


## Semiotics on the Representation of Healthy Skin Beauty in Somethinc's Instagram Posts

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### A B S T R A C T

As skincare has become increasingly integrated into contemporary beauty culture, cosmetic brands have actively promoted healthy skin as a primary indicator of beauty through social media platforms. Despite the widespread influence of these campaigns, limited studies have explored how beauty myths are constructed through skincare advertising on Instagram. This study aims to examine the representation of healthy skin in Somethinc's Instagram posts and identify the beauty myths embedded within those representations. A qualitative research design was employed using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, which analyzes signs through the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth. The data consisted of five image-based Instagram posts published on Somethinc's official account in 2025, selected through purposive sampling. The findings reveal that healthy skin is represented through themes of gentle care and pH balance, deep hydration and plumpness, the reduction of skin imperfections and renewal, youthfulness and regeneration, and barrier protection and recovery. These representations collectively construct beauty myths that position healthy skin as an idealized standard of attractiveness while portraying skincare routines as essential practices for achieving, maintaining, and legitimizing this culturally desirable beauty ideal.

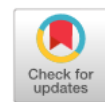
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## INTRODUCTION

Beauty has long been a central topic in discussions of women's appearance, as societal norms and cultural expectations continually shape perceptions of how women should look. Consequently, beauty products have become important tools for self-expression and enhancing self-confidence (Puspitasari & Suryadi, 2020). Growing awareness of personal appearance has further increased public interest in skincare products, with consumers increasingly relying on social media to access product reviews, tutorials, and recommendations before making purchasing decisions (K. Monisha & Tarika, 2026). Through its extensive reach and persuasive visual content, social media not only influences consumer behavior but also reinforces prevailing beauty standards and trends (Akca, 2026). As a result, beauty has evolved beyond a matter of personal preference or lifestyle, becoming a socially constructed concept shaped by digital media, commercial practices, and cultural expectations. These developments demonstrate how social media plays a significant role in defining contemporary ideals of beauty and influencing individuals' perceptions of attractive and healthy skin.

In this regard, social media plays a key role in introducing and spreading these beauty trends. Continuous exposure to these trends shapes how users perceive appearance and can push them to present idealized versions of themselves that conform to social expectations (Felimban et al., 2025). Among various social media platforms, Instagram is one of the most

popular channels used by beauty brands because it is highly focused on visual content. This characteristic makes Instagram an effective platform for sharing beauty-related messages and reaching a wide audience. Recent reports confirm that Instagram remains among the most widely used platforms by young and working-age Indonesians, many of whom also comprise the primary market for beauty and skincare products (NapoleonCat, 2025).

Alongside this phenomenon, Indonesia's beauty industry has grown, driven by increasing awareness of self-care, changes in consumer lifestyles, and the growing use of digital technology in everyday life (Horas et al., 2026). These changes became increasingly evident following the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. During that period, consumers showed increased interest in skincare products due to heightened awareness of skin health and the emergence of various skin issues caused by mask-wearing (Choi et al., 2022). This situation has led to the emergence of the concept of "healthy skin beauty." This concept emphasizes that healthy, well-cared-for skin is a key aspect of beauty. The rise of this trend is closely linked to the influence of K-beauty, which promotes radiant, healthy skin as the ideal standard of beauty (Puspitasari & Suryadi, 2020; Shabiriani et al., 2025).

Somethinc is one local brand that has built its Instagram presence around this ideal. Founded in 2019, it has become one of Indonesia's most prominent local beauty brands and uses Instagram as its main promotional platform. Through its official Instagram account, @somethincofficial, the brand regularly posts content that consistently depicts clear, glowing, healthy-looking skin through soft colours, close-up images, and promotional captions (Lova & Raharjo, 2023). As of 2025, the account had approximately 1.4 million followers and more than 2,400 posts, with an engagement rate of about 0.45 percent (HypeAuditor, 2025). These figures make Somethinc's account a relevant focus for this study. Healthy skin is frequently framed as a natural beauty ideal for women, and such representations may shape how audiences define beauty. Therefore, it is important to examine how healthy skin is represented in Somethinc's Instagram posts and to explore the meanings and beauty myths embedded within these representations.

The concept of representation describes how meaning is produced through language, images, and other communicative forms (Hall, 1997). People interpret the world through representations they encounter in daily life, including in the media. Rather than mirroring reality, representations help construct shared ideas, values, and understandings. Through repeated representations, certain meanings can become familiar and widely accepted. In beauty advertising, representations play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of beauty and healthy skin. Social media platforms like Instagram often use elements such as photos, colours, product displays, and promotional text, all of which work together to communicate specific ideas about beauty and skin. Analysing how those ideas are built into Somethinc's posts requires a method designed to read signs at multiple levels.

This study uses semiotics for that purpose. Semiotics examines how meaning is produced through signs and how audiences understand those meanings within cultural contexts. Meaning is produced through a system of signs that links form to concept (Saussure, 1916). From this perspective, language is used not only to convey information but also to express ideas and construct a specific understanding of reality (Apriyanto, 2022). In semiotics, meaning is understood through the relationship between a sign and the concept it represents. According to Ferdinand de Saussure, a sign consists of two inseparable components: the signifier, which refers to the form of the sign, and the signified, which represents the concept conveyed by the sign (Chandler, 2017). Through the relationship between these two components, signs are able to generate meaning.

