



## CULTURAL REPRESENTATION OF URBAN LIFESTYLE IN GOJEK'S 'GOCAR LUXE' ADVERTISEMENT (2023)

Siti Khodijah Lestari<sup>1</sup>, Nurhayani Saragih<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Pendidikan Seni Rupa, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Mercu Buana, Indonesia

### Article Info

### ABSTRACT

#### Keywords:

Semiotics, Cultural Representation,  
Urban Lifestyle

The rise of digital technologies has reshaped urban mobility and consumption patterns, with app-based transport services such as Gojek functioning not only as practical solutions but also as cultural symbols for the urban middle and upper classes. This study employs Roland Barthes's semiotic framework to examine how the GoCar Luxe (2023) advertisement constructs an urban lifestyle narrative through visual and verbal signs. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the analysis identifies denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings embedded in the advertisement. The findings reveal that symbolic representations reinforce values of comfort, exclusivity, and efficiency as central to contemporary urban discourse. By unpacking these semiotic layers, the study highlights how digital advertising mediates cultural identity and legitimizes lifestyle aspirations, offering insights for communication and advertising studies on the interplay between media texts, cultural representation, and urban consumer values.

*This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.*



#### Corresponding Author:

Name: Siti Khodijah Lestari  
Department: Pendidikan Seni Rupa  
University: Universitas Negeri Jakarta  
Email: [sitikhodijah@unj.ac.id](mailto:sitikhodijah@unj.ac.id)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technology has transformed urban lifestyles in Indonesia, particularly through app-based services such as Gojek. These services function not only as practical solutions but also as cultural symbols that represent identity and aspiration. Recent data highlight Indonesia as the world's largest ride-hailing market, with millions of daily transactions that reflect high urban mobility, efficiency demands, and comfort-seeking behavior (GoodStats, 2025; MetroTVNews, 2024). Within this context, advertising becomes more than a promotional tool; it operates as a site of meaning production that shapes how urban life is imagined and valued (Berutu, 2025).

The GoCar Luxe advertisement, released in 2023, illustrates this dual role by presenting a narrative of exclusivity, modernity, and convenience through humor, playful language, and everyday urban symbols such as air conditioning, soft seating, and a polished driver persona. These elements reinforce the image of a premium lifestyle associated with the urban middle and upper classes. Beneath its casual tone, the advertisement naturalizes ideals of comfort, efficiency, and social prestige as markers of the ideal urban lifestyle.

Previous research on digital advertising in Indonesia has largely focused on consumer behavior, branding strategies, or media effects (Lasido, 2017). Few studies have applied semiotic analysis to reveal how advertising constructs social identity and cultural myths in urban contexts. Advertisements themselves can be studied semiotically through their use of signs, which include verbal symbols such as language, nonverbal cues like shapes

and colors, and icons that imitate reality through depictions of people, animals, or objects (Madani, 2023 p.213-214). Few studies have applied semiotic analysis to reveal how advertising constructs social identity and cultural myths in urban contexts. This gap underscores the need to examine how symbols in advertising contribute to shaping collective perceptions of urban life. To address this issue, the present study applies Roland Barthes's semiotic framework that emphasizes denotation, connotation, and myth. This framework is used to analyze how the GoCar Luxe advertisement constructs narratives of urban lifestyle. The study not only interprets the symbolic layers embedded in advertising texts but also highlights the broader implications of digital advertising in producing and sustaining cultural values. This urgency is highly relevant for communication, cultural studies, and marketing research because it deepens our understanding of how media representations influence identity formation and value systems in contemporary urban societies.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative method with a descriptive approach to gain a deeper understanding of human and social issues (Suheri, 2025, p. 547). The research applied Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis, which was chosen because it enables the interpretation of signs at three levels: denotation, connotation, and myth. These levels are essential in uncovering how the GoCar Luxe advertisement (2023) constructs representations of urban lifestyles. At the denotative level, a sign consists of the signifier and the signified. At the connotative level, signs generate additional meanings that extend beyond the literal interpretation. Finally, at the mythical level, these connotations are naturalized into broader ideological narratives (Sobur, 2003, p. 69).

The object of this research is the GoCar Luxe advertisement, which was released in February 2023 through Gojek's official digital platforms, including YouTube and social media. The advertisement was selected because its visual and verbal elements explicitly highlight representations of urban lifestyles through humor, wordplay, and symbolic references to daily urban experiences.

The data set consists of visual clips analyzed frame by frame, verbal texts in the form of subtitles and narration, and symbolic elements such as colors, expressions, gestures, and objects. Data collection was conducted by repeatedly viewing and transcribing the advertisement to ensure accuracy and completeness.

The analysis followed three main stages based on Barthes's framework. First, all visual and verbal elements appearing in each scene were identified and categorized. Second, these signs were interpreted at the denotative level to capture their literal meanings in context. Third, the same signs were examined at the connotative level to uncover emotional and cultural associations. Finally, the interpretation extended to the mythical level to reveal ideological values and naturalized meanings embedded in the advertisement.

To enhance the reliability and validity of the findings, the analysis process involved cross-checking interpretations among researchers and comparing them with secondary references on semiotics and cultural studies. This triangulation helped to minimize subjective bias and ensured consistency in interpreting the data.

## 3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the findings of the study on the Gojek *GoCar Luxe* (2023) advertisement using Roland Barthes's semiotic theory. The analysis was carried out in three stages: denotative meaning, connotative meaning, and myth. To examine the representation of urban lifestyles, selected screenshots from the advertisement were analyzed as key visual elements. This approach aims to understand how urban lifestyles are represented in the advertisement and to identify the messages conveyed through its signs and symbols.



