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Diversity in Femvertising: An Experimental Investigation

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ABSTRACT

Diversity in femvertising—advertising that empowers women through inclusive representation—has gained significant traction in recent times. Yet consumer perceptions of its authenticity and effectiveness remain underexplored. This study examines the impact of diverse representation in femvertising on brand attitudes, purchase intentions, and consumer behavior. Findings from four experimental studies reveal that diversity enhances brand perceptions and purchase intentions, mediated by perceived brand authenticity. However, political orientation moderates these effects; liberals respond more positively to diverse advertisements while conservatives prefer homogeneous representations. These insights highlight the importance of authenticity in femvertising and the potential risks of tokenism and political polarization. The research contributes to advertising knowledge by incorporating intersectionality, examining behavioral outcomes, and addressing the ideological divide in consumer responses. Practical implications suggest that brands should balance diversity with authenticity to foster inclusivity without alienating key audiences. Future research should explore the optimal level of diversity, long-term effects on brand loyalty, and the role of AI-driven personalization in diverse advertising.

1 | Introduction

Representation of diverse groups in advertising is increasingly important. It not only shapes consumer perceptions but also reflects broader societal shifts toward inclusivity (Eisend 2022). Research indicates that consumers actively seek greater diversity in advertising (Simeon 2024). This also applies to femvertising, which uses pro-female imagery, messages, and talent to empower women and girls (Skey 2015). However, despite the growing emphasis on diverse representation, there remains a critical gap in understanding how consumers interpret and respond to these portrayals (Khan et al. 2025).

A key challenge in diversity-oriented advertising, and particularly in femvertising, is the perception of authenticity. Authenticity is a fundamental determinant of advertising effectiveness, as it influences whether consumers perceive

diversity efforts as sincere and aligned with brand values (Becker et al. 2019). Yet, many femvertising campaigns have faced criticism for appearing opportunistic rather than genuinely committed to social change (Åkestam et al. 2017). Consumers often perceive brands as capitalizing on feminist movements to drive profits—a phenomenon commonly referred to as “commodity feminism” (Buckley et al. 2024). When feminist ideals are repackaged as mere marketing tools, brands risk accusations of “woke washing” or “diversity washing” (Vredenburg et al. 2020), where inclusivity efforts feel performative rather than substantive. Consequently, such representations may function more as strategic branding exercises than as meaningful contributions to social progress.

This perceived lack of authenticity has created a disconnect between brand intentions and consumer expectations. As consumers become more skeptical, their trust in diversity-related

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initiatives wane, thereby reducing the impact of femvertising campaigns. Brands risk facing backlash if their diversity efforts are perceived as insincere or as a marketing ploy, which is reflected in a decrease in the visibility of such initiatives (Maurer 2023). As a result, a larger debate has emerged within both academia and industry regarding whether brands should take on the responsibility of shaping societal views on diversity or whether their focus should be on truly supporting social causes without exploiting them for commercial gain (Eisend 2010). This skepticism is further fueled by the fact that perceptions of diversity in advertising differ according to political orientation. Evidence indicates that conservatives often see such campaigns as politically motivated or “woke washing,” generating suspicion (Lisjak and Ordabayeva 2023; Sobande 2019), while liberals view them as authentic efforts to promote equity (Haidt 2012; Sternadori and Abitbol 2019).

To complicate matters further, the extant literature on diversity in advertising faces two key challenges (Campbell et al. 2025): (1) it is fragmented and lacks cohesion; and (2) as recognition of diverse identities expands, the topic becomes increasingly complex. To address these gaps, our research responds to recent calls (e.g., Campbell et al. 2025; Eisend et al. 2023; Gomez-Borquez et al. 2024) by making several substantial contributions to advertising and femvertising knowledge. First, we broaden the understanding of diverse representation by emphasizing intersectionality—namely, the ways in which multiple diversity elements intersect, and how they collectively shape consumer responses to advertisements. By moving beyond gender stereotypes, we explore broader forms of diversity, answering calls for greater inclusivity in research (Peñaloza et al. 2023). Second, we investigate additional mechanisms, moderators, and outcomes to understand how and why diversity operates in a femvertising context. We specifically address the limited empirical research on critical factors such as political orientation (Campbell et al. 2025), authenticity as a content cue (Becker et al. 2019), and mediating mechanisms (Khan et al. 2025). These areas have remained relatively underexplored in both advertising and femvertising research (Gomez-Borquez et al. 2024). Moreover, through our experimental design, we offer causal evidence to advance a field dominated by qualitative and noncausal research (Campbell et al. 2025). By integrating these elements, our work provides a more comprehensive and actionable framework for understanding diverse representation in femvertising.

1.1 | Extant Literature and Research Gaps

While research on femvertising and diversity in advertising has expanded over the past decade, the field remains fragmented and conceptually dispersed. Much of the existing work has focused on empowerment frames, postfeminist discourse, and questions of authenticity, with valuable insights emerging from both critical discourse analyses and consumer-focused studies. However, current contributions often stop short of directly examining consumer behavior, and mechanisms such as authenticity, as well as moderators such as political ideology, are only beginning to receive attention.

To contextualize these limitations, Table 1 provides an overview of recent scholarship on femvertising and diversity in advertising. The synthesis highlights how the literature has evolved, the dominant approaches employed, and the theoretical constructs emphasized. As the table shows, most studies center on attitudinal outcomes (e.g., advertisement or brand evaluations), while relatively few incorporate behavioral measures or systematically test mediators and moderators. Furthermore, questions of political orientation and intersectionality remain underexplored. Our study addresses these gaps by adopting a multi-study experimental design that integrates both attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, positions perceived brand authenticity as a central mediating mechanism, and incorporates political orientation as a key moderator.

In line with this contribution, we address the overarching research question of how diversity in femvertising shapes consumer responses. Our study has three objectives: first, to examine the effects of diverse versus homogeneous portrayals on brand attitudes, purchase intentions, and purchase behavior; second, to investigate whether perceived brand authenticity operates as a mediating mechanism; and third, to explore the moderating influence of consumers' political orientation. Together, these objectives provide a focused framework that guides our work.

Building on these objectives, the remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews prior work on diversity, femvertising, and authenticity, and develops the theoretical background and hypotheses. Section 3 reports the four experimental studies and their results. Section 4 discusses theoretical and managerial implications, outlines limitations, and concludes with a synthesis of contributions and avenues for future research. Finally, Section 5 provides a concise summary of our work.

2 | Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

2.1 | Diversity in Femvertising

Diversity is often classified into two categories: surface-level and deep-level differences (Harrison et al. 1998). Surface-level diversity includes visible and largely unchangeable traits, such as age, race, ethnicity, and gender, which are immediately noticeable through physical appearance. In contrast, deep-level diversity involves less obvious characteristics, such as beliefs, attitudes, expertise, and personality, which typically become evident only through extended interaction. Drawing on the framework proposed by Campbell et al. (2025), we conceptualize diversity across multiple dimensions, including age, beauty, body size, gender, LGBTQIA+ identity, physical and mental ability, and race and ethnicity.

To further capture the complexities of diversity, the concept of intersectionality offers a valuable perspective. Intersectionality (see Crenshaw 2017) emphasizes how overlapping social categories, such as gender, race, sexual orientation, and physical ability, create unique experiences of discrimination and disadvantage. For example, a lesbian woman with physical

TABLE 1 | Key studies on femvertising, diversity, and consumer responses.

Author (s), year	Context and scope	Methodology	Independent variables	Mechanisms			Key findings
				Outcomes	Mediators	Moderators	
Åkestam et al. (2017)	Comparing femvertising versus traditional ads	Controlled lab experiments	Type of ad (femvertising vs. traditional)	Reactance, brand attitude, purchase intention	Reactance reduction		Femvertising reduces resistance, boosts attitudes and intentions across contexts.
Sobande (2019)	Intersectional femvertising	Critical discourse/content analysis	Campaign tropes (e.g., diversity emphasis)	Audience perceptions of inclusivity	Woke-washing tropes		Highlights oversimplification of intersectionality; tropes reinforce stereotypes.
Windels et al. (2020)	Postfeminist discourse in ads	Qualitative and quantitative content analysis	Femvertising versus traditional ads	Ad attitudes, brand attitudes	Postfeminist tropes		Femvertising embeds subtle disempowering tropes even in “empowering” frames.
Varghese and Kumar (2022)	Cultural critique of femvertising	Conceptual review	Femvertising campaigns	Consumer interpretations of feminism in ads	Authenticity, irony		Femvertising often commodifies feminism (“commodity feminism”), undermining empowerment.
Sterbenk et al. (2022)	Authenticity of femvertising	Empirical study linking campaigns with CSR/gender data	Femvertising campaign exposure	Perceptions of authenticity, brand credibility		Internal gender equity	Femvertising works only when internal practices align with external feminist claims.
Hainneville et al. (2023)	Authenticity of femvertising	Qualitative interviews	Ad authenticity cues	Ad credibility, brand trust	Six authenticity dimensions		Authenticity dimensions drive credibility and trust in femvertising.
Buckley et al. (2024)	Gen-Z women and femvertising	Qualitative focus groups and interviews	Authenticity cues in ads	Emotional response, credibility evaluation	Credibility tension		Gen-Z women show ambivalence: empowerment versus guilt depending on authenticity.
Gomez-Borquez et al. (2024)	Femvertising across feminist advertising eras	Systematic literature review	Feminist era/femvertising type	Presence of stereotypes, representation complexity	Postfeminist framing		Femvertising reflects 4th-wave feminism but still embeds stereotypical complexity.
Campbell et al. (2025)	Broad diversity in advertising	Systematic literature review	Diversity dimensions (race, gender, age, etc.)	Consumer perceptions of ads			Proposes a unified framework of seven diversity dimensions shaping consumer responses.