Roland Barthes developed Saussure's model by introducing two levels of meaning: denotation and connotation. Denotation works by combining the signifier and the signified into a complete sign (Barthes, 1977). It is from this point that denotation can then transform into a new meaning known as connotation. Connotation involves cultural associations that shape how the sign is understood. In other words, what people understand from a sign is often influenced by external factors beyond the sign itself. An image, color, or phrase that seems simple at the denotative level can carry additional meaning once placed in a cultural context.

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The same image can mean different things to different audiences depending on what those audiences bring to it. Through this layered process, signs communicate ideas, values, and assumptions that go unstated but are nonetheless legible to the audience. When these connotative meanings recur across many images, they can harden into something broader.

Beyond these two levels of meaning, Barthes also introduced the concept of myth to explain how certain meanings become widely accepted in society (Barthes, 1972). The myth here does not refer to a fictional story, but rather to ideas and beliefs that are presented repeatedly until they seem familiar and normal. When the same messages appear across hundreds of posts, audiences can come to treat them as common sense. Beauty advertising relies on myth when it consistently links certain physical features to ideas of health, worth, or desirability. Analysing beauty advertisements, therefore, requires a framework capable of reading not only what an image shows, but what it has been built to make viewers believe.

Several previous studies have examined representations of beauty in advertisements using a semiotic approach. One analysed Scarlett Whitening advertisements and found that Korean and Japanese beauty ideals shape a myth that Indonesian women must have fair, white skin to be considered beautiful (Setyaningsih & Palupi, 2023). However, that study focused solely on YouTube advertisements, leaving room for further research on beauty-related content on Instagram. Another examined eight Instagram posts from Skin Game's #BornThisWay campaign and found that the brand promotes body positivity and physical diversity through models with features including albinism, facial hair, birthmarks, and plus-size bodies (Wargi, 2024). Although this study challenges conventional beauty standards, its primary focus is on diversity and self-acceptance, not healthy skin as a beauty ideal. A third study analysed Instagram content from Wardah, Somethinc, and Mad for Makeup, finding that Somethinc's posts address ideas of skin diversity and self-acceptance (Hidayat et al., 2023). However, this study primarily addresses racial and cultural representation from a feminist perspective.

Although the concept of healthy skin beauty is growing in popularity, the portrayal of this concept has not yet received much academic attention. Previous research has largely focused on fair skin, body positivity, racial diversity, and self-acceptance. In contrast, this emerging trend of healthy skin beauty emphasizes the idea that healthy, well-cared-for skin is a key indicator of beauty. The rising popularity of healthy skin beauty makes this topic important to study, as beauty brands are increasingly using social media to shape the public's understanding of what beautiful skin should look like.

As such representations of beauty often convey meanings that go beyond what is immediately visible, it is important to analyse visual and textual signs to understand how the image of healthy skin is constructed. Barthes' framework allows for analysis at the denotative level, where literal elements are identified; the connotative level, where associated values and ideas emerge; and the mythical level, where broader cultural beliefs become visible. This study aims to examine how Somethinc's Instagram posts construct healthy skin beauty, identify the denotative and connotative meanings carried by their visual and textual signs, and uncover the beauty myths those representations produce. The findings are intended to contribute to the application of Barthes' semiotic framework in analysing beauty representations on social media and to offer practical insights for beauty brands, content creators, and future researchers.

## METHOD

This section describes the methodological procedures used in this study. A qualitative descriptive approach was adopted to examine how healthy skin beauty is represented through visual and textual signs in Somethinc's Instagram posts. Five posts uploaded between January and December 2025 were selected using purposive sampling based on their relevance to the research objective. The data were collected through non-participant observation and documentation of the selected posts. The analysis employed Roland Barthes' semiotic framework to interpret meanings at the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth.

## Research Design

Qualitative research is appropriate because it focuses on interpreting meanings embedded in social and cultural contexts rather than measuring variables statistically (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Such approaches are particularly suitable for analysing symbolic representations and patterns of meaning embedded in communication (Flick, 2009). This approach is appropriate because the study aims to interpret meanings embedded in visual and textual signs rather than measure variables statistically. Data sources were selected using purposive sampling, in which posts were deliberately chosen based on their relevance to the research focus rather than randomly selected.

## Data Source

The primary data consisted of five Instagram posts from Somethinc's official account, *@somethincofficial*. Instagram was selected as the data source because its visual format supports the exploration of symbolic meanings in beauty representation. It also reflects contemporary brand marketing communication in the digital era. The study focused on posts uploaded between January and December 2025, as this period represents the most recent available content and provides sufficient data for analysis. The secondary data consisted of academic literature, social media reports, brand information, and theoretical references that supported the interpretation.

## Data Collection

The data were collected through non-participant observation using a documentation technique, a technique used in qualitative research to gather naturally occurring material such as images, texts, and digital content for systematic analysis (Flick, 2009). The process began by identifying all posts uploaded to Somethinc's official Instagram account between January and December 2025. During this one year, a total of 265 posts were identified. From these, 101 video and Reel posts were excluded because moving visuals, audio, and additional communicative elements require a different analytical method. This ensured that only image-based posts were included, as signs can be observed in greater detail in static images. Furthermore, promotional content such as giveaways, discount announcements, games, entertainment content, and other posts that did not directly contribute to the representation of healthy skin beauty were also excluded.

