

## The Evolution of Brand Inclusivity – A Systematic Review of Literature

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### Abstract

This work conducts a systematic review of literature on literature published between 2014 and 2024 that explore brand inclusivity. It examines how brands interact with consumers in different cultural, social and economic settings. The review emphasizes aspects such as the significance of brand communities in creating value the influence of emotional attachment to brands on consumer behaviour the impact of cultural factors on brand credibility and the establishment of inclusive market structures. Moreover, it discusses emerging trends in influencer led branding and brand activism particularly in relation to sustainability initiatives. The findings indicate that brands are increasingly adopting inclusive approaches to connect with diverse consumer groups foster emotional bonds and align with societal values. Future research should investigate the effects of inclusivity, digital transformation and activism on brand equity and corporate reputation within a rapidly changing marketplace.

**Keywords:** brand inclusivity, brand equity, inclusion, customer, marketing.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Brand inclusivity is a process of designing products, services, and any marketing messages that cater to a diverse set of consumers regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, and social identities (Nouri, 2019). The call for the societal diversity and adopt inclusive practices to remain competitive in increasingly multicultural market has only recently emerged over the period of action of about twenty years where consumers embarked on the necessity of the brands making changes into their marketing strategies as the market had transformed (L, 2021). This is a stretch from companies paying lip service to diversity but engaging in the fight for inclusion of diversity in advertising communication and message and products (Pérez, 2020). Brands that practice inclusiveness approach have a tendency of having stronger appeal as they are more socially responsible and aligned with consumer values. This could, overtime, lead to increased brand loyalty and brand image (Adams, 2019). Also, inclusive brands can leverage opportunities inside new or virgin customer segments; thus, businesses can gain a larger market share and growth in the future (Johnson, 2020). But, as Walker (2021) says, members of oppressed groups expect more than gestures from brands; they want brands to try to understand those needs. As a result, for the protection of non-discrimination rights, the societies are not only formed, but the brands also participate in the formation of societies free of discriminations (Singh & Sharma, 2022).

## 2. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The PRISMA framework has been applied for the study. The PRISMA framework, short for Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses serves as a guideline in the realm of systematic reviews and meta-analyses. Its aim is to offer an approach that enhances transparency, thoroughness and precision when sifting through vast amounts of literature. This framework comprises a checklist consisting of 27 items and a flow diagram to assist researchers in navigating the various stages of a systematic review. These stages include identification, where relevant studies are searched across databases and sources; screening, where the eligibility of studies is evaluated based on predetermined criteria along with the removal of duplicates or unrelated records; eligibility, involving the assessment of articles relevance and inclusion in the final analysis; and inclusion, where studies meeting all criteria are selected for synthesis and analysis. The PRISMA flow diagram visually illustrates the process of filtering and selecting studies showing the number of records at each stage of the review. This framework aims to reduce bias enhance replicability and ensure comprehensive results through a transparent process. In fields like healthcare and social sciences PRISMA is particularly important for conducting literature reviews that inform decision making. Its goal is to improve the quality of reviews by thoroughly addressing all aspects such as methodology, inclusion/exclusion criteria and the synthesis of findings. In this study, there were six tasks completed - defining the time horizon, choosing appropriate databases, implementing the research strategy, defining the inclusion and exclusion criteria, executing the research, and extracting and evaluating the data (Soni and Kodali, 2011; Manoharan and Singal, 2017). The titles and abstracts of the selected studies were reviewed. The standards were applied to ascertain whether an article qualified for study inclusion. To ensure final inclusion, the complete texts of possibly pertinent studies were evaluated. An evidence table contained the extracted data. The calibre of every sample was evaluated. Three rounds of selection were used to choose the papers for review. The abstract and title were screened in the first round of analysis. The papers were analysed in the second round. The research question guided the establishment of the eligibility and selection criteria, and the results were arranged. Research without a whole text available were disregarded. Every result from the third round was examined and combined into a single document. Articles in this round were retrieved for a comprehensive examination to determine their inclusion in this study. To address the specific research question, all papers that did not describe research examining the concept of brand inclusivity in marketing were eliminated. To construct the analysis corpus, the listed studies were organised by year of publication and by alphabetical order of the first author's name. Also, a citation analysis was conducted. In order to simplify cross-sectional analysis of the research, a system of categories and codes was created for data extraction and analysis. This allowed for the systematic examination and comparison of publications, allowing for the identification and investigation of differences and similarities (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