(Continues)

TABLE 1 | (Continued)

Author (s), year	Context and scope	Methodology	Independent variables	Mechanisms			Key findings
				Outcomes	Mediators	Moderators	
Martínez-Aguirre et al. (2025)	Feminist awareness in ad evaluation	Survey-based experiment	Level of feminist knowledge	Brand attitudes	Authenticity, credibility		Feminist-aware consumers critically judge authenticity, which mediates ad evaluations.
This article	Diversity in femvertising	Multi-study experimental design	Femvertising diversity	Brand attitude, purchase intention, actual purchase behavior	Brand authenticity	Political orientation	Diversity in femvertising enhances consumer outcomes via authenticity, moderated by ideology.

disabilities may face compounded biases that differ from those experienced by others within her identity groups. Despite its relevance, intersectionality remains underutilized in advertising research, with few studies exploring the interplay of multiple identity attributes within femvertising campaigns (Sobande 2019). This lack of comprehensive analysis limits the potential for truly inclusive and representative advertising.

The research dearth is particularly evident in femvertising, where achieving meaningful representation often falls short of stakeholder expectations (Hainneville et al. 2023; Sterbenk et al. 2022). While some campaigns have successfully featured women from varied ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, others continue to rely on superficial portrayals (Viglia et al. 2023). The inconsistency is further compounded by research on diversity in advertising, which often focuses narrowly on specific attributes such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age, limiting a broader understanding of inclusivity (Eisend et al. 2023). In addition, other dimensions, such as disability, transgender representation, and religious identity, remain largely underexplored (Haller and Ralph 2001; Rößner et al. 2021). The representation gap highlights the need for a more holistic approach to diversity in femvertising—one that integrates its core principles of promoting empowerment and embracing diversity to realize its full potential. Such an approach aligns with the original vision of femvertising, which seeks to address systemic gender inequalities while fostering inclusive narratives that resonate with diverse audiences.

2.1.1 | Consumer Responses to Diversity in Femvertising

Research indicates that an enhanced representation of diversity in advertisements can positively influence how people perceive the models, the advertisement itself, the brand, and even its products (Micu et al. 2009). Increased representation often encourages consumers to support brands through their purchases as a show of solidarity or, conversely, to avoid them as a form of boycott when diversity is absent (Bradley and Longi 2001; Eisend 2022). In the specific context of femvertising, studies have consistently demonstrated its ability to boost consumer purchase intentions, improve advertisement and brand opinions, and elevate brand evaluations (Champlin et al. 2019; Drake 2017; Papadopoulou et al. 2024; Teng et al. 2021; Yoon and Lee 2023).

When femvertising integrates diverse representation, its impact becomes even more pronounced, fostering positive brand attitudes (Abitbol and Sternadori 2016; Åkestam et al. 2017; Buckley et al. 2024). Given this evidence, diversity in femvertising offers brands a unique opportunity to connect with a wider audience and drive both social and commercial benefits. In what follows, we focus on three outcomes: brand attitude, capturing consumers' overall evaluation of the brand; purchase intentions, reflecting their motivation to engage with the brand in the future; and purchase behavior, indicating actual choice when alternatives are available. Against this backdrop, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1a-c. *Diversity (homogeneity) in femvertising is positively related to higher (lower) (a) brand attitude, (b) purchase intentions, and (c) purchase behavior.*

2.2 | Brand Authenticity in Femvertising

Brand authenticity is defined as “the extent to which consumers perceive a brand to be faithful towards itself (continuity), true to its consumers (credibility), motivated by caring and responsibility (integrity), and able to support consumers in being true to themselves (symbolism)” (Morhart et al. 2015, p. 203). The integrity, credibility, continuity, and symbolism dimensions are the hallmarks of authentic femvertising, ensuring that a brand’s messaging is seen as genuine and trustworthy.

Brand authenticity is central to the success of advertising, as it determines whether consumers perceive a brand’s messaging as genuine, real, and aligned with its values (Becker et al. 2019; Morhart et al. 2015). However, in the context of femvertising, authenticity is increasingly under threat due to the rise of inauthentic femvertising, where brands exploit feminist ideals for profit (Sobande 2019) and without meaningful alignment in their internal practices (Sterbenk et al. 2022). The incorporation of diversity into femvertising messages provides an opportunity to counter inauthenticity challenges by aligning brand messaging with broader societal values and expectations, as diversity signals inclusivity and a genuine commitment to social equity.

2.2.1 | The Mediating Role of Brand Authenticity

When advertisements showcase diverse representations (across dimensions such as gender, race, body types, and cultural backgrounds), they reflect an understanding of, and respect for, the diverse audiences they aim to serve (Champlin et al. 2019). Such efforts are particularly important in engaging Millennials and Gen Z consumers, who prioritize diversity and inclusivity in the brands they choose to support (Thomas and Kureshi 2020).

Authenticity, in turn, plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions and has been shown to drive a wide range of positive outcomes. When advertising is perceived as authentic, consumers are more likely to trust the brand and respond positively to its messaging (Becker et al. 2019). This is particularly true when brands demonstrate a genuine commitment to diversity initiatives since such efforts resonate with consumers who view their purchases as an extension of their own values (Champlin et al. 2019). In addition, studies have revealed that authentic branding enhances brand value (Papadopoulou et al. 2023), strengthens brand attitudes, and increases purchase intentions (Ilicic and Webster 2014; Napoli et al. 2014; Södergren 2021). Conversely, the absence of authenticity can have detrimental effects. A lack of perceived genuineness often leads to consumer skepticism (Hainneville et al. 2023), negative attitudes (Park et al. 2023), and reduced purchase intentions (Papadopoulou et al. 2024). Importantly, diversity can operate as a cue of perceived sincerity in advertising. When brands reflect inclusivity in a way that aligns with broader societal values, consumers are more likely to perceive the message as genuine rather than opportunistic, thereby reinforcing brand authenticity.

We therefore expect that diversity in femvertising enhances perceptions of authenticity by fostering inclusivity and demonstrating a genuine commitment to social equity. Authenticity,

in turn, creates positive attitudes, and drives purchase intentions, forming a critical link between diverse advertising practices and meaningful consumer engagement. Formally:

H2_{a-b}. *Perceived brand authenticity mediates the relationship between diversity and a) brand attitude and b) purchase intentions.*

2.3 | The Moderating Role of Political Orientation

Consumers’ political orientations are likely to play a pivotal role in moderating the relationship between diversity in femvertising and consumer responses. By examining how liberal and conservative ideologies influence perceptions of diverse advertising, it becomes clear that political beliefs significantly shape consumer reactions to campaigns focused on inclusion and representation. We argue that the ideological foundations of these orientations create distinct patterns of receptiveness or resistance to diversity in femvertising, shaping how effectively such campaigns resonate with different audiences.

Liberally inclined individuals, for instance, are more likely to respond positively to diversity in femvertising because their ideological framework emphasizes values such as equality, social justice, and individual self-expression (Hirschman 1983). These values naturally align with the goals of inclusive advertising, which seeks to represent a variety of identities, experiences, and perspectives. For liberals, diverse representations in advertising go beyond symbolic gestures; they are seen as meaningful actions to address systemic inequalities and promote equity in society (Sternadori and Abitbol 2019).

2.3.1 | Liberal and Conservative Responses to Femvertising

We expect that femvertising campaigns portraying women from diverse ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds, or include representations of women with disabilities, will resonate with liberal audiences. When brands avoid tokenism and instead embrace meaningful storytelling, they not only foster trust but also emotional connections with consumers who perceive these representations as genuine commitments to social progress (Ashley and Tuten 2015). Moreover, liberals’ openness to multiculturalism further enhances their positive responses to diversity in femvertising. Rooted in a worldview that values pluralism and embraces diverse perspectives, this openness makes liberals more receptive to representations that celebrate unique cultural identities or nontraditional experiences (Haidt 2012).

In contrast, conservative consumers often display skepticism toward diversity-focused femvertising due to their ideological emphasis on tradition, stability, and adherence to established norms (Haidt 2012). For conservatives, stability is closely tied to preserving traditional social structures and roles, leading them to view campaigns that emphasize diversity or challenge conventional narratives as potentially disruptive or overly

politicized (Goldman 2023). Femvertising that foregrounds progressive messages or advocates social change can conflict with this preference for cultural continuity and established traditions (Lisjak and Ordabayeva 2023).

These patterns reflect broader ideological cognitive styles: liberals tend to process information through an openness-to-experience lens that values pluralism and social change, whereas conservatives often rely on a stability-oriented style that prioritizes tradition, continuity, and order (Haidt 2012). Such differences help explain why diversity in femvertising may resonate positively with liberal audiences while provoking resistance among conservatives. Building on the above:

H3. Political orientation moderates the relationship between diversity and purchase behavior.

The sum of our arguments is presented as a conceptual model in Figure 1.

