

Kidult Representation in Hot Wheels F1 2025 Instagram Content

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Denny Suryakusuma*

Esa Unggul University
dnydkv@student.esaunggul.ac.id

Salman

Esa Unggul University
salman@esaunggul.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Purpose – The phenomenon of kidult in consumer culture shows a shift in the meaning of toy and diecast products that are no longer viewed solely based on function, but also as collectible objects that have symbolic meaning. This phenomenon is seen in the Instagram content @hotwheels_indo dated October 1, 2025, which promotes Hot Wheels Premium Formula 1 through visual representations that resemble the world of professional racing and display an exclusive, prestigious, and authentic impression. This study aims to analyze the myths and sign values of kidult consumerism represented through the Instagram content @hotwheels_indo.

Method – This study uses a qualitative approach with a critical paradigm. The analysis is carried out using Roland Barthes' semiotics through the meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth, as well as Jean Baudrillard's theory to analyze simulation, simulacra, hyperreality, and sign value. The object of the research is three slides of promotional content for Hot Wheels Premium Formula 1 uploaded on October 1, 2025.

Findings – The results of the study show that the content builds myths about the authenticity of the Formula 1 world, brand legitimacy, premium quality, exclusivity, collection culture, and enthusiasm for the product launch. Through visual elements, the official Formula 1 logo, team identity, dramatic lighting, compositions resembling the starting grid, product details, and persuasive narratives, Hot Wheels Premium Formula 1 is represented not just as a diecast, but as a symbol of prestige, identity, nostalgia, and affiliation with Formula 1 culture. This representation forms simulations, simulacra, and hyperreality that produce sign value, so that kidult consumption practices are more oriented towards symbolic meaning and social status than the use value of the product.

**) Corresponding Author*

Keywords: Myth, Sign Value, Kidult Consumerism, Hot Wheels Formula 1

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INTRODUCTION

On October 1, 2025, a phenomenon occurred, visualized through the Instagram social media platform @hotwheels_indo. The content related to Hot Wheels Premium Formula 1, or what can be called F1. The uploaded aspect related to the visualization of miniature diecast racing cars had a very interesting form and was also similar to the original form. At a glance, the content does not appear to be from the perspective of promoting toys for children, but resembles an exclusive creation similar to professional racing.(Sukmawati & Mahnun Mas'Adi, 2025).

Choice visual This method strategic keep away image creation from association toy children, And precisely bring it closer on aesthetics professional automotive and exclusive collections (Susilo & Setyanto, 2021). The image acquisition angle used tends to be eye-level, with tight framing. The typography of the slogan "AS CLOSE TO THE REAL THING AS YOU CAN GET" is displayed in a large, bold, and dominant manner; such similarities have a visual position that is equal to or even stronger than the image object itself. Including the interpretation of Roland Barthes' semiotic perspective, this text operates as an anchorage, namely anchoring the interpretation of the case, directing the explanation of the group which is targeted towards the visual. The slogan emphasizes that what is seen is not just a miniature, but a representation of the matter very close to its original nature. Ideologically, this phrase builds claims of authenticity and high quality, simultaneously obscuring the fact that the object of the matter displayed is only a replica. Symbolic value, prestige, and closeness parallel the world of professional racing.

At this stage, the image no longer merely imitates reality, but produces a version of the object that feels more perfect than reality. The miniature appears cleaner, sharper, and more ideal than the real race car, the real thing covered in dust and wear. This is what Baudrillard calls hyperreality: representation becomes "more real than the real thing." The target group no longer questions authenticity, because the image has represented reality (Saumantri et al., 2023).

A significant shift in the focus of the visual strategy of the advertisement occurs, with the emotional and temporal dimensions of the target audience now being emphasized, rather than the physical representation of the product. While the previous slide focused on the visual details of the diecast car, in this section, the physical object is relegated to a lesser role. The main elements of the prominent audience are persuasive texts such as "The Big Day is Just Around the Corner" and "Join the Hype," while the method is intentionally placed at the center of visual attention. The large typography, contrasting colors, and parallels serve as attention-grabbers, not only in action but also as agency triggers, as if the target audience is at a crucial moment, interpreted as a countdown.

The method of meaning, or semiotics, becomes the dialect that builds the narrative of eventization, namely the process of realizing the product launch as a social event of interpreting matters. (Pirnanda, 2023) This series shows that Instagram does not simply promote creations, but rather engineers a sign system in which the method slowly represents the reality of the object itself. Diecast, like a material toy, disappears behind the image of prestige and fantasy of the racing world. In Jean Baudrillard's framework, this process culminates in the transformation of commodities into sign value, namely when objects operate as symbols of status, identity, and social differentiation, especially for young consumers. This phenomenon shows that Instagram does not simply display

creations, but produces images. Diecasts, like small objects, have meaning to convey aesthetics visually as well as narrative symbols of similarity. The audience ultimately interacts more with the parallels of the image than the physical reality of the object itself. To identify how images provide interpretation, this operational method utilizes Roland Barthes's semiotics of imagery as a reading device. This approach helps explain how diecast photographs not only represent objects but also construct impressions of professionalism, exclusivity, and prestige.