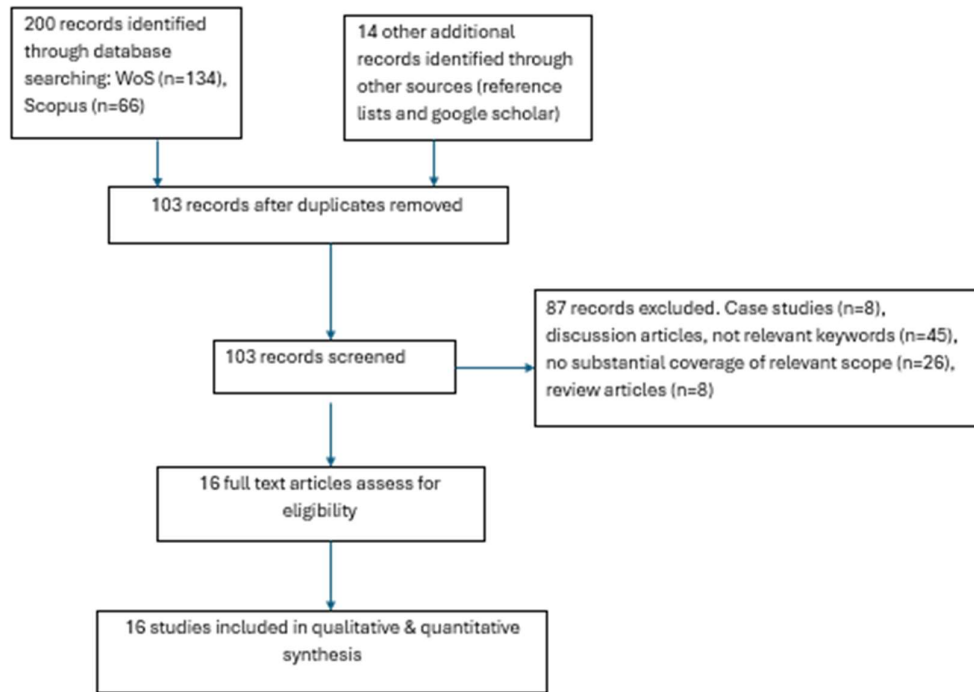


Figure 1: Flowchart of the Systematic Review Process for brand inclusivity

### 3. SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

**3.1 Descriptive Analysis:** A detailed analysis of the publications on brand inclusivity between 2010 to 2024 highlights certain notable facts - Table 1 outlines the annual trend of publications and total citations related to the topic of brand inclusivity from 2010 to 2024. This analysis helps understand the evolving scholarly interest and research impact in this area over time.

#### 1. Trend in Publications:

Between 2010 and 2013 there was a steady increase in the number of publications focusing on brand inclusivity starting with 8 in 2010 and peaking at 20 in 2012. This shows an increasing academic interest in the subject during this period, likely driven by a growing awareness of diversity and inclusion in marketing strategies. In the following years from 2014 to 2020 the publication numbers varied with a significant drop to just 6 publications in 2016. While there was some improvement in 2017 and 2018 with 9 and 10 publications respectively the overall output remained below those peak years. In the past years there has been a slowdown in publication activity. Only 3 publications were recorded in 2022 and so far in 2024 there has been just 1 publication indicating a decrease in scholarly output on the subject in recent times.

#### 2. Citation Trends:

The early years, particularly 2012, witnessed a substantial number of citations totaling 35,987 in that year alone. This suggests that publications during this period had a significant influence. Likewise, 2010 and 2011 also recorded citation counts showcasing the strong impact of early research in this field. Decline in Citations 2014 2021 After the surge period citation counts experienced a sharp decline. By 2019 the total citations dropped to only 553 reflecting diminished academic and practical engagement with the research. Nevertheless, the trend showed slight improvement in 2022 with 2,800 citations. No Citations in 2023 and 2024. The most recent years have seen zero citations so far likely due to the time it takes for publications to generate citations and establish academic influence.

Annual Publication and Citation Trend:

Table 1: Annual Publication and citation trend

Year	No. of Publications	Total Citations
2010	8	12645
2011	13	9234
2012	20	35987
2013	17	10407
2014	9	3774
2015	11	8286
2016	6	2973
2017	9	2327
2018	10	3751
2019	4	553
2020	4	955
2021	5	681
2022	3	2800
2023	5	0
2024	1	0