3 | Overview of Studies

We conducted four studies to investigate the impact of diversity in femvertising on consumer attitudes, purchase intentions, and behaviors. Study 1 tested the main effect of diversity on brand attitudes and purchase intentions (H1_a and H1_b), employing a one-factor, between-subjects design (high diversity vs. low diversity vs. homogeneity). This study provided foundational evidence that diverse advertisements positively influence brand attitudes and purchase intentions compared to homogeneous advertisements. Study 2 extended the findings by examining the mediating role of perceived brand authenticity (H2_a, H2_b) and tested these relationships across genders. Using real brands and video advertisements as stimuli, this study demonstrated that perceived brand authenticity mediated the relationship between diversity and purchase intentions, with consistent effects across male and female participants.

Study 3 introduced a causal investigation of brand authenticity by directly manipulating the mediator using a moderation-of-process (MOP) design. The study validated the role of brand authenticity as a key mechanism linking diversity in

femvertising to consumer purchase intentions. Additionally, a new product category was used to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Study 4 explored the effect of diversity on actual purchasing behavior and investigated the moderating role of political orientation (H3). Participants engaged in a realistic purchasing task to measure their behavioral preferences. The four studies were conducted within a recent and consistent period, which ensures comparability across data collections.

Together, these studies provide a comprehensive investigation of the positive effects of diversity in femvertising on consumer outcomes and highlight the mediating and moderating mechanisms that shape these relationships.

3.1 | Study 1: Testing the Main Effect

Study 1 tested H1_a and H1_b using a one-factor, between-subjects design (Diversity: high diversity vs. low diversity vs. homogeneity). Diversity was manipulated across all femvertising conditions, and participants' brand attitudes and purchase intentions were subsequently measured.

3.1.1 | Stimulus Development

The stimuli, specifically developed for this study, consisted of three print advertisements for a lip balm. All advertisements shared the same key femvertising message: "Real Women, Real Lips, Real Care." This message aligns with the values central to femvertising, such as promoting female empowerment, and reflects the essence of major femvertising campaigns. The advertisements also used consistent visual elements, including font style, the positioning of models, and their posture. By focusing on empowerment, rather than the functional aspects of the product, potential confounding effects related to product features were minimized.

The three advertisements (Appendix A, Figure A1) represented varying levels of diversity, through differing combinations of ethnicity and age among the featured models. In the high-diversity condition, the advertisement featured three women of different ethnicities and age groups, representing a broad range

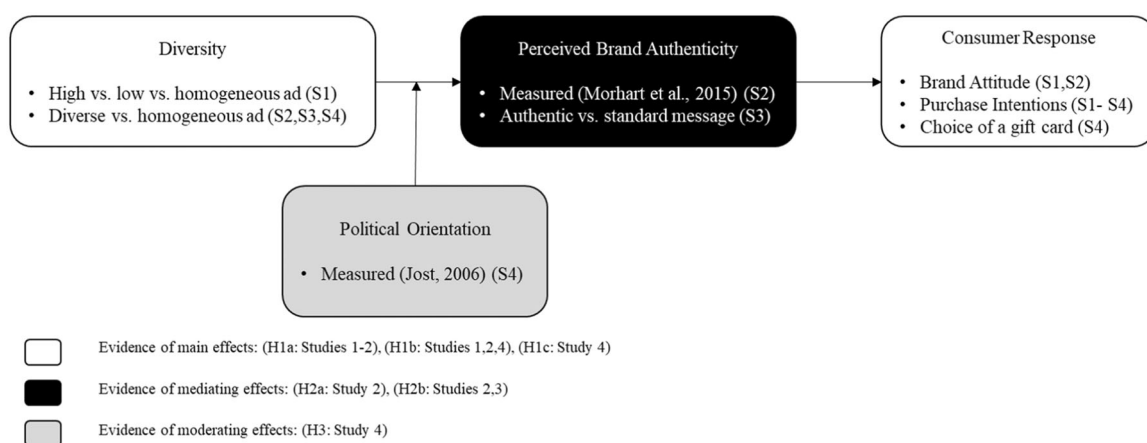


FIGURE 1 | Conceptual model.

of diversity. In the low-diversity condition, the advertisement showcased three women from different ethnic backgrounds, though the diversity was less pronounced than in the high-diversity condition. The women represented a moderate range of ages but with a noticeable inclination toward a specific age group, resulting in a balanced yet somewhat limited representation. This condition captured greater variety than the homogeneous advertisement but did not achieve the level of inclusiveness of the high-diversity condition. Finally, in the homogeneous condition, the advertisement featured three women of similar age and ethnicity, representing minimal diversity. The models shared largely homogeneous features, presenting a stark contrast to the high-diversity advertisement.

To prevent brand-specific biases from influencing participants' perceptions, an approach outlined by Åkestam et al. (2017) was adopted. A fictitious brand name and logo were blurred, and participants were informed that the brand wished to remain anonymous for the duration of the study. This step ensured that participants evaluated the brand solely based on its visual and message-based content, rather than on pre-existing attitudes toward the brand. The full advertisements used in the study are included in Appendix A for reference.

Pretest 1. Female participants recruited from Prolific ($N = 50$; $M_{\text{Age}} = 34$) rated the attractiveness (Khan et al. 2025) of nine models on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all attractive to 7 = very much attractive). Since the models represented different age groups, measuring attractiveness was not a primary objective. However, we decided to include it for thoroughness. While individual models showed slight variations in perceived attractiveness (Table A1, Appendix A), we ensured that the average attractiveness did not differ significantly between the homogeneous and diverse conditions that we had designed.

Pretest 2. Eighty females ($M_{\text{Age}} = 35$) from Prolific participated in a pretest using a 3-cell, design (homogeneous ad vs. low-diversity ad vs. high-diversity ad), following the pretest framework outlined by Khan et al. (2025). Each condition involved an advertisement featuring three female models grouped together, with variations in racial and age diversity as described earlier.

After viewing the advertisements, participants rated their perceptions of advertisement diversity on a single item, 7-point scale (Khan et al. 2025) and advertisement creativity ($\alpha = 0.90$) using three items adapted from Smith et al. (2008): "In general, the ad is very creative;" "The ad should win an award for creativity;" and "The ad is not very inventive and displays little creativity in its design" (reverse-coded). Responses were measured on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all to 7 = very much). Participants also rated advertisement likability using a measure adapted from Bergkvist and Rossiter (2008): "How much did you like the ad?" (1 = not at all to 7 = very much). Demographic information was collected at the end of the study.

A one-way ANCOVA showed no significant effect of diversity on advertisement creativity ($F(2, 80) = 0.57, p = 0.56$). Similarly, another one-way ANCOVA confirmed no significant effect of diversity on advertisement likability ($F(2, 80) = 0.62, p = 0.54$). These findings suggest that model diversity did not significantly influence participants' perceptions of advertisement creativity

or their likability towards the advertisements. Finally, consistent with our expectations, participants in the two diverse conditions reported greater perceptions of diversity compared to those in the homogeneous condition ($M_{\text{HighD}} = 5.04, SD = 1.45$ vs., $M_{\text{LowD}} = 4.70, SD = 1.35$ vs. $M_{\text{H}} = 3.52, SD = 1.64$; $F(2, 80) = 7.43, p < 0.001$).

3.1.2 | Design and Procedure

We recruited 450 female consumers through Prolific and retained 436 participants ($M_{\text{Age}} = 44$) after excluding 14 who failed the attention check. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of three conditions: high diversity ($N = 139$), low diversity ($N = 151$), or homogeneous ($N = 146$) femvertising. Participants were welcomed with the following text: "Welcome, and thank you for participating in this study. Below is an advertisement for a new lip balm. Please note that the brand has chosen to remain anonymous for the duration of this study." They were then shown one of three advertisements corresponding to their assigned condition. Participants evaluated their attitudes toward the brand by rating it on three 7-point bipolar scales: bad/good, dislike/like, and negative opinion/positive opinion. These ratings, adapted from Dahlén et al. (2009), were based on the question "What is your opinion on the brand?" ($\alpha = 0.91$). Subsequently, participants' purchase intentions for the fictitious brand were measured using a three-item, 7-point Likert scale adapted from Putrevu and Lord (1994) ($\alpha = 0.90$).

To ensure the effectiveness of the diversity manipulation, we asked participants to rate the extent to which the advertisement reflected diversity of the models using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) (Khan et al. 2025). They also responded to a statement measuring the perceived empowerment communicated by the advertisement: "Based on the advertisement you just saw, to what extent do you agree that the advertisement empowers women?" This item was adapted from Drake (2017) and used the same 7-point scale. Participants' product involvement was measured using Zaichkowsky (1994) scale ($\alpha = 0.81$), and an attention check was included to maintain data quality ("Please respond to this question as strongly agree"). At the end of the study, participants provided demographic details, including ethnicity, age, and education level. Manipulation checks, as well as study demographics (Table B2) and the constructs used across our studies (Table B1), are available in Appendix B.

3.1.3 | Results

Manipulation checks confirmed the effectiveness of our manipulation ($F(1, 436) = 358.25, p < 0.001$). Specifically, participants in the high-diversity condition perceived the advertisement as representing greater diversity ($M_{\text{HighD}} = 5.99, SD = 1.27$) compared to those in the low diverse (vs. $M_{\text{LowD}} = 5.05, SD = 1.59$) and homogeneous (vs. $M_{\text{H}} = 2.90, SD = 1.69$) conditions, who perceived lower levels of diversity. A one-sample T-Test revealed that femvertising perceptions remained consistently high across all conditions and significantly above

the scale midpoint (i.e., 4) ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 1.76$; $t(435) = 14.15$, $p < 0.001$).

