condition as the IV on this brand familiarity index yielded non-significant results, F (1, 58) = 1.45, $p > 0.05$.

Discussion. In Pretest 6, I tested the new stimuli for a business formalwear brand with the same models in both versions. Specifically, the nondisabled-models ad condition

featured four nondisabled models, and the mixed-models ad condition featured the same four models, with two of them being shown as disabled. I found that the mixed-models ad was found to be more inclusive and likable by participants than the nondisabled-models ad. Moreover, the ad believability and brand familiarity did not differ significantly. In the following main study, 3B, I test H4b stating SBC will moderate the mediation from ad condition to purchase intention through perceived brand inclusivity. I expect that for consumers feeling low SBC, there will be significant differences in perceived brand inclusivity and purchase intention in favor of the ad featuring disabled models. However, for consumers feeling high SBC, this effect will attenuate with no significant differences between perceived brand inclusivity and purchase intention (supporting H4b). Additionally, similar to main study 3A, I again conducted exploratory analyses testing moderation by a range of other demographics (ethnicity, income, education, and political ideology).

Main Study

Method

Participants. I recruited six hundred participants from the online data collection platform, CloudResearch, in exchange for a small monetary reward (USD 0.25). I pre-registered this study on aspredicted.org (https://aspredicted.org/9QX_W7T). Based on the exclusion criteria outlined in the preregistration (excluding incomplete responses and responses from participants failing the attention check), I analyzed the data from 593 participants (M_{age} = 40.25 years, 56.7% female). I randomly allotted each participant to

one of the two pretested ad conditions (nondisabled-models ad condition or mixed-models ad condition).

Design and Procedure. First, the participants provided consent for participation in the study. Next, they viewed the cover story: "We are working with a new local brand, DressedUpper, and below, you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. This brand will soon be available locally in stores. At this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds." The cover story and the stimuli were shown for at least 20 seconds. Thereafter, participants answered the questions measuring their purchase intention (Minton, 2020) – Please indicate your probability that you would purchase from the brand DressedUpper in the future (7-point Bipolar scale): "Unlikely/ Likely;" "Definitely would not/ Definitely would;" and "Not probable/ Probable." I then recorded participants' perceptions of brand inclusivity by asking the same two questions as in Study 2A. Next, participants answered two items to measure their felt SBC (adapted from Tan et al., 2018). In particular, I asked them the following two questions: DressedUpper seems to be a part of me, and who I am, I feel I am personally connected to DressedUpper, both measured on a 7-point Likert scale; 1 – "Strongly disagree;" 7 – "Strongly agree." Lastly, I had the same attention check question as Pretest 1 and demographic questions. In this study, since I again wanted to conduct exploratory analyses with a range of demographics, I recorded age, gender, ethnicity, income, education, and political ideology.

Results

Purchase Intention. I found that the three items measuring intended loyalty had high reliability ($\alpha = 0.97$). Therefore, I averaged them to form a purchase intention index. I also found that the two items measuring felt SBC were correlated significantly ($r = 0.92$, $p < 0.05$). Hence, I took the average of the two items to get an SBC index. For all the analyses, SBC was mean-centered, with the high SBC operationalized as one SD above the mean and the low SBC operationalized as one SD below the mean. Next, I conducted a moderation analysis using Hayes Process Model 1 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples to establish the moderating effect of SBC on the effect of ad conditions on the purchase intention index (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition (coded as -1 = nondisabled-models condition and 1 = mixed-models condition) as the IV, the SBC index as the moderator, and the purchase intention index as the DV. The main effect of the ad condition was marginally significant ($\beta = 0.35$, $SE = 0.20$, CI_{95} [-0.04 to 0.74]), and the main effect of SBC was significant ($\beta = 0.83$, $SE = 0.09$, CI_{95} [0.65 to 1.01]). Lastly, the predicted two-way interaction effect between the ad condition and the SBC index was non-significant ($\beta = -0.08$, $SE = 0.06$, CI_{95} [-0.20 to 0.03]).

Perceived brand inclusivity. I found that the two items measuring perceived brand inclusivity were correlated significantly ($r = 0.86$; $p < 0.001$). Hence, I averaged the two items to form a perceived brand inclusivity index. Next, I conducted a moderation analysis using Hayes Process Model 1 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples to establish the moderating effect of SBC on the

effect of ad conditions on the perceived brand inclusivity index (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, the SBC index as the moderator, and the perceived brand inclusivity index as the DV. The main effect of the ad condition was marginally significant (β = 1.15, *SE* = 0.19, CI_{95} [0.77 to 1.52]), and the main effect of SBC was significant (β = 0.45, *SE* = 0.09, CI_{95} [0.29 to 0.64]). Lastly, the predicted two-way interaction effect between the ad condition and the SBC index was also significant (β = -0.15, *SE* = 0.06, CI_{95} [-0.26 to -0.04]). On probing the Interaction, I noticed that the conditional effect of felt SBC was significant at both (-1SD) and (+1 SD), and the transition point to non-significance was beyond +1 SD. Please refer to Table 14 for detailed results.

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention					
	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition	0.35	0.20		-0.04	0.74
SBC	0.83	0.09		0.65	1.01
Ad condition x SBC	-0.08	0.06		-0.20	-0.03
Effect of Ad condition at high and low values of SBC (not significant)					
	Low SBC			High SBC	
Nondisabled-models ad	5.22			5.55	
Mixed-models ad	5.97			6.31	
Dependent Variable: Perceived Brand Inclusivity					
	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition	1.15	0.19		0.77	1.52
SBC	0.46	0.09		0.29	0.64
Ad condition x SBC	-0.15	0.06		-0.26	-0.04
Conditional effect of Ad condition at high and low values of SBC (significant)					
	Low SBC			High SBC	
Nondisabled-models ad	4.89			5.94	
Mixed-models ad	5.84			6.40	

Table 14. Detailed Hayes' Process Model 1 (moderation) results for Study 3B

Moderation by felt SBC on mediation through perceived brand inclusivity on purchase intention. I proceeded to test the moderated mediation on purchase intention

through perceived brand inclusivity by felt SBC by using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, the felt SBC index as the moderator, the perceived brand inclusivity index as the mediator, and the purchase intention index as the DV. The results revealed that the indirect effect of moderated mediation excluded zero (β = -0.08, SE = 0.03, CI_{95} [-0.14 to -0.02]). Particularly, the effect was found to be stronger at the -1SD value of SBC (β = 0.51, SE = 0.10, CI_{95} [0.33 to 0.71]) than at the +1SD value (β = 0.25, SE = 0.06, CI_{95} [0.14 to 0.36]). These results align with my conceptualization and provide partial support for H4b. However, since the moderating effect was beyond the +1SD value of SBC, the results cannot be taken as fully supportive of H4b. Lastly, the direct effect was non-significant (p > 0.05). Hence, hypothesis H4b was partially supported. Please refer to Table 15 for detailed moderated mediation results for this study with individual paths and direct and indirect effects.

Individual Path Details	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition X Felt SBC → Perceived Brand Inclusivity	-0.15	0.06		-0.26	-0.04
Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Intended Loyalty	0.54	0.05		0.43	0.64
Indirect Effect	**Coefficients**			**Bootstrapped 95% CI**	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition interaction X Felt SBC → Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Purchase Intention	-0.08	0.03		-0.14	-0.02
Direct Effect	**Coefficients**			**Bootstrapped 95% CI**	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition → Purchase intention	-0.18	0.13		-0.44	0.08

Table 15. Detailed moderated mediation results for Study 3B

As mentioned in the beginning, another aim of this study was to again test for moderation by demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, income, education, and political

ideology). Lastly, since these were exploratory analyses, I started with testing the moderated mediation. Only if the moderated mediation was significant, I proceeded to test the individual moderations on the mediator (perceived brand inclusivity) and DV (purchase intention).

Exploratory Analyses. Age. I tested the moderated mediation on purchase intention through perceived brand inclusivity by age using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, age as the moderator, the perceived brand inclusivity index as the mediator, and the purchase intention index as the DV. The results revealed that the indirect effect of moderated mediation included zero (β = -0.001, SE = 0.00, CI_{95} [-0.01 to 0.01]). Moreover, the direct effect was also non-significant ($p > 0.05$).

Exploratory Analyses. Gender. I tested the moderated mediation on purchase intention through perceived brand inclusivity by gender using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, gender as the moderator, the perceived brand inclusivity index as the mediator, and the purchase intention index as the DV. The results revealed that the indirect effect of moderated mediation included zero (β = 0.19, SE = 0.10, CI_{95} [-0.003 to 0.39]). Moreover, the direct effect was non-significant ($p > 0.05$).

Exploratory Analyses. Ethnicity. I tested the moderated mediation on purchase intention through perceived brand inclusivity by ethnicity using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, ethnicity as the moderator, the perceived brand inclusivity index as the mediator, and the purchase intention index as the DV. The results revealed that the indirect effect of

moderated mediation included zero (β = -0.05, SE = 0.04, CI_{95} [-0.13 to 0.03]). Moreover, the direct effect was also non-significant ($p > 0.05$).

Exploratory Analyses. Income. I tested the moderated mediation on purchase intention through perceived brand inclusivity by income using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, income as the moderator, perceived brand inclusivity index as the mediator, and purchase intention as the DV. The results revealed that the indirect effect of moderated mediation included zero (β = 0.01, SE = 0.03, CI_{95} [-0.06 to 0.07]). Moreover, the direct effect was also non-significant ($p > 0.05$).

Exploratory Analyses. Education. I tested the moderated mediation on purchase intention through perceived brand inclusivity by education using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, education as the moderator, the perceived brand inclusivity index as the mediator, and the purchase intention index as the DV. The results revealed that the indirect effect of moderated mediation included zero (β = 0.03, SE = 0.05, CI_{95} [-0.08 to 0.13]). Moreover, the direct effect was also non-significant ($p > 0.05$).

