

When One Size Does Not Fit All Models: Does Inclusive Fashion Help or Harm Consumers' Decision Making?

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Abstract

As online fashion retailers increasingly feature models with diverse body sizes to promote inclusivity and improve consumers' assessment of clothing fit, this research demonstrates the unintended negative consequences for vulnerable consumers. Through an eye-tracking experiment, we find that consumers fixate more on thin models than size-inclusive models both when browsing and actively searching to buy a product. The effect is especially strong for consumers with low body satisfaction, making them aspire more to products worn by thin-sized models. This work demonstrates the paradox that diversity in model sizes—a well-intentioned strategy that challenges thin beauty standards—inadvertently reinforces the attentional bias toward thin models among the vulnerable consumers it seeks to support. This highlights the complexity of improving consumers' decision making in e-retail and underscores the importance of considering individual differences in response to marketplace interventions.

Keywords: Online retailing; visual attention; size-diverse models

Track: Retailing & Omni-channel Management