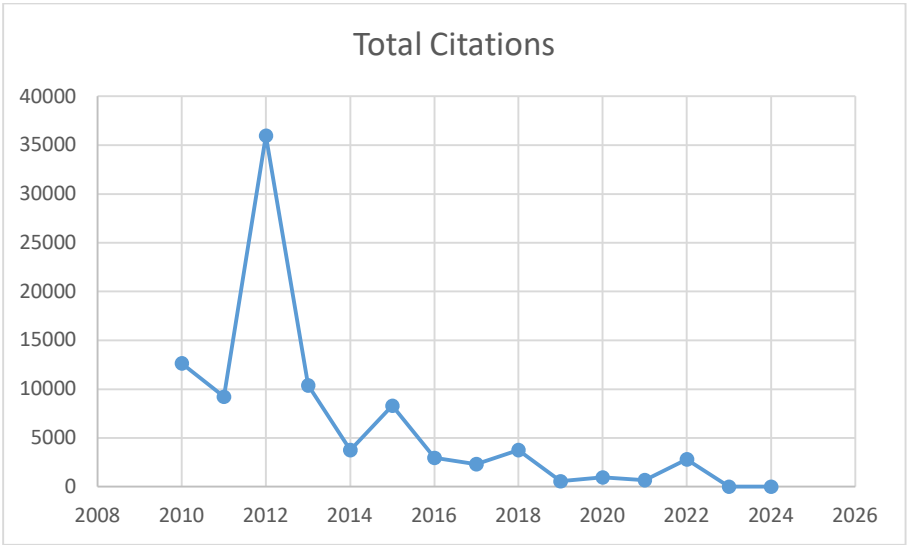
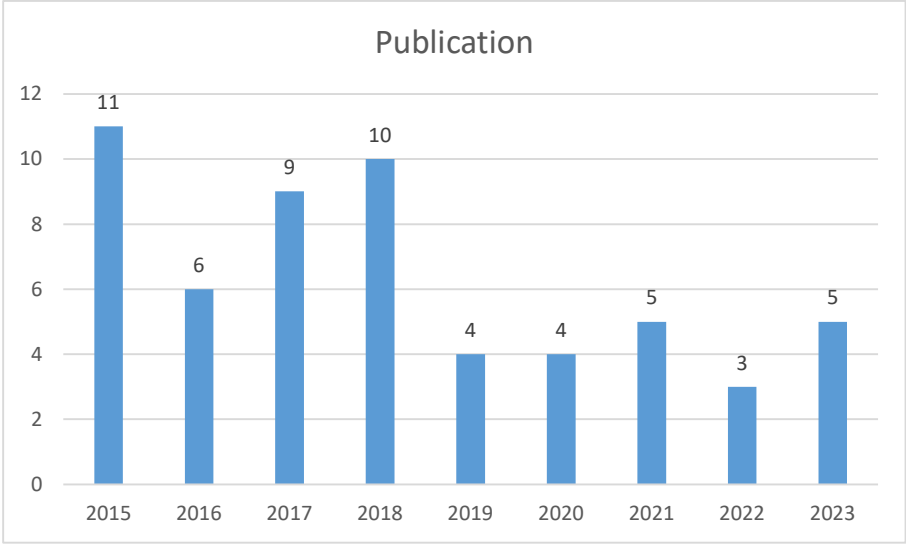
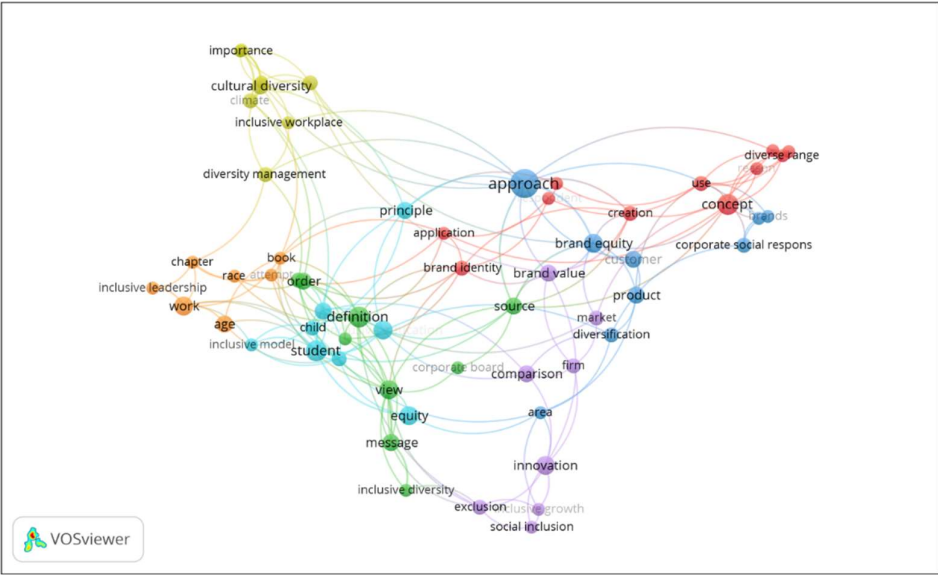


Figure 2: Annual Citation Trend



### Figure 3: Annual Publication Trend



**Figure 4: VoS View of Occurrence and co-occurrences of keywords related to brand inclusivity & marketing- Network Visualization**

**3.2: Key Findings:** Below is a detailed narrative explanation of the studies covered, categorized by their focus areas:

## 1. Brand Communities and Value Creation

Article: Schau, H. J., Muniz, A. M., & Arnould, E. J. (2009). "How Brand Community Practices Create Value."