Exploratory Analyses. Political ideology. I tested the moderated mediation on purchase intention through perceived brand inclusivity by political ideology using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, political ideology as the moderator, the perceived brand inclusivity index as the mediator, and the purchase intention index as the DV. The results revealed that the indirect effect of moderated mediation included zero (β = 0.002, SE = 0.03, CI_{95} [-0.05 to 0.06]). Moreover, the direct effect was also non-significant ($p > 0.05$). These

results contradict the significant moderation by political ideology in Study 3A. Since I found that this result was not replicable, I cannot ascertain the moderation by political ideology as an effect that would exist in the real world.

Discussion

Study 3B tested the boundary condition of felt SBC by measuring it and testing H4b. H4b proposed that SBC will moderate the mediation from the ad condition through perceived brand inclusivity to purchase intention. For consumers with low (high) SBC, the mixed-models ad will differ (not differ) significantly from the nondisabled-models ad for perceived brand inclusivity and purchase intention. I found partial support for hypothesis H4b. Specifically, I found that SBC significantly moderates the relationship from ad condition to perceived brand inclusivity, as predicted. However, SBC was not significantly moderating the relationship from ad condition to purchase intention. Lastly, as predicted, I found that SBC significantly moderates the path from ad condition to perceived brand inclusivity to purchase intention. However, the moderation was non-significant beyond the value of +1SD, and hence, I suggest reading these results with caution.

From this study, I learned that perhaps having a more concrete measure of CBRs, such as purchase intention, was the reason the hypothesized effect did not show. Moreover, as mentioned before, most SBC studies have utilized real brands. Therefore, since I used a fictitious brand, perhaps a more attitudinal measure of CBRs would have been more effective in testing the hypothesized moderated mediation effects.

Nevertheless, the overall significant moderated mediation suggests an effect that could possibly be observed after making a few changes in this study.

None of the exploratory analyses by demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, income, education, and political ideology) revealed significant moderation. Specifically, I found political ideology to be a significant moderator for brand inclusivity, intended loyalty, and the path from ad condition to perceived brand inclusivity to intended loyalty in Study 3A. However, I could not replicate this effect in Study 3B. Therefore, political ideology cannot be conclusively determined as a moderator. I do recognize that it could possibly be due to the ordering effect of questions since the questions were not randomized. Nevertheless, I do make a note to investigate political orientation as a possible moderator in the future.

In studies 3A and 3B, I found partial support for SBC as a moderator to my main and mediation effects. One reason for the moderation by SBC not working as hypothesized could be because of the use of fictitious brands. I used fictitious brands because the use of fictitious brands is known to account for any pre-existing bias participants might have (Ganassali & Matysiewicz, 2021). However, most of the previous research has tested SBC using existing well-known brands, with most participants having some experience with such brands. Since I was relying on felt SBC based on the participants viewing just the brand ads, it could be argued that the felt SBC was not reliable. Therefore, I aim to test the moderating effect of SBC by using real brands in the future.

Given that the proposed moderation by SBC did not work as expected, I proceeded to establish two other theoretically based and practically relevant boundary

conditions. Hence, in the following studies, I tested the boundary conditions of Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) to test hypothesis H5 and perceived Brand Message Authenticity (BMA) to test hypothesis H6.

CHAPTER 5. ADDITIONAL BOUNDARY CONDITION STUDIES

5.1 Testing Additional Boundary Conditions

Considering I only got partial support for SBC as the boundary condition, I investigated two other theoretically and practically relevant boundary conditions, Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) and perceived Brand Message Authenticity (BMA). SDO is a trait variable that suggests a personal preference for societal hierarchies (Pratto, 1994). Perceived BMA is a brand-related variable that is indicative of the perceived genuineness of brand communication (Shoenberger et al., 2021). Therefore, using a personality-based variable and a brand-based variable, I investigate and establish two situations under which the positive effects of mixed-model ads would likely be ineffective. In particular, I propose that the positive effects of mixed-model ads on perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs will attenuate for consumers with high SDO (H5). Moreover, I propose that the positive effects of mixed-model ads on perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs will attenuate for consumers with high perceived BMA (H6). In what follows, I describe the studies conducted to test hypotheses H4 and H5.

5.2 Study 4

I proposed that SDO will moderate the mediation from ad condition to brand evaluation through perceived brand inclusivity (hypothesis H5). Specifically, I predicted that for consumers with low SDO, there would be significant differences in perceived brand inclusivity and brand evaluation in favor of the mixed-models ad condition. However, for consumers with high SDO, this effect will attenuate, and the two ads (nondisabled-models ad and mixed-models ad) will not be significantly different for

perceived brand inclusivity and brand evaluation (supporting H5). The detailed measures for Study 4 are annexed in Appendix – H.

Method

Participants. I recruited three hundred fifty-one participants from the online data collection platform, CloudResearch, in exchange for a small monetary reward (USD 0.25). After excluding incomplete responses (including incomplete responses did not change the results) and responses from participants failing the attention check, I analyzed the data from 346 participants (M_{age} = 40.24 years, 55.8% female). I randomly allotted each participant to one of the two ad conditions (nondisabled-models or mixed-models ad condition). I used the same stimuli and cover story for this study as Study 2A. In particular, I used the nondisabled-models ad and the mixed-models ad for a fictitious business formalwear brand, DressedUpper, in this study.

Design and Procedure. First, the participants provided consent for participation in the study. Next, they viewed the cover story: "We are working with a new local brand, DressedUpper, and below, you will see one 'mockup' advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. This brand will soon be available locally in stores. At this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds." The cover story and the stimuli were shown for at least 20 seconds. Thereafter, participants answered the questions measuring their brand evaluation (Chang, 2010) – Please rate the degree to which you feel the brand, Dressed Upper, is the following:

Good, Likable, Pleasant, Positive, High quality, measured on a 7-point Likert scale; 1 = "Strongly disagree," 7 = "Strongly agree." I then recorded and asked their perceptions of brand inclusivity using the same questions as in Study 2B. Next, participants answered the 16-item scale created by Pratto et al. (1994), which was a measure of their SDO, measured on a 7-point Likert scale – 1 = "Strongly disagree;" 7 = "Strongly agree." A sample scale item from this established scale is "Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups." Lastly, the participants responded to the same attention check question as in Pretest 1 and entered their age and gender.

Results

Brand evaluation. I found that the five items measuring brand evaluation had high scale reliability (α = 0.94). Therefore, I took the mean of the five items to form a brand evaluation index. I found that the 16 items measuring SDO also had high reliability (α = 0.96). Therefore, I averaged them to form an SDO index. For all the analyses, SDO was mean-centered, with the high SDO operationalized as one SD above the mean and the low SDO operationalized as one SD below the mean. Next, I conducted a moderation analysis using Hayes Process Model 1 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples to establish the moderating effect of SDO on the effect of ad conditions on the brand evaluation index (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition (coded as -1 = nondisabled-models condition and 1 = mixed-models condition) as the IV, the SDO index as the moderator, and the brand evaluation index as the DV. The main effect of the ad condition was found to be non-significant ($p > 0.05$), and the main effect of SDO was found to be significant (β = -0.20, SE = 0.04, CI_{95} [-0.28 to -0.12]). Lastly, the predicted two-way interaction of the ad

condition and the SDO index was found to be significant (β = -0.10, *SE* = 0.04, CI_{95} [-0.18 to -0.02]). On probing this interaction, I found that, as hypothesized, the mixed-models ad (M_{Mixed} = 5.90) compared to the nondisabled-models ad ($M_{Nondisabled}$ = 5.54) generated significantly higher brand evaluation scores for participants with low levels (-1SD) of SDO (β = 0.18, *SE* = 0.07, CI_{95} [0.03 to 0.32]). However, the two ads did not differ significantly (M_{Mixed} = 5.13 vs. $M_{Nondisabled}$ = 5.30) in brand evaluation scores for participants with high levels (+1SD) of SDO (β = -0.09, *SE* = 0.08, CI_{95} [-0.24 to 0.06]). Please refer to Figure 20 for a graphical representation of the significant interaction of ad condition and SDO on brand evaluation.

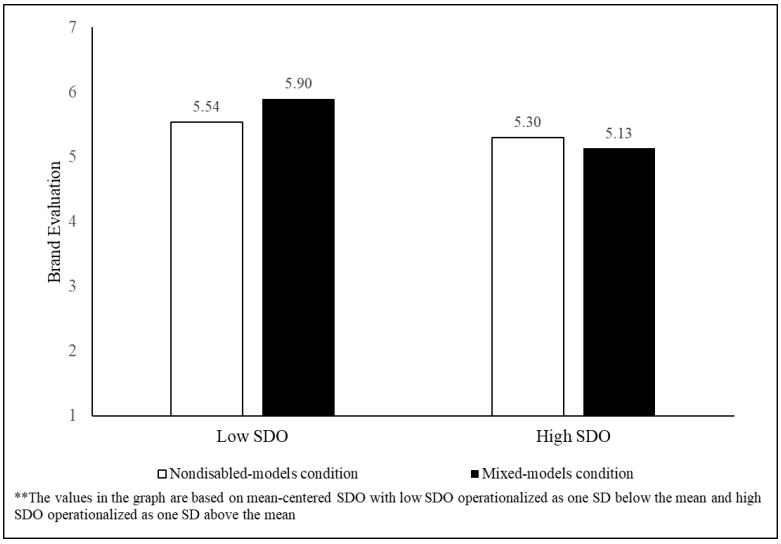

Figure 20. Significant interaction of ad condition and SDO on Brand Evaluation

Perceived brand inclusivity. I found that the two measures for perceived brand inclusivity were correlated significantly (r = 0.75; $p < 0.001$). Therefore, I averaged them to form a perceived brand inclusivity index. Next, I conducted a moderation analysis using Hayes Process Model 1 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples to establish the moderating effect of the SDO index on the effect of ad

conditions on the perceived brand inclusivity index (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, the SDO index as the moderator, and the brand evaluation index as the DV. The main effect of the ad condition was found to be significant (β = 0.31, *SE* = 0.06, CI_{95} [0.19 to 0.43]), and the main effect of SDO was also significant (β = -0.14, *SE* = 0.05, CI_{95} [-0.24 to -0.05]). Lastly and most importantly, the predicted two-way interaction of the ad condition and the SDO index was significant (β = -0.14, *SE* = 0.05, CI_{95} [-0.23 to -0.05]). On probing this interaction, I found that, as hypothesized, the ad featuring mixed-models (M_{Mixed} = 6.50) compared to the ad featuring nondisabled-models ($M_{nondisabled}$ = 5.54) generated significantly higher perceived brand inclusivity scores for participants with low levels (-1SD) of SDO score (β = 0.48, *SE* = 0.08, CI_{95} [0.32 to 0.64]). However, the two ads did not differ significantly (M_{mixed} = 5.77 vs. $M_{nondisabled}$ = 5.52) in perceived brand inclusivity scores for participants with high levels (+1SD) of SDO (β = 0.13, *SE* = 0.09, CI_{95} [-0.04 to 0.30]). Please refer to Figure 21 for a graphical representation of the significant interaction of ad condition and SDO on perceived brand inclusivity.

