

Visual Analysis of Kavela's Social Media Marketing Content

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the visual meanings in Kavela's Instagram content using Roland Barthes's semiotics theory. As an oral care brand, Kavela relies on social media, focusing on Instagram as its primary platform to build brand identity and engage audience interest. Roland Barthes's semiotics theory is used to explore the denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings found in the visual content. The findings show that the visuals not only promote the product but also present specific identities and lifestyles to consumers. This research provides insights for brands in the strategic use of visual storytelling to create emotional connections with target consumers.

Keywords: Roland Barthes's Semiotics, Social Media, Instagram, Oral Care, Mouth Spray

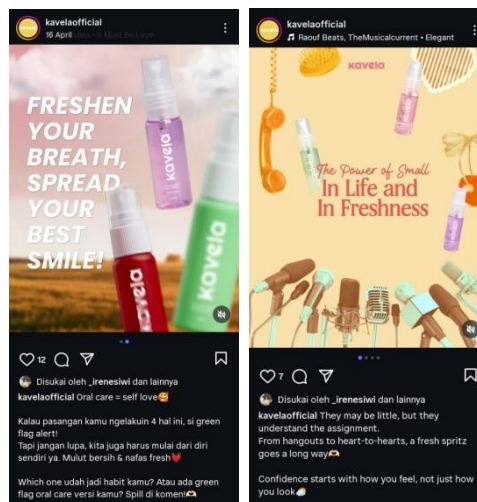
1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become one of the primary platforms in brand marketing strategies [1]. The shift in information consumption patterns towards visual content requires brands to deliver messages in a compelling and effective manner through visual elements [2]. Within a brand, visual content is not merely a complement, but serves as a key medium for building brand image, creating audience engagement, and strengthening brand identity in an increasingly competitive market [3]. One of the most prominent social media platforms that utilizes visual content is Instagram [4]. As a visually oriented platform, Instagram provides space for brands to express their identity and values through images, videos, and other graphic elements [5]. The use of strong visuals can foster consumer interaction by engaging the senses, emotions, and sentiments, ultimately influencing purchasing decisions [6]. One key element in Instagram's visual strategy is the Instagram feed—namely, the overall display of posts on a brand's profile, which functions to construct brand image and reinforce visual storytelling.

Based on an interview with Anthea Shifra, Chief Marketing Officer of Kavela, in today's highly competitive era, self-confidence has become one of the essential factors contributing to individual success whether in social life, education, or professional settings. Physical appearance and personal hygiene are often closely associated with one's level of self-confidence, including oral health. However, in Indonesia, awareness of oral care remains relatively low compared to the attention given to skincare or other body care routines. In fact, issues such as bad breath can have psychological impacts on individuals, including discomfort, reduced self-

confidence, and negative effects on social interactions or performance in various situations, such as job interviews or formal meetings.

Kavela is a local Indonesian brand that focuses on oral care products, with mouth spray as its first flagship item. The brand presents itself as a quick and practical solution to address bad breath an issue that often contributes to a lack of self-confidence, particularly in interpersonal communication. Kavela builds its brand presence through Instagram by educating consumers on the importance of oral hygiene, especially the use of mouth spray, which remains relatively uncommon in Indonesia. To expand its reach and foster stronger connections with its audience, Kavela actively utilizes social media particularly Instagram. Through this platform, the brand implements a promotional strategy centered on consumer insight and emotional marketing, linking the product to the lifestyle of modern women. This approach helps the message feel more relevant and personal to its target market. Recognizing that one-way promotional strategies are no longer effective in reaching younger generations such as Gen Z, Kavela emphasizes the importance of two-way



communication. This is achieved through social media engagement, community activities, and the storytelling of authentic experiences that reflect the lives of its target audience. Such strategies aim to generate emotional resonance, thereby fostering long-term consumer loyalty.

Figure 1. Content feeds on Kavela Instagram (2025)

Based on observations of Kavela’s Instagram account, the content displays a soft visual aesthetic characterized by pastel tones that evoke a feminine impression and a minimalist design approach. The mouth spray product is presented in combination with lifestyle elements, conveying the idea that the product is part of the daily routine of young women who care about their appearance and health. In addition to static visuals, Kavela incorporates other content types such as educational carousels, video reels, and user testimonials. These content formats are often accompanied by motivational messages.

