

Impressive insults: How do consumers respond to self-deprecating advertisements?

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Abstract

Most advertisements highlight a product's positive attributes to attract consumers. Yet, some brands deliberately criticize themselves by employing self-deprecation within their communications, such as Carlsberg's "Probably not the best beer in the world" campaign. This research examines *whether*, *when*, and *why* consumers react more favorably to self-deprecating advertisements. In six experiments, we demonstrate that when the self-deprecated attribute holds less importance to consumers, self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisements enhance brand trust by elevating the brand's social attractiveness and diminishing consumer skepticism. Importantly, self-deprecation in advertisements also lowers consumers' tendency to avoid them. We empirically rule out several alternative explanations (i.e., consumer engagement, sentiment, nonconformity, and novelty) for these effects. Our research builds on prior studies in impression management and social psychology, contributing to the literature on advertising, self-deprecation, and consumer skepticism by promoting the strategic use of self-deprecating advertisements to bolster brand trust and reduce advertising avoidance. We offer actionable insights for managers and practitioners, highlighting how self-deprecation can effectively address the challenges of building trust in diverse consumer-facing marketing contexts.

KEYWORDS

advertising avoidance, brand trust, consumer skepticism, self-deprecation, social attractiveness

1 | INTRODUCTION

The marketplace is saturated with self-promoting advertisements like Disneyland's "Happiest place on Earth." However, certain brands occasionally deviate from this norm and deliberately accentuate their shortcomings. The 1965 Volkswagen advertisement stating, "If you can sell her on this, you can sell her on anything," Listerine's "The taste people hate. Twice a day," and Oatly's "This tastes like sh*t! Blah!" illustrate how brands employ self-deprecation in their advertisements. This departure from the

conventional advertising approach of highlighting positive product characteristics (Eisend, 2006), raises intriguing questions about the underlying motivations of self-deprecating communications. To gain insights into consumers' real-world responses to such advertisements, we conducted sentiment analyses on user-generated comments in response to self-promoting and self-deprecating advertisements. We found that consumers exhibited positive rather than negative sentiments for both advertisement types (See Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 9). However, the underlying reasons why certain brands choose self-deprecation over

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conventional self-promotion remain unclear, inspiring us to explore in experimental settings.

The existing social psychology literature on self-deprecation presents conflicting findings. Some psychologists associate self-deprecation with depression and anxiety (Luyten et al., 2007), viewing it as a form of self-sabotage wherein individuals internalize the negative remarks they direct toward themselves (Breuning, 2016; Chandler, 2017). Conversely, other research indicates that self-deprecators are perceived as warm, humble, and less self-centered, fostering social attractiveness and closer interpersonal relationships (Baumgartner et al., 2018; DelGreco & Denes, 2020). This research explores self-deprecating advertisements, aiming to understand *whether, when, and why* they prove more effective than self-promoting ones, and proposes self-deprecating advertisements as a remedy to tackle consumers' declining trust in brands and subsequent advertising avoidance.

Prior research and industry evidence suggest a concerning decline in consumer trust towards advertising and brands (Ipsos, 2022; Rajavi et al., 2019). Upholding consumer trust is critical for brands as it directly impacts consumer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, repeat purchases, and market share expansion (Monahan & Romero, 2020). Additionally, declining trust may cause advertisement avoidance, where consumers tend to reduce their exposure to advertisements by ignoring them (McDonald, 2018). Advertisement avoidance imposes a significant annual financial burden for brands, exceeding US\$40 billion (Rua, 2021). Additionally, it disrupts consumer-brand relationships (Rojas-Méndez et al., 2009) and brands' ability to communicate with their customers effectively.

We posit that the erosion of trust stems partly from the prevalence of self-promotion in advertising, where brands predominantly highlight positive attributes (Eisend, 2006), leading to consumer skepticism (Hoppner & Vadakkepatt, 2019). Extant literature identifies advertising as a context requiring impression management, that is, a setting in which brands are motivated to control the impressions consumers form of them (Schniederjans et al., 2018). Thus, brands deliberately use advertising to cultivate favorable impressions among consumers (Kronrod & Danziger, 2013). In such a context, we argue that consumers may value the transparency achieved through self-deprecation. By reducing perceived self-serving motives (Baumgartner et al., 2018), self-deprecation may enhance a brand's social attractiveness, which may alleviate consumer skepticism, enhancing their brand trust and reducing advertisement avoidance. We posit, however, that the effectiveness of self-deprecation depends on its directed focus. Specifically, we contend that self-deprecation will be socially attractive when directed toward lower-importance attributes. By criticizing themselves for traits that are deemed unimportant, self-deprecators can seem more honest and modest (Baumgartner et al., 2018; Bitterly & Schweitzer, 2019), thereby garnering favorable evaluations. Conversely, self-deprecating about important attributes may invite negative judgements (Critcher et al., 2018), as any positive impact might be outweighed by the criticism directed towards the important attribute. Thus, we propose that deliberate self-deprecation directed toward low-importance attributes in an advertisement would lead

consumers to attribute higher social attractiveness to the brand, mitigating their skepticism, thereby enhancing brand trust and reducing advertisement avoidance.

This paper represents one of the first empirical inquiries into self-deprecating advertisements in marketing research. Our research demonstrates that self-deprecating advertisements, when focused on low-importance attributes, can enhance brand trust and reduce advertisement avoidance, making several significant contributions. First, it challenges the conventional wisdom that advertisements should primarily feature positive attributes by showing that self-deprecation can be effective under certain circumstances. Second, it resolves conflicting findings in the self-deprecation literature (Baumgartner et al., 2018; Bitterly & Schweitzer, 2019; Critcher et al., 2018) by demonstrating that self-deprecation generates favorable responses when used deliberately on less important attributes. Finally, by revealing that self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisements reduce advertisement avoidance, our research offers valuable insights for marketers and opens intriguing avenues for future research.

2 | CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

2.1 | Self-deprecation

"Self-deprecation," also known as negative self-evaluation or self-criticism (Owens, 1994), involves downplaying one's skills or qualities (Owens, 1993). It is a form of "self-talk" that involves expressing negative self-views (Baumgartner et al., 2018; Critcher et al., 2018; Owens, 1993; Speer, 2019) and has been studied in impression management and interpersonal communication contexts across disciplines like organizational behavior, political science, and social psychology (Owens, 1994; Speer, 2019; Vonk, 1999). Self-deprecating advertisements are rare because marketing communications typically convey positive product information. Consequently, marketing research on this phenomenon is scarce. One exception is the study by Mookerjee et al. (2021), where the authors, without explicitly using the term self-deprecation, demonstrated that labeling unattractive organic produce as "ugly" increased purchase likelihood. We define our scope as advertisements that engage in self-criticism or convey negative product information and explore how consumers perceive self-deprecating advertisements. Self-deprecating advertising differs from two-sided messaging in that it solely involves criticism as evidenced by Carlsberg's advertisement saying, "Probably not the best beer in the world," or Citroën's slogan, "Surprisingly, we didn't fire the designer." Conversely, two-sided messaging includes both praise and criticism (e.g., Picnic Chocolate Bar's "Deliciously Ugly") (Eisend, 2006, 2022).