This process resulted in 164 image-based posts. The remaining posts were then reviewed for visual and textual elements related to healthy skin beauty, hydration, skin barrier maintenance, protection, skin renewal, regeneration, and other characteristics related to healthy skin. Five posts were selected because healthy skin beauty was the primary focus of both the visual representation and the promotional message. For carousel posts, only the slides that most clearly represented healthy skin and the related promotional messages were analysed to maintain consistency with the research objective. The selected posts were then documented, downloaded, and organised for analysis.

## Data Analysis

The analysis began by identifying the visual and textual signs in each Instagram post using Barthes' semiotic framework, which draws on Saussure's concepts of signifier and signified. The researcher identified the signifiers and signified represented through elements such as skin appearance, product displays, colour choices, and promotional texts. These signs were first described at the denotative level before being interpreted connotatively to understand the meanings associated with healthy skin beauty. Finally, the relationships between these meanings were examined to identify the broader myths represented in Somethinc's promotional content. This process was carried out iteratively across the five selected posts to identify recurring patterns in the representation of healthy skin beauty.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and discussion of the study. The findings are organised based on the selected Instagram posts and presented through semiotic analysis tables with their corresponding interpretations. The discussion examines the meanings and recurring patterns found across the posts to explain how healthy skin beauty is represented in Somethinc's Instagram posts. These findings are then interpreted using relevant theories to address the research objective.

Five Instagram posts uploaded on Somethinc's official Instagram account between January and December 2025 were selected for analysis. Each post was analysed using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework to examine meanings at the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth. The analysis begins by describing the literal visual and textual elements in each post at the denotative level, then interprets their connotative meanings and the broader cultural ideologies represented through myth. The findings are presented in the following tables, followed by an interpretation of each post.

Table 1. Summary of Healthy Skin Beauty Representations and Associated Myths

No	Upload Date	Product Category	Representation of Beauty	Associated Myth
1.	March 20, 2025 ( <a href="#">Link</a> )	Facial Cleanser	Gentle cleansing, skin barrier protection, and balanced skin pH	Healthy skin depends on gentle cleansing that protects the skin barrier and maintains a balanced pH.
2.	June 22, 2025 ( <a href="#">Link</a> )	Hydrating Serum	Deep and long-lasting hydration, moisture balance, and plump skin	Healthy skin depends on maintaining deep and long-lasting hydration.
3.	July 17, 2025 ( <a href="#">Link</a> )	Peeling Serum	Skin renewal, refined pores, and controlled sebaceous filaments	Healthy skin depends on skin renewal and the management of natural skin imperfections.
4.	November 23, 2025 ( <a href="#">Link</a> )	Anti-Aging Serum	Plump skin, reduced wrinkles, skin elasticity, collagen support, and skin regeneration	Healthy skin depends on preserving a youthful appearance through skincare.
5.	December 1, 2025 ( <a href="#">Link</a> )	Sunscreen	Skin barrier protection, recovery, and resilience	Healthy skin depends on protection that maintains a strong and resilient skin barrier.

As presented in Table 1, healthy skin is represented through various characteristics across the selected posts. Some emphasize hydration, moisture balance, and plumpness, while others focus on skin renewal, the control of skin imperfections, regeneration, and youthfulness, or protection and barrier recovery. These representations contribute to the construction of beauty myths that shape how healthy skin is understood within Somethinc's promotional content. Although each post promotes a different skincare product, they consistently present healthy skin through positive and desirable characteristics. Together, these representations illustrate how Somethinc constructs a broader concept of healthy skin beauty across its Instagram promotions. To examine these meanings more closely, each post is analysed individually in the following sections.

### Somethinc Low pH Gentle Jelly Facial Cleanser



Figure 1. Somethinc Low pH Gentle Jelly Facial Cleanser Instagram Post (March 20, 2025)

The first post is a two-slide carousel featuring Somethinc Low pH Gentle Jelly Facial Cleanser. At first glance, the post appears relatively simple. However, it presents a broader idea of what an ideal facial cleanser should provide. The post emphasizes gentle cleansing, skin comfort, and pH balance as important characteristics of healthy skin. This representation is conveyed through both visual and textual signs. The semiotic analysis of this post is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Semiotic Analysis of Figure 1

Category	Analysis
Signifier	: A female model holding a facial cleanser at face level, a soft purple background, a floating product display with bubbles, and three numbered claims presented as "3 Rules of Facial Cleanser": "Be Gentle," "Comfort First," and "pH Matters."
Signified	: A cleanser that cleanses the skin gently without disrupting the skin barrier, leaving the skin comfortable and pH-balanced.
Denotative Meaning	: A two-slide Instagram carousel promoting Somethinc Low pH Gentle Jelly Facial Cleanser through a model, product visuals, and three skincare rules.
Connotative Meaning	: Proper cleansing follows certain standards, and a cleanser that causes dryness or tightness is considered unsuitable for healthy skin.
Myth	: Healthy skin depends on choosing a gentle cleanser that protects the skin barrier and maintains a balanced pH.

