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Peircean Semiotic Analysis of Simplicity in *Teh Botol Sosro* Posters

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ABSTRACT

Advertisements are not only promotional media but also cultural texts through which meanings are constructed through visual and verbal signs. This study examines how a culturally situated representation of simplicity is constructed in six *Teh Botol Sosro* advertising posters published on the brand's official Instagram account *(@tehbotolsosroid*) during 2025–2026. Using a qualitative interpretive design, the study applies to Charles Sanders Peirce's classification of icons, indices, and symbols to analyze the relations between signs and their objects. Data was collected through documentation and analyzed by identifying, classifying, and interpreting visual and verbal signs in relation to their immediate social contexts. The findings indicate that iconic signs establish recognizable everyday situations, indexical signs connect represented elements to actions and relationships, and symbolic signs reinforce meanings through linguistic and cultural convention. Together, these sign relations construct simplicity through four interrelated dimensions: everydayness, non-ostentation, accessibility, and relationality. The study therefore understands simplicity not as an inherent Indonesian cultural value or a minimalist visual style, but as a culturally situated representation of ordinary, accessible, and non-ostentatious social life. As the analysis is limited to six static posters from a single brand and examines the advertising texts rather than audience reception, the findings describe how simplicity is constructed and represented in the advertisements rather than how audiences actually interpret them.

Keywords: Charles Sanders Peirce, Classification of Signs, Semiotics, Simplicity, *Teh Botol Sosro*

INTRODUCTION

Advertising is not only a commercial practice for promoting products but also a form of mediated communication through which meanings, values, and cultural associations are constructed. Advertisements combine verbal and visual resources to position products within particular social contexts, allowing everyday objects, activities, and interpersonal relationships to acquire meanings beyond their immediate commercial functions (Chandler, 2007; Li & Ye, 2022). In this sense, advertising can be examined as a cultural text because its signs draw upon socially recognizable practices and conventions to make products meaningful to particular audiences. In Indonesia cultural values such as mutual assistance, social harmony, tolerance, and religiosity have long been discussed in relation to consumption and marketing practices (Sarwono, 1998). Such values may therefore become resources through which advertising

represents products as familiar components of everyday social life rather than merely as commodities.

Within this cultural landscape, this study conceptualizes simplicity not as minimalist aesthetic or the absence of decoration, but as a cultural value expressed through modest, relationship-centered everyday life. Togetherness, *gotong royong*, and harmony are treated as culturally grounded expressions of simplicity rather than separate or loosely related values (Butler, 2016; Sarwono, 1998; Turyani et al., 2024). This interpretive link is supported by Javanese ethical philosophy, in which an inward orientation of humility and self-restraint that rejects ostentation *(andhap asor)* and an outward orientation toward social harmony *(rukun)* function as parts of a single, coherent ethical framework (Awalin et al., 2026; Suseno, 2018).

Advertisements communicate such values through signs that audiences interpret according to shared cultural knowledge. Among available semiotic approaches, Charles Sanders Peirce's classification of signs into icon, index, and symbol is particularly suitable because it enables researchers to identify how distinct categories of signs contribute to meaning construction in visual advertisement (Chandler, 2007). This study examines *Teh Botol Sosro*, one of Indonesia's most established beverage brands, whose advertisements consistently portray familiar everyday situations rather than exclusivity, making them an appropriate object for investigating how simplicity is represented through visual signs.

Teh Botol Sosro advertisements have been examined from several perspectives. Gunawan and Simatupang (2022) and Ramdhan et al. (2023) applied Roland Barthes' concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth to reveal how scenes of breaking the fast and sharing meals construct myths of Indonesian unity and togetherness. Taking a different approach, Sulistyo et al. (2020) combined Peirce's sign, object, and interpretant model with Stuart Hall's theory of representation to examine moral messages such as tolerance and hospitality. Amallia and Rustanta (2020) likewise found that Indonesian food advertising communicates cultural identity through familiar, everyday situations. Collectively, these studies show that advertisements function as cultural texts that communicate social values beyond their commercial purpose.