Existing literature on self-deprecation yields contradictory findings. In social psychology, self-deprecation is often associated with lower self-esteem, leading others to believe the negative statements people make about themselves (O'Donnell et al., 2016; Owens, 1994). Critcher et al. (2018) prompted one group of participants to make self-deprecating remarks about their abilities,

while another group (unaware of the prompt) evaluated the self-deprecating participants. Their results showed those who self-deprecated were judged as less skilled. O'Donnell et al. (2016) also revealed that individuals who self-deprecated about their intelligence or appearance were perceived as having less self-esteem.

Conversely, research in impression management revealed positive effects of self-deprecation. In a hiring context, candidates who self-deprecated were perceived as warmer and more competent than those who did not disclose any negative information (Bitterly & Schweitzer, 2019). DelGreco and Denes (2020) showed that self-deprecating responses to compliments in online dating were perceived as more likeable than self-promoting ones. On social media, using self-deprecating hashtags suggested less arrogance and increased admiration (Austin et al., 2022). Research in political science highlighted that given the self-promoting tendency of politicians, self-deprecating comments evoked surprise and amusement, improving the politician's likability (Baumgartner et al., 2018).

Prior research demonstrating self-deprecation's positive outcomes (Baumgartner et al., 2018; Bitterly & Schweitzer, 2019) revolves around its use on low-importance attributes that carry minimal significance to the evaluation. For example, job candidates were perceived favorably when they self-deprecated about their trigonometry knowledge (Bitterly & Schweitzer, 2019), an attribute that was irrelevant to the job requirements. A presidential candidate's self-deprecating comment about his weight—a characteristic unrelated to his political competence, increased his likability among voters (Baumgartner et al., 2018). Self-deprecating about a product's visual appeal by using "ugly" labeling highlighted the organic nature of the product, which improved consumers' taste and healthiness perceptions (Mookerjee et al., 2021). Thus, given that all brand communications are deliberate attempts to impress consumers (Houman Andersen, 2001), we suggest that using self-deprecating advertisements focused on low-importance attributes may cultivate positive consumer evaluations. Conversely, self-deprecation concerning high-importance attributes could lead to unfavorable evaluations, as the positive impact of self-deprecation might be overshadowed by the criticism directed towards the high-importance attribute.

In summary, we anticipate that the positive effects of self-deprecation will be evident in situations requiring impression management, such as job interviews (Bitterly & Schweitzer, 2019) or political campaigns targeting voter influence (Baumgartner et al., 2018), especially when directed towards low-important attributes. In these contexts, self-deprecation is deliberate, with individuals intentionally engaging in impression management aiming to foster positive and closer connections with others (Schniederjans et al., 2018). Consequently, evaluators may appreciate self-deprecators' transparency, leading to favorable evaluations, that is, social attractiveness.

2.2 | Social attractiveness of self-deprecation

Prior literature on interpersonal interactions demonstrates that self-deprecators are perceived as humble and likeable, causing others to

seek closer relationships with them (Baumgartner et al., 2018; DelGreco & Denes, 2020). DelGreco and Denes (2020) show that women who self-deprecate by not readily accepting compliments are perceived as more socially attractive. People who display warmth, competence, and likability are often regarded as socially attractive, encouraging others to seek closer relationships with them (Andersen & Guerrero, 1996; Chen & Guo, 2021; Gilbert, 1997; Gilbert et al., 1995). We propose that brands deliberately self-deprecating on a low-importance attribute, given its association with traits such as humility (Vonk, 1999), likeability (DelGreco & Denes, 2020), warmth, and competence (Bitterly & Schweitzer, 2019), would be perceived as socially attractive.

Social psychology research highlights multiple advantages of social attractiveness, like elevated social status (Gilbert et al., 1995), credibility (Edwards et al., 2015), affiliation motivations (Gilbert, 1997), and reduced blame attributions (Alicke & Zell, 2009). Alicke and Zell (2009) discovered that socially attractive individuals received less suspicion, resulting in reduced accountability for their transgressions. Edwards et al. (2015) also illustrated that perceived social attractiveness increased credibility. While self-deprecation in advertising remains underexplored, research on two-sided messages indicates that presenting negative product information alongside positive aspects enhances likability (Kamins et al., 1989) and credibility, while reducing skepticism (Eisend, 2006). Mookerjee et al. (2021) reveal that labeling a product as "ugly" (solely negative information) may augment seller credibility. Building on the prior literature, we contend that when a brand self-deprecates on a low-importance attribute in its advertisements, consumers will perceive the self-criticism as socially attractive, thereby reducing consumer skepticism.

2.3 | Consumer skepticism, brand trust, and advertisement avoidance

Consumer skepticism, defined as the "tendency towards disbelief of advertising claims" (Obermiller et al., 2005, p.7), emerges when consumers detect self-serving motives in brand communications (Webb & Mohr, 1998). Campbell and Kirmani (2000) demonstrated that when salespeople are perceived to have self-serving motives, it triggers skepticism because of perceptions of insincerity and dishonesty. Since marketing communications aim to create positive consumer impressions (Houman Andersen, 2001), and advertisements typically present brands favorably (Eisend, 2006), consumers often harbor skepticism towards brand communications. This skepticism prompts heightened vigilance against brands' promotional efforts and increased scrutiny of persuasion tactics (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Webb and Mohr (1998) show that consumers become more skeptical of brand communications when they perceive exploitation of social causes for self-interest, thereby reducing the effectiveness of social campaigns.

As previously discussed, social attractiveness bolsters credibility, reduces suspicion, and mitigates skepticism (Alicke & Zell, 2009). We argue that self-deprecating advertisements, while enhancing a

brand's social attractiveness, are also perceived as less self-serving due to their self-critical nature, thus further reducing consumer skepticism. Additionally, consumer skepticism diminishes brand trust. For instance, skepticism toward online reviews resulted in distrust in both the review platform and the reviewed brands (Nam et al., 2020). Specifically, consumers' skepticism about hotel reviews on TripAdvisor, a travel website, lowered their trust in both the hotel and TripAdvisor (Nam et al., 2020). Furthermore, skeptical consumers were less likely to trust brand recommendations from their Facebook friends (Chari et al., 2016). Low brand trust triggers advertisement avoidance. Ketelaar et al. (2015) show that consumers lacking trust in a brand view advertisements as ineffective information sources and thus avoid them. Similarly, Baek and Morimoto (2012) illustrate that mistrust and skepticism towards brands' persuasion attempts causes consumers to avoid advertisements.

Combining insights from the prior literature, we argue that consumers will perceive a brand self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) on a low-importance attribute as more socially attractive, which will subsequently reduce consumer skepticism, enhance brand trust and diminish advertisement avoidance (See Figure 1). Formally, we hypothesize that:

H1 Self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisements directed toward a low-importance attribute will (a) increase a brand's social attractiveness, (b) diminish consumer skepticism, (c) bolster brand trust, and (d) mitigate advertisement avoidance.

