

## **Inclusive branding: Addressing religious diversity in workplace culture for effective marketing strategies**

### **Stratégie de marque inclusive : Aborder la diversité religieuse dans la culture en milieu de travail pour des stratégies de marketing efficaces**

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## Abstract

Integrating religious diversity into corporate culture is essential to developing an inclusive company image. This strategy increases a business's clientele, fosters loyalty, and improves its reputation. Businesses that respect different faiths and encourage diversity stand out in a market where customers place a greater importance on ethics and inclusivity. Marketing tactics that emphasize religious diversity, such as showcasing various staff members or sharing their personal narratives, help personalize the brand and build relationships. Commitment is further demonstrated by supporting relevant initiatives. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory study is to investigate how a brand's inclusive image may be strengthened and marketing tactics that are in line with changing consumer expectations can be informed by embracing religious diversity.

**Keywords:** Religious diversity ; Inclusive branding ; Marketing strategies ; Workplace culture; Social identity.

## Résumé

L'intégration de la diversité religieuse dans la culture d'entreprise est essentielle au développement d'une image d'entreprise inclusive. Cette stratégie augmente la clientèle d'une entreprise, favorise sa fidélité et améliore sa réputation. Les entreprises qui respectent les différentes croyances et encouragent la diversité se démarquent sur un marché où les clients accordent une plus grande importance à l'éthique et à l'inclusivité. Les tactiques de marketing qui mettent l'accent sur la diversité religieuse, comme le fait de présenter divers membres du personnel ou de partager leurs récits personnels, aident à personnaliser la marque et à établir des relations. L'engagement est également démontré en appuyant les initiatives pertinentes. L'objectif de cette étude qualitative exploratoire est d'examiner comment renforcer l'image inclusive d'une marque et comment informer les tactiques marketing qui sont en phase avec les attentes changeantes des consommateurs en adoptant la diversité religieuse.

**Mots clés :** Diversité religieuse ; Image de marque inclusive ; Stratégies de marketing ; Culture en milieu de travail ; Identité sociale.

## Introduction

In marketing literature, diversity is understood in two primary ways. First, American (Cui, 1997; Peñazola and Giddy, 1999) and Anglo-Saxon (Jamal and Chapman, 2000; Chudry and Pallister, 2002; Sekhon and Szmigin, 2009), refers to the market diversity, specifically with the amount of variety found among ethnic and minority consumer' segments. Conversely, some European and French authors (Andreani et al, 2008; Cova, 2004) have viewed diversity as having a strategic and societal role, emphasizing equal treatment for all consumer members and groups, typically free from discrimination, prejudice, or exclusivity. Despite these differing perspectives, both viewpoints ultimately acknowledge consumers' cultural identities through a multicultural model (Peñaloza 1994; Oswald 1999; Askegaard, Arnould, Kjeldgaard, 2005). Both views support the idea of multiculturalism and cultural differences, aligning them with diversity theories from human resource management (Jackson, 1992; Milliten and Martins, 1996). They identify two types of diversity: first, inherent diversity, based on foundational social characteristics of origin like age, gender, race, and ethnicity, second type is linked to acquired diversity, which includes some informal differences that are more or less visible such as education, religion, sexual orientation, and health status. However, the similarities stop there. The American school uses the term "ethnicity" to categorize these differences, by viewing the consumer as an ethnic consumer, or a minority group member. In contrast, the French school favors the term "diversity", by seeing the consumer as shaped by a range of experiences, expectations, backgrounds, as well as belonging to various cultural groups. The debate expands beyond marketing to touch on corporate policy (in line with diversity charters) and broader societal values as reflected in the motto "Europe United in Diversity". This may explain why the term "diversity" seldom appears in the titles of articles from across the Atlantic, except in works focusing on marketing organization and training (Foxman and Easterling, 1999; Auh and Menguc, 2005).

Furthermore, the concept of diversity includes not only ethnic and cultural differences, but also aspects like religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and educational background. These two views of diversity lead to different marketing strategies: ethnic marketing on the one hand, and diversity marketing on the other. Ethnic marketing (Jamal and Chapman, 2000; Appiah and Liu, 2009) or multicultural one (Cui, 1997; Penazola and Giddy, 1999) focuses specifically on ethnic groups, aiming to better meet their needs and preferences (Stayman and Deshpande, 1989; Sekhon and Szmigin, 2009).

