

Representation of Inclusivity and Exclusivity In Fashion Advertising

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ABSTRAK: This study examines how inclusivity and exclusivity are represented in fashion advertising using the semiotic framework of Charles Sanders Peirce. The research analyzes two denim advertisements released in 2025 “Better in Denim” by Gap featuring KATSEYE and “Good Jeans” by American Eagle starring Sydney Sweeney. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, verbal and visual signs are analyzed through Peirce’s triadic model (object, representament, interpretant). The findings show that the American Eagle advertisement emphasizes Eurocentric beauty ideals and jeans/genes wordplay, while Gap advertisement emphasizes diversity and togetherness. The study concludes that inclusivity and exclusivity can coexist within advertisements.

Kata kunci: advertising, media literacy, exclusivity, inclusivity, peircean semiotics

ABSTRACT: Penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana inklusivitas dan eksklusivitas direpresentasikan dalam iklan fesyen menggunakan kerangka semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce. Penelitian ini mengkaji dua iklan denim yang diluncurkan pada tahun 2025, yaitu “Better in Denim” dari Gap yang menampilkan KATSEYE serta “Good Jeans” dari American Eagle yang dibintangi Sydney Sweeney. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan menganalisis tanda verbal dan visual melalui model triadik Peirce (objek, representamen, dan interpretan). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa iklan American Eagle menonjolkan eksklusivitas melalui standar kecantikan Eurosentris dan permainan kata genetik, sementara iklan Gap menampilkan keberagaman dan kebersamaan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa inklusivitas dan eksklusivitas dapat hadir secara bersamaan dalam iklan.

Keywords: iklan, literasi media, eksklusivitas, inklusivitas, semiotika peirce

INTRODUCTION

Advertising serves as a cultural text that produces and circulates meanings beyond its primary function as a marketing tool (Goldman & Papson, 1996). Through persuasive language and imagery, advertisements often contain implicit messages that shape how audiences perceive identity, beauty, and desirability (Goldman & Papson, 1996). Because these meanings are embedded within signs, audiences may unconsciously absorb ideological narratives presented through commercial representations (Goldman & Papson, 1996). For this reason, advertisements should be critically examined as symbolic texts that communicate broader cultural values and social hierarchies (Vishal, 2025).

Debates surrounding representation became particularly visible in two denim advertisements released in 2025. The “Good Jeans” ad by American Eagle featuring Sydney Sweeney generated controversy after the actress delivered a line that plays on the words “genes” and “jeans”, implying that desirable traits may be inherited. Critics argue that the phrasing indirectly echoed ideas associated with hereditary superiority (Elshaikh, 2025). In contrast, the “Better in Denim” ad by GAP featuring the global girl group KATSEYE gained attention for its dance choreography, multicultural casting, and messaging centered on unity and collective identity (Tannenbaum, 2025).

The American Eagle ad was criticized by the CaMP Anthropology (2025) for allegedly using subtle rhetorical cues that resemble eugenics as means of exclusivity. However, Los Angeles Times (2025) argued that such interpretations might overstate that advertisement intention. Meanwhile the GAP campaign was praised by Glamour (2025) as a significant step towards inclusivity and worldwide representation, although a scholar Einav Rabinovitch-Fox from the Case Western Reserve University contends it is still considered exclusive since the advertisement reflects conventional beauty ideals thus not inclusive. These public responses to these advertisements illustrate how the media can generate competing interpretations. Inclusivity refers to the approach of making certain that every person is equally represented, appreciated, and acknowledged in social and economic frameworks, especially in the realm of

media and industry (British Beauty Council, 2019). Two significant aspects of inclusivity are authentic representation and intersectionality (British Beauty Council, 2019). Exclusivity in marketing is seen as the illustration of limited, idealized beauty standards that indirectly leave out individuals who do not align with prevailing expectations regarding looks, identity, or capability (Clark, 2023). Two significant aspects of exclusivity are repeated depiction of dominant beauty ideals and implicit barriers (Clark, 2023).