Using product involvement and demographics as covariates, a one-way ANCOVA revealed a significant effect of diversity on attitudes toward the brand ($F(2, 436) = 14.39$, $p < 0.001$). Specifically, participants exposed to both the high-diversity condition ($M_{\text{HighD}} = 5.25$, $SD = 1.62$) and the low-diversity condition ($M_{\text{LowD}} = 5.06$, $SD = 1.73$) expressed more favorable attitudes toward the brand compared to those in the homogeneous condition ($M_{\text{H}} = 4.25$, $SD = 1.95$) (see Figure 2). None of the demographic factors had any significant effects on brand attitudes.

A one-way ANCOVA on purchase intentions also revealed a significant main effect of diversity ($F(2, 436) = 22.48$, $p < 0.001$). Participants in both the high-diversity ($M_{\text{HighD}} = 5.52$, $SD = 1.28$) and low-diversity conditions ($M_{\text{LowD}} = 5.00$, $SD = 1.68$) reported greater purchase intentions than those in the homogeneous condition ($M_{\text{H}} = 4.20$, $SD = 1.80$) (see Figure 2). Ethnicity was the only control variable with a significant effect on purchase intentions ($F(1, 436) = 4.53$, $p = 0.03$).

Study 1 provides initial evidence for Hypotheses 1a and 1b, demonstrating the positive impact of diversity in femvertising on brand attitudes and purchase intentions. The results show that advertisements featuring high and low levels of diversity elicit more favorable attitudes toward the brand compared to homogeneous advertisements. Furthermore, participants exposed to diverse advertisements report stronger purchase intentions than those who viewed homogeneous advertisements.

3.2 | Study 2: Examining Mediation Across Genders

Building on the findings of Study 1, the primary goal of Study 2 was to examine whether perceived brand authenticity mediates this relationship across genders. We used a between-subjects experimental design to compare the effects of diverse femvertising with homogeneous femvertising advertisements for real brands. This approach, adapted from Åkestam et al. (2017), allowed us to test the hypotheses in a

new context, focusing on a different medium (YouTube), real brands, and an alternative form of femvertising.

To enhance the realism of the experiment, we selected gender-neutral brands, reflecting the current trend of femvertising being adopted by brands that cater to all genders. Specifically, by including both male and female participants, we ensured that the results were inclusive and applicable across a wider audience.

3.2.1 | Stimulus Development

Six advertisements were selected as stimuli for the study, representing three gender neutral product categories: cars (Ford), a dating app (Bumble), and electronics (Lenovo) (Table A2, Appendix A). For each category, two advertisements were selected: one featuring a high level of diversity in the portrayal of models, and the other depicting a more homogeneous representation. These pairings ensured that the primary difference between the advertisements was the diversity of representation, while other elements remained comparable.

To standardize the stimuli, the original advertisements were edited to ensure consistent lengths, with all videos running between 30 and 45 s. Advertisements that had not aired in the UK (the study's target market) were selected to minimize potential bias from prior exposure, although they had been broadcast in other English-speaking countries to maintain language consistency. Additionally, all advertisements had aired within the past year to minimize the risk of outdated content or prior exposure influencing participant responses.

To avoid environmental confounds associated with YouTube, the edited advertisements were embedded directly into the online questionnaire without video titles. Additionally, using the same brand for each pair of advertisements (e.g., Ford, Bumble, or Lenovo) ensured that any differences in participants' responses could be attributed to the diversity content of the advertisements rather than brand familiarity or perceptions. Finally, all the advertisements focused primarily on communication objectives and did not include any celebrity endorsements.

Pretest 3. A pretest with 198 participants (52% females, $M_{\text{Age}} = 44$) validated the effectiveness of the diversity and

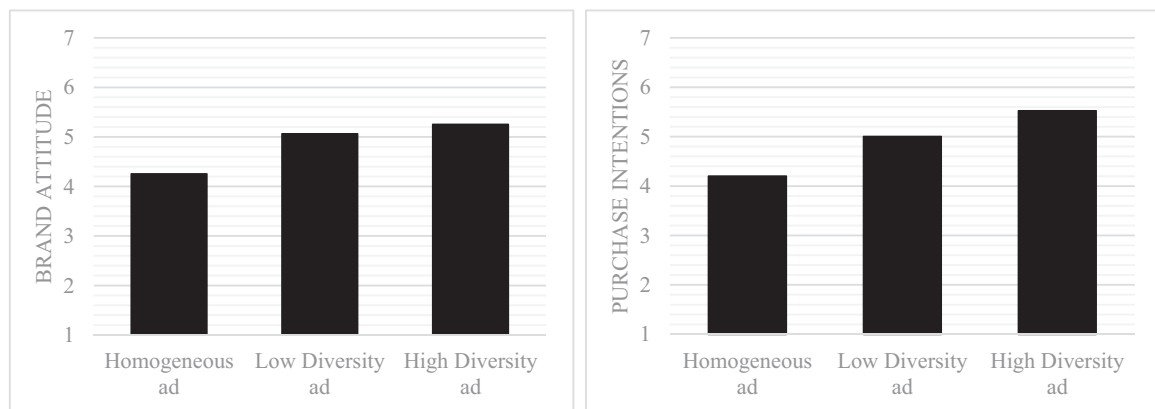


FIGURE 2 | Effects of diversity on brand attitude (left) and purchase intentions (right).

femvertising manipulations. The majority of participants (94%) reported no prior exposure to the selected advertisements, ensuring that the stimuli were novel and free from potential biases linked to previous familiarity.

Randomly assigned participants in condition 1 (Bumble) evaluated racial and sexual orientation diversity, while participants in condition 2 (Ford) and condition 3 (Lenovo) assessed gender, racial, and age diversity, as these were the predominant types of diversity portrayed in the advertisements. A series of ANCOVAs were conducted using ad creativity ($\alpha = 0.78$), ad likability, prior exposure, brand familiarity, involvement ($\alpha = 0.80$), age, gender, ethnicity, and education as covariates, using scales identical to those in prior studies. Additionally, the perception of femvertising was uniform across all 6 advertisements ($M_D = 5.06$, $SD = 1.77$, $M_H = 4.93$, $SD = 1.70$; $F(1, 198) = 0.51$, $p = 0.48$). The results confirmed that our diversity manipulation was effective as intended (see Table A2, Appendix A for full details). None of the control variables had a significant effect.

3.2.2 | Design and Procedure

We recruited 592 participants (final sample) through Prolific (49% females, $M_{Age} = 45$), after excluding eight individuals who failed the attention check, and randomly assigned each to one of six videos. Participants were informed that, upon clicking “Next,” they would watch an embedded video lasting approximately 30 to 45 s. To ensure full engagement, the video could not be paused or skipped. They were instructed to pay close attention to the video, as they would later answer questions about its content.

After viewing the advertisement, participants were asked to rate how female-empowering they perceived the advertisement to be (adapted from Drake 2017) and to assess the level of diversity they believed the brand represents (adapted from Khan et al. 2025). Next, we measured participants’ purchase intentions ($\alpha = 0.91$; Putrevu and Lord 1994) and brand attitudes ($\alpha = 0.84$; Dahlén et al. 2009) as in previous studies, along with brand authenticity ($\alpha = 0.85$) using a seven-point Likert scale (adapted from Morhart et al. 2015). Additionally, we included an attention check and collected data on brand familiarity, product involvement ($\alpha = 0.78$), and demographic information, including gender, using measures identical to those used in our prior studies.

TABLE 2 | Study 2 indirect effects.

Effects		Estimate (b)	SE	p value	95% CI
Diversity → Brand authenticity		0.63	0.03	< 0.001	[0.56, 0.69]
Brand authenticity → DV	(a)	0.34	0.05	< 0.001	[0.25, 0.43]
	(b)	0.15	0.05	0.006	[0.04, 0.25]
Direct effect: Diversity → DV	(a)	0.35	0.17	0.04	[0.02, 0.67]
	(b)	0.41	0.09	< 0.001	[0.23, 0.60]
Indirect effect: Diversity → Brand authenticity → DV	(a)	0.74	0.11	Sig	[0.53, 0.98]
	(b)	0.16	0.06	Sig	[0.05, 0.27]

Note: Dependent variable (DV): a. Brand attitude, b. Purchase intentions.

3.2.3 | Results

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) confirmed that our manipulations were effective. Respondents exposed to diversity-focused advertisements ($N = 301$) scored significantly higher on the diversity scale compared to those who viewed homogeneous advertisements ($N = 291$) ($M_D = 5.59$, $SD = 1.51$; $M_H = 4.41$, $SD = 1.44$; $F(1, 592) = 94.23$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate the success of our diversity manipulation. Furthermore, the effect of diversity on femvertising perceptions was insignificant, suggesting that all conditions were perceived as female-empowering ($M_D = 5.68$, $SD = 1.33$; $M_H = 5.59$, $SD = 1.33$; $F(1, 592) = 0.66$, $p = 0.42$).

To examine the mediating role of perceived brand authenticity in the relationship between diversity and brand attitudes, we used the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes 2013; Model 4) with 10,000 bootstrap resamples, and brand familiarity, product involvement, age, education, ethnicity, and gender as covariates (see Table 2). The analysis revealed a significant positive indirect effect ($b = 0.74$, 95% CI [0.53, 0.98]), suggesting that, when diverse brand initiatives are perceived as authentic, they are more likely to resonate positively with consumers as per H2_a. We also discovered that perceived brand authenticity significantly mediates the impact of diversity on purchase intentions ($b = 0.16$, 95% CI [0.05, 0.27]), supporting H2_b. Specifically, participants exposed to the diversity condition reported higher perceptions of brand authenticity, which, in turn, led to higher purchase intentions. In contrast, those exposed to homogeneous conditions reported lower authenticity perceptions, resulting in lower purchase intentions.

