

Advertising, diversity statements, and the portrayal of inclusiveness

A comparative analysis of luxury and fast fashion brands

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Master's Thesis

June 2021

Preface

Writing a thesis is a journey unlike any other. It teaches and enhances resilience, perspective, creativity, scrutiny, self-criticism, and passion for a specific topic. Most importantly, a thesis is a process of academic, professional, and personal development. My thesis journey has been a tough but instructive one, where I have learned many lessons that I can apply to multiple areas of my life. I want to thank the people that have made this journey possible and have contributed, in some way, to make it the unique journey that it was. Firstly, I want to thank my supervisor Ini for her support throughout these months and her critical, constructive, and precise feedback, which each time has pushed me to think - and re-think - deeper about my topic and helped me connect the dots. Then, I want to thank my team at Heineken for supporting and enabling me to complete the thesis and my best friend Ludovica for being always there for me, no matter the circumstances. Thank you to my university friends Celine, Florence, Floor, Giulia, and Rubina, whom they had been crucial support during the whole academic year and whom I hope to be calling friends for many years onwards. And last but not least, thanks to my family because if it was not for them, enabling me through the years and believing in me from afar, none of this would have been possible.

Shaping a better world: Exploring fashion brands communication through the inclusion and diversity lens

ABSTRACT

This study has touched upon inclusive representation in visual and textual communication, focusing on luxury fashion brands and fast fashion brands. Since the death of George Floyd in 2020 and the global protests against systemic racism that followed, societies are moving towards a more inclusive reality. After that, inclusion and diversity have increased in relevance, and as a result, companies are appointing Chief Diversity Officers, releasing statements, and outlining inclusion and diversity strategies. Fashion brands are not excluded from addressing inclusion and diversity. In the past, fashion brands have received extensive backlash due to narrow beauty standards portrayal, little to no diversity in ethnicities representation both visually and in the organisations themselves. Therefore, they should increase their inclusive visual representation and address inclusion and diversity at an organisational level. Thus, the main research question explored in this study was *How are fashion brands representing inclusivity in their brand communication?* and an industry comparison between fast fashion brands and luxury fashion brands was conducted. The most appropriate methodology for this study was thematic analysis, which, due to its flexibility, was suitable to adapt to a cross-comparison of visual and textual data. The framework of image analysis was also applied to gain a deeper understanding of inclusive visual communication. The main findings highlighted how fashion brands visually tackle inclusion and diversity by depicting more ethnicities, communicating a sense of community, and fostering freedom of expression. However, representations of different body types lacked in fast fashion and luxury fashion brands, mainly representing the idealised body type that fashion has maintained throughout the years. Diversity statements presented one main common pattern: employees' empowerment. Luxury fashion brands were less vocal about inclusion and diversity than fast fashion brands. The main conclusion of this research is that fashion brands are making an effort towards becoming more inclusive in their brand communication. However, if they want to avoid further backlash and criticism from new generations of consumers, they need to have thought-out inclusion and diversity strategies and improve their inclusive visual communication.

KEYWORDS: *inclusive representation, inclusion and diversity, advertising, diversity statements, fashion brands*

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1. Introduction

“Societies that are inclusive are societies that make room for the social recognition of a variety of groups. They are societies that sustain competing definitions of a worthy life and a worthy person, which empower low-status groups to contest stereotypes and measure their worth independently of dominant social matrices.” (Lamont, 2009, p. 151)

In 2020, the death of George Floyd had led to an outbreak of protests all over the globe. It was a pivotal moment that shed light on a collective lack of inclusion and diversity in societies (Roberson, 2020; Thelwall & Thelwall, 2021). From then on, multiple businesses and organisations had released statements on the importance of inclusion and diversity, promising support to tackle these issues by creating more inclusive work environments, establishing Chief Diversity Officers, and developing inclusion and diversity strategies (Roberson, 2020). In addition, a richer body of studies has started to address inclusion and diversity and how society can change accordingly in various areas such as academia, education, science, business, medicine, and artificial intelligence (Ng & Lam, 2021; Sutton et al., 2021; Pourret et al., 2021; Guglielmo et al., 2021; Higgins, 2021; Denny & Collins, 2021). Due to the increasing relevance of inclusion and diversity, as part of a broader societal framework, brands have the responsibility to reflect ever-changing societal values and represent these in their communication (Owen & Chandler, 2002). However, research on marketing communication have underlined that marketers create and maintain notions on how identities should be constructed and accepted by society, leaving out a growing number of consumers who do not fit conventional representations – e.g., non-binary individuals, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, the poor (Boyd et al., 2020; Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005; Licsandru & Cui, 2018; Kuppelwieser & Klaus, 2020).

Moreover, brand communication has to shift towards a more inclusive and diverse reality, which considers various ethnicities, gender identities, religions, ages, and sexual orientations (Boyd et al., 2020). The concept of inclusivity entails a people’s feeling of belonging to a society where they feel “accepted, empowered, respected and fully recognised as equal members” (Licsandru & Cui, 2018, p. 332). Since brands are considered mirrors of societies (Owen & Chandler, 2002), it is imperative for them to address inclusion matters on their external communication while dealing with inclusion at their organisational core. In other words, due to the nature of brands as cultural meaning systems (Owen & Chandler, 2002), inclusivity must be represented in visual communication such as advertising and must be addressed at an organisational level. Brands adopting a more inclusive marketing approach are able to establish deeper significant connections with their consumers and influence positive conversations, leading to societal change (Gazzola et

al., 2020). They also make an effort to remain relevant for the new generations of consumers, who are increasingly holding accountable brands and organisations in every market (Gazzola et al., 2020). Examples of brands that are trying to resonate with new generations through their marketing communication are Nike, Ben & Jerry, and Patagonia, which take a stand in challenging racial, gender, and cultural norms (Waymer & Logan, 2021, Vredenburg et al., 2020; Yoo et al., 2021).

In addition, corporate social responsibility and inclusivity agendas have become more prominent for organisations, putting pressure on brands to align their values to the changes in society (Chandler, 2020; Craddock et al., 2019). Corporate social responsibility places businesses as a crucial part of society, putting forward matters such as “environmental issues, eradication of poverty, employment creation and labour practices, environmental protection, education and human development” (Khan et al., 2012, p. 41). Organisations strategically communicate it to stakeholders with various approaches and, when taking into account inclusion and diversity, companies forge diversity statements that specifically tackle these concepts (Manoharan et al., 2021). Diversity statements are directed to internal and external stakeholders and include discourses and images on ethnically and gender-diverse employees, awards on inclusion and diversity won by the organisations, statistics, and outlines of the inclusion strategies (Manoharan et al., 2021). Moreover, diversity statements are a powerful tool that contributes to socially construct diversity at an organisational level while, at the same time, being communicated to external stakeholders, setting the standards on inclusion and diversity for businesses. Additionally, diversity statements are proven to foster a better reputation and climate with stakeholders (Manoharan et al., 2021).

Fashion brands are not excluded from addressing inclusion and diversity in their communication, and throughout the years, they had received backlash on many occasions for not being sufficiently inclusive (Lewis, 2019; Gerrie, 2019). Fashion is “considered to be a powerful form of social and political critiques, which reflect societal changes” (Lai & Perminiene, 2020, p. 685), which gives relevance in exploring whether fashion brands have moved towards a more inclusive and diverse way of communicating. In recent years, there has been a shift from unachievable beauty standards, which have been the dominant narrative of the fashion industry for decades, to a more imperfect, authentic idea of beauty (Lai & Perminiene, 2020). Additionally, perception towards fashion brands has gradually changed thanks to the ability that the Internet created to break down hierarchies. The Internet has enabled passive consumers to be able to hold accountable, via platforms such as Instagram, fashion brands on many aspects of their businesses – e.g., fashion products, how they communicate to their audience and unfair working conditions such as sweatshops (Gerrie, 2019; Rashid & Chattaraman, 2019). For instance, the 2018 H&M campaign, which included a dark-skinned kid wearing a “Coolest Monkey in the Jungle” jumper,

speaks for itself as racist and insensitive (Kuntala et al., 2021). Another recent example is Gucci's "balaclava" knit. It was a jumper launched in their autumn/winter 2018 collection which the public perceived as racist as it resembled the mocking stereotype of the "blackface" of the minstrel show, which in the 19th century was a form of American racist entertainment (Ferrier, 2019; Kohrs, 2020). Gucci has publicly apologised, explaining the importance that inclusion and diversity have for the company and that since then, they integrated a more inclusive approach into every decision the firm made by also committing to create a more diverse team (Ferrier, 2019). In 2018, Dolce & Gabbana received allegations of racism and racial stereotyping after a promotional video was released prior to a fashion show in Shanghai (Ferrier, 2018). The video depicted a Chinese model trying to eat Italian food such as pizza and cannoli with chopsticks, which was associated with the trivialisation of Chinese culture. Although fashion brands appear to be not inclusive in their visual communication, the topic has had little to no attention from academics, which makes this study a valuable addition to research on fashion brand communication and inclusion and diversity. So far, the research available on inclusive advertising is limited to the representation of gender or individuals with disabilities (Boyd et al., 2020; Murto, 2020; Kuppelwieser & Klaus, 2020).

Therefore, to gain a thorough understanding of brand communication and inclusivity, this study provides an account of where fashion brands stand when elements of inclusion and diversity are analysed both at a visual and textual level. Thus, this paper explores both advertisements and diversity statements communication. This creative approach can foster understanding of whether brands are consistent in their visual communication while pushing specific textual narratives forwards on inclusion and diversity in their diversity statements. The relevance for fashion brands to understand the impact that fairly addressing inclusion and diversity can have on their businesses is crucial not only due to the globally amplified discourse on inclusion and diversity, but it is also a topic close to new generations such as Millennials and Gen Z. The two new generations will be the consumers with the most buying power as close as 2025 and brands are increasingly aware that new generations choose brands with values in line with theirs rather than solely buying products (Gazzola et al., 2020).

Lastly, the fact that the fashion world has been facing criticism because of lack of inclusivity (Lewis, 2019; Gerrie, 2019), the comparison between fast fashion and luxury fashion brands can give insights into possible existing differences or similarities between the two markets. Thus, to thoroughly explore the aforementioned topics, the following research question: *How are fashion brands representing inclusivity in their brand communication?* To gain a deeper understanding of the chosen topic, the main research question was broken down into sub-questions that separately look at advertisements and diversity statements. Specifically, these questions are:

sub-question 1 *How are fashion brands representing inclusivity in their advertisements?* and sub-question 2 *How are fashion brands representing inclusivity in their diversity statements?*

Additionally, it is crucial to understand how advertisements and diversity statements: *How does representation of inclusiveness match in fashion brands' advertisements and diversity statements?*

To conclude, this research is divided into the following sections. Firstly, to frame this study from a theoretical perspective, a chosen theory and other concepts will be introduced. The analytics of cultural practice is the chosen theoretical framework for this study, which helps understanding the cultural relevance of marketing. An in-depth development of the framework will illustrate concepts such as inclusion and diversity in advertising, gendered roles, and the marketing of diversity statements. Additional sub-questions will be introduced as they help compare fast fashion brands and luxury fashion brands, to understand similarities and differences between the industries.

Furthermore, in the following section, the research design will be illustrated. Since this study focused on how brands are forging their visual and written communication through advertisements and diversity statements, looking to identify patterns in the data to draw conclusions, the suitable research method is thematic analysis. The findings will be then introduced, followed by a discussion that holistically answers the main research question. Lastly, the study implications, alongside limitations and future research, will be discussed.

2. Theory

Chapter overview

This chapter presents the theoretical framework used in this study, which is the analytics of cultural practice framework, followed by a development of the framework that explains different concepts relevant to this research topic. The development of the framework includes explanations of marketing and racism and the reputation that fashion brands have of generally not being inclusive, the body positivity movement in advertising, an explanation of what woke washing is, the framework of image analysis and its four lenses, and finally diversity statements communication. Lastly, since this study aims to compare the fast fashion industry and luxury fashion industry to understand whether there were differences or similarities in their visual communication and diversity statements, additional sub-questions will be organically introduced throughout the chapter.

2.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework chosen to frame this study is the analytics of cultural practice framework developed by Moisander and Valtonen (2006). The analytics of cultural practice framework is an approach to study cultural marketing. This framework highlights a rising academic interest in studying the market environment due its cultural complexity increased by globalisation (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). In addition to that, brands are nowadays considered one of the most crucial phenomena of consumer society, perceived by researchers as dynamic entities (Owen & Chandler, 2002; Krishna, 2019). Due to globalisation and the velocity in which cultures are changing and adapting, defining what brands are and how they act when relating to their audiences is of greater relevance (Krishna, 2019). The analytics of cultural practice framework makes an effort to understand consumer actions influenced by social contexts, assuming that individuals live in a culturally compromised world where the negotiations of meaning happen in the market. It serves as a lens to closely look at “how social reality and social order are produced, maintained, contested, negotiated, and transformed in the market” (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 7), which is what the main research question of this study is looking to explore. In other words, understanding how fashion brands create their communication cannot be analysed without taking into account that brands operate in a social reality where meaning is constantly created and negotiated.

Moreover, brands can be described as meaning systems. In addition, they are considered larger entities rather than solely representing the products they sell, co-creating meaning with consumers (Krishna, 2019), which highlights the importance that communication by brands is properly reflecting what is happening in societies. Consumer culture has seen a shift from brands focusing on selling functional services or the latest technology to brands creating a thoughtful connection with culture invoking “powerful cultural narratives and myths, citing culturally shared

meanings, norms and values, and thus give people a sense of structure and security in their life” (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 5). For instance, Nike’s source of value is not any longer the end product but the production and appropriation of meanings. Advertising is strictly linked to the creation of cultural meaning since it produces sign values. The value of advertising content production is seen in, for example, Nike’s copious annual budget for the department (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). Commercial symbols created by brands and put out in the world with advertising aspire to create cultural meanings that present or provoke the consumers by making them confront topics they have to deal with in real life (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). To take Nike’s communication as an example, the brand deals with crucial issues such as inequality, race, and gender and aims directly at making the consumers think about this variety of topics and change their view on them (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006).

Advertising is usually designed to be aligned with the audience's values, passing on cultural values and meaning, which usually follows the dominant cultural values in societies (Czarnecka et al., 2017). The authors also explain the relevance of studying advertising due to its influential nature and its ability to have societal impacts. Attention was put on this aspect during the data analysis to understand which of the dominant cultural values it was possible to identify in the advertisements. Narrowing down the attention on defining culture, in the framework by Moisander and Valtonen (2006), culture is “the systems of representation through which people make sense of their everyday life” (p. 8). Culture is neither a fixed concept nor an objectified idea, but mainly produced, developed, and negotiated during everyday social interactions amongst individuals and is nowadays produced by actors such as capitalism, creating and shaping a consumer society. Marketing aids the creation of meanings and practices which are transformed and negotiated in the market by representing these meanings in images, written words, and talk (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006; Batra, 2019; Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005; Lai & Perminiene, 2020).

