

# Diversity in Marketing Campaigns and Its Impact on Brand Loyalty

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## ABSTRACT,

*In recent times, the brands came under the spotlight for getting more equitable, inclusive, and representative of the societies, which led them to employ diversity-focused marketing strategies. The paper discusses the impact of marketing diversity on brand loyalty, primarily focusing on Nike's "You Can't Stop Us" campaign as an example. The theories include Brand Attachment Theory, Social Identity Theory, and Brand Trust, which demonstrate the psychological processes influencing individuals' behaviour when faced with diversity advertising. There was a cross-cultural survey done with 104 international adults aged 18 and over, which aimed to evaluate the perceptions of diversity, emotional attachment, trust, and loyalty. The outcome illustrates that diversity in marketing campaigns has a favourable influence on brand attachment and trust, where brand trust plays an important role in the increase of brand loyalty. Furthermore, it was found that brand attachment does not significantly influence brand loyalty. Besides that, the moderating role of group fit, how much consumers identify with those represented, was not established as significant. The results add to the diversity marketing literature and provide practical insights to brands that are looking to create brand loyalty by using authentic representation in the markets that are becoming increasingly diverse.*

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## Keywords

Diversity in Marketing Campaigns, brand loyalty, brand trust, brand attachment, group fit, social identity theory, brand attachment theory

*During the preparation of this work, the author used Quillbot.com and ChatGPT in order to refine spelling and grammar. After using these tools, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the work.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's ever-changing environment, many brands strive to integrate diversity into their marketing campaigns to attract a broader part of the audience. Recent social movements such as #MeToo, Black Lives Matter, and those demanding gender equality have thrown a challenge at brands to abandon traditional marketing strategies and adopt more diverse and inclusive practices (Burgess et al., 2022). According to Sahoo et al. (2024), diversity marketing can positively influence consumer perception and improve brand image. On the other hand, if companies display an activism that contradicts their core values, mission, or even the actual conduct, they will be seen as insincere. This practice, which is commonly known as "woke washing", not only decreases consumer trust but also leads to the loss of the legitimacy of the social change efforts (Vredenburg et al., 2020). Caruelle (2024) claims that perceived woke-washing has a negative impact on consumer outcomes, leading to the deterioration of brand trust and brand attitude. Regardless of these complexities, further exploration is needed to understand how diversity in marketing campaigns affects brand loyalty while also considering the factors influencing this relationship. While previous studies support the notion that diversity marketing strengthens the consumer-brand relationship, the extent to which diversity influences brand loyalty remains unclear (Essa, 2023). This is particularly concerning, as businesses spend considerable amounts of resources on marketing strategies to achieve a competitive advantage (Davcik & Sharma, 2016).

### 1.1 Research objective

This research will explore the link between diversity in marketing campaigns and brand loyalty. It seeks to explain how brands can maximise relevance in diversity in terms of customer retention, brand-consumer relationships, and survival in a competitive landscape that keeps changing in a global context.

### 1.2 Research question

Based on the discussion above, the following research question can be formulated: "How does diversity in marketing campaigns influence brand loyalty?"

### 1.3 Academic and Practical Relevance

Academically, this research will add to existing literature on brand loyalty, specifically on how diversity marketing may influence customer loyalty. While diversity marketing is generally associated with brand image and consumer perceptions, its direct effect on brand loyalty has not been broadly explored. Hence, by filling up the gap with updated knowledge, this research may provide insight to brands on how diversity can impact customers' loyalty towards a brand. From a practical perspective, this research is crucial since brands tend to frequently promote diversity on a surface level. While diversity representation in marketing receives positive recognition, its impact on brand loyalty is still unclear. Therefore, this research will provide companies with knowledge to develop diversity initiatives that go beyond surface-level representation and enhance loyalty among customers.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

To establish a theoretical foundation, this section identifies the key constructs of diversity and brand loyalty. Diversity can be defined as a "basic human right of not being disadvantaged but being recognised, understood, and appreciated based on any diversity attribute" (Eisend et al., 2022, p. 1). Brand loyalty can be described as consumer preference for a particular brand and the subsequent repurchase of the same brand, irrespective of the external circumstances and marketing efforts to induce changed

behaviour (Bae & Kim, 2023). To investigate the earlier mentioned information gap in more depth, this research will additionally employ Brand Attachment Theory, Social Identity Theory (SIT), and the concept of Brand Trust.

### 2.1 Brand Attachment Theory

In the marketing literature, Brand Attachment Theory is defined as "the strength of the bond connecting the brand with the self", where consumers form an emotional bond to which they assign brand identity as an extension of themselves. This relationship can develop loyalty, create positive word-of-mouth, and a readiness to interact with the brand (Shimul, 2022, p. 401).