Based on this background, the present study aims to identify the visual elements employed by Kavela in its marketing strategy through Instagram, particularly in shaping meaning, constructing brand image, and influencing its

audience. Using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, this research explores how Kavela organizes visual communication to construct public perception of its products and brand identity. Thus, this study positions visual content not merely as a marketing support tool, but as a central component in the construction of meaning, identity, and social relationships within the context of digital marketing.

2. METHOD

1. SIGNIFIER	2. SIGNIFIED
3. DENOTATIVE SIGN	
I. CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIER	II. CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIED
III. CONNOTATIVE SIGN	

Figure 2. Barthes' Semiotic Model (2025)

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach by employing Roland Barthes' semiotic theory as an analytical framework to interpret the meanings embedded in the visual content of Kavela's Instagram account. Barthes' theory explains the process of meaning-making through the relationship between the signifier and the signified, which operates on two primary levels: denotation and connotation. In addition, Barthes incorporates the concept of myth as a further layer of cultural meaning [7].

2.1 Denotative

Denotation is the first level within Barthes' system of signs. At this stage, a sign is understood objectively and literally that is, based on what is directly visible to the eye, without any cultural or emotional interpretation. Denotation refers to the direct relationship between the signifier and the signified, namely the physical form of an object and the most basic and descriptive meaning that can be attributed to it.

2.2 Connotative

The second level is connotation, which refers to meanings that arise due to the influence of social, cultural, emotional, or personal contexts. Connotation is subjective in nature and may vary depending on the viewer's background, experience, and perspective.

2.3 Mythological

Within Barthes' framework, connotations that have been long embedded in society are referred to as myths, which function to express and legitimize the dominant values prevailing within a particular historical or cultural period [8].

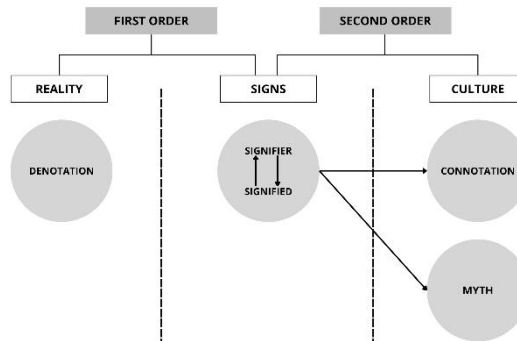


Figure 3. Two order of Signification Roland Barthes (2025)

Semiotics is a field of study that examines signs to understand how meaning is created. Ferdinand de Saussure's foundational theory, which divides a sign into two components the signifier and the signified was the basis for the theory developed by Roland Barthes, known for his concepts of the two orders of signification (denotation, connotation) and myth.[10]

Data collection was conducted through interviews with the brand owner and observations of Kavela's Instagram content in order to gain an understanding of the visual communication strategies employed in building brand image. In addition, a literature review of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory was carried out to enrich the analytical framework. The collected data were then analyzed qualitatively using a semiotic approach to uncover the layers of meaning within each visual element, with the aim of identifying the extent to which the visual messages conveyed support Kavela's brand positioning and appeal on Instagram.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study analyses six Instagram feed. Three of them are product introduction posts, each highlighting a different flavor variant, while the other three are the latest uploads from Kavela's Instagram account dated July 10-11, 2025 which focus on building a lifestyle context. These contents were selected for analysis based on the notion that a brand should not only explain its product offerings to the audience, but also construct a narrative that resonates with the



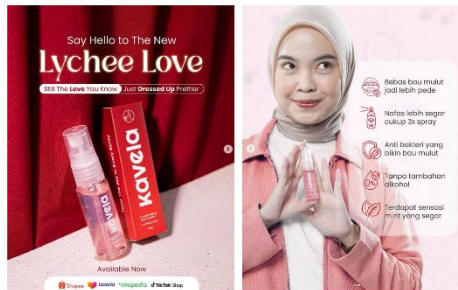
lifestyle of its target market.[9]

Figure 4. Calmelon (2025)

