

BEYOND GENDER

TWO The impact of
intersectionality
in advertising

Photo: Danielle Villasana / Moment / Getty Images

#UNSTEREOTYPE
ALLIANCE





Unstereotype Alliance member LIONS sponsored the Beyond Gender 2 study on behalf of the Unstereotype Alliance.

The research was conducted and part-funded by Unstereotype Alliance member Ipsos.

Images included in the report are from Getty Images' Project #ShowUs collection and include people from Japan, Turkey, UK and the US.

Created by Getty Images in partnership with Dove, Project #ShowUs is an innovative library of more than 14,000 photographs and videos, shot entirely by women, female-identifying and non-binary photographers and videographers, to deconstruct beauty stereotypes by setting a new standard for the authentic, diverse and inclusive representation of women and non-binary individuals across the world.

The Unstereotype Alliance seeks to eradicate harmful stereotypes from advertising and media to help create a more equal world. Convened by UN Women, the Alliance collectively acts to empower people in all their diversity (gender, race, class, age, ability, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, language, education, etc.) by using advertising as a force for good to drive positive change all over the world.

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Introduction

This report details the results of a four-country study conducted by Ipsos for the Unstereotype Alliance, sponsored by Cannes LIONS.

The purpose of the research was to examine the presence and impact of intersectionality in advertising across the selected countries. Intersectionality refers to how the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender apply to a given individual or group, can create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.¹ The term, coined by law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw over 30 years ago, has been used in the advertising industry to exemplify the need for advertisements (ads) that show people who have multiple intersecting identities, instead of overly relying on one-dimensional views of society.²

“[Intersectionality is] basically a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What’s often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts.”

Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw³

Adoption of intersectionality in advertising is crucial to driving social change in societies around the world because of advertising and the media’s powerful role in influencing behaviours, shaping beliefs, and reinforcing social attitudes. Without fully representative and inclusive portrayals of all people in their unique complexities, inequities not only in advertising but also in our communities will continue to exist.

To understand reactions to intersectionality in advertising, the Ipsos research teams in each country considered and reviewed over 50 creative executions specific to their respective market. The final eight ads selected for testing were chosen because they included an intersectional portrayal of people within the context of each country and/or people who challenged traditional roles and stereotypes.

The research included questions on the reaction to and emotions evoked by the ads tested as well as questions on general perceptions of advertising and personal mindset. The advertising testing was conducted using a pre-post analysis in which respondents were asked how they felt about a brand and how close they felt to the brand both before and after viewing the execution for that brand. The research analysis was completed across all the ads tested as the purpose was not to test specific executions but rather the reaction to intersectionality in advertising.

1. Oxford English Dictionary. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/429843>

2. Ad Week Magazine July 20, 2020. <https://www.adweek.com/agencies/brands-intersectionality-effectively-reach-women-of-color/>

3. Time Magazine February 20, 2020. <https://time.com/5786710/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality/>

The research was conducted in April 2021 with a sample of 2,000 respondents in each of Japan, Turkey, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US), using an online methodology. The survey results are considered representative of the general population in Japan, the UK and the US and representative of the online population in Turkey. Respondents self-identified their religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, and marital status, which are the categorizations that are used throughout this report. Where these populations are grouped together, the term ‘marginalised’ is used to mean those that have been historically underrepresented in advertising.⁴ In contrast, the term ‘minority’ is used to describe people who self-identified as any type of minority by answering “yes” to the question “do you identify as a minority”. Similarly, respondents were asked if they consider themselves someone living with a disability, which is reflected in this report as “Living with a disability”.

In order to develop the LGBTIQ+ category, respondents were asked two questions:

- Do you consider yourself to be transgender?
 - Yes / No / Prefer not to answer
- Which of the following best represents how you think about yourself?
 - Gay or lesbian / Heterosexual or straight / Bisexual / Something else / Prefer not to answer

The LGBTIQ+ group for analysis in this report includes respondents that answered “yes” to the transgender question and / or identified as “gay or lesbian,” “bisexual,” or “something else”⁵ – to the question on sexual identity. In creating this category each respondent was only counted once, and so this group includes those that are transgender, transgender and gay/bisexual/something else, and those that are not transgender but identified as gay/bisexual/something else.

The quantitative findings were supported by a one-week discussion within an Ipsos online community panel in each country. For further detail, please see the Methodology Appendix in this report. Observations from academic representatives in each country were sought and commentary can be found at the end of each section of key findings.



Photo: serts / E+ / Getty Images

4. This includes respondents that self-identified as LGBTIQ+, living with disabilities, immigrants, minorities, and/or country-specific ethnic and/or religion minorities as defined below:

Japan: religious minorities, unmarried populations.

Turkey: non-Muslim populations, unmarried populations.

US: non-white and ethnic Hispanic populations.

UK: minority, non-white, and LGBTIQ+ populations.

Cultural contexts differ on the stigma attached to these categorizations, and it is likely that social desirability bias means that figures were underreported.

As a measure of this, note that 2% in the US, 2% in the UK, 12% in Japan and 23% in Turkey answered the question on sexual orientation “prefer not to answer.” For the question on whether the respondent considers themselves to be transgender, “prefer not to answer” was 2.5% or less across all countries.

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Overview of key findings

Changing expectations of advertising

Across the board, the research showed that consumers' expectations of brands are changing, and those that create content with diverse representations of people in terms of race, ethnicity, creed, body size, sexual orientation, gender, ability and more, in roles that defy traditional stereotypes are best positioned to strengthen their business performance and meet consumer expectations.

The inclusion of intersectional portrayals in advertising has been shown to drive consumers' feelings of "closeness" with a brand.⁶ This metric is used in advertising impact studies and found to be increasingly important to brand choice. Furthermore, an increase in associations of positive emotions with the brand, with little to no backlash or downsides, was found. Indeed, many consumers are seeking validation as they do not otherwise see themselves in advertising and struggle to find products that are made for them.

As the findings show, these consumers, who are largely from minority groups, find intersectional advertising particularly impactful – making the shift to more representative content not just the right thing to do, but also a business imperative.

Consumer fears and discrimination in daily life

To help set the context for the analysis, the research included measures of self-perception and discrimination to understand how respondents perceive themselves and what types of societal barriers they may be up against.

While there was significant variation across the countries in terms of self-perception, consistent themes emerged in terms of the discrimination experienced. Those traditionally considered to be at the margins of society (whether this was unmarried respondents in Japan, LGBTIQ+ respondents in Turkey, or those that identified as minorities in the US or UK), feared discrimination the most.

There is a sizeable proportion of the populations who fear harassment or discrimination, and across countries traditionally marginalised populations including LGBTIQ+ groups expressed the most fear and vulnerability. More than half of each of these groups, regardless of the country they live in or their gender, expressed significant concerns about facing discrimination or harassment.



Photo: Peyton Fulford / Moment / Getty Images

6. This includes respondents that self-identified as LGBTIQ+, living with disabilities, immigrants, minorities, and/or country-specific ethnic and/or religion minorities as defined below: Japan: religious minorities, unmarried populations; Turkey: non-Muslim populations, unmarried populations; US: non-white and ethnic Hispanic populations.

<u>Discrimination Measures⁷</u>	Japan	Turkey	United Kingdom	United States
Because of who I am, I might have trouble finding or keeping a job	48%	27%	27%	28%
Because of who I am, I worry about being treated unfairly by a teacher, supervisor, or employer	38%	31%	28%	28%
I fear I will be targeted and called names or harassed in public	29%	41%	22%	23%

% Agree with statement.

Self perception remains mixed

Though many respondents were fearful of societal judgment and the repercussions they could face for self-expression, in the US and Turkey people still shared positive self perceptions, including those in the minority groups that expressed fear. In Japan, respondents were much less emphatic about their confidence and sense of self, perhaps driven by differing cultural norms. Similarly, UK respondents also reported lower feelings of pride and empowerment.

While the results show high levels of confidence in Turkey, they also show that about one in five have felt nervous or anxious in the past several weeks, a theme replicated in the other three countries. Feelings of being alone are also highest in Turkey, followed by the US, the UK and Japan.

	Japan	Turkey	United Kingdom	United States
Proud of who I am	13%	66%	38%	50%
Confident	10%	61%	26%	41%
Empowered	7%	44%	18%	30%
Nervous and anxious	24%	20%	20%	17%
Alone	14%	22%	17%	17%

% Describes me well (score of 8 to 10 on scale from 0 to 10)

In all markets, women were more likely than men to share that they have felt nervous or anxious in the past several weeks with the gap most acute in the UK (+11 points) and lower in Turkey (+3 points for women versus men). Those who identify as a minority were also more likely than those who do not, to exhibit the emotions of nervousness and anxiety across all markets, ranging from +14 points in Turkey to +7 points in the UK and the US and +1 point in Japan.

7. Based on the Intersectional Discrimination Index: Development and validation of measures of self-reported enacted and anticipated discrimination for intercategorical analysis; Ayden I.Scheimab Greta R.Bauerac; Social Science & Medicine; Volume 226, April 2019, Pages 225-235.

Advertising still does not depict reality

While there were significant differences in each country in the reactions to advertising, the measure of feeling under-represented in advertising was held by most respondents in all countries.

	Japan	Turkey	United Kingdom	United States
I rarely see myself in advertising	68%	66%	59%	53%

% Agree.

In all countries, those who identify as a minority were more likely than those who do not, to agree that they rarely see themselves in advertising, with a gap of 19 points in the US, 15 points in both Turkey and the UK and 7 points in Japan.

In the US and the UK, those who identify as LGBTIQ+ are also much more likely to agree that they rarely see themselves in advertising (+11 points in each market). The gap is smaller in Turkey and Japan (+3 in each market).

Across countries, and particularly in Japan and Turkey, people reflected that while the tides are beginning to turn towards more modern and intersectional approaches, advertising that represents traditional views and lifestyles is still very much present across the media landscape. For all, and especially those that identified as part of a traditionally marginalised group, there is a desire for brands to do more and do better to make their advertising reflect changing realities of society.

The impact of intersectionality

Overall, the research found intersectional advertising that represents people across a variety of social categorisations grows and deepens consumers' ties with a brand, with few downsides. At an overall level, intersectional ads performed well in Turkey, the UK, and the US, with less impact noted in Japan. In addition to the changes measured it is notable that in Turkey, and to a lesser extent Japan, consumers already had strong proximity to the brands included in the tests.

	Japan	Turkey	United Kingdom	United States
PRE-ASSESSMENT: How close do you feel to [brand in advertising]?	54.9	72.3	38.3	38.7
POST-ASSESSMENT: How close do you feel to [brand in advertising]?	56.1	75.8	42.4	44.2
CHANGE IN CLOSENESS ACROSS ALL ADVERTISING TESTED:	+1.23	+3.50	+4.09	+5.50

Average score across all advertisements on a scale of 0 to 100.

However, one of the most interesting findings in the survey is the ability of intersectional advertising to reinforce positive associations and help those who fear how they will be treated in public. The degree to which the advertising moves people closer to the brand is, in most cases, higher among traditionally marginalised populations than the consumer average in each country.