This study demonstrates that diversity in femvertising enhances perceived brand authenticity, which, in turn, boosts consumer brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Notably, the effects were consistent across genders, underscoring the universal impact of diverse representation in femvertising on purchase intentions.

3.3 | Study 3: Manipulating the Mediator

Study 3 aimed to provide causal evidence by directly manipulating the brand authenticity mediator. We specifically employed the moderation-of-process (MOP; see Spencer et al. 2005) design, which allows us to explicitly test the

mediator's role within the causal pathway and further validate the underlying mechanism. Furthermore, by incorporating a new set of stimuli, we enhance the generalizability of our findings and minimize the risk of stimulus-specific biases, thereby strengthening the validity of our results.

3.3.1 | Stimulus Development

We developed the brand name “NIRA,” ensuring it has no pre-existing meaning in English and is entirely fictitious, with no registered trademarks or domains in the UK market. This study utilized two carefully crafted print advertisements for a period underwear (knickers) product under the NIRA brand. As a relatively new product category, period knickers align seamlessly with the themes central to femvertising, such as inclusivity, empowerment, and challenging menstrual taboos. They also provide an ideal context for exploring diversity in advertising, especially in terms of body shape and size, which are key aspects of ongoing discussions around femvertising and critiques of femwashing (Hainneville et al. 2023).

Both advertisements conveyed the same femvertising message: “For every body. Perfect fit, perfect comfort.” Adapted from Åkestam et al. (2017), this message reflects the essence of femvertising by promoting empowerment and inclusivity. Consistency in visual design elements, such as font, model positioning, posture, and mood, was maintained across both advertisements to ensure the variations in diversity were the primary variable under examination. The advertisements emphasized empowerment over product functionality, ensuring the focus remained on the messaging and representation rather than the practical features of the product.

The two advertisements differed in their representation of diversity. In the diversity version, four women of varying body shapes, sizes, and ethnicities stood side by side in their underwear, embodying inclusivity and empowerment. This representation highlighted a spectrum of identities aligned with the campaign's core message. In contrast, the homogeneous version featured four slim, white women, with no variation in ethnicity or body type, presenting a homogeneous scenario. While age diversity was not incorporated due to the nature of the product, the stimuli aimed to highlight empowerment and inclusivity by representing a spectrum of identities in the diversity condition (Appendix A, Figure A2).

In this study, we directly manipulated the mediator, brand authenticity, using established approaches from prior research (e.g., Guèvremont and Grohmann 2018; Moharana et al. 2023). Following our conceptualization of brand authenticity (Morhart et al. 2015), we developed two distinct scenarios (Appendix A, Figure A3), designed to reflect the four dimensions of authenticity: continuity, credibility, integrity, and symbolism. The high authenticity scenario included the following statements:

- “At Nira, we provide period underwear designed with care and precision (integrity) to reflect who you are during your cycle (symbolism).”
- “Offering solutions for period care for over a decade (continuity).”

- “The reliable choice for modern period care (credibility).”

The standard scenario read:

- “At Nira, we provide period underwear designed for your cycle needs.”
- “Offering solutions for period care since 2022.”
- “The choice for modern period care.”

Pretest 4. For the first pretest of Study 3, 55 UK female participants ($M_{\text{Age}} = 32$) were recruited via Prolific to evaluate the attractiveness of eight models using the same measure as in Pretest 1. Although individual models showed minor differences in perceived attractiveness, we carefully controlled for this by ensuring that average attractiveness ratings remained consistent across both the homogeneous and diverse conditions we created. (Table A3, Appendix A).

Pretest 5. In the second pretest, 70 UK female participants ($M_{\text{Age}} = 40$) from Prolific evaluated advertisements, each featuring four models under homogeneous ($N = 34$) and diverse ($N = 36$) conditions, using a between-subjects design. After viewing the advertisements, participants evaluated the advertisements' creativity ($\alpha = 0.79$) and their likability and diversity perceptions. Additionally, we collected demographic information, using the same scales as those employed in Pretest 2. A one-way ANCOVA revealed no significant effect of diversity on ad creativity ($M_D = 2.77$, $SD = 1.64$; $M_H = 2.82$, $SD = 1.29$; $F(1,70) = 0.01$, $p = 0.097$), a second ANCOVA ($M_D = 4.89$, $SD = 1.62$; $M_H = 4.44$, $SD = 1.89$; $F(1,70) = 0.99$, $p = 0.33$), showed no significant effect on ad likability. Finally, diversity had a significant positive impact on perceptions of diversity ($F(1,70) = 2.71$, $p < 0.001$), as participants in the diverse condition ($M_D = 5.19$, $SD = 1.72$) reported higher levels of perceived diversity compared to those in the homogeneous condition (vs. $M_H = 3.41$, $SD = 1.46$). These findings suggest that model diversity did not significantly impact perceptions of the advertisements' creativity or likability.

Pretest 6. A pretest was conducted to confirm whether the authenticity versus standard conditions differed significantly across the four dimensions of brand authenticity. A sample of 60 females ($M_{\text{Age}} = 41$) was randomly assigned to either the authenticity ($N = 30$) or standard ($N = 30$) condition, completed measures of perceived continuity, credibility, integrity, and symbolism ($\alpha = 0.93$; Morhart et al. 2015) and also reported their age and education levels. A one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), with age and education levels as covariates, indicated that participants in the authenticity condition reported significantly higher levels of perceived authenticity (as a composite variable) compared to those in the standard condition ($M_A = 4.40$, $SD = 1.10$, $M_S = 3.09$, $SD = 1.10$; $F(1, 60) = 2.08$, $p < 0.001$). A multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) demonstrated that participants rated the authenticity scenario significantly higher across all dimensions of brand authenticity: continuity ($M = 4.3$ vs. $M = 3.13$; $F(1, 60) = 9.18$, $p < 0.05$), credibility ($M = 4.42$ vs. $M = 3.10$; $F(1, 60) = 14.15$, $p < 0.01$), integrity ($M = 4.19$ vs. $M = 2.90$; $F(1, 60) = 31.70$, $p < 0.01$), and

symbolism ($M = 4.55$ vs. $M = 3.24$; $F(1, 60) = 23.64$, $p < 0.01$). In addition, variations in participant age and education did not influence our results. These findings confirm that the authenticity scenario effectively captured the key dimensions of brand authenticity when compared to the standard scenario.

3.3.2 | Design and Procedure

We recruited 550 female participants from the UK via Prolific and employed a 2 (diversity: diverse vs. homogeneous ad) $\times$ 2 (authenticity: authentic vs. standard message) between-subjects experimental design. After excluding participants who failed the attention check, the final sample consisted of 546 female participants ($M_{\text{Age}} = 44$).

Participants were informed they were considering trying period knickers and had come across an advertisement. Then, they were randomly assigned to either the diverse condition ($N = 276$) or the homogeneous condition ($N = 270$), where they viewed the NIRA advertisement accompanied by the same femvertising slogan. Before seeing the advertisement, they were provided with information about NIRA's authenticity or a lack thereof. We measured purchase intentions ($\alpha = 0.93$), and additional measures included product involvement ($\alpha = 0.85$), an attention check, and demographics, which were assessed using identical scales from our prior studies. To ensure the manipulations functioned as intended, we measured perceived brand authenticity ($\alpha = 0.88$; Morhart et al. 2015), the extent to which participants perceived the advertisement as female-empowering (adapted from Drake 2017), and the level of diversity represented by the brand (adapted from Khan et al. 2025).

3.3.3 | Results

A 2 (diversity: diverse vs. homogeneous ad) $\times$ 2 (authenticity: authentic vs. standard message) analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the diversity measure showed only a main effect for diversity ($M_D = 4.99$, $SD = 1.18$; $M_H = 3.69$, $SD = 1.30$; $F(1, 546) = 149.66$, $p < 0.01$). Similar analysis on the brand authenticity measure also revealed only a main effect for authenticity ($M_A = 4.99$,

$SD = 1.08$; $M_S = 3.55$, $SD = 1.14$; $F(1, 546) = 227.73$, $p < 0.01$). Finally, the effect of diversity on femvertising perceptions was not significant, as expected ($M_H = 5.08$, $SD = 1.13$; $M_D = 4.98$, $SD = 1.12$; $F(1, 546) = 1.32$, $p = 0.25$). The above results thereby revalidate our manipulation.

A 2 (diversity: diverse vs. homogeneous ad) $\times$ 2 (authenticity: authentic vs. standard message) analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) on purchase intentions revealed the predicted two-way interaction ($F(1, 546) = 4.04$, $p < 0.05$). When participants were presented with the authenticity condition, they reported increased purchase intentions in response to the diverse advertisement ($M = 5.85$, $SD = 0.36$) than to the homogeneous advertisement ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 0.56$). When presented with the standard condition (i.e., lack of authenticity), participants reported higher purchase intentions in response to the diverse condition ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 0.55$) than to the homogeneous condition ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.56$). None of the controls showed a significant effect on purchase intentions, further supporting H2b. Figure 3 depicts the above results.

