

## Visual Perception of the Adidas Brand on Gen Z's Instagram Feed

### Persepsi Visual Merek Adidas di Feed Instagram Pada Gen Z

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#### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze and understand how visual elements in the @adidasindonesia Instagram feed shape Adidas brand perception among Generation Z. This study uses Charles Morris's visual perception theory framework which includes three main aspects, namely syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic, to examine visual structure, meaning, and visual impact on the audience. The research method used is qualitative with a descriptive approach, which focuses on an in-depth understanding of the audience's visual perception without involving hypothesis testing or statistical measurements. The object of the study is the visual content on the @adidasindonesia Instagram feed during the period 2023 to 2025. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews with five Generation Z informants selected using a purposive sampling technique, and supported by observations of the visual characteristics of Instagram posts. The results of the study indicate that the visual feed of @adidasindonesia Instagram has a strategic role in shaping the perception of the Adidas brand among Generation Z. Syntactically, the consistency of design, visual composition, and the use of Adidas's distinctive identity elements are considered capable of creating strong visual readability and brand recognition. Semantically, Adidas's Instagram visuals are interpreted not only as a means of product promotion, but also as a representation of an active lifestyle, community values, inclusivity, modernity, and sustainability. Meanwhile, pragmatically, Adidas's Instagram visual feed has a real impact on audience interest, the formation of emotional closeness and trust in the brand, as well as encouraging product information searches and strengthening brand loyalty. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the visual strategy of Instagram @adidasindonesia is effective in building positive perceptions and maintaining the relevance of the Adidas brand amidst the dynamics of Generation Z's digital culture.*

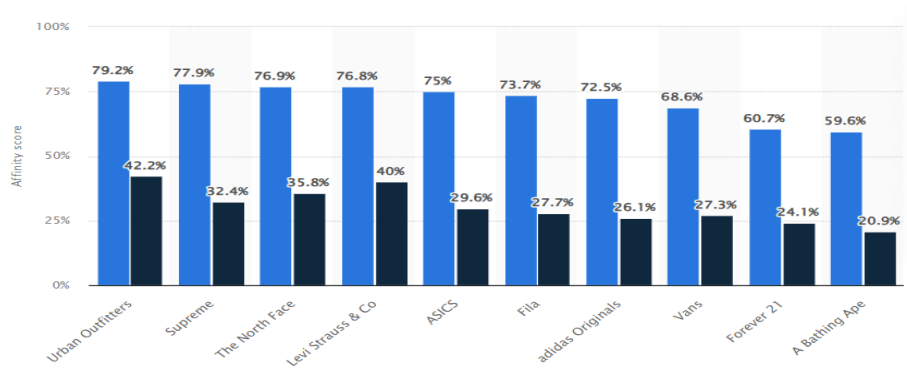
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#### 1. Introduction

Consumer perception of a brand is a key element in branding and marketing communication strategies, particularly in the context of digital media that emphasizes visualization and symbols (Helfiliani & Azhar, 2025). The development of social media, especially Instagram, has changed the way brands build and convey their identities to audiences. This platform functions not only as a promotional medium but also as a visual representation space that shapes how consumers interpret a brand as a whole (Abednego et al., 2021). For Generation Z (Gen Z), born between 1997 and 2012, Instagram has become a primary medium in shaping brand perceptions due to their highly responsive nature to visual displays, aesthetics, and popular cultural symbols (Putricia et al., 2024).

Adidas is a global brand that consistently leverages the power of visuals to build its brand image, particularly among Gen Z. Historically, Adidas' visual identity has been built through strong and sustainable branding elements. Adidas was first recognized through the Three Stripes logo, introduced in 1952 as a functional marker on sports shoes, but later evolved into a brand identity symbol representing performance, stability, and athletic excellence. Furthermore, Adidas also introduced the Trefoil logo in 1972 for the Adidas

Originals line, representing lifestyle, cultural heritage, and individual expression. These two logos are still used strategically to differentiate Adidas product segments, both those oriented towards sports performance and lifestyle (Vera, Untari & Andrian, 2024).



**Figure 1.** Brand Data The fashion that Gen Z consumers are most interested in in (Statista, 2022)2022

According to the data in Figure 1 regarding interested consumers with fashion Adidas Original has difference score affinity highest between Gen Z consumers and older generations old , with difference more from 46 percent between consumers below and above 25 years old . This is show that Gen Z has attachment more emotional strong to a number of certain fashion brands , such as adidas Originals and Urban Outfitters, compared with the next generation old (Statista, 2022).

In the context of the @adidasindonesia Instagram account, Adidas' visual representation tends to emphasize the Adidas Originals identity, particularly through the use of iconic products such as the Adidas Samba, Gazelle, and Superstar, which are synonymous with the Trefoil logo and a streetwear-style visual approach. This focus suggests that Adidas is not only selling sports products but also building a lifestyle narrative relevant to Gen Z. Therefore, it is important to examine how visual elements such as the Three Stripes logo, the Trefoil logo, Adidas's signature monochrome colors, and the visual composition of the Instagram feed contribute to shaping the brand's visual perception among young audiences. Brand image itself can be understood as a consumer's overall perception of a brand formed through experience, symbolic associations, and repeated visual communication (Puspitasari & Syafarudin, 2021). Visual elements are one of the main foundations in forming a brand image, especially on social media that emphasizes nonverbal communication through images and videos (Fitriyany, 2024). For Gen Z, brand image is not only related to product quality, but also values that are visually represented, such as modernity, diversity, inclusivity, and sustainability (Thamrin, 2024).

