

ANTI-SUICIDE CAMPAIGN STUDY GORONTALO & SOUTH SUMATERA PROVINCIAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT POSTERS 2019

Dina Rifandary

Master of Design, Faculty of Postgraduate, Universitas Komputer Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

Email: dina.75323001@mahasiswa.unikom.ac.id

Kankan Kasmana

Email: Kankan.Kasmana@email.unikom.ac.id

Abstract : Suicide is the most common cause of death, becoming a humanitarian emergency case, which threatens the survival of the nation's next generation. In the anti-suicide campaign, posters are used as information media. The purpose of the study was to examine the symbolic meaning and visual elements in the design of campaign posters, 2 Health Offices (Gorontalo Province and South Sumatra). The method used was qualitative with Van Zoest's semiotic approach (syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic analysis). The results showed that the posters had visual representations of emotions: darkness, loneliness, or hopelessness; the poster narratives contained motivating quotes and information on aid resources. In conclusion, the visual elements on the poster form a visual message in raising awareness to combat suicide. The impact of the research is that it can educate, reduce the stigma of suicide, and help policy makers and designers design campaign posters with appropriate messages and effective strategies.

Keywords: Campaign, Poster, Suicide, Semiotics.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organisation (WHO) reports that more than 800,000 people die by suicide each year, while millions more experience suicidal thoughts (Ikram, 2020). Various communities face an increased risk of suicide due to social isolation, economic worries, and uncertainty of the future. In addition, mental health issues and high stress levels, lead to a spike in cases of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thinking. Suicide is also one of the pressing global health issues, with widespread impacts on individuals, families, and communities. According to the American Psychiatric Association (APA), suicidal behaviour is when a person decides to end his or her own life, usually as a result of psychological distress, depression, or other psychiatric disorders (Karisma, et al., 2023).

To meet this challenge, sustained efforts are needed to prevent the tragedy of suicide and offer support to those affected. Suicide is most common in developing and underdeveloped countries. According to the official website of the Ministry of Health, many things can lead to suicide, including biological, genetic, psychological, social, cultural, and environmental factors. Not only do individuals commit suicide, but also their families, their communities, and the society in which they live. Some studies show that the stigma of suicide is more complex than the stigma of other mental health problems, especially health problems in general (Febriawan, 2020). The act can cause trauma,

psychological disorders, and substance use. Based on these problems, the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) was formed. The association was founded in Vienna, Austria, in 1960. In 2001, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) launched a programme to help people in the United States at risk of suicide. WHO partnered with the International Association for Suicide Prevention on 10 September 2003 to mark world suicide prevention day. Until now, the celebration is commemorated regularly with various activities, such as discussion forums, campaigns and the formulation of new policies related to suicide prevention.

Against this backdrop, the World Health Organisation (WHO) says that we must help improve the mental health of the global community. The theme is Suicide Prevention in 2019. In this campaign, the World Health Organisation invites all citizens of the world to take "40 Seconds of Action" with the aim of raising awareness of the importance of suicide as a global problem and how we can prevent it; as well as reducing the stigma attached to suicide and letting everyone know that they are not alone (who.int., 2019). In the campaign, WHO voiced several actions that people can take to support the initiative, namely raising awareness of suicide as a global health problem; increasing knowledge about how to prevent suicide; reducing the stigma attached to suicide; and letting people who are experiencing difficulties know that they are not alone.

Anti-suicide campaigns have become a major focus for many health organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and governments around the world to prevent suicide. The campaign media created by WHO is in the form of short videos, and in Indonesia itself uses posters created by several health offices. Posters are one of the most frequently used communication tools in this campaign because they have the advantage of delivering suicide prevention messages to the public in a direct, effective, and measurable way. These include primary health and mental health training, digital interventions for depression, guidelines for the media, public awareness campaigns, and reduced access to lethal resources (Hegerl, et al., 2021).