In other words, marketers create meanings with images that tell specific stories attached to brands and their products, resulting in them being in the middle of cultural negotiation. Although marketers and advertisers can be considered cultural mediators and help shape consumer’s needs by bringing them in line with brands’ strategies, they do not always succeed due to a lack of understanding of their target audience (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006; Czarnecka et al., 2017). This approach to cultural marketing is relevant since it helps brands and marketers to understand the cultural complexity that marketplaces entail and helps to give a perspective on the role they have in shaping meaning and addressing specific cultural narratives. It can also help create a more customer-oriented marketing strategy more in line with what the target audience wants to see. In fact, Millennials and Generation Z will shortly be the most powerful consumers (Gazzola et al.,

2020). These generations are increasingly holding brands accountable for various reasons, such as not being inclusive enough in their visual communication or at their organisational level, not addressing climate change and other topics that are close to them (Gazzola et al., 2020). Thus, it is crucial for fashion brands, if they want to stay relevant for future generations of consumers, to align their communication to reflect a more inclusive reality.

Lastly, the analytics of cultural practice makes an effort to study marketplace phenomena following an approach which is the “ethnomethodologically informed analysis of every discursive practice” (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006, p. 4). This approach considers social reality as being constructed by the institutional and cultural structure in place, which helped understand which narratives fashion brands prefer. Moreover, this type of analysis focuses on how individuals, in this case, marketers, use existing cultural representations that ultimately helps the audience make sense of their lives and reflect the achieved social order. It highlights how culture is negotiated by people and not imposed since people produce it during social interactions (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). Therefore, with the help of this theoretical framework, the focus was put on the narratives presented in the brands’ communication and how they communicate inclusion and diversity elements both at a visual level - through advertisements - and at a written level - diversity statements.

2.2 Development of the framework

2.2.1 Inclusion and diversity in the fashion industry

The fashion retail market can be divided into two main sectors: the luxury and fast fashion markets (Teona et al., 2019). The two markets have differences and sell different products, having significantly divergent marketing strategies (Teona et al., 2019). On the one hand, the luxury fashion industry is focused on selling high-quality garments that are exclusive, expensive, and praise craftsmanship. The luxury-brand strategies are known to bring to the viewers “sensory experiences through a social mystique and aura” (Teona et al., 2019, p. 861). On the other hand, the fast fashion industry is known to encourage quick responses to current fashion trends by providing ever changing product selections and valuing short cycles of fashion products. Since the two industries are highly criticised due to their unsustainable practices that are contributing to climate change, they have made efforts towards developing customer social responsibility practices (Colucci et al., 2020). An example is including green advertisements in their marketing strategies to tackle sustainability matters and persuade consumers to associate the brands with positive environmental messages (Teona et al., 2019; Gazzola et al., 2020; Colucci et al., 2020).

Another practice of interest for this study is gender roles stereotyping. Moreover, although there is not much research specifically on gender stereotyping and fashion industry visual

communication, gender roles in advertising has been studied abundantly, specifically how visual communication maintain sets of belief about specific groups such as male and female (Åkestam et al., 2021; Aramedia-Muneta et al., 2019). The study conducted by Åkestam et al. (2021) highlights how gender stereotyping in marketing, specifically related to physical characteristics, has a negative impact on both women and men, while the study by Aramedia-Muneta et al. (2019) illustrates how, in a study conducted on 354 advertisements, women and men are increasingly being portrayed in a more egalitarian manner. Another way in which fashion advertising tries to portray a more inclusive reality is by depicting tattoos. The portrayal of tattoos is associated with a shift in perception, which happened thanks to media representation. In the 20th century, tattoos and street culture were associated mainly with lower income groups, and nowadays, tattoos are part of pop culture and increasingly represented on social media platforms such as Instagram (Burns, 2019). They are highly relevant amongst younger generations thus, fashion brands have made an effort not to exclude their representation from their visual communication (Force, 2020; Burns, 2019).

Indeed, when marketers exclude consumers from the target audience, this can have various impacts on people's identities, such as affecting self-esteem and self-perceptions. Motivated by the sharp rise of ethnic minorities' buying power and numerical relevance, many famous brands such as Coca-Cola and L'Oréal have tried to approach inclusive marketing by giving a voice to the most excluded amongst their audiences in their branded communication (Licsandru & Cui, 2018). According to Boyd et al. (2020), recognising diversity within the fashion industry is a sound ambition since brands can play a crucial role in diffusing these concepts through mainstream consumer society. However, the lack of diversity in the fashion industry, spaces from campaigns to catwalks and is found within the organisations themselves (Craddock et al., 2019; Kennedy, 2020). An example of this lack of diversity of race and body size representations is in the study conducted by Kennedy (2020). The study examined Instagram brand communication of two fast fashion lingerie brands: Aerie and Victoria's Secret. Particularly, Victoria's Secret results were found to be discriminative towards races and body types: In a total of 54 models analysed, 55,5% of the models were white and 88,9% of the models were mainly thin. Interestingly, although Victoria's Secret has mainly been a brand showcasing idealised body types – e.g., extremely skinny or athletic, tall, and young - recently the brand attempted to shift their communication and overall concept and values. The change consists of selecting a more inclusive cast of models, where the selected women are famous due to their achievements and not solely on the way they look (Maheshwari & Friedman, 2021). This is an example of how fashion brands embrace a more inclusive strategy, especially when they have received backlash in the past.

Furthermore, the history of marketing and racism in the Western world goes back to 100 years (Davis, 2017). Precisely, visual communication such as images or videos conveys meaning to individuals, being a crucial lens in shaping social ideals and beliefs towards others and foreign cultures (Davis, 2017). Moreover, visual communication also influences children in forming perceptions and beliefs on others and society enabling systemic racism to continue to perpetuate. Systemic racism occurs when regular individuals living in societies maintain and reproduce the racialised order (Bonilla-Silva, 2021). Systemic racism is rooted in everyday lives, and it is complex to address and dismantle because it is embedded in people's everyday behaviour (Bonilla-Silva, 2021). As Davis (2017) explains, it is crucial to analyse whether brand communication can be considered inclusive due to the influence of marketing as a tool on public opinion. This happens when communicating dominant narratives through marketing practices such as advertising that foster the preservation of existing power structures that are biased towards races (Davis, 2017; Bonilla-Silva, 2021). The societal power is in the hand of a dominant group and if the marketing discourse does not adapt to accommodate a more inclusive society, it will solely contribute to the preservation of racial hierarchies (Bonilla-Silva, 2021; Tadajewski, 2012).

Moreover, the media can be considered a crucial player in socialisation and meaning creation in various scopes such as political, cultural, economic, psychological, and social realms (Davis, 2017). Citizens of all backgrounds are exposed to messages that media representations and imagery convey; thus, these messages conveyed through marketing can be internalised as part of their identity construction and evolution. Research proves that marketing practices such as advertising are powerful in spreading racist and sexist ideologies and easily accessible when compared to the accessibility of art or literature narratives (Davis, 2017). The other crucial matter is that aspects of racism in marketing tend to go unnoticed because they are systematically rooted at the core of marketing organisational cultures and rooted at the core structure of society (Davis, 2017; Bonilla-Silva, 2021; Tadajewski, 2012).

To conclude, studies have proven that the fashion industry is making efforts towards corporate social responsibilities such as tackling green communication in their marketing strategies (Teona et al., 2019; Gazzola et al., 2020). However, it is crucial to investigate whether they are addressing inclusive representations in their advertisements too. To further understand the chosen topic of research, the main research question was broken down into sub-questions. The first sub-question, *How are fashion brands representing inclusivity in their advertisements?* was broken down into an additional sub-question to make a comparison between the two markets. Therefore, sub-question 4 was also addressed: *How is inclusivity represented in luxury fashion brands advertisements compared to fast fashion brands advertisements?*

2.2.2 Fashion industry, beauty standards, and advertising

In the fashion industry, the European beauty standards are still mostly represented as Caucasian - light-coloured eyes, white skin, and straight hair. These beauty standards have been the leading standards for decades which further highlights how the industry has clearly had a lack of inclusive representation, systematically excluding any other type of individuals that would not comply them (Craddock et al., 2019; Omar, 2020). The fashion industry, alongside the media, has been the gatekeepers of the beauty standards, which, through images such as in advertising, result in the viewer wanting to identify with what it is being depicted (Lai & Perminiene, 2020; Johnson-Hunt, 2020). In fact, there is extensive research on how fashion brands' advertising is associated with low self-esteem and dissatisfaction due to the unrealistic beauty standards that the brands choose to depict in their visual communication (Lai & Perminiene, 2020; Azhaar et al., 2020). To clarify further, the dominant beauty standards in the Western fashion industry are focused on unachievable perfection, such as “deodorised, cosmeticized, slimmed, youthful, and urban women” (Lai & Perminiene, 2020, p. 687). However, in more recent years, the Internet has given more power to consumers, particularly the younger generations, to challenge brands and start rethinking beauty standards, moving more towards imperfection which encompasses authenticity, self-awareness, individuality, and freedom (Lai & Perminiene, 2020). An example of this is a shift towards more acceptance of female body hair, which has had a negative connotation as opposed to the idealised female beauty standards of perfect, smooth, and unaltered appearance (Toerien & Wilkinson, 2003).

Proof that a shift towards a more inclusive visual communication is in place is the rise of movements like the body positivity movement. The body positivity movement is among the dimensions taken into account when analysing the advertisements in particular. This movement has promoted acceptance for different body types, including those bodies that belong to socially dominant groups (Mehdi & Frazier, 2021). The movement enhances society to discern and accept a variety of body types and reflects on the commercialisation of beauty in response to the constant promotion of unrealistic and unattainable body types and appearance put forward by both the fashion industry and the media (Mehdi & Frazier, 2021; Cohen et al., 2020; Johnson-Hunt, 2020). The outcome is to demolish the prejudices present in societies to discriminate against body types that are not similar to the ideal standards of beauty that fashion has been dictating for decades (Mehdi & Frazier, 2021). It helps challenge collective knowledge about bodies, health, and shame (Mehdi & Frazier, 2021). The movement has received criticism and support in the general pop-cultural discourse and continues to challenge social constructs of beauty, especially on the social

media platform Instagram (Cohen et al., 2020). The spreading of pictures of Instagram accompanied by various hashtags such as #healthyeverysize, #effyourbeautystandards, and #fatspiration has helped convey messages of acceptance through fashion and activism, helping break the stereotypes (Cohen et al., 2020). Scholars have been putting the movement in context by exploring the theoretical construct of positive body image, conceptualising it as love and respect for one's body regardless if it fits in the stereotyped unrealistic beauty standards (Cohen et al., 2020; Mehdi & Frazier, 2021).

In recent years, fashion brands campaigns have increasingly represented different body types and focus on female empowerment. An example of one acclaimed campaign that represented the body positivity movement is the “Real Beauty” campaign by Dove, launched in 2004 (Drake, 2017). This campaign was created to start a global conversation on body image after a report called “The real truth about beauty: A global report” that disclosed that only 2% of women who participated in the survey considered themselves beautiful (Celebre & Waggoner Denton, 2014). Since then, fashion brands have been making an effort to move forward from representing specific unattainable body types to more understanding of the shift in women's representations in advertising (Drake, 2017). It is proven by the excitement transfer theory that emotion-based advertisements have success amongst audiences and that the emotional experience that can be linked to advertisements can foster a stronger bond between the target audience and the brand (Drake, 2017). This theory proves that whenever engagement towards an advertisement formed through emotional reactions is successful, this is a positive predictor of buying decisions. Therefore, brands are increasingly looking to create positive brand perceptions and form emotional attachment with their target audience by, for example, representing realistic body types and other non-stereotypical representations of people (Drake, 2017). For instance, the most effective advertisements amongst Millennials and Generation Z consumers are aspirational advertisements where there are emotive messages which can be described as “positive”, “empowering”, “inspirational” and are proven to be successful and setting the trend in contemporary marketing (Drake, 2017).

2.2.3 Woke washing in advertising

When brands make an effort to change their advertising narratives, there are questions whether this practice is genuinely thought-through or it can be classified as “woke washing” (Sobande, 2019). “Woke washing” entails when brands are communicating messages such as taking a stance on political or social issues while these stances are not aligned with “a brand's purpose, values, and corporate practice” (Vredenburg et al., 2020, p. 445). In fact, when brands try to align

with social justice matters, it is relevant to underline that, in a capitalist society, what is moral is strictly related to what has the most economic value, making brands risking to come across as not authentic when taking stances on socio-political issues (Sobande, 2019; Vredenburg et al., 2020). Research proves that consumers are willing to stop buying from a brand if the latter does not take a socio-political stance that they agree with (Sobande, 2019). However, brands need to be held accountable when they attempt to introduce specific narratives that touch upon societal issues or break stereotypes when their actions do not correspond with the representations in their advertisements (Sobande, 2019).

In other words, when looking at the representation of inclusiveness, brands can come across as not genuine when addressing this shift in representation because they have been criticised for having a narrow standard of, for instance, beauty standards (Lai & Perminiene). Moreover, an example of “woke washing” is the aforementioned “Real Beauty” campaign by Dove, which was linked to the “self-esteem project”, aiming to support the body positivity movement and breaking the stereotypes about body representations. The campaign failed as it was perceived by the audience as still representing idealised beauty standards, although it managed to move forward the conversation on the inclusiveness of more body types (McColl et al., 2021). In fact, messages of positivity related to LGBTQIA+ pride, inclusion and diversity, female empowerment, and climate change are widespread across all sort of markets (Kanai & Gill, 2020). Examples in the fashion industry of “woke washing” are the Twitter homepage of fast fashion brand ASOS saying “Unity, acceptance, equality”, the “Introducing Generation Fluid” slogan by the cosmetic company Maybelline, the “My Beauty, My Say” Dove’s slogan, and Chanel’s campaign saying “Forget foundation, choose confidence” (Kanai & Gill, 2020). The above mentioned are examples of how brands are trying to appeal to their consumers, also the ones that have been marginalised in the past, embedding corporate messages with such type of empowering statements and claims (Kanai & Gill, 2020).