Ethnic marketing is highly tailored, drawing on cultural experiences to effectively reach minority groups (Noriega & Blair, 2008; Appiah & Liu, 2009). It aims to appeal and engage these audiences (Stern, 1999) by connecting with their cultural traditions (Grier, Brunbaugh, & Thorton, 2006). However, the literature highlights controversies around how other consumers respond to ethnic marketing, citing reactions like hostility, rejection, customer loss (Borgerson, Schroeder, Blomberg & Thorssén, 2006; Gakenfull, McCarthy & Greenlee, 2008), and concerns over segregation (Quelet, 2007).

In distinction, diversity marketing embraces the goals of diversity as framed within human relations management. Its purpose is to encourage the coexistence among different groups (Noble, 1994), fostering their interactions to drive progress and boost organizational competitiveness (Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, Homan, 2004). This approach emphasizes partnership and mutual support between brands and diverse populations (Andreani et al, 2008), acknowledging their unique qualities through events, sponsorships, group support initiatives, educational programs, and targeted advertising. Here, the notion of “minority” fades replaced by a multicultural perspective that respects both cultural roots and progressive values specifically religious ones, this leads us to ask the following research question: *How can brands take an inclusive approach to integrate religious diversity in workplace culture in order to develop effective marketing strategies?*

## 1. Theoretical frameworks

### 1.1. Diversity, equity, and inclusion theory

Diversity, equity, and customer inclusion have become kernel social issues within the marketing functions, extending to minority groups such as religious communities in predominantly non-religious countries. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion framework, as proposed by Arsel et al. (2022), explores the impact of :

-“*Market structures*” which are often dominated by powerful actors, create barriers for vulnerable consumers and perpetuate inequalities while limiting the availability of essential goods and services or increasing costs for already precarious populations.

-“*Distributive justice and inequality*” are about the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, vulnerable consumers such as ethnic minorities often suffer systemic disadvantages.

-“*Business practices*” refers to some practices that mistakenly target vulnerable consumers. This limits their ability to make informed decisions and reinforces their economic

marginalization. Conversely, ethical companies can play a crucial role in promoting responsible and inclusive consumption.

-“*Stigma and consumer experience*” also exacerbate consumer vulnerability. The negative stereotypes or discrimination based on race, religion, gender, or socio-economic status not only influence consumers' interactions with businesses but also their own perception of their dignity and value.

According to Bernstein et al., 2020, diversity often originates in an individual's perception of being different based on particular valued characteristics, even if those traits are unrelated to specific tasks. In other words, a group is considered diverse when individuals derive their social identity from distinct characteristics and traits that set them apart from others. This perception of differences leads them to view themselves as different from the mainstream, often identifying as minority members of society. In addition to this, customer diversity lacks a universally accepted definition, as it encompasses a range of perceptions. However, research suggests that customer diversity is a multidimensional concept, with categories often organized as follows: “gender, age, sexual orientation, physical ability”, “racial ethnic and cultural identity”, “class and social status”, “religious and cultural identity” as well as “intersectional identities” (Arsel et al., 2022).

As stated by Park et al., (2022) the customer diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) framework suggests that organizations are shaped by influential societal actors, minority markets, resources, and marketing activities, collectively creating an entity characterized by racial and income representation. It tends to tie the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts to societal stakeholders and marketing assets while emphasizing the chain reaction of equitable strategies on broader societal unity. Therefore, this leads to a cut sight of inclusion and religious diversity in the focus, while diversity concerns the varied composition of individuals within a group, inclusion centers on the participation of those who can meaningfully influence an organization's culture and process. In fact, inclusion is a multidimensional concept, defined by aspects such as group cohesion, adding to this, authenticity, and the sense of belonging (Bernstein et al., 2020). Customer engagement, therefore, is rooted in the fulfillment of personal needs, driven by a sense of belonging and individuality. Bernstein et al., (2020) introduced the generative interaction theory to explain more how integrating customer diversity can enhance organizational performance. They argue that, without deliberate intervention, challenges such as self-isolation, communication breakdowns, stereotypes, and stigma tend to dominate, impending diversity and inclusion efforts by default.