To understand how Adidas' brand image is formed through Instagram visuals, this study uses Charles Morris's theory of visual perception as the primary conceptual foundation. Charles Morris views visual perception within a semiotic framework as a sign-making process involving three main dimensions: syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. The syntactic dimension relates to the relationships between visual signs, such as layout, color, shape, and design consistency. The semantic dimension focuses on the meaning the audience interprets from the visual sign, including the values, messages, and symbols it represents. Meanwhile, the

pragmatic dimension emphasizes the impact of the sign on the audience, such as emotional responses, interests, and behavioral tendencies (Morris, 2013). This theory was chosen because it can comprehensively explain visual perception, not only in terms of visual aesthetics but also in terms of the meaning and effects it has on the audience. In the context of Gen Z, who are highly active on Instagram, visual perception of a brand's feed is the result of an active process of organizing and interpreting visual elements based on their experiences, preferences, and values (Khafi & Febriana, 2024). Thus, Charles Morris's theory is relevant to analyzing how Gen Z interprets Adidas' visual content, starting from the visual structure of the feed (syntactics), brand messages and values (semantics), to its influence on attitudes and interest in the brand (pragmatics).

Various previous studies have shown that Instagram visuals have a significant influence on the perceptions and decisions of Gen Z consumers. Holappa (2023) found that visual elements in Adidas digital advertisements, such as color, model, and design, can evoke emotions that influence purchase intentions. Other studies also confirm that social media plays a role as a representation of the brand's face that forms associations and images in the minds of audiences (Febrian et al., 2023). However, most previous studies still focus on the influence of marketing in general or purchasing decisions, without specifically examining the visual perception process based on semiotic dimensions. Therefore, this study has a novel position by emphasizing the analysis of visual perception of the Adidas brand in the Instagram feed @adidasindonesia using the theoretical framework of Charles Morris (2013).

This study not only examines whether Adidas' Instagram visuals are attractive, but also how the visual structure is arranged, what meanings are captured by Gen Z, and how the visuals influence their attitudes and attachment to the brand. Based on this description, the problem formulation in this study is: How is Generation Z's perception of the Adidas brand represented through the visual feed of Instagram @adidasindonesia based on syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects? The purpose of this study is to analyze and understand how visual elements in the Instagram feed of Instagram @adidasindonesia shape the perception of the Adidas brand among Generation Z using Charles Morris's visual perception theory framework, which includes syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects.

## **2. Research Methods**

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because the study aims to understand and describe in depth the visual perception of Generation Z towards the representation of the Adidas brand displayed through Instagram feeds, without conducting hypothesis testing or statistical measurements (Sugiyono, 2018). The object of the study is the visual content uploaded to the Instagram feed of the official account @adidasindonesia during the period 2023 to 2025. The focus of the study is directed at the visual elements displayed, including design, color, visual composition, and content themes, and how these elements shape the visual perception of the Adidas brand among Generation Z as the main audience of social media.

The primary data source was obtained through in-depth interviews with five informants from Generation Z. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, taking into account certain criteria in accordance with the research objectives, namely that the informants are part of Generation Z, actively use Instagram, follow the @adidasindonesia account, and have an interest or connection with the Adidas brand (Sugiyono, 2018). This

informant selection aims to obtain data that is relevant and in accordance with the research context. Data collection was carried out through two main techniques, namely interviews and observations. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to explore the informants' views, experiences, and assessments of the visual content displayed on the @adidasindonesia Instagram feed. Observations were conducted by reviewing Instagram feed uploads to identify consistent and dominant visual characteristics. The informant selection process was carried out through the comments column of the @adidasindonesia Instagram feed, then re-selected based on suitability with the research criteria.

Data analysis was conducted through several stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction was carried out by sorting and simplifying interview and observation data to maintain focus on the research objectives. Data presentation was carried out in the form of narrative descriptions and thematic mapping to identify emerging visual perception patterns. Conclusions were drawn by examining the consistency of views between informants and linking the research findings to Charles Morris's (2013) visual perception theoretical framework, which includes syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects (Moleong, 2019). Through these stages, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the role of Instagram visual content in shaping Adidas' brand image among Generation Z.

### 3. Results and Discussions

#### Research result

#### Gen Z's Initial Perceptions of the Adidas Brand: The Role of Friends and Instagram as Information Sources

Based on interviews, it was discovered that Generation Z's initial exposure to the Adidas brand wasn't a one-off experience, but rather a combination of social recommendations (from friends) and visual exposure on Instagram. Social media, particularly Instagram, served as a visual reinforcement after initial exposure, whether through friends or independent exploration on digital platforms.

Informant 1 (@rianrisvan)

*"I initially learned about Adidas from friends in the running community, but I became more interested after seeing their content on Adidas' Instagram feed, which looked sporty and cool."*

Informant 2 (@deasalsbp)

*"I first got to know Adidas from its offline store ."*

Informant 3 (@ananthaocta)

*"From my friends, many of them wear Adidas . After that, I followed them on Instagram to see new products and styles."*

Informant 4 (@fioregaia.zahra)

*"I first learned about Adidas through Instagram, where their visual feed is clean and aesthetic. My friends often repost Adidas content."*

Informant 5 (@imna\_nael)

*"I initially learned about it from a friend, but Adidas' Instagram helped me get to know the brand better through their photos and videos."*

Based on the five informants, it can be concluded that Adidas brand recognition among Generation Z occurs through two main channels: friend recommendations and exposure to Instagram content. Friends act as the initial trigger in building brand awareness, while Instagram serves as a visual medium that strengthens brand perception, image, and appeal. Adidas' consistent, aesthetic, and Gen Z lifestyle-relevant Instagram feed confirms existing social experiences, thus forming a positive visual perception of the brand and increasing Gen Z audience interest and engagement.