### 2.2 Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Social Identity Theory (SIT) explains how individuals attain a sense of belonging to a group and the feelings associated with that membership (Harwood, 2020). The idea of group fit is key here since it illustrates the brand's alignment with consumers' social identities and needs. This theory helps to explore how diversity marketing campaigns affect consumers' loyalty.

### 2.3 Brand trust

This research will additionally use the concept of brand trust, which can be identified as a feeling of security while interacting with a brand based on perceived brand reliability (Shin et al., 2019). Brand trust is a key factor in creating brand loyalty since if customers are assured that the brand has the ability to satisfy their needs, they will most likely remain loyal (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2001). In diversity marketing, customers trust brands more if they perceive the brand as authentic and inclusive (Jacobsen et al., 2025). Figure 1 demonstrates the relationships between diversity in marketing campaigns, brand loyalty, brand attachment, brand trust, and group fit.

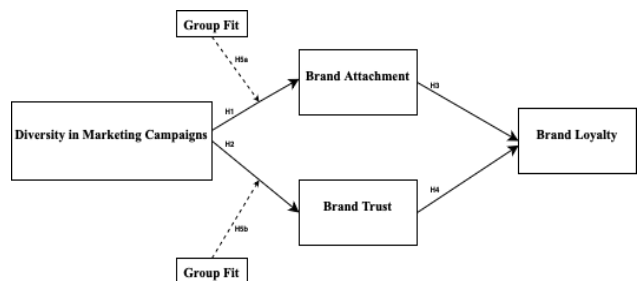


Figure 1. Research Model

### 2.4 Hypothesis development

#### 2.4.1 Diversity in marketing campaigns and brand attachment

Diversity in marketing campaigns can strengthen brand attachment by providing customers with a sense of belonging and representation. Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh (2021) supported this view by mentioning that a brand that allows a consumer's cultural or personal history to be reflected in its message and visuals will find that the consumer has a more intense emotional connection to the brand. This is an important topic nowadays, as societies have become increasingly diverse, and consumers now seek inclusivity and authenticity in brands. Research by Madadi et al. (2021) approves of this view by stating that ads with ethnic cues trigger feelings that can enhance brand attachment by making the brand experience more personal and relatable. This logic leads to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

# **H1. Diversity in marketing campaigns positively affects brand attachment.**

## **2.4.2 Diversity in marketing campaigns and brand trust**

Diversity representation in a brand's communication is a brand's way of demonstrating its strong attention to inclusivity, which consequently has the potential to create a strong consumer trust (Sjukun, 2024). This is critical for brands because, as explained by Portal et al. (2018), customers tend to prefer brands that align with their set of values, especially when it comes to diversity, which makes them perceive a brand as more authentic. Campbell et al. (2023) state that customers are more willing to trust brands that have diversity in their advertisements since it gives an impression of a real effort to connect with diverse audiences. Arising from this, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

# **H2. Diversity in marketing campaigns positively affects brand trust.**

## **2.4.3 Brand attachment and brand loyalty**

According to Pedeliento et al. (2015), brand attachment has a direct and positive effect on brand loyalty. The study showed that brand attachment positively affects brand loyalty by strengthening emotional bonds that cause customers to remain loyal to the company over time. Based on these insights, the next hypothesis is proposed:

# **H3. Brand attachment positively affects brand loyalty.**

## **2.4.4 Brand trust and brand loyalty**

Brand trust, according to Bozbay and Karakus Baslar (2020), is a key factor in establishing the security and reliability factors in customers that are the basis of their repeated buying behaviour, which in turn increases their loyalty. When consumers trust a brand, they are more expected to remain loyal as they assume that the brand will always keep its promises and satisfy their needs (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Therefore, brand trust decreases uncertainty and fosters more emotional bonding with the brand, which ultimately grants longevity to brand loyalty. Consequently, the hypothesis outlined below is presented:

# **H4. Brand trust positively affects brand loyalty.**

## **2.4.5 Group fit and the relationship between diversity in marketing campaigns and brand attachment**

Group fit is a critical factor in determining consumer responses to diversity marketing strategies, specifically when the alignment between consumer identities and the brand is considered (Fazli-Salehi et al., 2021). With this in mind, it is anticipated to positively moderate the relationship between the diversity in marketing campaigns and brand attachment since consumers can build stronger connections with the brand when they associate themselves with the social group shown in the advertisement (Henderson et al., 2023). This leads to the following hypothesis:

# **H5a. Group fit positively moderates the relationship between diversity in marketing campaigns and brand attachment.**

