

13. JESCS-SEP'26. Semiotic Analysis of Zero Waste Campaigns on Instagram.docx

 Politeknik Negeri Bali

Document Details

Submission ID

trn:oid::3618:138709552

Submission Date

May 13, 2026, 3:36 AM GMT+8

Download Date

May 13, 2026, 3:39 AM GMT+8

File Name

13. JESCS-SEP'26. Semiotic Analysis of Zero Waste Campaigns on Instagram.docx

File Size

43.5 KB

5 Pages

2,639 Words

17,130 Characters





1% Overall Similarity

The combined total of all matches, including overlapping sources, for each database.




Filtered from the Report

- ▶ Bibliography
- ▶ Small Matches (less than 28 words)

Match Groups

-  **1 Not Cited or Quoted 1%**
Matches with neither in-text citation nor quotation marks
-  **0 Missing Quotations 0%**
Matches that are still very similar to source material
-  **0 Missing Citation 0%**
Matches that have quotation marks, but no in-text citation
-  **0 Cited and Quoted 0%**
Matches with in-text citation present, but no quotation marks

Top Sources

- 1%  Internet sources
- 2%  Publications
- 2%  Submitted works (Student Papers)

Integrity Flags





0 Integrity Flags for Review

No suspicious text manipulations found.




Our system's algorithms look deeply at a document for any inconsistencies that would set it apart from a normal submission. If we notice something strange, we flag it for you to review.

A Flag is not necessarily an indicator of a problem. However, we'd recommend you focus your attention there for further review.

Match Groups

-  **1 Not Cited or Quoted 1%**
Matches with neither in-text citation nor quotation marks
-  **0 Missing Quotations 0%**
Matches that are still very similar to source material
-  **0 Missing Citation 0%**
Matches that have quotation marks, but no in-text citation
-  **0 Cited and Quoted 0%**
Matches with in-text citation present, but no quotation marks

Top Sources

- 1%  Internet sources
- 2%  Publications
- 2%  Submitted works (Student Papers)

Top Sources

The sources with the highest number of matches within the submission. Overlapping sources will not be displayed.

1 Internet

staging.preprints.org 1%

Semiotic analysis of zero waste campaigns on instagram

Senia Aida Afifah¹, Kinkin Yuliaty Subarsa Putri²

Universitas Negeri Jakarta, INDONESIA^{1,2},

Abstract - This study examines the symbolic construction of environmental messages in a zero waste campaign post published by Zero Waste Indonesia on Instagram dated March 12, 2026. The objective of this research is to analyze how meaning is produced and communicated through visual and textual elements in social media-based environmental campaigns. This study employs a qualitative research approach using semiotic analysis based on Roland Barthes' framework, focusing on three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth. The findings reveal that the analyzed content operates as a complex system of signs that constructs environmental meaning beyond its literal representation. At the denotative level, the post depicts the reality of waste accumulation and its management. At the connotative level, the content frames waste as a serious and potentially hazardous issue while highlighting the social dimension of environmental problems. At the level of myth, the message constructs an ideological narrative emphasizing collective responsibility, positioning audiences as both contributors to environmental degradation and agents of change. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that social media functions as a powerful platform for environmental communication by integrating visual storytelling and persuasive messaging. The findings suggest that zero waste campaign content not only informs but also influences audience perceptions, moral awareness, and attitudes toward sustainable behavior.

Keywords: semiotics, environmental communication, zero waste, social media, visual communication

1. Introduction

The increasing volume of waste has become a pressing environmental issue worldwide, including in Indonesia. Rapid population growth combined with high consumption patterns has significantly contributed to the rise of solid waste, particularly plastic waste that is difficult to decompose. This condition not only leads to environmental pollution but also poses serious ecological risks, especially for communities living near landfill areas (World Bank, 2018). Furthermore, plastic pollution has been identified as a major threat to global ecosystems, including marine environments (UNEP, 2021). Therefore, waste management has become a critical concern addressed through various environmental campaigns.

