

## The Role of Semiotics Analysis In Advertisement: Bibliometric Analysis

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### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received 14 February 2025

Received in revised form 16  
March 2025

Accepted 27 April 2025

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#### Keywords:

Semiotics

Advertising

Linguistics

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### Abstract

*Semiotic analysis in advertising plays an important role in understanding how signs, symbols and meanings are constructed and received by audiences. With the development of digital technology and social media, an understanding of semiotics is increasingly relevant to examine how brands build identity and create emotional resonance with consumers. This research aims to analyze the development of semiotic studies in advertising using bibliometric methods with VOSviewer. With this approach, scholarly publication patterns can be mapped to identify trends, academic collaborations, as well as key topics in advertising semiotics studies. The method used in this research is a systematic literature review (SLR) combined with PRISMA-based bibliometric analysis. Data were collected from journal articles published between 2014 and 2024, then analyzed using VOSviewer software to map the linkages between concepts. The results show that the study of semiotics in advertising has experienced significant developments in the past decade, with a focus on visual and linguistic representations, mythology in advertising, and multimodality in digital media. Bibliometric network visualization reveals a close correlation between semiotic theory and strategic marketing concepts.*

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## Introduction

In the world of advertising, semiotic analysis plays a crucial role in understanding how signs, symbols, and meanings are constructed and perceived by audiences. Advertising not only serves as a marketing tool but also as a communication medium that shapes consumer perceptions and behavior (Korenkova et al., 2020). Semiotics in advertising enables the analysis of message representation in advertisements, both in visual and textual forms, allowing communication strategies to be structured more effectively (Bhatti & Bashir, 2024). With the advancement of digital technology and social media, an in-depth understanding of semiotics has become increasingly relevant in examining how brands build identity and create emotional resonance with consumers (Travere, 2023).

Bibliometric approaches using software such as VOSviewer have become increasingly popular methods for analyzing the development of research in advertising semiotics. Through this technique, publication patterns can be mapped to identify trends, academic collaborations, and dominant topics in the study of advertising semiotics (Ghidoli & Montanari, 2021). Additionally, bibliometric analysis allows for keyword mapping and research network visualization, providing insights into the evolution of knowledge in this domain.

Previous studies have demonstrated how semiotic approaches are used in advertising to construct meaning and shape brand image. For instance, Semprini (1995) revealed that semiotics in advertising not only serves to interpret messages but also creates brand differentiation through specific cultural codes. Furthermore, Dalamu (2021), in his mythological analysis, showed that advertisements utilize signs with particular social

connotations, shaping audience perceptions of a product or service. On the other hand, research by Faizullah & Arslan (2024) highlights how semiotic approaches in advertising can be used to understand consumer preferences by identifying visual and linguistic codes used in marketing campaigns. The study by Shaddiq et al. (2021) also emphasized that understanding semiotics in advertising can enhance brand communication effectiveness with audiences through more targeted management of signs and symbols. Meanwhile, a more recent study by Hasyim & Arafah (2023) indicated that with the rise of digital media, semiotic approaches in advertising have become increasingly complex, involving multimodality and interactivity in message delivery.

By utilizing VOSviewer in bibliometric analysis, the development of semiotic studies in advertising can be mapped, including the relationship between established theories and contemporary studies. This approach also helps in understanding how semiotic concepts are applied in the digital era and how research in this field has evolved globally. Moreover, bibliometric analysis allows for the examination of scholarly trends and the identification of the most influential research in shaping the understanding of the role of semiotics in advertising. Based on this review, this study aims to analyze the development of semiotic studies in advertising using a bibliometric approach with VOSviewer. The findings of this research are expected to provide an overview of research trends, academic collaborations, and key topics of interest in advertising semiotics studies. Thus, this study not only offers theoretical insights but also practical implications for advertising practitioners in optimizing semiotics-based communication strategies.

## Methods

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) and bibliometric analysis (Bartolini et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2020). The protocol framework used as a guideline is the PRISMA Protocol, which consists of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion (Page et al., 2021). The bibliometric analysis procedure begins with defining research objectives, formulating research questions, and developing a search strategy to gather the dataset (Huang et al., 2020). This study integrates the systematic stages of SLR and bibliometric analysis, as they share similar procedures, including defining research objectives, formulating research questions, developing a search strategy for data collection, and conducting analysis. The entire review process is carried out systematically, including the dataset search phase.

All activities in this article review are conducted systematically. The established workflow in the research design (planning phase) is followed to guide the research implementation (Cooper et al., 2018). A dataset covering a decade is considered sufficient to track research developments in this field. The data collection phase follows a chronological process, beginning with (1) ensuring that collected articles are retrieved through Google Scholar, (2) recording search keywords as listed in Table 1, focusing on the title, abstract, and keywords search area, (3) using keywords such as: semiotic, semiotic analysis, advertisement, (4) Defining document type limits (articles and reviews), and (5) setting the publication year range (between 2020 and 2024).

After executing the search, the retrieved data consisted of 70 articles and reviews. The data were collected in CSV format and stored in the reference manager Mendeley. For bibliometric analysis, the CSV data must be visualized using VOSviewer software. Meanwhile, the next step involves screening or extracting documents by applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria established during the identification phase. Subsequently, all articles and reviews are extracted (filtered) to determine the data suitable for SLR analysis. The selection criteria are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Selection Criteria

No.	Exclusion Criteria	Exclusion Results
1	Articles written in English	22 Articles in non-English
2	Inappropriate articles (No keywords in the title, abstract or keywords)	13 related articles
3	Duplication	4

Data extraction with the specified exclusion criteria resulted in 29 articles. These articles were then assessed for eligibility. Subsequently, the collected data will be evaluated using the following quality assessment questions: a) Was the paper published between 2014 and 2024? B) Does the journal article discuss various roles of semiotics in advertising or otherwise?

For each of the above questions, each article will be marked in a table with the following responses:

Y = yes (if it meets the question criteria), and

N = no (if it does not meet the question criteria).

A total of 25 articles with predominantly "Y" responses were selected as the final data.

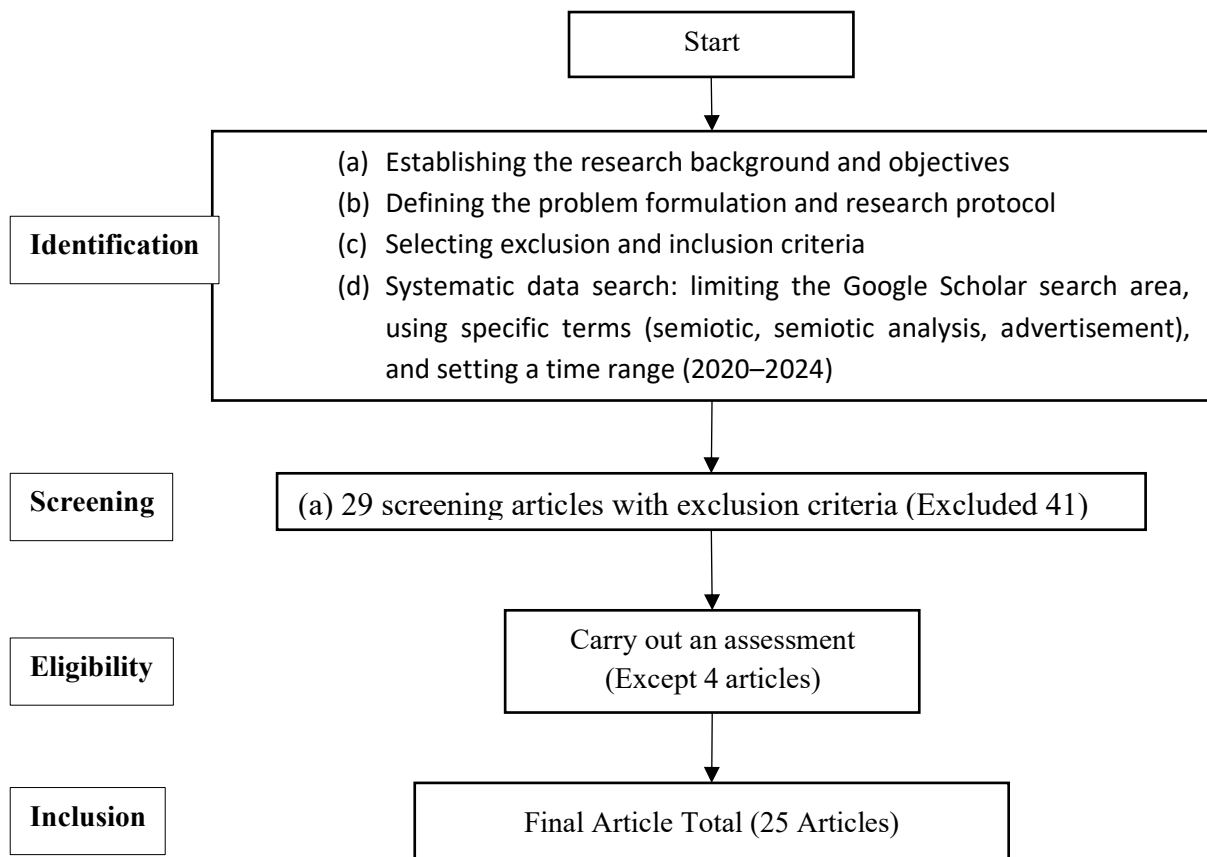


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of the Systematic Literature Review Combined with Bibliometric Analysis

The flow diagram in Figure 1 provides a detailed summary of the SLR and bibliometric analysis process through the following steps: (1) Identification: First, the research objectives are

defined. Then, it is essential to develop a review protocol. This is followed by determining the conceptual boundaries of the study. The next steps involve a systematic data search of Scopus-indexed articles and journal articles published between 2014 and 2024. (2) Screening: A total of 70 articles were extracted based on exclusion criteria. Subsequently, 41 articles were excluded, and 29 articles proceeded to the next level. (3) Eligibility: The remaining articles were validated and finalized. (4) Inclusion: A total of 25 full-text articles were deemed eligible for bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer, and their content was manually reviewed. The next crucial phases involve reporting and disseminating the results.

The software used in this study is VOSviewer Online Version 1.6.17 (Visualization of Similarities), which was used to map and analyze data. It can be downloaded from <http://www.vosviewer.com>. This software was primarily developed by Leiden University's Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS). VOSviewer Online is a valuable tool for visualizing bibliometric networks or metadata in the field of bibliography, including titles, authors, journals, abstracts, and keywords. The latest online version of VOSviewer is equipped with a sharing menu that allows readers to explore visualization results independently and interactively.

## Results and Discussion

Semiotic analysis plays a crucial role in understanding the hidden meanings in advertising. Through this approach, advertisements are not only seen as promotional media but also as a system of signs that shape consumer perception.

### Network Visualization

The network visualization in VOSviewer illustrates the interconnections between various concepts related to semiotics in advertising, demonstrating how elements such as signs, meanings, and symbols are interconnected in advertising analysis.

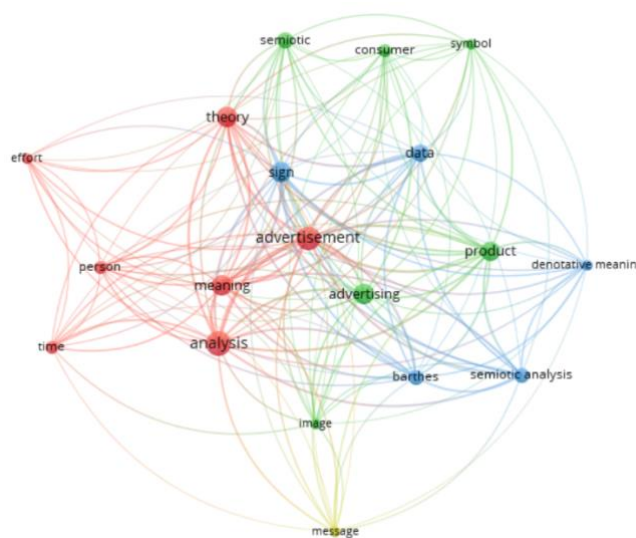


Figure 2. Network Visualization of the Role of Semiotics

The figure above illustrates clustered groupings, which are described as follows: 1) First Cluster: There is a strong relationship between "advertisement," "analysis," "meaning," and "theory." This indicates that advertising is often examined through theoretical and analytical perspectives to understand how meanings are constructed and interpreted. The factors "effort," "person," and "time" in this cluster emphasize that advertising analysis requires effort, involves individuals, and takes place over a certain period; 2) Second Cluster: This cluster focuses more

on visual elements and consumer engagement in advertising. Terms such as "advertising," "consumer," "image," "product," "semiotic," and "symbol" suggest that signs and symbols in advertisements are designed to attract consumer attention and shape product perception. This highlights the crucial role of semiotics in enhancing visual appeal and marketing communication; 3) Third Cluster: This cluster is closely related to semiotic studies in an academic context, with terms like "Barthes," "sign," "semiotic analysis," and "denotative meaning." It reinforces that semiotic theories, particularly those developed by Roland Barthes, are used to analyze how signs in advertisements function at both denotative and connotative levels; 4) Fourth Cluster: This cluster, containing only the term "message," indicates that the message is the core of all analyzed aspects in advertising.

### Overlay Visualization

The overlay visualization in VOSviewer displays various concepts related to semiotics in advertising, including sign theory, denotative meaning, and the relationship between symbols and products. Different colors in the diagram indicate the evolution of topics over time, with the latest trends focusing on product and consumer analysis in relation to semiotics.

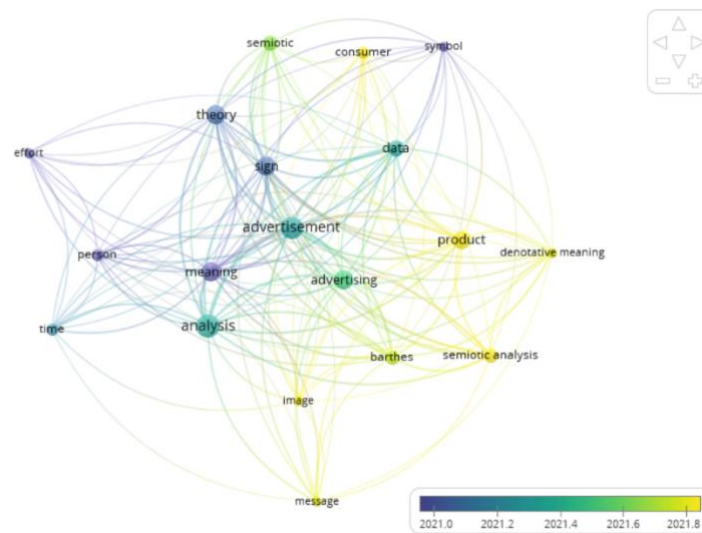


Figure 3. Overlay Visualization of the Role of Semiotics

Based on the Overlay Visualization, the key concepts that frequently appear in semiotic analysis of advertising include "advertisement," "analysis," "sign," and "meaning." The term "advertisement" is positioned at the center with numerous connections to other concepts, indicating that advertisements are the primary objects of semiotic analysis.

The relationship between "sign," "theory," and "semiotic" suggests that research in this field leans toward the application of sign theory in understanding the meanings conveyed in advertisements. Additionally, connections with "consumer" and "product" indicate that recent studies focus on how advertisements influence consumer perception of a product.

Table 2. Article Frequency Based on Year of Publication

Years	Article Frequency	Percentage (%)
2020	7	28.00
2021	8	32.00
2022	6	24.00
2023	2	8.00
2024	2	8.00

<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>
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The article frequency table indicates that research on semiotic analysis in advertising peaked in 2021, with 8 articles (32%), the highest number compared to other years. Although there was a decline in the number of articles in 2022 and subsequent years, this trend suggests that the topic remains relevant in academic research. The decrease in 2023 and 2024 may be due to a shift in research focus toward other analytical methods or the emergence of new approaches in advertising studies.

When linked to the Overlay Visualization, the rise in research during 2021 aligns with the dominance of concepts such as "advertisement," "analysis," and "meaning" in the diagram. The brighter colors in areas related to "product," "consumer," and "denotative meaning" indicate that more recent studies have started exploring consumption aspects and product interpretation in advertisements. This shift reflects a transition from theoretical studies to more practical applications in the advertising industry, particularly in understanding how consumers interpret messages in advertisements based on semiotic theory.

### Density Visualization

The density visualization in VOSviewer is a tool that helps in understanding the relationships between keywords in research. In this context, the visualization highlights the role of semiotic analysis in advertising based on frequency of occurrence and conceptual interconnections. The colors and density in the graph provide an overview of the most dominant concepts and the connections between elements related to semiotic studies in advertising.

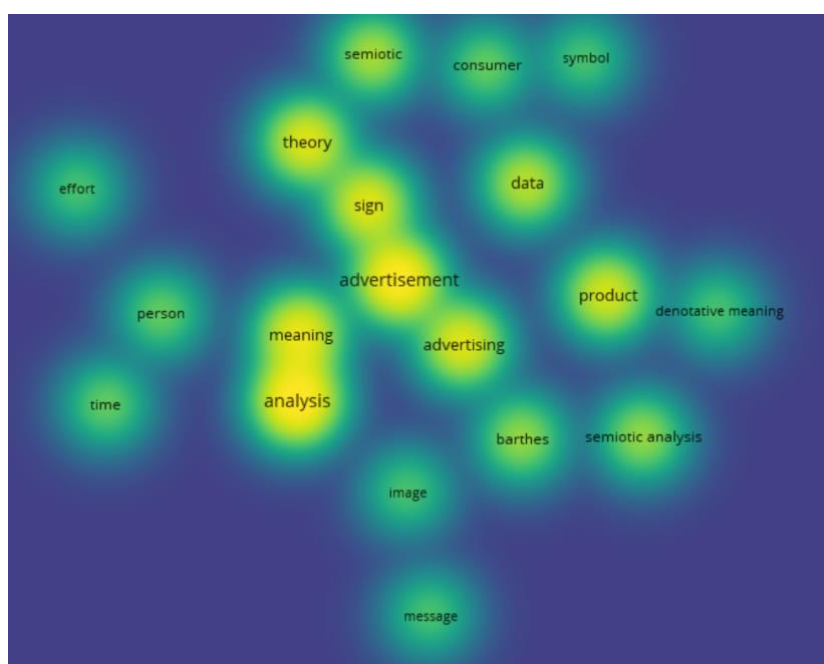


Figure 4. Density Visualization of the Role of Semiotics

In the displayed image, yellow areas indicate high density, showing that concepts such as advertisement, analysis, meaning, and theory frequently appear and are closely interconnected in this research. Green areas represent medium density, while blue areas indicate concepts with lower occurrences.

Core concepts like advertisement and analysis are positioned at the center of the map, signifying that semiotic studies in advertising focus on meaning analysis within advertisements. Terms such as Barthes, semiotic analysis, and denotative meaning also appear,

highlighting the influence of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory in understanding how signs and symbols in advertisements are encoded and received by audiences.

Other concepts, such as consumer, symbol, and product, are distributed around the core, indicating that research also explores how symbols and signs in advertisements are perceived by consumers and how products are semiotically constructed. The presence of the word data suggests that quantitative or data-driven approaches may also be used in semiotic advertising analysis. Additionally, elements like message, image, and advertising show that visual and message components in advertisements play a crucial role in this analysis.

Semiotic analysis in advertising has become a key approach in understanding how signs, symbols, and meanings are constructed to influence audience perception. Based on the keyword distribution patterns obtained from the VOSviewer analysis, it can be concluded that research in this field prioritizes the understanding of meanings embedded in advertisements, both through semiotic theory and in-depth analysis of signs and symbols used in marketing strategies. Several key themes have been identified regarding the role of semiotics in advertising, including the use of multimodality, social representation, linguistic manipulation, and persuasion and branding strategies.

### **Use of Multimodality in Advertising**

Studies such as Dalamu (2021) suggest that the interaction between images and text in multimodal advertisements creates a more effective communication effect. Advertisements employ elements such as bold fonts, word repetition, and numerical codes to capture audience attention. Similarly, Chen & Cheung (2022) found that interactive banner ads on digital platforms utilize gamification and interactivity as marketing strategies, emphasizing that a combination of visual and verbal elements enhances the user experience. Additionally, Lourenção et al. (2020) used eye-tracking methods to analyze visual attention to destination images in tourism advertisements, revealing that strong visual elements enhance advertising effectiveness. These findings are reinforced by Shukla et al. (2023), who examined semiotics in product packaging and found that design elements such as color, symbols, and text influence brand perception and consumer purchase intentions.

### **Social Representation in Advertising**

Many studies discuss how advertisements represent various social groups and shape audience perceptions of them. Yläne (2021) examined the representation of elderly people in UK magazine ads, revealing that aspirational stereotypes remain dominant. Similarly, Heathy (2020) found that advertisements continue to reinforce traditional gender stereotypes, with women often depicted in domestic roles. Andini et al. (2022) analyzed beauty standards in SK-II product advertisements in Japan, showing that virtual models are used to represent an idealized image of beauty. Furthermore, Ersan & Altın (2024) explored how masculinity and militarism are represented in advertising, demonstrating the influence of patriarchal and nationalist ideologies in commercial messages.

### **Linguistic Manipulation in Advertising**

The use of linguistic strategies in advertising is also a primary focus in semiotic research. Qudratova & Yigitliyeva (2021) studied the lexical, syntactic, and stylistic aspects of advertising texts and found that advertising language is often used to shape specific perceptions through linguistic manipulation. This is supported by Rudrakumar & Venkatraman (2022), who analyzed signs and symbols in Coca-Cola and Chupa Chups advertisements, demonstrating how verbal and visual elements are combined to create connotative meanings that influence audience interpretation. Patriansah (2020) examined the public service poster

"Stop Domestic Violence", revealing that visual signs are effectively used to mobilize social solidarity. Similarly, Sulatra & Pratiwi (2020) analyzed ideology in COVID-19 public service ads in Indonesia, discovering that prevention messages and social cooperation were conveyed through specific semiotic codes.

### **Persuasion and Branding Strategies in Advertising**

Advertising strategies that leverage semiotics to build brands and influence consumers are also a major focus in this research. Starr et al. (2022) highlighted how advertisements utilized the COVID-19 crisis to shape consumer behavior through five key discourses. Harnum (2023) applied structural semiotic analysis to examine Axis advertisements, finding that the system of signs used creates an implicit reality of violence.

Meanwhile, Lumampauw et al. (2020) investigated the #LangkahHijau campaign by Grab Indonesia, showing that the use of iconography and environmental symbols in advertisements helps shape social awareness of sustainability issues. Skrede & Andersen (2021) also revealed how housing advertisements create an ideal suburban image compared to urban life through social semiotic strategies.

### **Conclusion**

Based on semiotic analysis in advertising, it can be concluded that advertisements are not only a promotional medium but also a system of signs that shape consumer perception. Through a semiotic approach, elements in advertisements such as signs, meanings, and symbols can be interpreted more deeply. The network visualization results using VOSviewer indicate a strong interconnection between key concepts in this research, such as Roland Barthes' sign theory, persuasion strategies, and social representation in advertising. Furthermore, the development of research over the years suggests a shift in focus from theoretical approaches to more practical explorations regarding the relationship between symbols in advertising and consumer interpretation.

The implications of this study highlight the significant role of semiotic analysis in marketing communication strategies, particularly in shaping consumer perception and experience. The use of symbols and signs in advertisements not only serves to attract attention but also influences how audiences understand and internalize the messages conveyed. Therefore, marketers and advertising designers should consider semiotic aspects when crafting effective advertising strategies, whether in the context of digital or traditional media. Additionally, this study opens up opportunities for academics and practitioners to gain a deeper understanding of how visual, linguistic, and symbolic elements in advertising can be utilized to create more persuasive and inclusive communication.

As a recommendation, future research could further explore the influence of culture and social context on the interpretation of meaning in advertisements, considering that signs and symbols can have different meanings across various communities. Moreover, the use of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data analysis in semiotic studies could provide broader insights into how consumers respond to signs and symbols in advertisements in real time. Thus, the semiotic approach in advertising can continue to evolve and contribute more significantly to the creative industry and marketing communication.

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