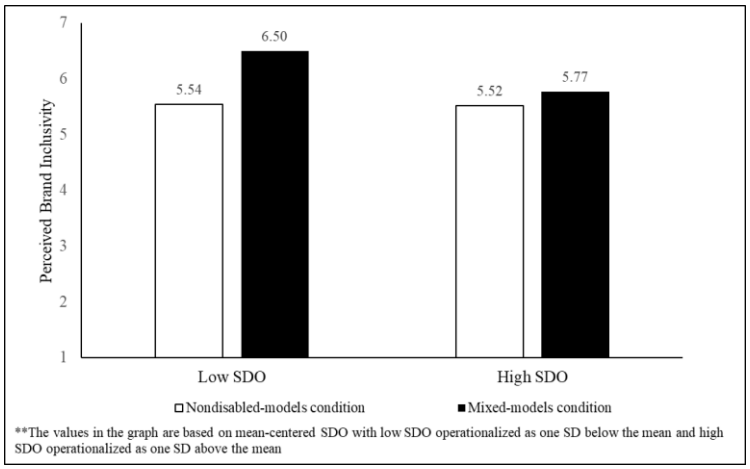

Figure 21. Significant interaction of ad condition and SDO on Perceived Brand Inclusivity

Please refer to Table 16 for detailed results.

Dependent Variable: Brand Evaluation					
	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition	0.05	0.05		-0.06	0.16
SDO	-0.20	0.04		-0.28	-0.12
Ad condition x SDO	-0.10	0.04		-0.18	-0.02
Conditional effect of Ad condition at high and low values of SDO					
	Low SDO			High SDO	
Nondisabled-models condition	5.54			5.30	
Mixed-models condition	5.90			5.13	
Dependent Variable: Perceived Brand Inclusivity					
	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition	0.31	0.06		0.19	0.43
SDO	-0.14	0.05		-0.24	-0.05
Ad condition x SDO	-0.14	0.05		-0.23	-0.05
Conditional effect of Ad condition at high and low values of SDO					
	Low SDO			High SDO	
Nondisabled-models condition	5.54			5.52	
Mixed-models condition	6.50			5.77	

Table 16. Detailed Hayes' Process Model 1 (moderation) results for Study 4

Moderation by SDO on mediation through perceived brand inclusivity on purchase intention. I proceeded to test the moderated mediation on brand evaluation through perceived brand inclusivity by SDO by using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, the SDO index as the moderator, the perceived brand inclusivity index as the mediator, and the brand evaluation index as the DV. I found that the indirect effect of moderated mediation excluded zero (β = -0.05, *SE* = 0.02, CI_{95} [-0.11 to -0.01]). Specifically, I found that at low levels (-1SD) of SDO, there were significant differences between the two ads (β = 0.19, *SE* = 0.05, CI_{95} [0.11 to 0.29]). However, at high levels (+1SD) of SDO, there were no significant differences between the two ads (β = 0.05, *SE* = 0.04, CI_{95} [-0.03 to 0.13]). Therefore, the results align with and support H5, which states that the positive effect of

featuring disabled models will attenuate for high SDO individuals. Please refer to Table 17 and Figure 22 for detailed results.

Individual Path Details	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition X SDO → Perceived Brand Inclusivity	-0.14	0.05		-0.23	-0.05
Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Brand Evaluation	0.39	0.04		0.30	0.48
Conditional Indirect Effect	**Coefficients**			**Bootstrapped 95% CI**	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Low SDO: Ad condition → Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Brand Evaluation	0.19	0.05		0.11	0.29
High SDO: Ad condition → Perceived Brand Inclusivity → Brand Evaluation	0.05	0.04		-0.03	0.13
Direct Effect	**Coefficients**			**Bootstrapped 95% CI**	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition → Brand Evaluation	-0.08	0.05		-0.18	0.03
Index of Moderated Mediation					
	Coefficients			**Bootstrapped 95% CI**	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
SDO	-0.05	0.02		-0.11	-0.01

Table 17. Detailed moderated mediation results for Study 4

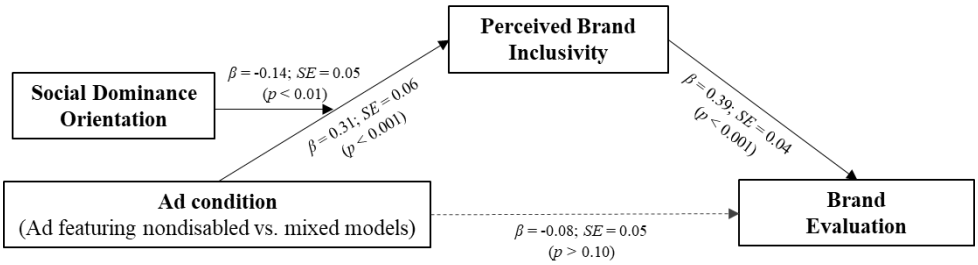

Figure 22. Moderated mediation results for Study 4

Discussion

Study 4 tested the boundary condition of SDO, testing and supporting H5. H5 proposed that SDO will moderate the mediation from the ad condition through perceived brand inclusivity to brand evaluation. For consumers with low (high) SDO, the mixed-

models ad will differ (not differ) significantly from the nondisabled-models ad for perceived brand inclusivity and brand evaluation. This study successfully established the moderating role of SDO on both perceived brand inclusivity and brand evaluation. Lastly, I found that SDO significantly moderated the path from ad condition to perceived brand inclusivity to brand evaluation. The results showed that at low values (-1SD) of SDO, the two ads differed significantly for perceived brand inclusivity and, consequently, brand evaluation in favor of the mixed-models ad. However, at high values (+1SD) of SDO, the two ads did not differ significantly for perceived brand inclusivity and, consequently, brand evaluation.

In the following study, I establish another theoretically relevant boundary condition, perceived Brand Message Authenticity (hereafter, BMA), supporting H6. H6 states that the positive impact of mixed-models ads on perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs will attenuate under conditions of high perceived BMA.

5.3 Study 5

I proposed that perceived BMA will moderate the mediation from ad condition to WOM for the company through perceived brand inclusivity (H6). Specifically, I predicted that for consumers with low perceived BMA, there would be significant differences in perceived brand inclusivity and WOM for the brand in favor of the mixed-models ad. However, for consumers with high perceived BMA, this effect will attenuate with no significant differences between perceived brand inclusivity and WOM for the brand (supporting H6). The detailed measures for Study 5 are annexed in Appendix – I.

Method

Participants. I recruited three hundred sixty-one participants from the online data collection platform, CloudResearch, in exchange for a small monetary reward (USD 0.15). After excluding incomplete responses (including incomplete responses did not change the results) and responses from participants failing the attention check, I analyzed the data from 349 participants (M_{age} = 41.46 years, 52.7% female). I allotted each participant randomly to one of the two ad conditions (nondisabled-models or mixed-models ad condition). I used the same stimuli and cover story for this study as Study 2C. In particular, I used the nondisabled-models ad and mixed-models ad for a fictitious fitness brand, Energy Zone, in this study.

Design and Procedure. First, the participants provided consent for participation in the study. Next, they viewed the cover story: "We are working with an upcoming fitness brand, Energy Zone, and below you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. This brand will soon open locally and at this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds." The cover story and stimuli were shown for a minimum of 20 seconds. Thereafter, participants answered the three questions measuring their WOM for the company (Wang & Korschun, 2015) – "I would talk favorably about Energy Zone to my friends and family;" "I would recommend Energy Zone to others;" and "I would encourage my friends and family to do business with Energy Zone," assessed on a 7-point Likert scale – 1 = "Strongly disagree," 7 = "Strongly agree." I then recorded their perceptions of brand

inclusivity by asking them the same two questions as in Study 2C. Next, participants answered the 5-item scale developed by Shoenberger et al. (2021) to measure their perceived BMA (Shoenberger et al., 1994), measured on a 7-point Likert scale; 1 = "Strongly disagree," and 7 = "Strongly agree." A sample scale item from this established scale is "Energy Zone's messaging was authentic." Lastly, the participants responded to the same attention check question as in Pretest 1 and entered their age and gender.