2.2.4 Framework of image analysis

To further understand whether fashion brands are inclusive in their brand communication, a framework for image analysis and its four lenses - *face-ism*, *idealisation*, *exclusion*, and *exoticization* - (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005) were applied to analyse fashion brands’ advertisements. This framework was developed to shed light on marketing communications dimension appropriateness and aid in pinpointing ethical issues in visual representation. Borgerson and Schroeder (2005) do not imply that marketing communication is the root cause of cultural preconceptions in societies. However, they highlight that brands are responsible in representing

cultural conventions, hence reinforcing existing stereotyping. The framework of image analysis can make clear distinctions on ethical issues linked to representations of identity in advertising, by excluding marginalised groups and representing unrealistic life scenarios. In fact, marketing images have powerful, persuasive power and influence to maintain social hierarchies and dominant ideologies (Davis, 2017; Bonilla-Silva, 2021). Thanks to the rising of advertising literacy, especially fostered by the Internet and rising amongst younger generations (Naderer & Oprea, 2021), consumers can decipher the creation of media images; thus, they are becoming more aware and critical of advertisements. Therefore, the framework of image analysis is even more relevant in helping to gain an understanding the whether representations in fashion advertisements are changing and becoming more inclusive to align with a more aware and critical audience (Borgerson and Schroeder, 2005).

Borgerson and Schroeder's framework (2005) helps understanding issues of inclusiveness in marketing representation with its four lenses. These lenses study identity concerns of gender and race. First, face-ism is applied in multiple studies and refers to the representational bias in mass media regarding gender; Specifically, (mass) media tend to systematically portray men with more notable faces than women (Cheek, 2016; Prieler & Kohlbacher, 2017). Interestingly, the study on face-ism and gendered self-presentation in online dating sites by Prieler & Kohlbacher (2017) found how face-ism was not consistently found in pictures of people aged 25-41 years old although it was found in older age groups, suggesting that older users on dating apps follow more traditional gender stereotypes than younger users. Moreover, face-ism also has negative psychological consequences as studies have proven that images with less prominent faces were linked to less intelligence, less ambition, and less attractiveness regarding the sex of the people portrayed (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005; Cheek, 2016). Second, the idealisation lens points out how representations illustrate ideal types as being young, thin, fulfilling unattainable goals, or being in unrealistic scenarios (Rajendrah et al., 2017). As Rajendrah et al. (2017) illustrate, advertisers still portray beautiful, idealised people as more likely to receive social recognition by others and more positive life outcomes than less beautiful people. Mainly, as the case for face-ism, these idealised representations help construct meaning around female and male identity and can damage self-confidence and ideas of identity (Lai & Perminiene, 2020; Azhaar et al., 2020; Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005). In other words, idealisation is proven to be linked by studies to dissatisfaction in the self, which leads to psychological consequences, such as a lowered self-image.

Third, exoticisation explains the process of making someone appear exotic or in a different way which they are to call attention to certain characteristics – skin colour, dress, appearance, and other categories. An example is representation of cultural appropriation by Western culture while at

the same time undermining these represented groups' identities. For instance, tourist advertisements of Hawaiian people reflect the dominant cultural view of what is exotic according to Western culture, portraying them as less valuable and complex lives compared to Western people (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005). Another example of exoticisation is the study by Chan et al., (2020) which examines how martial arts is being culturally appropriated in advertising representations, underline how advertising continues to "exoticise" cultures, and create powerful stereotypical narratives that are difficult to dismantle.

Finally, exclusion looks at how specific categories of people, such as the poor, the disabled, or other under-represented individuals, are left out of marketing communication representations (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005). There has been an increase in companies being called out for lacking representation of minority groups throughout the years - e.g., Timberland, Tommy Hilfiger, and Abercrombie & Fitch (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005). The critique was mostly about how these consumers are excluded from the brand's identity and lack representation in the brands' advertisements, catalogue, or images on their websites, resulting in exclusion negatively affecting the under-represented groups of individuals. In recent years, marketing representation of marginalised groups has improved. However, there have been critiques on how this has been done. For example, Benetton's cultural inclusion approach has been under fire for preserving stereotypes of difference and exclusion rather than including marginalised groups (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005).

2.2.5 Diversity statements communication

In recent years organisations have shifted their focus on creating meanings through advertising, marketing, and public relations (Özoran, 2020). One of the tools that organisations use to create meaning is storytelling, which makes use of emotions and creates a sense of belonging for consumers to identify with (König, 2020). As illustrated by König (2020), storytelling is a relevant tool for brand communication, mostly because marketing is not longer focused on selling the latest technology or an innovative product, but more on selling stories to their audience. Storytelling is crucial to successful brand communication, both in textual and visual communication (König, 2020). Companies use either mission statements, diversity statements, or manifestos to appeal to consumers' emotions since people generally buy products because they recognise themselves with the meaning attached to a company (Özoran, 2020; Jung et al., 2020). Moreover, diversity statements touch upon inclusion outlining the beliefs and goals for diversity within an organisation (Taylor et al., 2019). These statements aim is to articulate the direction and purpose that organisations are following. Nowadays, companies are called to become inclusive workplaces that

consider “individual differences, needs and perceptions as well as focus on creating structures, systems, and processes that make people feel valued and treated equitably” (Smith, 2020, p. 596).

Companies have various forms to promote diversity including images of ethnically diverse employees, talking about awards won, and diversity statistics (Manoharan, 2021). Moreover, diversity statements are crucial tools for both external and internal communication and are used to communicate corporate messages about their ethical and social responsibility to their stakeholders. Diversity statements are pivotal in the social construction of diversity within an organisation and in society at large because they explicate how companies manage diversity in the business world (Manoharan, 2021). In a study on 241 European companies, 131 firms explained how they managed diversity and equal opportunities and how diversity statements gave back a better reputation and a stronger relationship with their stakeholders (Manoharan, 2021).

Nowadays, inclusion and diversity have acquired a crucial meaning since they indicate organisations that drive progress in the market (Dixon-Fyle et al., 2021). In fact, it is proven by research that financial performance and diversity in executive teams are intertwined. For instance, as research from Dixon-Fyle et al., (2021) highlight, organisations with more than 30 percent women in the executive teams were able to outperform organisations that ranged from 10 to 30 percent. However, the same research explains how companies that are higher in ethnic diversity have outperformed even more other companies. For instance, bottom-quartile companies were outperformed by 36% in profitability. Another relevant number in the research is how organisations in the data sample respectively from the UK and the US, in 2019 more than one third of these companies have no women in their executive teams and representations of ethnic minorities remained at 13%, which is a slight improvement from the 7% in 2014. The lack of progress can be unified to all markets and in every country, making it slow but crucial progress that organisations are pursuing (Dixon-Fyle et al., 2021).

Although this study focused on brand communication to external stakeholders, it is crucial to define what inclusion and diversity entail at an organisational level. An inclusive workplace is a place where employees can collaborate and are supportive of each other, removing barriers such as discrimination and intolerance (Mondal, 2021). Furthermore, diversity entails accepting differences in races, ethnicities, ages, religions, disabilities, genders, and sexual orientations. A report by Deloitte explains how Millennials perceive diversity as one of the major driving forces of innovation in comparison to their counterparts Gen Xers and Baby Boomers do not associate diversity as a driving contributor for a successful business (Smith, 2015). The generational change and the connection with business performance make inclusion and diversity pivotal to analyse. In

this research, attention to how organisations communicate their inclusion and diversity mission on their public channel was one of the leading focuses.

In conclusion, sub-question 2: *How are fashion brands representing inclusivity in their diversity statements?* is broken down to sub-question 5: *How is inclusivity represented in luxury fashion brands diversity statements compared to fast fashion brands diversity statements?* to gain a deeper understanding of how brands are addressing inclusion and diversity in their diversity statements.

2.3 Summary

This chapter has introduced the theoretical framework chosen for this study, the analytics of cultural practice framework outlined by Moisander and Valtonen (2006), elaborated on the existing literature and concepts related to this study such as inclusion and diversity in the fashion industry, fashion industry beauty standards, the body positivity movement, woke washing, the framework of image of analysis and finally diversity statements. Further sub-questions were presented to delve deeper into the topic of study. The research aimed to make a comparison between brand communication of fast fashion industry and the luxury thus sub-question 6 and 7 were also addressed: *How are luxury fashion brands compared to fast fashion brands fulfilling their promises of inclusivity?* and: *How are fast fashion brands compared to luxury fashion brands fulfilling their promises of inclusivity?*

3. Research design

3.1 Method

To thoroughly answer the main research question and sub-questions, a qualitative content analysis of advertisements and diversity statements will be conducted. Qualitative research is the most suitable method to socially constructed meanings and considers the world not to be “the fixed, single, agreed upon, or measurable phenomenon that it is assumed to be in positivist, quantitative research” (Merriam, 2002, p.3). It provides tools for interpretation of ever-changing reality. The research questions presented in this study make an effort to examine representations in advertisements and diversity statements using an inclusion lens, which can be described as an interpretation of socially constructed reality (Merriam, 2002). Additionally, qualitative methods ensure flexibility in all the steps of the study: data collection, analysis, and ultimately the interpretation of the results (Manoharan et al., 2021), which is crucial to this research analysing a selection of visual and written data.

Thematic analysis is the chosen, most suitable method to explore the main research question and sub-questions. The method was selected over other qualitative methods due to its flexibility and capacity to highlight patterns of meaning by identifying, analysing and reporting relevant themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In other words, thematic analysis is also described as a categorising strategy that reduces data into segments, then categorises, summarises, and reconstructs the data in an effort to highlight relevant concepts and ideas (Flick, 2017). Furthermore, this study’s focus was to understand how fashion brands communicate inclusion and diversity visually - advertisements - and in a written form - diversity statements, and thematic analysis provides an efficient tool to find patterns in data sets. To successfully approach the two divergent corpus of data - visual and written - thematic analysis offered greater flexibility during the analysis process compared to other methods.

3.1.1 Analysis strategy

The method offers both a deductive approach - or “top down” way - and an inductive approach - or “bottom up” (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This study was mainly categorised as inductive since the themes that emerged are strongly linked to the data, especially in the case of the diversity statement analysis. However, the advertisements were also analysed with the help of the framework of image analysis, specifically its four lenses: face-ism, idealisation, exoticisation, and exclusion. This makes the method partially deductive as well. Finally, thanks to thematic analysis, deriving main themes from visual and written data sets helped during the comparison process needed to answer some of the sub-questions.

Moreover, Braun and Clarke (2006) provide a checklist of criteria to ensure that researchers are conducting a meaningful thematic analysis, which is: Familiarising with the data - noting down initial ideas, watching advertisements multiple times, re-reading diversity statements, generating codes - coding relevant features in a systematic manner which provides consistency to the overall analysis, searching for sub-themes and then main themes - merging similar themes together and gathering all codes under main themes, reviewing themes - ensuring the main themes make sense related to the whole data set, defining and naming themes - making sense of the story behind the data and that the main themes represent it correctly, and finally producing the report - selecting relevant extracts and examples of specific advertisements and diversity statements to narrate the analysis process while relating to the research questions and the concepts explicated in Chapter 2. These steps were followed during the analysis which ensured rigor and consistency to produce sensible results.

3.2 Sample

3.2.1 Brands selection

To gain an understanding of which were the most relevant brands to take into account for this research, various sources were consulted. Firstly, to determine which luxury fashion brands are the most relevant in 2021, three fashion news outlets were consulted: Luxe, Manofmany, Vogue, and FashionUnited. The 10 brands chosen for this research were: Prada, Gucci, Valentino, Louis Vuitton, Fedi, Burberry, Chanel, Armani, Yves Saint Laurent, and Versace. The list of brands was a combination of the three aforementioned sources. For instance, Luxe (Beuloye, 2021) has a list of the most popular luxury brands online in 2021: Gucci as the most popular luxury fashion brand online, followed by Chanel. In the list, Louis Vuitton, Prada, Versace, Armani, Valentino, and Burberry are also present.

On the other hand, Manofmany (Hall, 2020) pinpoints the 10 most valuable luxury brands for 2020, with Gucci in second place, Louis Vuitton in third place, and Chanel in fifth place. Vogue (Bennett, 2021) proclaimed the most-searched brands of 2021 and those include Gucci, Prada, Louis Vuitton, and Yves Saint Laurent. The FashionUnited Index (FashionUnited, 2020) created a list of the most influential fashion brands of 2020 by brand value. On a global scale of 100 brands which includes also fast fashion brands, Louis Vuitton is second, Gucci is fourth, Chanel is thirteenth, Prada is sixteenth, Burberry is twentieth, Armani is fiftieth, Fendi is fifty-second, and Valentino is eighty-fourth.

The Index takes into account fast fashion brands and was used to choose 10 fast fashion brands for this study. The chosen brands were: Mango, Esprit, H&M, Zara, UNIQLO, GAP, Tommy

Hilfiger, Ralph Lauren, Victoria's Secret, and Bershka. Linking back to the FashionUnited Index (FashionUnited, 2020), Zara is at the eighth place, H&M is at ninth place, Ralph Lauren twenty-first, UNIQLO seventeenth, Victoria's Secret twenty-fifth, GAP sixty sixth, and Tommy Hilfiger seventy-fifth. Markhor Venture's list of most powerful fast fashion brands in the world (Markhor Ventures, 2020) sees Inditex at the first place - Inditex includes brands such as Zara and Bershka, Fast Retailing at the second place - which includes UNIQLO, H&M at the third place, followed by GAP, then L Brands at the fifth place - which includes Victoria's Secret, PVH at the sixth place - includes Tommy Hilfiger, followed by Ralph Lauren at the seventh place. Fast Retailing Industry Ranking of major global apparel manufacturer and retailer of 2021 has Inditex (Zara and Bershka) at first place, followed by H&M, then Fast Retailing (Uniqlo), GAP, L Brands, PVH (Tommy Hilfiger), Ralph Lauren and at last Esprit (Fast Retailing, 2021). FashionUnited Combined Top 200 Index enumerates the most influential fashion companies by market value. In this list, Inditex (Zara and Bershka) is at first place, H&M fifth place, Fast Retailing eighth, L Brands (Victoria's Secret) nineteenth, GAP thirty-third, PVH thirty seventh, Mango fifty-fourth, Ralph Lauren fifty-ninth, and Esprit 139th place (FashionUnited, 2021).

3.2.2 Advertisements sampling

A corpus of 80 videos from approximately 30 seconds to 2 minutes in length was selected to conduct the analysis of this study. The videos were taken from the official YouTube channels of the selected brands. Purposive sampling was chosen as a sampling strategy to collect data. Moreover, amongst purposive sampling methods, criterion sampling was the most suitable for data collection. This sampling technique helps collect data to then create a sample which matches a specific profile (Flick, 2017). After selecting the 20 brands, the characteristics established for the data collection were the following: the advertisement videos had to be campaigns posted on official fashion brands channels throughout 2020 and 2021 and had to be longer than 30 seconds and shorter than 5 minutes. The videos were collected from official fashion brands YouTube channels. The videos collected were 80 in total: 40 from luxury brands and 40 from fast fashion brands. To delve more into the visual communication created by brands, the number of videos analysed per brand was 4 each. In appendix I, a complete list of the selected brands, divided by luxury fashion brands and fast fashion brands, alongside the selected campaigns can be found.