In the context of communication studies, social media has emerged as a strategic platform for disseminating environmental messages to the public. Platforms such as Instagram enable organizations and communities to deliver messages in a visual and persuasive manner, enhancing public awareness and engagement (Nasrullah, 2015). One of the movements actively utilizing social media is Zero Waste Indonesia, which promotes a low-waste lifestyle through educational content. These messages are not merely informative but also carry symbolic meanings that shape how audiences perceive environmental issues.

Within communication studies, media messages are not only understood at a literal level but also through signs and symbols that construct meaning. Semiotics provides a relevant approach to analyze how meaning is produced and communicated within media content. According to Roland Barthes, signs operate at the levels of denotation (literal meaning) and connotation (associated



meaning), which can further develop into myths representing dominant ideologies in society (Barthes, 1977). In addition, audience interpretation is influenced by social and cultural contexts, making meaning construction a dynamic process (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011).

An example of environmental campaign content that reflects such symbolic construction can be found in an Instagram post published by Zero Waste Indonesia on March 12, 2026. The post depicts a large accumulation of waste accompanied by the caption "Our waste can become a disaster for others." This visual representation does not merely portray environmental conditions but also conveys a moral message regarding collective responsibility. The use of the words "our" and "others" indicates a constructed social distinction between those who contribute to the problem and those who are affected by it.

Despite the growing number of environmental campaigns on social media, limited studies have specifically examined how symbolic meanings are constructed within zero waste campaign content. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the symbolic meanings embedded in zero waste campaign posts on social media using a semiotic approach. This analysis is expected to provide insights into how environmental messages are visually constructed and how such meanings may influence public awareness and attitudes toward waste management issues.

2. Method

2.1 Data Collection

This study employs a qualitative research approach using semiotic analysis to examine the construction of meaning in environmental campaign content. Qualitative methods are appropriate for this study as they allow for an in-depth interpretation of visual and textual elements, focusing on how meaning is produced and communicated rather than measured numerically (Creswell, 2014). The research specifically applies a semiotic framework to analyze how signs and symbols operate within digital media content.

The analytical framework used in this study is based on the semiotic theory proposed by Roland Barthes, which emphasizes the processes of meaning-making through signs. According to Barthes (1977), meaning is constructed at two levels: denotation, which refers to the literal or surface meaning of a sign, and connotation, which refers to the associated or cultural meanings embedded within it. These layers of meaning may further develop into myths, representing broader ideological narratives within society. This framework enables the researcher to uncover both explicit and implicit messages contained in the analyzed content.

The data for this study were collected through a documentation method by capturing and archiving a selected post from Instagram. The object of analysis is a visual post published by Zero Waste Indonesia on March 12, 2026. This post was purposively selected due to its strong visual representation and its relevance to environmental communication, particularly in promoting zero waste awareness.

The collected data include both visual elements (images) and textual components (captions and embedded text within the image). These elements serve as the primary data for semiotic analysis, as they function as signs that convey meaning within the context of environmental campaigns.

2.2 Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study follows the semiotic approach developed by Roland Barthes. The analysis is conducted through several systematic steps.

First, the researcher identifies key visual and textual elements within the selected content. Second, the analysis is carried out at the denotative level to describe the literal meaning of the signs presented in the image. Third, the analysis moves to the connotative level to interpret the symbolic and cultural meanings associated with these signs. Finally, the study examines the level of myth to uncover the underlying ideologies and broader social meanings embedded in the content.

This step-by-step analysis allows for a comprehensive understanding of how environmental messages are constructed and communicated through social media. To ensure the credibility of the findings, the interpretation is grounded in established theoretical frameworks and conducted systematically to maintain consistency and coherence throughout the analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

This study analyzes a zero-waste campaign post published by Zero Waste Indonesia on Instagram dated March 12, 2026. The findings reveal that the content contains multiple layers of meaning, which can be systematically categorized into denotation, connotation, and myth, following the semiotic framework proposed by Roland Barthes.

At the denotative level, the visual explicitly presents a large accumulation of waste accompanied by workers who are directly engaged in handling garbage. The setting appears to be a landfill or waste management site, characterized by the presence of extensive piles of trash and individuals operating within that environment. The image reflects a real-world condition in which waste is physically managed by human labor. In addition, the textual message embedded in the image, "Our waste can become a disaster for others," clearly establishes a direct relationship between human behavior and its environmental consequences. At this level, the message functions descriptively, representing observable reality without deeper interpretation.