Results

WOM for the brand. I found that the five items measuring WOM for the company showed high reliability ($\alpha = 0.96$). Therefore, I took the mean of the five items to get a WOM for the brand index. I found that the five items measuring perceived BMA also had acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.54$). Noting the low Cronbach's alpha for the perceived BMA scale, I referred to previous literature on the recommendation for a scale with a lower Cronbach's alpha. Based on previous literature recommending scales with $\alpha > 0.5$ (Henseler, 2017), I retained all items from the scale for further analysis and took the mean of the five items to get a perceived BMA index. For all the analyses, perceived BMA was mean-centered, with the high perceived BMA operationalized as one SD above the mean and low perceived BMA operationalized as one SD below the mean. Next, I conducted a moderation analysis using Hayes Process Model 1 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples to establish the moderating effect of perceived BMA on the effect of ad condition on the WOM for the brand index (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV (coded as -1 = nondisabled-models condition and 1 = mixed-models condition), the perceived BMA index as the moderator, and the WOM for the brand index

as the DV. The main effect of the ad condition was found to be significant (β = 0.21, *SE* = 0.06, CI_{95} [0.09 to 0.32]), and the main effect of perceived BMA was also significant (β = 0.80, *SE* = 0.07, CI_{95} [0.66 to 0.93]). Lastly, the predicted two-way interaction of the ad condition and the perceived BMA index was significant (β = -0.20, *SE* = 0.07, CI_{95} [-0.33 to -0.07]). On probing this interaction, I found that, as hypothesized, the ad featuring mixed-models (M_{Mixed} = 4.28) compared to the ad featuring nondisabled-models ($M_{nondisabled}$ = 3.51) generated significantly higher WOM scores for participants with low levels (-1SD) of perceived BMA (β = 0.38, *SE* = 0.08, CI_{95} [0.23 to 0.54]). However, the two ads did not differ significantly (M_{mixed} = 5.34 vs. $M_{nondisabled}$ = 5.29) in WOM scores for participants with high levels (+1SD) of perceived BMA (β = 0.03, *SE* = 0.08, CI_{95} [-0.14 to 0.19]). Please refer to Figure 23 for the depiction of the significant interaction of ad condition and perceived BMA on WOM for the brand.

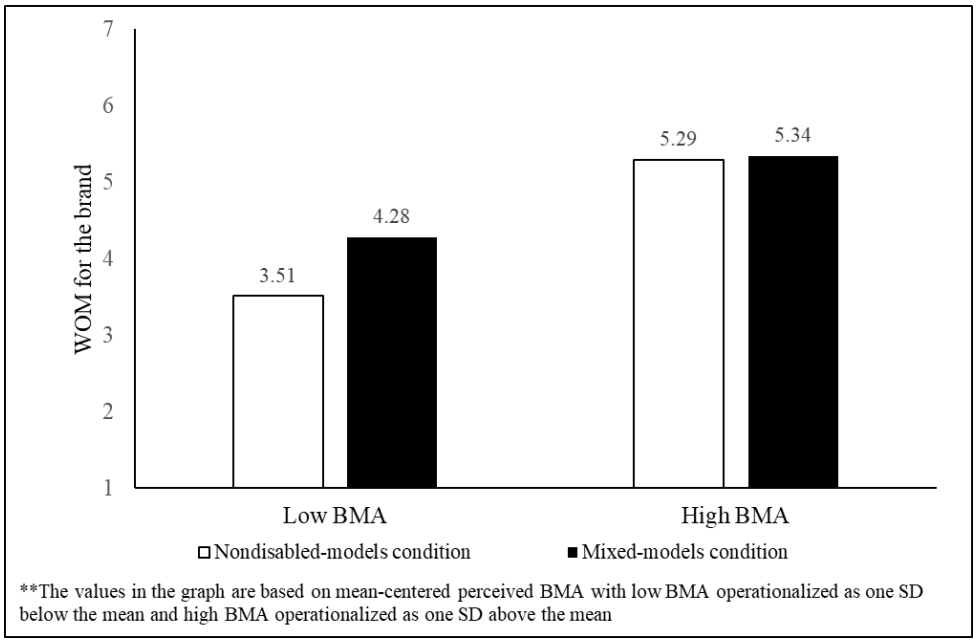

Figure 23. Significant interaction of ad condition and perceived BMA on WOM for the brand

Perceived brand inclusivity. I found that the two items measuring perceived brand inclusivity were correlated significantly ($r = 0.75$; $p < 0.001$). Therefore, I averaged them to form a perceived brand inclusivity index. Next, I conducted a moderation analysis using Hayes Process Model 1 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples to establish the moderating effect of the perceived BMA index on the effect of ad condition on the perceived brand inclusivity index (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, the perceived BMA index as the moderator, and the perceived brand inclusivity index as the DV. The main effect of the ad condition was significant ($\beta = 0.32$, $SE = 0.08$, CI_{95} [0.17 to 0.47]). The main effect of perceived BMA was also significant ($\beta = 0.43$, $SE = 0.09$, CI_{95} [0.25 to 0.60]). Lastly and most importantly, the predicted two-way interaction effect of the ad condition and the perceived BMA index was significant ($\beta = -0.23$, $SE = 0.09$, CI_{95} [-0.41 to -0.06]). On probing this interaction, I found that, as hypothesized, the ad featuring mixed-models ($M_{mixed} = 5.60$) compared to the ad featuring nondisabled-models ($M_{nondisabled} = 4.54$) generated significantly higher perceived brand inclusivity scores for participants with low levels (-1SD) of perceived BMA ($\beta = 0.53$, $SE = 0.11$, CI_{95} [0.32 to 0.74]). However, the two ads did not differ significantly ($M_{mixed} = 5.95$ vs. $M_{nondisabled} = 5.72$) in perceived brand inclusivity scores for participants with high levels (+1SD) of perceived BMA ($\beta = 0.11$, $SE = 0.11$, CI_{95} [-0.11 to 0.33]). Please refer to Figure 24 for the graphical representation of the significant interaction of ad condition and perceived BMA on perceived brand inclusivity.

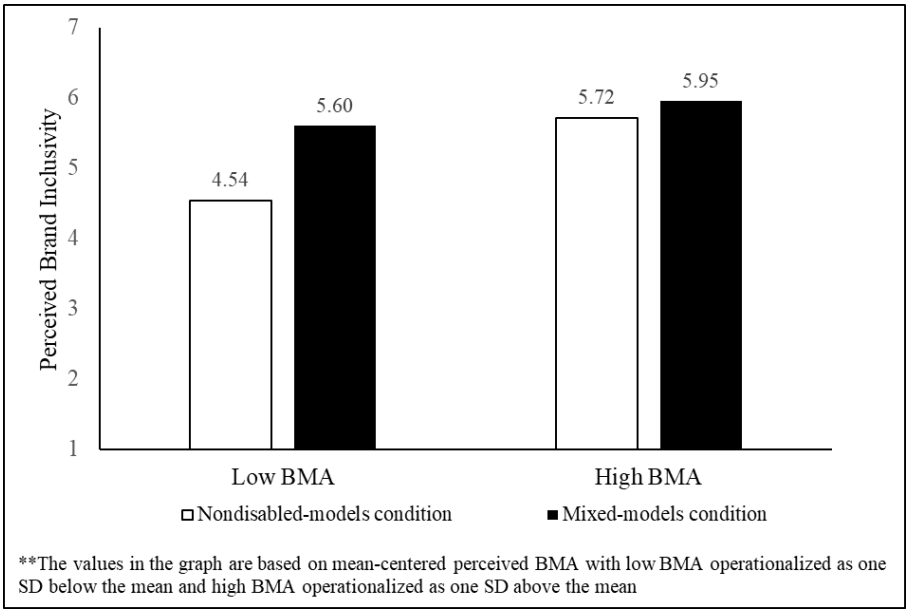

Figure 24. Significant interaction of ad condition and perceived BMA on perceived brand inclusivity

Please refer to Table 18 for detailed results.

Dependent Variable: WOM for the brand					
	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition	0.21	0.06		0.09	0.32
Brand Message Authenticity	0.80	0.07		0.66	0.93
Ad condition x Brand Message Authenticity	-0.20	0.07		-0.33	-0.07
Conditional effect of Ad condition at high and low values of Brand Message Authenticity					
	Low perceived BMA			High perceived BMA	
Nondisabled-models condition	3.51			5.29	
Mixed-models condition	4.28			5.34	
Dependent Variable: Perceived Brand Inclusivity					
	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition	0.32	0.08		0.17	0.47
Brand Message Authenticity	0.43	0.09		0.25	0.60
Ad condition x Brand Message Authenticity	-0.23	0.09		-0.41	-0.06
Conditional effect of Ad condition at high and low values of perceived BMA					
	Low perceived BMA			High perceived BMA	
Nondisabled-models condition	4.54			5.72	
Mixed-models condition	5.60			5.95	

Table 18. Detailed Hayes' Process Model 1 (moderation) results for Study 5

Moderation by perceived BMA on mediation through perceived brand inclusivity on purchase intention. I proceeded to test the moderated mediation on brand evaluation through perceived brand inclusivity by perceived BMA using Hayes Process Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes, 2017). I entered the ad condition as the IV, the perceived BMA index as the moderator, the perceived brand inclusivity index as the mediator, and the WOM for the brand index as the DV. The analysis showed that the indirect effect of moderated mediation excluded zero (β = -0.10, *SE* = 0.04; CI_{95} [-0.17 to -0.02]). Specifically, I found that at low levels (-1SD) of perceived BMA, there were significant differences between the two ads in favor of the mixed-models ad (β = 0.22, *SE* = 0.05, CI_{95} [0.12 to 0.31]). However, at high levels (+1SD) of SDO, there were no significant differences between the two ads (β = 0.05, *SE* = 0.04, CI_{95} [-0.04 to 0.14]). Lastly, the direct effect was also significant (β = 0.15, *SE* = 0.06, CI_{95} [0.03 to 0.28]). These results align with my conceptualization and support H6, which states that the positive impact of mixed-models ads will attenuate under conditions of high perceived BMA. Please refer to Table 19 and Figure 25 for detailed results.