**Key Focus:** This research explores the practices within brand communities that generate value for both the brands and their members. Their analysis delineates twelve value-generating practices, systematically categorized into four thematic domains: social networking, community engagement, impression management and brand use. These practices not only cultivate a profound sense of belonging and loyalty among consumers but also transcend the

superficial act of brand consumption.

Although the primary focus is on consumer experience, the implications for brands are substantial. Brands that proactively support and nurture community practices are more likely to cultivate enduring loyalty and intrinsic value. This is because these practices facilitate deeper engagement and a more robust sense of community among consumers. However, businesses must be strategic in their approach to community engagement if they are to fully harness these benefits. In conclusion, Schau et al.'s research underscores the pivotal role of brand community practices in value creation. This is not merely about fostering consumption but about building meaningful connections that resonate on a deeper level with consumers. Brands that understand and implement these practices are better positioned to achieve long-term success and loyalty.

## 2. Brand Attachment and Consumer Loyalty

Article: Park, C. W., MacInnis, D. J., & Priester, J. R. (2010). "Brand Attachment and Brand Attitude Strength: Conceptual and Empirical Differentiation of Two Critical Brand Equity Drivers."

Key Focus: This work elucidates the nuanced distinctions between brand attachment (an emotional bond) and brand attitude strength (a cognitive evaluation). The authors argue that although both constructs are pivotal, brand attachment emerges as a more potent predictor of consumer behavior. This is particularly salient because consumers with robust brand attachments exhibit behaviors indicative of higher commitment: they demonstrate an increased tolerance for price escalations and exhibit stronger advocacy tendencies. The research underscores that fostering strong emotional attachments between consumers and brands may yield superior outcomes in terms of long-term loyalty compared to merely cultivating positive attitudes. However, it is critical to note that while brand attitude strength (cognitive evaluation) does contribute to consumer behavior, its impact is often eclipsed by the profound influence of emotional bonds. Therefore, the implications of this study are profound: companies should prioritize strategies that enhance emotional connections with consumers to engender enduring loyalty. In conclusion, the differentiation between brand attachment and brand attitude strength is not merely academic but has significant practical ramifications. Building emotional attachments, although potentially more resource-intensive, may offer greater returns in terms of consumer loyalty and advocacy.

## 3. Brand Credibility in Cultural Contexts

Article: Erdem, T., Swait, J., & Valenzuela, A. (2006). "Brand Credibility, Brand Consideration, and Choice."

Key Focus: The research explores the influence of brand credibility—encompassing perceived quality and trustworthiness—on consumer decision-making across diverse cultural landscapes. It elucidates that consumer originating from cultures characterized by elevated uncertainty avoidance (e.g., Japan) exhibit a heightened propensity to depend on credible brands to mitigate purchasing risk. Insight: For global marketers, comprehending the cultural variances in the assessment of brand credibility can substantially inform targeted branding strategies. Although the fundamental premise remains consistent, the application of credibility varies significantly among different cultural groups. This study, however, underscores that the propensity to value brand credibility is not universally uniform but is, instead, modulated by cultural parameters. For instance, in markets where uncertainty avoidance is markedly pronounced, the reliance on brand credibility is more acute: this is because consumers in these regions seek to alleviate the inherent risks associated with purchase decisions. Conversely, in cultures with lower uncertainty avoidance, brand credibility may exert a less pronounced influence on consumer choices. Thus, for global marketers, the imperative lies in tailoring branding strategies to align with cultural expectations and perceptions of credibility. This necessitates a nuanced understanding of how different consumer groups evaluate credibility: it involves an intricate interplay of perceived quality and trustworthiness. By leveraging this insight, marketers can devise strategies that resonate more effectively with target audiences across disparate cultural milieus.

## 4. Market Creation in Developing Economies

Article: Mair, J., Marti, I., & Ventresca, M. J. (2012). "Building Inclusive Markets in Rural Bangladesh: Social Intermediation and Institutional Transformation."

Key Focus: This research undertakes an examination of market-building initiatives within underdeveloped economies, specifically via a case study concentrating on rural Bangladesh. The study elucidates institutional deficits resulting in market exclusion, while delineating strategies for market inclusion through the reconfiguration of market architecture and the legitimization of emergent actors. Insight: Although in developing economies, fostering inclusive market structures is pivotal for equitable growth, it is imperative that both businesses and policymakers prioritize structural transformations to support marginalized actors. Notably, the research (Mair et

al., 2012) emphasizes the necessity of addressing institutional voids: these voids precipitate market exclusion. However, the study also underscores the importance of social intermediation as a mechanism for institutional transformation. This involves re-architecting the market (to bridge institutional gaps), but also legitimizing new actors (to facilitate their integration into the market system). The implications are profound: equitable growth in developing economies is contingent upon these dual strategies. Moreover, the authors argue that, because institutional transformations require concerted efforts from multiple stakeholders, businesses and policymakers must collaboratively engage in the process. Although structural changes are complex and multifaceted, they are essential for facilitating the inclusion of marginalized actors. This dual approach—focusing on both market reconfiguration and actor legitimization—constitutes a comprehensive strategy for fostering inclusive markets in rural Bangladesh. The research provides a nuanced perspective on the mechanisms through which inclusive market structures can be cultivated in underdeveloped economies. The findings underscore the critical role of institutional transformation in achieving equitable growth, highlighting the need for collaborative efforts by businesses and policymakers.

