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## A Semiotic Analysis of Tim Hortons Pakistan's Eid Advertisements

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### ABSTRACT

Advertising is a sort of media that people and businesses use to market their goods on social media or in public. Every advertisement contains signs that convey a message. This study presents a semiotic analysis of Tim Hortons Pakistan's Eid advertisement. The study aims to identify the visual and textual signs in the advertisements employed by Tim Hortons on the occasion of Eid ul Adha. The study reveals the denotative and connotative meanings communicated to the Pakistani audience by analysing the visual signs of the advertisements, including colours, imagery, and composition, together with the textual signs such as captions, slogans, offers, and narratives. The study adopts a descriptive qualitative research approach, employing semiotic theory as the primary framework for analysis. The data for this study is taken from the official Instagram account of Tim Hortons Pakistan. Drawing upon Roland Barthes' semiotic concepts, the study identifies the denotative and connotative meanings of both visual and textual signs presented in the advertisements. The findings of the study contribute to the understanding of cross-cultural advertising strategies by providing useful insights for advertisers seeking to attract diverse audiences during festive occasions.

**Keywords:** Tim Hortons, Eid advertisement, Semiotic analysis, Pakistan, Cross-cultural advertising.

### INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a powerful tool through which businesses can effectively promote their goods and services to their target market. Semiotic analysis is typically used in advertisements to effectively convey messages. In the globalised world of today, advertising is crucial in promoting goods and services and influencing cultural attitudes in a variety of nations. Bathe, referenced in Boterill et al. (2000), asserts that advertisements attempt to persuade viewers to use or purchase the product by associating it with positive connotations.

Tim Hortons is a renowned multinational fast-food chain that has been extending its business operations in a number of countries including Pakistan to promote their brand and engage with local consumers. Understanding the importance of Eid, a significant Islamic festival in Pakistan, Tim Hortons has carefully designed ads to interact with Pakistani viewers on this joyous occasion. Bignell (2002) claims that the print media uses colour, sign, and intertextuality to portray the message and make it more visually appealing. Companies and product owners advertise their goods in an effort to attract viewers and sell their goods as quickly as possible. Additionally, in order to draw attention, advertisers employ a variety of colours, images, and text to promote their goods so each advertisement is crafted with a specific purpose. Barthes believes that rather than focusing on "what" meaning is associated with advertisements, the advertisements are taken as "how" they are mean (cited in Oparinde and Agbede, 2019).

This study aims to analyse the symbolic and cultural components embedded in Tim Hortons' Eid advertising with a particular focus on the Pakistani market by using semiotic analysis as a theoretical framework. As a field of study, semiotics examines signs, symbols, and how they are interpreted in various contexts. This analytical method helps in revealing the layers of cultural relevance embedded in advertising messages by examining the link between signs and meanings. The semiotic analysis of Tim Hortons Pakistan's Eid advertising will reveal the textual and visual signs employed to connect with the cultural values, customs, and beliefs of the Pakistani customers. The researcher decided to study Tim Hortons' advertisements because of the captivating visual and textual cues employed in these advertisements to draw in the viewers and persuade them to make a purchase.

By offering a thorough semiotic analysis of Tim Horton's Eid commercials in Pakistan, this study seeks to add to the existing body of knowledge. By analysing the hidden meanings and cultural allusions in these ads, the study offers a more comprehensive understanding of how global companies modify their messaging to connect with particular cultural settings. The findings of the study provide valuable guidelines for advertisers, marketers and researchers looking for successful cross-cultural advertising strategies.

### **Objectives of the study**

This study has following objectives.

1. To identify the visual and textual signs employed in Tim Hortons Pakistan's Eid advertisements.
2. To find out the denotative and connotative meanings communicated in the visual and textual signs of Tim Hortons Pakistan's Eid advertisements.
3. To explore the religious and cultural themes communicated in Tim Hortons Pakistan's Eid advertisements.

### **Research questions**

This study sought to answer the following questions.

1. What are the visual and textual signs employed in the Tim Hortons Pakistan's Eid advertisements?
2. What are the denotative and connotative meanings communicated in the visual and textual signs of Tim Hortons Pakistan's Eid advertisement?
3. What are the religious and cultural themes communicated in Tim Hortons Pakistan's Eid advertisements?

### **Statement of the problem**

Advertisements are used to build a brand's identity and attract customers attention by employing powerful signs. Tim Hortons, a Canadian coffee house that recently (2023) opened its first store in Lahore, Pakistan crafted special advertisements for Eid ul Adha employing captivating symbolic elements. The research problem for this study is to analyse and understand how the various semiotic elements and cultural symbols embedded in these advertisements contribute to the construction of brand identity to engage with local customers during the Eid season. Therefore, this study conducts a semiotic analysis of Tim Hortons Pakistan's Eid advertisements under Barthes' semiotic theory.