This post begins by introducing healthy skin through signs of gentle cleansing and skin comfort. The signifiers include a female model with clear skin smiling while holding the facial cleanser, a floating product display surrounded by bubbles, a soft purple background, and three textual claims presented as the "3 Rules of Facial Cleanser," "Be Gentle: Your cleanser should love your skin barrier, not disrupt it," "Comfort First: Skin feels clean & comfy without dryness or tightness," and "pH Matters: Non-stripping & pH-balanced formula is a must." These signs represent a cleanser that prioritizes gentle cleansing, skin comfort, and protection of the skin barrier.

The advertisement presents the product through a simple but informative visual layout. At its most literal level, the post promotes Somethinc Low pH Gentle Jelly Facial Cleanser through a two-slide Instagram carousel. The second slide contains more text and introduces three numbered rules for choosing a facial cleanser. Each rule highlights a different aspect of cleansing, allowing the audience to understand the product's key functions clearly. The model holds the product at face level, creating a visual connection between her clear skin and the cleanser. This arrangement gives the post an informative appearance and presents the product as a practical choice for everyday skincare.

Looking more closely at the relationship between the signs, the connotative meaning goes beyond promoting the product itself. The word "rules" suggests that there is a proper way to cleanse the skin. Presenting the product's features as rules also implies that cleansers that do not meet these standards may be less suitable for healthy skin. The statement "your cleanser should love your skin barrier, not disrupt it" describes the skin barrier as something that needs protection. The word "disrupt" carries a negative meaning because it suggests that the wrong cleanser can damage the skin instead of caring for it. The phrase "without dryness or tightness" also implies that these conditions should not happen after cleansing. The soft purple background and the model's relaxed expression support this message by creating a sense of comfort and calmness. Altogether, these elements suggest that healthy skin is not only clean but also comfortable, protected, and able to maintain its natural balance.

At the broadest level, the post constructs the idea that healthy skin can be achieved by making informed cleansing choices. The use of numbered rules presents skincare as something that should follow established principles instead of personal preference. Referring to these statements as "rules" instead of "benefits" or "features" also gives them a stronger sense of necessity. The repeated use of the word "should" reinforces this idea by suggesting that pH-balanced and non-stripping formulas are basic requirements, not optional advantages. As a

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result, healthy skin is represented as something that comes from choosing the right products and following the proper skincare standards.

### Somethinc Hyaluronic9 + Advanced + B5 Serum Post

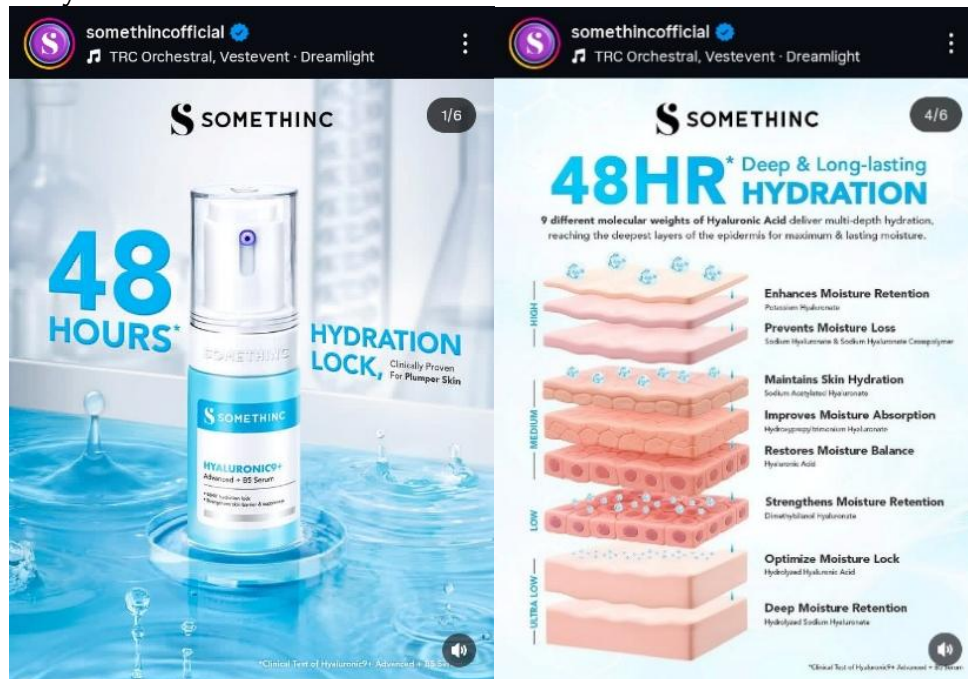


Figure 2. Somethinc Hyaluronic9+ Advanced + B5 Serum Instagram Post (June 22, 2025)

The second post features Somethinc Hyaluronic9+ Advanced + B5 Serum and consists of six carousel slides. Only two slides were selected because they provide the clearest representation of healthy skin through product visuals, illustrations of skin hydration levels ranging from high to ultra-low, and repeated claims about moisture. The remaining slides mainly present product ingredients, directions for use, and online shop promotions, making them less relevant to the focus of this study. The selected slides consistently associate healthy skin with deep and long-lasting hydration. This representation is reinforced through blue water imagery, illustrations of moisture distribution within the skin, and promotional messages highlighting hydration retention and plumpness. The semiotic analysis of this post is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Semiotic Analysis of Figure 2