Picture 1. Scene of the Gojek *GoCar Luxe* advertisement  
(Source: Screenshot from YouTube Good News, 2023)

### Denotative Meaning 1

In this scene, a young woman is shown with a neat appearance, wearing a cream blouse, green trousers, and matching heels. Her hair is tied back neatly. She is sitting on the hood of a black car in an unusual position, with

a confused facial expression and a hand gesture placed on her chin. The accompanying text reads: *'Wanita ini kalua naik mobil,'*

### Connotative Meaning 1

The formal clothing and simple makeup signify an urban professional figure who embodies a modern and sophisticated lifestyle. However, the visual contradiction between her refined appearance and the act of sitting on the hood of a car creates a striking opposition. Semiotic theory explains that meaning often emerges through contrasts and differences between signifiers (Yan, 2015, p. 59). In this case, the unusual sitting position implies discomfort and the need for a better transportation experience.

Her serious facial expression further reinforces this sign. The moment highlights the necessity of having access to proper and dignified mobility services. This is a need that may often go unnoticed in daily life but carries important ideological significance. Advertisements strategically employ multiple elements to construct narratives that strongly influence audiences, relying on culturally embedded signs and symbols whose meanings can vary across different communities (Aqel, 2024 p.1716).

Such cinematic contrasts illustrate how the advertisement highlights the gap between the ideal representation of modernity and everyday reality, while positioning GoCar Luxe as the solution to bridge this gap.



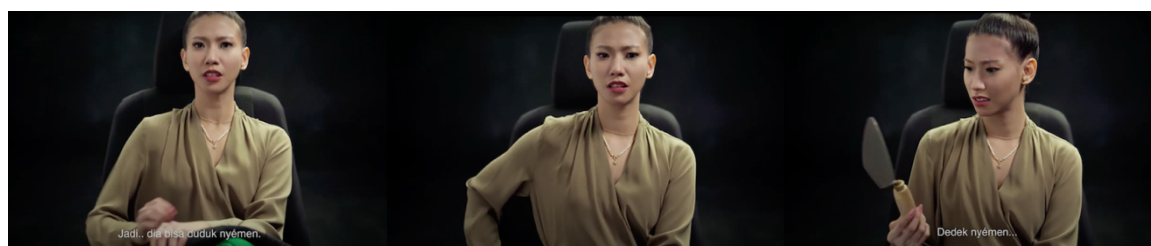
Picture 2. Scene of the Gojek GoCar Luxe advertisement  
(Source: Screenshot from YouTube Good News, 2023)

### Denotative Meaning 2

Suddenly, the woman falls with a slightly surprised expression and lands in a car seat with her body leaning back against the headrest. The text reads: *"sukanya kursi yang empuk."* She then appears relaxed, crossing her legs with a satisfied smile while touching the seat.

### Connotative Meaning 2

The soft car seat symbolizes the premium comfort offered by the GoCar Luxe service. The expression of joy and satisfaction emphasizes that comfort is an essential part of urban mobility. The relaxed posture and gesture of touching the seat reinforce the impression that transportation transcends mere movement; it becomes a luxurious experience that indulges the passenger. In this sense, the advertisement positions GoCar Luxe as an emblem of an urban lifestyle that prioritizes quality, comfort, and prestige. This framing aligns with Sovacool's discussion of automobility, where comfort is interpreted not only as a physical state but also as a symbolic frame that reflects cultural aspirations for status and leisure (Sovacool, 2018, p. 732). Likewise, Kisgyörgy and Tóth highlight that perceived comfort substantially enhances the value of mobility services, indicating that passengers judge transport not merely by efficiency but by the quality of experiential journeys (Kisgyörgy & Tóth, 2020, p. 207).



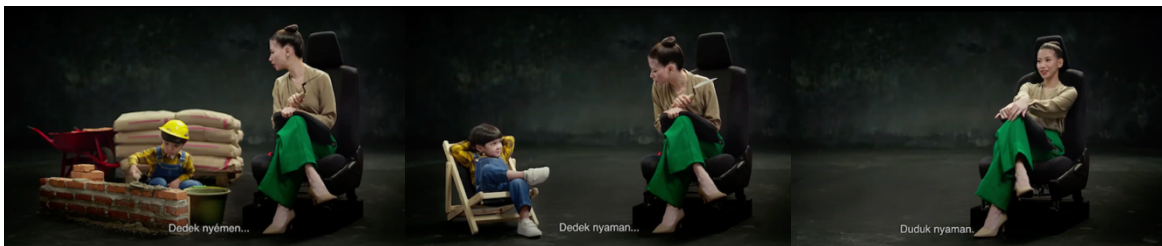
Picture 3. Scene of the Gojek GoCar Luxe advertisement  
(Source: Screenshot from YouTube Good News, 2023)

### Denotative Meaning 3

In the first clip, the same woman is still seated in the car with a serious expression while saying, “*Jadi.. dia bisa duduk nyémen.*” In the second clip, she appears slightly puzzled, leaning her body to the side as if demonstrating discomfort in her back. In the third clip, she pulls out a small metal-headed shovel from behind her back with a frown, accompanied by the text, “*Dedek nyémen....*”

### Connotative Meaning 3

The car seat once again becomes a signifier of comfort, this time illustrated through a playful word pun on *nyémen* (a colloquial variation of *nyaman*, meaning “comfortable”), which creates a humorous effect. The woman’s serious and puzzled expressions highlight the contrast between being “uncomfortable” and the “comfort” promised by GoCar Luxe. The presence of a small shovel, which has no contextual connection to a car, serves as a comic metaphor that reinforces the word *nyémen*, producing visual humor while strengthening the audience’s memory of the comfort concept. The connotation of this sequence is that the comfort offered by GoCar Luxe is not merely a functional necessity but rather an urban lifestyle associated with experiences that are unique, enjoyable, and even prestigious through the use of creative and humorous symbols.