## **2.4.6 Group fit and the relationship between diversity in marketing campaigns and brand trust**

Group fit plays a significant role in developing trust, as most of the marketing frequently reflects the factors that resonate with both local and global consumers (Strebingner et al., 2017). When consumers feel a personal or social alignment with the brand, they may be more willing to trust it (Coelho et al., 2018). In addition, Campbell et al. (2023) stated that diversity advertisements strengthen connection and trust, especially when

the consumer sees a strong fit between the individual and the brand's identity. Thus, this leads to the formulation of the next hypothesis:

# **H5b. Group fit positively moderates the relationship between diversity in marketing campaigns and brand trust.**

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This research pursued a quantitative research design to explore the link between diversity in marketing campaigns and brand loyalty. A cross-cultural sampling approach was utilised to capture diverse perspectives (Pfundmair, 2017). The survey was distributed via internationally orientated social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn. As a result, the research managed to attract respondents from various cultural communities. Such diversity in the sample improved the generalisability of the results and reinforced the study's applicability in the global marketing field.

### **3.2 Sample**

A total of 104 respondents were able to take the questionnaire, with 104 complete responses for statistical analysis. It follows a recommendation of Memon et al. (2020), which states that a sample size of 100 is generally acceptable if the research is based on the statistical analysis. To enhance accessibility and diversity in the demographics, a cross-cultural method was used. Furthermore, to ensure the efficiency and credibility of the survey, a mixture of convenience and snowball sampling strategies was applied to assemble participants for the research (Valerio et al., 2016). Respondents were targeted through widely used social media sites such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn. Additionally, they were politely asked to invite others in their networks to participate through the survey link. This diverse mix not only helped to enrich the data but also made the results more indicative of diverse consumer attitudes. To access the survey and be eligible for the research, participants had to be at least 18 years old, have sufficient English skills, and be able to access and view an online video embedded in the survey. Screening questions were applied at the beginning of the questionnaire to filter out those who were not eligible. Table 1 below shows the socio-demographic characteristics of participants, which include their age, gender, and the frequency of exposure to diversity advertisements.

**Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of participants (N = 104)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18–24	82	78.8%
	25–34	11	10.6%
	35–44	4	3.8%
	45–54	5	4.8%
	55–64	1	1.0%
	65 or older	1	1.0%
Gender	Male	47	44.8%
	Female	57	54.3%

Exposure to Diversity Ads	Occasionally	28	26.9%
	Monthly	15	14.4%
	Almost daily	25	24.0%
	Weekly	21	20.2%
	Rarely	15	14.4%

### 3.3 Method

The data were collected using an online survey created in Qualtrics, a well-known GDPR-compliant online platform. All survey items were adapted from existing literature and measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). It was distributed among participants from various cultural and demographic settings, ensuring diverse perspectives. After reading an introduction and providing informed consent, only participants who are 18 or older were able to access the next page of the questionnaire. In the table below, the measurement items and their corresponding references are demonstrated. The full list of survey questions can be found in Appendix A.

**Table 2. Operationalization table**

Variable	Source	Number of Items
Diversity in Marketing Campaigns	Burgess et al. (2024) and Yoo & Donthu (2001)	9
Brand Loyalty	Shimul (2022), Bobâlă et al. (2012), and Bozbay & Karakuş Başlar (2020)	5
Brand Attachment	Bobâlă et al. (2012) and Shimul (2022)	3
Brand Trust	Bozbay & Karakuş Başlar (2020).	5
Group Fit	Shimul (2022) and Burgess et al. (2024)	4

The survey consisted of six sections. The first section was focused on demographic and background information, including age, gender, and the extent to which the participants are exposed to diversity advertisements. In the second section, participants were asked to follow the given link to watch a short ad for Nike, titled “You Can’t Stop Us”. Afterwards, respondents were asked to answer questions regarding the diversity perceptions in the advertisement they just watched. The respondents were specifically questioned if they recognized Nike, if they thought the video was a diversity-orientated advertising clip, and if they experienced an emotional response to a brand after viewing the commercial. Brand loyalty was evaluated in section three. The participants indicated their willingness to keep buying Nike, their probability of referring the brand to others, their emotional bond, and their overall brand satisfaction from the advertisement they saw. Section four measured brand attachment using items that were targeting the consumer’s perception of joy, comfort, and personal connection when they were interacting with the brand. The questions were to determine whether the respondents felt an emotional involvement towards Nike and if the brand had become a meaningful or personally significant part of their daily

life. Section five examined brand trust. Respondents indicated their level of trust towards Nike and whether they perceived it as transparent and principled. The objective was to evaluate how diversity in ads influenced the consumers' trust in the brand's ethical stance. In the concluding part, section six, the degree of group fit was measured by examining the extent to which the participants perceived the ad characters as similar to themselves and the depth of their personal identification with the ad.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Data Analysis (Descriptive Analytics)