That is to say that the challenge for organizations lies in addressing the needs of diverse clients, the action of fostering markets grounded in equality and inclusion that support well-being, as opposed to those perpetuating inequality and oppression (Arsel et al., 2022). While bearing in mind, the organizational and managerial practices to promote an inclusive environment and shift into social norms that are expected to impact brand managers, potentially affecting religious and cultural experiences for many customers through reaching their identity specifically.

### **1.2. The theory of social identity**

Contemporary societies are defined by the coexistence of multiculturalism, prompting more general brands to let the religious product enter the market. In a specific context, the objective of this research is to explore how employees' religious affiliations impact their sense of belonging, inclusion, or the opposite, in the workplace culture. To address this, we gather the theory of social identity in order to study the attitude between the endo group (internal target audience) and the exo group (external target audience). Originally, as proposed by Tajfel (1982), the social identity theory helps in understanding the relationship between distinct social groups (Carvalho, Fazel, and Trifts, 2018).

The social identity theory highlights how consumers use brands in a way to express their identity and affirm their belonging to social groups (Aaker, 2000; Berger and Heath, 2007; Escalas and Bettman, 2003, 2005; Dommer and Swaminathan, 2013). Although, when the brand targets heterogeneous social groups, it may trigger some sort of tensions and resistance (Andreini et al, 2015; Fella-Dehiri and Michel, 2020; Izberk-Bilgin, 2012; Wright and Annes, 2013; Johnson, Thomas, and Grier 2017). This issue becomes particularly pronounced when a generalist brand decides to introduce a newborn religious offer, by raising complex questions about the interplay of impact between the endo and exo groups within a community that faces societal stigma. Little is known, about how limited is the understanding of how the endo groups (the non-religious) may react to brands targeting the exo groups (religious). Therefore, the group is created when individuals recognize themselves as members, also, identifying themselves within it. Social categorization, in turn, is a cognitive mechanism that organizes segments and classifies the social environment. This process, enables individuals to engage in various forms of social actions, shaping their interactions with external stimuli.

Moreover, social categorization determines each person's place in society within. That is to say, group membership occurs when individuals define themselves and are recognized by others as a part of a certain group. Therefore, social groups offer to their members with a sense of

identification to “social identity”. By this, social identity becomes the crucial aspect of an individual’s concept that emerges from the awareness of belonging to a social group, combined with the value of emotional significance they attribute to that membership. It also highlights the importance of adopting inclusive practices that reduce the perception from “us” to “them”, by creating a cohesive culture where religious diversity is much respected, for this connection, an environment and a workplace that incorporate religious diversity effectively, reflects positively on its brand identity, ultimately, understanding the social identity facilitates the process of how employees and customers can inform marketing strategies that resonate with multitude audiences by showing inclusiveness and authenticity.

### **1.2.1. The identification with the brand**

The concept of brand identification has its roots in Belk’s work (1988) on the relationship between self and possession, but also in the key dimensions of the brand’s relationship. It is notably included among six facets of the “Brand Relationship Quality” model proposed by Fournier (1998) such as “love and passion”, “personal engagement”, “interdependence”, “intimacy and familiarity”, “commitment” and “brand partner quality”. As defined by Bagozzi & Dholakia (2006), brand identification is defined as “the level of correspondence between self-image and brand image”. In this context, it occurs that brand associations align with the consumer’s identity. While the literature discusses the related concepts such as self-brand connections (Escalas and Bettman, 2003, 2005), as well as self-concept connections (Fournier, 1998), we favor the term “brand identification” to encapsulate this relationship.

For this reflection, the inclusion of brand is represented by the identification and incorporating cognitive attributes into one self-concept (Aron et al., 1992), playing a key role in forming the consumer’s identity. Thus, the consumers use associations or linked images in order to build their identity, and also adopt the values that the brand conveys. In addition to this, we postulate that brand identification impacts brand engagement, also, its explanatory power for symbolic brands is more pronounced than for functional brands.

### **1.2.2. Commitment to the brand**

In consumer-brand relationship studies, the conception of engagement is an essential variable. It is defined as follow “the willingness to make the necessary efforts to sustain a relationship that the individual considers important” (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Several researchers have identified some specific determinants of commitment like trust and attachment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Lacoëuilhe, 2000). In this context, we bargain and leverage the notion of

engagement in order to explore how brand identification and social identification impact it through symbolic and functional brand associations.