#### 5. Cultural Branding and Urban Development

Article: Evans, G. (2003). "Hard-branding the Cultural City – from Prado to Prada."

Key Focus: This study provides a rigorous critique of urban branding methodologies, scrutinizing the phenomenon wherein municipalities position themselves as cultural epicenters through "hard branding" techniques, which often prioritize consumerist objectives over authentic cultural interaction. Cities such as Bilbao and Rio de Janeiro are exemplified as cases where the commodification of cultural branding has taken precedence, often marginalizing the participation of local communities. Fundamental Insight: Urban branding initiatives must equilibrate economic ambitions with the safeguarding of cultural heterogeneity, ensuring inclusivity and long-term viability.

#### 6. Place Branding and Identity

Article: Kavaratzis, M., & Hatch, M. J. (2013). "The Dynamics of Place Brands: An Identity-based Approach to Place Branding Theory."

Key Focus: Their research critiques the prevalent oversimplification of place identity within contemporary branding practices; it argues for a more intricate approach that incorporates identity into branding endeavors.

However, successful place branding must accurately encapsulate the complexity of place identity—this means focusing on authenticity rather than superficiality. Although current methodologies often default to reductive representations, it is imperative to engender a more holistic reflection of place identity. Because place branding strategies that fail to account for the multifaceted nature of identity risk being ineffective, the authors advocate for an approach that intertwines branding with identity in a symbiotic manner. This perspective not only challenges existing paradigms but also extends the theoretical framework, pushing for an evolution in the conceptualization of place branding strategies.

#### 7. Brand Identity vs. Brand Image

Article: Nandan, S. (2005). "An Exploration of the Brand Identity-Brand Image Linkage: A Communications Perspective."

Key Focus: This article rigorously interrogates the intricate relationship between the deliberate presentation of a brand (i.e., brand identity) and its consequent perception by consumers (i.e., brand image). It posits that maintaining a high degree of consistency between identity and image is imperative for the attainment of brand success. Insight: Achieving alignment between a brand's identity and its consumer image is indispensable for robust brand equity. Although this alignment becomes particularly crucial as communication channels evolve, it remains a fundamental principle.

#### 8. Online Brand Followers and Consumer Perception

Article: Naylor, R. W., Lamberton, C. P., & West, P. M. (2012). "Beyond the 'Like' Button: The Impact of Mere Virtual Presence on Brand Evaluations and Purchase Intentions in Social Media Settings."

Key Focus: This empirical study delves into the influence exerted by a brand's online followers on the perceptions and purchase intentions of target consumers. It elucidates that demographic characteristics of these online followers (e.g., age, income, race) can significantly modulate brand evaluations. However, even in the absence of active engagement with the brand, such characteristics still wield considerable impact. Because of the pervasive nature of social media, the findings underscore the importance of understanding the passive yet potent role of mere virtual presence in shaping consumer perceptions. Insight: Brands ought to meticulously curate their digital persona while

remaining acutely aware of the perceptual impact engendered by the demographics of their followers on prospective clientele (potential customers); this necessitates an understanding that the demographic composition of one's audience can profoundly influence brand perception. Although the importance of managing online presence cannot be overstated, it is equally critical to recognize the nuanced ways in which follower demographics mold public perception. This awareness not only enhances brand image but also fosters trust among potential customers, who may base their purchasing decisions on the perceived congruence between the brand's ethos and the demographic profile of its followers.

#### 9. Destination Branding and Tourism

Article: Morgan, N., Pritchard, A., & Pride, R. (2002). "Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposition."

Key Focus: This research elucidates the paramount importance of branding within the domain of tourism marketing, with New Zealand's "100% Pure New Zealand" campaign epitomizing a paradigmatic case study. The campaign (meticulously designed) targeted international tourists by leveraging a distinctive national identity. Insight: Robust and focused branding is indispensable for the triumphant marketing of destinations, necessitating ongoing evaluations of campaign efficacy to ensure sustained relevance and appeal.

#### 10. Nation Branding for Competitive Advantage

Article: Gilmore, F. (2002). "A Country—Can It Be Repositioned? Spain—the Success Story of Country Branding."