Despite these contributions, several gaps remain, First, previous studies predominantly rely on Barthes' semiotic framework or integrate Peirce's broader triadic model with other theoretical perspectives, leaving limited attention to Peirce's specific classification of sign such as icon, index, and symbol, as an analytical framework in its own right. Second, although Indonesian cultural values such as togetherness, hospitality and national identity have received considerable attention, simplicity has rarely been investigated as a distinct cultural value expressed through ordinary social life, modest interpersonal relationships, and everyday social practices. Consequently, little is known about how different categories of signs operate individually and interactively to construct the meaning of simplicity in advertising. Addressing these gaps, the present study applies Peirce's classification of signs to examine how icon, index, and symbol represent simplicity as an Indonesian cultural value in *Teh Botol Sosro* advertising posters.

Accordingly, this study address two research questions: (1) What icon, index, and symbol are found in the visual elements of six selected *Teh Botol Sosro* advertising posters, and (2) how these signs represent simplicity as an Indonesian cultural value. The analysis is limited to six posters published on the brand's official Instagram account and does not extend to television or video advertisements, nor does it apply alternative semiotic frameworks such as Barthes' denotation, connotation, myth model or Peirce's triadic representamen, object, interpretant model. By applying Peirce's classification of signs, this study contributes to

semiotic research on advertising and cultural representation and offers advertising practitioners insight into how visual signs can effectively communicate cultural values that are familiar and meaningful to Indonesian audiences.

METHOD

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a qualitative interpretive design using semiotic analysis to examine how visual and verbal signs construct the representation of simplicity in advertising. The study did not seek to measure audience responses or determine the frequency with which particular signs occurred. Instead, it examined the relations through which selected signs refer to objects and contribute to culturally situated meanings within the advertisements. A qualitative approach was therefore appropriate because the analysis focused on the interpretation of meaning within a bounded corpus of multimodal texts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The semiotic analysis was guided by Charles Sanders Peirce's classification of signs into icons, indices, and symbols. These categories were treated as different modes of relation between a sign and its object rather than as simple labels for visual elements. Icons were identified through relations of resemblance, indices through actual, existential, or contextual connection, and symbols through meanings established by convention or habitual association (Peirce, 1931–1966; Chandler, 2007; Ding, 2016). This framework was used to examine how visual and verbal resources in the selected advertisements contribute to the representation of ordinary, non-ostentatious, and relational social life.

DATA AND CORPUS SELECTION

The data consisted of six static advertising posters published on the official Instagram account of *Teh Botol Sosro*, *@tehbotolsosroid*, between 2025 and 2026. The official account was selected because it provided an identifiable and publicly accessible corpus of brand-produced advertising materials. The corpus was treated as archival data because the advertisements had already been publicly published on the brand's official Instagram account before they were retrieved for this study. The publication dates presented in Table 1 refer to original publication dates of the advertisements, while the data collection period refers to the time when the researchers retrieved and documented the publicly available materials. The unit of analysis was each poster and the visual and verbal signs contained within it, including human figures, objects, spatial settings, gestures, facial expressions, product placement, logos, slogans, and other written messages.

The posters were selected through purposive criterion sampling. Selection was based on the following criteria: (1) the material was published on the official Instagram account of *Teh Botol Sosro* during the specified period; (2) the post consisted primarily of a static advertising image rather than a video; (3) the poster contained identifiable visual and/or verbal signs relevant to semiotic analysis; and (4) the six selected posters represented different every day or social contexts, including family dining, food consumption, travelling, daily preparation, festive celebration, and informal gathering. The posters were not selected because they had already been determined to represent simplicity. Rather, they were selected to provide variation in the social contexts through which the brand was represented. The interpretation of whether and how simplicity emerged from these contexts was developed during the analytical process.

The final corpus comprised six posters associated with the following campaign messages: *Apapun Kebersamaannya, Minumnya..., Apapun yang Jadi Andalan Perut Kamu, Minumnya..., Apapun Cemilannya, Minumnya..., Apapun Persiapannya, Minumnya..., Apapun Perayaannya, Minumnya..., and Teh Botol Sosro Mengandung 100% Teh & Melati Asli.* For transparency and reproducibility, the publication date, campaign message, and source location of each poster should be recorded in the research corpus table or supplementary material.