H2 The effect of self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisements directed toward a low-importance attribute on brand trust will be serially mediated by brand's social attractiveness and consumer skepticism.

H3 The effect of self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisements directed toward a low-importance attribute on advertisement avoidance will be serially mediated by consumer skepticism and brand trust.

H4 The effect of self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisements on a brand's social attractiveness, consumer skepticism, and brand trust will be attenuated when the self-deprecation is directed toward a high-importance attribute.

3 | STUDY 1

Study 1 examined the effect of advertisement types (self-deprecating vs. self-promoting) on consumer skepticism and brand trust, using a fictitious coffee brand to avoid any potential bias arising from prior brand associations (Low & Lamb, 2000). We designed our stimuli after rigorous pre-testing to ensure that (1) the self-deprecated attribute is given low importance, (2) self-deprecation is perceived as deliberate, and (3) the stimuli are equivalent on aspects such as aesthetic appeal, fluency, and consumer sentiment valence (See Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 1). We posit that employing self-deprecation yields positive evaluations when directed at low-importance attributes and perceived as a deliberate strategy.

3.1 | Procedure

One hundred eighteen students from a Western-European university saw either a self-deprecating or a self-promoting advertisement

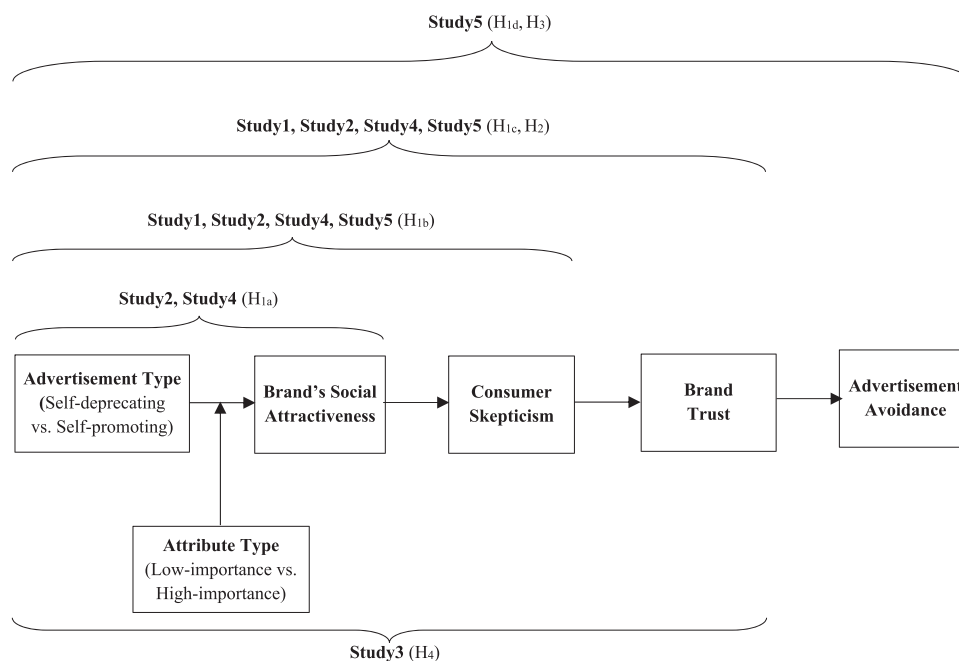


FIGURE 1 Conceptual framework.

(See Figure 2), and reported brand trust, consumer skepticism, and perceived self-deprecation (manipulation check). Fourteen participants failed an attention check question incorporated among the questions (“If you are reading this, select ‘Strongly Disagree’”) and were excluded from the analysis, leaving a final sample of 104. Since traditional advertising strategies typically self-promote (Eisend, 2006), they serve as the default against which we evaluate the effect of self-deprecating advertisements. Therefore, we did not employ a separate control condition to establish baseline effects. Given the scarcity of self-deprecating advertisements, individuals may exhibit heightened engagement in processing them, affecting their skepticism and trust. To address this, we measured the time participants spent observing the advertisements (in seconds) to indicate their engagement level. For this and subsequent studies, please see Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 5 for comprehensive procedure details, Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 6 for measures and their reliability coefficients, and Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 7 for discriminant validity analysis for the measures.

3.2 | Results and discussion

An independent sample t-test ensured the effectiveness of the advertising type manipulation. The self-deprecating advertisement was rated significantly more self-deprecating than the self-promoting one ($t(102) = 7.19, p < 0.001$). Independent samples t-tests revealed that the self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisement resulted in significantly higher brand trust ($t(102) = 3.538, p < 0.001$) and lower skepticism ($t(102) = -5.795, p < 0.001$) (Means reported in Table 1).

A mediation test (PROCESS Model 4; Hayes, 2022; 10,000 samples) revealed that the self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisement reduced consumer skepticism, which in turn increased brand trust (index: $B = 1.067, se = 0.242, 95\% CI = [0.627, 1.563]$) (See Figure 3 for all path coefficients). Participants did not spend more time observing the self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisement ($p = 0.843$), ruling out engagement as an alternative explanation.



FIGURE 2 Study 1 Stimuli: Self-deprecating (a) and self-promoting (b) advertisements.

TABLE 1 Results of Studies 1 and 2.

| Study # | Measures | Self-deprecating advertisement N = 50 | Self-promoting advertisement N = 54 | p Value | Cohen's d |
|------------|-------------------------------|--|--|---------|-----------|
| Study 1 | Perceived self-deprecation | 6.15 (1.56) | 3.55 (2.08) | <0.001 | 1.410 |
| | Brand trust | 6.04 (1.72) | 4.78 (1.90) | <0.001 | 0.236 |
| | Consumer skepticism | 3.99 (1.71) | 6.06 (1.91) | <0.001 | -1.137 |
| | Engagement | 55.35 (65.02) | 52.20 (94.94) | 0.843 | 0.038 |
| Study 2 | | N = 96 | N = 101 | | |
| | Perceived Self-deprecation | 6.77 (2.10) | 3.59 (2.31) | <0.001 | 1.44 |
| | Brand trust | 6.84 (1.44) | 5.45 (1.74) | <0.001 | 0.087 |
| | Consumer skepticism | 2.73 (1.57) | 5.66 (2.17) | <0.001 | -1.55 |
| | Brand's social attractiveness | 5.82 (2.15) | 4.56 (2.19) | <0.001 | .580 |
| | Perceived nonconformity | 6.11 (2.22) | 4.93 (2.17) | <0.001 | .540 |
| Engagement | 24.56 (20.63) | 22.05 (11.52) | .291 | .151 | |

Note: Standard deviations are reported in parentheses.

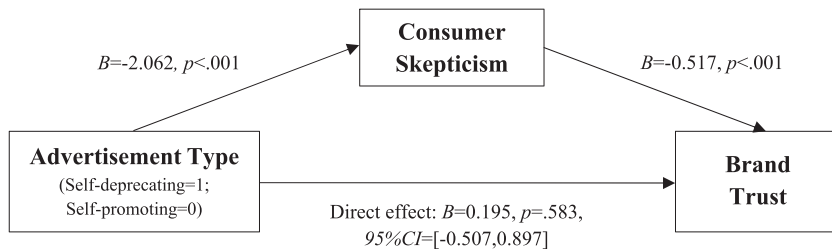


FIGURE 3 Mediation path coefficients.