Individual Path Details	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition X Perceived BMA → Perceived Brand Inclusivity	-0.23	0.09		-0.41	-0.06
Perceived Brand Inclusivity → WOM for the brand	0.40	0.04		0.32	0.49
Conditional Indirect Effect	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Low perceived BMA: Ad condition → Perceived Brand Inclusivity → WOM for the brand	0.22	0.05		0.12	0.31
High perceived BMA: Ad condition → Perceived Brand Inclusivity → WOM for the brand	0.05	0.04		-0.04	0.14
Direct Effect	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Ad condition → WOM for the brand	0.15	0.06		0.03	0.28
Index of Moderated Mediation					
	Coefficients			Bootstrapped 95% CI	
	β	SE		Lower	Upper
Perceived BMA	-0.10	0.04		-0.17	-0.02

Table 19. Detailed moderated mediation results for Study 5

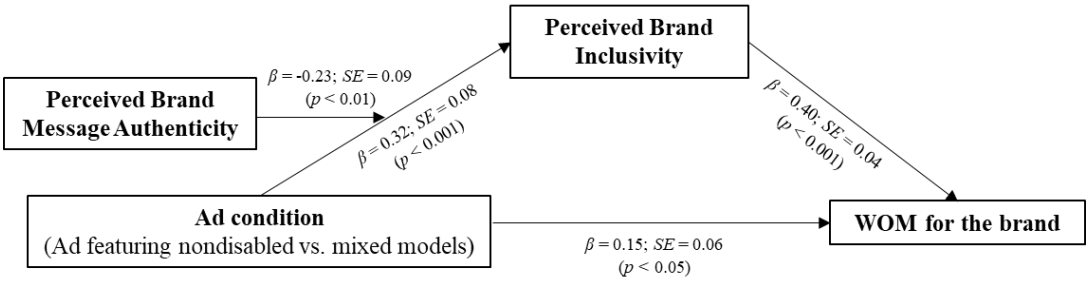

Figure 25. Moderated mediation results for Study 5

Discussion

Study 5 tested the boundary condition of perceived BMA, testing and supporting H6. H6 proposed that perceived BMA will moderate the mediation from the ad condition through perceived brand inclusivity to WOM for the brand such that for consumers with low (high) perceived BMA, the mixed-models ad will differ (not differ) significantly from the nondisabled-models ad for perceived brand inclusivity and brand evaluation.

Therefore, this study successfully established the moderating role of perceived BMA on both perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs. Lastly, I also found that perceived BMA significantly moderated the path from ad condition to perceived brand inclusivity to WOM for the brand. The results showed that at low values (-1SD) of perceived BMA, the two ads differed significantly for perceived brand inclusivity and, consequently, WOM for the brand in favor of the mixed-models ad. However, at high values (+1SD) of perceived BMA, the two ads did not differ significantly for perceived brand inclusivity and, consequently, WOM for the brand.

In the following section, I conclude this dissertation by summarizing my findings, theoretical and practical contributions, and the limitations of this research.

CHAPTER 6. GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 General Discussion

Consumer-brand relationships (CBRs) have seen a gradual movement away from being conventionally "transactional" to being "relational," meaning consumers look for "emotional connections" with the brands (Nandy & Sondhi, 2020). In this regard, the "brand intangibles," not directly related to the brand's product, communicate the brand's values, attracting people to the brand (Keller, 2020). This research investigates one such brand intangible: brand advertisements. Specifically, I examine the portrayal of the disabled having apparent physical disabilities with nondisabled models in brand advertisements. I find that such ads increase perceived brand inclusivity and lead to the downstream consequence of favorable CBRs.

Brands increasingly recognize the need to represent diverse consumer segments in their advertisements. Relatedly, the academic world has shown an interest in studying inclusive advertising, specifically the representation of disability, as has been suggested by recent calls for more research in this area (Eisend et al., 2023). Moreover, previous literature has also suggested that marketers portray certain segments stereotypically (Napoli et al., 2003), with the disabled also belonging to one such segment (Haller & Ralph, 2006). Prior literature has suggested the need to portray disability respectfully, and more importantly, not stereotypically, in a way that portrays them as capable beings with fully functional relationships with those around them (Stephens & Bergman, 1995). However, only a few brands have recently started featuring disabled models in their advertisements positively.

Although there has been an upward trend in disability representation, there still is a long way to go toward equal representation (Farnall & Lyons, 2012). Even when brands

specifically craft inclusive campaigns, they tend to overlook disability. An example in case is the "She's a Lady" campaign by H&M that was launched in 2016, showcasing women from diverse backgrounds. However, completely missing from the diverse set of women shown were the disabled (Barszcz, 2017). Similarly, Dove's "Campaign for Real Beauty" constituted models of various body shapes and types but conveniently excluded any form of disability among females (Heiss, 2011). Overall, previous literature has established that advertisers have largely failed to portray disability (Parashar & Devanathan, 2006; Haller & Ralph, 2001).

The main focus of this dissertation is to outline the advantages of portraying disabled models having apparent physical disabilities with nondisabled models in advertisements. I demonstrate that such a portrayal of disability leads to an increased perception of brand inclusivity. The increased perceived brand inclusivity results in the downstream consequence of favorable CBRs. I replicate my findings using various product and service categories while ruling out potential confounds and alternative explanations and controlling for alternate process mechanisms. Lastly, I establish two theoretically relevant boundary conditions to this effect. One boundary condition is a trait variable, SDO, and the other is a brand-related variable, perceived BMA. Therefore, this research comprehensively investigates the portrayal of disability, testing underlying mechanism and theoretically relevant boundary conditions.

This dissertation utilizes eight studies to support the proposed hypotheses. Study 1 established that mixed-models ads result in increased perceived brand inclusivity while controlling for the previously established effects of featuring a disabled model using a fictitious electronics brand (supporting H1a and H1b). Study 2A ruled out the alternative

explanation of disability alone, driving the effect of increased perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs. Specifically, it showed that the mixed-models ad and disabled-models ad do not differ significantly in perceived brand inclusivity and brand and ad attitudes. Moreover, it established that the mixed-models ads result in higher brand and ad attitudes, driven by perceived brand inclusivity (supporting H2a and H3a). This study used a fictitious business formalwear brand. Study 2B established that mixed-models ads result in higher WOM for the brand, driven by perceived brand inclusivity (supporting H2b and H3b). In Study 2B, I also controlled for the alternative process mechanism established for inclusive ads featuring LGBTQ+. This study used a fictitious casualwear brand. Study 2C established my findings in a service context while reducing the heavy-handedness of the cover story on inclusion and keeping the number of models the same. I also controlled for the alternative process mechanism identified in the literature for inclusive ads featuring females with higher body weight. Most importantly, it established mixed-models ad results in higher purchase likelihood for service offered, driven by perceived brand inclusivity (supporting H2c and H3c). This study used a fictitious gym and fitness brand. My findings were robust across multiple studies and contexts.

Lastly, I gathered partial support for felt SBC as a boundary condition. I proposed that SBC will moderate the path from ad conditions to favorable CBRs through perceived brand inclusivity. For high SBC consumers, the positive effects of featuring disabled models in a mixed-models ad will attenuate for perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs (H4a and H4b). In Study 3A, I manipulated SBC and did not get support for my proposed Hypothesis H4a. H4a suggested SBC moderating the path from ad condition to intended loyalty through perceived brand inclusivity. Study 3A did not work as expected,

but I also collected a range of demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, income, education, and political ideology) to conduct exploratory moderation analyses. I found that political ideology significantly moderated the mediation from ad condition to intended loyalty through perceived brand inclusivity. Specifically, I found that for those leaning toward being liberal, the two ads were significantly different in favor of the mixed-models ad. However, for those leaning toward being conservative, the two ads were not significantly different. This interaction was an interesting finding, but due to political ideology being measured after SBC manipulation, I recommend reading this result cautiously. Nevertheless, I aim to explore it further in the future.

In Study 3B, I measured SBC and got partial support for my proposed hypothesis H4b which suggested SBC moderating the path from ad condition to purchase intention through perceived brand inclusivity. I found that the hypothesized moderated mediation was significant, with SBC also significantly moderating the path from ad condition to perceived brand inclusivity. However, SBC did not moderate the path from ad condition to purchase intention. Lastly, I found that the area of non-significance was beyond the +1SD value of SBC. Nevertheless, noting that there could be an effect that could possibly be observed if I had a more attitudinal measure for CBR for fictitious brands, I plan to investigate this further in the future. I acknowledge that much of the previous research on SBC has utilized real brands, whereas I used fictitious ones. The use of fictitious brands instead of real ones could be one reason I only got partial support for SBC as a boundary condition. I plan to investigate the moderating effect of SBC further, assimilating all the perspectives I have learned from these two studies.

In addition to SBC as the proposed boundary condition, I investigated two more theoretically relevant boundary conditions: SDO and perceived BMA. I found that, as hypothesized, the positive effects of featuring disabled models in a mixed-models ad on perceived brand inclusivity and brand evaluation attenuate for consumers with high SDO (supporting H5). Lastly, I also find that, as hypothesized, the positive effects of featuring disabled models in a mixed-models ad on perceived brand inclusivity and WOM for the brand attenuate for consumers with high perceived BMA (supporting H6). Therefore, I provide both a personal difference variable and a brand-related variable that moderates the hypothesized main and mediation effects. In the following sections, I highlight how my findings theoretically advance the existing literature, offer practical implications for marketers, and have wider societal and consumer well-being implications.