3.2.2 Diversity statements sampling

Diversity statements were collected from the official websites of the selected brands. As for the advertisements, criterion sampling was the most suitable method for data collection. The

method helps create a sample that matches specific criteria. Since a diversity statement entails any statement from brands that explicates company's values and visions with a focus on employees and organisational culture, the selected texts needed to present those talks and visions. The latest statements available at the time of data collection were selected, and a list can be found in appendix II. The requirements for these statements were that they have to include discourses on inclusivity amongst other corporate social responsibility elements such as sustainability and other ethical practices that the companies want to put forward as a promise to their stakeholders. These could usually be found as manifestos (e.g., Prada) or as part of the Careers section on the brands' websites. There were differences of where inclusion and diversity discourses could be found and the relevance for this study was that these statements could be found on the brands' websites, not specifically in the same place for all of them. Brands such as Ralph Lauren solely had a video on inclusion and diversity in their company, and to ensure consistency in this study, the visual statement was not analysed. In fact, the statements had to be solely written and minimum of 300 words in length. The chosen diversity statements are the newest available. To give an example, H&M's mission statement is called "The H&M Way", and it can be found on their official website. The diversity statements were in English.

Furthermore, to organically compare the two industries, the initial aim was to collect 20 diversity statements: 10 from luxury fashion brands and 10 from fast fashion brands. However, eventually, it was only feasible to collect 8 diversity statements from luxury fashion brands and 9 from fast fashion brands (see appendix II). Some exceptions found during the data collection process will be explained below. For instance, Valentino and Yves Saint Laurent didn't have a diversity statement. Specifically, a space on their official websites where they talked about inclusion and diversity was not found. When doing in-depth research online, some statements from the two brands could be found. However, for the purpose of this research, these statements needed to be taken from their official websites. Regarding Zara and Bershka, the two brands are part of the same company, Inditex, thus sharing discourses on inclusion and diversity and company culture. Victoria's Secret is also part of a larger company, L Brands, and shares the same values with the organisation.

3.3 Procedure and operationalisation

3.3.1 Open coding

The analysis of advertisements was chosen as the first analysis of the study. The videos were divided between luxury fashion brands and fast fashion brands. Each brand had 4 advertisements thus, the researcher analysed one brand at a time and then moved on to the

following one to assure consistency. Firstly, open codes were developed by watching the campaigns. Open coding is the first step of any thematic analysis and helps make sense of the data by constantly comparing the broken-down data and reaching conceptualisation (Boeije, 2010). Codes are fragments of data which is a concise phrase that summarises the meaning of the fragments (Boeije, 2010). For the case of this study, both visual and verbal elements were taken into account, although the campaigns with verbal communication were a relatively small percentage. The videos were carefully watched multiple times to ensure that every detail was captured. During the analysis, there were predefined codes – e.g., the four lenses of the framework of image analysis – and other concepts that were closely looked at, which were explicated in Chapter 2: beauty standards and body positivity, woke washing, social constructs such as gender roles, stereotypical representations of families, LGBTQIA+ individuals, the number of ethnicities cast in the campaigns, the role that were given to the models or individuals participating in the campaigns, and body types representation.

Moreover, the four lenses of the framework of image analysis were of crucial help to frame the visual communication of the campaigns. For instance, face-ism was applied to understand whether male faces were represented more powerfully than female faces, idealisation helped creating narratives on what kind of stories the campaigns were telling to the audiences and how close to an “achievable” reality they were, exoticisation helped to take into account whether some details were reinforced or highlighted to underline someone’s characteristics, heritage, or ethnicity, and finally, exclusion helped analysing whether the selected brands solely represented young, thin, and attractive individuals or made an effort to include usually under-represented societal groups in advertising such as the poor, the disabled, and older generations. The type of atmosphere that the ads transmitted - dramatic, dark, light, or playful - was also looked at to better understand how brands establish the atmosphere that they wish to engage their audience with. All these concepts helped reporting the data consistently and holistically.

The ethnicities represented were closely looked at in the advertisements and noted down. The words race and ethnicity were used interchangeably when taking notes during the analysis. Ethnicity is the high-level umbrella term that includes race and tribe, among others. Race is a concept that defines the division of the human species based on the differences in hereditary physical features (The American Anthropological Association, 2006). The primary three races that exist on a high level are African, European, and Asian. Race is also defined as an aggregate of local populations which are distinguished because of genetic differences.

Regarding the diversity statements, the analysis was conducted similarly to the advertisement’s analysis process. During the open coding process, the research made an effort to

explain manners in which inclusion and diversity at an organisation level were depicted. Attention was put on statements that had little to no reference to inclusion and diversity and registered this under a code. Eventually, the analysis produced two separate codebooks: one for the advertisements and one for the diversity statements. It was crucial to keep the analysis separate to make more precise comparisons to answer the sub-questions which addressed comparisons between advertisements and diversity statements.

3.3.2 Axial and selective coding

When the entire corpus of data had been coded, the code comparison was initiated to start deriving the main themes in the data. Similar codes were merged together in the process called axial coding which was followed by a reorganisation of the codes in main themes, the step called selective coding. The process was facilitated by atlas.ti, which is a qualitative research tool for coding and analysing large bodies of data as for the case of this research. According to Flick (2017), using a software for coding and discerning themes is a suitable tool for thematic analysis. Also, due to the challenges of the sub-questions making a comparison across the two industries, it was necessary to collect and create separate reports in atlas.ti which made the comparison smoother.

Finally, the most relevant elements were selected to define the core themes. The codes were merged into broader categories or themes, which lead to looking at similarities and differences. This process is called selective coding, in which the main sub-themes that identify key concepts or themes which are ideally more abstract were identified (Boeije, 2010). This step is crucial to finding the main messages in the data and looking at how these themes are related to one another. The number of core categories was kept to a maximum of three. The exact process was followed for the diversity statements. An overview of the two coding schemes can be found in appendix III and in appendix IV. Meaningful fragments from the advertisements which helped explain the results in the following chapter can be found. After independently comparing the results of the separate analysis of advertisements and diversity statements, these main themes were cross-compared to draw conclusions and answer the main research question.

3.4 Reflexivity

Finally, this chapter will touch upon reflexivity and the importance of reflecting on the role of the researcher and the interpretation of the results. Braun and Clarke (2020) reflect on ensuring that thematic analysis is done in analytically and cohesively. For instance, the coding process, which results in overarching themes, was done analytically by immersing in the data. This entails “reading, reflecting, questioning, imagining, wondering, writing, retreating, and returning” on the

data (Braun & Clarke, 2020, p. 5). Additionally, the research had to continuously reflect on the taken-for-granted ideas that emerged when having to discern various body types and ethnicities, making an effort to address any bias that could arise during the process. Moreover, the researcher analysed the advertisements and the diversity statements taking into account the brands' point of view and also what the audience might perceive. When reflecting on the codes, the researcher referred back to the analytics of cultural practice framework which highlights the meaning-making nature of advertising and marketing, with a focus on inclusive representation and how brands construct these representations. In the diversity statements coding process, reflexivity was applied by focusing the attention on brands' effort to describe their inclusion and diversity strategies and what they decide to communicate to their external stakeholders, paying attention to discourses, and the abundance of diversity references.

4. Results

Chapter overview

This chapter introduces the findings of the analysis of advertisements and diversity statements. Each section answers two of the seven sub-questions which were initially broken down to thoroughly answer the main research question: *How are fashion brands representing inclusivity in their brand communication?* After presenting results from the advertisements and diversity statements analyses, a holistic conclusion and a comparison between luxury fashion brands and fast fashion brands will be illustrated.

4.1 Inclusion and diversity in advertisements

This section will contribute to answering sub-question 1: *How are fashion brands representing inclusivity in their advertisements?* and sub-question 4: *How is inclusivity represented in luxury fashion brands advertisements compared to fast fashion brands advertisements?* Firstly, the results of the thematic analysis will be presented. The data produced two overarching themes, respectively: inclusive representation and stereotypes reinforcement. Then, the results of the framework of image analysis, which contributed to explore inclusion elements of the brands visual communication, will be also introduced. To present the results in a concise and clear manner, the advertisements will be stated by mentioning the name of the brand and the number of the ad (e.g., Prada, V1).

4.1.1 Inclusive representation

The most predominant theme identified during the analysis was concerning inclusive representation. In the advertisements, this overarching theme entailed brands making an effort to be inclusive, focusing the attention on how they decided to depict inclusion and diversity in their visual communication. Other brands tried to challenge stereotypical narratives and empower their audiences. These findings will be explicated in more detail in this section.

4.1.1.1 Proof of inclusion and diversity

Brands' proof of being inclusive was depicted in their visual communication in various approaches. Firstly, in a total of 29 advertisements (e.g., Tommy Hilfiger V3, Gucci V3, Gucci V2, and Burberry V2), brands made an effort to achieve inclusive representation by casting people from different ethnic backgrounds. In advertisements from Burberry, GAP, Valentino, and Ralph Lauren, people with tattoos were depicted. Specifically, luxury fashion brands Valentino and Burberry made an effort to blend high fashion with street culture, and Burberry and Tommy Hilfiger included

references to streetwear and street culture. This portrayal by both luxury and fast fashion brands was associated with a shift in perception. In fact, tattoos and street culture are no longer solely linked to lower-income groups as it was in the 20th century, and fashion brands include these elements in their visual communication because they are increasingly present in the digital world and relevant amongst younger generations (Force, 2020; Burns, 2019). Another inclusion element found in the advertisements was gender fluidity. This can be found in 14 different advertisements. Gender fluidity was found when women were represented in a non-stereotypical feminine manner, displaying more variety such as short hair, androgyne features or, unisex clothing (e.g., GAP V2, Armani V1, and Zara V2). For instance, gender fluidity was found in an advertisement from UNIQLO (V2) where it was not immediately clear whether the person portrayed in the first scene was a woman or a man (Figure 1, see appendix IV). In a Gucci advertisement (V1), a man was wearing female clothes, ensuring that Gucci was making a statement by breaking stereotypes and social constructs (Figure 2, see appendix IV).

It is relevant to mention that only one advertisement portrayed a person with a disability: An Esprit advertisement (V2) where there was a deaf woman. Lastly, 15 ads made an effort to communicate a sense of belonging and community to the viewers. This was interpreted as an inclusive approach to make the audience feel accepted and create a sense of belonging. An example of this was one of the Mango advertisements (V2) where a group of friends was portrayed as being close, having a good time together, and communicating a sense of warmth and belongingness. Moreover, Prada managed to create this sense of belonging in a creative manner: by connecting two cities and by depicting talents from various industries and countries, skating in two different skate parks, and a recurring red line connecting the scenes, which was also one of the symbols of the brand (Figure 3, see appendix IV). Tommy Hilfiger (V1) emphasised the sense of community by having models reciting a poem about being together and helping each other, with the opening statement “We the people”.

Finally, 24 advertisements made a visible effort to include people from different backgrounds and ethnicities, although this representation could be improved. For instance, ads from Armani (V1), Chanel (V4), and Versace (V2) had a good representation of ethnicities although white models were clearly predominant. Crucial to mention is that one of Armani ads (V3) was the only advertisement out of the 80 analysed without any Caucasian models. In one of the Louis Vuitton ad (V3), the main character was a white model and the focus was mainly on the white models though other ethnicities were represented. In conclusion, the findings underlined how fashion brands were trying to make an effort to be more inclusive. This effort although was mainly limited to the inclusion of different ethnicities. It is relevant to mention that only one ad depicted a

person with a disability, and only one ad did not cast any Caucasian model. Various body types were not frequently represented neither by fast fashion brands nor by luxury fashion brands. This specific theme was further developed in relation to the framework of image analysis, which is presented later in this chapter.

4.1.1.2 Changing narratives

In a total of 45 advertisements, there was evidence that brands were making an effort to challenge societal narratives such as challenging gender roles, representation of mixed-race couples, and introduction of various body types. In their visual communication, brands proved to make an effort in challenging social constructs and depicted diverse scenarios such as gay couples, breaking down sexist stereotypes, raising awareness on gender inequality, and tackling body positivity. For instance, representation of body positivity was observed in 10 advertisements. However, the theme was not central in all those advertisements. Specifically, only one Mango advertisement (V1) focused on the body positivity movement in a more in-depth manner, making the whole campaign about the movement. Still, other advertisements did show some references to the theme. For instance, the brand GAP (V2, and V4) showed a good representation of different body types, alongside the regular representation of thin models in conformity with the fashion world beauty standards (Craddock et al., 2019). Specific examples could be Tommy Hilfiger advertisement (V2) portraying a black man whose body was not model-like (Figure 4, see appendix IV) and Victoria's Secret (V1 and V2) casting plus-size models in their advertisements.

Furthermore, mixed-race couples were found in 4 advertisements (e.g., H&M V2, and Gucci V3) and LGBTQIA+ couples were represented in solely two ads. These ads are from Yves Saint Laurent (V2), where two girls, although not in an explicit manner, were depicted kissing. The other example was found in an H&M ad (V1) where a gay wedding was represented (Figure 5, see appendix IV). To underline, the brands which made a more thoughtful effort in deviating from stereotypical societal narratives are GAP (V2) and Esprit (V2). The latter was an advertisement with a uniquely inclusive communication, being a platform for real-life testimonials about gender inequality. Esprit also tackled the issue of gender inequality in another advertisement (V4) by challenging football stereotypes as an exclusively male sport. Victoria's Secret was the only brand including a transgender model (V2) (Figure 6, see appendix IV). GAP (V2) portrayed a girl with armpit hair can be spotted, also challenging the social construct related to body hair and women (Toerien & Wilkinson, 2003). Finally, it is worth mentioning that there was one advertisement by Tommy Hilfiger (V1) that directly talks about inclusion and diversity, making a more powerful statement on the importance of inclusion and diversity for the brand and the world.