3.4 | Study 4: Replicating the Effect on Actual Behavior and Examining Moderation

In the previous studies, we provided evidence that diversity in the context of femvertising positively influences consumers' brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Building on these findings, Study 4 explores the effect of diversity on actual behavior and investigates political orientation as a potential moderating mechanism. Participants in Study 4 engage in a realistic purchasing task by selecting a branded product that serves as a measure of their actual purchase behavior.

3.4.1 | Design and Procedure

We replicated the diversity stimuli from Study 3 (Appendix A, Figure A2), using two femvertising advertisements (high-diversity vs. homogeneous ad), each featuring four females, for Nira, a fictitious period underwear brand. We recruited 400 female consumers through Prolific. Five of them failed the

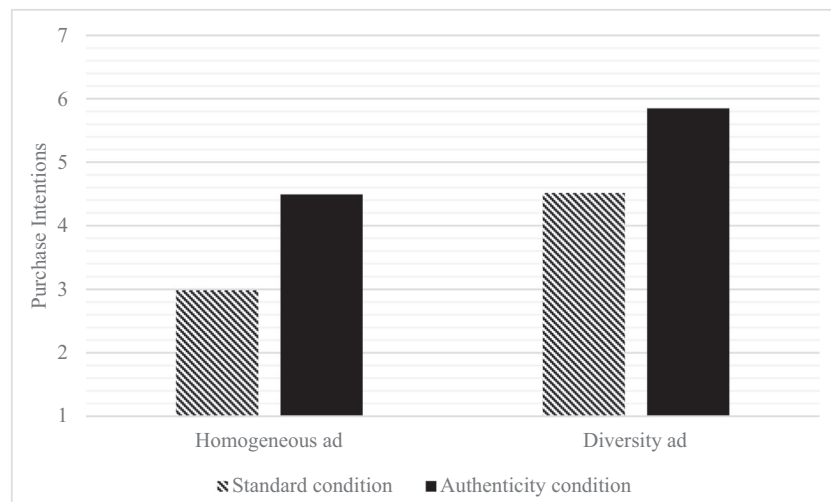


FIGURE 3 | Interaction effects of diversity and authenticity on purchase intentions.

attention check, leaving a final sample of 395 ($M_{\text{Age}} = 41$ years). Participants were welcomed with the following message: “Welcome, and thank you for participating in this study. Below is an advertisement for period knickers from a new brand called Nira.” Participants were also informed that, in addition to their regular compensation, they had a chance to win a £10 gift card to a period underwear brand (Khan et al. 2025). This incentive was chosen to reflect the typical cost of a pair of period knickers in the market. Next, participants were shown two side-by-side advertisements in randomized order (Option A: reflecting diversity and Option B: reflecting homogeneity) and asked to indicate their preference. Following this, they evaluated their purchase preference for the fictitious brand Nira using a single-item 7-point bipolar scale (1 = Option A, 7 = Option B). Political orientation ($\alpha = 0.92$) was also captured on a three-item scale (Lisjak and Ordabayeva 2023), ranging from 1 (“extremely liberal”) to 7 (“extremely conservative”). Product involvement ($\alpha = 0.85$) was assessed using the same scale from previous studies, and an attention check was included to ensure data quality. At the end of the study, participants provided demographic information, including ethnicity, age, and education level.

3.4.2 | Results

In this study, we hypothesized that political orientation would affect consumers' preferences for diversity-related (vs. homogeneous) brands. To test this, we analyzed the influence of political orientation on consumer choices between diversity and homogeneous advertisements and found a significant result ($\chi^2 = 63.24$, $p < 0.001$). Overall, 6.3% ($N = 238$) of all participants preferred the diversity advertisement (Option A), while 39.7% ($N = 157$) chose the homogeneous advertisement (Option B). Among conservatives ($N = 161$), 63.4% selected the homogeneous advertisement, whereas only 36.6% chose the diverse advertisement. Conversely, participants with a liberal orientation ($N = 234$) preferred the diverse advertisement 76.5% of the time, while 23.5% selected the homogeneous advertisement. Next, we conducted a one-way ANCOVA, finding a significant direct effect on purchase intention ($F(1, 395) = 18.90$, $p < 0.01$). Liberal participants preferred the diversity brand (Option A; $M = 3.21$; $SD = 1.27$), while conservatives had a stronger preference for the homogeneous brand (Option B; $M = 3.89$; $SD = 1.75$). None of the control variables had a significant influence on purchase intentions.

The results indicate that the diversity condition significantly influenced participants' advertisement choices, with high-diversity advertisements being more frequently selected. This relationship was moderated by political orientation, as participants with more liberal orientations were more likely to choose the high-diversity advertisement compared to those with conservative orientations. These findings provide support for H1c and H3.

4 | General Discussion

Across four studies, we explored the impact of diversity in femvertising on consumer attitudes, purchase intentions, and

behaviors. Our findings consistently show that diverse advertisements generate more favorable brand attitudes and stronger purchase intentions compared to homogeneous advertisements, emphasizing the value of diverse portrayals in advertising. Perceived brand authenticity emerged as a key mediator, with diverse advertisements being seen as more authentic, which, in turn, enhanced purchase intentions. Additionally, political orientation moderated these effects, as liberals favored diverse advertisements while conservatives preferred homogeneous ones. Finally, by examining actual purchasing behavior, we demonstrated that diversity in advertising influences not just attitudes but also tangible consumer actions. These findings highlight the importance of inclusive and authentic messaging, offering valuable insights for marketers seeking to connect effectively with diverse audiences.

4.1 | Theoretical Implications

Our research advances the understanding of femvertising by positioning diversity, authenticity, and political orientation as interdependent constructs that shape consumer responses. While previous research has mostly been nonbehavioral and nonexperimental (Campbell et al. 2025), our research adopts experimental methods across a series of studies to provide robust evidence for the critical role of diversity. Our findings demonstrate that diversity not only enhances brand attitudes and purchase intentions but also significantly impacts actual consumer behavior, highlighting its importance in today's socially conscious marketplace.

We respond to important research calls (e.g., Campbell et al. 2025; Eisend et al. 2023) and contribute to the existing advertising literature by emphasizing diversity not as a monolithic construct but as a multi-dimensional phenomenon encompassing surface and deep-level traits, such as race, age, gender, body type, and sexual orientation. By incorporating an intersectional lens, we fill this major gap in the advertising and femvertising literatures, which often overlook the interplay of intersecting identities. This approach aligns with Crenshaw (2017) intersectionality framework, emphasizing that diverse representations must reflect the complexity of real-world experiences to foster meaningful engagement. Unlike traditional advertising that often relies on superficial portrayals, our findings demonstrate that authentic and inclusive representations resonate more deeply with consumers.

Additionally, we provide compelling evidence that perceived brand authenticity mediates the relationship between diversity in femvertising and consumer outcomes. These findings enrich the theoretical discourse by addressing the growing challenge of inauthentic femvertising (Hainneville et al. 2023; Windels et al. 2020), where brands exploit feminist values for profit. Our research also reveals political orientation as a key moderator of consumer responses to diversity in femvertising, addressing a critical yet underexplored dimension (Campbell et al. 2025) in advertising. By illustrating the ideological divides between liberals and conservatives, we contribute to the growing understanding of how consumer worldviews shape perceptions of advertising.

Furthermore, we situate femvertising within the broader cultural discussion on feminism and advertising (Windels et al. 2020). Historically, feminist scholarship has focused on challenging harmful stereotypes and promoting gender equality; our findings expand on this perspective by showing that femvertising can simultaneously address intersectional inequalities and create positive consumer outcomes. This dual role of femvertising establishes it as a transformative force that aligns commercial and societal goals.

Finally, we bridge the gap between stereotype-challenging and empowerment-focused femvertising identified in prior research (Gomez-Borquez et al. 2024) by expanding its scope beyond traditional gender stereotyping. By incorporating a broader spectrum of diversity including namely, race, age, body type, and sexual orientation, we demonstrate that femvertising is not confined to women or female-targeted products. The involvement of men in our study further demonstrates that diverse representation in femvertising resonates universally across genders and product categories and amplifies its broader social and commercial relevance.

4.2 | Managerial Implications

Our findings emphasize the importance of representing diversity as a multi-dimensional construct in femvertising. Managers must move beyond surface-level diversity (e.g., visible traits such as race or age) to incorporate deep-level characteristics such as body type, ability, and sexual orientation. This holistic approach enables brands to create authentic campaigns that resonate with a broader spectrum of consumers while avoiding tokenism, where diverse representations are superficially included without meaningful integration into the narrative.

We also show that authenticity mediates the relationship between diversity and positive consumer outcomes. Managers should prioritize storytelling that highlights personal achievements and triumphs of diverse individuals rather than relying on generic empowerment clichés. Furthermore, campaigns should reflect the brand's long-term commitment to inclusivity through initiatives such as scholarships, grants, and partnerships that support underrepresented communities. Moreover, addressing the ideological divides in responses to diversity-focused advertising is equally important. Our findings show that liberal and conservative audiences may interpret diversity messaging differently, necessitating tailored approaches to avoid polarization. Therefore, managers can craft shared stories that resonate across political ideologies; for instance, a narrative about a hardworking entrepreneur from a diverse background can appeal to both liberal values of equity and conservative values of individual effort (Pratto et al. 2000). Segmentation tools can also tailor campaigns to specific regions or demographics, using bold diversity-focused messages for liberal markets and subtler, community-oriented narratives for conservative audiences.

Importantly, our study demonstrates that femvertising's impact extends beyond female audiences or women-centric products. Hence, brands can apply femvertising principles to target male consumers and gender-neutral products, too. For example, diverse and empowering narratives can effectively promote unisex products or service brands designed for all genders.