R Studio, a famous platform for computing statistical analysis in the R programming language (Kronthaler & Zöllner 2020), was used to conduct data analysis for this research. This analysis focused on the impact of diversity in marketing campaigns on brand loyalty, which also included the moderating effect of group fit. Appendix B shows the descriptive statistics for the four key constructs and their items: Diversity in Marketing Campaigns, Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty, and Brand Attachment. In Table 3 below, aggregated descriptive statistics used in the study are presented. The formulation of these variables was based on indicators such as mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha, and factor loadings of each item. In this context, aggregated data allows simplifying complex datasets by summarising constructs and their items to support clearer comparison between variables. The highest mean in this table belongs to diversity in marketing (M = 5.32), which presents strong agreement with the inclusivity and emotional appeal of the campaign.

The second highest mean was indicated in brand trust (M = 5.03). This could suggest that the participants considered the brand to be honest and reliable. Besides, group fit (M = 4.98) was rated the highest on average, implying respondents felt a degree of alignment toward the identity of the brand. Brand loyalty (M = 4.66) and brand attachment (M = 4.53) had lower values and indicate that some indifference in the behavioural commitment and emotional attachment to the brand existed. Marshall and Jonker (2010) are of the opinion that the standard deviation represents the degree to which the data is spread out, and as the standard deviations become wider, the differences become more at the edges, thus the furthest results from the average being the data set. This dataset illustrates that the standard deviation of data points from the mean is in the range of 0.99 to 1.15, which shows the moderate variability in the data. It was found that diversity has the lowest standard deviation (0.99), which means that participants were more similar in their answers about diversity marketing. On the other hand, attachment has the highest standard deviation in the dataset (1.15), which suggests that respondents vary in the extent of their emotional connection to the brand.

**Table 3. Aggregated Descriptive Statistics Table**

Scale	Mean	SD	Cronbach Alpha	Loading
Diversity	5.32	0.99	0.900	0.691
Loyalty	4.66	1.05	0.882	0.775
Attachment	4.53	1.15	0.816	0.789
Trust	5.03	1.07	0.876	0.779
GroupFit	4.98	1.14	0.816	0.725

#### 4.1.2 Cronbach's Alpha

When discussing aggregated data, Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency of a test or a scale, which measures the extent to which items are correlated within a given scale (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). All four constructs demonstrated strong internal reliability, with diversity showing the highest Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha = 0.900$ ), trust following second ( $\alpha = 0.876$ ), loyalty ( $\alpha = 0.882$ ), and both attachment and group fit ( $\alpha = 0.816$ ) following last. Such values indicate strong internal consistency within each variable and imply that the items used for the construction of the measures are highly aligned.

#### 4.1.3 Loading factor

Factor loading is the correlation that exists between the item and the factor, with values 0.30 or above indicating moderate correlation (Tavakol & Wetzel, 2020). Averaged factor loadings in this dataset exhibit moderate correlations for the constructs, ranging from 0.691 for diversity to 0.789 for attachment. Items trust (0.779), loyalty (0.775), and group fit (0.725) also presented good levels of internal reliability. The results hence indicate that participants were inclined to agree and have a positive attitude towards the brand's diversity and trustworthiness. Their emotional bond and loyalty, however, were comparatively less strong. This is an aspect that requires a more in-depth analysis in the following stages of research.

### 4.2 Correlation

Table 4 displays the correlation analysis between variables based on aggregated statistics presented above. The highest correlation is noticed between loyalty and attachment ( $r = 0.736$ ), which signifies that emotional attachment to a brand can lead to exhibiting faithful behaviours. There is an equally strong relationship between loyalty and trust ( $r = 0.620$ ), which means that the trustworthiness of a brand plays a significant role in enhancing a customer's commitment. Diversity marginally correlates with loyalty ( $r = 0.486$ ) and group fit ( $r = 0.529$ ), which suggests that an inclusive marketing strategy might not only influence the customer's ways of connecting with the brand but also how they recognise their community within the brand. Furthermore, a lower, but still positive, association has been identified between diversity and attachment ( $r = 0.344$ ), indicating that diversity signals are involved in emotional attachment; however, their contribution could be more marginal or dependent on the context. Group Fit has a comparable level of correlation with brand trust ( $r = 0.513$ ) and brand loyalty ( $r = 0.499$ ), which implies that if consumers feel an alignment with a brand's social or cultural identity, it may result in trust and loyalty on their part toward the product, service or company.