### **Delimitations of the study**

This study is delimited to the semiotic analysis of only 3 Eid advertisement posts by Tim Hortons Pakistan.

### **Significance of the study**

In today's world which is a global village now this study is significant since it contributes to our understanding of cross cultural advertisement strategies by providing useful insights for advertisers seeking to attract diverse audience. The study also contributes to communication literature.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Semiotics:** Semiotics is a study of signs. A sign is a unit that transfers information in various forms to communicate with an audience. Therefore, semiotics has a direct connection with advertising. The semiotic approach in advertisements helps to express an idea and transfer a message to an audience. It is a transdisciplinary framework for understanding and transferring information by augmenting the design approach. Semiotics is widely used in film production, theatre, architecture, visual design, and many communications and transfer information areas. It is based on knowledge of how to interpret the meaning of small to big things, analyse conceptual design, and reveal insight.

American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce and Swiss linguist Saussure are considered the founders of semiotics. The semiotic theory of Saussure holds that language is a system of signs. A signifier (a messenger) and a signified (a message or a meaning) make up each sign. Numerous signifiers can represent the same signified since the relationship between a signifier and a signified is arbitrary (Jensen & Jankowski, 1991).

According to Saussure (1959), a sign is made up of a signifier and a signified. A signifier is the shape that the sign takes whereas a signified is the idea of both verbal and non-verbal communication. The verbal sign is a means of communication whether spoken or written. It includes conventional linguistic symbols that are commonly used, such as words, phrases, and sentences, to communicate our thoughts and feelings to others. The visual sign, on the other hand, allows us to communicate meaning without using words. People employ symbols frequently because they are social beings and a member of society in order to comprehend the purposes of social interactions (Theresia et al., 2019).

Another recognised semiotician is the French literary theorist and philosopher Roland Barthes. Barthes's theory, influenced by Saussure's structural linguistics, introduced a hierarchy of signs: a first-level sign with a denotative signifier (literal or direct meaning) and a second-level sign with a connotative signifier (indirect meaning) or myth.

**Advertisements:** Advertising is a type of marketing communication that employs visual and auditory cues to convey a message intended to sell or promote a certain commodity, service, or concept. The term "advertising" refers to attracting attention, notifying a person of something, or informing people of something specific (Dyer, 1982). The advertising media is the best medium to utilise when the advertiser wants to draw attention to a particular product and convince consumers to purchase and use it. There are numerous types of media used for advertising, including print, direct mail, outdoor or mural media, video, and others (Rahman et al., 2019; Tavor, 2011). Dyer (1982: 120) states that many advertisements employ colour as an objective correlative, such as the colour of the product, a cigarette pack, a line of cosmetics, etc. There are many instances where verbal and visual cues are combined to create communication, including social campaigns, book covers, and commercials.

**Research related studies:** Several studies have been carried out about semiotics that explored the signs in advertisements. The difference between this study and the previous studies is in the topic discussed. Solihatun (2018) conducted a study about shampoo advertisements. The study aimed to analyse the denotative and connotative meanings of the verbal and

visual signs in the Clear Shampoo advertisements. Another study was carried out by Sena (2016), where the data source was the Adidas advertisements. Sena's study aimed to analyse the verbal and visual signs found in Adidas advertisements while applying a theory by Dyer (1993).

Komala (2013), Fizziela (2015), and Kartika et al. (2016) also carried out semiotic studies to explore the signs in advertisements. These studies discovered textual and visual signs in advertisements that not only sought to draw in customers but also contained embedded meanings within these signs. These studies examined and discussed the signs and their hidden meanings. Despite the fact that they all covered the same subject, there are some discrepancies in these studies. Kartika et al.'s (2016) study examined service advertisements utilising video as the data source. Meanwhile, Komala (2013) and Fizziela (2015) both explored products like perfume and shoes in their studies, using the poster as their data source. The present study studies the Eid advertisements by Tim Hortons' Pakistan.

Sofiyah (2019), Saputra & Agung (2023) also conducted studies on semiotic analysis of textual signs found in fast food advertisements. Saputra & Agung analysed the data by using the theory of semiotics by Saussure (1959) and the theory of meaning by Leech (1981). While Sofiyah (2019) analysed the fast food advertisements based upon Barthes' idea of signification by analysing the connotations and denotations of the signs in those advertisements.

## METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative in nature. The research type is descriptive. The data for this study included three different Instagram posts posted by Tim Hortons coffee shop in Pakistan on its official Instagram account for Eid-ul-Adha advertisements on the 28th, 29th, and 30th of June (2023) during the holy occasion of Eid ul Adha. The data was taken from Tim Hortons' official Instagram account, *timhortonspak*, linked as

<https://instagram.com/timhortonspak?igshid=MzRIODBiNWF1ZA==>

The population for this study included all the advertisement posts posted by Tim Hortons on its official Instagram account before 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2023. Guided by purposive sampling technique the study selected 3 Eid ul Adha advertisement posts as sample. These posts were purposefully selected based on their relevance to this study since there are many unique signs and embedded meanings in them. Semiotic analysis was the methodology opted for this study, and the research model applied for this study was Barthes' theory of semiotics which includes the 1st order of signification (denotation) and the 2nd order of signification (connotation). At the 1st level, the study analysed the denotative meanings of the signs, while at the 2nd level, the study analysed the connotative meanings embedded within these signs. Based upon the denotations and connotations of visual and textual signs, the study then explored the religious and cultural themes communicated in these Eid advertisements.

## Theoretical framework

This study aimed to uncover the denotative and connotative meanings of the textual and visual signs found in the Eid advertisements by Tim Hortons coffee shop in Pakistan. To find out the meanings of the advertisements the study employed Barthes' theory of semiotics (1977). In Fiske (1990), Barthes theory of semiotics is known as two orders of signification. The process that binds the signifier and signified of a sign is known as signification. There are two distinct signification systems. They are arbitrary and motivated systems of signification. When there is no natural connection between a word and the thing it refers to and when the signifier and signified develop a relationship that results in unilateral decisions, this relationship is known as arbitrary signification. However, motivated signification is an analogy or a relationship that is inherent in them. Here, the meaning is broken down into two steps. They are, respectively, the first and second orders of signification. The relationship between the signifier and signified of a sign is represented by the first order of signification. The first order of signification is referred to by Barthes as a denotation, which is the sign's obvious meaning. Connotation, on the other hand, describes how a sign relates to the recipient's feelings or emotions and cultural values (Barthes, 1977).

## DATA ANALYSIS

The study first analyzed the distinctive semiotic elements in all the advertisement posts, then it discussed the common signs contained in all the advertisement posts. The signs in the advertisements are analysed based upon their denotations and connotations.

**ANALYSIS OF DISTINCTIVE SEMIOTIC ELEMENTS IN THE ADVERTISEMENTS**  
**Advertisement no. 1**



<https://www.instagram.com/p/CuCjoWnooX6/?igshid=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==>

Textual signs	Visual signs
<b>Eid greeting</b> (EID -UL- ADHA MUBARAK) <b>Eid wish</b> ( MAY YOUR EID BE FILLED WITH IRRESISTIBLE TIMBITS AND TREATS )	Lamb shaped chocolate donuts

**Textual signs:** Textual signs in this advertisement include *Eid greeting* and *Eid wish* by the coffee house.

**1. Eid Greeting**

Sign (signifier)	Denotation (1 <sup>st</sup> order of signification)	Connotations (2 <sup>nd</sup> order of signification )
Eid Greeting (EID -UL- ADHA MUBARAK)	A wish for a blessed Eid-ul-Adha by the coffee house to all its customers and viewers sending goodwill and celebratory sentiments.	Cultural inclusivity Festive greetings Connection with the local community Marketing and branding

**Denotative meaning:** The sign is the phrase *EID -UL- ADHA MUBARAK* which signifies a wish for a blessed Eid-ul-Adha by the coffee House to all its customers and viewers sending goodwill and celebratory sentiments.

**Connotative meaning:** The coffee house wishes for a blessed Eid-ul-Adha to all its customers and viewers sending goodwill and celebratory sentiments. This eid wish connotes the ideas of cultural inclusivity, festive greetings, connection with the local community, marketing and branding which are explained as follows.

**Cultural inclusivity:** Tim Hortons Pakistan recognises and respects the religious and cultural significance of the celebration for Pakistani Muslims by sending Eid wishes customised for Eid-ul-Adha. This demonstrates inclusivity and respect of regional cultures and customs. It implies the idea that Tim Hortons’ respects culture and religious festivals of Pakistani customers.

**Festive greetings:** The phrase EID-UL-ADHA-MUBARAK means *Blessed Eid-ul-Adha*. By sending this message, Tim Hortons Pakistan acknowledges the happy occasion and joins its customers in celebrating it. It implies the coffee house’s desire to participate in the joyful events.

**Connection with the local community:** The Eid wish represents a bond and a sense of belonging for Tim Hortons Pakistan's consumers. It builds a bond by recognising and taking part in a significant cultural occasion that is very important to Pakistani society. This action fosters a sense of welcome and belonging, strengthening the bond between the brand and the Pakistani customers.

