

CAPITALISM IN ADVERTISING AND ITS IMPACT ON TODAY'S SOCIETY LIFESTYLE

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Abstract : This study aims to analyze the representation of the green economy in digital advertising through a semiotic approach. Amid growing public awareness of environmental issues, many companies are using digital media to promote environmentally friendly products. However, there has been little research specifically examining how symbols and sustainability messages are constructed in digital advertisements. Using a qualitative approach with semiotic analysis, this research examines the visual elements, symbols, texts, and imagery used in digital advertisements for eco-friendly products. Advertisement samples were obtained from various digital platforms such as social media and websites featuring sustainability campaigns. The results show that green and blue colors dominate the visual elements of advertisements to create associations with nature, freshness, and cleanliness. Symbols such as trees, leaves, and water are consistently used to represent sustainability values. The texts in the advertisements include phrases like “eco-friendly,”

“organic,” and “sustainable,” aiming to instill a positive perception of the product. Imagery depicting green activities such as cycling or recycling functions to build a narrative that consuming such products is an ethical and responsible act. The analysis also finds that the symbols and narratives in advertisements shape consumer perceptions that choosing eco-friendly products is part of a modern and environmentally conscious lifestyle. These findings affirm that digital advertising serves not only as a marketing tool but also as an educational medium in shaping consumer attitudes toward environmental issues. This study makes an important contribution to the field of advertising semiotics and expands the understanding of the role of visual communication in supporting the green economy agenda.

Keywords : digital advertising, green economy, semiotics, visual symbols, sustainability

I. INTRODUCTION

Environmental issues are increasingly dominating public discourse, triggering a paradigm shift in various sectors, including marketing. In this context, the concept of *a green economy* has emerged as an alternative development that emphasizes sustainability and efficiency of natural resources. Green marketing *has* become an important strategy for companies to build an environmentally friendly image and gain support from consumers. However, *green marketing practices* also present challenges, such as the potential for *greenwashing* , where environmentally friendly claims are used manipulatively

without being supported by real actions. This requires consumers to be more critical in assessing environmental messages conveyed through the media, especially digital advertising. (SABRINA AISYAH PUTRI 2024)

Digital advertising plays an important role in shaping public perception of environmental values. Through visual and symbolic elements, advertising can communicate certain ideologies and values. In this context, a semiotic approach becomes relevant to analyze how signs in advertising shape meaning and influence *audiences* . Semiotic studies can reveal how elements such as colors, images, logos, and text in advertising convey

certain messages that shape consumer perceptions of products and brands.

One interesting campaign example to analyze is the #OneGreenStep advertisement from Garnier Indonesia. This campaign highlights the company's sustainability initiatives, such as the use of recycled packaging and the *eRecycle program*. Through semiotic analysis, it can be explored how visual elements such as color, symbols, and narratives in the advertisement shape the representation of *the green economy* and influence consumer perceptions of the brand. Previous research has shown that semiotic elements in green product design can influence consumer brand experiences, including cognitive, sensory, emotional, and cultural dimensions, which in turn influence consumer attitudes and behaviors towards environmentally friendly products. (Worakittikul, Saenwerm, and Naruetharadhol 2024)

This study aims to examine the representation of *green economy* in digital advertising through a semiotic approach, focusing on environmentally friendly product campaigns. Thus, it is expected to gain a deeper understanding of how sustainability messages are constructed and received by *the audience*. This study is also expected to contribute to the development of more authentic and effective marketing strategies in conveying environmental messages to consumers. Through this research, it is expected to reveal how digital advertising not only functions as a promotional tool, but also as a medium to shape consumer awareness and behavior towards environmental issues. Thus, digital advertising can be an effective means in supporting the transition towards *a green economy* and sustainable development.