**Table 4. Correlation Matrix**

	Diversity	Loyalty	Attachment	Trust	GroupFit
Diversity					
Loyalty	0.4856941				
Attachment	0.3444501	0.7356886			
Trust	0.3734116	0.6196808	0.6020772		
GroupFit	0.5290391	0.4989543	0.3916018	0.5134909	

### 4.3 Hypothesis testing

Table 5 presents results of the regression analysis between variables, examining the direct relationship between the

constructs. Moreover, the moderating effect of group fit on the relationship of the diversity in marketing and the brand attachment as well as brand trust was assessed (Appendix C). These analyses were targeted to reveal more detailed information about how the diversity in marketing campaigns is influencing customer loyalty through different mechanisms.

**Table 5. Table for Hypotheses**

Hypotheses	Coefficient	SE	p-value	Significance
Diversity → Attachment	0.500	0.120	0.000	***
Diversity → Trust	0.205	0.118	0.082	ns
Attachment → Loyalty	-0.063	0.110	0.570	ns
Trust → Loyalty	0.473	0.104	0.000	***

#### 4.3.1 Hypothesis 1

It was stated that diversity in marketing campaigns positively impacts the brand attachment variable, indicating a strong relationship between constructs. After careful analysis of responses, it was confirmed that diversity in advertising is a major and positive correlation with the brand attachment ( $B = 0.500$ ,  $SE = 0.120$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This confirms that brands that feature diverse representation in their marketing strategies enables them to build an emotional connection with consumers.

#### 4.3.2 Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis stated that diversity in marketing campaigns has a positive and significant influence on brand trust. Nevertheless, this relationship could not be confirmed ( $B = 0.205$ ,  $SE = 0.118$ ,  $p = 0.082$ ), revealing no statistically significant direct effect between constructs. This suggests that diversity in marketing campaigns alone may not be sufficient to positively impact brand trust.

#### 4.3.3 Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 tested whether brand attachment has a positive effect on brand loyalty. The results showed no support towards the hypothesis, revealing that brand attachment does not have a big impact on brand loyalty ( $B = -0.063$ ,  $SE = 0.110$ ,  $p = 0.570$ ). This could signify that even though diversity affects the increase in brand attachment, this emotional connection, however, does not impact loyalty.

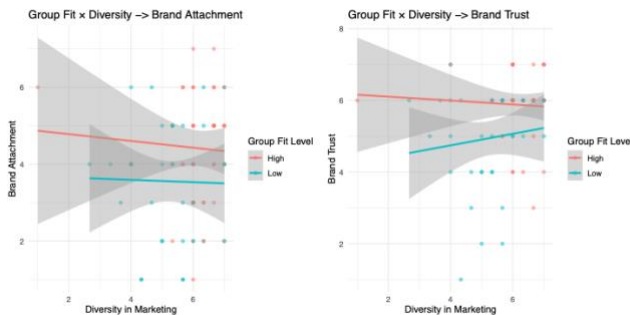
#### 4.3.4 Hypothesis 4

H4 suggested that brand trust has a positive impact on brand loyalty. This hypothesis was confirmed by a significant positive result in the table ( $B = 0.473$ ,  $SE = 0.104$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This finding emphasises the important role of trust in influencing not just the consumers' choices, but their continuous relationship with a brand as well. Loyal customers tend to be those who trust that the brands will be consistent and reliable, thus deepening the credibility of the brand-consumer relationship.

#### 4.3.5 Hypothesis 5a

H5a stated that group fit would positively moderates the impact of diversity in marketing on brand attachment. However, as can be seen in the visualisation produced in R (Figure 1), no empirical evidence was found to support this hypothesis, as the interaction coefficient was not statistically significant. The blue line means low perceived group fit, while the orange line represents high perceived group fit instead. These lines explain the relationship between (IV) diversity in marketing campaigns

and the dependent variable, in this case brand attachment, and how group fit moderates their relationship. In the first plot, the lines lie flat, which reveals an insignificant effect of group fit. This indicates that consumers' perception of similarity between their social group and the group depicted in the advertisement did not significantly affect the brand attachment strength that resulted from the diversification of marketing activities. The complete regression results table can be found in Appendix C.



**Figure 1. Moderation visualisation**

#### 4.3.6 Hypothesis 5b

Hypothesis 5b stated that group fit positively moderates the relationship between diversity in marketing campaigns and brand trust. This hypothesis is also not confirmed, as the interaction effect was not statistically significant (Figure 1). As in the previous case, the flat and overlapping lines indicated a weak impact on the relationship of diversity in marketing (IV) and brand trust (DV). Therefore, although diverse marketing can have a positive impact on trust, the role of perceived group fit does not significantly change this relationship. The full regression table is presented in Appendix C.

In summary, the results reveal that showcasing diversity in marketing campaigns has a positive influence on customer's brand attachment but no significant effect on brand trust and loyalty. This analysis shows the power of diversity marketing strategies in strengthening both emotional bonds and trusting relationships with consumers. The research results, however, have not indicated the supporting effect of group fit, thereby suggesting that the resemblance of consumers with people in ads is not a major driver of brand attachment and brand trust.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The main goal of this research was to indicate whether diversity in marketing campaigns affects brand loyalty, including various psychological factors such as brand trust, brand attachment, and group fit. The results will offer interesting insights into the way consumers perceive diversity advertising and whether this perception is important for brand loyalty in the increasingly diverse and globalised markets.

