When Inclusion Signals Altruism: Value-Dependent Consumer Responses to Same-Sex Advertising

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Inviting Users Into Inclusive Spaces: When Perceived Brand Altruism Translates Inclusive Messages Into Consumer Responses

Abstract. This study examines how inclusive advertising influences consumer responses in an Eastern European, post-communist context characterized by persistent traditional social norms. Using an experimental design, participants (N= 430) were exposed to advertisements depicting either a heterosexual couple, a gay male couple, or a lesbian couple. Inclusive portrayals increased perceived brand altruism, indicating that same-sex representations function as signals of ethical intent and social responsibility. However, these perceptions did not uniformly translate into more favorable brand outcomes. A direct effect of inclusivity emerged only for brand attitude, with advertisements featuring a lesbian couple eliciting more positive evaluations than those featuring a gay male couple. Crucially, the effects of inclusive advertising were contingent on individual value orientations. Political orientation moderated the formation of perceived brand altruism, while support for diversity, equity, and inclusion determined whether altruistic perceptions translated into evaluative and behavioral outcomes.
Keywords: inclusive advertising, brand altruism, consumer values, brand attitude, audience segmentation