Key Focus: The article delves into the concept of nation branding and explores the potential for countries to reposition themselves on the global stage (thus acquiring a competitive edge). The case of Spain is employed to demonstrate how strategic nation branding can enhance a country's image and augment its global stature. Insight: Nation branding affords countries the opportunity to redefine their global identities, engendering enduring advantages in facets such as tourism, exports and diplomacy.

#### 11. Co-Creation of Brand Identity

Article: Black, I. R., & Veloutsou, C. (2017). "Working Consumers: Co-creation of Brand Identity, Consumer Identity, and Brand Community Identity."

Key Focus: This investigation delves into the co-creation ("co-creation": a collaborative effort) of brand identity, focusing on how consumers actively engage in the formation of a brand's identity through their interactions with the brand. It underscores the role of consumers as "working consumers" who contribute significantly to brand meaning. Insight: Brands should embrace (actively) consumer participation in identity creation; this leads to deeper engagement and stronger community ties.

Each of these research studies contributes to a deeper understanding of branding, market creation, and consumer behavior, offering valuable insights into how brands can build lasting equity. From brand attachment to cultural branding, from online consumer perception to destination marketing, these articles underscore the importance of strategic, authentic, and inclusive approaches in brand management.

The analysis also indicates that there was an increase in the production and impact of scholarly work on brand inclusivity in the early 2010s. However, since 2013 both the volume of publications and overall citations have seen a decline. This decline may be attributed to a change in research priorities or a diminished interest in specific facets of brand inclusivity. The recent decrease in publication figures coupled with the lack of citations for the latest studies underscores the necessity for renewed academic exploration or shifting viewpoints, on the subject. There are several reasons why it is crucial to continue researching brand inclusivity. With the world becoming more interconnected brands need to appeal to a wider range of people. Consumers from different cultures, ethnicities and social backgrounds are now an essential part of brand communities (Crane et al., 2019). Inclusivity isn't just about doing the thing; it's vital for reaching a broader and more varied customer audience. Research is necessary to find out how brands can adjust their inclusivity approaches to suit global consumers while staying true to themselves (Fleming, 2020). People's views on inclusion and diversity have changed over time with consumers increasingly holding brands responsible for their beliefs (Aaker, 1997). Nowadays especially younger consumers expect brands to go beyond gestures and fully embrace inclusivity in their messaging products and business practices. This changing landscape brings challenges and opportunities for brands requiring ongoing research on how to meet these expectations effectively (Brown & Pharr, 2019). While early studies mainly concentrated on race and gender inclusivity the concept of inclusivity has now evolved to encompass identities that intersect various categories like gender, race, disability, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status (Chadha



& Dutta, 2021). Brands are expected to acknowledge and address these complex identities which necessitates a deeper comprehension of inclusivity, in branding. Future research should delve into these intersections and explore how brands can meaningfully incorporate them, into their marketing strategies (Banerjee, 2020). The emergence of washing or superficial inclusivity efforts by certain brands has highlighted the importance of conducting more research on how brands can overcome consumer skepticism of brands that appear to exploit social causes for marketing gains, making authenticity key to building trust and loyalty (Chadha & Dutta, 2021). Authenticity, in branding has become crucial and research could assist in identifying practices to ensure that inclusive marketing initiatives are perceived as genuine and impactful rather than merely performative.

#### 4. BRAND INCLUSIVITY CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK BASED ON LITERATURE:

The importance of embracing inclusivity in branding has become more prominent as companies aim to align their values with societal principles like equality, diversity and representation (Holt, 2004). In the past branding efforts primarily focused on crafting aspirational and often exclusive identities for a target audience. However, the emergence of movements for social justice and shifting consumer expectations have brought inclusivity to the forefront of brand conversations (Parker & Wang, 2016). Nowadays brands that prioritize inclusivity strive to reflect a range, of identities encompassing race, gender, ability and socio-economic status. Research underscores the evolution of inclusive branding from a concept into a standard practice emphasizing the role of brands in promoting societal wellbeing while broadening their customer base (Banerjee, 2020).

Embracing diversity in branding is not just a necessity for businesses but also a mirror of how consumers see themselves. Identity theory suggests that people are attracted to brands that resonate with their social and cultural backgrounds (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Brands that embrace inclusivity convey a sense of acceptance and recognition strengthening the bond between the brand and its consumers (Aaker, 1997). Studies indicate that inclusive brands nurture customer loyalty especially among marginalized communities that have been historically overlooked in advertising (Brown & Pharr, 2019). Additionally, being inclusive improves how a brand is perceived with consumers viewing brands as more genuine and socially conscious (Chadha & Dutta, 2021). Despite the increasing acceptance of inclusivity some researchers argue that brands often struggle to go beyond superficial inclusion (Humphreys & Thompson, 2014). The criticism is particularly directed at "tokenism" where brands showcase diverse individuals in their marketing campaigns but neglect to tackle systemic inequalities or make significant contributions towards social progress (Edelman, 2021). This can result in scepticism among consumers with diverse audiences questioning the authenticity of a brands inclusive initiatives. The existing literature emphasizes the importance for brands to implement more profound structural transformations and weave inclusivity into every facet of their operations rather, than limiting it to marketing efforts (Jones et al., 2019). Another aspect worth exploring is the connection between inclusivity and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Studies show that companies that effectively incorporate inclusivity into their CSR efforts not only make a positive social impact but also gain a competitive advantage in the market (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Inclusive CSR initiatives demonstrate a brands dedication to fairness and social equity which is increasingly becoming an important factor for building brand trust and customer loyalty (Crane et al., 2019). However, researchers warn that CSR and inclusivity need to be sincere and comprehensive to steer clear of the pitfalls of woke washing where companies superficially use social justice rhetoric without taking meaningful action (Fleming, 2020).