The author uses Van Zoest's semiotic theory as a surgical tool in this research, so that the study obtained is deeper and broader. Because semiotics is a field that studies signs and symbols, how they are used or interpreted in language, and how language affects human perception and thought (Manik, 2022). Van Zoest's semiotic concepts such as syntactic, simantic, and pragmatic analyses will be used in a descriptive approach. It is expected that this method will help explain the symbolic meaning and visual elements on the anti-suicide campaign poster design, in 2 Health Offices (Gorontalo and South Sumatra).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Campaign

In this research, campaigns are generally defined as a way to spread information, raise awareness, increase attention, and change the behaviour of the target audience. Campaigns usually use various means and communication media, such as posters/advertisements on social media, public events, press writings, and others, to influence the opinion or behaviour of the target audience. In this suicide case, the campaign needed is a social campaign. According to (Rice & Atkins, 2009) Social campaigns are efforts to inform, persuade, or motivate a wide audience for behaviour change, usually for non-commercial gain, through organised communication involving mass media and often complemented by interpersonal support. In interpreting communication, we often get stuck on the symbols and set of signs used. This is because of our simple assumptions that tend to regard symbols or signs as separate entities to describe meaning (Ibrahim & Sulaiman, 2020).

Campaigns that focus solely on suicide might help destigmatise (label someone in a more symbolic way) suicide and encourage those at risk to get help. On the other hand, they may not even do so. Reducing suicide rates through various means is possible. For example, normalising and destigmatising suicidal behaviour can help reduce the

threshold for suicide (Hegerl, et al., 2021). The importance of easing the stigma of suicide and making it easier for people to get help when they need it by campaigning (voicing support) towards those struggling with mental health issues.

These campaigns can use social media, a powerful and influential mass media platform, to push campaign messages to persuade the public (Zhong, 2021). Examples can be found on the websites of the Gorontalo and South Sumatra Provincial Health Offices, which display anti-suicide campaign posters.

Suicide

Suicide is when a person thinks of harming or killing themselves (Fitri, 2023). The stigma of suicide itself can take the form of misperceptions, emotions of fear or anger, or even discriminatory treatment, such as avoidance, humiliation, or even violence towards individuals who have attempted suicide (Corrigan, et al., 2017).

To be relevant and effective, suicide prevention and intervention efforts must be tailored to each target population (Alfonso, et al., 2022). When it comes to suicide prevention and intervention, it is important to remember that each target population has different needs, difficulties, and contexts. As a result, effective approaches must be tailored to the unique characteristics and needs of each population. Therefore, in an anti-suicide campaign, the poster design used must be appropriate for the audience in terms of cultural, communication and language differences.

Poster

A. Poster Development

Posters first appeared on wood panels or walls in Greece and Italy. Then, due to a major revolution in printing techniques that allowed mass and cheap production with the lithography technique developed by Alois Senefelder in 1789, the lithography process developed to be able to print 10,000 posters every hour. Posters since then have functions and are used in many ways (Setyoko & Yudianto, 2022). The main function of posters or arguably one of the most obvious social functions of posters is to disseminate information, especially in the era of undeveloped information technology (Xiaolifei, 2021). As such, posters play an important role in disseminating information to the public in an era where information technology is underdeveloped. Posters can be a powerful tool to raise awareness, convey important messages, and positively impact people's behaviour.

A poster is a piece of coloured or monochrome paper that is usually filled with images and text. They can also be considered the art of messaging by combining design and layout to convey a message to people around the world. Nowadays, posters are not only made in print media, but also many non-print ones, such as posters on the internet or in cyberspace, which of course are made for various purposes. Due to the changing times, posters are also included in social media (a term that refers to the use of new media platforms that require public communication channels and online activities) (Sitompul, et al., 2021).