Category	Analysis
Signifier	: A blue serum bottle placed on water, water droplets, a blue colour palette, scientific illustrations of skin hydration layers, and claims such as “48 Hours Hydration Lock, Clinically Proven for Plumpy Skin,” “48HR Deep & Long-lasting Hydration,” and ingredient descriptions featuring the word ‘moisture’ repeated eight times, ‘hydration’ four times, and ‘plumper’ once.
Signified	: A serum that provides deep hydration and helps maintain skin moisture through a clinically tested formulation.
Denotative Meaning	: An Instagram advertisement promoting a hydrating serum with claims of 48-hour moisture retention, deep skin hydration, and clinically proven results for plump skin.
Connotative Meaning	: Skin hydration is presented as an essential characteristic of healthy skin, supported by scientific claims and advanced skincare technology.
Myth	: Healthy skin is naturally plump and well hydrated through scientifically formulated skincare.

In this post, hydration and moisture become the main signs through which healthy skin is represented. The visual signs include a serum bottle placed on the surface of the water, surrounding water droplets, a consistent blue colour palette, and a scientific cross-section of the skin showing eight levels of moisture distribution, from high to ultra-low. These visuals

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are supported by claims such as “48 Hours Hydration Lock, Clinically Proven for Plumpy Skin” and “48HR Deep & Long-lasting Hydration.” The ingredient descriptions also repeat the word ‘moisture’ eight times, ‘hydration’ four times, and ‘plumper’ once. This repeated use of hydration-related vocabulary makes moisture the main message communicated throughout the post.

At the denotative level, the post promotes Somethinc Hyaluronic9+ Advanced + B5 Serum by highlighting its ability to retain skin moisture for up to 48 hours. The product is displayed on the surface of water, creating a direct visual association between the serum and hydration. A scientific illustration of the skin layers explains how the serum delivers moisture to different parts of the epidermis. This visual presentation gives the post a more clinical and informative appearance. It also helps explain the product claims in a way that appears more convincing to the audience.

These signs collectively suggest that the connotative meaning emphasizes hydration as one of the key characteristics of healthy skin. The blue colour palette and water imagery evoke ideas of freshness, cleanliness, and moisture. The layered skin illustration suggests that healthy skin requires hydration that reaches beyond the surface. The phrase “Clinically Proven” strengthens this message by presenting skin health as something that can be supported through scientific testing. The repeated use of “moisture” words throughout the post also implies that skin lacking hydration is not yet in its ideal condition. These elements represent hydration as an essential requirement for achieving healthy skin.

This representation gradually naturalises the belief that healthy skin is naturally plump because it is continuously well-hydrated. Hydration is presented as the main indicator of skin health instead of simply one skincare benefit. The combination of scientific illustrations, clinical claims, and repeated references to moisture makes this idea appear objective and unquestionable. As a result, maintaining skin hydration becomes an ongoing responsibility. The post also positions clinically formulated skincare products as the most reliable way to achieve and maintain healthy skin.

### Somethinc Advanced Peeling Solution 20%

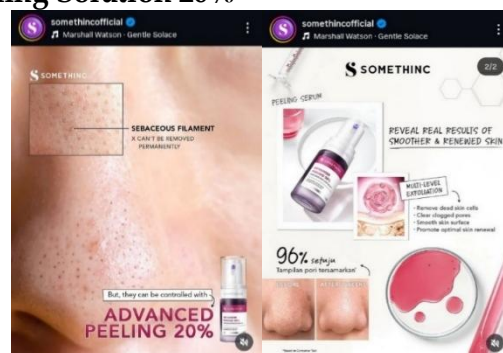


Figure 3. Somethinc Advanced Peeling Solution 20% (July 17, 2025)

The third post is also a two-slides post featuring Somethinc Advanced Peeling Solution 20%. Unlike the previous posts, which focus on hydration and skin barrier care, this post highlights skin renewal and the management of common skin concerns through exfoliation. The selected slides contain detailed explanations about sebaceous filaments, skin texture, and the benefits of regular exfoliation. Close-up images of the skin, before-and-after comparisons, and educational claims strengthen this representation. As a result, healthy skin is portrayed as skin that is continuously renewed and maintained through proper exfoliation. The findings are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. Semiotic Analysis of Figure 3

Category	Analysis
Signifier	: A close-up of skin texture labeled "Sebaceous Filament (X) Can't Be Removed Permanently," a peeling serum bottle, before-and-after nose comparisons, and claims such as "But they can be controlled with Advanced Peeling 20%," "Reveal Real Results of Smoother & Renewed Skin," "Multi-Level Exfoliation," and "96% setuju tampilan pori tersamarkan."
Signified	: A peeling serum that manages sebaceous filaments and supports skin renewal through exfoliation.
Denotative Meaning	: A two-slide Instagram carousel promoting an exfoliating serum through close-up skin imagery, before-and-after comparisons, and consumer evidence.
Connotative Meaning	: Sebaceous filaments are a permanent skin condition, but their appearance can and should be managed through consistent exfoliation.
Myth	: Healthy skin is not flawless but continuously renewed and maintained through the control of skin imperfections.

Unlike the previous posts, this advertisement begins with a common skin concern. In this post, the representation starts with visible skin texture instead of ideal skin. The signifiers include close-up images of skin texture and sebaceous filaments, a peeling serum bottle, before-and-after comparisons, and textual claims such as "Sebaceous Filament Can't Be Removed Permanently," "But They Can Be Controlled with Advanced Peeling 20%," "Reveal Real Results of Smoother & Renewed Skin," "Remove Dead Skin Cells," "Smooth Skin Surface," "Promote Optimal Skin Renewal," and "96% Agree Pore Appearance Is Minimized." These visual and textual signs represent a product that helps control sebaceous filaments, improve skin texture, and support the skin's natural renewal process. Together, they emphasise that skin improvement comes from regular care instead of instant transformation.

Rather than immediately promoting the serum, the post begins by explaining a common skin condition that many people experience. The statement "Sebaceous Filament Can't Be Removed Permanently" functions as an educational explanation and distinguishes sebaceous filaments from blackheads. Then, the before-and-after comparison shows a visible reduction in pore appearance after two weeks of use. It is supported by the claim in Indonesian "96% setuju tampilan pori tersamarkan," which means "96% agree pore appearance is minimized" as supporting evidence for the product's effectiveness. Overall, the post combines product promotion with information about skin conditions, giving it both an educational and promotional purpose.

At the connotative level, the post suggests that good skincare begins with understanding the skin itself. Sebaceous filaments are not presented as a flaw but as a natural part of the skin that can be managed through proper exfoliation. The scientific explanations, close-up skin images, and supporting claims make the product appear trustworthy and knowledge-based. This presentation encourages the audience to view skincare as a process of regular maintenance instead of searching for perfect skin. Healthy skin is therefore represented as skin that is cared for consistently and managed with the right skincare practices.

From this perspective, healthy skin becomes associated with continuous care and proper management of natural skin conditions. Sebaceous filaments are presented as something that should be controlled instead of completely removed. This idea makes ongoing skincare maintenance appear normal and necessary. The product is positioned as a tool that helps people maintain healthier-looking skin through regular exfoliation. As a result, healthy skin is represented not as naturally flawless skin but as skin that is continuously renewed and properly maintained.

**Somethinc PDRN + Exosome + Hyalupeptide Serum**

Figure 4. Somethinc PDRN + Exosome + Hyalupeptide Serum (November 23, 2025)

The fourth post introduces Somethinc PDRN + Exosome + Hyalupeptide Serum, which is promoted for wrinkle care and skin rejuvenation. The post consists of five carousel slides. This analysis focuses on the first two slides because they provide the clearest representation of healthy skin through a balanced combination of product visuals, skin appearance, and promotional text. These slides also introduce the product's main ingredients and explain their functions, making them the most relevant for semiotic analysis. The post highlights collagen production, skin elasticity, regeneration, and a plump appearance as characteristics of healthy skin. Together, these visual and textual elements present healthy skin as youthful, firm, and well-maintained. The analysis is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Semiotic Analysis of Figure 4

Category	Analysis
Signifier	: A youthful female model with smooth skin resting her hand on her shoulder, a serum bottle, a white and light blue colour palette, and claims such as "High Performance Serum for Wrinkle Care & Plumpy Skin," "To Promote Collagen Production," "Strengthens Skin Barrier & Optimizes Skin Regeneration Process," "Powerful Antioxidant to Preserve Skin Elasticity," and "Fades Signs of Aging, Brightens & Fades Hyperpigmentation."
Signified	: A serum that supports skin regeneration, preserves elasticity, and reduces visible signs of aging through advanced ingredients..
Denotative Meaning	: An Instagram advertisement promoting an anti-aging serum through claims of skin regeneration, wrinkle care, elasticity preservation, and hyperpigmentation reduction.
Connotative Meaning	: Visible signs of aging should be managed because healthy skin is associated with a youthful appearance.
Myth	: Healthy skin is naturally youthful, firm, and free from visible signs of aging.

Here, the focus shifts toward youthfulness and skin regeneration. The post represents healthy skin through signs associated with youthfulness, skin regeneration, and elasticity. The first slide features a youthful female model with smooth, even-toned skin, resting her hand lightly against her face to draw attention to her complexion. The second slide introduces four key ingredients, namely Hyalupeptide, Exosome, Vegan PDRN, and Laminaria Extract, with each ingredient linked to a specific skin benefit. The accompanying claims explain functions such as promoting collagen production, strengthening the skin barrier, preserving elasticity, and reducing visible signs of aging. Together, these visual and textual signs represent healthy skin as skin that remains youthful through continuous care and scientifically formulated skincare.

The post introduces the serum through claims related to wrinkle care and collagen production. From a denotative perspective, the post promotes Somethinc PDRN + Exosome + Hyalupeptide Serum through product imagery, the model's appearance, and explanations of its active ingredients. The headline, "High Performance Serum for Wrinkle Care & Plumpy Skin," immediately introduces wrinkle care as the product's primary purpose. The following slide explains how each ingredient contributes to collagen production, skin elasticity, barrier strength, and the reduction of hyperpigmentation. White and light blue colours are used

consistently throughout the post, creating a clean and clinical appearance. Overall, the advertisement combines visual presentation with ingredient information to explain the product's intended benefits.

The connotative meaning becomes clearer through the relationship between the visual and textual signs. The model's smooth, bright, and firm-looking skin becomes the visual reference for the product's promised results. Although the advertisement does not include before-and-after comparisons, repeated claims such as "Fades Signs of Aging," "Promote Collagen Production," and "Preserve Skin Elasticity" suggest that visible signs of aging should be reduced or delayed. Aging is therefore presented as a condition that can be managed through scientifically formulated skincare. As a result, healthy skin is represented not only as skin that functions well but also as skin that maintains a youthful appearance.

Viewed through Barthes' concept of myth, the post constructs the belief that youthful-looking skin is the ideal image of healthy skin. The repeated connection between youthfulness, skin health, and scientific skincare makes this idea appear natural and widely accepted. As a result, aging is no longer seen simply as a biological process but as a condition that should be managed through skincare. The product is positioned as a way to preserve youthful skin by supporting collagen production, elasticity, and regeneration. This representation reinforces the belief that maintaining a youthful appearance is an essential part of achieving healthy skin.

### Somethinc Calm Down Mineral Soothing Sunscreen



Figure 5. Somethinc Calm Down Mineral Soothing Sunscreen (December 1, 2025)

The fifth and final post features Somethinc Calm Down 100% Mineral Soothing Sunscreen. The post consists of five carousel slides, but this analysis focuses on the first two because they provide the clearest representation of healthy skin through visual elements and promotional claims. The remaining slides mainly explain SPF protection and introduce other products from the Calm Down series, making them less relevant to this study. Unlike the previous post, which represents healthy skin through youthfulness and regeneration, this post emphasises protection and skin barrier recovery. Through its visual and textual elements, the post presents healthy skin as skin that is protected from environmental damage and supported by a strong skin barrier. The semiotic analysis of this post is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Semiotic Analysis of Figure 5

Category	Analysis
Signifier :	A female model with clear skin holding a sunscreen product, green and white colour tones, a product display, and claims such as "Sun's Out, Calm's On," "2x Strengthens the Skin Barrier," "Reboots Skin Barrier System for Faster Recovery and Minimizes Skin Reactivity," and "Award-Winning Ingredients for the Ultimate Skin Protection."
Signified:	A sunscreen that not only protects the skin from UV exposure but also strengthens, restores, and maintains the skin barrier.
Denotative Meaning:	An Instagram advertisement promoting a mineral sunscreen through a model, product display, and claims related to skin barrier protection, recovery, and UV defense.
Connotative Meaning:	Healthy skin is constantly exposed to environmental damage, making protection and skin barrier maintenance essential parts of everyday skincare.
Myth :	Healthy skin depends on continuous protection through daily skincare that strengthens and maintains the skin barrier.

The final post approaches healthy skin from the perspective of protection. Overall, the post represents healthy skin through signs related to protection and skin barrier maintenance. The analysis focuses on the first two slides, which combine the model, product, and promotional claims in a balanced way. The first slide features a female model holding the sunscreen close to her face with a calm facial expression, while the second slide presents the product alongside a large teal medical icon and four main promotional claims. The medical icon is one of the most prominent visual elements in the post and is commonly associated with healthcare and medical treatment. Together with the claims about skin barrier recovery and protection, these visual and textual signs represent healthy skin as something that should be protected and maintained through daily skincare.

The advertisement presents sunscreen as a daily skincare product with protective functions. Denotatively, the post promotes Somethinc Calm Down 100% Mineral Soothing Sunscreen through product imagery, the model's appearance, and a structured presentation of its benefits. The headline, "Sun's Out, Calm's On," introduces the sunscreen as a product designed for daily sun protection. The following slide explains its functions through claims such as "2x Strengthens the Skin Barrier," "Reboots Skin Barrier System for Faster Recovery," "Minimizes Skin Reactivity," and "Award Winning UV Protection." The consistent use of teal and white colours, together with the medical cross, creates a clean and clinical appearance. Overall, the advertisement combines product visuals and promotional claims to present the sunscreen's intended functions.

Through its visual and textual elements, the post suggests that healthy skin requires continuous protection from environmental damage. The model's calm facial expression reflects the product name, "Calm Down," suggesting that healthy skin is calm, comfortable, and well-protected. The repeated references to barrier strength, recovery, and reduced skin reactivity imply that the skin is constantly exposed to external stress. The medical cross further strengthens this message by giving the product a more clinical and trustworthy appearance. Together, these signs represent sunscreen as an essential part of maintaining healthy skin through daily skincare.

As the final stage of this representation, the post naturalises the idea that protecting the skin is an essential part of maintaining healthy skin. Daily sunscreen use is presented as a normal skincare practice instead of an optional step. The repeated emphasis on barrier protection, recovery, and UV defense gradually naturalises the idea that healthy skin depends on continuous protection from environmental damage. The product is therefore positioned as a necessary part of everyday skincare rather than simply another cosmetic product. This representation reinforces the belief that prevention is just as important as treating existing skin concerns.