At this point, the issue is no longer simply the way images represent creations, but rather the way those representations gradually represent the reality of creation itself. The role of diecasts as material objects is less important than the image they create. Consumers are not confronted with the parallels of real objects, but rather with the similarity of a series of visual signs engineered to create an impression of luxury, rarity, and prestige. The functional reality of children's toys is submerged in the aesthetics of the media. In this similarity, the object in action is not a miniature car, but rather a fantasy about the world of professional racing, rendered through a digital screen. This situation aligns with Jean Baudrillard's critique of postmodern society. According to Baudrillard, media no longer reflects reality but instead produces simulations that invariably represent reality. Representations function like simulacra, that is, imitations without any original reference. A diecast miniature photographed using cinematic methods appears more real than its physical form. This process develops into hyperreality, a situation where the image is more believable than material reality.

In hyperreality, the logic of application changes. Individuals no longer acquire based on function, but rather on symbolic interpretation. Usage embodies the practice of sign communication. (Asharudin, 2023). Hot Wheels diecasts then operate as sign values, representing prestige, community identity, nostalgia, and lifestyle affiliation. Objects lose their utility value and become representations of social status. This change, for the kidult group, becomes a form of nostalgia for their childhood memories, which are still vividly depicted. (Marom & Intan, 2025) For this group, toys no longer function as playthings, but rather serve as symbols of lifestyle and social differentiation. In this way, toys transform into symbolic commodities, fraught with interpretation.

Although the phenomenon of kidult and the marketing of collections has been widely discussed, encompassing the meaning of communication studies, studies that specifically dissect the meaning of visual signs on social media through Jean Baudrillard's semiotics are still relatively limited. This approach, however, embodies images, develops into simulations, creates hyperreality, encourages symbolic consumption, and ultimately operates as a sign value. Roland Barthes views photography and visual images as a sign system that is never neutral, but rather full of parallel ideological and cultural content. (Hidayat, 2022). Denotation refers to the literal essence or what the direct method appears to hold an impression, while connotation relates to the parallelism of implicit meaning. This condition is born from the cultural context, social experience, and the ranking of life in society.

Roland Barthes, in *Image, Music, Text* (1977), explains that signs do not stop at literal meaning, but develop through a complex system of signification. Barthes distinguishes between denotation as a basic, direct meaning and connotation as a secondary meaning influenced by culture, ideology, and social experience. Through this approach, Barthes emphasizes that every visual representation

has the potential to produce a deeper meaning than just what is visible, because signs always operate within a broader network of meaning. In *Mythologies* (1972), Barthes developed the concept of myth as a second-order system of signification. Myths work by naturalizing meanings that are actually socially constructed, making them appear natural and unquestioned. In this context, signs not only convey messages but also convey specific ideologies disguised as general truths.

In *Camera Lucida* (1981), Barthes also highlights how visuals, particularly images, possess profound emotional and interpretive power. This concept suggests that visuals not only convey information but also build emotional connections that influence how the audience interprets an object. Barthes emphasizes the crucial role of supporting attributes in constructing the connotative essence. (Hidayatulloh & Urfan, 2024). Barthes uses the concept of anchorage to explain the state of text that functions as an anchoring task that limits the possibility of explaining impressions to fit the alignment of the ideological message. The state desired by the message producer. Conversely, text can also function as a relay, namely when text and image complement each other to build the essence of the narrative method.

Barthes introduced the concept of myth as a second-order semiotic system, in which signs at the level of denotation and connotation are elevated to actualize the “truth” of seemingly natural things. Beyond myth, ideological levels such as modernity, masculinity, femininity, prestige, or consumerism are represented as if they were something natural and unquestioned. (Budiman et al., 2021; Fikri, 2023). Within the context of media and advertising, myths serve to normalize economic interests and dominant ideologies through seemingly simple and appealing visual images. In this context, commodities are no longer valued in reference to their utilitarian function or material utility, but rather in reference to the symbolic essence attached to them through media representations. (Jean Baudrillard, 1998). Mass media and social media play an active role in producing signs, images, and simulations regarding how individuals view their essence, needs, and identity. (Masut et al., 2023).

Jean Baudrillard, in *The Consumer Society* (1998), explains that in modern society, consumption is no longer based on use value, but rather on sign value. Consumption becomes a means for individuals to build and express themselves within social structures through collectively recognized symbols. *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981), Baudrillard argues that contemporary society has entered an era of simulation, where representations no longer reflect reality but instead replace it. He introduces the concept of simulacra, as images or representations lacking any original reference, and hyperreality, as a condition in which the boundaries between reality and representation become blurred. In this situation, individuals interact more with images than with reality itself.

From the book *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1981), Baudrillard asserts that sign systems in consumer societies have a powerful economic and ideological role. Signs function not only as communication tools but also as commodities with exchange value within the social system. Thus, objects are not only produced for use but also for consumption as symbols reflecting social position and differentiation between individuals.

Baudrillard emphasizes that in an applied society, the process of representation does not merely reflect reality, but rather creates a new reality. The media no longer functions as a mirror of the social world, but rather as a machine for producing essences, representing material reality

(Zahoor et al., 2025). Jean Baudrillard is widely known in the current era because his thoughts are considered capable of understanding and explaining the conditions of the emerging situation which significantly contains the postmodern era (Giswandhani & Hilmi, 2024).