### **Visual Perception of the Adidas Brand on the Instagram Feed of @adidasindonesia among Generation Z**

The research results were obtained through in-depth interviews with five Generation Z informants who actively follow the @adidasindonesia Instagram account. The informants consisted of @rianrisvan, @deasalsbp, @ananthaocta, @fioregaia.zahra, and @imna\_nael. The interviews focused on the intensity of exposure to the Instagram feed, initial impressions of the visual appearance, and the informants' views on the role of Instagram visuals in shaping the Adidas brand image. All informants stated that they quite often view or access the @adidasindonesia Instagram feed, although with varying intensity. Rian Risvan (@rianrisvan) revealed that his access frequency increases when there is a certain momentum, such as a product launch or a sporting event :

*"Quite often, especially when it's racing season or waiting for new shoes to drop like the Adizero series. So I check often." (Rian Risvan / @rianrisvan)*

Dea Salsa BP (@deasalsbp) stated that she regularly accesses the Adidas Instagram feed:

*"About twice a week." (Dea Salsa BP / @deasalsbp)*

Meanwhile, Anantha Octa (@ananthaocta) said that the intensity of his access was related to the need to follow trends:

*"Quite often, 2–3 times a week to keep up with current trends." (Anantha Octa / @ananthaocta)*

Fioregaia Zahra (@fioregaia.zahra) explains that Adidas content often appears organically on Instagram feeds:

*"I see the @adidasindonesia feed quite often, it usually appears on my Instagram homepage." (Fioregaia Zahra / @fioregaia.zahra)*

Meanwhile, Imna Nael (@imna\_nael) stated that although not very often, she is still exposed to Adidas content regularly:

*"Quite often, about a few times a month." (Imna Nael / @imna\_nael)*

These findings indicate that the @adidasindonesia account has a fairly high level of visibility among Generation Z. Initial impressions of Adidas' visual Instagram feed, shared by informants, tended to be consistent: modern, sporty, professional, and energetic. Rian Risvan (@rianrisvan) emphasized the inclusivity and community engagement aspects:

*"It feels energetic and inclusive. It's not just filled with super-fast Caucasian athletes, but also lots of local faces and regular community runners. The vibe is very lively and youthful." (Rian Risvan / @rianrisvan)*

Anantha Octa (@ananthaocta) views Adidas' visuals as something that is thoughtfully designed and structured:

*"Professional, energetic, and very well-planned." (Anantha Octa / @ananthaocta)*

Meanwhile, Fioregaia Zahra (@fioregaia.zahra) and Imna Nael (@imna\_nael) both highlight the modern and sporty impression:

*"The first impression that comes to mind is that the feed is cool, modern, and sporty." (Fioregaia Zahra / @fioregaia.zahra)*

*"It looks modern, sporty, and professional." (Imna Nael / @imna\_nael)*

This demonstrates that Adidas' visual identity on Instagram is consistently well-received by the Generation Z audience. All informants agreed that Instagram's visuals play a crucial role in shaping Adidas' brand image. Rian Risvan (@rianrisvan) likens Instagram's visuals to a brand's showcase:

*"Visuals are like a shop window. If the feed looks intentional, the photos are sharp, and the styling is good, I'm more likely to believe the product's technology is also premium." (Rian Risvan / @rianrisvan)*

This view was reinforced by another informant. Anantha Octa (@ananthaocta) considered visuals a key factor in brand recognition in the digital age:

*"It's very important because in this digital era, it's very easy to be recognized by the outside world." (Anantha Octa / @ananthaocta)*

Similarly, Fioregaia Zahra (@fioregaia.zahra) and Imna Nael (@imna\_nael) emphasized that visuals shape first impressions and brand identity:

*"I think Instagram's visual appearance is very important because it directly shapes a brand's image." (Fioregaia Zahra / @fioregaia.zahra)*

*"It is very important because it forms the first impression and brand identity." (Imna Nael / @imna\_nael)*

Overall, the interview results indicate that Generation Z views the @adidasindonesia Instagram feed visuals as a direct representation of Adidas's quality, values, and brand identity. Based on the interviews with five informants, it is thus known that the @adidasindonesia Instagram feed visuals play a significant role in shaping Generation Z's perception of the Adidas brand. The high intensity of content exposure, both through active searches and organic appearance on the Instagram feed, indicates that the account has strong visibility among young audiences. Initial impressions of Adidas's visual appearance are consistently interpreted as modern, sporty, professional, energetic, and inclusive, which strengthens the brand's identity as part of an active and urban lifestyle. In addition, informants agree that Instagram visuals serve as a direct representation of brand quality and credibility, where a well-organized, attractive, and consistent visual appearance can increase trust, emotional closeness, and Adidas's premium image in the eyes of Generation Z. These findings confirm that @adidasindonesia's Instagram visual strategy plays a role not only as a promotional tool, but also as a strategic element in building brand image and maintaining Adidas's relevance among the younger generation.

In the study of visual communication, the perception of visual objects can be analyzed through a semiotic approach developed by Charles Morris. Morris views signs as part of a

meaning-making process that is not only related to physical form, but also to the interpreted meaning and the audience's response to the sign. Within Morris's semiotic framework, sign analysis is divided into three main dimensions: syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. These three dimensions are used to examine the relationship between visual elements, the meaning contained in the sign, and the impact of the sign on the audience's attitudes and behavior, making it relevant to analyzing visual perception in communication media, including social media (Morris, 2013).

### **Syntactic Aspects (Syntax)**

The syntactic aspect of Charles Morris's semiotic theory relates to the structural relationship between visual elements, such as color consistency, design, layout, visual composition, and the use of visual identity elements. Based on interviews with five Generation Z informants, the syntactic aspect of the @adidasindonesia Instagram feed is perceived as consistent, neat, and easily recognizable. The majority of informants assessed that Adidas is able to maintain color and design consistency without appearing stiff or monotonous. Rian Risvan (@rianrisvan) stated that even though Adidas is not fixated on one particular color, the brand's visual character remains strong:

*"I see that they don't have to be rigidly one color, but the common thread is felt: bold, high contrast, and clean... so the Adidas character is still visible." (Rian Risvan / @rianrisvan)*

This opinion is reinforced by Anantha Octa (@ananthaocta) who believes that Adidas has succeeded in combining iconic colors with trendy colors without losing the brand identity:

*"Very consistent. They're adept at combining their iconic color palette... even though the colors may vary, the Adidas 'feel' remains strong thanks to design elements like the logo, stripes, and photography style." (Anantha Octa / @ananthaocta)*

Meanwhile, Dea Salsa BP (@deasalsbp), Fioregaia Zahra (@fioregaia.zahra), and Imna Nael (@imna\_nael) generally think that the colors and design of Adidas' Instagram feed look neat, organized, and have a clear distinctive character:

*"Neat and organized so that those who see her IG profile will like it." (Dea Salsa BP / @deasalsbp)*

*"The colors and designs of the Adidas feed are consistent and have a strong, distinctive character." (Fioregaia Zahra / @fioregaia.zahra)*

*"Consistent, the colors and designs are typical Adidas." (Imna Nael / @imna\_nael)*

In terms of layout and visual composition, informants found Adidas' posts to be well-organized yet varied. Rian Risvan (@rianrisvan) noted that Adidas avoids boring patterns but maintains visual balance:

*"Neat but not boring... the composition is balanced between close-up photos of the product, action shots of the group running, and text graphics." (Rian Risvan / @rianrisvan)*

Anantha Octa (@ananthaocta) sees the Adidas feed as one conceptual visual entity:

*"They often use a grid layout technique... this makes the feed look like a complete visual canvas." (Anantha Octa / @ananthaocta)*

This opinion is in line with the statement of another informant who assessed that the layout of Adidas' uploads was pleasing to the eye, balanced, and well-organized:

*"The layout of the posts is neat and pleasing to the eye." (Fioregaia Zahra / @fioregaia.zahra)*

*"It looks neat, balanced, and well-conceived." (Imna Nael / @imna\_nael)*

All informants stated that the use of the Three Stripes logo in Adidas' Instagram content is highly recognizable. Rian Risvan (@rianrisvan) explained that Adidas' visual identity remains legible even without the logo being explicitly displayed:

*"Sometimes, without even looking at the triangle or trefoil logo, just the three stripes on the sleeve... I already know 'this is definitely Adidas'." (Rian Risvan / @rianrisvan)*

Anantha Octa (@ananthaocta) considers the Three Stripes a simple yet powerful design element:

*"The Three Stripes is a genius design element... simple, powerful, and instantly associated with Adidas without the need for words." (Anantha Octa / @ananthaocta)*

This was also confirmed by other informants:

*"The Three Stripes logo is very recognizable because it's iconic." (Fioregaia Zahra / @fioregaia.zahra)*

*"Yes, it is very recognizable because of its iconic and frequently displayed logo." (Imna Nael / @imna\_nael)*

Visual consistency across posts is considered to make it easier for informants to recognize Adidas content compared to other brands. Rian Risvan (@rianrisvan) emphasized Adidas' visual affinity for urban life and community:

*"When I pass by Explore, I often immediately recognize it's Adidas content because of its urban running vibe and strong community." (Rian Risvan / @rianrisvan)*

Anantha Octa (@ananthaocta) also said that Adidas content is often recognized before seeing the account name:

*"When scrolling through my timeline, Adidas content often jumps out at me before I even see the account name." (Anantha Octa / @ananthaocta)*

This statement is in line with the opinion of other informants who consider Adidas' visual uniformity as a clear differentiator from competing brands:

*"The visual uniformity makes Adidas content more recognizable than other brands." (Fioregaia Zahra / @fioregaia.zahra)*

*"Yes, visual uniformity makes it easier to recognize Adidas content." (Imna Nael / @imna\_nael)*

Based on the results of interviews with five informants, it is known that the syntactic aspects of the visual feed of Instagram @adidasindonesia are perceived as very strong and well-managed by Generation Z. The consistency of color and design is considered not rigid, but still able to maintain Adidas's bold, clean, and contrasting visual character through the use of iconic color palettes, photography styles, and distinctive design elements. The layout and visual composition of the posts are also perceived as neat, balanced, and varied, thus creating an interesting visual experience without causing a monotonous impression. In addition, the use of the Three Stripes visual identity element has proven to function as an effective brand

marker, because it can be recognized instantly even without the explicit presence of a logo. Visual uniformity between posts further strengthens the ease of identifying Adidas content amidst the flow of Instagram information, thus confirming that the structural relationship between visual elements in the feed @adidasindonesia syntactically succeeds in building readability and consistency of brand identity in the eyes of Generation Z.