4.1.1.3 Audience empowerment

Audience empowerment was found in 79 advertisements. Audience empowerment referred to images depicting confident and powerful individuals thus conveying confidence and empowerment to the viewers. Through their communication, fashion brands showed that their brand led to a sense of confidence through their visual communication. Models were depicted as confident and empowered by the clothes that they were wearing (Ralph Lauren V1, Fendi, V1). Other examples were one of the ads by Mango (V3), where the actress portrayed was confident and having fun, transmitting a positive message to the audience and all the four advertisements by Zara communicated confidence through the models' body language and the overall setting of the advertisements. Furthermore, in multiple advertisements, brands encouraged the audience to be themselves and feel free to express themselves. Examples were made by Esprit (V2) and H&M (V2). Two of their advertisements were about being oneself without being afraid of any judgment.

The Esprit advertisement called #ReimagineLive was also about freedom of expression, explaining how that could lead a person to find their path and be successful. This was depicted by the story of a woman who became an entrepreneur, "finding herself" by following her true call and passion. Lastly, brands made an effort to creatively empower women in, precisely, 13 advertisements. In an ad by Valentino (V4) there were spoken words about freedom of expression and challenging the social construct of masculinity. Yves Saint Laurent (V2) approached women empowerment by giving a role to the main model of extreme confidence: she was in charge of the interaction with the male model and transmits a sense of empowerment and confidence throughout the whole duration of the advertisements. These findings were in line with Lai and Perminiene's (2020) study, which confirms that the fashion industry was moving from an unattainable idea of beauty to empowering the consumers and enabling them to increasingly appreciate themselves for being who they are.

4.1.2 Stereotypes enforcement

Another relevant overarching theme was one that looked closely at stereotypes associated with fashion brands' representations. This overarching theme was strictly related to Borgerson and Schroeder's framework of image of analysis (2005) which will be explicated in detail later in this chapter. These lenses were unrealistic scenarios, unattainable goals, and ideal body types. For instance, cultural appropriation, which was an act done by different cultures to use aspects related to other cultures (Chan et al., 2020) was found in both Prada (V2) and Ralph Lauren (V4) advertisements. In fact, they represented images of skateboarding culture although it is not usually

associated with those fashion brands. Although there is not extensive scientific research on skateboarding culture and fashion, this finding could highlight how fashion brands, for the case of this research luxury fashion brands like Prada, culturally appropriated skateboarding culture to relate to a broader audience of consumers (Pérez, 2020). Additionally, Zara (V1) depicted clothing that recalled African culture although not put in a context that respected African heritage. There was an effort to take into consideration recurring pattern about representations of models such as body characteristics and ethnicities. In 7 advertisements, there were extremely skinny models which reinforces the stereotypes about the fashion industry and body representation (e.g., Yves Saint Laurent V1 and V3, Victoria's Secret V3 and V4). Particularly taking Victoria's Secret in account, this finding confirmed the study by Kennedy (2020) which was about how the brand is mainly representing small size models. In 5 advertisements there were only white people represented (e.g., Yves Saint Laurent V2 and Versace V3) and in 15 advertisements white models were predominant or the focal point of the advertisements (Yves Saint Laurent V4 and Louis Vuitton V4). Additionally, there was one ad which is the least inclusive and it is from Ralph Lauren (V1), where the target audience was clearly white, young, privileged males.

Lastly, woke washing was recognised in 3 advertisements. For instance, in one of the Tommy Hilfiger advertisements (V1), there was extensive talk about unity, inclusion and diversity, equality. This made the brand appear like it was making an extensive effort in doing good and was determined to make a positive change in the world. However, Tommy Hilfiger is a fast fashion company that it is amongst those companies that are known to be detrimental for the planet (Colucci et al., 2020; Teona et al., 2019), which could justify the woke washing talk that the advertisement can communicate to the audience. It was also the case for GAP and H&M, which gave the same impression in their advertisements, flaunting messages of positivity while they are of great damage to the planet.

4.1.2.2 Family representation

Family representations were found in 19 advertisements. Family images in the advertisements represented the stereotypical modern family composed of mother, father, and sons where gender roles were respected (Åkestam et al., 2021). Although the campaigns were mainly for adult clothes, kids were represented in 4 ads (e.g., Louis Vuitton V3, and Ralph Lauren V4) and the other representations where there was a family atmosphere (8 advertisements in total) were mainly stereotypical family representations as aforementioned. For instance, in two ads from H&M (V3 and V1) a mother encouraging their sons was depicted and there was a wedding scene with mothers and kids represented. In one of the Victoria's Secret advertisements (V3) there was a reference to

marriage: The model, who was reflecting the idealisation of beauty standards, was advertising lingerie although, at some point in the advertisement, she changed to wearing a veil, which was symbolising marriage. The advertisement transmitted an idealised message about how women, at some point in their life, must be marrying. This was also in line with the study by Rajendrah et al. (2017) which explained how advertisers tend to portray idealised, beautiful people as achieving more in life than less “attractive” people. Mango (V1) also conventionally represented motherhood.

4.1.3 Framework of image analysis

4.1.3.1 Face-ism

The first dimension of the framework of image analysis analysed was face-ism. Face-ism occurs when mass media systematically portrays men with more notable faces than women. For the purpose of this research, the analysis of the advertisements focused more on different ethnicities and representation of different people rather than gender. However, face-ism was found in few instances. In one of the Louis Vuitton ads (V4), there was no gender discrimination, although the white models’ faces were made more visible than the others. In one of the Burberry ads (V1) there was an intense close up of a male model that made him stand out from the other models. In one of the Yves Saint Laurent advertisements (V4), face-ism per definition was also not found although all the close ups are focused on the white models. Versace (V2) also depicted a male model striking close up, being the only model directly staring into the camera. On the other hand, fast fashion brands had no examples of face-ism. The results could entail that the lens of face-ism has shifted towards a more inclusive representation of individuals in fashion brands advertisements.

4.1.3.2 Idealisation and exclusion

Moving on to idealisation, this dimension entails how representations in advertisements illustrate ideal types such as young, thin models, unattainable goals or unrealistic scenarios. It is crucial to underline that in a total of 62 advertisements the models or the people represented were thin, young, and beautiful. Unrealistic scenarios were also commonly found. Unattainable goals portrayal was found in some of the luxury fashion brands. This could be look at as a reinforcement of the framework of image analysis and the idea of idealisation. Exclusion entails how specific categories of people, such as the poor, the disabled, or other under-represented individuals, are left out of marketing communication representations. For the purpose of this research, different origins and ethnicities of people represented had special attention. The result of the analysis highlighted that 71 advertisements excluded under-represented groups such as poor, disabled, or older people while 19 advertisements at least had a good inclusion of ethnicities. As previously mentioned, the

only advertisement that portrayed a deaf person is one of the Esprit ads (V2). In solely 5 advertisements, older people were represented.

4.1.3.3 Exoticisation

Exoticisation is the process of making someone appear exotic or in a different way that they are to call attention to specific characteristics which can be skin colour, dress, appearance, and other categories. This dimension was strictly linked to the overarching theme “stereotype enforcement” as it looked at similar aspects of the advertisements. To make examples of exoticisation, one of the Fendi ad (V1) had a voice-over in Italian and the models lip-syncing the words. However, the lip sync, was not accurately done and it could be interpreted as rather racist since it could be associated with the Dolce & Gabbana advertisement. As previously mentioned, in this ad, there was a portrayal of the Chinese model trying to eat Italian food with chopsticks, ending up receiving extensive backlash. One of the few black models in one of the Chanel ads was dressed all in white and appeared different because of the clothing choice, standing out from the others. One Zara ad (V1) also reminded of cultural appropriation since the choice of clothes has explicit references to African culture. Exoticisation was also found in one of the GAP’s ads (V3) where there was an Asian person that showcases some karate moves which highlighted an apparent reference to his origins and, in line with the study by Chan et al., (2020) on cultural appropriation of Asian culture in advertising, this representation could be interpreted as a stereotype’s enforcement.

To summarise the results from the framework of image analysis and make a comparison between fast fashion and luxury fashion brands, in the luxury fashion brands advertisements, some face-ism was spotted in a total of only 4 advertisements and it was not found in fast fashion brands communication. Exoticisation was also hardly found and in this case 2 fast fashion brands against 1 luxury fashion brand have shown this in their visual communication. Regarding idealisation, 26 fast fashion brands advertisements portrayed thin and young models while 11 depicted realistic scenarios with little to no idealisation. In 3 advertisements there were normal-looking people represented. On the other hand, luxury fashion brands portrayed idealised models, thin and young, in 34 advertisements while it was possible to find unrealistic scenarios in 16 advertisements. In one advertisement from Burberry, a truck driver was depicted and also a realistic scenario could be found in another ad from Burberry, where a girl was getting food from a fast food shop. In 2 ads there were older people represented. For the exclusion lens, 35 fast fashion brands ads excluded under-represented categories while 3 ads portrayed various body types. Only one ad depicted a person with a disability. When compared with luxury fashion brands, they had a similar level of exclusion since 34 luxury fashion brands excluded under-represented groups. At the same time,

there was a good inclusion of ethnicities in 15 ads. 4 ads did not have a good representation of ethnicities and 3 ads included under-represented groups. There was no portrayal of different body types in luxury fashion brands.

4.1.4 Visual communication: Holistic conclusion and industry comparison

As a result of the thematic analysis and the framework of image analysis, luxury fashion brands and fast fashion brands visual communication presented similarities and, at the same time, significant differences when it comes to inclusive communication. To answer sub-question 1 *How are fashion brands representing inclusivity in their advertisements?* the most recurring, common patterns found during the analysis could be interpreted as the following. Fashion brands were making an effort to be more inclusive at an ethnic level while portraying confident people and fostering a sense of community and belonging. Freedom of expression was also a recurring pattern that could be explained as brands encouraging individuals to be themselves hence promoting inclusion and diversity. This was in line with the study by Lai and Perminiene (2020), which highlighted a shift towards a more inclusive reality where people accept themselves for who they are. In contrast, there was a lack of portrayal of different body types, although it was found in some of the fast fashion brands ads while it was non-existent in luxury fashion brands. Face-ism and exoticisation were hardly found which could mean that brands visual communication had shifted and had become more inclusive from when the framework was created. Regarding idealisation and exclusion, fashion brands had not improved on inclusive representation. The idealisation lens proved that fashion brands were still mainly portraying idealised body types, unrealistic scenarios and unattainable goals, while almost all the advertisements excluded under-represented groups.

Finally, to answer sub-question 4: *How is inclusivity represented in luxury fashion brands advertisements compared to fast fashion brands advertisements?* it can be stated that fast although some patterns were shared by the two industries, indeed fast fashion brands were making more effort than luxury fashion brands in being inclusive in their visual communication by representing a variety of ethnicities and body types, focusing more on creating a sense of community and fostering freedom of expression. Both industries put forward women empowerment narratives and luxury fashion brands were more inclusive in representing gender fluid individuals. It is crucial to mention that, besides the conclusion drawn, Armani, a luxury fashion brand, was the only brand that has an advertisement without any Caucasian models and fast fashion brands did include extremely skinny models in their advertisements, highlighting how the fashion industry still had to improve inclusion and diversity in their visual communication and luxury fashion brands also were making a small but concrete effort to be more inclusive.

4.2 Inclusive representation and diversity statements

This section will contribute to answer sub-question 2: *How are fashion brands representing inclusivity in their diversity statements?* and sub-question 5: *How is inclusivity represented in luxury fashion brands' diversity statements compared to fast fashion brands' diversity statements?* The analysis resulted in the two overarching themes, which mainly looked at inclusion and diversity commitment and superficiality of brands' commitment to inclusion and diversity. In the following sections, the themes will be explicated in detail and conclusions will be drawn.

4.2.1 Inclusion and diversity commitment

The overarching theme “inclusion and diversity commitment” was the most recurring theme found during the analysis. Recurring patterns in the diversity statements were focused on employee's wellbeing, equality commitment, inclusion and diversity statements, and transparency on inclusion and diversity. In fact, fashion brands communicated these interconnected ideas, promises, and practices in a variety of manners. For instance, H&M, Zara, and Bershka talked about the company's commitment to maintaining an inclusive workplace. Bershka, Zara, Chanel, Versace, and Tommy Hilfiger mentioned employee empowerment. Chanel explained: “We strive to empower our people to realise their full professional and personal potential and achieve their ambitions through a culture of development focused on increasing their capacity to learn, grow, and innovate” while Versace: “believes in the empowerment, motivation and growth of all employees”/

On the other hand, UNIQLO made an extensive effort in addressing inclusion and diversity, presenting a detailed explanation on the efforts of the company to be as inclusive as possible. Another pattern found was the mention of zero tolerance on discrimination and harassment, put forward by Zara, Bershka and H&M. GAP explained how inclusion was a crucial pillar in their company by stating: “When you decide that inclusion isn't an option, not only do the gaps between us close, but a whole new world of possibilities opens”. Chanel also interestingly mentioned how they tried to create a culture that educated all colleagues to advance their organisation's inclusiveness even more. Lastly, thanks to the findings gathered under this theme, it can be concluded that most fashion brands' communication around diversity statements focuses on employee's wellbeing, equality commitment, and brands make an effort to be as transparent as possible on their people's policies.

4.2.2 Superficial commitment to inclusion and diversity

In the findings, this overarching theme was less relevant in terms of how frequently it was found during the analysis. In some diversity statements there was brief, or no mention of inclusion and diversity and other statements were focused on fostering an innovative vision. Brief was not necessarily associated with a superficial statement although, when compared with brands like UNIQLO, Zara, and Bershka that have comprehensive strategies in place, Versace's statement can be considered slightly brief. It is worth mentioning that Versace's statement was still a complete and heartfelt proclamation. Another example is Ralph Lauren, which did not mention inclusion and diversity anywhere. The brand's decision to leave the talk out did not mean that diversity and inclusion was not discussed. In fact, it could be found in separate testimonials videos where the company explained how inclusive they were and how crucial inclusion and diversity were to the core of their organisation.

Furthermore, coming across the strategic framework outlined by Ralph Lauren, it was interesting to observe how the brand did not include inclusion and diversity in its 5-year goals strategy. Fendi, when talking about employees and talent they looked for, mentioned that their main focus is business skills, not mentioning inclusion and diversity. Alongside Fendi, Mango also did not mention inclusion and diversity on its website. The only 2 brands that did not have a diversity statement on their official website were Valentino and Yves Saint Laurent. To conclude, it can be stated that since there are solely 2 brands out of the 20 taken into account for this study which do not have a diversity statement on their website, this could entail that fashion brands are taking seriously inclusion and diversity at an organisational level and they care about communicating it to their external stakeholders. Nevertheless, actual proof that they are being inclusive in their workplaces should be investigated further.