Research purposes

This study generally aims to identify and explore how the concept of *green economy* is represented through

digital media, especially in the format of advertisements that campaign for environmentally friendly products. This representation is crucial to analyze considering that digital advertisements now have a very wide reach and significant influence in shaping public awareness of sustainability issues. In the world of modern communication, media, including advertisements, not only convey information, but also have a role in shaping the construction of social reality. The representations displayed by the media are often ideological and full of meaning, so that they can create certain perceptions in the minds of *the audience*. Therefore, examining how advertisements describe the concept of *green economy* can help us understand the dynamics of environmental communication in the digital era. This is in line with the view (Hall and Lenguaje 1997) which states that the media plays a dominant role in shaping social meaning and ideology, including in framing environmental messages

More specifically, this study aims to analyze various visual and symbolic elements used in digital advertising using a semiotic approach. These elements can be symbols, colors, shapes, sounds, narratives, and message structures that are deliberately formed to convey certain meanings. In the context of environmental campaigns, the use of green, natural images, or recycling symbols is often used to build an environmentally friendly image. A semiotic approach is used to uncover how these signs create meaning and how the meaning is interpreted by *the audience*. In this case, semiotics not only dissects the literal content of the message, but also pays attention to the social and cultural context in which the message is constructed and received. Therefore, by using this method, it is hoped that the study can reveal the implied meanings behind the visual communication strategy in digital advertising. (Chandler 2007) explains that

semiotics is an important tool in understanding how media shapes social reality through signs and symbols.

This study also aims to explore and evaluate the influence of *green economy representation* in digital advertising on consumer perceptions and attitudes towards environmentally friendly products. In the era of highly visual digital communication, consumers are often influenced by symbolic representations constructed through media, and in this context, advertising plays a major role in influencing their perspectives on environmental values. An attractive and convincing representation in an advertisement not only forms a positive perception of the brand but can also encourage purchase intentions and more environmentally conscious consumption behavior. This is important because consumers who have a positive perception of sustainability tend to be more loyal and supportive of brands that they perceive as socially and environmentally responsible. Previous studies by (Leonidou, Katsikeas, and Morgan 2013) showed that semiotic elements in green marketing have a major contribution to the formation of brand perceptions and increased purchase intentions for environmentally friendly products.

objective of this study is to provide a critical understanding of *green advertising practices*, including in revealing the potential for *greenwashing practices*, namely when companies use symbols and sustainability narratives only as marketing tools without a real commitment to environmental issues. In practice, not all companies that display environmental messages in advertisements actually apply the principles of *green economy* in their business processes. Therefore, this study tries to uncover the possibility of a gap between the claims conveyed in advertisements and the reality on the ground. The semiotic approach in

this case can also help distinguish between authentic and manipulative representations. The study by (Delmas and Burbano 2011) emphasizes the importance of understanding the drivers behind *greenwashing* and its impact on consumer trust and corporate credibility in the long term.

Finally, through this analysis, the research is expected to contribute both academically and practically, especially in developing more ethical, transparent, and educational communication strategies in the realm of green marketing. This research is not only relevant for academics interested in media and environmental studies, but also important for marketing communication practitioners and stakeholders in designing campaigns that have a real impact on consumer behavior and support the sustainable development agenda. By strengthening the understanding of how *green economy representations* are constructed and accepted, it is hoped that marketing campaigns can become educational and promotional tools in directing society towards a more sustainable lifestyle. This is in line with the idea (Peattie and Crane 2005) which states that *green marketing* should not only be a promotional tool, but also a commitment to real social and environmental change.

II. Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which is chosen because of its nature that allows researchers to explore in depth the social and symbolic meanings in the representation of the green economy displayed through digital advertising. This approach does not focus on numbers or statistics, but on a deep understanding of a phenomenon, in this case how sustainability messages are constructed visually and verbally by brands in digital media. The main objective of this approach is to understand the meaning

behind visual communication practices in certain cultural, social, and ideological contexts. Through a qualitative approach, researchers can interpret environmental representations displayed in advertisements as part of a corporate communication strategy as well as a reflection of the increasingly strong global environmental discourse. This is in line with the opinion of (Roulston and Halpin 2022) which states that qualitative research is used to understand the meaning given by individuals or groups to a social or societal problem. Therefore, this approach is very suitable for analyzing complex environmental communication phenomena in the context of digital marketing.