**Marketing and branding:** Tim Hortons Pakistan also promotes and markets their brand by sending Eid greetings. It shows their dedication to the local customers and their goal to establish emotional and cultural connections with clients, thereby encouraging brand loyalty.

## 2. Eid wish

Sign (signifier)	Denotation (1 <sup>st</sup> order of signification)	Connotations (2 <sup>nd</sup> order of signification)
Eid wish (MAY YOUR EID BE FILLED WITH IRRESISTIBLE TIMBITS AND TREATS)	Tim Hortons sends a warm wish to all its viewers and customers for a happy Eid that is filled with timbits and treats	Festive celebration Tempting delights The spirit of generosity and sharing Brand marketing

**Denotative meaning:** The Eid wish signifies that Tim Hortons sends a warm wish for all its viewers and customers for a happy Eid that is filled with timbits and treats.

**Connotative meaning:** Tim Hortons sends a wish to all its viewers and customers for a happy Eid that is filled with timbits and treats. This Eid wish by Tim Hortons carries the ideas of festive celebration, tempting delights, spirit of generosity and sharing as well as brand marketing. These connotations are explained as follows.

**Festive celebration:** This eid wish honours the happiness and celebration of Eid. By using the word "Eid," it makes a direct reference to the religious celebration that holds a significant position in Pakistani culture. It expresses the idea of bringing loved ones together, eating delightful food, and taking pleasure in the merry atmosphere.

**Tempting delights:** The phrase IRRESISTIBLE TIMBITS AND TREATS refers to Tim Hortons' mouth-watering menu items. Customers like the bite-sized donut holes known as Timbits. By linking them to Eid, Tim Hortons Pakistan highlights the joy of indulging in these yummy delights over the holiday season. It builds enthusiasm and expectation for delicious food that will be served during Eid celebrations. Tim Hortons wishes the recipient a happy Eid celebration with a large supply of their yummy Timbits and other gifts.

**The spirit of generosity and sharing:** Eid is a time for giving and sharing with others. The Eid wish by Tim Hortons Pakistan's expresses their desire to add to their customers' joy and happiness by giving them tempting delights to enjoy throughout their Eid celebrations. It extends the concept of sharing and joining in food with loved ones and friends in a good-will gesture.

**Brand marketing:** Tim Hortons Pakistan employs the Eid wish as a marketing strategy. By referencing their signature product, Timbits, in the wish, the brand strengthens its relationship with tempting delights and boosts the customers interest in the brand. By associating the brand with the festive mood and the pleasant celebration of Eid, it aims to develop a favourable brand image and increase customer loyalty.

**Visual signs:** The visual signs in the advertisement include *two lamb shaped chocolate donuts*.

### 1. Lamb shaped chocolate donuts

Sign (signifier)	Denotation (1 <sup>st</sup> order of signification)	Connotations (2 <sup>nd</sup> order of signification)
Picture of lamb shaped chocolate donuts	Two lamb shaped chocolate donuts are given by Tim hortons Pk. on their Eid advertisement	Symbolism of Eid ul Adha Symbol of sacrifice Cultural relevance Tempting and indulgent treats Playful and creative approach

**Denotative meaning:** Two chocolate donuts shaped like lambs are featured in the advertising. The donuts have been given legs, horns, and a lamb's facial expression. This representation serves to graphically convey the concept of a lamb, which is customarily sacrificed on Eid-ul-Adha.

**Connotative meaning:** The lamb featured donuts signify many additional ideas which include symbolism of Eid ul Adha, symbol of sacrifice, cultural relevance, tempting and indulgent treats and lastly playful and creative approach that are further explained as follows.

**Symbolism of Eid ul Adha:** The Islamic festival Eid ul Adha honours Prophet Ibrahim's readiness to offer his son as a sacrifice in obedience to God. The lamb sacrificed customarily at Eid ul Adha is represented by the chocolate donuts in the advertisement. It serves as a symbolic embodiment of the festival's main ideas of sacrifice and obedience to God's decision.

**Symbol of sacrifice:** The donuts' representation as lambs alludes to the sacrifices made in observance of Eid ul Adha. It highlights the significance of the festival's theme by serving as a symbol of the spirit of sacrifice and devotion to God.

**Cultural relevance:** Tim Hortons Pakistan recognises the cultural importance of the celebration for its Pakistani customers by showcasing the donuts in the context of Eid ul Adha. The visual representation of the lambs communicates a knowledge of regional traditions and customs, connecting the corporation with the audience's festive enthusiasm.

**Tempting and indulgent treats:** The chocolate donuts' presence draws attention to the amazing delights Tim Hortons is providing during Eid ul Adha. The donuts' depiction as lambs adds a playful element to the visual image of chocolate, which is frequently linked to pleasure and delight. This implies that wonderful and irresistible treats will be served to celebrate the event.