The research showed a strong positive effect of diversity advertising on brand attachment. This aligns with the Brand Attachment Theory, which is the extent to which a buyer is ready to establish an emotional connection with a particular brand and continue to buy its products repeatedly (Gohar et al., 2023). The findings from the results proved the theory that people often try to form deep emotional bonds with brands that reflect their own value systems and that give them a feeling of acknowledgement (Pedeliento et al., 2015). While emotional attachment may translate into brand loyalty, the results from the analysis presented that brand attachment did not significantly affect customer loyalty.

Brand trust, however, was found to have a more positive impact on brand loyalty compared to brand attachment. Customers who perceived the brand to be trustworthy, honest, and ethical were more inclined to remain loyal. These findings are consistent with a study of Bozbay and Karakus Baslar (2020) where the authors argue that emotional bonding has to be supported by trust and integrity to assure effective results. As it was stated in Brand Trust Theory, trust minimises uncertainty and empowers consumers to increase their trust towards the brand's capability of fulfilling the promised value in the future (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). These findings suggest that, in this context, brand trust is considered a more critical factor when enhancing brand loyalty than attachment to a brand. Moreover, this study has shown no evidence of the moderating role of group fit. This is contrary to what Social Identity Theory (SIT) claims, specifically that people are more connected to messages that reflect their own social group (Harwood, 2020). Even though SIT would argue that recognising oneself in the ad would increase the emotional connection and trust, the findings indicate that it is not the case. On the contrary, broad inclusion of individuals and genuine representation appear to be sufficient to generate positive reactions towards the brand. This could mean that customers appreciate diversity on a more general level, although they may not personally identify with the representatives.

Demographic variables including age, gender, and exposure to diversity ads also turned out to be insignificant factors in determining the results. This could suggest that consumers from different demographic groups have similar responses towards diversity advertisements, therefore indicating the broader reach of diversity messaging, if executed correctly.

## 5.1 Implications

In the context of theory, this study extends prior research, confirming that brand trust is a significant driver of brand loyalty resulting from the diversity in marketing campaigns. Thus, Brand Trust Theory was validated and proven to be essential when maintaining these relationships (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2001). While Brand Attachment Theory underlines the role of emotional bonds for the enhancement of customer loyalty (Shimul, 2022), it was not proven to be significant when influencing brand loyalty.

On top of that, the results showed that Social Identity Theory was not fully supported in this context. In other words, it appears that individuals might appreciate inclusive advertising at a more general level, without being represented in the advertisement. In practice, this study highlights the importance of including authentic and substantial diversity in advertisements instead of showing superficial representation. Brands and marketing professionals should aim at delivering honest, emotional messages that are inclusive in values and show consistent behaviour to increase consumer loyalty.

Since demographic variables such as age, gender, and exposure to diversity advertisements did not significantly influence people's reactions, it is a great opportunity for brands to start targeting people from various social groups. It is also vital to understand that an approval of diversity advertisement does not necessarily come from personal identification with the people in the ad. Instead, a message that comes across as genuine and honest is more than sufficient.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In today's diversity-driven market, brands are expected to show proactivity in their marketing strategies to reflect the diversity in the new, identity-centred society. This study aimed to explore the impact of diversity in marketing on brand loyalty, using Brand

Attachment Theory, Social Identity Theory, and the Brand Trust concept to identify psychological mechanisms through which consumer attitudes are formed. The attention was given primarily to the changes in brand attachment, brand trust, and group fit. Findings suggest that advertising that incorporates diversity has a significant positive influence on brand attachment, confirming that consumers tend to form emotional bonds only with those brands that share inclusive values. Such emotional ties have been found to be a major factor in increasing brand loyalty, thus supporting the concept that consumers are not only affected by the products that brands provide but also by their beliefs.

However, contrary to previous hypotheses and literature, it was revealed that brand attachment did not have a significant impact on brand loyalty. Notably, the analysis indicated that group fit's moderating impact was not significant in brand attachment, trust, and loyalty. The finding defies some of the existing theoretical frameworks and points to the fact that individuals can still have a positive reaction towards diversity in advertisements even if they do not directly perceive themselves in it.

In conclusion, this thesis proved that diversity in marketing, if presented sincerely and ethically, can positively impact brand loyalty when also considering psychological factors. While diversity representation alone may not improve brand loyalty, it certainly has a positive influence on customers' trust and attachment levels. Brands that convey inclusive values in an effective way are more capable of establishing deep and loyal consumer relationships with customers of today.