The analytical method used in this study is **semiotics**, with a specific approach based on **Roland Barthes' theory**, which developed a two-level analysis model of meaning: **denotation** and **connotation**. Denotation refers to the literal meaning or basic meaning of a sign, while connotation reflects a deeper meaning, which is ideological, cultural, and emotional. In the context of digital advertising with a green economy theme, signs such as the color green, images of nature, narratives about environmental conservation, and recycling symbols not only convey literal messages, but also represent the ideology of sustainability, corporate social responsibility, and a progressive brand image towards environmental issues. Roland Barthes explained that these signs have a mythological function, namely forming meanings that are considered natural when in fact they are social and ideological constructions. Therefore, this method allows researchers to trace how advertising functions not only as a promotional tool, but also as a means of reproducing ideology in contemporary society. Barthes' theory is relevant in this context because it provides a critical analytical framework for

representational practices in modern mass media. (Moglen et al. 2019)

The main object of this study is a digital advertisement from the **#OneGreenStep campaign by Garnier Indonesia**, which explicitly raises the theme of sustainability and environmentally friendly products. This advertisement was published through various social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Garnier's official website, and displays visualizations of recycled products, an invitation to protect the environment, and consumer testimonials that support a sustainable lifestyle. This campaign was chosen as the object of research because it displays rich visual content, strong symbols, and a communication strategy designed to touch the emotions and ecological awareness of urban communities, especially young people. The data collection method was carried out using **purposive sampling**, namely the deliberate selection of objects based on the consideration that the campaign is relevant and representative of the issue being studied. This technique is commonly used in qualitative research because it allows researchers to select data that best suits the purpose of the analysis. (Patton 2002) emphasized that purposive object selection is useful for obtaining the depth of data needed in exploratory research like this.

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out through two main methods: **documentation study** and **visual observation**. Documentation study was conducted by collecting digital advertising materials studied in the form of videos, images, text narratives, and metadata such as captions and public comments. This data was then documented in the form of screenshots, video transcriptions, and text content analysis. In addition, researchers also conducted visual observations of the message structure, use of color, font type, visual symbols, and gestures or expressions

in the campaign video. This technique aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the semiotic elements that form the sustainability message in the advertisement. All data was then categorized based on semiotic dimensions—icons, indexes, and symbols—to facilitate the analysis process. To strengthen the theoretical basis and expand the context of interpretation, researchers also conducted a literature review of relevant literature on the green economy, green marketing, and media semiotics. According to (Bowen 2009) documentation study is an effective method for analyzing communication artifacts because it allows for non-reactive data collection and can be reviewed in the verification process.

The data analysis procedure is carried out in several systematic stages. The first stage is the identification of the main signs that appear in the advertisement, such as prominent images, texts, symbols, and colors. The second stage is the interpretation of the **denotative meaning** of each element—what is literally conveyed by the visual or verbal elements. The third stage is the interpretation of **the connotative meaning**, namely how these elements construct certain social and ideological meanings related to the image of sustainability, environmental ethics, and corporate responsibility. Furthermore, the fourth stage is to compare the connotative meanings found with the theory of green economy and the broader concept of sustainability, to see the extent to which the messages in the advertisement are consistent with the actual principles of sustainability. In this case, the analysis was carried out using the **interpretative textual analysis approach**, which is used to interpret the meaning of text or visuals based on the broader context of discourse. (Yu and Zheng 2022) emphasize that discourse and media analysis must pay attention to the relationship between text,

social context, and underlying power structures, so that interpretation is not superficial or merely descriptive.