According to (Aldiansyah, et al., 2023), a poster is a visual communication tool consisting of images and text incorporated into visual elements such as illustration, typography, colour, layout, and depiction concept. Posters are used as public information media to convey information about the products offered. In anti-suicide campaigns, posters are also used to spread prevention messages; information about help resources and reduce mental health stigma and raise public awareness about the warning signs of suicide. With their strong visual capabilities, posters can capture the audience's attention and convey messages in a concise and effective manner. The text of the poster should match the material content of the message. Signs and symbols used in poster art can be images, text, or writing. These types of signs and symbols should be relevant to the message of the poster and easily understood and comprehended by people (Setyoko & Yudianto, 2022). Posters can be classified based on their purpose: "Propaganda posters, campaign posters, wanted posters, cheesecake posters, film posters, comic book posters, recognition posters, artwork posters, and commercial posters" (Kembaren, 2020).

Posters that appear on the internet or in cyberspace are considered very effective for conveying certain information or messages to the wider community because people today are very familiar with social media. Everything that appears in the poster is a sign of communication that designers try to convey to the public so that they can understand the message and purpose of the information (Sitompul, et al., 2021).

In this research, the poster is of the infographic type, according to (Aldiansyah, et al., 2023) infographic posters are posters that have visual signs that are interconnected in verbal and non-verbal forms in the elements that make up the poster. Infographic stands for "information and graphics", referring to the visualisation of data, ideas, information, or knowledge in the form of charts or graphics. The purpose of this visualisation is to make information look more than just text and have a strong and attractive visual effect.

B. Anti-Suicide Campaign Poster

With data obtained from the POLRI SOPS DORS (Daily Operation Reporting System) application, related suicides that occurred in Indonesia, as follows:



Figure 1. Data on Suicides in Indonesia (SOPS DORS POLRI, 2023)
Source: <https://dinkes.sumselprov.go.id/2019/10/bunuh-diri-pada-remaja/>

Continuation of the commemoration of World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September. The campaign was carried out by the Gorontalo and South Sumatra Health Offices by making the following anti-suicide posters:

Table 1: Anti Suicide Campaign Poster

<p>Figure 2. Gorontalo Provincial Health Office Poster Source: https://dinkes.gorontaloprov.go.id/bunuh-diri-bukan-solusi/</p>	<p>Figure 3. South Sumatra Health Office Poster Source: https://dinkes.sumselprov.go.id/2019/10/bunuh-diri-pada-remaja/</p>

Both posters show the method used to commit suicide, and one of the common symbols that appears is the image of a rope to hang oneself, and the colours used are very different from each other.

Semiotics figures: Van Zoest

Aart Van Zoest was born in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in 1930. His full name is A. J. A Van Zoest. Van Zoest, an expert in semiotics, has written about poetry and billboards about Violin, Laclous, Gerald, and Prevert Morgenstern. Van Zoest worked as a scientist at the Institut Frans en Occitaans van de Rijks Universiteit in Utrecht. He then conducted research with his students on how a certain thing - the Den Hang hostage - was portrayed in the French and Dutch media. He later learnt about semiotics (iconicity) as he was interested in the use of literary techniques, as well as in non-literary texts. In addition, Van Zoest taught from 1980 to 1990 at the Graduate Faculty of the University of Indonesia (UI). In addition, Van Zoest is one of the many semiotic figures who introduced Indonesia to semiotics. Van Zoest uses Charles Sander Pierce (1839-1914) as his reference to develop the science of semiotics. To reach the stage of dividing semiotic studies Van Zoest said that semiotic studies are divided into three (3) fields: syntax, semantics, and semiotic pragmatics (Suherman, 2021).

Semiotics

As a discipline that studies signs, semiotics includes the study of not only what can be seen by the eye, but also all aspects related to visual signs. Semiotics is a field of research that covers not only signs in everyday speech but also everything related to other forms such as words, images, sounds, movements, and objects. Terminologically, Van Zoest states that semiotics is a field of science that investigates signs and everything related to them, such as sign systems and processes that apply to signs (Van, 1993). In addition, Zoest cited in (Chukwu & Ahumaraeze, 2022), defines semiotics as "the study of signs and everything related to them, the functions of signs, the meaning of signs, the relationship between signs and other signs, and the process of sending and receiving messages by those who use signs".

The semiotic approach is one of many ways to study artworks. In this way, we can study an anti-suicide campaign poster through its visual sign system (the symbols, both verbal and iconic, used in the poster). It is impossible to assess a visual work without reading signs. In visual art, visual signs have implied meanings. The semiotic approach is one of the many approaches that can be used to read these implied meanings. The word "semiotics"-also called "semiotics"-comes from the Greek word semeion, which means "sign" (Setyoko & Yudianto, 2022).

Within the scope of semiotics, research on sign systems focuses on the three components of the system: (1) syntactic, which includes elements related to symbols or signs and how they are related, (2) semantic, which includes elements related to symbols or signs and how they are related, and (3) pragmatics, which is the element or subject of research related to the user's relationship with the symbol when using it (Van, 1993).

Based on the results of the literature review search and providing some critical analyses, the author identified a research gap, namely, poster studies are often studied using the semiotic methods of Charles Sanders Peirce and Ferdinand De Saussure. Of course, to add more variety in the study of posters, the author studies it with a different perspective, namely using Van Zoest's semiotics.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach, by collecting data (library research method), which means searching for journals, documents, online media, and other sources relevant to the research topic as well as studying the subject in depth. In addition, this approach supports Van Zoest's visual semiotics theory, which is used to examine the research subject. With Van Zoest's semiotic theory, the study is expected to be deeper and broader. The relevance of the method used is that it can analyse symbols and meanings, which means the analysis and interpretation of visual representations to determine the meaning of the poster. Van Zoest's semiotic concepts such as syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic analyses will be used in the descriptive approach.

The data collection of anti-suicide campaign posters, uploaded on the website of the Provincial Health Office of Gorontalo and South Sumatra, is to obtain data that is relevant to the research subject so that it has high accuracy and reliability. In-depth and significant data can be obtained through a qualitative approach. True data, or definite data, has value in visible data. Hence, the importance of qualitative research (Sugiyono, 2019). Data analysis involves data preparation, inference, and reduction.

DISCUSSION

Syntactic, Semantic, Pragmatic Analysis of Gorontalo and South Sumatra Provincial Health Office Poster "Kampanye anti suicide"

Van Zoest's semiotic approach, which involves syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic analyses, was used to study the design of the anti-suicide campaign posters of the 2 Health Departments, as it provides a thorough and systematic approach to understanding the messages conveyed by the posters. Here are some reasons for using this approach:

Syntactic Analysis

Syntactic analysis is a complete description of what is visible to our eyes. It includes a visual description of the poster being analysed, which consists of visual signs, verbal text, colours, and icon shapes (Setyoko & Yudianto, 2022). Syntactic analysis helps us understand the visual structure of the poster, which includes layout, composition, and other visual elements. It helps us understand how these elements interact with each other to form the overall visual message.

Table 2: Syntactic Analysis

Source: Author's Work

Poster	Syntactic Analysis
 <p>Figure 4. Gorontalo Provincial Health Office Poster</p> <p>Source: https://dinkes.gorontaloprov.go.id/bunuh-diri-bukan-solusi/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The poster above is titled: Suicide is Not a Solution, which has a denotative meaning, suicide is not a solution or a way out to overcome one's problems or difficulties. In this context, "suicide" refers to a person's decision to end their own life, while "not a solution" refers to a person's decision that will not result in a good or positive resolution to the problem at hand. Therefore, the denotative meaning of the sentence is to show that suicide is not an option to solve problems or overcome difficulties; instead, it can result in very serious and adverse consequences. • In this poster, there is an icon of a rope for hanging oneself, and some human icons • The hanging rope icon is dark in colour, but uses a real image (not a vector). • The 6 human icons are white in colour, demonstrating the factors that trigger people to commit suicide, the icons are in vector form • The size of the 6 icons have different sizes • The background uses a dark black gradation colour • The whole text is in white colour, the title of the poster is in capital letters. • The top right corner has the logo of Gorontalo Region • White coloured tick icon on green background in round shape • White coloured number icon on a red background in a round shape