According to Charles Sanders Peirce (1958), a sign operates through a triadic relationship consisting of the object (the referent), the representamen (the form the sign takes), and the interpretant (the meaning produced by the viewer). This triadic process allows researchers to examine how visual and verbal elements interact to create meanings (Peirce, 1958). Within advertising, these elements function together to shape interpretations related to identity, desirability, and social belonging (Bignell, 2002).

Previous research has explored advertising and inclusivity-exclusivity from different perspectives, but these themes are often examined separately. The study “Linguistic Relativity in GAP X Katseye 2025 Instagram Advertisement: A Whorfian Weak Hypothesis Approach” in 2025 analyzes how language in the collaboration advertisement between GAP and KATSEYE shapes audience perceptions of freedom and self-expression. Meanwhile, “Pendekatan Model Pemahaman Keagamaan: Tekstual dan Kontekstual Inklusif dan Eksklusif” in 2021 discusses inclusivity and exclusivity within religious interpretation, and “Makna Tanda dalam Iklan Kecantikan: Analisis Semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce” in 2020 applies the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce in 2020 applies semiotics theory of Charles Sanders Peirce to examine the construction of beauty meanings in cosmetic advertising. Although these studies provide important insights, limited research integrates Peircean Semiotic analysis with the concepts of inclusivity and exclusivity in fashion advertising. Therefore, this study offers novelty by examining how visual and verbal signs in fashion advertisements communicate inclusivity and exclusivity through Peirce’s triadic semiotics.

This study aims to enhance media

literacy. The result of this research can assist us as advertisement viewers to reconsider and improve our thoughts and boost our critical awareness to interpret underlying messages, allowing us to grasp what ideological or discursive viewpoints and interest may be conveyed in a specific ad. This research addresses the following question: How do the connections between objects, representamen, and interpretant function in conveying the concepts of inclusivity and exclusivity in each advertisement?

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Linguistic Relativity in GAP X Katseye 2025 Instagram Advertisement: A Whorfian Weak Hypothesis Approach”

The research applied Whorf’s weak hypothesis to explore the impact of language structure in GAP x KATSEYE 2025 Instagram advertisements on how the audiences perceive them. They conducted a linguistic analysis and surveying 30 individuals aged 17-25, the findings indicate that language construction at lexical, syntactic, and discursive levels influences how audiences interpret messages, particularly concerning freedom, self expression, and empowerment values. A significant portion of participants (63.33%) link the language of advertising to freedom, whereas 32.1% view the narrative as both expressive and empowering. This research validates that while language in advertising may not fully dictate perceptions, it significantly contributes to shaping views and cultural values tied to products.

This research employed a mixed method design that is both descriptive and explanatory, merging qualitative analysis of language with a straightforward quantitative survey to gauge how the audience perceives words. The information was gathered from a selection of official Instagram posts from GAP and feedback from 30 individuals chosen through targeted sampling. The researcher collected data in a sequential manner, conducted an analysis focusing on style and sociolinguistics based on Whorf’s weaker hypothesis. They combined the qualitative and quantitative results. This method allows for the observation of how language affects audience perception through structural analysis and

the cognitive reactions of individuals surveyed.

The findings indicated that vocabulary choices such as “individuality”, “self expression”, and “style” are essential in connecting cultural beliefs with audience perceptions, particularly in terms of freedom and self-expression. Through discourse analysis, it is evident that the phrase “Powerful on your own. Even better together” adds a layer of significance balancing personal identity and community feeling, creating an ambiguity that enhances the effectiveness of the advertisement. In summary, the research suggests that language in online advertising can serve as a cognitive influence, shaping how audiences view brand identity, while working together with visual components.

The research shares similarities as it examines an advertisement from GAP and KATSEYE collaboration, focusing on how language and symbols are used in advertising, which influence how the audience understands and perceives the messages. The key distinction stems from the theoretical basis, the subject analysis, and the research goals. This study applies Whorf’s weak hypothesis to explore how language structure impacts perception and thinking. In terms of methodology, a mixed method approach is utilized, incorporating quantitative surveys that consider language as a determinant of thought patterns. Additionally, another difference can be seen in the thematic emphasis, as this study highlights how language helps shape ideas like “freedom”, “self expression”, and “style”.