4.2.3 Diversity statements: Holistic conclusion and industry comparison

To answer to sub-question 2: *How are fashion brands representing inclusivity in their diversity statements?* it can be stated that 18 out of the 20 fashion brands did have diversity statements outlined on their official website and the two brands which did not have one available were Valentino and Yves Saint Laurent. Fashion brands talk about inclusion and diversity practices, mainly focusing on employees' empowerment. To elaborate further, to answer sub-question 5: *How is inclusivity represented in luxury fashion brands diversity statements compared to fast fashion brands diversity statements?* it is relevant to highlight that the two fashion industries had divergent approaches when talking about inclusion and diversity. While 2 luxury fashion brands did not have presented diversity statements, only one fast fashion brand, Ralph Lauren, did not mention

inclusion and diversity explicitly although still making an effort to address it in a video. The analysis results proved that fashion brands were extensively talking about inclusion and diversity on their official channels, ensuring that they had a strategy or an explanation of what the company did to make their work environment more inclusive. Additionally, fast fashion brands' communication on inclusion and diversity was more refined while luxury fashion brands are generally less vocal about it.

Moreover, when looking at the most common trends among luxury fashion brands diversity statement communication, those were employees' empowerment and innovative visions. However, there was not a common, relevant discourse as a result of the analysis. This could be explained as luxury fashion brands communication was scattered and did not have some major, crucial patterns. Fast fashion brands, on the contrary, seemed to have made more effort in forging diversity statements' communication and highlighting what they were doing to create a more inclusive workplace. Employee empowerment was a crucial, recurring trend amongst the brands followed by a commitment by brands to maintain an inclusive workplace and putting effort address inclusion and diversity. Another common pattern was talk on zero tolerance on discrimination and harassment. To conclude, luxury fashion brands must develop their inclusion and diversity strategies and put more attention in forging diversity statements, while fast fashion brands are more vocal and refined about their inclusion and diversity practices and vision.

4.3. Most and least inclusive brands

Finally, the most inclusive brand amongst the two industries was Esprit. Examples of how the brand communication was considered the most inclusive of all brands are how Esprit challenged stereotypical narratives about football being a sport exclusively for men. To do this, the brand represented a girl playing football. Additionally, its visual communication included people's testimonial who advocated for gender equality, women empowerment, love and acceptance. Moreover, a deaf person and a gay couple were also depicted. Specifically, Esprit was the most inclusive brand because of the representation of the deaf woman since none of the other brands had included a person with disabilities in their visual communication. Regarding the brand's diversity statement, Esprit had an extensive part dedicated to inclusion and diversity on its official website. The brand had a vision of essential positivity, celebrating real people and togetherness and had equality and freedom of choice as the primary business pillars. They also illustrated how they did a "real people campaign" where they presented a sustainable collection where their own team was modelling instead of models.

Lastly, the least inclusive brand was Yves Saint Laurent. Regarding its visual communication, in two advertisements there were solely Caucasian models represented and in all the 4 advertisements analysed, representation of extremely skinny models was found. The advertisements with thin models were interesting because it appeared to be as the brand highlighted how skinny the models were (see figure 7, appendix IV). The brand tried to improve ethnic representation in two other advertisements, although it could be observed that Caucasian models were predominant. This approach to visual communication was in line with the conventional representations in fashion brands' marketing communication (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005), thus not making the brand inclusive in regard to body types representation and ethnicities. Additionally, the luxury fashion brand did not have a diversity statement available on its official website. To clarify, another luxury fashion brand, Valentino, did not have a diversity statement either. However, its visual communication was more inclusive. For instance, one of Valentino's ad (V4), "Gentle Masculinity", tackled toxic masculinity, one (V1) had a mixed-race couple as the protagonist of the ad, and finally, another advertisement had an Asian model as an ambassador and the main focus of the ad (V2).

5. Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

The holistic answer to the main research question: *How are fashion brands representing inclusivity in their brand communication?* is that fashion brands' representations of inclusivity were the following. Firstly, casting people from different ethnicities in their advertisements, alongside showcasing images that empower women. Then, they tried fostering a sense of community and freedom of expression. Body types representation in the advertisements were aligned with the idealised beauty standards set by the fashion industry (Lai & Perminiene, 2020). Diversity statements communication focused on employees' empowerment although did not present other consistent patterns. Examples of patterns that were not as frequent were commitments in maintaining an inclusive workplace, effort to address inclusion, and diversity and zero tolerance on discrimination or harassment. Moreover, in their diversity statements fast fashion brands were more vocal about inclusion and diversity than luxury fashion brands.

Having said so, as the analytics of cultural practice explains, brands operate in a fast-changing social reality where meaning is created and negotiated (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). Since in various fields there is a shift happening towards a more inclusive social reality (Ng & Lam, 2021; Sutton et al., 2021; Pourret et al., 2021; Guglielmo et al., 2021; Higgins, 2021; Denny & Collins, 2021), fashion brands' increasing attention on inclusion and diversity elements in their communication could be justified as a way to stay relevant in a fast-changing social reality. However, drawing back to the analytics of cultural practice framework, the brand communication analysed was not exceedingly vocal and progressive, and it was not possible to identify any relevant, dominant cultural values, both in the advertisements and the diversity statements. Regarding advertising, the findings prove that fashion brands are overall trying to shape their narratives towards more inclusive visual representations. Examples are images and words about body positivity, including different body types representation, images about LGBTQIA+ couples, representation of gender fluid individuals, messages of belongingness, and freedom of expression. This is in line with Lai and Perminiene (2020) study, which explains how fashion brands' advertising is shifting towards more authentic representations that encompass individuality, self-awareness, and freedom.

Elaborating further on visual communication, although fashion brands are making an effort to be more inclusive, it is crucial to mention that most advertisements did include mainly Caucasian models, excluded most of underrepresented categories and portrayed unrealistic scenarios, and unattainable goals. Body types representation was also low, with luxury fashion brands not deviating from idealised representations of body types such as slim, young, and attractive.

However, the findings from the analysis underlined how fashion brands had moved forward from advertisements such as the Dolce & Gabbana, which trivialised Chinese culture. The brands seemed to be making a substantial effort to diverge from racist representations (Ferrier, 2018). Racist representations are an example of exoticisation, one of the lenses of the framework of image analysis by Borgerson and Schroeder (2005). Linking back to the framework of image analysis, it was interesting to see how exoticisation was rarely found, except for few advertisements. This conclusion could entail that the lens could become less relevant if further research applies the framework. It was also the case for the lens of face-ism, which was not too recognised in the advertisements.

Nonetheless, the idealisation and exclusion lenses were frequently identified in the advertisements. It is crucial to underline how only one out of 80 analysed advertisements did not cast Caucasian models (Armani), and only one ad represented a person with disabilities (Esprit). Gendered roles were found in stereotypical representations of the family (Åkestam et al., 2021), which could be interpreted as fashion brands not being progressive enough to give a divergent portrayal from dominant narratives. Another relevant result was how one of Victoria's secret ads represented a model wearing a veil which symbolised marriage and communicated an idealised message to women that at some point in their lives, women should marry (Lai & Perminiene, 2020). As Borgerson and Schroeder (2005) explains, marketing communication per se is not the root cause, although it is repeating, of "problematic representational conventions" (p. 31). This can be avoided or at least improved if marketers recognise that what they are portraying represents a small portion of individuals and society in general. Nevertheless, advertising is shifting from stereotypical representations of gender roles and individuals towards a more inclusive and diverse reality (Lai & Perminiene, 2020).

Moving on to the diversity statements communication, brands should not merely represent societal issues such as moving towards a more inclusive reality in their visual communication, and it should also be reflected at their organisational level. Therefore, this study aimed to explore diversity statements to understand how and what brands shared with their external stakeholders regarding their vision on inclusion and diversity. Attention was also in finding whether there were any inclusion and diversity strategy in place in their organisations. The findings illustrated how fashion brands did not present many similarities in their communication of inclusion and diversity commitment and strategies, besides both industries caring about employees' empowerment. It is interesting to highlight how two luxury fashion brands did not have any diversity statements included on their official website while all fast fashion brands did talk about inclusion and diversity. On the one hand, the main findings from the diversity statements analysis were that fast fashion

brands, in line with the elements presented in the study conducted by Manoharan et al. (2021), did include more strategic elements to articulate their commitment, such as including awards won by the companies, employees' stories, and statistics.

On the other hand, two luxury fashion brands, Valentino and Yves Saint Laurent, lacked a diversity statement. The choice could be explained by the fact that these statements can be considered part of corporate social responsibility strategies, which are not yet enforced by law and are seen as businesses' voluntary contributions to society (Manoharan et al., 2021; Craddock et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the fashion industry is increasingly being held accountable for the damage they are inflicting on the planet (Teona et al., 2019; Gazzola et al., 2020). Given the rising awareness of inclusion and diversity after the 2020 global protests, they will most likely be held accountable for not being transparent about inclusion and diversity strategies or statements in the near future. To conclude, since only two brands did not present diversity statements, fashion brands are tackling inclusion and diversity at an organisational level and care about communicating it to their external stakeholders. Lastly, fast fashion brands were more vocal and refined when talking about inclusion and diversity.

Furthermore, it is crucial to answer the remaining sub-questions, which give insights into the comparison between the two fashion industries and the visual and textual communication. To answer sub-question 3: *How does representation of inclusiveness match in fashion brands' advertisements and diversity statements?* the findings of the analysis underline how fashion brands are generally more vocal in their diversity statements than in what they portray in their visual communication. As previously explained, advertisements are more inclusive mainly regarding ethnicities. However, the diversity statements are delving deeper into representing inclusion and diversity than the advertisements. It is worth mentioning that fashion brands' visual communication should not necessarily match what is being said in the diversity statements. When compared, diversity statements have more space to be more detailed and complex, while advertisements do not have the same length and space. Additionally, advertisements do not have to be necessarily about inclusion and diversity, while diversity statements are made to talk about brands' inclusive strategies.

When answering sub-question 6: *How are luxury fashion brands compared to fast fashion brands fulfilling their promises of inclusivity?* it can be stated that luxury fashion brands are generally fulfilling their promises of inclusivity less than fast fashion brands since there are already two brands that lack a diversity statement. As previously explained, luxury fashion brands are less inclusive in their visual communication, representing the stereotypical body types, excluding underrepresented groups, and idealisation. Relevant to mention is that the most inclusive brand was

Esprit, a fast fashion brand, and the least inclusive brand was Yves Saint Laurent, a luxury fashion brand, further highlighting how luxury fashion brands still have to improve their inclusive representation. On the other hand, the answer to sub-question 7: *How are fast fashion brands compared to luxury fast fashion brands fulfilling their promises of inclusivity?* fast fashion brands are fulfilling their inclusivity promises more by being vocal about inclusion and diversity and outlining a more inclusive visual communication. However, some of the fast fashion advertisements came across as “woke washing”, and it is also crucial to mention how fast fashion brands have had extensive backlash to their negative environmental impact. They could in fact possibly ensure that what they communicate to external stakeholders is to deviate the attention to other compelling issues such as climate change (Teona et al., 2019; Gazzola et al., 2020).

5.2 Implications

As previously mentioned in the first chapters of this study, there is not much research available that touches upon inclusion and diversity and brand communication, along with inclusion and diversity fashion brands communication. There is a lack of research that makes a comparison between visual communication and diversity statements nor an industry comparison between luxury fashion brands and fast fashion brands. Thus, this study provides a unique scientific perspective on the chosen topics. Moreover, the added value of this research is how the findings highlight that fashion brands are still not being inclusive in their visual communication and how diversity statements presented not many patterns or similar directions among the brands. It can be stated that diversity statements are a new concept that companies like fashion organisations are exploring and implementing. Additionally, there is also little research available on diversity statement communication. Thus, this study enriches the research on diversity statements and explains how fashion brands shape their diversity statement communication. Regarding visual communication, the added value that of this study is applying the framework of image analysis (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005) to understand whether it is still relevant in visual representation alongside challenging inclusion and diversity in visual communication in 2020 and 2021. Lastly, inclusion and diversity in brand visual communication have also not yet been thoroughly studied, making this research a valuable addition to marketing studies.

Practical implications for fashion brands are to ensure that they have an outlined diversity statements available on their official channels since this is external proof that they are interested in tackling issues such as gender inequality, discrimination, lack of cultural differences, and more. When companies lack this external proof, which is becoming increasingly frequent due to the rising relevance of corporate social responsibility (Chandler, 2020; Craddock et al., 2019), they could

receive future backlash from external and internal stakeholders. Additionally, visual communication will become more inclusive in the next years due to a shift towards a more inclusive reality which people are demanding more since the recent 2020 events (Roberson, 2020; Thelwall & Thelwall, 2021). Therefore, since the findings of this study have clarified how fashion brands are not yet being inclusive, marketers and communication specialists can be more critical on how to be inclusive when they decide to depict in their advertisements visually.

5.3 Limitations and future research

The findings of this study are subjected to limitations which will be discussed in the following paragraph. Future research could address these limitations. For example, the first limitation of this study is the little research available on inclusion and diversity in marketing communication. The lack of a framework tailored to inclusive communication would facilitate the analysis of visual communication. Future research could address creating, for instance, an “inclusion and diversity score”, which brands need to fulfil to be considered inclusive in what they depict in their advertisements. Other limitations of this study are linked to the comparisons which this study has tackled. Comparing between the two fashion industries could limit understanding of which industry is more inclusive than the other. Future research could either focus on fast fashion or luxury fashion brands to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the industries separately.

Additionally, comparing advertisements and diversity statements could entail that there is less focus on either visual or textual communication. Future research could either focus fully on diversity statements and link it to corporate social responsibilities studies or solely focus on advertisements. Another limitation could be how analysing 20 brands can present a more general understanding of brands’ inclusive communication. Future research could focus on analysing fewer brands. Alternatively, it could analyse one brand communication in a broader timeframe to see how inclusion elements have evolved throughout the years. Also, the brands that were analysed were well established in the fashion industry, and it could be relevant to analyse emerging fashion brands that could potentially set standards for inclusive communication in the fashion industry. Lastly, it would be of academic relevance to test further the framework of image of analysis to see whether lenses such as face-ism and exoticisation could be discredited or reshaped.

To conclude, fashion brands still have to improve their inclusive elements represented in their visual communication. They have proven to be making an effort in representing various ethnicities and diverging from the racist accusations they had to address in the past. In some cases, various body types which diverge from the conventional representation of fashion brands idealised

thin and young models were represented, although this aspect was not too present in the advertisements. Representations of a gay couple, gender fluid individuals, a person with disabilities was found, accompanied by messages of freedom of expression alongside the embracement of a sense of community and belongingness. However, gender roles were still found such as in conventional representations of the family. Diversity statements communication findings highlighted how there were not crucial patterns emerging from the analysis, which could reflect the fact that there are no specific guidelines in place on how to talk about inclusion and diversity at an organisational level to external stakeholders. The brands which did not have a diversity statement should reflect on how crucial it is becoming to be able to provide information to external stakeholders on how inclusion and diversity are being addressed at an organisational level.