**Playful and creative approach:** Donuts featured like lambs in the advertisement give it a humorous and inventive touch. While keeping the festival's spirit in tact, it portrays a playful tone. This strategy grabs viewers' attention and elicits joy and amusement in them.



Advertisement no. 2:



<https://www.instagram.com/p/CuEKb6MItLH/?igshid=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==>

Textual signs	Visual signs
Eid offer (SHARE THE EID- RESISTIBLE JOY WITH TIMBITS FESTIVE PACK)	A chocolate sprinkled creamy coffee cup with Tim hortons signature

**Textual signs:** The textual signs include the *Eid offer* by the coffee house.

1. Eid offer

Sign (signifier)	Denotation (1 <sup>st</sup> order of signification)	Connotations (2 <sup>nd</sup> order of signification )
Eid offer by the coffee house (SHARE THE EID- RESISTIBLE JOY WITH TIMBITS FESTIVE PACK)	Tim Hortons invites the customers to share the Eid joy with their timbits festive pack.	Share (sense of togetherness and generosity) The Eid Resistible joy (The strong joy of Eid) Timbits festive pack (Tims' bundle of joy for Eid)

**Denotative meaning:** The sign here is an Eid offer as *SHARE THE EID RESISTIBLE JOY WITH TIMBITS FESTIVE PACK*, which invites customers to share Eid joy with Timbits pack. The phrase "The Eid-Resistible Joy" combines the word "Eid," which is a happy Islamic holiday, with the word "irresistible," which suggests that the joy felt during Eid is so strong that it's difficult to resist.

**Connotative meaning:** The word *share* conveys the sense of togetherness and generosity, which are the fundamental values of Eid. It conveys the sense of gathering with loved ones to take part in the festivities since Eid is a festival of sharing joys with others. *The Eid Resistible joy* conveys the idea of strong joy of Eid which is associated with Timbits festive pack. The customers would experience irresistible joy with timbits pack.

**Timbits** are the small doughnut holes which are the signature product of Tim Hortons. While the term "festive pack" refers to a bundle that has been particularly chosen for the occasion and is designed to fit the festive mood of Eid, Thus, the "Timbits festive pack" represents the company's distinctive contribution to the event by providing a specially crafted bundle for it.

Overall, this advertisement promotes the sharing of Eid joys with loved ones and includes Tim Hortons' products, especially the Timbits Festive Pack, which is presented as a crucial component of these celebrations. Moreover, the wordplay, like "Eid-Resistible," gives the message a creative and amusing edge.

**Visual signs:** The visual signs in this advertisement include *a chocolate sprinkled creamy coffee cup with Tim hortons signature*.

1. A chocolate sprinkled creamy coffee cup with Tim Hortons signature

Sign (signifier)	Denotation (1 <sup>st</sup> order of signification )	Connotations (2 <sup>nd</sup> order of signification)
Picture of a chocolate sprinkled creamy coffee cup with Tim Hortons signature.	There is a signed creamy coffee cup with chocolate sprinkle offered by Tim Hortons	Luxury and cosiness An extra layer of joy Reliability, quality and trust

**Denotative meaning:** Tim Hortons presents a chocolate sprinkled creamy coffee cup with Tim hortons signature on it.

**Connotative meaning:** The signed creamy coffee cup with chocolate sprinkle offered by Tim Hortons carries the concepts of luxury, cosiness, extra layer of joy, reliability, quality and trust.

**Luxury and cosiness:** Coffee is frequently connected to comfort and warmth so the creamy coffee cup connotes luxury and cosiness.

**An extra layer of joy:** The coffee’s creamy texture gives it a posh and enjoyable feel. The coffee’s chocolate sprinkle suggests an additional layer of richness and joy. It enhances the sensory experience of the coffee by evoking a feeling of fulfilment and delight.

**Reliability, quality and trust:** The brand name *Tim Hortons* printed on the cup stands for reliability, quality, and trust. It represents the brand's reputation for offering delectable drinks and meals.

Overall, the coffee cup advertises relaxation and indulgence throughout the holiday season in the backdrop of an Eid advertisement. It implies that taking a time to have a delicious cup of coffee from Tim Hortons can improve the Eid experience while everyone is celebrating. The chocolate sprinkle gives the festivities an extra layer of joy, making it a modest but significant component of the holiday celebration. The brands visibility on the coffee cup highlights its function in offering a high-quality delicacies during the festive occasions like Eid.