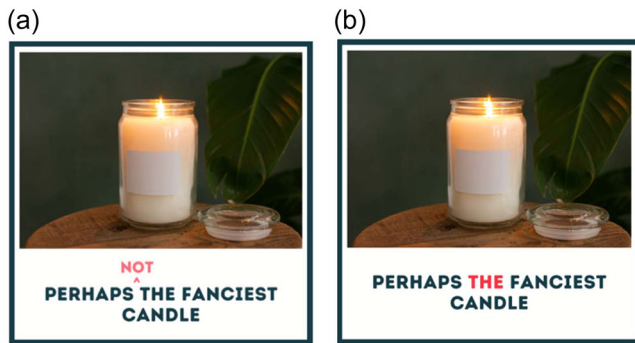


FIGURE 4 Study 2 Stimuli: Self-deprecating (a) and self-promoting (b) advertisement.

Study 1 provided initial evidence that self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisements reduce consumer skepticism, thereby enhancing brand trust.

4 | STUDY 2

In study 2, we used another product category and measured brand's social attractiveness alongside brand trust and consumer skepticism. Furthermore, we evaluated the perceived conformity of advertisements to advertising norms, aiming to exclude nonconformity as a potential mediator. This decision was motivated by the deviance regulation theory, which suggests that nonconformity may garner positive evaluations (Blanton & Christie, 2003). Given that consumers anticipate self-promotion in advertisements (Eisend, 2006), self-deprecation might be perceived as nonconforming. Pretests ensured the effectiveness and equivalence of the stimuli (See Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 2).

4.1 | Procedure

201 participants (47.7% females, $M_{\text{age}} = 42.9$ years, USA residents recruited from Connect by CloudResearch) viewed either a self-deprecating or a self-promoting advertisement (See Figure 4). Four participants failed an attention check (as in Study 1) and were excluded from the analyses, resulting in a final sample of 197. Brand trust and consumer skepticism were measured as in Study 1. Brand's social attractiveness was measured by prompting participants to envision the brand as a person and asking them to report their

agreement with statements such as "I would like to have a friendly relationship with this personified brand" (Scale items in Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 6). Next, participants rated perceived conformity ("How conforming is this advertisement's style to the advertising industry norms?"; 1 = *not conforming at all* to 9 = *extremely conforming*), which we reverse-coded to form the perceived nonconformity measure. Finally, participants responded to a manipulation check (as in Study 1) and reported their demographics. We additionally measured the time spent observing the advertisement.

4.2 | Results and discussion

An independent samples *t*-test revealed that the self-deprecating advertisement was rated significantly more self-deprecating than the self-promoting advertisement ($t(195) = 10.09$, $p < 0.001$). Other independent samples *t*-tests showed that the self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisement resulted in greater brand trust ($t(195) = 6.09$, $p < 0.001$), lower consumer skepticism ($t(195) = -10.84$, $p < 0.001$), and higher social attractiveness ($t(195) = 4.07$, $p < 0.001$) (Means reported in Table 1). Participants perceived the self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisement as more nonconforming ($t(195) = 3.79$, $p < 0.001$). We ruled out nonconformity as an alternative explanation by conducting a parallel mediation analysis (Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 2.3).

Hayes (2022, p.161) recommends utilizing parallel mediation only when no mediator causally influences another. Prior research implies a causal relationship between social attractiveness and skepticism (Alicke & Zell, 2009; Edwards et al., 2015) and between skepticism and brand trust (Chari et al., 2016; Nam et al., 2020). Therefore, we tested for a serial mediation (Process Model 6; Hayes, 2022; 10,000 samples) to explore whether self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisements increased a brand's social attractiveness, which reduced consumer skepticism, consequently enhancing brand trust, and found a significant and positive indirect effect ($B = 0.088$, $se = 0.035$, 95% CI = [0.031, 0.168]) (See Figure 5 for details).

The correlational nature of the relationship between the mediators allows for the possibility of alternative statistical models being significant (Engeler & Barasz, 2021). However, we assert the plausibility of our proposed serial mediation model (Figure 5), because our conceptualization relies on prior literature (Pieters, 2017). Study 2 indicated that self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisements positively influenced brand trust by enhancing brand's social attractiveness and decreasing consumer skepticism.

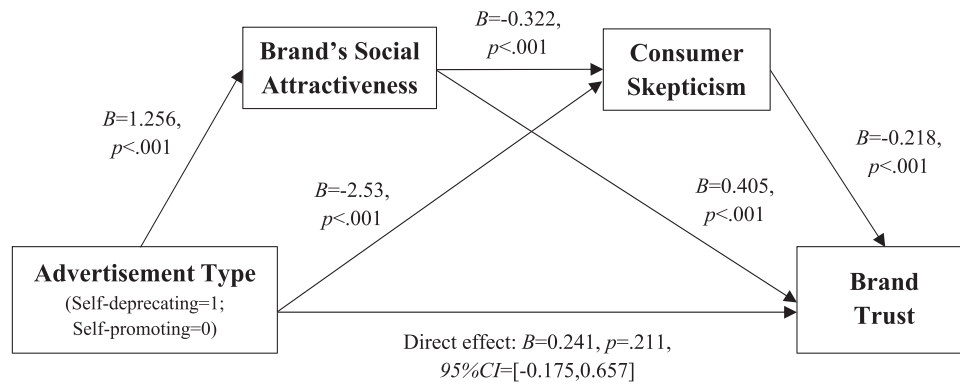


FIGURE 5 Study 2—serial mediation path coefficients.



FIGURE 6 Study 3 Stimuli: High-importance self-deprecating (a), low-importance self-deprecating (b), high-importance self-promoting (c), low-importance self-promoting (d) advertisement.

5 | STUDY 3

In Study 3, we examined the interaction effect of attribute importance and advertisement type on brand's social attractiveness, consumer skepticism, and brand trust.

5.1 | Procedure

301 participants (49.12% females, $M_{age} = 39.05$ years, USA residents) were recruited from Connect by CloudResearch. Three participants failed an attention check (Choose the odd one—Chicago, Berlin, Tomato, Paris), leaving a final sample of 298. This study followed a 2 (advertisement type: self-deprecating vs. self-promoting) by 2 (attribute type: high- vs. low-importance) between-subjects design. Attribute types were selected via pretests (Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 1.1). Participants were randomly assigned to view one of the advertisements presented in Figure 6, and then reported brand trust, consumer skepticism and the brand's social attractiveness as in previous studies. Next,

participants in the low-importance (high-importance) condition rated the importance of attribute "fancy" ("tasty") for coffee (1 = *not important at all*, 9 = *extremely important*). Finally, participants rated perceived self-deprecation (manipulation check) and reported their demographics.