Picture 4. Scene of the Gojek GoCar Luxe advertisement  
(Source: Screenshot from YouTube Good News, 2023)

### Denotative Meaning 4

The first clip shows a woman sitting in a car seat while turning her head to the side, where a young child dressed as a construction worker, complete with a yellow helmet, is building a brick wall with cement. The text displayed reads: “*Dedek nyémen....*” The second clip features another young child sitting casually on a small folding chair with legs crossed, while the woman in the car seat looks at the child with a warm smile. The text reads: “*Dedek nyaman....*” In the third clip, the woman is seen sitting comfortably in the car seat with her legs crossed, smiling as she says, “*Duduk nyaman.*”

### Connotative Meaning 4

The presence of the child dressed as a construction worker symbolizes a situation contrary to comfort, namely hard work, sweat, and lack of relaxation, which reinforces by contrast the idea of comfort offered by GoCar Luxe. In contrast, the child sitting casually in a folding chair becomes a symbol of innocence and simple joy, associating comfort with something natural and accessible from an early age. The final scene of the adult woman sitting relaxed in the car seat concludes the visual narrative by emphasizing that comfort is at the heart of the GoCar Luxe service. The wordplay moving from “*dedek nyémen/nyaman*” to “*duduk nyaman*” adds humor while reinforcing the message that comfort is the primary value of the modern urban lifestyle, one that is efficient, enjoyable, and prestigious.



Picture 5. Scene of the Gojek GoCar Luxe advertisement  
(Source: Screenshot from YouTube Good News, 2023)

### Denotative Meaning 5

The first clip shows a close-up of a woman’s crossed feet in cream-colored high heels resting in the car’s legroom, accompanied by the text: “*Kendaraan yang dia mau bisa muat berbagai kaki.*” The second clip displays a man’s feet in sports shoes and white socks, shown as long enough to reach the front seat area, with the text:

“*Kaki panjang.*” In the third clip, a pair of oversized feet resembling those of a monster or fictional creature appears, accompanied by the text: “*Kaki besar.*”

### Connotative Meaning 5

This sequence emphasizes the spaciousness and flexibility of the GoCar Luxe cabin. The high heels symbolize the modern urban professional woman, while the long feet in sports shoes represent an athletic, masculine, and energetic figure. The exaggeratedly large, fantasy-like feet introduce a humorous element while serving as a metaphor that the vehicle can accommodate anyone’s need for space, even in the most extreme cases. The connotation is that GoCar Luxe offers not only individual comfort but also inclusive and flexible capacity that caters to diverse urban lifestyles, ranging from office workers and athletes to families with special needs.



Picture 6. Scene of the Gojek GoCar Luxe advertisement  
(Source: Screenshot from YouTube Good News, 2023)

### Denotative Meaning 6

The first clip shows the feet of a soccer player wearing golden shoes and long white socks, sitting in the car seat, accompanied by the text “*Kaki mahal.*” The second clip displays a street food cart supported by wooden legs at the bottom, with the text “*Kaki lima.*” The third clip presents a small aquarium containing goldfish, with the text “*Ikan mas kaki.*”

### Connotative Meaning 6

The soccer player’s golden shoes symbolize status, high value, and luxury, representing urban individuals associated with prestige and exclusivity. Meanwhile, the “*kaki lima*” street food cart signifies street life, simplicity, and the everyday activities of city dwellers. The goldfish in the aquarium, combined with the wordplay “*kaki*,” introduces humor while also suggesting the diversity of urban life that can be accommodated. Taken together, this sequence associates GoCar Luxe with a transportation service capable of embracing a wide spectrum of social backgrounds, from the prestigious and elite to the simple and creative, while consistently emphasizing comfort and flexibility.



Picture 7. Scene of the Gojek GoCar Luxe advertisement  
(Source: Screenshot from YouTube Good News, 2023)

### Denotative Meaning 7

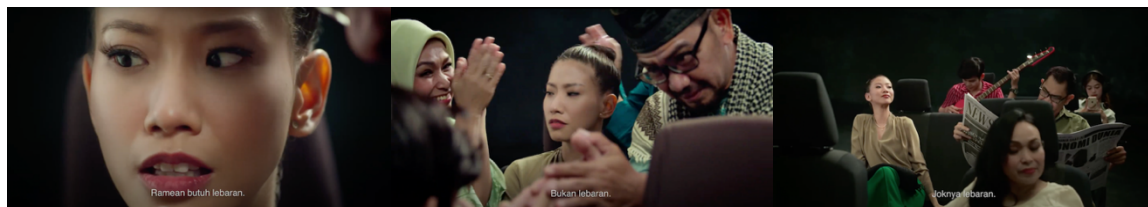
The first clip shows a woman sitting in a car seat, receiving a bowl of ramen on a tray handed to her by someone off-screen. Her expression is serious as she reads the text: “*Di perjalanan dia sukanya ramean.*” The second clip shows the same woman looking to the side with a puzzled expression, while the ramen remains in front of her, accompanied by the text: “*Ra-me-an.*”

### Connotative Meaning 7

The use of *ramean* in this scene is a deliberate wordplay. In Indonesian, *ramean* refers to being together or in a group, while its sound resemblance to *ramen* (a popular Japanese dish) creates a humorous pun. The

advertisement visually emphasizes this by showing ramen, turning the homophonic similarity into a playful and memorable association.