Advertisement no. 3 :



[https://www.instagram.com/p/CuGv3bnojK\\_/?igshid=MzRIODBiNWF1ZA==](https://www.instagram.com/p/CuGv3bnojK_/?igshid=MzRIODBiNWF1ZA==)

**Textual signs**

A motivation caption	TAG A FRIEND YOU WOULD WANT TO SHARE YOUR TIMBITS FESTIVE PACK WITH
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**1. A motivation caption**

Sign (signifier)	Denotation (1 <sup>st</sup> order of signification)	Connotations (2 <sup>nd</sup> order of signification)
A motivation caption (TAG A FRIEND YOU WOULD WANT TO SHARE YOUR TIMBITS FESTIVE PACK WITH)	Tim Hortons here motivates it's customers to tag their friends they want to share their timbits festive pack offered by the coffee shop on the occasion of Eid ul Adha.	Inclusivity and togetherness Social engagement Amplification of Joy

**Denotative meaning:** The caption written on the advertisement is TAG A FRIEND YOU WOULD WANT TO SHARE YOUR TIMBITS FESTIVE PACK WITH is a sign. Tim Hortons here motivates it's customers to tag their friends they want to share their timbits festive pack offered by the coffee shop on the occasion of Eid ul Adha.

**Connotative meaning :** The caption written on the advertisement where Tim Hortons motivates customers to share their festive pack with their friends signifies many ideas which include as follows:

**Inclusivity and togetherness:** Eid would be incomplete without friends. The act of tagging a friend communicates a spirit of inclusivity and community, which are the two important themes during Eid. It implies that celebrating Eid is about sharing happiness and memorable moments with loved ones rather than just enjoying oneself. By giving the friends the Tim Hortons festive bundle for Eid, it invites people to share their excitement with their friends, families, and other loved ones.

**Social engagement:** Tim Hortons is using social media and user-generated material to motivate customers to tag their friends. This fosters a sense of belonging among its clients by evoking a sense of community and involvement in the brand's Eid celebrations.

**Amplification of joy:** The use of "Timbits Festive Pack" implies that the item is meant to be shared on festive occasions like Eid. Customers are encouraged to tag others in order to share this special pack, which adds to the delight and celebration around it and makes it a part of group festivities.

Overall, this conveys a message that Tim Hortons is not just offering products but is actively engaging its customers in the communal spirit of Eid, encouraging them to share the joy of their special Timbits Festive Pack with friends and family. It's a clever way of promoting their products while aligning with the values and customs of the holiday.

**ANALYSIS OF COMMON SEMIOTIC ELEMENTS IN THE ADVERTISEMENTS**

This study analyses the similar semiotic elements which are common in all the three advertisement posts. These common elements are categorised as textual and visual signs.

Common textual signs	Common visual signs
The coffee shop's name (Tim Hortons) Tim hortons' slogan (always fresh)	Color (Red) EID MOOBARAK red box Tim hortons logo Stars and moon

Common textual signs are the *coffee shop's name* and *Tim Hortons' slogan*. Whereas the common visual signs include the *color of the advertisement, the Eid MOOBARAK red box, Tim Hortons's logo and the stars and moon*. These are analysed as follows.

**Common Textual signs:**

**1. The coffee shop's name**

Sign (Signifier)	Denotation (1 <sup>st</sup> order of signification)	Connotations (2 <sup>nd</sup> order of signification)
The coffee shop's name (Tim Hortons)	Tim hortons which is a significant Canadian-based coffee shop.	An elite icon A sense of comfort and familiarity Canadian cultural experience Quality and taste Status and affluence Westernization and Globalization Culinary excellence

**Denotative meaning:** The sign is the coffee shop's name Tim Hortons which signifies a significant Canadian-based coffee house.



**Connotative meaning:** Tim Hortons which is a significant Canadian-based coffee shop. The coffee shop connotes many ideas such as an elite icon, a sense of comfort and familiarity, Canadian cultural experience, quality and taste, status and affluence, westernization and globalization, and the culinary excellence.

**An elite icon:** Tim Hortons is the brand name mentioned in the advertisements. The sign so reads Tim Hortons which is a well-known Canadian fast-food restaurant franchise renowned for its coffee and baked items. The company is named after Tim Horton, a Canadian professional ice hockey player and a co-founder. Associating his name with the coffee shop grabbed people’s attention and helped establish brand recognition so it has become an elite icon.

**A sense of comfort and familiarity:** Customers from Pakistan have different associations with Tim Hortons because it is a worldwide Canadian fast-food restaurant brand that is well-known for its coffee and baked goods. It is frequently linked to benefits such as comfort, a relaxed dining environment, and a large variety of menu choices. Since it is a common option for many Canadians looking for a quick and reasonably priced lunch or a cup of coffee, it is associated with a feeling of familiarity and comfort.

**Canadian cultural experience:** Tim Hortons might be considered a symbol of Canada since it represents the culture and lifestyle of a Western nation. Customers from Pakistan could relate it to Canadian virtues like courtesy, diversity and efficiency, which might arouse their aspiration.