At the connotative level, however, the meaning extends beyond literal representation and begins to convey symbolic significance. The depiction of waste in a visually intense and seemingly hazardous environment suggests that waste is not merely an everyday byproduct but a serious and potentially catastrophic issue. The use of a monochromatic tone contributes to the creation of a somber and alarming atmosphere, reinforcing the perception of urgency. Furthermore, the presence of workers in such conditions symbolizes vulnerability and inequality, as it implies that certain groups are more exposed to the negative impacts of environmental degradation. This representation indicates that waste-related issues are not only ecological but also embedded within broader social contexts.

At the level of myth, the content constructs an ideological narrative concerning environmental responsibility and social awareness. The linguistic distinction between "our" and "others" creates a binary opposition that frames environmental problems as a shared responsibility while simultaneously highlighting the unequal distribution of their consequences. This narrative positions audiences as both contributors to the problem and potential agents of change. The myth constructed through this representation reflects a broader societal discourse in which environmental issues are linked to ethical considerations and collective accountability.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the analyzed content functions not merely as an informational message but as a complex system of signs that constructs meaning through visual and textual elements. This supports the semiotic perspective that media content operates at multiple levels of meaning, where signs are interpreted within cultural and ideological contexts (Roland Barthes, 1977; Daniel Chandler, 2017). In contemporary digital communication, these layered meanings become increasingly significant as audiences actively engage with visual content on social media platforms.

At the denotative level, the image represents the observable reality of waste accumulation and its management. However, as the analysis moves into the connotative level, it becomes evident that the content is designed to evoke emotional responses such as concern, empathy, and urgency. Recent studies highlight that visual-based environmental communication on social media plays a crucial role in shaping emotional engagement and public awareness, particularly when messages are framed in ways that emphasize risk and moral responsibility (Nabi et al., 2022). This indicates that the campaign content is strategically constructed to influence how audiences interpret environmental issues.

Furthermore, the portrayal of workers within the waste environment emphasizes the social dimension of environmental problems, suggesting that environmental degradation disproportionately affects marginalized communities. This finding aligns with recent research in environmental communication, which shows that media representations often highlight unequal environmental impacts as a way to build moral awareness and social responsibility (O'Neill & Nicholson-Cole, 2021). In this context, the image does not simply depict waste but also communicates broader issues of environmental justice.



At the ideological level, the distinction between “our” and “others” reflects a moral framing that positions audiences as both contributors to environmental problems and as agents of change. This binary opposition functions as a persuasive communication strategy, encouraging self-reflection and behavioral change. Recent studies in digital environmental campaigns suggest that such moral framing is effective in promoting pro-environmental attitudes, particularly when audiences are encouraged to see themselves as part of the problem and the solution (Wang et al., 2023).

Moreover, the findings indicate that zero waste campaigns on social media are embedded within a broader discourse of sustainability and ethical consumption. The integration of visual storytelling and persuasive messaging reflects current trends in digital environmental communication, where content is designed not only to inform but also to influence values and lifestyle choices (Anderson, 2022). This demonstrates that social media platforms play a significant role in shaping public discourse on environmental issues by combining symbolic representation with emotional appeal.

Overall, the discussion highlights that the analyzed content operates as a form of symbolic communication that constructs meaning, conveys ideology, and encourages moral reflection. The combination of visual imagery and textual messaging reinforces the urgency of environmental issues while simultaneously promoting collective responsibility. This confirms that social media-based environmental campaigns function as powerful tools in influencing public awareness and engagement in sustainability practices.

In addition, the findings of this study highlight the increasing importance of visual storytelling in digital environmental communication. Social media platforms such as Instagram prioritize visual content, making images a central medium for conveying complex environmental messages in a simplified yet impactful manner. Recent studies suggest that visual narratives are more effective in capturing audience attention and enhancing message retention, particularly when they evoke emotional responses and moral reflection (Highfield & Leaver, 2021). In this context, the analyzed content demonstrates how visual elements, combined with concise textual messages, can create a powerful communicative effect that transcends linguistic barriers and directly appeals to audience perception.