Table 1. Roland Barthes Semiotics on Calmelon

Visual Elements	Denotative	Connotative	Mythological
Photography	The mouth spray product and its packaging box are centrally positioned against a white background with natural lighting. A portion of a beige colored bag is visible in the background behind the product.	The centralized focus emphasizes the importance of the product. The clean background symbolizes simplicity and authenticity. The presence of the bag suggests mobility or an lifestyle.	The product is positioned as an integral part of a modern woman's daily life. Practical and designed to be carried conveniently in a handbag.
Color	The product and its packaging are dominated by pastel green tones, supported by a white background and a beige colored bag.	The green color symbolizes freshness, calmness, and nature. Conveying the impression that the product is gentle and safe.	Self care is associated with peace of mind and natural health, positioning the product as part of a holistic self care routine.
Headline	The headline "Meet The New Calmelon" serves as an invitation to discover the newly introduced product. Presented in capital letters and a prominent green color.	The use of capital letters emphasizes the brand's authority and presence, while the modern sans-serif typeface conveys clarity, precision, and professionalism.	The headline constructs the impression that Calmelon is a fresh, exciting product worthy of attention.
Tagline	The tagline "a clearer look, a calmer touch" is a descriptive sentence that highlight two key characteristics of the product: a clean appearance and a calming sensation.	The lightweight typeface evokes a gentle, personal, and elegant tone.	Shaping the myth that self care is not just about the look, but also a sense of calm and softness. It encourages the audience to perceive Kavela as part of a modern relaxation experience.
Kavela Logo	The logo features a clean, modern design using lowercase, sans-serif typeface in white.	It conveys a minimalist, contemporary, and professional impression.	The brand is positioned as part of an urban youth lifestyle that values appearance while maintaining simplicity.

<p>E-commerce Logo</p>	<p>Logos are displayed horizontally at the bottom of the content. There are several logos namely Shopee, Lazada, Tokopedia, and TikTok Shop.</p>	<p>e-commerce logos conveys the impression that Kavela is a trustworthy and professional brand. These marketplace logos are widely recognized as symbols of convenience and practicality in modern consumer behavior.</p>	<p>It constructs the myth that the brand is well established, digitally relevant, and accessible anytime and anywhere.</p>
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Slide 1

Slide 2

Figure 5. Lychee Love (2025)

Table 2. Roland Barthes Semiotics on Lychee Love

Visual Elements	Denotative	Connotative	Mythological
Slide 1			
Photography	A close up photo product placed centrally against a soft pink background	The centered composition and clean background draw focus to the product	The product is positioned as a significant object and visual focal point, symbolizing an organized, elegant, and modern lifestyle
Color	Dominated by light pink and red hues with white space around	Pink signifies softness, femininity, and care. Red suggest passion and energy	Color communicate a myth of ideal femininity, graceful, and gentle.
Headline	Text reads "Say Hello to the New Lychee Love" in bold	The style creates an enthusiastic and fresh tone, encouraging	Reinforces the idea that the brand is dynamic, always updating and

		curiosity about the product refresh	staying relevant to its audience.
Tagline	“Still the Love You Know, Just Dressed Up Prettier” beneath the headline, using lowercase typography	A playful and familiar tone that emphasizes emotional connection and a slight upgrade in appearance	Suggest that self care improvements can be simple yet impactful and inviting audience to embrace personal refinement
Slide 2			
Photography	A female model poses smiling while holding the product, set against a soft background with warm lighting	The expression and posture convey personal confidence, satisfaction, and intimacy	The product is presented as a source of confident and joy. Connecting beauty with emotional well-being
Color	The image maintains consistency with the first slide. Soft pink, celan, white, and warm lighting	Enhances a soothing and elegant tone, reinforcing the brand’s feminine and gentle identity	Associates care routines with emotional calmness and femininity
Facial Expression	The model smiles openly while maintaining direct eye contact	Evokes a sense of trust, comfort, and authenticity	Symbolizes the empowered modern woman, confident, fresh, and in control of her self care choices
Icons	There are several lineart icons displayed, namely mouth (breath), leaf (antibacterial), bottle with a slash (alcohol free), mint leaf	Icons visually reinforce the product’s features while enhancing clarity and aesthetic appeal	Creates the myth that effective self care should be simple, engaging, and easy to understand
Description Text	Simple sentences list that presents each icon	Emphasizes ease of understanding, everyday practicality, and user friendliness	Promotes self care as both accessible and essential for the modern health conscious consumer



Figure 6. Berry Mood (2025)