## 6.2 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

While this study provided valuable insights, it has its limitations. The first limitation was the sample size ( $N = 104$ ), which was skewing towards a younger, more international population. The ad shown in the survey included various individuals with different abilities, colours, orientations, and genders. However, it did not include people of older ages. Although age did not have a major significance in this study, future research may benefit from including different age groups to make the results more universally applicable.

Furthermore, the research was solely focused on the brand Nike and one advertisement that contained a very strong message of diversity and inclusion. While Nike is considered one of the most global companies in the world, the same effect may not apply for companies in different sectors. Essentially, companies such as tyre manufacturers, insurance firms or industrial suppliers might not get the same consumer reactions to diversity-focused campaigns. Additional research should be targeted at investigating a broader range of industries, such as those that operate in less emotionally driven or more utilitarian sectors, for the purpose of confirming if the impact of diversity in marketing is similar across different product categories and brand identities.

In addition, this research employed a cross-sectional approach to investigate consumer perceptions of the brand at one point in time. Although such an approach enables a quick overview of consumer perceptions, it still lacks the depth of how consumer loyalty may develop after they have encountered diversity-related messages for a more extended period. It is noteworthy to mention that consumer beliefs can be changed over time due to a set of factors such as changes in social norms, media, and personal experiences. Future research could be more productive if it utilised a longitudinal design that follows consumers over various periods of time.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix A. Survey Questions



Thank you for your interest in this research study. You are invited to participate in a study investigating **The Influence of Diversity in Marketing Campaigns on Brand Loyalty**. This survey is part of an academic research project for a bachelor's thesis in International Business Administration at the University of Twente. Before you begin the survey, please take a moment to review the following important information.

The purpose of this study is to explore how diversity in marketing campaigns impacts brand loyalty. You will be asked to watch a short video advertisement and then answer a series of questions regarding your perceptions of diversity in advertisements and your feelings toward a certain brand.

There are no foreseeable psychological, physical, or social risks associated with participation, but if any question makes you feel uncomfortable, you are free to skip it. The survey should take approximately **10–15 minutes** to complete. Your participation is **voluntary**, and you are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. All responses will be anonymous, and no personally identifiable information will be collected.

The data will be kept **strictly confidential** and used solely for academic purposes. Only the researcher and academic supervisor will have access to the data, which will be stored securely and in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact the researcher at [a.altay@student.utwente.nl](mailto:a.altay@student.utwente.nl). Thank you for your time and contribution!



By clicking 'I consent to participate in this study', you confirm that you are at least 18 years old and agree to participate under the terms outlined above.

☐ I consent to participate in this study.

☐ I do not consent to participate in this study.



## Section 1: Demographic & Brand Information

Please answer the following background questions before continuing to the rest of the survey.

1. What is your age?

☐ 18-24

☐ 25-34

☐ 35-44

☐ 45-54

☐ 55-64

☐ 65 or older

☐ Prefer not to say

2. What is your gender?

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Non-binary

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Other

3. How often do you encounter advertisements that reflect diversity (e.g., featuring different races, genders, abilities, etc.)?

☐ Rarely

☐ Occasionally

☐ Monthly

☐ Weekly

☐ Almost daily



## Section 2: Diversity in Marketing Campaigns

Instructions: Please click and watch the short advertisement below. Then answer questions 1–9 with that ad in mind. Watch here: Nike “You Can’t Stop Us” Ad

<https://youtu.be/pcXTnyCmQbg?si=Zn6lZ5FRRpmIDNVv>

Items taken from Burgess et al. (2024) and Yoo & Donthu (2001), with one item adapted to reference Nike

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. I am aware of Nike.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

2. This advertisement is a diversity advertisement.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

3. This advertisement has a high level of diversity.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

4. Diversity advertisements are heart-warming.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

5. Diversity advertisements make me feel good.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

6. Diversity advertisements are very appealing to me.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

7. Diversity advertisements make me want to buy the brand it features.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

8. Diversity advertisements are fascinating.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

9. Diversity advertisements are wonderful.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree



### Section 3: Brand Loyalty

Now that you've watched the Nike "You Can't Stop Us" ad, please answer the following questions about Nike.

Items taken directly from Shimul (2022); Bobălcă et al. (2012); Bozbay & Karakuş Başlar (2020)

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. I am pleased to buy this brand instead of other brands

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

2. I will buy this brand next time I buy sportswear.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

3. I recommend this brand to those who ask for my advice.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

4. I say positive things about this brand to other persons.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

5. I intend to keep purchasing this brand.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree



#### Section 4: Brand Attachment

Please continue thinking about Nike, the brand featured in the diversity advertisement you just watched.