Across Turkey, the US and the UK, many of the groups that feel under-represented overlap with those who are most moved by intersectional advertising:

- In **Turkey** there was overwhelming positive consensus among all groups, particularly among men, that intersectional ads made them feel closer to brands.
- Conversely, in the **UK** much larger impacts and positive associations were seen among women, particularly LGBTIQ+ and non-white women, who felt intersectional ads brought them closer to brands and made them feel accepted.
- In the US, women were more likely than men to be moved by the advertising with the highest impact amongst LGBTIQ+ and Hispanic women.

In contrast, the gaps by demographic identification were not significantly different in Japan.

Yet, the core of intersectionality is not only demographics, but how demographics relate to how we feel about ourselves and our role in society. These elements are particularly impacted by intersectionality in advertising, which can serve to not only reinforce positive emotions (such as feeling proud of oneself) but also help to lift up those who may be fearful of discrimination or harassment.

	Japan	Turkey	United Kingdom	United States
AVERAGE CHANGE IN CLOSENESS ACROSS ALL ADVERTISING TESTED WITHIN THE MARKET:	+1.23	+3.50	+4.09	+5.50
Men	1.3	4.7	3.0	2.8
Women	1.1	2.4	5.1	8.1
LGBTIQ+	0.8	3.6	4.8	6.8
Minority	0.3	4.0	4.9	6.5
Among those who have felt proud of who they are:	3.8	3.1	4.1	5.5
Among those who fear being harassed in public:	1.5	4.2	5.8	7.0

Average score across all advertisements on a scale of 0 to 100.

A call to action

Intersectionality in advertising may be seen as affecting only a small or targeted group of people. However, this research shows that its impact may be much greater. It has the power to influence large segments of the population, reinforcing the point that diversity and intersectionality in advertising is not only good for people, it is good for business.

The research demonstrates the potential positive impact of intersectionality in advertising while highlighting the variations across countries. These unique characteristics and findings are discussed in further detail below. Regardless of the country, the findings demonstrate that representation in advertising that goes Beyond Gender alone, is of critical importance.

Key findings:
Japan

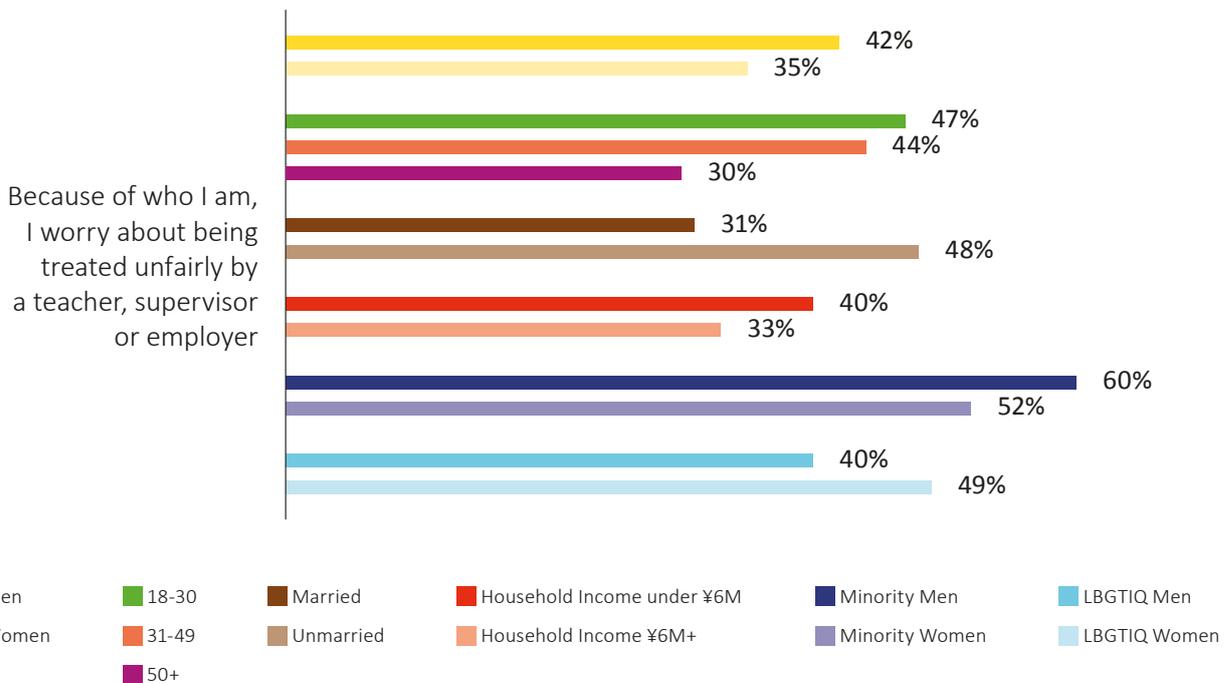
Country context

Fault lines across Japanese society

Fear of discrimination and harassment in Japan varies widely depending on age, marital status, household income, level of education, and sexual orientation/identity. These views are most prevalent among specific demographic groups in Japan, including those who:

- Are under the age of 50, and even more so, under 35
- Are unmarried
- Have a household income of less than 6 million yen⁸
- Have only a secondary education
- Consider themselves to be a minority; or
- Are LGBTIQ+.

% Agree



Fear of discrimination in a variety of areas (finding or keeping a job, getting an apartment or housing, being treated unfairly by teachers, supervisors, or employers) and with being targeted, called names, and harassed in public, is most prevalent among those who consider themselves to be “a minority.” They represent 9% of both Japanese males and females.

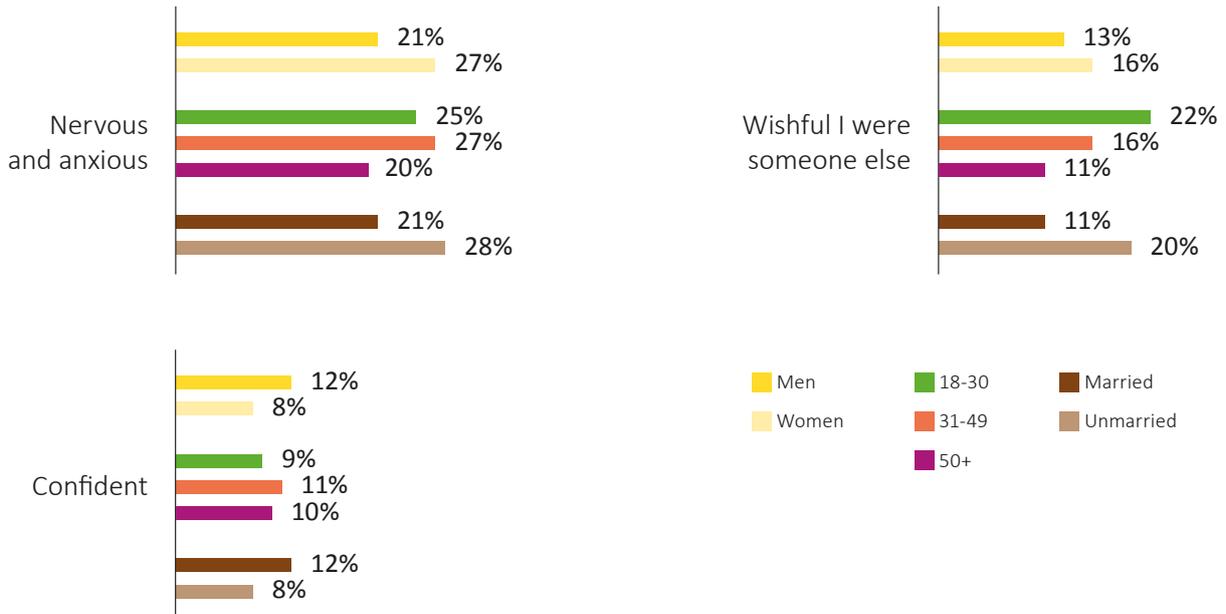
However, profiling this “minority” group presents a challenge because it does not differ significantly from the general population on most demographic variables such as gender, age, education, and income. While there are no significant differences by demographic, “minority” Japanese are more likely than average to report living alone (27% vs. 19%), living with a disability (20% vs. 10%), being an immigrant (6% vs. 1%), and – only among women - to be LGBTIQ+ (16% vs. 6%).

8. Equivalent to \$54,570.26, as of 23 September 21, UN Operational Rates of Exchange.

Japanese consumers need to feel supported

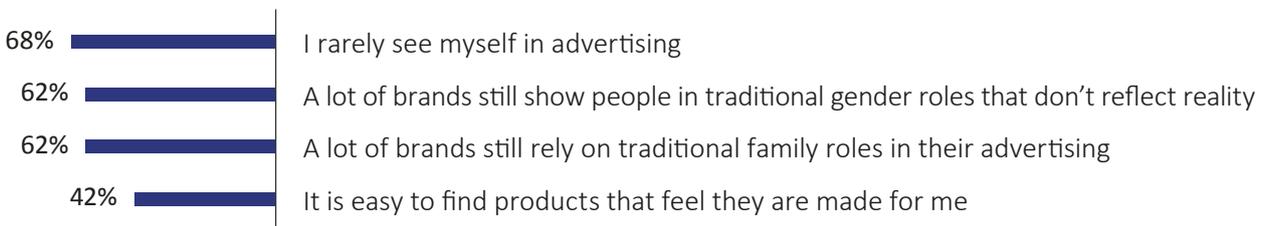
When asked about four positive and four negative measures of self-esteem, the three that Japanese respondents selected most commonly to describe themselves are: “nervous and anxious”, “wishful I were someone else”, and “alone” – ahead of “proud of who I am”. As many selected “sad” as did “confident” and fewer selected “attractive” and “empowered”. Younger and unmarried Japanese showed higher negative measures and lower positive measures than average.

% Agree



Additionally, only four in ten Japanese surveyed said it is easy for them to find products they feel are made for them and two-thirds said they rarely see themselves represented in advertising. Approximately two-thirds also agreed brands still show people in traditional family and gender roles that don’t reflect the lived reality of many consumers across the country.

% Agree



In the qualitative discussion sessions, many expressed the view that advertising in Japan tends to reinforce rather than challenge stereotypes, especially as they pertain to femininity, reflecting a culture that has traditionally valued conformity over individualism. These views could explain some of the quantitative findings, as many people throughout Japanese society struggle to reconcile their individualism with traditional social norms.

“Ads have conventionally shown women looking feminine and pretty running around after men. While they are supposed to be partners the women typically end up being the ones doing the chores and carrying the bags. This ad is different. It’s daring you to look at someone ‘as a person’, not because they are a woman.”

FEMALE, 27

Impact of intersectional advertising

Support consumers when they need it most

As shown above, brands that do challenge stereotypes are perceived to be in more in touch with today’s society without alienating consumers. Using the metric “a brand I feel close to” showed that ads that are inclusive and challenge traditional roles are effective in Japan.

“My sense from what is going on around me is that our culture is gradually opening up to be gender-free. Having an ad pick up on that trend in a positive way suggests that the company behind it is an open and inclusive company that has its finger on the pulse of current trends.”