“Pendekatan Model Pemahaman Keagamaan: Tekstual Dan Kontekstual Inklusif Dan Eksklusif”

This research focuses on two primary methods for comprehending religion via textual and contextual, along with their connection to inclusive and exclusive attitudes in religious practices. The textualist method is characterized by a straightforward interpretation of sacred texts, whereas the contextualist method examines religious teaching through the lens of social and historical circumstances. This research highlights the distinctions between inclusive and pluralistic perspectives and exclusive attitudes that prevent dialogue with other faith groups. This research also employs study literature as its method. The goal of this study is to offer a detailed summary

of how the interpretative framework of religious texts influences social behavior and to illustrate how a deeper understanding can foster harmony and coexistence among various religious communities.

This research indicates that a textualist approach often upholds the literal interpretation of sacred texts and preserves the integrity of teachings, however, such teachings risk becoming inflexible and may not adapt to changing times. This perspective is linked through exclusivity, as it portrays the belief system as the only unquestionable truth. Meanwhile, a contextualist approach takes into account the social environment, fostering inclusive perspectives. This outlook is marked by an appreciation for diversity and a willingness to engage in dialogue among different faiths. These conclusions are backed by multiple examples from everyday life, including the interpretation of religious ruling, contemporary concerns, and the fostering of interfaith relationships within the community.

The study has some common points as it looks at both inclusive and exclusive representation. The distinction lies in what is being examined and the approach taken. This research focuses on the religious area through literature analysis, where aspects of religiosity, inclusiveness, and exclusivity arise from analyzing texts and seeks to highlight social harmony within the field of religious studies.

“Makna Tanda dalam Iklan Kecantikan: Analisis Semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce”

The research outlines a qualitative investigation that examined the role of signs presented as icons, index, and symbol in creating practical meanings within advertisement for 20 Indonesian cosmetic companies. Information collected from both verbal and nonverbal components of visual marketing. The research utilizes Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic framework. The process of data gathering involved observing, documenting, and capturing both visual and verbal aspects. The researchers themselves function as the primary tool for this task.

The findings indicated that visuals in cosmetic advertisements depict actual outcomes like radiant skin, vibrant hair, or the appearances of the brand item. These signs can be observed in

the model’s facial expressions, their shown health, or factual claims that suggest a link between using the product and the expected results. Brand logos, unique colors, catchphrases, and specialized terms shape an ideological identity and a cultural idea of beauty. Each of these components collaborates to build a practical significance that highlights the perfection of beauty, the trustworthiness of the product, and the emotional impact that marketing aims to communicate to the audience.

The common aspect of this research is that both examined advertising as a cultural medium rich in social and symbolic significance, rather than merely as a tool for marketing. They also apply Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic theory to examine meaning in advertising. The difference between the studies lies in the explanation of the core values conveyed by advertising. This study focuses on the construction of the meaning of beauty through symbols that show the ideology and concept of beauty culture to 20 Indonesian advertising brands.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach grounded in Peircean semiotics. The primary data consist of two audiovisual advertisements:

1. “Good Jean” advertisement by American Eagle in 2025
2. “Better in Denim” advertisement by GAP in 2025

Datas collected through identification of signs by observing and taking screenshots of the most important signs of the ads. Charles Sanders Peirce’s triadic (object, representant, and interpretant) used to identify and categorize signs such as visual imagery, linguistic, color, gesture, etc. Relevant literature is cited to support the interpretation of each sign. Next, the analysis looked at inclusivity indicators (authentic representation and intersectionality) and exclusive indicators (repetition of dominant beauty, implicit barriers), to compare the two aspects across the ads.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Inclusivity and exclusivity are shown through different signs in both advertisements. The American Eagle advertisement mainly reflects exclusivity by using hereditary metaphors, Eurocentric beauty standards, and a celebrity centered presentation that suggest attractiveness is something natural and inherited. In contrast, the GAP advertisement displays more racial and stylistic diversity, highlighting ideas of togetherness and empowerment. However, this inclusivity is still limited because the performers continue to fit common commercialized beauty standards such as youthfulness and certain body ideals. These findings show that inclusivity and exclusivity can appear at the same time and often coexist in fashion advertising.