Lastly, I conducted all my analyses as per my pre-registration. Therefore, the age and gender collected in Studies 1, 2A, 2B, and 2C were recorded for reporting purposes (as is the norm in all research reporting). Relatedly, although Studies 4 and 5 were not pre-registered, I collected age and gender for reporting purposes. However, in Studies 3A and 3B, in the pre-registration, I mentioned collecting demographics (Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Income, Education, and Political ideology) and conducting exploratory moderating analyses. Although age and gender did not significantly moderate the mediation through perceived brand inclusivity to favorable CBRs in both Studies 3A and 3B, I went back and checked for moderation by age and gender in the rest of the studies (Studies 1, 2A, 2B, 2C, 4 and 5). I found that age did not significantly moderate the mediation through perceived brand inclusivity to favorable CBRs in any of the studies. Moreover, gender significantly moderated the mediation through perceived brand

inclusivity to purchase likelihood in Study 2C, with the effect showing for females only and not males. However, this effect was only prominent in one of the six studies, Study 2C, which suggests that it is not replicable.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

Previous research on the portrayal of disability has investigated the portrayal of a disabled model in brand ads (Panol & McBride, 2001; Cooley, 2017; Cossu et al., 2020). However, most brand ads feature disabled models along with nondisabled models. Therefore, this dissertation is the first empirical research on the portrayal of the disabled having an apparent physical disability and nondisabled models, theoretically contributing to and advancing the literature stream on the portrayal of disability in brand ads. Moreover, by establishing the entire process of mediation and boundary conditions, this dissertation investigates such portrayal of disability in brand ads holistically. Lastly, I also attempt to minimize the effect of potential confounds and control for potential alternative process mechanisms established in the literature for other inclusive ads (such as those featuring LGBTQ+ or higher body weight individuals).

Second, disability is primarily understudied in marketing literature, even when the disabled have reported feeling excluded and stigmatized in marketplace settings (Kearney et al., 2019). While inclusive campaigns might get resistance from a few (Kipnis et al., 2021), marketers need to connect with consumers and make diversity initiatives successful (Burgess et al., 2021). Given that there have been calls to study disability in ads (Eisend et al., 2023) and other transformative initiatives in advertising (Gurrieri et al., 2022; Huh & Faber, 2022), this research fits in well with such calls. Therefore, this

research also advances our understanding of representing an underrepresented identity such as disability, leading to favorable CBRs and contributing to the marketplace inclusion and brand inclusivity literature.

Third, there have been recent calls for consumer researchers to study DEI initiatives in consumption settings (Arsel et al., 2022). Moreover, the potential of using "marketing as a force for good" has given rise to the TCR movement in recent years (Mende & Scott, 2021). This movement proposes using marketing to potentially resolve important socio-economic issues (Davis & Pechmann, 2013). Moreover, it has been suggested that marketers need to focus on the requirements of the consumers labeled as disabled (LAD) for them to be actively engaged in the marketplace (Canbulut, 2016). Therefore, the representation of disability in brand ads might result in disabled consumers feeling more included and accepted in the marketplace. Since this research investigated an underrepresented consumer segment with potential societal and consumer well-being implications, it also contributes to the increasing literature on TCR.

The boundary condition of SDO also extends the Social Dominance Theory (SDT) (Pratto et al., 1994) by highlighting that high SDO consumers would be unlikely to find the brand ads featuring the disabled as inclusive. Hence, in such cases, these brand ads will not result in favorable CBRs. My finding aligns with previous literature that suggests that high SDO individuals are unlikely to view an inclusive ad featuring LGBTQ+ favorably (Cunningham & Melton, 2014). Hence, I posit an important facet of SDT that underscores how brand inclusivity efforts will likely not get favorable responses from high SDO individuals.

Lastly, the boundary condition of perceived BMA extends the literature on an integral domain of brand authenticity (Beverland et al., 2008). I found that consumers with high perceived BMA will likely not find the brand ads featuring the disabled as inclusive. Hence, in such cases, these brand ads will not result in favorable CBRs. This finding highlights the integral role of perceived BMA in driving perceived brand inclusivity and favorable CBRs. Specifically, my findings suggest that as the consumers perceived BMA increases, their perception of brand inclusivity and resultant CBRs is not impacted. Hence, I suggest an important aspect of brand authenticity, suggesting that brand inclusivity efforts will likely not get favorable responses from consumers with high perceived BMA.

6.3 Practical Implications

Brands need to recognize the importance of being inclusive in their portrayal to cater to the diverse set of consumers they serve, making the brand more relatable (Dimitrieska et al., 2019). Prior research on disabled consumers has investigated their experiences in service settings (Baker et al., 2007) and the design of inclusive servicescapes for disabled consumers (Edwards et al., 2018). However, the presence of disability in brand ads with nondisabled models in advertisements has not been studied. Specifically, my research highlights an underutilized facet of marketing with the portrayal of disability in brand ads. Therefore, considering brands' efforts to portray inclusivity can be challenging (Dimitrieska et al., 2019); my research suggests that brand managers can feature disabled models in brand ads to portray brand inclusivity.

Second, disability is omnipresent worldwide, and my findings suggest that through the portrayal of apparent physical disabilities, marketers can potentially foster favorable CBRs. Specifically, I find that mixed-model ads that feature models with an apparent physical disability along with nondisabled models can lead to favorable CBRs. Considering most brands portray disabled models with nondisabled models in their ads, this is the first empirical research testing this phenomenon. Moreover, brand ads portraying only disabled models might imply that the products are for the disabled only. Therefore, I attempted to mirror most brand ads from the real marketplace settings. My findings were robust across product and service categories and for a range of favorable CBRs. Third, more and more consumer segments accept and expect brand inclusivity (Licsandru & Cui, 2019; Light, 2014; Pang et al., 2019). Therefore, inclusive ads featuring models with apparent physical disabilities along with nondisabled models can help brands connect with more consumer segments beyond their current ones. Moreover, consumers are likely to view such brands in a more relatable context (Burgess et al., 2021). Therefore, practicing marketers can potentially connect with more consumer segments through such portrayal of disability in brand ads.

My first boundary condition of SDO also suggests potential practical implications for marketers. I found that high SDO consumers will likely not view brands featuring disabled models in their ads as inclusive, not resulting in favorable CBRs. Within the US, the state a consumer resides in is found to affirmatively predict their SDO and political identity (Han et al., 2019). Therefore, it is likely that mixed-model ads will get favorable responses from states that lean toward being liberal and not from those that lean toward being conservative (Blue vs. Red states). It might be beneficial for brand managers to

understand that they could get differential responses to the mixed-models ad throughout the US based on the prevalent political identity in the state. Moreover, high collectivist cultures tend to have high SDO (Yu & Sapp, 2019). Therefore, when venturing outside the US, it is likely that marketers will get varied responses to the mixed-models ad based on the prevailing culture in that country.

I also suggest practical implications for marketers based on my second boundary condition of perceived BMA. I found that as consumers' perceived BMA increases, their perception of brand inclusivity does not change, consequently not resulting in favorable CBRs. Therefore, my findings suggest it is likely that customers preferring a particular brand will likely not view a mixed-model ad from that brand any differently. Hence, upcoming brands would be more likely to benefit from mixed-model ads.

Lastly, previous literature has recognized that meaningful representation of people with disabilities can help promote the social inclusion of the disabled (Timke, 2019). Advertisements featuring the disabled can be a small, albeit important, step toward a more equitable society (Ellis et al., 2021). Moreover, positive representation of the disabled in advertising can help promote social change that could possibly shape public perception and awareness of disability (Liu et al., 2021). Therefore, such representations have the potential to make the disabled feel more "seen," enhancing their engagement in the marketplace. Through transformative advertising featuring the disabled, marketers could potentially help normalize disability in the marketplace settings.

6.4 Limitations and Future Research Directions

While providing theoretical and practical contributions, I acknowledge that this dissertation has a few limitations that can be treated as future research avenues. First, all my studies were conducted online with only participants recruited from the US and no behavioral measures. Considering my studies were conducted during the pandemic and shortly after, the possibility of conducting field studies remained unknown. Given that external validity has been established to be critical in marketing studies with experiments (Winer, 1999), I recognize that the biggest limitation of this research is that all my studies lack external validity in actual marketplace settings. Therefore, future research could investigate the brand portrayal of apparent physical disabilities through mixed-model ads using a field study with a behavioral measure.

Second, this research has only focused on visible or apparent physical disabilities. However, previous research has also highlighted another consumer segment: one with a "hidden stigmatized identity," such as those with certain cognitive disabilities, learning difficulties, etc. (Cherup, 2020). These also are categorized under the larger umbrella of disabilities but were not investigated in this research. Hidden stigmatized identity results in lower belongingness and even social exclusion (Newheiser & Barreto, 2014), which could be the case with mental disabilities. Therefore, an offshoot of this limitation is also exploring only physical disabilities and not mental disabilities in this research. In addition, the perceived severity of an illness impacts the marketing campaign's effectiveness (Meyer et al., 2020). Therefore, it would be lucrative for future researchers to determine what kind of disability representation tips these favorable CBRs towards unfavorable brand outcomes. In particular, future research could test the portrayal of

disabilities such as facial deformities, which could be viewed as more severe and test their impact on consumer behavior.

Third, prevailing prejudices around disability are documented in able-bodied people, believing they have no bias when they might harbor high implicit prejudice (Friedman, 2019). Some people do not indulge in explicitly expressing prejudice against the disabled but still have some implicit prejudice against them, termed "Aversive Disablism" (Deal, 2007). Hence, individual differences, such as personal attitudes toward disability, can be crucial in determining the favorable CBRs in advertisements featuring disabled models. Therefore, future research could consider such individual differences in attitudes while testing the portrayal of disability in brand ads.

Fourth, different cultures respond and cope differently with disabilities, as found in a study with parents having children with disabilities (Kayama et al., 2017). Therefore, a cross-cultural study examining the portrayal of disability in brand ads might be an insightful avenue for future research. Further, the disabled are discriminated against in developing countries (Parnes et al., 2009), can potentially feel more vulnerable due to a lack of facilities in general (Viswanathan et al., 2012), and can have decreased employment opportunities for them (Mizunoya & Mitra, 2013). The need for marketing researchers to study disabilities in social and cultural contexts has also been suggested (Dubost, 2018). Hence, future research could explore the portrayal of disabilities in developing countries such as India, the Philippines, etc.

Fifth, disability is a complex issue with answers often intertwined with socio-economic and political issues (Davis, 2005), which is beyond the purview of this research. As such, there is a thin line between inclusion and objectification, with the

consumers almost always being oblivious to the real reasons behind the brands' inclusion efforts (Bogart, 2021). Therefore, future research could explore disability while considering all such intricate issues.