Table 1. presents the six advertising posters selected as the corpus for this study

Code	Publication date	Campaign Message	Social context	Source
P1	May 10, 2025	*Apapun Kebersamaannya, Minumnya...*	Family dining	*@tehbotolsosroid*
P2	April 13, 2025	*Apapun yang Jadi Andalan Perut Kamu, Minumnya...*	Food consumption	*@tehbotolsosroid*
P3	April 17, 2025	*Apapun Cemilannya, Minumnya...*	Travelling/snacking	*@tehbotolsosroid*
P4	March 20, 2026	*Apapun Persiapannya, Minumnya...*	Daily preparation/travel	*@tehbotolsosroid*
P5	March 22, 2026	*Apapun Perayaannya, Minumnya...*	Eid celebration	*@tehbotolsosroid*
P6	January 23, 2026	*Teh Botol Sosro Mengandung 100% Teh & Melati Asli*	Informal gathering	*@tehbotolsosroid*

DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected through documentation. The selected posters were retrieved from the official Instagram account and preserved as the primary visual corpus for analysis. The publication dates of the posters were recorded based on the dates displayed on the official Instagram account and therefore represent the original publication dates rather than the researchers' data collection dates. Each poster was assigned a code from P1 to P6. All identifiable verbal and visual elements were then documented in an analytical matrix.

The matrix included the following components: (1) poster code; (2) identified sign; (3) mode of sign, such as visual or verbal; (4) object or referent; (5) proposed Peircean classification; (6) justification for the classification based on the relation between the sign and its object; (7) immediate contextual meaning; and (8) contribution to the representation of simplicity. The matrix was designed to ensure that the classification of signs was not based solely on the researchers' intuitive interpretation of individual visual elements.

Publicly available advertising materials were used exclusively as the research corpus. No interaction with human participants was involved, and the study did not collect personal information or analyze private communication.

ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

The analysis was conducted in four stages. First, each poster was examined as a multimodal advertising text. Its verbal and visual components were identified and documented, including people, objects, food, product packaging, gestures, facial expressions, spatial settings, logos, slogans, and written claims.

Second, each relevant sign was analyzed according to its relation to the object or referent. A sign was classified as iconic when its meaning depended primarily on resemblance to the represented object. A sign was classified as indexical when its relation to the object was based on an actual, contextual, or existential connection. A sign was classified as symbolic when its meaning depended primarily on social, linguistic, or cultural convention (Peirce, 1931–1966; Chandler, 2007; Ding, 2016). Each classification was accompanied by an analytical justification rather than merely assigning an icon, index, or symbol label to the sign.

Third, the immediate meanings of the identified signs were interpreted in relation to the social contexts represented in the posters. This stage examined meanings such as family interaction, food consumption, travelling, hospitality, preparation, celebration, and informal social gathering. These meanings were initially treated as distinct cultural or social associations rather than automatically being equated with simplicity.

Finally, the findings were synthesized across the six posters to examine whether the configuration of iconic, indexical, and symbolic relations contributed to a consistent representation of simplicity. In this study, simplicity was operationally examined through four interrelated interpretive dimensions: everydayness, non-ostentation, accessibility, and relationality. Everydayness referred to the representation of familiar and ordinary activities; non-ostentation referred to the absence of explicit markers of luxury, prestige, or conspicuous display; accessibility referred to the positioning of the product within ordinary and broadly recognizable social situations; and relationality referred to the representation of interpersonal connection, sharing, and social proximity. These dimensions were used as interpretive criteria rather than predetermined codes that every poster was expected to contain.

The analysis then compared the six posters to identify recurring patterns. The purpose was not to claim that Indonesian audiences necessarily interpret the advertisements in the same way, since no audience-reception data were collected. Rather, the analysis examined how the advertisements themselves construct and position simplicity through the relationships among signs and their culturally recognizable contexts.