This pun constructs the idea that traveling with GoCar Luxe offers not only comfort but also togetherness, making it suitable for group experiences as well as individual travel. Furthermore, the presence of ramen—as an icon of urban-modern cuisine—adds a cosmopolitan nuance, symbolizing globalization and contemporary urban lifestyles. Thus, the connotation is that GoCar Luxe caters to individuals who value social connection and togetherness while also embracing modern, prestigious, and globally inspired experiences in their daily mobility.



Picture 8. Scene of the Gojek GoCar Luxe advertisement  
(Source: Screenshot from YouTube Good News, 2023)

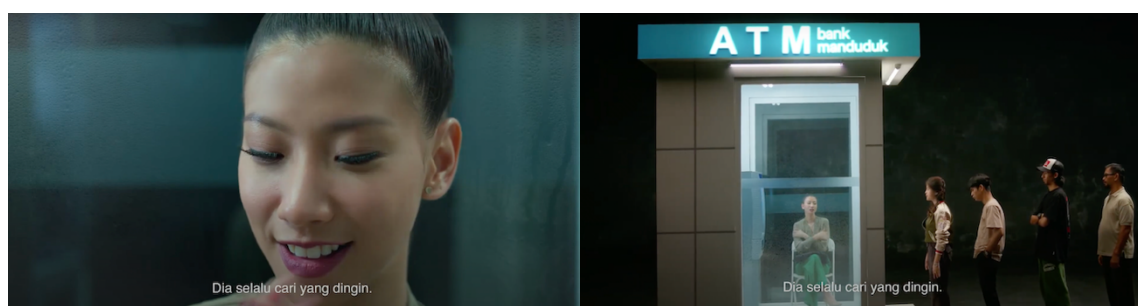
#### Denotative Meaning 8

The first clip presents a close-up of the woman's face with a puzzled expression, accompanied by the text: "*Ramean butuh lebaran.*" The second clip shows her in the middle of a crowd of people dressed in traditional Muslim attire, cheering and clapping, with the text: "*Bukan lebaran.*" In the third clip, the woman is seated comfortably in the car alongside several other passengers; one is reading a newspaper, another is playing the guitar, while another is using a mobile phone. The text reads: "*Joknya lebaran.*"

#### Connotative Meaning 8

This sequence plays on the word *lebaran*, which in Indonesian is commonly understood as the Islamic festive holiday marked by joy, crowds, and togetherness. The advertisement humorously twists this meaning into a pun, shifting from *lebaran* (festive) to *lebar-an* (literally: made wider or more spacious, derived from *lebar* = wide). The second scene, which initially refers to the festive sense of *lebaran*, is deliberately negated with the phrase "*Bukan lebaran*" to signal that the intended meaning is not about the holiday. Instead, the third scene reframes *lebaran* as describing the wide and spacious car seats, emphasizing comfort and the ability to accommodate multiple passengers with ease.

Thus, the connotation suggests that GoCar Luxe cleverly redefines '*lebaran*' from its cultural association with festivity and togetherness to a playful metaphor for spaciousness. This pun strengthens audience recall and adds a humorous, memorable twist that reinforces GoCar Luxe's image as both practical and premium in the urban mobility landscape.



Picture 9. Scene of the Gojek GoCar Luxe advertisement  
(Source: Screenshot from YouTube Good News, 2023)

#### Denotative Meaning 9

The first clip shows the woman smiling while speaking, accompanied by the text: "*Dia selalu cari yang dingin.*" The second clip depicts her sitting inside an air-conditioned ATM booth, while several people are shown waiting outside. The sign above the booth reads: "*ATM bank manduduk.*"

#### Connotative Meaning 9

She smiles and the phrase "*cari yang dingin*" reflects the urban desire for coolness and comfort in hot, crowded environments. The woman resting inside the air-conditioned ATM while others wait outside symbolizes

exclusivity, showing that comfort is accessible only to a few. The cold temperature of ATM rooms is not only a technical requirement, since machines generate heat and need constant cooling to function and ensure user comfort (finance.detik.com, 2020), but also a symbolic marker of safety and freshness in the city. Humor in the wordplay “*ATM bank manduduk*” highlights that comfort is not just about air conditioning but also about the rare luxury of private space in public settings. The connotation is that GoCar Luxe offers comfort comparable to a private air-conditioned room, a form of exclusivity highly valued by urban residents navigating congested city life.



Picture 10. Scene of the Gojek GoCar Luxe advertisement  
(Source: Screenshot from YouTube Good News, 2023)

#### Denotative Meaning 10

The clip shows a woman standing beside a black car with the GoCar logo on its door. She is wearing formal attire (a cream blouse, green trousers, and high heels) along with a green face mask, and is holding the car door. At the bottom of the screen appears the text: “*Karena itu dia coba GoCar Luxe.*”

#### Connotative Meaning 10

The black car with its elegant design symbolizes luxury, professionalism, and premium comfort. The presence of the woman in formal clothing reinforces her image as a modern urban figure who is stylish and highly mobile. The green face mask reflects the post pandemic context, in which safety and comfort have become essential needs for urban residents. The sentence “*Karena itu dia coba GoCar Luxe*” serves as the climax of the advertisement’s narrative, connecting all the previously displayed symbols such as the soft seat, spacious legroom, cool air, and togetherness into one concrete solution, namely the GoCar Luxe service. The connotation constructed is that choosing GoCar Luxe means choosing an urban lifestyle that is exclusive, comfortable, and safe.