Semiotic analysis of American Eagle advertisement

Table 1. Analysis of Duration 0-2 second

DOCUMENTATION		
		
OBJECT	REPRESENTATION	INTERPRETATION
The scene opens with a slow upward pan across a pair of denim jeans while a woman says, "genes are passed down from parents to offspring" in a calm tone. The visuals focus on jeans combined with the spoken line creates a deliberate connection between the clothing and the idea of inheritance.	The ad plays on the similarity between the words "genes" and "jeans". This creates a semantic contrast between biology and clothing, briefly confusing the viewer. The ambiguity encourages the audience to think about whether the message refers to genetics, denim, or both.	There's two ways of reading about this. Linking jeans with the idea of biological inheritance, the ad suggests that wearing the brand is something naturally passed down. It frames jeans as an essential, almost inherited part of identity and personal style. Another which genes is something all people experience, but by showing one model, it falls flat.

INCLUSIVITY OR EXCLUSIVITY INDICATORS

The ad links jeans with genetics to suggest an universal human trait, hinting at inclusivity. However, showing only one attractive model limits authentic diversity and intersectional representation. This focus on a single beauty standard may create exclusivity and subtle barriers, shaping who audiences perceive as belongs to the brand.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/americaneagle/videos/1136711328284537>

Table 2. Analysis of Duration 2-8 second

DOCUMENTATION		
		
OBJECT	REPRESENTATION	INTERPRETATION
The camera continues to slowly move upwards as the woman says, "often determining traits like hair color, personality, and even eye color." At the same time, she zips up her jeans and leans back comfortably on the pillow, creating a relaxed and intimate moment.	The line about genetics sounds scientific and informative, making the narration feel trustworthy. Meanwhile, the visual action of zipping up her jeans and leaning back carries a subtle sensual tone, since adjusting pants in this way is not a typical everyday gesture.	The scene shifts attention towards the individual rather than the jeans themselves. By using scientific language about inherited traits, the ad suggests that identity and personality are natural and predetermined, indirectly connecting these ideals to the person wearing the jeans.
INCLUSIVITY OR EXCLUSIVITY INDICATORS		
The scene centers on a single celebrity while linking identity to genetics, which shifts attention from the product to an idealized individual. This limits authentic and intersectional representation. At the same time, the youthful and attractive portrayals reinforce dominant beauty standards and subtly suggest who fits the brand, creating implicit exclusivity.		

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/americaneagle/videos/1136711328284537>

Table 3. Analysis of Duration 8-11 second

DOCUMENTATION		
		
OBJECT	REPRESENTATION	INTERPRETATION
The camera finishes panning and focuses on the woman's face. Looking calmly into the camera, she says, "my genes/ jeans are blue." another one of the earlier wordplay between genetics and denim.	When she says this line, her blue eyes become more noticeable against her fair skin and blonde hair. The phrase draws attention to these physical traits, subtly connecting the idea of "blue genes" with her appearance.	This moment suggests a racialized ideal where traits like blue eyes, fair skin, and blonde hair appear normal and desirable. As a result, the jeans seem naturally suited to people with these features, while other identities remain invisible in the ad.
INCLUSIVITY OR EXCLUSIVITY INDICATORS		
The ad, again, highlights one celebrity with blue eyes, fair skin, and blonde hair, reinforcing dominant Western beauty ideals. This limited representation weakens inclusivity because diverse identities are absent. The phrase "my genes are blue" subtly connects appearance and belonging, creating implicit barriers that suggest the brand mainly fits certain physical traits.		

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/americaneagle/videos/1136711328284537>