Table 3. Roland Barthes Semiotics on Berry Mood

Visual Elements	Denotative	Connotative	Mythological
Photography	A close-up photograph of the product is placed in the center, surrounded by descriptive text on a soft purple gradient background.	The central focus and soft lighting emphasize the product's shape and color, creating a clean and elegant visual.	The product is framed as a key element in daily routines symbolizing modernity, orderliness, and personal style.
Illustration	Simple arrow illustrations and small star icons point toward various features and benefits of the product.	The minimal and playful visual style enhances approachability and makes the content appear informative.	Suggests that self-care should be easy, enjoyable, and accessible to everyone, reinforcing a lifestyle of effortless wellness.
Color	The visual is dominated by light purple and white tones.	Purple evokes calmness, sweetness, and elegance; white connotes freshness and cleanliness.	These colors build a myth around feminine softness and inner strength
Headline	The main text reads "Experience the New Look" in large, serif white font at the top of the image.	The phrase encourages the viewer to embrace a refreshed version of the product in a confident and refined manner.	The brand is portrayed as consistently evolving and relevant positioning innovation as an integral part of a modern young woman's life.
Description Text	Short sentences encircle the product,	The language is simple and clear, emphasizing the	Positions the product as both a daily necessity and a

	highlighting its benefits such as “Anti-bacterial,” “Fresh,” and “Safe for everyday use.”	product’s everyday practicality and comfort.	pleasant part of self care aligned with the lifestyle of health conscious women.
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Figure 7. Cara survive quarter life-crisis (2025)

Table 4. Roland Barthes Semiotics on cara survive quarter life-crisis

Visual Elements	Denotative	Connotative	Mythological
Slide 1			
Illustration	Simple line illustrations such as a circle, clapping hands, and a curved progress line with labels “grow”	These symbols suggest thinking processes, emotional support, and individual journeys. The minimal style creates a friendly and approachable tone.	Illustrations construct the myth that personal growth is non linear and valuable, and that emotional progress deserves to be acknowledged and celebrated.
Color	Dominant soft pink background with red accents and white text across	Pink conveys warmth, softness, and emotional safety. Red color adds emphasis and emotional strength.	Color choices support the myth that vulnerability and strength coexist, softness is redefined as a sign of courage and emotional awareness, especially among young women.

Headline	<p>“Cara Survive Quarter-Life Crisis” is a popular psychological phrase presented using two different font styles. The phrase “Cara Survive” is written in Indonesian using a script font, while “Quarter-Life Crisis” is written in English using a sans-serif font.</p>	<p>It illustrates the emotional pressure experienced by individuals in their twenties, using a mix of languages that creates a casual yet modern impression.</p>	<p>It conveys that the younger generation faces complex life challenges that must be navigated with specific strategies.</p>
Slide 2			
Illustration	<p>An illustration of a brain in lineart style accompanied by a circle that refers to the word mindful.</p>	<p>This illustration conveys that overcoming a quarter-life crisis requires mental awareness and acceptance of imperfection.</p>	<p>Inner peace and the ability to cope with life’s pressures can be achieved through the practice of mindfulness and self-introspection.</p>
Headline	<p>“Turunin Ekspektasi” is an everyday persuasive phrase written in a sans-serif font style.</p>	<p>It offers a suggestion to remain realistic in facing life. The sentence implies emotional closeness by using a casual communication style.</p>	<p>The myth that setting high expectations can lead to disappointment.</p>
Subheadline	<p>“Hidup ga kayak di film-film” is a supporting statement that expresses how real life differs from the idealized life often portrayed in films. The sentence is written in a script font style.</p>	<p>It conveys the message that life is not always as beautiful as the narratives depicted in films.</p>	<p>Films can create a false reality that leads viewers to imagine an idealized life.</p>
Slide 3			

Illustration	An illustration of two hands in a lineart style meeting each other as if in a high-five or applause gesture. The hand positions suggest a shared celebration, enhanced by small surrounding lines symbolizing motion or sound effects.	It represents support, appreciation, and celebration of success, achievement, or shared enthusiasm with others.	Even the smallest achievements become more meaningful when they are appreciated and celebrated with others.
Headline	“Celebrate progress kecil” is presented in both Indonesian and English. The sentence is written in a sans-serif font style.	Valuing and celebrating every small step that has been achieved not only the final outcome, but also the process marked by incremental progress.	Every bit of personal growth, no matter how small, is worth celebrating.
Subheadline	“Jangan Cuma nunggu yang gede” is a supporting phrase expressed in colloquial language commonly used by younger generations in everyday conversation. The sentence is written in a script font style.	It encourages the reader not to postpone self-appreciation while waiting for major achievements.	Happiness can come from small, consistent things not only from major accomplishments.
Slide 4			
Illustration	A curved progress line labeled “fail” passes through the word “then” and ends at the word “grow,” illustrated using a simple line style.	It illustrates a gradual, time-based journey. The word “fail” represents a natural and acceptable starting point; “then” implies the passing of time and the process that occurs between failure and growth; while “grow” conveys a	Failure is a natural part of life's journey. One must go through phases of failure before eventually reaching growth and achievement.