Picture 11. Scene of the Gojek GoCar Luxe advertisement  
(Source: Screenshot from YouTube Good News, 2023)

#### Denotative Meaning 11

The first clip shows a male driver wearing a black mask, a black uniform shirt with green accents, and glasses, turning toward the camera with a smile. The text on the screen reads: “*Driver ramah dan rapi.*” The second clip displays the interior of the car, with a monitor screen showing the GoCar Luxe logo while the driver’s hand adjusts the air conditioner. The text on the screen reads: “*AC-nya pasti dingin.*”

#### Connotative Meaning 11

The neatly dressed and professional-looking driver wearing a mask signifies high service standards, safety, and friendliness as part of GoCar Luxe’s premium image. This associates transportation services not only with mobility but also with a driving experience that is safe, comfortable, and personal. The scene that emphasizes “*AC-nya pasti dingin*” highlights physical comfort as a key added value, linking it to the urban need for freshness

and quality during travel. Within the field of digital marketing, visual imagery is understood as a collection of visual stimuli, including photographs, videos, graphic design, and narrative-driven visuals, that play a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing their behavioral responses (Dibda, 2025: 70). In this sense, the advertisement's use of professional appearance, clear symbolic cues, and emphasis on comfort demonstrates how GoCar Luxe constructs an image that resonates with consumer expectations. Thus, the connotation is that GoCar Luxe offers a combination of personalized service, professionalism, and modern comfort that sets a new standard for urban lifestyles.



Picture 12. Scene of the Gojek GoCar Luxe advertisement  
(Source: Screenshot from YouTube Good News, 2023)

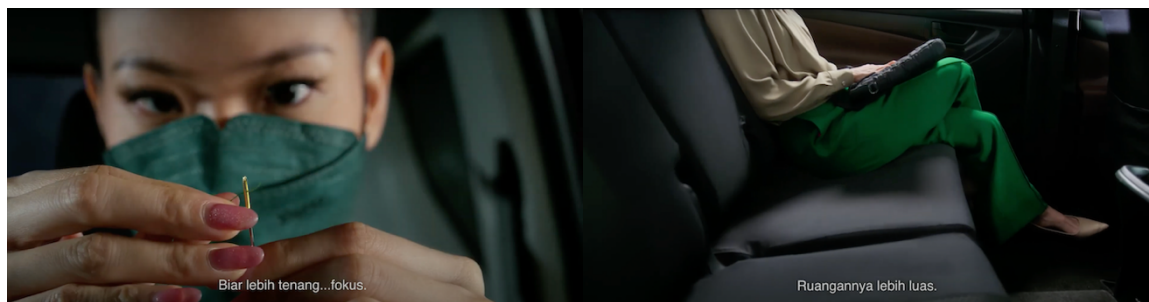
### Denotative Meaning 12

The first clip shows two ants walking in line along a rope with a perfectly round sunset in the background, accompanied by the text: “*Smooth dalam perjalanan.*” The second clip shows the woman sitting inside the car wearing a green mask, turning to look out the window with a satisfied expression, while repeating the phrase: “*Ehem. Smooth dalam perjalanan.*”

### Connotative Meaning 12

The ants walking neatly and in order function as a metaphor for a journey that is stable, smooth, and uninterrupted. The sunset in the background reinforces a sense of calmness, consistency, and harmony. The following scene with the woman inside the car links this metaphor directly to the real experience of GoCar Luxe users: a journey that is smooth, comfortable, and free from disruption. This reflects an urban lifestyle that demands efficiency, stability, and quality in everyday mobility. The small humorous touch with the utterance “Ehem” adds a relaxed tone while also emphasizing that GoCar Luxe promises a travel experience that is not only practical but also enjoyable.

From Barthes' perspective, the ants (*semut* in Indonesian) carry not only a denotative function as insects walking in order, but also a connotative dimension through linguistic play. The Indonesian word *semut* phonetically resembles the English word *smooth*, producing a signification that merges the visual sign (ants walking in order) with the verbal sign (*smooth dalam perjalanan*). This phonetic resemblance is not accidental; it strengthens the symbolic association of GoCar Luxe with orderliness, stability, and comfort. The rhetorical device here operates as a pun that makes the advertisement more memorable and culturally grounded, while simultaneously bridging local language (*semut*) with global branding (*smooth*).



Picture 13. Scene of the Gojek GoCar Luxe advertisement  
(Source: Screenshot from YouTube Good News, 2023)

### Denotative Meaning 13

The first clip shows the same woman wearing a green mask, appearing serious while holding a small needle with both hands. The text on the screen reads: *"Biar lebih tenang... fokus."* The second clip shows the interior of the car, particularly the spacious back seat where the woman sits relaxed with her legs crossed, accompanied by the text: *"Ruangannya lebih luas."*

### Connotative Meaning 13

The close-up of the needle serves as a symbolic metaphor for precision, concentration, and calmness. This scene suggests that traveling with GoCar Luxe provides passengers with the space to remain focused, whether for work or rest, without disturbance. Meanwhile, the spacious back seat illustrates both physical comfort and freedom of movement, indicating that the service is designed to meet the expectations of urban residents who value personal space. To deepen the interpretation of this scene, the analysis can be framed through Forceville and Sobrino's "A is B" model, which explains that visual metaphors function by mapping contextual similarities from a source domain, in this case the needle, onto a target domain, namely the qualities of travel such as precision, stability, and calmness (Almaghribi, 2025 p.141). The connotation constructed is that GoCar Luxe offers not only mobility but also a quality travel experience that supports balance between productivity, relaxation, and spatial comfort.