Finally, on a broader societal level, femvertising holds the potential to challenge entrenched stereotypes and foster inclusivity. By authentically showcasing diverse identities, it can contribute to a cultural narrative of equity and respect for all. Thoughtful and inclusive advertising strategies offer managers a unique opportunity to drive meaningful social change while achieving lasting consumer loyalty and sustainable brand growth.

4.3 | Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study highlights the positive impact of diversity in femvertising, but certain limitations must be acknowledged. There is a risk that excessive emphasis on diversity may lead to perceptions of tokenism or “diversity washing,” potentially diminishing consumer trust. Additionally, cultural and contextual differences may influence responses, as advertising perceptions vary across regions and demographics. While the study captures immediate consumer reactions, it does not assess the long-term impact of diverse advertising on brand trust and loyalty. Political orientation also plays a crucial moderating role, with liberals responding more favorably than conservatives, raising the need for strategies that bridge ideological divides.

Future research should examine the optimal balance of diversity in advertising to determine whether there is an inverted-U effect, where excessive representation could have adverse consequences (Uduehi et al. 2025). Exploring how brands can communicate authentic inclusivity rather than leveraging diversity purely for commercial gain would further enrich this discussion. Intersectionality remains a key area for development, particularly in understanding how multiple identity dimensions – such as race, gender identity, disability, and socioeconomic status—interact within advertising. Additionally, the growing role of AI-driven advertising personalization presents an opportunity to investigate whether algorithmic tailoring of diversity influences consumer engagement differently from traditional diversity campaigns. Finally, further research is needed to understand when and why diversity in advertising leads to consumer resistance, particularly among conservative audiences, and how brands can craft inclusive messaging that avoids adverse consequences while maintaining authenticity.

Beyond these limitations, it is also important to consider the possibility of publication bias within the broader body of femvertising research. Much of the existing evidence, as evidenced in Table 1, highlights positive effects, which may limit the visibility of studies reporting null or mixed findings. Future research would benefit from efforts to capture and disseminate a wider range of outcomes to provide a more balanced understanding of femvertising's impact.

5 | Conclusions

This study demonstrates that diversity in femvertising fosters more favorable brand attitudes, stronger purchase intentions, and even measurable changes in consumer behavior. Perceived brand authenticity emerged as a central mechanism, while political orientation shaped how audiences responded. By adopting an intersectional lens and employing a multi-

study experimental design, we offer robust causal evidence of when and why diversity in advertising matters. These contributions extend scholarship on femvertising, authenticity, and intersectionality, while advancing understanding of how ideological differences shape responses to inclusive brand communication.

Beyond theoretical advances, the study also highlights the strategic and societal relevance of authentic representation. For managers, the findings signal that inclusive and credible portrayals can strengthen consumer trust and engagement, provided they avoid tokenism and remain contextually sensitive. At a broader level, our work suggests that authentic femvertising is not only an effective branding strategy but also a meaningful contribution to social progress. In this way, the research highlights how equity-driven communication can serve simultaneously as a driver of brand value and a force for positive societal change.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Appendix A

Experimental Materials (Pretest 2, Study 1)

Experimental Materials (Pretest 5, Study 3, Study 4)

Experimental Materials (Pretest 6, Study 3)

TABLE A1 | Individual model attractiveness for Pretest 1 (Study 1).

Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
M = 6.10	M = 5.30	M = 5.90	M = 6.40	M = 6.10	M = 5.80	M = 6.40	M = 6.60	M = 6.30
SD = 0.80	SD = 1.2	SD = 1.3	SD = 1.10	SD = 1.24	SD = 1.58	SD = 1.18	SD = 1.10	SD = 1.47
High-diversity condition				Low-diversity condition			Homogeneous condition	
M = 5.76				M = 6.10			M = 6.43	

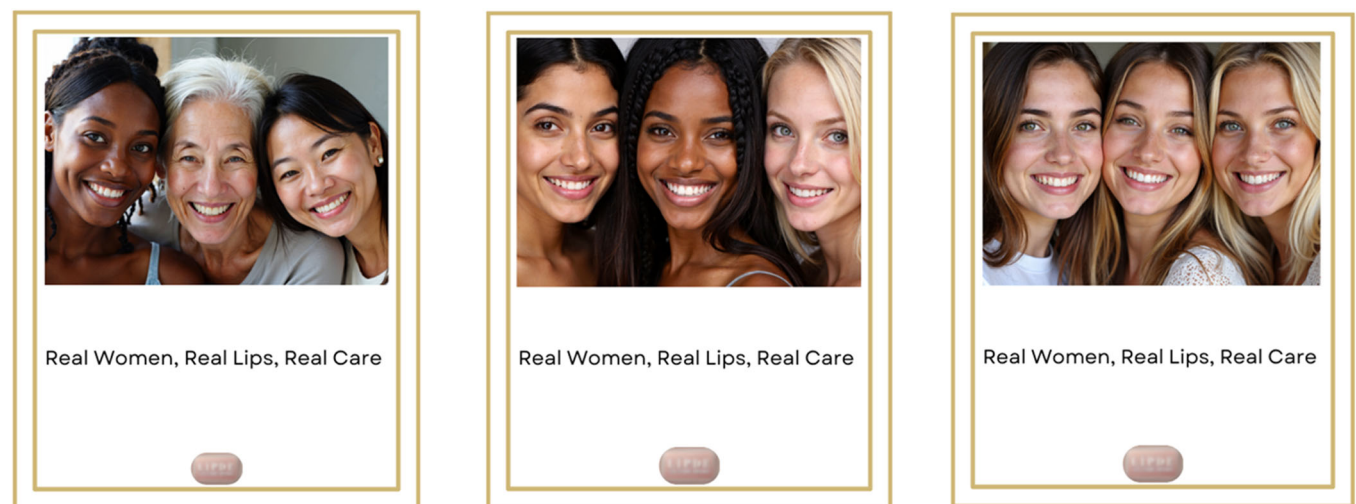
TABLE A2 | Experimental materials (Pretest 3, Study 2).

Femvertising condition	Brand	YouTube Link (unedited)	Pretest scores per type of diversity	Product category
Diversity (<i>N</i> = 33) (<i>N</i> = 98)	Bumble	https://tinyurl.com/BumbleDiv	Racial diversity: ($M_D = 6.03$, $SD = 0.77$; $M_H = 4.42$, $SD = 1.09$; $F(1,66) = 4.51$, $p < 0.001$)	Services (dating app)
Homogeneous (<i>N</i> = 33) (<i>N</i> = 97)	Bumble	https://tinyurl.com/BumbleHom	Sexual orientation diversity: ($M_D = 6.21$, $SD = 0.86$; $M_H = 2.33$, $SD = 1.19$; $F(1,66) = 209.29$, $p < 0.001$)	Services (dating app)
Diversity (<i>N</i> = 33) (<i>N</i> = 100)	Ford	https://tinyurl.com/FordDiv	Racial diversity: ($M_D = 6.52$, $SD = 0.76$; $M_H = 1.91$, $SD = 0.91$; $F(1,66) = 424.32$, $p < 0.001$)	Cars
Homogeneous (<i>N</i> = 33) (<i>N</i> = 101)	Ford	https://tinyurl.com/FordHom	Age diversity: ($M_D = 5.8$, $SD = 1.32$; $M_H = 2.33$, $SD = 1.05$; $F(1,66) = 115.60$, $p < 0.001$)	Cars
Diversity (<i>N</i> = 33) (<i>N</i> = 103)	Lenovo	https://tinyurl.com/LenovoDiv	Racial diversity: ($M_D = 5.55$, $SD = 1.03$; $M_H = 4.55$, $SD = 1.00$; $F(1,66) = 13.28$, $p < 0.001$)	Consumer Electronics
Homogeneous (<i>N</i> = 33) (<i>N</i> = 93)	Lenovo	https://tinyurl.com/LenovoHom	Age diversity: ($M_D = 4.88$, $SD = 1.22$; $M_H = 4.09$, $SD = 1.51$; $F(1,66) = 5.69$, $p < 0.05$)	Consumer Electronics

Note: For each condition, the first number in parentheses refers to the number of participants in the pretest (Pretest 3), while the second number refers to the number of participants in the main study (Study 2).

TABLE A3 | Individual model attractiveness for Pretest 4 (Study 3).

Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
<i>M</i> = 5.50 <i>SD</i> = 0.95	<i>M</i> = 6.21 <i>SD</i> = 1.14	<i>M</i> = 5.31 <i>SD</i> = 0.75	<i>M</i> = 6.4 <i>SD</i> = 1.21	<i>M</i> = 5.70 <i>SD</i> = 1.57	<i>M</i> = 6.5 <i>SD</i> = 1.04	<i>M</i> = 6.10 <i>SD</i> = 1.20	<i>M</i> = 6.51 <i>SD</i> = 1.40
Diversity condition <i>M</i> = 5.90					Homogeneous condition <i>M</i> = 6.20		

**FIGURE A1** | (From left to right: High diversity, low diversity, homogeneous condition).

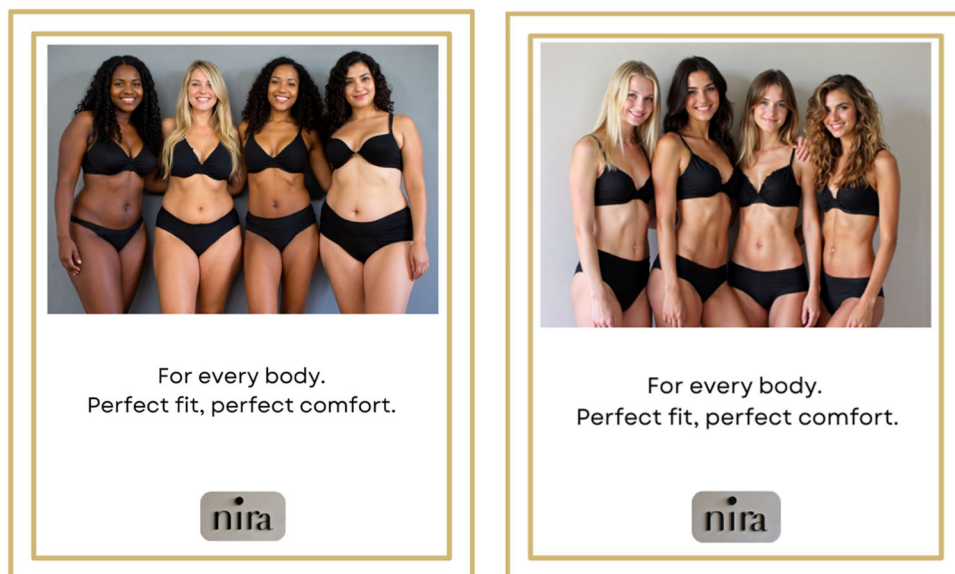


FIGURE A2 | (From left to right) High diversity and homogeneous conditions.

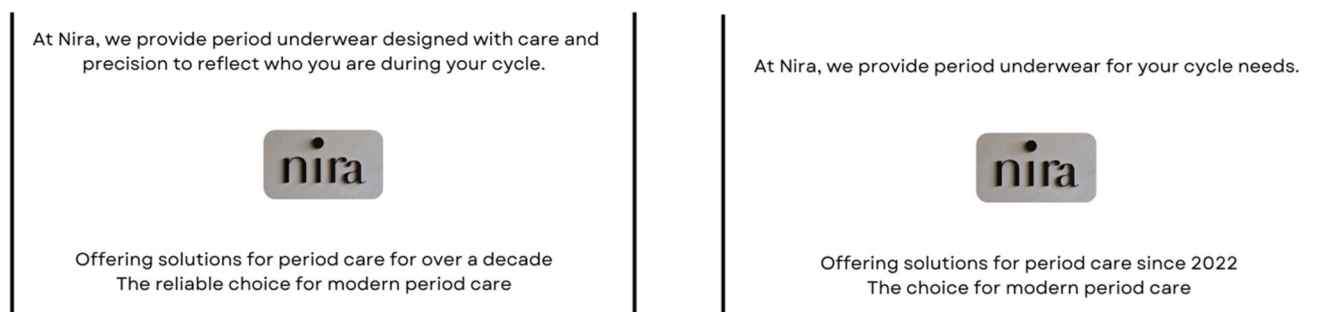


FIGURE A3 | (From left to right) Authenticity and standard conditions.

Appendix B: Manipulation Checks

- *Model Attractiveness* (Khan et al. 2025): “How attractive do you think the models in the ad are?” (Pretest 1, Pretest 4).
- *Model Diversity* (Khan et al. 2025): “How diverse do you think the models in the ad are?” (Pretest 2, Study 1, Study 2, Pretest 5, Study 3).
- *Racial, age, gender, sexual orientation diversity* (Khan et al. 2025): “How much racial/age/gender/sexual orientation diversity do you think this brand represents?” (Pretest 3).
- *Ad creativity* (Smith et al. 2008): “In general, the ad is very creative”; “The ad should win an award for creativity;” and “The ad is not very inventive and displays little creativity in its design” (reverse-coded) (Pretest 2, Pretest 3, Pretest 5).

TABLE B1 | Constructs used in Studies 1–4.

Study	Construct (Cronbach's α)	Source
1,2	Brand attitude (Study 1: $\alpha = 0.91$, Study 2: $\alpha = 0.84$) <i>What is your opinion on the brand? (7-point bipolar scales)</i> • bad/good, • dislike/like • negative opinion/positive opinion	Dahlén et al. (2009)
1,2,3,4	Purchase intentions (Study 1: $\alpha = 0.90$, Study 2: $\alpha = 0.97$, Study 3: $\alpha = 0.93$) <i>Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding [brand]. (1 = “strongly disagree,” 7 = “strongly agree”)</i> • It is very likely that I would purchase [product] from [brand] in the future • I would purchase [product] from [brand] next time I need menstrual products • I will definitely use [brand] [product] in the future	Putrevu and Lord (1994)
2,3	Brand authenticity (Study 2: $\alpha = 0.85$, Study 3 (as manipulation check) $\alpha = 0.88$) <i>Based on the ad you previously saw, to what extent the [brand] could (1 = “strongly disagree,” 7 = “strongly agree”)</i> • Not betray you • Accomplish its value promise • Be an honest brand • Have a history • Be a timeless brand • Be a brand that survives times • Be a brand that survives trends • Give back to its consumers • Have moral principles • Be true to a set of moral values • Care about its consumers • Reflect important values people care about	Morhart et al. (2015)
4	Political orientation (Study 4: $\alpha = 0.92$) <i>For the statements below, please indicate where you would place yourself on the following political spectrum (1 = “extremely liberal,” 7 = “extremely conservative”)</i> • Which of the following political orientations better reflects how you think about yourself? • Which of the following political orientations better describes you? • Which of the following political orientations is more important to you?	Lisjak and Ordabayeva (2023)
1,2,3,4	Involvement (Study 1: $\alpha = 0.81$, Study 2: $\alpha = 0.78$, Study 3: $\alpha = 0.85$, Study 4: $\alpha = 0.85$) <i>To me, [type] products are (7-point bipolar scales):</i> • Unimportant - Important • Boring - Interesting • Irrelevant - Relevant • Unexciting - Exciting • Mean nothing to me - Mean a lot to me • Unappealing - Appealing • Worthless - Valuable • Not needed - Needed	Zaichkowsky (1994)

TABLE B2 | Study demographics.

Characteristic		Study 1 (%)(N = 436)	Study 2 (%)(N = 592)	Study 3 (%)(N = 546)	Study 4 (%)(N = 395)
Gender	Male		48.7		
	Female	100%	48.9	100%	100%
	Other/Prefer not to say		2.4		
Ethnicity	White	50.5	37.9	45.2	55.9
	Black/African/Caribbean	7.8	15.9	11	6.3
	Asian (<i>Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, any other Asian background</i>)	20	26.5	21.6	9.6
	Mixed two or more ethnic groups	11.9	5.7	5.3	8.6
	Other (<i>Arab or any others</i>)	3.9	8.1	9.9	9.4
	Prefer not to say	6	5.9	7	10.1
Education	Less than Secondary School	4.8	0.8	2.6	0.8
	Completed Secondary School	9.9	11	13.2	4.8
	Vocational degree	34.9	27.7	35.2	43
	Bachelor's degree	35.3	35.6	33	37
	Master's degree	10.3	23.3	12.6	13.2
	Doctorate	4.8	1.7	3.5	1.3

TABLE B3 | Descriptive statistics for Studies 1, 2, 3, 4.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Study 1 (N = 436)</i>							
1. Diversity	—		1				
2. Purchase intentions	4.90	1.69	0.32*	1	1	1	
3. Brand attitude	4.85	1.82	0.22*	0.10**	−0.02		
4. Involvement	3.51	1.99	0.20*	0.11**			
<i>Study 2 (N = 592)</i>							
1. Diversity	—		1				
2. Purchase intentions	3.50	1.88	0.30*	1	1	1	1
3. Brand attitude	5.64	1.71	0.32*	0.14*	0.05	0.11*	
4. Involvement	4.49	1.66	0.08	−0.01	0.41*		
5. Brand Authenticity	4.41	1.75	0.63*	0.27*			
<i>Study 3 (N = 546)</i>							
1. Diversity	—	—	1				
2. Purchase intentions	4.47	1.12	0.62*	1	1	1	
3. Brand authenticity	—	—	−0.05	0.61*	−0.01		
4. Involvement	3.98	1.15	−0.01	−0.03			
<i>Study 4 (N = 395)</i>							
1. Diversity	—	—	1				
2. Purchase intentions	3.48	1.52	−0.21*	1	1	1	
3. Political orientation	3.81	1.95	0.41*	0.21*	−0.02		
4. Involvement	4.01	2.12	−0.06	−0.08			

Note: Correlations are shown below the diagonal. Diversity was manipulated in all studies. Brand authenticity was manipulated in Study 3. The rest of the variables were measured on 7-point Likert scales.

Abbreviations: M, mean; SD, standard deviation.

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

- *Ad likeability* (Bergkvist and Rossiter 2008): “How much did you like the ad?” (Pretest 2, Pretest 3, Pretest 5).
- *Perceived female empowerment (femvertising)* (Drake 2017): “Based on the advertisement you just saw, to what extent do you agree that the advertisement empowers women?” (Study 1, Pretest 3, Study 2, Study 3).
- Prior exposure: “Have you watched this ad before?” (Yes/No) (Pretest 3).
- Brand familiarity: “How familiar are you with [brand]?” (Pretest 3).
- *Attention Check*: “Please respond to this question as strongly agree” (Studies 1–4).

All the above were measured on 7-point Likert scales, unless otherwise stated.

Table B3