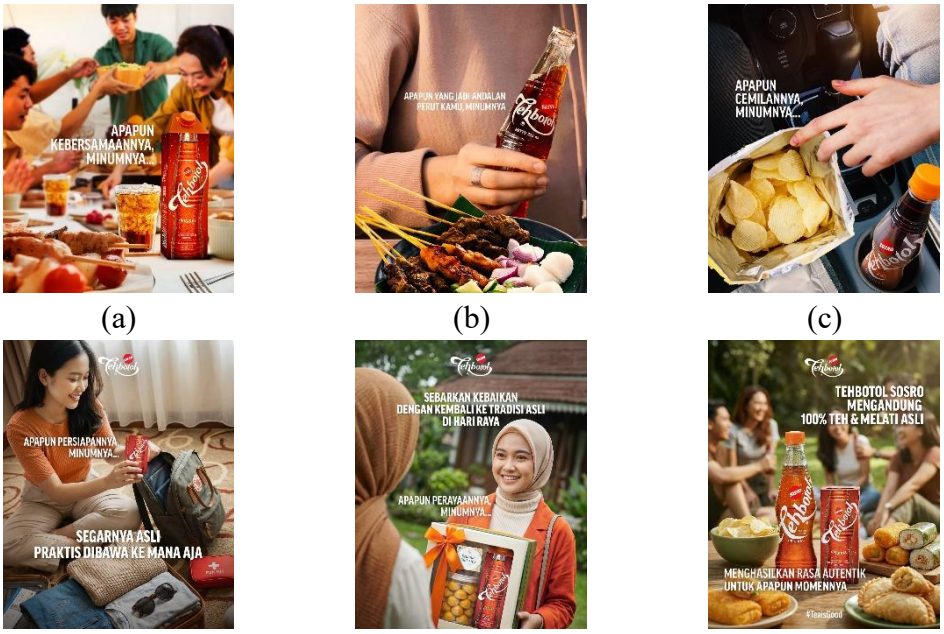
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Thus, the analytical process followed the sequence: advertising element → sign‑object relation → icon/index/symbol classification → immediate contextual meaning → culturally situated interpretation → contribution to simplicity. The analysis focused on how the configuration of iconic, indexical, and symbolic relations across the advertisements contributed to the construction of simplicity. The study did not claim that Indonesian audiences necessarily interpreted the advertisements in the same manner because no audience-reception data were collected. Instead, it examined how the advertisements themselves constructed and positioned simplicity through culturally recognizable signs and social contexts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the six selected *Teh Botol Sosro* advertising posters identified recurring iconic, indexical, and symbolic resources through which the advertisements construct culturally familiar representations of everyday social life. Rather than treating each sign category as independently producing the meaning of simplicity, the analysis shows that the categories contribute different functions within the same advertising configuration. Icons primarily establish recognizable people, objects, and situations; indices connect visual elements to

actions, relationships, and circumstances represented within the scene; and symbols provide meanings that depend on linguistic or cultural convention. The representation of simplicity emerges when these resources collectively position *Teh Botol Sosro* within ordinary, accessible, non-ostentatious, and relational situations.



(a) (b) (c)

(d) (e) (f)

Figure 1 The six selected *Teh Botol Sosro* advertising posters: (a) Poster 1, *"Apapun Kebersamaannya, Minumnya…*; (b) Poster 2, *Apapun yang Jadi Andalan Perut Kamu, Minumnya,*, (c) Poster 3, *Apapun Cemilannya, Minumnya…*, (d) Poster 4, *Apapun Persiapannya, Minumnya…*, (e) Poster 5, *Apapun Perayaannya, Minumnya…*, (f) Poster 6, *Teh Botol Sosro Mengandung 100% Teh & Melati Asli.* Source: official Instagram account *@tehbotolsosroid* (2025-2026). **Note:** The images are reproduced for academic research and analytical purposes only and are not used for commercial purposes.

Table 2. summarizes the identification and Peircean classification of the signs analyzed in the selected posters

Poster / Slogan	**Dominant Icons**	**Key Indices**	**Symbols**	**Thematic Focus**
P1: *"Apapun Kebersamaannya, Minumnya…"*	Family at dining table; food; product package; glass of tea	Ice cubes; water droplets; smiling faces; serving gestures	Logo; slogan	Family togetherness
P2: *"Apapun yang Jadi Andalan Perut Kamu, Minumya"*	Bottle; satay meal; person holding bottle	Bottle held near food; ready-to-eat serving	Logo; slogan	Everyday food culture
P3: *"Apapun Cemilannya, Minumnya…"*	Snacks; car interior; bottle in cup holder	Hand reaching for snack; bottle beside snack	Logo; slogan	Casual snacking while travelling
P4: *"Apapun Persiapannya, Minumnya…"*	Packed belongings; bottle among items	Bottle places with travel items	Logo; slogan; tagline *("Segarnya Asli Dibawa Ke Mana Aja)*	Everyday preparation