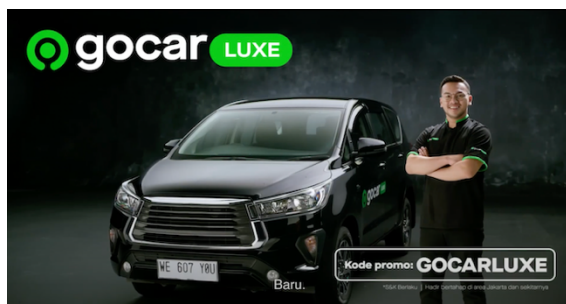
Picture 14. Scene of the Gojek GoCar Luxe advertisement  
(Source: Screenshot from YouTube Good News, 2023)

### Denotative Meaning 14

The first clip shows a woman sitting in the back seat of the car wearing a green mask, focused on a purple mobile phone in her hand. The text on the screen reads: *"Lebih nyaman."* The second clip shows the same woman working with a laptop on her lap while holding several documents in the spacious back seat of the car.

### Connotative Meaning 14

The first scene emphasizes personal comfort in everyday leisure activities such as using a mobile phone, representing the need for entertainment and digital connectivity. The second scene presents the car as an alternative workspace that supports productivity amid urban mobility. The spacious back seat symbolizes not only physical comfort but also the flexibility of a modern lifestyle that requires the ability to shift quickly between relaxation and work. The connotation constructed is that GoCar Luxe is not merely a means of transportation but a moving private space that provides comfort, efficiency, and support for the professional lifestyles of urban communities.



Picture 15. Scene of the Gojek GoCar Luxe advertisement  
(Source: Screenshot from YouTube Good News, 2023)

### Denotative Meaning 15

This clip shows a black car with the GoCar logo on its side. A man stands beside the car wearing the distinctive Gojek driver uniform in black with green accents, folding his arms while smiling. At the top of the

screen appears the GoCar Luxe logo, while at the bottom is the text: “*Kode promo: GOCARLUXE*” along with fine print on terms and conditions. On the other side appears the word “*Baru*” and “*Hadir bertahap di area Jakarta dan sekitarnya.*”

### Connotative Meaning 15

The sleek black car and the driver standing upright with confidence construct an image of exclusivity, modernity, and professionalism for the GoCar Luxe service. The presence of the logo and promo code highlights the commercial dimension of the advertisement while simultaneously enhancing its consumer appeal to try the new service. The black color of the car symbolizes luxury, power, and seriousness, while the driver’s friendly smile emphasizes the human dimension of the service. The word ‘*Baru*’ signals innovation and renewal in urban transportation, aligning with the dynamic needs of urban lifestyles. Beneath this word, the phrase ‘*Hadir bertahap di area Jakarta dan sekitarnya*’ specifies that the service is primarily targeted at the urban classes in major cities. This selective availability not only reflects practical rollout constraints but also serves as a symbolic strategy: exclusivity is communicated, as only consumers in metropolitan centers are privileged to experience GoCar Luxe’s comfort and prestige first. Consequently, the geographic limitation strengthens the association of the service with social status, modernity, and the lifestyle of the urban middle and upper classes. Recent studies emphasize that amenities and exclusive mobility options in urban settings function as markers of socio-economic privilege and status, illustrating how mobility offerings operate as signals of upper-class distinction (Heroy et al., 2022, p. 5).

Overall, applying Roland Barthes’s semiotic approach, the analysis of the 2023 GoCar Luxe advertisement shows that at the denotative level, the visuals depict everyday activities such as sitting in a car seat, using air conditioning, working with a laptop, or enjoying a ride. At the connotative level, these representations convey meanings of comfort, productivity, flexibility, and exclusivity associated with urban lifestyles. At the myth level, however, the advertisement operates ideologically by naturalizing certain values as markers of modern urban identity, namely:

#### a. The Car as a Modern Private Space

Scenes of soft seats, spacious interiors, cool air conditioning, and a “smooth” ride construct the myth of the car as a modern private space. Here, the vehicle is positioned not merely as a means of transportation but as a moving living space that provides comfort, safety, and exclusivity in the middle of the city. Moreover, the car functions as a “rolling private-in-public space,” a private capsule that enables users to enjoy personal comfort while simultaneously moving through public space (Bloch, 2021, p. 146). In this sense, car advertisements do not only sell the function of travel but also sell the narrative of the car’s domestication as a modern private space embedded within contemporary urban lifestyles.

#### b. Comfort as a New Symbol of Luxury

The advertisement normalizes the idea that comfort, represented by soft seats, friendly drivers, and smooth journeys, is both a right and a status symbol of modern urban society. Comfort is reproduced as a marker of a new form of luxury that has become the standard of living for the urban middle and upper classes. Contemporary research in luxury consumption underscores that hedonic comfort beyond mere functionality has become central to how luxury is experienced and valued among consumers particularly in service contexts (Gupta, et.al, 2023, p. 200).

#### c. Efficiency, Productivity, and Flexibility

The scene of a woman working with a laptop and documents in the car’s back seat conveys the myth that travel is not merely about moving between places but also about creating a mobile workspace. Such visuals reinforce the belief that premium transportation embodies efficiency, productivity, and flexibility, where professional activities continue seamlessly despite physical mobility. Previous studies have explored multitasking practices in vehicles and found that workers often combine work with travel, even in conventional cars (Theodorovic et al., 2022, p. 7). These findings suggest that cars, in the real-life experiences of users, already function as productive workspaces or “mobile offices,” supporting the continuity of professional activities during travel.