Items taken directly from Bobâlcă et al. (2012); Shimul (2022)

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. This brand gives me joy and pleasure.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

2. I find comfort in buying or possessing this brand.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

3. I feel more attached to this brand than to any other brands.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree





## Section 5: Brand Trust

Please continue thinking about Nike, the brand featured in the diversity advertisement you just watched.

Items taken directly from Bozbay & Karakuş Başlar (2020)

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. I trust this brand.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

2. I rely on this brand.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

3. This is an honest brand.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

4. I am confident in this brand's ability to perform well.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

5. This brand is safe.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree





## Section 6: Group Fit

Please continue thinking about Nike, the brand featured in the diversity advertisement you just watched.

Items taken from Shimul (2022) and Burgess et al. (2024), with two items adapted to reference Nike.

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. I can identify with Nike's diversity advertisement.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

2. People similar to me use a brand like this.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

3. I feel positive toward the people in Nike's diversity advertisement.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree

4. I feel like I belong with the people in Nike's diversity advertisement.

☐ 1 - Strongly Disagree

☐ 2 - Disagree

☐ 3 - Somewhat Disagree

☐ 4 - Neutral

☐ 5 - Somewhat Agree

☐ 6 - Agree

☐ 7 - Strongly Agree



Your response has been recorded.

If you have any questions about the study or would like to know more about the results, please feel free to contact the researcher at [a.altay@student.utwente.nl](mailto:a.altay@student.utwente.nl)

Thank you for your time and participation!

## Appendix B. Descriptive Statistics for Each Construct and Their Items

**Table B1. Descriptive statistics: Constructs, Items and Scale Reliability**

Scale	Item	Mean	SD	Cronbach Alpha	Loading
Diversity	Diversity in Marketing Campaigns1	6.31	1.17	0.9	0.365
Diversity	Diversity in Marketing Campaigns2	5.79	1.16	0.9	0.439
Diversity	Diversity in Marketing Campaigns3	5.98	1.17	0.9	0.599
Diversity	Diversity in Marketing Campaigns4	5.43	1.32	0.9	0.862
Diversity	Diversity in Marketing Campaigns5	5.34	1.38	0.9	0.929
Diversity	Diversity in Marketing Campaigns6	4.9	1.55	0.9	0.868
Diversity	Diversity in Marketing Campaigns7	4.34	1.36	0.9	0.641
Diversity	Diversity in Marketing Campaigns8	4.87	1.35	0.9	0.699
Diversity	Diversity in Marketing Campaigns9	4.95	1.44	0.9	0.816
Loyalty	Brand Loyalty1	4.44	1.19	0.882	0.717
Loyalty	Brand Loyalty2	4.34	1.39	0.882	0.829
Loyalty	Brand Loyalty3	4.55	1.29	0.882	0.769
Loyalty	Brand Loyalty4	5.0	1.25	0.882	0.783
Loyalty	Brand Loyalty5	4.96	1.25	0.882	0.775
Attachment	Brand Attachment1	4.82	1.12	0.816	0.786
Attachment	Brand Attachment2	4.95	1.32	0.816	0.915
Attachment	Brand Attachment3	3.82	1.56	0.816	0.666

Trust	Brand	5.35	1.28	0.876	0.845
	Trust1				
Trust	Brand	4.39	1.67	0.876	0.751
	Trust2				
Trust	Brand	4.63	1.27	0.876	0.834
	Trust3				
Trust	Brand	5.41	1.08	0.876	0.726
	Trust4				
Trust	Brand	5.34	1.15	0.876	0.738
	Trust5				
GroupFit	Group Fit1	4.62	1.55	0.816	0.818
GroupFit	Group Fit2	5.27	1.26	0.816	0.662
GroupFit	Group Fit3	5.62	1.37	0.816	0.691
GroupFit	Group Fit4	4.4	1.5	0.816	0.729

### Appendix C. Regression Results – H5a and H5b

**Table C1. Regression results: Moderation of Group fit on Diversity → Brand Attachment**

Predictor	Coefficient	SE	t	p-value
(Intercept)	3.7991	3.5576	1.0679	0.2881
Diversity	-0.3171	0.6749	-0.4698	0.6395
GroupFit	0.0549	0.6933	0.0792	0.937
Diversity:GroupFit	0.0524	0.127	0.4127	0.6807

**Table C1. Regression results: Moderation of Group fit on Diversity → Brand Trust**

Predictor	Coefficient	SE	t	p-value
(Intercept)	1.4229	2.6618	0.5346	0.5941
Diversity	0.2573	0.505	0.5096	0.6115
GroupFit	0.737	0.5188	1.4206	0.1585
Diversity:GroupFit	-0.044	0.095	-0.4635	0.644