Lastly, while I focus on inclusivity via brand ads depicting disabilities through models having apparent physical disabilities with nondisabled models, there also exists the avenue of testing such portrayal within the context of luxury brand products. Therefore, I aim to investigate this interesting possibility related to the perception of exclusivity that such a portrayal of disability entails in the future.

6.5 Conclusion

This dissertation investigates the most underrepresented yet omnipresent consumer identity: ones with apparent physical disabilities. Using a range of product and service contexts, I demonstrate that the brands' portrayal of models with apparent physical disabilities (in combination with nondisabled models) leads to favorable CBRs. The perceived brand inclusivity felt after seeing these ads drives this effect. I replicated the results consistently, addressing possible confounds and controlling for alternative process mechanisms linked to other inclusive advertisements (such as those featuring LGBTQ+ or heavy-weight individuals). Lastly, I establish a trait variable, SDO, and a brand-related variable, perceived BMA, as boundary conditions to these main and mediation effects. Considering the world is moving towards more equity, a brand's DEI efforts featuring disabled models may help foster favorable CBRs and possibly a more inclusive society. In conclusion, I recommend marketers not to "diss" the ability of disability.

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APPENDICES

Appendix – A: IRB Approval Letter

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Office of Research Integrity
Research Compliance, MARC 414

MEMORANDUM

To:	Dr. Jayati Sinha
CC:	Sphurti Sewak
From:	Maria Melendez-Vargas, MIBA, Coordinator
Date:	April 27, 2022
Proposal Title:	"Brand Inclusivity: The New Sustainability?"
	Approval # IRB-21-0154-AM05
	Reference # 110255

The Florida International University Office of Research Integrity has approved the following modification(s):

- Attached the draft UGS proposal.
- Added the following in the Methods and Activities section.
- More scales for constructs already approved: purchase intention and consumer engagement
- Power distance belief
- Familiarity with social media platform
- Product involvement
- Perceived corporate hypocrisy
- Brand evaluation
- Loyalty intentions
- Brand authenticity manipulation check
- Open minded thinking

- Tightness-Losseness of social norms
- Social dominance orientation
- Attention check
- Individualistic
- Collectivistic
- Ad skepticism
- Consumer skepticism
- Self-presentation
- Individual-collectivism at individual level
- Pretest for religiosity, including: Indicate your religion, recognition of religious cues, attitude towards religious group, sample stimuli with manipulation of religiosity
- Manipulating the mediator: Low inclusivity and high inclusivity
- Leadership commitment known to public
- Inclusivity part of core values, vision and mission of the brand
- Strong vs Gentle products
- Apparent vs Non-apparent disabilities
- Different kinds of disabilities like facial deformities
- Animated vs non-animated brand advertisement
- -The inclusion of these measures will not result in time spent by the participant and will be limited to 15-30 minutes per participant. The constructs mentioned here will not be used all in one study and hence, the time spent by the participant will not exceed 15-30 minutes of their time.
- Updated CITI Training for Dr. Jayati Sinha.

Special Conditions: N/A.

For further information, you may visit the FIU IRB website at http://research.fiu.edu/irb.

MMV/em

Appendix – B: Measures of Pretest and Main Study 1

Cover story

We are working with an upcoming electronics brand, Everyday Electronics, and below you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. Everyday Electronics as a brand stands for the belief that everyone should have access to electronics and it wants to make sure that the same is communicated through the ad. This brand will soon be available locally and at this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds.

Nondisabled-models condition

Mixed-models condition

Pretest Measures
Inclusivity *(1 - not at all inclusive; 7 - Very inclusive)*
• Please rate the ad in terms of inclusivity on the following scale
Ad believability (Atkin & Beltramini, 2007) *(1 - highly unbelievable; 7 - highly believable)*
• Please rate the believability of the ad on the following scale
Ad likability (Kellaris & Cox, 1989) *(1 - dislike very much; 7 - like very much)*
• Please rate the likeability of the ad on the following scale
Brand familiarity (Davtyan et al., 2021) *(7-point bipolar scale)*
• This brand is very unfamiliar/ familiar to me • I'm not at all knowledgeable/ very knowledgeable about this brand • I have never seen/ seen advertisements about this brand
Attention Check (Chugani and Irwin, 2020) *(1 - Strongly disagree; 7 - Strongly agree)*
• If you are reading this, please do not answer this question
Demographics
• Age, Gender
Study 1 Measures
Perceived Brand Inclusivity *(1 - Extremely unlikely; 7 - Extremely likely)*
• Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "Everyday Electronics is an inclusive brand"

	• Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "The ad shown depicts Everyday Electronics as an inclusive brand"
Pity for the models in the ad (Kervyn et al., 2012) *(1 - Not at all; 7 - Extremely)*	
	• Please indicate how likely are you to feel pity for the models in the ad
Negative Emotions evoked by the ad (Aaker et al., 2012) *(1 - Not at all; 7 - Extremely)*	
	• Please indicate the negative emotions evoked by the ad
Positive Emotions evoked by the ad (Aaker et al., 2012) *(1 - Not at all; 7 - Extremely)*	
	• Please indicate the positive emotions evoked by the ad
Admiration for the models in the ad (Aaker et al., 2012) *(1 - Not at all; 7 - Extremely)*	
	• Please indicate how likely are you to feel admiration for the models in the ad
Ad Novelty (Cox and Cox, 1988) *(1 - Not at all; 7 - Extremely)*	
	• Unusual • Original • New
Attention Check (Chugani and Irwin, 2020) *(1 - Strongly disagree; 7 - Strongly agree)*	
	• Pretest 1 attention check question
Demographics	
	• Age, Gender

Appendix – C: Measures of Pretest and Main Study 2A

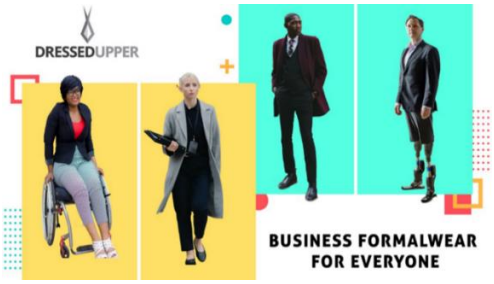
Cover story

We are working with a new local brand, DressedUpper, and below you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. DressedUpper as a brand stands for the belief that everyone should have access to Business Formals and it wants to make sure that the same is communicated through the ad. This brand will soon be available locally in stores. At this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds.

Nondisabled-models condition

Disabled-models condition

Mixed-models condition



Pretest Measures
Inclusivity *(1 - not at all inclusive; 7 - Very inclusive)*
• Same as Pretest 1
Ad believability (Atkin & Beltramini, 2007) *(1 - highly unbelievable; 7 - highly believable)*
• Same as Pretest 1
Ad likability (Kellaris & Cox, 1989) *(1 - dislike very much; 7 - like very much)*
• Same as Pretest 1
Brand familiarity (Davtyan et al., 2021) *(7-point bipolar scale)*
• Same as Pretest 1

Attention Check (Chugani and Irwin, 2020) *(1 - Strongly disagree; 7 - Strongly agree)*
• Pretest 1 attention check question
Demographics
• Age, Gender
Study 2A Measures
Ad Attitude (Mitchell, 1986) *(7-point bipolar scale)*
• Bad/ Good • Dislike/ Like • Irritating/ Not irritating • Uninteresting/ Interesting
Brand Attitude (Escalas, 2004) *(7-point bipolar scale)*
• Very unfavorable/ Very favorable • Very bad/ Very good
Perceived Brand Inclusivity *(1 - Extremely unlikely; 7 - Extremely likely)*
• Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "DressedUpper is an inclusive brand" • Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "The ad shown depicts DressedUpper as an inclusive brand"
Brand Familiarity (Davtyan et al., 2021) *(7-point bipolar scale)*
• Same as Pretest
Attention Check (Chugani and Irwin, 2020) *(1 - Strongly disagree; 7 - Strongly agree)*
• Pretest 1 attention check question
Demographics
• Age, Gender

Appendix – D: Measures of Pretest and Main Study 2B

COVER STORY & STIMULI

Cover story

We are working with a new local company, Attire, and below you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. Attire as a brand stands for the belief that everyone should have access to stylish clothes and it wants to make sure that the same is communicated through the ad. This brand will soon be available locally in stores. At this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds.

Non-disabled models condition

Mixed-models condition

Pretest Measures
Inclusivity *(1 - not at all inclusive; 7 - Very inclusive)*
• Same as Pretest 1
Ad believability (Atkin & Beltramini, 2007) *(1 - highly unbelievable; 7 - highly believable)*
• Same as Pretest 1
Ad likability (Kellaris & Cox, 1989) *(1 - dislike very much; 7 - like very much)*
• Same as Pretest 1
Brand familiarity (Davtyan et al., 2021*) (7-point bipolar scale)*
• Same as Pretest 1
Attention Check (Chugani and Irwin, 2020) *(1 - Strongly disagree; 7 - Strongly agree)*
• Pretest 1 attention check question
Demographics
• Age, Gender
Study 2B Measures
Perceived Brand Inclusivity *(1 - Extremely unlikely; 7 - Extremely likely)*

	• Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "Attire is an inclusive brand" • Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "The ad shown depicts Attire as an inclusive brand"
WOM for the brand (Maxham III and Netemeyer, 2002) *(1 - Extremely unlikely; 7 - Extremely likely)*	
	• How likely are you to spread positive word of mouth about "Attire" • I would recommend "Attire" to my friends • If my friends were looking to purchase stylish clothes, I would tell them to try "Attire"
Brand Familiarity	
	• From Pretest 1
Thoughts related to the Ad (Åkestam et al., 2017)	

	• Please write down your thoughts about the ad you just saw (open-ended question)
	• Please let us know under what category would you put your thoughts mentioned above
	  ○ Related to the ad
	  ○ Related to your own self
	  ○ Related to other people in the advertisement or at large

Attention Check	
	• Pretest 1 attention check question
Demographics	
	• Age, Gender

Appendix – E: Measures of Pretest and Main Study 2C

COVER STORY & STIMULI

Cover story

We are working with an upcoming gym, and fitness brand, Energy Zone, and below you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. This brand will soon open locally and at this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds.