Table 4. Analysis of Duration 11-15 second

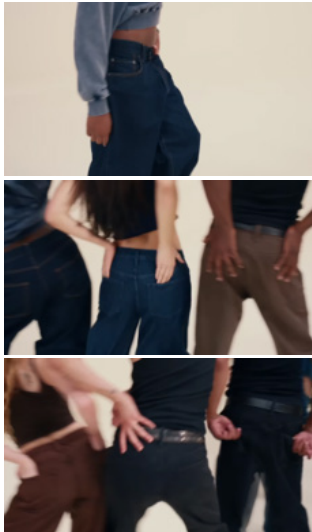
DOCUMENTATION


OBJECT	REPRESENTATION	INTERPRETATION
Large text appears reading "SYDNEY SWEENEY HAS GREAT JEANS" spoken by a deep, raspy male narrator. Sydney Sweeney sits in a relaxed pose, smiles, and looks away. The scene ends with the brief appearance of the American Eagle logo.	Because Sydney Sweeney is a well-known actress, the phrase "great jeans" connect both to the clothing and to her appearance. The earlier discussion of genetics makes the line suggest she has "good genes" highlighting her blonde hair, blue eyes, and conventional beauty. The deep male narration adds authority and confidence to the statement. Meanwhile her small chuckle and glance away show that the ad is aware of the wordplay, making the message feel playful rather than overly serious.	Here, "great jeans" becomes a metaphor combining product quality and physical attractiveness. The ad links the value of the jeans with the celebrity wearing them, implying that beauty and desirability are natural traits she already possesses.
INCLUSIVITY OR EXCLUSIVITY INDICATORS		
The ad featuring Sydney Sweeney connects the phrase "great jeans" to both the product and her appearance. This highlights dominant beauty standards such as youth, slimness and fair features. While playful, the focus on one celebrity limits diverse representation and subtly reinforces exclusivity through familiar beauty ideals.		

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/americaneagle/videos/1136711328284537>

Semiotic analysis of GAP advertisement

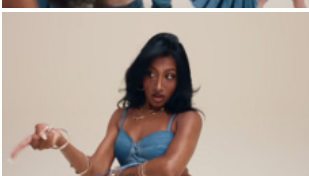
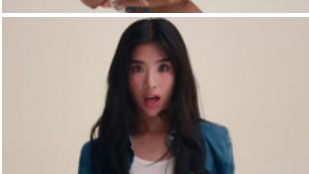
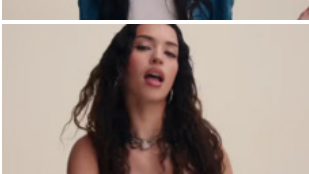
Table 5. Analysis of Duration 0-2 second

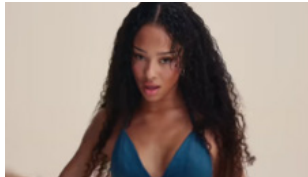
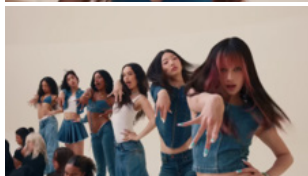
DOCUMENTATION


OBJECT	REPRESENTATION	INTERPRETATION
The song Milkshake by Kelis plays as a person walks towards a line of people, the camera focused on their jeans. They playfully bump their hip against the next person, starting a chain reaction that moves down the line while the camera follows the movement.	Each person in the line looks different in race, gender, and jean style. The playful bumping creates a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Despite their differences, everyone participates in the same action, with jeans acting as the shared element connecting them.	The scene presents jeans as something that brings people together. By showing visible diversity, the ads suggest that anyone can wear them. Viewers may interpret the message as inclusive, where people from different backgrounds are equally part of the group.
INCLUSIVITY OR EXCLUSIVITY INDICATORS		
The advertisements shows inclusivity by showing people of different races, genders, and jean styles participating together in a playful moment, presenting jeans as a shared item for everyone		

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwzF26o0AuU>

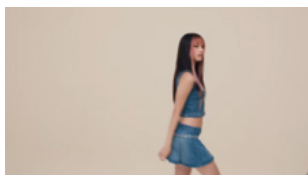
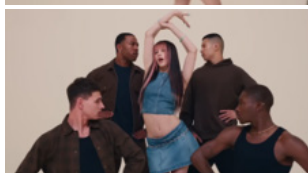
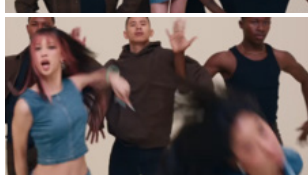
Table 6. Analysis of Duration 2-15 second