Poster / Slogan	Dominant Icons	Key Indices	Symbols	Thematic Focus
P5: *"Apapun Perayaannya, Minumnya…"*	Home visit; gift exchange; festive food	Warm gestures of hospitality and sharing	Logo; slogan; campaign message *"Selamat Idul Fitri"* greeting	Eid tradition and hospitality
P6: *"Teh Botol Sosro Mengandung 100% The & Melati Asli"*	Friends sharing snacks; product close-up	Relaxed gestures of communal enjoyment	Logo; product statement; slogan; hashtag #TeaisGood	Informal communal gathering

The distribution indicates that the advertisements do not rely on a single visual strategy to communicate simplicity. Instead, ordinary settings provide recognizable contexts, interpersonal actions establish social relationships, and verbal or brand-related elements connect these contexts to the product. This configuration is consistent with the broader potential of Peircean semiotics for analyzing advertising as a meaning-producing practice rather than merely as a collection of isolated visual components (Pompeu & Sato, 2024).

ICONS: ESTABLISHING FAMILIAR VISUAL REALITY

The iconic resources in the six posters primarily consist of recognizable representations of people, food, domestic or travel settings, and the *Teh Botol Sosro* product. Their principal function is to establish a visual situation that audiences can readily identify. In Poster 1, for example, the representation of family members gathered around a dining table provides a recognizable image of shared eating. Poster 2 similarly presents familiar food and a bottle of *Teh Botol Sosro* in a food-consumption context, while Poster 3 places snacks and the product within a car interior. Posters 4 and 5 extend this pattern to travel preparation and festive social visits, respectively.

These elements can be interpreted iconically because their visual representation depends substantially on resemblance to the people, objects, and situations represented. The significance of the iconic relation, however, does not end with recognition. Once the advertisement establishes a recognizable everyday situation, the scene becomes a context in which further indexical and symbolic relations can operate. This distinction is important because simply identifying a family, food item, or bottle as an icon does not by itself demonstrate the meaning of simplicity.

The recurrence of ordinary settings across the corpus is therefore more analytically significant than the presence of any single object. The advertisements repeatedly situate the product within activities such as eating, snacking, preparing for travel, visiting others, and spending time with friends. These are not represented as exceptional consumption events or status-oriented occasions. Instead, the product is visually integrated into situations that are recognizable as part of everyday social experience. This finding is broadly consistent with earlier research showing that Indonesian food and beverage advertising can construct cultural meaning through familiar social situations (Amallia & Rustanta, 2020). It also extends earlier *Teh Botol Sosro* research by shifting attention from the general cultural meaning of the advertisement to the semiotic function of the signs through which such familiarity is established.

The iconic dimension therefore contributes primarily to the everydayness of the representation of simplicity. The argument is not that an image of ordinary life automatically

means simplicity. Rather, the repeated representation of familiar activities provides the visual basis for positioning the product within ordinary rather than exceptional consumption.

INDICES: INDICATING SOCIAL ACTION AND EMOTIONAL WARMTH

The indexical dimension becomes visible in elements that connect the represented objects or people with actions, circumstances, or relationships within the advertising scene. Examples include serving gestures, hands reaching towards food, smiling expressions in interpersonal settings, the positioning of the bottle alongside food, and the placement of the product among travel belongings.

Unlike iconic representation, which primarily depends on resemblance, indexical interpretation requires attention to contextual connection. A hand reaching towards a snack, for example, is meaningful not merely because the hand resembles a hand but because its position and movement are connected to the action of taking or consuming the food. Similarly, the positioning of the product beside food connects the beverage with the consumption situation represented in the advertisement.

Poster 3 illustrates this relation particularly clearly. The hand reaching for a snack establishes an action within the scene, while the bottle placed nearby connects the product to the activity. The advertisement consequently presents the beverage not as an object requiring a special consumption occasion but as something available within an ordinary moment of travel and snacking. The indexical relation thus contributes to the representation of accessibility, because the product is visually associated with an activity that does not require an exceptional social setting.