5.2 | Results and discussions

A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test with advertisement type and attribute type as fixed factors and perceived self-deprecation as dependent variable found that the self-deprecating advertisement was considered significantly more self-deprecating than the self-promoting one ($F(1, 294) = 331.56, p < 0.001$). There was no other significant main or interaction effects ($p's > 0.05$). Participants also rated the attribute "tasty" as significantly more important than "fancy" ($F(1, 294) = 271.62, p < 0.001$). The main effect of advertisement type and its interaction with attribute type were nonsignificant ($p's > 0.05$) (Means in Table 2). These results indicated that manipulations worked as intended.

TABLE 2 Results—Study 3.

| Measures | Low-importance attribute | | | High-importance attribute | | Interaction effect | | Ad type main effect | | Attribute type—main effect | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|----------------------------|--|
| | Self-deprecating ad (N = 73) | Self-promoting ad (N = 76) | Self-deprecating ad (N = 74) | Self-promoting ad (N = 75) | p | η_p^2 | p | η_p^2 | p | η_p^2 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Perceived Self-deprecation | 6.80 ^a (2.05) | 2.75 ^b (2.10) | 7.46 ^a (1.74) | 2.81 ^b (2.30) | 0.241 | 0.005 | <0.001 | 0.529 | 0.173 | 0.006 | |
| Attribute importance | 4.23 ^a (2.54) | 3.99 ^a (2.59) | 7.89 ^b (1.20) | 7.96 ^b (1.18) | 0.559 | 0.001 | 0.639 | 0.001 | <0.001 | 0.484 | |
| Brand trust | 6.40 ^a (1.45) | 5.91 ^a (1.60) | 5.37 ^b (2.14) | 6.00 ^a (1.53) | 0.005 | 0.024 | 0.955 | 0.000 | 0.013 | 0.021 | |
| Consumer skepticism | 4.07 ^a (2.25) | 5.18 ^b (2.33) | 4.86 ^b (2.29) | 4.33 ^b (1.96) | 0.002 | 0.034 | 0.252 | 0.005 | 0.958 | 0.000 | |
| Brand's social attractiveness | 5.95 ^a (1.81) | 5.09 ^b (1.93) | 4.69 ^b (2.28) | 5.49 ^a (1.83) | <0.001 | 0.041 | 0.560 | 0.001 | 0.053 | 0.013 | |

Note: Standard deviations are reported in the parentheses. Cell means with different superscripts ('a' and 'b') within the columns "Low-importance attribute" and "High-importance attribute" denote significantly different means (p 's < 0.05) when comparing self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisements.

Another ANOVA test revealed a significant main effect of attribute type ($F(1, 294) = 5.69, p = 0.018$), and a significant interaction effect of advertisement type and attribute type on brand trust ($F(1, 294) = 8.13, p = 0.005$), but no main effect of advertisement type ($p > 0.05$). Participants in the low- (vs. high-importance) condition trusted the brand more. Additional ANOVA tests revealed that the main effects of advertisement type and attribute were not significant for brand's social attractiveness and consumer skepticism (p 's > 0.05). However, their interaction effects on brand's social attractiveness ($F(1, 294) = 13.34, p < 0.001$), and consumer skepticism ($F(1, 294) = 10.12, p = 0.002$) were significant.

In the low-importance condition, participants exhibited significantly higher social attractiveness ($F(1, 294) = 7.07, p = 0.008$) and lower consumer skepticism ($F(1, 294) = 9.36, p = 0.002$), and marginally higher brand trust ($F(1, 294) = 3.08, p = 0.080$) for the self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisement. Conversely, in the high-importance condition, the self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisement significantly reduced brand trust ($F(1, 294) = 5.19, p = 0.023$) and social attractiveness ($F(1, 294) = 6.29, p = 0.013$), but did not significantly affect consumer skepticism ($p = 0.151$, Means in Table 2).

A moderated serial mediation test (PROCESS Model 83, 10,000 samples; Hayes, 2022) replicated Study 2, revealing a significant indirect effect (index: $B = 0.019, se = 0.013, 95\% CI = [0.002, 0.050]$). The indirect effect of advertisement type on brand trust through increased social attractiveness and decreased consumer skepticism was significant and positive in the low-importance condition ($B = 0.010, se = 0.007, 95\% CI = [0.001, 0.028]$), but significant and negative in the high-importance condition ($B = -0.009, se = 0.007, 95\% CI = [-0.027, -0.0002]$) (See Figure 7). Thus, self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisement increased brand's social attractiveness, which reduced consumer skepticism and enhanced brand trust only when the self-deprecation was about a low-importance attribute. Self-deprecation on a high-importance attribute lowered the brand's social attractiveness, negating the positive effect of self-deprecating advertisements on brand trust.

We replicated these findings in a Supporting Information study, where we manipulated the attribute importance based on product type (hedonic vs. utilitarian), while maintaining the product and slogan identical (See Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 8).

6 | STUDY 4

Study 4 manipulated advertisement type with an alternate tagline and additionally examined whether perceived brand equity influenced the impact of advertisement type on the brand's social attractiveness, consumer skepticism, and brand trust. Prior research has commonly operationalized brand equity by varying product prices, as brands associated with higher-priced products are perceived to possess greater equity (Erdem & Swait, 2001). Thus, we introduced different prices for the advertised product to analyze the interaction effect of price perceptions and advertisement type on the brand's social attractiveness, consumer skepticism, and brand trust.

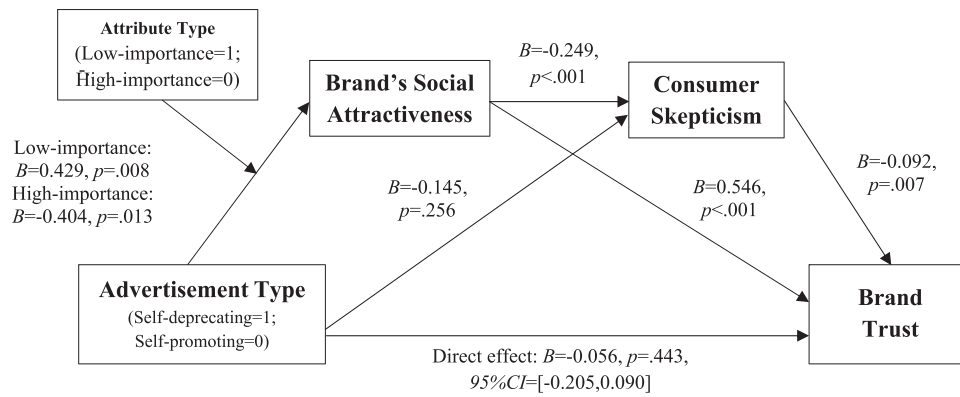


FIGURE 7 Study 3—serial mediation path coefficients.



FIGURE 8 Study 4 Stimuli: Self-deprecating ad with high-price (a), self-deprecating ad with low-price (b), self-promoting ad with high-price (c), self-promoting ad with low-price (d).