### Semantic Aspects

The semantic aspect in Charles Morris's semiotic study focuses on the meaning generated from visual signs and the values perceived by the audience. Based on the results of interviews with five Generation Z informants, the visual feed of the Instagram @adidasindonesia is interpreted not only as product promotion, but also as a representation of lifestyle values, identity, and brand ideology. Informants interpret Adidas' Instagram visuals as a medium for conveying messages about an active lifestyle, inclusivity, community, and self-confidence. Rian Risvan (@rianrisvan) interprets Adidas' visuals as an invitation to see sports as a social and fun activity:

*"The message is like: 'Sport is for everyone & community is key'... they want to say that running with Adidas isn't just about chasing PBs, but also about style, having fun, and making friends." (Rian Risvan / @rianrisvan)*

Meanwhile, Dea Salsa BP (@deasalsbp) interprets the visual of a model actively exercising as a symbol of a healthy and disciplined lifestyle:

*"Models who actively exercise are interpreted as representing the healthy, dynamic, and disciplined lifestyle that Adidas wants to instill in its audience." (Dea Salsa BP / @deasalsbp)*

Another opinion was expressed by Anantha Octa (@ananthaocta) who saw Adidas' global ideological value in his Instagram visual feed:

*"They convey the values of 'Sport & Street'... the messages of 'Impossible is Nothing' and 'Own the Game' are also strongly conveyed through action-packed visuals and personal expression." (Anantha Octa / @ananthaocta)*

Other informants interpreted Adidas' visuals more generally as representing an active lifestyle and sportiness:

*"Adidas' visuals convey a message about an active lifestyle and the spirit of sport." (Fioregaia Zahra / @fioregaia.zahra)*

*"The values of sportsmanship, an active lifestyle, and innovation." (Imna Nael / @imna\_nael)*

The use of models engaged in sports is interpreted as a symbol of the product's authenticity and functionality. Rian Risvan (@rianrisvan) believes the visuals resonate with the everyday realities of Generation Z:

*"For me, that's relatable... not just a model who's still on display for style, but actually showing that the shoes and clothes are worn for action." (Rian Risvan / @rianrisvan)*

Anantha Octa (@ananthaocta) believes that this approach builds brand credibility:

*"This is credibility. They're not just selling a product, they're also selling the 'action' and 'results' of that product." (Anantha Octa / @ananthaocta)*

A similar opinion was also expressed by another informant who interpreted sports activities as an affirmation of product performance:

*"Active sports models show that Adidas products support performance." (Fioregaia Zahra / @fioregaia.zahra)*

*"Showing an active spirit, performance, and a sporting lifestyle." (Imna Nael / @imna\_nael)*

Informants agreed that Adidas' colors and visual themes reflect a specific lifestyle, particularly an urban and active lifestyle. Rian Risvan (@rianrisvan) specifically defines this lifestyle as an urban active lifestyle:

*"Clearly, the 'Urban Active' lifestyle... the visuals say: you can be sporty but still stylish for going out." (Rian Risvan / @rianrisvan)*

Anantha Octa (@ananthaocta) emphasized that the lifestyle displayed is not limited to professional athletes:

*"This isn't just for professional athletes, but for anyone who considers physical activity and appearance as part of their identity." (Anantha Octa / @ananthaocta)*

Meanwhile, another informant interpreted Adidas' visuals as representing a modern, sporty, and inclusive lifestyle:

*"Adidas' visuals showcase diversity." (Dea Salsa BP / @deasalsbp)*

*"The colors and visual theme reflect a sporty and modern lifestyle." (Fioregaia Zahra / @fioregaia.zahra)*

*"Reflecting an active, sporty, and modern lifestyle." (Imna Nael / @imna\_nael)*

The values of diversity and modernity were the semantic aspects most strongly felt by informants. Rian Risvan (@rianrisvan) assessed that Adidas presents an inclusive and contextualized representation of the Indonesian audience:

*"In their feed, I see all kinds of people... it makes me feel like Adidas is inclusive, a brand for all Indonesians." (Rian Risvan / @rianrisvan)*

Anantha Octa (@ananthaocta) also believes that Adidas consciously inserts a sustainability message through a certain visual approach:

*"For their eco-friendly collection, they use visuals with earthy, natural tones and a clear environmental message." (Anantha Octa / @ananthaocta)*

This opinion is reinforced by other informants who see Adidas as a modern and diverse brand:

*"I think Adidas also showcases the values of diversity and a modern feel." (Fioregaia Zahra / @fioregaia.zahra)*

*"It looks modern and diverse, and is starting to emphasize sustainability." (Imna Nael / @imna\_nael)*

Based on the results of interviews with five informants, it is known that the visual feed of Instagram @adidasindonesia is interpreted by Generation Z as a sign system that semantically represents the values of an active lifestyle, inclusivity, community, and self-confidence, not

merely as a means of product promotion. Visual elements such as sports activities, model selection, colors, and visual themes are perceived as symbols of authenticity, performance, and closeness to the reality of urban life of Generation Z. The use of active models exercising is interpreted as an affirmation of the credibility and functionality of the product, while the colors and visual themes reflect an urban-active lifestyle that combines sporty and stylish elements. In addition, Adidas' visuals are also interpreted as a representation of brand ideology that emphasizes diversity, modernity, and a commitment to sustainability, thus strengthening the meaning of Adidas as a relevant, inclusive, and contextual brand for Generation Z in Indonesia.