- The poster titled "Suicide in Teenagers" has a denotative meaning of the act of a teenage person voluntarily ending their own life, while "in teenagers" indicates that the act is committed by people in the teenage age range, which is between 13 and 19 years old. This denotative meaning indicates directly that the adolescent who committed suicide had chosen to end his or her own life without experiencing violence or help from others. This is a direct description of a suicide involving teenagers as the subject.
- In this poster, there is a rope icon for hanging oneself, and some human icons.
- An illustration of the act of suicide, depicted with an illustration of a dangling leg, a sprawled chair, and a severed hangman's rope
- Cartoon image of a family, father mother and two children (a girl and a boy) with cheerful expressions
- 1 Icon of a human hanging himself, complete with rope and chair
- Poster background divided into 4 colour columns (dark blue, salt egg blue, light blue, and yellow)
- The logo of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia; the logo of South Sumatra Region; and the Germas logo on the left corner of the poster.
- Text with religious colours (red in the title, yellow, white, pink and purple in the content of the poster)

Figure 5. South Sumatra Health Office Poster

Source:

<https://dinkes.sumselprov.go.id/2019/10/bunuh-diri-pada-remaja/>

Semantic Analysis

Semantic analysis helps to understand the meaning of the images and symbols used in the poster. This analysis involves understanding the denotative meaning, meaning the literal meaning, and the connotative, meaning the hidden or symbolic meaning, of the visual components.

As a communicative endeavour, the poster created contains connotative meanings that are expressed in symbols and icons in visual form. The purpose of this poster is to convey information about the content of the message.

Table 3: Semantic Analysis

Source: Author's Work

Poster	Semantic Analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Icon of a rope for hanging oneself, has a denotative meaning in this context, "icon of a rope for hanging oneself" is a visual representation that clearly shows that the rope is used as a tool to commit suicide by hanging oneself. • The icon of a rope for hanging oneself, has connotative meanings in this context, which can vary depending on the context and the individual's interpretation, including: sadness; despair; mental crisis; stigma and hardship; notice and awareness; reminder to seek support. It is important to remember that the connotative meaning of the rope icon for hanging oneself can be very sensitive and complex, and its interpretation can vary depending on the experience and perspective of the individual viewing it. Therefore, when using this icon, you should be mindful of the context and how it will impact the intended audience. • Human icons are commonly used in graphic design, layout or visual communication to represent humans in general, without regard to physical features or special characteristics of individuals. A human icon is usually a graphic representation or visual symbol of a human figure, usually in the form of an image or silhouette that lacks specific details. • The connotations of human icons vary greatly depending on the context and the type of icon used, specifically for this poster only for the image of the supporting text. • The colours of the poster are predominantly black and the text is white, with the reason for using black referring to "Colourlessness and Tragedy": The colour black can also refer to tragedy, misfortune, or sadness. "Mystery and Fullness": The colour black is often associated with darkness, mystery, and uncertainty. The use of black in design or art can create an interesting and mysterious impression.

Figure 6. Gorontalo Provincial Health Office Poster

Source:

<https://dinkes.gorontaloprov.go.id/bunuh-diri-bukan-solusi/>

- The connotation of the colour black in the poster, "seriousness and darkness": the seriousness of the issue of suicide and the effects of darkness, resulting in sadness, despair, and uncertainty. "reminder of death and loss": the trauma that occurs in the impact on the surroundings. "urgency of action": a reminder to act quickly to support those in need, to seek professional help. "provide a sense of caution": a reminder to support people who are having suicidal thoughts.
- The white colour of the text is for contrast, legibility on a dark background, clean and pure, openness. The connotations are hope and healing for the recovery of mental conditions that may have triggered suicidal thoughts. "openness and realisation": open-mindedness, "connectedness and support": the importance of supporting each other in mental and emotional crises. "sincerity and purity": creating positive change helping those in need.