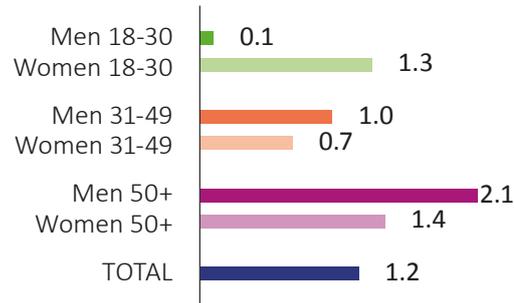
FEMALE, 29

Across all ads tested, the change in “closeness” score ranged from nil point to two points among every demographic group (based on gender, age, marital status, income, education, and sexual orientation) with an average increase among all adults of 1.2 points. It is worth noting that respondents in Japan already felt quite close to brands, with an average pre-test brand closeness score of 54.9 on a scale of 0-100.

Seven of the eight ads tested showed a change ranging from -1 to +2. However, the ad that was found to be the most inspirational showed a change of +7. This advertisement showed a woman in different roles with view to a better, more diverse and sustainable, future. This suggests that there is no downside for an advertisement to be inclusive and intersectional, and that it has the potential to have a strong positive impact.

Change in “brand closeness score” after exposure to the ad

Scale of 0-100

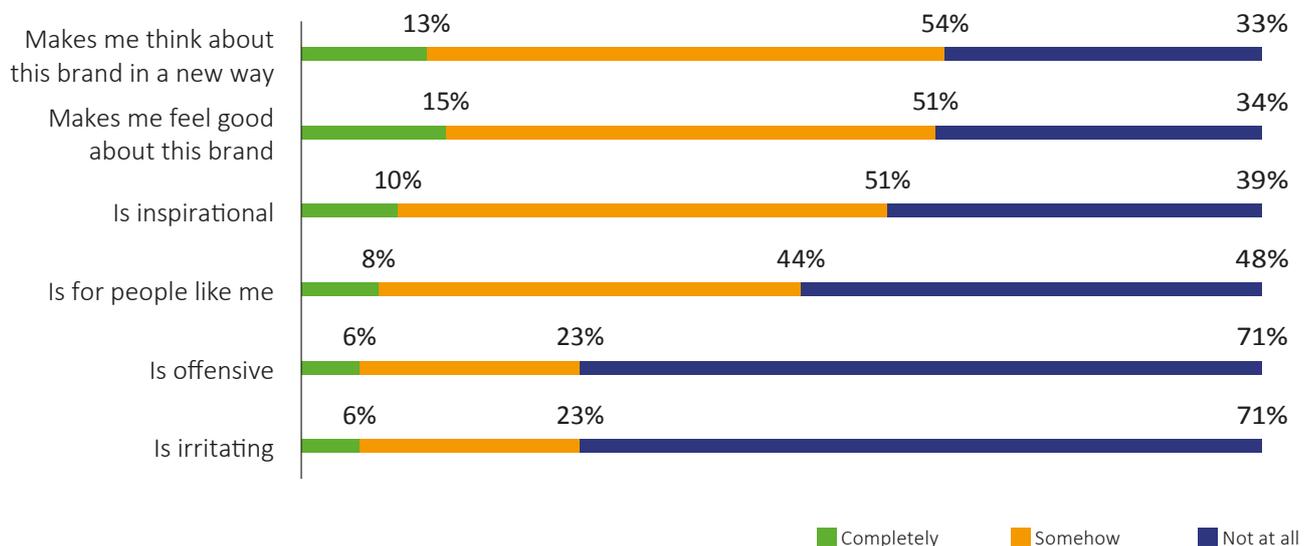


The intersectional creative executions evoked positive emotional associations. Four in five Japanese consumers surveyed agreed completely or somewhat that the advertising tested was believable. About two in three agreed the ads led them to feel good about the brand, think of it in a new way, and be glad it exists. Nearly as many said the ads stirred their emotions. Fewer than three in ten found the ads irritating or offensive.

“Seeing a depiction like this of a woman who presses on with the path that she wants to go on makes me feel good.”

FEMALE, 26

How did the ad make you feel?



In the qualitative research, ads depicting women in unconventional ways made both male and female viewers acknowledge and reflect on the fact that Japan currently remains a male-dominated society. Although a few felt that some ads challenge stereotypes too blatantly, the response was mostly positive.



Photo: Shiho Fukada / Moment / Getty Images

Observations from Renge Jibu

Advisor, Unstereotype Alliance Japan Chapter,
Associate Professor Tokyo Institute of Technology

Intersectionality is important when we discuss gender issues. Women are not a monolithic group of people. Some women are extremely marginalized while other women have similar opportunities as men. When we analyze the difficulty among women, we need to look carefully into socio-economic status, academic background, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and where they live.

“It’s not the way women are conventionally portrayed, as “cute” or “fragile.” She personifies the type of woman who doesn’t need to lean on the strength of others; she is strong, brave, resilient.”

MALE, 50

“As a man this ad made me think about how things must seem from a woman’s perspective. It also made me reflect on how there is still a lot of prejudice among men about the social advancement of women.”

MALE, 58

“It surprises me to see an ad like this and to realize that their thinking is not old-fashioned and antiquated but that they constantly have their eye on the future. It has boosted my image of the brand.”

FEMALE, 52

The feelings the ads triggered most frequently, each mentioned by over one-fifth of all Japanese research participants are: being accepted, being acknowledged, and being understood. The prevalence of these feelings was highest among minority women and LGBTIQ+ women. Both among men and women, the proportions of minority and LGBTIQ+ adults who said the ad made them feel proud of who they are and valued, are significantly higher than average. In every demographic group, the proportions of those who felt angry, disrespected, ignored, or unimportant were negligible.

In summary

With rapid shifts in Japan both in terms of society and opinions, many consumers still think that brands need to catch up. Brands that have embraced an intersectional approach to advertising receive strong positive reactions from consumers as they bring them closer. However, those that do not risk being left behind by a more diverse population that expects to see themselves represented in media – allowing brands the opportunity to truly differentiate themselves and make an impact using advertising that reflects current realities rather than those of the past.

The most valuable point in this report is revealing consumers’ real feelings including fear and lack of self-esteem among Japanese people. The report says that Japanese people have a stronger fear of discrimination and have low self-esteem compared with U.S., UK and Turkey citizens.

In order to understand this puzzling finding, I will provide two auxiliary lines.

One is law enforcement. Although the Japanese government have many laws related to the prohibition of gender discrimination and promotion for women, many victims of sexual assaults and harassment are not rescued. That is because of a lack of resource and gender bias in our judiciary system.

Second is the lack of laws protecting LGBTIQ+ people. There is much discussion of legislation of guaranteeing basic rights of sexual minorities, but we have not reached it yet because of resistance from some conservative groups.

In this circumstance, self-reported minorities cannot live safely or have high self-esteem.

Last but not least, I would like to call for action. Advertisers and creators need to understand their responsibilities to have created many stereotypical images of minorities which is a contributing force in Japanese society. We need to have more non-stereotypical advertisements which is not only good for promoting marginalized people’s human rights, but also good for business, I believe.

Observations from Renge Jibu

Advisor, Unstereotype Alliance Japan Chapter, Associate Professor Tokyo Institute of Technology

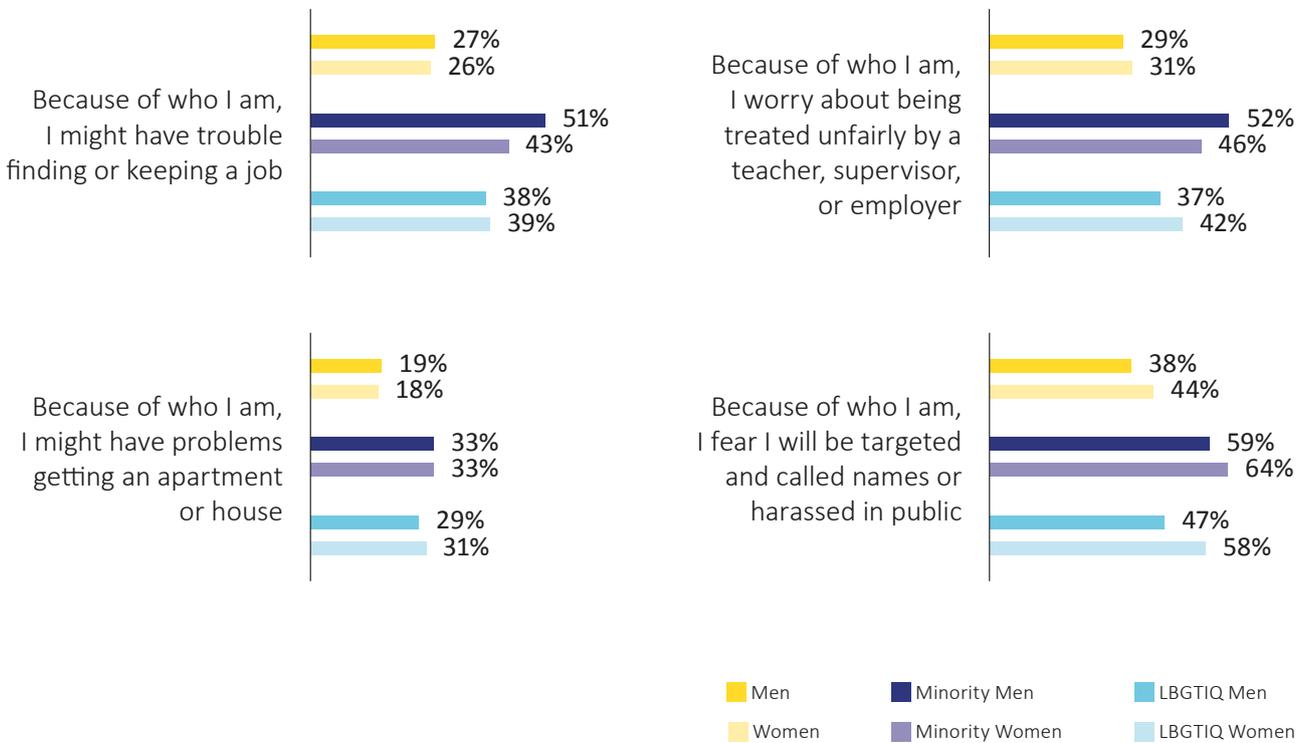
Key findings:
Turkey

Country Context

Turkey at a crossroads

Turkey currently sits at a cultural crossroads between a modern and a traditional society, as young people start to take on less traditional gender roles and explore lives outside of longstanding social norms. As a result, many respondents reported that they fear discrimination based on their identity, expressing concerns that they will have trouble finding a job, be treated unfairly, or be harassed. This was especially prevalent among young, single people, and those that identified as LGBTIQ+ or minorities, indicating that there is still a perception of significant intolerance in Turkish society.

