

Consumers' Responses to Brands' Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives: Longitudinal Evidence

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Acknowledgements:

This study was funded by the European Union - NextGenerationEU, in the framework of the GRINS -Growing Resilient, INclusive and Sustainable project (GRINS PE000018 - CUP B43C22000760006). The views and opinions expressed are solely those of the authors an

Cite as:

Branca Generoso, Grosso Monica, Castaldo Sandro (2026), Consumers' Responses to Brands' Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives: Longitudinal Evidence. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 55th, (134108)

Paper from the 55th Annual EMAC Conference, Bath, United Kingdom, June 2-5, 2026



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Abstract

This study examines how consumers respond over time to brands' diversity & inclusion (D&I) initiatives. The research project is based on a longitudinal survey in the Italian market, covering several forms of diversity (gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status). The manuscript reports preliminary results of three time points (2019, 2022, 2025; N = 2.410). Familiarity with diversity is consistently high, interaction with several minority groups increases over time and involvement varies across domains. Regression models indicate that awareness and, especially, reputation of brands' D&I efforts strongly and stably predict trust. In turn, trust is the main driver of loyalty, while the direct role of reputation weakens over time and awareness becomes a stronger secondary predictor. Analyses by diversity type confirm the centrality of trust.

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics