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Family Interpersonal Communication in Jumbo's TikTok Ad

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of social media has transformed family communication from a private relational practice into a symbolic representation within digital promotional content. This study examined how family interpersonal communication was represented and interpreted in the TikTok advertisement of the Indonesian animated film Jumbo, which was selected because its promotional content prominently features narratives of emotional attachment, family support, and solidarity. Using a descriptive qualitative design and Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach, this research analyzed visual, audio, and textual signs to identify the relationship between representamen, object, and interpretant. The findings revealed three dominant representational patterns: (1) the nuclear family as a space of emotional validation and affective support; (2) the chosen family as a form of non-biological solidarity; and (3) the intergenerational family as a foundation of identity and moral legitimacy. The advertisement constructed family not merely as verbal interaction but as a multimodal affective and ideological meaning system integrated into an emotional branding strategy. Through empathy, protection, solidarity, and nostalgia, family relationships were positioned as symbolic resources that generated audience engagement and strengthened brand identity. The study contributes to interpersonal communication scholarship by extending the understanding of family communication beyond lived interpersonal interactions toward symbolic and multimodal representations constructed through digital promotional media. The findings also provide practical insights for digital content creators and marketers regarding the strategic use of family narratives as emotional branding resources capable of fostering audience engagement, emotional identification, and relational connection in digital media environments.

Keywords*: family interpersonal communication; semiotics; emotional branding; TikTok advertising; multimodality*

ABSTRAK

Perkembangan pesat media sosial telah mengubah komunikasi keluarga dari praktik relasional yang bersifat privat menjadi representasi simbolik dalam konten promosi digital. Penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana komunikasi interpersonal keluarga direpresentasikan dan dimaknai dalam iklan TikTok film animasi Indonesia Jumbo, yang dipilih sebagai objek penelitian karena konten promosinya secara menonjol menampilkan narasi kelekatan emosional, dukungan keluarga, dan solidaritas. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan analisis semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce untuk mengkaji tanda visual, audio, dan teks melalui hubungan antara representamen, objek, dan interpretan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga pola representasi utama, yaitu: (1) keluarga inti sebagai ruang validasi emosional dan dukungan afektif; (2) chosen family sebagai bentuk solidaritas non-biologis; dan (3) keluarga lintas generasi sebagai fondasi identitas dan legitimasi moral. Iklan tersebut mengonstruksi keluarga bukan sekadar sebagai interaksi verbal, melainkan sebagai sistem makna afektif dan ideologis yang dimediasi secara multimodal dan diintegrasikan ke dalam strategi emotional branding. Melalui nilai empati, perlindungan, solidaritas, dan nostalgia, hubungan keluarga diposisikan sebagai sumber daya simbolik yang mampu membangun keterlibatan audiens serta memperkuat identitas merek. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan kajian komunikasi interpersonal dengan memperluas pemahaman tentang komunikasi keluarga, tidak hanya sebagai interaksi interpersonal yang dialami secara langsung, tetapi juga sebagai representasi simbolik dan multimodal yang dikonstruksi melalui media promosi digital. Temuan penelitian juga memberikan implikasi praktis bagi kreator konten digital dan pemasar mengenai pemanfaatan narasi keluarga sebagai sumber daya emotional branding yang efektif dalam membangun keterlibatan audiens, identifikasi emosional, dan kedekatan relasional dalam lingkungan media digital.

Kata kunci: komunikasi interpersonal keluarga; semiotika; branding emosional; iklan TikTok; multimodalitas

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INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, digital media adoption has reached a significant level, with internet penetration exceeding 79.5% of the population and approximately 167 million active social media users in 2024 (Indonesia, 2024; Social & Meltwater, 2024). Among digital platforms, TikTok has emerged as one of the most influential, attracting approximately 157.6 million users by mid-2024 (CNN, 2024). Its short-form video format, characterized by emotionally engaging visuals and algorithmic personalization, enables relational messages to be disseminated rapidly and repeatedly (Kaye et al., 2022). Consequently, TikTok has evolved beyond entertainment and promotion into a prominent space where meanings about social relationships, including family relations, are produced, circulated, and interpreted.