		positive outcome, emphasizing that personal development is the result of experience and progression.	
Headline	The phrase “Your timeline is different from others” uses casual, everyday language, made evident by the use of informal terms such as “your” and “different.” The sentence is presented in a sans-serif font, which reinforces a clean, modern, and accessible visual style.	It implies that each individual’s life journey is unique and follows a different path.	Having a different timeline is often perceived as wrong, as if everyone is expected to experience life at the same pace.
Subheadline	"That's totally okay" is a supporting phrase presented in a script font style.	The supporting phrase conveys emotional support, specifically emphasizing self-acceptance.	Accepting differences and misalignments in life’s rhythm is a form of self-validation.



Figure 8. Jaman sekolah vs pas kerja (2025)

Table 5. Roland Barthes Semiotics on Jaman sekolah vs pas kerja

Visual Elements	Denotative	Connotative	Mythological
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<p>Images</p>	<p>The nostalgic school-time foods depicted are street snacks such as fried foods and iced tea, while the working-era foods consist of sushi, salad, and fruit juice. These items are visually presented in the form of stickers.</p>	<p>School-time food symbolizes a period of adolescence characterized by indulgence and minimal responsibility. In contrast, working-age food represents a modern lifestyle marked by health consciousness and efficiency.</p>	<p>The school years symbolize a life phase that is relatively free from pressure. In contrast, working life tends to reflect a lifestyle that is health-conscious, minimalist, and focused on productivity.</p>
<p>Color</p>	<p>The background uses a combination of pink and white. The colors of the displayed food contrast strongly with the background and are framed with a white outline, resembling sticker style visuals.</p>	<p>The pink color evokes a soft, warm, and familiar atmosphere. It also conveys a sense of femininity and suggests comfort or nostalgia. The colors of the food items appear vibrant and energetic, while the white outline gives a modern, fun, and clean impression.</p>	<p>Pink is often associated with self-love and healing, reflecting a cultural narrative embraced by Gen Z, who are highly sensitive to mental health awareness. The colorful appearance of the food items represents a popular visual strategy on social media, designed to quickly capture attention. The use of white outlines reflects a digital native aesthetic, commonly found in Instagram stories and Reels content, reinforcing the visual language of contemporary online culture.</p>
<p>Headline</p>	<p>"Jaman Sekolah vs Pas Kerja". is an informal phrase that compares two distinct life phases: the school period and professional adulthood. The phrase is designed</p>	<p>The illustration conveys a temporal comparison by highlighting the transformation of identity, daily habits, and core life values between different stages of</p>	<p>The transition from school to working life illustrates a shift from a relaxed and pleasurable period to one characterized by increased responsibilities and</p>

	in a pop-art sticker style, reflecting a playful and eye-catching visual approach often associated with contemporary digital aesthetics.	life.	the realities of adult life.
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Figure 9. Low effort high impact self-care (2025)

Table 6. Roland Barthes Semiotics on low effort high impact self-care

Visual Elements	Denotative	Connotative	Mythological
Slide 1			
Images	An image of a woman wearing casual clothing, sitting on a picnic blanket in a park. She is engaged in reading a book while accompanied by a cup of tea and several small snacks around her. The visual composition is arranged using digital imaging techniques.	Depicting a peaceful and relaxed atmosphere through a mindful lifestyle.	Self-care or 'me time' in open spaces, involving calm activities without the distraction of work or digital devices, is portrayed as an aesthetically pleasing and Instagrammable process.
Color	Pastel purple as the background color, light green on the matcha with a dominant mint tone, and bright red	It evokes a dreamy and playful impression, with an imaginative and aesthetic nuance.	In Gen Z visual culture, these colors are associated with emotional balance, which is considered both aesthetically