A similar pattern occurs in Poster 5, where gestures associated with visiting, sharing, and receiving guests establish interpersonal circumstances. These signs can support an interpretation of hospitality and social connectedness. However, hospitality should not itself be equated with simplicity. Its relevance to simplicity emerges only when it is represented within an ordinary and non-ostentatious social setting. The indexical signs therefore contribute to the representation of simplicity by connecting the product with accessible interpersonal practices rather than by independently signifying simplicity.

This interpretation is compatible with previous research on *Teh Botol Sosro* advertising. Sulistyo et al. (2020), for example, identified moral meanings such as friendliness, sharing, empathy, helping others, harmony, and tolerance in the *Semeja Bersaudara* advertisement. Their findings demonstrate that interpersonal actions can function as important carriers of social meaning in *Teh Botol Sosro* advertising. The present analysis differs by asking how the semiotic relation of particular visual elements contributes to the construction of everyday and accessible consumption rather than treating the social value itself as the final analytical category.

The indexical signs therefore contribute particularly to the relationality and accessibility dimensions of simplicity. They establish connections among people, objects, and activities that make the product appear embedded in ordinary social practices.

SYMBOLS: GUIDING CULTURALLY SHARED INTERPRETATION

The symbolic resources in the posters include the *Teh Botol Sosro* logo, recurring slogans, product statements, campaign messages, and culturally specific verbal expressions. Unlike iconic and indexical signs, these elements depend substantially on convention. Their

interpretation requires knowledge of linguistic forms, brand identity, or culturally established meanings.

The recurring slogan pattern *"Apapun ..., Minumnya..."* is particularly important because it linguistically connects the product with different circumstances represented across the posters. The repeated structure allows family meals, snacks, travel preparation, and celebrations to be presented as variations of a broader consumption context. The slogan therefore performs a symbolic function by establishing a conventional linguistic association between the product and a range of situations.

Poster 5 provides an additional example through the Eid greeting represented in the advertisement. The meaning of the greeting depends on linguistic and cultural convention rather than visual resemblance. Within the visual context of visiting, sharing, and celebration, the greeting connects the product to a culturally recognizable festive occasion. However, the symbolic meaning should be interpreted carefully: the advertisement does not demonstrate that *Teh Botol Sosro* inherently represents Eid, hospitality, or harmony. Rather, it strategically associates the product with meanings already recognizable within the cultural context.

Poster 6 similarly uses the verbal statement "100% Teh & Melati Asli" as a symbolic resource. The statement depends on linguistic convention and communicates a product-related claim concerning its ingredients or authenticity. Within the broader visual context of informal communal consumption, this symbolic element contributes to the positioning of the product as familiar and trustworthy. The interpretation of authenticity, however, should remain distinct from the interpretation of simplicity; the two meanings overlap only when the product claim is considered together with the advertisement's broader everyday positioning.

The symbolic dimension therefore contributes to simplicity mainly by stabilizing the association between the product and familiar situations through repeated linguistic and brand conventions. This finding complements previous research on *Teh Botol Sosro* advertising that identified culturally meaningful messages through verbal and visual elements (Gunawan & Simatupang, 2022; Ramdhan et al., 2023). Gunawan and Simatupang (2022), for example, examined denotative and connotative meanings in the Ramadan edition of the brand's advertising, while Ramdhan et al. (2023) examined the mythic meanings of the *"Semeja Bersaudara"* advertisement through Barthesian semiotics. The present analysis instead focuses on the symbolic relation through which verbal and brand elements acquire meaning within the advertisements.

FROM SOCIAL MEANING TO CULTURALLY SITUATED SIMPLICITY

The analysis across the six posters suggests that simplicity is not represented through a single sign or a single cultural theme. Instead, it emerges from the configuration of everyday settings, interpersonal actions, and conventional verbal or brand resources.

The first dimension is everydayness. Posters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 place the product within familiar activities such as eating, snacking, travelling, preparing belongings, and informal gatherings. The product is therefore represented as part of ordinary life rather than as a marker of exceptional consumption. This pattern is consistent with previous studies showing that Indonesian food advertising frequently draws on familiar social practices to establish cultural meaning (Amallia & Rustanta, 2020).