From the perspective of interpersonal communication, family relationships are constructed through verbal and nonverbal message exchanges that foster intimacy, empathy, and emotional support (Littlejohn et al., 2017). Family interpersonal communication is not merely the exchange of information but also a process through which meanings, emotions, and relational identities are co-constructed among family members. Family communication also functions as a space for sharing feelings, developing mutual understanding, and fostering relational closeness among family members (Bahfiarti et al., 2021). Empirical research demonstrates that the quality of family interpersonal communication significantly influences emotional regulation and children's behavioral development (Juniati et al., 2024). In families facing structural limitations, emotional attachment may also emerge with non-biological figures, such as siblings who function as protectors and companions (Ferdiana et al., 2025). This phenomenon reflects the concept of chosen family, which is closely associated with collective responsibility and moral solidarity within Indonesian cultural contexts. These studies collectively emphasize the importance of family interpersonal communication as a lived relational practice with profound psychological and social implications.

However, this study does not examine family interpersonal communication as an actual interpersonal practice. Instead, it focuses on its symbolic representation within digital media. From the perspective of media representation, media texts do not simply reflect reality but actively construct and reproduce meanings through symbols, narratives, and cultural codes (Hall et al., 2013). Accordingly, family interpersonal communication may be understood in two interconnected dimensions: first, as a lived relational practice occurring through direct interpersonal interaction; and second, as a symbolic representation through which family values, emotional attachment, support, and solidarity are reconstructed and communicated within media texts. In digital environments, audiences increasingly encounter family relationships through mediated representations rather than through direct interpersonal experience.

Despite the growing body of scholarship on family communication and digital media, these areas of research have largely developed independently. Studies of family interpersonal communication predominantly examine parenting practices, emotional climate, emotional regulation, and interpersonal interaction within

households (Morris et al., 2007; Zapf et al., 2023). Conversely, research on TikTok and digital marketing primarily focuses on engagement metrics, virality, algorithms, influencer strategies, and promotional effectiveness (Kaye et al., 2022). Although studies on online family communication have begun to emerge, they continue to conceptualize communication as an actual relational practice, such as parent-child closeness and family interaction in digital contexts, rather than as a symbolic construction embedded within promotional audiovisual media (Xiong, 2025).

This separation has created a conceptual gap at the intersection of interpersonal communication and digital media studies. While previous studies have demonstrated the significance of family communication for emotional well-being and extensively examined TikTok as a platform for digital promotion, limited attention has been given to how family interpersonal communication is transformed into symbolic representations within promotional digital content. Consequently, there remains insufficient understanding of how digital media construct family relational meanings through audiovisual signs and how such meanings contribute to audience engagement and emotional resonance.

Addressing this gap requires an analytical framework capable of examining not only what family relationships signify in media texts but also how those meanings are produced and interpreted. In this regard, Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic framework offers an important analytical contribution. Through the triadic relationship between representamen, object, and interpretant, Peirce's model enables a systematic examination of how meanings emerge from the interaction between signs and interpretation processes. Therefore, the contribution of Peirce's semiotics in this study extends beyond methodological application; it functions as an analytical innovation that bridges interpersonal communication scholarship and digital media representation studies by explaining how emotional support, attachment, and family solidarity are symbolically constructed within promotional audiovisual content.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of family interpersonal communication, media representation, and semiotic analysis within the context of TikTok advertising. Although previous studies have examined family communication and TikTok separately, limited attention has been given to understanding how family interpersonal communication is represented in promotional TikTok content, particularly in the context of Indonesian animated films. In contrast to prior studies that primarily position family communication as a lived relational practice or approach TikTok from marketing and engagement perspectives, this study conceptualizes family interpersonal communication as a symbolic construction represented through audiovisual promotional content. Therefore, this research offers a distinct analytical perspective by examining how meanings related to emotional support, attachment, and family solidarity are constructed through systems of signs in digital media. Accordingly, this study contributes to the development of interpersonal communication scholarship by extending the analysis of family communication from lived interpersonal interactions toward symbolic representations constructed through digital promotional media.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis to examine the representation of family interpersonal communication in the TikTok advertisement of the animated film Jumbo. A qualitative design was selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of visual, verbal, and audio signs embedded in digital media texts, allowing researchers to interpret how meanings related to emotional support, attachment, and family solidarity are symbolically constructed and communicated through promotional content.