% Agree

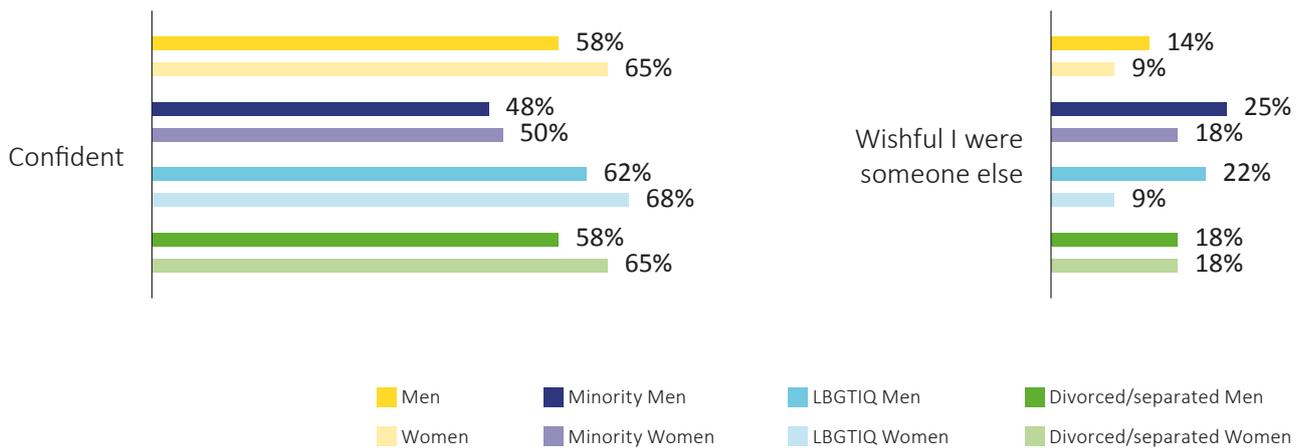


Yet brands have tremendous potential to help reshape how people see themselves and the world around them through their advertising. When asked about measures of self-esteem, those in minority or traditionally marginalised groups were more likely than the general population to identify strongly with negative attributes.



Photo: Ekin Ozbicer / Moment / Getty Images

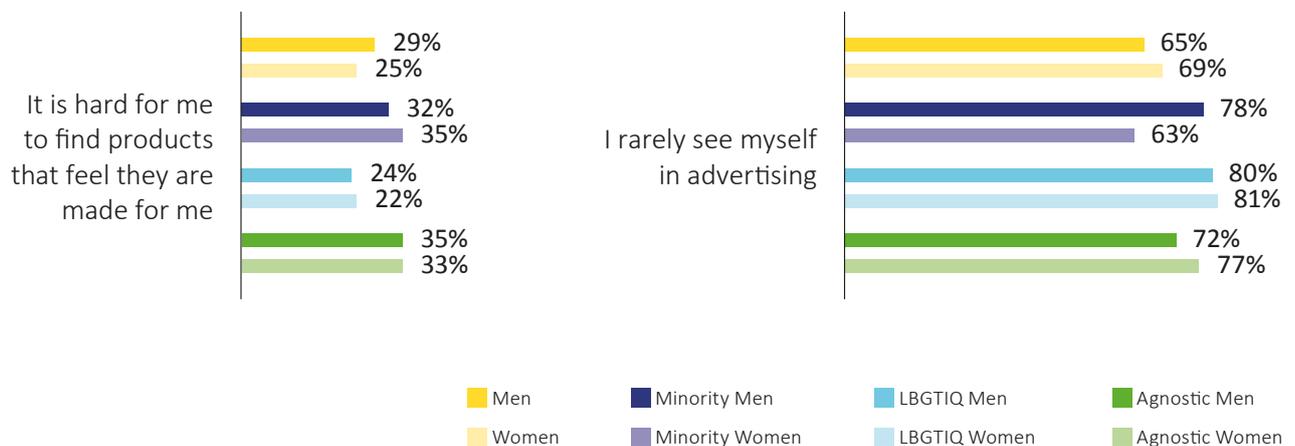
% Agree



Advertising confronting new ways of life

Despite increasing deviation from the traditional social norms in Turkey, many people feel that their way of life isn't reflected in advertising. Most of women and men agreed that they rarely see themselves represented in advertising and a third think it is hard to find products that feel like they are made for them. Each of these attitudes is experienced more acutely by groups that exist at the intersection of more than one traditionally marginalised population. For instance, minorities and LBGTIQ+ populations were more likely than others to say that they rarely see themselves in advertising and say they have trouble finding products that are made for them.

% Agree



Observation from Dr. Gül Şener

PhD, Bahçesehir University (BAU), Communication Faculty, Advertising Department

If 7 out of 10 survey participants in Turkey say that they rarely see themselves in advertising, it is more than a problem of representation but of exclusion and alienation and an intersectional perspective can help brands to overcome it.

However, insights from the community qualitative study where participants were exposed to both traditional and more modern intersectional ads, suggests that people believe brands are slowly evolving to be more inclusive and representative in their advertising. This shift is however seen over years rather than months.

“In my opinion, today, ads challenge stereotypical views. Ads are now being made for people from all walks of life. For example, in the past, there were almost no female business owners in ads, but this is now common.”

MALE, 40, UNIVERSITY DEGREE, EMPLOYED

Impact of intersectional advertising

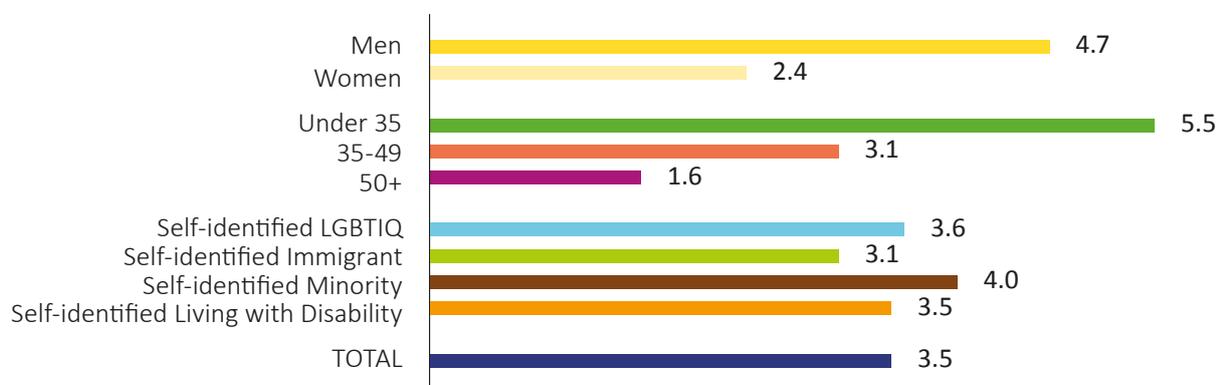
Brands bring consumers closer

When exposed to intersectional ads deliberately designed to be inclusive and feature diverse people in varying roles, respondents generally felt closer to brands after viewing the ad. By this metric (“a brand I feel close to”), ads that are inclusive and challenge traditional roles are effective in Turkey. Across all ads tested, the closeness score shifted by over three points. It is worth noting here that respondents already felt very close to brands tested in Turkey, with an average pre-test brand closeness score of 72.3 on a scale of 0-100.

Overall, inclusive and intersectional advertising is particularly effective among men and younger adults, while the impact of the advertising on LGBTQ+, immigrants, minorities, those over 50, or those living with a disability was closer to the general population, suggesting that more could be done to bring these consumers closer through advertising.

Change in “brand closeness score” after exposure to the ad

Scale of 0-100



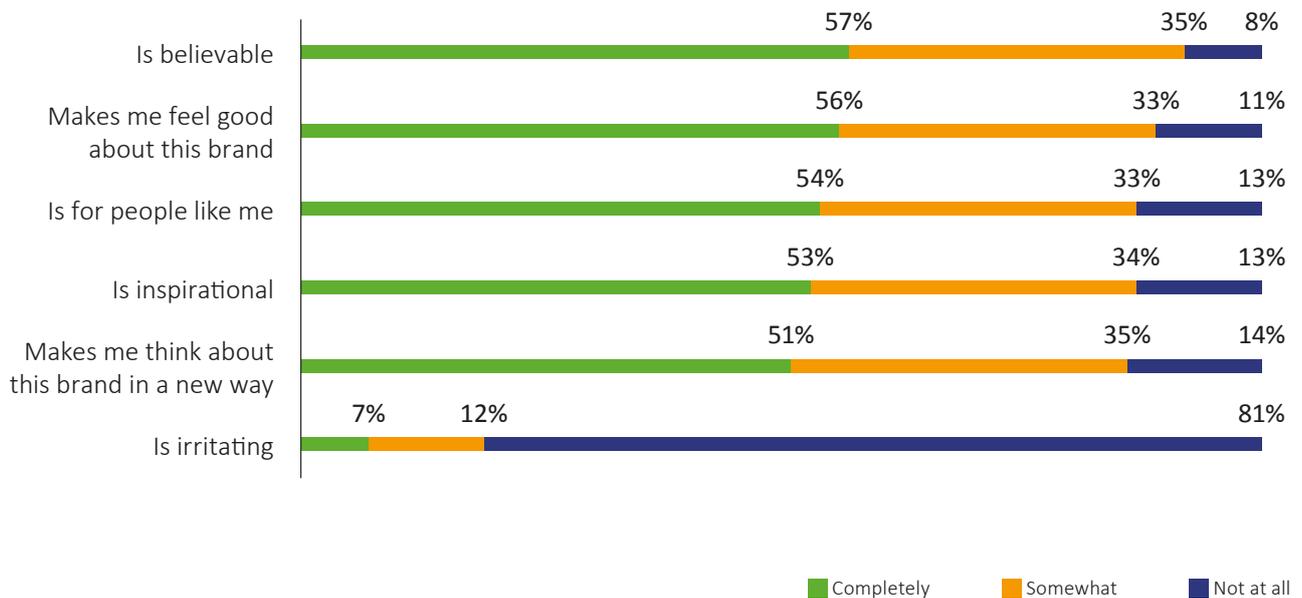
Observation from Dr. Gül Şener

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Recently, 'pink washing' criticisms became part of the public debate in Turkey as in other parts of the world. It has created a heightened skepticism among especially female consumers toward the usage of women empowerment messages by brands. Such developments could have produced a spillover effect on intersectional advertisements and explain why they don't affect women's feelings of brand closeness as much as men.

Not only did the intersectional advertising have an impact on closeness to the brand, but it also evoked positive emotional associations. Most of those in Turkey stated that the advertising made them feel glad the brand exists and made them feel good about the brand itself. One in two found the intersectional advertising they were shown as believable and inspirational, with very few indicating the creative was irritating or offensive.

How did the ad make you feel?



Furthermore, most respondents in Turkey indicated that the advertising made them feel valued (54%), and virtually no respondent indicated that the advertising made them feel angry (2%). These positive emotions to the advertising are similar regardless of demographic groups.

In summary

Intersectional representation in advertising creative has the power to influence large segments of the Turkish population. Not only does it positively impact closeness to a brand, but creative executions also evoke positive emotions and make consumers feel valued. Within the backdrop of opinions that are generally less positive about advertising, brands in Turkey can differentiate themselves with advertising that challenges norms and represents the full spectrum of individuals in Turkish society.