6.1 | Procedure

500 female participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 42.45$ years) from the US were recruited via Connect by CloudResearch. Twelve participants failed the attention check question (as in Study 1), leaving a final sample of 488. We exclusively recruited females, as we used feminine shoes in the advertisement (To & Patrick, 2021). The study had a 2 (advertisement type: self-deprecating vs. self-promoting) by 2 (price: low vs. high) between-subjects design. Participants were randomly assigned to see an advertisement for a fictitious orthopedic shoe brand (See Figure 8). The shoes were priced at either \$285 or \$75. A pre-test ensured that self-deprecation was perceived as deliberate and that "photogenic" is a low-importance attribute for orthopedic shoes (See Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 3.1).

After viewing the advertisement, participants reported brand trust, consumer skepticism, and brand's social attractiveness. Prior research reveals that warmth and competence are antecedents to social attractiveness (Chen & Guo, 2021). Thus, we measured them to explore how they affect our hypothesized effects. Finally, participants responded to a price perceptions manipulation check (All scales in Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 6) and reported perceived self-deprecation and their age.

6.2 | Results and discussions

A two-way ANOVA test on perceived self-deprecation found only a significant effect of advertisement type ($F(1, 484) = 648.91, p < 0.001$).

The effects of product price and its interaction with advertisement type were not significant (p 's > 0.05). Another two-way ANOVA test on price perception revealed only a main effect of product price. As expected, \$285 was perceived as a significantly higher price than \$75 ($F(1, 484) = 375.81, p < 0.001$).

A series of two-way ANOVA tests revealed that advertisement type significantly affected brand trust ($F(1, 484) = 37.42, p < 0.001$), social attractiveness ($F(1, 484) = 26.42, p < 0.001$), and consumer skepticism ($F(1, 484) = 35.99, p < 0.001$). Price affected consumer skepticism ($F(1, 484) = 10.02, p = 0.002$), but not brand trust and social attractiveness (p 's > 0.1). Advertisement type and price had a significant interaction effect on brand trust ($F(1, 484) = 5.44, p = 0.020$) and consumer skepticism ($F(1, 484) = 6.19, p = 0.013$), but not on social attractiveness ($p = 0.238$) (Means reported in Table 3). Within the high-price condition, self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisement significantly increased brand trust ($F(1, 484) = 35.86, p < 0.001$) and social attractiveness ($F(1, 484) = 20.06, p < 0.001$) and lowered consumer skepticism ($F(1, 484) = 36.16, p < 0.001$). Likewise, in the low-price condition, the self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisement significantly increased brand trust ($F(1, 484) = 7.13, p = 0.008$) and social attractiveness ($F(1, 484) = 7.80, p = 0.005$), and reduced consumer skepticism ($F(1, 484) = 6.14, p = 0.014$). While the hypothesized effects are directionally alike in both price conditions, they are stronger in the high (vs. low) price condition.

We additionally explored the effect of advertisement type and price on brand's perceived warmth and competence and found a significant main effect of advertisement type (warmth: $F(1, 484) = 8.68, p = 0.002$; competence: $F(1, 484) = 14.16, p < 0.001$), but no effect of price nor its interaction with advertisement type (p 's > 0.05). Given that perceived warmth and competence are antecedents of social attractiveness (Chen & Guo, 2021), the impact of advertisement type on them mirrored its effect on social attractiveness. Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 3.2 presents results from two serial mediation analyses that support prior literature by demonstrating that perceived warmth and competence are antecedents to social attractiveness.

To test whether our main conceptual model holds even when perceived warmth and competence are included into the analysis, we ran another moderated serial mediation test (PROCESS Model 83, 10,000 samples; Hayes, 2022) with warmth and competence as covariates. Our results revealed a nonsignificant index of moderation mediation ($B = 0.001, se = 0.010, 95\% CI = [-0.019, 0.021]$) because in both price conditions, the indirect effect of advertisement type on brand trust through brand's social attractiveness and consumer skepticism was significant and positive (High: $B = 0.018, se = 0.010, 95\% CI = [0.002, 0.041]$; Low: $B = 0.018, se = 0.009, 95\% CI = [0.005, 0.039]$) (See Figure 9 for details). Contrasting these two indirect effects revealed a nonsignificant effect ($c = 0.001, se = 0.010, 95\% CI = [-0.021, 0.022]$). Therefore, we conclude that self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisements boosted brand trust through enhancing social attractiveness and reducing consumer skepticism in both price conditions. Our hypothesized effects are not moderated by price and hold even when we control for the effects of the brand's perceived warmth and competence.

TABLE 3 Results—Study 4.

| Measures | High-price | | | Low-price | | | Interaction effect | | | Ad type—main effect | | | Price | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------|--------|---------------------|--------|------------|-------|------------|
| | Self-deprecating ad (N = 124) | Self-promoting ad (N = 121) | Self-deprecating ad (N = 122) | Self-deprecating ad (N = 121) | Self-promoting ad (N = 121) | Self-deprecating ad (N = 122) | p | η_p^2 | p | η_p^2 | p | η_p^2 | p | η_p^2 |
| | Perceived Self-deprecation | 6.99 ^a (2.23) | 2.64 ^b (2.04) | 7.19 ^a (1.94) | 2.42 ^b (1.66) | 0.247 | 0.003 | <0.001 | 0.529 | 0.932 | 0.000 | <0.001 | 0.437 | <0.001 |
| Price Perceptions | 7.38 ^a (1.39) | 7.67 ^a (1.29) | 4.49 ^b (2.10) | 4.60 ^b (1.88) | 0.555 | 0.001 | 0.195 | 0.003 | <0.001 | 0.003 | <0.001 | 0.269 | 0.003 | 0.003 |
| Brand Trust | 6.54 ^a (1.52) | 5.32 ^b (1.68) | 6.36 ^a (1.51) | 5.82 ^b (1.65) | 0.020 | 0.011 | <0.001 | 0.072 | 0.002 | 0.003 | <0.001 | 0.149 | 0.004 | 0.004 |
| Consumer Skepticism | 3.61 ^a (2.33) | 5.50 ^b (2.54) | 3.46 ^b (2.44) | 4.24 ^b (2.96) | 0.013 | 0.013 | <0.001 | 0.069 | 0.002 | 0.020 | <0.001 | 0.055 | 0.008 | 0.008 |
| Brand's Social Attractiveness | 5.83 ^a (2.06) | 4.58 ^b (2.31) | 5.89 ^a (2.13) | 5.10 ^b (2.21) | 0.238 | 0.003 | <0.001 | 0.052 | 0.149 | 0.004 | <0.001 | 0.350 | 0.002 | 0.002 |
| Warmth | 6.59 ^a (1.73) | 5.82 ^b (1.90) | 6.63 ^a (1.74) | 6.39 ^a (1.76) | 0.103 | 0.005 | .002 | 0.020 | .055 | 0.008 | .002 | .055 | 0.008 | 0.008 |
| Competence | 6.74 ^a (1.69) | 5.85 ^b (1.99) | 6.65 ^a (1.82) | 6.26 ^a (1.01) | 0.150 | 0.004 | <0.001 | 0.028 | 0.350 | 0.002 | <0.001 | 0.350 | 0.002 | 0.002 |

Note: Standard deviations are reported in the parentheses. Cell means with different superscripts ('a' and 'b') within the columns "High-price" and "Low-price" denote significantly different means (p 's < 0.05) when comparing self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisements.