Figure 7. South Sumatra Health Office Poster

Source:

<https://dinkes.sumselprov.go.id/2019/10/bunuh-diri-pada-remaja/>

- The illustration of the act of suicide, depicted with an illustration of a dangling leg, a sprawled chair, and a severed hanging rope, its denotative meaning literally shows a scene where a person uses a rope to commit suicide by hanging themselves. The use of images of hanging can be utilised in the context of suicide prevention to provide a clear warning of the dangers of suicide. This can be done with the aim of raising awareness of the warning signs of suicide and encouraging people to get help if they or others are experiencing suicidal thoughts or behaviour. While the connotative meaning is "Sadness and despair": deep emotional suffering, the lowest point in his life. "Mental crisis": despair that considers suicide. "Danger and warning": as a sign of danger and warning. "stigma and deprivation": mental health and difficulties experienced by the individual. "message of prevention and hope": although the illustration is scary, it can carry a very strong message of prevention, supporting individuals struggling with mental illness and offering help.
- Cartoon image of a family, father mother and two children (girl and boy) with a cheerful expression, as an image of a family, while the connotative is family as one of the closest solutions by providing care, love, unity, happiness, support. There is also security and protection, which is harmonious. Emotional fullness and richness, warm and pleasant feelings.
- The dark and light colours used in this poster are for the readability of the text, and the connotatives are "hope and optimism": positive energy, the use of yellow, orange, or green can convey the message of the importance of hope and recovery in overcoming mental crisis. "awareness and attention": attracting attention and provoking an emotional response. "happiness, optimism, support, unity, solidarity".

Pragmatic Analysis

A branch of semiotic research called semiotic pragmatics investigates the relationship between signs and the use of signs by interpreters or users (Manik, et al., 2022). The pragmatics approach helps us understand the social, cultural and historical context in which posters are created and used. It helps us understand how the intended audience may understand and interpret the message conveyed by the poster.

The results of the interpretation contained in the semantic analysis section can be drawn with the message contained in this work. From the results of the syntactic and semantic analysis above, we can draw the meaning of the message of this work as follows: "as a reminder, every problem must have the best way out, not by ending life, if we can pass a test given by God to his servants, then our degrees will also be raised by Him, the giver of life", and to remember that they are not alone in their struggle.

By using an approach that includes these three components, we can better understand how posters function as visual communication tools. It allows us to thoroughly analyze how the visual design, image selection, text and other components contribute to the delivery of the message in the poster.

CONCLUSION

The results of the assessment of health department posters (Gorontalo Province - South Sumatra) using Van Zoest's semiotic approach, namely the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic analysis approaches, are: The Main Message that the poster wants to convey is to urge people to ask for help, let them know that they are not alone in their struggle, or show the consequences of suicide. The Communicative Purpose of the poster is to raise awareness of the issue of suicide, support people in need, or encourage people to get professional help. The Social Context of the poster is cultural norms about mental health, events or occasions that may affect sensitivity to the issue of suicide, and the availability of resources to help those in need. Images or text used on posters can show hope for those struggling with mental health issues, acknowledge their struggles, or provide help. Anti-suicide campaign posters contain characteristically visual representations of emotions: darkness, loneliness, or despair; poster narratives convey direct messages (motivational quotes to information about help resources). Illustrations that often appear are depictions of rope as a tool for suicide, hanging oneself as an illustration. Suggestions from the results of this study are that the current cultural conventions and preferences of each region should be considered when choosing a poster design, including the use of color and visual aesthetics. The colors and designs chosen should attract people's attention and support the campaign message.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Dina Rifandary is a passionate and talented student in the field of design, who has shown great dedication and achievement during his studies in Master of Design at Universitas Komputer Indonesia (Unikom), joining in 2023. After completing her undergraduate program, Dina worked at ComLabs Institut Teknologi Bandung as a graphic designer (2007-2011). Then in 2020 Dina worked at UNG Training as a Manager, as a graphic designer Dina believes that design can change the world, with years of experience working in this industry, I have the honor to work with clients from all walks of life. I believe that good design is not just about aesthetics, but also function and purpose.