In a during and stable relationship, engagement not only resolve difficult potential conflict, it also decreases the likelihood of customers disengaging from the brand and therefore making it a stronger indicator of loyalty. As proclaimed by Joule and Beauvois (1989), commitment emanates our actions, as well as the degree of engagement may vary depending on the nature of the actions mentioned. The strength and nature of commitment can have a different perspective. Allen and Meyer (1990) identify three major components of the commitment:

-“*Continuance commitment*” is driven by the perceived need to continue the relationship, often due to the costs or barriers linked to leaving.

-“*Affective commitment*” is rooted in an emotional desire to maintain the relationship, reflecting a sense of attachment and identification.

-“*Normative commitment*” is based on a sense of duty to continue, often shaped by social norms. These dimensions highlight the diverse nature of commitment in a various context, incorporating consumer-brand relationships. Yet in marketing research, the normative dimension of engagement has received little attention. To our knowledge, it has been explored primarily as a multidimensional concept in some fields such as business-to-business (Bansal et al., 2004), professional organizations (Gruen et al., 2000), and more recently in the studies of brand image (Moulines et Roux, 2009). This gap suggests a chance and an opportunity for further investigation into the role of normative commitment in consumer brand dynamics.

## **2. Projected Methodology**

### **2.1. Methodology choice**

Avenirer & Gavard-Perret (2008) describe the methodology as “the study of methods for building knowledge.” Thus, according to his epistemological positioning, each researcher is called to mobilize a certain number of methods of access to reality. In our case, we will adopt a qualitative methodology that, according to Coutelle (2005), “aims at searching for meaning, understanding phenomena or behaviors” with a mode of interpretivist reasoning.

The qualitative approach does not limit interpretation to the identification of variables, the development of data collection instruments, and the analysis to establish results. It is rather for the researcher to position themselves as an interpreter of the studied field, even if their own interpretation may be more supported than the subjects' (Stake, 1995). The qualitative approach acknowledges both the subjectivity of the researcher and the subjects. It offers the opportunity for a confrontation with multiple realities because it “more directly exposes the nature of the

transaction” between the investigator and the subject (or object), and allows for a better evaluation of their interaction posture with the described phenomenon (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Interpretation is not restricted by the qualitative approach to the identification of factors, the creation of tools for gathering data, and the analysis to determine outcomes. Instead, even though their interpretation may be stronger than the subjects', the researcher should present themselves as an interpreter of the field under study (Stake, 1995). Both the researcher's and the subjects' subjectivity are acknowledged by the qualitative method. Because it "more directly exposes the nature of the transaction" between the researcher and the subject (or object), it provides the chance to confront multiple realities and enables more accurate assessments of their interaction posture with the phenomenon being described (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

To better understand the results obtained, it is necessary to integrate a dynamic essential for the comprehension and analysis of the interviews. This dynamic involves “elucidating personal opinions, exploring perspectives on a particular idea or situation, conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents.” According to Thomas (2003), “qualitative interviewing is a type of framework in which practices and norms are not only recorded but also enacted, questioned, and reinforced.” Interview guides aim to determine the set of favorable factors that allow respondents to answer independently and spontaneously through the thread of questions posed around a developed area. The questions in the interview guide include the basic question corresponding to the reformulation of the problem of the desired topic, and numerous associated questions related to the central question, which in turn are further improved thanks to the pilot test of the interview guide conducted. To mitigate the potential influence of the interviewer, the interviews are conducted remotely and without a camera.

The interviews were supplemented by the critical incident method, which involves asking the interviewee to talk about a situation they have already experienced. Several steps have been involved in the processing of data collection in order to perform the analysis. Starting with the interviews immediately, an initial reflection was documented and compiled. In our case, since the given data collection method was semi-structured interviews (which is a highly adequate approach for qualitative research), content analysis was chosen as the analytical method. The exploratory study is carried out in the form of semi-structured individual interviews, each lasting for fifteen to twenty minutes, with a sample of 16 companies.

## 2.2. Investigation procedure and data collection

To successfully conduct this study, individual interviews lasting between 30 and 45 minutes were carried out with 16 leaders and managers. The use of individual interviews aims to deeply explore a given consumption universe (Evrard et al., 2009). The choice of this type of data collection is justified when the researcher seeks the richness of the content, its depth, its diversity, and its quality (Evrard et al., 2009). The interviews were supplemented by the critical incident method, which involves asking the interviewee to talk about a situation they have already experienced. According to Coutelle (2005), “this method focuses on everyday situations and can help anticipate reactions in similar situations.”