Turkey has always been a terrain of clashing social forces: East vs. West, conservative vs. liberal, tradition vs. modernization. To understand Turkey is to understand that these tensions provide the socio-cultural context that shape people's experience of their converging identities and how they see others. The reason why younger consumers in Turkey are more responsive to intersectional advertisements can be because they function as a social facilitator by validating marginalized social identities and easing the tensions between social pressures of tradition and their evolving lived experience.

Women in Turkey are already subject to various social inequities. Gender-based violence against women is a serious problem. Considering the recent developments such as withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, it is not surprising that minority and LGBTIQ+ women expressed higher degrees of fear of being targeted and public harassment compared to other segments of the society. Brands should understand the complexities of being a woman in Turkey and recognize how intersectional identities add different layers of discrimination, exclusion and oppression to the lived experience.

Intersectionality offers an important framework to understand how certain members of a society are subject to marginalization and discrimination due to their intertwined identities. Ethnic and religious minorities, asylum seekers and LGBTIQ+ populations are disproportionately affected by social and economic inequalities in Turkey. As consumers, they don't feel that brands provide outlets where their experiences become visible, their voices to be heard as legitimate. Intersectional advertisements are the means for brands to show their acknowledgement of this call to be noticed, respected, understood, valued and to matter.

Although the intersectional ads have performed well in this study, the inclusion of intersectional portrayals in Turkish advertising isn't yet common, particularly of the LGBTIQ+ community and of ethnic minorities. While the examples of intersectional representation may not currently mirror the lived experiences of those communities in Turkish society, the results of this survey and interest in the subject show that there is benefit in promoting such representation to help advance positive social change.

Intersectionality is an invitation to expand our horizons beyond single-axis social categories, to reveal oppressive practices that operate under the radar and prevent certain segments of a society to benefit from equal life opportunities. Interestingly, intersectionality as an approach does not just resonate with the disadvantaged group of consumers but speaks to the general public in Turkey. This shows that it is also a mindset that has the potential to bring different people together around the common values of tolerance and social justice. In that sense, intersectional advertisements can be very instructive and transformative, especially in polarized societies like Turkey.

Observations from Dr. Gül Şener

PhD, Bahçeşehir University (BAU), Communication Faculty, Advertising Department

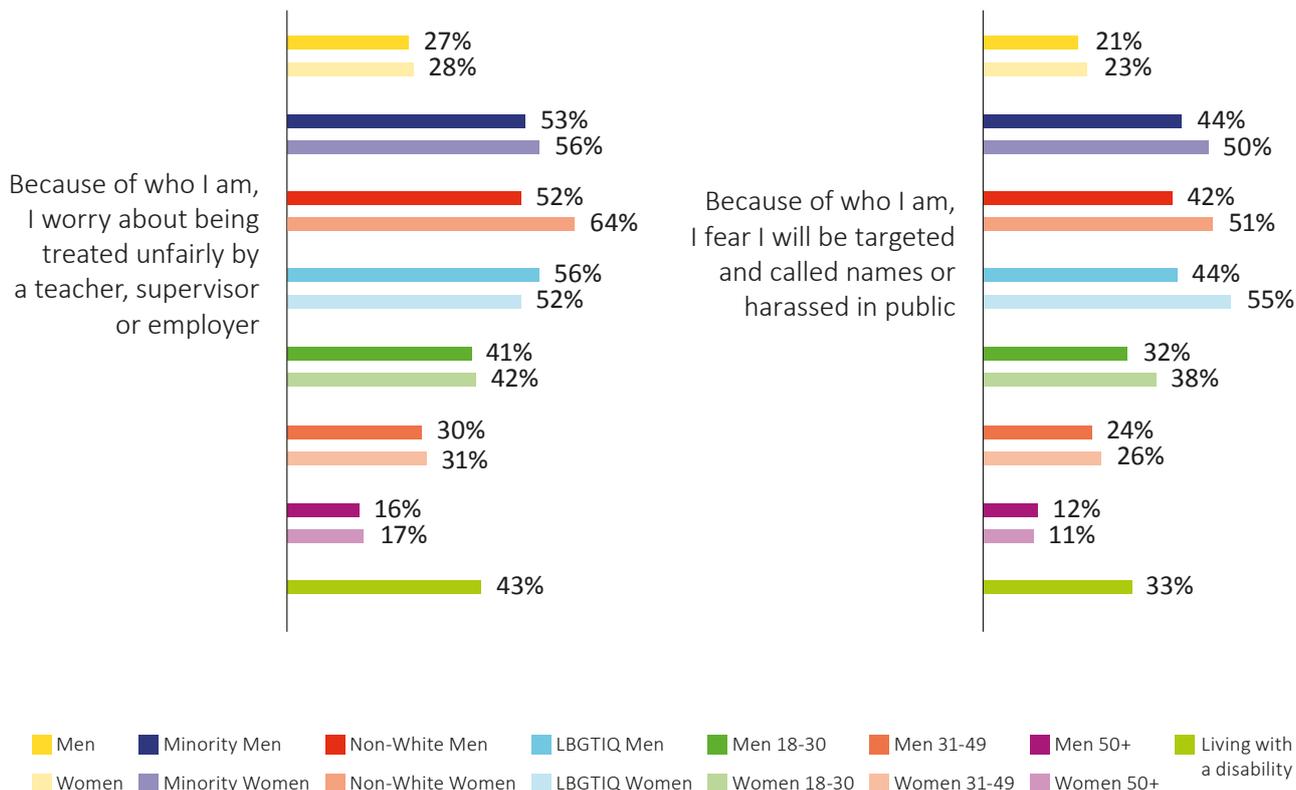
Key findings: United Kingdom

Country context

Different sides of UK society

The research shows there are varied experiences within British society depending on who you are. While overall approximately one in five of those surveyed in the UK expressed the fear they may be targeted or harassed in public, this more than doubled among minorities and non-white populations. Further, approximately half of those who identified as being a minority or non-white⁹ agreed that they may be treated unfairly or even face challenges finding or keeping a job because of who they are, including almost two thirds of non-white women. Perceptions of inequity are also prevalent among those who identified as LGBTIQ+, while those that identified as having a disability did not differ significantly from the population overall.

% Agree



When focusing on white and non-white populations in particular, there are stark differences in experiences of discrimination and harassment – more than double the number of non-white women and men in the UK fear discrimination when compared to their white counterparts.

9. The categorisation of non-white and white has been adopted for the UK analysis for statistical validity. Respondents were asked about their unique ethnicity and responses were grouped in order to create a sub-group large enough to independently analyse. The non-white categorisation includes all other race and ethnicity groups combined.

% Agree

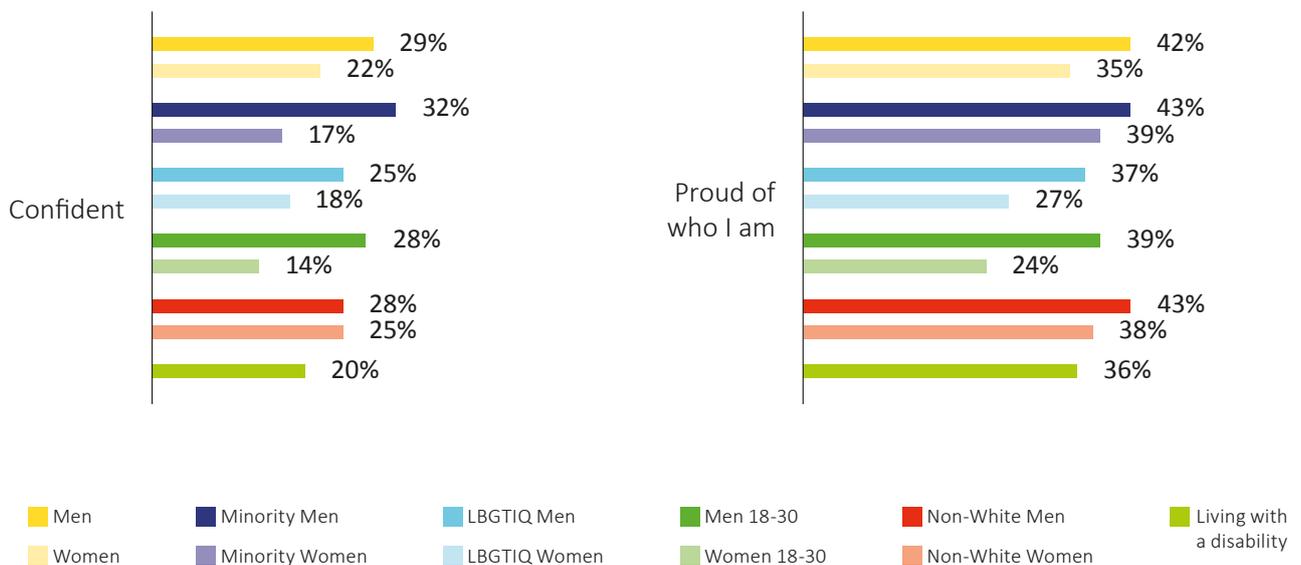


White Non-White

A crisis of confidence

While perhaps not all Britons have fears and hesitations about how they may be treated based on who they are, relatively small proportions reported strong feelings of confidence regardless of how one describes oneself. When asked about measures of self-esteem, 29% of men and 22% of women stated that they have felt confident in the past few weeks. Differences by gender and age are starker than those based on identification as a minority or particular race or ethnic group or disability status. The prevalence of feelings of confidence in the UK ranges from 50% among men aged 50 and older and 43% among women aged 50 and older, to 28% among men aged 18 to 30, and only 14% among women aged 18 to 30.

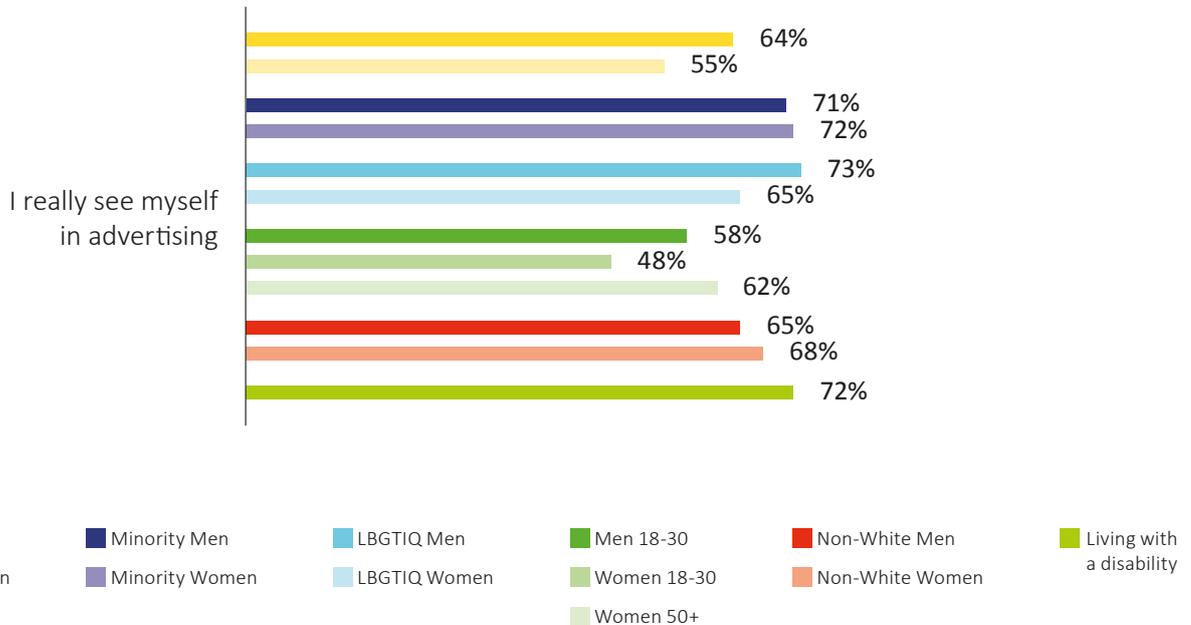
% Agree



The long road towards addressing stereotypes

This research found most British consumers feel that advertising still depicts people in traditional roles, and over half say they rarely see themselves in advertising. While the majority across all groups feels a lack of representation, those who identify as a minority, non-white, living with a disability, or LGBTIQ+ are more likely to feel that they are not included in advertising.

