

## SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF GENDER AND RACE REPRESENTATIONS AND THEIR EDUCATIONAL IMPACT IN THE MANAGEMENT COURSE FOR WOMEN AT SEBRAE



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### ABSTRACT

This article presents a semiotic analysis of the representations of gender and race in the educational context, focusing on instructional design and the application of the management course for women offered by Sebrae. The methodology of two-dimensional image analysis, based on the studies of André Mendes, is used to examine the phases of instructional design according to the proposal of Filatro (2008), based on the ADDIE model: *Analysis*, *Design*, *Development*, *Implementation* and *Evaluation* (Evaluation). The images and messages of the course are analyzed with the aim of understanding how they challenge gender and race stereotypes and how they impact the education of students, promoting more inclusive educational practices. It is concluded that semiotics is a valuable tool for the analysis and creation of effective educational materials, making learning more intuitive and meaningful. The "Women in Focus" course highlights the relevance of considering the dynamics of race and gender in the production of educational content, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive education.

**Keywords:** Instructional Design. Semiotics. Gender and race. Inclusive Education.

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## INTRODUCTION

Female entrepreneurship has stood out in the Brazilian economic scenario in recent decades, assuming a fundamental role in the transformation of the country's business landscape. According to the GEM/21 Survey, the PNAD of the 3rd quarter of 2022 and the Pulso of January 2023, Brazil reached a historic milestone in 2023, with a record number of women at the head of their own businesses. Moreover, it is notable that these female entrepreneurs represent a significant employer force in the country.

The Technical Report on Women's Entrepreneurship, 4th quarter of 2023, produced by Sebrae, reveals that the distribution of race/color among business owners in Brazil shows a greater participation of blacks (blacks and browns) compared to whites, with 52.4% against 46.6%, respectively. Among women business owners, 49.8% declare themselves black. These data indicate an advance in diversity, but also expose persistent challenges.

Women at the head of the business often have higher levels of education than their male colleagues, as pointed out by the Continuous PNAD. Yet despite this educational advantage, their ventures often generate less revenue, and women earn, on average, 16 percent less than men in similar positions. This complex scenario highlights the need for an educational approach that promotes gender and race equity in entrepreneurship.

The challenges faced by entrepreneurs go beyond economic issues. More than half of them are heads of households and often devote fewer hours per week to their business than male entrepreneurs. In addition, female entrepreneurship is often motivated by pressing financial needs, such as the search for an additional source of income or the achievement of financial independence. Motherhood and the need for flexible hours also pose significant obstacles for female entrepreneurs, with 53% of them seeking to reconcile family responsibilities and career.

Despite these challenges, female entrepreneurship continues to grow and evolve, playing a key role in the pursuit of a more equal society. The analysis of gender and race representations in educational practices is essential to understand the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that permeate Brazilian society. This study focuses on the management course for women offered by the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (Sebrae), a vital institution in the training of female entrepreneurs in Brazil.

The growing relevance of these representations in the educational and business context highlights the need for a detailed and critical analysis. In Brazil, gender and race inequalities are deeply rooted and manifest themselves in various ways, including in

education and the labor market. Previous research indicates an underrepresentation of women and people of color in leadership and management positions, reflecting systemic barriers that need to be addressed. This article seeks to explore how these issues are dealt with in Sebrae's management course for women.

The objective of this study is to analyze, from a semiotic perspective, the representations of gender and race present in the didactic materials of the management course for women offered by Sebrae. It is intended to understand how these representations influence the education and perception of students. Through this analysis, we seek to provide valuable perspectives for the development of more inclusive and equitable educational practices, contributing to the promotion of gender and race equality in business education.

In addition, a practical activity of image analysis based on the concepts of semiotics was carried out with master's and doctoral students of the discipline of Education, Technology and Communication of the Education Program of the Catholic University of Brasilia. This activity aimed to demonstrate the objective and subjective factors that make up an image. After this activity, a joint analysis of the images of the management course for women at Sebrae was made, followed by a debate on the possibility of integrating semiotic analysis into educational practice.

The theoretical foundation of this study is based on Lucia Santaella's semiotic theory, which allows a detailed analysis of the signs and symbols present in visual and textual materials. In addition, the methodology of analysis of still images, based on the studies of André Mendes, will be used to identify the underlying messages in the images used in the course. Also, Andrea Filatro's method of instructional design for distance education courses offers the basis for applied educational analysis.

The article is structured as follows: first, we address the Theoretical Foundations of Semiotics, followed by the Implications of Semiotics in Education. Then, we present the Methodology for Image Analysis, analyze the Instructional Design Applied to the Course and discuss the Dynamics of Race and Gender in the Brazilian Context. Subsequently, we conducted a Featured Course Analysis. Finally, we conclude the study, seeking to enrich the debate on inclusion and equity in business education, providing valuable perspectives for the development of fairer educational policies.

## METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach, based on the semiotic analysis of two-dimensional images, according to the theoretical assumptions of André Mendes. The focus falls on the course "Women in Focus", offered by Sebrae, with the objective of understanding how the representation of gender and race is incorporated in the instructional design of the materials used.

The analysis was conducted based on the five stages of the ADDIE model — *Analysis*, *Design*, *Development*, *Implementation* and *Evaluation* — as proposed by Filatro (2008). This structure allowed us to examine the course elaboration path, from the conception of the contents to their practical application.

Texts, images and graphic elements of the course modules were analyzed, with special attention to visual representations and implicit messages that could reinforce or deconstruct gender and race stereotypes. The interpretation of the data followed the principles of semiotics applied to education, seeking to highlight the meanings produced and their relationship with inclusive pedagogical practices.

## RESULTS

The analysis of the visual and textual pieces of the "Women in Focus" course revealed a deliberate effort to promote a more inclusive and diverse representation of black women in leadership, entrepreneurship and management contexts. The selected images escape traditional stereotypes and present black female characters in situations of protagonism, autonomy and technical competence.

With regard to instructional design, a coherence was observed between the educational objectives of the course and the choice of visual representations, which contribute to the valorization of the students' identity and to the deconstruction of exclusionary models historically reproduced in educational environments.

The messages implicit in the analyzed images reinforce a pedagogy based on equity and the appreciation of racial and gender diversity. The use of semiotics proved to be an effective tool to identify how educational materials can promote alternative, more plural meanings that are socially committed to inclusion.

## DISCUSSION

The discussion proposes to deepen the theoretical and analytical reflection of the study data, relating them to the central concepts of the research. It addresses the theoretical bases of semiotics and its application in the analysis of the images of the course "Women in Focus", in addition to the role of instructional design in the construction of social representations in distance education, focusing on gender and race issues in the Brazilian context. It concludes with a critical reflection on the use of semiotic analysis as a pedagogical tool for more inclusive educational practices.

## THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SEMIOTICS

Semiotics is the science that investigates the systems and processes of signs in culture and nature, examining the various forms, types and systems of representations, as well as the effects generated by the use of these signs, which range from simple signs to complex symbols. These fundamental processes involve signification, communication, and interpretation (SANTAELLA, 2017).

Signification refers to the process by which signs acquire meaning, representing something to someone in a specific context, through the attribution of meaning via cultural associations, social conventions, or individual experiences. Communication, in turn, is the exchange of meanings between individuals through signs, transmitting messages from the sender to the receiver using shared signs and codes, whether verbally, through gestures, symbols, or images. While interpretation refers to the understanding of the meanings transmitted by the signs, it is an active and subjective process in which the receiver attributes meaning to the message received, which may vary according to their experiences, knowledge and cultural context.

In Peirce's conception, the sign is characterized by a triadic nature, which means that it can be analyzed in three distinct aspects: (i) in its essence, considering its internal properties and its intrinsic power of signification, that is, how it acquires its own meaning; (ii) in its relationship with what it represents, indicates or refers to, elucidating how signs connect with the objects or concepts they represent; (iii) in the effects it is capable of producing in its receptors, that is, in the different types of interpretation it can elicit in its users. This triadic analysis offers a comprehensive understanding of the process of signification and communication mediated by signs, highlighting its complexity and breadth in human and cultural interaction (SANTAELLA, 2002).

According to Peirce's semiotics, our perception of the world occurs through the translation and interpretation of sensations caused by external phenomena. Initially, these stimuli generate sensations (firstness), which are filtered by the subject's perceptual schemes, resulting in partial representations in the interpreting mind (secondness). This process is automatic, but representations need to be evaluated by a system of values, which guides actions and interpretations (thirdness). Thus, human empirical experience is always mediated by perceptual schemas, which are shaped by socialization and adjusted throughout life. The more adjustments the individual makes, the more unique his interpretation of external stimuli will be (SANTAELLA, 2000).

Santaella (2002) points out that:

Semiotic theory allows us to penetrate the internal movement of messages themselves, the way they are engendered, the procedures and resources used in them. It also allows us to capture its vectors of referentiality not only in a more immediate context, but also in an extended context, because in every process of signs there are marks left by history, by the level of development of the economic productive forces, by the technique and by the subject that produces them (SANTAELLA, 2002, p. 5).

Faced with this potential, it is natural to seek in the abstract principles and classifications of signs guidelines for a method of analysis to be applied to the existing processes of signs and the messages they transmit. These processes can be found in a variety of artistic forms and media, such as poems, songs, paintings, photos, films, journalistic news, dance, advertising pieces, among others, regardless of the medium in which they are broadcast: printed, photographic, cinematographic or videographic. In other words, this is a methodological-analytical path that seeks to address the various natures of messages, whether verbal, imagetic, sound or their combinations, such as word and image, or image and sound, among others. In addition, it is able to address the processes of reference or applicability of messages, as well as the ways in which receivers perceive, feel and understand messages and, finally, how they react to them (SANTAELLA, 2002).

## IMPLICATIONS OF SEMIOTICS IN EDUCATION

In the diverse and technological society we live in today, semiotics, as a science of signs and signification, plays a crucial role in education by offering a deep approach to understanding how knowledge is constructed, communicated, and interpreted. In addition, it offers a rich theoretical and methodological tool to improve educational practice, allowing us



to understand how new digital media influence education, changing the forms of communication and interaction in the educational environment.

According to Santaella (2001), in the analysis of educational content, semiotics can be used to analyze texts and teaching materials, identifying how signs — words, images and symbols — are used to transmit knowledge and values. This analysis helps to understand how the contents are structured and perceived by the students, allowing us to understand how different modes of communication, such as visual, textual and auditory, are combined in the teaching materials to create meanings. This is essential for developing effective educational resources that engage students more fully.

Faced with this enormous growth of signs, Santaella (1995) is quite assertive in her statements when she states that:

The world is becoming increasingly complex, hyperpopulated with signs that are there to be understood and interacted with. It is high time that we got rid of the narrow and impoverishing prejudice that the notion of a sign is equivalent exclusively to a linguistic sign, that is, that only the verbal sign is a sign. It also does not help much, to overcome this prejudice, to verify that there are other signs beyond or below the verbal ones, but to continue to see them with the same equipment of understanding used to understand verbal signs. The profusion of signs distinct from verbal ones is enormous. Each of them will only be understood if it is respected in its difference (SANTAELLA, 1995, p. 11).

In this context, according to Farcas (2006), there is a growing emphasis on the transformative role of the teacher, who needs to overcome reproducivist and accommodating methodologies, focused on the mere transmission of information, which results in passive and receptive students, for active and constructive learning. This new approach replaces the triad "decode, repeat, and memorize" with "read, analyze, and create," encouraging a more critical and creative approach to knowledge. According to Pedro Demo (2012), "learning to learn" involves the ability to build competencies in an interactive and productive way.

Semiotics applied to instructional design is fundamental for the creation of educational materials that are clear and effective in transmitting knowledge. According to Eco (1976), semiotics provides an understanding of the processes of signification and communication, allowing instructional designers to create learning environments that use signs in a strategic way to facilitate the understanding and retention of the content by students. This includes the proper selection of icons, symbols, and graphic representations

that are intuitively understood by learners, contributing to a more engaging and effective educational experience.

In this way, semiotics plays an essential role in instructional design by offering insights into how signs and symbols are interpreted by students. According to Pierce (1931), semiotics helps to understand the relationship between signs, their meanings, and the interpretants, which is crucial for creating educational materials that are intuitively understood and effective in communicating information. Applying semiotic principles in instructional design allows educators to use visual and textual elements in a strategic way, facilitating knowledge building and promoting more meaningful and engaging learning.

## METHODOLOGY FOR IMAGE ANALYSIS

Two-dimensional images have played a crucial role since antiquity, with striking examples such as Egyptian hieroglyphics. Its importance grew exponentially after the middle of the twentieth century due to technical advances that reduced production costs, democratizing the creation and dissemination of images (MENDES, 2019).

Mendes (2019) emphasizes the importance of developing strategies to understand two-dimensional visual products widely disseminated in various media. During his doctorate (2005-2008), he developed a specific methodology for the analysis of Arlindo Daibert's images, formalized in his book "Mapas de Arlindo Daibert: diálogos entre imagens e textos" (2011). This methodology is highlighted for its easy applicability and relevance, being continuously improved through its application in the classroom and articles.

The method described by Mendes (2019) comprises two distinct moments: the first, objective and analytical, and the second, subjective and synthetic, which considers suggestions and redundancies perceived in the initial phase, in addition to contextual data. The interpretative synthesis in the second moment is based on the information and speculations generated in the analytical phase.

The objective path includes three stages: (i) selection, (ii) formal analysis and (iii) contextualization of the image. In the selection stage, the analyst discriminates, qualifies and suggests, identifying the elements of the image and highlighting its denotative power. The description is fundamental, as it confirms what was observed and highlights relevant aspects that could go unnoticed. In addition, describing is a way of rationalizing impressions and sensations, selecting the most credible ones.



To facilitate the analysis, it is recommended to adopt a descriptive/qualitative and suggestive table, as shown in Chart 01 below. This approach provides a clearer visualization of the information, stimulating a more accurate attention on the part of the analyst to the images and allowing quick and direct access to the relevant data. The initial procedure consists of identifying and numbering the pertinent elements/signs present in the images, providing details about their characteristics and the suggestions they evoke. It is important to emphasize that the last column of the table should be filled in only during the interpretation (second moment), when the analyst is more prepared to determine the meaning of the elements and their contribution to the internal code of the image.

**Table 1. Descriptive/Qualitative and Suggestive Framework Template**

Descriptive element	Decomposition		Qualification	What the elements and their qualities suggest	What the element means in the image's internal code
Element	Body	Head			
		Hands			
		Feet			
	Clothing	Shirt			
		Shoes			
	Other	Brush			

**Source:** Mendes (2019, p. 23-24).

In the second stage, the formal analysis of the elements of the image is conducted, focusing on aspects such as colors, shapes, lines and composition. Attention is directed to identify repetitions or contrasts between these elements, in addition to examining the shots and framing used.

In the third stage, the contextualization of the image in time, space and in the History of Art and Culture is carried out. This includes research on the representations associated with signs in the society in which it was produced and in which it is being conveyed. Relevant aspects, such as iconography, the author of the work and its style, are considered to determine the bibliography to be consulted and the operational concepts to be used. The "subjective" process of image analysis is divided into three stages. Initially, the elements are understood within their specific context, considering their interaction with other signs of the system.

In the second step, the internal code of the image is established by filling in a box that explains the meaning of the elements in the context of the image. This phase makes it possible to review and adjust the information in the table. The internal code is based on consensual meaning frameworks, but can acquire different meanings due to the arrangement of the elements in the image, as illustrated in Table 01 above.

In journalistic and propaganda images, the determination of codes is simpler, as they are usually argumentative and planned to affirm a single idea. In artistic images, on the other hand, which seek to propose more than one statement, the codes are more difficult to define, as they suggest ambiguous meanings.

In the third stage, called interpretation, after establishing the "internal code" of the image, it is sought to identify and relate the paradigms and discourses associated with the images, completing the hermeneutic analysis. Next, the analysis explores the insertion of the image in the Western collective imagination and its consequences. At the end of this process, the final text is drafted.

The analysis of the images of the management course for women offered by Sebrae was carried out by the authors following the methodology of André Mendes, as described in this topic. In the class on June 28, 2024, master's and doctoral students in the discipline of Education, Technology and Communication were divided into three groups to participate in a practical activity, in which they analyzed an image using the same methodology and answered the following question: How to integrate semiotic analysis into educational work? Is it possible to use it to address gender and ethnicity issues?

After this activity, the images of the didactic materials of the Sebrae course were presented to the class and the analyses carried out by the authors were discussed. Then, the students were encouraged to reflect on how to integrate semiotic analysis into educational practice and on the feasibility of using it to address gender and ethnicity issues. This dynamic promoted a rich debate on the practical application of semiotics in education, highlighting its potential to reveal and question the representations of gender and race in teaching materials and their implications in the education of students.

## INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN APPLIED TO THE COURSE

For Filatro (2018), the challenge of producing content for distance education involves technique, talent, discipline and sensitivity. Instructional design refers to the action aimed at teaching that contemplates the elaboration of planning, development, implementation and

evaluation with the intention of promoting learning. This action is intentional and requires organization so that its unfolding occurs in a systematic way (FILATRO, 2008).

The preparation of didactic material for distance education, which favors student learning, requires a commitment and responsibility from those who produce it. If this is not the case, the student will have losses and, consequently, this will reflect on the institution that is offering the courses. It is essential to keep in mind that, regardless of the support in which it is found, the didactic material must focus on the truth, respect for culture, be marked by ethics and, above all, not incite any type of segregation or prejudice (BENTO, 2017).

The phases of instructional design, according to Filatro's (2008) proposal, are the analysis, planning, development, implementation and evaluation of a course following the ADDIE model: *Analysis* , *Design* , *Development* , *Implementation* , *Evaluation* .

The analysis is the first phase and serves as a reference for the others. When identifying the educational problem, the learning context - technological infrastructure, financial resources, organizational policies, local culture, among others - and the target audience are analyzed. In this sense, the cognitive characteristics of the students, their prior knowledge, skills, social and motivational characteristics, as well as learning goals and objectives are examined.

The second phase is planning, which consists of structuring the educational project. At this point, the strategies that lead to the achievement of the learning objectives are defined, the organization of the contents is detailed, the media are selected, the teaching methods are chosen and the target audience to be reached is described. Development is the third phase, in which the production and development of teaching resources and materials occurs.

In addition, at this stage, the virtual learning environment is organized respecting the pedagogical conception of the course and its purposes. In the fourth phase, the implementation phase, material validation tests and material adjustments are carried out before the offer. Finally, the fifth phase of evaluation takes place during all stages of the process, but also after implementation. Formative assessment is present in every phase of the ADDIE model, which is widely used in instructional design. The first three phases correspond to conception, while the last two to execution.

In education, the "look" can be understood as the way in which educators and students visualize and interpret teaching materials. In semiotic terms, this involves decoding

the visual meanings, such as images, layouts, and interfaces, that are used to convey information and concepts. Filatro (2018), when discussing instructional design, emphasizes the importance of effective visual design that not only captures attention but also facilitates learner understanding and engagement.

Semiotics can help unravel how students perceive and interpret different visual elements, which is crucial for creating effective educational resources. Filatro (2018) discusses the importance of clear and effective communication strategies in teaching, especially in virtual environments where speech can be mediated by technology. Semiotics provides a lens through which we can understand how language influences learning and how it can be optimized to improve knowledge transmission and educational interaction.

The visual and methodological map, in addition to the instructional design matrix, called product map by Sebrae, supported the conception of the course referred to and point out the sources of research and resources used to conceive the Analysis phase (ADDIE Model). The sources and resources used revealed the sociodemographic, economic and educational characteristics of the Brazilian women entrepreneurs surveyed.

The in-depth analysis of these data allowed the Design and Development phases to include educational approaches and strategies, content and technologies appropriate for the development of socio-emotional skills. It was observed that the design and development of the course used learning objects contextualized with the challenges of women entrepreneurs. The images used in the course's support materials consider the existing racial, ethnic, age, social and regional plurality.

## DYNAMICS OF RACE AND GENDER IN THE BRAZILIAN CONTEXT

The National Curriculum Guidelines for the Education of Ethnic-Racial Relations define "race" as a social construction, arising from the tensions between whites and blacks in Brazilian society (BRASIL, 2005). This definition implies that physical attributes, such as skin color and hair type, influence the social position of individuals. Munanga (2003) describes "race" as an ideological category that masks relations of power and control, varying between different political and cultural contexts.

Racism, according to the National Human Rights Program (BRASIL, 1998), is an ideology that establishes a hierarchy between human groups to justify exploitation. Brazilian society, with roots in slavery, perpetuates racist practices that are often naturalized in everyday life. According to Sousa (1983, p. 19), "[t]he slave society, by transforming the African into a slave [...] instituted the parallelism between black color and inferior social position." Institutional racism, according to Almeida (2019), becomes evident when institutions benefit or harm individuals based on race, reflecting an educational system that fails to review and combat discriminatory values.

Ribeiro (2009) emphasizes the need for a structural analysis of racism in Brazil, linking it to slavery and its historical repercussions. He highlights the importance of recognizing privileges and adopting anti-racist positions. Thus, "if the first step is to denaturalize the gaze conditioned by racism, the second is to create spaces, especially in places that black people do not usually access" (RIBEIRO, 2009, p. 36). Data from the IBGE (2022) show that, although 53.8% of the workforce is composed of blacks, only 29.5% hold managerial positions.

The Black Movement and Black women's organizations have been crucial in the fight against racial and gender inequalities, highlighting the persistent vulnerability of Black women. Despite the increase in female representation, black women are still mostly in socially devalued functions. Data from the IBGE (2024) show a minimal growth in the presence of women in managerial positions, from 36% in 2012 to 39.3% in 2022. Black women face additional challenges, with significant underrepresentation in leadership positions: in 2022, only 31% of managerial positions were held by Black women, compared to 67.7% by white women.

This underrepresentation reflects inequalities in access to employment opportunities and career progression, in addition to perpetuating stereotypes and prejudices in the corporate environment. To promote racial equity, it is essential to adopt inclusive policies

that ensure a more accessible work environment for all women. Black women's struggle against gender and race oppression is redefining feminist and anti-racist political action in Brazil, enriching the debate on racial and gender issues (CARNEIRO, 2011).

## FEATURED COURSE ANALYSIS

The Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (Sebrae) is a private entity that promotes the competitiveness and sustainable development of micro and small business enterprises. Its activities are focused on strengthening entrepreneurship and accelerating the process of formalizing the economy through partnerships with the public and private sectors, training programs, access to credit and innovation, encouragement of associations, incentive to entrepreneurial education in formal education, fairs and business roundtables. The solutions developed by Sebrae serve from the entrepreneur who intends to open his first business to small companies that are already consolidated and seek a new positioning in the market, as well as the individual who seeks to build his life project by developing his entrepreneurial skills since childhood.

The featured course, called "Women in Focus", is offered in classes of up to sixty women on the Sebrae portal. It takes place online over the course of a week, through a digital platform, with a workload of eight hours. The course includes live classes every day, as well as mentoring and community on WhatsApp. Its central objective is to develop socio-emotional and technical skills to provide greater confidence, self-esteem and entrepreneurial independence to the participants. For this, the contents were organized and structured so that the participants could build knowledge and develop the necessary socio-emotional skills.

The first day of the course addresses the topic of self-image and proposes that participants identify the impacts of gender stereotypes on their own confidence. The second day presents self-confidence as a strategy to face the fear of judgment. The third day develops skills for assertive communication. The fourth day deals with decision-making, and the fifth day addresses leadership. The course environment is welcoming, mediated exclusively by teachers, mentors and monitors, establishing a network of support and mutual trust with the participants.

The following images illustrate several moments of the "Women in Focus" course, evidencing the methodology applied and the visual resources used. They demonstrate the phases of interaction between the participants and the mentors, as well as examples of the



educational materials used. Through these images, it is possible to observe how instructional design was designed to address the themes of self-image, self-confidence, assertive communication, decision-making, and leadership in a practical and engaging way.

**Figure 1. This space is ours!**



**Source:** Slide number 23 of day 04 of the course, live class on Decision Making.

**Table 2. Semiotic analysis of figure 1**

Descriptive element	Decomposition		Qualification	What the elements and their qualities suggest.	What the element means in the image's internal code.
Main text	"This space is ours!"	Inclusion, community, empowerment.	It suggests a shared and welcoming space, encouraging participation and sharing of stories.	The main text denotes inclusion and empowerment.	The text and visual elements create an atmosphere of empowerment and emotional support.
List of points	Messages encouraging sharing, inspiring and talking	Welcoming, motivation, interaction	Encourages interaction and mutual support between women	The list of points encourages interaction and mutual support.	The list of points and the action button are strategically placed to guide the viewer's gaze.

Additional text	Message about the importance of conversation circles for those who do not feel comfortable talking in a group	Support, empathy, understanding	It suggests creating a safe environment for personal expression and emotional support	The additional text and action button suggest a safe and interactive environment.	They suggest an interactive space where women can express themselves freely and find emotional support.
Action text	"Schedule a conversation circle with 4 more women!"	Action, interaction	Encourages active participation and the creation of small conversation groups		The list of points and the action button are strategically placed to guide the viewer's gaze.
Elderly female figure	Smiling elderly woman with white red hair wearing glasses and big earrings.	Wisdom, joy, welcoming.	It suggests a welcoming and wise personality, reinforcing the message of inclusion and empowerment.	The facial expression of the elderly woman denotes joy and acceptance.	The representation of a smiling elderly woman and the emphasis on conversation circles reflect values of empowerment, inclusion and mutual support among women.
Color palette	Soft and warm colors, with emphasis on purple and beige.	Warmth, comfort, welcoming.	The soft colours contribute to the feeling of a warm and comfortable environment.	The soft colours contribute to the feeling of comfort and warmth.	Realistic visual style, with the use of soft colors to create a cozy atmosphere.
Logo	Sebrae logo	Institutional, authority	The logo lends credibility and authority to the message	Credibility to the message.	a safe and supportive environment.

**Source:** Prepared by the author (2024) based on Mendes (2019, p. 23-24).

## Interpretative Synthesis

The image combines visual and textual elements to communicate a message of inclusion, empowerment, and emotional support. The main text "This space is ours!" sets a tone of community and welcoming, encouraging women to share their stories and support each other. The bullet list reinforces this message by encouraging participation and mutual inspiration.

The figure of the smiling elderly woman adds a dimension of wisdom and warmth to the image, reinforcing the message of a safe and supportive environment. The soft and

warm color palette contributes to the feeling of comfort and warmth, while the Sebrae logo lends credibility to the message.

The additional text on conversation circles and the action button to schedule meetings suggest an interactive space where women can express themselves freely and find emotional support. The image, therefore, highlights the importance of inclusive and safe spaces for personal expression and female empowerment.

The visual and textual elements have been carefully chosen to create a narrative that evokes a positive emotional response from the viewer, highlighting the importance of inclusion, empowerment, and mutual support among women.

**Figure 2. Businesswomen**



**Source:** Slide number 24 of day 05 of the live class course on Leadership.

**Table 3. Semiotic analysis of figure 2**

Descriptive element	Decomposition	Qualification	What the elements and their qualities suggest.	What the element means in the image's internal code.
Female figure	Young woman lying down looking at a tablet.	Concentration, interest, involvement.	Suggests a person engaged in learning or work.	The representation of a young woman engaged in continuous learning reflects values of empowerment, self-determination, and the importance of continuous education

				for professional success.
Environment	Blurred background, probably an indoor and comfortable environment	Cozy, private atmosphere	The environment suggests a comfortable and personal space, possibly at home.	The blurred environment suggests comfort and privacy.
Facial expression	Calm and focused face	Concentration, serenity	Facial expression indicates focus and interest in what you are doing	The facial expression denotes concentration and interest.
Color palette	Warm and soft colors, with emphasis on shades of yellow and green	Warmth, comfort	Warm and soft colours contribute to the feeling of a cosy and comfortable environment	Realistic visual style, with the use of soft and warm colors to create a cozy atmosphere.
Main text	"Women and Business: Learning to Learn"	Informative, motivational	The text highlights the importance of continuous learning for women in the business world	The main and secondary texts offer information and motivation about continuous learning.
Secondary text	Message encouraging development as a " <i>lifelong learner</i> " and explaining the concept	Educational, encouraging	Suggests the importance of continuing education and offers additional information	
Additional Image	A thumbnail of another image related to a similar message	Redundancy, emphasis.	It reflects the continuity of the theme and reinforces the main message.	The additional image reinforces the main message.
Logo	Sebrae logo	Institutional, authority.	The logo lends credibility and authority to the message.	The Sebrae logo confers credibility.