	from the strawberries.		pleasing and mental health-friendly.
Headline	“Low Effort” is written in an elegant script font, while “High Impact Self Care” is written in a sans-serif font.	The font types represent a balance between softness and communication, while the sentence describes self-care that yields significant results and can be done easily without excessive effort.	A minimalist self-care trend that suggests self-care can be done efficiently while still producing a significant impact.
Slide 2			
Images	The image shows two notepads titled "hello notes" in a mustard yellow color, with clips and stickers attached. In the foreground there is a green drink, a matcha latte, and the background is a soft pastel purple.	Notepads and clips are associated with journaling, while the trendy drink is linked to an aesthetic lifestyle that is synonymous with healing.	This image conveys that writing down anxieties in a notebook is a part of the self-healing process that can be done in a simple way. This forms a social understanding that well-being can be managed through small habits.
Color	The dominant colors in the image are pastel purple for the background, mustard yellow for the notepads, green for the drink, and white for the typography.	Pastel purple gives a soft and calm impression, which is often associated with tranquility. Mustard yellow creates a warm and creative impression. Matcha green evokes associations with a trendy lifestyle. The white color in the typography gives a clean impression.	This color palette creates the idea that dealing with anxiety doesn't have to be heavy and dark. These colors represent that mental wellness can be practiced in a light-hearted way.
Headline	"Tulis semua anxiety lu di notes (seriously help)" is a phrase that directly invites the audience to write down their	This sentence contains a personal emotional nuance.	Writing down your feelings or journaling is a part of modern self-care practice.

	<p>anxieties in a notebook. The language used is an informal mix of Indonesian and English, written in a sans-serif font.</p>		
Slide 3			
Images	<p>The image shows a hand holding a landline phone receiver, with the speaker and microphone holes filled with flowers.</p>	<p>The analog telephone gives a sense of nostalgia, evoking memories of the past when communication was more personal. The flowers growing on the phone symbolize that simple communication can foster warmth and affection. The hand holding the phone shows an active gesture, suggesting that self-care can begin with small initiatives like reaching out to a friend.</p>	<p>The myth being constructed is that talking to old friends can be healing or can cultivate a new spirit.</p>
Color	<p>The dominant color is pastel purple, with brown on the main object, the analog telephone. The flowers are red, pink, and white, and the headline is in white.</p>	<p>The colorful flowers give a sense of happiness and care. The brown color of the phone creates a feeling of nostalgia.</p>	<p>Pastel colors can create a modern societal perception of self-care as something gentle.</p>
Headline	<p>"call temen lama dengerin cerita (a.k.a curhat tipis)" is an inviting phrase for the audience to contact an old friend and listen to their stories.</p>	<p>Menyiratkan kehangatan dan nostalgia melalui aktivitas sederhana bisa menjadi bentuk self care</p>	<p>Maintaining social connections is a crucial part of mental well-being.</p>

Slide 4			
Images	The main image shows a person wearing a pastel-colored sweater, pulling the top of the sweater up to cover their face. Shiny pink star ornaments are arranged around them.	This image implies feelings of awkwardness, overwhelm, or confusion an expression often experienced by someone going through a quarter-life crisis.	It is considered that a quarter-life crisis is a sign of weakness or an inability to face life's challenges. However, a quarter-life crisis is actually a normal phase in adult development.
Color	The color palette is dominated by purple in the background, pastel rainbow colors on the sweater, and shiny pink on the star ornaments.	Bright colors show freedom of expression and a passion for change.	A quarter-life crisis is a vibrant moment that shows growth can be achieved with love and patience.
Headline	"Inget: quarter life crisis is temporary (you're not stuck, you're growing)" is displayed using a white sans-serif font.	That headline implies that a quarter-life crisis is a human emotional transition.	This headline constructs the myth that the emotional crises experienced by the younger generation are a part of personal growth or self-exploration.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that Kavela, as a local Indonesian oral care brand, utilizes Instagram not merely as a promotional channel, but as a strategic platform for shaping brand identity and emotional resonance with its audience. Through the application of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, it was found that Kavela's visual content operates on multiple layers of meaning denotative, connotative, and mythological.

Denotatively, Kavela presents its mouth spray product with clean, minimalist aesthetics, pastel color palettes, and lifestyle-oriented compositions. Connotatively, these elements evoke impressions of femininity, confidence, modernity, and personal care. Mythologically, the visuals construct narratives that position oral care as an essential aspect of a healthy, stylish, and emotionally balanced lifestyle for young women. The presence of motivational language, relatable illustrations, and inclusive representations further strengthens the brand's emotional connection with its Gen Z audience.

Thus, visual content in Kavela's Instagram feed serves not only as a branding tool but also as a semiotic medium for delivering culturally relevant messages and shaping consumer perception through symbolic storytelling.

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