DOCUMENTATION
    

 		
OBJECT	REPRESENTATION	INTERPRETATION
The group KATSEYE appears wearing different styles of blue jeans, slim-fit pants, denim skirts, etc. They synchronizely dance together, then break formation at the same time while the camera shifts to close shots of each of the members.	The camera highlights each member before zooming out to show everyone dancing again. Their movement stays partly synchronized, but each member adds small personal gestures that match their own style.	This scene balances teamwork and individuality. The shared denim looks creates unity, while the camera's equal attention to each of the members shows their uniqueness. Viewers may interpret this as a message that people can belong to a group while still expressing their personal identity.
INCLUSIVITY OR EXCLUSIVITY INDICATORS		
The scene shows inclusivity by showing KATSEYE wearing different denim styles while receiving equal camera focus, highlighting both group unity and individual expressions. However, exclusivity appears through the members similar youthful and slim appearances, which reflects dominant beauty standards.		

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwzF26o0AuU>

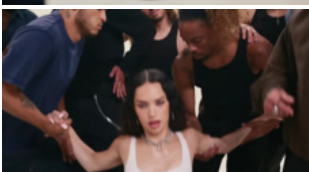
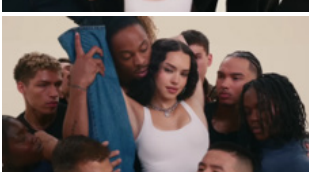
Table 7. Analysis of Duration 18-24 second

DOCUMENTATION
  

OBJECT	REPRESENTATION	INTERPRETATION
A member of KATSEYE leaves her group and walks towards several men. She stands in the middle and begins dancing, moving her hips while the men watch with mostly neutral expressions and only slight head movements.	As it goes, the men slowly become more involved. They begin dancing with greater energy, they move behind her, and for a line while holding each other's arms like a chain.	This scene shows a change in social energy. Though there's two ways to interpret it. Her confident movement encourages the men to become more active. Some viewers may see it as empowerment and social connection, while others may feel the focus on her hips movement reflects traditional ideas about attraction and femininity.
INCLUSIVITY OR EXCLUSIVITY INDICATORS		
The woman confidently leads the scene, encouraging the men to join, suggesting participation and social interaction. However, the focus on her hip movements may reflect traditional femininity and dominant beauty ideals, while the men's initial passivity subtly reinforces gender standards.		

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwzF26o0AuU>

Table 8. Analysis of Duration 29-36 second

DOCUMENTATION
   

OBJECT	REPRESENTATION	INTERPRETATION
In the background, several dancers move freely, and one person dances in an uncoordinated way. Soon, most dancers return to synchronized movement. Another member of KATSEYE is pulled by a crowd moving the opposite way. Several men lift her up as Milkshake by Kelis continues playing. The meaning of Milkshake can be interpreted differently. Kelis once explained that "milkshake" represents the unique quality that gives women confidence and makes them special. However, some listeners interpret it as sensual energy that attracts male attention.	This is the second time a woman becomes the center focus of a group of men, but it feels different. The men lift and surround her while she looks directly at the camera. At the same moment, the lyric "you're mine" plays, which may suggest ideas of control or possession.	Viewers may read this scene in two ways. It may appear empowering because she confidently faces the camera and becomes the focus. Or, it may also seem objectifying, since she is lifted, surrounded, and posed by men while the song's lyrics suggest attraction and ownership.
INCLUSIVITY OR EXCLUSIVITY INDICATORS		
Some diversity appears through varied dancers and movements, but the focus remains on a conventionally attractive KATSEYE member. Men surrounding and lifting her, along with the possessive lyric, may suggest empowerment, yet also reinforce dominant beauty ideals and subtle gender power imbalance.		

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwzF26o0AuU>

Table 9. Analysis of Duration 1:08-1:30 second

DOCUMENTATION
 

OBJECT	REPRESENTATION	INTERPRETATION
A group of dancers stands in straight lines in a simple beige background. Members of KATSEYE confidently walk between them. As each member passes, the dancers in that line begin dancing, creating a wave of movement that spreads through the group. The dancers then form a circle around KATSEYE and move in synchronized steps. The camera switches to a top view and all members look up at the camera. The scene ends with a white screen showing the slogan "Better in Denim"	The dancers only starting dancing after KATSEYE walks past suggests influence and leadership. The shift from straight lines to a circle shows unity. The simple and muted colored background keeps attention on the dancers, their movements, and the denim clothing.	Viewers may interpret the scene as something that brings people together. The choreography highlights both group unity and individual confidence, while the final eye contact with the camera helps create a strong connection with the audience.
INCLUSIVITY OR EXCLUSIVITY INDICATORS		
The choreography reflects inclusivity through group unity and shared movement, especially when they form a circle together. However, the performers still reflect common beauty standards, and KATSEYE's central role may imply subtle hierarchy, which can create implicit exclusivity within the representation.		