The second dimension is non-ostentation. The advertisements do not construct the product through explicit displays of luxury, prestige, exclusivity, or conspicuous consumption. The settings represented in the six posters remain relatively ordinary and socially accessible. This absence should not be interpreted as proof that the advertisements represent an essential

Indonesian preference for simplicity. Rather, it is evidence of how the selected advertisements construct the product's positioning through familiar and comparatively non-ostentatious contexts.

The third dimension is accessibility. The repeated association of the beverage with food, snacks, travel, preparation, and social occasions presents consumption as possible across different everyday circumstances. The recurring slogan structure reinforces this positioning by connecting the product with multiple situations rather than restricting it to a particular lifestyle or social class.

The fourth dimension is relationality. Posters 1, 5, and 6 particularly emphasize interaction among family members, visitors, hosts, or friends. These representations can evoke culturally familiar values such as togetherness and hospitality. Nevertheless, these values are treated here as contextual meanings rather than as direct synonyms for simplicity. Their relevance to simplicity lies in their representation of consumption as socially shared, familiar, and non-ostentatious.

This distinction is important for interpreting the cultural dimension of the advertisements. Indonesian cultural concepts such as gotong royong, harmony, and togetherness provide useful contexts for understanding social relationships, but the presence of social interaction alone does not establish that an advertisement represents simplicity. The evidence from the six posters more cautiously supports the claim that the advertisements construct simplicity through a combination of familiar social practices, accessible consumption contexts, and the relative absence of conspicuous status display.

THE INTERACTION OF ICON, INDEX, AND SYMBOL

The most significant finding is that the three Peircean categories perform complementary rather than interchangeable functions. Icons establish what the audience can recognize; indices connect represented elements to actions and circumstances; and symbols provide conventional linguistic and cultural associations. The representation of simplicity becomes more intelligible when these relations are considered together.

Poster 1 provides a representative example. The family and dining setting establishes a recognizable social situation through iconic representation. The expressions and serving activities connect the represented people to interpersonal interaction through contextual or indexical relations. The slogan and brand logo then symbolically associate the product with the social occasion. The resulting meaning is not produced by any single element. Instead, the advertisement positions the beverage as an ordinary component of shared family life.

A similar configuration appears in Poster 3. The car interior, snack, and bottle establish a recognizable travel context; the reaching hand connects the visual elements to the activity of snacking; and the slogan symbolically connects the product with the occasion. The resulting representation is one of accessibility and everydayness rather than exclusivity.

Poster 5 provides a different configuration. The visual representation of visiting and celebration establishes the social context; interpersonal gestures connect the represented participants to hospitality and sharing; and the Eid greeting symbolically anchors the scene in a culturally recognizable celebration. Here, the advertisement constructs the product as part of an ordinary social relationship rather than presenting it as a prestigious or exceptional commodity.

This layered interpretation is consistent with the argument that Peircean semiotics can provide a more comprehensive approach to contemporary advertising by examining how advertising generates meaning through interconnected sign relations rather than through

isolated elements (Pompeu & Sato, 2024). It also differentiates the present study from previous advertising analyses that primarily identify signs and their meanings. Nabila and Sakinah (2023), for example, demonstrate the applicability of icon, index, and symbol categories to advertising analysis; the present study extends this approach by examining how the categories collectively contribute to a specific culturally situated representation rather than simply cataloguing the signs.

DISCUSSION: SIMPLICITY AS A BRANDING POSITION

Taken together, the findings suggest that simplicity in the selected *Teh Botol Sosro* posters functions less as a visual style than as a branding position constructed through ordinary social contexts. The advertisements do not need to depict minimalist design to communicate simplicity. Instead, they associate the product with situations that appear familiar, accessible, socially shared, and relatively free from conspicuous status display.

This interpretation also helps clarify the relationship between the present findings and earlier studies of *Teh Botol Sosro* advertising. Previous research has identified togetherness, moral values, hospitality, and cultural meanings in the brand's advertising (Gunawan & Simatupang, 2022; Sulistyo et al., 2020; Ramdhan et al., 2023). The present study does not dispute these interpretations. Rather, it proposes that these meanings can be understood as components of a broader advertising strategy in which the product is repeatedly positioned within ordinary social life.