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method (library research) to analyze the representation of *the green economy* in digital advertising of environmentally friendly products. Literature studies were chosen because they allow researchers to collect, review, and interpret various library sources relevant to the topic, both in the form of scientific articles, books, journals, international agency reports, and digital documents such as case studies of company campaigns and online media articles. This approach provides a strong theoretical basis for understanding how the concept of the green economy is constructed and represented in digital advertising media through visual and verbal signs.

In this analysis, the researcher examines references that review semiotic theory, especially Roland Barthes' model that includes three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth. In addition, literature on the green economy from institutions such as UNEP, OECD, as well as articles on sustainable marketing communication and green advertising are also part of the main study. The selection of the literature study method allows for a critical reading of the discourses formed by the industry through advertising, as well as drawing conclusions based on the synthesis of previously existing concepts and findings. Thus, this study not only examines advertising as a visual object, but also as a social and cultural representation of the ideology of sustainability that is developing in the digital era.

III. Results and Discussion

The use of green as a green economy becomes Green in digital advertising is often used to represent nature and sustainability. For example, in the

#OneGreenStep campaign advertisement by Garnier Indonesia, the dominance of green on product packaging and the eRecycle application emphasizes the commitment to the environment and the green economy. Green not only reflects sustainability, but also associates the product with nature and health, reinforcing the message that consumers are participating in environmental conservation through their product choices. (Sihombing, Yosefin, and Pakpahan 2022)

In addition, the use of green in advertising design also functions as a visual code that is easily recognized by the audience. This color becomes a consistent visual identity in the #OneGreenStep campaign, making it easier for the audience to identify the message being conveyed. This is in line with Roland Barthes' semiotic theory which states that signs in visual communication have meanings that can be interpreted by the audience based on their cultural and social context (Sihombing, Yosefin, and Pakpahan 2022)

Plant Symbolism as a Representation of Life and Sustainability, In the advertisement, the presence of green plants as a visual element shows the relationship between the product and nature. Plants serve as a sign of healthy life, indicating that the use of the product contributes to environmental sustainability. This creates a positive association between consumers and nature conservation actions. (Sihombing, Yosefin, and Pakpahan 2022)

Furthermore, the green plants in the advertisement also serve as a metaphor for growth and regeneration. By showing healthy plants next to Garnier products, the advertisement conveys the message that using these products is not only beneficial for consumers, but also for the environment. This message reinforces the narrative that every small action, such as choosing environmentally friendly products, can contribute to big changes in

preserving nature. (Sihombing, Yosefin, and Pakpahan 2022)

Digital advertising not only conveys direct messages but also forms myths through the narratives it constructs. For example, in the #OneGreenStep campaign, the narrative it constructs shows that by using Garnier products, consumers are indirectly participating in environmental conservation efforts. This myth reinforces the perception that small consumer actions have a big impact on sustainability. (Sihombing, Yosefin, and Pakpahan 2022)

. According to Barthes, myths in advertising serve to hide the ideology underlying the message being conveyed. In the context of Garnier advertising, the myth it constructs is that choosing environmentally friendly products is an easy action that can be done by anyone. This myth aims to change consumer behavior by presenting environmentally responsible choices as something practical and accessible to all groups. (Sihombing, Yosefin, and Pakpahan 2022)

Then with the existence of digital clans also represents the green economy in a social and cultural context. In the #OneGreenStep campaign, the use of the eRecycle application as a platform for recycling product packaging shows the integration of technology in environmental conservation efforts. This reflects changes in consumer behavior that are increasingly aware of the importance of sustainability and the role of technology in supporting the green economy. (Sihombing, Yosefin, and Pakpahan 2022)

In addition, this advertisement also reflects cultural values that are developing in society, such as awareness of environmental issues and the importance of collective action in protecting the earth. By showing various scenes depicting people who care about the environment, this advertisement reinforces the message that the green economy is not only an individual responsibility, but also part of a shared

culture that must be maintained and preserved. (Sihombing, Yosefin, and Pakpahan 2022)