#### d. The Premiumization of Mobility

The word “Luxe” and the imagery of a sleek black car illustrate the myth of the premiumization of mobility, a cultural construction that emphasizes mobility as valuable only when it is exclusive, differentiated, and superior to ordinary transportation services. This premiumization transforms mobility from a functional necessity into a symbolic commodity that affirms prestige and distinguishes certain social classes from the general public. This aligns with the perspective that mobilities are not limited to the act of movement but also encompass “the meanings, representations, and infrastructures that shape and are shaped by movement” (Everuss, 2021, p. 9), thereby making mobility a cultural artifact that is consumed for its symbolic significance in shaping social relations. In this way, premium mobility reinforces the ideology that modern urban residents must choose prestigious modes of transport, thereby naturalizing social hierarchies within urban life.

#### e. Humor and Wordplay as a Subtle Ideological Strategy

Wordplay such as “ramean-ramen” and “kaki panjang-kaki lima-ikan mas kaki” reflects a closeness to popular culture while demonstrating linguistic creativity within the realm of digital communication. This humor functions as a subtle rhetorical strategy that normalizes premium services by making them appear familiar and relevant to the everyday life of urban communities. It also strengthens the image of urban groups as intelligent, modern, and adaptive to the dynamics of digital entertainment.

Conceptually, such wordplay can be categorized as verbal-metaphorical humor. This form of humor delivers promotional messages in a light, effective, and memorable way, thereby enhancing rhetorical appeal. Furthermore, humor functions as a persuasive instrument capable of embedding values implicitly. In addition, the affective dimension of humor suggests that it triggers positive emotional responses that are subsequently transferred to the brand, either through unconscious conditioning where favorable evaluations of humor are generalized to the brand itself or through a more conscious positive surprise effect (Eisend, 2022, p. 963). Thus, the GoCar Luxe product as a digital transportation service functions as an “envelope of meaning” that channels symbolic significance within urban circulation, linking mobility to wider structures of commerce, exchange, and social prestige. (Hariman, 2016, p. 10). The comfort presented is not only physical but also layered with meanings that reflect class aspirations and urban cultural identities. Accordingly, the myth constructed in this advertisement positions GoCar Luxe as an elite personal space, emphasizing that the modern urban lifestyle ideologically places comfort and efficiency as normative values and even as forms of social prestige that appear “natural.”

Overall, the results and analysis have demonstrated that Barthes’s semiotic framework is effective in uncovering the symbolic and ideological dimensions embedded in advertising texts. The thematic findings are consistent with the research objectives and show that the GoCar Luxe advertisement communicates values of exclusivity, modernity, and prestige that reinforce cultural perceptions of urban life. Nevertheless, this study is limited by its focus on a single advertisement, which constrains the generalizability of the findings. Future research could expand the scope by comparing multiple advertisements or examining audience interpretations to understand how such symbolic constructions are received in everyday contexts. Highlighting these directions can enhance the contribution of semiotic research to broader discussions in communication and cultural studies. In addition, the findings indicate broader social implications. By naturalizing comfort and efficiency as normative values, the advertisement legitimizes consumerist ideals that influence how urban communities define social status and lifestyle aspirations. This underscores the importance of critically examining digital advertising, as it not only promotes services but also shapes cultural norms and identity construction within contemporary urban societies.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the 2023 GoCar Luxe advertisement functions not only as a promotional medium for transportation services but also as a cultural instrument that constructs myths about the modern urban lifestyle. Through visual, verbal, and symbolic signs, the advertisement emphasizes comfort, efficiency, flexibility, and exclusivity as the ideal standards of urban life. Premium mobility is positioned as a moving private space that reflects social status and middle-class aspirations. The semiotic analysis of Barthes demonstrates that these representations are not neutral but carry ideological meanings that naturalize consumerist values. The use of humor, wordplay, and everyday urban symbols creates a sense of proximity to social reality, making the ideological messages subtle yet persuasive. The advertisement ultimately promotes the belief that comfort and efficiency are moral obligations of urban residents. At the mythical level, the advertisement positions comfort as a new form of luxury that distinguishes users from public transportation. Mobility is framed not merely as a functional necessity but as an expression of social identity and prestige. In this way, GoCar Luxe emerges as a symbolic commodity that sells not only mobility but also cultural identity, reinforcing the narrative of modern urban society as efficient, modern, and prestigious. The implications of this study are both theoretical and practical. Academically, it reaffirms the relevance of Barthes’s semiotic framework in understanding how advertising operates ideologically. Practically, the findings highlight how symbolic representations in advertising can be used by marketers and media producers to strengthen brand positioning and develop more persuasive campaigns that shape consumer perceptions and lifestyle aspirations. Finally, this study acknowledges its limitation in focusing on a single advertisement. Future research could expand by comparing advertising representations across other sectors such as financial services or e-commerce, or by analyzing additional Gojek campaigns to identify consistent representational strategies. Such directions would provide a broader understanding of how digital advertising shapes social imagination, class aspirations, and cultural identities in contemporary urban contexts.