Nondisabled-models condition

Mixed-models condition

Pretest Measures	
Inclusivity *(1 - not at all inclusive; 7 - Very inclusive)*	
	• Same as Pretest 1
Ad believability (Atkin & Beltramini, 2007) *(1 - highly unbelievable; 7 - highly believable)*	
	• Same as Pretest 1
Ad likability (Kellaris & Cox, 1989) *(1 - dislike very much; 7 - like very much)*	
	• Same as Pretest 1
Brand familiarity (Davtyan et al., 2021) *(7-point bipolar scale)*	
	• Same as Pretest 1
Attention Check (Chugani and Irwin, 2020) *(1 - Strongly disagree; 7 - Strongly agree)*	
	• Pretest 1 attention check question
Demographics	
	• Age, Gender
Study 2C Measures	
Purchase Intention (Mackenzie & Spreng, 1992) *(7-point bipolar scale)*	
	• Unlikely/ Likely • Improbable/ Probable • Impossible/ Possible

Perceived Brand Inclusivity *(1 - Extremely unlikely; 7 - Extremely likely)*	
	• Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "EnergyZone is an inclusive brand" • Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "The ad shown depicts EnergyZone as an inclusive brand"
Brand Warmth (Joo & Wu, 2021) *(1 - Extremely unlikely; 7 - Extremely likely)*	
	• Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "It seems Energy Zone has good intentions toward ordinary people" • Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "It seems Energy Zone consistently acts with the public's best interests in mind"
Gym Membership	
	• Please indicate if you already have a gym membership (Yes/ No)
Attention Check	
	• Pretest 1 attention check question
Demographics	
	• Age, Gender

Appendix – F: Measures of Pretest and Main Study 3A

COVER STORY & STIMULI

Cover story

We are working with an upcoming gym and fitness brand, Energy Zone, and below you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear. This brand will soon open locally and at this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds.

Nondisabled-models condition

High SBC condition

Below is a brief description of the brand Energy Zone:
Energy Zone is an inclusive fitness brand that creates fun, healthy, energetic, and athletic activities to increase its customers' strength. It has a diverse customer base, and accessible facilities that make exercising both exciting and fun.

Please mention five characteristics that you share with the brand Energy Zone.

Mixed-models condition

Low SBC condition

Below is a brief description of the brand Energy Zone:
Energy Zone is an inclusive fitness brand that creates fun, healthy, energetic, and athletic activities to increase its customers' strength. It has a diverse customer base, and accessible facilities that make exercising both exciting and fun.

Please mention five characteristics that sets you apart from the brand Energy Zone.

Pretest Measures
Please write five characteristics of Energy Zone that comes to your mind after seeing its ad
• Participants had space to write down five characteristics

Attention Check (Chugani and Irwin, 2020) *(1 - Strongly disagree; 7 - Strongly agree)*	
	• Pretest 1 attention check question
Demographics	
	• Age, Gender
Study 3A Measures	
Manipulation Check (Tan et al., 2018) *(1 - Strongly disagree; 7 - Strongly agree)*	
	• Energy Zone seems to be a part of me and who I am • I feel I am personally connected to Energy Zone
Perceived Brand Inclusivity *(1 - Extremely unlikely; 7 - Extremely likely)*	
	• Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "EnergyZone is an inclusive brand" • Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "The ad shown depicts EnergyZone as an inclusive brand"
Intended Loyalty (Sinha & Lu, 2019)	
	• How likely are you to spread positive word of mouth about Energy Zone *(1 = Not at all; 7 = Very much)* • If my friends were looking for a gym and fitness brand, I would tell them to try Energy Zone *(1 = Not at all; 7 = Very much)* • In the future, I intend to purchase services from the brand Energy Zone *(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)*
Attention Check	
	• Pretest 1 attention check question
Demographics	
	• Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Income, Education, Political ideology

Appendix – G: Measures of Pretest and Main Study 3B

COVER STORY & STIMULI

Cover story

We are working with a new local brand, DressedUpper, and below, you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. This brand will soon be available locally in stores. At this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds.

Nondisabled-models condition

Mixed-models condition

Pretest Measures
Inclusivity *(1 - not at all inclusive; 7 - Very inclusive)*
• Same as Pretest 1
Ad believability (Atkin & Beltramini, 2007) *(1 - highly unbelievable; 7 - highly believable)*
• Same as Pretest 1
Ad likability (Kellaris & Cox, 1989) *(1 - dislike very much; 7 - like very much)*
• Same as Pretest 1
Brand familiarity (Davtyan et al., 2021) *(7-point bipolar scale)*
• Same as Pretest 1
Attention Check (Chugani and Irwin, 2020) *(1 - Strongly disagree; 7 - Strongly agree)*
• Pretest 1 attention check question
Demographics
• Age, Gender
Study 3B Measures
SBC (Tan et al., 2018) *(1 - Strongly disagree; 7 - Strongly agree)*
• DressedUpper seems to be a part of me and who I am • I feel I am personally connected to DressedUpper
Perceived Brand Inclusivity *(1 - Extremely unlikely; 7 - Extremely likely)*

	• Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "DressedUpper is an inclusive brand" • Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "The ad shown depicts DressedUpper as an inclusive brand"
Purchase Intention (Minton, 2020) *(7-point bipolar scale)*	
	• Unlikely/ Likely • Definitely would not/ Definitely would • Not probable/ Probable
Attention Check	
	• Pretest 1 attention check question
Demographics	
	• Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Income, Education, Political ideology

Appendix – H: Measures of Main Study 4

COVER STORY & STIMULI

Cover story

We are working with a new local brand, DressedUpper, and below, you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. This brand will soon be available locally in stores. At this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds.

Nondisabled-models condition

Mixed-models condition

Study 4 Measures
Brand Evaluation (Chang, 2010) *(1 - Strongly disagree; 7 - Strongly agree)*
• Good • Likable • Pleasant • Positive • High quality
Perceived Brand Inclusivity *(1 - Extremely unlikely; 7 - Extremely likely)*
• Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "DressedUpper is an inclusive brand" • Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "The ad shown depicts DressedUpper as an inclusive brand"
Social Dominance Orientation (Pratto et al. 1994) *(1 - Strongly disagree; 7 - Strongly agree)*
• Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups • In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups • Its OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others • To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups • If certain groups stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems • It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom

	• Inferior groups should stay in their place • Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place • It would be good if groups could be equal (Reverse-coded) • Group equality should be our ideal (Reverse-coded) • All groups should be given an equal chance in life (Reverse-coded) • We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups (Reverse-coded) • Increased social equality (Reverse-coded) • We would have fewer problems if we treated people more equally (Reverse-coded) • We should strive to make incomes as equal as possible (Reverse-coded) • No one group should dominate in society (Reverse-coded)
Attention Check	
	• Pretest 1 attention check question
Demographics	
	• Age, Gender

Appendix – I: Measures of Pretest and Main Study 5

COVER STORY & STIMULI

Cover story

We are working with an upcoming gym, and fitness brand, Energy Zone, and below you will see one "mockup" advertisement designed to give an impression of how the actual advertisement will appear when it is in print. This brand will soon open locally and at this stage, we are conducting research to help with the decision of the final advertisement. Please take a close look at the ad below carefully and answer the questions that follow, the continue button will appear in a few seconds.

Nondisabled-models condition

Mixed-models condition

Study 5 Measures	
WOM for the brand (Wang & Korschun, 2015) *(1 - Strongly disagree; 7 - Strongly agree)*	
	• I would talk favorably about Energy Zone to my friends and family • I would recommend Energy Zone to others • I would encourage my friends and family to do business with Energy Zone
Perceived Brand Inclusivity *(1 - Extremely unlikely; 7 - Extremely likely)*	
	• Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "EnergyZone is an inclusive brand" • Please indicate how likely are you to agree with the statement "The ad shown depicts EnergyZone as an inclusive brand"
Perceived Brand Message Authenticity (Shoenberger et al., 2021) *(1 - Strongly disagree; 7 - Strongly agree)*	
	• Energy Zone's messaging was authentic • Energy Zone's messaging was truthful • Energy Zone's messaging seemed genuine • Energy Zone's messaging demonstrated that it cares about fitness for all • Energy Zone's messaging demonstrated that it cares about its consumers
Attention Check	
	• Pretest 1 attention check question

Demographics
• Age, Gender

VITA

VITA

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2022	AMA-Sheth Doctoral Consortium Fellow
2022	Top Student Paper in Conference Award, AMTP Conference
2022	FIU CIBER Research Award
2022	AMA Relationship Marketing SIG Small Research Grant
2022	FIU CIBER Doctoral Research Support
2021	Best Paper (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access track), Society for Marketing Advances
2021	Best Paper (Social Media and Marketing track), Association of Marketing Theory and Practice Conference
2021	TCR Grants, ACR

PUBLICATIONS AND SELECT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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Sewak, Sphurti* and Jayati Sinha, "An Investigation of Portrayal of Disability in Brand Ads."

- 2022 American Marketing Association Summer Conference (August 2022, Chicago, IL)

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- 2022 TCR-AMA Impact Festival (August 2022, Chicago, IL)

Sewak, Sphurti* and Jayati Sinha, "An Investigation of Brand Inclusivity and Consumer Brand Relationships."

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- 2022 American Marketing Association Marketing and Public Policy Conference (June 2022, Austin, TX)

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Sewak, Sphurti*, William F. Humphrey Jr., and Jayati Sinha, "Exploring the Impact of Brands Roasting on Social Media."

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