

UDC 659.1:316.346

Sobczyk-Kolbuch A.¹, Ruprich M.², Trokhymets O.³

¹prof. Katowice Business University, Katowice, Poland

²prof. MBA Katowice Business University, Katowice, Poland,

³prof. Katowice Business University, Katowice, Poland,

The V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Ukraine

THE EVOLUTION OF MARKETING STRATEGIES TOWARD INCLUSIVITY: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

Dynamic social, technological, and cultural changes are making inclusive marketing one of the key directions in the development of contemporary market strategies. In the context of the digital economy, companies are compelled not only to build competitive advantage through technological innovation but also to address the diverse needs, values, and expectations of society. The primary goal of this article is to examine the evolution of marketing strategies in the context of growing societal demands for inclusivity and diversity. The study aims to identify the key historical and conceptual shifts that have shaped inclusive marketing practices, analyze the factors driving these transformations, and evaluate the challenges organizations face in implementing genuinely inclusive strategies.

Inclusive marketing, understood as an integrated approach to communication, product design, and consumer experience that embraces diversity and equity, is no longer merely a reputational tool but has become a strategic component of business models [1; 2].

Traditional marketing strategies focused primarily on maximizing communication reach and segmenting the market based on demographic criteria. However, the modern consumer expects more – authenticity, an understanding of cultural and social diversity, and actions that reflect societal values. Inclusive marketing represents a shift from the perspective of “all consumers are the same” to an approach based on empathy, representation, and co-creation of value [1]. As Thakur et al. argue [2], inclusivity is now a fundamental element of the brand–consumer relationship, supporting trust-building and loyalty. Initially, inclusive actions were largely symbolic, primarily limited to advertising campaigns that showcased ethnic or gender diversity. Today, however, the concept extends across all areas of marketing – from product design to customer service. Nogueira et al. [3] emphasize that inclusivity goes beyond representation in communication, encompassing accessibility of products and experiences for diverse user groups. Increasing attention is also paid to the language used in marketing messages – communication must be neutral, empathetic, and free of stereotypes [1]. This evolution is driven by growing social pressure and consumer awareness. As Kemp et al. note [4], consumers increasingly expect brands to demonstrate social responsibility, and the absence of inclusive practices can lead to reputational

damage and a decline in trust. Furthermore, superficial actions that lack consistency with a brand's values may be perceived as opportunistic, reducing their effectiveness (woke-washing).

Modern, inclusive strategies are increasingly leveraging the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics. These technologies enable not only hyper-personalization of communication but also real-time analysis of diverse consumer needs. According to Labib et al. [5], machine learning algorithms allow marketers to segment audiences based on subtle behavioral differences, facilitating the creation of more inclusive and tailored marketing campaigns. AI can also enhance inclusivity in the visual and linguistic layers of communication – by analyzing the preferences of different social groups, it enables the selection of images, colors, and tones of communication that avoid excluding any audience segment. However, the literature also highlights the challenges of algorithmic bias, which can lead to unintended discrimination. Therefore, combining technology with ethical oversight and transparency has become a crucial component of developing inclusive marketing strategies [5].

Implementing inclusive marketing strategies presents several challenges. One is the lack of standardized definitions and metrics, which complicates the evaluation of effectiveness [1]. Organizational limitations pose another barrier – effective implementation requires not only technological solutions but also cultural change and the development of diversity-related competencies [4]. Additionally, companies must address growing consumer concerns about data privacy, which is central to personalized communication. The future of inclusive marketing is poised for deeper integration with AI technologies, the development of advanced analytical tools, and a heightened focus on ethics in marketing strategy design. As Thakur et al. argue [2], inclusivity will become one of the key criteria for evaluating brand value and a prerequisite for maintaining competitiveness. Furthermore, greater standardization of measurement methods and the incorporation of inclusivity into broader sustainability strategies can be expected [3].

The evolution of marketing strategies toward inclusivity reflects broader social, cultural, and technological changes. Inclusive marketing is no longer merely a trend – it is becoming a strategic tool for building strong consumer relationships and achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. However, integrating technology, artificial intelligence, and social values introduces new challenges from ethical considerations to organizational adaptation. The future of this field will depend on companies' ability to combine innovative technological solutions with a genuine commitment to diversity and inclusion [4; 5]. The evolution of marketing strategies toward inclusivity reflects a profound transformation in the relationship between businesses and society. As market environments become increasingly diverse and interconnected, inclusivity has emerged not only as an

ethical imperative but also as a strategic advantage influencing brand reputation, consumer trust, and long-term competitiveness. The study reveals that inclusive marketing has evolved from tokenistic representation to a more integrated and authentic approach emphasizing equality, cultural sensitivity, and social justice.

However, the transition toward genuinely inclusive marketing remains complex. Organizations continue to face significant challenges, including internal biases, insufficient understanding of intersectionality, and the risk of performative inclusion that undermines credibility. The effective implementation of inclusive strategies requires a systemic rethinking of organizational culture, communication practices, and data-driven decision-making processes.

Looking ahead, inclusivity in marketing is expected to deepen through the integration of technological innovation, ethical artificial intelligence, and participatory design that empowers diverse consumer voices. Future research should focus on developing comprehensive frameworks to assess inclusivity performance and explore the long-term societal impact of inclusive marketing initiatives. Ultimately, the shift toward inclusivity represents not a temporary trend but a foundational reorientation of marketing philosophy toward empathy, equity, and sustainability.

REFERENCES

1. Inclusive marketing: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Business Research*, 2025. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0148296325000979>
2. Thakur, R., et al. (2024). They're not my people: When inclusive marketing backfires. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 52, 1175-1190. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11747-025-01105-5>
3. Nogueira, L., et al. (2024). Value through diversity: A systematic literature review to understand the role of inclusion in consumer research. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 40 (5-6), 789-812. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/mar.22088>
4. Kemp, E., et al. (2023). Inclusive Advertising for a Better World. *International Journal of Advertising*, 42(3), 455-473. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2023.2255242>
5. Labib, A., et al. (2025). Artificial Intelligence in Marketing: Exploring Current and Future Trends. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 189(4), 895-913. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-025-05571-0>