Research related to semiotic analysis, many have been carried out on various objects and contexts of cultural studies, media, and literary works. Santi et al., (2025) examines the representation of Irish Bella's fashion on Instagram using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis to uncover denotative, connotative, and mythical interpretations of social media visual content. Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic approach is used by Assalia & Pramasseilla, (2021) in analyzing the Kethoprak Ringkes performance, as well as by Roita Sinaga (2023) includes the interpretation of the study of the novel *Garis Waktu* by Fiersa Besari, which emphasizes the relationship between the signifier and the signified, including the interpretation of realizing the interpretation. Meanwhile, Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics is applied by Saleha & Yuwita (2023) on the dead-end traffic sign symbol, and by Widia Kartika & Supena (2024) contains an interpretation of the analysis of the novel *Pasung Jiwa* by Okky Madasari; the parallels focus on the relationship between icons, indexes, and symbols.

The results of various studies confirm that the semiotic approach is effective for examining meaning or essence, cultural values, and the construction of meaning across various media, from perspectives such as social media, traditional performances, and literary works. No study has specifically used semiotic analysis to examine in depth the value of signs and the construction of meaning in Instagram content featuring premium toy products, including visual, verbal, and hyperreality narrative interpretations communicated through social media and correlated in the real world. This research has the novelty of how a toy that initially functioned only as a play object evolved into a symbol of consumption, simulation, and representation of status in kidult culture. This approach not only explores the interpretation of signs, icons, and symbols, but also examines how cultural and symbolic values are constructed through visual and narrative strategies in social media marketing, thus contributing to the understanding of the phenomenon of modern consumerism from a semiotic perspective.

Based on the background and substance described regarding the Instagram content @hotwheels_indo dated October 1, 2025, it is relevant for critical analysis. This research is expected to provide a critical understanding of the role of social media in realizing the essence of applications and cultural identity in the digital era.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach to the similarity of the critical paradigms put forward by (Creswell, 2018). The critical paradigm views social reality not as a neutral and objective state, but as a function resulting from power relations, ideology, and practices of meaning production, shaped by social structures and media. In this paradigm's interpretation, communication is not understood as a mere message-delivery process, but as a mechanism of active participation encompassing the meaning of establishing, normalizing, and legitimizing social reality. Within the context of social media, particularly Instagram, the critical paradigm is relevant because this platform not only presents creative information but also functions as a symbolic production space. Visual content embodies how the target group views the value, function, and meaning of an object of application.

Therefore, the nature of application cannot be understood as a result of mere rational needs, but rather as the meaning of signs and images produced and circulated across media.

This critical paradigm is in line with the similarity of thought (Jean Baudrillard, 1981), which contains the meaning of *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*; the case emphasizes that signs have symbolic value and play a dominant role in the formation of social essence. The research method used is a qualitative method with a similar approach to critical semiotics. (Sugiyono, 2022). This research is exploratory and critical because it describes the visual elements in Instagram content, such as composition, camera angles, lighting, colors, symbols, and supporting texts, while also examining their ideological and cultural implications in the context of postmodern society. Primary data is in the form of a carousel upload of the Instagram account @hotwheels_indo uploaded on October 1, 2025 and consisting of three promotional slides for Hot Wheels Premium Formula 1, covering visual elements, verbal, user interactions, and the context of the upload, while secondary data is obtained from books, scientific journals, and previous research relevant to semiotics, simulation, hyperreality, symbolic consumption, and kidult culture.

Data collection is carried out through visual documentation, observation of media texts, and observation of user interactions, with instruments in the form of researchers as human instruments, visual observation guides, Jean Baudrillard's semiotic analysis tables, and field notes. Data validity is maintained through theory triangulation, source triangulation, methodological coherence, and researcher reflexivity. Data analysis was conducted through the stages of sign inventory, sign categorization, denotative and connotative analysis, simulation and hyperreality analysis, symbolic consumption analysis, and sign value synthesis to explain how Hot Wheels Formula 1 diecast not only functions as a consumption product, but also as a symbolic commodity that represents identity, status, prestige, nostalgia, and social differentiation in kidult culture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The object of this research is a post on the Instagram account @hotwheels_indo published on October 1, 2025. The content is presented in a carousel format consisting of three slides and contains a promotion for the Hot Wheels Premium Formula 1 (F1) product. Visually, the three slides display miniature racing cars in diecast form with a cinematic photography approach. The visual representation is built through the use of dramatic lighting, low-angle shooting, and high color contrast that emphasizes the details and texture of the object. The visual composition used tends to eliminate comparative elements of size so that the scale of the miniature is not clearly visible. This condition makes the object no longer perceived as just a toy, but as a visual representation that is close to a real racing car. In this context, visuals not only function as a product promotion medium, but also as a meaning maker through structured visual signs.

Roland Barthes' myth contained in the Instagram content @hotwheels_indo dated October 1, 2025

The analysis in this subchapter aims to identify the myths contained in the Instagram content @hotwheels_indo uploaded on October 1, 2025, using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. Myth is understood as a second-level meaning system formed through the relationship between denotative and connotative meanings, resulting in ideological meanings that are then accepted as something

normal by society.

Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of Slide 1 Content

Before conducting an in-depth analysis, it's important to understand that the first slide plays a crucial role as an introduction in establishing the audience's perception of the entire content. Through the visual cues displayed, this slide serves as the starting point for constructing meaning, which in turn influences how the audience understands subsequent slides. From Roland Barthes's semiotic perspective, each visual element conveys not only a literal meaning but also connotative meanings and myths shaped by the audience's culture and social experiences. Here's an image of the Hot Wheels content on the first slide:



Picture1ContentSlide 1 (AS CLOSE TO THE REAL THING AS YOU CAN GET)
Source: Instagram @hotwheels_indo, (2025)

Slide: The first slide features three Formula 1 diecast cars arranged in a horizontal composition. The plain black background draws the audience's attention to the main object. The use of a low angle makes the object appear dominant and powerful. Dramatic lighting with high contrast sharply reveals the car's details, making it look realistic. Furthermore, the text "AS CLOSE TO THE REAL THING AS YOU CAN GET" is displayed in bold capital letters, along with the Hot Wheels and Formula 1 logos, reinforcing the visual identity of the content. Here are the visual elements found on the first slide:

Table 4.1Visual Element Findings Slide 1

Element	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Slogan "AS CLOSE TO THE REAL THING AS YOU CAN GET"	The slogan is written at the top of the visual.	Emphasizing the similarity of the product to the original Formula 1	Miniatures are considered capable of providing the experience of owning a real Formula 1 car.

		car.	
Three Formula 1 cars lined up.	Three Formula 1 diecasts are displayed side by side.	Represents the line-up of cars before the race starts.	Hot Wheels is positioned as part of the professional racing world, not just a toy.
Formula 1 car livery details	The colors, sponsors, and design of the car resemble a real Formula 1 car.	Demonstrates a high level of accuracy and product authenticity.	The more it resembles the original car, the higher the collectible value and prestige of the product.
Shooting angle (<i>low angle</i>)	The car is photographed from a low angle.	Gives a strong, dominant, and heroic impression.	Formula 1 cars are seen as symbols of power, performance, and superiority.
Black background with asphalt texture	The dark background resembles the surface of a race track.	Creating an exclusive atmosphere and professional racing atmosphere.	The world of Formula 1 is perceived as a premium, elite, and prestigious world.
Hot Wheels Logo	The Hot Wheels brand logo is featured in the center of the visual.	Shows a widely recognized brand identity.	Hot Wheels is not only seen as a toy, but as a legendary brand that has collectible and nostalgic value.
Formula 1 Logo	The official Formula 1 logo is displayed at the bottom of the visual.	Shows the existence of an official Formula 1 collaboration and licensing.	The product gains legitimacy as an official representation of the world of Formula 1, thereby increasing its symbolic value.
Hot Wheels Premium Formula 1 Packaging	The product packaging is displayed at the bottom of the visual.	Indicates that the product is ready to be purchased and collected.	Product ownership becomes a symbol of status, hobby, and collector identity (Kidult).

Source: Researcher data processing (2026)

All the visual elements on the first slide form the myth that Hot Wheels Formula 1 is an authentic representation of the premium, exclusive, and collectible world of Formula 1. This myth then positions diecast as a symbol of prestige, identity, and pride for its owner, so that the audience accepts the view that owning a Hot Wheels Formula 1 means having a piece of the experience and image of the professional racing world. The formation of this myth then becomes the basis for the emergence of sign value, which will be discussed further using Jean Baudrillard's perspective in the following discussion.

Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of Slide 2 Content

Slide: The second slide features several Formula 1 diecast cars arranged in separate visual compositions but still within a single frame. Each car is shown from a different angle and accompanied by identity markers in the form of team names such as Oracle Red Bull Racing,

McLaren Formula 1 Team, and Mercedes AMG Petronas Formula One Team. A dark background is still used to maintain visual consistency with the previous slide while keeping the audience's focus on the main object. In contrast to the first slide, which emphasizes the impression of closeness to reality, the second slide emphasizes the identity and visual differentiation of each Formula team. Here is an image from the second slide:



Picture2ContentSlide 2 Hot Wheels F1 Car
Source: Instagram @hotwheels_indo, (2025)

The images contain visual elements that serve to emphasize the uniqueness of each team, so that the audience no longer sees the object as a uniform product, but rather as a symbolic representation of a particular character, performance, and image in the world of racing. The compilation of these findings in a table aims to systematically classify and map these elements, thus facilitating the process of analyzing meaning in the next stage. With this mapping, the relationship between signs, meanings, and identity constructions presented in the content can be understood in a more structured manner. The following are the findings of the visual elements in the second slide:

Table2Visual & Verbal Element FindingsSlide Content Slide 2

Element	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Multi-angle view of a Formula 1 car	The car is shown from both front and rear angles.	Shows the overall shape and details of the product.	Hot Wheels Premium is perceived as an authentic and collectible replica.
Formula 1 team livery	Sponsor logos, signature colors, and identities of	Demonstrates the level of accuracy,	The product is considered to have a close relationship

and identity details	Oracle Red Bull Racing, McLaren Formula 1 Team, and Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS Formula One Team are featured on the car.	authenticity and official identity of each Formula 1 team.	with the original Formula 1 car, thus increasing its symbolic value and collection value.
Official name of the Formula 1 team	The names are Oracle Red Bull Racing, McLaren Formula 1 Team, and Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS Formula One Team.	Showing the official license and authentic identity of each Formula 1 team.	The product is perceived as an official representation of the world of Formula 1, which has high legitimacy.
Black textured track background	The dark background resembles the surface of a race track.	Create a professional, exclusive, and realistic atmosphere like a Formula 1 racing arena.	The world of Formula 1 is considered a premium, exclusive, and prestigious racing world.
Dynamic visual composition	The car positions are scattered with different orientations.	Gives the impression of movement, competition, performance, and racing dynamics.	Formula 1 is perceived as a sport synonymous with speed, competition and high performance.
Formula 1 Logo	The official Formula 1 logo is displayed at the bottom of the visual.	Shows the existence of official Formula 1 collaboration and licensing.	The Formula 1 logo is a symbol of legitimacy that enhances the credibility, authenticity, and exclusivity of the product.
Visual focus on product details	All attention is directed to the appearance of the diecast car.	Highlighting the quality, precision, and detail of the product throughout.	Diecast is positioned as a premium collectible object that has more value than just a children's toy.
Three Formula 1 team variations	Showcased are three car models from different Formula 1 teams.	Providing a variety of collection options for consumers.	Ownership of more than one variant is perceived as part of Kidult's culture of collecting and consumerism.

Source: Researcher data processing (2026)

Slide Second, constructing the myth that the primary value of Hot Wheels Premium Formula 1 lies in its authenticity, legitimacy, and completeness. Diecast is no longer understood solely for play, but as a premium collectible representing its owner's identity, status, and connection to Formula 1 racing culture.

Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of Slide 3 Content

This subchapter discusses how the third slide represents urgency and social engagement

through visual cues in the Hot Wheels F1 2025 Instagram promotion. Unlike the previous slides, which emphasized the product's reality and identity, the third slide places text as the dominant element to build the audience's emotional engagement with the product launch momentum. Here's an image from the third content slide:



Picture3ContentSlide 3 “THE BIG DAY”
Source: Instagram @hotwheels_indo, (2025)

Slide: The third slide is dominated by large text elements in bright colors and high contrast. Phrases like "THE BIG DAY IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER" and "ARE YOU READY TO JOIN THE HYPE?" are placed as the center of attention, while the visual of a miniature diecast car is placed below as a supporting element. The use of orange and yellow creates an energetic and urgent impression, while the high visual contrast makes the main message more easily attract the audience's attention. This composition shows that the main focus of the slide is no longer solely on the product, but on building anticipation and social engagement of the audience. Here are the visual elements found on the third slide:

Table3Visual & Verbal Element Findings Slide Content Slide 3

Element	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Headline"THE BIG DAY"	The words "THE BIG DAY" are written in large letters at the top of the visual.	Indicates that there is an important moment that is awaited.	Product launches are positioned as major events that fans must pay attention to.
Invitation sentence (Call	The text "It's Just Around The Corner, Are	Inviting the audience to join in	Following the launch is perceived as being part of the

<i>to Action)</i>	You Ready To JOIN THE HYPE?" and "Don't Miss It, Wait For The Release Date!" are displayed on the visual.	looking forward to the product launch.	community and trend, so you don't want to be left behind (fear of missing out).
Three Hot Wheels Formula 1 cars	Featured are three Formula 1 diecast models from different teams.	Shows the product variations that will be launched.	Ownership of multiple variants is seen as a valuable form of collection.
Checkered flag (<i>checkered flag</i>)	The Formula 1 finish flag is displayed at the top of the visual.	Symbolizes racing, victory, and the finish line.	Formula 1 is seen as a symbol of prestige, competition, and achievement.
Black background with textured track	The dark background resembles the asphalt surface of a race track.	Create a professional, dramatic, and exclusive atmosphere.	The world of Formula 1 is perceived as a premium and classy racing world.
Formula 1 Logo	The official Formula 1 logo is displayed at the bottom of the visual.	Shows official Formula 1 license and identity.	The Formula 1 logo is a symbol of legitimacy that increases the credibility and symbolic value of the product.
Bold typography with orange color dominance	<i>Headline using bold, orange capital letters.</i>	Grab attention, give an energetic impression, and create urgency.	The launch message was perceived as something important and not to be missed.
Product position at the bottom of the visual	Three cars are placed at the bottom of the visual, while the launch text is at the top.	The main focus is directed at pre-product launch information.	Anticipation of the launch becomes part of the product's value, so curiosity drives the desire to own it.

Source: Researcher data processing (2026)

The use of bold orange typography and the placement of the launch information at the top of the visual naturalize the idea that the launch momentum is part of the product's value. The product is perceived as more valuable because of the exclusivity of the launch time and public anticipation. Thus, the third slide builds the myth that owning a Hot Wheels Formula 1 means being part of a collector community that values the exclusivity, prestige, and culture of Formula 1, so that the product's value lies not only in its physical form but also in its accompanying symbolic meaning.