### Pragmatic Aspects

The pragmatic aspect in Charles Morris's semiotics relates to the impact of signs on audience attitudes, emotions, and actions. In the context of this research, the pragmatic aspect is analyzed through Generation Z's responses to the @adidasindonesia Instagram visual feed, specifically regarding interest, emotional closeness, intention to seek product information, and influence on brand loyalty. Interview results show that Adidas' Instagram visual feed is able to attract informants' interest to follow and continue viewing its content. Rian Risvan (@rianrisvan) stated that Adidas' visual display is both attractive and informative:

*"The visuals are engaging and visually informative... I keep following or checking back for fear of missing out on new product drops or running events." (Rian Risvan / @rianrisvan)*

A similar view was also expressed by Dea Salsa BP (@deasalsbp) who believes that visual power increases brand credibility:

*"The strong and professional visuals make me feel like Adidas is a credible brand and close to my lifestyle." (Dea Salsa BP / @deasalsbp)*

Meanwhile, Anantha Octa (@ananthaocta) believes that Adidas' visual content provides added value to the audience:

*"The content provides added value: style inspiration, exercise motivation, and aesthetic product information." (Anantha Octa / @ananthaocta)*

Other informants also expressed similar interest:

*"The way her feed looks makes me want to keep checking out her content." (Fioregaia Zahra / @fioregaia.zahra)*

*"Because the appearance is attractive and consistent." (Imna Nael / @imna\_nael)*

Adidas' visual Instagram feed also influenced informants' feelings of emotional closeness and trust in the brand. Rian Risvan (@rianrisvan) noted that the use of localized visuals made the brand feel more relatable:

*"Seeing photos of crowds of Indonesian runners makes me feel like I'm part of that community." (Rian Risvan / @rianrisvan)*

Anantha Octa (@ananthaocta) emphasizes that visual consistency builds a professional and authentic impression:

*"Visual consistency and quality build a sense of professionalism and commitment... making the brand feel more relatable." (Anantha Octa / @ananthaocta)*

Meanwhile, other informants also felt the positive impact of visuals on brand trust:

*"Interesting content makes me want to look for product information." (Dea Salsa BP / @deasalsbp)*

*"The visuals make me believe in the Adidas brand more." (Fioregaia Zahra / @fioregaia.zahra)*

*"Makes the brand feel more professional and trustworthy." (Imna Nael / @imna\_nael)*

Adidas' Instagram visuals are considered to encourage informants to seek product information, even triggering purchase intentions. Rian Risvan (@rianrisvan) stated that product visuals are the initial trigger for information searches:

*"I often get hit by visual 'poison'... a good photo is the initial trigger to find out more." (Rian Risvan / @rianrisvan)*

This is also reinforced by Anantha Octa (@ananthaocta) who stated that visual context influences interest in a product:

*"Compelling visuals are the gateway to purchasing consideration." (Anantha Octa / @ananthaocta)*

Another informant also acknowledged the urge to seek product information after viewing Adidas visual content:

*"Some of the content has made me interested in looking for product information." (Fioregaia Zahra / @fioregaia.zahra)*

*"The visuals are quite attractive for searching for product information." (Imna Nael / @imna\_nael)*

Regarding loyalty, Adidas' Instagram visuals are considered to play a role in strengthening brand image and pride. Rian Risvan (@rianrisvan) stated that visual quality influences the sense of pride in using Adidas products:

*"If I wear Adidas shoes and see their cool Instagram posts... I'm proud to wear their products." (Rian Risvan / @rianrisvan)*

Anantha Octa (@ananthaocta) believes that visuals serve as emotional reminders for consumers:

*"Consistent visuals can be the differentiating factor that makes them choose Adidas over other options." (Anantha Octa / @ananthaocta)*

Similar opinions were also expressed by other informants:

*"Adidas' Instagram visuals have a significant impact on my brand loyalty." (Fioregaia Zahra / @fioregaia.zahra)*

*"It's quite influential, as it reinforces a positive impression of the brand." (Imna Nael / @imna\_nael)*

Based on the results of interviews with five informants, it is known that the visual feed of Instagram @adidasindonesia has a strong pragmatic impact on the attitudes, emotions, and behavior of Generation Z. Adidas' visual content is not only able to attract attention and

encourage audiences to continue following posts, but also builds a sense of emotional closeness, trust, and professional perception of the brand. Visuals that showcase local communities, sports activities, and consistent aesthetic quality are perceived to be able to create a sense of involvement and pride as part of the brand. In addition, Adidas' Instagram visuals function as an initial trigger for product information searches and purchase considerations, as well as strengthening brand loyalty through the formation of a positive image and emotional reminders for consumers. Thus, the pragmatic aspect shows that Adidas' visual strategy on Instagram is effective in influencing the real responses of Generation Z, both at the affective and behavioral levels.

## **Research Discussion**

### **Visual Perception of the Adidas Brand on the Instagram Feed of @adidasindonesia among Generation Z**

Based on Morissan's (2013) perspective, visual communication is a process of conveying messages that involves elements of message, media, symbols, and audience, where communication effectiveness is determined by the ability of the visual message to attract attention, build meaning, and influence audience response. The findings of this study indicate that the visual feed of Instagram @adidasindonesia has functioned optimally as a marketing communication message, characterized by visual consistency, the strength of brand symbols, and the relevance of the content to the characteristics of Generation Z. Visual elements such as contrasting colors, dynamic compositions, and the use of sports activities act as symbols that are easily recognized and interpreted, so that the brand message can be received quickly and effectively by the young audience. This is in line with Morissan's (2013) view that strong visual symbols can accelerate the process of meaning and increase the audience's memory of the communication message. In addition, Morissan (2013) emphasizes that social media does not only function as a message distribution channel, but also as an interaction space that builds relationships between brands and audiences. In this context, Adidas's Instagram visual feed not only conveys product information, but also builds emotional relationships through representations of community, inclusivity, and an active lifestyle. The informants' responses, which showed a greater sense of closeness, trust, and pride in the brand, demonstrate that Adidas' visual communication has successfully transcended its informative function to a persuasive and affective one. Thus, Adidas' Instagram visuals can be understood as a form of strategic communication capable of shaping Generation Z's attitudes, perceptions, and brand engagement.