**Quality and taste:** Pakistani customers are drawn to Tim Hortons due to its reputation for serving high-quality coffee and freshly baked products. It implies a feeling of indulgence, cosiness, and satisfaction, which might create appealing connections with the brand.

**Status and affluence:** Tim Hortons may be seen as a symbol of status or prestige because it is a global chain. Customers in Pakistan who take it as an elite brand connect it with greater social standing. Its a status symbol to eat Tim Hortons.

**Westernization and globalization:** The presence of Tim Hortons in Pakistan is evidence of the nation's growing exposure to Western influences and globalisation. While some customers see it as a representation of modernity and progress, others voice concerns about the deterioration of regional culture or the predominance of international brands.

**Culinary excellence:** Tim Hortons has established a reputation as an icon of culinary excellence due to its rich heritage, extensive menu, expert bakery workmanship, dedication to high-quality coffee, and sustainability initiatives. It is viewed as a symbol of culinary excellence because of its illustrious history, commitment to culinary traditions, and dedication to upholding modern culinary values.

**2. Tim Hortons’ slogan (always fresh)**

Sign (Signifier)	Denotation (1 <sup>st</sup> order of signification)	Connotations (2 <sup>nd</sup> order of signification)
Tim Hortons slogan (Always fresh)	The slogan given by Tim Hortons which is <i>always fresh</i> . It means Tims’ product are always fresh	Quality Assurance Consistency in freshness Appeal to senses Competitive Edge

**Denotative meaning:** The sign is a slogan given by Tim Hortons above its logo in the advertisement which is ‘always fresh’ . It means Tims’ products are always fresh. At Tims, 'Always Fresh' isn't just a saying, it's a way of life.

**Connotative meaning:** The slogan given by Tim Hortons which is *always fresh*. It conveys many connotations which are as follows.

**Quality assurance:** The word *always* suggests a dedication to unchanged quality. It implies that Tim Hortons takes great care to make sure that their products are consistently fresh, which strengthens consumers’ confidence in the company.

**Consistency in freshness:** *Always fresh* implies that customers can anticipate the same level of freshness each time they visit Tim Hortons. This gives the dining experience a sense of reliability and predictability.

**Appeal to senses:** The word *fresh* also stimulates the senses of smell and sight in addition to the sense of taste. It enhances the overall sensory experience by conjuring up images of sizzling hot coffee, warm doughnuts, and compelling, crisp veggies.

**Competitive edge:** *Always fresh* positions Tim Hortons as an attractive choice in a competitive fast food industry compared to rivals who might rely more on pre-packaged or processed products.

Overall, ‘*always fresh*’ is a forceful branding strategy that communicates traits like reliability, quality, and sensory appeal. It enhances the brand's reputation and increases customers’ trust and engagement.

**Common visual signs:**

**1. Color**

Sign (signifier)	Denotation (1 <sup>st</sup> order of signification)	Connotations (2 <sup>nd</sup> order of signification)
Red color	The pure red color which is the base color of advertisement.	Passion and energy Attention grabbing Appetizing and stimulating Brand identity

**Denotative meaning**

The sign is a red color. Red color is the base color of Tim Hortons Pk. advertisements.

**Connotative meaning**

The red color which is chosen as the e base color of advertisement connotes many ideas which are explained as follows.

**Passion and energy:** Red is a bright and vivacious colour that is frequently linked to passion, zeal, and excitement. Pure red is used as the background of the advertising to generate a sense of vitality and vigour, providing viewers with a visually engaging experience. It conveys the brand's enthusiasm and commitment to offering a delightful and enriching eating experience.

**Attention-grabbing:** Red is a striking colour that tends to attract attention. According to Brown (2017), Red color draws customers' attention. Tim Hortons Pakistan intends to catch viewers' attention and stand out from other visual components by employing pure red as the background of the advertising. It establishes a strong and arresting presence that directs viewers' attention to the brand's messaging and products.

**Appetizing and stimulating:** Red is also known to increase hunger and stimulate the appetite. Brown (2017) asserts that red has the ability to arouse feelings of "hunger" and "appetite." Pure red is used in the background of the advertising to increase the visual appeal of the food and products being promoted. It suggests the delicacy and indulgence connected to Tim Hortons' offerings, making them even more alluring to potential customers.

**Brand identity:**The colour red is frequently linked across the globe with the Tim Hortons brand. The background of the advertisement consistently uses pure red, which contributes to the brand's visual identity and identification. As a result, viewers are more likely to remember the brand. It also enhances the relationship between the colour and the brand.