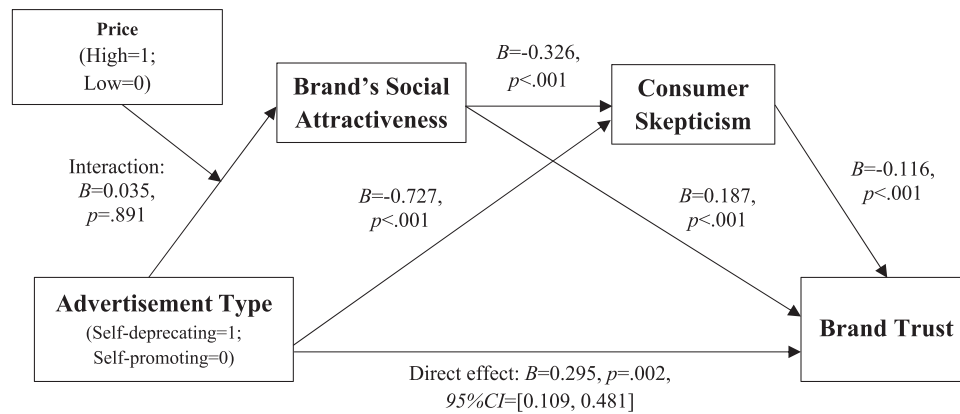


FIGURE 9 Study 4—moderated serial mediation path coefficients.



FIGURE 10 Study 5 stimuli: Self-deprecating (a) and self-promoting (b) advertisement.

7 | STUDY 5

In Study 5, we replicated our findings for another product category, and assessed a downstream consequence of brand trust; advertisement avoidance. We also measured participants' perceptions of novelty for the advertisements, as self-deprecating advertisements might be perceived as novel. Separate pretests ensured the effectiveness and equivalence of the advertisement types (See Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 4.1).

7.1 | Procedure

210 participants (50% females, $M_{\text{age}} = 38.12$ years, USA residents recruited via Connect by CloudResearch) viewed either a self-deprecating or a self-promoting advertisement (See Figure 10) for a fictitious brand of compression socks. Five participants failed the attention check and were excluded from the analyses, leaving a final sample of 205. Brand trust and consumer skepticism were measured as in Study 1. Participants then rated their tendency for advertisement avoidance (scale in Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 6) and

advertisement's perceived novelty (1 = *not novel at all* to 9 = *extremely novel*; Eisend, 2006). After responding to a manipulation check (as in Study 1), participants reported their demographics.

7.2 | Results and discussion

Independent samples *t*-tests showed that the self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisement was significantly more self-deprecating ($t(203) = 10.71$, $p < 0.001$). Further, the self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisement increased brand trust ($t(203) = 3.37$, $p < 0.001$) and lowered consumer skepticism ($t(203) = -3.09$, $p = 0.002$). Participants showed significantly less avoidance toward the self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisement ($t(203) = -3.05$, $p = 0.003$). The self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisement was perceived as significantly more novel ($t(203) = 3.68$, $p < 0.001$) (Means reported in Table 4). In Supporting Information S1: Web-Appendix 4.2, we presented a parallel mediation analysis that ruled out novelty as an alternative explanation.

A serial mediation test (Process Model 6; Hayes, 2022; 10,000 samples) to explore the indirect effect of advertisement type on advertisement avoidance through consumer skepticism and brand trust was significant and negative ($B = -0.125$, $se = 0.058$, $95\% CI = [-0.035, -0.258]$) (See Figure 11 for details). The results showed that self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisements reduced consumer skepticism, which increased brand trust, consequently reducing advertisement avoidance.

8 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

Self-deprecation is studied extensively in social psychology, organizational behavior, and political science (Baumgartner et al., 2018; Bitterly & Schweitzer, 2019; DelGreco & Denes, 2020), but has received little attention in marketing. Across six experiments (including one Supporting Information study, Supporting Information S1: Web Appendix 8), we demonstrate that self-deprecating (vs. self-promoting) advertisements targeted at low-importance attributes

TABLE 4 Results of Study 5.

| Measures | Self-deprecating advertisement N = 101 | Self-promoting advertisement N = 104 | p Value | Cohen's d |
|----------------------------|---|---|---------|-----------|
| Perceived self-deprecation | 6.95 (2.00) | 3.71 (2.31) | <0.001 | 1.50 |
| Brand trust | 6.90 (1.27) | 6.29 (1.31) | <0.001 | 0.471 |
| Consumer skepticism | 3.03 (1.98) | 3.90 (2.07) | 0.002 | -1.431 |
| Advertisement avoidance | 3.88 (2.16) | 4.85 (2.38) | 0.003 | -0.426 |
| Novelty | 6.89 (1.72) | 5.93 (2.00) | <0.001 | 0.514 |

Note: Standard deviations are reported in parentheses.

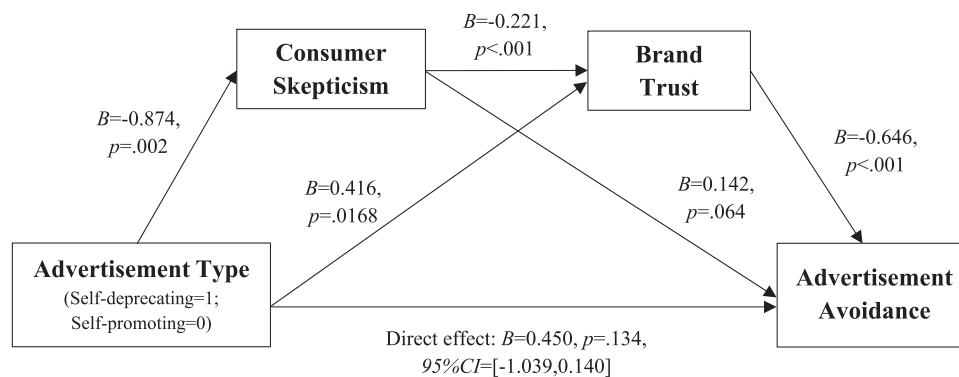


FIGURE 11 Study 5—serial mediation path coefficients.

enhance a brand's social attractiveness, alleviate consumer skepticism, boost brand trust, and reduce advertisement avoidance. We also showed that self-deprecation is perceived as a deliberate strategy in advertising, and ruled out consumers' sentiment and engagement with the advertisement, perception of nonconformity and novelty as alternative process explanations. Our results were robust across different price points, product categories (coffee, candles, orthopedic shoes, and compression socks), and samples (students and online panels) from diverse geographies (USA and Western-Europe), ensuring the reliability and generalizability of our findings.