## 5. REFERENCES

- [1] M. I. R. Avisena, "Mogok ojol, perputaran uang Rp188 miliar hilang dalam sehari," *Metro TV News*, May 21, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://www.metrotvnews.com/read/b3JCb9Dd-mogok-ojol-perputaran-uang-rp188-miliar-hilang-dalam-sehari?utm>
- [2] N. A. Berutu, K. Sebayang, L. Z. Surbakti, R. Diva, and A. Ghalib, "Analisis semiotika Roland Barthes pada iklan Marjan 2025," *Abstrak: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Seni, Media dan Desain*, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 67–77, 2025.
- [3] S. Bloch, "Policing car space and the legal liminality of the automobile," *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 45, no. 1, pp. 136–155, 2021, doi: 10.1177/0309132519901306.
- [4] M. Eisend, "The influence of humor in advertising: Explaining the effects of humor in two-sided messages," *Psychology & Marketing*, vol. 39, no. 2, pp. 227–240, Feb. 2022, doi: 10.1002/mar.21634.
- [5] R. Faisal, F. Rahman, S. Efendi, S. Sosrohadi, F. Sachiya, T. P. A. Mochammad, and Mahdori, "Analysis of signs on online ads: Roland Barthes' perspectives," *International Journal of Arts and Social Science*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 203–213, 2025.
- [6] D. G. Gupta, H. Shin, and V. Jain, "Luxury experience and consumer behavior: A literature review," *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 199–213, 2023, doi: 10.1108/MIP-12-2021-0438.
- [7] Good News, "GoCar Luxe 2023," *YouTube*, Aug. 25, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjkNnsdp9Cw>
- [8] R. Hariman, "Public culture," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016. doi: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.32.
- [9] S. Heroy, I. Loaiza, A. Pentland, and N. O'Clery, "Are neighbourhood amenities associated with more walking and less driving? Yes, but only for the wealthy," arXiv, Jan. 2022, doi: 10.48550/arXiv.2201.07184.
- [10] N. A. Lasido, "Mitos gaya hidup metroseksualitas dalam iklan produk kosmetik Vaseline Men," *Jurnal Komunikasi*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 169–183, 2017, doi: 10.20885/komunikasi.vol10.iss2.art5.
- [11] S. K. Lestari and A. I. Saidi, "Semiotika 'Kampanye Love Myself' grup penyanyi Korea BTS (Studi kasus: Video comeback trailer 'Epiphany')," *Jurnal Komunikasi Visual Wimba*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 24–37, 2020.
- [12] A. Sobur, *Semiotika Komunikasi*. Bandung, Indonesia: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2003.
- [13] Y. Sui and F. Ming, "Reinterpreting some key concepts in Barthes' theory," *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 59–66, 2015, doi: 10.5897/JMCS2014.0412.
- [14] T. Teodorovicz, A. L. Kun, R. Sadun, and O. Shaer, "Multitasking while driving: A time use study of commuting knowledge workers to assess current and future uses," *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, vol. 162, p. 102789, 2022, doi: 10.1016/j.ijhcs.2022.102789.
- [15] L. Everuss, "The new mobilities paradigm and social theory," in *The Routledge Handbook of Social and Cultural Theory*, 2nd ed., A. Elliott, Ed. London, UK: Routledge, 2021, pp. 287–305, doi: 10.4324/9781315149714-18.
- [16] Y. Yan, "Semiotic oppositions in advertising discourse," *Journal of Media Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 55–70, 2015, doi: 10.1234/jms.2015.120105.
- [17] A. Z. Yonatan, "Indonesia jadi pengguna online mobility services tertinggi, proporsinya mencapai 66,7% dari total pengguna internet pada Kuartal IV 2024," *GoodStats.id*, May 23, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://goodstats.id/article/indonesia-jadi-pengguna-transportasi-online-terbesar-2024-sn07c>
- [18] B. K. Sovacool, "Functional, symbolic and societal frames for automobility," *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, vol. 118, pp. 730–746, Dec. 2018, doi: 10.1016/j.tra.2018.10.016.
- [19] L. Kisgyörgy and J. Tóth, "Fuzzy analysis of comfort along travel chains," *Transport*, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 203–212, 2020, doi: 10.3846/transport.2020.12183.
- [20] A. Madani and J. Ambarwati, "Subkultur anak muda dalam iklan kopi di Indonesia: Kajian semiotika Roland Barthes," *Semiotika Jurnal Ilmu Sastra Dan Linguistik*, vol. 24, no. 2, p. 212, 2023, doi: 10.19184/semiotika.v24i2.31091.
- [21] F. Aqeel and M. W. Ali, "Deciphering cultural myths: A semiotic analysis of selected advertisements," *Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL (JALT)*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 1716–1734, 2024.
- [22] H. Suheri, S. Sosrohadi, T. Sulastri, R. Adinda, and C. Andini, "Semiotic analysis of signs and symbols in digital instant noodle advertisements: A Marcel Danesi approach," *Int. J. Res. Innov. Appl. Sci. (IJRIAS)*, vol. 10, no. 4, pp. 545–554, May 8, 2025, doi: 10.51584/IJRIAS.2025.10040045.
- [23] I. A. Almaghribi and D. R. Himawati, "A semiotic analysis of IKEA's visual metaphors: Exploring the symbolic language of advertising," *New Language Dimensions*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 135–147, Feb. 2025, doi: 10.26740/nld.v5n2.p135-147
- [24] S. F. Laucereno, "Terkuak! Ini Alasan Ruang ATM Selalu Pakai AC 24 Jam," *detikFinance*, Nov. 30, 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://finance.detik.com/moneter/d-5275435/terkuak-ini-alasan-ruang-atm-selalu-pakai-ac-24-jam>
- [25] A. Dibda and H. A. Ahmad, "The role of visual imagery in building brand image and consumer purchase intention in the era of social media: A literature review," *J. Ekonom. Kreatif dan Manaj. Bisnis Digital*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 70–81, Aug. 2025, doi: 10.55047/jekombital.v4i1.981.