A systematic literature review into brand inclusivity will give a lot of insights on the nature of the current focus on brand inclusivity, the rigor of brands in incorporating the same and future directions if any on this actionable factor.

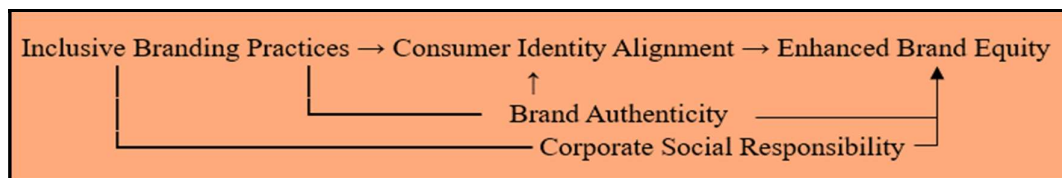


Figure 5: A Conceptual Model of Brand Inclusivity

The suggested framework for brand inclusivity combines essential components found in existing research to offer a comprehensive understanding of how inclusivity operates in the context of branding. This framework revolves around four core elements: Inclusive Branding Strategies, Alignment with Consumer Identity, Authenticity of the Brand and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). These elements collectively contribute towards achieving the goal of Strengthened Brand Equity.

1. **Inclusive Brand Practices:** These practices involve brands making efforts to include diversity and representation in their messaging, products and interactions with customers. This means addressing aspects such as race, gender, age, socio economic status and abilities in their marketing campaigns and communications (Banerjee, 2020). Inclusive branding practices serve as the basis for a brands overall inclusivity. Companies need to go beyond mere tokenism to genuinely showcase significant diversity across all facets of their identity and operations (Humphreys & Thompson, 2014).
2. **Customer Identity Alignment:** The extent to which consumers perceive a brand as reflecting their personal and social identities plays a role in their engagement with it. According to theory consumers are more inclined to connect with brands that align with their values and cultural identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Aaker, 1997). Inclusive brands establish strong connections, with individuals from historically marginalized groups leading to deeper emotional bonds, with the brand (Brown & Pharr, 2019).
3. **Enhanced Brand Equity:** Brand equity refers to the value that a brand adds to its offerings as seen through customer loyalty, recognition and positive associations with the brand (Aaker, 1997). When a brand effectively embraces inclusivity aligns with consumer identities shows authenticity and incorporates inclusivity into its corporate social responsibility initiatives it boosts its brand equity. This leads to consumers being more inclined to stay loyal to the brand support it and trust its values ultimately strengthening the brands overall presence and market share (Chadha & Dutta, 2021).
4. **Brand Authenticity:** Brand authenticity pertains to how sincere a brands commitment to inclusivity is perceived by consumers. Authenticity plays a role in avoiding skepticism, among consumers that often arises when brands engage in superficial or performative acts of inclusivity commonly referred to, as woke washing (Fleming, 2020). Authenticity serves as a factor influencing the connection between inclusive branding practices and alignment with consumer identities. When consumers view a brand as genuinely inclusive it enhances the relationship between the brand and its customers (Chadha & Dutta, 2021).
5. **Corporate Social Responsibility:** Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) showcases a company's commitment to the well-being of society, the economy and the environment often through initiatives promoting inclusivity. CSR programs that emphasize inclusivity are viewed as a testament to a brands enduring commitment to fairness (Crane et al., 2019). CSR serves as an affirmation of a brands inclusive values. By incorporating inclusivity into CSR efforts, it bolsters the brands image and credibility fostering lasting brand loyalty (Kotler & Lee, 2005).