The findings of this study align with various previous studies that emphasize the importance of social media visuals in shaping Generation Z's brand perceptions and image. Cahyani & Fitriyani (2021) and Dewi (2024) show that Instagram's visual consistency and aesthetics play a significant role in building brand image and credibility. Similar findings were also found by Fitriyani (2024) and Sopari and Alawiyah (2024), who stated that well-managed visual content marketing can increase the interest and engagement of young audiences. These similar findings strengthen Instagram's position as a strategic medium for visual-based brand communication. Research by Arif et al. (2023), Gosal (2024), and Panjaitan and Simanjuntak (2024) confirms that Generation Z tends to perceive visual quality as a direct representation of product quality and brand value. The emotional aspects that emerge from visuals have also been shown to influence information search intentions and purchase decisions, as stated by Holappa (2023) and Lestari et al. (2024). Thus, the findings of this study extend the empirical evidence that Instagram visuals not only shape cognitive perceptions, but also influence the affective and behavioral dimensions of Generation Z towards fashion brands.

The implications of this study suggest that fashion brands, particularly those targeting Generation Z, should view Instagram visuals as a strategic asset in their brand communications. Consistent, authentic, and lifestyle-relevant visual management has been shown to build sustainable brand image, trust, and loyalty. For communication and marketing practitioners, the results of this study emphasize the importance of integrating aesthetic, symbolic, and emotional elements into social media visual strategies. Academically, this study enriches the study of visual communication and digital branding by applying Morissan's (2013) communication theory to the context of social media and Generation Z, thus serving as a reference for further research in the fields of marketing communication and visual communication design.

### **Visual Perception of Adidas Brand in Instagram Feeds of Gen Z Based on Syntax Aspects**

From the perspective of Morissan's (2013) communication theory, the syntactic aspect of visual communication relates to how message elements are structurally arranged to create cohesiveness, readability, and message appeal. The findings of this study indicate that the visual feed of @adidasindonesia's Instagram feed has fulfilled the syntactic principles of visual communication through consistency of color, design, layout, and the use of repeated brand identity elements. This consistency allows Generation Z audiences to recognize Adidas's visual messages quickly and intuitively, without having to read the verbal information in depth. This is in line with Morissan's (2013) view that a consistent visual message structure serves as an identity reinforcement and facilitates the process of message decoding by the audience. Morissan (2013) emphasizes that regularity and visual patterns in mass communication media play an important role in creating a professional and credible impression. In the context of Adidas's Instagram feed, the neat, balanced, and varied layout of posts creates a visual experience that is not monotonous but remains controlled. The use of the Three Stripes element as a consistent visual marker strengthens the symbolic function of the message, so that the brand remains recognizable even though the logo is not always displayed explicitly. Thus, syntactically, the visual structure of @adidasindonesia's feed has functioned effectively as a sign system that strengthens brand identity and increases message readability amidst the dense flow of Instagram content.

The findings of this study align with those of Cahyani & Fitriyani (2021) and Dewi (2024), who stated that visual consistency on Instagram plays a crucial role in building brand image and enhancing audience perceptions of professionalism. This study demonstrated that uniformity in design, color, and post layout helps audiences instantly recognize a brand's identity. This finding is further supported by Sopari & Alawiyah (2024), who found that visual content marketing with a neat and consistent structure significantly contributes to increased engagement among Instagram users, particularly among the Generation Z segment. Furthermore, research by Febrian et al. (2023) and Gosal (2024) confirms that visual elements such as symbols, colors, and graphic composition play a significant role in shaping brand associations in the minds of younger audiences. Generation Z tends to be more responsive to strong, easily recognizable visual displays than complex textual messages. This finding also aligns with research by Syahputra & Prabumenang (2025), who stated that consistent Instagram visual elements can strengthen brand image and differentiate brands from competitors. Thus, the results of this study strengthen the empirical evidence that syntactic aspects are the main foundation in brand visual communication on social media.

The implications of this study indicate that managing the syntactic aspects of Instagram visuals needs to be a strategic concern for brands targeting Generation Z. Consistency in color, design, layout, and the use of integrated brand symbols have been proven to improve message readability and strengthen brand identity on social media. For communication and marketing

practitioners, the results of this study confirm that visual power lies not only in aesthetics, but in the structure and order of visual messages that are able to build professional, credible, and easily recognized perceptions. Academically, this study contributes to enriching the study of visual communication by confirming the relevance of Morissan's (2013) communication theory in the context of social media and the visual behavior of Generation Z.

### **Visual Perception of Adidas Brand in Instagram Feeds of Gen Z Based on Aspects Semantics**

Based on the semantic perspective within Morissan's (2013) communication theory framework, visual meaning is not only understood as a representation of objects, but also as a symbolic construction that conveys certain values, ideologies, and messages to the audience. The results of this study indicate that Generation Z interprets the visual feed of Instagram @adidasindonesia as a sign that represents an active, modern, and community-oriented lifestyle. Visual elements such as sports activities, model selection, and color arrangement and visual composition function as symbols of brand performance and authenticity. In this context, Adidas's visuals are not interpreted denotatively as mere product promotion, but connotatively as a representation of social identity and an urban lifestyle that is relevant to the daily lives of Generation Z. Morissan (2013) emphasizes that the semantic aspect is closely related to how the audience associates visual signs with broader social and cultural meanings. The findings of this study indicate that Generation Z interprets the use of local models and sports communities as symbols of inclusivity and the brand's closeness to their social reality. Adidas's visuals are interpreted as an ideological statement that sport is open, non-exclusive, and accessible to various backgrounds. Thus, the meaning formed not only strengthens the image of product performance, but also builds emotional associations and collective values that contribute to the formation of brand image in the minds of Generation Z.