Furthermore, the role of social media in shaping environmental discourse cannot be separated from the dynamics of digital engagement and participatory culture. Environmental campaigns such as those conducted by Zero Waste Indonesia are not only designed to inform but also to encourage interaction, sharing, and collective awareness among users. This aligns with recent research indicating that social media campaigns can foster a sense of community and shared responsibility, which in turn strengthens pro-environmental behavior (Veltri & Atanasova, 2021). Therefore, the effectiveness of zero waste campaigns lies not only in the messages they convey but also in their ability to engage audiences in ongoing conversations about sustainability and environmental responsibility.

4. Conclusion

This study aimed to analyze the symbolic meanings embedded in a zero-waste campaign post published by Zero Waste Indonesia on Instagram dated March 12, 2026, using a semiotic approach based on Roland Barthes. The findings reveal that the content constructs meaning through multiple layers, including denotation, connotation, and myth, which together shape how environmental messages are communicated and understood.

At the denotative level, the content presents a direct representation of waste accumulation and its management. However, at the connotative level, the image conveys deeper meanings by framing waste as a serious and potentially dangerous issue, while also highlighting the social dimension of environmental problems. At the level of myth, the content constructs an ideological narrative that emphasizes collective responsibility, positioning audiences as both contributors to environmental degradation and as agents capable of driving change.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that environmental communication on social media is not merely informative but also persuasive and symbolic. The integration of visual and textual elements allows the message to evoke emotional responses, encourage moral reflection, and

influence audience perceptions of environmental issues. This confirms that social media platforms play a significant role in shaping public awareness and promoting sustainable behavior through strategic communication practices.

Overall, this study concludes that zero waste campaign content functions as an effective medium for constructing environmental meaning and fostering social awareness. By utilizing symbolic representation and moral framing, such content is able to communicate complex environmental issues in a way that is accessible, engaging, and impactful for audiences.

References

- Anderson, A. (2022). *Media, environment and the network society*. Palgrave Macmillan.
<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-94154-0>
- Barthes, R. (1977). *Image, music, text*. Fontana Press.
https://monoskop.org/images/7/7e/Barthes_Roland_Image_Music_Text.pdf
- Chandler, D. (2017). *Semiotics: The basics* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
<https://www.routledge.com/Semiotics-The-Basics/Chandler/p/book/9781138234149>
- Cox, R. (2013). *Environmental communication and the public sphere* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
<https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/environmental-communication-and-the-public-sphere/book235513>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
<https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/research-design/book235675>
- Highfield, T., & Leaver, T. (2021). Instagrammatics and digital methods: Studying visual social media. *Social Media + Society*, 7(1), 1–12.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120984459>
- Littlejohn, S. W., & Foss, K. A. (2011). *Theories of human communication* (10th ed.). Waveland Press.
<https://www.waveland.com/browse.php?t=384>
- Nabi, R. L., Gustafson, A., & Jensen, R. (2022). Framing climate change: Exploring the role of emotion in generating advocacy behavior. *Communication Research*, 49(3), 442–468.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00936502211037475>
- Nasrullah, R. (2015). *Media sosial: Perspektif komunikasi, budaya, dan sosioteknologi*. Simbiosis Rekatama Media.
<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Nasrullah+Media+Sosial+2015>
- O'Neill, S., & Nicholson-Cole, S. (2021). Fear won't do it: Promoting positive engagement with climate change through visual communication. *Science Communication*, 43(1), 1–28.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547020971911>
- UNEP. (2021). *From pollution to solution: A global assessment of marine litter and plastic pollution*. United Nations Environment Programme.
<https://www.unep.org/resources/report/pollution-solution-global-assessment-marine-litter-and-plastic-pollution>
- Veltri, G. A., & Atanasova, D. (2021). Climate change on social media: Content, engagement, and influence. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 12(1), e665.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.665>
- Wang, X., Zhao, K., & Chen, Y. (2023). The impact of social media environmental campaigns on pro-environmental behavior. *Journal of Environmental Communication*, 17(2), 215–230.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2022.2031403>
- World Bank. (2018). *What a waste 2.0: A global snapshot of solid waste management to 2050*. World Bank Publications.
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30317>

