

## ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND VISUAL SEMIOTICS OF UHT ULTRA MILK DRINK PRODUCT PACKAGING

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### ABSTRACT

The beverage industry is one of the fastest growing industries today, therefore packaging is one of the things that a company needs to pay attention to in communicating its products. This study examines the development of packaging design for UHT Ultra Milk products since the 1970s. Ultra Milk is produced by PT Ultrajaya which has been established since 1971. Currently, PT Ultrajaya has many other products that are well known to the public in Indonesia and abroad. This study was conducted to study how the development of packaging design and visual semiotics of UHT Ultra Milk packaging adapts to the times. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method and Roland Barthes' semiotic approach as data analysis that includes three levels of reading: denotation, connotation, and myth. Throughout the journey of the Ultra Milk product, there have been several changes in packaging design, but some visual elements are maintained and become the characteristics of a product. The results of the study show the importance of consistent visual elements in forming a product identity. This research is expected to contribute to industry players in communicating their products.

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## INTRODUCTION

Milk is a fluid produced by female animals through the mammary glands. It has been around for thousands of years, making it one of the oldest beverages discovered by humans. History records that milk plays a vital role in various cultural activities. The culture of milk consumption is often linked to human evolutionary history, cultural traditions, and nutritional developments.

The food and beverage industry is one of the fastest growing and increasingly competitive industries, therefore product packaging is one of the important things for a company in keeping its products safe. In addition to protecting the contents, packaging is also a way for brands to communicate their products, this communication is necessary for promotional needs. This phenomenon is also clearly seen in the ready-to-drink liquid milk beverage sector, especially in the Ultra High Temperature (UHT) category, where product packaging design competition occurs in various places such as supermarket shelves and retail stores. One of the competing products is Ultra Milk which is produced by PT Ultrajaya Milk Industry & Trading Company Tbk. As a pioneer of UHT packaged liquid milk in Indonesia, Ultra Milk has undergone several

packaging design changes since it first appeared on the market in the 1970s. To understand how an Ultra Milk brand builds and maintains its visual identity, a trace of the development of its packaging design over time was conducted.

To understand the meaning behind these visual changes, Roland Barthes' semiotic framework is used, (Barthes, 1972) Developing a sign analysis model that includes three levels of reading, namely denotation (the literal meaning of the visible sign), connotation (additional meaning that is cultural and contextual), and myth (ideology built through the sign system so that it looks natural and universal). (Chandler, 2022) emphasizes that semiotics is the right tool to reveal not only what is visible on the surface, but also the values and ideological messages contained in a design.

Several previous studies discussing the semiotics of packaging in Indonesia, such as research conducted by (Erlyana, 2022) on Herbavera packaging, then (Prasetyo et al., 2023) which discussed Starbucks can packaging showed significant results in revealing the construction of meaning in local product packaging design. However, studies discussing the development of Ultra Milk brand packaging design over time based on a semiotic perspective are still quite limited. Existing research focuses more on visual attributes towards purchasing interest through a marketing perspective. Therefore, research gaps were found, including: (1) How has the development of Ultra Milk UHT milk packaging design from the 1970s to the present historically and visually? (2) how has the shift in meaning of Ultra Milk UHT milk packaging over time reflected changes in brand values and visual communication strategies? Based on these problems, this study aims to analyze the development and study the visual semiotic meaning contained in each period of Ultra Milk packaging design.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Packaging as a Visual Communication Medium**

Product packaging has two main interrelated functions, namely the physical protection function and the communication function. (Rimbawan et al., 2024) Emphasizes that packaging design must reflect the visual identity and image of the brand, important elements in packaging design include the selection of colors, typefaces, visual elements, and brand consistency, all of which contribute to a memorable experience and win the hearts of consumers. In a broader perspective, (Pramesti et al., 2023) emphasizes that effective packaging is able to create a bond between the brand and its consumers through meaningful visual consistency, where the application of appropriate and consistent colors on the packaging can be directly related to consumer perceptions emotionally. The most influential visual elements of packaging in attracting consumer attention include color, brand or logo, illustration, typography, and layout (Ariiq & Asidigisianti, 2021) . These five elements form an integrated visual system that collectively communicates the brand message to consumers.

### **Semiotika Roland Barthes**

Semiotics is the study of signs and sign systems in the communication process (Chandler, 2022). Roland Barthes developed semiotic theory by dividing the analysis model into three levels of reading: denotation, connotation, and myth. This model was later used in the study of visual communication.

The first level, denotation, refers to the most direct and true meaning of the sign shown. At this stage, the reader only sees what is visible outside the packaging, such as color, shape, text, and images directly. Second, connotation, which is when the denotative sign is further processed by taking into account the reader's cultural, social, and historical background, thus producing a deeper and implicit meaning. Above these two things, Barthes places myth, namely a communication system that hides connotative meaning so that it appears natural and universal, as if it were not the result of ideological construction, but a truth that already exists in itself (Barthes, 1972). In the context of product packaging, this myth applies when certain design choices continuously form certain values or beliefs in the minds of consumers without their awareness.

### **Visual Elements of Packaging**

The visual element most easily captured by the human eye is color, which directly influences consumers' perceptions of a product's character and quality. In the context of Visual Communication Design, Pramesti et al. (2023) state that color has both aesthetic and communicative power because the color on product packaging influences consumer perception through its inherent cultural associations.

Moving on to the next visual element that determines how written information is conveyed to the reader, namely, Typography. (Erlyana et al., 2023) stated that typography is a key element that directly influences the visual perception of a brand, each letter characteristic reflects the overall brand image, so that good typography is not only about readability, but also conveys the character and personality of the product that is in line with the overall message of the packaging design.

The final visual element, layout or visual composition, governs how all elements are placed and connected to one another to create an attractive appearance on the packaging. (Prasetyo et al., 2023) state that in visual packaging design, the position and arrangement of elements within the packaging have specific meaning and are directly related to consumer perception. How consumers read and understand a brand's identity is influenced by the visual hierarchy formed by the placement of logos, illustrations, and product information. This principle is relevant to understanding how the elements of Ultra Milk's packaging are composed throughout its design period.

### **Research methods**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. According to (Moleong, 2018) qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. The reason for choosing a qualitative descriptive method is because this study aims to interpret the meaning contained in the visual elements of Ultra Milk packaging in depth, not to measure or express data in numerical units. This approach is considered most appropriate for analyzing signs, symbols, and changes in packaging design that are visual and cultural using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework. The unit of analysis of this study is the visual elements consisting of color, illustration, typography, and layout.

## **Analysis Method**

The analytical method used in this study is Roland Barthes' semiotics. Data were collected in two ways. First, through visual documentation such as photographs and video documentation from various periods. The sources came from digital archives available online and direct observation of products circulating in the market. Second, through academic journals, design books, and relevant literature. This analysis was conducted in four stages. First, documenting each packaging version chronologically. Second, listing the visual elements of each version. These elements include color, typography, illustrations, logos, and layout. Third, analyzing each version using a method developed by Barthes that focuses on three aspects: denotation (direct), connotation (indirect), and myth (deeper meaning). Finally, comparing the results of the analysis from each period to find patterns of change in semiotics. To ensure accurate analysis, using diverse sources. Confirming the findings with relevant academic literature to strengthen the results of the visual analysis.

## **Data Collection Techniques**

Data was collected in several ways, including: (1) documentation through sources on the internet in the form of images or videos, (2) literature studies through several references to articles or similar research, (3) observation, conducting direct observation of the packaging of Ultra Milk UHT milk products on the market.

## **Sampling Techniques**

This study employed purposive sampling, which involves intentionally selecting samples based on specific considerations and criteria relevant to the research objectives. This technique was chosen because the research is qualitative and does not aim to generate statistics, but rather to obtain in-depth analysis of the visual meaning of a specifically defined object.

The sample in this is the packaging design for the UHT Ultra Milk product which was selected based on the following criteria: (1) the packaging represents a different design period visually, (2) the packaging can be documented through digital archive sources or direct observation in the market, (3) the packaging comes from three main variants that have existed for a long time, namely full cream, chocolate and strawberry.

Based on these criteria, five packaging periods were used as analysis samples: the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2014, and 2024. These five periods were chosen because they exhibited significant design changes and reflect the visual and cultural context of their time. A total of 15 packaging units were analyzed, representing five packaging periods and three product variants.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Ultra Milk Product Overview**



Source: Kumparan.com

Figure 1. Ultra Milk UHT Milk Product

Ultra Milk is a UHT milk product produced by PT Ultrajaya Milk Industry & Trading Company Tbk. Founded in 1958, the company began commercial production of UHT milk in the 1970s, making Ultra Milk a pioneer in UHT milk products in Indonesia.

Ultra Milk has various types of flavor variants in various packaging sizes, starting from the smallest size of 125 ml to 1000 ml or 1 liter, using rectangular Tetra Pak packaging as its main container. Ultra Milk packaging uses aseptic technology consisting of six layers of cardboard, the six layers include paper, polyethylene plastic, and aluminum foil. This material is specially designed to protect milk from bacteria, air, and exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light. Since it was first marketed, Ultra Milk UHT milk packaging has undergone several packaging design changes, for example, the packaging form which initially used Tetra Aseptic Classic (Tetrahedron) packaging switched to Tetra Pak. In addition to the packaging form, changes also occurred in the packaging design. These changes were made to adapt to the development of visual trends and market dynamics in each era.

**Semiotic Analysis of Ultra Milk UHT Milk Packaging**

1970s packaging



Source: Instagram @mymilk\_id

Figure 2. Ultra Milk Packaging in the 1970s, Full Cream Variant

The analysis was conducted on the packaging design of Ultra Milk UHT milk products from the early period to the present using Barthes' semiotic approach. (Prasetyo et al., 2023)

conducted a semiotic analysis on Starbucks coffee can packaging products, and concluded that branding consistency helps public perception of a product. Seeing this conclusion, an analysis was conducted on the development of Ultra Milk packaging in each period, to determine how far Ultra Milk has changed its packaging design. The packaging was analyzed based on three levels of reading, namely: denotation, connotation, and myth that explain the elements contained in the product packaging.

Table 1. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of "UHT Ultra Milk Packaging, Full Cream Variant, 1970s"

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Color	The dominant background color is blue, followed by lines that divide the blue into three parts. These lines are white, red, and navy blue.	light blue is related to the freshness, cleanliness, and purity of milk	Blue means pure and fresh milk without any mixture, the freshness of full cream milk
Image/Illustration	black and white illustration of a Holstein cow in a standing position	Cows as a source of milk directly link the product to its natural and pure origin.	Cows are interpreted as the authenticity and naturalness of dairy products.
Typography	The text "UHT Ultra Milk" uses a bold and bold Serif Slab font.	Text that is made bold and upright reflects the brand's assertiveness and the product's confidence.	a strong brand name or identity indicates a trusted product, a confident brand means a proven brand.
Layout	Tetrahedral packaging with a cow as the main visual element dominating the center.	The cow as the visual center emphasizes the identity of the pure milk product.	The cow is in the middle of the milk packaging, it shows that the original milk product comes directly from the cow.

Chocolate Variant

Table 2. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of "Ultra Milk UHT Chocolate Variant Packaging in the 1970s"

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Color	Using a dominant cream background color, the brown color is divided into three	The cream color represents the deliciousness of natural milk.	Cream or other warm colors are often used in food and beverage businesses to attract attention because

	sections: white, red, and navy blue.		they are considered appetizing.
Image/Illustration	Image of a chocolate bar in dark brown color on the side of the packaging	The image of a chocolate bar is directly linked to the taste of the product, the chocolate bar gives the impression of a sweet taste.	Chocolate is a very common flavor liked by children, chocolate provides true pleasure
Typography	The text "UHT Ultra Milk" uses a bold and bold Serif Slab font.	Text that is made bold and upright reflects the brand's assertiveness and the product's confidence.	a strong brand name or identity indicates a trusted product, a confident brand means a proven brand.
Layout	Tetrahedral triangular shaped packaging with visual elements spread across all sides	The unique and creative tetrahedral shape attracts attention. This packaging represents an advancement in packaging technology in the 1970s, marking the product's modernity.	Using packaging that is different from the usual, shows that the product is more sophisticated and superior to competitors.

Strawberry Variant

Table 3. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of "Ultra Milk UHT Milk Packaging, Strawberry Variant, 1970s"

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Color	Using a dominant pink/magenta background color, then lines that cut the pink/magenta into three parts. These lines are white, red, and navy blue, respectively.	pink/magenta is associated with strawberries, the bright color gives a fun and attractive impression	Pink is often associated with feminine things, bright and soft colors give a friendly and safe impression.
Image/Illustration	illustration of red strawberries	The fresh red color of the strawberries reflects the taste of the real fruit used in the milk, the contrasting green color attracts attention.	Packaged fruit is interpreted as the original fruit content, strawberry is one of children's favorite flavors

Typography	The text "UHT Ultra Milk" uses a bold and bold Serif Slab font.	Text that is made bold and upright reflects the brand's assertiveness and the product's confidence.	a strong brand name or identity indicates a trusted product, a confident brand means a proven brand.
Layout	Tetrahedral packaging with a prominent strawberry illustration on the side of the packaging	The prominent placement of the fruit makes it easy to identify the flavor variants from a distance and the tetrahedral shape also creates visual uniqueness among other milk packaging.	Unique packaging shows a different and better product. Easy flavor identification shows that the brand understands consumers.

1980s packaging



Source: youtube @KOI FILMS DIGITAL  
 "Ultrajaya Milk - Video Profile"

Figure 3. Ultra Milk packaging in the 1980s

Varian Fullcream

Table 4. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of "Ultra Milk UHT Milk Packaging, Full Cream Variant, 1980s"

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Color	The dominant bright light blue color is accompanied by three vertical stripes on the left in red, white, and navy.	The bright light blue reinforces the association of freshness and purity of milk, the color consistency with the previous packaging shows that there is no	Blue is the identity to show the freshness of the milk, the color that does not change with the previous edition shows

		change in taste even though there is a change in the packaging shape.	consistency in quality.
Image/Illustration	image of a standing Holstein cow facing left, larger size than the previous packaging.	The larger cows strengthen the argument for the product's authenticity.	The larger the cow, the more it confirms the authenticity of the milk, the larger the illustration, the greater the brand's commitment to the quality of the milk .
Typography	The text "ULTRA MILK" is larger in size, positioned above the illustration area.	A more dominant brand position at the top indicates more serious and planned brand building.	A big name is defined as a product that is well known and trusted by the wider community.
Layout	Rectangular packaging with tricolor vertical stripes on the left side and a large cow on the right side	An easily scannable visual hierarchy is formed when the lines (identity or brand) and illustrations are separate.	With red, white and blue stripes as a marker of natural and unquestionable European quality

Chocolate Variant

Table 5. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of "Ultra Milk UHT Chocolate Variant Packaging in the 1980s"

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Color	cream or pale yellow background color with three vertical stripes in red, navy, and white	Cream color maintains a warm and delicious identity and appears more professional.	The cream color that is still maintained is interpreted as a brand that is loyal to its identity despite changes.
Image/Illustration	illustration of a larger dark brown block of chocolate, taking up almost half the surface of the packaging	The larger and more dominant chocolate image strengthens the taste identity, the larger size displays the rich chocolate taste.	Larger and more dominant food visuals are interpreted as stronger and more satisfying flavors, chocolate is a taste icon that is very commonly known to people.

Typography	The text "ULTRA MILK" is printed larger and bolder than the previous period, without "UHT" in front of the name.	Increased brand confidence is demonstrated by the increased typography size and the removal of the word "UHT" in front of the name.	The greater the brand's visibility, the stronger and more established the brand is.
Layout	Vertical box packaging with vertical tricolor stripes on the left, brand text and chocolate illustration on the right	A grid layout is more efficient for storage and distribution. The separation of line and content areas creates a more structured and readable visual hierarchy.	Box packaging is a modern, efficient way to package large quantities. The structured layout demonstrates a brand that is serious and professional in serving customers.

Strawberry Variant

Table 6. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of "Ultra Milk UHT Milk Packaging, Strawberry Variant, 1980s"

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Color	a stronger pink/magenta color than the previous color accompanied by three vertical stripes in red, white, and navy	The bolder pink/magenta color aggressively emphasizes the variant's identity, looking more striking on store/retail shelves.	Sharper colors show the product's courage to appear more confident and attractive, these stronger colors look more striking
Image/Illustration	illustration of two relatively large red strawberries with striking leaf color	The fresh red color of the strawberries reflects the taste of the real fruit used in the milk, the contrasting green color attracts attention.	Packaged fruit is interpreted as the original fruit content, a larger image of fruit accompanied by striking contrasting colors attracts the eye to the product.
Typography	The text "ULTRA MILK" is in bold capital letters, consistent with other variants in the same period.	A cohesive brand identity is built through typographic consistency. Customers can instantly identify items from the same product line, even if they differ in color.	A brand that has consistent typography shows that the brand is mature, trusted, and established in the market.

Layout	Vertical box packaging with tricolor stripes on the left and a large strawberry illustration on the right, the same as other variants.	The combined layout between variants strengthens the product identity and consumers can easily recognize other products even though they have different variants.	Consistency of system design creates a strong, planned brand identity that cannot be imitated by competitors.
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1990s packaging



Source: youtube @KOI FILMS DIGITAL "Ultrajaya Milk -Video Profile"

Figure 4. Ultra Milk packaging in the 1990s

Varian Fullcream

Table 7. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of "Ultra Milk UHT Milk Packaging, Full Cream Variant, 1990s"

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Color	The dominant background color is blue, there are other colors such as white and black in the cow image.	Blue is interpreted as trust, professionalism, institutional credibility.	Usually the color blue is used to build a positive perception of something.
Image/Illustration	A fairly large picture of a cow, and a relatively small picture of a house in the middle of green grass.	The image of a cow indicates that the milk is produced by farm cows. The image of a house represents a farm among green pastures.	Fresh milk comes from cows raised on clean and green farms.