8.1 | Theoretical contributions

This research, by investigating *whether*, *when*, and *why* consumers respond favorably to self-deprecating advertisements, offers several theoretical contributions. First, we contribute to advertising research which argues that advertisements primarily share positive information about brands (Hernandez et al., 2019; Mo et al., 2018). We show that self-deprecating advertising—introducing only negative connotations about a product or brand—can significantly boost brand trust and reduce advertisement avoidance. Second, the literature on self-deprecation presents conflicting findings on whether it leads to

positive or negative evaluations (Critcher et al., 2018; DelGreco & Denes, 2020). In responding to the “whether” and “when” questions, we reconciled these findings by identifying that self-deprecation begets favorable responses when used deliberately on low-importance attributes. Third, in addressing the “why” aspect, we found that self-deprecating advertisements enhance brand trust by elevating brand's social attractiveness which diminishes skepticism. Extant research on skepticism-reduction focuses on the effects of holistic thinking (DeMotta et al., 2023) and curiosity-stimulating information disclosure (Hüttl-Maack et al., 2023). We contribute to this discourse by demonstrating that self-deprecating advertisements can reduce skepticism by enhancing a brand's social attractiveness. Fourth, we contribute to extant research highlighting mistrust and skepticism towards advertisers (Ketelaar et al., 2015) and their persuasion tactics (Baek & Morimoto, 2012) as primary causes for advertisement avoidance. We identify self-deprecating advertising as a strategy that mitigates these causes, thereby reducing advertisement avoidance. Finally, we build on prior research in impression management, emphasizing the influence of elements like engaging brand narratives and celebrity endorsements (Spear & Roper, 2013) on consumers' brand perceptions. We illustrate that self-deprecating advertisements enhance a brand's social attractiveness, prompting positive brand impressions.

8.2 | Managerial and practical implications

Prior research and industry evidence indicate a concerning decline in consumer trust towards advertisers and brands (Ipsos, 2022; Rajavi et al., 2019). This presents a serious problem for marketers as brand trust enhances consumer loyalty, word-of-mouth, and market share expansion (Monahan & Romero, 2020). Our findings offer a potential solution to the declining trust. Brands can leverage self-deprecation across various contexts, including product packaging, social media engagement, customer service, and collaborations with influencers and celebrities, not just advertisements. For example, the brand-ambassador of eHarmony, actress Lindsay Lohan, self-deprecated her single status to promote the dating platform (TrendHunter, 2009). Self-deprecation on product packaging helps differentiate the brand and establish an image that resonates with consumers. For instance, Oatly, the food company, included a self-deprecating message on their packaging, "We could have written anything we wanted here, but instead we wrote this. At least what's inside this package will feel like an upgrade." Oatly further employed self-deprecating names for their ice-cream ("Pretty Average Vanilla"; Wolfsohn, 2019).

Dwindling trust prompts advertisement avoidance, preventing brand messages from reaching their target consumers (Çelik et al., 2023; McDonald, 2018; Rojas-Méndez et al., 2009). This can create a rift between brands and consumers, resulting in missed opportunities for brands to convey information or address consumer needs, ultimately leading to lost sales (Knittel et al., 2016). Our findings show that self-deprecating advertisements may help advertisers to

alleviate avoidance, foster stronger brand trust, and consequently build better communications with consumers.

8.3 | Limitations and directions for future research

This research has a few limitations that present opportunities for future investigations. While self-deprecating advertisements are infrequently used so far, we contend that the dissemination of our findings might encourage a broader adoption to leverage their trust-boosting benefits. Our findings revealed that the brand trust-enhancing effect of self-deprecating advertisements was serially mediated by increased social attractiveness and reduced consumer skepticism. The correlational nature of the relationship between the mediators allows for the possibility of alternative statistical models being significant (Engeler & Barasz, 2021; Pieters, 2017). In other words, when the order of the mediators is changed, the indirect effect remains significant (Hayes, 2022). Nevertheless, we assert the plausibility of our proposed model, as it is grounded in prior literature that suggests that social attractiveness causes skepticism-reduction (Alicke & Zell, 2009; Edwards et al., 2015; Eisend, 2006) and consumer skepticism influences brand trust (Chari et al., 2016; Nam et al., 2020).

Our studies directly measured consumers' responses to self-deprecating advertisements. However, our methodology did not allow us to understand consumers' interpretations of the self-deprecation or their underlying thought processes. Consumers may perceive the self-deprecation message as humorous and ironic

TABLE 5 Directions for future research.

| Research domains | Future research questions | Theoretical and practical importance |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Brand types | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do consumers evaluate self-deprecating advertisements from established (vs. new) brands? How will brand personality (e.g., sincere or sophisticated) interact with the use of self-deprecation and self-promotion in advertisements? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advance our understanding of how brand types affect consumers' responses to self-deprecating advertisements. Provide insights for marketers on how to effectively utilize self-deprecating advertisements. |
| Consumers' individual differences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which dispositional consumer characteristics (e.g., need for status, self-enhancement needs, and self-construal) affect consumers' evaluation of self-deprecating advertisements? Which situational characteristics (such as mood and cognitive load) interact with consumers' evaluation of self-deprecating advertisements? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how consumer characteristics affect their responses to self-deprecating advertisements. Help advertisers identify suitable consumer segments for self-deprecating advertisements. |
| Diverse situations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will consumers perceive self-deprecating advertisements during a brand crisis? How will a brand's self-deprecating response during situations of product and service failure affect repurchase intentions? Can self-deprecating advertisements in social, cause-related, charity campaigns and public service announcements enhance organizations' social attractiveness and trustworthiness? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the contexts in which self-deprecating advertisements may benefit or harm brands. |
| Downstream consequences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How may self-deprecating advertisements affect consumers' word-of-mouth intentions? What kind of consumer emotions would self-deprecating advertisements generate? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advance our knowledge of how self-deprecating advertisements affect consumers' actual behavior or emotions |

(Bitterly & Brooks, 2020), causing them to interpret the advertisement differently. Future research could employ qualitative methods to disentangle potential interpretations of self-deprecating advertisements. We find that self-deprecation consistently boosts the social attractiveness of brands across various samples, product categories, and country-contexts. This, in turn, leads to decreased consumer skepticism and heightened trust after a single exposure to the advertisement. Future investigations can explore their longitudinal effects, investigating whether the initial boosts in social attractiveness, brand trust, and reduced skepticism persist or diminish over time. We anticipate that the impact of a single exposure to self-deprecating advertisements would be more pronounced for new brands, as consumers are in the process of forming their attitudes toward the brand. However, for established brands, where consumers have already solidified their attitudes and opinions, a single exposure may not suffice to induce attitude change (Campbell & Keller, 2003). Future research could explore the effects of repeated exposure to self-deprecating advertisements for established brands.

Similarly, future research can explore how self-deprecating advertisements affect consumer reactions for various brand types (e.g., brands with distinct personalities), consumer segments (e.g., individuals with varying degrees of social status and self-enhancement needs), and situational contexts (e.g., brand crisis or service failure). Researchers may empirically investigate whether incorporating self-deprecation into charity appeals and public service announcements enhances organizations' social attractiveness and trustworthiness, potentially reducing consumers' avoidance of such campaigns and encouraging participation in activities benefiting society, such as recycling, sustainable consumption, and supporting charitable causes. In Table 5, we outline directions for future research within consumer psychology and marketing.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

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

ETHICS STATEMENT

This research has been approved by the institutional review board (IRB) and the Research Ethics Committee at the authors' institution.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

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