**2. EID MOOBARAK red box**

Sign (signifier)	Denotation (1st order of signification)	Connotations (2nd order of signification)
Eid MOOBARAK red box	The red box with a Eid MOOBARAK wish with chocolate shaped donuts on it, which is offered on the occasion of Eid.	Eid present Joy and celebration Cultural significance

**Denotative meaning:** Tim Hortons offers an *Eid MOOBARAK red box* on the Eid festival to celebrate Eid with Tims.

**Connotative meaning:** The *Eid MOOBARAK red box* offered by Tim Hortons Pk. connotes following ideas.

**Eid present:** 'Red Box' suggests that whatever is within the box is something amazing, worth celebrating, and might even be a surprise or present. It indicates something fun and celebratory that Tim Hortons will be providing for its customers on this unique occasion. During the Eid celebrations, During the Eid festival, people frequently greet one another with "Eid Mubarak," expressing their best wishes for a beautiful and happy holiday. Tim Hortons expresses its sincere wishes for a happy Eid celebration by placing it prominently on the red box.

**Joy and celebration:** The *Eid MOOBARAK red box* in the advertisement is important to note because the red colour frequently denotes joy, celebration, and fervour.

**Cultural significance:** The selection of *lamb-shaped chocolate donuts* on the red box is significant from a cultural and religious perspective. Tim Hortons is aligning itself with this significant Eid festival and demonstrating cultural sensitivity by moulding the doughnuts to resemble lambs.

**3. Tim Hortons' logo**

Sign (Signifier )	Denotation (1st order of signification )	Connotations (2nd order of signification)
Picture of a maple leaf	A maple leaf which is national emblem of Canada	Canadian identity and association Symbol of international excellence

**Denotative meaning:** Tim Hortons logo, a maple leaf which is national emblem of Canada.

**Connotative meaning:** A *maple leaf logo* that is national emblem of Canada. The logo carries Canadian identity and association. It is also the symbol of international excellence which are explained as follows.

**Canadian identity and association:** The *maple leaf logo* by Tim Hortons represents the company's Canadian identity and history. The Tim Hortons logo proudly displays the maple leaf, which is a well-known symbol of Canada. The maple leaf's appearance highlights the company's strong connections to Canadian culture.

**Symbol of international excellence:** In the context of Tim Hortons coffee house in Pakistan, the maple leaf logo serves as a symbol of international excellence. It signifies the brand's Canadian heritage and its dedication to providing quality products and services. It conveys a promise of consistency and authenticity that transcends borders. In Pakistan, it represents a global brand that values quality and embraces cultural diversity, offering a unique blend of Canadian tradition and local flavours to its customers.

#### 4. Stars and moon

Sign (Signifier)	Denotation (1 <sup>st</sup> order of signification)	Connotations (2 <sup>nd</sup> order of signification)
Stars and moon	The stars and moon are presented in a sprinkle on the red background of the advertisement for Eid celebration	Festivity and celebration

**Denotative meaning:** The sign is *stars and moon* presented in a sprinkle on the red background of advertisement to celebrate Eid.

**Connotative meaning:** The *stars and moon* sprinkled on the red background of the advertisement connote the idea of festivity and celebration. These white stars and moon refer to the joys and festivities of the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha.

#### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study identified the visual and textual signs in the advertisements. The findings of the study revealed that there are 6 verbal and 6 visual signs in these advertisements. 2 textual and 4 visual signs are common in these advertisements while the 4 textual and 2 visual signs are distinctive which are interpreted. The textual signs included captions, slogans and offers etc. while the visual signs included colors, imagery, and other composition of the advertisement.

The study analysed the denotative and connotative meanings within these signs communicated to the Pakistani customers during the Eid occasion. These signs contained religious and cultural references. The findings revealed that Tim Hortons carefully employed Islamic symbolism and elements of Pakistani culture to connect with local customers during the Eid festival. The textual and visual signs shaped effectively the overall meaning and perception of the advertisements.

By analyzing the textual and visual signs, the study found various religious and cultural themes were communicated in these signs. The study identified that the advertisements embodied the themes of celebration of Islamic festival Eid ul Adha, the spirit of sacrifice and generosity associated with eid, sharing of festive food, hospitality and communal dining during Eid, social engagement, sense of community and unity, and multiculturalism.

#### CONCLUSION

The study offers a comprehensive semiotic analysis of Tim Hortons Pakistan's Eid advertisement. From the three advertisement posts the researcher analyzed textual and visual signs. All of those signs were combined to convey the messages of the advertisements that are being advertised. Tim Hortons advertisements employed both the textual and visual signs to convey the message that stimulated consumers' interest in trying the product. This study is limited to only three advertisement posts posted by Tim Hortons Pakistan during the Eid festival. The researcher suggests other researchers to conduct further studies about semiotic analysis in other types of advertisements in parallel as well as other methodologies.

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