Typography	The UJ logo is more prominent, the text "ULTRA MILK" with a clear hierarchy, and the additional description "Sterile UHT Milk"	The increasingly prominent logo signifies a more serious brand building effort in an era of increasingly fierce milk competition.	A strong logo represents an established and undeniable brand. Technical terms like "UHT Sterile" demonstrate a brand that cares about consumer health.
Layout	Vertical layout with logo at the top, cartoon cow in the middle as the dominant element, and caption at the bottom	As the most prominent main component, the cartoon cow emphasizes the brand's focus on young customers and the strong visual character creates a feeling that goes beyond just taste preferences.	Animated/cartoon characters are a strategy for building emotional loyalty in children from an early age. Likewise, cute cartoon cows create a personal connection between brands and young consumers.

Chocolate Variant

Table 8. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of "Ultra Milk UHT Chocolate Variant Packaging in the 1990s"

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Color	The dominant background color is pastel yellow, with other colors of brown and green at the bottom of the packaging.	The brighter yellow color gives an energetic and cheerful impression, the color change from cream to bright yellow is a sign of an effort to attract a more active market among children.	Bright yellow color gives energy, enthusiasm and joy, chocolate milk is the choice for children to be more active and cheerful.
Image/Illustration	A picture of a fairly large bar of chocolate, and a picture of a relatively small house in the middle of green grass.	Chocolate is synonymous with sweetness, and the image depicts milk chocolate, which has a sweet chocolate flavor. The image of a house represents a farm among grasslands.	Chocolate has a sweet taste. The house on the prairie shows the freshness and green of the farm.

Typography	UJ (Ultrajaya) logo, large "ULTRA MILK" text, "UHT Sterile Milk" label, and "Chocolate Flavor" description at the bottom	The appearance of the UJ logo and the description "Sterile UHT Milk" strengthens the legitimacy of the corporate brand behind the product and is more informative and transparent about the production process.	The "sterile" and "UHT" labels convey the impression of modern, scientifically verified food safety. Company logos represent accountability and transparency, guaranteeing consumers.
Layout	The packaging is slimmer vertically. The UJ logo is at the top, the chocolate illustration is in the middle, and the flavor information and label are below.	A more structured visual hierarchy makes it easier for consumers to identify brands and variants. The design is also more informative and well-organized.	Comprehensive and well-presented information demonstrates brand transparency and responsibility. A clear hierarchy indicates that the brand values its consumers' intelligence and ability to understand information.

Strawberry Variant

Table 9. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of "Ultra Milk UHT Milk Packaging, Strawberry Variant, 1990s"

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Color	The dominant background color is pink/magenta, with other colors such as red in the strawberry image and green under the packaging.	Pink gives the impression of sweetness, fun and enjoyment.	Pink is synonymous with feminine things.
Image/Illustration	Draw two real strawberries, whole and split in half, which are quite large, then draw a relatively small house in the middle of green grass.	The strawberry image has been changed to be more realistic and detailed, giving a fresher impression. The image of the house is interpreted as a farm among green meadows.	The more realistic visuals of the fruit give a more natural feel to the materials used, the House in the meadow shows the freshness and green of the farm.

<p>Typography</p>	<p>UJ logo, "ULTRA MILK" text, "Strawberry Flavor" caption (in English), and "UHT Sterile Milk" label</p>	<p>The use of "Strawberry" in English for the first time gives the impression of a modern, urban, and globally trend-following product.</p>	<p>English on the product shows a modern and cosmopolitan lifestyle.</p>
<p>Layout</p>	<p>Vertical packaging with logo at the top, fruit illustration in the middle-bottom, flavor description at the bottom is consistent with other variants.</p>	<p>Layout consistency with other variants reinforces a mature brand visual system and consumers can switch between variants easily due to layout familiarity.</p>	<p>A cohesive design system demonstrates a mature, professional, and uncompromising brand. This consistency demonstrates consumer respect for the brand.</p>

**2014 packaging**



Figure 5. Ultra Milk packaging in 2014

Varian Fullcream

Table 10. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of "Ultra Milk UHT Milk Packaging, Full Cream Variant, 2014-an"

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Color	The dominant light blue background, there are other colors such as white and black on the cow image and yellow and green on the bottom of the packaging.	Blue is interpreted as trust, professionalism, institutional credibility.	The main color blue combined with the natural green image illustrates that Ultra Milk is the most natural and fresh milk.
Image/Illustration	A fairly large picture of a cow, a meadow at the bottom of the packaging with a house and a cow there.	The image of a cow indicates that fresh milk is produced by a cow. The image of a house is interpreted as a farm among green pastures.	The friendly cartoon style has endured since 1990 as an iconic mascot that has built the product's identity across generations of children and the farm's background signals that the milk is sourced directly from cows.
Typography	UJ logo, larger "ULTRA MILK" and "Full Cream" text, complete vitamin and mineral information, net weight 250ml	The greater emphasis on the word "Full Cream" indicates a clearer variant difference and the complete nutritional information reflects the approach that milk is not just a drink but also a nutritional supplement.	Complete nutritional information makes for a healthy product and a brand that is responsible to its consumers.
Layout	Layout with a clear hierarchy, namely the logo and brand at the top, the "Full Cream" variant in the middle, the dominant cow illustration, nutritional information on the edge of the packaging	A more structured hierarchy allows consumers to navigate more quickly and efficiently. The presentation of nutritional information, now integrated into product design, demonstrates that nutritional aspects are	Structured and informative design attracts smart consumers who care about nutrition.

		no longer an add-on but an integral part of the product's identity.	
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Chocolate Variant

Table 11. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of "Ultra Milk UHT Chocolate Variant Packaging in the 2014s"

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Color	The dominant background color is light yellow, then there are other colors such as milk chocolate, yellow and green on the bottom of the packaging.	The combination of yellow, brown, and green creates a connected visual. The green meadow symbolizes nature and the cow, its source. These colors appear richer and more natural than in the previous period.	The green color combined with animal elements creates the impression of a natural and healthy product. The bright yellow reflects the cheerfulness and energy of daily milk consumption.
Image/Illustration	Picture of a glass of chocolate milk, a meadow at the bottom of the packaging with a cow and a house there.	Splash of chocolate milk gives an appetizing effect. Meadows and farms connect the product with nature	The appearance of the farm on the packaging is a trusted guarantee of authenticity.
Typography	UJ logo, "ULTRA MILK" and "Chocolate Flavor" text, complete with complete vitamin and calcium information, net weight 250ml	Very comprehensive nutritional information reflects consumers' increasingly educated awareness of nutrition.	Brands that list vitamins and minerals prove that they truly care about consumers, not just selling products.
Layout	The vertical layout is divided into several zones: the logo and brand name are placed at the top, an illustration of splashing milk in the middle, nutritional information on the side, and a farm scene is located at the bottom.	More complex layouts with multiple layers of information reflect the increasingly critical consumer era that requires a lot of information.	The natural appearance of the farm creates the perception that the product is part of nature presented with modern technology.

Strawberry Variant

Table 12. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of "Ultra Milk UHT Milk Packaging, Strawberry Variant, 2014"

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Color	The dominant background color is pink, then there are other colors such as yellow and green on the bottom of the packaging.	Pink gives the impression of sweetness and fun.	Soft pink gives a sweet, feminine, and playful impression. Strawberry milk is a perfect gift for children, especially girls.
Image/Illustration	Picture of a pink glass of milk, a meadow at the bottom of the packaging with a cow and a house there.	The splash of pink in the glass is a dynamic and irresistible delight. The consistency of the cow farm and pasture elements confirms that the strawberry milk also comes from the same natural source.	The visual choice of splashed milk conveys a sense of freshness and deliciousness. The farm setting of the fruit flavors is a branding strategy to legitimize synthetic flavors through a more natural appearance.
Typography	UJ logo, larger "ULTRA MILK" and "Strawberry Flavor" text, complete vitamin and mineral information, net weight 250ml	The translation of flavor information into Indonesian signifies adaptation to the increasingly confident local market and complete nutritional information in Indonesian makes it more inclusive and communicative.	The use of Indonesian brings products closer to consumers. Nutritional information in the national language demonstrates the brand's responsibility to the Indonesian people.
Layout	The layout follows the same system as the Chocolate and Full Cream variants, total consistency in the design system.	Perfect visual system consistency confirms the maturity of brand identity	Consistency in maintaining quality in each variant shows that the brand is reliable and never disappoints consumers.

2023 packaging



Figure 6. Ultra Milk packaging in 2023

Varian Fullcream

Table 13. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of "Ultra Milk UHT Milk Packaging, Full Cream Variant, 2023-an"

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Color	The color is still consistent with the previous packaging design, namely bright sky blue.	The bright and clear sky blue color reflects higher quality standards and better production processes.	The combination of sky blue and white on the bottom shows the purity and cleanliness (sterility) of the product.
Image/Illustration	The cartoon cow is still the same as the previous design, the "50+" anniversary badge in the top corner, and the farm background is smaller because there are additional milk waves which are more decorative elements.	The cow cartoon shows the consistency of a product and the 50+ badge emphasizes the long historical heritage.	The cow cartoon, which has been around since 1990, demonstrates a proven loyalty to the identity. A 50-year lifespan is undeniable proof of its legitimacy.
Typography	Claim "Made from Fresh Milk", description "Full Cream" for product variant identification	The claim "Full Cream + Fresh Milk" combines the identity of the variant with the superiority of the raw	"Full Cream Made from Fresh Milk" describes the best milk formula offered to

		materials in one powerful sentence.	consumers. The 50th Anniversary is proof that this brand is not just a brand but a legacy.
Layout	A minimalist layout with a cartoon cow as the main character that dominates, the claim "Made from Fresh Milk", and no excessive decorative elements.	Minimalism signifies a mature brand that doesn't need many words to convince and focuses on three key elements (brand, character, claim) showing confidence without over-selling.	The combination of minimalist design, unique mascot, unique claims, and anniversary celebrations create the perception that Ultra Milk is the only right milk choice for families.

Chocolate Variant

Table 14. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of "Ultra Milk UHT Chocolate Variant Packaging in the 2023s"

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Color	The golden yellow packaging is deeper and richer than before, with an illustration of melted chocolate in a glossy dark brown color.	The golden yellow gives a premium and quality impression. The waves of melted chocolate signify the luxury of taste.	Chocolate milk is no longer just a children's drink but a premium experience that can be enjoyed by all ages.
Image/Illustration	Illustration of liquid chocolate flowing in a wave shape, looks shiny and has a smooth texture, no longer using chocolate pieces and splashes of chocolate milk into the glass.	The transition from chocolate bar to mouth-watering flowing chocolate liquid signals a shift from a simple product to a premium experience.	The visual of the chocolate liquid promises irresistible deliciousness and an experience that is more than just a beverage product.
Typography	Claim "Made from Fresh Milk", description "Rasa Dokelat / Chocolate Flavor" in two languages (Indonesian and English)	The claim "Made from Fresh Milk" confirms the competitive advantage of the raw material.	"Made From Fresh Milk" signifies high quality standards. The bilingual nature of the brand demonstrates its expansion into global markets, and the transparency of its ingredients signifies open and

			trustworthy communication.
Layout	Minimalist layout with fewer elements, illustration of melted chocolate taking up a large portion of the packaging and the claim "Fresh Milk" in the center of the packaging	The minimalist approach demonstrates design maturity and brand confidence.	visual simplicity makes a brand that doesn't need to "shout" to be heard because its reputation speaks for itself

Strawberry Variant

Table 15. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of "Ultra Milk UHT Milk Packaging, Full Cream Variant, 2023-an"

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Color	The pink color is still consistent from the previous period's packaging.	Dynamic waves of liquid strawberries signify the luxury of taste.	Just like the chocolate variant, strawberry milk is no longer just a children's drink but a premium experience that can be enjoyed by all ages.
Image/Illustration	The illustration used is the same as the chocolate variant, namely liquid milk flowing in the form of waves, looking shiny and having a smooth texture, no longer using strawberries and milk splashing into the glass.	The shift from the strawberry fruit illustration to the strawberry milk flow signals the brand's confidence that consumers already know the taste and the flowing stream visual depicts a more premium deliciousness.	The milk flows beautifully, displaying a liquid luxury that can be felt by anyone.
Typography	Claim "Made from Fresh Milk", description "Strawberry Flavor" in two languages	The consistent bilingualism with other variants signifies a unified global communication strategy and the "Fresh Milk" claim legitimizes the fruit flavored variants as premium dairy products, not just	"Made From Fresh Milk" signifies high quality standards. The bilingual nature of the brand demonstrates its expansion into global markets, and the transparency of its ingredients signifies open and

		artificially sweetened beverages.	trustworthy communication.
Layout	Minimalist layout with fewer elements, liquid strawberry illustration takes up a large portion of the packaging and the claim "Fresh Milk" in the center of the packaging	The minimalist approach that is consistent with other variants emphasizes a mature brand system and the visual dominance of the milk flow creates a premium impression that is on par with other variants.	The consistency of minimalist design across all variants makes the brand solid, well-planned and ready to compete in the premium market.

Development of Ultra Milk Packaging Visual Elements Between Periods

Table 16. Development of Visual Elements of “Ultra Milk UHT Milk Packaging” between periods

Visual Elements	Early Period (1970s-1980s)	Middle (1990s-2000s)	Current (2014-Latest)
Color	Fullcream: Uses light blue plus vertical stripes in red, white, and navy.	Not much has changed in terms of color, only in 2000 did the vertical stripes disappear.	The colors are more varied due to the addition of other elements, the use of background colors is also made smoother and more comfortable to look at.
	Brown: Using cream color plus vertical stripes which are red, white, navy respectively.	Not much has changed in terms of color, only in 2000 did the vertical stripes disappear.	The colors are more varied due to the addition of other elements, the use of background colors is also made smoother and more comfortable to look at.
	Strawberry: Using magenta plus vertical	Not much has changed in terms of color, only	The colors are more varied due to the

	stripes in red, white, and navy respectively.	in 2000 did the vertical stripes disappear.	addition of other elements, the use of background colors is also made smoother and more comfortable to look at.
Image/Illustration	Fullcream: A black and white cow standing facing left with a thin outline.	Only half of the cow's body is visible, but the larger one almost takes up half the packaging. The outline of the cow is made thicker. There is also an image of a meadow and a small house in the center.	Same as before, but the size of the cow is smaller, but in the picture of the meadow there is a picture of a small house and a small cow in the middle, there is also a sun behind the meadow,
	Chocolate: illustration of a chocolate bar in brown and white colors	only the image changed, the chocolate bar which was previously white became a combination of light and dark brown	becomes a picture of a glass that looks like it is being poured with brown milk, which represents the milk, then changes again to just a picture of the flow of milk
	Strawberry: illustration of two strawberries with a deep red color, with green leaves.	switching to the original picture of strawberries, then there is also a picture of a green meadow with a house in the middle	becomes a picture of a glass that looks like it is being poured with pink milk, which represents the milk, then changes again to just a picture of the flow of milk
Typography	Using Slab Serif font, Formal, Informative	Switch to a more dynamic and friendly Sans Serif font	Using a modern, clean, sans serif font. The font uses a dark blue color.
Layout	Simple layout, the elements are not very varied, the main element that describes the flavor variants is placed in the middle, lots of whitespace	The layout is denser, the graphic elements are more varied, the placement of graphic elements is organized but consistent.	The layout is dense but organized, the graphic elements are more or less the same as before, the graphic elements are more organized and have more breathing room.

Packaging Form	Using Tetra Classic Aseptic/Tetrahedron Packaging	Switch to Box Packaging (Tetra Brick)	Switch to the taller and thinner Tetra Brik Slim type
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### Changes in Semiotic Meanings Between Periods

Examining the development of Ultra Milk's packaging design through Barthes's semiotic framework reveals a consistent and directional shift. In the early period, the visual cues used were informative, making the design solely aesthetic, speaking about the product itself. Moving into the middle period, packaging was no longer merely aesthetic; it also began to speak about health. Only in the most recent period has packaging begun to speak about the product's value, highlighting its naturalness, authenticity, and healthy and responsible care.

Despite these changes, several elements have been consistently maintained, including the color, image, and quality claims of fresh milk. This consistency creates a distinct identity for the product, a valuable decision for maintaining the positive consumer perceptions that have been built over time. According to Caruso et al. (2026), modernization should not be viewed as an automatic driver of success, but rather as a targeted response to declining appeal while maintaining visual familiarity. Both aspects contribute to the effectiveness of the packaging redesign.

### CONCLUSION

This research shows that Ultra Milk has experienced a very long journey since the company was founded, and during this long journey Ultra Milk has experienced several design changes to its packaging that reflect the context of its time, from prioritizing usability accompanied by aesthetics, to a more minimalist and naturalistic approach that builds the value of naturalness and a healthy lifestyle in the current era.

A semiotic analysis using Roland Barthes' three-tier framework shows that each packaging period creates slightly different but interconnected myths. Consistent key visual elements, such as color, imagery, and quality claims, consistently maintain a positive public perception across generations of consumers.

This research confirms that packaging design is not just about creating aesthetics, but also about the symbols that shape consumer identity and perception of a product. Future research could expand the scope of the study by involving consumers through interviews and surveys, or conducting comparative analysis with other brands to gain a more comprehensive picture of semiotic strategies within the same category.

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