Semiotic analysis also shows that elements in digital advertising influence consumer behavior. Messages conveyed through symbols, colors, and narratives in advertisements can shape consumer attitudes and decisions in choosing products that support the green economy. Thus, digital advertising plays an important role in shaping consumer awareness and behavior towards sustainability. (Sihombing, Yosefin, and Pakpahan 2022)

Furthermore, this advertisement also shows how industry can play a role in driving social change through effective visual communication. By utilizing strong visual elements and a compelling narrative, this advertisement not only promotes the product but also educates consumers about the importance of sustainability and their role in the green economy. This shows that digital advertising can be an effective tool in influencing consumer behavior and driving positive change in society. (Sihombing, Yosefin, and Pakpahan 2022)

IV. Conclusion

This study shows that the representation of *the green economy* in digital advertisements of environmentally friendly product campaigns is built through a structured system of visual and verbal signs, and has complex layers of meaning. Using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, the analysis of Garnier's #OneGreenStep campaign reveals that the color green, plant symbols, narratives about sustainability, and digital elements such as recycling applications are used strategically to shape the perception that the product is not only safe to use, but also contributes to saving the environment. This reflects that advertising does not only convey commercial messages, but also forms social and ideological meanings.

Furthermore, digital advertising exploits the myth of sustainability—as described by Barthes—to create an idealized image that consumer action can be an ecological action at the same time. This means that consumers are led to believe that by purchasing a particular product, they have taken part in solving the climate and environmental crisis. This myth strengthens the product's position in the market by combining ethical values, such as social responsibility and environmental conservation, with commercial interests. However, this also raises ethical dilemmas and criticisms of the practice of *greenwashing*, a marketing strategy that presents an impression of being environmentally friendly when it is not necessarily based on truly sustainable practices.

In the context of today's digital culture, this kind of representation shows how advertising takes over environmental discourse spaces and packages them in an attractive and easily digestible visual form. Digital advertising acts as a cultural agent that is able to shape public perception of what is meant by “sustainable”, and in the process, creates new consumption norms that appear green but remain within the framework of capitalism. Therefore, the representation of *the green economy* in digital advertising is not only a matter of visualization, but also a matter of the power of meaning and the direction of ideology that producers want to shape towards consumers.

Thus, it can be concluded that digital advertising has great symbolic power in shaping social meanings regarding environmental issues and the green economy. The representation of the green economy in digital campaigns forms a narrative that ethical and environmentally friendly consumption is part of a modern lifestyle, whereas true sustainability practices are not only determined by consumption, but also by production,

distribution, and regulatory systems that support the principles of ecological justice.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that further studies expand the object of study by analyzing more than one campaign or brand, and comparing the representation of the green economy from various industrial sectors such as renewable energy, transportation, organic food, and sustainable fashion. With a comparative approach, researchers can find patterns of representation that are unique or diverse in the depiction of sustainability values. In addition, the semiotic approach used in this study should be enriched with other perspectives such as critical discourse analysis, media political economy studies, or environmental communication. This multidisciplinary approach can reveal the dimensions of power, ideological interests, and the relationship between producers, media, and consumers in shaping the meaning of sustainability.

green economy messages conveyed in digital advertising. Although this research highlights the production of meaning by producers through visual and verbal signs, a more complete understanding will be achieved if combined with reception studies or digital ethnography to find out how consumers interpret and respond to these representations in everyday life. This can reveal whether green campaigns really influence consumption behavior significantly, or are merely symbols.

Finally, another important suggestion is the need for further research on the authenticity or validity of sustainability claims built into digital advertising. Such studies can use an evaluative approach to the fit between the messages displayed in the campaign and the sustainability practices of companies in the field. Thus, researchers can distinguish between campaigns that truly support the principles of *the green economy* and those that simply use environmental issues as a

marketing strategy or *greenwashing practice*. Such research is very relevant in the context of increasing demands for transparency and corporate accountability in environmental issues.

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