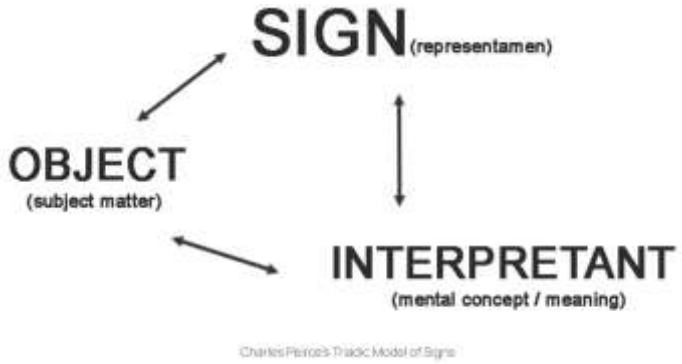


Figure 1. Charles Sanders Peirce's Triadic Model of Signs.
Adapted from Peirce (1931–1958) and Chandler (2017).

The analytical framework of this study was based on Peirce's triadic model, which conceptualizes meaning through the relationship among three interconnected elements: *representamen* (the sign), *object* (the referent represented by the sign), and *interpretant* (the meaning generated by the interpreter). This model was employed to identify and interpret the symbolic meanings embedded in the audiovisual content of the TikTok advertisement.

Data were collected through digital documentation and non-participant observation of promotional videos uploaded on the official TikTok account *@visinemaid*, managed by Visinema Pictures. This account was selected because it serves as the official communication and promotional channel for the film and represents the production company's digital marketing strategy. The primary data consisted of audiovisual promotional materials, including visual scenes, dialogues, character interactions, background music, captions, and on-screen text. Secondary data were obtained from scholarly books, journal articles, and other academic sources related to Peircean semiotics, interpersonal communication, media representation, and digital communication.

The population of this study comprised all promotional content related to *Jumbo* uploaded on the @visinemaid TikTok account during the film's promotional campaign period. A total of 21 promotional videos were identified on the account

during the observation period. Of these, six videos met the inclusion criteria and were selected for detailed semiotic analysis using purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria were: (1) videos officially uploaded on the @visinemaid TikTok account; (2) videos published during the promotional campaign period of *Jumbo*; (3) videos containing visual or verbal representations of family relationships; and (4) videos depicting emotional attachment, emotional support, care, companionship, or solidarity among characters. The selected videos were considered most relevant because they directly reflected the interpersonal communication themes examined in this study. Of the six videos analyzed, three were selected for presentation in this article because they most clearly represented the dominant patterns of family interpersonal communication identified in the data: nuclear family, chosen family, and intergenerational family relationships.

Data analysis followed Peirce's triadic semiotic procedure. First, the researcher identified the representamen, namely the visual, verbal, and audio signs appearing in the selected promotional videos. Second, the object represented by those signs was determined by examining the social and relational realities depicted within the narrative. Third, the interpretant was generated through an interpretive process to understand the meanings conveyed regarding family interpersonal communication. The findings were subsequently interpreted using concepts of interpersonal communication, particularly emotional support, attachment, empathy, and family solidarity, to explain how family relational values are represented in digital media.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing and integrating evidence derived from visual elements, verbal narratives, audio components, captions, and relevant theoretical literature. Interpretations generated through semiotic analysis were continuously cross-checked against concepts of interpersonal communication and media representation to ensure analytical consistency. Credibility was further strengthened through repeated observation of the selected videos, detailed analytical note-taking, and systematic documentation of the relationships among representamen, object, and interpretant throughout the coding process. In addition, prolonged engagement with the research material and continuous comparison between empirical findings and theoretical frameworks were employed to maintain interpretive consistency and strengthen the credibility of the findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the research findings on the representation of family interpersonal communication in the TikTok advertisement of the animated film Jumbo through Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach. The analysis of visual, audio, and textual elements identifies how signs construct meanings related to emotional validation, relational commitment, identity formation, and moral legitimacy through different representations of family relationships. Family

interpersonal communication is understood as a process of verbal and nonverbal message exchange that fosters empathy and support within a relational system (Littlejohn et al., 2017). Therefore, the signs appearing in the advertisement function not only symbolically but also represent interpersonal communication as an emotional branding strategy in the digital media context.

Representation of the Nuclear Family as a Space of Emotional Support

One of the dominant representational patterns in the TikTok advertisement of the film *Jumbo* is the construction of the nuclear family as a space of emotional validation and psychological security. Unlike other family representations in the advertisement, the nuclear family is portrayed as the primary relational environment in which emotional needs are recognized, affirmed, and responded to through everyday interaction. This representation positions the parent–child relationship as the foundation of emotional stability and relational trust within the narrative. Through the integration of visual elements, body gestures, facial expressions, and domestic settings, the advertisement constructs the family as a relational system that normalizes care, empathy, and emotional reassurance. This representation is clearly evident in the scene depicting the interaction between Don and his mother in a domestic setting, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. TikTok promotional clip of the film *Jumbo* depicting Don with a caregiver figure in a domestic setting (Source: https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSkMUJADR/)

The scene depicting Don embracing his mother at the dining table generates meaning through a coherent configuration of visual signs. The *representamen* consists of the embracing gesture, the mother's attentive facial expression, physical

proximity, and the domestic dining table setting. These signs function simultaneously as icons of affection and indices of relational intimacy. The *object* represented through these signs is not merely maternal affection but the experience of emotional validation, in which the child's emotional presence is acknowledged and accepted within a secure relational environment. The dining table itself carries symbolic significance. Rather than functioning solely as household furniture, it operates as a recurring domestic space associated with togetherness, routine interaction, and emotional accessibility. Through this sign system, the advertisement transforms an ordinary domestic moment into a representation of emotional security and belonging.

At the level of interpretant, the scene invites audiences to associate family with comfort, acceptance, and emotional reassurance. The meaning generated extends beyond the depiction of affection itself; it constructs the family as a place where individuals are emotionally recognized and psychologically protected. This interpretation reflects interpersonal communication functions such as empathy, supportiveness, and emotional validation, which are central to healthy family relationships (Littlejohn et al., 2017). Afifi et al. (2016) found that effective family communication patterns are associated with greater emotional validation, empathy, and relational support among family members. The findings are also consistent with previous research demonstrating the importance of family communication for emotional regulation and psychosocial well-being (Juniati et al., 2024; An et al., 2024).

From a broader cultural perspective, the representation also conveys an ideological message regarding the ideal family. The advertisement consistently portrays the nuclear family as harmonious, emotionally available, and supportive, thereby positioning it as a normative model of family life. While this representation promotes positive values such as care and empathy, it simultaneously privileges a particular vision of family that may not reflect the diversity of contemporary family experiences. Consequently, the nuclear family in the *Jumbo* advertisement functions not only as a narrative element but also as a cultural symbol through which ideals of emotional stability, belonging, and relational harmony are reproduced and circulated within digital media.

Representation of Chosen Family as Relational Commitment

In addition to the nuclear family, the TikTok advertisement of *Jumbo* represents an alternative form of family constructed through relational commitment rather than biological ties. Unlike the nuclear family, which is grounded in parental authority and emotional validation, the chosen family depicted in this advertisement emerges through voluntary attachment, mutual care, and social responsibility. This representation reflects a shift from understanding family as a genealogical structure toward viewing it as an affective relationship sustained through presence, loyalty, and everyday caregiving. Such a pattern is evident in the relationship between Atta and

Bang Acil, who are positioned as surrogate family figures within the promotional narrative, as illustrated in Figure 3.

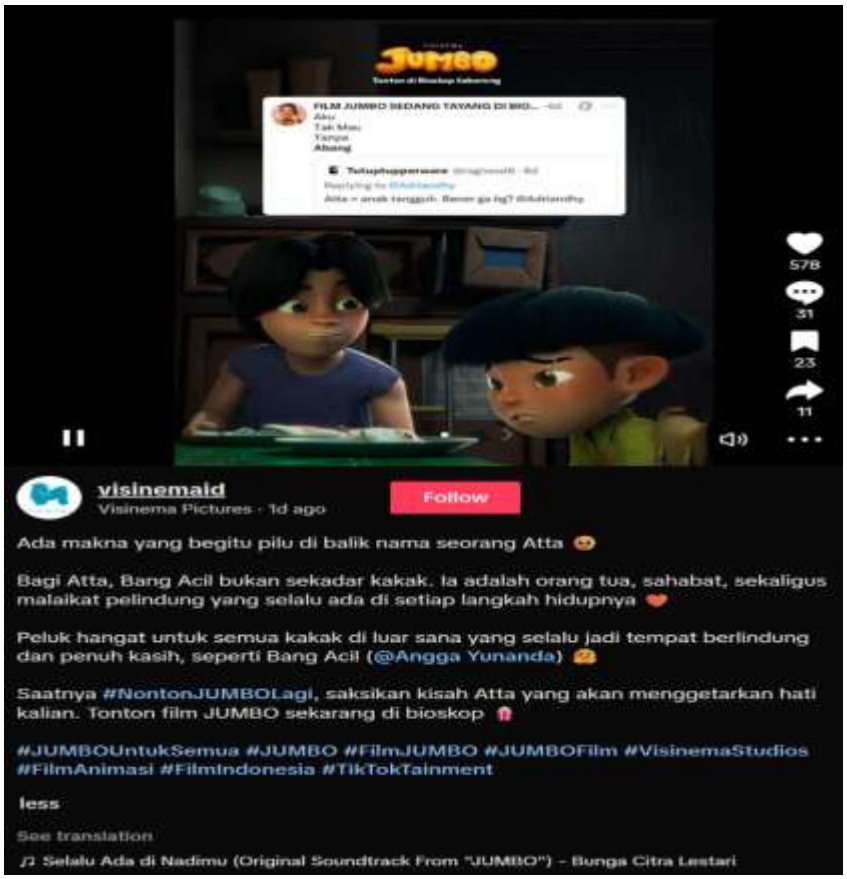


Figure 3. Screenshot from the TikTok promotional video of the film Jumbo featuring the story of Atta and Bang Acil (Source: https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSkMDVdh1/)

The relationship between Atta and Bang Acil generates meaning through a combination of visual, verbal, and narrative signs. The *representamen* consists of their close physical interaction, expressions of concern, protective gestures, and the narrative statement, *"I don't want to be without you, Brother."* These signs function as icons of emotional closeness and indices of relational dependency. The *object* represented is not merely friendship but a form of non-biological kinship in which care, protection, and responsibility substitute for blood relations. Through these signs, the advertisement constructs family as a social relationship produced through commitment and emotional investment rather than genealogy. Previous studies have shown that interpersonal relationships are maintained through mutual support, inclusion, affection, and everyday interaction practices (Mutia et al., 2025).

At the level of *interpretant*, audiences are encouraged to understand family as a relational category defined by what individuals do for one another rather than by biological connection alone. The meaning generated by the scene suggests that emotional security may emerge from chosen relationships when individuals consistently perform caregiving and protective roles. While previous studies describe

chosen family as a form of kinship based on affection, trust, and commitment (England et al., 2020; Kim & Feyissa, 2021), the significance of this scene lies in how the advertisement visually naturalizes such relationships. Bang Acil is not presented as a substitute parent in an explicit manner; rather, his role is communicated through repeated signs of presence, concern, and responsibility that gradually establish his legitimacy as family.

The multimodal structure of the scene further reinforces this interpretation. Facial expressions, body gestures, camera framing, and background music operate together to create emotional intensity and relational coherence. Rather than functioning as decorative elements, these signs guide audience interpretation toward viewing the relationship as meaningful, trustworthy, and enduring. The repeated emphasis on protection and companionship transforms an ordinary interpersonal relationship into a symbol of belonging. Consequently, the chosen family is represented not as an exception to the traditional family model but as a legitimate relational formation capable of providing emotional stability and social support.

From a broader cultural perspective, this representation carries important ideological implications. By portraying non-biological relationships as emotionally meaningful and socially legitimate, the advertisement challenges the assumption that family must be rooted exclusively in blood ties. At the same time, however, the representation remains selective. Although it expands the definition of family, it continues to privilege relationships characterized by loyalty, care, and emotional harmony. Alternative family forms that involve conflict, ambiguity, or relational instability remain absent from the narrative. As a result, the advertisement promotes an inclusive understanding of family while simultaneously reproducing an idealized vision of relational commitment. In this sense, the chosen family in *Jumbo* functions not only as a narrative device but also as a cultural statement that redefines kinship through emotional practice rather than biological inheritance.

Representation of Intergenerational Family as a Foundation of Identity and Moral Legitimacy

In addition to nuclear and chosen families, the TikTok advertisement of *Jumbo* represents the intergenerational family as a foundation of identity formation and moral legitimacy. Unlike the previous representations, which emphasize emotional validation and relational commitment, the intergenerational family is portrayed as a source of values, memory, and personal meaning that connects individual achievement to familial heritage. This representation positions the grandmother not merely as a caregiver but as a symbolic figure whose presence legitimizes the protagonist's personal growth and success. Through the integration of visual imagery, nostalgic color schemes, and promotional text, the advertisement constructs a symbolic relationship between family memory and public achievement, as illustrated in Figure 4.

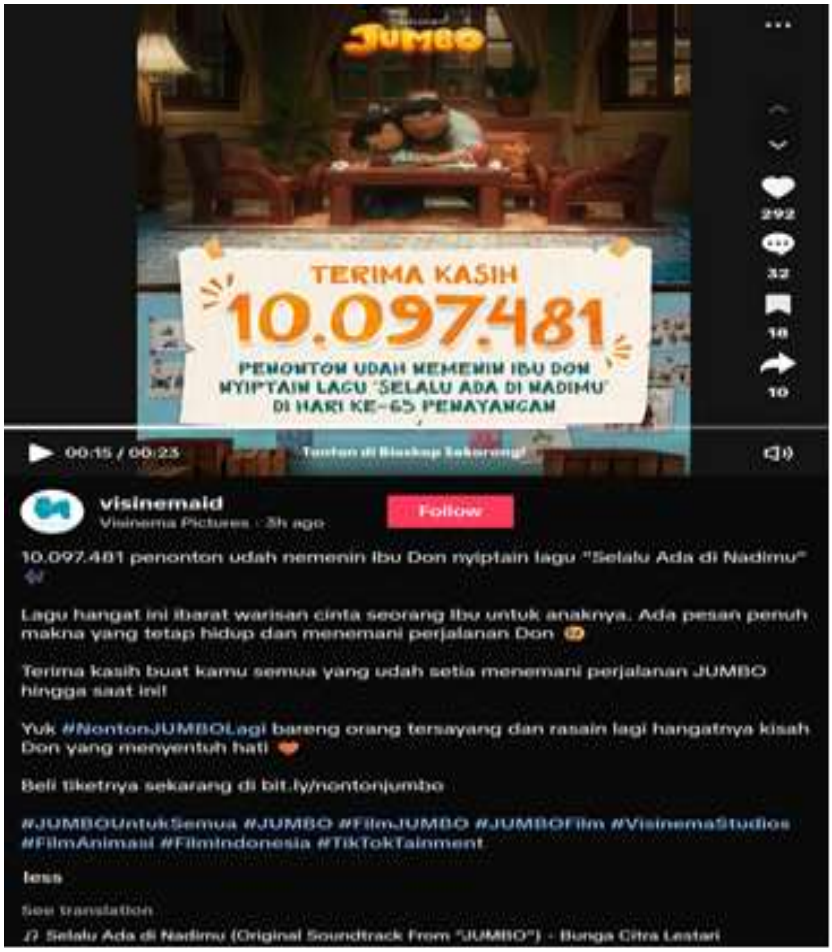


Figure 4. Screenshot from the TikTok promotional clip of the film Jumbo featuring young Don with his grandmother and the celebration of reaching 10 million viewers
(Source: https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSkMDoKYE/)

The representation generates meaning through a strategic combination of visual and textual signs. The *representamen* consists of the image of young Don with his grandmother, warm color tones, affectionate interaction, and the visual juxtaposition of this memory with the celebration of reaching 10 million viewers. These signs function as icons of intergenerational intimacy and indices of a long-term relational bond. The object represented is not simply grandparental caregiving but the transmission of values, identity, and moral support across generations. By placing childhood memory alongside public achievement, the advertisement symbolically links personal success to familial roots, suggesting that achievement is grounded not only in individual effort but also in inherited emotional and moral foundations. This interpretation is consistent with previous research highlighting that intergenerational communication strengthens family solidarity, emotional resilience, and cultural continuity across generations. Through ongoing communication and emotional exchange, older family members contribute not only to relational closeness but also to the transmission of values, traditions, and family identity (Farhi et al., 2025). This finding is also consistent with the convoy model of family relationships, which suggests that family members function as enduring sources of emotional support,

guidance, and social connectedness throughout the life course. Such intergenerational bonds contribute to the maintenance of identity, continuity, and relational solidarity across generations (Fuller et al., 2020).This interpretation resonates with previous family communication studies emphasizing that trust, care, commitment, and emotional closeness constitute essential elements in maintaining meaningful intergenerational relationships within the family (Bahfiarti et al., 2021).

At the level of *interpretant*, audiences are encouraged to perceive the grandmother as a figure of wisdom, sacrifice, and moral authority. The meaning generated extends beyond affection or caregiving; rather, it constructs the grandmother as a symbolic source of legitimacy through which success acquires social and moral significance. The nostalgic visual atmosphere further reinforces this interpretation. Warm colors, gentle gestures, and intimate interaction do not merely evoke sentimentality but activate collective memories associated with family guidance, protection, and value transmission. Through these signs, the advertisement transforms a personal family memory into a culturally recognizable narrative about identity and belonging.

Although previous studies have highlighted the importance of grandparental relationships for emotional development and psychosocial well-being (Xu & Harrison, 2023; Wang, 2024), the distinctive contribution of this scene lies in how visual signs connect private family memory with public recognition. The milestone of 10 million viewers is not presented as an isolated achievement. Instead, it is framed as the culmination of a relational journey rooted in intergenerational support. In this way, success becomes meaningful because it is symbolically anchored in family history and collective memory rather than solely in individual accomplishment.

From a broader ideological perspective, the representation reflects cultural assumptions commonly found in collectivistic societies, where family functions as a primary source of identity and social legitimacy (Triandis, 2018). The advertisement suggests that personal achievement gains moral value when connected to family sacrifice, caregiving, and value transmission. At the same time, this representation also reinforces a particular cultural narrative in which success is expected to remain indebted to family origins. While such a narrative promotes gratitude and relational responsibility, it may also marginalize alternative understandings of achievement that emphasize individual autonomy or self-determination. Consequently, the intergenerational family in *Jumbo* functions not only as an emotionally engaging narrative element but also as an ideological mechanism through which cultural values concerning family, identity, and legitimacy are reproduced and circulated within digital media.

To facilitate comparison across the three family representations, Table 1 summarizes the relationships among *representamen*, *object*, and *interpretant* identified through Peirce's triadic semiotic analysis. The table highlights how different configurations of visual, verbal, and audio signs generate distinct meanings related to family interpersonal communication. While all three representations

construct family as a source of relational meaning, each emphasizes a different communicative function: emotional validation in the nuclear family, relational commitment in the chosen family, and identity formation and moral legitimacy in the intergenerational family.

Table 1. Summary of Peirce's Triadic Analysis Across Family Representations

Figure	Representamen	Object	Interpretant
Figure 2	Embracing gesture, attentive facial expression, dining table setting	Emotional validation and maternal affection	Family as a safe space of psychological security and belonging
Figure 3	Protective gestures, physical closeness, narrative statement "I don't want to be without you, Brother"	Non-biological kinship and relational commitment	Family as a legitimate social bond formed through care and responsibility
Figure 4	Grandmother figure, nostalgic colors, 10 million viewers milestone	Intergenerational caregiving, value transmission, identity formation	Family as a source of moral legitimacy and meaningful success

(**Source:** Developed by the authors based on Peirce's triadic semiotic analysis of Jumbo TikTok advertisements)

Table 1 summarizes the relationships among representamen, object, and interpretant identified across the three family representations. The findings demonstrate that although all three categories construct family as a source of relational meaning, each representation emphasizes a distinct dimension: emotional validation in the nuclear family, relational commitment in the chosen family, and identity formation and moral legitimacy in the intergenerational family.

Interpersonal Communication as an Emotional Branding Strategy

Overall, the findings indicate that family interpersonal communication in the *Jumbo* advertisement functions not merely as a narrative device but as a strategically designed emotional branding mechanism. Across the three family representations identified in this study, interpersonal communication values are consistently associated with emotional validation, relational commitment, identity formation, and moral legitimacy. Through dialogue, facial expressions, gestures, physical proximity, music, and visual symbolism, family relationships are transformed into communicative resources that generate emotional resonance and strengthen audience identification with the film. From a multimodal communication perspective, the integration of visual, audio, and textual signs creates an interconnected representational system that amplifies affective engagement and persuasive impact (Lytvynenko et al., 2022).

The semiotic findings further demonstrate that the emotional power of the advertisement does not emerge from individual signs alone but from the interaction among multiple modes of communication. The recurring use of affectionate gestures,

intimate family settings, nostalgic imagery, and emotionally charged narratives encourages audiences to associate the film with feelings of belonging, protection, and relational warmth. Through Peirce's triadic framework, these signs generate meanings that extend beyond the narrative itself, allowing audiences to connect the experiences represented in the advertisement with their own personal memories and family relationships. Consequently, family functions as a symbolic bridge linking the promotional message to the audience's emotional and social reality.

In the context of digital marketing, such emotional meanings possess significant strategic value. Emotion-based content is more likely to stimulate engagement because emotions facilitate social connection, identification, and message sharing (Berger & Milkman, 2012). On platforms such as TikTok, interactions in the form of likes, comments, and shares may therefore be interpreted not merely as indicators of popularity but as signs that emotional meanings have been successfully internalized and circulated among audiences (de Veirman et al., 2020). The representation of family becomes particularly effective because it relies on widely shared cultural experiences and values that audiences can easily recognize and relate to.

At the same time, the findings invite a more critical reflection on the ideological implications of emotional branding. While the advertisement promotes positive values such as care, solidarity, and family support, it also transforms these intimate relational experiences into promotional resources. Within the framework of symbolic economy, family operates not only as a social institution but also as a form of symbolic capital that can be mobilized to generate emotional engagement and commercial value (Banet-Weiser, 2012; Illouz, 2007). Through this process, affection, belonging, and family intimacy become strategically embedded within marketing communication.

Moreover, the advertisement consistently portrays family relationships as emotionally harmonious, supportive, and morally meaningful. Such representations reinforce culturally desirable ideals of family life while simultaneously obscuring potential tensions, conflicts, or alternative family experiences that exist within contemporary society. As a result, the advertisement does not simply reflect family values but actively participates in constructing a particular vision of what family ought to be. This finding suggests that emotional branding operates not only as a commercial strategy but also as a cultural practice through which social norms and relational ideals are reproduced and circulated within digital media environments.

Accordingly, family interpersonal communication in the *Jumbo* advertisement functions as both an emotional branding strategy and an ideological resource. It generates emotional attachment to the film while simultaneously promoting culturally valued understandings of care, belonging, commitment, and success. The findings therefore demonstrate that digital advertising is not merely a tool of commercial promotion but also a site where meanings about family, identity, and social relationships are symbolically constructed and negotiated.

CONCLUSION

Based on the overall analysis, this study identifies three dominant patterns in the representation of family interpersonal communication within the TikTok advertisement of the film Jumbo: the nuclear family as a space of emotional validation, the chosen family as a form of non-biological solidarity, and the intergenerational family as a foundation of identity and moral legitimacy. These findings demonstrate that family interpersonal communication is constructed not merely as verbal interaction but as an affective and ideological meaning system mediated through multimodal signs. The integration of visual imagery, audio elements, narrative structure, and symbolic cues functions strategically to evoke empathy, protection, solidarity, and nostalgia, thereby positioning family relationships as an emotional branding mechanism in the digital media landscape.

The findings further suggest that family representation in digital advertising extends beyond narrative storytelling and serves as a symbolic resource through which cultural meanings and social values are communicated. By presenting chosen family and intergenerational caregiving as legitimate relational forms, the advertisement promotes more inclusive understandings of family that resonate with contemporary social realities. At the same time, the study reveals that intimate family values may be transformed into emotional branding assets, highlighting the tension between authentic relational experiences and their commercialization within digital media environments.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of interpersonal communication studies by repositioning family interaction as a symbolic and multimodal construct within digital media environments. It integrates perspectives from interpersonal communication, semiotics, emotional branding, and digital engagement studies to demonstrate how relational meaning is strategically mediated for both cultural and commercial purposes. The findings expand the scope of interpersonal communication research beyond face-to-face contexts, highlighting its role in symbolic representation and mediated meaning production.

From a practical and policy perspective, the study underscores the importance of ethical communication practices in digital marketing. Content creators, media producers, and digital platforms should remain attentive to how representations of family and cultural values shape public perceptions and social norms. Responsible emotional storytelling is necessary to ensure that affective communication strategies do not become exploitative or manipulative. This study is limited to promotional content from a single TikTok account and focuses primarily on textual and semiotic interpretation rather than audience reception. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized to all forms of family representation in digital media or to audience interpretations across different cultural contexts.

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