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwzF26o0AuU>

Comparative summary of inclusivity and exclusivity

Tabel 10. Comparison Between The Two Ad

BRAND	INCLUSIVITY STRENGTH	EXCLUSIVITY STRENGTH	OVERALL SEMIOTIC TENDENCY
American Eagle	Minimal	Strong (hereditary, racialized beauty, celebrity centralization)	Exclusivity dominant
GAP	Moderate-High	Present (normative beauty standards, subtle hierarchy)	Inclusivity within certain limits

DISCUSSIONS

The analysis shows that both advertisements present ideas of inclusivity and exclusivity in different ways. Although both ads promote

denim products they also communicate identity and beauty using different strategies. Using the semiotic framework of Charles Sanders Peirce, the relationship between object, representamen, and interpretant helps explain how visual and verbal signs guide how audiences understand the ideology from each advertisement.

The advertisement by American Eagle featuring Sydney Sweeney focuses mainly on a single individual who represents conventional beauty traits such as fair skin, blonde hair, and blue eyes. The advertisement uses the wordplay "genes" and "jeans" to connect appearance with inherited traits. In this case, genetics acts as the object, the dialogue and visual focus on Sweeney become the representamen, and the interpretant leads viewers to associate beauty with natural inheritance. The strong focus on a celebrity figure also strengthens this exclusivity. By placing Sweeney at the center of the ad, the advertisement connects the product with a specific beauty ideal. Her appearance becomes a symbolic sign that represents desirability. The repeated attention to her physical traits, supported by a confident narration, reinforces traditional beauty standards. This construction creates an exclusive message because it presents one type of appearance as the ideal standard. Even though genetics is something shared by everyone, the advertisement visually limits this idea to one dominant identity. As a result, other identities are mostly absent, which reduce authentic representation and intersectionality.

The advertisement by GAP featuring the international girl group KATSEYE presents a more visibly inclusive image. The advertisement shows performers from different ethnic backgrounds and personal styles. Their synchronized choreography highlights unity, while each member still expresses her own identity. In semiotic terms, denim acts as the central object that connects performers, the choreography, and interaction become the representamen, and the interpretant suggest togetherness and shared belonging. However, the analysis also shows that exclusivity still appears within this inclusive message. Although the performers represent diversity, most of them still follow common beauty standards such as youthfulness, slim body, and conventional attractiveness. This means the diversity shown in

the ad still fits within beauty ideals.

These findings also show that inclusivity and exclusivity can coexist in advertisement. The GAP ad does highlight diversity through multicultural casting and collective individuality, however, the ad still relies on certain traditional beauty standards to maintain an aspirational image.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the semiotic relationship between object, representamen, and interpretant functions as the primary mechanism through which meanings of inclusivity and exclusivity are constructed in advertisement. In the advertisement by American Eagle featuring Sydney Sweeney, the visual emphasis on a white celebrity with blonde hair and blue eyes, combined with the “genes/jeans” wordplay, produces an interpretant that frames beauty and desirability as natural, inherited, and implicitly aligned with Eurocentric standards. In contrast, the advertisement by GAP featuring KATSEYE constructs inclusivity through diverse performers, synchronized choreography, and collective styling that symbolically connects different identities through denim. However, the analysis also indicates that this inclusivity remains situated within dominant commercial beauty ideals. Overall, the findings demonstrate that inclusivity and exclusivity do not function as opposing categories but coexist as interconnected representational strategies in advertisement. Future research may expand this analysis by examining a larger range of advertisements or exploring how mass audiences interpret these symbolic representations across different cultural contexts.

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