The findings of this study align with those of Abednego et al. (2021) and Panjaitan & Simanjuntak (2024), who stated that Generation Z tends to interpret social media visual content as a representation of values and lifestyle, rather than simply product information. Visuals that are consistent, authentic, and relevant to the audience's social reality have been shown to build stronger brand meaning. This is also supported by research by Gosal (2024), which shows that visual aesthetics and thematic alignment of social media content significantly influence Generation Z's perceptions and purchasing decisions. Furthermore, this study's results reinforce the findings of Arif et al. (2023) and Dewi (2024), who emphasized that social media visuals play a crucial role in shaping brand image through symbolic meanings constructed by the audience. Research by Koudelkova & Hejlova (2021) shows that Generation Z has a high sensitivity to ideological values represented visually, such as diversity, sustainability, and inclusivity. Thus, the visual interpretation of Adidas as a modern, inclusive, and contextual brand shows consistency with Generation Z's perception patterns across various brand and industry contexts.

The implications of this study indicate that a brand's visual communication strategy, particularly on Instagram, needs to be designed with a deep consideration of semantic dimensions. For communication practitioners and brand managers, visuals are not simply positioned as aesthetic or promotional elements, but rather as a sign system that represents brand values, ideology, and identity. For academic research, this study enriches the study of visual communication by confirming the relevance of Morissan's (2013) theory in analyzing visual meaning in contemporary social media, particularly among Generation Z. This research also opens up space for further study related to syntactic and pragmatic aspects to gain a more comprehensive understanding of brand visual perception on digital platforms.

### **Visual Perception of Adidas Brand in Instagram Feeds of Gen Z Based on Pragmatics Aspects**

From a pragmatic perspective, according to Morissan (2013), communication is understood through the tangible impact of signs on audience attitudes, emotions, and behavior. Based on the research results, the visual feed of Instagram @adidasindonesia is not only perceived aesthetically, but also produces affective and behavioral responses in Generation Z. Consistent, professional visuals, and featuring sports activities and local communities, trigger a sense of interest, emotional involvement, and trust in the brand. This indicates that Adidas' visual signs function pragmatically as triggers of sustained attention and reinforces the audience's positive attitude towards the brand, as emphasized by Morissan (2013) that the success of a communication message lies in its ability to influence audience actions and attitudes. Morissan (2013) explains that the pragmatic aspect is closely related to how the message is utilized by the audience in their social and personal contexts. The findings of this study indicate that Adidas' visuals do not stop at the symbolic meaning stage, but encourage further actions such as product information searches, purchasing considerations, and the formation of brand loyalty. Generation Z responds to Adidas' visuals as stimuli that reinforce a professional and relevant image, thus influencing their preferences and trust in product quality. Thus, the pragmatic aspect shows that Adidas' Instagram visuals function as a strategic instrument that connects visual messages with the real consumption behavior of Generation Z.

These findings align with research by Aryawan & Valdez (2024) and Sopari & Alawiyah (2024), which states that Instagram visual content has a significant influence on customer engagement levels and user behavioral responses. Attractive and consistent visuals can encourage interaction, increase trust, and influence purchasing decisions. Research by Panjaitan & Simanjuntak (2024) confirms that social media visual strategies play a crucial role in building loyalty and positive attitudes toward brands among Generation Z through memorable communication experiences. Furthermore, these findings reinforce the findings of Lestari et al. (2024) and Holappa (2023), which emphasize the role of emotion in Generation Z consumers' responses to digital advertising and branding. Visuals that evoke positive emotions have been shown to increase purchase intention and emotional attachment to brands. Studies by Gosal (2024) and Olivia Efendi and Giyana (2025) also show that social media visual aesthetics serve as an initial trigger for consumption behavior, especially among Generation Z, who rely heavily on visual experiences in their decision-making process.

The implications of this study suggest that visual communication strategies on Instagram need to be designed not only to build symbolic meaning, but also to produce measurable pragmatic impacts on audiences. For brand practitioners, these findings emphasize the importance of visual consistency, community representation, and emotional engagement in building Generation Z engagement and loyalty. For academic studies, this study strengthens the relevance of Morissan's (2013) pragmatic theory in the context of digital communication and opens up opportunities for further research to examine the relationship between emotional responses, purchase intentions, and Generation Z consumption behavior on social media.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the visual Instagram feed @adidasindonesia plays a strategic role in shaping Generation Z's perception of the Adidas brand. Intense and consistent visual exposure makes Instagram a primary medium for introducing and strengthening brand identity. Generation Z perceives Adidas as a modern, sporty, professional, and inclusive brand, where visual quality is seen as a direct representation of the brand's credibility and premium value.

Structurally and meaningfully, Adidas's Instagram visual feed has proven effective in building a strong brand identity through consistent design, visual composition, and the use of easily recognizable iconic symbols. Semantically, the visual elements are interpreted not only as product promotion but also as representations of an active lifestyle, community values, diversity, and sustainability. This demonstrates that Adidas' visuals successfully function as a sign system that constructs ideological and emotional meanings relevant to the lives of Generation Z.

Pragmatically, Adidas' Instagram visuals have a significant impact on audience attitudes and behaviors, ranging from engaging with content, increasing feelings of closeness and trust in the brand, to encouraging product information and strengthening loyalty. Therefore, it can be concluded that @adidasindonesia's visual strategy is effective not only in attracting the attention of Generation Z but also in shaping positive perceptions and maintaining the relevance of the Adidas brand amidst the dynamics of the younger generation's digital culture.

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