The contribution of the present analysis therefore lies in identifying the semiotic configuration through which this positioning is achieved. Iconic signs make ordinary situations visually recognizable; indexical signs connect the product to actions and relationships within those situations; and symbolic signs stabilize the association through language, brand identity, and cultural convention. Simplicity consequently emerges not as an intrinsic property of the product and not as a universal characteristic of Indonesian culture, but as a culturally situated meaning constructed by the advertisements.

At the same time, the advertisements should not be treated as transparent representations of Indonesian social reality. They are commercial texts that selectively reconstruct culturally familiar practices in order to position a product. The family meal, social visit, travel preparation, snacks, or communal gathering is therefore not simply documented; it is strategically selected and organized as part of the brand's communicative process. The representation of simplicity should consequently be understood as an advertising construction of cultural familiarity, rather than as direct evidence of how Indonesian society as a whole life or interprets simplicity.

Overall, the six posters demonstrate that the representation of simplicity is sustained through the interaction of everydayness, non-ostentation, accessibility, and relationality. These dimensions do not function as independent cultural values but as interconnected features through which the advertisements position *Teh Botol Sosro* as a familiar product embedded in ordinary Indonesian social experiences.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how icons, indices, and symbols contribute to the representation of simplicity in six *Teh Botol Sosro* advertising posters published on the brand's official Instagram account during 2025–2026. The findings indicate that simplicity is not communicated through

a single sign or visual feature. Rather, it is constructed through the interaction of different sign relations within representations of familiar social situations.

The analysis identified iconic signs through recognizable representations of people, food, products, and everyday settings. These signs primarily established the everydayness of the represented situations. Indexical signs, including gestures, interpersonal actions, and contextual relationships among people, objects, and activities, connected the product with particular social circumstances and contributed to relationality and accessibility. Symbolic signs, particularly slogans, brand elements, and culturally conventional verbal expressions, reinforced these associations through linguistic and cultural conventions. The interaction of these three sign relations enabled the advertisements to position *Teh Botol Sosro* within ordinary and socially familiar consumption contexts.

The findings further indicate that the representation of simplicity can be understood through four interrelated dimensions: everydayness, non-ostentation, accessibility, and relationality. Everydayness is established through familiar activities such as eating, snacking, travelling, preparing for activities, celebrating, and gathering with others. Accessibility is constructed by presenting the product across different ordinary consumption situations rather than associating it exclusively with particular lifestyles or status groups. Relationality emerges through representations of family interaction, sharing, visiting, and informal social gatherings. Non-ostentation is reflected in the relative absence of explicit luxury, exclusivity, or conspicuous status display. These dimensions should not be interpreted as inherent characteristics of Indonesian culture; rather, they describe how the selected advertisements construct simplicity through culturally familiar social practices.

The study therefore contributes to semiotic research on advertising by showing how Peircean sign relations can be used to examine the construction of a culturally situated value beyond the identification of individual icons, indices, and symbols. In the selected *Teh Botol Sosro* posters, iconic signs make everyday situations recognizable, indexical signs connect the represented elements to actions and relationships, and symbolic signs establish conventional linguistic and cultural associations. Simplicity consequently emerges from the configuration of these sign relations rather than from any single sign.

However, the findings should be interpreted within the limitations of the study. The corpus consists of only six static posters from one Indonesian beverage brand and therefore cannot represent Indonesian advertising or Indonesian cultural values as a whole. Furthermore, the study analyses advertising texts rather than audience responses; consequently, the findings describe how simplicity is constructed and represented in the advertisements, not how audiences actually interpret these representations. Future research could extend the analysis to a larger and more diverse corpus of Indonesian digital advertising and could combine semiotic analysis with audience-reception research to examine whether the meanings identified in advertising texts correspond to audience interpretations.

Overall, the six *Teh Botol Sosro* posters construct simplicity as a culturally situated form of ordinary social life in which the product is associated with familiar activities, accessible consumption, interpersonal relationships, and relatively non-ostentatious contexts. The significance of the advertisements therefore lies not in presenting simplicity as an essential or universal Indonesian cultural characteristic, but in strategically constructing simplicity through culturally recognizable signs and social practices.

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