**Source:** Prepared by the author (2024) based on Mendes (2019, p. 23-24).

## Interpretative Synthesis

The image combines visual and textual elements to communicate a message of empowerment and ongoing education. The young woman lying down, looking at a tablet, suggests a comfortable and private learning environment, with focus and interest. His facial

expression of concentration and serenity reinforces the idea of involvement in learning.

The main text "Women and business: learning to learn" highlights the importance of continuous learning for women in the business world. The secondary text encourages development as a "*lifelong learner*" and offers additional information, emphasizing the importance of continuing education.

The additional image and logo of Sebrae reinforce the credibility and continuity of the theme, creating a cohesive visual narrative. The soft and warm color palette contributes to the feeling of comfort and warmth, while the strategic composition of the visual and textual elements guides the viewer's eye and reinforces the main message.

The visual representation highlights the importance of continuous learning and personal and professional development for women, communicating a message of empowerment and motivation. The visual elements have been carefully chosen to create a narrative that evokes a positive emotional response from the viewer, highlighting the joy and importance of continuous learning.

## REFLECTION ON SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

In the Education, Technology and Communication class, held on June 28, 2024, ways to integrate semiotic analysis into educational work were discussed, especially in the context of addressing gender and ethnicity issues. The responses of the three groups of students highlighted the relevance and benefits of this approach.

The first group emphasized the importance of analyzing how genders are represented in the media, identifying stereotypes and recurring patterns. They argued that by discussing the implications of these representations for the perception and behavior of individuals, it is possible to promote a critical understanding of gender roles and their influences on social dynamics. The media, as a central vehicle for the construction of cultural meanings, plays a crucial role in perpetuating or deconstructing gender stereotypes, making this analysis a powerful tool in education.

The second group highlighted that integrating semiotic analysis into educational practice is not only possible, but often beneficial, especially when addressing complex issues such as gender and ethnicity. Semiotics, which is dedicated to the study of signs and the processes of signification, offers an effective analytical lens to examine how symbols, languages, and cultural representations contribute to the construction of gender and ethnic identities. This group stressed that, by understanding these processes, educators and

students can question and challenge established norms, promoting a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.

The third group focused on the practical application of semiotics, suggesting that this approach helps in the combined interpretation of texts and images, contributing to a more critical view of the subjects. They mentioned that the use of images, from visual literacy, helps in reading comprehension and orality. By integrating semiotic analysis into educational practices, it is possible to effectively address issues of gender and ethnicity, enriching the educational process with a deeper and more critical understanding of cultural representations.

These discussions demonstrated that semiotic analysis can be a valuable tool in the educational context, offering multiple perspectives and methods for addressing and understanding the complex dynamics of gender and ethnicity. Utilizing this approach not only enriches teaching and learning, but also promotes critical awareness and the deconstruction of harmful stereotypes, contributing to the formation of a more just and equitable society.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study sought to explore the relevance and challenges of female entrepreneurship in Brazil, approaching the issue from a semiotic and educational perspective. Based on a detailed analysis of the didactic materials of the management course for women offered by Sebrae, we identified how the representations of gender and race influence the education and perception of female students.

With regard to inclusion and diversity, semiotics can be used to analyze and critique how genders and races are represented in educational materials, promoting a more inclusive and critical education. This is crucial for combating stereotypes and promoting equality. In addition, semiotic analysis can help to understand how different cultures use signs in different ways, promoting an education that respects and values cultural diversity. This prepares students to live and work in a multicultural world.

Sebrae's "Women in Focus" course, analyzed in this study, demonstrates a commitment to the inclusion and empowerment of women entrepreneurs, offering a learning space that considers the plurality of experiences and challenges faced by these women. However, it is essential to continue improving teaching materials and methods to ensure



that all women, regardless of their race or social status, have equal access to business development opportunities.

In short, this study contributes to the debate on inclusion and equity in business education, offering valuable insights for the development of fairer educational practices. The application of semiotic and instructional design principles can not only enrich the training of women entrepreneurs, but also promote a more equal and diverse society. Strengthening female entrepreneurship is a fundamental step in the fight for a fairer and more equitable society, where everyone has the opportunity to prosper.

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