This conceptual framework explains the role played by inclusivity in enhancing a brands value. Through the integration of inclusive practices, alignment with diverse identities and involvement in social responsibility initiatives this model demonstrates the synergistic effect of these factors in bolstering a brands worth.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

An important insight identified through this review of literature is the significance of brand communities in generating shared value. Schau et al. (2009) show how brand practices cultivate emotional and procedural commitments that go beyond mere business forecasts. These communities enrich cultural capital and enhance consumption options emphasizing the value of strategic leveraging of brand practices for branding purposes (Schau et al., 2009). Similarly, brand attachment emerges as a factor influencing consumer behaviour surpassing the impact of brand attitude strength in predicting purchase intentions as noted by Park et al. (2010). This underscores the necessity, for exploring the intricacies of brand relationships especially regarding the coexistence of strong aversive brand ties and attachment bonds (Park et al., 2010). Brand credibility holds significance in shaping consumer decisions worldwide, across various cultural backgrounds. Research by Erdem et al. 2006 revealed that individuals in collectivist societies and those with a strong preference for avoiding uncertainty place greater importance on trustworthy brands. This, in turn, helps to lower information expenses and perceived risks.

The findings of this study highlight the importance for marketers to tailor their branding approaches based on cultural factors while also suggesting potential areas, for further exploration such as consistency over time and brand investment (Erdem et al., 2006). Another aspect worth noting is the dynamics at play in institutions and markets as examined by Mair et al. (2012). They highlight how gaps in institutions can result in exclusion from markets. Their argument suggests that by redefining market structures and legitimizing new participants it is possible to foster inclusive markets, particularly in developing regions (Mair et al., 2012). This research emphasizes the significance of comprehending the interaction between institutional settings and broader market approaches. The intersection of cultural branding and urban development also presents an area of exploration. Evans (2003) critiques the commercialization of art and cultural establishments in cities driven by capitalism where cultural districts and museums are utilized as marketing tools. This raises concerns regarding the potential erosion of diversity and community involvement prompting future investigations into urban branding strategies that prioritize inclusivity (Evans, 2003). The topic of branding is also a focus of interest Kavaratzis and Hatch 2013 suggest a need for a deeper understanding of how place identity relates to branding. They argue that the current approaches oversimplify identity hindering the success of branding initiatives. Their research calls for a reassessment of strategies in challenging settings such as cities where identity is diverse and ever changing Kavaratzis Hatch 2013. In the realm of digital branding Naylor et al. (2012) underscore how the demographic characteristics of online followers' impact perceptions of a brand. Their findings suggest that even passive followers can sway purchasing decisions. This implies that brand managers need to be strategic about revealing or concealing follower identities (Naylor et al., 2012). Another important aspect is the co-creation of brand identity through interactions with consumers. Black and Veloutsou (2017) explore how brand identity is shaped by customers and the brand community. They emphasize the role of behaviour in shaping brand identity while calling for more research on situations where consumer influence is less prominent (Black & Veloutsou 2017). The rise of brand activism to advance social objectives like equality and inclusion resonates with the mission of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals SDGs. According to Confetto et al. 2023 activist branding tactics although varied in their execution can bolster brand value and customer loyalty when they are rooted in authentic and steadfast principles. Future studies could investigate the influence of such activism on profitability and corporate image shedding light on the effectiveness of social media activism initiatives (Confetto et al. 2023). To sum up this review highlights how branding is changing due to shifts in culture, institutions and technology. With aspects like brand communities, credibility, identity co creation and activism taking centre stage in branding approaches future studies should examine the lasting effects of these trends on consumer behaviour, market inclusivity and business performance. The existing research emphasizes the need to better understand how factors such as cultural contexts, institutional shortcomings and digital landscapes influence brand strategies presenting opportunities for further investigation across various industries.

## **6. FUTURE SCOPE AND LIMITATION:**

Considering the importance of brand inclusivity several key areas deserve deeper investigation:

1. Assessing the Impact of Inclusive Branding: While inclusivity is generally viewed as advantageous for brand value there is a lack of empirical studies on measuring its effectiveness (Aaker, 1997). Future research could aim at creating metrics to assess how inclusive branding strategies influence consumer perceptions, loyalty and long-term brand success (Brown & Pharr, 2019).
2. Technology and Inclusivity. With the rise of platforms and AI driven marketing brands encounter both opportunities and challenges in upholding inclusivity (Crane et al., 2019). It's essential to conduct research on how brands can leverage technology to foster inclusivity instead of perpetuating existing biases (Fleming, 2020).
3. Variations in Inclusivity Across Different Regions and Cultures: The way inclusivity is expressed varies depending on the cultural and regional context (Banerjee, 2020). What appeals to consumers in the West may not have the same impact in Asia, Africa or Latin America. Future studies should focus on how brands can adapt their inclusivity initiatives to different cultural settings while staying true to their core values (Humphreys & Thompson, 2014).
4. The Importance of Inclusivity in Crisis Management and Reputation Protection: With increasing public scrutiny on inclusion brands that fall short of expectations risk severe damage to their reputation (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Research could delve into how inclusive branding approaches can assist companies in handling crises rebuilding trust and nurturing lasting consumer relationships (Chadha & Dutta, 2021).

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