% Agree



It is perhaps not surprising in this case that these same populations say it is difficult to find products that are made for them – particularly pronounced in non-white populations, where 71% of women and 67% of men say that they have trouble finding products.

“Some adverts do reinforce stereotypes. For example, how often are family mealtimes portraying single parent families? I also feel that some adverts try too hard to achieve a balance of, in particular, ethnicity, the danger being that people just label them ‘political correctness’.”

MALE 65+ BRITISH

“Some ads represent beautified, flawless versions of the idealized types that are regarded as acceptable to mainstream society at large but it does not necessarily reflect the reality.”

MALE 35-44 BRITISH

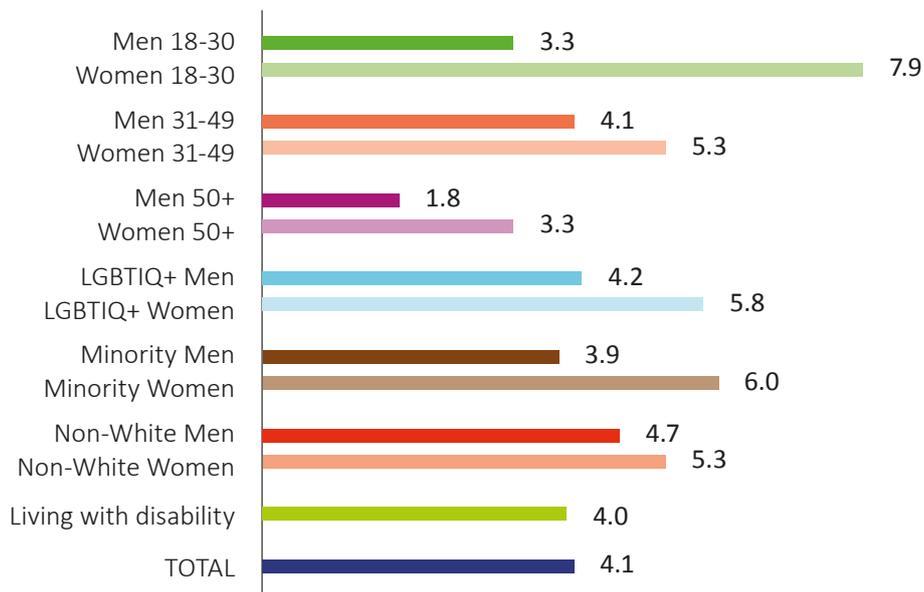
Impact of intersectional advertising

Positive reactions, little risk

Despite the prevailing perceptions, intersectional advertising in the UK evokes overwhelmingly positive reactions and very few negative. Across the ads tested, the closeness score shifted from an average of 38 to an average of 42, an increase of four points. Overall, inclusive and intersectional advertising is particularly effective in shifting views among women, especially those that identified as minorities, non-white, LGBTIQ+, or are aged 18 to 30.

Change in “brand closeness score” after exposure to the ad

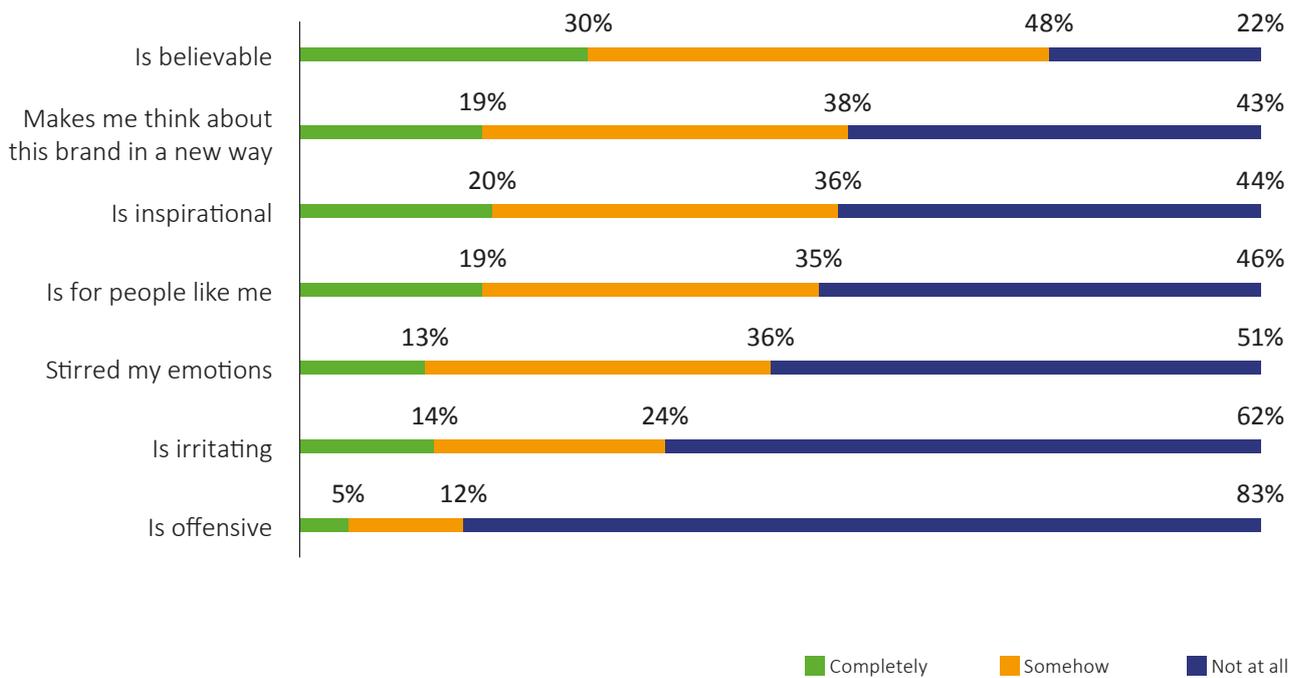
Scale of 0-100



While the degree of impact of advertising varied based on whether one describes themselves as LGBTIQ+, a minority, non-white or living with a disability, there were uniformly positive shifts in brand closeness among minority or traditionally marginalised groups. Unsurprisingly, the largest shifts were seen in some of the populations that expressed the most discontent with the advertising status quo, including LGBTIQ+ and minority women and non-white men.

Not only did the advertising have an impact on closeness to the brand, but it also evoked positive associations among consumers. Most of those in the UK stated that the advertising tested was believable and changed the way they viewed the brand, while fewer indicated that they had an emotional response, and very few said the creative shown was irritating or offensive.

How did the ad make you feel?



Among those that said the advertising shown did evoke an emotional response, the strongest emotion was that of “accepted,” receiving 20%. The feeling of “accepted” was higher among certain groups such as minority women (31%) and younger women (29%). The qualitative research predominantly mirrored the positive impacts identified within the online survey.

“This advert shows inclusion and equal opportunities. It’s wonderful to see people of different race, culture, shapes and sizes – hair texture and brace wearers etc. all in one short advert where they are not your typical stereotype.”

FEMALE, 35-44, CARIBBEAN BRITISH

“There are a lot of assumptions about ethnic minorities, but I think advertising helps to change this and maybe even encourage change within the minorities regarding many different things.”

FEMALE, 45-54, INDIAN BRITISH

In summary

Though the UK has made headway in recognising and responding to the harmful impacts of stereotypes in advertising, there is still a long way to go. In particular, minority, non-white, and LGBTIQ+ groups feel left behind by brands that they believe overly focus on populations that are not reflective of their own reality. These same groups, however, are the most responsive to brands that do take steps to reflect society through intersectionality, showing that such approaches will be rewarded with a greater sense of closeness and very low push-back.

The data from the UK market emphasises that not all Britons experience day-to-day life in the same way. Gender, race, sexual orientation, and age all influence one’s general apprehension, confidence, and self-esteem. Specifically, being female and identifying as LGBTIQ+ are associated with greater fears of being harassed and lower feelings of confidence. These effects appear to be exacerbated for younger individuals (e.g., those 18-30 years old).

This research demonstrates that in the UK, the value in adopting an intersectional lens is two-fold: it benefits advertisers (by leading underrepresented individuals to feel closer to the advertised brands), and it benefits society (by providing psychological benefits to traditionally-excluded audiences).

Furthermore, the fact that the majority of non-white individuals in the UK say they struggle to find products that are made for them illustrates that this problem goes beyond representation in advertising, and reveals a large unmet need in the marketplace.

Observations from Rhonda Hadi

Associate Professor of Marketing, Future of Marketing Initiative, Saïd Business School, University of Oxford

We know that consumers' attitudes to important social issues around diversity, inclusion, and equality have shifted in recent years. More and more consumers around the world now pay close attention to these issues, care deeply about them, and - critically for businesses of all shapes and sizes, and in all industries - expect brands to take positive actions on these issues in everything they do.

Brands can and should take appropriate positive steps motivated by consumers' demands as well as basic principles around doing what is morally and ethically appropriate. But one would also hope that doing what is right and good - and what consumers apparently expect - is also commercially viable. Is it good to be good? This research is timely because it helps answer this and related questions with respect to intersectionality, which represents a highly complex and multifaceted set of issues for businesses to grapple with in their advertising. Intersectional portrayals in advertising are found to have a positive impact on those consumers who would otherwise not normally see themselves in advertising, and these impacts appear to increase positive emotional associations between those consumers and brands, as well as make consumers feel closer connections to brands. These are core requirements for building strong and lasting consumer-brand relationships, which are vital for long-lasting (and commercially successful) brands.

Holding up a mirror to consumers who usually don't see themselves in ads is the way to go. And what is very encouraging to see is that it seems to have no negative impact on the relationships between brands and other consumers. As the report says, intersectionality in advertising seems to have the potential to offer positive benefits across the board, which is excellent to see and adds to the growing body of evidence that doing good is good for people and business.