Based on Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, the third slide shows that all visual elements work together to construct meaning regarding the Hot Wheels Formula 1 launch as an event with

symbolic value. At the denotative level, the content conveys information about the product launch through headlines, calls to action, diecast visuals, and other supporting elements. At the connotative level, the use of large typography, contrasting colors, the checkered flag symbol, the Formula 1 logo, and visual composition convey meaning regarding enthusiasm, exclusivity, and the importance of the launch momentum. Furthermore, at the mythical level, the content builds an understanding that the Hot Wheels Formula 1 launch is not just a marketing activity, but an event that represents prestige, exclusivity, and a collection culture. The myth is naturalized through the relationship between text and visuals so that the audience accepts that attending the launch and owning the product is part of the collector's identity and a form of closeness to the world of Formula 1. Thus, the third slide not only functions as a promotional medium, but also as a medium for the production of meaning that constructs the product launch as a symbol of exclusivity and collection value in Kidult consumerism culture.

The Value of Jean Baudrillard's Sign Contained in the Instagram content @hotwheels_indo dated October 1, 2025

This sub-chapter discusses the sign value contained in the Instagram content @hotwheels_indo uploaded on October 1, 2025, based on the perspective of Jean Baudrillard's consumption theory. After the previous sub-chapter analyzed the meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth using Roland Barthes' semiotics, the next discussion is directed to explain how these meanings develop into symbolic values attached to the Hot Wheels Formula 1 product. In Baudrillard's view, modern consumer society no longer consumes commodities solely because of their use value or exchange value, but because of their sign value that represents social status, identity, prestige, and social differentiation.

Jean Baudrillard's Semiotic Analysis of Slide 1 Content

In understanding how the meaning of consumption is constructed in the content of the first slide, this study uses Jean Baudrillard's perspective which focuses on the concepts of simulation, simulacra, hyperreality, and sign value. In Baudrillard's view, visual media no longer merely represents reality, but is able to create a new reality that appears more real, more ideal, and more convincing than the actual reality. Through visual techniques such as shooting angles, dramatic lighting, visual composition, color, and the use of official symbols and logos, the Hot Wheels F1 content builds a simulation of the world of professional racing in the form of miniature diecast. As a result, the audience does not only see the product as a toy, but as a symbol of prestige, identity, and closeness to the global motorsport culture. The following are the results of the analysis of simulation, simulacra, hyperreality, and sign value in the first slide:

Table 4 Simulation Analysis, *Simulacra*, *Hyperreality*, and *Sign value* on Slide 1

Object / Sign	Simulation	Simulacra (Simulacra)	Hyperreality	Sign value
Slogan "AS CLOSE TO THE REAL THING AS YOU CAN"	The slogan simulates the experience of owning a Formula 1 car through a Hot	The miniature is positioned as a representation that resembles a real Formula	The audience perceived that owning a diecast could provide an experience almost the same as owning	The slogan builds symbolic value that owning a diecast means having a closeness to the world of Formula 1, thus becoming a symbol of

GET"	Wheels miniature.	1 car.	a Formula 1 car.	prestige and collector identity.
Three Hot Wheels Formula 1 cars	Displaying miniatures as representations of professional racing vehicles.	Miniatures replace the image of Formula 1 cars in a form that can be owned.	Miniatures are perceived to have emotional value equal to the original object.	Owning several Formula 1 miniatures is a status symbol as a collector and shows appreciation for the world of motorsport.
Formula 1 team livery and identity details	<i>Livery and</i> the team identity are presented to resemble a real racing car.	A replica is a visual copy that is close to the real object.	The accuracy of the details makes the audience appreciate the replica more than the toy's function.	Authentic details are a sign of quality, exclusivity, and prestige of the Hot Wheels Premium collection.
Formula 1 Logo	The logo brings the official image of the world of Formula 1 to the product.	The logo not only represents the competition, but also symbolizes Formula 1 culture.	The presence of the logo makes the product perceived as having a higher value than ordinary diecast.	The Formula 1 logo is a marker of originality and official legitimacy, and it enhances the symbolic status of the product in the eyes of collectors.
Hot Wheels Logo	The logo reinforces Hot Wheels' image as a renowned diecast manufacturer.	Hot Wheels is no longer seen as just a toy brand, but as a collectible cultural icon.	The brand value is more dominant than the product's function as a toy.	The Hot Wheels logo has become a symbol of reputation, quality, and identity as part of the diecast collector community.
Black background and racing track texture	The visuals simulate the atmosphere of a Formula 1 circuit.	The setting represents the world of professional racing.	The audience feels the racing atmosphere through the visual display even though they only see promotional images.	The track atmosphere is a sign of exclusivity and reinforces the premium image and closeness to the world of Formula 1.
Shooting angle (low angle)	The photography technique makes the miniature look like a real Formula 1 car.	The perspective blurs the distinction between miniature and real vehicles.	Miniatures are perceived as more magnificent and classy than their actual-size counterparts.	Visual techniques build an impression of superiority, prestige, and exclusive value so that the product is seen as more valuable than its material function.
Hot Wheels	The packaging	Packaging becomes part	Packaging is seen as equally important as	Premium packaging becomes a symbol of

Premium Formula 1 Packaging	presents the product as an exclusive collectible.	of the representation of premium value, not just a product protector.	the product's contents, as it demonstrates originality and rarity.	rarity, exclusivity, and collector identity, thus increasing the brand value of the product.
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Source: Researcher data processing (2026)

Based on the analysis of simulation, simulacra, hyperreality, and sign value in the first slide, it can be understood that the Hot Wheels Formula 1 Instagram content constructs a symbolic reality through the integration of all visual elements. The slogan, three miniature cars, livery details, Formula 1 logo, Hot Wheels logo, track background, low-angle shooting angle, and premium packaging work simultaneously to form a representation of the Formula 1 world that looks authentic. Through this process, diecast is no longer understood as a replica or toy, but as a symbolic commodity that has social meaning. In Jean Baudrillard's perspective, products gain value primarily because of the sign value that represents prestige, exclusivity, the identity of Kidult collectors, and affiliation with professional racing culture, so that the image and symbol become more dominant than the material function of the product itself.

Jean Baudrillard's Semiotic Analysis of Slide 2 Content

In the second slide, the construction of visual meaning begins to shift from a representation of proximity to reality to a representation of identity and symbolic differentiation. Analysis using Jean Baudrillard's perspective shows that the visual elements in the content not only represent the miniature Formula 1 cars as products, but also construct a sign system related to identity, status, and social preferences. Through the use of various team colors, sponsor logos, livery details, various shooting angles, and close-up techniques, the visuals create a more dynamic and personal simulation of the Formula 1 world. In this context, each miniature car is no longer understood as an ordinary collector's item, but rather as a symbol of a particular character and affiliation that can be consumed by the audience. The following is the result of the analysis of simulation, simulacra, hyperreality, and sign value in the second slide:

Table 5: Simulation Analysis, *Simulacra*, *Hyperreality*, and Sign Value on Slide 2

Object / Sign	Simulation	Simulacra (Simulacra)	Hyperreality	Sign value
Multi-angle view of a Formula 1 car	The car is displayed from various angles to simulate the experience of seeing the product in person.	The miniature is a visual representation that resembles a real Formula 1 car from various angles.	The audience feels like they know the product thoroughly even though it is only through digital content.	Diecast ownership is seen as a symbol of appreciation for detail and premium quality.
Formula 1 team livery and identity details	<i>Livery</i> , colors, and sponsors are displayed to resemble a real Formula 1 car.	Replicas present a visual copy that is very close to the	The accuracy of the details makes the miniature perceived as having almost the same value as a Formula 1	Authentic details are a marker of the collection's exclusivity, quality and prestige.

		real object.	car as a representational object.	
Official name of the Formula 1 team	The names Oracle Red Bull Racing, McLaren Formula 1 Team and Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS Formula One Team strengthen ties with the world of Formula 1.	Team names are not only an identity, but also represent the image and reputation of each team.	The audience felt connected to the Formula 1 team through ownership of the miniature.	Product ownership becomes a symbol of closeness to one's favorite Formula 1 team and identity as a fan.
Black textured track background	Visuals simulate the atmosphere of a professional racing track.	The setting is a representation of the world of Formula 1, which is brought into promotional media.	The audience feels the racing atmosphere without having to be on the circuit.	The racing atmosphere is a marker of exclusivity and strengthens the premium image of the product.
Dynamic visual composition	The placement of cars from various directions simulates the dynamics of racing.	The visual composition represents the competition and high performance of Formula 1.	The product is perceived not just as a silent miniature, but as if it has the character of a real racing car.	The product is a symbol of performance, speed, and the motorsport lifestyle.
Formula 1 Logo	The logo presents the official image of Formula 1 in promotional visuals.	The logo represents the authority and legitimacy of Formula 1.	The presence of the logo strengthens the perception that the product has a higher value than diecast without an official license.	The Formula 1 logo is a sign of status, originality and product exclusivity.
Visual focus on product details	The visuals draw attention to the quality and precision of the diecast.	Product details represent the quality the brand wants to display.	Audiences value visual details more than the product's function as a toy.	The product is perceived as a premium collectible, not just a children's toy.
Three Formula 1 team variations	Display multiple product variants to simulate collection options.	The various variants represent the diversity of the Formula 1 world.	Audiences are encouraged to collect all variants to obtain a more complete experience.	Ownership of multiple variants becomes a symbol of collector identity (Kidult) and indicates

				status within the fan community.
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Source: Researcher data processing, (2026)

Based on the analysis of simulation, simulacra, hyperreality, and sign value on the second slide, it can be understood that the Hot Wheels Formula 1 Instagram content constructs a symbolic reality by highlighting product quality, the official identity of Formula 1, and the diversity of collection variants. Multi-angle views, livery details, official team names, track settings, dynamic visual compositions, the Formula 1 logo, the focus on product details, and the variations of the three teams work together to produce a representation that appears authentic and exclusive. In Jean Baudrillard's perspective, this representation makes diecast no longer understood as a miniature vehicle or toy, but as a symbolic commodity that has sign value in the form of prestige, quality, the identity of Formula 1 fans, and status as a kidult collector. Thus, the second slide shows that visual media not only promotes products, but also produces social meanings that make diecast ownership a symbol of identity and differentiation in contemporary consumer culture.

Jean Baudrillard's Semiotic Analysis of Slide 3 Content

Before conducting further analysis, the following table is compiled to map the forms of simulation, simulacra, hyperreality, and sign value that appear on the third slide of the Hot Wheels Formula 1 content. In contrast to the previous slides that emphasized the proximity of reality and identity differentiation, the third slide focuses on the formation of urgency and social engagement through the dominance of persuasive text, contrasting colors, and a narrative about the momentum of the product launch. Each visual element in this slide works simultaneously to build a symbolic experience that encourages the audience to feel the need to participate in the "hype" being constructed. This analysis aims to see how visual media not only promotes products, but also shapes social perceptions regarding exclusivity, collective participation, and symbol-based consumption in contemporary kidult culture.

Table 5 Simulation Analysis, *Simulacra*, *Hyperreality*, and *Sign value* on Slide 3

Object / Sign	Simulation	Simulacra (Simulacra)	Hyperreality	Sign value
<i>Headline</i> "THE BIG DAY"	<i>Headlines</i> simulate that the product launch is a very important event.	The launch was presented as a major moment worth celebrating.	Audiences view product launches as more meaningful events than just marketing activities.	Attending a launch marks the point that someone is part of the Hot Wheels collector community.
The invitation sentence "JOIN THE HYPE" and "Don't Skip"	Content simulates shared enthusiasm for a product launch.	Collective enthusiasm is built through social media narratives.	The audience feels compelled to stay tuned for the launch so as not to be left behind by the trend.	Participation in the hype becomes a symbol of involvement in the community of fans and collectors

				(kidult).
Three Hot Wheels Formula 1 cars	The product is featured as a key item coming soon.	Miniatures are a representation of the world of Formula 1 that can be owned.	The product is perceived as a must-have when it is officially launched.	Ownership of multiple variants becomes a symbol of collector identity and prestige.
Checkered flag	The flag simulates the atmosphere of a Formula 1 race.	Racing symbols are used to represent success and achievement.	Product launches are perceived as winning moments in Formula 1.	Racing symbols reinforce the image of prestige and exclusivity of the product.
Black background with textured track	The visuals simulate the atmosphere of a Formula 1 circuit.	The setting represents the world of professional racing.	Audiences can experience the Formula 1 atmosphere even through digital content.	The racing background is a marker of premium quality and product exclusivity.
Formula 1 Logo	The logo presents the official image of Formula 1 in promotional content.	The logo represents the legitimacy of the Formula 1 world.	The presence of a logo makes the product perceived as more valuable than unlicensed diecast.	The Formula 1 logo has become a symbol of prestige, originality and social status for collectors.
Bold orange typography	The typography simulates an urgent and energetic atmosphere.	The text represents the urgency leading up to the launch.	The audience felt that the launch was an opportunity not to be missed.	The rapid response to the launch is a sign of enthusiasm and engagement as fans.
Product position at the bottom of the visual	Product placement after the launch message builds curiosity before showing the main object.	The product becomes a representation of the awaited gift after building expectations.	Expectations towards a product become more important than the function of the product itself.	The desire to own a product is shaped by the value of exclusivity and image attached to the product, not solely its usefulness.

Source: Researcher data processing, (2026)

Based on this analysis, it can be understood that the third slide predominantly constructs sign value through various interrelated visual elements. The Instagram content not only informs the launch of Hot Wheels Formula 1, but also constructs the product as a symbol of prestige, collector identity, exclusivity, and membership in the kidult community. In Jean Baudrillard's perspective, the final product is no longer consumed for its utility value as a miniature car, but rather for its ability to represent social status and cultural identity. Thus, the third slide shows how social media plays a role in producing symbolic consumption through the formation of sign value attached to commodities.

CONCLUSION

The myth contained in the Instagram content @hotwheels_indo dated October 1, 2025, is constructed through the interconnection of various visual elements that naturalize certain meanings so that they are accepted as something normal by the audience. Based on Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, the first slide builds a myth about the authenticity of the Formula 1 world, brand legitimacy, and product exclusivity through slogans, official Formula 1 logos, car visuals, and photographic compositions that resemble the world of professional racing. The second slide builds a myth about premium quality, product precision, and collection culture through the presentation of livery details, Formula 1 team identities, and comprehensive product variations. Meanwhile, the third slide builds a myth about launch momentum, collective enthusiasm, and exclusivity of ownership through the use of headlines, persuasive sentences, racing symbols, and visual compositions that emphasize the importance of product launches. The entire myth constructs the understanding that Hot Wheels Premium Formula 1 is no longer perceived as a children's toy, but as a symbol of prestige, nostalgia, identity, and part of the collection culture for the Kidult community.

The sign value in the Instagram content @hotwheels_indo is formed through a process of simulation, simulacra, and hyperreality that shifts the meaning of the product from use value to symbolic value. Based on Jean Baudrillard's theory, various visual elements such as close-up techniques, low angles, dynamic visual compositions, the use of the Formula 1 logo, product details, and narratives such as "THE BIG DAY" and "JOIN THE HYPE" build a simulation of the Formula 1 world that appears authentic. This simulation develops into a simulacra, a representation that stands as a new reality, thus producing a hyperreality condition where the product image is perceived as more interesting and more meaningful than the physical object. As a result, Hot Wheels Premium Formula 1 is no longer consumed based on its material function as a diecast, but rather based on its sign value that represents prestige, exclusivity, legitimacy, identity as a collector, and affiliation with Formula 1 culture. In this context, consumption becomes a symbolic practice oriented towards social meaning and recognition in the Kidult community.

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