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Religious inclusion in client diversity and organizational performance

Based on the feedback from the interviewees, religious inclusion in client diversity can be a sensitive and complex element of organizational management. On the one hand, respecting customers' religious beliefs can significantly enhance trust and strengthen the relationship between them, which may have a positive influence on organizational performance, specifically in terms of customer loyalty and the company's reputation. On the other hand, managing religious diversity effectively among clients can entail some challenges, especially in terms of communication, understanding specific needs, and resolving sometimes potential conflicts.

However, adopting an inclusive approach that acknowledges and respects diverse religious beliefs may lead to creative solutions with better adaptation to clients' needs, which can boost organizational performance. That is to say, religious inclusion in clients' diversity involves respecting and accommodating clients' religious beliefs, which can build trust and loyalty. As explained by an HR leader, “... *it requires addressing intricate and sensitive issues such as work schedules, dress codes, dietary restrictions, prayer spaces, and religious expression.*” By fostering a culture of respect and understanding, organizations can improve employees' morale, stimulate innovation, and enhance their brand reputation. These factors can lead, in the long term, to a significant social benefit. In addition, to effectively manage religious diversity, organizations must implement solid strategies such as cultural competence training, flexible workplace policies, and open communication channels. By prioritizing these aspects, as well as using data-driven decision-making, organizations can create an inclusive and successful business environment, according to some managers.

### 3.2. Social categorization and brand interaction

Naturally, social categorization plays an important role in how individuals perceive and interact with brands. Social categorization refers to the process by which individuals mentally group objects, people, or similar concepts into distinct categories. Brand interaction, on the other hand, concerns an individual's emotional and cognitive relationship with a specific brand, often based on shared values, beliefs, and experiences. Also, when a brand deliberately targets a specific religious group, it can provoke different reactions among individuals who are not part of that religious group, but who recognize themselves in other social categories. This dynamic can be influenced by several factors, including social categorization and brand interaction.

It should be noted that the interviewees are aware that when brands align with specific religious members, a complicated interplay of social categorization and brand interaction occurs. While such alignment can strengthen the bond between the brand and its target, it may also alienate and provoke negative reactions from individuals who do not identify with that specific group. This is due to social categorization, and that often involves in-group and out-group dynamics, where individuals tend to prioritize those who belong to their group members, can also see outsiders with hostility and suspicion. As a result, brands that are perceived as biased may suffer from decreased brand loyalty and negative word-of-mouth reviews.

Individuals often tend to organize themselves socially according to various characteristics, such as religion, age, gender, ethnicity, etc. For example, religious beliefs (e.g., Muslim, Christian, Jewish) influence worldviews and interactions, while age groups (e.g., Baby Boomers, Millennials) share shared experiences and values, gender identity shapes social roles, and ethnicity reflects a shared cultural heritage.

This process of social categorization can lead to the formation of endogenous groups (those to which a person belongs) and exogenous (those to which a person does not belong). Consequently, when a brand targets a specific religious group, people outside of that group may feel ignored and excluded, leading to resentment and disengagement. This is especially true with targeted marketing, such as advertising that only features members of one faith or during religious holidays, which can create a sense of exclusion. These negative emotions can manifest in boycotts, negative word of mouth, and a switch to more inclusive competitors.

That's why the majority of leaders insist that brands need to balance inclusivity while addressing particular individual group needs. In other terms, failing to do so might not risk alienating out-groups but also limit the brands' market appeal. Furthermore, if it is managed

thoughtfully, targeting that specific group may coexist with strategies that maintain a sense of inclusivity.

### **3.3. Brand identification**

As is known, brand identification reflects the degree to which an individual feels emotionally connected to that brand and integrates their image into their concept of self. If a brand targets a specific religious group, and this is perceived as contrary to the values or identity of non-religious individuals, it may compromise their identification with that brand.

According to the feedback, individuals may feel uncomfortable or even disengage from the brand if it is perceived as excluding or contrary to their personal values. In this context, the reactions of non-religious individuals to a brand that targets a religious group may vary. Some may interpret the brand's concentration as a demonstration of inclusivity and respect towards diversity, thereby strengthening their emotional connection and identification with the brand.