Observations from Professor Andrew Stephen

L'Oréal Professor of Marketing & Research Dean, Director, Oxford Future of Marketing Initiative, Co-Director, Oxford Executive Diploma in AI for Business, Saïd Business School, University of Oxford



Photo: SolStock / Moment / Getty Images

Key findings:
United States

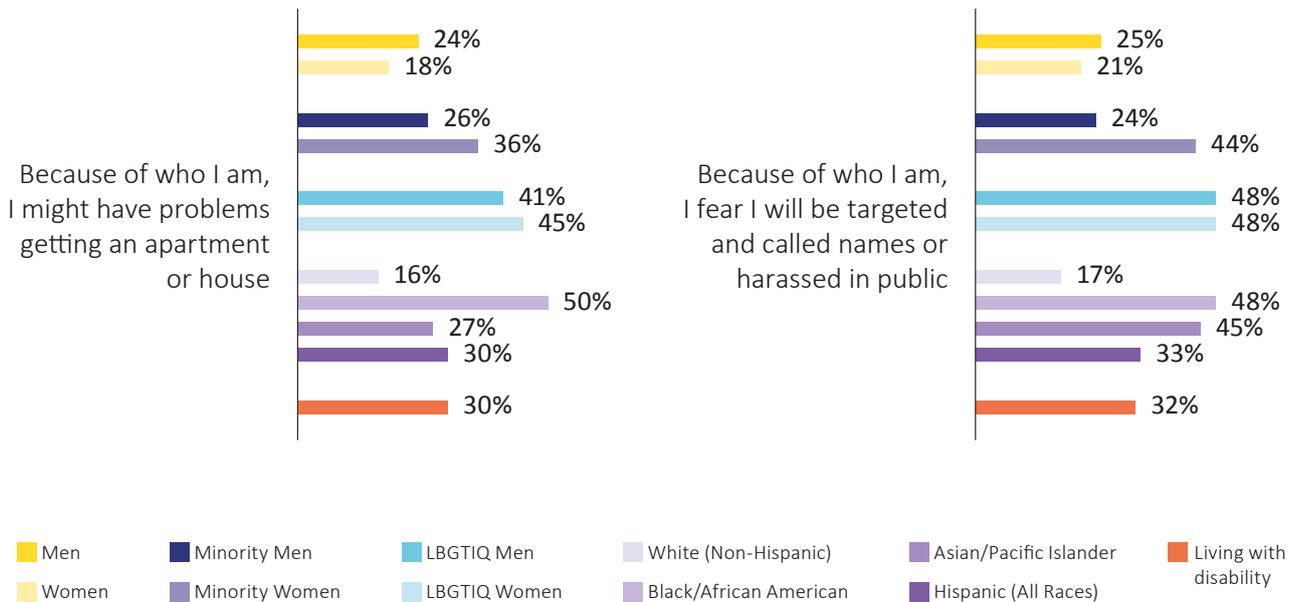
Country context

The changing face of the US

It is difficult to overstate the demographic and cultural changes the US is undergoing. Within a generation, the proportion of foreign-born adults is now larger than it has been in a century. Women make up a majority of college graduates, and about one in ten Americans identifies as LGBTIQ+.

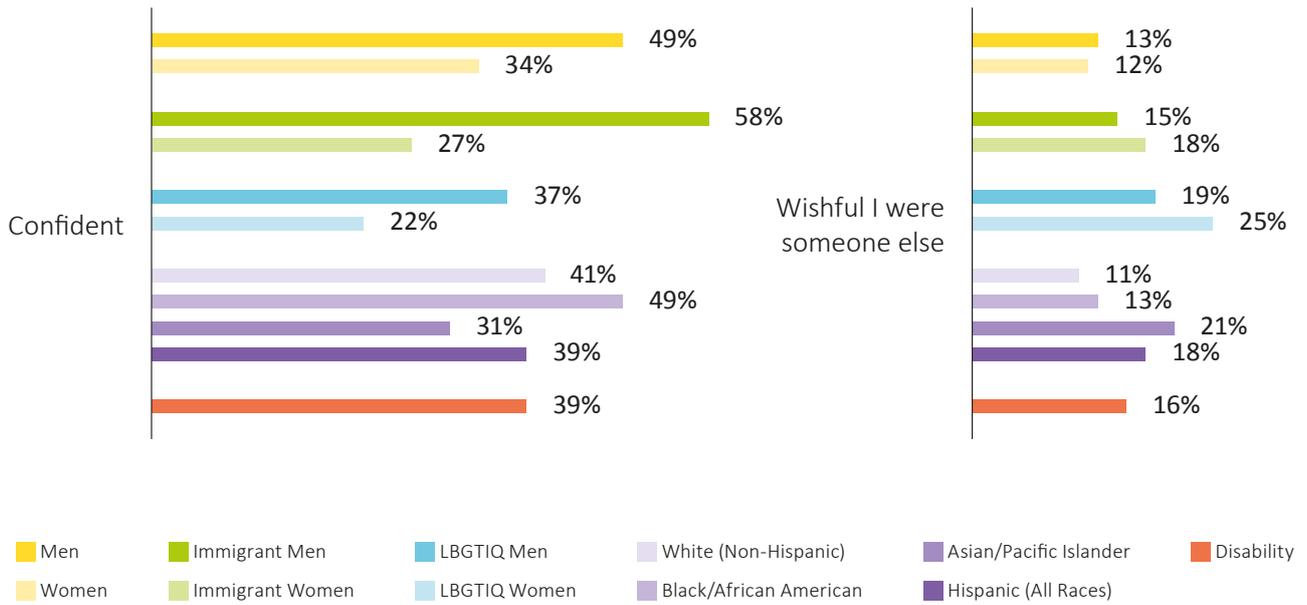
Yet, many of the citizens surveyed reported that they fear discrimination based on their identity, expressing concerns that they will have trouble finding a job, be treated unfairly, or be harassed. This was especially prevalent among younger people and those with a lower income level, and even more so among African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs), LGBTIQ+ men and women, those living with a disability, and female immigrants.

% Agree



Ensuring that advertising is representative of current society is not just the right thing to do – there is a business imperative to build stronger connections with consumers. When asked about measures of self-esteem, AAPIs, women identifying as a minority or as an immigrant, both male and female LGBTIQ+ people, the economically disadvantaged, and those living with a disability, were far more likely to identify strongly with negative attributes than the average of all Americans surveyed.

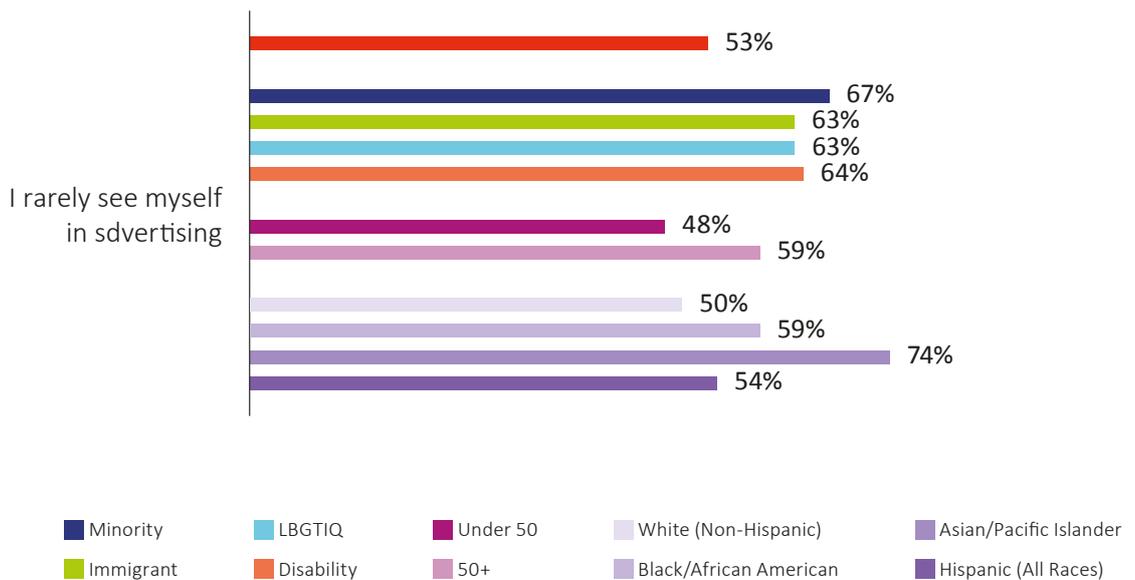
% Agree



Advertising lags behind reality

Among both men and women surveyed in the US, approximately half agreed they rarely see themselves represented in advertising. This experience is more prevalent among those aged 50 and older, those with a lower level of education, and those who are economically disadvantaged. It is even more common among groups who exist at the intersection of more than one traditionally marginalised population, namely AAPIs, African Americans, immigrants, LBGTIQ+ populations, and those living with a disability.

% Agree



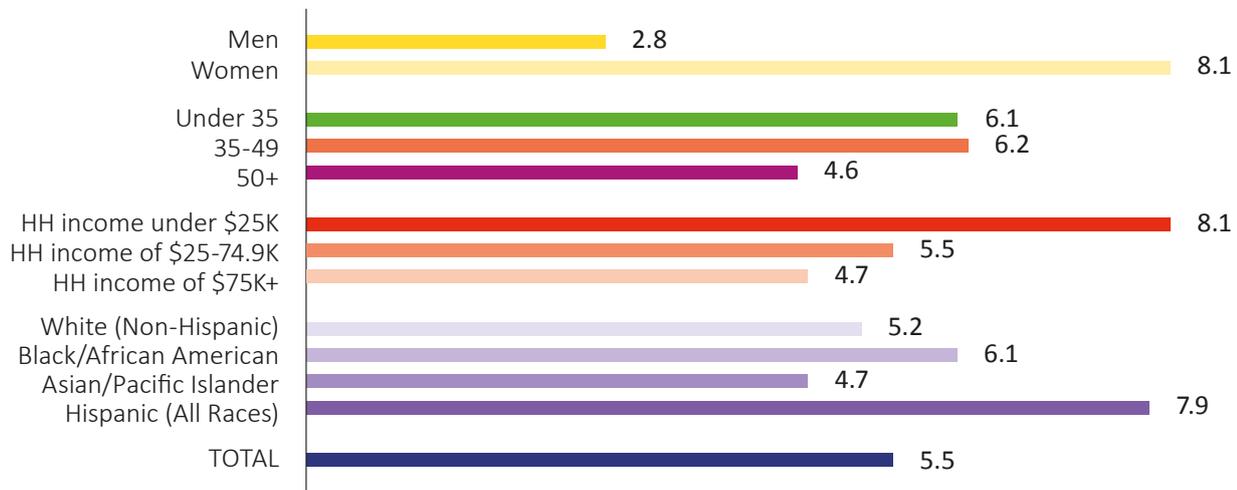
The groups who least often see themselves depicted in ads tend to be those who are most likely to express concerns that brands still show people in traditional family and gender roles that don't reflect reality, most of all, LGBTIQ+ women.

Impact of intersectional advertising

Across all ads tested, the “closeness” score shifted by over five points. Overall, inclusive and intersectional advertising is particularly effective among women, lower-income Americans and Hispanics, and the impact of the advertising was highest among women who identify as a minority or as LGBTIQ+.