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Appendices

Appendix I: List of advertisements

Below, a list of the 10 selected luxury fashion brands in alphabetical order and advertisements. The advertisements will include name of the campaign and link. For clarity, the videos are also named as they are named in the analysis – e.g., V1, V2, V3, and V4.

1. Armani

- V1 - Giorgio Armani Spring Summer 2020 Advertising Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oB5vaLVxp34>
- V2 - Giorgio Armani SS21 Advertising Campaign Video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cj99ZueuJz8>
- V3 - Armani Exchange Spring Summer 2021 Advertising Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFvAVYq0Fl8>
- V4 - Giorgio Armani FW 20-21 Campaign Video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXgS4ljJTFA>

2. Burberry

- V1 - Burberry | It's about that fearless spirit and imagination when pushing boundaries.'
#RiccardoTisci <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbmW76Cp4s8>
- V2 - Burberry Spring/Summer 2021
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZDUwuBamMg>
- V3 - Introducing Evolution, The Burberry Spring/Summer 2020 | Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFFrjsXN6EY>
- V4 - Discover Burberry Autumn/Winter 2020
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtoqWUNQklQ>

3. Chanel

- V1 - Fall-Winter 2020/21 Haute Couture – CHANEL
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byGgiKj1LRY>
- V2 - Spring-Summer 2020 Pre-Collection
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsXuKLQItCM>
- V3 - The Spring-Summer 2021 Ready-to-Wear Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-2RWW9QfaU>

- V4 - The Fall-Winter 2021/21 Ready-to-Wear collection
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Szus2kpy7u0&t=2s>

4. Fendi

- V1 - Women's Spring/Summer 2020 Advertising Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPMHyWQ7nTE>
- V2 - Fendi Women's Spring/Summer 2021 Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjpmhcYEUDs>
- V3 - FENDI Resort 2020 Fashion Film | Directed by VIVIENNE & TAMAS
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1c2-yWp-9pk>
- V4 - "FENDI ROMA" HOLIDAY COLLECTION 2021 CAMPAIGN
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aK8wD0NQGjY>

5. Gucci

- V1 - Gucci Of Course a Horse: The Spring Summer 2020 Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jkkaIO553U>
- V2 - Gucci Overture of Something That Never Ended: The Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNiuHEOeNW0>
- V3 - Gucci Gift 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGEYaRyLgLg&t=2s>
- V4 - Gucci Epilogue https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsQw_HTP2_I

6. Louis Vuitton

- V1 - Women's Spring-Summer 2020 Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Z7Ed8vTyh>
- V2 - Women's Spring Summer 2021 Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2NmxflbTOc>
- V3 - Journey Home for the Holidays with Alicia Vikander
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKEMDMuDjcU>
- V4 - Campaign Spring Summer 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sl1myQrxkJ0>

7. Prada

- V1 - Spring/Summer 2020 Advertising Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d48W-Y3JcV0>
- V2 - Spring/Summer 2021 Campaign <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfFEejsPDfE>

- V3 - Fall/Winter 2020 Campaign <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7jRV2IKa6o>
- V4 - Prada Holiday 2020 Campaign - 'A Stranger Calls'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9KzQbmj3Yg>

8. Valentino

- V1 - Valentino | #BornInRoman Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btivyrFecHI>
- V2 - VALENTINO GARAVANI 520 CAPSULE COLLECTION
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJ8MMtdz5iE>
- V3 - Valentino | #ValentinoDiary Resort 20-21
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eG7naD4Xhos>
- V4 - GENTLE MASCULINITY <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDLH7aAjde0>

9. Versace

- V1 - Versace | Versace House Party | The Pre-Fall 2020 Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXFkg0vwLpQ>
- V2 - Versace Holiday Campaign | Home For The Holidays
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsLULzTgJE4>
- V3 - Versace La Medusa | Soaring Muses
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1NF4aZu3KE&list=PLxViQyEiEuWGVshpn4sjPkBSroM4Pcqoj&index=3>
- V4 - Atelier Versace | Fall-Winter 2020
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hj8_YX48x14

10. Yves Saint Laurent

- V1 - Yves Saint Laurent | Winter 2020
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YL2Y_6EuFeY
- V2 - SAINT LAURENT - BEST WISHES – 2020
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eoBc-V5HINs>
- V3 - SAINT LAURENT - SUMMER 2020
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qHX1nCExoo>
- V4 - SAINT LAURENT - SUMMER 2021
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTHGxYPbdu0>

Below, a list of the 10 selected fast fashion brands in alphabetical order and advertisements. The advertisements will include name of the campaign and link.

1. Bershka

- V1 - Bershka | bCOMFY <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BuRaatcIPV4>
- V2 - Bershka | SS'21 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJ_6puIffTI
- V3 - Bershka | Loose Threads <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DrtkoB1DcE>
- V4 - Bershka | Grey Tailoring <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECQfyLFs9X8>

2. Esprit

- V1 - Esprit | #YouRule
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PESNZ3nRMFA&list=PL9It2QekigfbXynKbqTUXG3H5k_kz0JjK&index=1
- V2 - Esprit | #YouRule | Community
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZX4HI9gWhk&list=PL9It2QekigfbXynKbqTUXG3H5k_kz0JjK&index=5
- V3 - #ReimagineLife - The joy of positive living with Anna
<https://youtu.be/Kpj5WVnfLmU>
- V4 - Esprit | #YouRule | It's a man's world
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aH5J72tcJYU&list=PL9It2QekigfbXynKbqTUXG3H5k_kz0JjK&index=2

3. GAP

- V1 - GAP | Stand United (:60s) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Eg9-Tl4uMU>
- V2 - GAP SP21 | INDIVIDUAL ANTHEM
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZWl6wJfzKs>
- V3 - GAP | Freedom of Summer Adult | SUM21
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7kcXhiyKfY>
- V4 - Dream the Future (:60s) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZbH3EaN-RU>

4. H&M

- V1 - H&M | Let's change. In every detail
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFQmapcvglS>
- V2 - Bring on the future <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uem9aQXw8B4>

- V3 - Show them what you're made of. Walk tall with H&M Man
- V4 - Maisie Williams x H&M https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fx15zou_7SI

5. Mango

- V1 - Mango | VIOLETA by MANGO | THIS IS POWER Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jP5923v7ukM>
- V2 - SHARED MOMENTS Campaign | Mango SS20
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqqmgTG5Aq8>
- V3 - Mango Summer Spring 2021 | Myntra
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0IN5N0I1G8>
- V4 - LIFE IN BLOOM Campaign | MANGO
S20 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRZTIHDdbOE>

6. Ralph Lauren Polo

- V1 - Ralph Lauren Polo Ralph Lauren | Deep Blue | Spring 2020
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEKTIrITnW0>
- V2 - RALPH LAUREN | Purple Label Fall 2020
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UBc7GSI2yY>
- V3 - RALPH LAUREN | Polo Ralph Lauren | Women's Garden Party | Spring 2021
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4XpuOP9v8w>
- V4 - RALPH LAUREN | Polo Ralph Lauren | Men's Color Shop | Spring 2021

7. Tommy Hilfiger

- V1 - Tommy Hilfiger | MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gC81gXrW_IM
- V2 - Moving Forward Together <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xdrsk9c8L0U>
- V3 - Tommy Hilfiger Icons Primavera
2020 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bc2P_1eLjd0
- V4 - TOMMY HILFIGER with
MOGLI <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wefiwazdGFw>

8. UNIQLO

- V1 -UNIQLO Presents: Disney Love Minnie Mouse UT Collection by AMBUSH
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHs9K51JLvc>

- V2 - UNIQLO Presents: Uniqlo U 2020 Spring/Summer
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V569VSLFdE8&list=PLth8ow3KfOcrteBkOy3dMZv24dHOii8g-&index=3>
- V3 - UNIQLO PRESENTS: AIRism T-Shirts
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cE0Bogz-mwUhttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cE0Bogz-mwU>
- V4 - UNIQLO PRESENTS: Core T-Shirts
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Pbe4DyMQYw>

9. Victoria's Secret

- V1 -Destination: Swim | Victoria's Secret
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzEda-IcF78>
- V2- VICTORIA'S SECRET HOLIDAY 2020
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTg4QU81xeg>
- V3 - For Love & Lemons for VS: Spring 2020 | VICTORIA'S SECRET
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9vTVA3nZhI>
- V4 - For Love & Lemons for VS: Fall 2020 | Victoria's Secret
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSXSxajCt5s>

10. Zara

- V1 - ZARA WOMAN | Spring Summer 2021 Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKCmezkfWbE>
- V2 - ZARA | Woman Campaign Fall Winter 2020
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rTy4oouj4c>
- V3 - ZARA | Woman campaign Spring Summer 2020
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2o7Zuq3BBPs>
- V4 - ZARA MAN | Spring Summer 2021 Campaign
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmhZijk1TtQ>

Appendix II: List of diversity statements

Below, a list of the diversity statements from luxury fashion brands consulted for this research:

1. Armani <https://www.armani.com/experience/en/corporate/social-responsibility/employees/>

2. Burberry
<https://www.burberryplc.com/content/dam/burberry/corporate/Responsibility/Global%20Diversity%20Inclusion%20Policy.pdf>
3. Chanel https://careers.chanel.com/en_GB/
4. Fendi
<https://careers.fendi.com/hr/#:~:text=Fendi%20is%20synonymous%20with%20luxury, and%20transform%20dreams%20into%20reality>
5. Gucci https://www.gucci.com/nl/en_gb/st/sustainability-landing/commitment
6. Louis Vuitton <https://www.lvmh.com/group/about-lvmh/the-lvmh-spirit/>
7. Prada
<https://www.pradagroup.com/en/group/manifesto.html#:~:text=1%20.,%2C%20re%2Dworkings%20and%20passions>
8. Valentino No diversity statement
9. Versace <https://www.versace.com/eu/en/about-us/careers.html>
10. Yves Saint Laurent No diversity statement

Below, a list of the diversity statements from fast fashion brands consulted for this research:

1. Bershka <https://www.bershka.com/gb/company.html>
2. Esprit <https://www.esprit.com/en/company/corporate/about-us#:~:text=Esprit%20makes%20people%20feel%20good&text=The%20success%20story%20of%20Esprit,equality%20and%20freedom%20of%20choice>
3. GAP <https://www.gapinc.com/en-us/values> - <https://www.gapinc.com/en-us/values/equality-belonging> + <https://www.gapinc.com/en-us/commitments>
4. H&M
https://about.hm.com/content/dam/hmgroup/groupsite/documents/en/hm-way/HM%20Way_en.pdf
5. Mango <https://mango-emea.jobs.net/en-GB/>
6. Ralph Lauren Polo <https://corporate.ralphlauren.com/our-company>
7. Tommy Hilfiger <https://responsibility.pvh.com/tommy/>
8. UNIQLO <https://www.uniqlo.com/en/sustainability/mission/> / <https://www.fastretailing.com/employment/en/diversity/>
9. Victoria's Secret <https://www.lb.com/responsibility/inclusion/overview>
10. Zara <https://www.inditex.com/en/our-commitment-to-people>

Appendix III: Coding schemes

Coding scheme: Advertisements

Selective code	Axial code	Open code	Example
Inclusive representation	Audience empowerment	Confidence	The ad is about confidence and empowering narratives (H&M, V3)
		Women empowerment	Definitely empowering women, the model is very confident and she's kind of 'controlling' the male model. She's powerful (YSL, V2)
		Body positivity	Plus size models (VS, V2)
		Freedom of expression	The ad is about being able to express oneself without any judgment and just being yourself (Esprit, V2)
	Changing narratives	Mixed race couples	Representation of mixed-race couples (H&M, V2)
		Raising awareness on gender inequality	Esprit has an inclusive approach for its visual communication, exposing through real life testimonials about gender inequalities and how being different is the new cool (Esprit, V2)
		Two girls kissing	The only ad where two girls are kissing although it's not very explicit (YSL, V2)
		Transgender model	In this as we can find the first transgender model of VS (VS, V2)
		Challenging social constructs	This as well challenges the social constructs as moving

			forward in society and be more unite/inclusive (Tommy V2)
Effort to achieve inclusive representation	Good representation of ethnicities but white is predominant		Representation is good but there are more white models than others (Armani, V1)
	Ambassadors for Gen Z		Change agent Yara Shahidi = ambassador for Gen Z = contributes to social and charitable causes (Prada, V3)
Proof of inclusion and diversity	Good representation of ethnicities		Gucci represents all ethnicities as harmonious and happy together also in an office context. Nobody is left out (Gucci, V3)
	Gender fluidity		gender fluidity since the first model could be a girl or a guy, not clear (Uniqlo, V2)
	Older people represented		older people are represented (H&M, V2)
	Unisex clothing		they all wear kind of unisex clothing such as coats and bucket hats, the clothes that the women wear are not feminine (Prada, V3)
	Inclusion of Asian culture		520 which is the name of the capsule collection is similar to the pronunciation of I love you in Chinese (5/10 as a date) and the references are all over the video (Valentino, V2)
	Sense of community/belonging		in this video It feels like the group of friends is very cohesive and happy to be together, giving

			a sense of warmth and community (Mango, V2)
		Gay couple represented	in this ad there's a representation of a gay older couple (H&M, V2)
		Raising awareness on gender inequality	Esprit has an inclusive approach for its visual communication, exposing through real life testimonials about gender inequalities and how being different is the new cool (Esprit, V2)
		Inclusion of talents from different industries	Reggae artist that wrote a poem for the ad (H&M, V2)
		Black family represented	There is one black family represented although for a split second (LV, 3)
		Very inclusive ad	This ad is very inclusive in comparison to the others because has representations of: mothers, lesbian wedding, someone who's not extremely thin, and representation of normal life. Could be more inclusive but also the ethnicities represented are varied (H&M, V1)
	Cultural appropriation	Appropriation of skate culture	taking skate culture and making it high end fashion, Prada as setting the standards also at the skate parks, which is kind of in contrast with what skaters usually wear and identify with (Prada, V2)