## **4. Discussion of results**

Religious diversity and inclusion extend beyond legal compliance, they also serve as a source of competitive advantage for organizations. By respecting and accommodating employees' religious beliefs and practices, managers can encourage a culture of trust, respect, and belonging, ultimately boosting team performance and enhancing brand reputation. However, implementing religious diversity and inclusion is not without challenges. To navigate these complexities effectively, both employees and managers should be equipped with practical tips and resources to support and promote religious diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Religious diversity and inclusion are not only a matter of ethical and legal obligations but also strategic advantages for companies that admit to building and cultivating strong teams and brands. Furthermore, embracing religious diversity and inclusion enables businesses to tap into the potential of a diverse global marketplace while strengthening their social responsibility and bolstering their reputation. Moreover, according to our literature review, organizations need to take a proactive approach to integrating religious diversity into their overall diversity management strategy. This may include awareness and training programs for staff, policies and practices that promote religious inclusion, as well as feedback mechanisms allowing clients to express their specific needs in terms of religious practices. Ultimately, an approach that recognizes and respects religious diversity among clients can not only strengthen client relationships but also contribute to more robust and sustainable organizational performance. Research shows that while diverse teams often perform better than homogeneous teams because of the different points of view they bring, inclusion is more easily achieved within

homogeneous groups, because fewer individual needs or perspectives need to be recognized or addressed. Therefore, it is not surprising that the levels of inclusion in our survey are high, as respondents from majority groups predominate. However, our results also show that not all categories of employees experience inclusion similarly. Minority and, to a greater extent, lower-ranking respondents report fewer positive experiences of inclusion in the workplace. In our study, the response profile of some minority groups indicates a slightly but less consistently positive experience of inclusion factors. These are primarily the elements of inclusion that respond to the need to be seen, understood, and valued as an individual. However, some of the responses from these minority individuals, particularly at the leadership and senior levels, show a more positive experience with inclusion than those from majority groups. This segment will delve into examples and case studies of successful religious diversity and inclusion initiatives across various industries and sectors, shedding light on their benefits as well as the challenges they present. However, others may perceive the brand's approaches and strategies as dismissive of their proper values, leading to a decline in their engagement and interest. Alternatively, some may remain largely indifferent to the brand's religious targeting approach, provided it continues to fulfill their personal needs and expectations without compromising their sense of belonging. The combination of social identity theory with diversity equity and inclusion theory allocates a crucial comprehensive approach to addressing religious diversity in corporate culture, as well as, outlining inclusive branding strategies focused on effective marketing plans. This framework identifies the importance of constructing an environment for work, where diversity is much more valued, equity is prioritized, and inclusion is actively stimulated, while considering social identity, religious affiliation, employees, and customers. It also highlights, the importance and the necessity of understanding multiple social identities to adjust branding with marketing efforts to match the needs, values, and preferences of various religious and other social members. By integrating both of these theories, organizations may produce holistic strategies that cultivate an inclusive corporate culture and strengthen the brand image, also marketing attractiveness at the same time.

## **Conclusion**

In order to include religious diversity into marketing and workplace culture, brands must first create a welcoming and courteous atmosphere. This entails educating staff members about various religious customs through training and incorporating them in diversity committees and feedback to jointly develop inclusive projects. Marketing should authentically represent this inclusivity on the outside, especially in rural areas. This includes avoiding preconceptions and

politely interacting with local groups, especially around significant religious festivals. A brand's dedication to inclusivity can be further demonstrated by sponsoring multicultural events. Our study draws attention to the differences between the more inclusive European diversity marketing strategy and American ethnic marketing, which targets particular cultural groups. Both stress how crucial it is to acknowledge cultural identities within a multicultural context. A solid basis is offered by theories of social identity and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). While Social Identity theory describes how group affiliations influence consumer responses, DEI concentrates on equitable behaviors and belonging. Our results from qualitative interviews demonstrate that managing religious diversity enhances trust, innovation, and brand reputation in addition to adhering to legal and ethical requirements. But this calls for constant, proactive involvement. To sum up, brands can create inclusive strategies that honor religious diversity by incorporating DEI and Social Identity theories. Brands may be positioned as socially conscious and progressive by measuring their impact and openly sharing their progress, which will improve internal cohesiveness and public trust.

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