Change in “brand closeness score” after exposure to the ad

Scale of 0-100



Not only did the advertising have an impact on closeness to the brand, but it also evoked positive emotional associations. Sizable majorities of those surveyed in the US agreed completely or somewhat that the advertising tested was believable, made them feel good about the brand, and made them think of it in a new way, and was for people like them. This sentiment was also reflected throughout the qualitative responses.

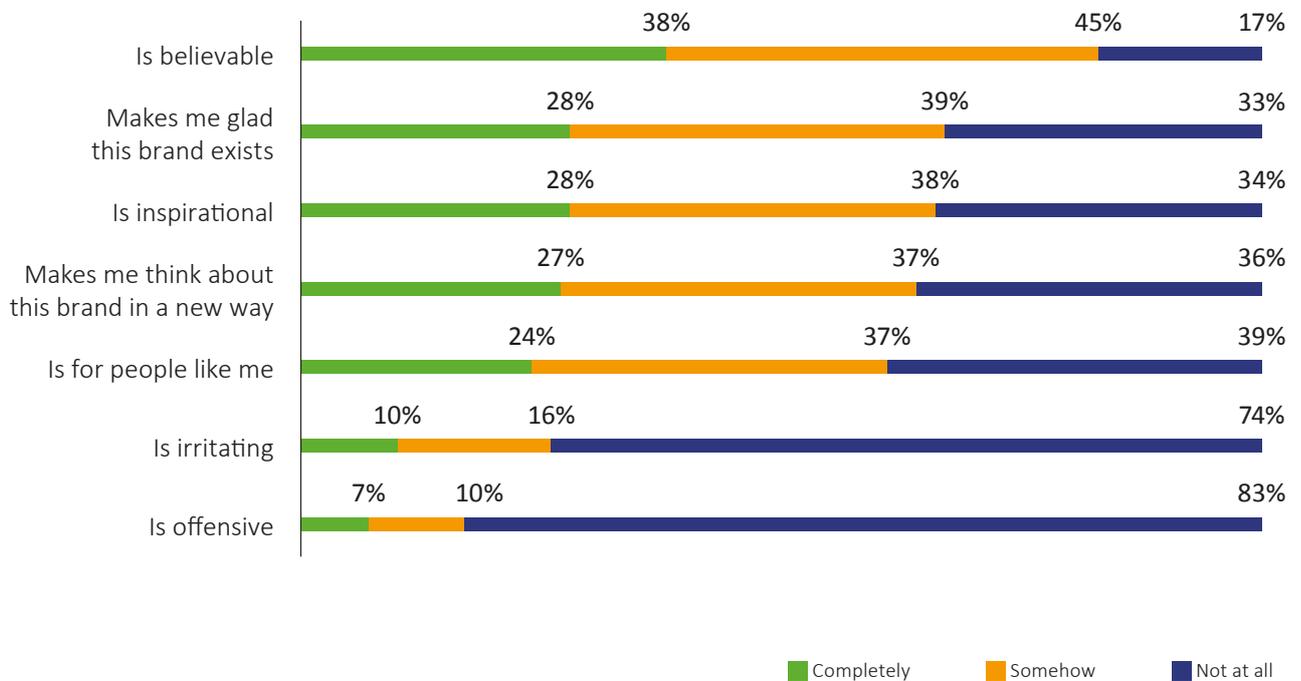
“This represented many racial groups but focused on [...] commonality... It was inclusive and [showed] all the people in the same situation. Great job!”

FEMALE, 55+, WHITE

“In general, I do not think advertising reinforces these stereotypes. I believe we are in a trend where we are so aware of what bias is that we are challenging these stereotypes every chance we get. I think advertising is trying to get back to the basics of who we are as people and connect to people through emotion and feeling – not just by what we see with our eyes.”

FEMALE, 35-54, ASIAN

How did the ad make you feel?



In general, positive emotional responses were most prevalent among Americans under the age of 35, African Americans, Hispanics, AAPIs, and women who identify as LGBTIQ+, as an immigrant or a minority. Conversely, groups who tended to respond less favorably include those aged 50 and older, those who are unemployed, and LGBTIQ+ men.

The emotion that the ads triggered most frequently, each mentioned by over one-quarter of all US research participants were: being accepted, being valued, and being respected. Again, the prevalence of these feelings was highest among people under 35, African Americans, Hispanics, and women who identify as LGBTIQ+, as an immigrant or a minority, and lowest among those aged 50 and older, those who are unemployed, and LGBTIQ+ men. The proportions of those who felt angry, disrespected, ignored, or unimportant are negligible.

How much is enough?

Relatively few indicated that they found the ads to be irritating or offensive in any way. However, immigrants, LGBTIQ+ people, those with a low-income level, and those living with a disability were slightly more prone than others to state those feelings. This may be because even with the intersectionality depicted in the advertising, they still may not have felt they were included. This finding emerges from the qualitative research where many participants were critical of ads that failed to display adequate diversity, and were quick to point out the absence of representation of specific groups, or that they were portrayed in a stereotypical way.

“Some advertising definitely caters to stereotypes. The voiceover for a lot of [fast-food ads] is done by an African American and the musical accompaniment is often hip-hop/rap... when [a lot of advertisers] show LGBT persons, they are too often shown in stereotypical roles, such as in the arts and dance.”

MALE, 55+, HISPANIC

“I’d like to see a same-sex couple [...] just to bring awareness to this segment of America. If we want to be inclusive, we have to try to show all groups. I don’t remember seeing Native American or LatinX people represented well either.”

MALE, 55+, HISPANIC

In summary

The research shows intersectionality in advertising has the power to influence brand closeness among large segments of the US population and particularly among those groups such as women or Hispanics who are more likely to feel that they are rarely represented in advertising. These findings are particularly powerful in a society such as the US which has sharp social divisions and large groups that feel they are marginalized. Within this context, the research shows that creative executions that show intersectionality can reinforce positive emotions such as feeling valued and seen as an important part of society.

The significant number of US citizens that felt under-represented in advertising was startling and shows there is an enormous amount of work to be done. I found it very interesting that inclusive and intersectional advertising is particularly effective among women, lower-income Americans, and Hispanics. These are all major groups in the US and taken together have large purchasing power.

The latest census showed again that mixed race identification is rapidly growing and other research shows that mixed race marriages are increasingly common in the US (with over 75% of these marriages being between a person of color and a white person). These, among other shifts in our communities, are not yet reflected in the advertising we see, so it is unsurprising that people feel they are not represented and that advertising does not reflect reality. There is still a largely homogenous representation in advertising and media which is lacking the multi-dimensional makeup of American society and the infinite experiences of people in the US.

As a Persian American woman, I very much identify with the intersectional approach. I hope we can go beyond categorizing people based on one label/ identity in advertising, and beyond. Our own research demonstrates that the lack of authentically inclusive representation (i.e. that goes beyond stereotypes and tropes) in movies has major costs at the box office, which suggests there is both a business and societal benefit.

Observations from Yalda T. Uhls

PhD, MBA. Founding Director, Center for Scholars & Storytellers, The University of California, Los Angeles



Photo: Alex Farfuri / Moment / Getty Images



APPENDIX
Methodology

Research Methodology

These are the results of a four-country survey conducted by Ipsos on its Global Advisor online platform. Ipsos interviewed a total of 8,000 adults aged 18-74 in the US and Turkey, and aged 16-74 in the UK and Japan between 17 April and 30 April 2021. Each country's sample consists of 1,000 men and 1,000 women.

The questionnaire for the study was designed by Ipsos in consultation with the Unstereotype Alliance. The average survey length in each country was 12 minutes.

The samples in Japan, the UK, and the US can be taken as representative of these countries' general adult population under the age of 75. The sample in Turkey may be more urban, more educated, and/or more affluent than the general population. The survey results for Turkey should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more "connected" segment of its population.

The data is weighted so that each country's sample composition best reflects the demographic profile of the adult population according to the most recent census data.

Where results do not sum to 100 or the 'difference' appears to be +/-1 more/less than the actual, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of 'don't know' or 'not stated' responses.

The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of 500 accurate to +/- 4.8 percentage points. For more information on the Ipsos use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website.

As a build on the quantitative survey, Ipsos recruited members of their online community to provide qualitative insights and responses to the advertising. These sessions lasted one week and were hosted by trained moderators in each country.



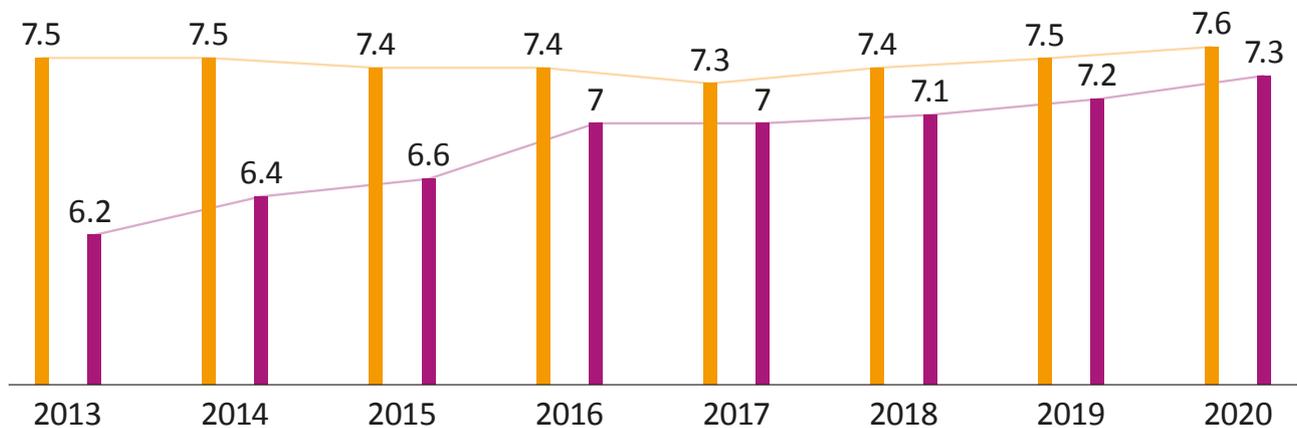
Photo: Boogich / E+ / Getty Images

Advertising test methodology and analysis

At the core of the research was a test of advertising. In each country, ads in film format were selected that represented intersectionality in terms of the people present in the ads and their role. The ads tested included a range of brands and were varied by the nature of the product or service including financial services, personal care, durable goods, automotive, and apparel. Eight ads were selected for each country and were specific to that country. To avoid bias, each respondent was shown only one ad. This methodology avoids any bias resulting from seeing multiple executions and stating opinions that could therefore not attributed to one creative.

The analysis of the results is based on Ipsos' experience with measuring advertising impact through the lens of closeness to the brand by assessing how much closeness shifts after viewing. While brand performance has remained static, brand closeness as a metric is increasingly important to brand choice.

Brand closeness increasingly important in brand choice



Source: Ipsos brand value research database.

Brand Performance

Closeness



Photo: FatCamera / E+ / Getty Images

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