## Discussion

The analysis shows that Somethinc does not represent healthy skin through a single characteristic. Instead, each Instagram post highlights a different aspect of skin health that corresponds to the product being promoted. Figure 1 emphasizes gentle cleansing and pH balance, while Figure 2 highlights hydration and plumpness as key indicators of healthy skin. In Figure 3, healthy skin is represented through the process of skin renewal achieved by exfoliation. Meanwhile, Figure 4 and Figure 5 shift the focus toward long-term skin maintenance by highlighting regeneration, youthfulness, barrier protection, and recovery. Looking across the five posts, healthy skin is represented through a combination of interconnected skin functions rather than a single ideal characteristic. This representation presents skincare as an ongoing practice in which different products contribute to maintaining healthy skin.

The representations identified in this study closely reflect how healthy skin is described in dermatological research. According to (Hafték et al., 2021), healthy skin is characterized by adequate hydration, skin barrier integrity, protection from environmental factors, and the ability to maintain and restore its normal function. This similarity suggests that Somethinc promotes healthy skin using characteristics that are already recognized within dermatological

literature. At the same time, they reflect the influence of the healthy skin beauty trend, particularly within K-beauty, which places greater attention on skin condition than on heavy cosmetic coverage (Puspitasari & Suryadi, 2020). One notable finding is that Figure 3 offers a slightly different perspective from conventional beauty advertising. Instead of treating sebaceous filaments as flaws that should disappear completely, the post explains that they are a natural part of the skin that can only be managed through appropriate skincare. This shifts the focus from achieving flawless skin to maintaining healthy skin through informed skincare practices.

Visual elements also contribute to the way healthy skin is represented in Somethinc's Instagram posts. Although each product serves a different purpose, the colour palettes appear to be carefully selected to reinforce the message being communicated. Figure 1 uses soft purple as the dominant background colour, supporting the cleanser's emphasis on gentleness and comfort. In contrast, Figure 2 and Figure 4 are dominated by blue and white, colours commonly associated with cleanliness, freshness, hydration, and trust. Figure 5 adopts green and white tones that complement the sunscreen's focus on calmness, protection, and skin recovery. Previous studies in colour psychology have shown that blue, green, and blue-green are generally associated with positive and calming emotions, while purple is often linked to feelings of relaxation and comfort (Jonaskaite & Mohr, 2025). These colour associations are consistent with the messages conveyed in the selected posts. Research also suggests that colours influence how audiences perceive information and respond emotionally to visual content, making colour an important part of communication rather than simply an aesthetic element (Dzaki et al., 2026). In Somethinc's Instagram posts, colour therefore functions as a visual sign that strengthens the textual claims and reinforces the representation of healthy skin.

Another pattern that appears consistently throughout the advertisements is the use of scientific language. Rather than relying only on persuasive promotional slogans, the posts frequently present technical terms and expert-like explanations to communicate product benefits. Figure 1 introduces expressions such as "Non-Stripping & pH Balanced" and "Love Your Skin Barrier," framing cleansing as a practice supported by scientific knowledge. Figure 2 highlights "48 Hours Hydration Lock: Clinically Proven for Plumpy Skin" while repeatedly emphasizing moisture and hydration throughout the ingredient descriptions. Figure 3 combines educational information about sebaceous filaments with claims related to skin renewal and supporting statistical evidence. Similar strategies appear in Figure 4 through references to collagen production, skin elasticity, and advanced ingredients such as PDRN, Exosome, and Hyalupeptide, while Figure 5 focuses on skin barrier recovery through claims including "2x Strengthens the Skin Barrier" and "Reboots Skin Barrier System for Faster Recovery." Together, these expressions present healthy skin as something that can be understood, maintained, and improved through scientific knowledge and skincare technology.

Viewed through Barthes' concept of myth, these recurring representations gradually become normalized through repetition. Scientific terminology, visual design, and promotional messages work together to make particular ideas about healthy skin appear objective and unquestionable rather than commercially constructed. As a result, healthy skin is represented not only as a biological condition but also as an attainable beauty ideal supported by skincare routines and scientifically formulated products. Across the five posts, this myth is expressed in different ways, from gentle cleansing and hydration to skin renewal, regeneration, and barrier protection. Although each product highlights a different aspect of skin health, they collectively reinforce the belief that maintaining healthy skin depends on continuous skincare practices.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study examined how healthy skin beauty is represented in Somethinc's Instagram posts using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework. The analysis shows that healthy skin is represented through interconnected characteristics, including gentle care, hydration, skin renewal, youthfulness, and skin barrier protection. Together, these representations construct healthy skin as an ideal form of beauty that is achieved and maintained through continuous skincare practices supported by scientifically formulated products. From Barthes' perspective, these repeated representations contribute to the myth that healthy skin is not only desirable but also something that can be attained through the right skincare knowledge, routines, and products. However, this study is limited to five Instagram posts from a single beauty brand and focuses only on visual and textual representations. Future research could examine a wider range of beauty brands and social media platforms or explore audience interpretations to understand how these representations are accepted, negotiated, or challenged by consumers.

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