Stereotypes enforcement		Appropriation of African culture	Zara uses clothing reminding of African culture (Zara, V1)
	Family representation	Motherhood represented	First time motherhood is being represented (Mango, V1)
		Family vibes	there's some kids and a teenager, giving family feelings (GAP, V2)
		Kids representation	kids are being represented (H&M, V2)
		Pregnant girl	first time in this analysis that there is a pregnant lady (GAP, V3)
		Reference to marriage	She's wearing a veil which kind of reminds of a marriage and that because she's a woman she should marry (VS, V3)
	Luxurious visual communication	Detached reality	Detached, dreamy reality (Zara, V1, Zara V2, Zara V3)
		Sophistication	Chanel strives for sophistication, funnelling their audience to a certain type of people, not very creative (Chanel, V2)
		Dramatic atmosphere	dramatic atmosphere, the atmosphere is charged and powerful (YSL, V3)
		Luxury environment	In line with what Prada sells, the campaign is filmed in a luxurious villa and all the model/actors look rich, young, and extremely fashionable (Prada, V4)
Show off of wealthiness		In this ad there's a lot of clothes and Christmas packages, making	

			it overexaggerated a bit and appealing to the very rich (Fendi, V4)
	Stereotypical representation	Extremely skinny models	very skinny models and very visible (YSL, V3)
		Only white models	only white models (Saint Laurent, V2)
		Woke washing	All the H&M gave a sense of woke washing
			This ad feels a bit like woke washing since Tommy is still a fast fashion company and doing really bad for the planet but wants to appear all good and talking about unity etc (Tommy, V1)
		Straight couple represented	The ad is about a straight couple (RL, V1)
		Thin and beautiful	Still many thin and beautiful models, of course excluding other categories (VS, V1)

Coding scheme: Diversity statements

Selective code	Axial code	Open code	Example
	Employees well-being	Deeply caring about employees	Chanel wants to provide a safe environment for their employees

Inclusion and diversity commitment			
		Attention to well-being of employees	The attention to the well-being and development of employees is one of the five pillars of the Group's sustainability strategy. (Armani)
		Company culture of respect, individuality, and possibility	Thriving in a Culture that champions respect, individuality and possibility. (Ralph Lauren)
	Equality commitment	Equality and belonging as main values	An Open to All mindset drives every aspect of our business. When we include and respect people from all walks of life, we create a better, stronger company and a better, stronger world. (GAP)
		Equal opportunities	First of all, it is necessary to respect diversity, protect equal opportunities and appreciate the contribution that everyone brings to the growth of the company. (Armani)
		Everyone should feel valued and supported	From farmers to factory workers, designers to marketers, we believe everyone who is part of our business should feel valued and supported, and have their voice heard. So we're working to ensure that all people who want to work with us not only feel welcome, but are also encouraged to reach their full potential. (Tommy Hilfiger)

		Equality and freedom of choice as pillars	The success story of Esprit is based on these two pillars.
Inclusion and diversity statement		Power of people	At Inditex we strongly believe in the power of people. We foster inclusive work environments that empower our co-workers to thrive and succeed regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, and disability, among other characteristics. (Bershka and Zara)
		Standing against racism	At Inditex, we stand against racism, as our Executive Chairman, Pablo Isla, has publicly expressed through this letter. (Bershka and Zara)
		Mentioning people with disabilities	Bershka and Zara
		Effort to address inclusion and diversity	This is the first sentence of the manifesto underlining how essential inclusion and diversity is to Prada.
			Very extensive strategy (UNIQLO)
		Human driver employer	At Chanel, being a purposeful and human-driven employer means being intentional, meaningful and caring in inspiring our people.

		Employees empowerment	<p>At Inditex we strongly believe in the power of people. We foster inclusive work environments that empower our co-workers to thrive and succeed regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, and disability, among other characteristics. (Bershka and Zara)</p> <p>We strive to empower our people to realise their full professional and personal potential and achieve their ambitions through a culture of development focused on increasing their capacity to learn, grow and innovate. (Chanel)</p>
		Zero tolerance on discrimination or harassment	<p>We promote diversity and equality and do not tolerate any kind of discrimination or harassment. H&M is committed to following all applicable labour and employment laws wherever we operate. (H&M)</p> <p>We do not tolerate discrimination of any kind. Inditex has specific systems in place so that in the event of alleged discrimination, an internal investigation is promptly conducted and appropriate action is taken. (Bershka and Zara)</p>
		Welfare plan	<p>It's called the Armani People Care welfare plan to take care of employee's well-being</p>

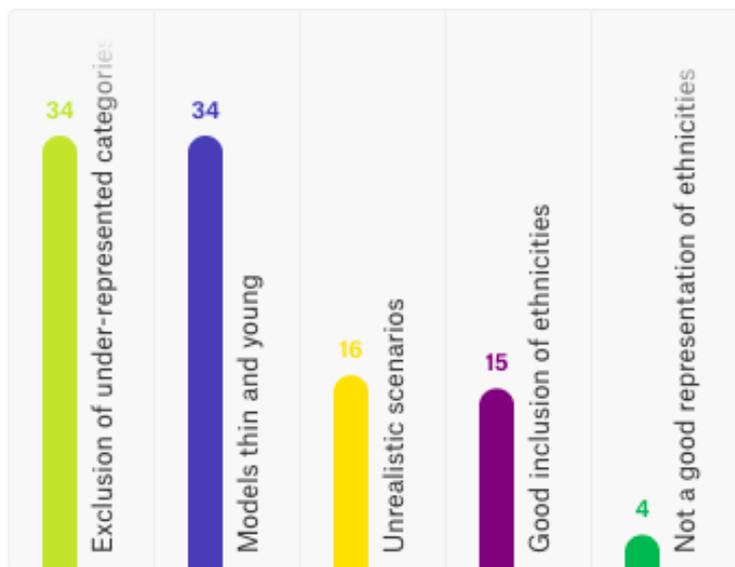
	Transparency on inclusion and diversity	Global diversity and inclusion policy	Our global Diversity & Inclusion Policy applies to all entities of Inditex and is fully supported by the top management. The Company understands that building and promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace environment will contribute towards the achievement of our corporate and business objectives. (Bershka and Zara)
		Percentage of female employees	Mango it's mentioning this in their statement
		Clear I&D strategy in place	Tommy Hilfiger UNIQLO
Superficial commitment to inclusion and diversity	Brief or no mention of inclusion and diversity	No mention of inclusion and diversity	There is no direct mention of I&D in their HR statement (Fendi)
		Brief statement but still good	The statement is quite short but straight to the point (Versace)
	Innovative vision	Fashion as reflection of society	Prada recognises how fashion is a mirror of society and it's constantly changing and shifting
		Actors of change	The demands of this fast-changing society are recognised by Prada which has the mission to address this and translate these market demands into a fair way to make business
		Fusion between tradition and innovation	This is important pillar of Fendi vision (Fendi)

		Strategic priorities not including I&D	They are: win over a new generation, energize core products and accelerate underdeveloped categories, drive targeted expansion, lead with digital, operate with discipline to fuel growth. It's not really written out in the website but the video showed here: https://corporate.ralphlauren.com/careers is quite inclusive. They talk about it doesn't matter where you are from, you are welcome. (Ralph Lauren)
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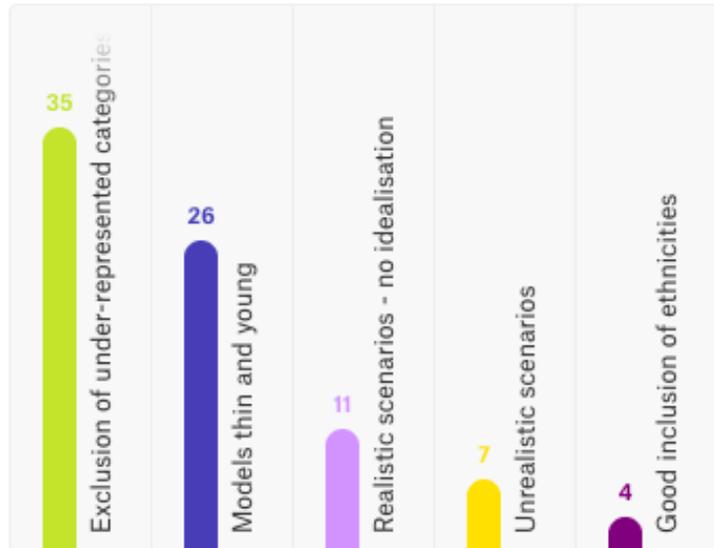
Code distribution: Framework of image analysis

1. Idealisation

Luxury fashion brands idealisation code distribution:

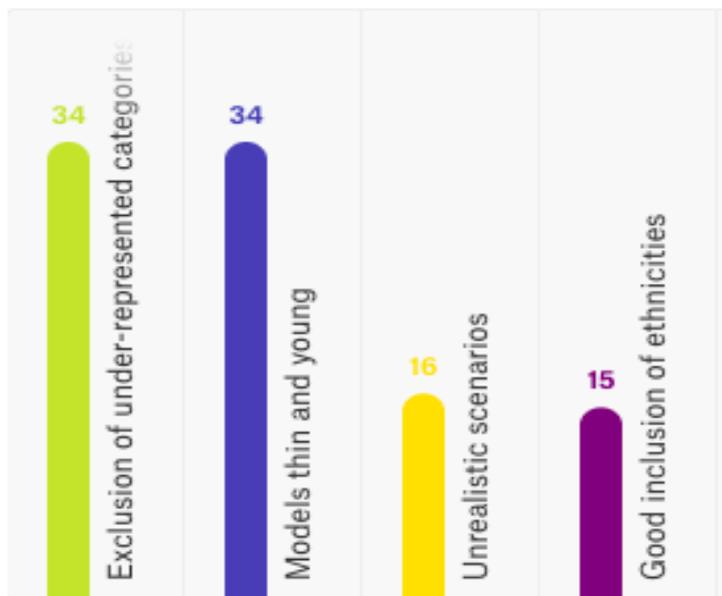


Fast fashion brands idealisation code distribution:

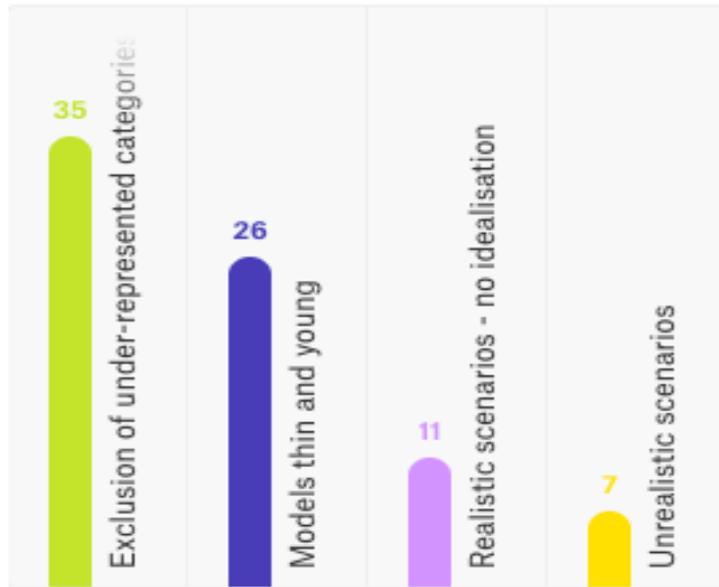


2. Exclusion

Luxury fashion brands exclusion code distribution:



Fast fashion brands exclusion code distribution:



Appendix IV: Fragments

Below a list of relevant fragments mentioned in the text.

1. Fragment 1 - UNIQLO, V2



2. Figure 2 – Gucci, V2



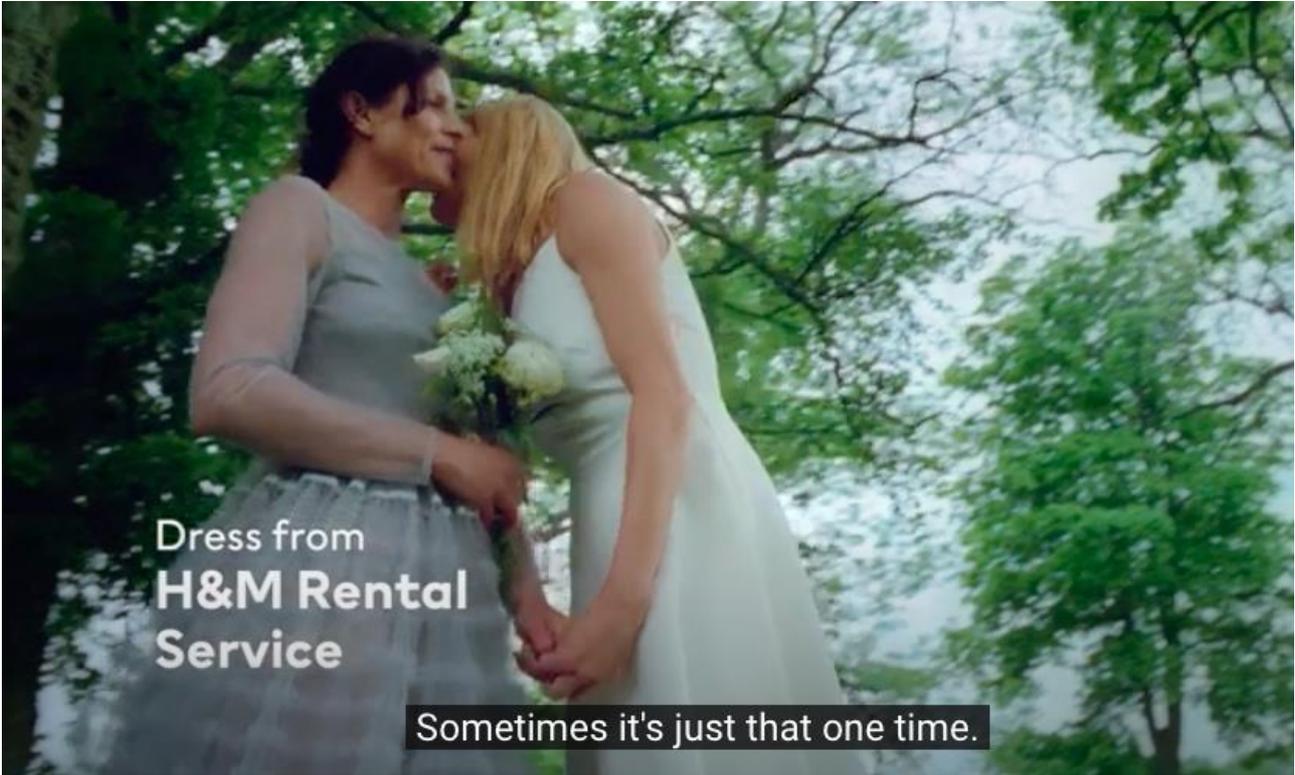
3. Figure 3 – Prada, V2



4. Figure 4 – Tommy Hilfiger, V2



5. Figure 5 – H&M, V1



6. Figure 6 – Victoria’s Secret, V2



7. Figure 7, Yves Saint Laurent, V3

